UCLA International Institute
Institutional History

Mission

The UCLA International Institute is the hub for international studies and global engagement at UCLA. The Institute educates students, supports research and teaching about the world and its global challenges, and builds academic partnerships here and abroad. Headed by the Vice Provost for International Studies and Global Engagement, the Institute comprises over 20 research centers and programs, and eight degree programs for both undergraduates and graduate students.

Part one of the world’s best public universities located in the global city of Los Angeles, the Institute is a resource about world regions and international issues for the UCLA campus, Los Angeles and beyond. The Institute annually hosts more than 500 free public events that showcase the most recent scholarship on country-specific, regional and global issues; it also offers many popular cultural and community outreach events, including numerous international film screenings and professional development workshops for K–12 educators.

The Institute is charged with both supporting international studies on campus and representing UCLA to the world. Working alongside UCLA’s college and professional schools, the Institute promotes, supports and sustains expertise and education on world regions and global challenges.

The Institute empowers regional and global faculty experts to make an impact on their fields and offer new perspectives on scholarship by supporting new faculty positions, as well as by fostering outstanding research and teaching. UCLA faculty train new generations of scholars who will conduct the research of the future; the symposia, workshops and conferences of the Institute and its units create and nurture networks of scholars across UCLA, the country and the world.

At the campus level, the UCLA International Institute is uniquely positioned to bring together faculty and students engaged in international research throughout UCLA’s many divisions and professional schools. This gives the Institute a special convening role, enabling it to foster collaborative research and debate on pressing world problems that require a global response, such as climate change, public health challenges, international conflicts and migration.

The Institute also plays a pivotal role in supporting the Vice Provost for International Studies and Global Engagement to develop and implement UCLA’s global strategy. The Vice Provost is responsible for strategizing and managing the university’s international partnerships, strengthening the university’s global engagement and facilitating cross-campus collaboration in global affairs.

Specifically, the Vice Provost manages UCLA’s 350 plus research, teaching, and student exchange agreements with institutions in 50 countries; supports overseas engagement with alumni and donors; helps develop strategic international programs and partnerships; and cultivates UCLA’s relationships with...
educational institutions, governments, non-profit organizations and businesses worldwide.

The Vice Provost also oversees the reception of international dignitaries on campus; manages a central information clearinghouse for international education and research programs on campus; represents UCLA in major global associations, such as the Association of International Education Administrators and the Association of Pacific Rim Universities; and plans and organizes the international trips of the UCLA Chancellor to engage UCLA’s many constituents, stakeholders, partners and friends around the world.

Organizational History

Interdisciplinary area studies at UCLA date back to 1933, when such activities were periodically led by committees of faculty experts from different disciplines. However, a genuine infrastructure for area studies on campus was not created until the late 1950s, when significant funding for international studies was first made available by the University of California, the U.S. government and major philanthropic organizations such as the Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations.

At that time, four major regional centers and the first administrative body for international studies on campus were created. These organizations are the institutional predecessors of today’s UCLA International Institute.

The Institute’s four oldest centers were created in 1957 and 1959 as Organized Research Units of the University of California. Today, these well-respected centers are known as the Center for Near Eastern Studies (created in 1957), the Center for European and Russian Studies (1957), the Latin American Institute (1959) and the African Studies Center (1959).

These four centers operated independently, with their own state-allocated budgets and government grants, until 2000. For much of their existence, they have also been designated National Resource Centers by the U.S. government, which has awarded them significant funding through the competitive Title VI Program of the Department of Education. The directors of these centers were originally appointed by the UCLA chancellor and reported first to him, and eventually, to the Executive Vice Chancellor and/or Vice Chancellor for Research.

The number of Title VI–funded centers at the Institute has varied over time. As of 2017, there are four: the Asia Pacific Center (funded jointly with USC), Latin American Institute, Center for Southeast Asian Studies (funded jointly with UC Berkeley) and the National Heritage Language Resource Center.

In 1958, UCLA created the Institute for International and Foreign Studies to administer a US$ 10 million grant to the University of California for nonwestern studies. In 1965, this body was reorganized and renamed the Chancellor’s Committee on International and Comparative Studies (CICS), with Professor Elwin V. Svenson named its vice chair. Svenson, who had previously led the Peace Corps training programs at UCLA in the early 1960s, was appointed coordinator of overseas programs at UCLA that same year.

