

# Reimagine PSU Grant

## Collaborative Model for Interdisciplinary Programs: International Development Studies

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## Executive Summary

This study sets out to design a collaborative curricular model for International Development Studies (IDS), with the objective of an improved student learning experience and the more efficient utilization of faculty resources. First, we explore the forces that have led to the insularization of the degree as it currently exists, relating the changes to the intended and unintended consequences of the adoption, or threat of adoption, of performance-based budgeting (PBB) and how this relates to the objectives of interdisciplinary education. As we mark ten years of the start of a discussion on PBB at PSU, and six years since its official introduction, this research project is a timely intervention to examine its efficacy and impacts on the overall educational mission of the University.

We collected data for this research using qualitative methods (20 semi-structured interviews of former and current chairs of both interdisciplinary and disciplinary departments and five focus group discussions with students, library liaisons, advisors, students, and former and current UCC members) and by analyzing curricular data from DataMASTER and Course Catalogs.

Some of the major findings include the emergence of a “*culture of competition*,” expansion of external and internal conflicts, dilution of curriculum and runaway growth of cluster course offerings, weakening of programmatic coherence with demand-determined new courses, various forms of disconnect and institutional inefficiencies, increased workload and decreased faculty morale. Such a discouraging and stressful environment places an additional stress on faculty, a reality highlighted by virtually all our non-student respondents. The introduction of pathway advising has also been evaluated as having a mixed impact on several of the units analyzed. Ultimately, our review of qualitative and quantitative data finds numerous outcomes of the PBB model to run counter to PSU’s mission statement, particularly in relation to students experiencing “academic excellence.”

We complete our report with a redesigned Bachelors program in International Development Studies, drafted bereft of the traps of the PBB model and meant to craft the best-possible curriculum based on the resources currently available at PSU. IDS, an interdisciplinary field par excellence, would greatly benefit from a shift away from SCH accounting in particular, and PBB in general. We ought to ReImagine PSU on foundations that support its mission which speaks of “collective knowledge and expertise” and “collaborative learning,” objectives that, as we have seen in this study, stand at odds with SCH maximization at the departmental level.

## Introduction

Building interdisciplinary programs has had much support in higher education, at least as far back as the 1960s. However, interdisciplinary programs face particular challenges, primarily in terms of faculty collaboration across academic units. The Department of International and Global Studies offers a B.A. in International and Global Studies, with a concentration in International Development Studies (IDS) since 2008. IDS is a quintessentially interdisciplinary subject, requiring and integrating knowledge from a variety of disciplines, mostly, but not exclusively, in the social sciences. The program is housed in an interdisciplinary unit that has faculty members who have such diverse disciplinary backgrounds as Communication, Political Science, Economics, Geography, and History. However, several other academic units at PSU offer courses of relevance to IDS, and yet these courses, and the faculty expertise that they represent, effectively are not available to students pursuing an IDS degree under the current budget model. Our study sets out to design a collaborative curricular model for IDS, with the objective of an improved student learning experience and the more efficient utilization of faculty resources. First, we explore the forces that have led to the insularization of the degree as it currently exists, relating the changes to the intended and unintended consequences of the adoption, or threat of adoption, of performance-based budgeting (PBB) and how this relates to the objectives of interdisciplinary education.

Through our research and analysis of course data at PSU over the past 15 years, we see a contradiction between the goal of international and interdisciplinary education for the University's students and the performance-based budgeting (or funding) in the allocation of resources. This conflict was echoed in almost all the data collected through interviews and shows up in other indicators. Furthermore, PBB practices appear to at least partially negate the University's mission statement, which emphasizes the fostering of "collective knowledge and expertise" and "collaborative learning" and support for "a diverse community," with research and teaching that has a "global impact." We have found in this study that PBB, instead, interferes with these mission objectives, particularly in areas of faculty cooperation and the cultivation of a broad and solid liberal arts education.

The concerns expressed in our interviews are corroborated by a report in *Inside Higher Ed* (Whitford, 2020), which notes that: "After synthesizing more than 50 studies published between 1998 and 2020, researchers found that performance-based funding typically yields modest or null effects on institutional outcomes and that the policies come with a host of unintended consequences," and that this approach "threatens to further widen the resource gap between colleges and universities that enroll larger numbers of racial minority and low-income students and institutions that primarily enroll students from more advantaged backgrounds." Along similar lines, Nicholas Hillsman, writing for the Century Foundation, argues that: "Despite the logic, research shows that tying financial incentives to performance measures rarely results in large or positive outcomes that are sustained over time" (2016).

