



Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs

Undergraduate Concentrations Review

Convened by the Office of the Dean of the College

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I. Introduction

The Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs seeks to promote a just and peaceful world through research, teaching, and public engagement. Focusing on three main areas – development, security, and governance, the Institute leverages Brown's tradition of interdisciplinarity to foster innovative, policy-relevant scholarly activities on a global scale. Renamed in 2015 following the incorporation of the Taubman Center for Public Policy, the Watson Institute now houses six interdisciplinary undergraduate degree-granting programs that seek to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to be engaged, global citizens. In spring 2018, the Office of the Dean of the College charged a committee to review three of these concentrations – International Relations (IR), Development Studies (DS), and Public Policy – constituting their first simultaneous, collective assessment.¹

The review focused on three main areas:

- i) Academic Rigor: What is the body of knowledge that each concentration requires its students to master and how is it conveyed? What processes are in place for verifying that students have gained the necessary knowledge and analytical and writing skills in each of the three concentrations? How is advising structured and how might it be strengthened? Are the three concentrations adequately reflecting the University's aspirations for diversity and inclusion?
- ii) Peer Comparisons: How do these concentrations compare to those offered by other leading institutions? What can we learn about other curricular and advising approaches to such inter- and multidisciplinary fields?
- iii) Possible Synergies across the Concentrations: What possibilities might exist for strengthening the three concentrations, collectively as well as individually? Is there an organizational and curricular model that might allow for deeper coordination and collaboration? How might the three areas maintain their distinctive features, while taking advantage of a more unified academic unit?

Chaired by the Dean of the College, the committee consisted of faculty from many of the social science departments whose courses feed into these interdisciplinary concentrations and from the School of Public Health, three undergraduates, and the senior associate dean for the curriculum. Over the course of the semester, committee members consulted a range of materials on the three concentrations, including results from the last four senior exit surveys (administered biannually),

¹ The remaining three concentrations housed in the Watson Institute – Latin American and Caribbean Studies, South Asian Studies, and Middle East Studies – sit in distinct Centers within Watson and as such, are not included in this review. The concentrations in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and South Asian Studies are housed in the Center for Latin American Studies (established in November 1984) and the Center for Contemporary South Asia (established in July 2016), respectively. The program in Middle East Studies will transition into an endowed Center within Watson as of the end of spring 2018. "Director's Message Spring 2018." Middle East Studies. Accessed March 27, 2018. <http://watson.brown.edu/mes/about/message>.

data on enrollment and graduation trends and alumni outcomes, and the most recent concentration review reports; in addition, committee members spoke with the leadership of the three concentrations and the larger Watson Institute and students from the three concentrations, and studied Watson’s website to get a sense of how Watson and the concentrations are presented to potential concentrators and other constituencies. Finally, to help address questions about the state of undergraduate education in this area, the committee, aided by the assistant director for assessment and evaluation at the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, examined the curricula and organizational structures of similar programs at other institutions.

2. The Watson Institute and its Concentrations

Since its inception nearly forty years ago, the approach of the Watson Institute has been, by definition, comparative, multi-disciplinary, and global; today its “policy-relevant” research stretches across ten region- or topic-focused centers, initiatives, and programs in three core areas: (i) development, or a concern with various forms of inequality and questions about migration and displacement, international aid and finance, and transnational movements; (ii) governance, focusing on efforts to expand the regulatory capacity of individual nation-states in the face of increasing problems of global significance such as climate change; and finally, (iii) security, with a focus on both long-standing concerns such as nuclear proliferation, military spending, and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as those of the modern era, including cyber-threats and pandemics. If Brown is a hub of socially-engaged, collaborative, and integrative teaching and research, Watson can, at its best, be a critically-important spoke, fostering rigorous multi-disciplinary training grounded in an empirical approach to understanding our complex world.

1. International Relations

A. Overview

The International Relations (IR) concentration is a cross-disciplinary field of study that draws on courses from a variety of departments to offer international and comparative perspectives on the contemporary global system. Drawing primarily on political science, economics, history, anthropology, and sociology (among over twenty other departments and programs across the social sciences and humanities), IR aims to train its students to understand global problems of conflict and political economy. According to the IR website, “its mission is to foster creative thinking about complex global problems and to equip students with the analytic tools, language expertise, and cross-cultural understanding to guide them in that process.”²

In attempting to define the field of IR, the program’s website highlights its key distinctions – methodologically and structurally – from other related fields of study at Brown, namely the

² About | Brown International Relations Program.” n.d. Brown International Relations Program. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://watson.brown.edu/ir/about>.

international politics track offered by the Political Science concentration and the concentration in Development Studies. Indeed, in many institutions, international relations is solely offered as a subfield within Political Science departments. Both the international politics track and the IR concentration require students to learn the major theories underlying political systems in comparative perspective; the two fields differ in two primary ways: first, the concentration in IR requires students to acquire “expertise in one region of the world,” demonstrated through coursework in at least one language other than English and complemented by two courses on the same geographic region; second, as a track within the concentration in Political Science, international politics requires students to bring *disciplinary* questions and approaches to bear on contemporary politics, allowing no more than two courses outside of the Political Science department. By contrast, IR, like the concentration in Development Studies, is designed to educate students on a broader range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives and methodological approaches. The ability to transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries is, in fact, among the reasons that Brown students and faculty are drawn to this field. In the absence of a departmental home, and its attendant administrative structures, budgets, and tenure lines, however, interdisciplinary concentrations are faced with several persistent challenges, not least of which is the question of intellectual cohesion and depth.

In the case of IR, periodic reviews have led to a range of curricular changes. The most recent changes were in 2011, a result of the recommendations of a Committee on International and Development Studies co-chaired by Katherine Bergeron, former Dean of the College, Michael Kennedy, former director of the Watson Institute, and Mark Blyth, former director of the concentrations in IR and Development Studies.³ By increasing the number of requirements and modifying the structure of both IR and DS, the report and subsequent curricular changes sought to increase the intellectual depth and coherence of the two concentrations, while providing a more adequate number of courses and advisors relative to the size of the concentrations.

