**History Undergraduate Assessment Report for 2015-2016**

1. **What learning outcomes did you assess this year?**

The History department assessed the following outcomes:

**Student Learning Outcome 7:** Students will analyze, and interpret charts, graphs, and statistics relevant to historical events and interpretations.

**Student Learning Outcome 4:** Students will demonstrate their ability to analyze sources in-depth and construct arguments using the most relevant and compelling evidence.

**Student Learning Outcome 2:** All students will demonstrate basic proficiency in written communication and history majors will construct and communicate advanced evidence based arguments that will be delivered in written or oral form.

**The G.E. outcomes assessed this year are discussed in the G.E. assessment report.**

1. **What instruments did you use to assess them?**

**Concept Maps (SLO 7)**

In History 164, students created four concept maps, each of which explained the thesis and key points of a specific article that had been assigned. These concept maps explained the main argument and key points of the articles visually in a clear, organized and concise way. These visual diagrams involved using headings, boxes/circles and arrows/lines to provide clarity on what the students thought were the important aspects of the assigned readings. History Department faculty evaluated the fourth or last concept map submitted by students in the course. Every student in the random sample of 23 assignments evaluated was expected to receive a 3 out of 3 on each of the rubric criteria. One criteria focused on accurate identification of the thesis and main points and the other criteria focused on the visual presentation of these points.

**Evaluation and Comparison of History 4 and History 100W papers (SLO’s 2 and 4).**

History 4 is the first History course most majors take and focuses on specific skills necessary to succeed as a history major and History 100W is our capstone writing course taken at least a year after History 4 and requires students to do research and write a major research paper. Both the papers written in History 4 and History 100W were required to have a valid thesis, key points, evidence, and citations to primary and secondary sources that are relevant and scholarly. The History Department identified eight students who graduated in either 2015 or 2016 and obtained copies of their History 4 and History 100W papers and compared them to see if there was any noticeable difference in student’s ability to analyze sources and write valid evidence based arguments as they progress through the major. It was not possible to analyze a larger or random sample and thus the results are tentative and not conclusive. However, the eight students selected are relatively representative, in terms of the range of GPA’s and average time to graduation for students currently majoring in History. The History 4 and History 100W papers were evaluated using a Holistic Rubric focused on evidence based written arguments and an analytic rubric focused on content development, disciplinary conventions, and sources and evidence (See appendix 1 to review both of these rubrics).

1. **What did you discover from the data**

Concept Maps – Although total enrollment in the course was 31 students, only 27 students submitted the fourth concept map. A random sample of 23 concept maps was selected from the 27 submitted and evaluated for assessment purposes. There were two criteria on the rubric used to evaluate the concept maps (see appendix 1). The first criteria focused on accurately identifying the thesis and key points and the second focused on the visual presentation and clarity of the information presented and a score of 3 indicated proficiency, a score of 2 indicated partial proficiency, and a score of 1 indicated serious weaknesses and a lack of any proficiency in the designated skill.

The first criteria focused on identifying the thesis and key points is the most critical from the department’s point of view and 8 out of the 23 students received a 3 and were deemed proficient. These eight concept maps were especially detailed and the students clearly understood the thesis and key points well enough to both identify and evaluate them. Of the 12 out of 23 students who received a 2 out of 3 (partially proficient), 9 of them only scored a 2 instead of 3 because the thesis was not explained as clearly as it needed to be and because one of the required points was not discussed. In other words, three-fourths of the concept maps that scored a 2 did recognize the thesis and showed an understanding of the articles key points. Given the complexity of the article assigned for concept map 4, the evaluators concluded that most students who scored a 2 had in fact demonstrated minimal proficiency. However, 3 out of 12 or one fourth of the students who scored a 2 and the three students who scored a 1 were unable to correctly identify the thesis and key points. It is disconcerting that 6 out of 23 students in an upper-division history course could not identify the thesis of an article. Furthermore, all of these students are history majors and thus would have been required to identify the thesis and main points of arguments previously. In terms of visually representing the thesis and key points so that they are clearly explained and so that the connection between them is apparent, 14 out of the 23 students were deemed proficient, 6 were deemed partially proficient and 3 failed to demonstrate any proficiency. It is no surprise that the 3 students who were unable to identify the thesis and key points were also able to visually represent these points. However, there were some students who did not state the thesis and key points clearly enough to receive a score of 3 on the first criteria but who represented these points effectively enough to score a 3 on the second criteria which makes sense since for some students the only reason they did not score a 3 on criteria one was because their wording was slightly unclear or because they overlooked one point that supported the thesis. The most common issues among students who did NOT score a 3 on criteria 1 were that they either confused the thesis with the most strongly stated key point or did not clearly restated the thesis.

