Program Review

Department of History, Geography, and Political Science

Program:

- BA in History
I. Program Outcomes

BA in History

Program Outcome 1 - Graduates will describe the major people, events and ideas in world and American History.

- University outcomes mapped to this program outcome: Skilled Professionals, Engaged Citizens

Program Outcome 2 - Graduates will document connections between political, social, economic, and cultural concepts across space and time.

- University outcomes mapped to this program outcome: Lifelong Learners, Creative and Critical Thinkers, Engaged Citizens

Program Outcome 3 - Graduates will be able to identify and evaluate appropriate research sources and incorporate these sources into well-documented formal academic writing.

- University outcomes mapped to this program outcome: Lifelong Learners, Creative and Critical Thinkers, Effective Communicators

Program Outcome 4 - Graduates will read historical sources critically and analyze arguments, methods and biases.

- University outcomes mapped to this program outcome: Lifelong Learners, Creative and Critical Thinkers, Skilled Professionals

Program Outcome 5 - Graduates will be able to explain the nature of historical study.

- University outcomes mapped to this program outcome: Lifelong Learners, Creative and Critical Thinkers, Effective Communicators
- Courses mapped onto this outcome: H101, H300, H490
Program Outcome 6- Graduates will evaluate their own views and interpretations of the human experience, both past and present.

- University outcomes mapped to this program outcome: Disciple Leaders, Lifelong Learners, Creative & Critical Thinkers, Skilled Professionals, Engaged Citizens

Program Outcome 7- Graduates will identify the basic features of good expository writing and employ them in their own writing.

- University outcomes mapped to this program outcome: Effective Communicators, Creative and Critical Thinkers, Skilled Professionals

II. Assessment Plan

BA in History

There are three primary modes of assessment for determining how well our BA in History program outcomes are being achieved. Common assessments include a direct mode and an indirect mode. Assessments are the same among all modes of delivery.

Individualized Assessments:

- Course assessments. These include objective and subjective quizzes and exams, written materials, portfolio/work journals. Instructors have discretion to use the tools they think are most useful to their own teaching style and approach to improvement. (These tools assess BA in History Program outcomes #1-7.)
- Our methods courses (HIST 101, 300, 490) have history research papers that function as common assessments across sections.

Common Assessments:

- Department Exam. An objective assessment given at the beginning and end of majors’ experience. (This instrument assesses BA in History Program outcome #1.)
- Senior Seminar. A capstone course where students produce an article-length research paper (20-30 pages), in which they demonstrate the key skills and abilities they have learned as history majors. History department faculty have held extensive discussions about what is expected in these papers and have agreed on general characteristics that include:
Argumentative essay with an appropriate thesis and argument, primary and secondary research with appropriate source evaluation, a historiographical evaluation, appropriate formatting and citations, 20-30 pages. (This instrument assesses BA in History Program outcomes #2-7.)

III. Assessment Data

(From Department Report Card)

RESULTS OF OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PO1</th>
<th>PO10</th>
<th>PO11</th>
<th>PO12</th>
<th>PO2</th>
<th>PO3</th>
<th>PO4</th>
<th>PO5</th>
<th>PO6</th>
<th>PO7</th>
<th>PO8</th>
<th>PO9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BS - Social Studies, Education</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO1</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO2</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO3</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PO1</th>
<th>PO2</th>
<th>PO3</th>
<th>PO4</th>
<th>PO5</th>
<th>PO6</th>
<th>PO7</th>
<th>PO8</th>
<th>PO9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA - Political Science</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO1</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO2</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PO1</th>
<th>PO2</th>
<th>PO3</th>
<th>PO4</th>
<th>PO5</th>
<th>PO6</th>
<th>PO7</th>
<th>PO8</th>
<th>PO9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA - Political Science</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO1</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO2</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO4</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO5</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO6</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO7</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO8</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PO1</th>
<th>PO2</th>
<th>PO3</th>
<th>PO4</th>
<th>PO5</th>
<th>PO6</th>
<th>PO7</th>
<th>PO8</th>
<th>PO9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA - History</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO1</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO2</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO3</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO4</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO5</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO6</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO7</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO8</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
History Department Entrance/Exit Exam

History 101 is usually taken 1st year, History 490 taken fourth year.

