MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

International Business is an interdisciplinary major that culminates in a Bachelor of Arts degree offered jointly by the College of Arts and Letters and the Fowler College of Business. International Business students take classes offered by faculty in a diverse set of disciplines such as Accountancy, Anthropology, Communication, Comparative Literature, Economics, European Studies, Finance, History, Management, Management Information Systems, Marketing, Political Science, and one of several foreign languages. The program produces well-rounded graduates who develop promising careers in a variety of different fields. Graduates navigate today’s globalized world with cutting-edge knowledge of modern enterprises, and social and political conditions around the world.

A collaborative and interdisciplinary undertaking, the International Business program integrates coursework in business administration, foreign language, and regional/cultural studies. Our majors complete a rigorous set of business courses, acquire proficiency in one of 11 languages, and master the history and culture of one of six regions in the world. In addition, our students spend one semester abroad studying their language of choice, as well as business and cultural practices of one specific world region. They also finish one semester-long internship in international business.

We in the IB Program believe that understanding the global nature of the modern economy and business practices is indispensable to students who wish to develop the necessary experience and skills for the dynamic business environment of the 21st century. Students are provided with the knowledge, skills and experiences to foster an in depth understanding of the values and culture that provide the foundation for business practice throughout the world.

The IB program is consistently ranked among the top one percent of undergraduate international business programs in the U.S. It is ranked No. 2 in the nation among minority-serving institutions, No. 4 among public universities, and No. 8 overall among undergraduate programs by U.S. News & World Report. It is also one of the largest International Business programs in the country.

Our enrollment in Spring 2022 was around 440 students. This is our usual number for the past three to four years. Our enrollment every semester has been somewhere between 430 and 480. We have had 296 admissions for Fall 22. This is up from 263 admissions last year, and 189 admissions in Fall 2020. So we currently have a steady increase in the number of admissions to the IB Program.

There are other exciting things going on in the department, several of which you can read about in this newsletter. We’re always working to develop opportunities for our students: from the newly expanded 4+1 program, to our annual Case Competition, to our study abroad partnerships with universities outside of the country.
This spring marked the official launch of the BMGBD—or B.A./M.S. 4+1 degree in International Business and Global Business Development—our first integrated 4+1 graduate program. The program, which ultimately rewards a B.A. in International Business and an M.S. in Global Business development, accepted its first cycle of student applications this spring. The deadline for this round of applications was June 1st, and we will be notifying students of their acceptance in July or August of 2022.

Over the course of the BMGBD program, in pursuit of the two degrees, students will complete five years of coursework. They will have a “transition semester” during the Spring 2023 semester, during which they will begin taking graduate level courses in Global Business Development alongside their final undergraduate courses in the IB program. In Fall 2023 this cohort of students will formally join the graduate program for Global Business Development in the Fowler College of Business.

This program is unique. The BMGBD provides high-performing International Business (IB) majors the opportunity to complete their Bachelor of Arts in IB and a Master of Science in Global Business Development (GBD) in five years. It is a combined B.A./M.S. program, and students must successfully complete 150 units to be awarded simultaneously. The program is designed for those seeking to start and accelerate careers related to international business development and sales across a wide variety of industry sectors.

Looking ahead at expanding our offering of integrated programs in the future, the IB program is also working with the Department of Management Information Systems to put together a second 4+1 track in Supply Chain Innovation. We are very excited about this second track, which addresses the great need our students have in understanding supply chain issues in the 21st century. Further down the road, Michael Pack, one of our IB Donors, has pledged financial support for a new 4+1 program in Sustainability. We will soon begin assessing our options for a plan to establish the necessary interest in Sustainability within the IB program. We’re looking forward to being able to offer these new opportunities to future students.

IB student Aaron Miller was the recipient of the US Department of State’s Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship in Fall 2021. A US Marine Corps veteran, father, and now full-time student, Miller was able to use this award to study at Reutlingen University in Germany. “I appreciate that Gilman also offers students other resources abroad such as networking, a great option to have while seeking future employment or internship opportunities.”

