

## Department and College Post Self-Study Action Plan

*Instructions - Department (in consultation with Dean) needs to prepare an action plan over the next 5 years. This step provides the department the opportunity to reflect on the findings of the self-review and external peer review. Through the development of the action plan the department can address areas of weakness, plan for improvements and new opportunities. Categorize all actions into one of the following areas: Program/Curriculum, Student Learning & Assessment, Student Success, Faculty, Staff, Facilities/Space, Equipment, Computing Resources, Operating Budget and Other. The Dean of the College is expected to review the self-study, external review and action plan and provide their recommendation. The department signs the document prior to submitting to the Dean's office.*

*Department needs to submit a memo responding to the concerns and detailing the action plan.*

*Dean needs to submit a memo responding the self-study, external review and final action plan.*

**Name of Department:** History, MA program

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**Name of College:** CLASS

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**Short Term Priorities – Minimum of 5 key items identified that will take 1 to 2 years to implement**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timeframe – Start and End</b>
Program/ Curriculum	Review Contemporary Historiography course to better align with needs of MA students (who are prospective and current K-12 teachers)	Instructors of contemporary historiography course	none	2020-21 academic year
Program/ Curriculum	Determine whether Graduate History Methods course should be added to required list of courses	Graduate instructors and, if approved, representative to CLASS curriculum committee	none	2020-21 academic year
Student learning and assessment	Create more opportunities in graduate seminars for students to develop their oral communication skills	Graduate instructors	none	Fall 2020 to Spring 2022
Student learning and assessment	Create mentor program among students with experienced K-12 teachers mentoring prospective teachers	Graduate advisor	none	2021-22 academic year for implementation; will continue
Student success	Find and promote affordable course materials	Graduate instructors	none	2020-21 academic year
Faculty	Develop better mentoring for junior faculty, especially those teaching for the MA program	Graduate Advisor and Department Chair	none	2020-21 academic year
Other: Recruitment	Develop plan to promote the MA program and increase number of applicants	Graduate advisor, dean's office, graduate office, university admissions	Promotional materials, access to college fairs etc	2020-21 academic year and ongoing

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**Long Term Priorities – Minimum of 5 key items identified that will take 3 to 5 years to implement**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timeframe – Start and End</b>
Program/ Curriculum	Review course content of all graduate level courses to align with program goals	Graduate instructors	none	fall 2020 to approximately Spring 2023
Program/ Curriculum	Develop and refine digital humanities component of the program	Graduate instructors	none	fall 2021 to spring 2024
Faculty	Develop hiring plan to address need for more world history specialists among junior faculty	Department chair and whole department	approval of tenure-track searches	Ongoing from now
Facilities/Space	Identify and get permission to regularly use a seminar room for graduate seminars	Graduate advisor, department chair, dean's office	allocation of a seminar room for use by the history dept	start process in 2020 until room is found and allocated
Facilities/Space and Computing Resources	Create a digital humanities lab for use by graduate students and history majors, along with other students in CLASS	Graduate advisor, department chair, dean's office	classroom with moveable computer terminals dedicated to digital humanities	process to start in fall 2020 until lab can be found and equipped
Operating Budget	Fund a second released course for graduate advisor	University	cost of released course	Probably not until after state's current budget crisis

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**Signature Page**

Department Faculty Name	Signature
Amanda Podany	
David DeVore	
Mahmood Ibrahim	
Rob Lewis	
Rachel Van	
Eileen Wallis	
Zuoyue Wang	

*Instructions: Have all tenure and tenure track faculty review the proposed action plan and sign document. Department Chair will sign with the Dean prior to sending the document to the Director of Assessment and Program Review ([apr@cpp.edu](mailto:apr@cpp.edu)).*



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Department Chair



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Dean

## **Department and College Post Self-Study Action Plan**

To: Seema Shah-Fairbank, Faculty Fellow - Program Review

From: Amanda Podany, Professor and Graduate Advisor, Department of History

Re: Post Self-Study Action Plan

Date: May 4, 2020

The History Department and especially those of us involved in the History MA Program deeply appreciate the thoughtful review done by Dr. Mark Wild and Dr. Nicole Gilbertson. They met with us, with the dean's office, with all the current students and a number of alumni, and they read all the materials that we prepared with great care and attention. Their recommendations are insightful and enormously helpful.

The review was conducted during our first year on the semester system (2018-2019) so it mostly reflected the program as it had existed on the quarter system. During this current academic year we have had the opportunity to learn more about what does and doesn't work well in semesters and our response here reflects that. Some of what we have learned we did not know at the time of the reviewers' visit, and we have included some thoughts about possible changes that they did not (and could not) anticipate.

