Letter of Support for The Ph.D. Program in International Conflict Management  
College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Kennesaw State University

by

Amr Abdalla, Ph.D.  
Vice Rector  
University for Peace  
December 29, 2009

I have reviewed the Full Program Proposal for The Ph.D. Program in International Conflict Management, and would like to offer my support to its design and plan of implementation. The following is my assessment of the factors which led me to lend my support to the program.

a. Interdisciplinary and Multicultural Design: The program embraces the fundamentals of the field of peace and conflict studies, namely the interdisciplinary and multicultural elements which are profound in the field. These qualities were identified and integrated on several levels:

1. The selection of faculty. The list of faculty involved with the program includes professors from diverse academic backgrounds such as international relations, political science, sociology, psychology, economics, communication, anthropology, geography, theater, etc. This diverse collection of academicians is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of peace and conflict issues with the required depth and breadth at a Ph.D. level.

2. The selection of students. The document emphasizes that students selected for the programme will meet not only rigorous academic requirements, but will also represent a diverse population both professionally and culturally. The emphasis on selecting a diverse student body is pivotal for the learning experience in the area of peace and conflict studies. This is because experiences related to peace and conflict vary widely based on culture, professional background, and many other factors. Creating the proper space for students to contribute to the learning experience becomes a pedagogical necessity in the field of peace and conflict as the shared knowledge and experiences expand everyone’s worldview, understanding and capacity for empathy.

3. The academic program. The description of the Core Seminar on Theories and Analysis in International Conflict Management set several objectives, among them:
   - Learn how to integrate non-western and comparative ethical foundations into a global analytical framework for conflict; and,
   - Develop the skills to apply ethical decision making to problem solving and conflict issues in a cross-culturally sensitive manner

These two objectives echoed the strong emphasis on the multicultural nature of the program. Further, the international internship requirement “allows the opportunity to practice the theory and research in a conflict environment under the tutelage of a recognized mentor in the field, while at the same time sharpening language skills as appropriate to the setting. Through
their language proficiency and on-the-ground experiences, graduates of the International Conflict Management Ph.D. program will have gained a unique understanding of the current era, one marked by the intensification of globalization, the impact of technology, and deepening interconnection of people and institutions.” This statement not only recognizes the significance of the multicultural element, but also the practical, hands-on experience which the program would require of students.

b. Balance of Theory, Practice and Research: The course of study includes well-portioned components of theory, practice and research. In order to achieve this, a benchmark review of similar programs was conducted, which ensured that this program met the expected standard of highly successful Ph.D. programs in the field of peace and conflict studies. The theory requirements of the program seems to match the standard dosage in similar programs, and which takes into consideration the need to meet the academic needs of a diverse student body, both academically and culturally. The program also remains focused on the international level of conflict management; the “international” theme is inherent in each of the Core Seminars.

The research component is definitely rigorous, yet at the same time makes space for students to choose among several focus areas. It includes a sufficient dosage of basic research design, qualitative and quantitative research methods, while allowing for choices of advanced courses based on students’ interests. This research component appears heavier than what is required in similar programs. But I see this as an advantage because in my experience I have seen several Ph.D. holders in the field of peace and conflict who lack the basics of research. Kennesaw State University’s strong research emphasis will help raise that standard.

The program has one required practice-based Core Seminar on Essentials of International Negotiation: Theory and Practice. This course focusing on negotiation theory and practice is complimented by other elective practice-based courses such as Peace building, Peacekeeping, and Reconciliation, and Comparative Conflict Management Policies of International Organizations. Students accumulating practice-based courses via the electives option, and the required Core Seminar will be well prepared to address practical issues of international conflict management and negotiations. However, it is my recommendation that the program includes at least one more required course, preferably with a lab or practical component, to focus on skills of international conflict intervention such as mediation and problem solving workshops.

Finally, the program requires that students complete an international internship. This is definitely an advancement over requirements of existing Ph.D. programs in the field of peace and conflict studies. The internship requirement also responds very well to a growing need in the field to prepare graduates with real world experience, contacts and prospect employment.

