

**INTERNAL PROGRAM REVIEW
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
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Introduction

The three members of this committee were asked to submit a review of the Department of History. We have evaluated the accomplishments, problems, and goals of the department in light of conditions at the University of Oregon. Committee members met in person before and after reviewing the self-study report, discussed our findings, reached consensus, and compiled the following observations, suggestion, and justifications. Our comments are organized into three primary sections: (a) faculty, staff, and resources; (b) undergraduate education; and (c) graduate education. In each section, we have organized our review around our observations of the department based on the self-study and conclude with a set of recommendations.

Department effectiveness:

The Department of History is effective in teaching, service, and participation in university life. The number of undergraduate majors has grown rapidly over the past decade. Undergraduate students rate the instructors and the courses highly on evaluations. The graduate program is small but stable, selective in admissions, and very effective in placing Ph.D. graduates in academic positions. Research in the department is active and diverse; several projects are recognized across the university as well as externally. In the Self Study report, the department has identified some challenges in terms of graduate and undergraduate education, faculty hiring, faculty diversity, and priority fields of study. They have formulated thoughtful approaches for addressing some of these challenges. Overall, we consider the Department of History to be effective, but at a crucial point in its development since it faces several key challenges for sustained quality and improvement.

FACULTY, STAFF, AND RESOURCES

Faculty structure, size, and function

The Department of History at the University of Oregon is a unit of twenty-six tenure and tenure-track faculty members, one senior instructor (Dracobly), one part-time adjunct faculty member (Toll), and three full-time and one part-time staff. The Department has an extensive committee structure. Particularly critical in this structure is an elected Advisory Committee, which assists the Head in a variety of tasks such as

setting the agenda for faculty meetings, conducting regular merit reviews, and assigning salary increases. The Department appears to be well served by its organization and obviously takes faculty governance seriously, with most faculty members assuming a fairly heavy load of departmental service. History is known on campus for its tradition of deliberation. This tradition, we believe, will serve the Department well as it plans for a future wherein it is virtually certain to continue to face serious budgetary and staffing constraints.

The faculty of the Department of History is strong. Out of nine hires in the past decade, eight have been the Department's first choice, and one was a close second choice. Likewise, the department's ten cases of advancement to associate professor with tenure have succeeded. Five faculty members have been promoted to full professor in the last five years. Most faculty members are active researchers, and a significant number have established national and even international reputations. In fact, retention has been a problem: three important faculty members have been lost to outside offers in the past several years. Fifteen of the twenty-six tenure-related faculty are associate professors. Other departments on campus probably have a similar percentage of faculty members in the associate rank, since normal attrition, demographics, and changes in PERS have reduced the number of Full Professors at the university.

Four to five members of the faculty will retire in the next three to six years, and this will present the department with the ever-challenging and delicate task of determining hiring priorities. Established specialties are almost certain to come into competition with new demands. The current allocation of faculty by field is tipped very strongly in the direction of Europe and America, with a significant faculty presence in Asian history as well. Latin American and Africa, although represented, remain relatively small, and the department does not yet have a specialist in the history of the Middle East. The Department lists as its major strengths the U.S. West and Asia. Despite ten faculty members specializing in Europe, the Europeanists have only one full professor (McGowan) and are in the process of rebuilding after the loss of major Europeanists some time ago. Given the current situation, it is certain that discussion will center upon whether the Department should strive for greater geographical balance or emphasize areas that are already strong. There is no easy solution to this problem. Deliberation concerning future hiring priorities and directions needs to begin soon and will test the Department's tradition of consensual decision-making.

Recommendations:

1. The Department should take steps to protect associate professors as much as possible from excessive service and generally provide conditions that encourage them to progress as quickly as possible to promotion.
2. Faculty members who seem unlikely to advance beyond the rank of associate professor should be encouraged to consider an increase in teaching and/or service duties.
3. Given the relatively small size of the faculty and the immensity of the field, we believe the Department would benefit from continuing to develop specializations rather than strive for "balance." Such specialties can be geographical or topical. Particularly fruitful might be an attempt to develop

departmental thematic specialties (e.g., medical history, law and punishment, colonialism, immigration).

4. We also believe that the Department should work together with the College and University to articulate a strategy for dealing with the rising interest on campus and in the nation with Islam and the Middle East.

