**2009 International Studies Report**

**Step 1: Department/Program Mission (Any updates due September 15, 2009)**

The mission of the IS program is to provide an academically rigorous, yet flexible curricular structure for students who wish to pursue in-depth knowledge of global, transnational, and international issues. IS courses are selected from menus of courses offered by existing departments. Because of its interdisciplinary nature, the program services students with a variety of academic and career goals. We offer both a major and a minor.

**Step 2: List goals/outcomes (Any updates due September 15, 2009)**

**The IS Major:**

The goal of the IS major is to train students to understand and think critically about international and global issues and to acquire the interpersonal and experiential skills needed to operate effectively in a globalized, multi-cultural, multi-national environment. At the same time, we aim to have students understand how their own experiences and experiences of their home country are enmeshed in international, transnational, and global networks.

Through a combination of coursework, off-campus study, and competence in a second language, the IS major aims to help students attain the following specific learning outcomes:

1)  Acquire a solid base of knowledge about a variety of important international, transnational, and global phenomena.  This knowledge base includes not just factual knowledge, but also knowledge about the analytical models and frameworks that people use to investigate and analyze these international, transnational, and global phenomena.

2) Increase students' level of cross-cultural competency.  "Cross-cultural competency" comprises three intertwined dynamics:  a) possessing a significant level of knowledge about a range of cultures, societies, and countries outside the student’s own culture/country, b) knowing how to analyze and understand cultural differences, and c) having the ability to objectively analyze one's own culture from the standpoint of an outside observer.

**The IS Minor:**Because the IS minor was created only in the Spring of 2008 and only has two students at present, it is not feasible to carry out a meaningful assessment program at this time.

**Step 3: Identify program components (Any updates due September 15, 2009)**

**Program components for the IS major that address learning goal #1**

**Acquire a solid base of knowledge about a variety of important international, transnational, and global phenomena.  This knowledge base includes not just factual knowledge, but also knowledge about the analytical models and frameworks that people use to investigate and analyze these international, transnational, and global phenomena.**

1) Required introductory course for all majors: *INTN 130: Introduction to International Studies*

The explicit purpose of all the course readings, lectures, activities and assignments in this course is to teach students how the field of "international studies" has evolved over the past two centuries in response to actual international, transnational,and global phenomena.  Students thus acquire factual knowledge about these phenomena while simultaneously considering the different ways that people have tried to explain and manage them.  The course is taught at the introductory level and assumes no prior factual or analytical knowledge of international events.

2) Two additional "foundation courses", numbered 200 or above:*selected from a menu of courses that have been pre-approved by the IS committee. Students must take these courses in two different departments.*For a course to be designated an IS "foundation course", it must meet the following set criteria listed below.  Instructors submit a questionnaire and syllabus explaining how their course fulfills the requirement, and the proposal must be approved by the IS committee:

(i)  Required format of IS foundation course----the course must do at least one of the following: it directs students to investigate an important global, transnational, or international phenomenon from multiple disciplinary perspectives AND/OR it deploys the analytical tools of a given discipline to investigate a significant array of global, transnational, or international phenomena.

(ii)  Required pedagogical outcomes of IS foundation course---it must teach students to negotiate difference or otherness (intercultural understanding) (and instructors must explain what specific assignment are used to do this).  It must also do at least one of the following:  teach students how to employ analytical models or frameworks that scholars and/or policy makers currently use to understand international     and transnational phenomena AND/OR  teach students how to employ models or frameworks that scholars and/or policy makers currently use to compare salient aspects of different regions, countries, or demographic groups

3) Required senior capstone course for all majors: *INTN 370: Building on your international and intercultural experiences.*The course is directed at seniors who have already completed at least one semester of study abroad (or equivalent) and who have already had significant prior academic coursework on international, transnational, and global issues. The formal readings and class assignments are designed to do meet the two main goals of the IS program:

a) to direct students to consider a range of international, transnational, and global issues and the frameworks that people have used to investigate and explain them.  While this approach is analogous to INTN 130, the difficulty and intensity of coursework, including the types of issues addressed, is at a substantially higher level.

b) to direct students to reflect critically on their experiences during study abroad, especially experiences with negotiating cultural difference.

Notably, the course also requires students to complete a research project on a topic or issue that they first encountered during their study abroad.   Depending on the topic selected, the research project can do one or both of the following:  delve in-depth into a specific international, transnational or global issue AND/OR delve in-depth into the culture or history of a country outside the student's home country.