The 2011 curricular changes, including an increase in the number of requirements from eleven to fourteen, was followed by a sharp, though perhaps temporary, decline in the number of concentrators. Once among the top three concentrations, graduating, on average, nine percent of

³ First established in 1949, the IR concentration was revamped with the founding of the Watson Institute, then known as the “International Institute” in 1985, and again as part of a reorganization of the Watson Institute in 1998. In 2008, Watson convened a group of its own faculty to look more closely at both concentrations. The 2009 report of the visiting team of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) referenced the IR concentration in particular, calling for the concentration to be strengthened “by adding additional requirements and ...dedicated international relations faculty who would be fully dedicated to Brown and to aiding Brown students achieve their full intellectual potential” ([2009 NEASC report](#), p. 15). With Michael Kennedy’s appointment as director of Watson in September 2009, he and the Dean of the College convened a larger group, “Committee on International and Development Studies” in May 2010, which released a report in April 2011 that resulted in a number of changes to the IR and DS concentrations, including an increase in the number of requirements from eleven to fourteen (fifteen, in the case of honors candidates) and the number of core courses from four to five; substantially revising the three tracks (narrowing one, redefining a second, and eliminating a third); narrowing the choices from which students select track and elective courses; increasing the regional requirement from one to two courses; and modifying the capstone requirement by requiring that students produce a culminating paper incorporating research in a second language and ensure that it was completed no earlier than the senior year.

students in a given class, IR had seen a somewhat steady decline in undergraduate completions since 2008.⁴ In the past three years, however, the concentration once again shows signs of growth, with IR concentrators constituting 3-4% of each graduating class (61 students in the class of 2017). As of the writing of this report, there are 72 seniors, 63 juniors, and just under 70 declared sophomores. While varying from year-to-year, the number of students completing a second concentration typically exceeds the average across both the College (approximately 20%) and its peers across the social sciences (approximately 30%), with the exception of the most recent graduating class, which saw 20% of students completing a concentration in addition to IR, typically economics. The percentage of students completing honors has fluctuated in this period, but has averaged around eight percent in the last three years, compared with approximately twenty-five percent across the College. Although the concentration offers information sessions for juniors about the requirements and benefits of pursuing honors, students and faculty alike have anecdotally expressed frustration about the shortage of willing and available thesis advisors. That the percentage of students graduating in the top twenty percent of the class (*magna cum laude*) has fluctuated between 22-27% in the past three years and that the percentage of students elected to Phi Beta Kappa has consistently exceeded the College-wide average raises questions about the relatively low number of honors candidates.

In the area of compositional diversity, in the last three years, IR has had a slightly lower representation of concentrators from underrepresented groups and students who self-identify as Asian-American and as white relative to the broader undergraduate body. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the percentage of international students has been twice their representation across the College.⁵

B. IR Requirements

The concentration requires fourteen courses and a language requirement. Students complete five core courses from as many disciplines: the introductory economics course; a foundational anthropology course on global social problems; an advanced sociology course on globalization and social conflict; one of two introductory political science courses focusing on either international or comparative politics; and a pre-approved history course that may vary from semester to semester based on availability.⁶ Students choose from among two tracks: i) Security and Society, examining micro- and macro- approaches to conflict and security; and ii) Political Economy and Society, focusing on global economy, trade, and finance at the macro-level. Track courses constitute an additional five requirements across two sub-themes. Students must

⁴ According to data from Brown University's Office of Institutional Research (OIR), IR graduated 157 students at its height in 2008. Available at <https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/institutional-research/factbook/degrees-and-completions>.

⁵ According to data from OIR, in the last three years, 15.4% of IR concentrators have been underrepresented minorities, 8.2% have been Asian-American, 39% have been white, 5.1% have identified as multi-racial, and 24.6% as "non-resident alien," following the federal government's definition of these categories. The College-wide figures are: 17.9% underrepresented minorities, 12.2% Asian-American, 44.2% white, 5.4% multi-racial, and 11.6% "non-resident alien."

⁶ "Courses | Brown International Relations Program." Brown International Relations Program. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://watson.brown.edu/ir/courses>.

complete a research methods course prior to the seventh semester (selected from sixteen options across nine departments) and two regional courses, and they must demonstrate the equivalent of three years of study in a foreign language related to the region of focus.

Culminating Projects: Capstones and Honors

The final concentration requirement is in the form of a credit-bearing culminating experience: all seniors must complete a capstone project in the senior year in which they synthesize and apply the perspectives, theories, and methods learned in the concentration. The project may consist of a substantial research paper (defined as 20-25-pages) for either an IR-approved seminar or an independent study course and it must incorporate research conducted in the second language. A third capstone option is a two-semester honors thesis, which effectively brings the number of requirements for honors candidates to fifteen as compared with the fourteen required of all other IR concentrators. Typically, the first of the two semesters consists of a required thesis seminar for all honors candidates (INTL 1910, typically taught by the associate director and concentration advisor of the IR program), while the second semester consists of a directed readings course with the thesis advisor.

C. Advising

The associate director of the IR program serves as the primary concentration advisor for all one hundred thirty or so juniors and seniors,⁷ providing guidance “on all matters concerning the concentration... [including] course offerings and course selection for any given semester, planning courses over several semesters, changes in the student’s concentration program, study abroad plans, concentration approval of courses taken abroad and transfer credit from U.S. institutions, fulfillment of IR concentration requirements for graduation, the honors program, independent study, or other procedural or academic issues that may arise in dealing with the university administration.”⁸ In addition, two faculty members serve as track advisors for the security and society track (the slightly larger of the two tracks), and a third faculty member serves as a track advisor for the political economy and society track. Track advisors help students with the process of selecting a track, advise on course selection (with a focus on the particular track), and are available to discuss post-Brown career and educational plans. Finally, an IR peer advisor holds weekly office hours, during which prospective and current concentrators may hear a student’s perspective on courses and on study abroad and internship experiences. Typically, the

⁷ The position of the concentration advisor was expanded to a full-time Assistant Director in 2007, and upgraded to an Associate Director position with advising and teaching responsibilities in 2011. That year, the administrative coordinator position for IR and DS was upgraded to program manager/developer with IT/website editing experience and the separate directorships of the IR and DS programs were combined into one director of International Studies who oversaw both programs for a three-year term with the goal of creating a coherent “unit” with a similar set of goals for the two concentrations. Bergeron, Katherine, Michael Kennedy, Mark Blyth, Cornel Ban, Claudia Elliott, Michael Ewart, Matthew Gutmann, et al. 2011. “Strengthening International and Development Studies at Brown: Report of the Committee on International and Development Studies.” Brown University. Archives of the College Curriculum Council.

⁸ “Advising | Brown International Relations Program.” n.d. Brown International Relations Program. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://watson.brown.edu/ir/advising>.

peer advisor is also a member of the IR Departmental Undergraduate Group (DUG), which holds regular meetings, information sessions, and speaker series.

