Evaluation Report

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Evaluation Division

International Writing Program

January 2020

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INTERNATIONAL WRITING PROGRAM:

A PROCESS EVALUATION OF HOW THE INTERNATIONAL WRITING PROGRAM CAN BEST SERVE U.S. EMBASSIES WORLDWIDE

January 2020

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ACRONYMS

D.C.	District of Columbia
DOS	U.S. Department of State
ECA	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
FSO	Foreign Service Officer
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IWP	International Writing Program
LES	Locally Employed Staff
PD	Public Diplomacy
PII	Personal Identifying Information
SUSI	Study of the U.S. Institutes
U.S.	United States
UGRAD	Undergraduate Exchange Program
UI	University of Iowa
USG	United States Government

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 1967, the International Writing Program (IWP) at the University of Iowa (UI) has hosted more than 1,500 established foreign writers in residence from more than 150 countries. While the main focus of the IWP is its flagship Fall Residency program, there are other classes, tours, and programs: (1) Between the Lines, a summer exchange for teenage writers from the U.S. and overseas; (2) Lines & Spaces, reading tours and workshops abroad facilitated by American writers; and (3) Distance Learning Creative Writing Courses, online classes using digital platforms to develop the skills of writers around the world.

This evaluation was conducted to understand better how the IWP can best serve U.S. Embassies worldwide by providing evidence to inform decision-making for future program design. While the study primarily focused on processes (how the IWP was implemented and how the program might be improved), it also captured the extent to which the IWP fit with the overall mission goals of each Post. Both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the study looked for ways to encourage further engagement from Posts with the IWP and solicited recommendations to align the IWP with Posts' needs, interests, and resources. To meet these goals, the Evaluation Team used a mixed-methods approach, combining in-depth interviews with an online survey to gather feedback from staff at Posts around the world.

The overall evaluation findings were as follows:

- There was room for improvement in information flow and sharing to ensure the IWP meets Posts' needs. Specifically, officers at Post asked for greater communication and transparency on the Fall Residency nomination process and about what participants do in Iowa. Knowledge of IWP elements, aside from the Fall Residency, was low, even among staff at Posts who the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) program team identified as active IWP users.

- Staff at Posts were highly satisfied with the IWP overall and the impact it had on participants. While they shared some administrative challenges, Posts felt IWP was implemented well and reported positive relationships with UI IWP staff and ECA. Areas for improvement included the need to decrease the burden of the application process on Post staff and increase clarity and support in participant selection for the Fall Residency, as well as support for the application processes of the other programs.

- The IWP aligned with Posts' overall mission goals, namely creating interpersonal relationships, strengthening literary culture in-country, and supporting non-state narratives and free expression in repressive contexts. Post staff often expressed an appetite for more literary programming, especially additional youth-centric programming, and an expansion of the IWP to include other forms of expression such as graphic novels, hip hop verse, online content, and spoken word poetry, among others.

- There was room for improvement in overall alumni engagement and better collaboration on alumni relations between IWP, ECA, and Posts. Staff at Posts also stressed the need for follow-up programming for IWP alumni through mentorship, online continuing education programs, and the strengthening of existing alumni networks. Existing evaluation data, especially long-term trends and outcomes among IWP alumni, was lacking.

The evaluation made clear the IWP was a well-respected and prestigious program, with staff at Posts as well as current and former participants speaking to its effectiveness and impact. However, the interviews and responses to the online survey provided several clear and specific recommendations to ensure the IWP is as beneficial as possible to Posts around the world.

- Continue to strengthen relationships between the UI IWP staff and Posts around the world. While relationships are strong with some Posts, better overall communication and follow-up between Posts, ECA, and the UI IWP staff is necessary.

- Develop standardized and clear program guidance for all IWP activities and ensure it is easily accessible and regularly referenced in IWP-related communication.

- Create an external-facing FAQ document to help Posts respond to inquiries from potential participants about various IWP programming, application protocols, and deadlines. Allow fillable fields for Posts to personalize the FAQ, as needed.

- Explore the creation of an online portal for program applications, specifically the Fall Residency, to ease the processing burden on Posts.

- Explore creating one universal online IWP alumni database where updates and guidance can be shared by the IWP, ECA, or Posts.

- Create an easy-to-use, well-marketed feedback loop Posts can use to provide input to UI IWP staff, anonymously if desired, on program implementation processes. Consider creating an IWP@state.gov email address Posts can contact for inquiries, recommendations, advice, or support.

- Consider opportunities for additional programming, such as other types of literacy expression (graphic novels, spoken word, hip hop, etc.), mentoring programs, or exchanges with American writers.

- Invest in strengthening the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of IWP through capacity building with staff and longitudinal research.

- Collect success stories about IWP participants and make them publicly available.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND DESIGN

EVALUATION PURPOSE

Established in 1967, the International Writing Program (IWP) at the University of Iowa (UI) has hosted more than 1,500 established foreign writers in residence from more than 150 countries. While the main focus of the IWP is its flagship Fall Residency program, there are other classes, tours, and programs: (1) Between the Lines, a summer exchange for teenage writers from the U.S. and overseas; (2) Lines & Spaces, reading tours and workshops abroad facilitated by American writers; and (3) Distance Learning Creative Writing Courses, online classes using digital platforms to develop the skills of writers around the world.[1]

This evaluation aimed to understand how IWP can best serve U.S. Embassies worldwide by providing evidence to inform decision-making for future program design. While the study was primarily focused on process (how the IWP was being implemented and how the program might be improved), it also captured the extent to which the IWP fit with the overall mission goals for each Post. Both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the study looked for ways to encourage further engagement with the IWP and solicited recommendations to improve the programming to ensure the IWP best aligns with Posts' needs, interests, and resources.

This was the first Post-centric evaluation of the IWP and is intended to inform a renewal of the cooperative agreement between the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and UI in early 2020. As such, the main audience for this report is ECA, with additional implications and recommendations for the UI IWP staff and U.S. Embassy cultural affairs teams worldwide.

The evaluation was conducted by the ECA Evaluation Division in partnership with the District Communications Group, referred to hereafter as "the Evaluation Team."

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The four main evaluation questions of this evaluation were:

1. To what extent are Posts aware of the IWP? Through what mechanisms do they hear about the program, and how can ECA increase awareness and participation?

2. How can ECA and IWP better support the Posts' use of the IWP? What steps can be taken to make it a more attractive and convenient program?

3. To what extent do Posts believe IWP aligns with their broader Mission goals? How can the program be brought more into alignment?

4. What follow-on activities do Posts arrange after IWP to encourage long-term engagement and multiplier effects? How can ECA work to support those efforts?

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[1] For detailed background information on IWP, see Annex I.

DATA COLLECTION

Fieldwork occurred from September 25 to December 13, 2019. The Evaluation Team conducted a total of 21 **in-depth interviews (IDIs)** with five UI IWP staff, personnel at 11 U.S. Embassies and Consulates representing a range of highly engaged and less engaged Posts across five regions,[2] and five current and former IWP Fall Residency participants. The team also conducted an **online survey** that generated **65 responses**, representing 64 U.S. Embassies around the world (23 percent response rate).[3]

LIMITATIONS AND BIASES

Sample sizes for each respondent type and for each data collection method—both qualitative and quantitative—are relatively small. This is particularly true for the online survey, which had a low response rate of 23 percent. Additionally, the regional distribution of data was skewed, with South and Central Asia underrepresented in survey data and completely unrepresented in in-depth interviews.[4] Evaluation results were, therefore, indicative of those who participated in the evaluation and not statistically representative of all Posts or program alumni.

However, the Evaluation Team was able to interview half (50 percent) of the Posts recommended by the ECA program team, reducing the impact of the response rate challenge. Additionally, because the IDIs focused on how to improve the process to support Posts' needs and goals, they were not particularly sensitive in nature and there was a relatively low likelihood of self-censorship.

Some lines of questioning, both with the UI IWP staff and Posts, may have had some element of desirability bias, especially in discussions related to how well they implemented and supported the program. The Evaluation Team did not encounter any data quality issues with the quantitative survey responses, as the data collection took place within Qualtrics, which mitigates any issues such as missing responses, incorrect skip patterns, or duplications in data. The Evaluation Team also conducted a detailed review of the internal data checks built into the program to ensure the quantitative data in this study accurately reflect the respondents' feedback.

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[2] **Highly engaged Posts** are defined as those that successfully nominate writers for the Fall Residency each year, regularly participate in other IWP components (Between the Lines, Lines and Spaces, or Digital Programming), and/or are highly engaged with their IWP alumni.
Less-engaged Posts are defined as those that at one time nominated writers to the Fall Residency but have stopped, are engaged with one IWP component but have not worked with another (for example: engaged with Between the Lines but do not nominate for the Fall Residency), or are of strategic importance to the Department of State/ECA but are currently not participating in any IWP programming.
[3] For a comprehensive review of data sources and data analysis techniques, see Annex II.
[4] **IDIs**: Africa – 36 percent, East Asia Pacific – 9 percent, Europe and Eurasia – 18 percent, Near East – 18 percent, South and Central Asia – 0 percent, Western Hemisphere – 18 percent
Online Survey: Africa – 19 percent, East Asia Pacific – 28 percent, Europe and Eurasia – 20 percent, Near East – 12 percent, South and Central Asia – 4 percent, Western Hemisphere – 17 percent
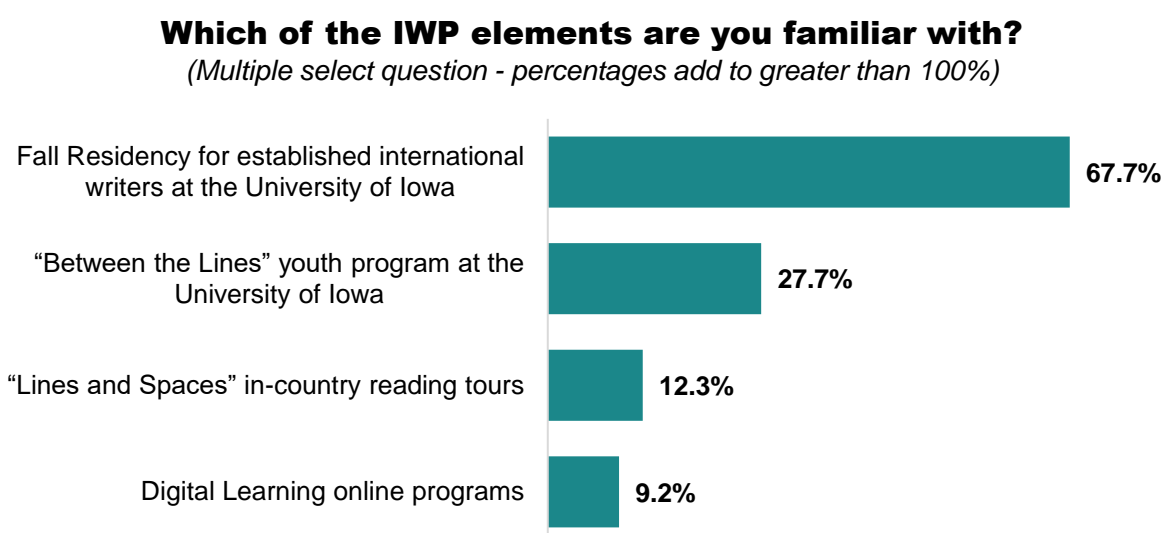
EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS

AWARENESS OF IWP
EVALUATION QUESTION 1: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE POSTS AWARE OF THE IWP? THROUGH WHAT MECHANISMS DO THEY HEAR ABOUT THE PROGRAM, AND HOW CAN ECA INCREASE AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION?

