Building a National Security Program at a Small School: Identifying Opportunities and Overcoming Challenges

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Building a National Security Program at a Small School: Identifying Opportunities and Overcoming Challenges

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ABSTRACT
This article offers insights into the overall program development process and—institutional obstacles and constraints notwithstanding—successful introduction of a new national security program at a small liberal arts university at a time of growing institutional prioritization of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs. The successful launch of the program at a time of rising institutional resource constraints provides valuable suggestions for colleges and universities of similar size to University of Mount Union on how to develop programs in national security and/or intelligence studies that not only remain solidly grounded in the social sciences but are also tailored to a specific career path. Although aspiring to build the ideal program may be a natural inclination, the ability and willingness to settle for what is feasible rather than optimal and to devise creative ways to leverage existing resources and to align as best as possible with institutional direction is a prerequisite for effective and successful new program development.

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KEYWORDS
ingelligence; mathematics; national security; science; STEM; technology

The events of September 11, 2001, the subsequent war on terror, and the evolving patterns and origins of twenty-first-century security challenges (Brown 2003; Buzan 1991, 1997; Hoffman 2007; Jarmon 2014) have shattered the illusion of a stable and peaceful post-Cold War international environment. The ability to effectively guard against unsubstantiated or irresponsible threat exaggeration while simultaneously being able to objectively identify, to analyze, to prepare for, and to respond to current and projected dynamics in global politics and potentially associated national security threats (Fukuyama 2008; Mueller, 2006) is just as critical—if not more so—than the urgent need to restructure the national education system aimed at preparing students “for futures in a globalized world” and producing “citizens with critical skills to fill the ranks of the Foreign Service, the intelligence community, and the armed forces,” as concluded in a 2012 Council on Foreign Relations-sponsored Independent Task Force report on U.S. Education Reform and National Security (U.S. Education Reform and National Security 2012).

Acting on this combination of national need and market opportunity, the Department of Political Science and International Studies (PSIS) at the University of Mount Union decided to launch a new national security program. Though there has been substantial discussion in the extant literature on computer, network, and information security curriculum development (Bogolea and Wijekumar 2004; Streff and Zhou 2006; Vaughn, Dampier, and Warkentin 2004; Whitman and Mattord 2004), similar attention has not yet extended to
nationalsecurityand/orintelligenceanalysisprograms. This article thus not only contributes
to the broadly relevant academic literature but it also offers insights into the overall program
development process and—institutional obstacles and constraints notwithstanding—the
successful introduction of a new national security program at a small liberal arts university
at a time of growing institutional prioritization of science, technology, engineering and,
mathematics (STEM) programs. More specifically, we intend this article to serve as a
blueprint on how to successfully adapt to and overcome the competitive pressures of
changing social, political, and economic dynamics that are prompting institutions of higher
learning to make calculated decisions about which new programs to support and to
successfully introduce and to grow a national security program in spite of institutional
constraints. The relevant literature to date offers little to no coverage on this aspect.
Additionally, the successful launch of the National Security and Foreign Intelligence Analysis
(NSFIA) program at the University of Mount Union, as outlined below, provides valuable
suggestions for colleges and universities of similar size to the University of Mount Union
on how to develop programs in national security and/or intelligence studies that not only
remain solidly grounded in the social sciences but are also tailored to a specific career path.

The article is divided into eight distinct sections. The first section provides a brief intro-
duction to the University of Mount Union and the PSIS Department as a way of setting the
broad context for the introduction of the NSFIA program. The second section outlines the
dynamics and trends that reinforce the overall appeal of a national security program.
Institutional constraints and locational disadvantages—and how to overcome them—are
discussed in third section. The fourth section describes the initial planning stages to ensure
effective program development. These include articulation of learning objectives that align
with the institutional mission statement and the identification and fostering of basic capabili-
ties that are critically relevant to successful pursuit of a career in the broader intelligence
community. The fifth section briefly explains the extent to which the programmatic learning
outcomes align with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence’s (ODNI 2014)
 amended Intelligence Community Directive Number 651. The NSFIA curriculum is presented
in the sixth section. Specifically, it elucidates the extent to which the NSFIA program
seamlessly integrates specific resources and strengths of other university departments and
builds upon the critical thinking and written/oral communication practice infused through-
out the University of Mount Union’s general education curriculum. Efforts to ensure, to
evaluate, and to expand the NSFIA program are the subject of the seventh section Finally,
the last section offers a brief summary of the main aims of the article.