**History 4 and History 100W Evaluation Results**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student | B.B. | J.C. | C.C. | T.C. | S.C. | M.D. | H.H | F.R. |
| Hist 4  Holistic Score | 2/5 | 3/5 | 3/5 | 4/5 | 3/5 | 2/5 | 4/5 | 4/5 |
| History 100W  Holistic Score | 3/5 | 3/5 | 4/5 | 5/5 | 4/5 | 3/5 | 5/5 | 4/5 |
| Hist 4 Analytic Content Score | 2/4 | 2/4 | 3/4 | 3/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 3/4 | 4/4 |
| History 100W Analytic Content Score | 3/4 | ¾ | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 3/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 |
| History 4 Analytic Disciplinary Score | 2/4 | ¾ | 3/4 | 3/4 | 3/4 | 2/4 | 3/4 | 4/4 |
| History 100W Disciplinary Score | 3/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 3/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 |
| History 4 Analytic Sources Score | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 3/4 | 3/4 | 2/4 | 3/4 | 4/4 |
| History 100W Analytic Sources Score | 3/4 | ¾ | 4/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 | 3/4 | 4/4 | 4/4 |

In terms of the holistic rubric and the overall quality of the History 4 papers, six out of eight were deemed minimally proficient while two were deemed less than proficient. However, History 4 is the first course many students take in the major and some have very little experience writing research papers previously which explains the two low scores. Moreover, all eight of the History 100W papers were deemed proficient and six of the eight students (these scores are among those highlighted in green in the above chart) scored one point higher on their final or History 100W paper than they did on their initial or History 4 paper suggesting their writing may have improved as they progressed through the major toward graduation. Furthermore, one of the two students who did not score higher on their final paper, had high scores on both their initial and final paper and thus clearly demonstrated proficiency in all areas throughout their time as a History Major. The only other student in the sample was deemed minimally proficient in all areas for both their History 4 and History 100W papers but did not improve their score by a point as did all other students excepting the one who had already scored a 4/5 on their initial paper.

The results were slightly different on the analytic rubric with only about half of the eight students achieving a 3 out of 4 or minimal proficiency on their History 4 paper. This makes sense since scoring with analytic rubrics places more emphasis on each aspect of the paper and since each is scored separately according to a detailed scale, the scores were lower for these papers on an analytic rubric than on a holistic rubric. Again the scores were lower in the initial course students took as History majors. However, all eight students achieved at least a 3 out of 4 and were deemed proficient on their History 100W papers and in seven of the eight cases students scored one point higher and in many cases this means a 4 out of 4 on their History 100W papers (these scores are also highlighted in green on the chart above). In this case all but the one student who had high scores on their History 4 paper showed an improvement on their History 100W paper. These scores also suggest that student writing improves between their first and last course as a History major. The History 100W papers all clearly demonstrated the expected proficiency of students about to graduate with a degree in History.

1. **What changes did you make as a result of the findings?**

The results from the concept map suggest that more emphasis could be placed on identifying the thesis and key points of articles, especially in lower-division courses and this has been communicated to all full-time faculty in the department. No further changes will be undertaken at this time but the department will conduct further assessment on assignments that require students to analyze and restate theses key points from historical sources. The results of the analysis of the History 4 and History 100W papers suggest that student writing is improving during their progression through the program. The results of this small sample demonstrated that all eight of these students were proficient in writing and use of evidence and previous analysis of History 100W papers has also indicated that students are minimally proficient in key skills although there is always room for some improvement. No changes are necessary since the results of the History 4 and History 100W papers confirm students are proficient in those areas assessed.