Many Posts were only familiar with the Fall Residency and not with the various program elements the IWP offers. About two-thirds of survey respondents (68 percent) indicated they were familiar with the Fall Residency, significantly more than were familiar with the other three IWP elements. The Between the Lines program followed with 28 percent of respondents reporting familiarity. Lack of knowledge appeared especially true of the Lines and Spaces tours and the Distance Learning Program, of which only 12 percent and 9 percent of respondents (respectively) indicated familiarity (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1

Which of the IWP elements are you familiar with?
(Multiple select question - percentages add to greater than 100%)

Fall Residency for established international writers at the University of Iowa	67.7%
"Between the Lines" youth program at the University of Iowa	27.7%
"Lines and Spaces" in-country reading tours	12.3%
Digital Learning online programs	9.2%

These knowledge gaps may have been due, at least in part, to inconsistent program branding During interviews, the Evaluation Team encountered mentions of the "Iowa Writers Program" rather than "International Writing Program" and references to the "Full Residency" rather than "Fall Residency." Additionally, because Between the Lines has traditionally only accepted participants from South and Central Asia, it is commonly referred to as the "Silk Road" program among Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) with previous placements in that region, and they often did not become familiar with the "International Writing Program" until entering their current Post.[5]

Some highly engaged Posts learned about the other program elements through their participation with the Fall Residency.

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[5] The Evaluation Team believe that the low response rate both to the online survey as well as to the requests for interviews in some regions, namely South and Central Asia, may have some connection to the lack of familiarity with the IWP and be indicative of the need for greater information and communication about the program overall.

We stumbled upon the [other programs]. It would really be helpful if they could guide us. We could find everything available if we had more guidance, more directives. (Africa)

According to survey respondents, the primary means of communication regarding the IWP was official cables (57 percent) and emails from ECA (49 percent). Some respondents also indicated communication via emails from UI IWP Staff (23 percent) (**Figure 2**).[6]

Figure 2

How does your current Post get information about IWP? Top three selections shown.

(Multiple select question - percentages add to greater than 100%)

Official cables	**56.9%**
Emails from ECA	**49.2%**
Emails from the University of Iowa	**23.1%**
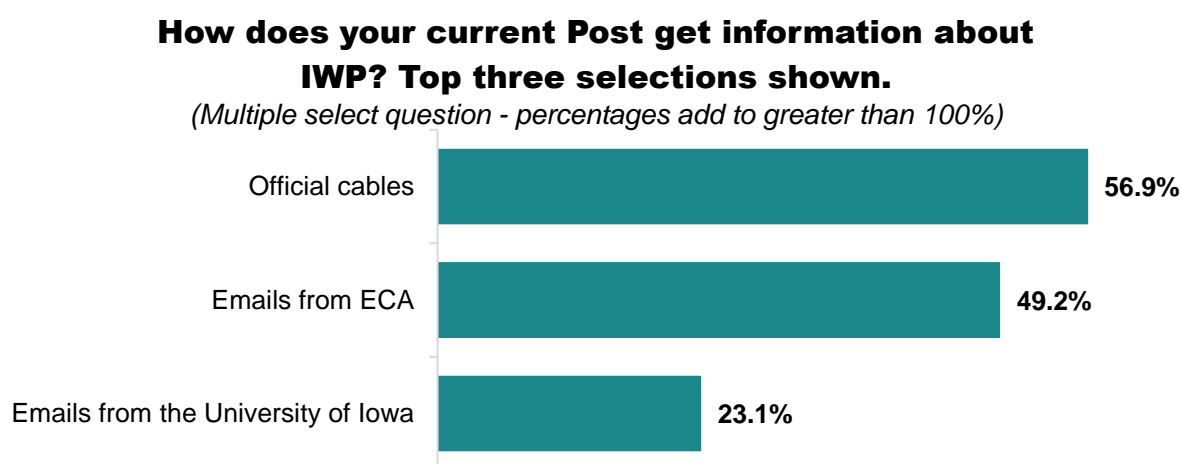
Staff at Post were generally satisfied with the cable as an initial form of communication. Broadly speaking, only 15 percent of respondents indicated more frequent communication was needed to improve their experience with the program, and only 11 percent indicated more effective communication was needed.

That said, IDIs revealed challenges Posts face when relying on the cable. The most common was the feeling that while cables can be a useful means of communication, they are insufficient for providing deeper information about the program. Posts said sometimes the cable is not delivered or sent at all (several respondents reported experiencing this in 2019, possibly due to the interruption of the typical programming schedule by the government shutdown). In cases like these, the participation of the Post was jeopardized, except in instances where a strong personal or institutional relationship with the UI IWP staff existed. Some said the UI IWP staff checked-in with them and followed-up on nominations, despite the missing cable. To improve future communication, it was frequently suggested the cable be accompanied by an additional follow-up or "heads-up" email to let Posts know the cable has been or will be sent soon along with any changes to programming or priorities for the program.

It's an awesome program, so I was asking when I got [to my current Post], 'Why don't [we] send anyone?' I think there's just a lot going on, and it's gotten lost in the mix. There is no awareness of what the deadlines are. Cables are helpful if there are firm deadlines, along with reminder emails from [the UI IWP staff]. I think you could do it both ways. It should be done more formally, so there is a searchable record, but also more informally for reminders. (Western Hemisphere)

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[6] Other, less impactful, methods of communication included: social media (9 percent), the IWP website (8 percent), program alumni (8 percent), colleagues (6 percent), informal or personal channels (6 percent), visits from the UI IWP staff (6 percent), and PD regional newsletters (5 percent).

The cables are fine. All the ECA programs use them. It can be a little frustrating because I get like 100-200 cables per day from every country in the world with random stuff in them. I miss a lot of cables. I receive about 50 from Washington every day. Usually, someone in my office catches it and forwards it around, but it's nice when ECA follows up with an email to say, 'Hey guys, the cable just came out with a cable number.' That really, really helps." (Europe and Eurasia)

Usually, it's been sufficient. This year we didn't get any communication from them. They claimed they sent something out, but we had no record of it." (East Asia Pacific)

Furthermore, staff shared that while the cable gives notice of the upcoming cycle of the Fall Residency, it does not provide easily understood brief overviews of the other elements of IWP.

We don't know about all these different program offerings. This is the first time I've heard about any of this. I only know about the Fall Residency. (Africa)

Posts reported most of their communication is through ECA and not directly with the UI IWP staff. However, as mentioned previously, a few highly engaged Posts reported having personal relationships with key UI IWP staff as a result of their long-term engagement with the program.

There was demonstrated interest among Posts in learning more about the other elements of IWP. Half of the survey respondents (52 percent) indicated an interest in learning more about digital programming, with 48 percent and 43 percent showing interest in Lines and Spaces and Between the Lines (respectively) (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3

Are there IWP programs you or your colleagues at Post might want to learn more about, that you think could be utilized more than they are currently?
(Multiple select question - percentages add to greater than 100%)

Digital Learning	52.3%
Lines and Spaces	47.7%
Between the Lines	43.1%

Posts provided several examples where a lack of information and general awareness negatively affected a Post's engagement with the IWP. The following, organized by program, details these instances.

Digital Learning
While there was a clear interest in virtual programs, there was little overall knowledge of the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and other digital IWP programming. A Post in

Africa revealed that an FSO did not know a targeted online course had occurred in the country where she worked, even though UI IWP staff noted it as a particular success. Of interest to Posts was utilizing digital programming to engage nominees not selected for the Fall Residency. A common recommendation was for IWP to consider developing programming with engaging online instruction from Iowa professors, specifically targeting and tailored for established writers and Fall Residency runners-up or those not selected.

Between the Lines
Regarding the Between the Lines program, the 2019 changes surprised Posts that traditionally participated in the program.[7] The shift in focus designed to include a broader range of countries meant historically eligible Posts could send far fewer students. Posts were not aware of a permanent change in the program focus, thinking next year they could send greater numbers of participants.

> *Last year it was Silk Road focused, and it included more countries, so fewer students were able to go from [country]. (Europe and Eurasia)*

Lines and Spaces
A Post in Africa was unaware of the Lines and Spaces program and began independently organizing a reading tour, not knowing there was an IWP offering until they contacted the IWP team. On the other hand, an UI IWP staff member expressed willingness to develop customized digital learning opportunities based on Posts' requests – but no Posts mentioned this option during the IDIs. These anecdotes indicated a lack of knowledge of the program offerings and a disconnect between some Posts, UI IWP staff, and ECA.

> *We hosted Lines and Spaces for the first time in [country] this year. But it wasn't until I proposed a sort of reading tour myself and reached out to IWP to tell them about our plans. We had no idea there was such a program. It was incredibly amazing. I'd love to do this every year. One human being who goes to the U.S. is not enough. More people get a chance to eat out of the pie this way. (Africa)*

There was a view among Posts that the literary visits were not always as useful as they could be, and alumni and other local writers could be better leveraged for these events. This was compounded by a concern that these tours only happened sporadically and where an existing relationship between Post and UI IWP staff existed, rather than where they would have been most impactful.

Fall Residency
Some Posts expressed a sense of shifts in the strategic priorities of IWP programs that they were not privy to but affected their ability to engage with the program. For example, staff at Posts in Europe said they believe the Fall Residency shifted to include only writers from developing countries, mainly in Asia and Africa, to the exclusion of European writers. Posts asked for more transparency and clarity on reasons for the selection or rejection of nominees.

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[7] For the first 10 years of the Between the Lines program, only Russian-speaking and/or Arabic-speaking participants were eligible. The program was adjusted to encompass the broader geographic region of the Silk Road beginning in 2019. Participants may now be selected from a range of 20 countries in South and Central Asia, the Near East, and Europe and Eurasia, though the number of participants is roughly the same.

From what I've seen, there has been a move away from wealthy Western nations to Asia and Africa ... Are there only certain slots from certain areas? Are there specific priorities, quotas, political, strategic motivations? We just don't know. We need more feedback on individual nominees as well. We go through the process to nominate, and then it's just a no. And that's it. If there was more information on where they are emphasizing certain areas (females, certain marginalized communities, minorities), so we can tailor to what they are looking for from the [country] perspective. (Europe and Eurasia)

Finally, staff from Posts in all the regions interviewed were clear in their request for more information about what participants do while on the program. Twenty-two percent of survey respondents indicated additional information about program activities would improve their experience with the program. They also said more information about trip logistics would be helpful because IWP participants come to the Embassies for pre-departure information Posts often have not had.

IWP is one of the few programs where we don't have full details of what they are doing. It might be useful if we have details on what they are doing while there. Good to know for their purposes, but also potentially to publicize our work. (Africa)

We don't hear anything once they've left for the program. Sometimes we WhatsApp with the participant during the fellowship. Not sure we get anything in terms of formal updates. We want real content from participants in the United States about what they are doing. It would feed ideas to us… We also need to know basic logistical information. We never get any info about flight tickets, where they'll stay, the per diem they'll get. With other exchange programs, we're more involved in logistical elements. Participants see the embassy as the implementer, so they don't understand why we don't know. It's a little weird before they head out when we say, 'we're not quite sure what you're doing.' (East Asia Pacific)

Several respondents at Posts stressed having information about what participants are doing in Iowa was essential, not only for their internal purposes but also to create content for their websites, social media, and other publications. Twenty-two percent of survey respondents indicated a desire for additional prepared content to share on Embassy platforms.

For American Spaces, the creation of content would be good. Think it would be great to have alumni help produce content that could be used –not only creative writing, but business writing, how to do an elevator pitch, anything that could be used by emerging writers, or our youth. Worships, curriculum, prompts ... tools for facilitators. (Western Hemisphere)

Sharing program activities, photos, and videos that will help promote the program. Videos where the participating writers talk about their experience throughout the program. (Near East)

Posts explained they would welcome more data to understand the actual impact being made by the IWP, which in turn could help them understand how IWP may contribute even more to their broader mission goals (see additional discussion of this in the section on evaluation question 3).