“You will only regret it if you let the moment slip away. Get out there and do something new every day.”

—AARON MILLER
graduating senior
One of the great assets of the San Diego State IB department is our active, thriving student organization: the IB Society. The IB Society was founded in 2006, and is a student run and led organization created to help students with networking, job opportunities, and developing professional skills, as well as preparing for time abroad. Their mission is to “provide students with educational and professional network opportunities, teach professional skills, and explore study abroad programs, international internships, and business career opportunities.”

This year the IB Society held a variety of events toward fulfilling those goals. A series of virtual guest speakers allowed students to hear from industry professionals across the country. Hiromi Oka, currently a Microsoft 365 Product Marketing Group Manager at Microsoft, joined to speak about working in international business in the IT field. Kristen Walthall, Senior Finance Director, M&A at HP spoke about her experience in mergers and acquisitions. Bernardo Andrade, Director of Logistics for Dr. Bronner’s took questions about international business, supply chain management, and logistics. And finally, the semester wrapped up with Tom McCarthy, who is in Strategic Accounts at MURAL, but also the first president and founder of the International Business Society, and thus a fitting way to end the year.

Other events scheduled during the organizations regular meeting included workshops on resumes, alumni panels, and social gatherings for students to meet and get to know one another. (Pictured to the right are group photos from the Bowling and Scavenger Hunt social events).

In April, the IB Society helped to organize a field trip for IB students to see an international business here in San Diego. The fieldtrip was scheduled for April 15 and students joined some faculty from CAL and Fowler to go to the Casas International Brokerage. This was a visit to learn more about how a fully globalized business is run here in town. Casas Brokerage is in the business of customs brokerage services for the US-Mexico border.

Last, but far from least, at the end of Spring semester, the IB Society was voted Most Valuable Student Organization of the 2021-2022 academic year in the College of Arts and Letters. It’s an exciting achievement that is a testament to the IB Society’s success in engaging our students.

Carmelina Herrera
IB SOCIETY PRESIDENT
Mandarin / China & Asia

In addition to serving this past academic year as IB Society President, Carmelina Herrera is one of our exceptional graduating seniors who will be receiving her degree summa cum laude this May. She has focused her international interests in China and Asia—including studying her chosen language of Mandarin—and Management, her area of concentration. For her internship experience, Carmelina worked as an Executive Intern with the San Diego Diplomacy Council, and as an Associate for SDSU’s Center for Advancing Global Business.

After graduation, Carmelina will be pursuing work in the field of international operations or global diplomacy. She credits Nancy Nicholson, SDSU’s Wendy Gillespie Center for Advancing Global Business Director, with being the most influential person in her college career—and for her hopeful future one. “Nancy’s dedication to detail and success in the global diplomacy/trade fields encouraged my own career path,” she says. “She is overall a woman of such unique and valuable knowledge with a dedication to helping students succeed.”

As she reflects back on her experience with IB, it’s clear that Herrera is a people-focused leader. “The most valuable part of my experience in International Business was the connections that I’ve made,” says Herrera. “Both personal and professional, I have met the most genuine and hardworking people. In essence, the International Business program taught me that although drive and passion will take you pretty far, compassion and empathy to understand others will take you even further.”
LESLIE ZUBIETA

Leslie Zubieta is a graduating senior in the International Business department this spring—in fact, you could say that she’s THE senior graduating in May 2022. That is, with a cumulative GPA of 3.95 and an SDSU GPA of 4.0, Zubieta is the Outstanding Graduating Senior for the College of Arts and Letters this year.

