



Functional Bureau Strategy

Foreign Service Institute

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1. Executive Statement

Clarity of purpose and commitment to mission are indispensable components of organizational success. FSI's Strategic Framework, entitled "FSI Forward," has guided our efforts since its development in 2013. It reads as follows:

American diplomacy rests on the shoulders of the men and women who design, develop and implement our foreign policy. The professional cadres of the Department of State, along with other foreign affairs agencies, advance American interests around the world and protect American security at home. To excel in the fulfillment of these critical responsibilities, our personnel require a unique combination of specialized expertise, operational skill sets, and a broad capacity for innovative and visionary leadership. The rapid pace of change and likelihood of fundamental shifts in the international system over the next decade place an added premium on intellectual agility and personal resilience. We must have the ability to respond quickly and effectively to evolving USG priorities as well as to external events that are both unexpected and unprecedented. The mission of the Foreign Service Institute is to ensure our people meet these high standards, so that the United States has the strongest and most successful diplomatic force anywhere in the world.

Our Product

FSI trains and educates all professional cadres of the State Department – Foreign Service, Civil Service, and Locally Employed Staff. From orientation seminars in the first days of employment, to the development of substantive, regional, linguistic, and managerial expertise in the mid-levels, to the ambassadorial and deputy assistant secretary seminars for our most senior officials, FSI cultivates the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of our professionals across the span of their entire career.

Underpinning all of our training – and the rationale which unifies all that we do at FSI - is the drive to develop the best possible leaders at every level. We seek to produce individuals who are capable of designing our foreign policy and national security strategy, leading our diplomatic operations around the world, and producing outcomes that serve the best interests of our country.

To accomplish these goals, the training that we deliver must meet four broad criteria: effectiveness, relevance, reach, and impact.

- **Effectiveness:** FSI learning objectives target the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes the foreign affairs community requires to develop workforce competencies. To be effective, FSI training must ensure learners achieve the identified learning objectives. As a result, learners are confident they can apply the acquired knowledge and skills, implement what they learned, and impact the Department in positive ways.

- **Relevance:** We must ensure that our training is geared toward the challenges facing our workforce in the world of today and tomorrow. Relevance is the extent to which FSI training and program content align with the needs of the foreign affairs community. Constant renewal of our content and methodology, as well as adaptation for specific circumstances, is essential to ensure immediacy and flexibility.
- **Reach:** With a globally deployed workforce operating in every country around the world, FSI must deliver learning when and where it is needed, with a whole-of-government student body and learning experience. We must also sustain our engagement so that continual learning is an inherent component of a State Department career, and encourage wide recognition that all employees are accountable for managing their continued professionalization through structured learning.
- **Impact:** FSI training must deliver results to the Department of State. FSI must focus training on what learners need to know and do to advance the mission and goals of the Department and we must be able to present evidence of our positive impact.

2. Bureau Strategic Framework

Bureau Goal 1: Provide World-Class Training to U.S. Government Foreign Affairs Professionals

- **Bureau Objective 1.1:** Rigorously apply FSI standards and policies for curriculum development, educational technology, and training evaluation (assess requirements for training by working with stakeholders; design, develop, implement, and evaluate curricula across all areas of instruction; incorporate educational technology where appropriate) to support continuously improving world class training; and constantly build capacity of FSI staff.
- **Bureau Objective 1.2:** Grow partnerships with higher education institutions, private sector organizations, and USG/foreign counterparts, and conduct benchmarking of their practices and content; adopt evidence-based practices from these partnerships and benchmarking studies to improve the FSI training experience.
- **Bureau Objective 1.3:** Strengthen Department leadership and workforce support for training by demonstrating its impact on the work of the Department of State.

Bureau Goal 2: Leverage Training as a Platform for Career-long Talent Development of the Workforce

- **Bureau Objective 2.1:** Design, develop, and implement core curricula for new hires, mid-level staff, and newly promoted senior staff.
- **Bureau Objective 2.2:** Promote higher levels of language, regional, and cultural mastery across career spans by encouraging repeat tours in posts requiring these skills, raising or tailoring language-designated position (LDP) designations for certain positions, and expanding advanced-level training and evaluation.
- **Bureau Objective 2.3:** Increase leadership skills across the Department workforce by enhancing and reshaping the career-long leadership and management training continuum, expanding access to individual coaching, and increasing organizational development services.
- **Bureau Objective 2.4:** Boost individual and organizational capacity to operate effectively in crises and thrive even in face of danger, stress, uncertainty, and setback through enhanced training, the development of crisis leadership programming with specialized elements for particular functional roles, and a comprehensive resiliency training program.