Hard to know if what they do advances our mission because we don't know what they're doing. (East Asia Pacific)

CONCLUSIONS

- There is a need for improvement in information flow and sharing to ensure IWP works as well as possible and best meets the needs of staff at Posts.

- Specifically, staff at Posts ask for greater communication and transparency on the Fall Residency nomination process and about what participants do while they are in Iowa.

- Knowledge of IWP elements, aside from the Fall Residency, was low, even among staff at those Posts defined as the most engaged and active.

POSTS' NEEDS RELATED TO IWP
EVALUATION QUESTION 2: HOW CAN ECA AND IWP BETTER SUPPORT THE POST'S USE OF THE IWP? WHAT STEPS CAN BE TAKEN TO MAKE IT A MORE ATTRACTIVE AND CONVENIENT PROGRAM?

FSOs and Locally Employed Staff (LES) shared that the entire IWP administration process, from participant recruitment to alumni relations, was well-established and worked relatively well. Most survey respondents (71 percent) indicated "a great deal" of satisfaction with their experiences with IWP overall. When the Evaluation Team explored views of the program, they were positive across the board, with Posts sharing a belief the IWP had a positive impact on alumni and generally reflected well on Post's missions overall.

While they indicated there could be better communication on the details of the program curriculum and more collaboration on the process, almost without exception, Posts said they believed the IWP to be implemented well. Department of State staff respondents noted the program was extremely well-respected and highly prestigious, bringing distinction and professional opportunities to alumni who participated, particularly in the Fall Residency.

Furthermore, Posts were happy with the relationships with the UI IWP staff overall. About two-thirds (62 percent) of survey respondents indicated "excellent" support.

> *It's a great relationship [with the UI IWP staff]. Very on top of the selection process. They're always specific about our applications, whether they're high quality or not. They handle everything. We just help with visas. They manage housing, transportation, etc. ... and it's always outstanding, we've never had any complaints. (Western Hemisphere)*

Posts' overall relationship with ECA was generally positive, though more mixed, with close to an even split of survey respondents rating the support received as "excellent" (44 percent) or "good" (40 percent).

The most common challenges cited by survey respondents included too many previously unsuccessful applications (19 percent), not enough communication before/during the application process (17 percent), not enough time for Posts to engage with this program (17 percent), and not enough literary capacity in-country for the IWP program (12 percent). To a lesser extent, they also cited lack of information (9 percent), lack of interest (5 percent), and other similar programming (2 percent) as challenges (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4

What are some of the challenges your current Post faces in engaging with IWP?
(Multiple select question)

Challenge	Percentage
Too many applications to the program have been unsuccessful in past	18.5%
Not enough communication before/during the nomination process	16.9%
Not enough time to engage with IWP	16.9%
Not enough literary capacity in country	12.3%
Not enough information about the program	9.2%
Not enough interest at post	4.6%
There are other similar programs	1.5%
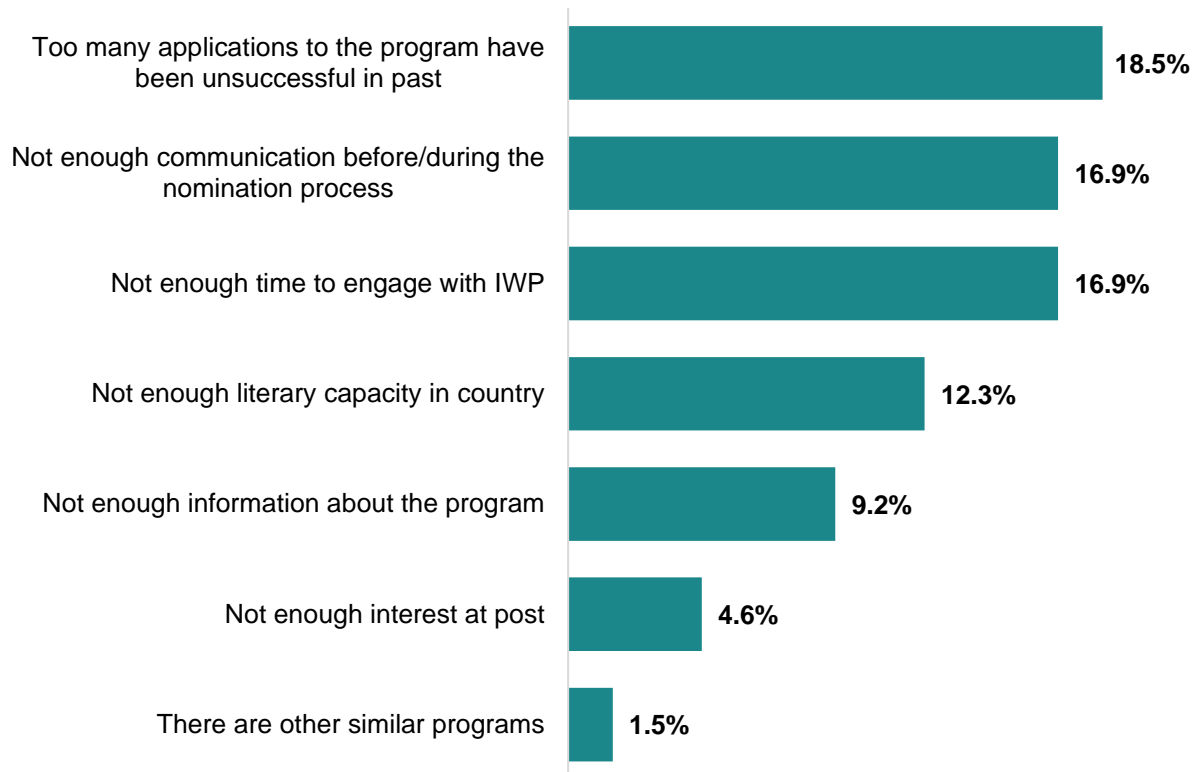
IDIs support these data. From some Posts, there was a clear sense of frustration with having nominees repeatedly rejected. Although giving a great deal of feedback on each nominee might be too burdensome to the UI IWP staff, a brief explanation or outreach was desired, especially for Posts with candidates who have been rejected repeatedly.

While there were no serious complaints about the specifics of the nomination process, Posts did ask for greater support throughout the overall process, especially in the context of technical support. They discussed the great bureaucratic burden they face with data entry; this was especially true for the larger Embassies. In fact, several respondents from larger Posts suggested the benefits of undertaking the administration of the IWP were somewhat limited as it was a comparatively small program, making up just a fraction of their cultural diplomacy portfolio while still taking significant effort to manage applications.

> *As someone who has administered this program at multiple places, it's really going to depend on Post's bandwidth. This is one of the smallest programs number-wise. So, the amount of effort [per participant] is infinitely less for some of the programs where we get a lot more slots ... Having administered this elsewhere ... I would work heavily on IWP, but because we have so many opportunities in [city] especially, it's not something we make a priority. It's just 1-3 slots compared to the massive programs. (Near East)*

We have three [Assistant Cultural Affairs Officers] in [city]: 40 different programs, 450-500 people every year. It's a large team managing many cultural programs. [IWP is] a very good program. The more support you can provide, it would make our lives easier. We get 100 applications, but only nominate one or two participants. We're going to do all the work for one or two people, let's at least increase it by one or two participants [per country]. We have all these different systems and types of applications for all the different programs, and we need to input them into different systems. It's a lot of data work. We need a unified electronic platform to manage the process. [We get] 2,500-3,000 applicants for one of the larger programs. To manage the workload, we have to give grants to other organizations to inspect all the applications. It's $10,000-$20,000 per program. I would rather spend that money to send another participant. (Near East)

We get hundreds of email applications and questions [and it] is a real hassle. We are getting deluged by emails to the exchange email address. There's no support for us for ... how do we get the applications from all these young people? We are sorting hundreds of emails. (Europe and Eurasia)

Removing the onus of managing the nominations from Posts would be welcome and allow them to focus more of their attention on things like follow-up programming or alumni relations. For instance, the Posts proposed ECA develop one central online application program to ease the burden of the data entry and review.

If there is a way to have an online system participants can directly apply to, instead of Posts doing the data entry directly. We do all the data entry ourselves, [and] don't have an online system to receive application data. Instead, it's all hard copy or by email. So, much [of the] administrative work to support these programs is done by Posts. Database management is a challenge. If there's a way for participants to update their own information, that would be helpful. There's a central database, but alumni can't log in and update it. So, we get different emails telling us to update this and that. The amount of data entry we do here is insane. We want an intern to get through the backlog. (Near East)

In addition, some staff at Posts explained that the cable comes too late for rigorous recruitment for Fall Residency. Both the largest and historically most-engaged Posts have established outreach processes using long-time LES to support a robust recruitment effort beginning *before* the receipt of the annual notice via cable. These Posts were often in touch with IWP or ECA staff on a regular basis. However, less-engaged Posts, with a smaller staff or LES less familiar with the program, ran the risk of missing a year of involvement.

The core cable comes really late. We don't have enough time to find a good candidate. Last time, [I] flagged it before they reached out to us. The call comes much too late for there to be enough time to do the work to find a good candidate. You have to know the candidate and that you want to nominate them well before [the cable comes out]. (Europe and Eurasia)

Another key point from the data collection was that the institutional knowledge, cultural expertise, and connections to local arts and literary communities of LES were key to successful nominations for the Fall Residency. Posts reported relying heavily on their personal networks and relationships with IWP alumni for recruitment. The dependence on LES for nominations reduced the involvement of the American FSOs in the recruitment process. However, a few Posts requested referrals to someone who could answer literary questions during the nominations process, saying they did not feel qualified to evaluate creative writing samples. This may be an opportunity to liaise more closely with IWP during the candidate evaluations.

Posts also discussed the challenges of the nomination process. They said it could be difficult to select nominees because of uncertainty about what writing samples and personal characteristics to prioritize. Seventeen percent of survey respondents indicated a desire for more guidance on nominee selection criteria. Posts indicated there was no universal interview guide or criteria used to base their decision of which writer to nominate. While some Posts reported emphasizing candidates' commitment to community and social change, other Posts said they focused exclusively on the candidates' writing career.

> *We could centralize the process. Who should receive the applications and select participants is always a question. That's the only thing we could think of changing, centralizing the application process. We don't always know what IWP is looking for. If there are writing samples, I'm not a literature specialist. I can gauge based on the English language, but not the creativity or the content. (Near East)*

The challenges regarding nominations varied by country and region, with some Posts located in places where the literary and publishing community and industries were not as well developed. In such Posts, staff explained they sometimes struggled to find a writer of the caliber of the program to nominate. This included difficulty due to language barriers (most commonly, limited written English). In these cases, a lack of literary translation services may have been a barrier. Writing samples in English are a perceived nominations barrier for both the Fall Residency and Between the Lines. Some writers do not understand the difference between a literary and regular translation, so the quality of the samples may not reflect the quality of their writing. Especially for Between the Lines, even young writers fluent in English are unlikely to write in English. Relaxing this requirement or providing translation support would ensure the best literary candidates (still with spoken English proficiency) are considered.

> *[The] writing and publishing industry is still developing. Most write in local languages, especially established, older writers. Others write in French because editors are French speakers. Writing in English is very, very new, and it's not taught as a creative language. Finding the right combination was hard, although manageable. (Africa)*

> *Not enough English spoken or written in a country. Hard to find a fluent candidate. (Western Hemisphere)*

However, candidates were to be conversational in spoken English. As such, limited spoken English proficiency has kept some Posts from finding nominees. A common programming request from the survey was local language programming for writers who otherwise may be unable to participate.