In order to declare an IR concentration, prospective concentrators must first complete an IR concentration form and draft the essays required of all concentrations; upon meeting with a track advisor and obtaining their signature on concentration forms, the student is then required to meet with the concentration advisor, who discusses the student's intended course plan and gives final approval. The final step is completion of the online declaration in ASK. With the program director serving as the concentration advisor of record, there is no structural tie between students and their track advisors beyond the declaration; anecdotally, students reported meeting only once with their track advisors, the end result being that IR's concentration advisor has among the highest ratios of concentrator-to-concentration advisor in the College. Still, students report that the concentration advisor is a knowledgeable and approachable resource for concentrators.

D. Strengths and Opportunities

The concentration in IR is supported by a small, but skilled and committed administrative staff. Nonetheless, a wide range of feedback from both students and the concentration leadership makes clear that IR is lacking sufficient faculty investment in order to staff the core courses of the program and carry out the advising responsibilities required of every concentration. IR has very few of its own courses (nearly all of which are senior seminars taught by visiting faculty). Although the Watson faculty has recently increased in size, such growth has not necessarily been aligned with the teaching needs of the Watson concentrations. Moreover, the proliferation of Centers, initiatives, and programs, such as the growing Master's in Public Administration, has drawn faculty time and teaching effort away from the core IR curriculum.

In addition to these structural challenges, IR's curriculum remains somewhat diffuse, even with the most recent modifications. Although the concentration has a fairly prescriptive academic core comprised of five disciplinary courses, in the absence of a unifying introductory course, students are left with a lack of clarity as to key learning goals and what distinguishes the concentration from the international politics track in political science.

Advising continues to pose serious challenges to this large interdisciplinary concentration. Advising is among the most critical issues facing non-departmental concentrations; because of its large size, these challenges – particularly the shortage of advisors and relevant courses – are especially acute. Conversations with current concentrators suggest some particular weaknesses in this area, including the notable lack of sufficient faculty to provide hands-on advising and thesis support. Student self-reported data from the College-wide senior survey supports this anecdotal evidence. On the one hand, the quality of instruction and the level of intellectual excitement in IR are rated as highly as they are by concentrators in other social science areas. On the other hand, there are a number of other metrics in which the concentration does not fare as well,

namely quality of advising, number of faculty in the concentration with whom to discuss post-graduation plans, faculty who took genuine interest in concentrators, and sufficient opportunities to work one-on-one with a professor.⁹

It is clear that the strength of Watson's undergraduate programs rely on the commitment of its faculty; stronger alignment between Watson's core research areas and its programs of study is one part of the equation; closer ties to related departments is a second. In previous years, IR has been governed by an advisory committee of faculty from a broad range of departments who advised the program's administration on course requirements and policy questions. Such an organizational structure not only allows a program to benefit from the input of a diverse array of faculty, it also has the potential to foster buy-in on the part of faculty who might then be more willing to serve as thesis advisors, readers, and informal mentors for IR concentrators.

2. Development Studies

A. Overview

Like IR, Development Studies is, by definition, cross-disciplinary with grounding in the social sciences. While admittedly, there is much overlap between the two concentrations, the focus of DS is largely on the Global South (with, according to its current program director, more recent student interest in “underserved domestic communities at home”¹⁰ (Lewis 2018)), often taking a more micro-level focus to address questions of poverty and inequality, in contrast to IR’s “more macro ‘state-system’ perspective.”¹¹

Given its narrower lens, the goal of the DS concentration is articulated somewhat more cogently on its program website: “to provide students with the knowledge, critical perspectives and skills they need to engage with the issues of economic and social development, especially as they relate to the global south;” importantly, in a memo to the Committee conducting this review, the DS program director parenthetically added, “as well as underserved domestic communities at home.”¹² Although students select a focus area, often by region, DS aims to provide students with a foundation in the field of development itself, rather than to train them as area specialists as would other concentrations at Watson and beyond, such as Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Middle East Studies, and East Asian Studies. Upon completing the curriculum, DS graduates are expected to:

- Understand the key debates in the field of development;

⁹ OIR Data.

¹⁰ Lewis, Patsy. “Notes Toward DS Review,” January 26, 2018.

¹¹ “About | Brown International Relations Program.” n.d. Brown International Relations Program. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://watson.brown.edu/ir/about>.

¹² “About | Brown Development Studies Program.” n.d. Brown Development Studies Program. Accessed April 18, 2018. <http://watson.brown.edu/ds/about>; Lewis, Patsy. 2018. “Untitled Memo.” Archive of the College Curriculum Council.

- Experience an interdisciplinary approach to development;
- Complete coursework in three primary fields of the social sciences;
- Develop expertise in a specific region and/or thematic area that is of interest to them, engaging in original fieldwork, and producing a substantial piece of original research or creative work; and
- Develop fluency in a second language.

These learning goals should be published on Focal Point, the College-wide database of concentrations, as well as on the program's website.

DS is considerably smaller in size than IR, graduating an average of sixteen students between 2015 and 2017. Like IR, the number of concentrators in DS began to decline significantly beginning with the class of 2012: the average number of graduates between 2008 and 2011 -- 31 -- is more than double the average from the last four years -- fourteen.¹³ By all accounts, this decline in size is not indicative of a lack of commitment or satisfaction among DS concentrators. DS graduates have consistently reported the greatest degree of overall satisfaction with the concentration and with the quality of advising. DS graduates also reported a greater degree of satisfaction with faculty helpfulness outside of the classroom; level of intellectual excitement in the concentration; the degree to which faculty take a genuine interest in concentrators; the ability to talk to faculty about post-Brown career plans; and the degree to which their faculty are prepared to develop courses that are inclusive of diverse perspectives and are able to moderate discussions of controversial topics.¹⁴

B. DS Requirements

Like many multi- and interdisciplinary concentrations, DS affords students with a great deal of flexibility in crafting their own course of study in order to pursue their own interests. Although the 2011 review did not impact the total number of concentration requirements for DS (eleven), it narrowed the focus, added a language requirement and an expectation that it be incorporated into students' capstone work, and increased the structure of the concentration, while still allowing a great deal of flexibility and choice. Students must take five core courses¹⁵:

- two of three possible choices focused on global conflict and development in sociology, political science, or anthropology;

¹³ OIR.

¹⁴ OIR.

¹⁵ The review process revealed discrepancies in the concentration requirements listed on the DS website and those listed on the University Bulletin; this report draws from the latter, as the Bulletin constitutes the official record of CCC-approved requirements.

