

## 2009 Annual Report

Please answer the following questions in the body of an e-mail and return to [rculbert@iusb.edu](mailto:rculbert@iusb.edu). CC a copy of the report to your department faculty and to your dean.

a. Program Name - History Department

b. Report prepared by – Isabel O'Connor

c. Who is the current assessment contact for your program? Isabel O'Connor

d. Should assessment information be sent to anyone else in your department? No

1. What are the program's educational goals? (Please take goals directly from your program's assessment plan, and highlight any changes made this year.)

In the Fall 2008, the Department revised its mission statement and goals. In his report to the Department, Dr. Gary Stark, the outside program reviewer, encouraged us to revise the mission statement to reflect the Department's goals. As part of the exercise, the History faculty revised not only the departmental mission statement, but also the program's educational goals. See below.

### Mission Statement

We, the faculty in the History Department, seek to create a stimulating and supportive environment for the study of peoples, movements, nations, and events from across human history. Through an analytical engagement with historical documents, artifacts, and interpretations, we as faculty engage in original research and model historical methods in class for history students. We strive to help students develop a robust understanding of the past and a thoroughgoing engagement with the present. In keeping with the overall mission of Indiana University South Bend, we help prepare students for future careers, further research and education, and, more generally, a life of civic-minded citizenship.

### Educational Goals

The History major is designed to help students:

- gain a broad exposure to the past, the varieties of ways to examine it, and ways of thinking historically;
- understand and analyze primary and secondary sources, including archival documents, historical objects, journal articles, and monographs;
- utilize a variety of research tools, both in print and in electronic format;
- communicate, both in written and verbal form, multiple ways of understanding the past;
- develop a global perspective by taking courses that cover various regions of the world.

**2. What assessment techniques did the program use? (Please take assessment techniques directly from your program's assessment plan and highlight any changes made this year.)**

**A. The portfolio.** In the Spring 2008, History faculty reviewed the portfolios of five students who took the senior seminar in the Fall 2008; in the Fall 2008, the faculty reviewed the portfolios of the seven students who took the senior seminar in the Spring '09. After close scrutiny of the students' research and writing skills as illustrated in the materials included in their portfolios, all the students were considered ready to take the seminar. We continue to be very impressed with the depth and quality of the self-analysis essays that students are required to write as part of each portfolio.

**B. Exit interviews.** For the third year in a row, we conducted exit interviews of all the graduating seniors. Four students completed the exit interview in the Fall 2008 and five in the Spring '09. Instead of distributing the interviews in the seminar and asking the students to turn them in to the Department Chair as a hard copy, we decided to e-mail the questionnaire to the graduating seniors, who are then instructed to e-mail their responses to the departmental secretary. The change was adopted to protect the privacy of the students and to encourage them to provide a candid assessment of the History program.

The History faculty discuss all the exit interviews collected in a semester at the first departmental meeting of the following semester. We continue to receive very useful feedback from the students in terms of curriculum, scheduling, and advising.

**3. What has your program done with assessment information this year? (i.e. communicated results to faculty, staff, alumni and students, made changes in the curriculum, made changes in the budget, added new courses. . .)**

In January 2008, the History Department received the report from its outside reviewer, Dr. Gary Stark. We dedicated several meetings in the Spring 2008 to discuss Dr. Stark's recommendations. As stated above, the History faculty implemented some of the suggestions offered by Dr. Stark in regards to the mission statement and educational goals. Moreover, following Dr. Stark's recommendation, the Department reviewed the list of History courses from the 2007-2009 bulletin and eliminated several that were not taught on a regular basis.

In the Fall 2008, the full-time and part-time instructors who teach the American history surveys applied and received approval to count their courses as part of the "diversity in U.S. society" category of the campus-wide general education curriculum.

As stated in our 2008 annual assessment report, the History Department was concerned about the number of graduating seniors who reported in the exit interviews that the quality of the advising that they received varied among department faculty. In 2008-2009, the Department discussed advising issues at several of its monthly meetings. Moreover, in April 2009, Dr. Hayley Froyland conducted a special advising session for the History faculty to familiarize all departmental advisors with the advising process and policies.

**4. After reflecting on assessment activities in your unit, as a result of assessment what are two issues you would like to address?**

- As stated in our 2008 annual assessment report, an ever growing number of History majors continue to receive campus-wide awards. While we are very proud of these majors,

we are concerned about the students who have difficulty completing the History degree. These at-risk students often lack strong writing skills. To help these students succeed, the History faculty decided to make writing across the curriculum the focus of the Spring 2009 Teaching Retreat, which was held on May 3. In addition to sharing ideas and teaching strategies, at the retreat several faculty members agreed to implement a pre-requisite on History courses. Starting in Spring 2010, several faculty members will require that students either have completed ENG W 130 or be enrolled in it before they can register for a History class.

- Several faculty members expressed concerns about the questions used currently on the evaluations that students in History courses complete at the end of every term. A sub-committee is working on revising the questions to reflect the educational goals of the program. We expect to complete this process in the Fall '09.