Leslie has a remarkable story that demonstrates her courage, persistence, and interest in helping the disadvantaged in society. At the same time, she has been able to overcome major obstacles and develop many leadership skills through extra-curricular activities. When Leslie started attending college, her greatest feat was being able to show up to every single one of her classes. As an under-sourced student whose parents lived in Mexico, the only way she was able to afford attending San Diego Mesa Community College was by commuting daily from Tijuana and back—five hours every day. Despite this significant challenge, Leslie thrived. She became an Associated Students Senator and President of the Honors Club. It was during this time that Leslie also started volunteering for the Financial Literacy Speaker Series (FLSS).

The FLSS sparked her interest in social entrepreneurship and financial literacy. In order to keep the discussions relevant to students in her community college, Leslie con-

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OLIVIA KAEMPF

Olivia Kaempf is an IB Senior graduating in May 2022—but her studies in international business aren’t going to end there. In the fall, Kaempf will be heading off to Washington D.C., where she has accepted a full-ride scholarship to American University’s Washington College of Law and School of International Service, to pursue a dual JD/MA in international affairs.

During her time in the IB program, Kaempf studied in Toulouse, France (pictured on the cover). “I can’t overstate how instrumental it was in improving my language skills, understanding of other cultures, and openness to new experiences,” Kaempf says of her experience abroad. “This experience changed the way I think about the world and drastically improved my confidence in uncertain and unfamiliar situations, and I wouldn’t change a thing.”

As she reaches the end of her time as an SDSU student, Kaempf reflects back to selecting the IB major. “When I was considering changing my major to IB, I was really intimidated by the requirements and was on the fence about whether or not it was for me,” she says, continuing “I want to share a quote that I came across during this time that changed my mindset and led me to make one of the best decisions of my life: ‘If something excites you and terrifies you at the same time, you should probably do it.’”

XIMENA LECHUGA GONZALES

Ximena Lechuga Gonzalez is a senior at SDSU in International Business—and she’s also a multi-year Mountain West Conference champion in diving and three-time winner of the conference Diver of the Year award. One version of headlines about the conference referred to her as a “phenom,” who posted Zone E Championship qualifying scores in the Platform competition earlier this year. Gonzalez, who is the 3-meter springboard champion, attained a career-high and reclaimed the top all-time score in the event for a diver from The Mesa. SDSU won handily with a total of 1,541.5 points, with the second and third place scores coming in at 1,277.5 and 1,249, respectively. She also currently holds the school records for the SDSU diving program for all three springboard events, which she first set in 2020.

Ximena was born in Mexico City, and grew up in Tijuana, where she was recruited for the SDSU program as a sophomore in high school by Coach Roland McDonald.

Ximena is working toward her International Business degree with an interest in international corporate finance. She’ll be going abroad this summer, where she’ll complete an internship in Spain. Afterward she’ll be returning for one more year of diving competition and the completion of her IB degree.
"The most valuable part of my experience so far has to be the Study Abroad experience. It pushed me out of my comfort zone and it allowed me to grow in many aspects. I went to Montreal, Quebec, Canada for the Spring Semester. I think my favorite part of my trip was the ability to practice speaking French everyday. It is really rewarding to see the progress I have made in 4 months...."

"The International Business Program is a unique opportunity to learn the language you always wanted to while also enhancing your business skills!"

—JOSEPH DOUMBIA
graduating senior
YEAR IN PHOTOS

Top row: A rainy day in Heidelberg, Germany (Aaron Miller); Robert Hill, former Managing Partner at Deloitte Consulting, gives a talk as guest speaker for the IB Society; Olivia Kaempf (second from the right) along with other exchange students on a trip to Carcassone, France; International Business Society Company Tour at CASAS International, Jennifer Gomez, VP of Public Relations (left) and Carmelina Herrera, President (right) Left: Joseph Doumbia, in front of the Citadel of Quebec Lower right, clockwise: IB Society Executive Board; Case competition team; Go-karting with roommates and neighbors in Germany, Grace Chou & Nardyedelta Acosta in Germany Fall 2021 semester, IB Society receives CAL award for most valuable organization, Open House Fall 2021
Meet Our Faculty . . .

