

2014-2019 Strategic Plan
International Studies Program
The College of New Jersey
Adopted April 23, 2014

The College's International Studies (IS) Program (IS) is one of the most rigorous academic programs of its kind and has grown in enrollment and faculty participation since first accepting students in 2001. This interdisciplinary program enjoys a reputation of having high-caliber students and its goals and structure fit well with the College's mission. Faculty from the School of Business, and from the Departments of History, Political Science and World Languages in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences contribute to the curriculum, management and direction of International Studies. Faculty members and students are the main asset of the program.

This purpose of this strategic plan is to improve the Program by prioritizing and scheduling specific tasks, or strategic goals, that better meet the missions of The College and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the needs of participating faculty and students. The plan first lists the mission and learning goals of the Program before narrating the review and planning process. Ten strategic objectives follow.

International Studies Mission Statement.

To meet the increased need for training in global perspectives, the interdisciplinary International Studies major educates students to appreciate the social, cultural, political, and economic characteristics of national, regional, and global communities. It is based on the conviction that historically informed and politically aware students with knowledge of more than one language will be able to think more critically and act more responsibly in a shrinking world. Students who successfully complete this major improve their opportunity for further study in graduate or professional school and careers in government service, private enterprise, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, non-profit education, research and advocacy organizations, and teaching.

International Studies Learning Goals.

Students completing the International Studies Program will:

1. Emerge with a cosmopolitan outlook, awareness of one's own country and its culture, and appreciation of others;
2. Benefit from a truly interdisciplinary approach;
3. View human problems in their global context and examine problems from different national perspectives rather than through the perspective of one country;
4. Acquire critical thinking and writing skills;
5. Acquire awareness of the economic dimensions of public policy problems;
6. Be prepared for graduate study in a variety of programs related to international studies including law, business, public administration, and area studies;
7. Be prepared to assume jobs in the private and public sectors, including the Foreign Service and international non-governmental organizations.

While the wording of the Program's learning goals has changed slightly over the years, the goals themselves have been consistent over the history of the Program.

The recent strategic planning process.

This document is the result of the first strategic planning process undertaken by the Program. The International Studies major was proposed in February 2001 (see “Proposal for an International Studies Major”) by the departments of History, Modern Languages and Political Science, and the School of Business. The original proposal stressed the need for a globally-focused program with an interdisciplinary core, showed how the Program would match The College’s mission, and outlined the curricular structure. The Program was approved by The College’s Board of Trustees in April 2001 and began accepting students the following Fall semester. The Program was able to take advantage of The College’s adoption of more rigorous courses under the 2003 “Transformation” to list classes that required a deeper investigation into the various disciplines that form the core of the curriculum.

Currently, the Program draws strength from the fact that most of the faculty members of the Core Committee participated in the creation and transformation of the Program. These dedicated teacher-scholars agree on the need for students to acquire deep knowledge of a language and culture and applying rigorous analytic skills to global social problems. Students fulfill these objectives through work done in the classroom, in experiential learning and during their semester(s) studying abroad. Over the last decade, the program has sought to formalize these expectations in student advising documents, the Undergraduate Bulletin, the College’s academic requirements software (“PAWS”) and the Admissions process.

The current planning process began with a Self-Study and an external review. Members of the Core Committee completed a Self-Study in March 2013. The study listed several strengths of the program, especially the interdisciplinary curriculum, the expertise of faculty members, and the success of graduates in finding placement in rewarding private and public sector jobs and in the world’s leading graduate schools. A review of twelve comparable programs across the United States showed that TCNJ’s International Studies Program remains the most rigorous, as it requires study abroad, a senior thesis and advanced language study. The Self-Study did identify several improvements to be made as well as resource needs, the most important of which are listed below as strategic objectives.

Professor Karen Mingst wrote an external review of the Program, which she sent to Dean Benjamin Rifkin in May 2013. Based on a two-day visit with faculty, students, administrators and campus constituents, the review commended the quality of the program, the collegiality of its faculty and resulting student outcomes. Mingst praised the three requirements of a mandatory semester of study abroad, foundational economics and foreign language and noted that “they should be supported at the institutional level.” Showing the importance of the Program to the College’s goals of global engagement, Mingst wrote “The IS Program is one central component of internationalization of the campus.” The weaknesses identified in the external review largely paralleled those identified by the Self-Study and are addressed in the strategic objectives below.

The above discussion of the strategic planning process summarizes more extensive work that prepared the Committee to write the strategic plan. For more details, please consult the “Self-Study 2012-2013,” and Professor Mingst’s external review as well as the 2001 “Proposal for an International Studies Major.” These documents are available from the Political Science office.

