

Date: 2/28/20

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Bill Myers, Professor of History and Chair of International Studies

Cc: Dean John Petraitis  
Dr. Chad Farrell, Professor of Sociology, and INTL EPR committee member

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review: Optional Program Response to Dean's Recommendation

**Program/s in this review: International Studies BA**

**Program response to dean's findings:**

I want to make this brief, knowing how overburdened you are with this rather intensive and extensive EPR process.

While I am thankful for Dean Petraitis' recommendation for continuation of the International Studies BA, and I agree that the INTL BA might become an even more attractive option for students during the next few years of compressed degree options, I am disheartened by the "hits" that CAS is taking. I understand the dire budget pressures UAA and CAS have been under, which have only heightened with this summer's "compact" agreement between the Governor and UA Statewide. However, being forced to cut fundamentally healthy programs like Sociology and Environment and Society is deeply worrying to me. Professors Chad Farrell (Sociology) and Dorn Van Dommelen (E&S) deliver key courses for the INTL BA. While we will be able to find alternatives, and continue to offer the International Studies BA, precisely because it is an interdisciplinary degree, I am deeply concerned about the future sustainability, not just of the INTL degree, but also of CAS as a whole given the continued budget cuts this year and next. I know from serving under you during your tenure as Dean of CAS how much you believe in the mission of a college of arts, humanities and sciences. I believe that the liberal arts, broadly construed, are at the very origins of the idea of a university, and the liberal arts must remain at the center of any mission, any value statement, any budget decision being made for UAA. I really believe that all of our CAS degree programs educate the whole person, and educate them to be thinking, thoughtful, adaptive, resilient and imaginative people. These are not just "job-ready" degrees, but degrees for life.

I know that both Dean Petraitis and now the Provost are in a nearly impossible place with the budget, seemingly forced to make Hobson-like choices. I just gently ask you to remember the long game—the liberal arts do matter, in and of themselves.

On a final note. I cannot begin to say how sorry I am to be losing Prof. Chad Farrell, a casualty of these budget wars. Chad is one of the finest colleagues with whom I have ever had the pleasure of working. Professional, a source of excellence as a teacher, advisor, researcher and colleague, his resignation is a tough blow, not only for Sociology and INTL, but also for UAA and the Anchorage community. I thank him for all of his service and friendship.

With respect and concern,

Bill Myers  
Professor of History and Chair of International Studies