

- 13) Language teaching. The previous review noted that the university does not offer enough language courses to cover the needs of graduate students working on non-United States topics. This has actually deteriorated with the elimination of the Russian program. Language learning is important to the study of history. It would be desirable for the university to expand its foreign language offerings.
- 14) Library support. Adequate.

III. DEPARTMENTAL DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

A. Mission and Goals of the Program

The primary mission of the CSU Fresno Graduate Program in History is to develop M.A. students who can successfully research, analyze, synthesize and communicate accurate conclusions about diachronic change by using the historical method. To obtain these goals the program is designed to increase their capacity to ask hard questions, research them, and communicate their conclusions clearly. In addition we emphasize the acquisition of the skills of open inquiry and debate as well as teamwork and collaboration, the inculcation of cultural literacy and acquisition of the knowledge necessary for informed decision-making in all aspects of their lives as citizens of the United States.

B. Effectiveness of the Instructional Program

1. Student Learning Outcomes as Developed in the Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP)

Outcomes assessment of our graduate program highlighted two major concerns: offering a balance between breadth and depth of knowledge, and assuring that students can complete required courses in a timely manner. Faculty retirements in the past years have limited the number of graduate faculty in the program, while budgetary concerns, particularly in the last year, have meant a significant reduction in the number of classes offered. Pragmatically this meant that courses required as part of the 30-unit program were being offered less frequently, often lengthening completion time by as much as a year.

In response, and after considerable consideration and discussion of the issues at a faculty retreat, the department has embarked on a sustained hiring process, guaranteeing coverage of required content areas. Particularly, we have hired a medievalist, Dr. Mark Arvanigian, and a Renaissance/Reformation specialist, Dr. Maritere López. We have also expanded our base of possible subjects by hiring an early Americanist, Dr. Bridget Ford, who concentrates on the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. Currently, the department also has two full-time, tenure track faculty searches under way, one each on Military History, and California History. These two hires also replace retired faculty.

In terms of curricular offerings, the department has also implemented significant change. Our new program aims at improving the availability of required courses, allowing us to offer a greater variety of focused topics courses without making the program bureaucratically unwieldy. See below, section B.2, "Curriculum."

Program completion has also been restructured. Previously, all our students needed to compose a Master's Thesis, whether their degree was meant as a terminal one or as basis for further graduate study in the field. The department has introduced a two-option culminating experience: thesis or comprehensive exam. Since the implementation of the exam option, several students previously held back have successfully completed the program.

Curriculum changes, the department retreat, subsequent faculty meetings, and the five review process have led to the development of a new graduate SOAP which department faculty believe better represents our goals for M.A. graduates.

Student Learning Objectives

Students graduating with a Master's Degree in History from CSU-Fresno will illustrate the above mentioned goals by demonstrating the historical *knowledge, skills, and values* appropriate to a graduate-level education, including:

A. Knowledge

- 1) the fundamentals of the historical method and discourse .
- 2) a broad foundation of historical knowledge in their primary field.
- 3) an in-depth knowledge of historiography and of recent research in their chosen area of specialization.
- 4) critical thinking and analysis through effective communications skills appropriate to the discipline of history.

B. Skills

- 1) an ability to do original historical research based on primary documents.
- 2) competency in electronic information retrieval and evaluation

C. Values

- 1) an appreciation for the value of original historical research and scholarship
- 2) an appreciation for professional standards in the discipline of history.

Assessment Measures

Direct Measures:

- 1) Portfolios. All graduate students will compile a portfolio of papers completed in their program of study. These portfolios will be evaluated for evidence of specific student learning outcomes relating to knowledge and skills at the end of their program by a team of three history department faculty members (those on their thesis or exam committee.)
- 2) Master's Thesis. Graduate students who choose the thesis option within the History Department's Master's Program will write a Master's Thesis of approximately 80-100 pages. The thesis will present original research based on primary source material. It will be evaluated by a team of three history department faculty not including those on the thesis committee for evidence of specific student learning outcomes relating to knowledge and skills.
- 3) Master's Exam. Graduate students who choose the exam option within the History Department's Master's Program will take a comprehensive written exam at the end of their program of study. The exam will then be evaluated for evidence of specific student learning outcomes relating to the area of knowledge and skills by a team of three history department faculty not including those on their exam committee.

Indirect Measures:

- 1) Exit interview. All graduate students will conduct an exit interview with a team of three history department faculty upon completion of their program of study. The questions asked at this interview will seek to assess student learning outcomes relating to the areas of knowledge, skills and values and to illuminate departmental successes and failures in achieving its stated goals.
- 2) Surveys. Every year the department will send out a survey to all history graduate alumni. The questions on this survey will seek to determine departmental successes and failures in achieving its stated goals and to assess student learning outcomes in the areas of knowledge, skills, and values.

For Assessment Tools, please see Appendix G. The History Department was somewhat late in creating a graduate SOAP. We have begun assessment of graduate Master's Theses. This past year we graduated five M.A. students. One of them, Victoria Malko, won the University's Outstanding Thesis award. Three others, David Zwart, Henry Montelongo and Christopher McColm have gone on to Ph.D programs with funding. All of the theses were written at a high level and all included primary source material.

This semester we are beginning exit interviews.

In addition we do have data on about half of our graduates. Ten of them are teaching at various secondary schools, six are enrolled in Ph.D. programs, one is in an Ed.D. program, two teach at the community college level, one works at the university writing center, and one has gone on several missions to foreign countries.

2. Curriculum