## Methodology

We collected data for this research through qualitative methods (interviews and focus group discussions) and by analyzing curricular data from course catalogs. Since our goal was to model a new curriculum for the B.A. in International Development Studies, pursuing an interdisciplinary program approach, we began our research by putting together a list of departments (n=10) that could contribute courses for the revised IDS program. The sample included equal representation of both interdisciplinary and disciplinary departments. The purposive, theoretical sampling strategy necessitated interviewing current and at least one recent-past Chair of each department (n=20). We assumed that a current and a recent-past Chair would, in totality, capture the experience of a department attempting to advance its curricular within the context of or in response to a changing budgetary environment at PSU, especially during most of the last decade. While departmental curricular committees normally make curricular decisions, department Chairs' approval is required to move all proposals to fruition.

Additionally, Chairs and former Chairs of interdisciplinary departments could explain the specific conditions and challenges faced by such units. We conducted semi-structured interviews lasting between 30 minutes to a little over an hour with each participant. We concluded each interview with open-ended questions for participants to provide any comments relevant to the research but not covered during the interview and for them to suggest other questions that we could incorporate in future interview schedules.

Next, we conducted two focus group discussions with students from the ten departments, one with the library liaisons of the departments, one with academic advisors working with majors in these departments, and finally, one with curricular officers such as the Chairs of the faculty senate's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and curriculum coordinators (past or present). To maintain confidentiality, we cannot mention whether the participants were or are in these positions. The synergistic energy of these relatively homogenous groups enabled their enthusiastic participation. We recruited students through open invitation limiting participation to the selected departments. Finally, for the departments in our study we analyzed quantitative data available publicly at PSU (that is, to all faculty) from DataMASTER and Course Catalogs to examine changes in 1) program curriculum, including the total number of credits and non-departmental courses that can be taken or are required for a degree, 2) the number of courses the units include in a UNST cluster, and 3) trends in the offering of cross-listed courses.

### A Review of PBB at PSU

As we mark ten years of the start of a discussion on PBB at PSU, and six years since its official introduction, this project is a timely intervention to examine its efficacy and impact on the overall educational mission of the university. In theory, the model allocates a unit's budget based on return on its "performance," measured primarily as SCH generated by the unit, degrees granted,

and majors in the unit's programs. In other words, it interprets performance as student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.

Under the PBB model, academic units are considered responsible for a number of variables over which they have little to no control. Furthermore, the model ignores important questions such as the value of a liberal education, and external factors, such as trends and fads in local and global politics and the labor market that swing students from one major to another. Finally, we found that the emphasis placed on the Revenue-Cost Attribution Tool (RCAT) to inform administrative decisions ignores factors such as large inequities in faculty salary within a College/Department due to rank difference, seniority, retention of administrative salaries by faculty, and size differentials of Colleges/Departments (larger units can find creative ways to strategically balance large and small class sizes).

Despite the performative nod to retention and graduation rates, several Chairs reported in our interviews that their Deans focus accountability almost exclusively on SCH, a perception that can be confirmed by the attention given to RCAT values in administrative decisions, as retention and graduation rates do not generate revenue, whereas SCH does. Further, a report by Third Way, a think tank, found that “overwhelmingly, the empirical research on performance funding suggests that in most current iterations at the state level, the [performance- based budgeting] policy fails to improve degree completions and graduation rates” (Li, 2019).

In our interviews with Chairs and former Chairs, librarians, advisors, and students, we also observed that an emphasis on “choice” and “consumer sovereignty” has increasingly replaced what educators and academic expertise have long regarded and planned as a well-rounded and rigorous education for students that would enable them to function as knowledgeable, skilled, socially aware, and empowered citizens and leaders in a democratic and justice-focused society. The PBB model rewards units that generate SCH, ostensibly because SCH demonstrates student demand for courses offered by those units. However, SCH allocation at PSU is not at all straightforward, as units paying for a particular course are often not receiving the full share of SCH generated by the course. SCH allocation is based on the prefix of the course, which in turn is associated with a particular academic unit. However, the course prefix does not necessarily indicate which unit is providing and paying for the instructor when the course is offered. For some units, particularly those with a history of curricular collaboration with others, many of them interdisciplinary units, this can lead to a significant undercounting of SCH for some units.