Resources and Finances

The History Department is a productive unit. In the past decade, majors in History have increased by 80%, from 242 to 436, while majors in the rest of the social sciences divisions have increased by 28%. History has also seen a 17% increase in total number of student credit hours in the same period, somewhat below the social sciences average of 29%. In evaluating these SCH numbers, we must keep in mind that twelve years ago, History was somewhat arbitrarily assigned to the newly created social sciences division and is therefore most frequently compared to such social sciences departments as Political Science and Sociology, units that have experienced very large enrollment increases in recent years. Had History been placed in the humanities division, which some members of the Department favored at the time the three divisions were first created, it would stack up much better against its division comparators. In several regards, the Department of History has made conscious decisions that resemble those made in humanities departments and that mitigates rapid growth. One of these is the decision to place strong emphasis upon undergraduate writing, and another is the decision to limit enrollment in the capstone seminar, History 407, to just fifteen students (twelve undergraduate majors and three graduate students), a policy that might be pedagogically sound but has created problematic staffing and scheduling problems for the Department.

We should mention that History has achieved its strong level of growth with very little reliance upon adjunctive faculty. In fact, as noted earlier, the Department has only one full-time instructor and a single part-time adjunct. Tenured or tenure-track faculty teach fully 80% of all lower-division SCH, compared with an average of 60% in the social sciences and 43% in the entire College of Arts and Sciences. The same pattern holds for upper division courses. History's heavy reliance upon regular faculty for virtually all classes is unusual in the social sciences division and represents, in the words of their self-study, ". . . a principled commitment which the department has discussed and affirmed in the recent past, to make regular faculty responsible for virtually all classroom instruction apart from discussion sessions" (p. 31). We note further that in spite of staffing virtually all classes with regular faculty, history has kept its cost reasonably efficient, with its direct instructional cost per student credit hour 2.8% lower than the average for the social sciences, the latter the most cost-effective unit in CAS.

With a relatively stable faculty size and continued growth have come stresses. The department has pushed its "do more with less" strategy about as far as it can without undertaking major structural changes. These changes might well threaten History's tradition of intensive involvement of tenure track faculty in helping students with writing and research methodology. However, it may benefit the department to having skilled instructors or graduate students teach in the upper division undergraduate courses. This would not be unprecedented, as at least one skilled instructor already teaches in History.

The Department of History runs a yearly deficit in its regular budget and makes up for this with salary savings and summer earnings. It is good news indeed that a new chair, dedicated to the history of the U.S. West is being endowed by contributions from a private donor. This will be a significant addition to the faculty of the History Department and highlights the need for continued effort to attract and cultivate other donors. Additional stresses that have come with budgetary constraints have been the inability to offer support packages to graduate students equivalent to those offered by comparator institutions (see graduate section) and the continued strain of trying to emphasize writing in the undergraduate curriculum.

Recommendations:

1. Should financial and enrollment pressures continue, it might be necessary to consider one of two options: (a) hiring additional instructors, or (b) allowing advanced graduate students to do more teaching at a higher level in the undergraduate curriculum.
2. Since there is little hope for a significant infusion of money from the state or from any significant reallocation within the University, the Department must continue to manage its resources well and must continue to make external fund-raising a high priority.

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

The department of History offers undergraduates the option of taking the major with either a B.A. or a B.S. (although it requires proficiency in a second language regardless of degree). Many non-majors move through History's curricular offerings to fulfill General Education Social Science Group requirements, multicultural course requirements, and required or recommended courses important for other CAS departmental and inter-departmental majors, especially Asian Studies, European Studies, International Studies, and Latin American Studies. The department actively participates in Overseas programs for undergraduates as well as offering courses that regularly contribute to (and are cross-listed in) Women's and Gender Studies, Religious Studies, Judaic Studies, and Humanities. The department serves an impressive number of undergraduates: total enrollments have increased 17% since 1995; students choosing the History major has risen a staggering 80% in the same period (Self-Study, p. 11).

The History Major requires students to fulfill both period and geographical distribution requirements. Students majoring in History and focusing on European History, for example, also undertake advanced study in non-Euro-American History. In this regard, the department is working to prepare its Majors so they have knowledge of the world community and the role of any particular geographical area within that larger context. The Major is enhanced by the requirement of an advanced research project conducted in small senior seminars (HIST 407) and focused on primary source materials (Self-Study, pp. 14-15). While the department is clearly aware of, and responsive to, student course

evaluations, like many departments on campus, it does not currently have data available to assess graduating students' perceptions of the quality of their experiences with the department beyond course evaluations. Although the department's Self-Study (pp. 13-14), claims that Majors are advised by individual faculty advisors, the department's website indicates that some of this work is performed by peer-advisors: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~history/undergradadvising.html>. This discrepancy may be more apparent than actual but lacks explanation in the Self-Study.

