

Executive Summary for the Department of History & Geography: Bachelor of Arts in History & Bachelor of Arts in History with a Concentration in Secondary Education

Major Findings of the Program's Quality and Productivity

The detailed self-study of the Department of History & Geography's programs provided an opportunity to assess those areas within our different degree tracks that are successful and those in need of adjustment. The areas that were assessed by faculty members as "above average" to "very strong" are listed as our strengths, while those areas assessed as "very weak" or "below average" are listed as weaknesses.

Program's Strengths in the Area of Quality

Appropriateness of Faculty Credentials
Indicators of Good Teaching
Indicators of Good Advising
Activities to Enhance Program, Department, College, Institution, Community and/or Region
Quality of Faculty & Student Achievements
Relationship between Program's Curriculum and Its Outcomes
Utilization of Multidisciplinary Approaches
Utilization of Multicultural Perspectives

Program's Strengths in the Area of Productivity

Retention Rates
Cost Effectiveness of Instructional Delivery

Program's Weaknesses in the Area of Quality

Use of Part-time Faculty
Diversity of Faculty
Opportunities for Faculty Development
Departmental Reward System
Quality of Facilities and Equipment
Availability of Classroom and Laboratory Space
Opportunities for Student Research Projects

Program's Weaknesses in the Area of Productivity

Enrollment in Program

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Quality

Quality of Faculty

- Two more tenure-track historians should be hired to replace Alice Pate and Tyler Fleming.
- One of the new hires should be a specialist in American history. The other new hire should be an African specialist.
- By hiring new tenure-track faculty, we can cut down on the use of part-time faculty members and strengthen the department in the areas of teaching, advising, and service. The new faculty members could support the Digital Humanities program and the Race, Ethnicity, and Society program. New faculty could aid with Retention, Progression and Graduation by establishing early relationships with history majors, by increasing contact time with students, and by assisting with field trips and other extracurricular activities.

Faculty Development

- Increase funding for research and conference travel. Many of our colleagues have departed for other schools in the past few years due partly to low funding for faculty development. Since we have not received a cost of living increase since 2008, faculty member are finding it more and more difficult to properly fund research and conference trips.

Advising

- Work more closely with the Department of Teacher Education to devise course schedules that accommodate History & Secondary Education majors.

Quality of Research and Scholarship

- Acquire additional funds for Graduate and Undergraduate student research and conference travel.
- Adequately fund the MA in History program (programming, assistantships, library holdings, recruiting, etc.).
- Seek external grants to fund research projects, programming, and Digital Humanities.

Utilization of Multicultural Perspectives

- The hiring of an African specialist would enhance the MA in History with a Concentration in Race, Ethnicity, and Society program and perhaps address the lack of faculty diversity within the department.

Relationship between Program's Curriculum and Its Outcomes

- Develop a new assessment tool for graduating seniors.

Classroom and Laboratory Space

- Increase the history catalog at the library.
- Acquire new PCs for GIS students.
- Repair or replace air conditioner in One Arsenal Place.
- Address security issues at One Arsenal Place.
- Improve sound quality in Carpenter's 217.

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Productivity

Enrollment in Program

- Launch a recruitment drive to boost enrollment.
- We are in the process of conducting a survey of history alumni (2003 to 2013) to determine their respective career and educational paths after leaving CSU. We can use the findings to inform current and future history majors about careers available to graduates with history degrees.

Retention Rates

- Utilize the Writing Center and tutoring services at the Academic Center for Excellence.
- Place a graduate teaching assistant from the MA in History program in the Writing Center to assist students in our lower and upper division history and geography courses. Such a strategy will help boost RPG rates.

Conclusions about the Program's Viability at CSU

The History program at CSU is viable and will continue to be viable in the future. Our graduates will continue to pursue careers in a variety of fields, including education, administration, journalism, public history, the religious ministry, and law. With the implementation of a Digital Humanities program and the continued expansion of GIS, our graduates will acquire skills that are not widely available in other history programs in the region. Such programs help fulfill the goals of the **Complete Georgia College** plan by training students for emerging and cutting edge careers.

