

History Department --- Preliminary Midterm Assessment Report May 2016 - May 2018

In Summer 2016, the History Dept. GPC participated in a Strategic Planning Session with other department representatives to consider the following issues within the graduate program.

Short-Term Goals

1. Simplify and clarify the degree requirements (Handbook)
2. Strengthen the distinctions between Plan A (thesis) and Plan B (professional)

Long-Term Goals

3. Increase the number of applicants (Recruit individually, social media, gradschoolmatch)
4. Improve graduation rates (Research seminar; public proposal defense in February/March of first year)
5. Explore the possibility of a Public History Concentration (15 credits)

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES (2016-2017)

1. The GPC created a Graduate Student Handbook listing all the policies and procedures for the History Department Graduate program and program options (MA/MS, Plan A/Plan B). The Handbook is online and available to students and faculty.
2. The department increased its stipend from \$7500 to \$10,000 per year for funded students.
3. The Department hired a Public Historian to teach Public History courses (undergraduate and graduate; to serve on thesis committees and guide graduate level research in public history; to manage and guide graduate level internships; to advise graduate students). Dr. Rebecca Anderson took up her duties in Fall 2017.
4. In recruiting for Fall 2017, the GPC more actively engaged in recruiting efforts by working with the School of Graduate Studies to create a marketing flyer, using gradschoolmatch.com, and participating in the SGS first Welcome Weekend. The student who attended the Welcome Weekend chose to attend our program with additional financial incentives.
5. The department targeted the methods (HIST 6000) course as a class with more skills exercises, cohort-building experiences, and a clear outcome toward the degree (thesis proposal as final project). Ten of the twelve students (83%) enrolled in HIST 6000 in Fall 2016 defended their proposals in Spring 2017. This is a dramatic improvement.
6. First year students were offered funding for research travel in Summer 2017 if they defended their thesis proposal by March 2017. Nine students received funding for archives visits. Graduating students will participate in the exit survey.

ASSESSMENT PLANS (2017-2018)

1. In order to improve graduation rates, the History Dept. created a new required course (HIST 6030) for all students entering their second year. This class was offered for the first time in Fall 2017. The goal is to provide students with structured class time to write a chapter of their thesis or Plan B paper.

2. Data measuring student achievement of learning outcomes was collected in our required courses (HIST 6000, HIST 6010, and HIST 6030) in 2017-2018.
3. At the department's fall retreat in August 2017, the department discussed possible assessment measures for individual students, (such as an assessment rubric for thesis committees to complete as part of the final defense). This conversation is ongoing.

ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES – MAY 2018

The 2016-18 cohort is comprised of 12 students.

- 10 successfully defended a thesis proposal in Spring 2017. This is a measure of success for HIST 6000 (Theory and Methods). One more defended in early fall 2017.
- 7 successfully defended a Plan A/Plan B project by May 4, 2018 (58%)
- 3 will defend in summer 2018 (83%)
- 2 students have not planned their completion dates (17%)

Name	GRE Scores			Other Info			Thesis Proposal Approval Date	Thesis Defense Date	Travel grant
	Verbal %	Quant %	Analytical Writing Percentage	Funding Status	MA or MS	Plan A or Plan B			
Student 1	98	48	93	Full funding	MA	A	2/16/17	defended 4/17/18	yes
Student2	25	4	56	None	MS	B	No Form	no defense scheduled yet	
Student 3		GMAT	GMAT	Full funding	MS	A	3/13/17	defended 4/26/18	yes
Student 4	87	68	none	Full funding	MA	A	3/26/17	planned summer	yes
Student 5	74	48	98	Full funding	MA	B	2/27/17	no defense scheduled yet	yes
Student 6	54	6	56	Full funding	MA	A	9/19/17	3/23/18	
Student 7	81	75	93	Full funding	MS	A	3/1/17	defended 3/10/18	yes
Student 8	41	48	none	Full funding	MA	B	3/5/17	defended 4/5/18	yes
Student 9	94	45	56	Full funding	MA	A	3/29/17	planned summer	yes
Student 10	94	40	80	Full funding	MS	B	3/23/17	planned summer	yes
Student 11	67	48	none	Full funding	MA	A	4/3/17	defended 3/6/18	yes
Student 12	87	88	none	Full funding	MA	A	3/29/17	defended 4/20/18	

These figures are an improvement over the previous cohort (2015-2017), which was comprised of 8 students. Of these,

- 2 successfully defended a Plan A/Plan B project by May 4, 2017 (25%)
- 4 successfully defended a Plan A/Plan B project in Summer 2017 (50%)
- 2 have not completed their degree requirements (25%)

The GPC attributes the higher completion rates to the following:

- Greater emphasis on the completion of a thesis proposal in HIST 6000
- Greater emphasis on defending the thesis/Plan B proposal by spring of the first year
- Travel funds available to students who successfully defend a thesis/Plan B project by spring of the first year
- Implementation of HIST 6030 in fall of second year

ASSESSMENT PLANS 2018-2019

Given that there will be an interim GPC in 2018-2019, the Department is not planning to begin new initiatives. However, the interim GPS will continue the recruiting and improved graduation rate strategies implemented since 2015, and to evaluate their success.

1. The GPC will maintain the MA/MS Handbook, updating to reflect new courses, funding opportunities, and the Public History/Plan B option.
2. Recruiting efforts will continue with the Department's Welcome Weekend in October 2018; faculty will be encouraged to contact their peers in other institutions, and the interim GPC will use gradschoolmatch.com to advertise the Welcome Weekend to potential students.
3. Continued emphasis on defending a thesis/Plan B proposal by the end of the first year; second year of HIST 6030 to test graduation rate improvement
4. Collection of student feedback from exit surveys
5. Evaluation of Graduate Assistant program – faculty satisfaction, possible introduction of GA evaluations at the end of each semester. As funding becomes more competitive, we would use these evaluations to award funding to students.
6. The Department is in conversation with Library and SCA staff to further refine the Public History/Plan B option. Many of our students pursue digital work for their Plan B project. An initial meeting was held on April 30, 2018 to discuss cooperative efforts and coordination between the Department and Library staff.