The first instance of misassigned SCH occurs with cross-listed courses. When a course is cross-listed, it becomes available to students under two prefixes. Irrespective of which unit pays for the instructor, each receives the SCH corresponding to the students enrolled in the section with their prefix. However, the instructor is assigned to teach the course and paid by one of the units, and hence the SCH generated by this course is not fully channeled to the unit incurring the cost of offering the course.

This problem with SCH allocation would tend to undercount the contribution of smaller units, which often rely on cross-listing courses to generate sufficient enrollment in their courses. Interdisciplinary units, which use cross-listed courses to provide an interdisciplinary education to their students, are also likely to be disproportionately impacted. Ultimately, the misassignment of SCH would seem to undermine curricular collaboration between units.

A second problem with the assignment of SCH based on course prefixes arises for units that teach courses for University Studies using the UNST prefix (all FRINQs, SINQs, and capstones). Units that teach such courses provide significant faculty resources to support the university's core undergraduate, general education mission, but do not receive the SCH credit that they generate in exchange. Although, in theory, a reconciliation of SCH takes place at the end of the year, reallocating SCH away from UNST to the units that provide instruction. However, given that Deans and Chairs review SCH data rather regularly, they do not always consider these reallocated numbers in their calculations, thus "seeing" a grimmer picture of departmental SCH contribution. In fact, the data expressed in the "dashboards" recently created in the context of a discussion of academic reorganization, did not seem to show the adjusted figures.

The greater the contribution of a particular unit to the general education mission of University Studies, the greater the cost it pays in terms of lost SCH. While International and Global Studies used to offer fifteen SINQ sessions in an academic year, the incentive has been to cut back and redirect faculty to teach cluster courses that generate SCH from majors and non-majors, shrinking the number of SINQs it plans to offer this year to ten.

The broader argument is that the atomized quantification of departmental teaching contribution, measured by the number of students taking a course with a certain prefix, fails to properly account for the curricular contributions of a department, let alone explain a department's full contribution to the education mission of the university. However, the PBB model relies precisely on this sort of narrow definition of "performance," which, as we discuss below from our interviews and focus groups, result in negative practices with unintended and unwanted outcomes.

## Findings

From our interviews with Chairs and former Chairs, and focus groups with librarians, advisors, curriculum officers and students, emerges a problematic and concerning picture of the role that PBB, with its focus on SCH, that has played out at PSU over the past decade, even prior to its nominal implementation in 2015. While the impact appears to be the worst on interdisciplinary units, our findings indicate that all units in this analysis were negatively affected. In addition to negative outcomes associated with PBB, we found that changes in the advising model as well may be having adverse effects on the ability of interdisciplinary programs to recruit majors. We discuss these issues below.

### *A “culture of competition”*

The impact of PBB was felt by most Chairs as fostering unproductive competition between units, leading to insularity and the creation of “silos” (the term was mentioned in at least four interviews, including a former member of UCC). Given that departments do not have direct influence over enrollment levels at the University, the focus on SCH generation inevitably results in departments adopting strategies of competition between units, both for overall enrollment in their courses and for majors. Such efforts, termed “cannibalization” by a current Chair (Interview M, September 2, 2021), tend to isolate units from one another and often pits them against each other, as competition over SCH is a zero sum game. Note that given overall declining enrollment at the university, departments are competing over a shrinking pie. The result is necessarily adverse to inter-departmental collaboration and to the educational experience of, and opportunities for, PSU students.

### *External and internal conflict*

In this competitive context, conflicts flare up between units as curricular changes in one unit tend to undermine other units (more on this below.) One place where such conflicts come out in the open is the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC), where new course proposals and changes to existing courses can become bogged down in turf battles between units. An example of this consequence of inter-departmental competition over SCH is the recent failure of three departments to agree on the practical aspects of offering an interdisciplinary interdepartmental degree (Interview H, August 24th, 2021). Interdisciplinary units, which by definition offer courses that overlap with a variety of disciplines, are particularly impacted by the focus on SCH generation because they are more likely to face objections by disciplinary units seeking to protect their enrollment, when proposing new courses.

