



University of Colorado **Boulder**

2016 Program Review

Department of History

Academic Review and Planning
Advisory Committee Report

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. W. Wood'.

02/13/2017

Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs : Date

Contents

Process Overview – 3

2016 ARPAC Members – 4

Unit Overview – 5

Past Reviews – 13

Campus Context – 14

National Context – 15

Analysis – 16

Recommendations – 19

Required Follow-Up – 22

Process Overview

The review of the Department of History was conducted in accordance with the 2016 review guidelines. The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) conducts and writes the final reviews of all academic units on the Boulder campus. The unit prepared a self-study during 2015, which was reviewed during January and February 2016 by an internal review committee (IRC) composed of two CU Boulder faculty members from outside of History. The IRC found the report fair and accurate and noted issues for subsequent exploration by the external reviewers and ARPAC. An external review committee (ERC), consisting of two disciplinary experts from outside the University of Colorado Boulder, visited the unit over March 14 and 15, 2016, reviewed relevant documents, and met with faculty, students, staff, university administrators and members of ARPAC. The reviewers' comments and recommendations are cited at appropriate points throughout the report. This public document reflects the assessment of and recommendations for the Department of History as approved by ARPAC.

Academic Review
and Planning
Advisory
Committee
(ARPAC)

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Unit Overview

The campus' standardized description of the Department of History, and information regarding comparable units, can be found on the Office of Data Analytics' (ODA) website (<http://www.colorado.edu/oda/institutional-research/institutional-level-data/information-department/academic-review-and-0>). ODA updates the profile annually in the fall semester. This report cites the ODA data for History posted in October 2015, the most recent update available; these figures reflect the state of the unit in academic year (AY) 2014-2015.

The unit self-study declares the department's mission: "to add to the breadth and depth of understanding of the human past, producing distinguished scholarship that is wide-ranging, inclusive, and long-lasting in its impact on our discipline." Educationally, it seeks to "train graduate students as practitioners of history both within and beyond the academy" and to "prepare undergraduates to engage fully with the complex world of the twenty-first century, providing them with tools and insights that will enable them to thrive on the job market and in their personal lives." Concerning service, the unit seeks to "contribute qualitatively to the life of our community, university, and profession."

The unit offers one undergraduate program, the BA in history. It offers two graduate programs, the MA and the PhD in history.

Personnel and governance

According to the self-study, as of fall 2015, the unit employed 35 tenure and tenure-track faculty (TTT; note: subsequent self-study figures, as well as ODA data, indicate the number is 33). Distribution of TTT across rank includes 11 professors, 15 associate professors, and seven assistant professors. These TTT are further distributed across the program's three primary geographic areas: nine focus on the US, 11 on Europe, and 13 on

world areas. At least one TTT retirement is projected from the US cohort by 2018. Program delivery is supplemented with two instructors and three lecturers. Unit operations are supported by three state classified staff members and two student hourly employees.

The unit is governed through by-laws most recently revised in December 2015 and is formally led by a simple majority-elected chairperson. The chair serves a three-year term (possibility for renewal unspecified). The department appoints associate chairs who serve as directors of the undergraduate and graduate programs. The chair is advised in matters of faculty hiring, committee appointments, merit and salary, and grievance, by an executive committee, consisting of six TTT faculty members serving one-year terms, with eligibility requirements and election procedures designed to ensure representation across rank and program areas. A personnel committee, variably composed of faculty occupying a rank equal to or above the outcome rank being considered, deliberates cases of reappointment, tenure, and promotion, with favorable decisions requiring a simple majority of the constituted committee. These structures conform to university norms, and the department appears to be well-governed both through structure, and (as the IRC and ERC attest) the performance of its current chair.

The department employs three professional staff. Related full-time employee (FTE) and role categories include one Administrative Assistant I; one Administrative Assistant III; and one Program Assistant I. The self-study emphasizes both the high levels of staff dedication and reliability and also a concern that staff workload has become excessive, particularly in light of an immediate need for ensuring adequate program publicity, student outreach, and recruitment. The ERC ranks related hiring of an additional staff

member to perform these duties as a—if not *the*—top priority. The self-study notes that, because two of five staff positions were eliminated in 2003 during a period of increasing enrollments, the current decline in enrollments does not inherently contradict this request (i.e., parallel fluctuations in staff and enrollments have not had sufficient time to stabilize in order to establish a baseline for evaluating claims concerning the adequacy of that correspondence).