Brief history of the University of Mount Union and the PSIS department

Founded in 1846, the University of Mount Union is a comprehensive, private, liberal arts
institution in Northeastern Ohio. The school is home to approximately 2,300 students
and offers 62 majors encompassing preprofessional, interdisciplinary, and more traditional
“liberal arts” programs, postgraduate programs in physician assistant studies, educational
leadership, and a doctor in physical therapy program. The vast majority of students enrolled
at the University of Mount Union come from Northeastern Ohio and neighboring regions.

Until the 2002–2003 academic year, the political science major was housed in a then-
combined History and Political Science Department. A dynamic and sustained growth
trend in political science enrollment had provided a compelling curricular rationale to spin
off political science into a standalone department. Beyond that, members of the political science faculty articulated a strong desire to frame the study of politics in a traditional social sciences perspective, the better to differentiate it from the humanistic approach that defines the study of history. The programmatic spin-off led to the creation of the Department of Political Science and International Studies (PSIS) in 2002. At present, the PSIS Department administers three major programs of study—political science, international affairs and diplomacy (formerly known as international studies), and a new national security program, launched in Fall 2013.

Given the PSIS Department’s longstanding emphasis on an applied approach to the study of politics, the decision to commit to the development of a more distinctly career-focused national security program proved a novel undertaking. Compared to the existing programs of study offered by the PSIS Department, the national security program is not so much grounded in a theoretical and highly academic context as it is defined by a practical/applied approach, emphasizing in particular the development of basic skills and knowledge identified by the intelligence community as crucial for aspiring intelligence and national security professionals.

**Contextualizing the appeal of a national security program**

In the early post-Cold War years, the pernicious optimism that flowed from the “unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism” (Fukuyama 1989, 3) and the ready embrace of the prediction of a “New World Order” proved highly intoxicating. It was tempting to believe that the post-Cold War order would usher in a peace and stability dividend (Clark 2001). As the 1990s unfolded, unbridled hope gradually but irrevocably gave way to cautious pessimism. Following on the heels of the “Clash of Civilizations” argument (Huntington 1993), President Bill Clinton, in his remarks at the United States Naval Academy Commencement Ceremony on May 25, 1994, remarked that “[T]he end of the superpower standoff lifted the lid from a cauldron of long-simmering hatreds” (Auerswald, Duttweiler, and Garofano 2003, 100). Indeed, at the end of the twentieth century, the strategic security and economic challenges facing the United States looked not merely as daunting as ever but likely more complex as well.

In the aftermath of the launch of Sputnik on October 4, 1957, the United States government had passed the 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA) to “strengthen the national defense and to encourage and assist in the expansion and improvement of educational programs to meet critical national needs; and for other purposes” (Government Printing Office [GPO] 1958, 1580). In 1991, the U.S. Congress, acknowledging that “recent changes in the world pose threats of a new kind to international stability as Cold War tensions continue to decline while economic competition, regional conflicts, terrorist activities, and weapons proliferations have dramatically increased” (50 USC 1901, 1), passed the David L. Boren National Security Education Act (NSEA). The NSEA mandated that the following:

Secretary of Defense shall carry out a program for:

1. awarding scholarships to undergraduate students
2. awarding fellowships to graduate students
3. awarding grants to institutions of higher education to enable such institutions to establish, operate, or improve programs in foreign languages, area studies,
counterproliferation studies, and other international fields that are critical areas of those disciplines (D) awarding grants to institutions of higher education to carry out activities under the National Flagship Language Initiative. (50 USC 1902, 1)

NSEA subsequently led to the establishment of the National Security Education Program (NSEP), which aims to “develop a much-needed strategic partnership between the national security community and higher education, addressing the national need for experts in critical languages and regions” (NSEP.gov n.d. paragraph 2). Laudable as the initiatives were, “[C]ontroversy in the United States over the 1991 National Security Education Act, which aimed at supporting the development of academic programs in foreign language and area studies, militated against involvement of the Intelligence Community” (Rudner 2008, 112). Consequently, the development of full-fledged national security and intelligence studies programs proved quite challenging. It was not until the early twenty-first century that national, security, and intelligence studies as an academic discipline started to gain the support and visibility conferred onto area studies and foreign languages under the 1991 NSEA.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks, whether viewed as the result of policy, organizational, or strategic intelligence analysis failures (Goodman 2003; Marrin, 2011; Zegart, 2007a, 2007b, 2009), have dramatically accelerated the development of intelligence and national security studies as academic disciplines.

