**Annual Assessment Report for 2018-2019 AY**

Reports completed on assessment activities carried out during the 2018-2019 AY will be due September 30th 2019 and must be e-mailed to the Director of Assessment, Dr. Melissa Jordine (mjordine@mail.fresnostate.edu).

Provide detailed responses for each of the following questions within this word document. Please do NOT insert an index or add formatting. Furthermore, only report on two or three student learning outcomes even if your external accreditor requires you to evaluate four or more outcomes each year. Also be sure to explain or omit specialized or discipline-specific terms.

Department/Program: \_\_History\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_MA\_\_\_

Assessment Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_\_Brad Jones\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Please list the learning outcomes you assessed this year.

**SLO 5**: Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills by developing a valid evidence-based argument with relevant and specific examples linked to key points.

**SLO 7**: Students will give a presentation during class or at either a conference or an HGSA (History Graduate Students Association) Meeting.

1. What assignment or survey did you use to assess the outcomes and what method (criteria or rubric) did you use to evaluate the assignment? **Please describe the assignment and the criteria or rubric used to evaluate the assignment in detail and, if possible, include copies of the assignment and criteria/rubric at the end of this report.**

The department reviewed four presentations given at the 2019 HGSA annual symposium. Of the four presenters, two were second-year students, and the other two were in their first year in our program. This was our 21st annual symposium, and it included presenters from several UC and CSU campus along with four MA students from Mississippi State University. This is an appropriate event to assess our student’s oral presentation skills. It is run as professional academic conference, and presenters are expected to deliver polished papers reflecting their best academic work to date.

We used the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ (AACU) Oral Communication Value Rubric. The rubric includes five categories, which broadly speaking, assess the quality of delivery (SLO 7) and the strength and clarity of their argument (SLO 5). Students were expected to receive at least a 3 out of 4 on all rubric criteria. The rubric is attached to the end of this report.

1. What did you learn from your analysis of the data? Please include sample size (how many students were evaluated) and indicate how many students (number or percentage instead of a median or mean) were designated as proficient.

We were only able to review four oral presentations, all of which took place at our annual graduate symposium in April. This number is low in comparison to previous years, where we would typically have somewhere between seven and ten of our students present. All four presenters performed at an advanced level, receiving scores of 4 on Organization, Language, Supporting Material, and Central Message on the Oral Communication Value Rubric scoring system. Two of the students also scored a 4 on Delivery, while the other two scored a 2 for showing signs of nervousness. Presenter #1 delivered an engaging and thoughtful paper on how the Nixon administration manipulated news coverage to get more sympathetic coverage during the final two years his presidency. He was confident and polished in the delivery of his paper. Presenter #2 looked at the famed female baseball player, Jackie Mitchell, who pitched for a minor league men’s baseball team during the Depression Era. His presentation was organized and engaging, though he appeared nervous throughout and tended to speak too fast. Presenter #3’s well-researched paper dealt with local history, examining the role of Chicanas in the Civil Rights protests of the 1960s and 1970s in Fresno County. She delivered the paper with enthusiasm, though she too was nervous and tended to speak too fast. Presenter #4 examined women’s activism in pre-Pinochet Chile, a subject that has received very little attention by historians. She was confident, enthusiastic, and her argument was clear and engaging.

While all four presenters met or exceeded our expectations, there is room for improvement. First, our students would benefit from a greater number of low-stakes presentation opportunities, where they could practice their deliveries and become more comfortable with speaking in front of an audience. Perhaps this is something that could be practiced in the introductory graduate methods courses (Hist 200A and Hist 200B). We also need to spend more time working with our students on how to write effective and engaging conference papers, which differ considerably from the more commonly assigned research or historiographical essays. This is also something that could be covered in the introductory graduate methods courses or even be assigned as a final paper in a Topics course. Lastly, we need to do a better job with getting all of our thesis students to present their research at our symposium. Presenting research is a critical part of our profession. It is an opportunity to share new research with your peers, to receive valuable feedback, and to use that feedback to improve your work. Our first year students, in particular, would benefit from getting early criticism of their work, which could direct them to new research, and help them to refine their argument.

