

Program Assessment for Fiscal Year 2006

Program Name: Master of Arts in History

Date: October 31, 2006

College: Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

A. Mission Statement

Our mission is to graduate students who will follow a variety of objectives after successful completion of the Master of Arts degree in history. It will deliver M.A. candidates effective historical instruction which will allow them, to pursue and compete in ancillary professions that require pronounced emphasis on factual knowledge and historical data. It will prepare and educate M.A. candidates who wish to enter a career in teaching history and the social studies at the primary, secondary levels and/or post-secondary education in private and public school systems. One aspect of the mission is to provide M.A. candidates an opportunity to pursue the Master of Arts degree in our Public History Program. Successful students completing the M.A. as part of career training will pursue a number of diverse occupations such as college professors, private and public school teachers, archivists, museum professionals, journalists, lawyers, clergy, and public service. Students who complete the M.A. for personal enrichment will be prepared for a lifetime of personal study and service, including service on community boards and through historical and community organizations.

Assessment of Program Objectives

Objective 1: To enroll at least five new qualified graduate students each year who view the Master of Arts degree either as a terminal degree or as an interim goal in the path of progression towards the Completion of the Ph.D. in history. Between four and five students will enroll who have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in history and an overall 2.75 grade point average.

a. At least four of students admitted to the program met the standards for “full standing” per academic year

FY 2006: 21 students admitted to M.A. program
 2 students denied

b. At least five enrolled in the master’s program per academic year

FY 2006: 10 new students enrolled in M.A.

Objective 2: To sustain a highly qualified faculty involved in scholarly research and publication that will enhance their professional status, keep them abreast of current issues and methodologies that can be brought into the graduate classroom experience.

During 2005, the department taught the following graduate level courses:

Number of classes:

	500 level	600 level	700 level	800 Level*
Fall 2005	8	1	4	Blue carded
Spring 2006	14	2	5	Blue carded
Summer 2006	2	N/A	N/A	Blue carded

*In this department, the 800 level is reserved for 1) thesis hours and are blue cards listed under the thesis faculty advisor or 2) Internship credits, for which the director of the Public History Program assigns grades.

All courses listed at the 500 level and 600 level were taught by members of the department. Faculty in the department are 100% full time with graduate status and all have a Ph.D. in the appropriate fields. At the 700 level, only HIS 705 (Intro to Archives) and HIS 703 (Museum Administration) were taught by members outside of the department and both of those were taught by professionals in the field with appropriate training and professional qualifications. The remaining 700-level classes were taught by faculty members of the department.

Objective 3: To assure that the department offers required courses on a regular basis so that students can meet the degree requirements in under 3 years.

Students averaged 2.5 years for completion of M.A. for cohort completing the degree in FY 2006

In order to accommodate the needs of the department's largely non-traditional student body, all courses required for the M.A. are offered in the evening or on Saturday. In fall 2005, the department offered HIS 701, Intro to Public History, HIS 698, Historiography, HIS 725, Advanced Historical Methods, and HIS 730, Seminar in American History. Because of student demand for Historiography, HIS 698 was offered again in spring 2006, as well as HIS 730, Seminar in American History, and HIS 734, Seminar in European History

In August 2006, the graduate program was discussed as part of the department's annual retreat. Among the issues discussed were whether to have the U.S. field be one or two fields. Data secured from other research universities in the state and from Regents' designated peer institutions revealed that our program is very competitive with those M.A. programs in terms of our admission requirements and graduation expectations. (See Appendix A) As a consequence of the review, however, the Department approved the implementation of a requirement that applicants to the M.A. must provide a writing sample, which may be in the form of a letter addressing the applicant's goals for their degree program.

In summer 2006, the director of the public history program brought together a meeting of the graduate coordinator, the department chair, and several individuals who have taught in the public history program to discuss changes such as emphasizing community history and emphasizing the non-career, avocational aspects of public history. In addition, the arrival of a new curator of special collections has allowed further discussion on these issues.