Prior to 9/11, the establishment of national security and intelligence studies programs in academia was a rather slow process, despite substantive efforts by a number of epistemological communities—including the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies (CASIS) and the International Studies Association (IAS)—to provide such programs greater prominence and visibility (Rudner 2008, 112). The delay in institutionalizing national security and intelligence studies programs may have partly been attributed to the difficulty of accommodating the interdisciplinary nature of these programs into “the traditional structure of academic departments of most universities” (Nye and Lynn-Jones 1988, 6). Security studies as a field of scholarly research had experienced its own rise and fall cycle before enjoying a renaissance in the mid-1970s following the establishment of several academic centers in security studies, sponsored by the Ford Foundation and the launch of International Security (Walt 1991, 216).

In the aftermath of 9/11, the realization of the comparative deficiencies in present capacity and skills to effectively and efficiently assess, manage and mitigate the myriad of twenty-first-century security threats and risks has not only generated significant societal demand (Rudner 2008) but significantly raised the prospects for the academic intelligence education market. According to Campbell, “[T]he ongoing threat of terrorism has increased the consumer base for national security intelligence, which now includes thousands of state and local law enforcement officials, as well as security managers of public infrastructure and business enterprises” (2011, 307).

The intelligence community (IC) has become actively involved in requisite capacity-building efforts. Through congressional mandate, the ODNI has launched the intelligence Community Centers for Academic Excellence (IC-CAE) program, an initiative that complements the Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) long-standing Officer-in-Residence (OIR) program, first launched in 1985. Additionally, the International Association for Intelligence Education (IAFIE), created in 2004, “serves as a catalyst for the sharing of information about intelligence training and education for those currently practicing intelligence and those desiring to enter the field” (Marrin 2008, 138).
The outlook in the professional field of “security and protection” has been consistently strong over the years with projected hires increasing from 35,620 in fiscal year (FY) 2007–2010 to 52,077 in FY 2010–2012, according to the Partnership for Public Service’s (2007) Where the Jobs Are publications. Any available data exclude hiring trends in the wider intelligence community due to the confidential nature of hiring data, especially with regard to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Security Agency (NSA), and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). The demand for intelligence analysts has been particularly positive in recent years.

In recent years, the demand for intelligence analysts has remained particularly strong. According to the Department of Labor’s O*Net Online, the field of intelligence analysis enjoys a “bright outlook” in employment, with an overall 27,700 projected job openings in 2012–2022. A recent study of federal hiring trends indicated that in 2013, 79.8% of new federal employees were hired by defense- and security-related agencies, with the Department of Defense and affiliated agencies accounting for 36.2% of these new hires. More specifically, recent studies on “Entry-level analyst hiring projections for the U.S. Intelligence Community,” conducted by the Institute for Intelligence Studies at Mercyhurst University in 2012–2013 and 2013–2014, identified cyber-intelligence/cyber-security as the most promising growth area, followed by geospatial intelligence (Marchwinski 2013, 2014a).

The private and business sectors, meanwhile, also indicate growing demand for entry-level analysts across the full range of analyst positions, given the ever-expanding threat and risk management metrics with which business have to contend. A recent survey indicated disproportionately high entry-level hiring prospects in competitive intelligence, business intelligence, corporate strategy analysis, risk analysis, and market research analysis (Marchwinski 2014b). On the whole, the dynamics of, and developments in, the twenty-first-century international environment, coupled with current and future attrition rates in key national security/intelligence analysis employment sectors as well as an acute “human capital crisis” in cybersecurity (Libicki, Senty, and Pollak 2014), will ensure strong and sustainable employment opportunities for candidates with requisite national security, intelligence analysis, and risk management training and education.

Overcoming institutional constraints and locational disadvantages

In proposing the introduction of the national security program, the PSIS Department not only had to contend with the obvious institutional limitations associated with being a small liberal arts university but also with the necessity of structuring it around learning objectives that complement the university’s commitment to “prepare students for fulfilling lives, meaningful work, and responsible citizenship” (University of Mount Union n.d.b). The new national security program at the University of Mount Union, as we will illustrate in the subsequent discussion, is the result of pragmatic adaptation to institutional and locational realities, of effective capitalization on existing resources and strengths, and of finally focused attention on external opportunities.

