

Multi-Site Report

Defense and Strategic Studies Department at Fairfax, Virginia Location

Defense and Strategic Studies Department
Missouri State University
9302 Lee Highway, Suite 760
Fairfax, VA 22031

Program Offered:
Master of Science in Defense and Strategic Studies

1. ACADEMIC CONTROLS. Explain the institution's systems for assuring appropriate oversight of instruction at its off-campus additional locations generally and at the locations to be evaluated specifically. The institution's explanation should include, but need not be limited to, answers to the following questions.

- How does the institution oversee and administer the instruction of educational programs and institutional policy at the additional locations?

Each semester, prior to the beginning of courses, the DSS Department head and members of the staff review every new syllabus carefully to ensure that all courses offered are consistent with the high quality demanded by the department. In addition, the Department Head and the staff interview approximately 50% of all DSS students every academic year to gain an understanding of student concerns regarding courses and any other pertinent matter. These interviews are conducted privately and on a non-attribution basis. Information from these interviews is provided to the Department Head so that steps may be taken promptly to address any matters needing attention.

The Fairfax site Department Head reports directly to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs. The academic programs themselves are managed by DSS faculty in coordination with the Graduate Council on the main campus. All faculty hired to teach at the Fairfax location are first vetted and approved by the Department Head and are then recommended for employment to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs. The DSS Department provides orientation for all faculty at their location. Moreover, faculty off-campus are included in regular college and university communications. When necessary, meetings can be conducted at a distance through conference calls or ITV. The goal is to provide the same quality of academic experience at off-campus sites as for main campus students.

- What personnel and structure at the main campus or system office provide overall institutional oversight of such instruction and assurance of consistency of similar programs offered at multiple additional locations?

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Humanities and Public Affairs.

- How does the institution assure timely availability of coursework required for the particular degree programs offered at each degree additional location?

Like all other academic programs delivered at off-campus sites, DSS has published its course periodicities enabling students to complete an academic program within a reasonable time. The Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs on the main campus is responsible for ensuring DSS classes are offered as planned. Academic advisors familiar with the DSS program advise students by phone, in-person, or email each semester to keep them on track with their program of study. Advisement is done by phone and email, or in person.

- How does the institution ensure that faculty hired to work at its off-campus additional locations are appropriately qualified and performing in accordance with institutional expectations?

All off-campus faculties must have the same qualifications required of faculty who teach on the main campus. They are hired by the DSS Department with the approval of the Dean. As a result there is an assurance that the credentials of faculty are vetted and are consistent across the institution, including at off-site locations.

The goal is to provide the same quality of experience to off-campus students that on-campus students would receive. Student performance and placement would seem to bear this out. The DSS Department, because of its location, is able to take advantage of per course faculty who work in federal agencies or have exceptional experience in the military or defense industry. The academic advising needs of the students are provided by the Department Head and faculty with the assistance of staff members who also assist students with financial aid and scheduling.

The formal review of the DSS program conducted by the Virginia State Council of Higher Education conducted a survey of DSS students in 2010 and found that 100% of DSS students were “Very satisfied /satisfied” with the DSS faculty, and that 95% of DSS students were “Very satisfied/satisfied” with the quality of education” they received at DSS. The VA state representatives told the DSS department head that these were the most impressive results she had seen from such VA State reviews of programs.

- How does the institution assure that faculty across additional locations have a consistent understanding of their role and are similarly oriented to it?

Faculty at the Fairfax location are hired by the DSS Department. They have access to the same training and support as faculty on the main campus. Support includes technology assistance from experts on the main campus and a computer services representative hired by the department.

2. REGULAR EVALUATION BY THE INSTITUTION. What evidence confirms that systems are in place to ensure that the institution evaluates the additional location on a regular basis?

- What are the reporting lines from the site to a branch campus or the main campus?