1. **What assessment activities will you be conducting in the 2015-2016 academic year?**

Quantitative Reasoning Evaluation

Alumni Survey

1. **What progress have you made on items from your last program review action plan?**

History Department Action Plan

California State University, Fresno

August, 2015: This Action Plan reflects the fact that we have already accomplished some of the items mentioned in our review.

1. Assessment for both undergraduate and graduate degree programs has been improved.
2. We successfully hired Dr. Frederik Vermote (a specialist in Modern China) for our Asian history position and we have formalized Dr. Lopes’ position as our historian of Mexico. During the 2015-2016 academic year the department will conduct searches for a public historian who can increase interaction with and outreach to the community and an Islamic historian who would enable the department to increase its non-western offerings.
3. The department chair reviews all syllabi each semester for compliance with university standards. The department has reviewed the syllabi of all part-time faculty to be sure that they have appropriate learning outcomes in addition to meeting other requirements.
4. We have changed our curriculum to reflect changes in the field of history. Students will now be required to take History 20 and 21 instead of History 1 and 2. This will help credential students who will now have six units less of course work. This is a reduction of units for a least a quarter of majors. Furthermore, many students complete the bachelor’s degree and later enter the credential program and these students will also benefit. The department has proposed curriculum changes that will enable students to take the History 100W course before their senior year thus demonstrating proficiency prior to their last year in the program.

**Action Plan Items and Steps Taken:**

1. Continue to work on assessment plans and closing the loop in assessment. Continue to discuss assessment results and make changes as necessary according to assessment results.

**Progress:** In conjunction with the on-going efforts of the University to improve student success and achieve more consistent assessment to provide data for the upcoming WASC review, the History Department has already taken and will continue to implement specific actions in regard to student assessment. The department has revised its undergraduate and graduate SOAP plans by reducing the number of goals and outcomes and changing our measures to align them more closely with our outcomes. The department has introduced new measures focused on writing assignments to measure G.E. outcomes instead of relying on a pre and post-test. The department has revised its senior survey and created an alumni survey to determine the extent to which graduates are prepared for graduate school and/or the job market. The department has also taken steps to assess students earlier in the program by collecting History 4 assignments and analyzing this data. Deficiencies. The department is currently considering implementing an e-portfolio requirement that would require students to create a collection of work that would enable us to do more thorough comparisons of student work over time.

1. Advising. Two reviews ago our reviewers noted a great deal of discontinuity in our student advising. In response the department assigned a single person advising duties and arranged for them to have six units of release time. As a result of budget cuts, all departments in our college lost their release time for advising. Although each faculty member remains responsible for specialized advising, content advising and career planning, we would hope to make degree advising much more consistent.
2. **Progress:** Students with unique issues are referred to the Chair of the Department who either assists them or refers them to someone (often in advising services) who can work with them to resolve the issue. During the 2014-2015 academic year, President Castro approved and funded the creation of a centralized advising center for every college that did not already have such a center. COSS has hired two full-time advisors who will be responsible for G.E. and initial major advising which should improve consistency. History faculty will continue to meet with students to advise them on graduate schools, career options, and other specialized opportunities.
3. We want to continue to work on the university’s goal of internationalization. Several of our faculty have already taught abroad but we would like to see many more students taking advantage of opportunities to study abroad.

**Progress:** A recent College of Social Sciences initiative that provides some scholarship money for student travel should help with this endeavor. Dr. DenBeste took a group of 17 students to Russia in summer 2014. Dr. Lopez took approximately 18 students to Italy as part of a Study Abroad Program in June of 2015. Dr. Jordine took 18 students, 15 of which were History Majors, to Central Europe as part of a WWII & Holocaust study abroad trip in July 2015. These trips in addition to requiring students to read and write papers on topics in European History also greatly expanded their cultural knowledge and gave our students direct experience in interacting with individuals with different backgrounds and perspectives than their own. The department also hopes to be able to recruit additional international students to our program.