Research, scholarship, and creative work

The self-study characterizes History faculty as “prolific scholars, producing work of exceptional quality and abundance.” Supporting evidence includes a recent record of successful faculty reappointments and promotions, and prominent fellowships (e.g., National Endowment for Humanities, National Humanities Center, etc.) and prizes (e.g., the Pulitzer). ODA data ranks unit activity in this category over the past seven years as third among 16 review-cycle units, with an average refereed book rate of 0.9 and an average refereed articles and chapters rate of 3.9 per faculty member. The self-study also reports that, based on academic analytics data for 2013, this performance level is “right in line” with that of Association of American Universities (AAU) peer institutions. The ERC characterizes this level of performance as “impressive.” The unit ranked first of 12 units for receipt of direct grant expenditures (third of 12 after allocation), with most recent year rates reflecting a 30-40 percent decline over the past five years.

Undergraduate education

As noted above, the department offers the BA in history. ODA figures for fall 2015 indicate a total of 353 majors (fourth among 16 units; a decrease of 43 percent over five years). Student-faculty ratio is ranked eighth of 14. ODA reports 69 minors. Total undergraduate student credit hours (SCH) for AY 2014-2015 was 17,895 (second of seven; a 325 percent decrease). Service teaching to non-majors represents 79 percent of this SCH.

Student credit hours taught to non-majors by TTT was 58 percent (third of 17; a nine percent decrease). Instructors account for 19 percent of this total SCH and graduate part-time instructors (GPTIs) and teaching assistants (TAs) for four percent (13 of 14). Total average size of course sections is 42 (second of 17; a 15 percent decrease). Faculty course questionnaire (FCQ) ratings are 75th percentile for course (12 of 15; a two percent increase) and 83rd percentile for instructor (13 of 15; three percent increase). Results of the unit's spring 2013 senior survey report positive ratings of 73 percent (third of six) for course availability, 75 percent (fifth of six) for the program's academic quality, and 69 percent for academic advising (second of six). Satisfaction ratings from the spring 2016 survey of majors average 4.01 out of 5.0, with the lowest rating of 3.78 for course availability and the highest of 4.41 for diversity climate. The unit awarded 110 BA degrees in AY 2014-2015 (third of 16; a 40 percent decrease), and ranks first of 13 for median time to completion of degree. Ten percent of History majors in 2014-2015 graduated with Latin honors (a 22 percent increase).

The self-study notes (and the ERC confirms) the importance of assessing the recent decline in majors in the context of two coinciding events: first, a deliberate response by the unit to the 2009 ARPAC identification of capacity concern arising from excess majors, resulting in curricular revision; and second, a post-2008, recession-related, national decline in humanities unit enrollments. The IRC raises a concern that this decline might complicate the unit's request for additional resources but also notes existing faculty discussions concerning innovation of unit mission and course delivery. The IRC highlights the importance of increasing program publicity for student recruitment. The ERC prioritizes discussion of the negative impact created by the enrollment of international students for faculty delivery of

introductory survey courses in non-Western history (discussed further, below).

Graduate education

As noted above, the department offers the MA and the PhD in History. ODA census for 2014-2015 reports a total of 63 students enrolled across the two programs (ranked third among 13 comparable units; a nine percent decrease over five years). Fourteen (about 20 percent) of those students are enrolled in the MA program (ninth of 13; a 33 percent decrease), and 49 (about 80 percent) are enrolled in the PhD program (second of 11; a two percent increase). In AY 2014-2015, the unit awarded seven MA degrees (sixth of 13; a 17 percent increase) and two PhD degrees (seventh of ten; a zero percent change). Median time to completion of degree was 2.7 years for the MA (ninth of 13), and 7.02 years for the PhD (sixth of eight). Graduate course offering SCH totals 732 (third of 15; a four percent increase over five years). FCQ ratings (92nd percentile course; 94th percentile instructor) rank at the very top of nine comparable units (eight and six percent increases, respectively). ODA reports an AY 2014-2015 appointment level of six graduate students as GPTIs, and 24 as TAs, suggesting a funding rate of around 47 percent. Student ratings in spring 2016 surveys average 3.87 out of 5.00, ranging from a low of 2.52 for financial support to 4.58 for ease of identifying an advisor. In addition to standard History offerings, graduate students may enroll in coursework offered through jointly-administered MA programs with Asian Languages and Civilizations, French and Italian, and Religious Studies, as well as a certificate program jointly offered with Museum Studies.