4)  The IS "focus area":  In addition to the above IS requirements which are common to all majors, IS majors also take 3-4 units in a specific "focus area."  This focus may be defined by a geographic region (e.g., European studies, African studies) or by a transnational theme (e.g., international environmental studies).  Students who pursue a transnational thematic focus will explicitly acquire additional factual knowledge about a range of international, transnational, and global phenomena.

**Program components for the IS major that address learning goal #2**

**Increase students' level of cross-cultural competency.  "Cross-cultural competency" comprises three intertwined dynamics:  a) possessing a significant level of knowledge about a range of cultures, societies, and countries outside the student’s own culture/country, b) knowing how to analyze and understand cultural differences, and c) having the ability to objectively analyze one's own culture from the standpoint of an outside observer.**

1) IS "foundation courses":

As discussed above, one of the criteria for a course to be designated as an IS foundation course is that it must include assignments that teach students to negotiate difference or otherness

2) Required senior capstone course for all majors: *INTN 370: Building on your international and intercultural experiences.*

As discussed above, one of the course goals is for students to learn how to reflect critically on their experiences during study abroad, especially experiences with negotiating cultural difference.

3) Additional components contributing to this goal, but not under the direct assessment of the IS program

3.1) Study abroad
All IS majors are required to study abroad for at least one semester.  Majors pursuing an area studies focus must study in their region of focus. Transnational students may study in any geographical location but are strongly encouraged to select a program that offers courses or experiential components related to their area of focus.  This impact of study abroad on students' cross-cultural competency is assessed by the Center for International Education.

3.2) Sustained study of a second language
IS majors must show that they have studied a second language.  The level of study must be equivalent to having completed two years of college-level language study.   Students may fufill this requirement by taking courses, or by taking equivalency examinations.  The impact of language study on students' cross-cultural competency is assessed by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures.

**Step 4: Select methods/data sources and instruments (Any updates due September 15, 2009)**

Because of the interdisciplinary, flexible nature of the IS major, each student is essentially doing a self-designed major, albeit in a routinized and structured framework.  We have concluded that the most logistically and pedagogically appropriate way of measuring student learning is via the two IS courses required of all majors:  INTN 130 (introductory gateway course), and INTN 370 (senior capstone course).

We thus propose two types of assessment instruments, to be built into the formal content of these courses:

**Direct assessment**:  Using a model currently used to assess college "mode of analysis" courses, we will ask students to engage in an analytical writing assignment at the beginning and end of each semester.  The activity will require them to draw on their existing knowledge of international issues as well as their existing ability to think cross-culturally.  This instrument will allow us to assess how INTN 130 and INTN 370 have influenced a student's intellectual development over the course of a given semester.  It will also allow us to assess a student's growth from the time they enter the IS major to the time they complete the major.   The student's performance on these analytical assignments will be assessed by a subcommittee of the IS program committee.

**Indirect assessment**:  Since Fall 2008, we have been piloting student questionnaires in these courses.  These will allow us to measure longitudinal changes in students' self-perceptions and to collate their self-assessments with our outside assessments of their analytical assignments.

**INTN 130**: Beginning in Fall 2008, all students enrolled in this class have been asked to complete a questionnaire about their present state of knowledge about and interest in international issues. The questionnaires are kept in the IS program office files, managed by the IS chair. When a student declares an IS major/minor, his/her questionnaire is filed in his/her student folder, which the IS chair uses to keep track of what the student is using to fulfill the IS major/minor.

**INTN 370**: Beginning in Spring 2008, all seniors were asked to complete a questionnaire assessing how well they think the IS program has allowed them to achieve the IS learning goals (stated above). They are asked to reflect on their present state of knowledge and also to compare it to their state of knowledge at the beginning of their studies. Starting in Fall 2008, this questionnaire has been administered in INTN 370. By the time the class of 2012 graduates, they will also be able to have their INTN 130 questionnaire in hand as they complete their senior questionnaire. This will allow us to measure longitudinal change.

**Step 5: Analyze and interpret the data (Due October 1, 2009 with preliminary data; Due November 2, 2009 with final data for this assessment cycle)**

To date, we have only conducted indirect assessments of the program via questionnaires. We will begin implementing direct assessments beginning with the section of INTN 130 taught in Spring 2010.

