Program Assessment

Status Report

International Affairs Program

Trinity Washington University

Spring 2015

**Part I: Introduction**

The International Affairs (INAF) program at Trinity is distinguished by its rich interdisciplinary design, connecting foundational courses from its core constituent fields of economics and business, geography, history, political science, sociology, and foreign language. Introduced to the College of Arts and Sciences curriculum in 1986 as International Studies, it has developed through the years with the many disciplinary contributions offered by the programs that support the major. In addition, the **program regularly teaches a rotation of specifically designated INAF courses,** including the introduction to the major (INAF 201) and the senior seminar (INAF 499) as well as thematic and topical courses on a cycled schedule.

In the last several years, the INAF program has experienced significant change. With the resignation of Dr. Robert Maguire four years ago, the program has had to rely upon excellent visiting professors; fortunately, as of Fall 2014, Dr. James Stocker was confirmed in his appointment and placed on tenure track. While many members of the Trinity faculty have been actively engaged in the delivery of the major, the program continues to rely substantially on two faculty members: Dr. Stocker and Dr. Susan Farnsworth, Professor of History, who presently serves as program chair/coordinator.

Although INAF has, in the past, been available as a major program to students in the School of Professional Studies, presently it serves students in the College of Arts and Sciences only. The program typically graduates 6-8 majors a year. INAF also contributes to the CAS General Education curriculum with courses approved in satisfaction of the critical reading (CRS) and Civic Knowledge requirement areas.

**Part II: Mission Statement**

International Affairs is the interdisciplinary study of the nature and activities of states and non-state units in a complex and increasingly inter-connected global environment. Our program provides a broad-based foundation in world history, culture and societies, politics, geography, economics and global business. Concentration areas within the major provide opportunities for in-depth study of area and cultural studies, international relations, the global economy, conflict management and diplomacy, and global migration. The program’s strong social science foundation, combined with the pursuit of focused concentration areas, provides students opportunities to grasp complex global phenomena by drawing from the theories and perspectives of many academic disciplines.

The primary goal of the program is to enable students to gain the knowledge and skills to respond to the urgent, worldwide need for a cadre of professionals well versed in international issues. To achieve this goal, the program draws upon an approach that combines work in the classroom with a variety of educational enhancement opportunities that make optimal use of Trinity’s location in one of the world’s leading cities. With its emphasis on the issues of social justice, the role of women, applied learning, service, and leadership, the international affairs program is linked firmly to the mission of Trinity University.

The INAF major aims to prepare students for careers in governmental, international, and non-governmental organizations engaged in diplomacy, policy-making and advocacy, humanitarian and social development issues and conflict resolution, as well as in international business, law, and education. Upon completion of the undergraduate degree, students will be qualified to seek entry-level positions in agencies and organizations engaged in international issues and/or to pursue advanced study in graduate or professional schools.

**Part III: Programmatic Goals and Objectives**

Of the eight CAS goals, seven are pertinent to the INAF program. Appendix A provides a list of CAS Goals that articulate with INAF Program Goals; in addition, these Programmatic Goals are connected with specific, measurable objectives.

Since the majority of the courses that sustain the INAF major are offered by our contributing disciplinary partners, we have decided to focus our review on the courses that carry the INAF designation. These include both INAF 201, Introduction to International Affairs, and INAF 499, The Senior Seminar, as well as the content and thematic INAF courses that have become regular parts of our program’s rotation: INAF 251: Geography of the Americas and Europe, INAF 252: Geography of Africa and Asia, INAF 382: Oil and International Affairs, INAF 383: Poverty and Humanitarianism, INAF 385: Politics and Policy in International Trade. Appendix B indicates how INAF Program Goals and Objectives are met through the course objectives of these offerings.

**Part IV: Curricular Map**

In recent years, we have discovered that our majors most often join the program after a decision to shift from their originally chosen field or after arriving at Trinity as a transfer. Therefore, it is not uncommon to have students who have junior status taking the building block courses of the major at the same time that they are sampling more advanced elective options. Each student’s progress through the major has to be individually plotted through careful consultation with program faculty. The flexibility of the interdisciplinary major allows us to tailor an approach to the core requirements, (many of which allow choice), according to each student’s main interests and professional goals; we are also able to allow reasonable substitutions in course requirements to accommodate the prior work of transfers.

Ideally, a student enrolls in INAF 201, Introduction to International Affairs, as soon as she begins to explore the major. Enrollment in INAF 499, Senior Seminar, is one of the only fixed program requirements. Because of the way in which the seminar prepares majors for the development of their comprehensive projects, it must be taken in the fall of the year in which the student plans to graduate; the course, in fact, only is offered in fall semester and, historically, this has been adequate for the needs of our major population. Most of the other courses specifically designated as INAF are offered on a rotation of every two years; typically, these develop both content mastery and advancing skills at the 200 and 300 level.