The committee was charged with administering a new US$2 million grant for international studies and providing administrative and financial services to a growing number of programs with an international dimension, including the UCLA-Chile Convenio, a Nigerian education program and a Peace Corps volunteer training program. CICS also advised the UCLA chancellor on matters of university policy regarding
international and comparative studies and advised and assisted faculty in developing corresponding programs and projects.

Two other key institutions in international studies were also added to a growing constellation of programs on campus in the 1960s: the UC Education Abroad Program (1962) and the Museum of Cultural History (1963), now the Fowler Museum.

In 1979, UCLA Chancellor Charles E. Young merged CICS with the Office of the Coordinator of Overseas Programs and renamed it the Council on International and Comparative Studies. Political scientist James S. Coleman, founding director of the African Studies Center, became chair of the new Council. Elwin Svenson, who had been named Vice Chancellor for Institutional Relations in 1975, continued to guide the new CICS as vice chair.

During the 1980s, Svenson played a key role in developing a more integrated office of international studies that would oversee education abroad programs, international grant programs, area studies degree programs and research centers, as well as conclude exchange agreements with international academic institutions. As a result, the International Studies and Overseas Programs (ISOP) replaced CICS in 1984. The new body retained James Coleman as its director. ISOP’s original governance structure included an Administrative Committee, an advisory Executive Committee, and the ISOP Council; its director reported to the executive vice chancellor and, eventually, the vice chancellor–academic affairs.

In 1985, ISOP and the organized research units (ORUs) for the Near East, Russia and Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America, together with a number of other area studies centers and programs, were consolidated on the 10th and 11th floors of Bunche Hall, where the UCLA International Institute remains to this day.

In 1991, the director of ISOP became ISOP dean and vice provost for international studies, reporting to UCLA’s vice chancellor of academic affairs. Simultaneously, the body’s administrative structure was simplified, with the Faculty Executive Committee (a subset of the directors of ISOP centers and programs) constituting its advisory body.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, ISOP became part of the UCLA College of Letters & Science for some seven years. In 2000, ISOP was given responsibility for all undergraduate and graduate degree programs historically associated with its centers and programs (known within UCLA as IDPs or “interdepartmental degree programs”).\(^1\) The directors (later “chairs”) of these international and area studies programs subsequently reported to the ISOP dean and their students were advised by ISOP academic counselors. Previously, specific ISOP centers had managed these respective programs on behalf of the College of Letters & Science.

Simultaneously, UCLA’s four original area studies centers (the ORUs) were officially transferred to ISOP, with their directors now reporting to then vice provost for international studies (now the vice provost for international studies and global engagement).

\(^{1}\) A number of area and international studies programs also exist outside of the Institute, such as Armenian Studies, Islamic Studies and Jewish Studies (all in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures) and Asian Humanities and Asian Religions (Department of Asian Languages and Cultures).
ISOP was renamed the UCLA International Institute in 2002. In order to improve the management of the Institute's academic degree programs, the position of associate vice provost for international studies was created in 2012 with responsibility for curriculum development, teaching programs and outreach efforts.

In 2013, the Institute's wide-ranging portfolio was further streamlined. A new post of senior associate vice provost and director of the UCLA International Institute was created, reporting to the renamed Vice Provost for International Studies and Global Engagement, with responsibility for managing the Institute's global and regional studies centers, academic programs and organizational administration.

Senior Institute Leadership

The UCLA International Institute and its closest institutional predecessor, International Studies and Overseas Programs, have been led by a number of renowned scholars from diverse disciplines. A list of these leaders (whose titles have included dean, vice provost and director) follows:

James S. Coleman, 1984–85
Professor and former chair, department of political science; founding director, UCLA African Studies Center; former head, department of political science and public administration, Makerere University, Uganda; former director, Institute of Development Studies, University of East Africa, Uganda; former associate director and East Africa representative, Rockefeller Foundation. Africanist with a research focus on nationalism and development theory in Africa.

Robert N. Burr, 1985–87
UCLA professor of history; founder, Latin American Studies Program. Specialist on Latin American history, with a focus on revolutions, U.S.-Latin American relations and Chilean foreign policy.

John N. Hawkins, 1987–99
UCLA professor of education; former chair, division of social sciences and comparative education, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies; former director, Center for International and Development Education. Specialist in comparative education with a research interest in Asia.