The self-study projects improvement in PhD time to completion (and, one might conclude, also in survey ratings of financial support) due to recent changes in admissions and funding policies (e.g., offering of five-year packages for every incoming class since

2012). Applicant quality has improved, although concerns persist, including a disparity in funding levels for humanities graduate students across College of Arts and Sciences, the unit's ability to compete with peer institutions for preferred applicants (e.g., the self-study reports that in 2012 CU graduate funding ranked last among 26 AAU peers), and the financial burden imposed on funded students by fee requirements. The self-study also reports the recent replacement of the comprehensive exam requirement with the development of a portfolio, as well as a new requirement for students to specialize in a global/thematic field of history, in addition to their regional/national field specialization. The unit has also added an Asian history PhD track. The self-study reports robust student participation in associations, conferences, and refereed publication. The self-study also concedes shortcomings in tracking alumni placement and commits to instituting a more regular and thorough system.

The IRC's comments emphasize the concern about student funding levels and recommend further investigation (and presumably, adoption) of strategies pursued by AAU peers that produce their relative advantage. The ERC praises the unit's improvements yet offers the sobering counsel, "better may not be good enough." The ERC members report recent good news that the unit may be able to equalize pay rates among recently admitted and finishing students, reducing discontent concerning that disparity. They express concern, however, regarding the insufficiency of post-degree tracking efforts and suggest that the unit should examine its cultural attitudes concerning the legitimacy of non-academic employment outcomes. They forwarded requests from interviewed students for enhanced professional development and career guidance opportunities to address the "abysmal" state of employment opportunities. They also encourage unit discussion of reallocating resources and

redesigning programs to develop a larger MA program whose revenues might subsidize a smaller PhD operation. ARPAC notes that this recommendation mistakenly assumes that the unit directly receives revenues from its graduate program enrollments.

Budget History receives a standard operating budget from the college (amount unspecified). The self-study relays the consistent decline in that allocation over the past five years and argues that increased funding would enhance the unit's ability to recruit and retain students.

The self-study characterizes staff as underpaid but does not provide specific evidence. Contrary to self-study assertions, ODA reports that TTT salaries are generally in line with AAU public peer averages at rank, including assistant (97 percent), associate (100 percent), and full (94 percent), for a combined average of 97 percent. Insufficiency of graduate instructor compensation has been noted above; the self-study states improved administration of contingent instructional funding under college revision of Leaves and Replacements allocations. The unit has a variety of gift funds which support an annual lecture series, an undergraduate research award, and graduate student research, travel, and fellowships. The self-study notes consistently modest success in fundraising, recent and planned activity by the chair, and the synergistic effect on this pursuit projected by additional staff dedicated to program publicity.

Space The Department of History is located in Hellems, one of the older campus buildings that was scheduled for renovation in the early 2000s; that renovation did not occur. Across the self-study, IRC, and ERC reports, unit issues of space are unanimously deemed urgent. The status of housing faculty and student in offices (e.g., last among review units in average square footage), and the lack

of functional spaces for communal gathering, staff work, and student accommodation are characterized by the self-study as “shameful” and an impediment to collegiality. In a particularly evocative phrase, the IRC likens the atmosphere of the Hellems building to “a Third World airport” (the self-study description is “dismal”). The ERC encourages campus administration to finally deliver on long-standing projections of Hellems renovation.

Past Reviews

The Department of History was last reviewed in 2009. That ARPAC report praised the unit for successfully addressing leadership and collegiality issues (exemplified by successful new hiring following a series of faculty departures), for demonstrated commitments to diversity, and for revision of its faculty mentoring program. It also directed the program to revise its requirements and curriculum to reduce its majors and called for a significant infusion of graduate funds to support unit competitiveness with peer institutions.

The unit's response to direction concerning undergraduate program reform has been effective (even if producing ironic outcomes as a planned reduction was followed by an unplanned national drop in humanities enrollments).

The unit's response to direction concerning increasing rates of Latin honors graduation has been effective (see discussion above).

The unit's response to direction concerning enhancement of advising for graduates appears to have been successful (see discussion above).

The current ERC report concludes: "In general, the Department is in good shape, and, in our view, it is in better shape than at the time of its last review in 2009."

