



MEMO

Date: September 7, 2017
To: Rick Muma, Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Strategic Enrollment Management
CC: Ron Matson, Dean of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
From: Dennis Livesay, Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice President of Research and Technology Transfer
Re: Department of History 3-Year Program Review

This review is part of the 3-year review process of the Department of History at Wichita State University. As Dean of the Graduate School, my review and recommendations will be primarily limited to the master's program. I am very impressed by the thoughtfulness of the document, especially the professional outcomes discussion on pages 14-15 and restrictive nature of the research/scholarship component. With that said, I am very concerned by the outcomes assessment. As pointed out in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences review letter, grades are not an acceptable assessment vehicle. Part of the reason for assessment is to ensure that grades are aligned with learning outcomes. In addition, there is no discussion regarding how the outcomes assessment has informed and improved the curriculum. 'Closing the loop' is the hardest part of program review, and more attention to how the data actually informs what is taught and learned is needed to fully utilize the process. Finally, I would like to see more discussion of how learning outcomes vary by track (thesis, non-thesis, or local and community history).

I offer the following as two additional suggestions:

- There is very little discussion regarding where the department is going. Most of the document is retrospective based on the 'review' nature of the process, and while there are goals and at the end of the document, the best program reviews also present a clear vision going forward. As presented, these goals feel a bit 'tacked on' without sufficient context and do not sufficiently describe next steps.
- I am worried about the lack of alumni feedback discussed within the review document. At the very least, exit survey data should have been included and analyzed. Further, what a current student or recent graduate think about a program is vastly different than someone that has been employed for some time. While difficult to carry out, getting feedback from alumni that have been working for 5-10 years can provide some of the most telling information

regarding curricula relevance and effectiveness. In addition, I further suggest that you have focus group discussions with frequent employers of your graduates, who typically bring a different viewpoint. All of this is to say, since you have identified the need to do a better job with assessment, I encourage you to embrace the challenge and adopt a comprehensive model.