

**Spring
2024**

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS PROGRAM **NEWSLETTER**



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- The International Business Program by the Numbers
- Student Spotlight
- Inspiring Alumni Highlights
- Message from Leadership
- IB Society News

Message from Leadership

Ranin Kazemi, Ph.D.

Director



The International Business program at San Diego State University has worked with hundreds of students over the course of the spring semester to ensure their academic success. The IB team consisting of three advisors and one administrative coordinator along with two graduate students helped prospective students and their families to learn about the IB program and decide whether the IB major is the right fit for them. We held Explore SDSU on April 13 here on campus and joined many other programs and departments to give formal and informal introductory presentations about the IB major to prospective students and their families. The IB team also worked with our current students over the course of the semester, helping them learn more about their academic trajectories, secure internships both locally and internationally, learn about and undertake study abroad at peer universities, and prepare for the job market upon graduation. Much of this work, I should stress, was accomplished through the continuing support the IB program receives from both the College of Arts and Letters and the Fowler College of Business.

One of the key events of the spring semester was the external academic review of the IB program on April 15. We had Nancy Buchan from the Department of International Business at the Darla Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina and Reid W. Click from the Department of International Business at the School of Business in George Washington University joining Gabriel Gonzalez of the Department of Marketing at the Fowler College of Business here at SDSU to serve on a review panel to assess all aspects of the IB program. The last time the IB Program at SDSU was reviewed in this way was back in 2011. The reviewers met with and had informed conversations about the program with the IB director and staff, the CAL and Fowler leadership, the IB professors in both CAL and Fowler, our IB students and alumni, the IB Advisory Board members, and the AVP of Curriculum, Assessment, and Accreditation whose office in fact oversaw the review process. Prior to the actual review day, I spent months gathering data and studying the changes in the IB program in the past decade or two. I also wrote a twenty plus page self-study of the IB Program assessing and highlighting our areas of strength and our current goals for the future. The review panel has spent much time evaluating all the relevant documents pertaining to the IB program and will provide us with their final written assessment of our program in the coming weeks. This document will then help us much to think through and if necessary recalibrate the strategic plan and visions of the IB program for the next several years.

On a personal note, I should mention that after much thought and for several personal and professional reasons, I decided to step down as IB director at the end of this summer. I provided ample notice to secure a smooth transition in the IB leadership. Serving the IB Program has been very rewarding for me in a number of different ways. I witnessed students learn about different cultures and languages while obtaining skills needed for today's globalized business scene. I had the pleasure of working with the IB staff who are committed to student learning and growth. And I had the honor of being part of a high-ranking program and working collaboratively to develop new promising curricular changes in it.

I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Hisham Foad, professor of economics here at SDSU, who will serve as IB director beginning in fall of this year.

The IB Program by the Numbers



415

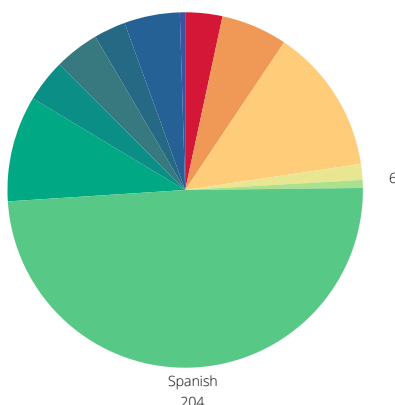
Students enrolled in total
in the spring of 2024

31

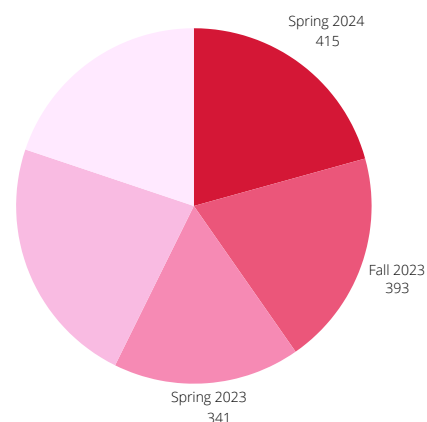
Students currently enrolled
are studying overseas

62

Students are currently doing
the program in Spanish



IB Study Abroad numbers by
Language emphasis options



IB Study Abroad enrollment
by semester

17 Major programs

12 Language emphasis options

Meet the IB Team



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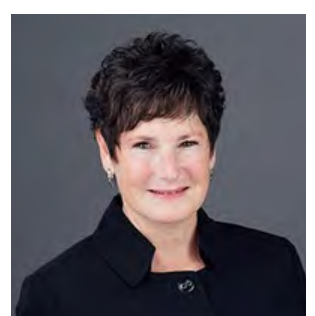
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Meet the IB Faculty

Elena Salsitz

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Elena Salsitz is in her 17th year of teaching IB 498, International Business Protocol & Diplomacy, at San Diego State University (SDSU). Prior to and during her teaching tenure, she has served in various protocol and diplomacy roles, including as chief of protocol for the City of San Diego, chief of protocol for NASA at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, British Honorary Consul in San Diego (an appointment by both the State Department and British government), and special assistant to the mayor of Indianapolis, among others. As NASA chief of protocol, she hosted and managed the visits of presidents, cabinet members, kings and queens, international heads of state and government, foreign ministers, legislators, CEOs, and celebrities from the movie, television, and music industries.