The Fairfax site Department Head reports directly to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs. The academic programs themselves are managed by DSS faculty in coordination with the Graduate Council on the main campus. All faculty hired to teach at the Fairfax location are first vetted and approved by the Department Head and are then recommended for employment to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs. The DSS Department provides orientation for all faculty at their location. Moreover, faculty off-campus are included in regular college and university communications. When necessary, meetings can be conducted at a distance through conference calls or ITV. The goal is to provide the same quality of academic experience at off-campus sites as for main campus students.

- Is the institution responsive to concerns from the faculty, administration, and staff at the additional location?

Regular communication insures that any concerns from faculty, administration, and staff are addressed in a timely manner. This includes budgetary, curricular, and personnel issues and has resulted in adjustments in purchasing procedures, budgetary transfers, development of new curriculum, and the hiring of new personnel to meet student needs.

3. FACULTY. What evidence confirms that the additional location has adequate faculty, including an adequate number of appropriately credentialed faculty for the courses and programs available at the additional location?

Faculty at the Fairfax location are hired by the DSS Department. They have access to the same training and support as faculty on the main campus. Support includes technology assistance from experts on the main campus and a computer services representative hired by the department.

The emphasis is to provide a unique academic experience for these students that would not be available if the department was located on the main campus. Despite their distance from the main campus, DSS faculty and its academic program is still subject to the central oversight of academic administrators who oversee the on-campus programs. Changes in the curriculum must still be submitted to the Graduate Council on the main campus and all aspects of the admissions process and financial aid process are channeled through the offices on the main campus. This ensures comparability across all sites where a particular academic program is delivered.

4. FACILITIES. Describe the facilities generally available at the institution's multiple off-campus additional locations and at the specific locations being visited. Include classroom and laboratory space as well as space for faculty and administrative needs. The institution's description should include, but need not be limited to, answers to the following questions.

- How does the institution determine what the needs of students, faculty and administration are at a particular additional location being planned and how does it go about identifying and improving space to meet those needs?

Launching new programs and recruiting for existing ones are done in close consultation with the Department Head of DSS, the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs, and the Provost. Thus, recruiting and marketing only takes place when the Department Head of DSS, the Dean, and the Provost are comfortable that adequate resources are available to support those programs. Further, since this is a graduate program only all sections of courses are capped at levels that are commensurate with the available facilities and pedagogic requirements.

- How does it continue to assess whether existing space at the additional locations is adequate for its educational and other needs or whether space may need to be improved or upgraded?

Every semester the DSS department head and staff systematically and carefully calculate student needs in terms of facilities, space, equipment, faculty and DSS course offerings to ensure that these resources are in balance with student numbers. As a result, the number of adjunct faculty and course offerings has increased every year, computer equipment and library resources have been expanded, and the department's fixed resources have been used with ever-greater efficiency.

- How does the institution assure it has dealt with appropriate transportation and parking issues at the additional locations?

The Fairfax facility is easily assessable by public transportation and the building has adequate parking for all of its tenants.

- How do students at the additional locations acquire appropriate textbooks and other materials in a timely fashion either at the additional location or elsewhere?

Students are able to access and order their textbooks through the University bookstore website. They can then be shipped to the student's home address.

- How does the institution address ADA and other related issues at the additional locations?

The Fairfax facility is fully in compliance with all ADA regulations as part of its lease agreement.

- How does the institution receive and address comments or suggestions from faculty and students about individual facilities?

The DSS Department Head and his staff are present as the first point of contact for students needing to access academic services. He is able to assess a student's needs and then direct that student to the appropriate resources. The work of the Department Head and his staff ensure quality of service by acting as advocates for students and ensuring that their needs are met by the department and the University.

The DSS Department Head and his staff are available during regular business hours and in the evening to assist students. Students are able to interact with these personnel

directly, and they are able to interact with student support personnel by phone and email. Students may utilize the University web site online twenty-four hours a day for admissions, registration, and to manage their accounts.

5. RESOURCES. What evidence confirms that the additional location has adequate resources?

- Are the faculty appropriately supported?

