

January 24, 2017

PROFESSOR PAMELA RADCLIFF, Chair
Department of History

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Program Review for the Department of History

Dear Professor Radcliff,

The Undergraduate Council discussed the 2016 Department of History Undergraduate Program Review. The Council supports the findings and recommendations of the review subcommittee and appreciates the thoughtful and proactive response from the Department.

The Council would like to highlight the subcommittee's suggestion of working with advising staff and Deans in the Colleges to cultivate a curriculum that could draw students to the major. While the Department indicated that they offer a number of courses in partnership with the Colleges in addition to the numerous course options within its own Department, offering courses that include cross-Department partnerships could increase visibility of the major and minor, and increase the diversity of course listings and attract students from different areas.

The Council will conduct its follow-up review of the Department in Winter Quarter 2018. At that time, our goal is to learn about the Department's progress in implementing the recommendations of the program review subcommittee and the Undergraduate Council. The Council extends its thanks to the Department for their engagement in this process and we look forward to the continued discussion.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Cook, Chair
Undergraduate Council

Attachment

(1) Undergraduate Program Review Report and Responses for the Department of History

cc: C. Della Coletta
J. Rauch
R. Rodriguez
K. Roy
B. Sawrey
M. Sidney

Report of the Undergraduate Review Committee for the Department of History

Committee Members:

May 19, 2016

Dennis Childs (Literature, UCSD)
Kuiyi Shen (Visual Arts, UCSD)
Edward Dickinson (History, UC Davis)

Introduction

On May 18th and 19th, 2016, the Review Committee met with the Department of History, including the Department Chair and Director of Undergraduate Studies, the MSO and Undergraduate Advisor (and the former advisor), two different groups of faculty members, a group of current Graduate Student Teaching Assistants, and a group of undergraduate majors. We also met with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Affairs and Deans of Academic Advising from two UCSD Colleges. As a part of our engagement with the History Department we consulted the Departmental Self Study, a comprehensive set of departmental data covering the 2010/11-2014/15 academic years, a number of student surveys including CAPE, UCUES (2014), Post-Baccalaureate (2012), College Deans of Advising, and the previous departmental review conducted in spring, 2006. The Committee wishes to express great thanks to the Academic Senate staff, the office of the AVCUE/Dean of Undergraduate Education, and to the History Department for providing all the materials and expertise that we needed in order to conduct the review process.

The Committee found that the History Department has continued to build on its exemplary record in respect to its collective pedagogical engagement with UCSD's undergraduates. Ranked #30 in the country by *US News and World Report*, the Department is comprised of an outstanding group of ladder-rank faculty (many of whom have been recognized with Senate awards for outstanding teaching); a number of experienced lecturers; a creative group of graduate student instructors; and a tremendously committed staff. Since the last review the Department has begun or continued a number of measures to improve upon its strengths in undergraduate education including the promotion of its undergraduate history club, the teaching of enriching colloquia for advanced history students, an honors program, and substantive dedication to the university's DEI mission both within and outside of the classroom. Ladder-rank faculty currently teach 16 DEI courses, with a number of them working on DEI in an administrative capacity.

The overall picture we consequently garnered was one of excellence in teaching, a fact reflected in the Department's generally high CAPE scores and by the UCUES and Post-Baccalaureate surveys. In short, History boasts a renowned group of faculty and exemplary staff who are performing admirably, and who are obviously dedicated to the mission of providing an outstanding educational experience to undergraduate students. As such the Committee's recommendations are meant to serve a constructive role in

helping the Department improve on its strengths, and to offer ideas on how it might improve, specifically in areas such as curriculum enhancement, campus/community outreach, and TA support.