1. We strongly support undergraduate research opportunities and will continue to encourage our students to apply for university funding for research. We have also been encouraging students to present at the regional Phi Alpha Theta history conference. In addition we are exploring ways to begin a History Honors program. Increasing the numbers of students working on undergraduate research projects remains a long-term goal.

**Progress:** Several of our students have worked with faculty mentors to apply for and have received undergraduate research awards from the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. No steps have been taken towards creating a History Honors Program. A College Honors Program has been created but no History students participated in the first cohort. Two or three will be participating in the second cohort.

1. The graduate program generally received excellent reviews at all levels. We have already improved recruitment and retention. We have had many students this year and last attend conferences and give research presentations. We have reviewed and will continue to review our graduate level outcomes. The most pressing issue related to all of these concerns however, is graduate advisement (as noted by the review committee). We have always had a graduate advisor. However, in connection with recent budget cuts the advisor has been reduced from 6WTU release a year to 3WTU. Keeping a larger graduate program afloat, planning research opportunities for students, keeping students abreast of opportunities in their field and keeping our graduate program current is a big task for one person. We will continue to seek creative ways to fund an additional 3WTU release for our graduate coordinator.

**Progress:** Even with an improved budget situation, and the continued growth and success of our graduate program, we have not been able to secure the additional 3 WTUs of release time for the graduate coordinator. The HGSA (History Graduate Student Association) Organization sponsors a symposium every year and again this year there were a diverse array of graduate students, both our own and several from other institutions, presenting. This year, for the first time, we recorded several presentations by our own students and used them to assess the oral communication skills of students in our program.

1. Future Hiring. We believe that hiring a Public historian would allow us to connect with new programs across campus and with the community in a much stronger way. A Public Historian would raise the profile of our department and college throughout the Central Valley by engaging with community organizations, libraries, historic sites, and county archives.  Should our numbers justify it, we would eventually like to hire a French and/or Intellectual historian.

**Progress:** The department has been granted a search for a public historian for the 2015-2016 academic year.

1. The Jewish Studies Certificate Program (JSCP) was launched in Spring 2013 under the auspices of the department and is now in its first full academic year.  The JSCP incorporates and encourages interdisciplinary collaboration across campus, in addition to providing opportunities for community-campus interchange, student involvement, and curriculum development.  The department plans to continue to support the evolution of the JSCP.

**Progress:** The Department continues to offer courses that are part of this certificate (History 129T: Anti-semitism) and History 140 (The Holocaust) and to support the JSCP.

**Holistic Rubric: Proficiency in Evidence based Written Arguments**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5 - Excellent | 4- Above Average | 3- Proficient | 2- Not Proficient | 1 – Deficient |
| Clear and compelling argument with key points and examples that are connected. More than sufficient evidence is provided and examples are very specific. Writing is eloquent and there are virtually no grammatical errors. | Argument is clear and there are at least two points with related evidence. Examples are specific and sufficient. There are few grammatical errors and virtually no structural errors. | Argument is clear but limited and there are few points and a minimum amount of evidence. Evidence is not as specific as it could be and the writing is not very sophisticated. There are a number of grammatical errors but they do not completely obscure the argument. | Argument and key points are not clear. There is either insufficient evidence or the evidence is not directly connected to the points. The writing is very weak and there are numerous unclear sentences. It is difficult to understand the meaning due to the weaknesses in the writing. | There is no argument and no points are supported by sufficient or relevant evidence. The writing and organization so poor that meaning of the sentences as well as the overall argument cannot be determined. |

**Analytic Written Communication Rubric: (Adapted from AAC&U Rubric)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Capstone 4 | Milestone 3 | Milestone 2 | Benchmark1 |
| Content Development | Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work. | Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work | Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work. | Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work. |
| Disciplinary Conventions. Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular academic fields. | Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to history including organization, formatting, use of evidence, and citation format. | Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to history including organization, formatting, use of evidence, and citation format. | Follows expectations appropriate for history and demonstrates basic organization, formatting, use of evidence and citation format. | Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization, formatting, use of evidence and citation format. |
| Sources and Evidence | Demonstrates skillful use of high quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing | Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing. | Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing. | Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing. |