Institutional context

Greeting the development of the national security program at the University of Mount Union was a combination of internal and external constraints and limitations increasingly
faced by many institutions of higher learning these days. The most obvious of these are fiscal constraints (Archibald and Feldman 2006; Mitchell, Palacios, and Leachman 2014) and changing demographic and student population trends at the regional level. These limitations, though not necessarily permanent, are likely to be further accentuated in the near-term reality through distinct institutional prioritization of (accompanied by a relative yet substantive shift in institutional resources to) STEM programs aimed at increasing student recruitment and revenue.

The increased programmatic emphasis on career-specific fields of study resulted in a corresponding decline in, if not loss of, relevant marketing resources and support for non-STEM programs. Consequently, the department had to rely primarily on its own resources to market the NSFIA program. Working with the enrollment office, the department was able to reach out to potential students using data provided on the American College Testing (ACT) form identifying student interests. Focusing on regions from where the institution traditionally draws students, the department sent flyers advertising the program. Potential students were also contacted through phone calls and e-mails after they inquired, with the enrollment office, about the major.

Additionally, at a time of dwindling institutional resources for and commitment to non-STEM programs, successful new program development hinges to a large extent on the ability to build a curriculum that requires as few additional institutional resources as possible. Specifically, the availability of qualified faculty to successfully launch new programs, whether replacement or new lines, are highly constrained by prioritized institutional allocation of such resources to STEM programs, even in cases of compelling need for replacement lines due to faculty retirement or resignation. This directly influences the ability to create new courses or to increase the frequency of already existing courses. Consequently, the present structure of the national security program (to be more extensively discussed below) not only draws heavily on existing course structure but it also underlines the inherent value-adding proposition of increased interdepartmental cooperation and coordination so as to provide students with complementary skills that prove critical to success in the evolving field of national security and intelligence analysis.

The new national security program (discussed in more detail below) offers compelling synergies with existing institutional resources, notably with programs of study in the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures (e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Russian) and the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems (e.g., Computer and Network Security). Through the International Affairs and Diplomacy program, the PSIS Department has already been enjoying a longstanding and successful relationship with the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, making further collaboration and coordination through the national security program a highly attractive and mutually beneficial proposition. In fact, the practice of cross-referring students between and among the various departments—already an established practice between the PSIS and Foreign Languages and Cultures departments—proves critical to the sustainability of departments at a time of major institutional rethinking of academic program offerings.

The initial consultation with the Department of Computer Science and Information System, initiated by the PSIS Department with the aim of identifying potential courses to include in the national security program, quickly led to the realization of a more synergistic potential and to the subsequent suggestion to include the full minor in computer and network security into the national security program.
The competitive pressures of changing social, political, and economic dynamics (Altbach, Gumport, and Berdahl 2011) are prompting institutions of higher learning to make calculated decisions about which new programs to support. Given the reality of increasingly hard budget constraints and a deliberate shift to career-specific programs, any successful new program development—in both process and structural terms—will thus be contingent on the acknowledgment, acceptance, and effective mitigation of institutional constraints.

Finally, as suggested by the data provided in the previous section and as further elaborated in our subsequent discussion of the evaluation of the national security program’s success to date, the curricular structure of the program is deliberately more career focused than academically oriented so as to align more closely with the growing emphasis on career-specific rather than liberal education that has come to define the current trajectory of higher education without, however, compromising the importance of critical and analytical thinking (Deresiewicz 2014; Roche 2010; Roth 2014; Zakaria 2015). At the same time, if enhanced by institutional marketing support commensurate with the identified market potential and demand—as reflected in the post-9/11 aggressive capacity build up in the broader national security and intelligence analysis industry— the new national security program is uniquely positioned to provide the University of Mount Union with an added competitive advantage in student recruitment.

**Locational context**

In addition to financial/institutional constraints, the University of Mount Union’s location appears to confer a competitive disadvantage. Located in a relatively rural part of Northeast Ohio, the institution does not have immediate access to a wide array resources and networking opportunities available to students in major metropolitan areas. Consequently, the creation of the program entailed extensive and ongoing research to locate opportunities for students. While our investigations found a paucity in immediate resources, expanding our search yielded great opportunities and suggests that such apparent regional disadvantages need not be absolute. In fact, the national security program benefits from relative proximity to a number of regional Intelligence Community resources. The Cleveland Division Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Cleveland Field Intelligence Group, the Cleveland chapter of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, regional and local cybercrime taskforces, branch offices of the FBI and Homeland Security, and local InfraGard Chapters all present potential opportunities for student internships and can function as potential resources for speakers. In addition, the department was able to leverage its alumni network and faculty (including current and former members of the IC community) to provide an invaluable resource/talent pool that the department may draw to strengthen program development, to promote student and community education, and to provide substantive networking opportunities.

