

**APR External Report**

Global Studies (GLBL)  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

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## **Introduction**

This program review is based on a campus visit and a self-study prepared by Global Studies. The campus visit took place May 8-10, 2022. The sections below highlight the main findings of the two-day visit, which included conversations with students, faculty, and college and university administrators. The reviewers have tried to answer the specific questions presented by the university and by the program in what follows.

### **A. Appropriateness of the Goals and Objectives of the Program**

The main goal of the program is to build global competence among the majors. There are two critical ways that the program meets this goal. First, there is a strong emphasis on foreign language requirements through to the 302 level. Knowing a foreign language to the 301/302 level is important for a global studies major as it helps them in their journey towards becoming global citizens. Secondly, Global Studies offers students the choice of completing community and civic engagement activities either locally or abroad. Such engagements allow students to complete meaningful research and community engagement that greatly supports their growth and development as global studies majors. This is highlighted by the work of Dr. Filomeno, Dr. Lizarazo and Dr. Brown. However, these important community engagement opportunities do not reach all the students in the program. The program could benefit from additional infrastructure and support so that more students can take advantage of these rich and impactful opportunities.

Global Studies is well aligned with the broader goals of UMBC and CAHSS in two important ways. First, nurturing global competence and promoting community engagement has placed faculty and some students in opportunities where they address social justice questions through an interdisciplinary lens. Global Studies is at its core interdisciplinary and the curriculum includes an impressive list of courses from multiple departments. This is strong evidence of multi-disciplinarity and it demonstrates a strong potential for interdisciplinarity. This potential appears to be realized by the few students who can complete research projects, but not by all students who major in Global Studies. With additional resources, a Capstone (or similar research-focused) course where students complete interdisciplinary projects can be supported. There is also a strong historical connection between Global Studies and Political Science. While this has many advantages, it may in practice limit the degree of interdisciplinarity. This can be addressed through the careful inclusion of faculty members from departments other than political science (one way to do this would be through the establishment of a faculty advisory board discussed below). Second, the group of students that have been attracted to the Global Studies major at UMBC is racially, ethnically, and nationally diverse. We saw the advantage of this in the class visit with Dr. Brown – this diversity comes with diverse research interests and classroom presentations where students have opportunities to learn from each other.

### **B. Student Perception of the Program**

Overall, students are happy with the curriculum and the mentorship that they receive in the program. The student evaluation of teaching scores are above average for the university. Some students have completed award winning undergraduate research in a variety of topics, while others have received Fulbright Awards and served as Newman Civic Fellows. Students who responded to the alumni survey 1-5 years after graduation are working in organizations that are international or global. They are happy that they were able to take classes in many disciplines and they appreciate how open and helpful the faculty can be. They benefited from the critical thinking skills that they learned as students in the program. Current and former students are pleased with the relative ease with which they are/were able to minor and double major.

Current students and alumni pointed out some areas that needed improvement in the program. First, they wanted more career planning and advising, especially when it came to aligning what they were studying with the job market. This can happen through internships in the Baltimore/D.C. region. It also appears (from students' comments) that students were not always aware of all the opportunities that they could take advantage of at UMBC and this may explain the perception that opportunities for internships are limited. Students also wanted more independent research. This can be met through a Capstone (or similar) course that comes after students have taken an appropriate methods course.

### **C. Directions of Program and Overall Quality Relative to Peers**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has become a key area of attention for many institutions of higher learning, including UMBC and its peers. Global Studies advances DEI through coursework, study away, community engagement opportunities, and through the foreign language requirement. This is especially well highlighted by the addition of the Global Citizenship course and the special topics course on Global Baltimore. Global Studies aligns well with UMBC's strategic enrollment goals of attracting and retaining a diverse student body. The program has a flexible curriculum to account for diverse students, such as waiving the foreign language requirement when students come to UMBC with the requirement already met (e.g., speak a language other than English at home or completed studies at a community college prior to transferring). The diversity of study abroad opportunities offered, and the recent expansion of study away experiences to include domestic experiences with a global dimension, is especially important for students unable to travel due to health or migration restrictions. The reviewers noted that unlike other units at UMBC, Global Studies does not have by-laws. We recommend that the program consider formulating by-laws. They could do this in partnership with a strategically and carefully selected faculty advisory board (discussed later).

