

**To:** Special Meeting of Faculty Senate, Senators and Ex-Officio Members  
**From:** Intensive English Language Program (IELP), NTTFaculty Members

**Date:** March 15, 2021

**Subject:** IELP NTTF self-appraisal report for the special meeting on Monday, March 15, 2021, pursuant to Article 22 of the [PSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement](#), in regard to potential program reductions in the IELP.

The IELP teaching and academic professional faculty would like to thank the Faculty Senate for this opportunity to provide a more complete understanding of our program's position as we enter into retrenchment proceedings for Article 22. As stakeholders, we appreciate the transparency this process affords. Therefore, we offer this report as a supplement to our presentation to the Faculty Senate regarding reductions to our program.

The PSU administration's rationale for reducing our program relies mainly on the decline in enrollment our program has experienced over the past several years. While we do not dispute the current decline in our student numbers, it is our position that in order to accurately assess our program's value to PSU, a broader context is needed.

## Introduction

For context, we would like to start by referring to President Percy's comments regarding the need for multicultural competency at the Faculty Senate meeting on January 4, 2021 as well as the following words from his online greeting on the first day of winter term:

*Portland State University is synonymous with our Portland community. As PSU will be changed by the past year, so too will Portland. We must ask ourselves: How can our research, our programs, our students, our alumni and our campus be part of a different, better, more just community?*

The IELP serves as a campus leader in intercultural communication, multicultural competency, curricular innovation, and equitable student support services. Our program has risen to meet the special needs of international students at PSU in these challenging times, and we are already moving forward with innovative programming to serve our 21st century learners. We will continue to envision new ways to serve the ever-fluctuating international student market and to add to PSU's portfolio of offerings for multilingual, multicultural domestic and international students. Especially for these students, who are often students of color, maintaining the health of the IELP is a vital mechanism in reaching the President's goal of a "different, better, and more just" community.

The IELP has a seasoned continuous-appointment faculty, an accredited program with diverse offerings, and renowned student services. Through our credit-bearing programming, we provide

academic pathways for ESL-restricted international students by providing transitional support into degree-seeking programs. Our non-credit programming supports a variety of study-abroad experiences that bring international students to campus, further enhancing PSU's global reputation. Our hybridized educational and student support unit is not typical at the university because we deliver both instruction and services. Additionally, we work in different dimensions with campus partners at PSU to support international scholarship. Our program model emerged as we have sought to address the needs of ESL-restricted international students at PSU, while at the same time seeking our permanent home within the university. Unfortunately, our current budget model as a solely academic unit does not account for all that we do in-house or accurately reflect the impact of our partnership work within the larger university.

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## **Dependence of University on the IELP**

As Article 22 requires the president to consider matters such as the dependence of other departments on the department proposed for reduction, we would like to illustrate the ways in which the IELP is indispensable to the university. IELP students represent a global community and are integral to PSU's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. IELP faculty teach in multiple departments and participate in multiple levels of shared governance. Our independently accredited program facilitates the admission of undergraduate and graduate international students and plays a vital role in the education and support of international and domestic multilingual students across campus.

### **IELP Graduate and Undergraduate Pathways Program**

The IELP functions as PSU's only pipeline for international students who have not met English proficiency requirements. The university depends on the IELP to prepare students for matriculation into their primary path of study. All international students who intend to earn an undergraduate or graduate degree at PSU and who have not earned the required scores on an English language proficiency test are required to participate in the Pathways Program. Completion of the Pathways Program satisfies PSU's English language proficiency requirement. Our Pathways Program promotes and supports student academic success during the transition from the IELP to degree study at PSU.

Between 2014 and 2018, 39% of all international students who earned a bachelor's degree had enrollment in IELP courses. Even during the COVID pandemic that necessitated a return to their home countries for many of our students, the IELP Pathway pipeline has continued to flow. In the period from March 2020 to June 2021, we will have transitioned 66 undergraduate pathway students to their degree program. Between spring 2020 and winter 2021, 49 students completed the IELP Pathway Program, and 48 of those are continuing on to PSU. Another 18 are scheduled to complete the program this term. A single year of non-resident tuition/fee revenue generated by these 66 students equals \$1,969,242.

The IELP also collaborates with the Graduate School and individual departments to facilitate the admission of students who have not met or have expired language proficiency requirements.

We do the following:

- allow students to take our remote placement test to supplement expired scores;
- place students into graduate-specific courses depending on the lower bands of their language proficiency tests--most commonly grad reading (LING 454) or grad writing (LING 453) or the writing workshop for multilingual grad students (LING 457);
- teach workshops hosted by the graduate school and the PSU library.