The pursuit of SCH not only fosters interdepartmental conflict, but also invites internal conflict. Placing the focus on course enrollment brings unwanted attention to faculty who teach less popular (and potentially “difficult”) subjects, while those teaching courses that enroll well may feel entitled to special treatment by the Chair, such as teaching in their favored time slots. Enrollment minimum rules, mandated by Deans but enforced by Chairs, create further internal tensions when under-enrolled classes are cancelled. The imposition of enrollment minimums, with its focus on SCH generated by specific courses and faculty, can potentially impact the tenure process of junior faculty since SCH tracking creates an additional concern for the candidate and an issue of contention for the P&T committee evaluating tenure and promotion (Interview K, August 30th, 2021).

### *The problem of cross-listing*

A few of the units under analysis have found ways to cross list without long-term losses of SCH. This is mostly done through close coordination with partnering departments, taking turns on whose faculty will teach the course on a year to year basis. However, such collaboration is the

exception rather than the norm, meaning that the general disposition is to avoid cross-listing when paying for the instructor, unless, of course, the potential cancellation of the course is a concern due to minimum enrollment rules. Such an arrangement assumes faculty in both departments are able to teach the course every year, something that poses challenges with sabbatical leaves, course buyouts, and other curricular needs of the departments involved. As a result, Chairs are likely to view proposals to cross-list courses, particularly new cross listings, with a negative lens.

University-wide data on the offering of cross-listed courses does not show a clear trend, with a great deal of variation from one academic year to the next. The same applies, for the most part, to the ten units under analysis. The data indicate great variation in the use of cross-listing between units, the result of a variety of factors beyond the PBB model.

### *Curricular dilution to capture SCH*

Many Chairs mentioned changes in curriculum as a strategy to boost SCH, and revealed their concern that SCH “trumped the pedagogical matter” (Interview P, September 8th, 2021). A common practice has been to reduce the number of courses, core or elective, that students may take outside their departments, (Interview D, August 26, 2021; Interview N, September 2, 2021). Another has been the discontinuation of classes with low enrollment, irrespective of the importance of the content in the curriculum to the unit. In the competition over majors, and in an effort to boost retention and graduation rates, units have also reduced the number of credit hours required to graduate.

A review of curricular changes in the ten units under analysis shows that six of them made major curricular revisions since 2006-07. Of those six, five reduced or eliminated the number of courses that could be taken outside their unit, and three significantly reduced the number of credit hours required for graduation, while only one increased them by four credit hours. Of the four units making no curricular changes, two never accepted outside courses as electives for their major, one unit accepts one course, and the last one accepts two courses. In other words, from the start, the units that did not make curricular changes had little to no incentive to revise their curriculum in an effort to capture more SCH from students in their major.

### *Cluster course offering expansion*

Practically all Chairs interviewed mentioned efforts to increase the number of courses approved to meet junior cluster requirements (unlike FRINQs, SINQs and capstones, cluster courses use non-UNST prefixes). Our interviews make it clear that the objective of including courses in a cluster is to generate enrollment from non-majors who are seeking to meet University Studies requirements. Some Chairs considered that the widespread inclusion of courses in clusters has had a negative impact on their curriculum, describing this the “sacrifice of pedagogy in the major” (Interview O, September 7, 2021).



Our review of course catalogs between 2007/08 and 2021/22, reveals that every unit under analysis increased the number of cluster courses listed, six of them more than doubling the base number (one department jumping from 30 to 66, another from six to 20). In several of these units, practically all 300-level courses are part of a UNST cluster. It is important to note that cluster courses cannot have prerequisites, and that many, if not most, departments use their cluster courses as electives in their degrees. Logically, this raises concerns about the curriculum available to majors who may expect a deeper engagement with subject matter. Further, when a few years back UNST asked units to eliminate 400-level courses from the clusters, many of those courses were simply brought down to the 300-level for no other purpose than to keep them in the cluster and continue generating non-major SCH (Focus Group E, September 30th, 2021). As a result, many junior clusters have become saturated with courses, while curricular integrity has been compromised to greater accrue SCH.