Bureau Goal 3: Boost Readiness for Diplomacy of Tomorrow

- **Bureau Objective 3.1:** Instill greater future orientation and capacity for innovation in the Department's workforce via critical analysis and strategic approaches with new and strengthened courses and course content focused on emerging global trends, data analytics, and related diplomatic and leadership skill sets.

- **Bureau Objective 3.2:** Analyze recent case studies of American diplomacy and incorporate lessons learned into tradecraft and leadership training through the work of the Center for the Study of the Conduct of Diplomacy (CSCD).
- **Bureau Objective 3.3:** Explore, develop, and train workforce to employ IT innovations that can support more effective diplomacy.

Bureau Goal 4: Infuse Digital Advantages into all Operations

- **Bureau Objective 4.1:** Take FSI online to facilitate digital registration and global 24/7 access by all learners, including eligible family members (EFMs) and employees of non-State agencies for all materials.
- **Bureau Objective 4.2:** Maximize training effectiveness by incorporating appropriate and well-designed educational technology in the classroom and beyond.
- **Bureau Objective 4.3:** Acquire or develop two leading-edge digital platforms: 1) a learning management system to serve as a LearnCenter to manage instructional materials; and, 2) a central evaluation system to manage evaluation processes.
- **Bureau Objective 4.4:** Develop and launch a more sophisticated and impactful blended and synchronous approach to distance learning.
- **Bureau Objective 4.5:** Develop a robust inventory of effective distance learning courses in diplomacy tradecraft, leadership, and language studies.

Management Goal: Create Optimal Learning Environments

- **Management Objective 5.1:** Complete construction and begin using the new training building; upgrade existing facilities as needed to resolve long-term training space deficit and unify Department domestic training on the FSI campus.
- **Management Objective 5.2:** Advance central mission -- boosting diplomacy by empowering diplomats -- through greater focus on the needs of learners in all FSI operations.
- **Management Objective 5.3:** Strengthen key FSI management processes and systems in order to increase administrative responsiveness and agility, reduce customer response times, and deliver a measurably higher level of support to both employees in training and staff.

3. Goals and Objectives

Bureau Goal 1: Provide World-Class Training to U.S. Government Foreign Affairs Professionals

a. Description and Linkages

To develop the world's best diplomats, the Department needs the world's best diplomatic training. As noted in the *Joint Strategic Plan FY2018-2022 (JSP)*, FSI will "enhance workforce performance, leadership, engagement, and accountability to execute our mission efficiently and effectively." (JSP Strategic Objective 4.3), by embracing cutting-edge educational trends from the public and private sectors, as well as academia in order to achieve a world-class standard of training. FSI must also dramatically boost professional development opportunities for staff to ensure the strongest possible training team. Risks to achieving this goal could come from partners for whom our issues may not be a priority or whose priorities may conflict with ours.

Bureau Objective 1.1: Rigorously apply FSI standards and policies for curriculum development, educational technology, and training evaluation (assess requirements for training by working with stakeholders; design, develop, implement, and evaluate curricula across all areas of instruction; incorporate educational technology where appropriate) to support continuously improving world-class training; and, constantly build capacity of FSI staff.

a. Justification

FSI must ensure that training and evaluation methodologies continue to contribute to the ability of the foreign affairs community to execute U.S. diplomacy. Curriculum that addresses key needs, innovative educational technology, and robust evaluation tools are crucial. Additionally, increasing and varying the opportunities to build FSI staff capacity is essential.

Bureau Objective 1.2: Grow partnerships with higher education institutions, private sector organizations, and U.S. government/foreign counterparts, and conduct benchmarking of their practices and content; adopt evidence-based practices from these partnerships and benchmarking studies to improve the FSI training experience.

a. Justification

Many higher education institutions, private sector companies, and U.S. government/foreign counterparts use evidence-based training practices. It is important for FSI to partner and benchmark with these organizations to understand and employ effective practices to prepare the foreign affairs community to execute U.S. diplomacy.