> *Have programs in local languages so more can apply. (Western Hemisphere)*

> *We have great writers in […] who don't speak fluent English. So, if there is an IWP Arabic version, that would be great. (Near East)*

Diversity of candidates was another challenge for some Posts. A few mentioned wanting to diversify nominations to include writers from outside the capital city of their country, even if it meant putting forward less established writers. They recommended IWP weigh the value of this diversity as a selection criteria.

CONCLUSIONS
- Staff at Posts were highly satisfied with the IWP overall and the impact it had on participants.

- While they shared some administrative challenges, Posts felt IWP was implemented well and had positive relationships with the UI IWP staff and ECA.

- Areas for improvement included the need to decrease the burden of the application process on Post staff and increase clarity and support in participant selection for the Fall Residency, as well as support for the application processes of the other programs.

IWP'S ALIGNMENT WITH MISSION GOALS

EVALUATION QUESTION 3: TO WHAT EXTENT DO POSTS BELIEVE IWP ALIGNS WITH THEIR BROADER MISSION GOALS? HOW CAN THE PROGRAM BE BROUGHT MORE INTO ALIGNMENT?

Survey data overwhelmingly showed staff at Posts believed the IWP fit with their broader mission goals and priorities – 91 percent of respondents indicated they could utilize IWP activities to advance their mission goals.[8] Furthermore, respondents noted the IWP was the only exchange program focused on literature and writing in their public diplomacy (PD) portfolio that they participated in.

While some Posts specifically noted the overarching mission goals the IWP falls under, many spoke of the power of storytelling, freedom of speech, and supporting alternative narratives more generally as an important strength of the IWP. They shared that, especially in countries where the current governments were repressive, the act of supporting and amplifying strong voices that speak about democracy, truth, freedom, and peace was critical. They noted the role writers have played in creating alternative narratives, especially in politically and culturally repressive environments.

> *As a democracy, our trajectory is worrying. Writers and people in the arts have a way of connecting to people. We need literary voices to speak out for freedom. This really resonates with people. It connected well with what people are feeling right now. Not confrontational, but people get the message and can discuss, go deeper. Writers have an important role to play. (Africa)*
>
> *Programming in [country] is very restricted. Our PD goals are pretty modest because we can't counter the extraordinarily anti-American narrative from [country]… IWP and BTL are an important part of our strategy because our goal in [city] is to support a non-state narrative. Any writer doing fiction or nonfiction not being guided by [country] government is a grassroots, non-state, narrative creator, and we support them. Comic book [creators], photographers, YouTubers, bloggers, anyone [who is] generating stories outside the state structure. (Europe and Eurasia)*

Another area where many FSOs saw value in the IWP was the focus on relationship-building and person-to-person connections between Americans and other nationalities. The IWP has been invaluable in creating strong bilateral cultural connections that are especially necessary when political relations become strained. FSOs stressed that the most effective means to build these strong foundations was through person-to-person interaction. Alumni relations were a key part of this effort. FSOs in multiple Posts stressed the importance of just bringing people together in the same room because the simple act of relationship-building serves all mission goals.

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[8] For respondents indicating they are unable to utilize IWP to advance their mission goals, open-ended responses mentioned that the Post is not utilizing IWP at all, either due to general time constraints or knowledge that the country has another mechanism for sending writers to IWP.

> *At times, when bilateral or U.S.-European issues can be strained, the cultural programs are the mainstays. That's how you build bridges among people. There are a certain number of issues, the popularity of U.S. policies and Americans are declining. But not through cultural programs –the popularity of American culture strong, like American music and film, etc. People that don't like American politics, they still love the culture. Which makes cultural programs even more crucial in these times. And sometimes you have to just promote PD programs, cultural programs just for their own sake and not for other mission, strategic, political goals, or agenda, but just to make strong connections between the [country] and American people … We very closely align with PDIP and the ICS, and there are overlapping goals. It is just important to get [country] and Americans in the same room together so that we create opportunities to have a dialogue. You can't just come out of nowhere and try to engage with people on tough issues if you don't have strong relationships. So, our cultural programs lay the foundation for those conversations, to strengthen the relationship. (Europe and Eurasia)*

Several Post staff saw IWP programming as focused on traditional literary forms and suggested it could potentially expand to include more diverse literary or story-telling formats.

This would bring greater diversity and inclusivity to the IWP, and possibly decrease the importance of English-language knowledge or historically established publishing industries in-country. As noted earlier, while they were generally satisfied with IWP programming, staff at Post wanted to see the IWP expand to reach a broader audience. Some suggestions included mentorship programs and workshops for graphic novels, hip hop lyrics, spoken word poetry, and online content.

They also requested more follow-up and connection of IWP to other work at Posts, especially with alumni and youth. Youth programming was considered central to mission objectives and expanding to include more youth programming could help the IWP remain relevant and impactful.

> *The mentoring initiative was a great idea.[9] This was the first year we had that, and it was a great idea. It extends the experience to other emerging writers. We have seen that writers that participate in IWP have had great careers, but there are emerging writers that need this kind of support. So, it is a great idea [to expand programming]. (Western Hemisphere)*

> *We know their bread and butter are fiction and non-fiction, but the main story-telling style among youth here is comic books and graphic novels. Tons of people in [country] are doing this. There's not as much text, so [it is] more accessible to those with less English. [They] could include more people and younger people. Do a workshop on comic books and graphic novels, nonfiction, or their own stories. It's what's trending here in [country] and all over the world… We do a lot more programming with comic creators than writers. It's more accessible than [a] full novel or even [a] short story. (Europe and Eurasia)*

> *Our focus here and in other countries is really on youth and innovation, so finding ways to remain relevant to a young audience is a challenge for this program. Could involve spoken word, hip hop music, English learning through graphic novels … Perhaps a focus on these could be a hook to get more people involved, moving beyond just traditional novels or poetry. (Africa)*

To ensure the IWP programming fits closely within mission goals, staff at Posts recommended looking for overlap, connection, and lessons learned among cultural programming. They suggested Post and ECA work together to connect alumni or develop mentoring programs linking participants from cultural programs together where appropriate.

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[9] This Post participated in an IWP distance mentoring program, where one of their Fall Residency alumni mentored a young writer, then they traveled together to Iowa.

CONCLUSIONS

- The IWP aligned with Posts' overall mission goals, namely by creating interpersonal relationships, strengthening literary voices, and supporting non-state narratives in repressive contexts.

- Likely as a result of the IWP's reputation and success, Post staff believed even more could be done in the area of literary programming. Specifically, they hoped to see more youth programming as well as an expansion of the IWP to include other forms of expression such as graphic novels, hip hop verse, online content, and spoken word poetry.

IWP ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT
EVALUATION QUESTION 4: WHAT FOLLOW-ON ACTIVITIES DO POSTS ARRANGE AFTER IWP TO ENCOURAGE LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT AND MULTIPLIER EFFECTS? HOW CAN ECA WORK TO SUPPORT THOSE EFFORTS?

There did seem to be great efforts made by both the UI IWP staff and Posts to keep in touch with alumni – 66 percent of survey respondents reported they were in touch with their IWP alumni. Posts often reported they were not as engaged with IWP alumni as they believed would be ideal.

There was very strong feedback from staff at Posts regarding room for further or better engagement. They stressed that greater alumni engagement and the extension of literary programming would be valuable as a means to serve the greater mission goals and potentially create higher levels of impact over time. They emphasized that together with the UI IWP staff and ECA, they needed to leverage the program and its alumni to expand its impact. They stressed the need to find linkages between the IWP and other cultural programs, and to build on the vast alumni networks from existing programs and their commitment and connections to the community. Some of the other suggestions for continued engagement with alumni included yearly follow-up trips to Posts by IWP faculty or notable writers that alumni can join, mentoring programs between alumni and youth writers, alumni book fairs, alumni reading tours, reciprocal literary exchanges between Posts and the United States, writing workshops, alternative writing courses, and publishing alumni anthologies.

> We should think of ways to add maybe a small grants program for alumni for[a] follow-up program. The alumni could travel and talk about their experiences and promote the program and the U.S. Government's involvement ... engaging with other authors, publishers, etc. [There] should be a central offering like that so we can see the follow-up. We have only five to six people in-country, so it wouldn't take much to engage with them further. (Europe and Eurasia)

> Linking Between the Lines alumni with Fall Residency for online mentoring might be a possibility, for example. I think they would be willing, and we can have it as a requirement in their program description. We should focus on giving back to communities after exchange. If they're not willing to do that, wouldn't recommend them. "How do you plan to give back to your community?" is an interview screening question we include for all exchanges. (Near East)

It became clear during data collection that IWP alumni were rarely treated as a unique alumni group. Instead, they were grouped with Posts' broader alumni network for all public diplomacy and exchange participants. While there were a few examples of IWP alumni-specific events or programming, most engagement efforts involved inviting IWP alumni to general Embassy events. For instance, 35 percent of survey respondents indicated inviting IWP alumni to public events at the Embassy, and 34 percent indicated inviting them to alumni-specific social or networking events. As a result, while IWP alumni are well integrated into broader alumni engagement activated, there is little IWP specific follow-on engagement occurring.

Furthermore, overall alumni engagement seemed to be relatively weaker among the bigger and busier Posts. They reported difficulty keeping in touch and engaging with their alumni because of the numerous programs and alumni they managed. Posts with dedicated alumni coordinators attributed much of their success to that role. Despite this, they still reported falling short because of the huge volume of programs they sponsored. Some Posts, either because of staffing limitations, difficult political contexts, or other challenges, struggled to maintain an up-to-date database or communicate at all with all the program alumni.

The few Posts describing themselves as highly engaged with alumni also said they dedicated considerable resources for alumni relations and prioritized it throughout all their programming. They even focused on alumni on-going engagement while interviewing and recruiting for programs like the Fall Residency, making the likelihood of "spillover" or secondary effects a consideration during the selection process. One LES member from a highly engaged Post in Africa said, "We expect the moment you come back to do something ... that other people will benefit and pass on the knowledge you gained." She also went on to discuss the need for long-term tracking and monitoring of alumni so Posts could better understand how and if their programs worked:

> *It's not enough to do something. We also have to provide evidence that it led to X, Y, and Z. How can we ensure the IWP alum implement what they've learned? What are the follow-ups? It's not done until the outcome is evident. I'm not aware of efforts to circle back with alum to check in on what they're doing. During Lines and Spaces Tour, three [Fall Residency] alum from 2014-2018 came, but before we hadn't done anything to bring them back. There needs to be a real effort for every exchange we do. Send an online form, let us know what you're doing. (Africa)*

If the IWP expanded to include greater alumni efforts, Posts indicated the need for more support from ECA and the UI IWP staff on these efforts. Twenty percent of survey respondents indicated additional support for alumni activities would improve their experience with the IWP.

> *We need more sustained engagement with the program, that would be helpful. There is not a sense that they try to continue engagement. They should have more contact with [alumni]. These are prestigious people and potentially influential. More, better alumni engagement ... [We need] more information, networks, follow-up. Very little visibility of what they are doing on the ground there as well. That would be gold if we could see it. (Europe and Eurasia)*

> *There was no follow-up with the UI IWP staff, but I am in touch with a couple of people ... There was no formal way to get back in touch with them besides personal relationships. There was no evaluation questionnaire or anything like that at the end of the program, or once I arrived back [to my home country]. But all the participants did a radio interview with Chris Merrill in which the experience of joining the IWP was discussed. Also, after I got back, the program asked me to write a short piece reflecting [on] my experience. Only because I have some personal relationships, I keep up the connections. But there is no formal way to share my work with them. (IWP Fall Residency Alumni 2017)*

Unsurprisingly, funding was a common request, with Posts mentioning additional funding could help support better IWP alumni-specific networking events or follow-on programming. Some Posts also mentioned a more general request for "guidance and best practices on IWP alumni engagement around the world."