Strategic Objectives of the International Studies Program for 2014-2019.

Objective 1: Curricular review.

The Committee will review the learning goals and structure of the major, looking for improvements that offer students more advice, provide more flexibly curricula and better prepare students for graduate school or careers. Such changes will be made after careful consultation with students, faculty and alumni. Priorities include:

- a) Thoughtful consideration of the addition of specializations in other geographic zones (e.g. Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia) as well as new thematic options (i.e. international development, peacekeeping, international public health);
- b) Means requiring that majors have training in quantitative methods and other research methods;
- c) A more comprehensive and structured suggestions of four-year course sequences, including a sequence for each specialization. Additional suggestions might be added for students interested in intensive languages, a second major or minor, and perhaps even a 5-year track for combined programs.
- d) In conducting these curricular changes, the Committee should consider relevant changes in advising. For one, instead of advising across the major, faculty members might specialize in advising one specialization, ideally in their area of research expertise.

Objective 2: Improve the website and other publicity.

The Program will improve the website (<http://internationalstudies.pages.tcnj.edu/>) to make it conform to College style, offer more and more accurate information, and be easier for students to navigate. The curricular information on the website (and on PAWS) should agree with that listed in the Undergraduate Bulletin. The internship page needs to be updated on a regular basis. Moreover, the Program will improve its capacity to keep the website updated (see objective 8 below).

Objective 3: Institutionalize a closer relationship to Center for Global Engagement.

With the recent announcement that “Global Engagement” is one of the TCNJ signature experiences, the International Studies program should work even more closely with the Center for Global Engagement. We suggest, therefore, that the Director of the Center for Global Engagement (CGE) be included as a member of the IS Committee. All International Studies students must work with the CGE to arrange their study abroad experience, and the IS faculty and student representatives would benefit from more familiarity with the policies and procedures of the Center. Further, the mission of the CGE includes internationalizing the campus. This includes curricular and co-curricular measures as well as increasing the number of international students on campus. Given the similar interests of IS and CGE to place global issues at the center of the TCNJ experience, a more established, well-defined, and closer relationship will be mutually beneficial.

Objective 4: Develop a Learning Outcomes assessment.

An integral component of a dynamic program is periodic assessment of identified learning outcomes. While the Program in International Studies developed clear learning goals at its inception and has engaged in periodic assessment of learning objectives, we view the strategic process as an opportunity to examine and update the goals as well as develop an ongoing

assessment plan. The goal of the assessment plan is to measure achievement in attaining the identified learning outcomes, and to utilize these data to build on areas of strength, address areas in need of greater development, and thus inform future curriculum development and programmatic initiatives. We expect that the Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan will be ongoing and yield measurable results.

Objective 5: Offer more internships.

It is a goal of the International Studies program to guide students toward enriching extra- and co-curricular experiences such as foreign study, internships, and cultural events. One of the main concerns expressed by students in the major was finding work after graduation. As one student mentioned, “I think there needs to be a way for more international studies majors to know what kind of opportunities are available to them after graduation.” Another student stated, “It would be great if there is a list of TCNJ International Studies alumni readily available that we could use for networking.” With this in mind it should be a strategic objective of the program to provide students with more assistance in their search for relevant, useful internship experiences by partnering with the Careers Center, Center for Global Engagement and International Studies alumni.

Objective 6: Improve tracking and engagement of alumni.

The International Studies Program seeks to improve its tracking and engagement of alumni. The program currently relies on the Career Center information and an IS LinkedIn page. These methods have meant that we have less than systematic and full participation of IS alumni with the program. Improving our tracking and engagement with our excellent alumni would strengthen our program in clear ways. First, more systematic tracking of our alumni will allow us to understand the degree to which the program’s content matches the needs of successful candidates in International Studies jobs. This will help us to better understand our own career preparedness strategies as well as our course offerings. Second, our current students would benefit immensely from greater engagement with our alumni. As our self-study indicated, 93% of our students plan to pursue a career in international studies post-graduation, and yet many expressed not feeling adequately prepared to enter careers in the area once they graduate. Indeed, in a survey of our current students, very few cited networking with alumni to be a helpful source of preparation to enter the field after graduation. However, students have expressed a desire to understand the various types of opportunities available to them after graduation, with particular students directly citing the desire to interact with IS alumni more systematically in order to understand these opportunities and to aid in their pursuit thereof.

Objective 7: Improve staffing resources through the addition of a graduate assistant.