While serving as NASA chief of protocol, Salsitz worked in the White House Office, coordinating holiday events in the Executive Office of the President (EOP), Office of the Social Secretary. Her other experiences included performing financial and strategic analysis of NBC's satellite broadcasting system, DJ-ing at an album-oriented rock (AOR) radio station in North Carolina, and managing protocol for the San Diego Chamber of Commerce's Insights program, which hosted many VIPs and dignitaries such as Walter Cronkite, Benazir Bhutto, George Stephanopoulos, Robert Reich, and others. She holds an undergraduate degree from Duke University (and is an avid — and occasionally fierce and perhaps irrational — Duke basketball fan) and an MBA from Columbia University Graduate School of Business.



Meet the IB Faculty

Nita Umashankar, Ph.D.

numashankar@sdsu.edu

Nita Umashankar, an associate professor of marketing at San Diego State University's Fowler College of Business, earned her bachelor's degrees in molecular and cellular biology and marketing/entrepreneurship from the University of Arizona in 2003 and 2004, respectively. She obtained her doctorate in marketing strategy from The University of Texas at Austin in 2010.

Umashankar's research shifts the traditional focus of marketing principles from maximizing returns for companies to addressing societal issues. Her work, published in top academic journals such as the Journal of Marketing, explores marketplace literacy's impact on consumer well-being and income generation for impoverished women in India and Tanzania.

Additionally, her research demonstrates how classic marketing principles can combat gender bias, benefiting organizations worldwide. Umashankar's impactful work is widely recognized and utilized by non-profit organizations in various countries.

She has published numerous articles in prestigious academic journals such as the Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Marketing Science, and Strategic Management Journal. Additionally, Umashankar serves as an associate editor for both the Journal of Marketing and the Journal of Marketing Research.

At SDSU, she teaches marketing research and strategic marketing management, earning several local and national teaching awards. She actively mentors students within campus organizations like Women in Business, the American Marketing Association, and International Business Case competitions.



Student Spotlight

The IB Newsletter staff writer Lisa Arzaga Hart conducted an interview with one of our IB students. The following comes from that interview.

Naomi Ortiz is a native of San Diego. She first earned her associate degree in business administration before transferring to San Diego State University. Currently, she is a junior in the International Business program, focusing on Spanish and Western Europe, with plans to study in Madrid, Spain in the fall. She chose to apply to SDSU due to her emotional connection to the university and its excellent reputation. Ortiz said, "I feel like I always grew up hearing people speak highly of San Diego State, and now I understand why." She mentioned how proud her parents were when she was accepted into one of the top International Business Programs in the nation. She is one of the first in her family to attend university.

Naomi Ortiz



CHEERS FROM SF!

Ortiz chose international business because she felt it was an excellent way to integrate her American and Mexican cultural backgrounds, to which she was exposed while growing up. She proudly stated, "I just want to embrace that and be able to apply it professionally." Additionally, Ortiz notes that the International Business program has exceeded her expectations. The program encompasses various business courses, as well as extensive training in the culture, social practices, language, and behavioral ethics of specific regions, more than she initially anticipated. She emphasizes the potential oversight of the importance of organizational values and cultures, underlining their role in contributing to a company's success.

One of the primary aspects she is looking forward to is her study abroad trip to Spain. This will be her first visit to Europe, and she is enthusiastic about immersing herself in the local culture. She is excited to analyze the impact of Spanish culture on business practices and compare it to business operations in the United States and Mexico. Ortiz said, "I want to understand what drives business success there, and perhaps I can integrate those insights into my own practices here."

Regarding her career goals, Ortiz remains somewhat undecided. She is contemplating whether to seek employment directly after graduation or pursue a master's degree through the IB's 4+1 program. Previously, she worked as an account manager for a logistics company and found the experience highly enjoyable. She noted that she may aim for a similar role or explore opportunities in sales. One of the most valuable lessons she has gained from the IB program thus far is business ethics. While she previously had a general understanding of the subject, the program has significantly expanded her knowledge. Ortiz concluded the interview by emphasizing the importance of ethical behavior and maintaining an open mind, particularly when engaging with different cultures and countries.