Campus Context

As the self-study states, the History faculty “believe that history, which generates deep resonance across human experience, has never been more relevant to daily life.” That universal scope translates into numerous connections of “engagement and influence” between History and other campus units. As mentioned above, the unit jointly administers two MA programs with Asian Languages and Civilizations, French and Italian, and Religious Studies, as well as a certificate program jointly offered with Museum Studies. Unit faculty members direct or serve on advisory boards for numerous other units (e.g., Honors, International Affairs, Women and Gender Studies, etc.). They also hold formal affiliation with nine other units (e.g., English and Religious Studies, etc.). The unit maintains a “strong relationship” with at least two residential academic programs (e.g., Farrand and Honors). The self-study reports a “recently enhanced connection” between History and the Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS) in that the institute’s new director holds tenure in the department. Also, new faculty hires in areas such as Latin American and environmental history have stimulated faculty interest in interdisciplinary ventures such as co-taught courses. Faculty and graduate student interest in digital humanities is mentioned as another vector of collaboration.

The self-study emphasizes that it provides “essential service and teaching support to numerous other units” (see discussion above).

As previously noted, the self-study expresses strong concern regarding negative impacts created by a disparity in graduate students across humanities units.

National Context

The department has recently worked to execute its current strategic plan emphasizing interconnections between multiple contexts and scales of history. “This vision,” notes the self-study, “entails preparing undergraduate students for citizenship in a world community, attracting first-rate graduate students who leave CU prepared to engage in . . . transnational/global research . . . and fostering such work among our own faculty ranks without slighting the persistent importance of the local and the national.” This execution has played out across the spheres of undergraduate curriculum reform and faculty hiring. The self-study indicates the delicate balancing required in this process between the priorities of a global/transnational paradigm and one reflecting the aggregation of traditional, specific areas.

Additionally, the department performs service and outreach to the community through two annual public lectures and other activities including “CU on the Weekend, History Day, and voluntary engagements at public libraries, civic organizations, elder communities, public schools, and teacher-training programs.” Other outreach targets referred to in the self-study include local churches and synagogues, and “CU in the Community” program activities located in Trinidad. The unit’s participation in campus programs such as Jewish studies enable it to engage with related publics located across the Front Range.

Analysis

Undergraduate and graduate education and support

The department faces two significant and significantly intertwined challenges. Its declining undergraduate enrollment clearly warrants response. However, its ability to respond is partly hampered by a lack of staff able to develop and to implement related programs for internships, outreach, publicity, recruitment, retention, and support of fundraising. The unit requests funding for a part-time staff member to support these efforts. The unit is also engaged in developing other plans to increase the appeal of its major. According to the self-study, these include “updated intro-level classes that will pull students into the major, enhanced writing instruction, revising our major requirements, and developing specific ‘tracks’.” These innovations would complement recent innovations, including “small introductory survey courses, adding one-credit ‘history lab’ sections to larger survey, making available more team-teaching opportunities . . . [greater] exploration of digital humanities . . . and . . . experiments with ‘hybrid’ or ‘flipped classrooms.” The self-study also notes the need to reduce faculty service burdens in order to accomplish these goals (a recommendation the ERC echoes). It notes indirectly the importance for the success of program delivery of administrative support for anticipated replacement hiring in the areas of US and Latin American history.

The IRC encourages the unit to continue its planning of these strategies, including developing scenarios for both successful and unsuccessful outcomes in requests for funding.

Inclusive excellence

The department expresses a deep commitment to promoting and increasing diversity among its faculty and students and consistently considers opportunities for related curriculum innovation. Representation of women among the unit faculty is relatively strong (44 percent; fifth of 16 review units) and representation of minority racial and ethnic groups surpasses that

of units currently under review (11 percent; first of 16). ARPAC notes that a more revealing basis for comparison would be related rates among peer AAU history units. Diversity rates among History students are less impressive. Among graduate students those rates are 44 percent for women (11 of 13) and 15 percent (eighth of 13) for minority racial and ethnic groups, although those figures represent a slight increase over the past five years, by 10 and 4 percent, respectively. Diversity among undergraduate majors displays a similar profile, with women representing 38 percent (14 of 16; an eight percent decrease over five years) and racial/ethnic minority groups at 19 percent (10 of 16; an increase of 117 percent). The self-study ties the unit's ability to recruit a more diverse student body to requests for staff support and graduate student financial support.