In summary, the academic requirements of the program are consistent with standard requirements for Ph.D. programs in peace and conflict studies. This program stands out with its emphasis on the international level of conflict management, the strong research requirements, and the innovative international internship requirement. The program can benefit from a stronger practical emphasis on conflict management skills such as mediation and problem solving workshops.

I congratulate Kennesaw State University on this important initiative, and wish it full success.
RE: Proposal to create a PhD Program in Conflict Management at Kennesaw State University

To Whom It May Concern, 12/29/09

I am writing to lend my strongest support to the proposal to create a PhD program in Conflict Management at Kennesaw State University (KSU). Based in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS), this proposal is one that will immediately gain notoriety in higher education and make its impact felt quickly once its first graduates enter the job market. I will undoubtedly be advising undergraduates at my university to apply to this program in the coming years. I have been teaching in a PhD program for 20 years and can strongly state my positive assessment of this new program.

There are several reasons why I so firmly believe in the strength of this program. First and foremost is the quality of the faculty resident in CHSS and other units at KSU. From Dean Richard Vengroff on down to the junior scholars in the College, KSU has a dedicated and innovative faculty who will work very hard to make sure the program delivers on its promise. I had first hand contact with many of the CHSS faculty June 2008, when I helped lead the planning workshop for the program. During that day, I witnessed an energy that is lacking in many other programs around our country. Maybe this is because of the newness of the program and the excitement of building it up. But if even half of that energy gets translated into the actual program delivery in the coming years, the program will be a rousing success. The faculty involved in the workshop were thoughtful, reasonable, and in possession of high standards for the students they expect to teach over the next few years. I was also extremely impressed with the scholarly records, as many of them match up favorably with those of faculty at top R1 universities. Thus, combining the energy I witnessed with the scholarly credentials is a winning formula for this program.

Second, the proposed program has a number of unique facets that will provide a competitive advantage in the coming years relative to other comparable programs in the United States. These include:

- **A conflict management concentration** that provides the opportunity for students to specialize, all the while maintaining a strong interdisciplinary academic program.
- **Strong methodological training** that will allow students to enter the academic job market, prepare them to publish in the best scholarly journals and also to take their expertise into the policy realm, if that is their chosen career path.

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• **A required high level of language proficiency** – this is truly a distinguishing feature of the program, as more and more PhD programs have downplayed language training as a tool for research and international policy involvement.

• **International experience** – all too often, PhDs are trained in international affairs with little, if any, on-the-ground experience. The proposed KSU program assures that their graduates will not fall into that trap.

• **Strong pedagogical training** – capitalizing on KSU’s teaching-centered approach to professional development, students will gain pedagogical experience and other professionalization skills from faculty who truly care about high quality teaching.

• **The resources of the metro Atlanta area** – in contrast to some other high profile PhD programs, the KSU program will allow students to access resources such as CNN, the CDC and other policy-relevant entities with international components.

In addition to these unique aspects of the program, there is another significant feature of the proposed program: a core curriculum that will educate students broadly in the field of international theories, concepts and issues. Moreover, in contrast to many programs with a single or narrow disciplinary focus, this program is able to draw on the interdisciplinary strength that exists across the departments in CHSS and KSU more broadly. As a result, institutions looking to hire will feel secure in knowing that KSU PhDs will be well-grounded in the core concepts of international studies, but still be able to reach out across a field that is by definition interdisciplinary in character.

In sum, the proposed KSU program will quickly become a “known program” in the international studies field. I am extremely confident in KSU’s ability to deliver on the promise of the proposal and to hit the ground running once the proposal is approved by the University System of Georgia.

If you wish further information from, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cordially,

Mark A. Boyer
Professor and Department Head, Political Science
Co-Editor, *International Studies Review (ISR)*, [www.isr.uconn.edu](http://www.isr.uconn.edu)
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Dear Dr. Middleton,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposal to establish a PhD program in International Conflict Management at Kennesaw State University. After reading the current draft proposal (Kennesaw phd-proposal_2009-11-06.pdf), I am most impressed with the thought and care that has gone into the development of this program. As such, I can provide a strongly positive evaluation of the proposed program. The structure of my evaluation follows that suggested in your initial request for me to perform this review and will focus on the seven categories below.

