

History BA/BS

Goal: Enhancing Alumni Relations and Outreach

Goal Description:

The Department of History will seek to demonstrate its commitment to community engagement and lifelong learning by formalizing outreach to alumni.

Providing Department: History BA/BS

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Performance Objective: Enhancing Alumni Relations and Outreach

Performance Objective Description:

The Department of History will aim to track the career outcomes and professional successes of its recent alumni by developing and administering an alumni survey. This survey shall assist the unit in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the program, and shall aid departmental leadership in better understanding the demographics of our majors and minors.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

KPI #1: Enhancing Alumni Relations and Outreach

KPI Description:

The Department shall seek to enhance its communications with recent alumni, in an effort to (1) showcase its scholarly profile and (2) build connections with community stakeholders who might supply internships, career opportunities, or professional connections for current students.

Target Description:

The Department shall consider it a success if it develops, publishes, and distributes among its recent alumni an e-newsletter.

Results Description:

The Department developed, published, and distributed a newsletter to its recent alumni (copy attached).

Attached Files

 [Vol.2-2022Newsletter.pdf](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Enhancing Alumni Relations and Outreach Action Item

Action Description:

The department shall initiate conversations with development about fundraising opportunities among alumni. Presently, the department does not have any organized development strategy. Alumni have generously underwritten scholarships for our undergraduate and graduate students; however, the department can and should be more proactive about cultivating these transformative gifts.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

KPI #2: Enhancing Alumni Relations and Outreach

KPI Description:

The Department shall, through a anonymous survey, seek to better understand the career outcomes of recent alumni.

Target Description:

The Department shall consider it a success if it (1) develops a survey to be deployed among its recent graduates; and (2) collects and analyzes data about job placement, advanced degrees, and degree outcomes.

Results Description:

An especially busy year (a major tenure track search, the launch of a new, interdisciplinary minor in the Medical Humanities, as well as the launch of a MA in History in Political Studies) prevented the department from completing work on this survey. This will be a priority action item for the upcoming academic year.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Enhancing Alumni Relations and Outreach Action Item

Action Description:

The department shall complete work on and deploy a survey to its recent graduates. This survey shall be designed to supply keener insights into the career outcomes and job placements of departmental alumni. It shall also seek to identify ways in which the program can better serve alumni through continued engagement and networking.

Goal: Historical Literacy

Goal Description:

The BA/BS in History at SHSU prepares students to learn about and critically analyze historical events; to weigh and interpret conflicting evidence; to assess change over time; to evaluate the complexities and contingencies of the past; and to gain an appreciation of the texture and diversity of the human experience. Students who complete the BA/BS degree should be able to make and sustain a historical argument in professional prose; to weigh the merits of an argument; and to pose good questions both about the past and their own particular moment. Students with the BA/BS degree should be prepared for graduate education in history.

Providing Department: History BA/BS

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Learning Objective: Acquisition of Historical Thinking Skills

Learning Objective Description:

Upon completion of the core curriculum courses (HIST 1301 and HIST 1302, HIST 2311 and HIST 2312), undergraduate History majors should be able to demonstrate their mastery of basic historical thinking skills by: (1) evaluating change over time; (2) establishing and/or situating events in historical context; (3) distinguishing between primary and secondary sources; and (4) describing the complexities and contingencies of the past.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Indicator, Criterion, and Findings: Acquisition of Historical Thinking Skills

Indicator Description:

The Department of History's Undergraduate Affairs Committee shall administer pre- and post-tests to students enrolled in its core curriculum courses: HIST 1301 and HIST 1302, HIST 2311 and HIST 2312. These examinations were developed by the Department's Undergraduate Affairs Committee to measure the acquisition of historical thinking skills and student growth over the course of a semester.

Criterion Description:

The Department of History shall administer the attached pre- and post-tests to students enrolled in its core curriculum courses. These exams will be scored by members of the Undergraduate Affairs Committee. The results of the exams shall be analyzed by the committee and reported to the departmental faculty for review and discussion.

Attached Files

 [2312%20Pre-Test.pdf](#)

 [1301%20Pre-Test.pdf](#)

 [1301%20Post-Test.pdf](#)

 [1302%20Post-Test.pdf](#)

 [2311%20Post-Test.pdf](#)

 [2312%20Post-Test.pdf](#)

 [1302%20Pre-Test.pdf](#)

 [2311%20Pre-Test.pdf](#)

Findings Description:

Instructional faculty distributed pre-tests and post-tests to a random sample of students in U.S. history survey courses. Students taking these exams demonstrated significant growth in the acquisition of historical thinking skills over the course of a semester. While students earned a "C" average on the pre-test, their scores improved a full letter grade on the post-test. The most dramatic growth was in the analysis of visual culture, a key historical literacy skill evaluated by this assessment instrument.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Acquisition of Historical Thinking Skills Action Item

Action Description:

The department shall develop and implement a new, undergraduate degree plan for History majors and minors that requires HIST 3300: The Historian's Craft in the second year of study. Presently, the department does not require an historical methodology course. The gap between survey level courses and upper-division electives is too wide. HIST 3300 will bridge the gap and become a space where faculty can (a) promote historical thinking skills and (b) discuss the various methodological tools and approaches that historians use to access the past.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Learning Objective: Constructing a Historical Argument

Learning Objective Description:

Prior to graduation, students will demonstrate the ability to make and sustain a historical argument rooted in their own, original analysis of primary and secondary sources.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Indicator, Criterion, and Findings: Constructing a Historical Argument

Indicator Description:

All undergraduate students are required to take HIST 4399: History Senior Seminar. In this capstone course, typically completed in the penultimate or final semester, students conduct historical research and produce an extensive research paper using primary and secondary sources. Once per year, the Department of History's Undergraduate Affairs Committee shall collect and evaluate a randomized sample of the writing artifacts produced across all sections of HIST 4399.

