



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences
Department of History

Sharon Huo, Ph.D., P.E.
Associate Provost
Office of the Provost
Tennessee Tech University

4 March 2023

Dear Associate Provost Huo,

My name is J. Laurence Hare, and I am writing to provide a report on my service as an external reviewer for the BA and BS program in History (CIP 28.54.0101.00) at Tennessee Tech University during the 2022-2023 review cycle. I believe that I am qualified to conduct this external review. I hold a PhD in History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2007) and am currently Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of History in the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas. Before becoming Chair in 2021, I served as Undergraduate Studies Director in History from 2013-2015, as Director of the European Studies Program from 2015-2018, and as Director of the International and Global Studies Program from 2015-2020. I have previously participated in state-mandated external reviews for the University of Arkansas History BA program and led the review process for the International and Global Studies BA Program in the 2016-2017 academic year.

As part of the review process, the Tennessee Tech Department of History provided me with a thorough self-study, including a narrative statement, thirteen appendices with institutional and departmental data, the most recent alumni survey, course syllabi from the 2023 spring term, and the curriculum vitae of the current faculty. To follow up on that information, I reached out to the ten peer institutions identified by the Department of History and reviewed publicly available institutional reports to acquire additional data. I also visited the Tennessee Tech campus from 26-28 February 2023 and met with the department chair, department faculty, college and university administrators, current undergraduate majors, and alumni of the program. The visit included tours of classrooms, offices, and campus facilities. Based on this information, I provide here an evaluation of the Department of History and its BA and BS programs, with an emphasis on overall impressions, strengths, challenges, and suggested strategies and opportunities for program enhancement.

Attached to this letter please find the report and a copy of my curriculum vitae. If you have questions or need more information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

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Tennessee Tech University
External Review: BA and BS in History
CIP 28.54.0101.00

Provided by J. Laurence Hare, Associate Professor and Chair,
Dept. of History, University of Arkansas

Overall Impressions

In my judgment, the quality of the BA and BS program in History at Tennessee Tech is outstanding. In terms of teaching effectiveness and student, alumni, and faculty engagement, the Department of History offers an exceptional undergraduate program, which merited an *Excellent* rating for all criteria of the *THEC Program Review Rubric for Baccalaureate Programs*. As a native of Tennessee, I was already aware of the strong regional reputation of Tech as an institution with highly-regarded STEM programs, but I have since learned much about its robust history and humanities offerings. My sense now is that the history program should be considered a point of pride for Tennessee Tech and a crucial component of its ongoing emergence as a ranked national university.¹ Moreover, the history program offers a great deal of potential for Tech to thrive beyond its nominal STEM focus. Viable humanities and social science programs are essential for any comprehensive public university as a sign of the general health of the institution. Given the importance of such soft skills as active reading, critical thinking, cultural competency, effective writing, information literacy, and oral presentation, history programs in particular are needed to promote the overall quality and career readiness for all undergraduates. For students majoring in history, the program also provides a direct route to career readiness in a wide variety of professions both within and beyond the historical discipline, including in academia, education, entrepreneurship, law, library science, museums, and in both the non-profit and public sectors. Finally, history is a critical component of cultivating active and informed citizenship among college graduates. Therefore, the history degree programs at Tech carry intrinsic value to the institution, while their related core curriculum and elective contributions elevate the value of degree programs across campus. In both instances, they serve local, state, regional, and national needs (criterion 6.3). During my conversations with college and university administrators, I was pleased to see that institutional leaders appear to appreciate the value of the Tennessee Tech history program.