A. brief description and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current operation of the department

General Description

The Department of History comprises a major and a minor, along with a number of special research and instructional units, inclusive of Chinese Studies, Judaic Studies, and the Committee on Area and Ethnic Studies (CAESAR), which includes Classical Studies, European Studies, German Studies, Italian Studies, Japanese Studies, Middle East Studies, and Russian and Soviet Studies. The major requires 15 courses, including three lower division courses and 12 upper division courses (recently decreased to this number in keeping with university initiative of decreasing time to degree). This number includes three courses in the student's designated field of emphasis, three non-field courses, six electives, three pre-1800 classes, and one colloquium. The student's field of emphasis can be chosen from Histories of Africa (HIAF), East Asia (HIEA), Europe (HIEU), the Middle/Near East (HINE), Latin America (HILA), and the US (HIUS). Courses of study are also broken down in to themes of History of Science (HISC); Gender and Sexuality; Race, Ethnicity and Migration; and War Revolution and Social Change. Since the last review the Department has also added a series of "pre-professional" fields including Law, Business, Medicine, Education, and Global Relations.

The Department currently consists of 39 faculty (16 Full, 18 Associate, 5 Assistant), 6 Adjuncts, and 1 LSOE. Departmental staff includes a Managing Service Officer (MSO), a Financial Analyst, a Student Affairs Officer (currently vacant), an Academic Affairs Specialist, an Undergraduate and Graduate Advisor, and a Computer Resource Specialist (whose time is split with Philosophy).

According to the surveys we received, History majors are generally pleased with the program. CAPE and UCUES data show that students are, for the most part, very pleased with quality of instruction and curricular programming, with a CAPE average of 91% in the "Recommend the Instructor" category. However, the Committee did make note of some categories of student/alumni response that the Department would be well served by addressing. Namely, when compared to other History Departments throughout the UC system, the program scored relatively low marks in categories such as "Course Variety"; "Advising by Department and Staff"; "Value of Courses in Major"; and "Communication with Faculty by Email or in Person." As will be discussed below, the Committee recognizes that these relatively low marks involve structural issues per availability of resources. However, we do think the department should look for ways to enhance opportunities for students to communicate outside of the course setting with faculty. We feel that the Department can use this push toward office hours, emailing, and other out-of-class arenas of engagement as a means of cultivating an individualized approach to student engagement while raising the campus profile of the department. We also heard from more than one current student that professors should post book lists earlier so that

students can get an idea of expected readings. This is definitely a “quick-fix” area that could improve undergraduate engagement for both declared and possible majors.

Majors and Enrollments

By far the most challenging issue facing the undergraduate program is its decline in enrollments and number of majors. That this issue has become so prevalent represents a real shift from the last History review insofar as, at that time, enrollments and major yield were on the upslope—so much so that the main challenge facing the program then was coming up measures to decrease the number of students filling both lower-division and upper-division classes. However, now the opposite is the case, with the number of majors dropping heavily from 363 in 2010 to 133 by FA15. This drastic drop has been coupled with a sharp decrease in overall enrollments, even though many of the Department’s lower division courses (namely sequences such as the 7 series on Race and Ethnicity), continue to receive very high enrollments with numbers often exceeding 400 students. While the Committee does feel that there are some real measures the Department can take (and should continue to take) in addressing these trends, we also agree wholeheartedly with the characterization of the issue in its Self Study. That is, rather than being a reflection of any particular shortcoming within the Department structure, curriculum, or teaching, the drop in enrollments and majors is actually reflective of a larger national pattern of declining enrollments in Humanities, and a particular “cultural” problem at UCSD, a place that is most often described in public discourse—*even by the university itself*—as a “STEM campus.”