Has your most recent year of data been uploaded to the outcomes and assessments SharePoint site?

This information will have been uploaded to the Outcomes and Assessment SharePoint site by the time of the presentation.

IV. Analysis and Improvement Plan
How do you analyze and make decisions based on your assessment data? Who participates in that process?

Our department meetings at the beginning of each semester are devoted to long-term issues such as program reviews. The data from these assessments are raised and the department discusses the data and measures for improvement. In general, the process is probably too informal and could benefit from a more systematic approach that focuses on using the data to plan for improvement.

Summarize conclusions that have been drawn from your analysis of the assessment data.

A. BA in History

Assessment tool: History Entrance/Exit exam. This assesses Outcome 1 (Content Knowledge).

While this instrument does show that some learning is taking place, the primary conclusion from a review of the History pre-post exam is that the exam is not effectively assessing what our students learn in regards to factual knowledge about people, events, and ideas in world and U.S. history. Assessments at the course level show that students are learning this information, but the department exam needs reconsideration. We have known for some time that this instrument is flawed and needs to be replaced with a more effective exam. We are in the process of revising this exam. Each professor who teaches our survey classes is assessing the exam to assure that we are asking questions of content that is actually taught in the survey classes. This revision will be completed by the end of the semester so that we can implement the new exam in Fall, 2015.
Assessment tool: Senior Seminar. This assesses Outcomes 2-7 (Documenting Historical Connections, Research Source Use, Analyzing Historical Arguments, Explaining Historical Study, Effective Writing).

Senior Seminar Grades (% of students A, B, C, D/F)

The senior seminar assesses students’ understanding of the key skills needed by the historian. It requires students to demonstrate the following: how to make historical connections across space and time; to effectively use primary and secondary sources; to critically analyze historical arguments as well as make their own; explain the nature of historical study; evaluate their own views of historical events; and demonstrate good expository writing. There are some variations from instructor to instructor, but the history faculty have common requirements and expectations for the course that are based upon professional expectations.

Most students in the senior seminar are effectively demonstrating that they have learned these key historical skills. In 2013, only 2% of students taking the course did not pass, and in 2014 12%. Well over two-thirds of all students score in the excellent-to-good range of work, with about 15% each year in the average/developing range.

Conclusions

Our Senior Seminars remain effective places where we can assess how our students are learning to be historians. The process of organizing a project, carrying out the research, and writing the paper, effectively test students’ abilities and understanding of their chosen profession. Because the students organize and produce their research project under the eyes of the instructor, plagiarism is
not a problem. In general, the students perform well. Department members need to remember to hold discussions concerning common criteria for these projects and hold to those criteria.

The primary task facing the History program is to produce a more effective exit exam, which should be completed by June 15. Our six survey courses (H220, H222, H224, H260, H262, H264) are designed to give students a strong background in factual knowledge and the narrative of history. We will have those faculty who teach these courses evaluate the instrument, making sure that what is being evaluated is being taught.

Describe changes that have been made to the program based on assessment data and any corresponding evidence of improvement.

In 2012-13, in response to a variety of indicators that our majors were not mastering the historical content needed for effective teaching, the History Program altered a key element of its curriculum. To expand students’ basic knowledge of people, events, and ideas (outcome #1), they converted their lower division survey courses (American History and World History) from 2-course sequences to 3-course sequences (i.e. HIST 120 & 121 became HIST 260-262-264; HIST 201 & 202 became HIST 220-222-224). This means that students have more coursework at the level that instructs basic historical knowledge. It will take some time to see if this improves performance in outcome #1 (content knowledge), but we will be able to see through the Praxis and exit exam scores. No discernable change so far, but the students taking these exams are still under the old program, thus they have not benefited from the extra surveys.

Describe plans for improving one or more of the program outcomes. Do any of your improvement plans involve changes in your curriculum that will need to be considered in the coming year?

History should consider adding an outcome that addresses the university’s goal of developing skilled professionals—something that provides career preparation for our majors.