Strengths

History Faculty

The faculty are easily the Department of History's greatest asset. There are currently nine tenure-track faculty and two full-time instructors, with a search underway for a tenth tenure-track replacement

¹ Tennessee Tech ranked #285 in the "National Universities" category on the 2023 "Best Colleges" list of *US News & World Report*. See <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/tennessee-tech-3523>, accessed 4 March 2023.

position. This number places them in the middle of the pack among their peer group.² I deem this to be an adequate number for managing the existing undergraduate program (criterion 4.2). I can also confirm that current tenure-track faculty meet the standards for the program and SACSCOC guidelines for credentials (criterion 4.1). All tenure-track faculty hold terminal PhDs in history from high-ranking institutions,³ and the faculty has strived to cultivate diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, and educational background (criterion 4.3). The Department supervises a Race and Ethnicity Studies minor, and a number of faculty have included diversity and inclusion initiatives in their teaching, research, and service activities. One faculty was recognized as an “Outstanding Diversity Advocate.”

The research productivity of the faculty is adequate for an R2 institution. During their time of service at Tech, faculty members have published or will soon publish roughly 6 books, 40 articles and book chapters, 15 reviews, and they have delivered nearly 50 formal national and international academic presentations. With respect to service, the history faculty are exceptional and are likely among the most service-oriented of campus departments. In my conversations with them, I found that they expressed a clear desire to advance the University through service on institutional committees and to the wider community. They have participated on well over 100 committees and initiatives, and some have received recognition with service awards.

What impressed me most about the faculty was their sense of collegiality and ability to work as a team to assess and improve their courses and overall program. This includes adjustments made through the annual faculty review process, through active participation in annual program assessment, and through contributions to the five-year THEC program evaluations (criterion 4.4). I observed these activities in my review of the self-study documents and in my meeting with the faculty on 27 February 2023. A review of the curriculum vitae showed that at least 50% of the faculty have received external funding or participated in regional, national, and international activities related to teaching and professional development during their time at Tech (criterion 4.5). At least eight members of the faculty have been recognized with or nominated for teaching awards, and at least three have received institutional “challenge coins” denoting that they played a transformative role in a student’s education at Tennessee Tech. The self-study also revealed the careful and intentional process through which each faculty member regularly seeks to plan, evaluate, and improve their approach to teaching effectiveness and student success (criterion 4.6).

Alumni and students universally praised the faculty for being talented and dedicated teachers and mentors. One student said, “History professors will bend over backwards to help a student,” and another said, “I appreciate the ways the faculty wants to see you as a person succeed.” During my conversations, I heard every faculty member’s name mentioned at least once by a grateful student or alumnus/a as someone who had made a positive impact on their academic and career goals.

² According to Appendix H provided by the Department of History, the lowest number of tenure-track faculty at peer institutions is 6 at the University of Southern Maine (where total institutional enrollment is 5,108), and the highest number is 14 at Arkansas Tech (with total enrollment at 7,384). Three other institutions, Cal State Bakersfield, Idaho State, and UC Colorado Springs, have 10-11 tenure-track faculty.

³ Tenure-track faculty have earned PhDs from Purdue, Rutgers, University of Arkansas, University of Illinois, University of Mississippi, University of South Carolina, and University of Tennessee.

History Courses and Curriculum

The Department of History offers both a BA and BS degree, and the curriculum is in keeping with norms in the discipline, with a focus on survey courses at the beginner level, a mid-tier historical methods course, topical electives at the upper level corresponding to geographical focus areas in US, Europe, and world history, and a capstone senior seminar. The curriculum is guided by three primary student learning outcomes (SLOs) focused on research skills (SLO1), extracurricular engagement (SLO2), and factual knowledge (SLO3). The SLOs have guidelines for measurement (criterion 1.1), and the Department provided data showing how they are able to apply quantitative measurements to track progress with each SLO (criterion 1.2). The Department provided an analysis of the results for future improvement (criterion 1.3), and they clearly demonstrated alignment between the SLOs and the stated components of the University mission (criterion 1.4). The Department reviews the curriculum regularly. They included updates on their past review processes in their self-study, and they specifically posed questions to help guide their process during this review period (criterion 2.1).