One disclaimer that I should lay out from the beginning is that I am quite familiar with this program because I helped lead a program development workshop in June 2008 on the Kennesaw State University campus. This involvement notwithstanding, I feel quite comfortable in developing an evaluation of the program in an unbiased fashion. Moreover, it gives me a familiarity with the quality of the faculty that would not be possible without such first-hand contact.

1. National Trends, Need, and Demand:
   Although some authors and commentators initially viewed the end of the Cold War as signifying the end of conflict in the world, the reality is much messier. The elimination of superpower conflict was just that; but what emerged was a world with more fluid relationships and also fewer macro-systemic constraints on conflict at the regional and sub-systemic level. Thus, the global community has witnessed a succession of violent conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia, East Timor and elsewhere.
   These events and the general trend toward more frequent “smaller” conflicts clearly highlights the need for the development of greater academic and policy-relevant expertise in conflict management in the coming years. In American academia, there are very few programs that focus on this set of topics. They include George Mason University, Syracuse University and the University of Manitoba (all mentioned in the proposal), University of Denver, and several programs based at law schools (e.g., Harvard’s negotiation project). But very few provide a focused academic program that leads to PhD level research and the development of expertise...
to that level of education and training. For instance, of the programs with which I am familiar, only George Mason, Syracuse and Manitoba provide for PhD level work. Others (like Denver) provide an MA program and would allow research at the dissertation stage within a more general social science program. Thus, Kennesaw's proposal is among a select few schools with this focus.

2. Curriculum Strengths and Weaknesses:
The proposed program is very strong on several levels. They are:

- **A conflict management concentration** that provides the opportunity for students to specialize, all the while maintaining a strong interdisciplinary academic program.

- **Strong methodological training** that will allow students to enter the academic job market, prepare them to publish in the best scholarly journals and also to take their expertise into the policy realm, if that is their chosen career path.

- **A required high level of language proficiency** – this is truly a distinguishing feature of the program, as more and more PhD programs have downplayed language training as a tool for research and international policy involvement.

- **International experience** – all too often, PhDs are trained in international affairs with little, if any, on-the-ground experience. The proposed KSU program assures that their graduates will not fall into that trap.

- **Strong pedagogical training** – capitalizing on KSU's teaching-centered approach to professional development, students will gain pedagogical experience and other professionalization skills from faculty who truly care about high quality teaching.

- **The resources of the metro Atlanta area** – in contrast to some other high profile PhD programs, the KSU program will allow students to access resources such as CNN, the CDC and other policy-relevant entities with international components.

As for program weaknesses, they are few. But if pushed to identify any for the sake of argument, they would be as follows:

- Mirroring the strength of the program concentration above, I would argue that a program with two or more concentrations would have the advantage of attracting a broader and more diverse student population and would allow for synergistic collaboration among faculty and students across concentrations. Perhaps additional concentrations can be added as the proposed program is implemented.

- While not really a weakness, KSU and the USG should recognize that they will need to invest in an aggressive marketing campaign to get the program known nationally and internationally in quick fashion.

3. Degree Nomenclature and Appropriateness in Graduate Education: As stated above, the conflict resolution niche is a unique one with few peers in the United States. Thus, I am convinced that the program will fill a valuable role in graduate education in the coming years. In addition, the curriculum developed for the program is entirely appropriate to PhD education and could serve as a model for the development of other programs in the United States. Please see further comments under #7 below.
4. Resources (sufficiency of faculty, infrastructure, etc.):

- **Faculty**: The faculty at Kennesaw State University are an exceptionally accomplished group of scholar/teachers, especially for a non-R1 university. This speaks clearly to the energy and engagement of the faculty in both teaching and scholarship. It also bodes very well for the success of the proposed program, as students will benefit from the teaching focus of KSU as well as the demonstrated research accomplishments of the faculty. Thus, KSU offers the best of both research and teaching missions for students who will enroll in the new program. In addition, the leadership of Dean Vengroff (internationally known for his work on the international and comparative development issues) is a real strength of the program. In addition, the long-established KSU expertise resident in and around the Center for Conflict Management provides an excellent centerpiece for the proposed program.