The unit's large-lecture, lower-division offerings (Western Civilization, World History, US History, and others) enroll substantial numbers of students, both majors and non-majors. In fact, the Self Study notes that 40% of History's student credit hours occur at the lower-division level, overwhelmingly taught by tenure-related faculty. Data indicate that for the past three years, about 80% of lower-division SCH were offered by tenure-related faculty and about 20% by Fixed Term faculty. While GTFs lead discussion sections attached to these large-lecture courses, no GTFs have served as Instructors of Record. In 2005-06, History allotted 0% of its lower-division student credit hours to GTFs, whereas the Social Science Division in toto assigned 17% to GTFs. In the same academic year, History notes that only 4% of its upper-division student credit hours were offered by GTFs; the Social Science Division as a whole offered a disturbing 20% of its upper-division student credit hours under GTF tutelage (see Appendix D: "Distribution of SCH."). Thus, the department contributes significantly to the University's and College's efforts to offer undergraduates the most professional learning environment possible, though this is overwhelmingly conducted in large lecture, making the department's goal of increasing attention to student writing and analysis difficult.

Both Educational Technology and the dissemination of research and knowledge to an audience both on campus and beyond provide further evidence of the department's contribution to undergraduate education. The *Mapping History Project* is currently used across our campus as well as by campuses and programs nationally and internationally. Additionally, the project "has consistently been one of the most often 'hit' [internet] sites associated with the U of O" (Self-Study, p. 38). Professor Herman's Adoption Project holds great potential as a substantial research and teaching website for students and faculty here and afar. More locally, the department's Website gives undergraduate students easy access to faculty, many of whom have substantial course websites that are well-organized and clearly enhance student learning (see, for just one example, Prof. Nicols' site: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~klio/wc07/index.htm>).

Attention to critical thinking, analytical abilities, and written reasoning is central to the way the department understands its most important contribution to undergraduate education. The large-lecture format (common in its 100, 200 and some 300-level courses) creates potential obstacles to achieving this, but the department's close working relationship with discussion section GTFs attached to the large-lecture is intended to obviate this concern. The department indicates, however, a desire to "enhance the analytical writing component" of its courses and "strengthen . . . undergraduates' exposure to research methods" (Self-Study p. 5). The unit's relatively small faculty of 26 who sustain a large variety of courses in American, Latin American, European, African,

and Asian History (see notes regarding the size of faculty at comparator institutions, pp. 2-3) make these enhancements a challenge. If GTFs meet with discussion sections attached to lecture courses just once a week, the rigor of student critical analysis and attention to writing is severely constrained, since these one-hour sessions are often reviews and clarifications of lecture material. Additionally, the key to enhancing student writing is the intervention of comments between drafts, and commenting on papers clearly and significantly for the purpose of assisting student essays between drafts is very time consuming. If the department has, as one of its goals, a commitment to improving student writing, the presence and frequency of writing assignments must be balanced with the most effective writing pedagogy, namely a process of student drafts followed by critical response followed by the students' revision. GTFs carrying two discussion sections totaling 40-50 students will not likely be able to devote attention to this process, or to the individual instruction needed to make significant headway with this department goal.

Recommendations: While the department is doing an exemplary job placing faculty in significant numbers before students in lower-division courses, this, along with the size of the History Major is clearly straining tenure-related faculty. For the department to meet all its goals within a research university, we recommend the following:

1. Increase a commitment to the 100-level World History sequence and reduce the size or frequency of the other lower-division surveys.
2. Consider offering some lower-division offerings with GTF instruction and/or perhaps more with fixed term faculty. This will enhance the graduate program (by making more GTF support available), take some pressure off research faculty, and create a small enough classroom size to increase attention to critical thinking, active learning, and written reasoning.
3. Consider reducing the number of majors to allow for greater concentration on students' critical reasoning and writing.
4. Consider focusing undergraduate offerings so they reflect the focus of research faculty rather than giving students as much breadth (at the lower-division level) as possible. (Current offerings try to cover nearly every period and region of the world except, apparently, the Middle East.)
5. When funding allows, increase the size of the tenure-related faculty.

THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

The graduate programs in the Department of History appear to be a strongly conceived and implemented masters program and a doctoral program that provides flexibility to students within a relatively independent approach to doctoral training. These programs appear to successfully provide academic development for several graduate students annually. The strengths of these programs include coursework that focuses on a broad range of historical domains with a growing focus on the U.S. West and East Asia, highly qualified admission cohorts, close contact between doctoral students and faculty members, and a good track record of employment for graduates. However, review of the graduate program materials revealed three areas that warrant particular attention: the enrollment patterns and characteristics of graduate students, the lack of doctoral courses

and experiences available to doctoral cohorts, and limited funding to recruit top level graduate students to the department.

The University of Oregon has a strong commitment to diversity. The Department of History shares this commitment and is simultaneously demonstrating a priority of admitting highly qualified students to its graduate program. Based on the data provided, the History Department appears to recruit and admit a healthy number of students each year and maintain relatively high criteria for admission. Based on the data provided, however, department admits very small numbers of students from diverse groups. The numbers of minority and international students in graduate education suggests that either the program is not appealing to or supportive of these underrepresented groups or recruitment efforts have not been focused on or successful in diversifying the graduate student body. The department's program review states that there have been specific initiatives to address this issue including accessing "Fighting Fund Fellowships" when appropriate. We believe that the History Department should examine recruitment and retention activities with the goal of maintaining the high quality graduate student body while increasing its size and diversity.

The Department should also consider marketing areas of concentration such as the emerging strengths in East Asia and the U.S. West (Self-Study, p. 26). These concentration areas may provide leverage to recruit students in a more targeted way that could both diversify the student body as well as increase the number of admitted students. Moreover, Department leadership may consider targeting faculty hires in these areas of concentration to serve as magnets for high quality doctoral students.

A primary strength of the doctoral program in the Department of History is the mentorship model that allows doctoral students to work closely with their faculty mentors on important projects that reflect the faculty members' interests. At the same time, this strength has been shaped, in part, by the small number of students enrolled in the doctoral program and the department's inability to offer more than just a few 600-level courses. It is a departmental priority to continue to pursue ways to offer more doctoral seminars (p. 24 of the Self-Study). The small number of topical doctoral seminars is a liability for the program because it increases the burden on individual faculty to offer meaningful one-on-one experiences and reduces students' opportunities to engage in intellectual discourse on historical topics. The Self-Study notes (p. 24) that the Department's graduate policy committee has developed a new curriculum model designed to address the small number of doctoral courses offered to students. We encourage the Department to continue to pursue ways to revise the doctoral curriculum to (a) offer more topical courses or seminars, and/or (b) identify courses and experiences that take advantage of other departments and programs across CAS.

The lack of graduate student financial support at the University of Oregon is a perennial problem experienced by all graduate programs. The fiscal reality has enormous implications for recruiting and retaining students and faculty members. The History Department has been particularly creative in utilizing available awards, GTF positions, and other sources to cobble together financial support for most matriculated graduate students. However, these efforts fall far short of what is necessary to admit the most

desirable graduate student applicants. These students are often being recruited away from the University of Oregon by institutions with greater financial capacity. Continue exploring alternative means of enhancing graduate student support that will assist in parlaying the strong admission cohorts into matriculated students.

Recommendations:

1. To enhance the high quality graduate program, the department should grow and diversify its student body by identifying successful recruitment and retention efforts in other departments within CAS and in other schools and colleges within the UO. Efforts should also focus on marketing and recruitment that identifies areas of faculty expertise that may appeal to underrepresented groups; and a review of curriculum to determine its appeal to underrepresented groups.
2. The Department should review and possibly implement the proposed curriculum model designed to increase the number of small doctoral seminars with a careful evaluation of its merits. Additionally, the Department should identify ways to encourage doctoral students to seek relevant coursework across departments where appropriate to broaden their exposure and deepen their intellectual development.
3. The Department should engage in strategic planning focused on graduate student funding. This planning should consider any means possible to increase student financial support including, but not limited to activities that require partnering with the University of Oregon's development office to build endowments for student support, changes in enrollment patterns and numbers that would provide more GTF teaching opportunities, and private foundation funding for graduate student research in particular areas of concentration.