The History Department has undertaken a number of initiatives to deal with the decline in majors. Since its last review the Department has taken on a substantive reorganization of the undergraduate section of its website (which was made actionable through the tremendous efforts of Department staff). Now this section of the Department website offers students a much more clear articulation of the skills offered by the major. The pages also define the afore-mentioned pre-professional fields offered in the course of study in the major, and include data on the marketable skills of the degree that go beyond careers in academia. In keeping with both the campus initiative of reducing time to degree and with an eye on improving enrollments and yield, the Department has also reduced the number of required courses for a field of emphasis from 5 to 3. The Department also holds two community town hall meetings every academic year, with one meeting geared toward recruitment of new majors and the other toward giving current students the chance to air questions and concerns. Another very promising recent addition is an Undergraduate lounge. The opening of this lounge promises to do a great deal for enhancing a sense of academic/social community among undergraduates. The Department has also expressed interest in following the example of Visual Arts in piloting a portfolio review project that would allow prospective history majors to submit portfolios with their applications. The Committee also very much supports the Department’s idea of having faculty participate in phone/email banking initiative that would involve personalized contacts to admits who have expressed interest in being History majors. This initiative promises to have a very positive effect both on admissions yield and on the prospect for a better yield in declared majors in the program.

While the Committee commends these efforts on the part of the Department we feel that there are some important steps it can take for increasing the chance of better outcomes. Namely, our interaction with a group of top-notch undergraduates in the program reflected the amazing pedagogical and mentoring work that faculty are offering current majors in the program. For instance, we heard from one such student who is a double major in Engineering and History who spoke of interning at San Diego's Museum of Man—how he was able to combine his developing expertise in History and Engineering to his work on an installation dealing with the history of human combat. The Committee was blown away by this narrative, and felt that such stories should be showcased on the Department website in the form of a promotional video or photographic feature. Indeed, notwithstanding the improvements that have been made to the web page, we feel the undergraduate pages should do more to highlight the work and experiences of individual students in the program. This will enhance efforts to raise awareness among would-be majors of the advantages of taking on History as a course of study. We also feel that the website should direct students to the Department's presence on social media since this arena holds such a prominent place in students' connection to campus life.

However in our discussions with staff we also came away understanding that, given the lack of resources from which staff are able to draw in order to complete basic duties, it is very difficult to imagine placing more extra work on them for outreach, promotion, and other such duties. Indeed, one staff member mentioned that if issues of enrollment and major yield are to be tackled head-on then more resources directed expressly at such initiatives should be directed toward Department staffing. The Committee agreed with this assessment and hopes the Division and wider UCSD administration will support any proposal coming from History and other Humanities departments dealing with the enrollments/majors issue.

In terms of current and/or planned initiatives in the area of promotion of the program, the Committee felt that the Department might consider holding at least one of its annual town-hall events in UCSD's Residential Halls in coordination with residential life administrators. This would allow the best possible attendance and for the Department to take full advantage of the town hall as a mechanism of raising its campus profile. In terms of the portfolio initiative with new applicants to UCSD, the Committee agrees that primary focus should be given to insuring the best possible yield with already admitted students who have declared interest in History as a major (the yield in this category was a very low 5% for FA14 class). However, we feel that the portfolio/yield discussion should not be viewed in an either/or fashion. In other words, if the Department makes strides in improving yield through some of the afore-mentioned initiatives then working on the portfolio project in concert with these efforts would only add to the numbers gained through yield improvement. The Committee feels that the portfolio initiative should definitely be pursued along with other outreach efforts the department mentions in its Self Study such as reaching out to local Junior Colleges. In fact, as the Department points out, such efforts bear great import given that many possible History majors throughout San Diego and the state are likely never arriving at UCSD due to its reputation as a

“STEM campus.” Troublingly, during the Review Committee’s meetings with staff and college advisors it heard anecdotal evidence to the effect that, in certain instances, even UCSD own admissions office has contributed to this misconception by recommending that students interested in Humanities programs “need not apply” to UCSD.

These stories, along with an equally troubling testimonial from a student in UCUES reports wherein s/he complained that upon attending a UCSD career fair there was not a single booth offering career opportunities for a History/Humanities graduate, signals that the campus administration, Career Center, Alumni Relations, and Admissions Office need to take SUBSTANTIVE steps to promote UCSD as a world class institution in every field of study—a fact that is bore out by the incredible group of faculty, staff, and students in the History Department. Indeed, given the university’s stated commitment to dealing with the drop in enrollments in Humanities and lessening over-subscription in capped majors, it would seem that much more in the way of resources should be placed in the area of promoting programs in Humanities. Initiatives such as bringing in History alumni, staffing departments in the area of program promotion, and Humanities-based outreach to local JC’s and high schools were repeatedly raised in our conversations with faculty, staff, and students. And the Committee urges UCSD’s administration to come up with a full-scale, and well-resourced plan for cultivating the image of UCSD as a national leader in Humanities and Social Sciences—which, of course, *it is*.

B. Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum

Curriculum Assessment

In reviewing the History Department curriculum we were struck by the quality of instruction offered across a wide range of geographies and time periods. The Department is particularly strong in the areas of African American, Latin American, East Asian, and European History. These strengths are reflected both in the large number of enrollments that continue to occur in sequences such as the 7-series on Race and Ethnicity, and in the fact that many History professors teach large lower-division courses in programs such as Dimensions of Culture (DOC) and “Making the Modern World” in the College system. As noted above, the record of the Department in DEI related curriculum is stellar with faculty teaching 16 such courses. Students are also able to take advantage of what appears to be an incredibly engaging colloquia series and Honors Program. The Department also offers a number of freshmen seminars that expose prospective majors to a variety of special themes, some of which are geared toward exhibiting the practical utility of the History degree to a wide range of career paths in fields ranging from law, to public policy, to the sciences. This performance is impressive given that the Department currently has an average time to degree of 4 years (well below UCSD’s average).

We were also very impressed with pedagogical development efforts by certain faculty who have taken advantage of campus-wide facilities such as the Teaching/Learning Commons. One such faculty member spoke of how his approval ratings for a very large

lower division course (which are notorious for low CAPE scores) skyrocketed after he took advantage of these trainings. We applaud the department for recommending its faculty to this program and urge it to continue to do so especially in dealing with junior faculty. We were also impressed with faculty members' incorporation of new technologies such as the Clicker in large classroom settings—a mechanism that seems to relate directly to the realization of pedagogical efforts and improving student engagement and accountability vis-à-vis course materials.

While the Department does present a wide range of courses, the Committee did take note of the fact that many courses in the general catalog have not been offered for at least four years—this despite the Department's stated efforts to either remove or offer these courses in the last review. In terms of fields of emphasis, the greatest number of these untaught courses appear to be in Science, Near East, European (particularly Ancient period), and Third World History (particularly African and Indigenous Studies). Indeed, when considered in relation to the afore-mentioned relatively low marks for the Department in student/alumni satisfaction in the area of "Course Variety" and "Value of Courses in Major," these gaps in curricular offerings stand out as an area in need of concerted focus. For instance, we heard from one student that they were frustrated with the relative lack of courses offered in African History, and another that the lack of courses in Indigenous History represented a difficulty. We were glad to hear from the Department that it has placed Indigenous Studies at the top of its FTE priority list, and think that African Studies and Near East Studies should also be considered as high priority fields. We definitely would like for the Department to follow through on its stated goal of reviewing its overall course matrix and rationalizing its course offerings. Particular attention should be focused on the reconsideration of course titles and descriptions especially since this was brought up by some of the Department's best current majors. However we would like to stress that such efforts need not overstep in the name of "boutiquing" courses to match perceived student "preferences." Rather, we think that the high level of enrollment in wonderfully named courses such as "Zoot Suits to Hip-Hop" is a reflection of the fact that course names can be made to match the *already-present* engaging aspects of the materials and pedagogy being offered by the faculty. The Department should also urge faculty to make their reading lists available as soon as possible given that students we interviewed mentioned that History courses tend to be relatively late in doing so.

