

Texas A&M International University
Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)
(Transition Period)

Date Submitted December 17, 2005

Assessment Period Covered (FY 2005)

Budget Period Covered (FY 2005)

Academic Program/AES Unit Bachelor of Arts with a Major in History

Person Preparing Review Dr. Deborah Blackwell

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

During the FY 2004 cycle, our assessment of students' knowledge of History as suggested by ACAT test subscores indicated the need to develop new courses to cover the entirety of U.S. chronological history. Students showed greater weaknesses in the chronological periods not previously covered by our course sequence, 1763-1815 and 1815-1865. The two new courses, HIST 4317 and HIST 4318, cover these time periods. The first of the courses was taught in spring 2004. The revamped degree plan that first appeared in the 2003-2004 catalog places additional emphasis on these U.S. chronological courses; because this was still a new requirement, monitoring of these changes will continue. Due to continued concerns with student writing proficiency, History faculty re-implemented a requirement of research paper assignments in all 4000-level courses and book reviews in all 3000-level courses. Our weaknesses in World History due to faculty resignations led us to argue for the need for an additional faculty line.

Provide summary of budget decisions and their impact on your program/division.

History Faculty recommended the hire of one additional faculty member with specialization in World History to help us meet the needs of our students on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. We were denied this additional hire, leaving us with a persistent gap in our History program that we are unable to bridge.

Section I: Planning and Implementation

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/Administrative/Educational Support Unit 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.

Identify outcomes and relationship to Strategic Plan

Outcome 1

Students completing the History baccalaureate program will compare favorably in their knowledge of History with students completing similar programs at other universities.

Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 1

Goal 2 Academic

Identify Strategic Plan Objective and Strategy related to Outcome 1 (Appendix A – Strategic Goals)

1.7 Establish and pursue student learning outcomes appropriate for each program with systematic assessment and use of results for continuous quality improvement.

Methods of assessment

Graduating History majors will take the standardized examination, ACAT, in History. Their average score will be equal to or greater than the average scores of students completing similar programs. Subscales on the ACAT History examination will be assessed to determine outcomes in specific areas within the History program. The graduating History majors will not fall below the average scores on any subscale of history majors completing similar programs nationwide.

Frequency of administration

ACAT examinations will be administered once every Fall and Spring Semesters provided there are eligible candidates.

Criteria/Benchmark

ACAT examinations are scored by the test company, College Outcomes. The average score of graduating history majors as well average subscale scores will be equal to or greater than the average scores of students completing similar programs nationwide.

Outcome 2

Students completing the baccalaureate program will have a broad understanding of the field of History.

Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 2

Goal 2 Academic

Identify Strategic Plan Objective and Strategy related to Outcome 2 (Appendix A – Strategic Goals)

1.7 Establish and pursue student learning outcomes appropriate for each program with systematic assessment and use of results for continuous quality improvement.

Methods of assessment

History faculty will assign a research paper in each 4000-level history course offered each semester. Copies of research papers from each course will be collected, and 10-15% of the total number will be randomly selected for evaluation in writing and proficiency in History. Selected papers will then be assessed by a team of History faculty who will score the submissions in relation to predetermined expectations. The average score on the papers will not fall below 3 (good/adequate). In addition, graduating History majors will be surveyed to gather supporting data concerning the degree to which the program provided them with a broad understanding of the field of History, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well). At least 85% of those responding will rate the program 4 or 5 on the scale.

Frequency of administration

Each fall and spring semester.

Criteria/Benchmark

For research papers, the average score on the papers will not fall below 3 (good/adequate) on the research paper rubric. For the surveys, at least 85% of those responding will rate the program 4 or 5 on the scale.

Outcome 3

Students completing the baccalaureate program will be prepared for graduate study.

Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 3

Goal 2 Academic

Identify Strategic Plan Objective and Strategy related to Outcome 3 (Appendix A – Strategic Goals)

1.7 Establish and pursue student learning outcomes appropriate for each program with systematic assessment and use of results for continuous quality improvement.

Methods of assessment

TAMIU graduates with a BA degree in History will be contacted annually to gather acceptance rates in graduate programs as well as information on successful completion of graduate programs. Each graduate will be contacted for a total of five years after his/her graduation, or through the completion of his/her graduate degree, whichever is later. Seventy-five percent of History graduates who apply for admission to a graduate program will be accepted, and at least 50% of those entering post-baccalaureate programs will successfully complete those programs.

Frequency of administration

At least once per academic year following spring semesters.

Criteria/Benchmark

Seventy-five percent of History graduates who pursue a post-baccalaureate program will be accepted. At least 50% of those entering post-baccalaureate programs will successfully complete those programs.

Section II: Analysis of Results

When (term/date) was assessment conducted?