A regional competitive positioning study conducted by the PSIS Department during the national security program planning stage, meanwhile, suggested a compelling competitive advantage in student recruitment to the University of Mount Union given not only the growing demand for national security and intelligence community professionals but, more importantly, the lack of programmatic competition from peer and aspirant institutions. In fact, the University of Mount Union’s program is the only one of its kind in Northeastern Ohio, and one of only two four-year national security studies programs offered at the
undergraduate level in Ohio. Moreover, the national security program is uniquely positioned to serve as a feeder program for the University of Akron graduate program in political science, which presently offers a “Security Studies” track.

Finally, the department was able to counter its regional disadvantages through close coordination with an already well-established internship program through The Center for Student Success and Career Development at the University of Mount Union. With the help of the center’s executive director, who also serves on the Liaison Advisory Board of The Washington Center, the PSIS Department has been working extensively with The Washington Center to develop and secure specific internships focused on intelligence and national security that provide students in the national security program with practical insights into and hands-on exposure to the working environment and dynamics of the broader intelligence and national security communities.

**Action plan for effective national security program development**

When considering the development of a national security program, the PSIS Department not only had to contend with significant institutional constraints (as discussed above) and the broader limitations that come with being a small liberal arts-grounded university but it also had to ensure that the proposed program be structured around learning objectives that complement the institutional commitment to “prepare students for fulfilling lives, meaningful work, and responsible citizenship” (University of Mount Union n.d.b). Moreover, significant time and effort were devoted to differentiating the national security program from the existing international affairs & diplomacy program in substantive ways while also benchmarking it against comparable programs nationwide. Ultimately, the ability (1) to successfully leverage the University of Mount Union’s established liberal arts foundation, (2) to draw on the curricular breadth and depth of existing academic courses within as well as outside of the PSIS department, and (3) to foster extensive cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary linkages proved critical to the successful launch of the national security program.

The study of intelligence encompasses a wide range of fields, including “a multitude of governance, policy, institutional, operational, and behavioral parameters in its intellectual purview” (Rudner 2008, 114). Similarly, and in a broader sense, the current security concerns for the United States, as spelled out in the 2010 National Security Strategy of the United States (White House 2010, 17), include both domestic and international issues as well as transnational concerns such as democracy promotion and defense of human rights. Consequently, any effort to successfully address these interests, by virtue of their nature, scope, breadth, and depth, would compel substantive knowledge of both the complex dynamics shaping continuities and changes of international politics (Rosenau 1990) as well as a detailed understanding of the peculiarities of diverse political, economic, social, and cultural environments (from both an institutional and interactional perspective). Thus, any academic study of intelligence and national security must be interdisciplinary. From that perspective, the PSIS Department was uniquely positioned to develop a national security program on account of its extensive prior experience in successfully developing, managing, and assessing an interdisciplinary program in the form of its own in-house International Affairs & Diplomacy (formerly International Studies) program.

The starting point for the development of any program is to identify key learning objectives. Part of this process involves identification of what can and cannot be accomplished in
an undergraduate academic program. Intriguing and exciting though it might be, for both faculty and students, to develop a national security program that is focused on the more glamorous aspects of the profession—that is, operational training and analysis—it should be readily apparent that in-depth operational training is generally beyond the scope of most undergraduate programs (Landon-Murray 2013). Instead, the primary goal should be to impart solid foundational knowledge about the structure, methods, and functioning of the intelligence and national security communities as well as to provide students with an objective and comprehensive understanding of the major issues and dynamics in national security and intelligence analysis (Rudner 2008).

At the same time, there is widespread consensus on the need to develop a set of basic capabilities—for example, language ability, regional knowledge, critical thinking, and effective communication—that are critically relevant to successful pursuit of a career in the broader intelligence community (Landon-Murray 2013, 751). Pursuant to that goal, the PSIS Department has sponsored a number of on-campus events, featuring retired CIA agents and analysts, designed specifically to dispel any prevailing myths and misperceptions about careers in the national security and intelligence analysis field, while also offering specific advice on how to prepare for a career with national-security- and/or intelligence-related agencies.