### **D. Curriculum**

We note here that Global Studies has been extremely receptive to feedback from students. The core faculty are deliberate about changes they make to the curriculum, and they have updated their curriculum based on student feedback. The long list of course options may not be as helpful to the students as was intended. There are 227 elective courses in which students can choose from. This can seem very overwhelming. The core faculty should consider having a structure that offers more guidance to students while still allowing them flexibility in designing an interdisciplinary degree. This does not need to include a curriculum revision if the program chooses not to go through the process; Global Studies could create advising sheets with groups of courses based on a few themes. Students can then be guided through the themes during advising. We noted that none of the Global Studies courses satisfy general education requirements at UMBC. We recognize that this may increase class size or the number of sections that need to be offered each semester, particularly of GLBL 100 as this seems like a natural fit, but it could also be a way to expose more students at UMBC to the program and major. This may be taken under consideration after additional resources are discussed (see below).

We have recommended that Global Studies considers creating a new faculty advisory board that would play a crucial role in the development of the curriculum (other responsibilities of the faculty advisory board can be outlined in the new by-laws suggested above). The advisory board can discuss title of themes (mentioned in the previous paragraph), and the coursework to be included in each. Care should be taken to include other units in the discussions and think carefully about how Global Studies and partner units can mutually benefit from the courses included in the GLBL themes. Such collaboration would help reduce duplication of courses between Global Studies and partner units. We would like to caution the faculty involved in creating themes to use titles that are less academic, more in-tune with the marketability of the degree and less likely to create tensions with other programs due to duplicity. As an example, we suggest that the current theme titled "culture, place and identity" be removed as it is too scholarly and students most likely will not grasp what they are able to do with such a track post-UMBC. A possible theme instead could be, "Global and community engagement and civil society," as it aligns better with where students graduating with a Global Studies degree find jobs.

It is unclear what the purpose of the research methods course is, if the students are not expected to do research in a Capstone. If there is no capstone, perhaps the research methods course can be taken in other departments to free up faculty in Global Studies to teach other specialized courses or do more mentoring. Sending students to other departments may also help with enrollment in those departments and help foster collaborative relations. It may also permit Global Studies faculty to teach a course in their area of interest. It is noted that the full-time lecturer in the program teaches the majority of the core courses of the program.

This does not benefit the students—as they take their courses with one faculty member—and it does not allow that faculty member to create a robust teaching portfolio that also aligns with their scholarly interests. At present, the “closing” course of the degree, GLBL 400, is writing intensive. However, if students want writing skills and the program wants to produce good writers and critical thinkers, then faculty may consider moving the writing intensive requirement earlier in the program so that students can continue to develop their skills and ultimately showcase them in a Capstone course. Our suggestion would be to revise GLBL 400 to be more of a Capstone, as its purpose in the curriculum and its intended outcomes are not well-defined.

The foreign language requirement poses some challenges for students. Current and former students talked about the challenge of completing this requirement. The challenge is also clearly noted in the self-study that we received. Global Studies is already considering flexibility with program requirement for foreign languages to the 302-level due to the many challenges that this poses. We recommend that Global Studies considers allowing students to complete the requirement using either one or two foreign languages. A student who majors in MLLI for example could complete the requirement by taking additional courses in the same language that met university requirements. A transfer student may opt to complete the requirement by starting a second foreign language once they complete the university requirement.