Notable IB Alumni

The IB newsletter staff writer Lisa Arzaga Hart has conducted an interview with one of the former IB students. The following comes from that interview.

Frida Niebla Loza

Frida Niebla holds a Bachelor of Arts in international business with an emphasis in marketing and Chinese from San Diego State University, where she graduated in 2018. Originally from Imperial Valley, California, she has accumulated many years of business experience working for companies such as Tesla, Ferrari, and Aldi Grocery Stores. Niebla decided to study international business after discovering how culture, language, and business are integrated within the program. She highlights the advantage of being able to concentrate on marketing, her original intent, while also gaining additional depth in her education. Furthermore, the degree allowed her to pursue her passion for traveling and her love of languages.



你好 (HI)
FROM CHINA!

Niebla applied her Mandarin skills while working for Faraday Future, a U.S.-Chinese company operating in the same sustainable energy sector as her previous employers, such as Tesla. She frequently spoke Mandarin when communicating with international contacts and colleagues within the company. Although she has not been using Mandarin as often recently, she still finds it beneficial, especially as an enthusiastic traveler and when spending time in San Diego.

She currently works for a company called Organic, which is part of the larger umbrella agency Omnicom based in New York. She has been a project manager there for almost three years. Her daily responsibilities include managing project timelines, ensuring the continuity of digital projects, supporting team meetings, and overseeing client management activities. One of the most fulfilling aspects of her job is the accountability and ownership of running a project from start to finish. She said, "It's kind of like a game of chess for me. You move the pieces, face complications, and strategize your way from beginning to end, considering various factors to make the best decisions."



Notable IB Alumni

Internships at Sempra Energy Power Learning Opportunities for Students in a New SDSU Degree Program

[Suzanne Finch and Leslie L.J. Reilly](#)

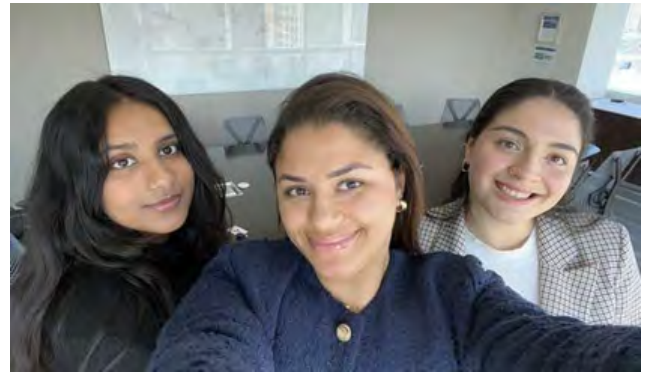
Two students who are in the final stages of their B.A./M.S. in Global Business Development (BMGBD 4+1) degree program at San Diego State University and one student in SDSU's Master of Science in Global Business Development (MSGBD) are currently participating in internships at San Diego-based Sempra Energy. Sempra Energy is a global organization which currently ranks #266 on the Fortune 500 listing.

Jazmin Bahena, Ishani Mattigunta and Lojeen Ragab first became aware of the internships with Sempra during a visit to the company's headquarters with Fowler College of Business management professor Martina Musteen's Seminar in World Business Environment (MGT 710) class.

The visit was prompted by an opportunity to learn more about Sempra's role in providing global energy resources after the start of the war between Russia and Ukraine. The outing proved to be fortuitous since it was their interaction with company managers during the visit that led to their internships.

"I was introduced to the person that later became my manager during the lunch break and he informed me that his department had an open position for an intern in the sustainability department," said Bahena, the MSGBD student. "I was definitely intrigued with the idea of working for Sempra. I set up an informal meeting with the manager, submitted my application and received word soon afterward that I was accepted for the role."

The BMGBD 4+1 program, a joint venture between SDSU's College of Arts and Letters and the Fowler College of Business, is designed for students who seek to start and accelerate careers related to international business development. Students who choose the BMGBD 4+1 program complete their undergraduate degree in international business and begin their MSGBD program in the final semester of their senior year by taking two graduate courses. They will finish both their bachelor's and master's degree requirements in a total of five years, with the first cohort graduating this August.