All faculty hired to teach at the Fairfax location are first vetted and approved by the Department Head and are then recommended for employment to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs. The DSS Department provides office space, clerical and technical support, and orientation for all faculty at their location. Moreover, faculty off-campus are included in regular college and university communications. When necessary, meetings can be conducted at a distance through conference calls or ITV. The goal is to provide the same quality of academic orientation and support at off-campus sites as for main campus faculty.

- Do students have access to course materials?

Services are available to all students through a variety of venues. A primary means of communication is through the Student Services website (www.education.missouristate.edu/services/), which is regularly updated so that the most current information is available. We maintain quality through the use of a common information portal website. Several personnel in the Student Services offices also have web cams and are available to visit with off-campus students via Skype. This new service allows face-to-face contact with staff at Missouri State and helps ensure high quality interactions between students and staff.

The DSS Department Head and his staff are available during regular business hours and in the evening to assist students. Students are able to interact with these personnel directly, and they are able to interact with student support personnel by phone and email. Students may utilize the University web site online twenty-four hours a day for admissions, registration, and to manage their accounts.

The DSS Department Head works with the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs on program communication including degree information, course periodicities, and state of Virginia requirements to ensure that print and web based information is accurate. All DSS departmental materials are created by a team of DSS staff, faculty members and the department head. All of these materials are reviewed carefully and sequentially by the entire team for accuracy and appropriateness on multiple occasions, e.g., during the writing/ production process, prior to printing, following printing, and prior to distribution.

6. ACADEMIC SERVICES Explain the services provided to support the academic program generally across the institution's multiple off-campus additional locations and at the specific locations being evaluated. The institution's explanation should include, but need not be limited to, answers to the following questions.

- How are the services delivered, managed, and quality assurance maintained at the additional locations?

The DSS Department Head and his staff are present as the first point of contact for students needing to access academic services. He is able to assess a student's needs and then direct that student to the appropriate resources. The work of the Department Head and his staff ensure quality of service by acting as advocates for students and ensuring that their needs are met by the department and the University.

- Describe the reporting and feedback mechanisms that addresses concerns or problems by students and faculty at the additional locations.

The DSS Department Head and his staff are the primary student-services contacts for off-campus students and are held responsible for responding to student concerns and communicating those concerns to the appropriate administrators on the main campus. They ensure quality of service by acting as advocates for students and ensuring that their needs are met by the University.

The DSS Department Head and the staff interview approximately 50% of all DSS students every academic year to gain an understanding of student concerns regarding courses and any other pertinent matter. These interviews are conducted privately and on a non-attribution basis. Information from these interviews is provided to the department head so that steps may be taken promptly to address any matters needing attention.

As part of a formal review of the DSS program conducted by the Virginia State Council of Higher Education an official survey of DSS students was taken in 2010 and it found that 100% of DSS students were "Very satisfied /satisfied" with the DSS faculty. This official survey also found that 95% of DSS students were "Very satisfied/satisfied" with the quality of education" they received at DSS and "with the administration" of DSS. The VA state representatives told the DSS department head that these were that most impressive results she had seen from such VA State reviews of programs.

In addition, this 2010 VA State survey of students found that 100% of DSS students "Strongly agree/agree" with the statements that DSS, "Provides adequate opportunities for interaction between faculty and students" and that the DSS "Faculty is accessible to students for academic and course advising at stated times outside of regularly schooled hours at each site." The VA State survey of DSS students concluded with the written observation that, "These very positive responses [regarding the DSS program] were also reflected in student comments."

Since the establishment of DSS in the Washington, D.C. area in 2005, the number of students raising substantive matters to the department head has been no more than one per year. In six years, the department has successfully addressed virtually all of these few matters.

- How do students at the additional locations connect with advisors, placement coordinators, and tutors?

The DSS Department Head and his staff are present as the first point of contact for students needing to access academic services. He is able to assess a student's needs

and then direct that student to the appropriate resources. The work of the Department Head and his staff ensure quality of service by acting as advocates for students and ensuring that their needs are met by the department and the University.

- How are library and computer services made available to students at the additional location?