- **Infrastructure**: The physical resources evident at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences provide an excellent instructional environment within which to offer the program. The relatively new CHSS building at KSU offers state of the art instructional settings that make me jealous. In addition, the library resources specified in the proposal document demonstrate that students will easily gain access to the requisite research resources needed for graduate education and research.

- **Budget**: From examining the budget and phase-in plan in the proposal, it is clear the KSU has adequately planned for a program that will be run on a sufficient, though not extravagant, budget for program development and administration.

5. Programmatic Balance (teaching, mentoring, applied studies): As mentioned above, KSU offers an excellent balance of the teaching and research missions resident in contemporary American universities. In addition, the emphasis on language learning and international experience assure that students graduating from the proposed program will be well grounded in the conceptual/theoretical material they need for a strong intellectual foundation, but also have applied knowledge and experience required of few PhD programs. Again, the applied aspects of KSU’s program give it a real edge over many other potential competitors or peers.

6. Diversity: From my contacts with the KSU faculty at the June 2008 workshop and from examining faculty listings, it is clear that KSU possesses a faculty with diverse perspectives and from diverse backgrounds personally and intellectually. In addition, in the early years of the program, I expect that entering classes of students will draw heavily from international applications. After serving many years on our own graduate admissions committee, I have no doubt that it will be easy to achieve a high level of diversity within the student population. This will further enhance the strength of the proposed program, as it will allow both students and faculty access to diverse perspectives and experiences in the intellectual (and applied) educational settings.

7. Outcomes Assessment: A careful review of the proposed curriculum and program structure shows that the CHSS faculty have done an exemplary job in developing a PhD program with standards comparable to (or even higher than) those top PhD programs in the United States. For example, students will be required to pass two core field exams (in-class and take-home)
that will require mastery of both breadth and depth of knowledge in the international conflict management field. Moreover, students will also be required to take coursework in a related field, pass a language proficiency exam, and orally defend both the dissertation prospectus and final product. These are all in addition to the regular courses and assessment methods (exams and papers) required for the core curriculum. Thus, it is abundantly clear that faculty will have numerous opportunities to assess student progress and mentor students as they work through the components of the proposed program. This system will provide much better mentoring opportunities than normally exist in American PhD programs.

In sum, I am extremely confident that KSU’s PhD program will be a successful one and provide a valued addition to graduate level offerings in the United States in the coming years. If you have any questions about my evaluation or need further information from me, please do not hesitate to contact me at any of the coordinates listed below. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the University System of Georgia in this important project.

Cordially,

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December 10, 2009

Richard Vengroff, PhD., Dean
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and Professor of Political Science
Kennesaw State University
Kennesaw GA 30144-5591
USA

Dear Professor Vengroff:

It was great to hear about your new project at Kennesaw State University (KSU) to help establish a doctoral program in International Conflict Management (ICM). The determination of KSU to establish the Ph.D. Program is a right decision in the right time. The need to deepen research, education, and outreach peace and justice issues is now probably more imperative than ever. To accomplish this mission, you have got an opportunity to emulate some institutes that have been thriving in the recent past, including the Joan B. Kroc Institute at the University of Notre Dame, under the leadership of Scott Appleby. The Department of Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) at the University of Uppsala, Sweden, comes to mind as another academic unit of strong scholarly and educational reputation. In addition, the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (DCAR) at Nova Southeastern University that I chaired for four years and our own newly established Ph.D. Program in PACS with 21 students from 11 different countries illustrate the burgeoning nature of the field in North America.

There is, however, a major gap in today’s PACS; the lack of doctoral programs. As far as I know, there are only half a dozen conflict resolution and peace studies departments in the entire world that confer doctoral degrees. The standard argument is, of course, that it is better for the students to earn their Ph.D. degree in a traditional discipline even if their real focus would be on peace studies or conflict resolution. One practical obstacle to Ph.D. programs has been that disciplinary departments have been reluctant to give such a role for inter and transdisciplinary centres that cut across the established university organization.