### Short Term Priorities

1. Contemporary Historiography course: One of the most pressing priorities for the department, according to the reviewers, was to revisit our methods, contemporary historiography, and digital humanities courses to find ways to better meet our program needs and to support preparation for current and prospective K-12 history teachers (who make up most of our MA cohorts). Elsewhere in their report they focused in particular on the contemporary historiography class (HST 5571). This class was identified by students as one that did not fit in well with the rest of the curriculum. Over the coming year we will reassess the need for this course and consider options to revise its content or to replace it with a course that is more relevant to the needs of our students.

This also ties in with a concern that has arisen since the time of the review. We have regularly offered HST 5571 once every two years, so that it is taken by members of both cohorts who are enrolled at that time. Under the quarter system it was offered in the winter quarter, but we now have to offer it in the spring semester so that it doesn't conflict with HST 5501 (graduate history methods) which is taken by all the incoming students in the fall. It turns out, though, that spring semester is a tough time for our graduating MA students to be taking a challenging seminar on contemporary historical theory because they are also taking their last core seminar (on world or US history) and preparing for their comprehensive exams. Last year several students chose not to take Contemporary Historiography and to take an upper division course instead. This is allowed, but it breaks away from the road map that we had hoped all students would follow with their cohort. We will work on making the course more relevant to our students and also on dealing with what they perceive to be an overload of difficult courses in their last semester.

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2. Graduate Methods Course: The reviewers suggested that we should add HST 5501 (Graduate History Methods) to the core courses required of all graduate students. This is something that we will discuss in coming months and weigh the pros and cons of doing. At present all incoming MA students *do* take HST 5501, even though it is an elective, because we strongly advise them to do so. We made it an elective when creating the curriculum because we thought that some incoming students might be particularly well prepared in historical methods and therefore might not need the course. Initially it was envisioned as a course that would help teachers who had been in the classroom for some time get back up to speed in current historical methods. Recently graduated history majors might not need it, we thought. But more recently we have found that it is the course in which each cohort comes together and forms a team, and that even recent history majors learn new strategies and approaches. They do not feel that it is a repeat for them. Therefore it seems likely that we will add it to the core curriculum.

3. Oral communication skills: One of the areas that was mentioned as in need of improvement by students who spoke with the reviewers was the development of their skills in oral communication. We have also heard this from students in their exit interviews. Over the coming two years, as each graduate seminar is taught (most are in a two-year rotation) we will work as a team to find ways to incorporate more opportunities for students to develop in this area. The reviewers suggested that it would be good to incorporate more collaborative projects for the students as well.

Related to this is another comment by the reviewers, namely that faculty members should be more transparent about their own instructional choices and to explicitly, rather than implicitly, model good pedagogical practices. We will try to implement this suggestion in association with the increased opportunities for students to develop skills in oral communication which, of course, include teaching strategies that they will use in their own classrooms.

4. Mentor program among students: The reviewers noted that the MA students have varying levels of expertise in teaching and could benefit from learning from one another. We heartily agree and did try, at one point, to create a mentor program within the MA program. It was not a success because it was too informal, but we believe that we need to approach this idea again. MA students who are currently practicing teachers could mentor students who are prospective teachers. We may even be able to incorporate alumni into this network of support. Several of them have expressed a desire to reconnect with the program, and perhaps they would be willing to serve as mentor teachers to prospective teachers currently in the MA program. We will discuss this with the students themselves and with alumni. Ideally, we will create a trial program during the coming year and will find ways to eventually make it an integral part of the MA in history.

5. Affordable course materials: This priority should be easy and quick to implement. Graduate instructors will choose resources that are available in open source or digital form and will make clear to students which readings are required and which are recommended. We will all limit the number of books that students are required to buy and find alternative sources for those books for students who do not have the funds.

6. Mentoring for faculty: In their discussions with junior faculty members, the reviewers discovered an issue that we had been unaware of, namely that recent hires did not feel that they

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received enough mentoring when they joined the department. The reviewers raised this as an issue for the whole department, not just for the MA program, and it is one that we will discuss as a department. For the purposes of this self-study, however, the Graduate Advisor and other graduate instructors will be sure in future to assign a specific mentor to any faculty member who is new to teaching graduate seminars and that mentor will work with him or her closely in developing the course, as well as during the first semester in which the faculty member teaches it. For the coming year (2020-21) all the graduate instructors have years of experience teaching their seminars, but we will be sure to implement a mentorship as soon as a newer faculty member takes on a seminar.

