

Executive Summary

The History Department has been flourishing over the last five years. We have revised our curriculum, enhanced our student advising, created new programs, including an International Visiting Professorship, expanded opportunities for student research and internships, increased the number of scholarships we award, enhanced our lecture series, revised our website and initiated a social media campaign, and strengthened our relationships with local, regional, and national communities. Our students have been successful in getting jobs and gaining admission to selective graduate programs. While the number of history majors has fallen a bit, the program is still robust and attracts high achieving students.

Meanwhile, despite a heavy teaching load, members of our faculty have been productive scholars, with many books and articles to show for their efforts.

We have also improved the way we assess these changes, our programs, and our classes. The result has been what we believe to be a more effective curriculum and a more collegial environment for students and faculty alike.

Here are more details about the changes described above.

We revised our curriculum. We added a new course, History 2000, Introduction to the Craft of History, which will be taught for the first time in Spring 2016. This one-credit course is required of all new history majors to orient them to the field, to introduce them to research techniques and resources, to provide them with a sense of the varieties of history, and to connect them with faculty, all of whom will participate in the course. We also revised our senior seminar course sequence. We now have students take 4985, Investigating History, the semester preceding History 4990. Faculty in 4985 will not advance a student on to 4990 unless they have a viable research topic and sources. This more cohesive course sequence has helped students complete their theses more easily, and enabled them to produce a higher caliber of work.

We also added a new language requirement for all majors, which was just going into effect at the time of the last program review. Before 2011, some students were able to avoid taking a foreign language by pursuing a B.S. in history. We eliminated that degree path, and all students now earn a B.A., which requires them to have at least 2 semesters of foreign language. We made this change out of a commitment to preparing our students for life in an increasingly interconnected world.

Our advising system, with one faculty member doing the major portion of the advising, has proved very effective. Stephen Francis has filled that role for the last few years, and he and the Chair work together to meet with students, advise them about courses, and clear them for graduation. This has made it much simpler for students to find the right advice about course selection, requirements, and graduation. The advisor has also taken on the responsibility of monitoring our history teaching majors as they engage in

student teaching. His advice and feedback has offered important and timely strategies for improving their pedagogy.

We have also added new events and opportunities through which students can learn about career paths with a history degree and graduate school possibilities. This will be the third year we host a Career Day, at which we bring in alums as well as others with a background in history, who can counsel students about possible jobs, post-graduation. At this event, we also have on hand the university's career advisor, who critiques resumes, and alerts students to other job resources.

Some other very important changes: We have added new faculty: Professor Jeff Richey (Ph.D. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) joined us in 2013, replacing Henry Ibarguen as the Dept.'s Latin Americanist. We have also brought in an array of faculty from abroad, through our new International Visiting Professorship. These visiting scholars come and teach a course each fall. We have hosted 2 faculty from the University of Tübingen (Prof. Georg Schild and Daniel Menning), one from Fudan University (Ma Lin) thus far. In Spring 2017, we will host Dr. Abdul Nasser Kaadan of Aleppo University; in the Fall of 2017 we will host Prof. Maurizio Meloni of the University of Sheffield. We also have a new Office Manager, Jenna Daniels, who brings a wealth of administrative and budgetary experience to the department.

We have made a commitment to four of our adjuncts who have Ph.D.s, giving them the most overload courses of any of our adjuncts. We also have tried to provide these faculty with extra resources, detailed below.

We have worked with archivists and museum specialists on campus and in the community to find internships for our students. We have been able to offer an increasing number of our majors the opportunity to work as interns, with the Union Station Museum, the University Archives, the Stewart Library Special Collections, the Brigham City Art and History Museum, the LDS Archives, the Utah State Park system, the Virtual Museum of Northern Utah, among others.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, as well as the loyalty of alumni, we have increased both the number and the monetary value of scholarships for our majors. A new lecture series, funded by one of our faculty, has just been established with a \$100,000 endowment, as well. This series, on the history of the American West, will join our well-established Lampros Lecture, which brings in scholars of the Civil War. (Additionally, each year, we host many other lectures on a range of topics, funded by our regular operating budget.)

Working with WSU's web design team, we have redesigned the departmental website in an effort to make it more user friendly. It should go live by the end of the fall semester; once it does, students will be able to declare their majors through its portal. One of our faculty—Jeff Richey—has just created a Twitter account for the Dept. and will serve as its manager.

We have worked to strengthen our relationships with local, regional, national, and international communities. Those many connections—with the general public, local educational institutions, museums, and scholarly organizations—are detailed in Section G.

Currently, we have 217 majors and teaching majors. That number, while down from a high of 285 in 2011-12, is still healthy, and represents an increase over last year. These students go on to do great things. Many gain admission to prestigious graduate schools. In the last 5 years, our students have been accepted at Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Cornell, Duke, George Mason, University of Washington, University of Utah, Boise State, University of Illinois, Chicago, Utah State, among others. Many others pursue careers in teaching, public history, government, business, and non-profit work.

History Department faculty are committed scholars, as well. Over the last 5 years, they have produced books with major university presses, published articles in well-respected journals, and received awards and fellowships from the Institute for Advanced Study, the Organization of American Historians, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Utah Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Clement Library at the University of Michigan, and the Rocky Mountain Archivists Society, among others. In an effort to support these research efforts, the Department has found ways to increase travel and research funding. This year, each faculty member is receiving \$2100 a year. In addition, for the last two years, we have been able to provide our four Ph.D. adjuncts with substantial travel support, as well.

We have changed the way we assess our program overall and our success at teaching and guiding our students. Beginning in 2011, we expanded our assessment efforts. We were guided by the Tuning Process, initiated by the AHA and the Lumina foundation. We eventually adopted the AHA's learning outcomes and used those as the foundation for our assessment. At first, individual faculty used their own rubrics for measuring success against these outcomes. However, in academic year 2014-15, we created a new method for measuring our success in meeting those outcomes, using a unified rubric to assess all classes at the 3000 level or above. And for our lower division courses, we created unified methods as well. This has allowed us to compare results across the history degree program, and chart the progress students make as they travel through it.

We had very few recommendations for change on our last program review and we followed those suggestions that were offered. However, there are some areas that we did not have the power to address, but which we do believe need attention. First and foremost is our need for a Middle Eastern historian and eventually an ancient historian. The last program review found that we needed a faculty member with expertise in that field. While we have a line that has not yet been filled (that of Richard Ulibarri, who retired in 2011), so far we have not been able to get the resources to fill that position. We are hopeful that going forward we will be able to, particularly given world events. We hope our students will have exposure to Middle Eastern politics and realities; this is particularly pressing for those students in the military and those contemplating careers in government. Down the line, we will also need an ancient historian. Currently, no one on our faculty specializes in

the period pre-1400. While we have a very capable adjunct Ph.D (Dr. Kathy Payne) who teaches these courses now, we need someone in that position long term and full time.