**History Department – Graduate Program Assessment Report**

**Graduate Degree Learning Outcomes**

Having completed a Master’s degree in History, a student will be:

1. Conversant and proficient in the most important interpretive frameworks and significant debates in history, as well as the major historical sub-disciplines.

2. Conversant and proficient in the most important historical scholarship in at least three different fields.

3. Able to present persuasive historical arguments to scholarly and public audiences in both written and oral form, substantiated with primary and secondary sources.

Having completed a PhD in History, a student will be

1. Conversant and proficient in the most important interpretive frameworks and significant debates in history, as well as the major historical sub-disciplines.

2. Conversant and proficient in the most important historical scholarship in at least three different fields.

3. Able to present persuasive historical arguments to scholarly and public audiences in both written and oral form, substantiated with primary and secondary sources.

4. Able to navigate historical archives, both physical and digital, in order to produce new historical knowledge that is relevant for the discipline and the broader public.

5. Knowledgeable about the major professional organizations, conferences, and funding organizations for the discipline.

**Assessment Activities**

The Department has not yet conducted a formal review of its assessment procedures. However, a few areas of strength and concern are apparent.

Our students compete very effectively for grants and other sources of funding. They also represent the department frequently – and well – at conferences and other public events. The training they undergo during their first two years in the program is rigorous and gives our students a wide range of expertise. An annual graduate student conference hosted by the department offers a chance to assess students’ proficiency in the stated learning outcomes.

On the other hand, our students struggle in several areas. First, as they are not offered enough graduate classes, they often have to take combined undergraduate / graduate courses. These courses often demand less of them and provide them with insufficient grounding in historiography. Their lack of exposure to the challenging atmosphere of the graduate seminar often results in their being less confident compared to PhD students in other programs. As they progress to candidacy, they maintain significant teaching obligations, and often do not have sufficient time to research and write their dissertations. This means that strong students often produce substandard dissertations, which negatively impacts their job prospects.

**Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis**

The Graduate committee will be looking into ways to improve our students’ outcomes, both in terms of academic and professional success.

**Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience**

At the urging of the graduate students, we have implemented a serious of workshops to address alternative career pathways (alt-ac), including higher education, public history, museums, historic preservation, and secondary teaching. We conducted two such workshops this fall, and have several more planned for the next two quarters.

**Plans for Next Year**

We will be assessing ways to increase the offerings of graduate-only seminars. There are potential budget implications for such an increase, but they are not yet entirely clear. We will also be exploring the possibility of reducing teaching obligations during the students’ years of dissertation writing.