7. Recruitment: We have always received enough applications to fill an annual cohort of students (our cohorts are small--between five and nine students each year, so that we average fifteen or sixteen graduate students enrolled at any time). However, we would prefer to receive more applications so that we can include equal numbers of practicing and prospective K-12 history teachers in each cohort. This requires a recruitment strategy that we are currently lacking. We depend on word of mouth, our website, and flyers that are circulated to teachers in our area, often by Dr. Michael Slaughter who is the pre-credential advisor for the department and who supervises student teachers in history. The reviewers suggested that the university should be more supportive of our efforts. This would be ideal--we would love to work with the various groups on campus who do outreach to promote graduate programs. As the Graduate Advisor, I would also be able to do more promotion if I had a second release course. Currently the one release course is usually taken in the spring because this is when I am working with students on comprehensive exams, organizing and responding to applications from prospective students, doing exit interviews, and advising the grad students more generally. Recruitment would be most effective in the fall semester, but currently I teach a full load in the fall. Even absent a second release course, however, we can do more to promote the program.

### Long Term Priorities

1. Review course content: The reviewers noted the importance of aligning all course content with the program goals. This is a long-term project that will take at least three years to complete. Each faculty member will need to correlate the content of his or her seminar with the program goals, and faculty will probably need to work with one another towards this end as well.

2. Digital Humanities: When the review took place, we had only just begun to incorporate a digital humanities research projects into all the graduate seminars. Doing this more effectively is an important long-term goal for us. We have talked with the students since the review took place and have found that some of them feel a little overwhelmed with the amount of work involved in some of these projects. The faculty need to work together to agree on manageable goals for student mastery of digital humanities. We also need to improve our own expertise. Some graduate instructors have long experience, for example with using GIS, and others have come up with innovative and useful projects, such as having students use their research to edit Wikipedia pages about neglected figures in history. Some of the other graduate instructors, however, are much less familiar with what is possible and could use professional development in this field themselves.

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3. Hiring plan: When the program review took place, tenure-track searches in history were approved about once every two years. Now that the state budget is in crisis with the pandemic, it seems unlikely that our priority for new hires will be realized any time soon. Nevertheless, as a long-term goal it is an important one. The reviewers noted that most of the faculty members who are senior and heading toward retirement age are specialists in world history (including three faculty members who FERPed at the end of the 2018-19 academic year). In contrast, most of the faculty members in US history are younger. The reviewers noted the need to maintain the department's long and excellent reputation in world history by continuing to hire in this field. Fortunately, since the review took place, we have been able to hire an African historian who will start in Fall 2020. In future it will be important to hire in other areas of world history. Given that world history makes up a large proportion of the K-12 history curriculum, we will always need to have faculty members who can teach graduate seminars in this area.

4. Seminar room: The need for a dedicated seminar room was listed as one of the top priorities by the reviewers. They talked with current students in the room that is usually assigned for our seminars and found it lacking in many ways. They described it as "a narrow windowless room that seemed like a converted utility closet" and noted that the department "desperately needs" a better seminar room. We absolutely agree. If we could identify a room with windows that could be outfitted with a large seminar table (seating up to 17 students), it would be used not only for all the graduate seminars but also for our undergraduate methods and senior thesis classes. We realize that classroom space is almost impossible to find, but believe that this is a priority and hope that it can be addressed in the next few years.

5. Digital Humanities Lab: Falling into the same category of a need for classroom space is the reviewers' recommendation that we have access to a digital humanities lab. Many of the CSU campuses have developed such a lab for their humanities departments to share, according to the reviewers (and according to our own contacts with colleagues at other CSU campuses). Our focus as a department is moving in this direction as student research and student projects are increasingly digitally based. We are excited with this aspect of our program, which coincided with semester conversion, and would very much like for students to have regular access to a lab. Apparently, according to our administrative coordinator, it is becoming harder and harder to gain access to other computer labs on campus, even for one-day programs, let alone whole courses. A dedicated digital humanities lab would be an extraordinary resource.

6. Released course for Graduate Advisor: This priority was noted by the reviewers and was mentioned above under our short term goal of improving recruitment. Although it may not be possible until after the current budget crisis, the growth and continued improvement of the History MA program would be greatly assisted by the allocation of a second release course for the graduate advisor (whoever it may be by that time).

Overall, we were very pleased with the reviewers' comments. In many categories they made no suggestions at all for improvement. The priorities we have listed here are mostly based on the ones that they identified, and we hope to achieve them over the coming years so as to better serve the K-12 history and social science teachers in our area.