

## **PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Review Outcome:** The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the B.A., B.S. in History to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee recognizes that many of the efforts and activities that led to the development of the self-study report were accomplished during the time-period coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee thanks the program for a comprehensive and critical self-study report that included input from multiple stakeholders.

The committee commends faculty efforts to grow the program's enrollment during the period covering the program review cycle, placing the program as the fourth largest in the nation. We note that the program's enrollment increased significantly (from 393 in 2015 to 491 in 2021), which contrasts with national trends that show declining numbers of majors. The program indicates that, with current resources, this enrollment level has resulted in a higher than ideal faculty to student ratio (currently at 22:1) and suggests that the addition of two more tenure track faculty would allow the program to grow to an ideal of 500 majors. The committee commends the department faculty for efforts to increase the diversity among its students. The percentage of students identifying as female has increased from 33.7 percent in fall 2015 to 38.2 percent in fall 2021. The percentage of undergraduate students from groups traditionally underrepresented in the discipline has also increased (from 15.3 percent in fall 2015 to 17.6 percent in fall 2020), getting closer to their target of 20 percent. The committee commends the program for the use of scholarship funds for recruiting and retaining students. The committee acknowledges the work faculty have completed regarding recruitment efforts and that this work has been successful in enrolling both first-time-in-college and external transfer as first and second majors in the program (e.g., recruiting efforts admissions events like Redbird Days, Presidential and University Scholars events, sending hundreds of personalized letters to high school students and teachers, and hosting the Capitol Forum on America's Future).

The committee commends the program faculty for their efforts to support the success of their students. We commend the program on its ability to continue to limit enrollments in many of its courses, which is in keeping with the University's commitment to fostering a small-college atmosphere with large-university opportunities. The committee applauds the extensive revamping of the public spaces to include decorative items that reflect a broad and global diversity to foster a more inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. The committee commends the program for the creative and varied internships and co-curricular options it provides its students which provide multiple opportunities to participate in activities that allow them to learn from experts in the field, participate in civic and community engagement, and network with potential employers. We applaud the program faculty for their support of the annual History-Social Science Education Symposium which regularly attracts not only faculty and students, but also local secondary school teachers. We further commend the program faculty for their long-standing support of study abroad opportunities to visit diverse international cultures (e.g., summer, semester, and year-long programs in England and Italy). The committee commends the program faculty for their support of the Honors program as evidenced by recent work to allow greater access for majors that contributed to increasing participation from 6.5 percent in Fall 2017 to 11.6 percent in Fall 2021.

The committee commends the faculty for their substantial work to revise the curriculum during the period of review based on feedback from multiple stakeholders. This work included the development of a new one credit course HIS 100 Introduction to History designed to support freshmen as they transition to college and to support their success in the program. Additional curricular work included sequencing revisions to increase preparation for student teaching (as evidenced by a 100 percent pass rate on EdTPA) and removing HIS 200 as a prerequisite for 200- and 300-level courses (providing more scheduling flexibility). We also commend the program faculty for developing an accelerated sequence option for students interested in pursuing graduate studies in History at Illinois State. The committee commends the program faculty for their analysis of the curriculum with respect to DFW rates and the development of recommended strategies to address these rates in a small set of courses. The committee further commends the faculty for the creation of several new courses that further infuse Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion issues into the curriculum (including HIS 328 Modern Civil Rights Movement, HIS 334 Nazi Germany, HIS 367 Global Conflict: 1914-1941, HIS 285 History Study Abroad, HIS 350 Women and Sexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome, and IDS 254 World Religions). The committee further commends the program faculty for their support of and participation in institutional programs (e.g., General Education and AMALI).

The committee commends the program faculty on the development, implementation, and revision of their plan for the assessment of student learning outcomes. During the current review cycle, faculty have used the evidence gathered through the student learning outcomes assessment plan to inform program changes, and this includes the incorporation of rubrics as tools for assessing student coursework regarding the program's learning outcomes. The committee acknowledges the use of such rubrics as one method to provide consistent reviews of student learning that can provide potential areas for improvement. The information gathered through these measures has been used to make program changes, and several examples of these changes were specified.

