

UNIT REPORT

History - Institutional Effectiveness Final Annual Report 2019

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Definition of Unit

Departmental Mission Statement

Reporting Year: 2018-2019

Providing Department: History

Department/Unit Contact: Jeff Roberts

Mission/Vision/Goal Statement:

The Department of History offers a wide array of courses to diverse student populations. The department provides General Education instruction to a large number of students in the state-required American history sequence, while Western and World Civilization sequences satisfy TBR humanities requirements. In addition, department faculty offer numerous specialized courses that attract majors and non-majors alike.

The department has developed and maintains a comprehensive and successful curriculum for history majors. The programs are designed to provide future historians with the tools and knowledge for successful graduate study in the discipline, and to prepare graduates for careers in education, law, public service or business. Majors are expected to think analytically, ascertain facts and make objective judgments, and write clearly, communicating the results of reasoned analysis.

The department shares with the University both its broader commitment to cross-cultural understanding and its special obligation to serve the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee.

Goal/Objective/Outcome

Student Learning Goal 1: Research Paper Proficiency

Define Goal:

The Department faculty have defined successful student performance in History 4990 according to the following rubric, as one who is able to:

- Formulate an original thesis and defend it in a sustained argument
- Make effective use of primary sources (if possible) - AND/OR - Demonstrate ability to professionally evaluate and

employ secondary sources.

c. Make proper use of citation conventions, thereby avoiding plagiarism.

d. Use standard written English effectively and appropriately.

e. Present a well-organized paper.

f. Place the research topic and/or literature survey in broader historical context.

g. Demonstrate critical thinking, reasoned analysis, and/or problem solving.

h. Follow any additional directions as assigned by the professor.

Intended Outcomes / Objectives:

* *History majors will write papers that meet the requirements above*

Student Learning Goal 2: Participation in Co-curricular Activities

Define Goal:

The department desires to instill in students an appreciation of the past, to include a desire to explore history beyond the classroom.

Intended Outcomes / Objectives:

We expect at least 50% of all history majors to participate in extracurricular activities related to the discipline. Activities may include membership in the History Club or Phi Alpha Theta honor society, presentation of research, participation in field trips, or attendance at special lectures, cultural events, and historical conferences.

Student Learning Goal 3: Factual Knowledge/Standardized Testing

Define Goal:

History majors will demonstrate a reasonable command of general factual knowledge by achieving at least a mean score relative to national averages on discipline related exams.

Intended Outcomes / Objectives:

History majors will demonstrate their factual knowledge competence by scoring at or above the national average on the ACAT achievement tests.

Assessment Tools

Assessment: SWOT Analysis

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to the Department

Type of Tool: Survey

Frequency of Assessment:

This survey of the faculty was completed in 2018 and has been analyzed since in hopes of fostering continuous improvement

Rationale:

This was required by the new strategic plan. The department completed it early, having done one before (2006), and having found that earlier effort useful in seeking opportunities for continuous improvement.

Assessment: ACAT Standardized testing

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: #3

Type of Tool: Exit Exam

Frequency of Assessment: Once per semester (in Methods course)

Rationale:

Required by state authorities.

Assessment: Academic Audit (peer review)

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: #1, #2, #3, Program Goal

Type of Tool: Peer Assessment

Frequency of Assessment: Once every four or five years

Rationale:

Required by the Tennessee Board of Regents

Assessment: Alumni Survey

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: #1, #2, #3

Type of Tool: Other

Frequency of Assessment: Once every ten-twelve years

Rationale:

Alumni surveys, we believe, are ^{one} ~~the ultimate~~ litmus test of a successful program.

Assessment: Annual department reports

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: #2

Type of Tool: Checklist

Tracking Spreadsheet

Frequency of Assessment: Once per year

Rationale:

Required by the college. These have ⁺ ~~no~~ been requested for the past two years. The raw data is still available.
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Assessment: Historical Methods and Senior Seminar Courses

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: #1

Type of Tool: Capstone Project

Frequency of Assessment: Every semester

Rationale:

History graduates should have the ability to research and write a scholarly paper of publishable quality. These courses give them the tools and opportunity to demonstrate such.