Bureau Objective 1.3: Strengthen Department leadership and workforce support for training (time and resources) by demonstrating its impact on the work of the Department of State.

a. Justification

Greater institutional support for training, driven by demonstrated results, will encourage more student engagement, provide expanded opportunities for innovation, and better prepare professionals.

Bureau Goal 2: Leverage Training as a Platform for Career-long Talent Development of the Workforce

a. Description and Linkages

Core curricula and career-long development of both knowledge and skills are essential for effective and efficient professional development over the span of a diplomatic career. Effective leadership is cultivated over time and with concerted attention. Strategic Objective 4.3 of the JSP articulates the need to “enhance workforce performance, leadership,...to execute our mission...” The stress and sacrifice of a diplomatic career require a new level of resilience that must be instilled at entry level, nurtured in the face of crisis and sustained over many years. Conflicting or changing priorities that our workforce must address may pose a risk to achieving this goal as the focus could shift away from long-term talent development to other concerns.

Bureau Objective 2.1: Design, develop, and implement core curricula for new hires, mid-level staff, and newly promoted senior staff.

a. Justification

The Department currently lacks any standard of shared knowledge and skills for employees at each of the three key career milestones that is carried through each milestone.

Bureau Objective 2.2: Promote higher levels of language, regional, and cultural mastery by across career spans by encouraging repeat tours in posts requiring these skills, raising or tailoring language-designated position (LDP) designations for certain positions, and expanding advanced-level training and evaluation.

a. Justification

The culture behind FSI language training has long been to prepare diplomats for worldwide service, so employees learn multiple languages to varying levels of fluency. However, if employees return to a post or region for repeat assignments, substantive linguistic and cultural proficiency will increase as will the employees’ effectiveness.

Bureau Objective 2.3: Increase leadership skills across the Department workforce by enhancing and reshaping the career-long leadership and management training continuum, expanding access to individual coaching, and increasing organizational development services.

a. Justification

For the past 15 plus years, the Department has relied primarily upon a model of grade- or rank-based mandatory leadership courses and a collection of elective short courses to develop this talent and imbue effective leadership behavior. While this foundation is important, a model of mandatory one- to two-week classroom courses every five to seven years is not sufficient to produce the leaders the Department needs to advance America's national interests in today's complex world.

Bureau Objective 2.4: Boost individual and organizational capacity to operate effectively in crises and thrive even in face of danger, stress, uncertainty, and setback through enhanced training, the development of crisis leadership programming with specialized elements for particular functional roles, and a comprehensive resiliency training program.

a. Justification

Personnel must learn how to handle crises and cope successfully with difficult circumstances, and these skills must be cultivated within the Department. Though FSI has worked diligently to prepare personnel for crises through Crisis Management Exercises, Department-wide efforts have been largely uncoordinated. FSI will help partners across the Department share training information. Resilience continues to be a largely unknown concept throughout the Department, so FSI will enhance efforts to educate Department leaders about resiliency while designing and launching a comprehensive resilience training program.

Bureau Goal 3: Boost Readiness for Diplomacy of Tomorrow

a. Description and Linkages

The pace of global change is accelerating dramatically and our workforce must be ready to respond effectively. To that end, boosting our diplomats readiness falls in line with the JSP Strategic Objective 4.1 of "[strengthening] the effectiveness and sustainability of our diplomacy..." Relying on the "old way" of doing things is challenging, leading to inefficient processes and diplomats who are not as well prepared as they could be.

Bureau Objective 3.1: Instill greater future orientation and capacity for innovation in the Department workforce via critical analysis and strategic approaches with new and strengthened courses and course content focused on emerging global trends, data analytics, and related diplomatic and leadership skill sets.

a. Justification

The Department's workforce needs to be better prepared for emerging trends.

Bureau Objective 3.2: Analyze recent case studies of American diplomacy and incorporate lessons learned into tradecraft and leadership training through the work of the Center for the Study of the Conduct of Diplomacy (CSCD).

a. Justification

By incorporating CSCD analysis into training, FSI will prepare the Department's workforce to apply best practices and lessons from diplomatic history to the current and future challenges facing our diplomats.

Bureau Objective 3.3: Explore, develop, and train workforce to employ IT innovations that can support more effective diplomacy.

a. Justification

With a dedicated, multi-disciplinary team managing a technology-enabled experimentation lab, FSI has created a sustainable training program where instructors can problem-solve, exploit their collective expertise, and internally collaborate. This program is a place for instructors to try new approaches to curriculum development, including through the creative use of new and existing technologies inside and outside the classroom.