On the other hand, there is a kernel of truth in this argument, although it tends to underestimate the demand, even in the labor market, of specialized knowledge in peace and justice issues. The doctoral programs at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College, Dublin, and the University of Bradford, England have been able to generate quite good employment opportunities for their students.
would think that – as a bigger, internationally oriented, and progressive country – the
U.S. would be able to offer at least an equally good labor market for Ph.D. graduates in
ICM. Moreover, one should not underestimate the need of specialists in the field in
various international organizations.

As we both know, PACS is an applied field, in which one has to be in constant contact
with constituencies outside the university. PACS cannot thrive only as an isolated
academic discipline. Yet, solid research – including the development of appropriate
theory and methodology – is essential for any successful doctoral program. Such a
program also needs to be multidisciplinary, and even transdisciplinary, reaching to other
social and cultural studies.

Given increasing demand for leaders and decision makers well-trained in the approaches
to global interconnections in the 21st century, there is a real need for developing
practitioners who understand the utility of theoretical models and academic debate and
for scholars who can translate the results of their research into practice and make them
relevant to the policy community and the public alike. KSU’s Ph.D. in ICM will be one of
only three doctoral programs in conflict management in the southeastern U.S. and the
only program of the three to require both competency in a language other than English
and international experience.

KSU’s PhD program in ICM is intended to heed the demand for praxis-relevant academic
training by graduating scholar-practitioners with applied interdisciplinary global key
competencies that prepare them to effectively address the increasing array of international
conflict and security challenges through rigorous substantive and methodological
preparation, foreign language proficiency and international field experience. As the PhD
program develops, curricular offerings will expand and students will have the opportunity
to focus on key areas integral to conflict management, including but not limited to
national and homeland security, peace and stability operations, environmental security,
development, human rights and human security, and public diplomacy.

The interdisciplinary program is well planned and highly centered to the interests and
needs of Ph.D. students. It addresses some of the main issues of contemporary plural
societies that are characterized by diversity and asymmetry/asymmetries. The Ph.D.
Program offers the students a plethora of research topics and issues in the framework of
the field. The proposed Program enables the students to position the subject of their
research into a broader interdisciplinary context, and directs them to explore their specific
research questions and projects in critical, analytical and synthesizing ways utilizing
relevant literature with the assistance of the faculty. The courses contribute to the
dynamics of the student’s study while offering them a connected community with their
direct inclusion in research projects to develop skills and knowledge that integrates them
into collaborative research teams mentored by excellent faculty. The renowned scholar-
practitioners in the program will certainly make the Ph.D. Program interesting for
students worldwide. I expect that in addition to students from the U.S., students from the
European Union (EU), Africa, the Middle East and Latin America will apply.
My knowledge about KSU is limited, but what I know leaves me confident that it can offer all the necessary academic ingredients for a strong doctoral program in ICM. It is my pleasure to strongly endorse the Program’s development. Let me wish you all the success in the effort. You can always count on my support.

Sincerely,

Sean Byrne, Ph.D.

Director and Professor, Ph.D. and M.A. Programs in Peace & Conflict Studies
Executive Director, Arthur V. Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice
December 19, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am honored to write this letter of support for the PhD program proposal in Conflict Management at Kennesaw State University.

This is one of the most exciting proposals for a Ph.D. program at a State University. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences should be commended for an excellent and timely proposal. My assessment is based on the overall soundness of the proposal, and its curriculum. It is without any hesitation that I endorse this proposal.

As an Economist who has been involved in academia and international consultancies for over 30 years, I have observed how issues of poverty, injustice, and aggression has contributed to political, economic, and social conflicts. We have in the past approached solving these conflicts through a single lens of our disciplines. What is needed is an interdisciplinary perspective that can address issues of conflict in a holistic manner. The approach taken by this proposal addresses this concern.

What sets this proposal apart from other programs of study around the country is the interdisciplinary nature of the program at the Ph.D. level. Additionally, the thoughtful and deliberate approach, as highlighted by the nine key elements of the program, truly puts this program of study above the traditional Ph.D. programs offered elsewhere. The authors of this proposal have correctly identified issues that cross multiple disciplines and cultural divides and have used this as the basis for the growing need for highly trained analysts and academics who understand both the implications and potential solutions to global tensions. It appears that the thrust of the Ph.D. in International Conflict Management is on the links between peace building operations, risk management, conflict management, humanitarian work, and the role of third parties. These are critical factors for successful resolution of problems around the world. In addition to the interdisciplinary nature of this PhD program, its methodological rigor, and practical applications will give the students of this program a solid foundation in conflict management. It is impressive to see the level of language proficiency that is required in this program.