ELENA SALSITZ
Professor

One member of our standout faculty is Elena Salsitz, who has been named Most Influential Professor for the International Business department for three of the last four academic years. Even when she was only teaching two one-credit courses, she made an impression on her students and beat out many tenured professors across the Fowler Business School to win. Recognition for her skill as an educator has also come from the Vanguard Group, who identified her as an Influential Faculty Member, and from students who awarded her an honorary membership in the Golden Key Honor Society—one of only five SDSU faculty selected.

You might be wondering—is that a photograph of Professor Salsitz with the queen? Why yes, it is. Elena is an expert in the fields of protocol and diplomacy. She worked as Chief of Protocol for NASA/Johnson Space Center (during which time she met Her Royal Highness). She even has an IMDB profile, for the time she was thanked in the credits for Apollo 13. She’s currently putting her wealth of expertise in protocol to work on the San Diego Diplomacy Council’s Advisory Board. She was also selected by the San Diego International Affairs Board to provide an international protocol course for its membership and for San Diego City Council staff.

Here at the SDSU IB (CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

LOIS BITNER OLSON
PhD, Lecturer

This year, our Outstanding Graduating Senior, Leslie Zubieta, selected Professor Lois Bitner Olson as her Most Influential Faculty. Dr. Olson teaches Consumer Behavior, Marketing, and Global Marketing Strategy in the SDSU Fowler College of Business. In addition to her teaching at San Diego State University, she teaches internationally in Venezuela, Taiwan, and The People’s Republic of China.

Graduating IB senior Olivia Kaempf also chose Dr. Olson’s class this Spring 2022 semester as her favorite, saying, “I am learning a lot about so many different cultures, including how to interact with people in those cultures both personally and in a professional setting. The material is really fascinating, and I have gained a stronger understanding about why people from certain cultures act the way that they do. I also love that at the end of the course, we will have completed a substantial international marketing plan that can be brought up in interviews as proof of our practical experience.”

Dr. Ranin Kazemi
DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

International Business had a change of leadership beginning in the Spring 2022 semester. John Putman, who served previously as the Director of the IB program for six years, was promoted to Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Letters. Dr. Ranin Kazemi, Associate Professor of History, consequently began his tenure as Director of International Business in January of this year.

“I look forward to enhancing and expanding the global connections of the program and to positioning it as a vital resource in the university and something that we are all proud of,” said Dr. Kazemi of taking on the role. “I am eager to build on the strengths of the International Business program while continuing the enviable legacy that John Putman is leaving behind.”

Professor Kazemi’s academic and teaching interests are broad and include major problems and issues in the social, environmental, and economic history of the world. He is also interested in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the Caucasus, and Central and South Asia. He has conducted extensive archival research across the globe. His research has been sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, the American Research Institute in Turkey, the American Institute of Iranian Studies, and the Yale University Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies.

In the past year, Dr. Kazemi received a prestigious award from the
David To has been the Academic Advisor for SDSU International Business majors since the 2018-2019 academic year, and has been working in education since 2006. As Academic Advisor, it’s David’s job to help keep our IB majors on track in a fast-paced and challenging major. He fields questions about students’ options for navigating graduation requirements and courses to make sure each one is able to tailor their schedule to their personal goals.

This role is particularly important in a department like IB, which offers so many opportunities for students to specialize. If students are going to accomplish it all in 4 years, it helps to strategize! Joseph Doumbia, a graduating senior, named David the person in the department who most impacted his experience for this very reason. “The course load in years 3 and 4 is the most challenging part of the IB program. The mix between the business and language courses required a lot of dedication especially when we were online,” said Joseph. “David To has been extremely helpful when it came to planning my two years here as a transfer student. I am grateful for his academic advising.” With David’s help planning, Joseph was able to hit the ground running as a transfer in his academic advising. With David’s help planning, Joseph was able to hit the ground running as a transfer in his academic advising.