The committee recognizes the faculty members of the program for their scholarly contributions to the B.A., B.S. in History. Faculty members are active researchers who author books, peer-reviewed journals articles, published monographs, and present at national and international professional conferences. The program faculty regularly engage in professional development opportunities, including wide participation of the GROWTH Change Team and other EDI focused events. Additionally, we recognize that faculty in the program has been activity involved in advising and supporting professional student organizations demonstrating their commitment to facilitate learning and educational experiences of our students outside the classroom. The committee commends and congratulates the program faculty for earning Fulbright and NEH Fellowships as well as a wide variety of college and university awards for their teaching, scholarship, and service activities.

The committee commends the program faculty for being accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) for the History Teacher Education Program. Furthermore, we also commend the program faculty for maintaining program standards that meet the Illinois teacher licensure requirements set by the Illinois State Board of Education which makes graduates qualified to teach in all areas of social science in grades 9-12 (and grades 6-8 with additional endorsement).

#### **Follow-up Report.**

**Comparator Analysis.** The committee has included analyses of comparator and aspirational institutions in the self-study report outline to provide faculty members opportunities to consider the niche the program has among its peers and to gather information for program planning. The committee asks that program faculty return to this analysis to identify the program niche among comparator programs at Illinois public universities and to identify actions faculty could take to enhance the program with respect to the quality indicators faculty have prioritized. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to revisit their discussions of comparator institutions and to summarize findings of those discussions in a report submitted to the Office of the Provost by May 15, 2024.

#### **Recommendations.**

The Academic Planning Committee thanks faculty members of the Department of History for the opportunity to provide input regarding the B.A., B.S. in History program at Illinois State University through consideration of the self-study report submitted by faculty. The following committee recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle are provided in a spirit of collaboration with Department of History faculty members. In the next program review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2030, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

**Continue to focus on student success and retention.** The committee recommends that the program faculty develop a plan for student success. The plan should be used to increase transparency and communication around "student success" by defining the program's goals for, assessment of, and actions towards supporting students enrolled in the program. The plan may provide an overarching structure for other plans (e.g., retention, curriculum, alumni engagement). The committee recognizes substantial work by former and current faculty members to review and update the program and its curriculum. The committee recommends continued periodic review of the program structure and content to remain current with changes in the field and to maintain program retention, time to degree, and graduation rates. The committee recommends that the program continue monitoring student retention, particularly of students from traditionally underrepresented groups.

**Continue to refine your plan for enrollment management.** While the committee commends the program for their growth, we recommend that the program continue to work with Enrollment Management and Academic Services

and the Office of the Provost to refine and implement their plan for student recruitment. We also recommend that the program continue to explore available scholarship opportunities as part of the recruitment plan.

**Continue to focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity.** The committee recognizes the efforts that have resulted in the diversity of faculty and students within the program and encourages the program to continue to pursue its goals related to further developing an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment that effectively supports students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds. We encourage the program to continue refining and implementing their plans for recruiting students from groups who are traditionally underrepresented in the program and discipline. Furthermore, we encourage the program faculty to continue to examine ways to infuse diversity, equity, and inclusion into the curriculum.

**Continue to review and revise the curriculum.** The committee recognizes substantial work by faculty members to review and update the program and its curriculum. The committee recommends continued periodic review of the program structure including assessing the impact of recent revisions. In particular, we recommend that program faculty consider developing revisions to address “choke points” within the History-Social Sciences Education sequence that may be negatively impacting time to degree for students in that track. The committee recommends that the faculty continue to explore ways to infuse issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion into the program and to continue to explore developing courses that would satisfy the institutional IDEAS requirement.

**Continue implementing and refining the student learning outcomes assessment plan.** The committee encourages faculty to continue their implementation of the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program during the next program review cycle, to continue to utilize information gathered through plan implementation to make program revisions as necessary, and to document how that has been done. The committee encourages faculty to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in assessing student learning to identify any modifications to the plan faculty may deem necessary.

**Continue the collaborative work with Milner Library.** The committee recommends that the program work with the subject liaison librarian to examine and evaluate the library's journals and monograph collection to aid in both the selection and deselection process of these sources. We also recommend that the program work with the subject liaison librarian to develop a tiered approach for information fluency learning outcomes for the department, align those outcomes to the curricula, and integrate those outcomes into the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program.

**Develop a plan for alumni tracking and engagement.** The committee encourages the faculty to continue to refine their plan for tracking program alumni and use this system to enhance alumni networking and engagement. These activities may become even more important in the years ahead as the program's alumni become more diverse. The program could benefit from increased involvement of its alumni, employers, and other external stakeholders in providing input regarding the program and in mentoring students and provide employment opportunities for program graduates.