I am pleased to see the inclusion of such critical courses as Internship with International Organization, Foundations and Issues in International Political Economy, International Project Management, Comparative Conflict Management Policies of International Organizations in the program of study.
I am confident that this degree program will become a signature program in North America that will attract students not only from the US, but also countries around the world.

I would be happy to provide further information should you desire. Please contact me at a hoshman@cityu.edu.hk.

Sincerely,

A. Reza Hoshmand, PhD
Visiting Professor of Economics and General Education Coordinator
City University of Hong Kong
Kowloon, Hong Kong
December 16, 2009

Richard Vengroff, PhD., Dean  
College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
and Professor of Political Science  
Kennesaw State University  
Kennesaw GA 30144-5591

Dear Dean Vengroff,

The proposed Ph.D. program in international conflict management is excellently conceived and will be a highly worthwhile undertaking. It is clearly the result of a great deal of thinking and careful planning. Given what I can discern of the people involved and the overall resources available for the program, I believe it will provide needed contributions to the field of international conflict management. As I discuss later, it promises exciting new developments for the field and for Kennesaw State University.

First, I want to comment on the value of beginning a Ph.D. program in international conflict management. The program integrates studies of two important new developments: the intensification of global relationships and empirically-based constructive ways of conducting the inevitable conflicts of human societies. Despite the widespread recognition of the increasing integration in many spheres of global interaction, I believe there are no Ph.D. programs focusing on that in the United States (there are some minors associated with Ph.D.s). The field of conflict resolution has grown rapidly since the end of the 1970s and numerous undergraduate and M.A. programs have been established. The field of peace studies has existed longer, but largely at the undergraduate level. Ph.D. programs in conflict resolution or peace studies are rare.

The Kennesaw State University Ph.D. in international conflict management provides a focus in global studies and also in peace and conflict resolution studies, by linking them. That is an excellent idea. The reference to conflict management also can be understood to give attention to the transformation of conflicts from being waged badly to ones that are well conducted or constructively managed. The term also relates to the conflict stage that is of increasing attention and effort: the peacebuilding that occurs after mass violence or after a peace agreement has been reached.
Various MA programs that pertain to globalization and to conflict management are growing; and those topics are receiving increasing attention in many traditional disciplines. This makes it likely that graduates with a Ph.D. in international conflict management will find academic posts if they seek them. In addition, positions in non-governmental organizations working in this field are expanding, as are positions in national and international governmental organizations.

Furthermore, it should be noted that a Ph.D. program is a critical locus for the advancement of research and theory building, the essential bases for effective policies and practices. The scholarly work that the faculty in a Ph.D. program tends to do, in conjunction with training graduate students, is vital for diffusing knowledge as well as advancing it.

The proposed program is excellently designed for the purposes it is to fulfill. The curriculum is appropriately focused and fits well in the broader context of the general peace and conflict resolution perspective and in the context of globalization. It seems to me that the program builds on the strengths of KSU, as I understand them. A large number of KSU faculty are interested in working in the proposed program and are doing research on particular matters within the field of the Ph.D. program. The faculty is internationally diverse and experienced in interdisciplinary cooperation. There also is evidence of strong student interest.

I want to comment on the challenges and opportunities that I see in implementing the proposed program. The breadth of the material to be taught, the large number of faculty likely to be associated with the program, and the disciplinary diversity of the faculty are wonderful characteristics. They also, however, pose challenges. The program needs a minimal degree of cohesion and coordination to guide the students. The associated faculty and also the graduate students need to interact frequently enough so as to share their understandings and fashion some shared foci of interest and approach. There are several ways to meet these challenges. They include regular faculty seminars to share ongoing research, one or two-day faculty retreats, and producing joint publications, including an edited volume on a particular issue and written by KSU faculty. Organizing a major conference on a significant, but under-examined issue can be useful in providing focus and gaining needed recognition.