#### **E. Assessment and Student Learning Outcomes**

The assessment is well done, and the response rate is modest (38% in summer 2019). Global Studies has responded to the assessment by turning one course into a writing intensive course in a thoughtful manner. This is commendable as it demonstrates the dedication that Global Studies faculty have to improving the program and serving their students. It is an excellent attempt at closing the loop in response to the assessment process. However, we wonder whether a senior class is the best place to teach writing, as noted above. Perhaps teaching students to write can be a deliberate process that begins at the 100 level and is taught at all levels. Another action taken based on assessment was the creation of GLBL 383: Global Citizenship. This is another way that the program has tried to close the loop, but this class is not a required and students take it as part of the Tier II electives. We wonder if enough students will take it to operationalize the desired outcomes of Global Studies.

#### **F. Level of Scholarly Work**

The core faculty in Global Studies hold different types of appointments at the university and therefore, have different expectations when it comes to research and publications. Two of the core faculty are tenured (tenure-track) Associate Professors with an expectation that they have active research programs, and two hold the position of lecturers with the expectation that they carry heavier teaching loads. We were impressed that the Promotion and Tenure guidelines for the CAHSS include the option of community engaged research. Even though it is not a requirement, this inclusion provides faculty a wider range of options for achieving excellence in research needed for promotion and tenure and allows them to bridge academic research with public scholarship, a move many of the disciplines are making today. We find that the core faculty are actively engaged in quality research and have secured funding both internally and externally for projects that would also support student research. The two faculty who teach more courses due to their appointments equally include students in community-based research. This is a symbiotic relationship in which faculty are able to further their research agendas and students gain hands-on research experience inside and beyond the classroom. The research done by students is exceptional.

The workload guidelines for core Global Studies faculty should be revisited with an attention to equity concerns. The two current MOUs that we reviewed between the program and core faculty’s home departments are uneven, and have resulted in one of the core faculty taking on more advising and mentoring than the other. They are not written in the same ways either, with one focusing on activities and numbers and the others focusing on percentage of time. We recognize that not all home departments will provide the same level of support for faculty who are part of Global Studies due to their own needs, but there should

be a way to set basic parameters when it comes to advising, teaching, and service work. Furthermore, we recommend that the synergistic appointments are institutionalized so that they are more permanent from the Global Studies perspective. When the MOU is revisited, the core faculty member could decide not to be part of Global Studies and devote 100% of their effort to their home department instead. This would be devastating for Global Studies in terms of teaching and mentoring. This process may need to involve some guidance from the Dean's Office.

We have two final comments about student research. The core faculty stated that it would be much appreciated if they could have easier access to funds to support their students in research. They must spend time seeking external support or support from centers on campus to even start the research (i.e., seed funding). The CAHSS Dean's Office said that there is funding available at various university levels, so it seems that the students and/or faculty are unaware of how to access them. Clearer messaging is needed. We noted that much of the research with students is conducted with immigrant and migrant communities in the Baltimore area. Care should be taken at the university level not to overburden certain communities with student researchers, particularly those who are often tapped to speak for or represent many. We agree that multiple voices must be heard and brought into dominant narratives in the academy and public. At the same time, there should be greater support to grow the profile of research projects and to go beyond Baltimore; this will demonstrate Global Studies and the university's sensitivity to the burden of research that some communities feel.

### **G. Facilities**

Global Studies has an adequate number of offices and access to conference rooms close by. Most likely, their concern about scheduling classes in rooms that are adequate for their needs is not unique to just Global Studies. Sometimes they hold classes in their conference rooms, depending on the number of students, which do not have windows or natural light. The Global Studies program coordinator (and academic advisor) needs to have access to the conference rooms on a regular basis to hold advising appointments in a safe space in which she can distance herself from the students, but the conference rooms are shared with other units on their floor. Ensuring her well-being and making sure that she feels comfortable is important.

