

To Mick Peterson, Chair -Program Creation and Reorganization Review Committee (PCRRC)
From SPIA PAC (Mario Teisl, James Warhola and Laura Lindenfeld)
Re: SPIA move from graduate school reporting, to CLAS reporting

Dear Mick:

As members of the SPIA Program Advisory Committee, we write to you regarding our request to move SPIA from the Graduate School to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. We strongly support this move and want to provide additional information on the need for this change.

Moving SPIA from the Graduate School to CLAS will not significantly impact any cooperating faculty member since most cooperating faculty members do not actively participate in SPIA operations (i.e., administration, advising or teaching). About half attend and participate in SPIA faculty meetings. Examining the total number of cooperating SPIA faculty by college is not a relevant metric: What is relevant is to examine which faculty are most active in SPIA operations, which units provide the core training needed by SPIA students, and which units provide the types of undergraduate students most attracted to a SPIA type program. These metrics are of greatest relevance to where the program should be housed, because they represent where the greatest concentration of activity within SPIA is taking place.

First, CLAS has become the natural home for SPIA. The faculty actively involved in SPIA operations are primarily from CLAS (e.g. 2 PAC members; 2 teaching core classes; 2 teaching concentration requirements - Security concentration), with two from NSFA (1 PAC member who also teaches a concentration requirement – Environmental concentration; 1 teaches a core class). No one from engineering or business teaches a core class, serves on the PAC (although 1 from engineering has been on the PAC), and no one from the School of Business has attended a SPIA faculty meeting in the last three years. This does not mean that SPIA is not welcoming to faculty from the School of Business; rather, it is evidence of where the core faculty participating in SPIA reside within UMaine.

Being interdisciplinary, SPIA students can, and do, come into the program with many different backgrounds (e.g., environmental science, business and economics, various other physical and social sciences). However, all SPIA students must have some economics (2 classes), and statistics (1 class), but all must have significant expertise in a modern (non-native) language (typically 2-3 years of classes). We also note that, by far, the most popular SPIA concentration is International Security. 75 % of the pre-approved elective courses for this concentration are taught by CLAS faculty; the other 25 % are taught by NSFA (all from the School of Economics).

Another reason that a move to CLAS makes sense is that the undergrad POS, HTY, and IA degrees are clear feeder programs for the International Security concentration, and modern language also fills an important role. Placing SPIA in CLAS helps to provide important and necessary program coordination among these undergraduate units and SPIA. Further, since SPIA has no faculty lines, it is important that SPIA maintain close coordination with units that teach in, or feed students into, the program. This helps in making the transition from undergraduate to graduate school relatively seamless. SPIA is therefore able to provide the necessary input into the coordination of current and future teaching resources.

While SPIA should remain interdisciplinary and open to involving faculty from across campus, CLAS is the clear, natural home for this burgeoning program. We are delighted to provide any further information you might require to advance this move.