The indirect assessment data that we have comes from the following semesters:

INTN 130 questionnaires

·         Spring 2009:  26 students responding

·         Fall 2009:  25 students responding

INTN 370 questionnaires

·         Spring 2008:  3 students responding (questionnaire to seniors, but not integrated into INTN 370)

·         Fall 2008:  6 students responding (questionnaire integrated into INTN 370)

**Analysis**

**Indirect assessment data**

The INTN 130 questionnaires are intended to serve as a point of comparison that senior IS majors can use to assess their own growth over the course of the major. Since the students who took INTN 130 during the existing assessment cycles have not yet entered their senior year, we are unable to make any longitudinal assessment of individual students at this time.

The INTN 370 questionnaires provide students with a detailed list of learning goals related to the IS learning goals, and they ask IS seniors to assess how well they have achieved these goals. Overall, IS seniors “strongly agree” that they have achieved the learning goals. Furthermore, they are generally very satisfied with the intellectual and personal growth that the IS major provides them.  One issue that came up, however, is whether IS majors should be formally required to take economics courses, since many graduate programs in international relations and associated fields require economics.  We have already started to address this issue (see below).

**Direct assessment data**We have no analytical findings at this time, since preliminary data will not be available until May 2010

 **Step 6: How will the data collected be used for decision-making, strategic planning, etc. (Due October 1, 2009 with preliminary data; Due November 2, 2009 with final data for this assessment cycle)**

*NOTE:You will need to submit a summary report of your findings to the Assessment Committee for review. In that report, please include details of how the data will be used, any program changes that will be made (or not made). Questions to ask yourself/to include in the report are as follows:*

* *How, exactly, will your data be used to help with program planning and improvement?*
* *Will your program form a committee to review assessment findings, and make recommendations for change or improvement in a timely manner?*
* *Will your entire department convene to discuss assessment results and program changes?*
* *Who will make formal recommendations for curricular or other changes—the chair/head? The committee?*

**A) The data will be evaluated and analyzed in two stages:**

1)  Review by chair of IS and the IS faculty member:  The IS chair and IS faculty member are the two people on the IS committee with the most intensive, sustained interactions with IS majors.  They will be responsible for preliminary analysis of the data and crafting formal recommendations for any programmatic modifications that may be indicated.  The analysis for each semester’s assessment will be completed by the middle of the subsequent semester.

 2)  Review by entire IS committee:  As soon as the preliminary evaluation of data is complete, the IS faculty member and IS chair will present their findings and recommendations to the IS committee.  Prior to this presentation, all the raw data will also be made available to the entire IS committee.  If there are any findings of an ambiguous or negative nature, committee members will review the pertinent data and its analysis will be discussed by the entire committee.  Any recommendations for change must also be discussed and approved by the entire committee.  Upon the completion of committee discussion, the preliminary assessment will be finalized.

**B) The data will be used to enhance our program in two main ways:**

1)  Enhancing the pedagogical effectiveness of INTN 130 and INTN 370—data from assessment will be used to assess how well these courses meet our program goals, and modifications to the content and structure of the courses will be undertaken as appropriate.

2)  Enhancing the structure of the IS major—data from assessment will be used to assess how well the major requirements fulfill our program goals, and modifications will be undertaken as appropriate.  Obvious areas for modification include: the types of courses, level of courses, the number of units, and the criteria that we use to designate certain courses as “foundational courses’ for the IS major.

Example:  Some IS senior questionnaires felt that IS should require or strongly encourage its majors to take economics classes.  The IS committee was extremely sympathetic to this concern, but since the interests and career goals of IS majors can differ widely, the IS committee did not feel it was appropriate to have a formal requirement like that.   Nevertheless, we initiated a discussion about how to make the program more responsive to students who wished to take economics.  More broadly, we began to discuss how to make the program more responsive to students who wished to take courses like economics that were not explicitly “international” yet which provided essential grounding in disciplinary tools that would be valuable for the study of international issues.  Since many of these courses are 100-level courses, furthermore, this opened the question of how many 100 level courses IS majors should be actually be allowed to take.  The ultimate result was a revision to our major requirements (soon to be submitted to CRC) to allow IS majors to take up to three 100-level courses in fulfillments of their major requirements (previously they had been restricted to two 100-level courses).