

**Texas A&M International University
Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)
for Academic Programs**

Program: Master of Arts in History

Assessment Period Covered: January 1, 2009 to January 31, 2010

Program Coordinator (Preparer of Report): Dr. Deborah Blackwell

List Other Program Faculty:

Dr. Rex Ball
Dr. Carlos Cuellar
Dr. Stephen Duffy
Dr. Stan Green
Dr. Jerry Thompson

Reviewed by Chair: Name: Dr. Mohamed Ben-Ruwin **Date** _____

Reviewed by Dean: Name: Dr. Thomas Mitchell **Date** _____

The Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review for Academic Programs is directed at Goal 1: Academics of the Texas A&M International University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan:

Develop, maintain, assess, and improve academic programs, administrative/educational support services and student services, to admit, retain, and graduate students who achieve established learning outcomes designed to prepare them for success in their chosen careers.

Institutional Mission

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

Academic Program Mission

The Department of Social Sciences enjoys a broad mission in teaching, research, creative activities, and service to our international community. The Master of Arts in History is a traditional liberal arts degree designed to provide a sound graduate education that helps prepare graduates to think critically, communicate effectively, and successfully transition to further graduate study and/or the job market. In support of these goals, History program faculty are committed to 1) developing historical knowledge among our students; 2) fostering the development of critical thinking and writing skills; and 3) ensuring that our students are prepared for further study in history.

Provide summary of the last cycle’s use of results and changes implemented

Program faculty should evaluate the former cycle. This statement should specify if the outcomes addressed were a continuation of previous ones, new outcomes, or modified versions of previous outcomes. In addition, the statement should include a concise analysis of the assessment data collected during the previous year, a brief explanation of actions taken to address specific outcomes, an evaluation of how these actions contributed to the improvement of the program, and any recommendations formulated. Assessment data—including actual samples of student work—must be viewed and discussed by program faculty during this process.

Because of small data samples, major changes were not indicated for 2008. We continue to monitor student writing and qualifying examination scores to watch for patterns of student performance.

Selected list of program-level intended student learning outcomes *(It is recommended that programs rotate through their entire set of outcomes over a multi-year period. Programs may focus on one or two outcomes each year, as deemed appropriate).*

1. Students will demonstrate accurate knowledge of historical facts and be able to explain historical changes over time.
2. Students will develop written historical arguments in a variety of formats, including conducting original research using primary historical documents.
3. Students will understand the evolution of historical scholarship and be able to discuss and critique a variety of historiographical debates.

Section I: Planning and Implementation

Outcome(s)

Identify the outcome(s) that will be focused upon this year.

2. Students will develop written historical arguments in a variety of formats, including conducting original research using primary historical documents.

Please indicate if the outcome(s) is (are) related to writing (QEP).

Methods of assessment to be used: *The explanation should identify and describe the type of assessment(s) that will be used (e.g., survey, questionnaire, observation instrument, test, rubric to evaluate performance, standardized examination, action research, interviews, etc.), who will provide the information, and how the data will be obtained.*

Students in HIST 5380/Historiography will complete a required library research project, to be prepared and graded by a committee of History faculty, that will test their ability to locate, interpret, and use appropriate available sources for research in History.

Indicate when assessment(s) will take place

January 2010, following the conclusion of the fall semester.

Criteria/Benchmark(s): *[Specify, if deemed appropriate to assess outcome(s). Criteria/ benchmark(s) may be optional, especially if qualitative measures are used for data collection.]*

The project will be team graded by History faculty, using the rubric provided on pages 78-82 of the QEP. The average score on the project will not fall below 3 on the rubric. Subscores from the QEP rubric will also be examined that will identify areas of strength and weakness in historical research. The average scores on the subscales will not fall below 3 (good) on any subscale.

Section II: Analysis of Results

What were the results attained?

Describe the primary results or findings from your analysis of the information collected. This section should include an explanation of any strength(s) or weakness(es) of the program suggested by the results.

Six students completed the HIST 5380/Historiography course in the Fall 2009 semester. The major research paper that each completed was evaluated by a committee of History faculty (Ball, Blackwell, Cuellar, Duffy, and Green). The average overall score of the six papers using the QEP rubric was a 3 (two received 4s, two received 3s, and two received 2s). On five of the six subscores (focus, organization and development, sentence structure, discipline-specific writing, and research), the average score was a 3. On the sixth, grammar and usage, the average score was 2.8.

What were the conclusions reached?

Should include a brief description of the procedure used for reaching the conclusion(s) based on the evidence collected and describe the process used to disseminate the information to other individuals. For example, if the discussion took place during the annual spring retreat, include a summary from those deliberations using the Meeting Minutes template found on the Project Integrate web page at <http://www.tamtu.edu/integrate/docs/Minutes-Template.doc>. Once completed, submit the minutes to assessment@tamtu.edu.

The relatively small sample that we evaluated makes definitive conclusions difficult. However, it is clear that grammar and usage, which have often been a weak point in our students' writing, continues to be problematic for some of our students. The variation between students on their grammar and usage skills was significant as well. In terms of research and the analytical skills necessary to good history writing, however, the outlook is significantly better. These results are disseminated via email and will be discussed as a part of the 2010 COAS Retreat.

Describe the action plan formulated. (The plan may be multi-year in nature.)

Based on the conclusion(s), describe the action plan to be implemented to improve or maintain student learning, including a timeline for implementation.

Based on the above findings, History faculty need to continue and in fact increase the emphasis on writing in our Master's classes, and to critique writing for grammar and usage issues. We also need to work together to identify those students with writing weaknesses and employ the Writing Center as a resource for those students. The addition of a faculty member qualified to teach graduate seminars would greatly help in developing these skills in our students.

Section III: Resources

Resource(s) to implement action plan:

Describe the resources that will be needed to implement the action plan. Also indicate if the resources are currently available, or if additional funds will be needed to obtain these resources.

Funding

- New Resources Required
- Reallocation of current funds

Physical

- New or reallocated space

Other

- Primarily faculty/staff time
- University/rule procedure change only

Provide a narrative description and justification for requested resources (include linkage to Strategic Plan)

History needs the ability to continue offering quality education to an increasing number of students. With initiatives like HB1 and ECHS adding to the increased number of regular freshmen, the history faculty resources are strained in offering the senior-level and graduate level coursework necessary for our growing number of majors and minors. This is consistent with Strategic Plan Goal 1.7: Establish and pursue student learning outcomes appropriate for each program with systematic assessment and use of results for continuous quality improvement.

Identify proposed outcomes for the next assessment cycle:

Continuation of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for continuation):

Enter text here

New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below):

Graduating History Master’s candidates will take a locally-generated comprehensive examination that measures understanding of the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the field of History commensurate with graduate knowledge. The examination will be team graded by History faculty, using a rubric ranging from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent). The average score on the examination will not fall below 3 on the rubric. Also, subscales on the comprehensive examination will be scored to determine the outcomes relative to particular areas of History. The average scores on the subscales will not fall below 3 (good) on any subscale.

Modification of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for modification):

Enter text here

Date Completed: February 16, 2010

Submit completed form to integrate@tamiu.edu.

Updated 09/03/2009