**History Undergraduate Assessment Report for 2016-2017**

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

According to the assessment timeline on the department SOAP, History was scheduled to assess Quantitative Reasoning during the 2016-2017 academic year. However, this assessment was postponed in order to allow the department to participate in the campus-wide Quantitative Reasoning assessment during the 2017-2018 academic year. Furthermore, an alumni survey was also on the schedule for this past year but the department did not receive an adequate amount of alumni survey responses in order to conduct a *fruitful* assessment. Therefore, these two activities will instead be conducted during the 2017-2018 academic year.

The History Department assessed the following outcome during the 2016-2017 AY instead:

Student Learning Outcome4**:** Students will analyze evidence and sources to determine if they are valid and relevant.

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

**Précis**

In History 153, students submitted three written assignments, each focused on one assigned scholarly work. In each précis the students were required to summarize the author’s thesis and main points. Students were instructed to evaluate the argument and *cite* three examples that supported the author’s thesis and/or key points. For the purposes of this assessment, the third and final précisof the semester was evaluated. All of the students in this upper-division major course were expected to achieve a minimum score of 2 in both categories of the rubric. The rubric used for this assessment was a 3-point rubric and a score of 1 indicated a deficiency, a score of 2 indicated that the assignment demonstrated a basic proficiency, and a score of 3 indicated the student had demonstrated a more advanced proficiency in the criteria related to the outcome. The first rubric criteria focused on identifying the thesis and key points of the book while the second criteria focused on identifying specific examples the author used to support the thesis.

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

The department reviewed 21 assignments, from a class with a total of 25 students enrolled not all of whom submitted the final paper, and all 21 of these students were expected to be deemed proficient in both being able to identify the thesis and key points and being able to cite specific evidence that supports the thesis. For the first criteria a majority of the students, 19 students out of 21, were deemed to have at least basic proficiency. Two of the students were not able to accurately identify the thesis and main points from the book. As part of the assignments, students were asked for their opinion of the work and many stated that the reading was especially dense and challenging. The level of difficulty of the assigned scholarly work may have been a factor in the failure of two students to achieve the expected level of proficiency. The complexity of the assigned reading might also be part of the reason why students had slightly more difficulty with the second criteria of citing specific evidence. For the second rubric criteria, only 17 out of 21 students achieved basic proficiency while 4 failed to demonstrate proficiency. A recurring issue within this category of the rubric is that while students understood key points, they failed to be able to cite specific examples that supported the key points and thesis. Students were only able to identify general ideas and concepts and could not identify very specific examples and link those to the appropriate point. It is possible that students may have misunderstood the level of specificity that was required of them. Their evidence was valid, just not specific enough. Although the desired results were not achieved, only two students failed to demonstrate proficiency in criteria one and only four failed to demonstrate proficiency in criteria two. While some of the students who demonstrated a basic proficiency could have given more specific examples, most of the class was successful in demonstrating their ability to effectively evaluate evidence and sources.

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

The results indicate that students most students are proficient in the learning outcome so no major changes will be made at this time. It is clear that students are able to successfully identify the thesis and key points but that many students have a more difficult time identifying very specific examples and clearly linking the examples to the appropriate point and to the thesis. The results will be discussed with all department faculty and faculty will be encouraged to provide more examples focused on the connection between specific points and points in an arguments.

1. **What assessment activities will you be conducting in the 2017-2018 academic year?**
2. Use Quantitative Reasoning exam to measure outcome on quantitative reasoning.
3. Alumni Survey – measure several department outcomes using Alumni Survey.
4. **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.

**Appendix I: Rubric used to score Assignments**

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|  | 3-Advanced | 2-Proficient | 1-Developing |
| Analysis of Source | Thesis and key points are identified accurately and evaluated in detail | Thesis and key points are identified accurately and evaluated to some extent | Thesis and key points are either not identified accurately or are not evaluated at all |
| Examples/Evidence | Specific examples are described and student indicates if and how examples support thesis and points | At least two specific examples are described and student indicates if and how examples support thesis and main points | Either no specific examples are given or examples are not entirely clear and student does not indicate whether or not examples support main points |