In terms of squaring curricular offerings with the goal of increasing enrollments and major yield, we feel that the previous review's call for the Department to work in more direct consultation with the various College programs through which majors are taking lower-division requirements would be highly advisable. In speaking with Deans of Advising from two such colleges (Thurgood Marshall and Sixth College), we were made aware that there is a great student demand for classes covering African History and other non-European/DEI material. Given the Department's strength in these areas it should consider developing new lower-division courses that satisfy both History and College requirements (along with the DEI requirement). We also feel that the Department would do itself justice by adding a number of such courses to its list of lower-division classes offered in History—especially given the large size of courses offered in the 7-series for

instance that are currently turning away large numbers of students because of over-subscription. To facilitate faculty taking on this initiative, the Department should make faculty aware of incentives such as the Course Development grant (CDIIP) being offered through the EVC office. In speaking about History developing closer curricular development ties with the Colleges, faculty did bring up the fact that the Colleges' loosening of requirements in keeping with time-to-degree efforts of the university has had a detrimental effect on enrollments in History and other Humanities majors. Not only should the Department communicate these concerns to UCSD's administration in concert with other departments in the Division, but it should use its strong connections to Colleges such as Marshall, Roosevelt, and Sixth, to counter this structural impediment proactively through shared curricular planning and development.

Teaching Assistant Resources

Of all the issues discussed, both in the various reports we reviewed, and in our discussions with faculty and staff, the issue of TA funding was paramount in terms of the Department's current efforts at offering its students the best possible experience. As in the case of many other Humanities (and some Social Science) Departments, History has suffered a severe depletion in Temporary FTE monies, and in TA allocations in particular. This has forced the Department Chair to use "carry-forward" money that would otherwise be utilized for afore-mentioned efforts such as website improvement and outreach, to cover the costs associated with hiring TA's. This shortfall has also forced the Department to use money it would normally have available for hiring lecturers to fill in the gap in TA funding. The Department has also been made to increase its minimum number of students required for a faculty member to receive a course reader to 50—a number that has a severe effect on faculty workload. Notwithstanding its use of funds to cover TA's from other areas, there are still not enough funds to cover TA positions for current graduate students—a fact that forces History graduates to look to College programs and to far-flung junior colleges throughout the county in order to find employment.

This issue has also affected those TA's currently employed as the number of students per undergraduate discussion section is currently set at 36—an unacceptable number for any Humanities discussion insofar as it severely restricts the TA's ability to hone students' critical analysis, to offer an arena for constructive debate, and to present an individuated elaboration of complicated concepts introduced in large lectures. Indeed, in one faculty member offered a spreadsheet that computed the time per paper for TA's in her current lower division course as 1.4 minutes per paper. There is no way that 1) quality instruction can be given to current students under such labor conditions 2) that the Department can hope to increase majors and enrollments when such a workload is being experienced by TA's and the faculty that mentor them. Here it must be stressed that funding decreases due to decreased enrollments are actually having a detrimental effect on the Department's ability to give the best possible experience to *existing students* at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

The Committee therefore wholeheartedly agrees with the Department that the current calculus for TA allocation must be readjusted so that History and other Humanities Departments that are experiencing student decreases as part of the *national decline in Humanities enrollments* can maintain their curriculum base as well as their funding, recruitment, and retention of top-notch graduate student teachers. Along these lines, an increase in TA funding would also allow the Department to build on one of its most exciting initiatives—its pilot program of using graduate students as writing tutors. Students who have been offered access to this program have scored markedly higher on assignments than their classmates, reflecting the fact that this program should receive funding so it can expand. The Committee recognizes that an expansion of this pilot would require TA funding that is simply not available under the current TA allocation formula.

As far as the issue of TA training is concerned, many graduate students with whom we spoke mentioned that they felt that they would benefit from 1) a pedagogy course offered before or during their first time serving as TA 2) training geared specifically toward DEI related courses for which they are most often asked to teach. DEI courses are challenging enough for seasoned instructors in fields such as African American, Latin@, and Indigenous Studies. Thus it is very important that TA's be given adequate training in how to better perform their duties in such courses. The Department should take care to work with faculty on constructing a mentoring model based on the specific challenges these courses foster. And, should the Department move toward offering a pedagogy course, it should consider having DEI teaching be a fundamental part of this course's syllabi.