V. Course-Level Outcomes

Are course level outcomes clearly articulated for each course in your department? Where are course level outcomes available for students and faculty to review? Do course-level outcomes appear in all syllabi?

The current practice in the department is that instructors are directed to have course outcomes for each course and those outcomes be clearly listed on their syllabi. Course syllabi with outcomes are available in course binders housed in the Department office. A review of these folders showed that
23 out of 45 course syllabi with outcomes are available for History. Presently, our department secretary is collecting the remaining syllabi and adding them to the binders. The target for completion is June 15.

Have your department reviewed course-level outcomes in the last three years?

The department conducted a review of course-level outcomes in school year 2013-14.

VI. Benchmarks

How does your program compare to any peer programs or to national standards in your discipline?

The history program at BYU-I compares favorably to other programs in history departments of comparable size. Ten out of thirteen faculty in our department have doctoral degrees, with two working on or planning to work on PhDs, and the third retiring this year. Our program course offerings reflect a focus on effective training for teachers who teach history. This focus means that our courses are less varied and more chronologically oriented than are those offered by history departments of a comparable size at other institutions. Our department does not use any national history standard exam as a benchmark. However, we do use the education praxis exams to evaluate mastery of historical content. On the praxis, our students score at or just above the state average.

What conclusions have you drawn from this benchmarking analysis?

We feel that our programs compare favorably to other history programs. History has gone through fairly substantial curriculum revisions in the last two years designed to improve our students’ mastery of historical content. We are at the stage where we need to see if these revisions produce the desired results in better achievement of outcomes.

Does your department have an outside Advisory Council?

No.

VII. Student Placement (Job and Graduate School)
Discuss job placement and prospects for your graduates who have sought employment after graduation.

Recently, Matt Miles conducted an alumni survey of former History Majors. The response rate was 24% (168 out of 706 alums). He will be presenting to our department the results of the survey on June 4, including suggestions for using it to improve the major. These are the most relevant questions:

1. Response to: I feel like my undergraduate training prepared me for the world I encountered after graduation.
   
   - Agree/Strongly Agree: 55%
   - Neither Agree nor Disagree: 25%
   - Disagree/Strongly Disagree: 19%

2. Those who obtained the job they wanted:
   
   - Within one year of graduation: 41%
   - 1-3 years after graduation: 18%
   - After three years: 13%
   - Did not ever: 28%

3. Those who have attended graduate school: 47%

4. Graduate programs attended:
   
   - History: 21%
   - Social Science: 16%
   - Law School: 18%
   - MBA: 5%
   - Other: 40%

5. An open-ended question asked for them to identify skills that they wish they had learned better while at BYU-Idaho. The most common response was research skills, with “real world”/job-hunting skills second.

Student Placement Conclusion:

The survey shows that there are areas where we could improve. Just over one quarter of history majors feel that they have not, nor ever will, obtain their desired job. We can evaluate both our teaching of research skills and how we advise and prepare students concerning the job market. However, the survey also shows that about half of our majors are getting into graduate school, and that 72% of our students are obtaining the jobs that they want.

VIII. Resources
What is the average number of credits at graduation for each program in your department?

Our history majors averaged 125 credits in 2013 and 130 credits in 2014, well below the university target.

Are there any bottlenecks in your program that slow your students down?

No. All required classes are offered each semester and sufficient seats are available to meet need.

What efforts are you making as a department to ensure the wise use of faculty and other resources?

Overload among our department faculty has continued to decrease over time: we went from 100.8 hours overload in 2010 to 26.5 hours in 2014. This is approximately a single hour overload per faculty member. In History we have reduced the number of upper-division classes, which tend to be under-enrolled, and have encouraged faculty to participate in Foundations courses, which tend to fill up more readily. As our department has grown, we have increased effective room usage. We hold a draft to determine times and rooms, which generally fills all time slots for our primary rooms.

The department has welcomed the increases in opportunities for professional development. Not surprisingly, geographical knowledge is important to the teaching or our faculty; for example, the majority of department faculty (58%) are involved in teaching topics in non-U.S. fields of study. The department has been active in using travel to improve teaching and research.