In a normal academic semester, the Department is able to offer approximately 30 regular survey courses in US history, world history, and western civilization that meet both core and major/minor requirements, and they also provide 14 or so upper-level courses per term that allow students to meet BA and BS degree requirements (criterion 2.2). Enrollments in upper-level courses are capped at 15 students to ensure equitable distribution of students across sections and to facilitate intensive writing and oral presentation training. The curriculum continues to evolve in a way that brings new innovations into the classroom, as seen in the introduction of courses to support a new minor in Digital Humanities (criterion 2.3). The structure of this curriculum is aligned with most programs in the United States (criterion 2.5), and it is satisfactorily designed to move students progressively from beginner status towards a point of mastery (i.e., a “solid foundation”) expected at the undergraduate level (criterion 2.7). Along the way, students can expect to learn and practice such important soft skills as critical thinking and problem-solving (criterion 2.6); historical thinking; source analysis and active reading; effective writing, oral presentation, and multi-modal communication (criterion 2.9); and information literacy and qualitative research methods (criterion 2.10).

A review of the course syllabi convinced me that the faculty are very intentional and thorough in the development and improvement of their courses. Syllabi clearly identified course learning outcomes and expectations. The most complete syllabi I reviewed, which included Prof. Kent Dollar’s syllabus for the US history survey, also provided detailed content information that afforded students the opportunity to be partners in planning and assessing their own learning. I was satisfied that the courses were of sufficient rigor for a strong undergraduate program, and I was pleased to see that there were an increasingly diverse array of courses, including courses on African-American and Native American history. Although the Department does not have faculty specialists with primary scholarly fields outside US and European history, the existing faculty are able to draw on secondary doctoral fields to offer courses in such non-western histories as Latin American and African history, and these courses support a non-western requirement in the major (criterion 3.4).

Students and alumni reported without exception that their courses in history were rigorous, but they also expressed appreciation for the challenge. Several students told me that the course expectations were never

more than they could handle, and that they felt intellectually stimulated and energized by their courses. Alumni told me that the courses had been transformative, giving me the impression that the faculty have a unique ability to work with inexperienced students in a way that leads them to become highly educated and competitive graduates. The students and alumni were especially grateful for the skill training and career readiness imparted by history courses. One told me that she never expected a history course to teach her so much about how to deliver an effective oral presentation, and praised the Department for promoting in-class presentations. Meanwhile, all the individuals with whom I met offered high praise to the quality of writing instruction. It was also interesting to hear from two attorneys and former alumni who in separate meetings told me that the history program prepared them to thrive in law school as no other program could. Both said the rigor of the program made going into law school much easier.

Student evaluations and alumni surveys corroborate these accounts, and they show similarly high levels of satisfaction with courses and curricula (criterion 3.1). Alumni results were especially illuminating, with well over 90% of alumni reporting that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their experience as Tech history majors and with the skills and content they had learned in their courses.

With this information in hand, I would readily say that the curriculum effectively prepares students for careers and advanced study (criterion 2.8). As the chair of a history department in an R1 institution that grants MA and PhD degrees, I would also say that my colleagues and I would look favorably upon a graduate school application from a Tennessee Tech history graduate, knowing that the student had been well prepared to succeed in a rigorous doctoral program.

Extracurricular Engagement

Beyond the classroom experience, the Department of History maintains a very impressive slate of extracurricular opportunities. There are two clubs for students: a Phi Alpha Theta National History Honors Society chapter and a History Club open to all Tech students. It is rare to see two such organizations on a single campus, and this is a testament to the service commitment of the faculty. There are also internships and student research opportunities. Activities are well advertised in Henderson Hall, and data provided by the Department show that participation rates are very high, with events and activities drawing over 100 students per term. A few students told me that they also participated in service learning activities with the history department, most recently through the Rural Reimagined program (<https://www.tntech.edu/grand-challenge/>). These activities are key to creating an intellectual community within history and to providing exposure to professional and career opportunities (criterion 3.2) and opportunities to apply historical learning (criterion 3.3).