Criterion Description:

The department shall assess the thesis, evidence, organization, and mechanics of a randomized sample of writing artifacts produced in the capstone seminar course. The department will consider it a success if all writing artifacts scored by the Undergraduate Affairs Committee obtain a minimum score of "meets expectations" on the attached rubric.

Attached Files

 [HIST 4399 Writing Artifact Evaluation Rubric.pdf](#)

Findings Description:

The Undergraduate Affairs Committee neglected to score a randomized sample of writing artifacts by the assessment deadline; the department will ensure that this exercise is completed in the fall semester.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Constructing a Historical Argument Action Item

Action Description:

As part of its ongoing undergraduate curriculum reform conversations, the department shall revisit and adopt standardized learning objectives across its 1000-, 2000-, and 3000-level courses. These objectives shall also be communicated to students and included within course syllabi, so as to empower students to describe their marketable skills to potential employers.

Goal: Promoting the History Major

Goal Description:

The Department of History will continue to promote the study of history and the value of historical literacy at SHSU.

Providing Department: History BA/BS

Progress: Ongoing

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Performance Objective: Promoting History Major

Performance Objective Description:

The Department of History will continue to increase the number of undergraduate majors and minors.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

KPI #1: Promoting the History Major

KPI Description:

The Department of History shall attempt to build community among current students and alumni and promote its programs.

Target Description:

The department shall consider it a success if it (1) develops an annual faculty newsletter; (2) hosts a student recruitment event, and (3) develops a new promotional video for its undergraduate program

Results Description:

The department (1) developed and distributed the faculty newsletter and (2) developed a new promotional video for its undergraduate program, highlighting the key marketable skills honed and cultivated by the History major. This video was published on the departmental website: <https://www.shsu.edu/academics/history/undergraduate/undergraduate-courses.html>. The department likewise initiated registration open-houses, inviting students to discuss course offerings with faculty in a social setting.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Promoting the History Major Action Item

Action Description:

The department shall seek to enhance the culture and community among students through sponsorship of more co-curricular activities. The department shall host regular film nights and increase the visibility and activities of its student-led Bearkat History Club.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

KPI #2: Promoting the History Major

KPI Description:

The Department of History shall seek to exploit its unusual B.S. degree as a recruiting tool. To fully realize the recruiting potential of this degree program, the department shall seek to build a program in the history of medicine.

Target Description:

The department will consider it a success if it makes a tenure-track hire in the History of Medicine.

Results Description:

The department successfully completed a tenure-track hire in the History of Medicine in Spring 2023. Further, the department continued to support its successful Medical and Health Humanities Speaker Series, hosting three nationally recognized experts on campus for hybrid lectures. Finally, the department secured a \$149,000 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Grant to support the development of the Medical and Health Humanities Minor (announcement attached).

Attached Files

 [Medical Humanities.pdf](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Promoting the History Major Action Item

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Closing Summary

The department shall seek to better measure student learning outcomes and the effectiveness of its classroom instruction. Faculty will design new instruments to assess the acquisition of historical thinking skills in core curriculum classes.

The department will also seek to further enhance alumni relations. The program shall develop and deploy an alumni survey to better understand the career and professional outcomes of its graduates.

Finally, the department shall work on recruiting new history majors and minors. In support of these efforts, the department will explore updates to the undergraduate curriculum; work with Marketing and Communications on new marketing materials; consider the viability of micro credentials in public and/or military history; and build connections with local high schools and two-year colleges.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

The department developed new instruments to assess the acquisition of historical thinking skills in its core curriculum classes. These instruments shall continue to be deployed in HIST 1301, HIST 1302, HIST 2311, and HIST 2312.

The department continues to improve its outreach to alumni. It has twice hosted an alumni career night, inviting recent graduates back to campus to discuss their career outcomes, reflect on their marketable skills, and network with current students. Work on an alumni survey shall continue, so that the department can gain keener insights into career placements.

The department has begun work on a significant undergraduate curriculum update. It expects to adopt this new curriculum in time for an October submission to the CHSS Curriculum Committee. The program has launched a new Medical and Health Humanities minor and Public History Internship program. It shall continue to invest time and resources into these efforts. The work of recruitment and retention shall also continue; the department shall host open-houses to promote course registration. It will also be more deliberate about making appeals to students in its core curriculum classes.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

The Department of History shall seek to better serve its undergraduate students in the upcoming academic year. First, it shall implement overdue updates to its degree plans. The new degree plans shall require a course in historical methodology, so as to better prepare students for upper-division coursework. The new degree plans shall also structure elective choices, so as to ensure geographic and chronological breadth. Students will also benefit from clearly articulated learning objectives at the 1000-, 2000-, and 3000-levels.

Second, the department shall further develop its new Public History Internship program, which launched in Summer 2023. The department shall seek to increase the number of students engaged in this program. Alongside this effort, the department will promote oral history as a tool for academic community engagement. The department shall develop a physical space where oral history interviews can be recorded.

Third, the department will continue to build intellectual community through its sponsorship of the Medical Humanities minor. With a newly-hired tenure-track professor in place to direct the program--and a NEH grant to support its development--we shall seek to recruit and retain new students while building interdisciplinary connections.