> *Provide funding to do one alumni activity per year, either at our American Spaces or at the Ambassador residence. Officially consider them State Department programs alumni (we don't). A fund for them to apply to publish or propose a project related to this field. (Western Hemisphere)*

> *Small grants program for IWP and Between the Lines alumni [could help] support writers' workshops led by IWP alumni. We have done this before with Post funds and [the] Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund. (Near East)*

One specific area where there seemed to be room for significant improvement was alumni databases. Posts said there is a need for a central and regularly managed digital alumni database, potentially with the UI IWP staff directly inputting and verifying contact information. Staff at Posts shared that it is difficult to keep alumni databases current, particularly for Between the Lines, and alumni connected to the Embassy because students often moved and changed contact information more than established adults. Posts expressed a need for a more organized, centralized, searchable, and open-access database for alumni, both for the IWP and other PD programs, ideally run by ECA.

> *[It is] a very, very weak database. The [Department of State] has an alumni database that was developed in 1990, but the search functionality is extremely weak. [It] makes it very difficult to maintain alumni contact lists. Professional exchanges have their own list that they try to track, including IWP alumni, but they maintain information in three different ways. It's a decentralized process. (East Asia Pacific)*

Finally, the current Cooperative Agreement between UI and ECA highlights certain evaluation mechanisms, such as a needs assessment when Fall Residency participants arrive in the country and a follow-up evaluation a month after they return home. However, interviews with officers at Posts indicated they were not aware of such efforts, and the information from these evaluation efforts was not shared with them. Furthermore, the few interviews with Fall Residency alumni in this study also indicated they did not participate in such formal evaluation processes. Interviews with staff at Post indicated that following through with such evaluation processes and strengthening them, especially by including longer-term longitudinal studies with alumni, would provide evidence of the efficacy of the IWP over time.

CONCLUSIONS

- There was room for improvement in terms of alumni engagement overall and better collaboration on alumni relations between the IWP, ECA, and Post.

- Staff at Posts also stressed the need for follow-up programming for IWP alumni in the forms of mentorship, online continuing education programs, and strengthening of existing alumni networks.

- Existing evaluation and data collection, especially long-term trends and outcomes among IWP alumni, was lacking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, the program was extremely well-regarded and generally thought to be very well-run and successful. However, the interviews and survey data provided several detailed and practical recommendations for small changes to improve the overall implementation and effectiveness of the program.

- Continue to strengthen relationships between the UI IWP staff and Posts around the world. While relationships are strong with some Posts, better overall communication and follow-up between Posts, ECA, and the UI IWP staff is necessary. The following communications options should be considered:
  - Dual cable/email communication during the application/nomination process where the official cable is preceded by an unofficial heads-up email alert that the nominations process would be opening soon to give them a longer recruitment planning window. That preliminary email should highlight any eligibility changes or new programming.
  - Email reminders during the application/nominations period with reference to the deadline and official cable number for their reference.
  - Official cable which features bulleted descriptions of all IWP program elements, including distance learning.

- Develop standardized and clear program guidance for all IWP activities and ensure it is easily accessible and regularly referenced in IWP-related communication. Guidance – potentially in the form of an FAQ or toolkit – should cover (at the least):
  - Application standards, including best practices in nomination selection.
  - Rules around the translation of writing sample(s), given the pervasive misperception that authors need to work in English, rather than just speak English for participation in the program.
  - Priorities, themes, trends, or changes to programming or eligibility criteria, with updates as needed.
  - How to use other IWP programming, such as existing MOOC content, to host follow-up writing workshops in-country for runners-up or Between the Lines alumni.
  - Clarified roles and responsibilities around alumni relationships, including best practices for alumni engagement.

- Create an external-facing FAQ document to help Posts respond to inquiries from potential participants about various IWP programming, application protocols, and deadlines. Allow fillable fields for Posts to personalize the FAQ, as needed.

- Explore creating an online portal for applications for programming, specifically the Fall Residency, to ease the processing burden on Posts.

- Explore creating one universal online IWP alumni database, where updates and guidance can be shared by the IWP, ECA, or Posts.

- Create an easy-to-use, well-marketed feedback loop Posts can use to provide input to the UI IWP staff, anonymously if desired, on program implementation processes. Consider creating an IWP@state.gov email address Posts can contact for inquiries, recommendations, advice, or support.

- Consider opportunities for additional programming:
  - Other types of writing and literary expression, especially those that might ease the burden of English fluency, such as graphic novels, hip hop, spoken word, and others.
  - Mentoring programs between alumni and others, especially virtually.
  - Follow-up activities and publications, especially for Between the Lines students to continue having an outlet to publish their ongoing work.
  - Exchanges that bring more American writers to Post to engage with alumni and new potential participants (essentially expanding Lines and Spaces).

- Invest in strengthening the monitoring & evaluation of the IWP through:
  - Capacity building for the UI IWP staff.
  - Longitudinal research with program alumni to better understand the impact of their participation in the program.

- Collect success stories about IWP participants and make them publicly available.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Established in 1967, the International Writing Program (IWP) at the University of Iowa (UI) has hosted more than 1,500 writers from more than 150 countries as writers in residence at the University of Iowa. While the focus of the IWP is its Fall Residency program, bringing established published writers to Iowa from late August to mid-November every year, there are other classes, tours and programs.

The IWP offerings are composed of (I) The Fall Residency, which hosts emerging and well-established foreign writers; (II) Between the Lines, for teenage writers from the U.S. and overseas; (III) Lines & Spaces, creating targeted face-to-face exchange abroad; and (IV) Distance Learning Creative Writing Courses, which use digital platforms to develop the skills of writers around the world.

- **Fall Residency**: Every year, during IWP Fall Residency, approximately 15 international writers of the highest caliber, whose work reaches a wide audience, join as many as 20 international peers for a 78-day residency in Iowa City. Intense engagement with U.S. culture and the creative economy is complemented by time for writing, interdisciplinary artistic collaboration, research, and cross-programmatic events.

- **Between the Lines**: Peace and the Writing Experience, a two-week creative writing cultural exchange for students ages 16 to 18, includes approximately 30 young writers from countries along the Silk Road in the EAP, EUR, NEA, and SCA regions. Alongside 10-12 American peers, participants broaden their literary and professional horizons, and deepen their understanding of American culture. An alumni writing contest and social media engagement aims to create ongoing dialogue and connect students to other IWP programs.

- **Lines & Spaces**: Overseas Creative Writing Workshops and Reading Series implement three one-week overseas tours with delegations of three to four American writers. In consultation with partnering Embassies and/or Consulates, in-country activities aim to address local needs, build upon networks and programs in the region, and increase the reach of other IWP exchanges. A pilot version on the innovative Youth Cultural Leadership program aims to mentor young, entrepreneurial IWP alumni developing arts programs in-country.

- **The Distance Learning Creative Writing Program**: produces four cutting-edge writing workshops and collaborate with the other exchange components to draw together globally remote participants. Two of the workshops aim to increase the writing skills and professional development of participants in the Women's Creative Mentorship Project. Another two workshops, tailored to advance Mission objectives, will focus on young international playwrights ages 15-25, and explore how the theatrical experience can cross borders using a variety of low- and high-tech digital formats.

These different parts of the IWP are conceived to be mutually reinforcing exchange components where writers and thought leaders from abroad will interact with U.S. counterparts and gain an increased understanding of creative writing, literature, and U.S. society and U.S. writers will collaborate with at-risk, underserved, and other priority populations abroad.

The three over-arching objectives that underlie all IWP programming are as follows:

1. Advance U.S. State Department foreign policy goals and Mission objectives in partner countries. The IWP's content, in the U.S., abroad, and online, strongly supports foreign policy priorities and themes including, but not limited to, freedom of expression, strong civil societies, cultural diversity, and the need to counter disinformation.

2. Improve participants' understanding of U.S. society by connecting writers around the world with fellow artists and with U.S. institutions, organizations, and communities. To forge these connections, the IWP uses multiple models, often in tandem: residency programming, creative writing workshops, discussion and translation forums, literary tours, transformative collaborations, and virtual projects.

3. Foster participants' professional development and increase their understanding of creative writing. The IWP uses mentoring programs, workshops and skill-building courses, literature classes, orientations, and guest expert-led seminars, the content of which ranges from the literary to the workings of the creative economy.

The theory of change underlying the program is that these components will foster professional development and allow participants to engage with the creative economy and with networks that embody and convey U.S. values and culture (including the importance of pluralism, tolerance, and freedom of expression) and that this will advance U.S. foreign policy goals and Mission objectives. The theory of change also posits that the strategic social media and robust follow-on by the IWP will increase programming impact and keep alumni involved over time.

ANNEX II: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

Fieldwork occurred from September 25, 2019 to December 19, 2019. The Evaluation Team conducted a total of **21 in-depth interviews (IDIs)** with key informants and completed **65 online surveys**, representing 64 U.S. Embassies engaged with the IWP around the world. For a comprehensive review of data sources, see Appendix III.

Document Review and Background Interviews with the UI IWP Staff

The Evaluation Team reviewed documents and records related to IWP and conducted four interviews with current IWP administrators to be able to understand both the various elements of IWP as well as the program implementation processes from the point of view of the the UI IWP staff in Iowa. These readings and discussions provide another point of data triangulation within which to view the in-depth interviews with Department of State staff at Posts around the world. **Table 1** in illustrates the background research that was done in addition to the qualitative and quantitative research with Posts around the world.

	Total Participants
Document Review	20+ cables, reports, program documents and online publications
Interviews with the UI IWP staff	5

Table 1: Background Interviews on IWP Program

In-depth Interviews with Department of State Staff at Post

In-depth interviews were conducted with 11 respondents from Posts covering five of the six regions working on cultural affairs programming that were of interest to ECA program administrators. Posts were selected for interviews based on recommendations from the ECA program office and represented highly and less-engaged posts. The Evaluation Team developed two separate interview protocols to use with Posts deemed by the ECA program team to be highly engaged and less engaged. Highly engaged posts were identified as those Posts that have either hosted the Lines and Spaces program or that sent writers to the Between the Lines program. Interview guides covered topical areas such as the IWP administration process, communication, alumni relations, and recommendations. The Evaluation Team reached a total of 11 IDIs in 10 countries. **Table 2** in illustrates the distribution of IDIs by region.

Region	Interviews Completed
Africa	4
East Asia Pacific	1
Europe and Eurasia	2
Near East	2
South and Central Asia	0
Western Hemisphere	2

Table 2: Breakdown of In-depth Interviews with Post by Region

Discussions with Current and Former IWP participants

A focus group with members of the current IWP Fall Residency cohort took place in Washington D.C., while two Fall Residency alumni were also interviewed for this evaluation. These discussions with current and former IWP participants centered around their recent experiences with the IWP – soliciting their input on both their experiences, and with how the program has affected them personally and professionally – to provide another perspective and point of reference to the data collection with ECA and UI staff. **Table 3** in illustrates the details of these discussions.