Campus Facilities

My tour of the Department and the wider campus convinced me that the campus facilities are excellent and meet the needs of the history program. Tennessee Tech has clearly benefited greatly from investments in campus infrastructure provided by the state of Tennessee. It is admirable that the University affords the Department of History control of its classrooms in Henderson Hall. This helps foster a sense of intellectual community on campus, and the Department has taken advantage of that by providing a student study and gathering space near the faculty offices. In fact, I witnessed several students using this space to

prepare for class and participate in group study. The classrooms in Henderson Hall used by the Department are also of good quality, with built-in presentation technology, whiteboards, and new tables and chairs that are mobile and can easily be configured for lectures or discussions. Classroom capacity appears adequate for the regular surveys and upper-level courses in the BA/BS degree. Large classrooms are not available in Henderson Hall to support the program's double survey sections, but well-appointed lecture halls are available elsewhere on campus, and the University is moving towards implementing a strategy for equitable access among departments. All equipment appeared to be well maintained and in working order (criterion 5.1).

The campus library does not have a large collection, but there has been a notable increase in access to such critical databases as JSTOR since the last program review, and faculty report that the library has been able to purchase books to support history research and teaching (criterion 5.2). It stands to reason that an increase in library resources and services would accompany the University's elevation to R2 status.

Faculty offices are of sufficient size for effective research and student meetings, and there is a break area and gathering space in the department that meets faculty needs.

Student and Faculty Support

Students have access to academic support through the College of Arts and Sciences, and history syllabi offer guidance on using these resources. Students told me that faculty also provide direct guidance on using institutional resources for student success (criterion 3.5). Students are also able to navigate their curricula with the benefit of a professional academic advising staff.

I took special note of the available funding opportunities for students who participate in high-impact activities. For instance, students who wish to study abroad have access to institutional funding to support travel, which is fairly rare among public universities. I also saw that students have access to a special set of CISE (Creative Inquiry Summer Experience) grants for undergraduate research. History faculty reported using CISE funding to engage undergraduates in research opportunities that also increased their own research productivity.

The Department has a modest budget, but there appear to have been increases recently in key endowments that support faculty research (criterion 6.1). The College and University both provide funds for research and professional development, and faculty told me that the Dean and Associate Provosts were responsive to targeted requests for support. Faculty are also able to gain professional support from the campus Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (<https://www.tntech.edu/citl/>), which has been increasing its capacity to support the development of online teaching. I was not able to visit this center during my on-campus evaluation due to time constraints.

The faculty accomplish a great deal with their available resources. Their program supports core offerings for the entire university, and they also serve 42 majors and 75 minors. In the spring 2023 term, they appear to be serving over 700 undergraduates in history courses. These numbers are in step with the data

provided by their ten peer institutions, and give them sufficient enrollment and graduation numbers overall to sustain their high-quality program and maintain cost-effectiveness (criterion 6.2).

Alumni Support

The level of alumni support and participation was surprising to me, and most welcome. In the most recent alumni survey, nearly 80 former students participated, and I was able to speak with numerous alumni who drove to campus or met with me off campus to talk about their experiences.

Challenges

Although the history BA/BS program merited “excellent” ratings in all measurements prescribed by THEC in this review, there remain some issues that I recommend the Department of History and the University address in advance of their next THEC review period. Note that I am not referring to these issues as weaknesses or threats; rather, I urge the institution to see them as challenges to a program that has a great deal of potential to enhance its offerings and raise the overall quality of the University.

History Majors and Minors

The number of history majors is within the range of majors exhibited by the Department’s ten peer institutions, but it is at the bottom of that range. It is tied for the lowest number at 42 majors with the University of Alabama at Huntsville. Two schools at the higher end, California State University at Bakersfield and University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, each have more than 200 majors. The average number of majors among Tech and its peers is 116 majors. When presented as a ratio, Tennessee Tech ranks at the bottom of its peers, with 1 history major for every 236 students. Seven of the comparison institutions have ratios below 1:100. Obviously, the numbers of majors can be expected to fluctuate from year to year, and the numbers currently indicate that Tech has a healthy cohort. Nonetheless, there seems to be capacity for Tennessee Tech to grow the numbers of history majors it serves.