1. What changes, if any, do you recommend based on the assessment data?

The department will not make any changes to the program since all students at least met the requirements. The findings of this assessment report – that students demonstrated an advanced proficiency in oral presentations – will be shared with the department

1. If you recommended any changes in your response to Question 4 in last year’s assessment report, what progress have you made in implementing these changes? If you did not recommend making any changes in last year’s report please write N/A as your answer to this question.

N/A

1. What assessment activities will you be conducting during the next academic year?

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the department will be reviewing student content knowledge, research methods, and level of writing in Hist 200B research papers.

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

We completed a program review in Spring 2019. I am scheduled to meet with the University Graduate Committee on October 8, which will conclude the review process. I have included our response to the Review Committee’s recommendations, which will serve as the basis for our new Action Plan.

The review team offered recommendations in five areas:

1. **Curriculum**

**Recommendation 1:** The reviewers urged the department to formalize the recent changes to Hist 200A and 200B to allow for a more standardized student experience in these two courses.

**Department Response:** We agree with this recommendation. These changes have helped our students to find viable thesis projects sooner, and to better grasp the requisite disciplinary skills needed to research and write in our field. While the department is often correct to resist efforts to standardize our courses, these two introductory classes serve a very different purpose than the other required courses in our program.

**Recommendation 2:** The report observes that given our department’s investment in growing our public history program, the committee suggests we should diversify course and research opportunities to appeal to the divergent interests of our students.

**Response:** We agree with this recommendation. Provided the necessary resources, the department hopes to offer more seminars and paid public history internships to expose our students to a diverse array of public history projects and programs.

**Recommendation 3:** The committee supports the department’s self-study recommendation that we make the Teaching Option available not just to current teachers, but to aspiring secondary educators as well.

**Response:** We agree with this recommendation.

1. **Funding**

**Recommendation 1:** The review team argued for an increase in program funding to offset the recent and drastic funding cuts to the program. They also support the Graduate Coordinator receiving an additional course release per year. Finally, they believe the department should establish a Development Committee to explore additional fundraising opportunities for student support and growing the public history program.

**Response:** We agree with these recommendations. If not addressed, the cuts to funding will have a negative long-term impact on our ability to recruit and maintain a healthy cohort, and to offer our students with paid internships in fields related to our discipline. Additionally, it simply not feasible to expect a faculty member to run a program of this size on one course release per a year. We also agree to explore the idea of a creating a Development Committee though we continue to believe that first and foremost, the college and university should support its programs.

1. **Advising**

**Recommendation 1:** While the department has improved its retention and graduate rates, the committees believes that students still need more advising. As such, they recommend that every student be assigned an advisor when they begin the program.

**Response:** The department understands that our students need help with making important decisions that impact their ability to complete the program in a timely manner. Currently, the Graduate Coordinator provides incoming students with a degree roadmap and has an open-door policy for meeting with students. We are also taking steps to have HIST 200A instructors assign students to possible thesis advisors so that they can begin as soon as possible to think about their research projects.

1. **New Hires**

**Recommendation 1:** The review team recommends a replacement hire for the Asian history position recently vacated, and a joint hire with the Classics Department in Ancient History.

**Response:** See the B.A. report for response.

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| **Oral Communication VALUE Rubric**  *for more information, please contact value@aacu.org* |  |

**Definition**

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.*

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|  | **Capstone**  4 | **Milestones**  3 2 | | **Benchmark**  1 |
| **Organization** | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive. | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation. | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation. | Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation. |
| **Language** | Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience. | Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience. | Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience. | Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience. |
| **Delivery** | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident. | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable. | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative. | Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable. |
| **Supporting Material** | A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. | Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. | Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. | Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic. |
| **Central Message** | Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.) | Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material. | Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable. | Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation. |