Outcome 1

Fall 2004 and Spring 2005

Outcome 2

Fall 2004 and Spring 2005

Outcome 3

Not conducted Spring 2005

What were the results attained (raw data)?

Outcome 1

Six graduating History majors took the ACAT examination in Fall 2004 and Spring 2005. The average overall score was 511 (national average = 500). Subscale average scores (national average = 500) were as follows: U.S. 1829-1890, 541; U.S. Colonial-1763, 509; U.S. 1890-1940, 440; U.S. 1763-1820, 502; U.S. 1940-Present, 427; Early Modern Europe, 500.

Outcome 2

Copies of research papers from four 4000-level courses were gathered in fall 2004, and from an additional four 4000-level courses in spring 2005. Five papers were randomly selected for evaluation each semester. Two papers received scores of 2 (marginal), and eight received scores of 3 (good/adequate), resulting in a 2.8 overall average. Six students rated the History program in surveys; two rated the program as 5, and four rated it as 4, meaning that 100% rated the program as 4 or 5.

Outcome 3

N/A

Who (specify names) conducted analysis of data?

Outcome 1

History Faculty (Drs. Blackwell, Cuellar, Duffy, Green, Thompson, and Mr. Valle)

Outcome 2

History Faculty (Drs. Blackwell, Cuellar, Duffy, Green, Thompson, and Mr. Valle)

Outcome 3

N/A

When were the results and analysis shared? With whom (department chair, supervisor, staff, external stakeholders)? Minutes with data analysis submitted to

assessment@tamiu.edu? (Please use Minutes Template located on the Project INTEGRATE web page.)

Results were shared with History Faculty, Department Chair, and Department Assessment Coordinator via email on 9/6/05. Additional material on results and analysis were embodied in assessment reports and regularly submitted electronically to the University Assessment Committee and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness with copies to the above-listed individuals. Hard copies have occasionally been submitted upon request.

Has the assessment documentation (i.e., surveys, rubrics, course exams with embedded questions, etc.) been submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning?

The surveys, rubrics, results reports, and minutes have been maintained in electronic and/or hard copy files by the History Discipline Coordinator. These records are available for inspection whenever the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning needs them.

Use of Results: Indicate what changes, if any, based on the data have been recommended?

Outcome 1

The number of students taking the exam (6) is too small to use as a justification for additional programmatic changes. The subscale scores of History majors will continue to be monitored until the number of scores is sufficient to use as a basis of analysis. Meanwhile, History faculty will take note of the results in which scores were below the standardized average as an indicator of possible problems. The History curriculum has been revised into grouped competencies and two new U.S. chronological courses have been created, to more effectively assist students. These changes appear in the 2003-04 catalog; the first of the new courses (U.S. 1815-1865) was taught in the spring 2004 semester, and the second (U.S. 1763-1815) was taught in the spring 2005 semester. The ACAT examination primarily tests students' proficiency in U.S. history; though the degree requires 9 SCH of upper-division world history, personnel changes have left the department without faculty prepared to teach those courses and thus depriving students of the breadth of knowledge that we would wish them to have.

Outcome 2

While we understand that the small sampling of papers makes definitive conclusions elusive, History faculty are using these results as inspiration for work on a common set of research paper guidelines for all history 4000-level courses, which we hope will strengthen writing and research skills among our students. These guidelines were drafted in the spring 2005 semester for implementation in the fall 2005 semester. Universally, the weakest area for our students continues to be in writing, and our long-standing agreement to include substantial writing assignments in all history courses will, we hope, help us address that concern.

Outcome 3

N/A

Section III: Programmatic Review

What are the implications of the recommended changes?

A specialist in World History needs to be hired in order to offer courses (such as those in Asian, African, and/or Middle Eastern history) that make well-rounded History graduates and that will lead to improvements in student knowledge of History (as reflected in ACAT scores). Efforts to improve student writing need to continue and expand.

Will resources be affected by the recommended changes? Yes No

If so, specify the anticipated effect(s) using the chart below:

Funding	Physical	Other
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New resources required	<input type="checkbox"/> New or reallocated space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primarily faculty/staff time
<input type="checkbox"/> Reallocation of current funds		<input type="checkbox"/> University rule/procedure change only
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other: Enter text here

Narrative description and justification for request including related strategy

(Attach Budget Request 'Form B' and/or 'Form C')

See previously submitted forms.

If funding, physical or other resources were requested, what is the impact of the budget decisions on program/division?

See previously submitted narratives.

In the box below, provide information on the outcomes for the next assessment cycle:

Outcomes for Next Assessment Cycle
Continuation of present outcome(s) - (Indicate reason for continuation): The present outcomes will continue until a large enough sample is obtained to make the results of the assessment definitive and conclusive, and to allow programmatic changes a chance to influence those results.
New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below): N/A
Modification of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for modification): N/A