One of the barriers to growth that became obvious to me during my visit is the Tennessee Tech brand. As a STEM institution with the “Tech” name, the University faces a marketing challenge if it wants to make known its exceptionally strong offerings in history. Indeed, one student told me in an interview that she had originally come to Tech as a STEM major at the urging of her parents, but after struggling academically and finding less fulfillment in her initial program, she switched her major and has since found a great deal of satisfaction and academic success. She said, “If I had known I was going to major in history, I would not have thought to consider Tennessee Tech.” Another student told a similar story, saying that switching to a history major allowed him to push on with the ROTC program and stay on track for graduation and military service. This tells me first that the History Department has a key role to play in improving retention rates for students who come to Tech for STEM fields and second that Tech needs to do more to raise awareness of its wider offerings.

Student Recruiting and Mentorship

If Tech is to capitalize on its strong history program, and if the Department of History is to grow the size of the major cohort it serves, then it faces a challenge of recruitment. The current model involves bringing history faculty to events on campus, which connects them to students who are already considering Tennessee Tech. This is a useful strategy, and the history faculty readily participate in these events, but such activities may not be enough to bring history offerings to the attention of the full recruiting pool.

Closely related to recruitment is mentorship, which the Department specifically identified as an area of desired enhancement. My sense is that faculty do a great deal already to mentor students, but I believe they could create more opportunities for quality mentorship. This is especially true for early career undergraduates, who are less likely to declare history majors or have the chance to work with history faculty in smaller courses. Meeting this challenge is critical to achieving high retention and graduation rates and to ensuring career readiness and positive outcomes for graduates.

Faculty Workloads

If the faculty were to increase the impact of their teaching and mentorship while also increasing support for a larger number of majors, then the challenges of their workload will become more pronounced. The current faculty workload is assigned as the equivalent of a 15-credit hour load per term, with 12 hours devoted to teaching (i.e. a 4/4 teaching load) and the remaining three “hours” dedicated to service, mentorship, and research. This arrangement is not strictly out of step with the peer institutions, but it does lie on the far edge. Some peer universities, such as Arkansas Tech, have similar workloads, but others, such as Idaho State University, have a 3/3 teaching load and a 25% research assignment. The additional context is that the Department of History’s teaching load may be higher than other humanities departments at Tennessee Tech.

In my conversations with faculty, I heard fewer concerns specifically about the teaching load, but more about service and research. Faculty reported feeling pressured to serve intensively, not from upper-level administration, but more from the sense that if they did not engage in service, then the University as a whole would suffer. They also reported struggling to make time for research, and they felt particularly challenged to plan for the “deep work” involved in historical research. They indicated that mentorship put an additional burden on that small window of time and energy outside of teaching. I suspect that these concerns may be a form of “referred pain” from a high teaching load.

Course Enrollments

Seen as a whole, enrollments in history courses appear robust. Survey courses typically fill or reach minimum enrollment as students seek to complete core requirements at the Universities. Upper level courses mostly appear similarly healthy, but a few courses are under-enrolled and require cancellation or consolidation with other courses. This raises the possibility that the Department is offering too many upper-level sections each term, and this in turn connects with the challenge of the high teaching load for faculty.

BA/BS Requirements

As indicated above, the BA and BS requirements are appropriate for the discipline. It is the case, however, that the language requirements for the BA, which include 18 credit hours of foreign language, are on the high end for history programs. Few history programs require more than 12 hours of history for a BA degree, and many require even fewer. This may be the reason why the number of BA majors is lower than those in the BS, and it may also be inhibiting broader participation in the major. Many students and alumni complained that they felt the language requirements were too high, and several reported that they had switched from the BA to the BS because of the language requirements. If the requirements were adjusted, the changes may also implicate similar non-history credit requirements in the BS degree.

Funding for Faculty Research and Professional Development

Faculty reported that the most significant challenge with respect to funding for research and professional development is the regularity with which it is offered. College support seems to come on a biannual basis, and this creates some challenge for faculty whose research progress may not align with funding opportunities. Unlike most disciplines, historical research, which tends to be focused on monograph production, happens best in periods of intense work and writing, which requires advanced planning and flexible support.