A computer lab makes computers and printers available to students in the Fairfax facility. Students are able to use the Internet to connect to Springfield library resources and databases to do their research.

The DSS Department Head and his staff are available during regular business hours and in the evening to assist students. Students are able to interact with these personnel directly, and they are able to interact with student support personnel by phone and email. Students may utilize the University web site online twenty-four hours a day for admissions, registration, and to manage their accounts.

- According to what schedule are these services available (e.g. twenty-four hours a day, weekdays only, etc.) and by what mode (e.g., phone, e-mail, in person, another location or campus, etc.)?

The DSS Department Head and his staff are available during regular business hours and in the evening to assist students. Students are able to interact with these personnel directly, and they are able to interact with student support personnel by phone and email. Students may utilize the University web site online twenty-four hours a day for admissions, registration, and to manage their accounts.

7. STUDENT SERVICES Explain the institution's systems for providing student services at its multiple off-campus additional locations. The institution's explanation should include, but need not be limited to, answers to the following questions.

- How are the services delivered, managed, and quality assurance maintained at the additional locations?

The DSS Department Head and his staff are available during regular business hours and in the evening to assist students. Students are able to interact with these personnel directly, and they are able to interact with student support personnel by phone and email. Students may utilize the University web site online twenty-four hours a day for admissions, registration, and to manage their accounts.

- Describe the reporting and feedback mechanisms that addresses concerns or problems by students and faculty at the additional locations.

The DSS Department Head and his staff are the primary student-services contacts for off-campus students and are held responsible for responding to student concerns and communicating those concerns to the appropriate administrators on the main campus. They ensure quality of service by acting as advocates for students and ensuring that their needs are met by the University.

The DSS Department Head and the staff interview approximately 50% of all DSS students every academic year to gain an understanding of student concerns regarding courses and any other pertinent matter. These interviews are conducted privately and on a non-attribution basis. Information from these interviews is provided to the department head so that steps may be taken promptly to address any matters needing attention.

- How do students at the additional locations connect with admissions, registration, business office, student records and financial aid?

Services are available to all students through a variety of venues. A primary means of communication is through the Student Services website www.education.missouristate.edu/services/, which is regularly updated so that the most current information is available. We maintain quality through the use of a common information portal website. Several personnel in the Student Services offices also have web cams and are available to visit with off-campus students via Skype. This new service allows face-to-face contact with staff at Missouri State and helps ensure high quality interactions between students and staff.

- According to what schedule are these services available at the additional locations (e.g. twenty-four hours a day, weekdays only, etc.) and by what mode (e.g., phone, e-mail, in person, another location or campus, etc.)?

University web services are available 24-hours per day by means of the portal. Several personnel in the Student Services offices also have web cams and are available to visit with off-campus students via Skype. This new service allows face-to-face contact with staff at Missouri State and helps ensure high quality interactions between students and staff.

8. Financial Stability. What evidence confirms that the additional location is a financially sound operation?

- Does the additional location generate revenue?

The Fairfax facility generates revenue through tuition and student fees. These funds are used to help pay operational, personnel, and facilities costs. The department head has raised almost \$2 million in private donations for DSS since the department's 2005 establishment in the Washington, D.C. area. These monies have also been used to help provide for the necessary facility and curriculum needs of DSS students.

- Who sets the budget for the additional location?

The budget is developed by the DSS Department Head in consultation with the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs and is approved by the Dean.

- Who approves the budget?

The budget is approved by the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs.

- How do administrators and staff assure that the location will have adequate financial resources each year?

Every semester the DSS department head and staff systematically and carefully calculate student needs in terms of facilities, space, equipment, faculty and DSS course offerings to ensure that these resources are in balance with student numbers. As a result, the number of adjunct faculty and course offerings has increased every year, computer equipment and library resources have been expanded, and the department's fixed resources have been used with ever-greater efficiency.