### *Quality of education*

A logical consequence of the pressure to amass SCH and a major concern of this study is the deterioration of the quality of curricula at PSU. First, courses in the junior clusters cannot require prerequisites. Given the significant push at the university to convert 400-level courses to 300-level ones, and for 300-level courses to be included in various clusters, there are clear impacts on the academic preparation of our majors. Second, our respondents raised concerns about courses relying on “easier” content and assignments, including the thinning of syllabi through increased reliance on the use of films (corroborated in a Focus Group A, September 10th, 2021), something that can potentially result in grade inflation. As units compete with each other over SCH, and faculty feel the pressure to offer courses and titles that tend to enroll well, some interviewees perceive that academic standards at PSU have declined.

We find through our interviews that there are serious questions about the academic quality of such degrees as Liberal Studies, Social Sciences, and, more recently, Urban and Public Affairs. These catchall programs are designed to maximize flexibility in terms of the curriculum, and hence lack the academic coherence and rigor of degree programs based and designed by specific departments. Advisors indicated that degrees with a series of core requirements and 400-level courses with prerequisites tend to lose students to these majors. Seniors who are unable or unwilling to complete any remaining 400-level courses due to scheduling difficulties or course standards end up switching to one of these degrees, where they can usually count most if not all of their completed coursework. In fact, advisors often direct students toward such degrees for the purpose of increasing overall graduation rates. In the competition for SCH, these amorphous degrees clearly lower the academic bar for other programs.

### *The push for NTTF faculty*

As a result of PBB, units seeking to replace faculty retirements or departures face increased pressure, directly or indirectly, to hire non-tenured track faculty (NTTF). While tenure-track

faculty must teach 24 credit hours per academic year, NTTF teach 50% more, creating an excessive burden on them. An incentive is thus introduced to hire NTTF as a strategy to boost SCH. However, in such a case, SCH is generated at the expense of research output and opportunities for graduate students, who end up having fewer options for thesis and dissertation committee members and supervisors. Ultimately, this will reduce the status of the institution as a research university.

### *Increased workload*

Chairs and advisors cited as an issue increased workload in scheduling, enrollment management, and the practice of “stealing SCH from one department to the other rather than collaborating” (Interview O, September 7, 2021; Focus Group B, September 13, 2021). In addition to heightening pressures of scheduling courses at the times most likely to enroll well, the potentially conflictive practice of switching instructors to ensure enrollment in some courses, and periodic review of enrollment numbers, the PBB model pushes Chairs, and often the faculty, to recruit new majors. Chairs, at times with the assistance of faculty, seek innovative ways to advertise their courses and their majors, reaching out to give talks and distribute literature in high schools and community colleges, or using scarce departmental funds and faculty and student time to produce recruitment videos. Most interviewees agreed that recruitment of students into PSU should be the responsibility of administrators with appropriate training and specifically hired for this purpose rather than burdening departments and placing pressure on Chairs to address perceived enrollment problems.

### *Faculty morale*

An unexpected but important finding of this study is the negative impact that PBB has had on PSU’s faculty morale. Several Chairs expressed disappointment that instead of hearing an inspirational vision for the future, in meeting after meeting with their respective deans, they were presented with tables of SCH data. This tactic of “naming and shaming” by the administration has created a discouraging and stressful environment for Chairs and faculty and has been destructive of faculty morale (Interview H, August 24, 2021). Furthermore, as a former Chair put it, the unrelenting emphasis on SCH feels like “insidious manipulation” from the administration to make Chairs do the “dirty work” (Interview P, September 8, 2021).

### *Various forms of disconnect and institutional inefficiencies*

Finally, this study found that the PBB model exacerbated old and created various new forms of fragmentation and institutional inefficiencies. Apart from overlaps of courses and competition between departments (Focus Group E, September 30, 2021), the disconnect between administration and Chairs/faculty was expressed best by a former Chair who said that the focus on PBB modeled at the upper administrative level has a disproportionate impact on departments (Interview B, August 17, 2021). Research has also been negatively impacted by the increased

hiring of non-research faculty who are not involved in graduate education. The ultimate outcome is the inconsistency of PSU's mission of "academic excellence" with the disruptive effects of the PBB model on the student experience.

### *Majors and advising*

The impact of the pathway advising, introduced in 2017, was evaluated in different ways by current Chairs. Some disciplinary departments find that it allows faculty more time for research. Other units, predominantly interdisciplinary, feel that this advising design contributed to the decrease of their majors. Most Chairs believe that to the degree that students no longer communicate directly with faculty, they are losing a crucial element of their academic experience.