Typically, the two DEVL courses -- the sophomore seminar and the research methods course -- are taught by postdoctoral fellows or visiting faculty. In spring 2018, DEVL 1000 was taught by a senior faculty fellow at Watson. The remaining core courses have recently been taught either by faculty with joint Watson appointments (ANTH 0110, SOC 1620, ECON 0510) or by regular faculty in other units (ECON 1510, POLS 1240).

- a sophomore seminar taught in the sociology of development, designed to develop critical thinking skills while introducing students to the critical study of development (DEVL 1000);
- one of two possible development economics courses (ECON 0510 or 1510); and
- a research methods and design course with a focus on qualitative and field research taught by a postdoctoral fellow or visiting faculty member and ideally completed in the junior year (DEVL 1500).

DS also requires two courses on the same region of the developing world, which should complement the student's choice of a foreign language; however students may choose a thematic focus area instead of a geographic one. Three elective courses from a pre-approved list (or an approved alternative) and a capstone or thesis rounds out the remaining requirements.

Culminating Projects: Capstones and Honors

As with IR and other interdisciplinary concentrations, DS students must complete a capstone project in the senior year by selecting from among three types of experiences: (1) eligible students may request approval to either write an Honor's thesis or produce a multimedia project based on an analytical framework and supported by written chapters; others may choose to write a 20-25 page research paper in either (2) a pre-approved writing-designated seminar, or (3) in an independent study or group independent study, with approval of the director of DS.¹⁶ In any case, the original work must utilize the student's thematic or regional focus and incorporate foreign language skills. The DS website provides a helpful "Thesis Writing Guide" that includes guidelines and suggestions for the various aspects of the thesis-research and -writing processes, addressing such questions as when and how to secure an advisor and a second reader and what kind of preparation is necessary for taking on various kinds of projects. Thesis candidates are required to enroll in two courses in the senior year – typically, "Thesis Writing in Development Studies" (DEVL 1980) in the fall and a semester of independent study with the thesis advisor (DEVL 1990) in the spring. Although a thesis is not required as it once was, at least two thirds of all graduates, dating at least to 2008, complete one, compared with about fifteen percent of social science students and twenty percent of all undergraduates.

C. Advising

Once overseen by a director responsible for both IR and DS (in collaboration with a deputy director who served as the *de facto* concentration advisor), the concentration in DS is now led by a visiting professor of international and public affairs. A manager of academic programs provides administrative and other support for both DS and IR. The director serves as the concentration advisor of record for all concentrators, which number approximately forty-five

¹⁶ Among the recommendations of the 2011 Committee on International and Development Studies was strengthening of the required senior capstone experience: clarify expectations for honors in the concentration, and expand options for the required capstone project. In addition, a budget should be created, jointly funded by Watson and the University, to ensure oversight and advising of the concentration and the capstone requirement.

across the sophomore, junior, and senior classes as of the writing of this report. As with IR, a senior concentrator provides peer advising. An active Departmental Undergraduate Group (DUG) organizes peer advising forums, panels, opportunities for informal interactions with faculty, and guest lectures featuring scholars from within Brown and Beyond.

D. Strengths and Opportunities

The evidence reviewed by the committee suggest a small, yet devoted group of concentrators who report a high level of satisfaction with the concentration and with their experiences with advising and with their course instructors. Newer core courses like the Sophomore Seminar in Development (DEVL 1000) and Methods in Development Research (DEVL 1500) have provided a more substantive foundation to this interdisciplinary course of study, lending much-needed cohesion while still allowing a great degree of flexibility and choice for students to pursue their interests. Still, relying on short-term appointments to staff core courses comes at a cost, namely inconsistency in content and level of rigor from year-to-year. In recent years, the course that preceded DEVL 1000 shifted from a home in the Sociology department to being fully located in Watson, a positive development that locates greater control over the course content within the concentration. More recently, in spring 2018, DEVL 1000 was taught by a senior fellow at Watson, which could be a step in the right direction. Similarly, having a Watson faculty member teach DEVL 1500 would increase continuity and provide the necessary methodological expertise that may be missing with a more junior scholar or postdoctoral fellow.

In addition to the issues around staffing its few existing courses, DS is confronted with another challenge common to interdisciplinary concentrations: the ongoing concern about a sufficiently cohesive core mapping onto the program's learning objectives for its concentrators. A core with so many course options may not adequately be serving students. Better coordination with the departments that offer courses within the DS curriculum could allow for a narrowing of the course options from which students may choose, thus further ensuring that students are graduating with the requisite skills and knowledge expected from a degree in development.

The final concern that was raised during the review was around the lack of faculty, and thus courses, with expertise in regions of the world that students want to study, namely continental Africa and southeast Asia. With its broad focus on "the Global South" and its expectations that students study a related language, the DS concentration may be inviting students to study topics that the University cannot, at least at the moment, support. If Watson's teaching mission is to be a priority, further consideration should be given to geographic breadth when considering potential faculty hires for the purposes of staffing its core curricular offerings.

3. Public Policy

A. Overview

Like IR and DS, the concentration in public policy is grounded in an interdisciplinary, empirical approach to the study of human societies, focusing its lens on, to borrow from its recently redesigned website, “the rules and norms by which we govern ourselves.”¹⁷ At its core, the concentration trains students in the tools of analysis of

pressing social problems and the design, implementation, and evaluation of better policies and practices. The concentration is designed to provide students with the critical capacities, analytical tools, and collaborative dispositions to be effective and ethical policy analysts and change agents in governments, firms, and non-profit organizations. Students will learn how social, economic and political issues become the object of public policy, how policy decisions are crafted, made and implemented, as well as different strategies for evaluating their impact.¹⁸

Home to two programs in partnership with the Swearer Center for Public Service – the Engaged Scholars Program and the new Brown in Washington, D.C. program – Public Policy provides students with a range of opportunities for integrating curricular and co-curricular learning about critical issues of local, national, and transnational or global significance. Graduates are expected to acquire:¹⁹

- A broad understanding of major policy issues in a number of substantive domains (e.g. Health, Education, Social Welfare, Criminal Justice, and Environmental Protection), as well as deeper knowledge of the most important policy issues in a particular domain;
- A basic understanding of how laws, institutions, and budgets shape the policy process, from formation through implementation and evaluation;
- The critical skills necessary to examine how the framing and communication of social problems structures the analysis, formation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies;
- An appreciation of the ethical foundations of public engagement, from basic conflicts of interest to both the obvious and less visible challenges that competing values –including one’s own- pose for the policy process; and
- Command of a tool kit of analytical, institutional, and communicative skills, including:
 - Quantitative and qualitative methods of policy analysis and program evaluation;
 - The ability to critically read budgets, laws, project proposals, and policy studies.