Two minor comments that we would like to make is about the website. Again, there is an unevenness when it comes to how the two core faculty with synergistic appointments are listed. One is noted as being a faculty member in Global Studies, while the other is noted on their home department's page as "contributing" to the Global Studies program. When these synergistic appointments are institutionalized, the language should be revisited on the faculty's bio pages to note that they are core faculty in GLBL. This will also be a nod to them that their labor for Global Studies is recognized and appreciated. In addition, we noticed that the Global Studies website does little beyond present information about the degree. We wonder if there could be a way to improve the website to include a "Meet an Alum" section or stories about students' research projects that could also serve as marketing. We discussed with the Director the possibility of using LinkedIn to network with alumni of the program, and while she does it on her own, any social media presence should not be connected to one person in case they leave the program or university. Recommend including this in either the program coordinator or full-time lecturer's scope of duties.

### **H. Resources and Revenue Generation**

We were very impressed with how the Global Studies program does "more with less." A comment was made during their visit that UMBC is known to be "scrappy." GLBL has approximately 125 majors, which is a larger student population than many of its related programs at CAHSS, such as those centered on area studies. This is a great accomplishment of the program. While doing more with less is an admirable model, it is not sustainable especially for a program of its size in terms of students and certainly would not support growth. We recommend that there be immediate attention by the Dean's Office and university given to faculty workload and burnout. Commitments of the core faculty to their home departments leaves the program coordinator and the full-time lecturer with much of the GLBL service work. Moreover, the

Director of the program, who also holds a joint-appointment with another unit in CAHSS, gives much of her time to Global Studies, which concerns us as she still has commitments in her home department. One recommendation would be that when a Director comes from another unit, the Dean's Office makes it clear that more than 50% of their time and teaching is to Global Studies for the duration of their term, rather than having the Director work with their Chair individually.

Faculty are actively engaged in community service work through their research. This is prime for external grants; however, faculty need time and administrative support to find and apply for this funding. This is not readily available in GLBL as the program operates currently. Faculty must seek it from their home units, the Dean's Office, or from centers on campus. Based on our conversations, this can be problematic because if a faculty member is asking for something for Global Studies from their home unit, this can raise some concerns about "territory" or the utilization of resources and staff's time. When this support is put into place for Global Studies, the reviewers recommend that GLBL consider turning their community based research into an NSF REU proposal. A long-term goal may be to work closely with MLLI to apply for external funding to become a resource center for language, global, and area studies. MLLI offers a wide variety of languages, some that are not regularly taught or taught by full-time faculty at other universities, and UMBC could become a national center for language instruction with the support of external organizations or agencies.

GLBL may consider leveraging its location near Baltimore and within driving distance to Washington, D.C. to create a graduate program or certificate. The reviewers believe that it would be successful if designed to be flexible and delivered in mixed modalities given the population it would most likely attract due to the geographic location. However, at present, teaching capacity and collaboration across CAHSS does not allow for the development of a graduate program and this should be more of a medium-term goal. GLBL sits at the interstices of many units and degrees, but it seems that they do not work with each other to create unique student experiences not found elsewhere in Maryland or the region. This is where the Dean's Office may need to find ways to intervene while still facilitating and respecting faculty governance. Likewise, there could be real possibilities for collaboration across UMBC and GLBL may consider working with programs to offer programs on Global Business or Global Economy that is offered online or in multiple modalities. This could be a way for CAHSS to collaborate more with the more business oriented or STEM fields at UMBC.

### **I. Collaboration with Other Units**

Global Studies welcomes collaboration with other units, we learned. There needs to be a discussion of "give and take" that occurs between Global Studies and other departments and programs in CAHSS. For example, we were told that while Global Studies offered a course on "Global Ethnography," anthropology offered a similar methods-focused course on ethnography at the same time, thus putting them into competition for enrollment. This can be prevented if there is a system put into place with partner departments that would allow them to send their students to GLBL courses and GLBL to send students to theirs. We encourage GLBL to work together with other units to build pathways to minors and majors (for a double major). This would involve identifying common courses so that GLBL and the other unit could grow together.

