

University Planning III: Department of History

Submission Date: Oct. 13, 2008.

History Department Mission and Aspirations

The History Department embraces the University's goals of advancing both excellence and leadership. The area of distinction "History and Culture of the Rocky Mountain Region" is the most obvious area in which the department is equipped to advance the university's goals; additionally the department seeks to play a greater role during this upcoming planning period in "Professions critical to the region." While continuing our record of excellence in education at both the BA and the MA levels, the four initiatives that form the main thrust of the planning period are to establish a road map for a PhD program, to strengthen and make more prominent our undergraduate concentration in Public History, to campaign for an endowed chair in Energy History, and to rebuild essential teaching capacity in US and European history fields due to enrollment increases and loss of faculty. Each of these initiatives will require collaboration across the university campus and particularly with the American Heritage Center and the School of Energy Resources. Whereas these initiatives will tie the department ever more closely to the state and the region, we will continue to recognize that we serve our students best when we study the West within its broader national and international context.

Previous Plan Action Items:

1. We successfully hired an Assistant Professor of Modern Europe, thus concluding our action item of filling the Europeanist position.
2. Assessment has been implemented in stages, the first two assessment items having been successfully addressed.
3. History has revised and updated its curriculum and faculty rotations to provide regular offerings of core courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels (3020, 4030, 5880).
4. The History Graduate program has been revised and updated for both our MA and MAT programs.
5. History has been discussing possible routes to establishing a Ph.D. program, but this is still very much in process.
6. Development has been advanced by the former Chair, and is on track by the current interim Chair.

Action Items

HIST 1: CPM Hires in Critical Areas.

History needs to rebuild essential teaching capacity in US and European history due to faculty losses and growing student demand. We are currently undertaking a search for a 20th Century US Historian, and we hope to hire an Early Modern European historian next year. The number of history majors has doubled since 2000 to 188, and the Department is also playing an increasingly important role in several cross-disciplinary areas on campus; teacher education with the recent establishment of the concurrent major in History & Secondary Education, public history with the AHC and a proposed Museum Studies Minor, International Studies, Women's Studies and American Indian Studies. We

welcome these growth trends both now and in the future, and filling these two critical vacancies in our faculty will address some immediate needs in these projects.

[E: we anticipate filling these faculty vacancies Early in the Plan period.]

HIST 2: Campaign for endowed chair in Energy History in collaboration with SER.

The Department will seek an Endowed Chair in Energy History. The current state, regional, and global trends in the energy economy along with the establishment of the School of Energy Resources present a unique opportunity to establish the University of Wyoming as a premier institution for the study of Energy History. Business and policy leaders recognize that sustained growth in the energy economy in Wyoming depends on more than technology, earth science, and engineering. Knowledge of policy, the regulatory environment, Wyoming's place in the global energy economy, and the environmental and social impacts of energy booms and busts are critical for our business leaders and our state and local officials. Archival collections housed at the AHC and existing faculty expertise in the History Department make UW especially well suited to take leadership in this relatively new, but growing, sub-discipline.

[M: we expect to make significant progress on this Midway through the Plan period.]

HIST 3: Increase Instructional Excellence Support.

The History major is growing in numbers every year, due not least to our revised undergraduate curriculum, our partnering with several interdisciplinary programs at UW, and our articulation with Community Colleges across the State. Several faculty also teach Outreach courses and are involved in community outreach via public lectures and other formal and informal contacts. These activities are, however, constantly limited by the shortage of department support budgets. Increasing these funds will enable us to expand these important teaching and outreach activities.

[E-L: we will continue to advocate for an increase in excellence support funding throughout the Plan period.]

HIST 4: Establish roadmap for future Ph.D. program in Western and Native American History.

History faculty believe that the department can have the greatest impact fostering excellence and cultivating leadership by growing toward the establishment of a PhD program in History. The department can already claim depth in Western and Native American history. These fields will anchor the PhD program. The availability of AHC archival holdings and the recently enhanced Coe Library collections will play a central role in History doctoral research. Research clusters that already exist among the faculty, such as in energy history and in ethnicity and identity, will lend a particular thematic branding to our program while bringing comparative and transnational approaches to the study of the West. To establish the roadmap for implementing this PhD degree, we have begun a study of comparator departments with PhD programs to determine necessary foundation (faculty expertise), cost (increasing History GAs) and curriculum. We will hire a 20th Century US historian to rebuild our teaching capacity in this critical area. The desired outcomes during this planning period will be a) determination of the feasibility of a PhD program and b) establishment of a plan to bring the department faculty and graduate assistantships in line with the resource needs for such a program.

[E: we anticipate finalizing this “roadmap” Early in the Plan period.]

HIST 5: Enhance and promote the field of Public History.

History will create a Minor in Public History, building on our current undergraduate concentration in Public History available to majors. This area of our curriculum supports directly University areas of distinction in History and Culture of the Rocky Mountain Region and in Professions Critical to the Region’s Future. An effective Public History curriculum prepares students for careers in cultural resource management within our state, as archivists, museum curators, or historic preservationists. State agencies, such as Wyoming’s State Parks and Cultural Resources, and private contractors, such as environmental consultants, are among potential employers of graduates trained in public history. The current energy boom in Wyoming and expansion in the construction industry are creating an unprecedented demand for such expertise. It is our goal to increase the number of History majors graduating with a Public History Minor and to ensure that the Public History curriculum effectively prepares them to enter the field of cultural resource management in the Rocky Mountain West. To achieve this end, History will need to coordinate with cognate programs and with the American Heritage Center. One example of this cross-disciplinary effort that focuses on Public History and in which History will play a central role is the proposed Minor in Museum Studies (see 6 and Appendix).

[M: we anticipate implementing this action item Midway through the Plan period.]