Assessment: IDEA teaching evaluations

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: #3

Type of Tool: Other

Frequency of Assessment: Every semester

Rationale:

Required by the university.

Assessment: Value added testing

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: #3

Type of Tool: Gap Analysis

Frequency of Assessment: Varied use among professors, at least once per year

Rationale:

Demonstrates student learning in all courses in readily measurable fashion.

Results

Results: Program/Peer Review

Goal/Objective/Outcome Number: Program Goal

Results:

Our Peer Review of April, 2018, was a resounding success. We received all possible performance funding points, and our reviewer described the department as "healthy, collegial, and successful," and "succeeding in every part of their mission."

The department identified six potential avenues for improvement within the text, and our reviewer offered at least four more suggestions. Our progress in the subsequent 15 months has been as follows:

Goal #1 - Obtain a large classroom. We do not have such, but hope the opening of a new science building might free up space elsewhere.

Goal #2 - Expand "Maymester" offerings. Those continue to be successful and lucrative for the University. We are waiting for Provost office approval to initiate "Wintermester" courses.

Goal #3 - Expand online offerings. We now offer History 1310 online in addition to the American surveys, and will have a new online instructor participating this fall.

Goal #4 - conduct two successful searches in back-to-back years. We actually conducted two successful searches in just one year (by hiring two new faculty from the same search). We increased the diversity of the faculty at the same time.

Goal #5 - Conduct an alumni survey. We've held off on this, as we consider the appropriate medium.

Goal #6 - Enhance our social media presence. Dr. Allen Driggers has created an Instagram account, complimenting the existing Facebook Page managed by Dr. Troy Smith.

Suggestion #1 - Get a new office. As with Goal #1, this is not our call. We continue to advocate for our new colleagues.

Suggestion #2 - Eliminate the historiographic option in Senior Seminar. We did this immediately, last May.

Suggestion #3 - Create a formal mentoring program. We held off on this and took an informal approach, but have reconsidered in light of IDEA evaluations. We will implement such in the fall.

Suggestion #4 - Reconsider the role of History 3410 (Methods). We have reconsidered, and are still reconsidering. Devoid of consensus, we continue to leave much of this course to the academic freedom of the instructor.

Attachments:

Results: ACAT Standardized Test Results

Goal/Objective/Outcome Number: Student Outcome Goal #3

Results:

Six students took the fall 2018 ACAT. One scored in the 75th percentile, but all others were below average, including one who scored in the 8th percentile. The top four averaged 51, but the overall average was 40. Given that these were predominantly European History students, forced to take American History tests, such scores are not really disturbing. Furthermore, some students did well in their specialty areas. Two who studied military history, for example, made raw scores of 557 and 570 (500 is average) on that section (#3) of the test.

Spring's scores were better. The overall average, for eleven students, was 52, with six individuals above average. One student scored in the 98th percentile(!), and another in the 91st. On the other hand, one scored in the 5th percentile, and some failed to even enter their names correctly. We suspect senioritis or just flippancy, especially from the 5-er, who also wrote the best paper in the class(!). Perhaps most disturbing was a student who scored in the 13th percentile, yet came to us from a community college with a 4.0 GPA.

Owing to a variety of factors discussed in our recent peer review, we don't put much stock in these standardized tests. Still, we can claim that our overall average was slightly above the national average for spring, and only slightly below cumulatively.

Attachments:

Results: Senior Seminar Results

Goal/Objective/Outcome Number: Student Learning Outcome #1

Results:

Dr. Elizabeth Propes taught the fall, 2018 seminar. Dr. Allen Driggers taught the spring, 2019 seminar. Dr. Propes had six students, while Dr. Driggers had twelve. One student took both seminars. Only five out of eighteen students met all requirements of the rubric and thus received A grades. While each paper had enough merit for passing grades (there was one student who withdrew late from each course, without refund) that not everyone received the same grade is indicative that students were held accountable for failing to meet all the standards of the rubric. Those who received "C" grades typically lacked in more than one area. The department did review and confirm the standards during our 2018 peer review, choosing to eliminate the historiographic option (the second half of item 'a') in future classes following confirmation from our reviewer.