	Total Participants
Focus groups with current IWP Fall Residency Participants	4
Interview with alumnus	1

Table 3: Research with IWP Participants

Online Survey

To obtain a broader sample size and additional perspective on Post engagement and satisfaction with the IWP, an online survey was also implemented as part of the evaluation. The survey consisted of 30 closed-ended questions and 12 open-ended responses, focusing on Post feedback of the IWP processes and outcomes. While many of the questions posed were similar to those developed for the IDIs, the fact that the survey took place after the IDIs were completed allowed for the survey instrument to be designed based on the lessons learned from the qualitative research. The survey was sent to approximately 280 posts worldwide, 65 of those Posts responding, resulting in a response rate of 23 percent overall. **Table 4** in illustrates the distribution of survey responses by region.

Region	Surveys Completed
Africa	12, 19.5%
East Asia Pacific	18, 27.7%
Europe and Eurasia	13, 20.0%
Near East	8, 12.3%
South and Central Asia	3, 4.6%
Western Hemisphere	11, 16.9%

Table 4*: Regional Breakdown of Online Survey Respondents*

ETHICAL CONSITERATIONS

The Evaluation Team collected respondents' verbal informed consent prior to proceeding with IDIs and in written form before the online surveys. IDIs were conducted over the phone, unrecorded and limited in duration so that they did not cause undue time burdens on interviewees. The Evaluation Team ensured data confidentiality in that only the Evaluation Team was privy to respondent data and personal identifying information. The Evaluation Team's report only includes aggregate data, with quotes attributed to a respondent's regional category rather than an individual.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The Evaluation Team analyzed data through an iterative process during and after fieldwork. The team collaborated by conducting each of the IDIs directly in paired teams, drawing our analysis from the detailed notes for each interview.

For the analysis, the Evaluation Team first examined the data from the IDIs and then those from the survey data in Qualtrics. The Evaluation Team then triangulated the findings from those data points with information gleaned from other data sources including the background research. The survey results were disaggregated by region and respondent type to examine if certain findings applied more or less to certain groups or regions.

ANNEX III: EVALUATION STATEMENT OF WORK

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The International Writing Program (IWP) is a unique conduit for the world's literatures, connecting well-established writers from around the globe, bringing international literature into classrooms, introducing American writers to other cultures through reading tours, and serving as a clearinghouse for literary news and a wealth of archival and pedagogical materials. Since 1967, over fifteen hundred writers from more than 150 countries have been in residence at the University of Iowa.

The IWP is comprised of the following four programming elements:

- Fall Residency
- Between the Lines
- Lines and Spaces
- Digital Learning/MOOCs

Fall Residency

While the IWP conducts classes and tours throughout the year, its principal program is its Fall Residency, which runs from late August to mid-November. The Residency is designed for established and emerging creative writers — poets, fiction writers, dramatists, and non-fiction writers. The minimum requirements are that they have published at least one book, and that they possess sufficient proficiency in English to profit from the Iowa experience. The Residency provides writers with time, in a setting congenial to their efforts, for the production of literary work. It also introduces them to the social and cultural fabrics of the United States, enables them to take part in American university life, and creates opportunities for them to contribute to literature courses both at the University of Iowa and across the country.

Participants of the Fall Residency do not take classes at the University of Iowa, and no degree is given for participation. The program provides various literary activities. All the activities offered by the program are optional, and the writers are free to use their time as they wish, to write or to conduct research. The IWP may also facilitate individual visits to other parts of the United States, including schools and community colleges within Iowa and around the nation.

Between the Lines

Since 2008, Between the Lines (BTL) has hosted young writers at the University of Iowa for a cultural exchange program that focuses on the art and craft of creative writing. Participants, aged 15-18, come together in Iowa City for an intensive two-week session. During the session, they live in campus dorms and spend their days in creative writing workshops and global literature seminars designed to broaden their literary horizons and deepen their empathy for and understanding of one another's identities and stories.

Evenings and weekends are spent on assorted adventures—attending literary and cultural events in Iowa City, swimming and hiking in nearby Lake MacBride State Park, and exploring each other's cultures through open-mic nights and collaborative filmmaking. At the program's end, participants have the opportunity to publish their work in the annual camp anthology. Each session is led by a faculty of prize-winning poets and writers from the United States and abroad, who are also experienced creative writing teachers.

Lines and Spaces

The International Writing Program organizes reading tours to countries or regions with a relatively sparse history of literary liaisons with the contemporary United States. The aim of a Reading Tour is two-fold: to introduce important American writers to a new and distinct literary-cultural landscape, and to create opportunities for colleagues and students there to meet with a group of distinguished representatives of the current American literary scene. The tour involves public readings, visits to universities and literary institutions, encounters with cultural personalities and media, and visits to places and events that increase our understanding of the historical and current affairs of the region. Lines and Spaces is programmed four times per year.

Digital Learning

The IWP's Digital Learning Program offers a year-round program of online courses, exchanges, and events whose goal is to encourage worldwide cultural and creative exchange—the IWP's principal mission. Digital learning courses and MOOCs bring American and international writers together in online classrooms to explore themes of common interest with accomplished creative writing instructors. Exchanges offer groups of writers and artists opportunities to collaborate on new work and to build new communities across regional and cultural distance. Live-streamed events offer international access to readings and performances. While fiction, poetry, and nonfiction workshops form the backbone of online offerings, the Digital Learning program also aims to provide opportunities for academic discussion about topics in contemporary world literature. Unless otherwise noted, all distance learning activities are conducted in English.

Since 2012, the Digital Learning Program has offered more than 30 distinct MOOCs, courses, exchanges, and events which have provided participants creative space to form new international communities in the exploration of writing fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and plays; the craft of photography and other multimedia projects; and the analysis of a diverse selection of literatures. Digital Learning Program offerings have enrolled over 47,000 people from 197 countries.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this process evaluation is to determine how the IWP can best serve Embassies worldwide and provide evidence to inform programmatic decision-making by the ECA program team, who will be the primary user of the evaluation results, to influence future program design. The evaluation should be completed by **December 2019** in order for the program team to utilize the results of the evaluation for the next solicitation cycle.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation will answer the following questions:
1. Are Posts aware of the program's (and all four elements) existence?
   a. For those posts aware that have not applied, why not?
   b. What would make the overall program more inviting?
2. How are Posts utilizing the four existing IWP program elements to advance their ICS goals?
   a. Which goal(s) in particular were Posts able to advance through an IWP program element?
   b. Which program elements best enabled Posts to advance their ICS goals?

3. For those posts that have worked on an ECA-funded IWP project, did they receive adequate support from IWP/ECA?
    a. Did posts receive sufficient communication from IWP/ECA? How could communication between IWP/ECA and posts be improved?
    b. Did IWP provide adequate social media engagement for specific programs? Are there additional social media aspects or strategies that would have been helpful to Posts?
4. What activities are occurring post-program in conjunction with or at posts?
    a. What follow-on activities/engagement are posts programming, if any?
    b. Are participants still in contact with Posts?
    c. How can IWP/ECA better support these activities?
5. What structural changes (if any) need to be made to the program and/or its elements to help it better align with post mission goals?
    a. How can ECA align different program elements better for individual Posts or regions?
    b. What changes to current program elements would make the IWP more convenient/effective?
    c. Are there any new program elements that would make the IWP more convenient/effective?

EVALUATION DESIGN
This evaluation will seek to answer the four evaluation questions through a mixed methods design using the following methods: Document Review and Initial interviews

Document Review
As a first step, the Evaluation Division will undertake a review of existing program documentation. This will include initial interviews with ECA and the University of Iowa program staff. We plan to conduct 2-3 interviews with both ECA and the University of Iowa, with each lasting approximately one hour and conducted in-person where possible (and via teleconference or zoom if remote interviews are required). This initial research will help inform survey development.

Note: The ECA program office will be responsible for providing contact information for all relevant University of Iowa staff and making any necessary introductions.

Survey
For initial data collection, the Evaluation Division will send a survey to all posts through a cable announcing the evaluation, as well as through notification to the Public Diplomacy Officer Directors (PDODs) in the regional bureaus. The survey will contain mostly closed-ended questions and take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. The Evaluation Division will manage the survey from Qualtrics, including using the platform for sending email invitations and reminders to posts. The survey will be open for four weeks, and after the initial invitation, anyone who has not completed the survey will receive email reminders as deemed necessary.

Note: The Evaluation Division will take primary responsibility for obtaining necessary contact information for creating the Embassy distribution list with assistance from IWP team.

Interviews

To follow-up on data collected through the survey, certain posts will be asked to participate in in-depth semi-structured interviews. Based on survey results, posts will be selected for interviews using the following criteria:
- Regional representation
- Mix of large and small posts
- Mix of "high" and "low" IWP engagement

Note: Definitions of "high" and "low" engagement with the IWP to be determined upon initial analysis of survey results, but tentatively based on factors such as engagement with various IWP elements and number of participants/alumni.

The Evaluation Division estimates conducting interviews with 12 posts (two per region), with the possibility of conducting two interviews per post (for a total of 24 in-depth interviews). Interviews will be remote, using teleconference or zoom, and should last approximately 90 minutes.

DELIVERABLES
Monthly Reports/Discussions
These reports/discussions will include the status of on-going and completed tasks, brief summaries of significant meetings or briefings held during the month reported on, next steps to be undertaken by the Evaluation Division, and any pending actions to be taken by the IWP program office.   Monthly reports will also highlight any delays or expected delays based on the timeline (i.e., when a benchmark or deliverable was not met) as well as remedies or significant challenges which impede the timeline. The monthly report is expected to only be 1-2 pages.

Final Briefing
Once data collection and an initial of results has been completed, the Evaluation Division will meet with the IWP program office to discuss initial findings (the most likely format will be a 30-45-minute PowerPoint presentation; 30-45 minutes of questions). While this briefing will be geared to the IWP program office at ECA, they will be welcome to invite other stakeholders that they deem appropriate.

Final Report
The Final Evaluation Report will include a review of the evaluation and IWP, an Executive Summary that includes key findings, and a detailed analysis of the data collected, as well as any recommendations and/or lessons learned for the program. The final report is anticipated to be between 15-20 pages (not including appendices).

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE & TIMELINE
Below is a timeline of all key deliverables, based on an estimated period of performance of **July 29 through January 31, 2020**:

	Deliverable
Monthly	Monthly Reports
July	Kick-off Meeting
July	Program Document Review
July-August	Initial Interviews with Program Staff
August	Survey Development
August-September	Survey Administration

	Deliverable
October	Interview Guide Development
October-November	Interviews
December	Final Briefing
December	Evaluation Final Report

SCOPE FOR CONTRACTOR

While it is envisioned that the ECA Evaluation Division will be able to conduct the bulk of the work internally, we request the support of a contractor to be a part of the team and provide assistance with:

- Document review
- Creating and reviewing data collection tools
- Conducting analyses of the data collected (particularly the quantitative data)
- Scheduling and conducting interviews
- Report-writing

Payment

Payment will be remitted to the Offeror upon its successful delivery of the final report.

ANNEX IV: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE UI IWP STAFF

Administration:
1. Can you describe the University of Iowa's role in administering the International Writers Program? What part of the program do you specifically manage?
2. What aspects of IWP administration are working well for you? What challenges do you face?
   Probe for…
   a. Issues with participant recruitment
   b. Issues working with ECA
3. What changes would you make to IWP administration, if any? Why?
4. What support do you need from ECA to be more successful in implementing IWP?

Working with Posts:
5. How much interaction do you have with posts?
6. What is going well in how you work with posts? What challenges do you face?
7. How well do you think posts understand IWP?
   Follow-up:
   a. Do specific program elements seem to resonate best with Posts? How so?
   b. Does this have an effect on program administration?
8. What should be done to strengthen Posts' understanding of IWP and/or your IWP portfolio in particular?