Building out curriculum would be a much easier task with the reinvigoration or reinvention of the Advisory Board for Global Studies, as we previously noted. Faculty from partner departments in CAHSS and even across campus can come together to discuss ways to help each other grow and to cut down on duplication and competition for students. Once this faculty advisory board is in place, GLBL can also work with them on outreach and marketing for their major as well as marketing other majors (for a double major) and minors to their students. One suggestion is to bring back alumni who majored in Global Studies and double majored or minored in another unit to have them talk about their experience in doing so and how it has helped them in the long-run, or at least feature their stories on the website. The reviewers strongly recommend to not think of partner departments as feeder units, but as collaborators. They also feel that not working with

business focused units is a missed opportunity for GLBL given the global landscape today and what is happening in the local region with companies, such as Amazon locating one of its headquarters in Arlington, VA and Boeing moving into the same area.

### **J. Resource Needs**

The Global Studies Program has learned to do a great deal of teaching and service with relatively few resources. GLBL has one full-time lecturer, while the Director holds a synergistic appointment with another department in CAHSS. In addition to this full-time lecturer, GLBL may benefit from an addition half-time position that is a formally joint position with another unit. This can provide additional time for mentoring students engaged in research (as the number overall is still relatively low) through the practicum and an additional person to take on some of the service work that falls to the program coordinator and lecturer. The recommendation is that this position not be joint with POLI or MLLI to preserve the multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinarity of Global Studies and the dynamics of the program, perhaps look to Sociology, Anthropology, and Public Health or to History for a faculty member. The program needs teaching, service, and research mentoring, meaning that it may also be beneficial for the faculty to not be on the tenure-track.

The full-time lecturer position will be vacated May 2022. The suggestion is that this position be re-scoped to be the Associate or Assistant Director of Global Studies and to have regular course reductions to assist with the advising and service work placed upon the program coordinator. The reviewers highly recommend that immediate attention be given to the program coordinator's role and workload in GLBL, which ranges from advising to scheduling courses to event coordination to some budget processes (and much more). It is important to consider how staff can grow in their roles, and given the coordinator is critical to GLBL, the coordinator's position must be nurtured.

A final suggestion is that given the importance of student research in Global Studies and how this sets the program apart from others, it may be worthwhile to create a (small) fund, whether this is additional funding to GLBL from CAHSS or sectioning off some of the program's operating budget, to support community engaged coursework or research with/for students. Either faculty can apply for it to support students in their courses or students can apply for it on their own.

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (These recommendations are in no particular order.)**

- Create a more robust infrastructure to support student research. Research opportunities are important to the program but reach only a fraction of the students.
- Revise GLBL 400 to serve as a Capstone where students design and complete an interdisciplinary research project under the supervision of a faculty member.
- Consider having a regular rotation of methods courses and allow students to select one approved methods course offered by different units; GLBL 300 could be in regular rotation with other approved methods courses. This not only frees up a faculty member for teaching other courses, but can start to create collaborative relationships with other units in CAHSS.
- Reinvigorate the faculty advisory board that once existed for Global Studies that would include faculty members from multiple units—first order of business of the board could include formulating by-laws and working on the themes/tracks in Global Studies.
- Allow one or two languages to meet the language requirements for Global Studies. This can help with some of the challenges that transfer students face, in particular, when it comes to language study. It may also make the degree more attractive to students who otherwise would be concerned that they are “not good at languages.”

- Consider teaching writing at all levels rather than focusing on one senior class. Investigate the possibility of having students complete a writing intensive course earlier in the curriculum that may be from outside of the program.
- Increase the number of professional development and career advising opportunities that students can engage in while in Global Studies. Tailor the programs for them and possible career paths for the major.
- Connect with business oriented and STEM program at UMBC to discuss future collaborations, whether this be through the offering of cross-listed courses, the creation of a new course, or developing a certificate that can be completed by current students at UMBC or to working professionals.