Apart from being compatible with the mission of the University of Mount Union, the national security program’s learning outcomes (see Table 1) also reinforce the PSIS Department’s commitment to equip students with all the requisite skills and tools for personal and professional success and to instill in them a desire for and commitment to lifelong engagement with the political world. In pursuit of these goals, the department

Table 1. National security program learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Skills:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to identify the agencies and departments that are considered members of the U.S. intelligence community.</td>
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<td>Students will be able to describe the history and structure of the U.S. intelligence agencies as well as similar agencies in other countries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to describe the intelligence gathering, analysis, and dissemination process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to discuss the history, structure, and nature of U.S. foreign policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to identify some of the major threats currently facing the United States.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to compare and contrast the different types of political, economic, and cultural systems in other nations.</td>
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<th>Methodological Skills:</th>
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<td>Students will be able to read and interpret tables, charts, and graphs commonly found in the relevant literature.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to apply appropriate quantitative methods to perform basic data analysis, correctly interpreting the results of those tests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to identify the methods used in intelligence analysis and to determine which methods are best for their research and to employ those methods in an appropriate manner.</td>
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<th>Intellectual Skills:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to analyze evidence and reach evidence-based conclusions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to effectively communicate ideas in written and oral formats.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to identify issues, to evaluate the relative importance of problems, to formulate solutions, and to evaluate the consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to gather information from a variety of sources, to use information in an appropriate manner to address issues, and to take action.</td>
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embraces an applied approach that fosters intellectual growth through active learning and internships, encourages critical and analytical thinking, emphasizes quantitative and qualitative research methods and promotes effective written and oral communication skills (University of Mount Union n.d.a).

**National security program learning outcomes and ODNI ICD 651**

The national security program’s learning outcomes are not based on the ODNI’s amended *Intelligence Community Directive Number 651*, as the program development preceded the directive’s official release. Nonetheless, as shown in Table 2, the program learning outcomes—combined with the university’s general education curriculum learning outcomes—closely approximate most, if not all, the major core competencies identified by ODNI ICD 651 (ODNI 2014).

The broad nature of the framework provided by the ODNI compelled the PSIS Department to determine the type and depth of competencies best addressed within the national security program itself. Any identified competencies not explicitly addressed by the

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<tr>
<th>ODNI-Identified core competencies</th>
<th>National security program learning outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability for Results</td>
<td>• Students will be able to effectively communicate ideas in written and oral formats.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>• Students will be able to analyze evidence and reach evidence-based conclusions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students will be able to identify issues, to evaluate the relative importance of problems, to formulate solutions, and to evaluate the consequences.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students will be able to gather information from a variety of sources, to use information in an appropriate manner to address issues, and to take action.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement and Collaboration</td>
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<td>Personal Leadership and Integrity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Expertise</td>
<td>• Students will be able to identify the agencies and departments that are considered members of the U.S. intelligence community.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students will be able to describe the history and structure of the U.S. intelligence agencies as well as similar agencies in other countries.</td>
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<td>• Students will be able to describe the intelligence gathering, analysis, and dissemination process.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• Students will be able to compare and contrast the different types of political, economic, and cultural systems in other nations.</td>
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program are covered by the University of Mount Union’s general education (Integrative Core) curriculum that infuses written and oral communication throughout the curriculum and emphasizes critical thinking, reflective learning, and complex problem solving. The experience ends with a senior capstone seminar that requires students to engage in a collaborative study of a real-world issue designed to help students develop critical skills for effective and efficient collaborative work.

**National security program curriculum**

As illustrated in Table 3, the curricular structure of the University of Mount Union national security program emphasizes professional skills courses and mandatory national-security-related internships, coupled with a minor in either Foreign Languages or Computer and Network Security in order to prepare students for entry-level jobs in the broader national security and intelligence community. Apart from providing students with a comprehensive skillset for intelligence analysis, the national security program features a built-in minor requirement\(^1\) that is geared towards giving students a basic foundation for a future career in either the clandestine service (by focusing on foreign languages, coupled with extended area studies knowledge) or in cyber-security/warfare (by focusing on computer and network security).

