



2015-16 End-of-Year Report Academic Department Success Plan

Department: History

Department Chair: Steven Stofferahn (Interim)

Person Primarily Responsible for Preparing this Report:
Steven Stofferahn

Please answer the following questions in two or three pages and submit to your Dean by October 3. Your Dean will review and advance to Academic Affairs by October 10¹ and will offer you feedback by Oct. 17. This report will help inform your 2016-2019 Student Success Plan update that will be due to your Dean by Nov. 4.

1. **Specific accomplishments/achievements this past year** (*briefly explain using bullet points, noting any changed/adapted*):

- **Self-Study Report:** Compiled in the spring/summer 2016, this comprehensive report will both orient the two external reviewers slated to visit in November, as well as help the faculty refocus its attention on the initiatives outlined in the updated Success Plan.
- **Curriculum Revisions:** HIST 302 (intensive survey of American history) is on the schedule for Spring 2017, and should be of great service to SSE Majors (see Retention Action Step A); HIST 113 (Topics in History) pilot study with smaller class sizes and more intensive writing/analysis was carried out in Spring 2016, with positive effects on student success and retention currently being analyzed, potentially with an eye to revamping HIST 113 as 213 (see Retention Action Step C).
- **Assessment:** The Assessment Committee continued its tradition of rigorous and regular assessment of student learning outcomes, reviewing the portfolios of all graduating Majors and submitting the results to the department as it considers future curricular changes.
- **Advising:** Departmental academic advisors continued to help Majors navigate a series of important decisions, not only for registration but also for potential career paths. Advisors make it a point to help students with 60-90 credit hours find the most efficient and sensible path toward graduation (see Completion Action B).
- **Career Readiness:** The department's Research and Career Center located in Stalker Hall 109 continues to offer students a dedicated space in which to conduct primary source research using materials owned by the department, as well as to meet, on occasion, alumni and distinguished guests able to speak about how their experience and training as History Majors has helped them achieve their post-graduation goals.

2. **Objective/Actions Not Achieved** (*briefly explain using bullet points*):

¹ Note that the Dean will request a refinement to the report if it is not suitably addressing the questions.

- Credit Hour Audit: A rolling three-year audit of past graduates should be carried out to help the department start an informed discussion about pathways toward timely degree completion (see Completion Action Steps A and C).

- Support for Student History Organizations and Activities: As part of the department's integrated recruitment and retention strategy, student organizations like the History Club and Phi Alpha Theta (honorary society) ought to be revived and supported (see Completion Action Step G). Both informal and formal events should be sponsored by the department throughout the year.

3. Looking ahead, briefly describe changes, additions, or subtractions that need to be made to your goals and/or action steps, including with respect to their linkage to student learning outcomes.

- Majors: One of our most pressing needs as a department is to boost our numbers of Majors, both in History and African and African American Studies. Our 2016-2019 Student Success Plan Update has set forth aggressive goals for recruitment and retention, with attention not only to broadening outreach to potentially interested students, but also to using specific analysis of learning outcomes (e.g., DFW rates in various courses) and anecdotal evidence from academic advisors to continually monitor the curriculum and make additional adjustments when necessary.

- Use of Data: For any number of initiatives set forth in the Success Plan Update, a focused use of data now available through the Office of Institutional Research's "Blue Reports" could help the department more readily understand shifting enrollment patterns, and to adjust to those patterns with novel strategies.

4. Do you see opportunity for this project to work more closely with another department, college, or unit such that greater impact might be possible (*briefly explain*)?

- AFRI: The Department of History naturally works in close conjunction with African and African American Studies, particularly in ensuring that cross-listed classes required for the degrees are offered on a regular basis. The department and program are hopeful that a new tenure-track position in African American Studies within the coming year will allow for an expansion of course offerings reflecting the faculty member's specialization.

- Global Engagement: Both HIST and AFRI continue to view Global Engagement as an important partner, as more faculty explore and implement short-term travel abroad experiences into their courses.

- Student Media: A relationship is also developing with Student Media, particularly Sycamore Creations, as the department intends to add video content about faculty and alumni to its website by Spring 2017.

- Alumni Office: To identify good candidates for the alumni features, the Department will pursue a stronger relationship with the Alumni Office, and likewise intends to partner with the Career Center to make sure our current students more readily envision themselves as successful alumni, and begin to chart a path for themselves toward that goal.

5. Is there anything else about your initiative you feel important to detail?

History's graduate program remains a vital component of the department's overall mission. Notably, since launching an all-online option for the Master's degree, enrollment growth has shifted steadily

toward distance students, to the point that within a few years, we anticipate over half of our graduate enrollment will be online. Ensuring that we provide online students with a sustained path toward degree completion by staffing the requisite seminars with a broad enough slate of faculty to cover a reasonable range of research interests among the graduate students (particularly as they pursue their culminating projects) will present the department with both a challenge and opportunity in the coming years.