Phillip Trimble, 1999–2001
UCLA professor of law; former assistant legal adviser for economic and business affairs, U.S. Department of State (under Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter); former deputy mayor of New York under Ed Koch; former U.S. Ambassador to Nepal. Expert on international law, arms control and foreign policy.

Robert Buswell, 2001
UCLA distinguished professor of Buddhism; founding director, UCLA Center for Korean Studies; founding director, UCLA Center for Buddhist Studies. Specialist on Korean Buddhism and the East Asian Zen tradition.

Geoffrey Garrett, late 2001–2005
Political scientist and founding director, Global Studies degree program, UCLA International Institute; former director, Leitner Program in International Political Economy and Council on European Studies, Yale University. Specialist on political economy, globalization, economics and law.
Ronald Rogowski, 2005–07  
UCLA professor of political science; founder and initial director, Global Fellows Program, UCLA International Institute. Specialist in comparative politics and political economy, with a focus on international trade and its impact on domestic politics.

J. Nicholas Entrikin, 2007–10  
UCLA professor of geography; former chair, department of geography; cofounder of the UCLA Institute of the Environment (now the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability). Cultural geographer specializing in Europe and the significance of place in a globalizing world.

Randal Johnson, 2010–12  
Distinguished professor of Brazilian culture and cinema; twice chair, Spanish and Portuguese Department; former director, Latin American Institute (LAI); former chair, Brazil Program; former faculty director, UCEAP Study Center in Brazil. Specialist on Brazilian film, literature and the sociology of literature and culture.

Cindy Fan, 2012–present  
Vice Provost for International Studies and Global Engagement; UCLA professor of geography and Asian American Studies; founding director, Global Classroom, UCLA International Institute; former chair, East Asian Studies Program, UCLA International Institute; former chair, Asian American Studies Department; former Associate Dean of Social Sciences. Specialist in migration, regional development and gender in China.

Chris Erickson, 2013–present  
Senior Associate Vice Provost and Director, UCLA International Institute; Professor, UCLA Anderson School of Management; former faculty director, UCLA International Education Office; former senior associate dean, Global Initiatives, former director, Center for International Business Education and Research, and founding director, Center for Global Management, UCLA Anderson School. Specialist on collective bargaining, union-management relations and international comparative industrial relations.
Centers and Programs

Africa
African Studies Center (1959)

The Americas
Canadian Studies Center (2001)
Latin American Institute (1959)
  Center for Brazilian Studies (1989)
  Center for Mexican Studies (1982)
  Center for Southern Cone Studies (1997)
Program for Caribbean Studies (2016)

Asia
Asia Pacific Center (1976)
Center for Buddhist Studies (2000)
Center for Chinese Studies (1986)
Center for India and South Asia (2005)
Center for Korean Studies (1993)
Center for Southeast Asian Studies (1999)
Program on Central Asia (2008)
Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies (1992)

Europe and Eurasia
Center for European and Russian Studies (1957)
Center for Near Eastern Studies (1957)
Program on Central Asia (2008)

Middle East
Center for Middle East Development (2002)
Center for Near Eastern Studies (1957)
Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for Israel Studies (2005)

Global and Thematic Programs
Burkle Center for International Relations (1975)
Center for the Study of International Migration (2015)

Education and Language Programs
Academic Programs, UCLA International Institute
  Undergraduate:
  Global Health (minor, 2015)
  Global Studies (2005)
  International & Area Studies (2012)
    - African & Middle Eastern Studies (1956, 1959)
    - Asian Studies (1971)
    - European Studies (1995)
    - Latin American Studies (1947)
    - South Asian Studies (minor, 2004)
    - Southeast Asian Studies (minor, 2001)
  International Development Studies (1987)
  International Migration Studies (minor, 2017)
  Graduate (M.A.):
  African Studies (1963)
  East Asian Studies (2001)
  Latin American Studies (1956)
  Center for World Languages (1986)
  Cross-Disciplinary Scholars in Science and Technology (2008)
  PKU-UCLA Joint Research Institute (2009)

Special Programs
Fulbright Scholar Enrichment Program (≈1964)
Cross-Disciplinary Scholars in Science and Technology (2008)
International Visitors Bureau (1966)
PKU-UCLA Joint Research Institute (2009)
UCLA Global Classroom (2010)

Peggy McInerny
January 2017

2 Names of many of these units have changed over the years; we provide here the current name and year of founding of the original unit.