Maribel Franco has been with the International Business Department for an impressive 15 years! She has a wealth of expertise that she uses to coordinate IB’s robust Study Abroad program (you can see the Study Abroad numbers from this year on page 2, none of which would be possible without her). As Senior Advisor, she is responsible for developing and managing all international programs.

Aaron Miller, when asked who in the department significantly impacted his experience, said “Ms. Maribel Franco has been the most influential department member during my time at SDSU. She has helped me consistently with the many different aspects of my major, semester abroad planning, and other individual needs that have arisen.”

One of Franco’s highlights this year was attending the NAFSA 2021 Virtual Conference (NAFSA being the Association of International Educators), described as “the most diverse and comprehensive global event attended by professionals from across the field.” The theme of the 2021 Conference was “Designing our Shared Future,” which ended up being remarkably fitting, at least for Maribel’s networking endeavors. Attending this event helped her along in the process of successfully developing the new study abroad exchange program with the EISC Business and Marketing School in Madrid, Spain. That program will be receiving its first cohort of SDSU IB students this coming fall.

Marisela LaPlante is the Internship & Career Advisor for the IB Department, where she helps our students with all things career-oriented. In addition to helping coordinate local internships for students to fulfill their necessary graduation requirements for hands-on job experience, she also advises students looking for international internship opportunities while completing their study abroad semester(s). LaPlante is also the one who helps IB Students ready themselves to launch their post-graduation careers, offering help with resumes, coverletters, LinkedIn strategies, career resources, and more to prepare them for the professional world.

Jessica Roberts is the Administrative Coordinator for the IB Department. She holds a Masters of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Arts in Art History, both as an SDSU alum.

She keeps the department running smoothly and efficiently, handling everything from the official class schedules each semester to budgetary analysis. On a normal week day, you can find her in our campus office, where she provides front-facing support for the staff. When she isn’t providing help to drop-in visitors, she might be found wrangling dozens of complicated travel itineraries for our students studying abroad, or managing the full department calendar of events. If you have a question in IB, it’s a good bet Jessica is the one who can find you the right answer.

Jessica is the Administrative Coordinator.

National Endowment for the Humanities—a grant which allows him to continue his research for a book on popular uprisings in early 19th-century Iran. Entitled, “The Making of the First Revolutionary Movement in Modern Iran, 1850-1892,” the book is the first systematic study of the origins of a protest that opposed the establishment of a fully globalized company in Iran in the late nineteenth century. This work deals with economic, commercial, and business history, as well as many social and political issues relevant for the understanding of the contemporary Middle East.
Jantzen O’toole (far left) is one of our IB students who spent time abroad this year. He spent both semesters in Portugal, where this photo ran in one of Portugal’s lead publications: Público. Jantzen was interviewed as part of a story on North American students studying in Portugal, which posed the question “Portugal is on the radar of North American students: what attracts them?”

(Continued from page 5)

Leslie conducted research on common financial issues that college students face. She discovered that a large number of the students who were seeking financial guidance came from families who had recently immigrated to the United States. Leslie determined what specific topics were important and timely, and, in the process, drew many students to the FLSS events.

When Leslie transferred to SDSU in Fall 2020, she continued these interests, thrived academically, and demonstrated even more leadership skills. Leslie was, for example, among a select few who was able to participate in the National Internship Program that is organized by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. As the VP of Philanthropy for the Weber Honors College Student Society, Leslie continues her efforts to make a positive impact in the areas where she finds it is most needed. Since Fall 2021, Leslie is also a Career Peer for the SDSU Career Services. She has also mentored students one-on-one to help them improve their resumes and cover letters when applying for jobs.

In the future, Leslie would like to help people achieve financial independence and use her skills in business development to provide assistance to others who may need it on a global scale. In order to achieve this, she wants to gain experience with nonprofits that work to provide financial assistance and guidance to communities in need. Leslie is set to be a leader of tomorrow.