**Table 3.** Major requirements for national security program

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<th>Required Courses (20 Semester Hours)</th>
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<tr>
<td>American Government and Politics</td>
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<td>World Politics</td>
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<td>or</td>
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<td>Introduction to Geography</td>
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<td>Introduction to Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction to Political Science Methods and Inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative Political Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Security and Intelligence Core Courses (12 Semester Hours)</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Foreign Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence Gathering, Analysis, and Dissemination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colloquium in National Security (Senior Capstone)</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Security and Intelligence Distribution Courses (8 Semester Hours) – Choose two courses with different prefixes</td>
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<td>Required Minor (16–20 Semester Hours)</td>
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<td>Minor in Foreign Language (20 Semester Hours)</td>
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<td>or</td>
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<td>Minor in Computer and Network Security (16 Semester Hours)</td>
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The curricular structure of the national security program—in terms of required and electives courses as well as the built-in minor requirement—is designed to impart an analytical and technical skill set that will prove critical for a comprehensive foundation in matters of national security and intelligence analysis. Course offerings include area studies specialization—Europe, Middle East, East Asia, Russia and its near-abroad, and the Global South—and topical focus, including terrorism and economic development. The required courses in U.S. foreign policy and intelligence gathering, analysis, and dissemination foster a comprehensive understanding of the major national security issues facing the United States as well as a general understanding of the structure and function of the intelligence community. The internship requirement, meanwhile, aims to give students firsthand exposure to and experience in a wide range of organizations related to national security and/or intelligence analysis and, consequently, to develop additional skills and/or insights into national security or intelligence analysis matters that prove difficult to provide in an academic setting. Moreover, students further expand their learning and skills acquisition with an overseas course of study through an extensive study-abroad program at the University of Mount Union that ranges from semester-long programs to summer programs and short-term (typically 1–2 weeks) faculty-led study tours.

The University of Mount Union also enjoys obvious programmatic strengths in the form of established programs (major and minor programs of study) across the entire institutional level that can further complement the national security program. These programs—including most notably economics (major and minor), mechanical engineering (major), international business and economics (major), business administration (minor), and public service (minor)—provide students with opportunities to expand their areas of expertise, either through the pursuit of a double major or of an additional minor to the two options granted all students in the national security program. Additionally, they also allow for linking the national security education with skills acquisition in a wide range of fields that are identified as being in high demand by the intelligence community. The combined breadth and depth of national security-specific faculty resources, spanning extensive firsthand regional expertise, active area studies research agenda, and/or prior intelligence community experience, further adds to the academic quality and rigor of the program.

Extending the curricular perspective beyond the PSIS Department, the national security program draws on a range of invaluable resources from the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures and the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems. Apart from offering four full-blown foreign language majors and minors in French, German, Spanish, and Japanese, the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures also presently offers a minor in Chinese and courses in Arabic and Russian—identified as “critical languages” by the federal National Security Education Program. Students may choose from any one of these language programs to fulfill the Foreign Language minor option associated with the national security program.

Alternatively, students may choose to minor in computer and network security through the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems. The minor consists of five courses providing an introduction to the functioning of computer networks and their security. The courses include the following: Programming and Problem Solving, Computer Organization, Computer Networks, Network Security, and Discrete Mathematics. Students could also choose to major in computer science in lieu of the computer and network security minor.
Supplementing the two minor program options required under the curricular structure of the national security program is a substantive general education (Integrative Core) curriculum. The University of Mount Union is historically founded on a liberal arts core that focuses on developing critical thinking skills as well as a familiarity with the different disciplines that have historically constituted the liberal arts. In August 2012, the institution implemented a revised and leaner general education curriculum aimed at developing essential skills in written and oral communication, reflective learning, critical thinking, complex problem solving, and collaborative, problem-based learning. Specifically, the new Integrative Core curriculum infuses written and oral communication throughout a student’s four-year academic journey—from First-Year Seminar through Foundation Courses (one each in fine arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences), to theme courses (students take two courses from different disciplines in a theme “cluster” of their choice) and a senior capstone seminar.

At a secondary level, the NSFIA program builds on the critical thinking and written/oral communication practice infused throughout the general education curriculum with a “professional skills” course requirement to maximize students’ analytical, communication, organizational, and leadership skills.

