

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

**Program: Bachelor of Arts in History with Grades 8-12 Certification**

**Assessment Period Covered: March 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009**

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

**List Other Program Faculty:**

<b>Dr. Rex Ball</b>
<b>Dr. Carlos Cuellar</b>
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**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 Bachelor of Arts in History is a traditional liberal arts degree designed to provide a sound undergraduate education that helps prepare graduates to think critically, communicate effectively, and successfully transition to graduate school 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 TeXeS 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. Define and describe the foundations of the U.S. and world political systems and their effects on national development.
2. Recall and classify factors that relate to issues of gender, race, religion, and economic status in U.S. and world society.
3. Identify and explain how the United States interacted with the governments and peoples of other nations.
4. Discuss and explain connections between historical events as well as describe historical changes over time.
5. Analyze primary and secondary historical sources to demonstrate critical reading skills.
6. Develop written historical arguments in a variety of formats.

**Section I: Planning and Implementation**

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

1. Define and describe the foundations of the U.S. and world political systems and their effects on national development.
2. Recall and classify factors that relate to issues of gender, race, religion, and economic status in U.S. and world society.
3. Identify and explain how the United States interacted with the governments and peoples of other nations.

**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.*

A pilot program began in the fall 2008 semester to give pre-tests and post-tests to freshmen entering the History 1301 U.S. to 1877 survey course. The 30-question multiple-choice test was written by Drs. Blackwell and Duffy and was administered to three large sections of HIST 1301. Ten questions relate to each of the three learning objectives. We are undertaking this project in part to help us further address the significant DFW rates for HIST 1301.

**Indicate when assessment(s) will take place:**

The pre-test is administered during the first two weeks of the semester, and the post-test is administered at the end of the 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.*

No benchmarks have been set as yet, given that this assessment is still in its pilot stages. We will set benchmarks in FY 2009 based on the results of our initial experience.

## 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.*

Of the 260 students who took the HIST 1301 pretest in the fall 2008 semester, the average total grade was 49.5% correct. On the 10 political questions (LO #1), the average score was 52.7% correct. On the 10 social questions (LO #2), the average score was 44.2% correct. On the 10 global history questions (LO #3), the average score was 51.6% correct.

Of the 224 students who took the HIST 1301 posttest in the fall 2008 semester, the average total grade was 65.8% correct. On the 10 political questions (LO #1), the average score was 67.0% correct. On the 10 social questions (LO #2), the average score was 66.7% correct. On the 10 global history questions (LO #3), the average score was 63.9% correct.

These results suggest that the history faculty members are seeing significant improvement between pretest and posttest scores in freshman History 1301, and that the balance of political, social, and global history is being maintained well.

**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 at <http://www.tamtu.edu/integrate/docs/Minutes-Template.doc>. Once completed, submit the minutes to [assessment @tamtu.edu](mailto:assessment@tamtu.edu).*

This pilot program in testing freshman history students is showing good results for student performance (a 16.3% increase in overall scores). The testing will continue with History 1302, and an additional instructor will be added for FY 2009. The results also confirm anecdotal evidence of freshman students' lack of prior knowledge of American history and the high quality of instruction in our program.

**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.*

The pretests and posttests will continue to be implemented in both HIST 1301 and 1302, with the addition of one instructor each year for the next two to three years.

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 HB 1 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):*

We will continue evaluation of the pretests and posttests for HIST 1301-1302; this is necessary to complete a full cycle of evaluation in order to have comparative results. These results also help us address some of the ongoing concerns with DFW rates in HIST 1301.

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

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