¹⁷ “About | Brown Public Policy Program.” n.d. Accessed April 16, 2018. <http://watson.brown.edu/public-policy/about>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The review committee noted that the learning goals published on the concentration’s website differ slightly from those published Focal Point; we encourage you to update Focal Point as appropriate by emailing focal_point@brown.edu.

- Discourse analysis, the construction of policy narratives, memo and op-ed writing.

Soon after its integration into the Watson Institute, the concentration proposed a number of changes (described below) in order to better align its aims within those of Watson and to leverage the additional resources in terms of faculty expertise and course offerings that would now be available. Nonetheless, in spite of the work that has already taken place, as the premise for this review makes clear, additional opportunities for collaboration and cohesion exist. For one, while the concentration is described as offering “comparative study” of human societies, Public Policy requires that only one course – an elective – be focused on international or global policy issues. Certainly, faculty in PLCY courses may integrate scenarios and case studies from beyond the US; however in its course description, the introductory course (PLCY 0100), a draw for many of the recently-declared concentrators, locates its object of focus as “policymaking and policy analysis in the contemporary United States.” One of the few active courses that foregrounds contexts beyond the US, Policy Making and Policy Makers in Domestic and International Contexts (PLCY 1703C), is only open to students participating in the Brown in Washington, D.C. program. Self-reported data from recent senior surveys paints a consistent picture: Public Policy’s ratings do not differ significantly from the mean across the College in most metrics, with the exception of the degree to which concentrators feel the concentration has contributed to the “develop[ment of] their global awareness,” on which Public Policy was rated less favorably than concentrations across the College among both the classes of 2014 and 2016.²⁰ When tracking graduates from both its previous iteration as Public Policy and American Institutions (PPAI) and its current version, the concentration has had only two international students graduate from the concentration in the last decade.²¹

Like IR, the Public Policy concentration appears to be on the rise after a sharp dip – about fifty percent – in the number of graduates in 2014.²² Both the classes of 2017 and 2018 have about forty students each, and just over forty sophomores declared this spring. Given the tendency of Public Policy students to double concentrate (about half do so) and to declare their second concentrations in their junior or senior years, its director estimates that this will constitute a twenty-percent increase in the size of the concentration.²³ At least one fourth of these students have cited the introductory course, taught by a visiting faculty member with long-standing ties to Brown and a full-time faculty position at a neighboring college, as one reason they decided to pursue the concentration.²⁴

²⁰ OIR Data.

²¹ One “non-resident alien” completed a degree in PPAI in 2009 and a second completed a degree in Public Policy in 2016. OIR Data.

²² According to data provided by the Office of Institutional Research, the number of graduates in the classes of 2009-2013 hovered between 32-37 per year; the number of graduates in 2014 was 16, and the number of graduates between 2015-2017 was between 21-23 students.

²³ Levitas, Anthony, and Melissa Nicholaus. 2018. “Overview of Sophomore Declarations.” Archive of the Office of the Dean of the College.

²⁴ Ibid.

The CCC's most recent review of the concentration in Public Policy and American Institutions took place in spring 2010. Five years later, the concentration saw a number of changes to its requirements and even its name, in order to "leverage the increased faculty and course offerings resulting from the center's integration with ... (Watson)... [and to bring] the policy concentration closer in line with similar concentrations offered at our peer institutions."²⁵ The changes made in 2015 did not substantially impact the number of required courses (which continues to be ten) or the composition of the five required "core" courses. The most substantive changes included modifications to course prerequisites and to the structure of the electives, which was narrowed in order to increase the emphasis on policy specializations.

B. Public Policy Requirements

Public Policy concentrators must complete ten courses and a capstone experience. Students complete five core courses, consisting of an introductory course, Introduction to Public Policy (PLCY 0100); a course on economics for public policy, chosen from among three options offered by Public Policy, Economics, and Education, respectively; a course on ethics and public policy (PLCY 1400); statistics, chosen from among four options offered by Political Science, Economics, Sociology, and Education, respectively; and a course on program evaluation (PLCY 1200). Each of the core courses offered by Public Policy is taught by an adjunct or visiting faculty member and is offered once per academic year. With the more recent emphasis on both breadth and some depth in policy specialization areas, students must now take two courses in two different policy areas, chosen from six choices: environmental; government, law and ethics; health policy; social policy; technology policy; and urban policy; and an additional three electives in a third area. Since the integration with Watson, one of the five electives must focus on international or global policy.

Culminating Projects: Capstones and Honors

Students round out their concentration requirements with completion of a senior capstone, which can be completed through independent study; a summer internship or research assistantship; completion of a designated senior seminar that requires the writing of a research paper (Policy 1820 series or equivalent seminar offered in IR or Political Science, or another course by petition); or, for eligible students, through completion an Honor's thesis. The capstone requirement was strengthened in fall 2017 when the newly hired and current director proposed to the CCC that *all* students be required to complete a substantive paper as part of their culminating experiences, including those whose capstone projects were grounded in practicum experiences. Students completing the capstone requirement through a policy internship or research

²⁵ Shankar Prasad on behalf of the Faculty in Public Policy to the College Curriculum Council, April, 2015, Office of The Dean of the College Archives, 1.

assistantship must write a paper “reflect[ing] on how the work [they have done] did is situated in a larger, institutionalized process of producing knowledge, goods and/or services.”²⁶

In the past three years, approximately sixteen percent of Public Policy concentrators, or three-to-five students, have graduated with honors. Students interested in pursuing honors must meet a minimum grade point average, must have completed at least six of the concentration requirements by the end of the junior year, must complete a senior thesis application in the spring of the junior year, and must enroll in the two-semester Public Policy Honors Colloquium (PLCY 1990 and 1991).

To the credit of its leadership, the concentration publishes a good deal of information about the goal and expectations of capstone projects, posting explicit guidelines, prompts and a timeline with special considerations for students studying abroad or those who will complete mid-year instead of May. One of the concentration’s best practices, for example, is requiring all students to declare their proposed plans for their capstone projects by the fifth semester, typically the fall of the junior year.

C. Advising

Like IR and DS, Public Policy is staffed by a program director and an academic program manager, who, in the case of the latter, is fully dedicated to one concentration. With support from the academic program manager, the program director (a senior fellow in the Watson Institute) is the first primary point of contact for prospective concentrators, providing guidance on the concentration, and on co-curricular opportunities, such as internships, research assistantships, and more. Yet unlike IR and DS, Public Policy draws upon a larger pool of faculty who serve as concentration advisors. Of the five additional concentration advisors, three are tenure-track or tenured faculty, one is a visiting associate professor the other is an adjunct lecturer, both of whom have had long-standing positions at Brown.