The ERC reports a developing issue concerning negative impacts created for faculty offerings of introductory survey courses in the world areas program. Those impacts arise from university's decision to increase admissions of international students, whose motivations and backgrounds have not prepared them for successful alignment with traditional course requirements and pedagogy. These students have different orientations to course material and greater needs for writing assistance compared to US students. Related burdens are falling upon world area faculty assigned to these courses (whose enrollments are increasingly important to the unit's bottom line) and faculty who happen to represent minority groups. At least some of these faculty belong to a cohort that recently has undergone reappointment or promotion; while they were generally successfully in moving forward they felt that their scores on faculty course questionnaires suffered due to the presence of students who had not been appropriately acclimated to CU. (The ERC expands on the frank account of this situation in the self-study by urging the unit and administration

to collaborate in revising measures of faculty teaching performance and to address what appears to be a serious issue of diversity climate. The unit notes the importance of developing some structure to facilitate faculty representation and mentorship in this area (e.g., a diversity committee, which has now been formed).

Budget As discussed above, the unit seeks support for staff, graduate student funding, and faculty replacement hiring. While it is not unsupportive, the IRC is less sanguine in projecting the success of these proposals and thus counsels the unit to explore all potential scenarios for reducing costs and increasing fundraising in order to enhance available resources. The ERC report displays no ambivalence in supporting these proposals and offers additional support for the importance of administrative budget restructuring to create a funding model for faculty retention offers that does not exacerbate problems of salary inequity and faculty morale.

Space The IRC and ERC strongly support the unit's appeal for immediate funding to renovate current facilities to create three distinctive spaces: a communal lounge or break room, a workspace/meeting room, and a space for accommodating students with disabilities.

Library resources The self-study praises the history bibliographer and assesses the existing resources for undergraduate and graduate student needs as generally adequate. It flags, however, two concerns: the impact of collections budget cuts on faculty member research using foreign-language and non-European sources and the impact on graduate students' publication careers given a requirement that completed dissertations be deposited in a publicly-available digital repository (CU Scholar). These concerns were not further elevated by the IRC or ERC.

Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) address the following recommendations to the Department of History, and to the deans of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School and to the office of the vice provost for undergraduate education. It is the committee's intention that the recommendations serve to benefit program improvement and development and to further the mission of the University of Colorado Boulder.

To the unit

1. Improve student recruitment and retention.
 - a. Proceed with planning for implementation of programs to facilitate unit outreach and publicity. Develop related scenarios depicting both the employment of new unit staff, and collaboration with new college staff hired to facilitate these goals across humanities units;
 - b. Continue to explore innovations in the undergraduate curriculum that will increase its student appeal without compromising existing quality and integrity
2. Initiate a faculty discussion concerning unit challenges in pursuing inclusive excellence. Solicit faculty recommendations for reform of existing teaching measures to address disparate impacts of international enrollments on course offerings and assigned faculty. Collaborate with staff in the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program currently working to develop alternative teaching measures. Task the inclusive excellence committee with approving and implementing reforms. Maintain transparency of this process to ensure maximum benefit for impacting current diversity concerns.
3. Proceed with development of proposals for faculty hiring. Make the case for senior appointments where needed.

To the dean of the
College of Arts and
Sciences

4. Proceed with proposals to the College of Arts and Sciences for renovating current unit facilities to achieve goals of enhancing faculty collegiality, staff effectiveness, and student accommodation.
5. Fund a part-time staff position enabling History to develop and execute planning for outreach and publicity and for student recruitment and retention. If this is not possible, fund an arts and sciences staff position that would broadly support humanities units in accomplishing these functions.
6. Review funding paradigms for graduate students in humanities units. Identify and address disparities. Consider strong proposals by History for improving funding parity for TAs and GPTIs.
7. Prioritize applications by History for interim funding (e.g. via annual Category B calls) for renovation of current unit space in order to achieve goals of improved faculty collegiality, staff effectiveness, and student accommodation.
8. Fully consider future History requests for faculty hiring in light of demonstrable benefits created for undergraduate and graduate programs.
9. Investigate unit reports concerning disparate impacts on faculty and course evaluation caused by lack of preparation among recent international student admissions. Develop and implement solutions for confirmed problems.

To the vice provost and
associate vice chancellor for
Undergraduate Education

To the dean of the Graduate
School

10. Investigate the current paradigm for charging fees to graduate students. Explore alternative funding mechanisms to exempt them from—or subsidize payment of—unnecessary or inappropriate student fees.

Required Follow-Up

The chair of the Department of History shall report annually on the first of April for a period of three years following the year of the receipt of this report (i.e., April 1st of 2018, 2019, and 2020) to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the provost on the implementation of these recommendations. Likewise, the deans and vice provost shall report annually on the first of May to the provost on the implementation of recommendations addressed to their offices. The provost, as part of the review reforms, has agreed to respond annually to all outstanding matters under her/his purview arising from this review year. All official responses will be posted online.