**Sempra Energy interns/SDSU students
Ishani Mattigunta, Lojeen Ragab, and
Jazmin Bahena**

Notable IB Alumni

Internships at Sempra Energy Power Learning Opportunities for Students in a New SDSU Degree Program

[Suzanne Finch and Leslie L.J. Reilly](#)

Apart from their hands-on experience at Sempra, Bahena, Ragab, Mattigunta were among the SDSU graduate students consulting with companies from New Zealand, the Czech Republic, Tunisia and Algeria that were seeking entry into the U.S. marketplace. “The students’ final project will include travel to Romania,” said Musteen, who is also the faculty director of the Wendy Gillespie Center for Advancing Global Business. “Once they arrive, they will start working on a project with Barrier, a premier window manufacturer.” Before departing for Romania, the students will conclude their internship with Sempra at the end of May.



(L to R): Sempra Energy interns/SDSU students Ishani Mattigunta, Jazmin Bahena and Lojeen Ragab.

As her internship winds down, Ragab said that her experience with the energy giant has changed her view of the industry. “For those young people who are hesitant about applying to industries they might find intimidating, remember that your work holds the power to shape the future,” she said. “Embrace the opportunity to learn and contribute, knowing that even small steps can have a significant impact on advancing solutions to global challenges.”

Bahena, who also had no previous experience within the energy industry said her internship provided her with the additional confidence to move forward with her career goals. “I didn’t have a background in energy or sustainability, but my willingness to step outside my comfort zone helped me realize my resilience and capability for achieving great things,” she said. “I want to encourage others to always reach for your goals, even if you feel underqualified or inexperienced – try anyway! Also, you’ll be surprised by how far kindness and curiosity can take you.”

Notable IB Alumni



Richard Amaechi, Class of 2020

As a distinguished IB alumnus, he values the global outlook the major imparted to him and the opportunity to embrace boldness. Although relocating abroad for a semester posed significant challenges, his international studies equipped him with a profound resilience and adaptability. He has since leveraged these attributes across various facets of his life, ultimately guiding him to his current professional position.

Richard Amaechi is a San Francisco native who graduated from San Diego State University in 2020 with a degree in international business, focusing on the Japanese language. After his education, Richard began his career at Vanguard through its leadership development program and then moved on to a role as a retail sales supervisor. He later took on a role at UBS in Charlotte, North Carolina, leading training as a manager in their wealth management division.

Amaechi's journey has led him to his current role as a financial consultant at Fidelity Investments. He values the diverse experiences he's had, and while his career path hasn't been straightforward, he believes it has been worthwhile. Now back in the Bay Area, Amaechi is ready to share his learnings and tips for recent graduates or job seekers considering a career pivot.



To read more about Richard Amaechi: [Follow this link](#)

News from IB Society

International Business Student Organization



The International Business student organization (called IB Society) has been busy hosting a number of events and workshops this semester and in fact throughout the 2023-24 academic year. The society organized fieldtrips, networking events, public lectures, study abroad orientation, open house meetings, and more in the past couple of months. As always, these events were meant to foster professional growth and provide insights into the international business scene these days.




News from IB Society

IB Society san diego state university

* *Kiel Yost* *

THRIVE AVIATION - MANAGER OF
REGULATORY COMPLIANCE



Thursday, February 22 from 5-6PM
Pride Suite, Aztec Student Union

* *

STUDY ABROAD PANEL



IB Society

Speed Networking



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15 / 5:00-6:00 PM

GET TO KNOW THE EXECUTIVE BOARD & FELLOW MEMBERS
@ OUR FIRST SOCIAL OF THE SEMESTER!

OPEN HOUSE MEETING

Thurs, 01 February 2024
5:00-6:00 pm




WE
ARE
OPEN

↓

AZTEC STUDENT UNION PRIDE SUITE

FOOD WILL BE AVAILABLE DURING
THE MEETING

STUDY ABROAD PANEL



AHMED LAKRAB
Argentina

KALEB MAST
Japan


ANTARA COLLINS
France

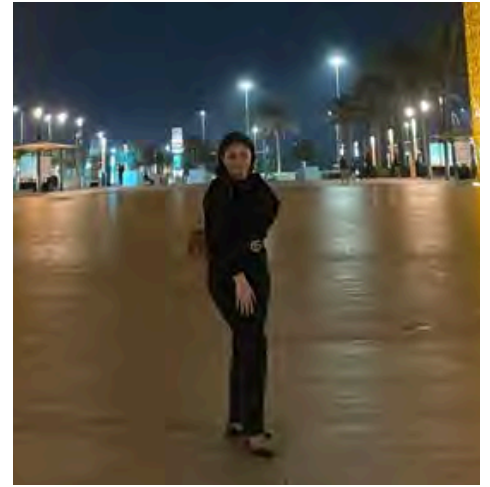
THURSDAY, FEB 8 5-6 PM

PRIDE SUITE

RETREAT OVERVIEW

Thursday, March 14
5-6 pm, Pride Suite





THE 2023-2024 YEAR IN PHOTOS