**Part V: Proposed Assessment Procedures and Measures**

As an interdisciplinary major, INAF encourages students’ explorations of the central issues facing the contemporary world from a variety of methodological and substantive perspectives. We believe that we have found a stimulating and effective combination of courses that ensures our majors achieve a breadth and depth of content understanding and hone the analytical, research and communication skills essential in the workforce of today. Nevertheless, we are aware that certain topics and ideas are considered in more than one major requirement, including INAF 201: Introduction to International Affairs. Our major question for the next phase of our program assessment is to examine whether or not a separate introductory course should remain a foundational requirement.

During the first years that the INS/INAF major was offered at Trinity, we did not have a separate introductory course, assuming that the central issues in the field were addressed in the 200 level POLS courses: Introduction to Comparative Politics and Introduction to International Relations, as well as in the history and geography selections. The INAF 201 was first offered about a decade ago, at the same time that a SOCY requirement also was introduced. The major now is comprised of nine foundational courses, six courses in the student shaped concentration area, and the foreign language requirement. A typical major in INAF finishes her major with somewhere in the range of 45-54 credits, not the heaviest College major, but a substantial portion of the 128 credits required for graduation. Since its addition to the curriculum, INAF 201 also has become an option for students satisfying their civic knowledge requirement; both foundational POLS courses: POLS 231 and POLS 241 can be counted toward the Social Science requirement in the Knowledge and Inquiry section of the General Education Curriculum. While this meshing between the major and GEN ED requirements creates a credit advantage for our students, we want to be sure that our continuation of the requirement of INAF 201 adds value to the program.

During year two of our program assessment, we will be collecting and analyzing data that should help us determine whether or not to retain INAF 201 as a foundational requirement. We will be looking at International Affairs/International Studies programs at cohort institutions, gathering syllabi for introductory courses in constituent disciplines and comparing their goals and objectives to see if there is, indeed, overlap, interviewing recent graduates and current students about their evaluations of the INAF 201 experience etc. We are aware of the fact that proposed revisions to the GEN ED curriculum may have ramifications for INAF in terms of how frequently INAF 201 should be offered and how it will enroll if it were not concurrently satisfying a GEN ED area requirement. We also want to find ways to assess whether INAF 201 is succeeding as a sophisticated and engaging introduction to the study of international affairs, helping us to recruit potential majors from students who may have originally enrolled simply for GEN ED purposes. A fuller plan for carrying out this assessment will be developed during Summer 2015.

**Part VI:** **Conclusions**

Now that we again have a stable faculty team devoting a significant portion of teaching and advising time to International Affairs, we feel that this is a good moment to think critically about how the major that has evolved and to consider whether other allocations of credit or content emphases would be preferable. If we were to find that the goals of INAF 201 are met in other courses, this might lead to a curricular reshaping: either the reduction of credits required for the major or a different use of three credits in the foundational area of the major. Given our program’s size, our reputation for attracting excellent students, and our Washington location, it might be possible to reallocate three credits toward a required International Affairs internship. Our first step, however, is to explore how well INAF 201 meets its stated goals and whether it remains essential to the quality of the major.

**Appendix C: Program Faculty**

As noted previously in this report, many faculty members from many programs throughout the College of Arts and Sciences teach courses that are essential and valuable to International Affairs. However, Dr. Stocker and Dr. Farnsworth are the faculty members most centrally involved in the INAF program; their particulars are provided below.

Dr. Susan Farnsworth, Professor of History and Chair of International Affairs

B.A. Magna Cum Laude, College of Wooster, 1972

B. Litt. University of Oxford, British Imperial and Commonwealth History, 1978

M.A. Brandeis University, Comparative History, 1975

PhD. Brandeis University, Comparative History, 1983

Dr. Farnsworth teaches INAF 499 Senior Seminar in International Affairs and many of the European and world history courses that are approved for the history requirement in the major.

Dr. James Stocker, Assistant Professor of International Affairs

Dr. Stocker teaches INAF 201 at least one semester each year, which presently serves both the major and as an option for the Civic Knowledge requirement in the GEN ED curriculum. He also teaches POLS 241 in the fall and POLS 231 in the spring; these courses serve the INAF and POLS majors as well as contribute to the Social Science requirement in the GEN ED curriculum. In addition, Dr. Stocker offers 200 and 300 level courses that are important elective options for INAF, as well as supportive of the POLS and HIS majors.

Both faculty members are active in Sigma Iota Rho, the national honors society for International Studies, for which we established a campus chapter four years ago.