Historical Methods

HIST 3410 Introduction to Historical Methods is a useful course for the major and the first real point of engagement for majors. Faculty report that students perform better in upper-level topical courses when they have completed HIST 3410 because they are prepared to succeed on advanced research papers. The problem the Department is having relates to when the course should be required. There is debate among the faculty about whether to offer the course in the second semester of the freshman year or in the second semester of the sophomore year. There is also discussion about how to appropriately level the course.

Student Learning Outcomes

The Department's SLOs are clear and measurable. It did strike me as odd that SLO3 would call for an assessment of factual knowledge as a programmatic goal because it seemed to conflate course goals and program goals and to raise questions about whether students in a diverse program could be expected to master common sets of content. I have since been persuaded that SLO3 facilitates external measurements required by THEC and therefore should remain in place. With respect to SLO2, I wondered whether the measurement of "appreciation of history" would be too vague, even as I think the use of extracurricular participation is an appropriate assessment strategy.

MA Program in History

The Department has not offered a graduate degree in history since the 1980s, when the program was canceled due to low graduation rates. I noted in the self-study that the program remains on the list of

long-term goals for the Department, but that the faculty have not made substantial progress on achieving that objective.

Recommended Strategies

Grow the History Major

I recommend that the Department of History take steps to increase the number of history majors through a named, coordinated initiative to improve recruitment and mentorship efforts. Recruiting efforts should be focused on students at risk in other units on campus and on potential students who may have an interest in history but have not discovered Tech as a destination campus for humanities and social sciences.

Tennessee Tech University might capitalize on the strength of their humanities programs by incorporating them into broader recruitment efforts. Since Tech is a comprehensive institution with a growing national reputation, one need not emphasize STEM connections in history. Instead, history can stand on its own as an exemplary program and another reason for students with diverse interests should consider Tech as their college of choice.

The other part of the recruitment strategy should highlight the benefits of history as a *value-added* major for other programs on campus. This entails work to promote the BA/BS as a *double major* and exploring possibilities for creating *dual degree* programs. For instance, students and alumni reported that a large number of social science education majors choose a minor in history but would benefit more from having a second major focused on content. A dual degree program, if feasible, might strengthen the employability and long-term career readiness of students interested in teaching and education sector careers. With respect to double majors, I would encourage the Department to think about ways to facilitate two majors and then to help students find ways to create meaningful connections between the majors, whether through a research project integrating learning from the two programs or through a relevant common learning experience or reflective assignment.

Improve Mentorship Activity

I recommend that the Department of History coordinate its recruitment push with its mentorship efforts and emphasize opportunities to promote early undergraduate mentorship. I also encourage building mentorship opportunities across the curriculum through dedicated activities in the methods course and in the senior seminar.

I recommend that the Department take advantage of its talented and eager alumni pool to strengthen recruiting and to bring alumni into the mentorship process. There are a number of ways to accomplish this goal, from helping alumni promote Tech programs in their current locations to developing a social media network to connect students and alumni.

The strategy overall is to use mentorship to cultivate strong student outcomes and then recruit future students with those outcomes as examples. In other words, I encourage the Department to say why a

history degree matters, but also to stress more specifically why the history degrees at Tennessee Tech have unique value.

Incorporate Experiential Learning in the Curriculum

I recommend implementing a curricular strategy that emphasizes experiential, high-impact learning for all history majors. Such strategies bring the Department more in line with trends in the discipline, promote good outcomes for students, create opportunities to apply learning in the classroom to real-world situations, and enhance the University's showing on key NSSE student engagement benchmarks. The faculty and University are encouraged to talk more with prospective majors about what they will *learn* and what they *do* in a history major. The following are strategies I recommend for consideration:

- Increase student engagement in internships by developing a network of partners and assigning faculty to coordinate internship activities.
- Increase participation in student research with faculty through thesis credit or independent study credit.
- Increase visible engagement in service learning through such means as modifying existing courses or encouraging development of new courses.
- Integrate both faculty-led and provider-supported study abroad opportunities into the curriculum.
- Incorporate domestic travel experiences into the curriculum.