### **Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science (MCECS)**

For the past 10 years the IELP has collaborated with PSU's Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science on international student enrollment. We have been instrumental in the Intel Vietnam Scholars Program and partnerships with Changchun University of Technology and Jilin Jianshu University in China. Since 2015, we have helped CCUT and JLJU undergraduate students transfer to PSU, even during online learning.

The IELP is currently assisting MCECS with a new initiative with Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications in China by working on curricular and instructional support for non-STEM coursework.

### **University Studies (UNST)**

In 2015, the IELP began working in partnership with UNST to provide the Multilingual FRINQ-SINQ Lab. The Lab is a 2-credit bridge course which supports a variety of multilingual international and domestic students who are enrolled in FRINQ or SINQ classes. IELP NTF facilitate multilingual learners in this bridge course to develop skills and strategies for successful completion of university coursework. IELP faculty also participate in the training of UNST mentors and provide professional development workshops for UNST faculty. One such recent workshop was titled *Questioning Assumptions about Multilingual Writers*. Although the lab is not currently running due to COVID, the IELP fully expects more partnership opportunities with UNST and other campus entities such as the Learning and Writing centers to grow as PSU strives to provide a more seamless and equitable network of support for L2 students in the post-pandemic return to classes.

### **Department of Applied Linguistics (LING)**

As a related department and one we were previously housed under, IELP faculty have a long history of working closely with Applied Linguistics faculty, programming, and language educators-in-training.

In partnership with LING, IELP faculty regularly:

- supervise and deliver LING 409/509 Language Teaching Practicum, a credit bearing program including community partnerships that brings language instruction to local underserved multilingual immigrant and refugee communities;

- mentor LING undergraduate and graduate educators-in-training through language course observations and student-teaching opportunities;
- serve on MATESOL culminating project/thesis committees;
- present as guest lecturers in undergraduate and graduate LING courses on a variety of language teaching and assessment topics;
- team with LING faculty on published research.

### **Hybrid Courses for New Matriculated International Students**

In rapid response to federal restrictions on exclusively remote programming for international student visa holders, the IELP has stepped in and provided essential hybrid-courses during the Covid-19 pandemic, allowing students to continue their studies here in the US. These are the current hybrid-courses we are offering: IELP-admitted students (LING 199), PSU UG students (LING 172, in coordination with OISSS), and PSU GR students (LING 199 and LING 457). International students now meet the immigration requirement to enter or stay in the U.S because of our course offerings. A total of 84 PSU students have registered for these classes.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**

PSU depends on the IELP to support multilingual international students in a culturally responsive educational setting that fosters a critically informed and responsible learning community. In this way, our program contributes to the university's mission of educating a 'diverse community of lifelong learners.' IELP students complement the diversity of domestic PSU students with their unique linguistic, cultural, political, and religious perspectives.

Recently, IELP faculty and staff have developed an implementation plan for the *PSU Intercultural Partnership Program*, a university-wide matching program that recruits and matches students in a cohort setting to participate in cultural, personal, and social exchange. This program was designed to meet the present-day needs of our campus and our students and is a direct response to PSU's current goals around student success and a more inclusive campus. It demonstrates investment in every student's experience, provides programmatic infrastructure that supports intercultural fluency, and can be leveraged for recruitment of international students to our campus.

We see multilingual support at PSU as fundamentally an equity issue. We are unaware of dedicated support networks for multilingual PSU students outside of the services offered by the IELP. For example, the multilingual specialist position in the PSU Writing Center was eliminated. Writing Center consultants no longer receive IELP training to support multilingual students. In order to equitably support the entire student body, more funding is needed for services like this.

### **Student Success - PSU's Students First Initiative**

The IELP strives to address the entire international student experience from initial point of contact to alumni engagement. We provide wraparound services for international students, including outreach/admissions; pre-arrival/orientation; advising; academic programming; academic support, and opportunities to engage with PSU and the Portland community. We provide first-term programming that supports students' initial campus experience and

contributes to student persistence, academic success, and sense of belonging. Additionally, our two-term academic pathway program promotes and supports student academic success during the transition from the IELP to degree study at PSU.

It is important to recognize that the IELP is budgeted as a revenue-generating unit. We do provide a full-slate of credit-bearing SCH-generating courses for our IELP and PSU admitted international learners. However, we also provide essential revenue-supporting student-success services such as those mentioned above that do not result in SCH. Our revenue-supporting activities are not accurately accounted for in the budget calculations used by the university to portray the fiscal health and value of our program. Our budget picture looks problematic to the outside eye because many of our faculty serve international students in roles or programs that support international efforts in other departments and campus-wide. A significant cut to the IELP undermines our capacity to continue to do this critical work.

