

B.A. International Studies  
College of Arts and Sciences  
QEP Report

**International Studies QEP Process and Plan:** The International Studies coordinate major (it must be paired with another major of any discipline) was created and launched during the current QEP. It is also a totally interdisciplinary program with courses drawn from 8 different academic departments. As such it was conceived with the goals of synthesis clearly in mind. From our founding document we wrote:

*Western Carolina University's Quality Enhancement Plan document, approved in 2008, defines as its central organizing concept of synthesis – the ability to integrate knowledge from different areas into an original whole – as the driving framework for teaching and learning. This proposed coordinate major supports this endeavor by allowing students to augment their traditional major with a structured selection of courses that are all international in scope. The introductory course and the advisors will assist students in drawing the connections between their traditional major and the broader global context.*

We are still in the process of creating our assessment plan so we have not yet captured any data on student learning outcomes. Nonetheless, there is ample anecdotal evidence of student behaviors that indicate the program is on its way to meeting several of the QEP learning outcomes. Some of this evidence includes:

1. In only its third year of operation (it began in Fall 2010), the major has attracted 63 majors. For an interdisciplinary program this is healthy and indicative of students' interests in studying a subject that crosses traditional disciplinary lines.
2. Within those 63 majors a total of 19 other majors serve as the coordinates. This range from the Social Sciences (Anthropology; Business Law; Criminal Justice; Finance; Political Science; Social Work; Psychology; Sociology; Natural Resources Management) to the Humanities (Communication; English; History; Philosophy; Spanish; Special Studies Japanese; Hospitality Tourism and Management) to the Natural Sciences (Environmental Science; Math; Chemistry).
3. Thus far we have graduated 11 International Studies majors. Of those, nine had studied abroad; one was an international student, and only one did not study or live abroad. The major does not require study abroad but we do emphasize its virtues to all our majors. We have gained some majors after students have studied abroad or completed international service learning experiences (e.g., Alternative Spring Break in Jamaica 2012). This indicates that experience abroad caused students to think more broadly about their education.

In terms of one specific QEP learning goal:

*Integrate information from a variety of contexts:* Since students will be taking courses in the major from disciplines as varied as Modern Foreign Language; English; Political Science; Geography, History; Communication; Anthropology; Philosophy; and Sociology almost necessitates that students will be exposed to a wide range of approaches to knowledge and learning. Not all majors will take courses in all these disciplines. But they will all be exposed to several academic disciplines. In addition, the coordinate major feature means that students are getting exposed to one particular discipline in depth.

**Next Steps:**

1. (Under active consideration) – Establish a required capstone course that will assist students in synthesizing their two majors.
2. (Under active collaboration) – Identify learning objectives and means by which we will measure these.