Revise SLO2 to Assess Experiential Learning

I encourage the Department to integrate experiential learning into the curriculum by modifying SLO2. Remove language about the "appreciation for history" and emphasize "applications of historical learning," and then measure participation and student outcomes in high-impact experiences and extracurricular activities.

Adjust Faculty Workloads to Facilitate Scholarship and Experiential Engagement

I do not recommend changes to the existing number of tenure-track lines, nor do I endorse changes to upper-level caps. Instead, I recommend a few small adjustments that may enable the Department to accommodate a more experiential curriculum. For example, the Department might consider reducing the number of upper-level elective offerings to ensure more sections reach enrollment minimums.

With these sorts of changes, the Department might be in a position to offer teaching reductions to help faculty manage their workload. I can think of at least three ways the Department might make reductions work. One would be a blanket reduction that sets the standard faculty load per year at 3/4 for tenure-track faculty or that sets a rotating reduction schedule. Another option would be to replace parts of the course load with experiential learning responsibilities (e.g., supervising interns, directing student research, leading study abroad, etc.). A third possibility would be targeted reductions to support dedicated periods of faculty research or professional development. In any case, I would recommend that faculty account for the time spent during reduction with a plan to utilize the extra time and then provide documentation on the results.

Make Adjustments to the Curriculum

I recommend that the Department reduce the language requirement in the BA degree from 18 hours to 12 hours. This would better align the Department with other programs nationally. It could have an impact on the language programs, and I would urge the College of Arts and Sciences to monitor the effect. If BA participation increases, it could also benefit language programs, and that would also be something to watch. If the BA curriculum is adjusted, then parallel adjustments to the BS degree might also be warranted. For the BS, I would caution against requiring high-level math or science requirements, but leaving them as options to facilitate students transferring from other majors would be prudent. Alumni also recommended including business classes or courses in essential computer programming or data science into the BS options, and I agree that such changes could be appropriate and beneficial for career readiness.

With respect to the HIST 3410 Historical Methods course, the Department should make a decision about what the course should accomplish. If the faculty wants the course to serve as an early opportunity for student mentorship, then the Department should reduce it to the 2000-level and offer it in the first year. If the faculty prefers to use the course as a preparation for advanced study and wants higher-level methods training, then the Department should preserve its 3000-level designation and place it no earlier than the second semester of the sophomore year.

As an extra note, I saw that no history courses are represented in the social science core curriculum. This strikes me as odd, given the strong social science empiricism evident in historical work. Indeed, the status of history as both a humanities and social science disciplines is a strength, and the Department may wish to consider whether one of its courses would not be a good fit for the social science core.

Improve Funding for Scholarship and Professional Development

Although I am impressed by the level of funding support for faculty, I believe some changes could be useful. These could include the following:

- Promote more opportunities for funding on an annual basis
- Increase funding for targeted purposes such as the development of experiential learning opportunities and offer those on a competitive basis. For example, provide support for faculty who wish to develop ethical and impactful service learning components in their courses. Or support internship network development efforts as a one-course buy-out, or direct funding to support the development of undergraduate research clusters or new study abroad partnerships.
- Identify new sources of funding, such as support from high-performance budgetary increases or from shared revenue derived from online history courses.
- Increase non-STEM access to CISE grants to promote undergraduate research.

Focus on Building an Excellent Undergraduate Program

I am firmly convinced that the Department of History faculty have the scholarly strength to support MA students, but it seems clear that there is little potential for building and maintaining a healthy program and that current departmental capacity is insufficient for the needs of graduate students. Therefore, I

recommend that the Department drop the MA program as a goal and focus its energy of enhancing its excellent undergraduate program. My opinion on this matter would change only under certain circumstances. For example, if the number of program majors were to reach a sufficient number, probably well over 150, to provide a potential cohort of new graduate students from within, then the Department might study the viability of offering the MA.

Contact

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