The program will seek a graduate assistantship to add administrative capacity. While the Director hires annually an undergraduate student assistant, the addition of a graduate student employee would provide additional skills and continuity if the graduate assistant worked for more than one year. The undergraduate assistant could focus on publicity and experiential learning programs (such as the Model United Nations), allowing the graduate assistant to work more on graduate and internship placement. A job description is provided below.

Objective 8: Revisit the membership of the Core Committee, the role of affiliated faculty and relationships with other campus constituencies.

Given the 13 years that have elapsed since the establishment of the IS governing committee, and in light of faculty, school and department changes across campus, the limited at large membership currently allowed, and the need to be as inclusive as possible to include the broad spectrum of disciplinary fields represented in International Studies, the composition of the committee should be reexamined. Art History, Sociology/Anthropology, Philosophy/Religious Studies, among others, should have a larger representation, for example. Also necessary is a reassessment of the methods used by IS to communicate its mission, presence, and programs across campus and the steps needed to be taken to develop stronger ties with programs outside of HSS, such as the Schools of Education, Business, Engineering, and Science.

IS Strategic Objectives sought with cooperation of HSS and the Office of Advancement.

Advancement Objective 1: Development of an endowment fund for visiting scholars.

The Program seeks development of an endowment to fund visiting scholars in the Program. The visiting scholar would serve as a teacher-scholar in the Program for a one-to-three year period. The four participating departments would share the position discussing relative needs and rotating hires among the four departments. In addition to disciplinary objectives, bringing in foreign scholars could help develop curriculum and generate research in certain geographical regions or issue-areas (say public health). Given the diversity of objectives, funding should be developed to bring in more than one scholar annually. Development of this resource would raise the profile of the Program, give students an opportunity to work with emerging or established scholars and contribute to the interdisciplinary collegiality of the Program.

Advancement Objective 2: Develop funds for team teaching that promotes cross-disciplinary research among Core Committee members and affiliated faculty.

The Program will seek funds for team-teaching and faculty research. As a program that is at its core interdisciplinary, International Studies would benefit from enhanced opportunities for team teaching. Team teaching by two faculty members from different disciplines not only allows IS students to learn in an interdisciplinary environment, it also provides IS committee members and affiliated faculty with a chance to engage in cross-disciplinary research. Team teaching, however, is labor intensive, often requiring more work than an individually taught course. Thus, it is imperative that each faculty member receives full credit. Currently, at TCNJ, faculty members are able to receive credit for a full course when team teaching a course for the first time in the Freshman Seminar Program and in the Honors Program. IS faculty members should take advantage of these programs while additional opportunities and funding are sought.

Additionally, a research and travel fund for participating faculty members furthering such cross-disciplinary research would match faculty participation in the Program with research needs. Participating faculty members often work on research agendas that demand more funding than those of their colleagues, particularly in terms of travel costs. As noted below under “Faculty,” members of the Core Committee share a double load of advising and administrative service; they perform such functions in their host departments as well as in the Program. Thus a research fund directed at members of the Core Committee and Affiliated Faculty would reward faculty participation in the Program by providing the additional resources needed for international

research. A focus on cross-disciplinary research would allow their work to be directly translated to unique classroom experiences for IS majors.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan.

In the following academic year (2014-2015), members of the Core Committee will draft and approve an assessment plan to measure progress towards the ten strategic objectives. The assessment plan will specify benchmarks against which to measure progress towards the strategic objectives. The timeline below will help to stagger the pursuit of the strategic objectives over the five-year planning cycle. Committee members will finish the assessment plan before December 2014.

Although this strategic plan will guide actions towards the improvement of the Program for the next five years, the Core Committee recognizes that it may need to make changes in its planning process within the planning period. In writing the plan, the Committee seeks to prioritize goals and guide its efforts in improving the Program, while recognizing that such a process will require adjustments along the way.

Timeline of work on strategic objectives.

Fall 2014		Fall 2015		Fall 2016		Fall 2017		Fall 2018	Spring 2019
	Objective 1: Curricular review.								
	Objective 2: Improve the website and other publicity.								
	Objective 3: Institutionalize a closer relationship to CGE.								
	Objective 4: Develop a Learning Outcomes assessment.								
	Objective 5: Offer more internships.								
				Objective 6: Improve tracking and engagement of alumni.					
						Objective 7: Improve staffing resources			
				Objective 8: Revisit the membership of the Core Committee					
				Advancement Objective 1: Endowment fund for visiting scholars.					
						Advancement Objective 2: Funds for team teaching			