The interdisciplinary character of the Ph.D. program is certainly valuable, but establishing and sustaining it can be challenging. One issue is that faculty appointments and the awarding of tenure is usually a departmental matter, and the needs of a department may compete with the needs of an interdisciplinary program. Again, there are ways to alleviate and productively overcome this challenge. One way entails strong support to the interdisciplinary program, including funding the program so that individual professors can be partially paid by the program. It may be useful to have some professors have appointments and tenure in the program. Having a highly visible and prestigious interdisciplinary program makes affiliation with it attractive to department members.
Quickly appointing five senior-level faculty is a daunting task, but part of the exciting opportunity to establish a major new program. I trust some group is already discussing possible candidates. Obviously the choice of a director is extremely important. The new Ph.D. program in international conflict management will be a great opportunity for excellent candidates from the United States and abroad.

In conclusion, I want to convey my congratulations to you and your colleagues upon undertaking this great venture. The present seems to me to be a good time for fresh thinking in the studies of peace and conflict resolution because some of the thinking in these fields is becoming routinized. With the new generations arising in these fields, a new program should bring innovate approaches to the world’s new conditions.

Sincerely yours,

Louis Kriesberg
Professor Emeritus of Sociology
Maxwell Professor Emeritus of Social Conflict Studies
Founding Director, Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts
December 16, 2009

RE: Ph.D. Proposal in International Conflict Management at Kennesaw State University

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been asked to review and comment upon the proposal from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) at Kennesaw State University (KSU) to offer the Ph.D. Degree in International Conflict Management. This I gladly do.

One is immediately impressed by the number and depth of faculty expertise in CHSS and elsewhere at KSU in the broad areas of international studies and conflict resolution and management. This is perhaps the most significant predictor of program success. The proposal itself calls for the establishment of a unique and entirely timely program that will, I should think, attract a significant student body. Unlike several other programs in conflict resolution with which I am familiar, the proposed program at KSU differs in its requirements of both actual international experience and language proficiency in a language other than English. As someone who has trained students entering this field for years, as well as the parent of a daughter who occupies a significant post with "Save the Children," these two requirements, together with others, strike me as vital for any one working in the area of international conflict. As the past coordinator of the University of Maine System's World Languages Initiative I cannot tell you how utterly important it is that students have language skill and field experience.

As I have reviewed the proposed curricula the program at KSU meets all of the expectations one would normally wish to see in any research-based doctoral program. In other words, the program is consistent with best practices even as it has several distinctive components. Both the required core of courses together with the enumerated electives will provide students with an outstanding theoretical and practical basis for their work in conflict resolution. If there is one area that I would recommend for some additional attention it lies in that of international law as related to conventions, agreements, and treaties. Expertise in these areas may well reside within the KSU faculty, though there is a substantial center in comparative legal studies at Emory under Professor An-Na’im that might also provide the program with appropriate support.
It is also readily apparent that this proposed offering will support the goals of both globalizing the university and contributing substantially to the University System’s aspirations. Few regions of the United States have emerged as a genuine global player to the extent that the great Atlanta region has over the past several decades. I see this degree program as extending that critical mass of expertise even further but in a way that compliments rather than competes with existing institutions and areas of strength.

In sum this highly interdisciplinary doctoral program has great potential. It is founded upon a sound academic platform informed by substantial experience in conflict resolution and international affairs. I can foresee that the graduates of this program will be in a highly competitive position relative to opportunities in higher education as well as in peacemaking and conflict resolution and management. Were I still in the post of Provost/VPAA of my institution and this proposal came before me, I would not hesitate to support it enthusiastically.

If I can provide you with any additional information, please do not hesitate to be in contact with me.

Sincerely,

Mark B. Lapping
Distinguished University Professor
27th December 2009.

Re: New Ph.D. Programme in Conflict Management at KSU.

To whom it may concern.

I am writing this letter as part of the evaluation process for the proposed new doctoral programme in Conflict Management in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Kennesaw State University.