Objective 4: To provide the local Wichita community-at-large with public service and intellectual stimulation that increases knowledge and creates individual and collective interest in the people and institutions of our society.

During the 2005 academic year, faculty were very active in the local community. Among some of the activities were:

- Niall Shanks gave several public talks about health, science, and evolution on campus and throughout the state.
- Robert Owens served as coordinator for the regional History Day event. Over 200 students participated in the event that took place in February 2006.
- John Dreifort served as Executive Secretary of the Wichita Committee on Foreign Relations speakers' series that is affiliated with the American Committees on Foreign Relations that promotes a national dialogue between citizens and policy makers .
- As part of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Science speaker's series, H. Craig Miner gave a public presentation about farming in Western Kansas in March 2006.
- Helen Hundley, as faculty advisor for the *Fairmount Folio*, hosted a public signing and unveiling of the latest edition at Watermark books in May 2006.
- As members of the Kansas Humanities Council Speaker's Bureau, Jay Price and Philip Thomas gave about a dozen talks across the state.
- With representatives of AIAA (American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics), Jay Price proposal for Travel Air-related sites in Wichita to be nominated to the AIAA Site Recognition Program.
- Students in HIS 701 interviewed members of the Jewish community for the Mid Kansas Jewish Federation

Objective 5 To provide relevant, practical experience for public history students through the Cooperative Education program's opportunities.

Educational Student Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate effective writing skills when conveying knowledge base information.

**** See Appendix B for attached syllabi for HIS 725, HIS 729, HIS 730, HIS 733, HIS 734

2. Students will master the knowledge bases in at least one of the following fields congruent with option selected: U.S., Ancient/Medieval, European, and Public History

a. Students will successfully complete (grade B or better) courses for the different tracks. The student and advisor together determine appropriate four to five relevant knowledge-based courses.

Semester	Students	Number who received GPA's of B or higher in 500, 600, and 700-level classes		
Summer 2005	19	16	84%	3 dropped
Fall 2005	102	69	68%	25 dropped
Spring 2006	92	70	76%	17 dropped

(See Appendix C for raw data)

b. Demonstrate the professional skills in history necessary to pass the exams on the knowledge base.

During academic year 2005, 11 students took comprehensive exams and 10 passed.

c. Thesis track students demonstrate original work in their thesis.

During academic year 2005, the following students successfully defended their thesis work:

Devin Brogan
Bruce Carruthers
Erin M. Doom

d. Students in the public history track complete the internship to demonstrate that they can apply public history theory and practice in a public setting

During academic year 2005, six students took internship or cooperative education in fall 2005. Seven students signed up for internship or cooperative education credit in spring 2006. There was one student taking internship credit in summer 2006

3. Students will demonstrate the professional research, writing, and oral presentation skills in history necessary for effective teaching and public history work.

As mentioned in the attached syllabi, students in HIS 725 are required to do research papers. In addition, public history students do final papers to receive grades for internship and cooperative education related activities.

Feedback Loop

In conducting this assessment the Department recognizes that it must continue to engage in an annual review of its Master's program in History to determine if it is on the right path to maintain an effective and productive degree program. This was done during the review period.

The data reveals that the number and quality of students admitted into the program is measuring up to the Department's expectations, and those students admitted have performed in a manner consistent with the matrix developed for the program and have progressed to graduation in a timely manner.

There are concerns that have been generated by the assessment process:

1. There are points in the record keeping process where the department loses sight of its M.A. students. Most notably after a student completes the defense of the thesis, the committee recommendation form goes directly to the Graduate School, but the Graduate Coordinator is not informed in a consistent and timely manner about the result of the defense. Therefore, the department is not aware of the actual number of students who are graduating. Either at the departmental level or the Graduate School level, more feedback is needed about students who have completed all of the degree requirements
2. More effective, but less complicated ways need to be found to complete assessment of the Department's M.A. program. The amount of staff time required to complete the report is an unnecessary intrusion into the basic function of the faculty, which is to teach and to pursue scholarship for the advancement of knowledge.