## A Model for International Development Studies

In what follows, we present a redesigned Bachelors program in International Development Studies, a design bereft of the traps of the PBB model and meant to craft the best-possible curriculum and based on existing resources available at PSU.

International Development Studies is an interdisciplinary subject of inquiry that incorporates knowledge from numerous humanities and social science disciplines including anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, and sociology. A program of study in IDS ideally draws from the expertise of faculty in these disciplines. While a single interdisciplinary unit with faculty from various disciplines may house the degree, ideally students should be able to reach across departmental boundaries to supplement their studies with courses in other disciplines. Courses from a disciplinary unit help students build skills in areas of interest to them and become better prepared for transforming acquired knowledge into employment opportunities and careers.

Unfortunately, conditions at PSU have become increasingly unwelcome to the collaboration across units needed to build a strong IDS degree. As previously noted in this report, an exaggerated emphasis on SCH generation has resulted in a "culture of competition" that is not conducive to curricular collaboration. We have found that academic units have taken various initiatives to draw more SCH from majors and non-majors, turning departments into "silos" and oftentimes stirring conflict between them. This suggests that the focus on SCH generation at the departmental level undermines collaboration and cooperation in the design and implementation of interdisciplinary degrees. While students pursuing the IDS degree would greatly benefit from related courses taught in a variety of units across campus, the pressures of SCH generation at the unit level obstructs the curricular flexibility that would allow them to do so.

When curricular design by a department responds to enrollment pressures, students are more likely to be forced into taking courses in the unit granting the degree, inducing some to drop their majors as a result or drop out of the University altogether. This not only restrains the

educational and intellectual development of our students but also leads to the inefficient use of faculty resources and course offerings. Despite the best efforts of the UCC, courses with significant overlap are often offered in two or more units, as each unit teaches courses for their own students in order to claim the SCH generated, and all units prevent their students from taking courses offered by other units, no matter how complementary they may be to their own. As a result, several of these ‘surplus’ courses will have relatively low enrollment, driving up their cost per SCH.

Beyond the budgetary model, which depends on an administrative decision and hence can be readily modified, another important challenge for interdisciplinary degrees and the efficient use of faculty and courses across units are disciplinary boundaries. Interdisciplinarity has been broadly defined as “communication and collaboration across academic disciplines” (Jacobs and Frickel 2009, p. 44). All too often, and even in the absence of perverse incentives such as PBB, faculty engage in disciplinary turf battles. Lowering disciplinary defensiveness will require the building of trust between faculty in different disciplines as they collaborate in a common effort to prepare students for careers in international development. For trust to build among stakeholders in this program, events where they can meet or work together would have to be organized and participants rewarded, and these should include not only faculty, but also outside organizations and students. These events could include presentations on development issues, social gatherings for people interested in development issues, workshops on internship opportunities, etc. For such events to come into being, material resources, and some degree of formal recognition for participation, particularly in their organization, would need to be provided by the university.

Ideally, a B.A. in International Development Studies would be established, distinct from the B.A. in International and Global Studies currently being offered, which has a track called International Development Studies. Depending on their choice of electives, students pursuing the new B.A. may complete any one of four tracks:

- A. International Development Studies General track
- B. Political Economy of Development track
- C. Social and Cultural Development track
- D. International Grassroots Development track

Below we provide a table of what the International Development Studies degree could look like, demonstrating a high level of potential complementarity across departments, and the exciting new opportunities that would be created for students, were the budgetary model friendly to inter-departmental collaboration.

	<b>International Development Studies track</b>	<b>Political Economy of Development track</b>	<b>Social and Cultural Development track</b>	<b>International Grassroots Development track</b>
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Sophomore Year	INTL 201: Introduction to International Studies	INTL 201: Introduction to International Studies	INTL 201: Introduction to International Studies	INTL 201: Introduction to International Studies
	ECON 201: Principles of Microeconomics or PS 205: International Politics	ECON 201: Principles of Microeconomics		
		ECON 202: Principles of Macroeconomics		
Junior Year	INTL 397: Theory and Practice of International Development	INTL 397: Theory and Practice of International Development	INTL 397: Theory and Practice of International Development	INTL 397: Theory and Practice of International Development
	ECON 350U: Economics of Developing Countries	ECON 311: Microeconomic Theory	ANTH 304: Social Theory	USP 302: Theory and Philosophy of Community Development
	USP 317U: Introduction to International Community Development			USP 317U: Introduction to International Community Development
	PA 320U: Introduction to non-profit management		PA 320U: Introduction to non-profit management	PA 320U: Introduction to non-profit management
	Electives from a variety of units to be chosen from an advisor approved list	300-level electives from INTL, ECON and PS	300-level electives from ANTH, HST, WLL, SOC, WGSS and BST	
Senior Year				
	PS 447: International Organization	PS 454: International Political Economy	ANTH 414: Culture and Ecology	USP 480: Political Economy of Nonprofit Organizations

