



INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

International Education Week 2012

In an effort to understand how students perceive and experience the idea of 'international' at HSU, the International Studies Program collaborated with the Center for International Programs to conduct a survey of IEW students and organize a 'listening' session hosted by the International Studies Program Leader, Alison Holmes, and Rebecca Brown, Director of the Center for International Programs. With nearly 70 responses, the results were a good snap-shot of the week's attendees.

We discovered that International Education Week, a unique HSU institution, remains popular with students and continues to draw new students. Asked whether they had considered studying abroad, nearly 90% said yes - though they were concerned with how it would fit with their major



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International Studies Program at HSU: Growth and Consolidation

The International Studies Option within Interdisciplinary Studies was founded in 1999-2000 and has grown steadily for the past 13 years.

Today, there are approximately 115 Majors and the Program awarded 34 degrees last year.

To mark the continued growth of the Program, the diverse faculty who support it undertook a major review. This led to some significant changes and consolidation that, we hope, will offer a rigorous academic base as well as language skills and practical experience of foreign cultures.

Not wanting to damage the Program's individualized approach, faculty concluded that the 4 original pillars of: core courses; regional expertise; language proficiency; and a residency abroad, continue to offer a unique Program on HSU's campus as well as one that is distinct within the CSU system. More importantly, it offers an increasingly useful interdisciplinary approach to the global issues of interest to our students.

The desire was to enhance and strengthen the core so as to better reflect developing

literature on globalization and its distinct economic, cultural and political features.

The Concentrations within the Major have been limited to 3 regional areas: China, Latin America and Europe (France, Germany, Spain), and 2 issue-based areas: Global Culture and Third World Development. They are designed to ensure students have a focus of study as well as a demonstrable expertise. The result is a hybrid we feel reflects the new direction of an ambitious Program while building on the strengths of the existing faculty and the whole University.

There was also a strong desire to create more of a student identify within the Major and so, along with the increased number of courses in which students will meet, a new Capstone was created to help them come together at the end of their college career to consider their progress and help determine their future direction. These proposals have now been approved and will take effect in AY 2013-2014.

Please visit our new website/get in touch:
www.humboldt.edu/internationalstudies





IS Program Leader

Dr. Alison Holmes was appointed Program Leader in 2012. She came to California from Connecticut (at the invitation of a local British jazz musician) where she was the Pierre Keller Fellow of Transatlantic Studies at Yale University for 2 years.

Prior to New Haven, she lived in London for 21 years - 10 of those working in politics and running 2 General Election campaigns for the Liberal Democrats.

Professionally, she specialized in strategic communications and worked for: the BBC, a PR/Lobbying firm, and was Managing Director of a UK/US business organization.

After being awarded a PhD in International Relations from the London School of Economics in 2005, she taught at Oxford and was speechwriter to the US ambassador.

Her areas of research interest are diplomacy, international relations theory and UK/US relations.

Student Survey: Feedback on the Program

An ongoing challenge for a Major as diverse as International Studies is the creation of 'cohort' or identity. As students take different languages and study abroad at different times, it is easy to forget that their interest in international affairs and global cultures sets them apart.

We have begun to address this through a majors' meeting and social event every semester and a Moodle site for regular updates and useful information.

We also instituted an IS student survey.

About half the students responded, and the results were quite interesting.

Highlights: IS majors tend to come late to the Program, either as transfers or upper classmen. We speculate this may be due to the fact it takes time to 'find' the Program and to decide that an interdisciplinary Major is a better fit (though no clear pattern of majors they come from).

Their reasons for choosing the Major fall into 3 broad categories: inter-disciplinary content; a desire to travel/learn a language; and flexibility.

A question about the 'most important ideas' might be expected to produce as many answers as respondents, but a large number listed the

'interconnectedness' of world issues and the importance of communication.

Similarly, responses as to their 'most valuable experience' drew a strong answer: study abroad.

Career goals included non-profits and NGOs as well as government and teaching jobs while their advice for new IS majors was sobering. Clearly they see the complexity of the world's problems as a challenge, but concluded: 'don't give up', 'don't stop working and thinking for change'.

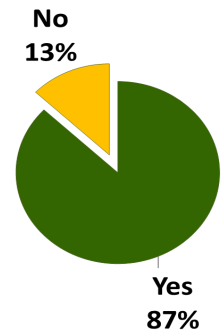


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By contrast, respondents were nearly split on their consideration of International Studies as a Major - with study abroad topping their list of concerns.

We plan to repeat this initiative and continue to work on the issues raised.

Students Who Considered Study Abroad



International Studies Alumni Corner

Hannah Graff graduated from HSU in 2010 with a Concentration in Globalization and now works in Eureka, CA as a Community Health Outreach Worker for the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services. While at HSU, she studied in Tanzania doing work that prepared her for her current career.



Originally from Santa Cruz, Hannah was drawn to HSU's International Studies Program and its commitment to a core curriculum as well as study abroad and a foreign language. Hannah is currently in graduate school studying Public Health with an emphasis on the social determinants of health. She plans to remaining here for a while longer, but eventually wants to continue her studies in the growing field of Global Public Health.