Attachments:

Results: Student Participation in Co-Curricular Activities

Goal/Objective/Outcome Number: Student Outcome Goal #2

Results:

We excelled again regarding student activities in 2018-2019. We certainly surpassed the goal of 50% participation. The majority of our faculty offered field trips. Dr. Susan Laningham took three students to present papers at the Phi Alpha Theta State Conference at Belmont University, and one of our majors, Hannah Cowan, won first prize. Dr. Jeff Roberts took our freshman class (History 1066) to the Alvin C. York Site on October 8 (the anniversary of his heroism), and four of his Historical Methods students there on Armistice Day. Both groups got to see reenactments (especially the latter, who saw machine guns and aircraft) along with the museum and memorials. A few of our seniors even participated in the reenactments. Dr. Mike Birdwell also led several tours (some involving students, some not) to the York Site, and took his Public History class to several sites in Cookeville and the surrounding areas. Dr. Roberts partnered with Dr. Paula Hinton to drive seven majors to various sites in Alabama and Georgia (Horseshoe Bend, Little White House, Fort Benning, Tuskegee Institute) for Spring Break. The students even had the chance to meet former President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Roselyn Carter in Plains, Georgia. Dr. Krystal Akehinmi, in her very first year on campus, took students to Fisk University and other sites in Nashville. The department hosted its annual Winchester Lecture featuring Dr. Carole Bucy in the spring of 2019. She commemorated Tennessee's role in passing the 19th Amendment for a large crowd (estimate 400) in Derryberry Hall. Dr. Theda Perdue, a nationally-recognized expert on Native Americans, spoke to somewhat smaller crowd (~150) at the third annual Pauline Womack lecture the previous fall. Lastly, Dr. Allen Driggers has been working to revitalize our History Club with a variety of guest speakers, pizza parties (Halloween for example) and the like. Dr. Susan Laningham started a new organization, Clio's Blue Stockings, targeting female majors, which held three events last spring. All-in-all, we are confident that at least 75% of our majors participated in extracurricular activities during 2018-2019, again, far surpassing this goal. We are increasingly concerned, however, that some students who appear to be attempting to complete most of their requirements online will miss such opportunities entirely.

Attachments:

Modifications and Continuing Improvement to Goals/Objectives/Outcomes

New Program Goal - Commitment to the Strategic Plan

Goal/Objective/Outcome Number: New

Program Changes and Actions due to Results:

The Department of History will help Tennessee Tech progress via its commitment to the Strategic Plan. This involves at least one initiative in all four target areas: Education for Life, Innovation in All We Do, Exceptional Stewardship, and Engagement for Impact.

Under Education for Life:

1. The Department will provide opportunities to highlight undergraduate research via a semi-annual Lyceum and participation in Phi Alpha Theta conferences (which the Department will host in 2020).
2. The Department will increase access and retention via expanded online offerings, experimental "Maymester" sections, and, if permitted, "Wintermester" sections.
3. Department faculty will offer field trips for current students and alumni.
4. The Department will host at least one guest speaker per semester.

Under Innovation in All We Do:

5. The Department will increase its presence on social media.
6. Department Faculty will spearhead an initiative to establish a cross-disciplinary Digital Humanities minor.

Under Exceptional Stewardship:

7. Working with the Alumni and Development Offices, the Department Chair will solicit alumni so as to enhance departmental scholarship, guest speaker, and student travel endowments.
8. The Department will allocate endowment funding to expand co-curricular activities.

Under Engagement for Impact:

9. Department faculty will spearhead an initiative to establish a cross-disciplinary minor in African-American Studies, while also expanding offerings in African-American History.
10. The Department will continue to expand its internship and public history opportunities.

Link to Assessment:

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Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

* Please see the Program Goal!