Alumni Programming:
9. Is the University of Iowa in contact with program alumni?
   Follow-up:
   a. If so, how does Iowa maintain contact? [Alumni network? Programming?]
   b. If not, why?
10. Are you aware of any programming Posts are conducting with IWP alumni?
   Follow-up:
   a. If so, what kind of programming have you been made aware of?
11. How would you suggest ECA and/or Iowa support alumni engagement at Posts?

Program Results:
12. In what ways do you think IWP/your portfolio has been most effective? In what ways has it been least effective?
13. What are the intended goals of IWP/your specific portfolio? Does the program realize those goals?
14. How similar/different are program goals across the various IWP programming elements (residency, Between the Lines, etc.)? Is there any coordination on goals?

Wrap-Up:
15. What is the best thing about IWP? What are the main challenges/weaknesses of the program?
16. Are there any particular aspects of IWP that you think participants would change? Are there aspects you would change? Are there aspects that you think ECA should change?
17. Is there anything else you would like to share?

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR POSTS WITH IWP EXPERIENCE

Introduction *(suggested time: 3-5 minutes)*
AIM (unspoken): Introduce the purpose and process of the evaluation

---

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today.

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to investigate how Posts engage with the International Writing Program and make recommendations for how to better align the IWP's programming and processes to Posts' goals. I am conducting this research on behalf of the District Communications Group (DCG), an independent contractor which has been hired by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to investigate Posts' needs and opportunities for the IWP.

Protocol: After conducting interviews with a select number of Posts, we will write a report for ECA. With your permission, I will record this interview. If you do not want to be recorded, I will take just notes. These recordings and notes will be kept personal and confidential and will not be shared outside of ECA and DCG.

If there is anything you would like to remain off the record (not for the report) or on background (unattributed), please let me know. When we use quotations in our report, they will be attributed to the region of your post, but not to you by name or your specific post. Your name will never be associated with the remarks that you make today without first obtaining your permission. The DCG or ECA might reach out to you for further comment or elaboration after we finish conducting all our interviews.

Estimated Time: We should need between 60-80 minutes for this discussion.

Further Questions: Feel free to ask me any questions now or at the conclusion of our interview. You can also reach me or the ECA evaluation team directly if you think of questions later on.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

I. Awareness of IWP and Participation/Engagement *(suggested time: 20 minutes)*
AIM: To gain a better understanding of level of awareness of IWP and how to increase participation

---

1. What is your role at the post?

2. Have you worked with the International Writing Program in any way? Which of the IWP elements are you the most familiar with?
   (If necessary, review quickly: Fall Residency, Between the Lines (two-week summer program for Silk Road countries), Lines and Spaces (reading tours to countries without strong literary connection to the US) and Digital Learning (year-round program of online courses bringing together American and international writers for creative exchange)

3. *For those posts that apply regularly: Which IWP elements have you engaged with most frequently? Are there others you have not worked with but would like to*?

4. Where do you hear about the IWP? *Probe for:* Official cables, reports, colleagues, meetings, social media…

5. What should be done to strengthen your posts' understanding of IWP and/or specific program elements? Probe for: how this might affect program implementation or communications…

II. Administration of Program (*suggested time: 20 minutes*)

AIM: To gain feedback on how the IWP is administered by post, UI and ECA and to make the program more attractive and convenient for post

---

6. Could you walk me through the process of how Post engages with IWP? How does the process work? How is it different based on program elements? *Listen for:* Involvement by locally employed staff, support of the Ambassador, local culture, "walk-ins" who approach Post about getting nominated…

7. Do you receive adequate support from IWP and ECA in implementing the program on your end? What form does that support take? *Probe for:* adequate communication, social media content/engagement…
   - What support do you need from ECA and IWP to be more successful in implementing IWP or attracting attention to the program?

8. Do you think the IWP administration works well overall? How so? *Probe for:* What external and internal barriers do you face? Does communication between post and ECA/IWP work well?

9. What challenges do you face working with IWP? *Listen for:* issues with participant recruitment, working with IWP, staying in touch with alumni, ideas for how to improve program implementation…

III. Alumni Programming (*suggested time: 10 minutes*)

AIM: To understand the extent to which posts work with alumni from the IWP and how alumni support an activities might be strengthened

---

10. Is your post still in contact with IWP program alumni? If so, how? *Probe for:* alumni network, events, training or placement programs, in-country live events, other programming, etc.
    - Do you have any sense of how effective these alumni programs are?

11. Would fostering a continued relationship with alumni serve your post's goals? How so?

12. How might IWP or the ECA better support post's efforts at maintaining relationships with IWP program alumni?

IV. Program Effectiveness, Goal Alignment (*suggested time: 10 minutes*)

AIM: To understand to what extent the program's goals align with post's goals and ensure that the IWP serves post's broader goals and priorities

13. How are you utilizing the four existing IWP program elements to advance your mission goals?
    - Which goal(s) in particular do you feel you are able to advance through an IWP program element?

14. Do you think your post sufficiently engages with and participates in the program? What benefits does it create for your post?
    - Which one specific part of the IWP program do you think is the most attractive and/or successful?

15. What changes to current program elements would help IWP better meet your mission goals? Are there any new program elements that could be introduced to help the program better align with your goals?

IV. Conclusions (*suggested time: 3-5 minutes*)

AIM: To allow respondent to give advice and concluding remarks

16. If you were in charge of the IWP, how might it different? What one change might you make to increase the effectiveness, appeal and success of the IWP?

17. Is there anything that we missed? Do you have any other comments or advice that we should have asked about but didn't?

Thank you so much for your participation!

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR POSTS WITH LESS IWP EXPERIENCE

Introduction *(suggested time: 3-5 minutes)*
AIM (unspoken): Introduce the purpose and process of the evaluation

---

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today.

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to investigate how Posts engage with the International Writing Program and make recommendations for how to better align the IWP's programming and processes to Posts' goals. I am conducting this research on behalf of the District Communications Group (DCG), an independent contractor [OR] the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) to investigate Posts' needs and opportunities for the IWP.

Protocol: After conducting interviews with a select number of Posts, we will write a report for the ECA. My colleague is on the line taking notes. These notes will be kept personal and confidential and will not be shared outside of the ECA and DCG.

If there is anything you would like to remain off the record (not for the report) or on background (unattributed), please let me know. When we use quotations in our report, they will be attributed to the region of your post, but not to you by name or your specific post. Your name will never be associated with the remarks that you make today without first obtaining your permission. The DCG or ECA might reach out to you for further comment or elaboration after we finish conducting all our interviews.

Estimated Time: We should need no more than 60 minutes for this discussion.

Further Questions: Feel free to ask me any questions now or at the conclusion of our interview. You can also reach me or the ECA evaluation team directly if you think of questions later on.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

I. Awareness of IWP and Participation/Engagement *(suggested time: 10 minutes)*
AIM: To gain a better understanding of level of awareness of IWP and how to increase participation

---

1. What is your role at post? *(Listen for: any programs or specialization they are responsible for)*

2. Have you worked with the International Writing Program in any way? Which of the IWP elements are you the most familiar with?
   (If necessary, review quickly: Fall Residency, Between the Lines (two-week summer youth program for Silk Road countries), Lines and Spaces (reading tours to countries without strong literary connection to the US) and Digital Learning (year-round program of online courses bringing together American and international writers for creative exchange)

[IF WORKED WITH IWP BEFORE]
- What is your goal when engaging with the IWP? *[Listen for: benefits, alignment with IWP mission statement]*
- What results or outcomes have you seen from it?

3. Where have you heard about the IWP in the past? *Probe for:* Official cables, reports, colleagues, meetings, social media…

4. How do you like to hear about new PD programs in general? What would be the best way to communicate with your Post about the IWP in particular, to increase awareness and participation?

II. Administration of Program (*suggested time: 20 minutes*)

AIM: To gain feedback on how the IWP is administered by post, UI and ECA and to make the program more attractive and convenient for post

---

5. [IF WORKED WITH IWP BEFORE] In the times that you have been involved with the IWP, have you received adequate support from IWP and ECA in implementing the program on your end? Does communication and cooperation between post and ECA/IWP work well?

6. [IF WORKED WITH IWP BEFORE] Do you think the IWP administration works well overall? How so? *Probe for:* What external and internal barriers do you face?
- Have you seen differences in engagement with IWP at your various posts? If so, how? *[Listen for: unique needs and challenges by location]*

7. What challenges have you faced working with IWP or attempting to engage with the program? *Listen for:* issues with participant recruitment, working with IWP, visas for candidates, lack of time or resources, uncertainty about who to put forward, ideas for how to improve program implementation…

8. How do you think the IWP could do a better job of attracting attention and greater engagement with their program? What might make the program more appealing to your Post? *Probe for:* increased communication, more outreach, strengthened personal relationships, more awareness of the program, simplified process…

III. Alumni Programming (*suggested time: 10 minutes*)

AIM: To understand the extent to which posts work with alumni from the IWP and how alumni support an activities might be strengthened

[ASK THIS SECTION ONLY IF THE PERSON HAS WORKED WITH IWP BEFORE]

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9. Is your post still in contact with IWP program alumni? If so, how? *Probe for:* alumni network, events, training or placement programs, in-country live events, other programming, etc.
- Do you have any sense of how effective these alumni programs are?

10. Would fostering a continued relationship with alumni serve your post's goals? How so?

11. How might IWP or the ECA better support post's efforts at maintaining relationships with IWP program alumni?

IV. Program Effectiveness, Goal Alignment (*suggested time: 10 minutes*)
AIM: To understand to what extent the program's goals align with post's goals and ensure that the IWP serves post's broader goals and priorities

12. Do feel your post is generally able to use existing PD programming to advance mission goals?
    - Do you have a public mission goals document that you publish annually?

13. What other cultural programming is Post currently most actively involved in? What is it about those programs that is most appealing or attractive to Post?

14. Do you think the IWP program fits with Post's specific goals? Which goal(s) in particular do you feel you might be able to advance through the IWP?

15. What changes to current program elements would help IWP better meet your mission goals? Are there any new program elements that could be introduced to help the program better align with your goals?

16. What goals does Post have in terms of cultural diplomacy that are not served by the IWP? Do you have any ideas of possible public diplomacy programming that should exist to serve posts goals that are not currently offered?

IV. Conclusions (*suggested time: 3-5 minutes*)
AIM: To allow respondent to give advice and concluding remarks

17. If you were in charge of the IWP, how might it different? What one change might you make to increase the effectiveness, appeal and success of the IWP?

18. Is there anything that we missed? Do you have any other comments or advice that we should have asked about but didn't?

Thank you so much for your participation!

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR IWP PARTICIPANTS AND ALUMNI

Note: Questions marked with "**" in the guide below were used to facilitate a small focus group with 2019 Fall Resident participants.

Group Discussion Guide with Program Alumni in Yangon, Myanmar
Estimated Total Discussion Time: About 40 minutes

I. Experience with the IWP   *(suggested time: 20 minutes)*

AIM: To get a general understanding of whether participants overall experience has been positive and whether or not benefits have continued to affect their personal and professional lives.

Evaluation Team to briefly introduce the study and reason for discussion, highlighting that this is a study primarily on the internal implementation of the IWP and that we are interested to learn how the IWP engages with alumni.

1. **Could you please tell me a little bit about your experience with the Iowa Writers Program?

2. **Did you know about the IWP before you were nominated? If so, where did you hear about the IWP? *Probe for:* Colleagues, social media…

3. **Could you tell me a little bit about the about the nomination process? What was your overall impression of the process? *Probe for:* How was it initiated? Did you know about IWP and reach out to the embassy or did the embassy contact you? Did the process go smoothly? If you were nominated multiple time, is there any frustration about that? How was the nomination

4. **What was the best thing about the program for you? *Probe for:* professional growth, opportunities, networking, improving craft, travelling to US…

5. Do you think having participated in the program has affected your life in a positive way? How so? *Probe for*: better work opportunities, better understanding of self/US/world, increased confidence…

6. When you returned from the University of Iowa, did you talk to people about your experience? Who did you talk to and what kinds of thing did you share with them?