C. An analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the department in the context of campus and University policies

General Campus Considerations

The Review Committee feels that the decline in enrollments and majors cannot be dealt with in a stopgap manner, or at the departmental level alone. The last thing that will aid History and other Humanities Departments at a time when they are attempting to develop new initiatives to improve visibility and marketability is to *decrease* their resources. With this in mind, we reiterate that current calculations of TA-funding allocation must be changed so that History can continue to offer the first-class education that its students are now receiving from its dedicated faculty and its hard-working staff. And, as stated above, we feel that both the Department and the university administration need to look closely at ways to deal with the unfortunate outcome of the university-wide initiative to decrease time-to-degree given its adverse effect on enrollments in the History Department and other non-capped majors in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Again, the Department's plans to participate in the portfolio review initiative, increased outreach, TA-training, curriculum development, and the hiring of faculty in important areas such as African and Near East History all depend on a forthright approach by the administration that recognizes that a DECREASE in funding for these initiatives cannot possibly lead to an INCREASE in enrollments and majors.

Moreover, the university should look closely at its own marketing and promotion through its alumni office, career fairs, etc., to insure that UCSD is not losing top-notch undergraduate students by promoting itself as a “STEM Campus.” The Committee wishes to reiterate a survey response that we saw in review materials in which one student spoke of going to a career fair held on campus and not seeing a single table offering a career path for one such as s/he who majored in History: the student said this “severely lowered my self-esteem.” Along these lines, we join previous Review Committees in calling for an immediate assessment of the effects on enrollments of recent policy changes such as the time to degree initiative—and an evaluation of the resources necessary to assist negatively affected departments in attracting future students and faculty.

D. Recommendations for alleviating any shortcomings suggested by the description and analysis

As expressed above, the Review Committee finds the History Department to be performing in a stellar fashion with respect to its commitment to undergraduate education. This was reflected not only in the data we received but also in the direct conversations we held with faculty, staff, and students. Below we offer a summary of our recommendations as reflected in the overall report:

- 1) Showcase student “success stories” on Department website and promotional materials as a way of celebrating current students and attracting new ones.
- 2) Move forward with plans of reworking course matrix and rationalizing offerings. In this respect, definitely remove (or re-offer) courses that have been dormant for years and think of re-naming courses to fit the exciting nature of materials taught. Do so with definite eye on expanding on courses in African, Near East, Indigenous, and early European/Mediterranean History.
- 3) Work with advising staff and Deans in Colleges such as Marshall and Sixth to come up with possible new lower-division courses (both in the Colleges and in History), especially in DEI related subject matter.
- 4) Improve student opportunities for individualized connection to faculty by stressing the import of office hours, emailing, and other out-of-class arenas of instruction/mentorship.
- 5) Increase TA-funding and expand current TA writing tutor project to all pertinent undergraduate classes (of course these will both depend on whether resources are made available through drastically needed changes to current TA allocation formula).
- 6) Follow through on plans to participate in outreach at local Junior Colleges and high schools, and try to highlight the study of history in such efforts by having faculty participate in programming on specific topics pertinent to target audiences. Such efforts could also help the Department deal with its curious enrollment decline in Latin American History—a decided strength in its course offerings.

7) Follow through on stated plans of portfolio initiative (modeled on Visual Arts) for applicants expressing interest in History. Do so in concert with ideas such as phone banking by faculty with admits—seeing these efforts and those in respect to improving yield as mutually beneficial.

8) Move forward with plans to involve staff in statistical analysis of program profile (website) and other aspects of enrollment issue when resources to this end are made available for staffing. Again, given the stretched nature of staff already these initiatives will be impossible without funding by administration for more staff time.

9) Work with Alumni Services and Career center to highlight the great number of careers students can access through a degree in History. Again, funding for such an initiative should come from the UCSD administration since the Department is operating with a shortage of resources, and since Alumni Services and the Career Center should already be showcasing Humanities (and Social Sciences) alumni and their exciting career pathways.