D. Strengths and Opportunities

Under the leadership of a new director who joined Brown in the 2017-18 academic year, Public Policy has already begun to introduce some promising changes, including revisions to its website to more clearly articulate the mission and learning goals and better align with Watson; strengthening of the capstone requirement; creation of a new research grant to support theses and capstones; hosting the first of what will hopefully be more faculty lunches focused on improving advising in the concentration; and codifying guidelines and expectations for concentration advisors. These changes come at a critical juncture, when the concentration has doubled in size, of which over half receive financial aid, 12% identify as first-generation college students, 80% identify as women, and one third plan to be Engaged Scholars.

²⁶ Tony Levitas and Melissa Nicholaus, “Overview of Sophomore Declarations,” April 8, 2018, Office of The Dean of the College Archives, 1.

Like all the interdisciplinary concentrations under study, Public Policy grapples with the challenge of having very few core faculty associated directly with the concentration, leaving it vulnerable to curricular planning processes it cannot control in other departments. According to its director, only one core course is taught by a regular faculty member. And while there is a greater pool of faculty who participate in concentration advising than in some of its peers, the incredible growth of concentration raises important questions about sustainability and whether there are sufficient advising resources in place to support this growth.

Finally, the process of meaningfully integrating the concentration within Watson is ongoing. That Public Policy students report less knowledge of global affairs is perhaps not surprising given the prior focus of Taubman on U.S. policy. A reevaluation of the concentration structure and requirements would allow for the curriculum to reflect the wealth of expertise around comparative frameworks and the particular challenges and models of governance around the world.

III. Proposed Changes

In many ways, the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs that was launched with the merger of Watson and Taubman is unique in the higher education landscape. Among undergraduate degree-granting programs, only Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School for Public and International Affairs shares this model.²⁷ Intellectually, the merger of the two units provides an opportunity to consider the ways in which many of the most pressing problems -- development, security, and governance, to focus on Watson's key themes -- transcend national boundaries. In addition to the as-yet unrealized potential for substantive synergies, the integration of these two units also allows for us to imagine creative solutions to staffing challenges that have persisted in spite of various attempts to address them over the years from both within and beyond Watson and Taubman. While the vast majority of graduates of Watson's concentrations, like all Brown graduates, feel that their education has prepared them well for their careers, it must continue to if it is to seize the opportunity to, as stated in the 2015 Operational Plan, "become the first school of its kind fully calibrated to the needs of the 21st century world."²⁸ Based on its review of the strengths and challenges facing IR, DS, and Public Policy, as well as a survey of select undergraduate programs in the fields of development, policy, and international or global affairs, the committee presents below a series of recommendations that would constitute a fundamental reimagining of Watson's undergraduate curriculum, while preserving many of the distinctive features that have served its students well.

²⁷ Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs offers master's and doctoral degrees but no bachelor's degree.

²⁸ According to data obtained by the Office of Institutional Research, 85% of Public Policy, 75% of IR, and 78% of DS alumni agreed or strongly agreed that their education at Brown prepared them for their career. OIR, Overview of Undergraduate Alumni Outcomes, Five and Ten Years Out of Brown. "Operational Plan for Building Brown's Excellence: Realizing the Goals of Building on Distinction: A New Plan for Brown." 2015. Brown University.

[https://brown.edu/web/documents/provost/Operational Plan FINAL PUBLIC 2015.09.15.pdf](https://brown.edu/web/documents/provost/Operational%20Plan%20FINAL%20PUBLIC%202015.09.15.pdf).

In the last decade, several institutions have moved from a traditional “international relations” program, with its roots in the Cold War-era, to a more critical concept of “global studies,” with its acknowledgement of our increasingly interconnected world, its critiques of the politics of knowledge-production, and its concern with issues often excluded from the more mainstream interpretations of IR: “for example, issues connected to gender, poverty (conceived in terms of its linkages across state boundaries), the global spread and concentration of media, [etc.].”²⁹ For example, in 2010, Yale eliminated its international relations major and launched a new, more structured “Global Studies,” housed in its newly opened Jackson Institute for Global Affairs.³⁰ A reported sixty Global Studies majors per cohort are expected to “learn to understand global affairs through interdisciplinary academic training and experiences outside the classroom with the ultimate goal of inspiring and preparing students for global leadership and service.”³¹ Yale has continued to build its program, first dissolving the distinction between two tracks -- security and development -- that were once offered at the inception of the major nearly a decade ago, and most recently, modifying the requirements with the introduction of a new sequence of three Global Affairs courses on quantitative analysis.³² Yet beyond these curricular tweaks, Yale has been engaged in a more fundamental conversation about the future of the Jackson Institute as part of the development of President Peter Salovey’s strategic plan. Under serious consideration is a plan to transform the Jackson Institute for Global Affairs into a school for Public Policy, potentially with an expansion into domestic policy issues.³³

More recently, both the University of Chicago and the University of California at Berkeley have launched Global Studies programs. Chicago’s international relations major once offered tracks in international political economy, transnational processes, and areas studies; its Global Studies program has moved toward more thematic areas with tracks in “bodies and natures,” “knowledge and practice,” “cultures at work,” and “politics and governance.” UC Berkeley shifted from offering majors in Development Studies and Peace and Conflict Studies to a Global Studies major with tracks in Global Development, Global Peace and Conflict, and Global Societies and Cultures. While we are not necessarily recommending a similar change in name and theoretical framework, as Watson may wish to continue centering “international affairs” and its attendant

²⁹ Stephen J. Rosow, "Toward an Anti-disciplinary Global Studies," *International Studies Perspectives* 4, no. 1 (2003): 5, doi:10.1111/1528-3577.04101.

³⁰ Through thirteen courses and language study, Global Affairs majors take three foundation courses in micro- and macro-economics, two core Global Affairs courses introducing students to international development and international security, three newly-created courses within Global Affairs focusing on quantitative analysis and research design, four electives, and a public policy capstone project through which seniors work in small-task force groups under the guidance of a faculty member. “New-Requirements-for-the-Global-Affairs-Major.Pdf.” n.d. Accessed April 19, 2018. <http://jackson.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/New-Requirements-for-the-Global-Affairs-Major.pdf>.

³¹ “Yale College Majors Project | Advising Resources.” n.d. Accessed April 19, 2018.

<https://advising.yalecollege.yale.edu/courses-and-majors/choosing-major/yale-college-majors-project>.