Bureau Goal 4: Infuse Digital Advantages into all Operations

a. Description and Linkages

Today's more technically savvy clientele has come to expect cutting-edge learning technology. Strategic Objective 4.2 of the JSP emphasizes this need to "provide modern and secure infrastructure and operational capabilities to support effective diplomacy and development." Specifically for FSI, the need to expedite the processing of our student enrollments and get more information out to our worldwide employees faster and often in real-time is growing exponentially. Also, the ability to evaluate and report on training effectiveness is more critical now than ever given tight fiscal conditions. Maintaining obsolete legacy systems can put our operations at risk by draining personnel and financial resources, as opposed to investing in newer and more efficient technology. In addition, systems that are not "keeping up" lead to less-than-desirable learning outcomes.

Bureau Objective 4.1: Take FSI online to facilitate digital registration and global 24/7 access by all learners, including eligible family members (EFMs) and employees of non-State agencies for all materials.

a. Justification

Automating processes and expanding services beyond OpenNet will put us on par with our academic and private sector colleagues - something our students expect.

Bureau Objective 4.2: Maximize training effectiveness by incorporating appropriate and well-designed educational technology in the classroom and beyond.

a. Justification

"Sage on the stage" and "death by PowerPoint" approaches to instruction are not effective. Extensive research has shown that learning is enhanced when students are actively engaged ("doing") rather than passive.

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Bureau Objective 4.3: Acquire or develop three leading-edge digital platforms:

1) a new student training management system with enhanced enrollment processing cross-system capabilities; 2) a learning management system to serve as a LearnCenter to manage instructional materials; and, 3) a central evaluation system to manage evaluation processes.

a. Justification

Technology is turning over far more rapidly than FSI is responding. Both the Student Training Management System (STMS) and the FSI LearnCenter are decades old; it is time to look for ways to improve our reach. We also need a centralized evaluation system to efficiently evaluate how well we are performing.

Bureau Objective 4.4: Develop and launch more sophisticated, impactful, blended, and synchronous approaches to distance learning.

a. Justification

A decade ago, training our worldwide population was most readily managed with asynchronous distance learning. With today's advances in mobile technology and collaborative tools such as FaceTime and Skype, it is relatively easy to connect with our students simultaneously in every time zone.

Bureau Objective 4.5: Develop a robust inventory of effective distance learning courses in diplomacy tradecraft, leadership, and language studies.

a. Justification

With today's advances in mobile technology and collaborative tools, coupled with students' demand for state-of-the-art training, it is imperative that we remain diligent in developing training resources that connect with our students in every time zone.

4. Cross-cutting Management Goal

Management Goal: Create Optimal Learning Environments

a. Description and Linkages

FSI's physical plant lacks sufficient space for optimal classroom training, teacher preparation, and student study activities. Relatedly, the JSP notes the need to "strengthen security and safety of workforce and physical assets" in Strategic Objective 4.4. We will continue our efforts to maintain FSI's corporate culture of putting the needs of our students at the center of our operations. Again, the potential for shifting priorities puts considerable risks on our ability not only to create optimal learning environments but also to simply maintain our existing conditions.

Management Objective 1.1: Complete construction and begin using the new training building to resolve long-term training space deficit and unify Department domestic training on the FSI campus; while upgrading existing facilities as needed.

a. Justification

In response to previous overcrowding on the FSI campus, the Department is currently occupying temporary commercial space at 1200 Wilson Boulevard, Rosslyn, VA for FSI training. By FY2022, we will complete construction of a new building on the campus.

Management Objective 1.2: Advance central mission -- boosting diplomacy by empowering diplomats -- through greater focus on the needs of learners in all FSI operations.

a. Justification

Student focus should be on training, not on fulfilling bureaucratic requirements. FSI will continue its now regular review of operations to improve the student and staff experience.

Management Objective 1.3: Strengthen key FSI management processes and systems in order to increase administrative responsiveness and agility, reduce customer response times, and deliver a measurably higher level of support to both employees in training and staff.

a. Justification

Redundancy and duplication are often prominent features in large organizations. Streamlining management procedures and automating processes across systems is a win-win for students and staff.