## **Navigating International Student Enrollment Trends**

International student enrollment is well-known for being variable based on global and local events. Other university academic departments seldom face the extreme highs and lows in student enrollment that IEPs do, and therefore these fluctuations can appear alarming. According to the *Open Doors* reports compiled by the Institute for International Education (IIE), IEP enrollment fluctuates even more than international student enrollment overall, which makes projections very challenging.

The university cites the decline in IELP enrollment as catastrophic for years to come, but significant fluctuations in enrollment are part of the nature of IEPs. In the past we have had multiple years with 20% increases in enrollment, and we worked creatively to accommodate the huge influx of international students to PSU. We are again weathering a market shift, which our program has done before, namely after 9-11. It is notable that in one of the “declining enrollment” years mentioned in our notice letter, AY 2018-2019, we began to see the data turn around with a less than 1% decline. In AY 2019-2020, we began trending up in Fall, with improved SCH prior to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. It may be worth noting that the biggest group of students in our beginning pathway level when the pandemic hit had majors relating to Public Health, a field likely to experience immediate growth post Covid-19. Currently, despite Covid-19, we have new scholarship students coming in cohorts from KSA, Oman, and Kuwait.

### **PSU IELP vs Other Intensive English Programs (IEPs) Nationally**

It is no secret that in the past five years university IEPs around the country have experienced wide-spread declining enrollments, a trend exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. *English USA* has reported that 80 IEPs have been closed since 2017. The IELP is proud to report that while we have sustained declines, we have fared better than average IEPs in the US. In fact, in a recent survey of 73-member IEPs conducted by *University and College Intensive English*

*Programs (UCIEP)*, the IELP was one of only four programs nationwide with more than 50 students.

The IELP recognizes the turbulent nature of the international student market and has taken significant steps to bolster itself by diversifying course offerings. One reason why we are faring better than others is our adaptability to flex with the market. We diversified our portfolio of student programming to address the ebb and flow of international student enrollment. We designed and implemented short-term programming and embraced non-degree inbound international programming as an institutional strategy. One such program has been the English Through Sustainability and Service Learning (ETSSL) program, an internationally recognized award-winning program which draws from multiple international partner-universities. ETSSL is one of the IELP's non-credit-bearing study abroad options that meets market demand for service-learning experiences. Learners interact with the Portland-area community, participate in student clubs, and enrich the multiculturalism and diversity of the PSU campus. This work has exponentially opened up opportunities to work with other university partners across the globe, which benefits the university's profile. Another example of our adaptive efforts to tap into emerging markets is the current Remote Intensive Communication Program for partner-university students from Hiroshima University and Hosei University in Japan. This is the second term that students are joining us remotely for this communication-focused short program.

### **Grant-based Specialized Programming**

As a program that has weathered almost 60 years, the IELP understands that relying solely on a credit-bearing academic preparation program is not a viable strategy for the financial sustainability of an IEP. Efforts to diversify our programming have included grant-based short-term programs that bring recognition to PSU. Two of these programs are described below:

Fulbright Preparation Courses - Since 2015, the IELP has been one of six American universities chosen to host up to 30 international Fulbright scholars during summer term for a pre-academic English for graduate study program in collaboration with the US Department of State and the Institute of International Education (IIE). IELP faculty designed and led the courses and activities in the program to prepare international scholars for graduate study at US universities and colleges. PSU has been recognized as a leader in this type of programming thanks to the efforts of the IELP and we look forward to sponsoring these students again following the Covid-19 pandemic.

PDPI Program for Brazilian Teachers of English - The PDPI Brazilian Teacher Training Program was designed and developed by the IELP in partnership with IIE and CAPES, a Brazilian government ministry. To date, our PDPI program has brought more than 50 Brazilian in-service language teachers to PSU for two six-week intensive teacher-training sessions. A third session was scheduled but subsequently cancelled due to Covid-19. This also is work we intend to pick up once travel restrictions ease following the pandemic.

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## State of Development of the IELP

The IELP is a well-established department with long-standing leadership in international education at Portland State University. In order to continue to serve in a shifting landscape, the leadership, faculty, and staff of the IELP have been proactive in positioning ourselves appropriately within the governing structure of the university and in the international student market as a whole. In fact, we sought and earned a 10-year accreditation from the preeminent language education specific accreditor, *Commission on English Language Accreditation (CEA)*, in order to heighten our profile to student markets. This accreditation highlights the excellence of our program and is indicative of why students choose the IELP.