	INTL 490: Global Sustainable Development	INTL 490: Global Sustainable Development	INTL 490: Global Sustainable Development	INTL 490: Global Sustainable Development
		ECON 450: Economics of Development	HST 490: Comparative World History	USP 430: Participatory Research Methods for Community Development
	Electives from a variety of units to be chosen from an advisor approved list	400-level electives from ECON, INTL and PS	400-level electives from ANTH, HST, WLL, SOC, WGSS and BST	400-level electives from INTL, USP and PS
Total credits	8 core courses (32 credit hours) from four departments 7 electives from list (28 credit hours) 60 credit hours total	8 core courses (32 credit hours) from three departments 7 electives from list (28 credit hours) 60 credit hours total	7 core courses (28 credits hours) from four departments 8 electives from list (32 credit hours) 60 credit hours total	8 core courses (32 credit hours) from three departments 7 electives from a list (28 credit hours) 60 credit hours total

### Conclusions

In this study we have attempted to explain the challenges faced by interdisciplinary programs at PSU, with particular focus on the creation of a collaborative B.A. in International Development Studies. We pursued our objective through interviews with Department Chairs and focus groups that included students, librarians, advisors and curricular officers. Our work indicates that a major obstacle to collaboration between academic units at PSU has been the PBB model and its focus on SCH generation. As departments seek to maximize SCH in a zero sum game environment, a destructive “culture of competition” has been normalized. As previously discussed, this not only leads to the inefficient use of faculty resources on campus, the deterioration of faculty morale, an increased workload and greater conflict, but also and most importantly to the decline in the quality of education at PSU.

Great benefits accrue to the education mission through interdisciplinarity and the collaborative model when achieved. Unfortunately, the competition between units that we experience at PSU, the result of relatively recent administrative decisions, offers barren soil for the flourishing of interdisciplinary programs. International Development Studies at PSU, an interdisciplinary field par excellence, would greatly benefit from a shift away from SCH accounting in particular, and the PBB model in general. Rejecting the “culture of competition,” with its focus on SCH,

suggests an alternative pathway to a collaborative model and a curriculum built on the strengths of various disciplines, their faculty, and units across campus.

We ought to ReImagine PSU built on foundations that support its mission of “collective knowledge and expertise” and “collaborative learning,” an approach that we have seen in this study is at odds with SCH maximization at the department level. Furthering the PSU mission of education for a “diverse community” with “global impact” requires strong interdisciplinary programs unfettered by detrimental incentives and the unintended consequences derived from the PBB model.

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## Interviews and Focus Groups

- Interview A (2021, August 16) Personal interview.
- Interview B (2021, August 17) Personal interview.
- Interview C (2021, August 23) Personal interview.
- Interview D (2021, August 26) Personal interview.
- Interview E (2021, August 25) Personal interview.
- Interview F (2021, August 23) Personal interview.
- Interview G (2021, August 24) Personal interview.
- Interview H (2021, August 24) Personal interview.
- Interview I (2021, August 26) Personal interview.
- Interview J (2021, August 30) Personal interview.
- Interview K (2021, August 30) Personal interview.
- Interview L (2021, September 1) Personal interview.
- Interview M (2021, September 2) Personal interview.
- Interview N (2021, September 2) Personal interview.
- Interview O (2021, September 7) Personal interview.
- Interview P (2021, September 8) Personal interview.
- Interview Q (2021, September 9) Personal interview.
- Interview R (2021, September 15) Personal interview.
- Interview S (2021, September 15) Personal interview.
- Focus Group A, Librarians (2021, September 10)
- Focus Group B, Advisors (2021, September 13)
- Focus Group C, Students A (2021, September 17)
- Focus Group D, Students B (2021, September 20)
- Focus Group E, Curriculum Officers (2021, September 30)