I have read through the draft proposal dated 6th November 2009, which outlines the justification for the new degree, the outline of the courses to be taught, the requirements for a successful graduation, and the resources needed to be made available to support the new initiative. All in all, I find the proposal intellectually sound, even exciting, and have no hesitation in urging that the scheme be adopted by the University, and implemented as soon as possible.

As the proposal draft points out, there are currently very few doctoral level programmes in conflict management, conflict analysis or conflict resolution in North America, my own programme at George Mason University being among them. [In fact, while there are an increasing number of Masters level programmes throughout the world, globally there is an equal lack of good programmes producing the next generation of scholars, teachers and informed practitioners.] As a result of this lack of global opportunities, the existing programmes tend to be overwhelmed by applications for places, largely from this country but increasingly from foreign students, already employed in colleges and universities and seeking higher educational qualifications to forward their career. In addition, there are many applications from those working in government and in NGOs, seeking an intellectual foundation for their practical work.

In the case of the GMU Conflict Analysis and Resolution programme, the upshot of this growing demand is that we receive far more applications [most of them from excellent candidates] than we can accommodate, and end up each year taking about one fifth of the 60 plus candidates that present themselves for consideration. This situation may be eased somewhat when the Notre Dame programme begins to get under way.
However, my main point is that there currently exists a substantial demand for doctoral places, on which the proposed degree at KSU can capitalize.

The proposed KSU degree will also, I feel sure, appeal to many of those seeking a higher degree because of its alternative specialization on a region or on a topic, with a wide range of electives available for either specialization. Starting with a focus on one of the three “streams” – environmental issues, human rights and security issues – will enable individual students later to choose electives which provide an excellent background to their dissertation work and – one hopes – to the international internship experience which forms an integral part of the proposed degree. This last will prove an added attraction, I am sure, as many of our own students at GMU have increasingly enjoyed the opportunities we have been able to provide them to work overseas through an internship or as part of their Applied Practice and Theory Programme.

The emphasis on research methodology in the outline programme is also something to be welcomed, as it is important that future scholars and practitioners can become critical and aware “consumers” of research and research findings, as well as being able to design, plan, carry out and evaluate their own projects. I would hope that the courses themselves will include a few practical opportunities to actually “do” research, as research in the real world tends to differ from research as described in text books.

A further strong point in the proposed degree is the clear intention on the part of the innovators to link the programme both locally and globally, to existing institutions with a global reach. Linkages to CNN, the Carter Center and other local institutions with a global reach around Atlanta will provide KSU with opportunities parallel to those enjoyed by universities in the Washington DC area.

In conclusion, I have two suggestions that might help to improve an otherwise impressively planned programme. The first is a trivial one, but it might be useful to recast the position of “Ambassador/Visiting Scholar in Residence” to “Practitioner in Residence”, which would remove the impression that this would become a resting place for out of work diplomats, or academics looking for a place to write their book. [There are many other places for such people.] Entitling thus would enable you to give a year to someone working in a variety of practical fields, who could give students the benefit of practical expertise in dealing with real life problems of development, defence of human rights, maintaining the peace in war torn societies, or the preservation of a livable environment.

My second suggestion is more radical but I hope it might be taken seriously. While I applaud the programme’s requirement that all students become fluent in a second - or even a third - language, I am doubtful whether this will be achieved – or even approached – unless some provision is made for language classes to be taken as an integral part of the degree. In other words, some language courses should be compulsory and taken for credit, thus contributing towards the degree itself, rather than simply included as “Focus on language acquisition” with “No credit towards degree”.

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We have tried this approach to our own students becoming usefully fluent in a second language – on the grounds that, increasingly, working globally requires scholars and scholar-practitioners to be comfortable in a language other than English – and it simply does not work. If we need – as surely we do – some researchers and practitioners to be fluent in Spanish, or French or Russian or Arabic, then it is not enough to simply say that there has to be a “focus on language acquisition”. One has to make provision for fulfilling such a focus.

Aside from this, I have to conclude by saying that I am more than impressed by the thought, hard work and vision that has obviously gone into preparing this proposed degree. I hope that KSU decides to take up both the challenge and the opportunity offered in this growing field, and look forward to the establishment of the new doctoral programme, which I would wish every success.

Sincerely,

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