

# Academic Department Student Success Plan Update 2015-2018

**Department:** History

**Department Chair:** Christopher Olsen

**Department Mission:** History is a core discipline in the Humanities, concerned with exploring the dynamics of change over time in human societies. African and African American Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study centered on the history and culture of Africa and the African Diaspora. The Department of History is comprised of faculty with expertise in a wide range of human history and cultures and offer courses in United States, Latin American, European, Russian, African, Middle East, and World History, with topical focuses on issues like social and cultural history, labor movements, race, ethnicity, and gender studies. As scholars, the Department faculty are engaged in the creation of new knowledge and many have gained national recognition through their activities in research and publishing. We are also engaged locally with the wider University community, the city of Terre Haute, and the state of Indiana with sustained support for service and outreach efforts. Our faculty is committed to training students to think like historians and scholars by engaging ethically with the past, thinking critically about the world around them today, and acting as engaged and informed citizens now and in the future. A degree in History or African and African American Studies requires developing proficiency in core academic skills considered vital to the life and mission of the University. These include the ability to think and read critically, to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, and to articulate informed arguments on complex issues. These are highly regarded disciplines among leaders in the public and private sectors for preparing students for analytical and interpretive work in a wide variety of careers. Equally important, an education in History or African and African American Studies enriches students' lives by imparting in them an appreciation for the great richness and variety of the human experience.

## Department Freshmen (1<sup>st</sup> year) Retention<sup>1</sup> Goal(s):

Increase retention by 1% annually.

### Action Steps (with dates & person(s) responsible):

Action Steps for Retention Goal 1:

- A. Review majors' performance in entry-level courses and consider creating separate sections for History and Social Studies Education majors. Target date: Fall 2016. Primary responsibility: Chairperson, Advisers, SSE Coordinator
- B. Review majors' performance in new HIST 302 course (recently revised curriculum) through assessment and monitoring with faculty. Target date: Fall 2017 and Ongoing. Primary responsibility: Chairperson, SSE Coordinator, & HIST 302 (U. S. History) faculty.

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<sup>1</sup> Departments w/o undergraduates can adapt the retention and persistence to completion sections to serve their graduate student success purposes or alternatively, integrate into the Other Goal(s), Action Steps, and Benchmarks of focal interest to department section at the end of the template.

- C. Review and make changes to our Foundational Studies course array, with considerations for increasing recruitment to the History and African and African American Studies majors and minors and for increasing our impact on retention of freshmen students at I. S. U. Pilot program for re-design of HIST 113 is in effect for 2015-2016. Target date: Fall 2016. Primary responsibility: Department Faculty
- D. Review Department activities and organizations dedicated to majors and minors and consider revisions to enhance student participation in Department events. These will include Phi Alpha Theta and History Club, but should not be limited to existing student organizations. Target date: Fall 2016. Primary responsibility: Department Faculty
- E. Promote student and faculty use of the History Department Research and Career Center, a dedicated space for History and African and African American Studies majors and minors. Students can conduct research in primary materials owned by the Department and research careers for majors and minors. Target date: Ongoing. Primary responsibility: Chairperson & all faculty

<i>Retention Benchmarks<sup>2</sup></i>	<b>Fall 2012 cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2013 cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2014 cohort:</b>
(by original department)	76.92%	64.29%	57.14%
	<b>Fall 2015 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2016 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2017 target:</b>
	58.14%	59.14%	60.14%

*Other Freshmen Retention related benchmarks of focal interest to department<sup>3</sup>*

If proposed revisions to HIST 113 (being piloted this AY), our Foundational Studies core course in Historical Studies, are approved, then we would teach many more sophomores, shifting our focus to their retention (for non-majors). We would have great interest in tracking our impact on sophomore-junior retention.

**Department Persistence to Completion Goal(s):**

Increase persistence to completion rates by 1% annually.

**Action Steps (with dates & person(s) responsible):**

- A. Conduct a total credit hour audit of our graduates from the past three years including proportion that were students that declared our major initially versus those that selected it in a subsequent semester. Use the data to inform a discussion of pathways and time to degree. Target date: Spring 2016. Primary responsibility: Chairperson & Advisers

<sup>2</sup> Department level current and historical retention and completion benchmark data to be integrated into the plan can be found through Blue Reports: <http://irt2.indstate.edu/cms/ir/blue-reports/>.

<sup>3</sup> A retention and completion rate is an essential benchmark, but it is not necessarily the only benchmark of interest to a department. Others of interest to the department can be integrated as well.

- B. Conduct a degree audit for all majors between 60 and 90 hours to make sure that students have considered the optimum pathway to graduation, including minors. Target date: Spring 2016.  
Primary responsibility: Advisers
- C. Reach out to our majors with 100 or more credit hours completed and use it as an opportunity to discuss optimal pathway to completion. Target date: Spring 2016. Primary responsibility: Advisers
- D. Conduct open house each fall for all majors, offering a chance to meet with faculty and discuss their progress and career plans. Target date: Ongoing. Primary responsibility: Chairperson & Faculty
- E. Conduct early spring group advising session for majors and minors, particular emphasis on possibly using summer to get back "on track" and simply to review pathways to on-time graduation. Target date: Spring 2016 and ongoing. Primary responsibility: Chairperson & Faculty
- F. Work with majors, beginning in Freshman and Sophomore year, to encourage double majors and minors to keep students focused on career readiness and post-graduation plans. Target date: Ongoing. Primary responsibility: Advisers
- G. Enhance support for History Club activities. Target date: Fall 2016. Primary responsibility: Chairperson
- H. Review majors' performance in new HIST 302 course (recently revised curriculum) through assessment and monitoring with faculty. Target date: Fall 2017 and Ongoing. Primary responsibility: Chairperson, SSE Coordinator, & HIST 302 (U. S. History) faculty.

<i>Completion Benchmarks</i>	<b>Fall 2009 cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2010 cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2011 cohort:</b>
(by original department)	15.38%	42.86%	27.27%
	<b>Fall 2012 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2013 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2014 target:</b>
	28.27%	29.27%	30.27%

*Other Persistence to Completion related benchmarks of focal interest to department*

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**Other Goal(s), Action Steps, and Benchmarks of focal interest to department<sup>4</sup>:**

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<sup>4</sup> Departments may have student success related goals, action steps, and benchmarks that do not fit neatly into the other categories. If so, feel free to place them here.