Program Improvement Plan (completed by Dean and Provost/VPAA with Department Chair)

Improvement initiatives

- Convert one current temporary lecturer position into a tenure-track position in FY 2015.
- Seek funding for an additional tenure-track position in the following year.
- Recruit and encourage underrepresented minority candidates to apply for faculty positions as searches are approved and developed.
- Depending on budget conditions, fund faculty development and equipment purchases in the department at least at the level of FY14 funds, which was higher than in previous years.
- Continue to encourage department faculty to apply for University Grants for research funding and program improvement.
- Continue the salary study, which has led to salary increases in the department in the past two years.
- Work with CSU Police and RiverPark Campus staff to improve security in One Arsenal Place.

- Make arrangements for department faculty to have access to a printer and scanner while using the Midtown Campus offices.

Summary Recommendations and Supporting Rationale

Expand or Enhance Program

- **Two tenure-track positions to replace Tyler Fleming and Alice Pate:** Compared to other history departments at peer institutions across Georgia, we are woefully understaffed. In the fall of 2012, Armstrong Atlantic had 120 history majors and seventeen full-time historians on its faculty. In the fall of 2012, CSU had eight full-time historians and 123 history majors. We continue to rely upon temporary faculty members, who cannot direct graduate theses. The decline in tenured and tenure-track faculty members has placed added pressure on other members of the department in terms of service and advising and, in truth, weakens our position across the University. New faculty members are necessary to support the new MA program, to guide graduate research theses, to help with the departmental committee work, to support the new Digital Humanities program, to offer more required undergraduate and graduate courses, to aid in recruitment, to organize field trips and other extracurricular activities, and to address and improve Retention, Progression and Graduation rates. With additional faculty members, we could reduce the class size in core survey courses, increase our contact hours with students, and further improve RPG rates. Additional faculty members would also share the workload with current members of the department and thus improve faculty morale and productivity.
- **Expand and improve the MA in History program:** In order to attract qualified students to the program, two new tenure-track historians should be added to the department, more assistantships should be funded, the history collection in the library should be expanded, and additional funds should be secured for programming and recruitment. In the spring of 2014, we will welcome our sixth graduate student into the program – up from just one student the previous spring. Yet, the dearth of research materials, limited opportunities for assistantships and programming, and the lack of tenure-track and tenured faculty to guide graduate level research theses may inhibit the program's growth. In the fall of 2012, Armstrong Atlantic University had virtually the same number of undergraduate history majors (120) as CSU, with a smaller overall enrollment (7,439). Still, Armstrong Atlantic had twenty-five students enrolled in its MA in History program. There is no reason to believe that we can't have similar results with aggressive recruiting and adequate staffing.
- **Digital Humanities Program:** The introduction of a Digital Humanities program would provide students with skills and methodologies not typically acquired in other history departments. Students and faculty could collaborate on a number of digital projects. For instance, several faculty members have discussed building a public access web-site dedicated to the rich history of Columbus, Georgia, and the surrounding Chattahoochee Valley region. The site will utilize geospatial technologies, historical maps, digital archives, oral interviews, podcasts, and short documentary films as tools to explore, interpret, analyze, and interact with the past. The project will be interdisciplinary and collaborative in nature, drawing expertise from a variety of fields and disciplines, including history, geography, library science, computer science, communications, and archaeology. The department would eventually create a degree track in History and the Digital Humanities. Students who successfully complete this degree will take courses in history, GIS, web-site design, and social media. It will give them an advantage in an increasingly competitive job market.
- **Increase funding for faculty and student research and conference travel:** Since 2008, faculty members in the Department of History and Geography have published two books (another is forthcoming), one edited volume, six chapters in edited volumes, eleven journal articles, five dissertations, and countless book reviews, reports, newspaper and magazine articles, museum guides, and encyclopedia articles. With rising demands on faculty members to publish peer-reviewed articles in order to gain tenure and/or promotion, additional faculty development funds are essential.