III.   Experience with Continuing Engagement with Post and IWP   *(suggested time: 15 minutes)*

AIM: To understand the extent to which posts work with alumni from the IWP and how alumni support and activities might be strengthened

---

7. Are you still in contact with other IWP program alumni in Myanmar and around the world? If so, how are you in touch with them and how often? *Probe for:* alumni networks online, in person meetings, social media connection, other events, training or placement programs etc.

8. Are you still in contact with the U.S. Embassy here in Yangon? *Probe for:* events, networking, professional connections…

9.   Do you continue to interact with the University of Iowa IWP team? What form does that communication take? Is there a better method of communication that might be preferable to you?

10. Are you aware of any programming that either the U.S. Embassy here in Yangon or the University of Iowa does with IWP alumni? If so, what sorts of programs are they? Have you participated in any of these programs?

11. What do you think of these alumni engagement efforts? Do you think the IWP sufficiently engages with alumni of the program? If not, what might be possible barriers?

12. How might UI or the U.S. Embassy or Department of State better maintain relationships with IWP alumni?

13. Do you have any ideas for possible follow-up programs or activities that might be beneficial to you? *Probe for:* Online network, virtual writers program, additional classes…

IV. Conclusions	(*suggested time: 5 minutes*)
AIM: To allow respondent to give advice and concluding remarks	

14. If you were in charge of the IWP, how might it different? What changes might you make to increase the effectiveness, appeal and success of the IWP?

15. Is there anything that we missed? Do you have any other comments or advice that we should have asked about but didn't?

Thank you so much for your participation!

International Writing Program Evaluation Survey

Purpose: This evaluation will help us to understand how posts around the world engage with the International Writing Program and identify opportunities to better align future programming and processes to your needs. This study is being conducted by the District Communications Group (DGC), an independent contractor, in tandem with the Evaluation Division of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA).

Instructions: The survey should be completed once per post, and can be taken by either an FSO or LES. <u>Your responses will be anonymized and reported at the regional level, not by your job title or particular post. Your participation is this study is voluntary.</u>

Estimated Time: It will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete this survey.

Deadline: Please complete this survey by Wednesday, December 4th.

Questions: If you have any questions, please contact Mary Ann Aabye at AabyeMA@state.gov.

Thank you for participating in this survey!

Q1. What is your role?
- Foreign Service Officer (1)
- Locally Employed Staff Member (2)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q2. What is your job title? [Open response]

Q3. To which post are you currently assigned? [Drop-down list, including "Other"]

Q4. To which post are you currently assigned? [Open response if "Other" selected in Q4]

Q5. How long have you been in this role?
- 0-6 months (1)
- 7-12 months (2)
- More than a year (3)
- More than 3 years (4)

Q6. What ways do you like to receive information about public diplomacy programming in general? *Please select as many as apply.*
- Emails from ECA (1)
- Social media (2)
- Official cables (3)
- PD regional newsletters (4)
- Videos or other promotional material (5)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q7. What public diplomacy programming is your current post engaged with? *Please select as many as apply.*
- Educational exchange (i.e., Fulbright, Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI), Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD), etc.) (1)
- Professional exchange (i.e., IVLP, Professional Fellows, etc.) (2)
- English language teaching (3)
- Arts programs (i.e., music, dance, or film programs) (4)
- Sports programs (5)
- American center (6)
- Online programs (7)
- Private sector programs (8)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q8. Do you feel that your post is able to effectively use public diplomacy programming to advance mission goals?
- A great deal (1)
- Somewhat (2)
- Not at all (3) → *Skip to Q10*
- Don't know (99) → *Skip to Q10*

Q9. Which goal(s) in particular do you feel you are able to advance through public diplomacy programming?
    [Open response] → *Skip to Q11 after answering*

Q10. Why do you feel your post is unable to use existing public diplomacy programming to effectively advance mission goals (or why are you unsure)?
    [Open response]

Q11. Do you have any ideas or suggestions for other types of programming that could be developed to better serve your needs?
    [Open response]

Q12. Is there anything else you would like to share about your public diplomacy programming or anything covered in this survey? *(Optional)*
    [Open response]

Q13. Have you ever heard of the International Writing Program (IWP)?
    Yes (1)
    No (2) → *End Survey*

Q14. How familiar are you with the IWP?
- A great deal (1)
- Somewhat (2)
- Not at all (3) → *End Survey*

Q15. Have you worked with the IWP in any way?
    Yes (1)
    No (2) → *End Survey*

Q16. Have you been involved with the IWP at your current post or at your previous post? *Please select as many as apply.*
- Current post (1)
- Previous post (2)
- In multiple previous posts (3)

Q17. How does your current post get information about IWP? *Please select as many as apply.*
- Official cables (1)
- IWP website (2)
- Colleagues (3)
- Social media (4)
- Informal or personal channels (5)
- Local cultural, artistic or literary circles in country (6)
- PD regional newsletters (7)
- IWP newsletter (8)
- Emails from ECA (9)
- Emails from the University of Iowa (10)
- Program alumni in this country (11)
- Visits from IWP staff to post (12)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q18. What ways would you like to receive information from and about the IWP in the future? *Please select as many as apply.*
- Official cables (1)
- IWP website (2)
- Social media (3)
- PD regional newsletters (4)
- IWP newsletters (5)
- Emails from ECA (6)
- Emails from the University of Iowa (7)
- Visits from IWP staff to post (8)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q19. Which of the IWP elements are you familiar with? *Please select as many as apply.*
- Fall Residency for established international writers at the University of Iowa (1)
- "Between the Lines" youth program at the University of Iowa (2)
- "Lines and Spaces" in-country reading tours (3)
- Digital Learning online programs (4)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q20. Which elements of the IWP have you worked with directly? *Please select as many as apply.*
- Fall Residency (by nominating writers) (1)
- Between the Lines (by nominating writers) (2)
- Lines and Spaces (by participating in a writing tour or indicating your interest to do so) (3)
- Digital Learning (by participating in digital programming or indicating your interest to do so) (4)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

If you have nominated for the Fall Residency, please answer both Q21 & Q22:

Q21. When did your current post last nominate a writer for the IWP Fall Residency?
- This calendar year (1)
- Last year (2)
- 2-5years ago (3)
- 6+ years ago (4)
- Don't know (99)

Q22. When did a writer that your current post nominated last get accepted to the IWP Fall Residency?
- This calendar year (1)
- Last year (2)
- 2-5years ago (3)
- 6+ years ago (4)
- Don't know (99)

If you have nominated for Between the Lines, please answer Q23:

Q23. When did your current post last send youth writers to the Between the Lines program?
- This calendar year (1)
- Last year (2)
- 2-5years ago (3)
- 6+ years ago (4)
- Don't know (99)

If you have participated in Lines and Spaces, please answer Q24:

Q24. When did your current post last participate in a Lines and Spaces writing tour?
- This calendar year (1)
- Last year (2)
- 2-5years ago (3)
- 6+ years ago (4)
- Don't know (99)

If you have participated in Digital Learning programming, pleaser answer Q25:

Q25. When did your current post last work with the IWP digital learning team?
- This calendar year (1)
- Last year (2)
- 2-5years ago (3)
- 6+ years ago (4)
- Don't know (99)

For Q22-Q25 above, if it has been several years (2-5 years; -6+ years) since your post participated, or you do not know when your post last participated, please answer Q26:

Q26. You indicated it has been several years since you last engaged with at least one of the IWP program elements. Generally speaking, why do you think your current post has not worked with IWP recently? *Please select as many as apply.*
- Not aware of program   (1)
- Unsure how to pursue it (2)
- Too difficult to be involved   (3)
- Lack of staffing resources at Post (4)
- Difficult to identify possible nominees (5)
- Nominations have been rejected in the past (6)
- Not my role or responsibility (7)
- We didn't experience benefits from participating that we expected in the past (8)
- Technology and connectivity issues make it hard to participate (9)
- My region is very competitive (10)
- We have other PD priorities to focus on (11)
- The time of year nominees are due is very busy for us (12)
- Information about nominations was received too close to the deadline (13)
- Nominees from our country are no longer eligible (14)
- Don't Know (99)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q27. How satisfied were you with your experience with the IWP overall?
- A great deal (1)
- Somewhat (2)
- Not at all (3)

Q28. Are there IWP programs that your or your colleagues at post might want to learn about more, that you think could be utilized more than they are currently? *Please select as many as apply.*
- Fall Residency (1)
- Between the Lines (2)
- Lines and Spaces (3)
- Digital Learning (4)
- Not applicable (No interest in additional IWP programming) (99)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q29. Generally speaking, what are some of the challenges your current post faces in engaging with IWP? *Please select as many as apply.*
- Not enough information about the program (1)
- Not enough communication before/during the nomination process (2)
- Not enough time to engage with such programs (3)
- Not enough interest at post to support such programming (4)
- Not enough literary capacity in country for such programs   (5)
- There are other similar programs (6)
- Too many applications to the program have been unsuccessful in past (7)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q30. When you participated in IWP previously, how was the support you received from the IWP team at the University of Iowa?
- Excellent (1) → *Skip to Q33*
- Good (2)
- Fair (3)
- Poor (4)
- I didn't interact directly with IWP personnel (99)

Q31. When you participated in IWP previously, how was the support you received from ECA in implementing the program?
- Excellent (1) → *Skip to Q33*
- Good (2)
- Fair (3)
- Poor (4)
- I didn't interact directly with IWP personnel (99)

Q32. What support from ECA or IWP would improve your experience with the program? *Please select as many as apply.*
- More frequent communication   (1)
- More effective communication (2)
- More lead-time for recruitment or planning (3)
- More guidance about nominee selection criteria (4)
- More support for visa process (5)
- More support for alumni activities (6)
- More prepared content to share from embassy platforms (7)
- More information about program activities while participants are in Iowa (8)
- Creation of a streamlined online application portal (9)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q33. Do you feel that your current post is able to use the four existing IWP activities to advance its mission goals?
- A great deal (1)
- Somewhat (2)
- Not at all (3) → *Skip to Q36*
- Don't know (99) → *Skip to Q36*

Q34. Which of the four program elements do you feel best advance your current post's mission goals?
- Fall Residency (1)
- Between the Lines (2)
- Lines and Spaces (3)
- Digital Learning (4)
- I don't know (99)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q35. Which goal(s) in particular do you feel you are able to advance through the IWP?
[Open-ended response] → *Skip to Q37 after answering*

Q36. Why do you feel your post is unable to use the IWP to advance mission goals (or why are you unsure)?
[Open-ended response]

Q37. Is your current post in touch with any IWP alumni, as far as you are aware?
Yes (1)
No (2) → *Skip to Q40*

Q38. In what ways in your current post engaging with IWP alumni? *Please select as many as apply.*

- Alumni social or networking events (1)
- Alumni training or placement programs (2)
- Events at the embassy (3)
- Online networks (4)
- Supporting in-country reading tours (5)
- Facilitating alumni visas to the United States for teaching and cultural events (6)
- Other (00) [Write-in option]

Q39. How might IWP or ECA better support your post's efforts at maintaining relationships with IWP program alumni?

[Open-ended response]

Q40. What is the biggest benefit to your post related to the International Writing Program?

[Open-ended response]

Q41. What is a change that could be made to IWP to make the program more effective and appealing to posts?

[Open-ended response]

Q42. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with the IWP or anything else covered in this survey? *(Optional)*

[Open-ended response]