³² “Overview | Yale Jackson Institute for Global Affairs.” n.d. Yale Jackson Institute for Global Affairs. Accessed April 19, 2018. <http://jackson.yale.edu/study/ba/program/>.

³³ Fuchs, Hailey. 2018. “Yale Considers Jackson Institute’s Future.” *Yale Daily News*, February 8, 2018.

<https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/02/08/yale-considers-jackson-institutes-future/>.

focus on nation-states and non-state actors; however, many of the recommendations noted below reflect these somewhat newer directions in the field.

A. Structure

The recent structural integration of international affairs and public policy within Watson provides an opportunity to rethink the affiliated concentrations in ways that integrate them more fully and that align more closely with Watson's intellectual trajectory and research priorities. Given the excellent and committed staff and faculty affiliated with the Watson concentrations, the review committee has confidence that an ambitious re-organization, while perhaps initially challenging, would be feasible and would ultimately provide more reliable advising and mentoring resources and more in-depth methodological and regional training to all concentrators. With these opportunities in mind, we propose re-imagining the three current concentrations into one unified concentration with two tracks, one on governance and the other on development. The third major research area – security – can be pursued within either track, depending on the area of focus. While the development track might be loosely modeled on the current DS concentration, the governance track would re-imagine the former public policy and international relations concentrations into a single track focused on comparative policy. Such a change would encourage greater collaboration and coordination in terms of advising and teaching resources and more fully align Watson concentrations with the Institute's intellectual commitments. We also recommend that students in each track select a regional or thematic focus, which we will discuss in further detail below, so as to ensure depth as well as breadth in the concentration.

B. Curriculum

In order both to lend some coherence to the concentration and to aid students in choosing a track, the Committee recommends the creation of a required introductory course. We understand that there is confusion about what distinguishes Governance (currently Public Policy) from Development Studies (and from the international relations track in Political Science). We envision a course that, by explaining the intellectual rationale and the methodologies of the tracks, would provide students with the information they need to select which track, Development or Governance, best suits their interests, at the same time that it would emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of the concentration and the natural links between the two tracks. Shared experience in such a course would also serve to create a cohort of Watson concentrators who would continue to interact "across tracks." Introductory courses in Public Health (PHP 0320: Introduction to Public Health) and Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences (CLPS 0010: Mind, Brain, and Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Approach) provide models for such a course. The course could be co-taught; occasional and carefully integrated guest lectures by Watson scholars would also help to introduce students to the faculty and its range of expertise.

Once having selected a track, students would also be asked to select a thematic or geographic focus. For those selecting a geographic focus, we recommend greater depth than is currently required in both IR and DS. Indeed, as it stands now, the regional requirement in both concentrations is thin as compared to our peers. We thus propose three years of language (i.e. through the 600 level or the equivalent) along with four non-language based focus courses across the humanities and social sciences, including history, sociology, political science, economics, anthropology, religious studies, or in an area study such as Africana, Ethnic, Latin American, East Asian, or Middle East Studies. With this more robust regional focus comes more courses. Therefore, we also recommend culling the list of “electives” so as to limit all concentration requirements in either track to 12 (not including language proficiency). Language acquisition is a key skill even for students who select the United States as their region of focus; we therefore recommend some language proficiency for these students as well, but this is an open question that needs further discussion. Students focusing on the United States should, in addition, be required to engage in comparative international policy courses so as to learn to situate the United States in a global context. This would be consistent with Watson’s mission to develop policy solutions to problems of global significance by approaching such questions through a comparative lens. Students opting for a thematic focus would be encouraged to take courses across regions; they should also fulfill the language requirement, which would enhance their ability to conduct comparative research.

The Committee was struck by the recurring question of inadequate training in both research methods and research design. The Committee thus also recommends the development of a one-semester research design course taken in the sophomore or junior year that would introduce Watson concentrators, regardless of track or focus area, to the basic elements of critical empirical thinking. This seminar would require students to develop a topic of their own (what could potentially become a thesis topic for students who elect to write one). Rather than a methods course, the course would introduce students to frameworks for asking empirical questions and making empirically-based, analytical arguments. The course would not be unlike the existing Methods in Development Research (DEVL 1500) for juniors, or the senior seminars for honors candidates offered in IR and Public Policy (Senior Honors Seminar, INTL 1910 and Public Policy Colloquium, PLCY 1991-1992); but, unlike the existing IR and Policy courses, taken by the small percentage of seniors who are writing honors theses, this course would be expected of all concentrators and would, like DEVL 1500, be taken *before* students embark on a summer research experience. Such a course might have to be offered each semester to ensure that a large number of concentrators could participate. Additionally students should be required to take at least one research methods course of the students’ choice from across the Brown curriculum and as relevant to their own research plans. Enrollment in the new research design course would better prepare students for selecting an appropriate methods course from among the range of options offered across many academic departments.

For students opting to write an honors thesis, the committee recommends that proposals be submitted in the spring term of junior year, and then conducted through summer research (in most cases) and two semesters of independent study with a thesis advisor. See the table below for a potential mapping of the newly proposed curriculum.

Advisory Committee

For these changes to be possible, the review committee feels it is essential that Watson establish an advisory committee of key faculty committed to supporting the concentration and its two tracks. Indeed, each recommendation is based on the premise that key faculty are invested in these concentrations, and are willing to advise students and theses and to teach mandatory courses. One of the key challenges currently facing all Watson concentrations is that none have the necessary buy-in from faculty in order to ensure that required courses are covered and that the heavy advising commitments are met. Without such a commitment, the concentrations will continue to struggle to meet student need and to provide the rigorous education that Brown students and faculty expect. Comprised of Watson-affiliated faculty, this advisory committee would be charged with creating the new concentration structure and, just as importantly, ensuring its continued success by monitoring student learning outcomes, overseeing thesis and capstone work, and staffing key courses. A critical aspect of the advisory committee's work would be to host regular curricular planning meetings (at least annually) with the department chairs from the departments from which the concentration's course offerings would be drawn -- namely Economics, Political Science, History, Anthropology, and Sociology, as well as other area studies units as appropriate.

C. Advising

We propose an advising system that pairs each student with a faculty advisor but limits each advisor to six students per cohort for a maximum of eighteen at any given time. Program directors would be charged both with pairing students with academic faculty advisors and carrying a load of, ideally, no more than twenty advisees each.

IV. Summary Recommendations

Overall Structure

1. Reduce the number of concentrations from three to a single concentration with two tracks: one focused on development (adapted from the current Development Studies concentration) and the other focused on governance (integrating the current Public Policy and IR concentrations to a single course of study on comparative policy). Such a redesign would allow students in what are now the concentrations in Development Studies and

Public Policy to be more fully integrated within Watson and thus to leverage the Institute's resources.