HIST 6: Coordinate curricular offerings in cultural resource management with Art, Anthropology, American Studies, and the American Heritage Center.

Each of these units, along with History, engages in cultural resource management from a distinct disciplinary perspective. History students pursuing a concentration in Public History are best served by also taking courses in Museum Studies (Art), Historic Preservation (American Studies), and Archaeology. Likewise, Museum Studies students, Historic Preservation students, and Archaeology students all would benefit from Public History offerings, taught by both History faculty and AHC archivists. Students in any one of these programs may find internship opportunities through another most appropriate for their course of study. It is essential, thus, that these units coordinate their course offerings, in conjunction, where appropriate, with the AHC. They should also work toward making internship opportunities available across the disciplines to students pursuing cultural resource management. In some instances, meeting cross-disciplinary curricular needs may require College resources.

[M-L: we expect to make significant progress on this item Midway to Late through the Plan period.]

HIST 7: Continue efforts to strengthen MA and MAT programs and recruitment.

The department plans to build upon our efforts toward recruiting regional, national and international graduate students. In recent years, the Department has enjoyed marked success in attracting well qualified applicants to our graduate programs. We can reinforce this trend by addressing more formally and more definitively than we have in the past our standards for admission, a task that our History Graduate Committee is currently undertaking. Currently, we adhere roughly to the Graduate School minimum standards. Do we want to raise those standards even further? One possibility might be to review and

elaborate upon those non-numerical elements of graduate school applications (i.e. writing samples and statements of purpose) with an eye toward establishing clearer guidelines of what we expect of successful applicants. The department will also continue to recruit international graduate students into our MA program through exchange programs and other venues. International students enrich our program by the perspectives they bring that, while difficult to quantify, are an important component of graduate education. Improved recruitment and retention of international graduate students also brings higher visibility of the Department at the national/international level, enabling us to improve international opportunities for faculty and student teaching, research and exchanges.

A second aspect of strengthening our MA and MAT programs entails a request for more Graduate Assistantships. The ability to award GAs is critical to our efforts to attract the best graduate students. Graduate assistants in History receive valuable mentorship and experience to prepare them for careers as teachers and scholars. Additional graduate assistants will be employed in our department by opening up more discussion sections of popular lower-division courses, thereby giving GAs direct hands-on experience with classroom teaching, and by dedicating public history internship assignments as sites for GA involvement. The latter goes to broadening our vision of these assistantships as true Graduate Assistantships and not merely as Teaching Assistantships. Finally, we expect that our need for GAs will increase as we implement a Ph.D. program in the future. [E-M: we are currently revising our Graduate curriculum, and expect to have completed this action item Early in the Plan period; seeking additional GA support will be ongoing.]

HIST 8: Expand upon departmental efforts in program assessment

To the present, the History Department has assessed two of seven learning outcomes identified for its undergraduate degree program. We intend to measure the remaining learning outcomes over the course of the planning period. We will also review the work we did two years ago in defining our learning outcomes. In particular, there has been significant growth in the number of our majors in the past several years, and in light of this growth it may make sense to review our learning outcomes and ensure that they reflect what it is that students need to take from their education. For example, if we find that much of this recent growth is driven by students studying to become teachers, does this warrant a learning outcome that speaks directly to this career path? Without getting into the business of teaching pedagogy, we can still explore ways to enhance students' abilities to teach History.

[M: our department assessment will be largely done Midway through the Plan period.]

HIST 9: Review departmental tenure and promotion criteria.

The Department will continue to examine its expectations and requirements that regulate tenure and promotion to eliminate inconsistencies that may exist between the department, college and university governing documents. The Department will formalize these expectations and requirements in a new document that will both ensure that our standards are appropriate for a history department in a major public research university and ensure a transparent process for all involved.

[E: we are already reviewing our requirements, and expect to have this item completed Early in the Plan period.]

HIST 10: Review department space needs.

Space in the History Building is an absolute constraint, both in terms of faculty and staff office space and of classroom space. We plan to complete a study of our space needs with the intention of developing concrete proposals to address those needs.

[E: we will complete this assessment Early in the Plan period.]

HIST 11: Foster international opportunities for faculty and students.

The Department will continue its contribution to internationalization by fostering international exchange possibilities for faculty and students. We have been especially successful in bringing international visiting scholars in-residence to the department and in recruiting international graduate students. We have also been fortunate to administer the Jon Noyes International Travel Grant fund for student study in China. History will explore formal relations with the Department of History at Shanghai University and Shanghai Normal University using the “4+1 model” developed by Chemistry. Growing numbers of History faculty have led study abroad courses, have taught abroad as exchange faculty, and have successfully competed for internal and external funding for international research. We intend to continue to foster all of these developments.

[M: although we are already well involved in study-abroad and hosting visiting scholars, other aspects of this item will take longer to complete, Midway through the Plan.]

Proposed Implementation of Action Items by Plan Year.

1: #1, 3, 4, 9

2: #3, 4, 7, 10

3: #2, 5, 7, 8, 11

4: #6, 8, 11

5: #6, 3

Appendix
Museum Studies Minor Letter of Support

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

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September 24, 2008

Dear Michael,

The Museum Studies Minor promises to be a truly interdisciplinary collaboration among various departments across the UW campus.

The courses offered by the History Department are especially critical to the proposal, for several address methods of research that are important to museum and archival work. These courses (HIST 2050, 3020, 4050, and 4055) are included as options for students to fulfill the "Methods Core." In addition, period history courses will serve as valuable electives to complete the minor, and students majoring in History can use the Internship (4400) to fulfill that requirement.

Your fresh input and views on the proposal at our meeting last week will make a valuable contribution to the Minor's success.

Best,

Lisa

Elizabeth Moore Hunt, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Medieval Art