Ensuring, evaluating, and expanding program success

During the feasibility/proposal stage of the national security program, the psis department offered a conservative estimate of four to five new declared majors in the national security program per year. These estimates were based primarily on the number of students who self-identified as being interested in related fields (e.g., military science, international affairs, security services, etc.) on the American College Testing (ACT) form, given that “National Security” and/or “Intelligence Analysis” categories do not feature on the ACT list. The subsequent enrollment statistics for the national security program (11 major and four minors after two years) offer proof of the success of the program to date. Moreover, the enrollment trends for the 2014–2015 academic year indicate that the program is increasingly successful in also attracting honors students. Of the 25 incoming first-year students for the 2015–2016 academic year who have indicated an interest in the combined programs of study offered by the PSIS department, nearly half (10) have selected the national security program. This accelerating recognition of and interest in the national security program is further evidenced by a steady increase in the number of program inquiries from prospective students visiting the University of Mount Union campus since the program’s inaugural academic year (2013–2014). Among prospective students, inquiries about the NSFIA program rose from 59 for the 2014–2015 academic year to 97 for the 2015–2016 academic year, providing further evidence that the program, if supported by a concerted and targeted marketing initiative, shows distinct growth potential in the future. Moreover, the national security program offers a particularly appealing course of study to students presently enrolled in a Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) program or contemplating military service down the road.

The PSIS Department has also worked diligently to increase the visibility of the program through a number of campus events featuring retired CIA agents and analysts as well as through marketing outreach to local/regional high schools through the aforementioned direct mailings, phone calls, and e-mails. The existence of and ability to tap into a strong
network of alumni, faculty, and friends of the institution—many of whom have extensive experience in the wider national security and intelligence communities—as well as regional organizations and national security-related federal field offices offer invaluable opportunities for student networking and internship opportunities. At the same time, these networks also yield potential guest speakers and/or visiting or adjunct faculty for specific program courses or short-term seminars.

Fully cognizant of the fact that a successful program launch does not necessarily ensure sustainable growth, the PSIS Department is committed to deepening and expending interdepartmental cooperation and coordination and continuous quality and content improvement of the national security program. In Fall 2014, the department introduced a minor program of study to better integrate with high-demand programs of study in the national security and intelligence communities—notably computer science, engineering, and mathematics—that due to their curricular structure may leave little room to pursue a double major.

Finally, in a period of constrained budgets for non-STEM programs, a potential avenue for further program development is through the Intelligence Community Centers for Academic Excellence program, currently administered by the Defense Intelligence Agency. The program provides grants to institutions as a way to increase the pool of qualified applicants with the skills identified as crucial for careers in the intelligence and national security fields. With recent federal budget cuts, the size of the grants and the frequency of their distribution have both changed. Nonetheless, the program still affords an opportunity for funds for increasing curriculum development and providing additional student opportunities and faculty development.

**Conclusion**

The overarching aim of this article has been to outline how to develop—from academic/programmatic due diligence (focusing on mission compatibility, market need and sustainability, competitive positioning, etc.) to curriculum design and interdepartmental cooperation/coordination—a national security program at a small liberal arts-based institution despite significant institutional resource constraints.

With the introduction of the new program, the PSIS Department has been able to expand its program offerings to align itself more concretely with the increasingly preprofessional repositioning dynamic at the University of Mount Union. In effectively combining a more traditional academic focus with the nurturing of critical professional skills, the national security program is furthermore uniquely positioned to offer a substantive commitment to the University of Mount Union’s stated mission of preparing students for “fulfilling lives, meaningful work, and responsible citizenship” (University of Mount Union n.d.b).

Though aspiring to build the ideal program may be a natural inclination, the ability and willingness to settle for what is feasible rather than optimal and to devise creative ways to leverage existing resources and to align as best as possible with institutional direction is a prerequisite for effective and successful new program development. The strength of the national security program lies not only in combining rigorous academic instruction with professional skills acquisition. Rather, the PSIS Department has from the outset committed itself to striving for a critical comparative advantage through the practice of major-minor bundling initiatives—that is, combining the national security course of study with a
required minor in a high-demand skill area (presently limited to computer science and foreign languages, but potentially to be extended to engineering and mathematics as well)—in order to ensure sustainable programmatic growth and expansion prospects. Such identification and effective coupling of existing institution-wide programmatic strengths is critical to building a viable, sustainable, and marketable program of study in an academic environment increasingly defined by selective prioritization of institutional support for specific programs of study.

Acknowledgments

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Note

1. Unless pursuing a double major, students enrolled at the University of Mount Union are required to complement their major program of study with a minor program of study.

References