2. Create an advisory committee comprised of Watson faculty to further discuss a revised concentration for the approval of the College Curriculum Council. Like curriculum committees in departmental concentrations, this standing committee would be responsible for overseeing the new concentration, monitoring student learning outcomes, staffing key courses, and overseeing thesis and capstone work.

Curriculum

3. Establish a required introductory course that could be co-taught, such as the introductory courses offered in Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences (CLPS 0010, Mind, Brain and Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Approach) or Public Health (PHP 0320, Introduction Public Health) to provide students with a broad and interdisciplinary foundation to global studies and development.
4. Deepen global competency through three years of language study in all tracks (i.e. through the 600 level or the equivalent) along with four non-language based regional or thematic focus courses across the humanities and social sciences.
5. Require students focusing on the United States to engage in comparative international policy courses so as to learn to situate the United States in a global context; discuss the benefits of requiring language study.
6. Develop a one-semester research design course for sophomores and juniors that would introduce Watson concentrators, regardless of track or focus area, to frameworks for asking empirical questions and making empirically-based, analytical arguments.
7. Require that proposals for honors theses be submitted in the spring term of junior year, and then conducted through summer research (in most cases) and two semesters of independent study with a thesis advisor during senior year.

Advising

8. Assign each concentrator to a faculty advisor, limiting each advisor to six students per cohort for a maximum of eighteen at any given time.
9. Charge program directors with pairing students with academic faculty advisors and carrying a load of, ideally, no more than twenty advisees each.

Proposed Concentration and Requirements

TRACK 1: DEVELOPMENT	TRACK 2: GOVERNANCE
CORE (5)	
<p>Integrative gateway course, or equivalent</p> <p>PLCY 0100 -- Expanded to include content and case studies beyond the U.S.</p> <p>ECON 0110 – Principles of Economics</p> <p>Two of: SOC 1620 Globalization and Social Conflict;</p> <p>ANTH 0110 Anthropology and Global Social Problems: Environment, Development, and Governance;</p> <p>POLS 0400 Introduction to International Politics</p>	
TRACK COURSES (2)	TRACK COURSES (2)
ECON Economics for Development	ECON/PLCY Economics for Public Policy
Sophomore Seminar in Development	Ethics for Public Policy
REGIONAL OR THEMATIC FOCUS (4)	
<p>Regional courses must be in the same geographic area, linked with language study.</p> <p>If thematic focus area, at least one course should be in a different geographic region.</p>	
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS (2)	
<p>New DEVL 1500 Methods in Development Research (prior to 7th semester)</p> <p>Quantitative or qualitative methods course from approved list (prior to 7th semester)</p>	
LANGUAGE	
<p>Three full years of university study or equivalent.*</p> <p><i>Further discuss language requirement for students focusing on “U.S.” region.</i></p>	
SENIOR CAPSTONE (1 or 2)	
<p>a. one-semester option, must incorporate substantive, synthetic, written product</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. Honor's thesis (2 courses)</p> <p>Must incorporate language skills and focus area.</p>	
STUDY ABROAD	
Strongly Recommended	

Appendix

A. Committee Charge

In 2015, three interdisciplinary undergraduate concentrations – Development Studies, International Relations, and Public Policy – were placed formally under the jurisdiction of the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. The current review represents the first time that all three concentrations will be assessed simultaneously, and the first time that they will be examined as part of a synthetic whole.

The review has three main tasks: i) to assess whether the concentrations are meeting the highest standards for rigorous undergraduate education; ii) to assess whether the concentrations are performing at or above the level of comparable programs at our strongest peer institutions; and iii) to examine possible synergies that might be realized across the three concentrations now that they are part of a single organizational whole.

Academic Rigor

The first main task involves assessing whether the three concentrations are meeting their educational goals, and doing so with rigor. What is the body of knowledge that each concentration is demanding its students master before graduating? How is that body of knowledge conveyed? Are students leaving the program with clear analytical skills? How are those skills imparted, and are they done so in a rigorous fashion? Are honors students being adequately prepared to write theses? Especially given that each of these concentrations represents a multidisciplinary effort, do the programs amount to more than just a collection of courses offered by external disciplinary departments? Are students being adequately advised, and are advising responsibilities apportioned on a sustainable basis? Do our concentrations adequately reflect our aspirations for diversity and inclusion?

Peer Comparisons

The second main task involves assessing how the Watson Institute’s concentrations compare to those offered by leading peer institutions. Comparisons might include the Public Policy major at Princeton’s Woodrow Wilson School, the Public Policy Studies major at the University of Chicago Harris School, the International Studies major at Johns Hopkins SAIS, the Global Affairs major at Yale’s Jackson Institute, etc.

Do Watson’s undergraduate concentrations compare favorably to our leading peers? In what ways are Watson’s concentrations distinctive, and what opportunities exist for further growth or retooling? What might we learn from our peers’ curricula, requirements, approaches to advising, etc.? What changes do we need to make, if any, to ensure that Brown is a leading institution among its peers with regard to educating students in the field covered by these concentrations?

Potential for Synergies Across the Concentrations

The third main task involves assessing whether Watson's three concentrations can become stronger both individually and collectively by together pursuing deeper coordination and collaboration. Might the three concentrations share a set of common courses that would provide a distinctive Watson experience to all concentrators (i.e., a shared scope and methods course, a shared thesis preparation seminar, etc.)? That is, what opportunities exist for shared curricula? Can the concentrations better coordinate to ensure access to faculty teaching time (and thus ensure continuity and regularity in course offerings)? How can the concentrations best maintain their distinctive features, but at the same time take best advantage of their position in a growing, increasingly unified academic unit? Over the longer run, what is the best overarching structure that would ensure academic rigor and distinctiveness – three closely coordinated distinct concentrations or one combined concentration (“International and Public Affairs”) with distinct internal tracks? Might there be still other structures that could achieve the goals of rigor and distinction?

B. Committee Membership

Maud S. Mandel, Dean of the College, Professor of Judaic Studies and History (*committee chair*)

Cynthia Brokaw, Professor of History

Omar Galarraga, Associate Professor of Health Services, Policy and Practice, School of Public Health

Matthew Jarrell '18

Alina Joharjian '18

J. Timmons Roberts, Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology

Besenia Rodriguez, Senior Associate Dean of the College

Wendy Schiller, Professor and Chair of Political Science

Kerry Smith, Associate Professor of History

Zach Witkin '18