(Continued from page 5)

Elena has made her mark. Salsitz brings to the classroom a sense of humor that combines with her invaluable depth of knowledge to create an exciting and collaborative atmosphere for her students. Carmelina Herrera, asked about her favorite class, chose one of Salsitz’s. “IB-498 International Protocol with Professor Elena Salsitz sparked my interest in Global Diplomacy, and Elena is one of my favorite professors of all time.”

Elena shared that another of her favorite comments from a student this year came from one who initially flunked her class a semester earlier. He had to retake the course, and upon finishing, told professor Salsitz: “Thank you so much professor! You are hands down my favorite professor I’ve taken at SDSU so far, I’m actually glad I took your class twice! I really appreciate all the work you’ve done for us and going out of your way to make sure each and every one of us succeed.”
CASE COMPETITIONS AT SDSU

The IB program here at SDSU hosts one of only four International Business Case Competitions in the nation. As such, case competitions are highly anticipated events for our department. Our Case Competition Team is open to undergraduate Juniors/Seniors majoring in International Business or any major out of the Fowler College of Business. In early spring, we begin recruitment for four dedicated business students to make up the team that will attend competitions during the next Fall and Spring semesters. Throughout the year, the Case Competition Team trains with experienced business professors, typically meeting weekly to go over business case scenarios. Teams gain the skills needed to solve and present a case solution in a limited time frame, and get the opportunity to test their skills against top business schools at several competitions.

Case competitions themselves—including the one we host here—are electrifying events. They bring students from different parts of the country to work on a real or fictitious business case (often a difficult one) dealing with international business. The cases chosen require teams to analyze various aspects of a company to fully understand its workings, and then to design and present a recommended plan for dealing with that problem. Students often have 24 hours to come up with solutions, so working efficiently as a team is key to making sure that they are presenting a thoroughly thought-out plan, free of missed loopholes or issues. The better the final presentation, the higher ranked the solution will be by the panel of business leaders who serve as judges.

The winning team is then awarded and recognized, and there is a nice dinner at the end of that program where the teams and faculty can mingle. Case competitions are not only great venues to showcase the importance of the IB program in the country; they also provide great learning experience for all IB students.

We will be hosting our 6th Annual Case Competition the weekend of October 13-15, 2022, for which our registration is fully booked. *

Notable IB Alumni

Carolina Verdugo was one of six recipients of the Rising Star Award by Licensing International, an organization that recognizes licensing professionals around the world for “their commitment, passion, and contributions to the brand licensing industry.” Verdugo is the director of brand management at Beanstalk, a brand licensing company based in New York, where she leads the company in the Mexico and Latin America markets. Verdugo earned a B.A. in International Business/Marketing, and a licenciatura de negocios internacionales degree from CETYS Universidad in Mexicali, through the MEXUS dual degree program with IB.

Kydal Slotemaker graduated from SDSU in 2019 with a B.A. in International Business, from which she went on to pursue a JD at University of San Diego School of Law, expected in 2023. Currently, Slotemaker is the President of the International Law Society at USD, a comment editor for the San Diego International Law Journal, and a Law Clerk at BH2I.

Vicky Walker is an International Business alum now working as a Senior Media Project Manager at PlayStation. During her time as an IB major at SDSU, Walker’s studies were focused on Marketing and the Japanese language. “As a solutions-minded project leader, I specialize in steering large-scale digital/software initiatives,” Vicky writes of herself. “I get to solve interesting challenges every day by communicating closely with my teams, clients, and vendors.”

Gary Yu got B.A. in International Business, which was the springboard for an impressive career as a product designer in the Silicon Valley. His resume includes entries as Product Designer from Amazon, Pandora, Postmates, and, most recently, for Uber, where he is now a Manager for Product Design.