### Ongoing Merger with the Office of International Affairs (OIA)

With the goal of adopting a strategic and comprehensive approach to supporting international education and internationalization at PSU, the IELP petitioned in spring of 2020 to merge with OIA. This merger draws on the expertise of both units in order to increase international enrollment capacity at PSU. The merger addresses concerns regarding the challenges of operating the IELP as a standalone revenue generating unit and its anomalous status in PSU's budget process. The goals of the merger are:

- increasing outreach to international partners who funnel students to PSU;
- increasing PSU's capacity to design and deliver programming for international and domestic multilingual/multicultural learners within the whole of PSU;
- increasing capacity and innovation of student success efforts for international degree seeking students;
- building long-term fiscal stability and sustainability.

Currently, representatives from the units within OIA are working on structural redesigns that include:

- rethinking student services within the broader umbrella of ISP, PC, IELP and PSU degree-seeking students to increase efficiency in support services;
- redesigning OIA/IELP educational programming into a single unit to better position PSU within the changing international market;
- establishing an OIA outreach team to improve student pipelines to PSU.

This ongoing merger offers long-awaited opportunities to bring cohesion and focus to all international programming on PSU's campus, as well as to reconcile the budgeting discord that results from the IELP being an academic unit with wrap-around services. We are just getting started with that work. To significantly reduce the IELP now through Article 22 undermines the merger process and the current work that OIA, the IELP and Enrollment Management are doing to improve PSU's capacity to bring international students to PSU and support their success throughout their PSU experience.

### **Recent reductions in faculty and staff**

As part of an ongoing effort to combat shrinking budgets, austerity measures have been implemented in the IELP. Since 2016, the first year in which the program's tuition revenue generated fell below our E&G budget, 19 positions have been eliminated in the IELP. These positions include 13 NTTF reductions (9 contract terminations and 4 retirements/resignations not replaced). Additionally, 6 support staff and administration positions have been reduced (2 AP contract terminations, 2 classified staff contract terminations, 2 administrator resignations not replaced). Additional personnel cuts threaten to erode our expertise and jeopardize academic success work that could easily be adapted and utilized to support current university initiatives such as "Open for Fall Open for All."

### **IELP Program Review and Revision Project**

In response to shifts we have been tracking in the IEP market, the IELP has engaged in a full curricular review and innovative revision. This program-wide process is expected to yield a slate of course offerings by Spring 2022. The revisions we are in the process of making will:

- maintain the quality and rigor of English language education in the IELP while continuing to diversify the types of learners we serve;
- increase flexibility for learners with credit load and course options;
- add attractive courses for learners with a broad range of educational and professional goals.

Notable features of the revision include:

- a streamlined Pathway program that is competitive with peer IEPs and fast-tracks a fluid admission process to PSU;
- addition of an "English Plus" track (a trendsetting content-based instruction model) that offers a high-interest language learning context attractive to university partners especially in Japan and Korea;
- an integrated skills approach to lower-level proficiency courses in line with global trends in international education.

The IELP looks forward to contributing its expertise to a diverse array of services in conjunction with our new colleagues in OIA, in order to create a robust menu of choices for a broader international student audience here at PSU.

## **Closing & Next Steps**

With international student numbers poised to increase again in the near future, now is not the time to make further cuts that may impact a successful recovery or undermine current partnerships both on campus and abroad. We would like to be able to respond quickly when international students once again return to the US and specifically to PSU in higher numbers. We also would like the university to recognize that we have the tools to serve a diverse campus community beyond our intensive language classes. The IELP has supported the work of



internationalization for 56 of PSU's 75 years, and we are determined to demonstrate our adaptability and resiliency in serving multilingual learners at PSU for years to come.

It is with humility and appreciation that we respectfully submit our program status report to the Faculty Senate. The retrenchment process can at times be daunting, and we appreciate being allowed the opportunity to share a fuller picture of what is at stake for us and the future of PSU's international and domestic multilingual student populations as we face programmatic cuts. Finding a balance between budgets and benefits is more than a game of crunching numbers. It is, as President Percy said, about envisioning a different, better, more just environment for our community of learners.

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IELP alumni comment on the transformative power of the IELP on their educational success:

*"This is all a great beginning to start my program. I can't even imagine starting my academic life without having this beautiful adaption to American culture and life."*

*"I just submitted a 20 pages critique for one of my classes. When I was done, I took a moment staring at my laptop screen and it filled me with pride! I remember turning to my teacher for my first pre-class assignment ... how scared and puzzled I was then. I can see how her class and what we learned in IELP reflecting in my work and confidence."*

*"I truly believe that the classes in the Intensive English Language program were very supportive and I am ready to transfer from an IELP student to a PSU student. I also think my pathway class is the main reason why I'm ready for class. It made me well prepared for my PSU class."*

*"Joining the Pathway program instead of trying to improve my IELTS score was the best decision I've made in a while."*