At present, the Department of Defense and Strategic Studies has maximized its use of available classroom space. This is due to growth in the number of students and the fact that all classes are taught in the evening. Recent addition of ITV equipment will allow DSS to transmit live broadcast of courses to the Springfield campus and other locations and that should provide for some growth in student credit hours. In addition, negotiations are currently underway with other institutions for use of their facilities and eventually larger space will have to be leased at the Fairfax site. Since the DSS program has received high approval from agencies in the Washington, D.C. area and is a cost effective option with relation to similar programs in the area, it has great potential for future growth.

9. Long Range Planning. What evidence confirms that the additional location fits into the mission and strategic plan for the institution?

- Does the institution have a plan for how long the additional location will remain in place?

The Fairfax facility currently has a ten-year lease and plans are underway to investigate a future lease agreement.

- Does it have a plan for the programs it will offer?

The plan is to continue to provide the DSS program in Fairfax or a similar location in the Washington, D.C. area.

10. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE Explain the institution's systems for assessing student performance across its multiple off-campus additional locations and at the locations being evaluated specifically. The institution's explanation should include, but need not be limited to, answers to the following questions.

- How does the institution assure that students attending these additional locations, in particular, the additional location(s) being visited, are learning and meeting the educational objectives of their programs?

Students and instructors at the Fairfax location are held to the same academic policies and standards established for the main campus. For example, students in the Master of Defense and Strategic Studies program go through the same admissions process as main campus students, must meet the same entrance requirements as the main

campus, must make the same academic progress as main campus students in order to complete the program (e.g. they are dismissed from the program after two grades of C or below). The goal is to ensure that there is no distinction between students at off-campus sites versus the main campus. Thus, any evaluation techniques used for off-campus students are the same as those for on-campus students.

- How does the institution go about measuring the learning at the additional locations?

Academic standards and policies are no different for off-campus students than main campus students and are administered by the academic departments.

- How does it include feed back, what it learns from assessment, at a particular additional location into strategies to improve teaching and learning at that location? How does it ensure that students attending additional locations have similar learning to that of students on the main campus?

No courses are taught at additional locations without the consultation and approval of the Dean and the Graduate Council on the main campus. Thus, program at the Fairfax location is subject to the same evaluative procedures as academic programs on the main campus.

Students are regularly invited to comment about any concerns in the classes they take, including those regarding facilities, in course evaluation forms routinely given in classes. Additionally, the DSS Department Head and his staff are available to receive and address any concerns from students, faculty, or staff. The DSS Department Head is in regular consultation with the Dean of Humanities and Public Affairs regarding needs and opportunities at their respective off-campus sites. As appropriate, the Department Head also has the opportunity to consult with the Associate Provost for Access and Outreach

11. MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT Explain the institution's strategies for marketing and recruitment of students to its multiple off-campus additional locations and to the particular locations being evaluated. Provide samples of marketing and recruitment literature for the evaluator to review while at the additional locations. The institution's description should include, but need not be limited to, answers to the following questions.

- How does the institution confirm that marketing and recruitment information accurately provides sufficient information about individual additional locations?

The DSS Department Head works with the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs on program communication including degree information, course periodicities, and state of Virginia requirements to ensure that print and web based information is accurate. All DSS departmental materials are created by a team of DSS staff, faculty members and the department head. All of these materials are reviewed carefully and sequentially by the entire team for accuracy and appropriateness on multiple occasions, e.g., during the writing/ production process, prior to printing, following printing, and prior to distribution.

- How does the institution ensure that students have the appropriately applicable information for the additional location they are attending?

The DSS Department Head works with the Dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs on program communication including degree information, course periodicities, and state of Virginia requirements to ensure that print and web based information is accurate. All DSS departmental materials are created by a team of DSS staff, faculty members and the department head. All of these materials are reviewed carefully and sequentially by the entire team for accuracy and appropriateness on multiple occasions, e.g., during the writing/ production process, prior to printing, following printing, and prior to distribution.

- How does the institution answer questions or address comments from individuals about the information related to the additional location?

They are directed to call the DSS Department Head, view the departmental webpage (<http://dss.missouristate.edu/>), or examine printed materials on the program.