




### Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Department Chair:  Date: 10/21/2024  
David Shafer

Dean, College of Liberal Arts :  Date: 10/21/2024  
Deborah Thien

Interim Vice Provost Academic Programs:  Date: 10/21/2024  
Pei-Fang Hung



**Program Review Summary  
Memorandum of Understanding**

Department of History  
College of Liberal Arts  
October 2024

This document serves as a summary of the Program Review findings and a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the consensus reached by the Department of History, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recently conducted program review with a Self-study received in May 2023. Drs. Andrew Aisenberg and Allison Varzally completed the external review in May 2024. This report and MOU describe the goals to be achieved and the actions to be undertaken by all parties during the next program review cycle. Progress toward goals is to be addressed in an annual report.

The Department of History offers a BA and an MA in History, as well as a minor in History.

- The BA requires 14 courses (45 units), some of which can also double count for GE. Following completion of two 4-unit core courses, students complete six courses (18 units) in two or three fields of specialization chosen from the following: Africa and the Middle East, Ancient and Medieval Europe, Asia, Latin America, Modern Europe (Including Britain), U.S. history, and World history, in addition to two courses outside their fields of emphasis. The Capstone Senior Seminar (499) requires majors to write a 20-page research paper in one of their chosen fields of emphasis. Finally, at the conclusion of both 301 and 499, students produce a portfolio comprised of their written work, faculty evaluation of their work, and a self-evaluation of their progress and successes.
- The MA is a 30-unit curriculum designed to be taken over 5 semesters. Students have the opportunity to specialize in two fields of concentration: World History, U.S. History, European, Ancient, and Medieval History.
- The American Studies program was housed within the History Department during this review period, however it became an independent program in 2022. This program will therefore be reviewed separately.
- The Department of History is also the home department of the university's Single Subject Social Science Credential Program, which was reviewed under CTC accreditation.

The program's previous MOU was signed in 2017, with the following recommendations: 1) The Department will re-engage with assessment of student learning both in the undergraduate and graduate programs; 2) The department will add some occasional indirect measures to gauge student satisfaction and concerns and use the evidence for program improvement in both degree programs; 3) The department will undertake a review of the graduate program to



analyze and take action on the issue of declines in enrollment, the increased use of 400/500 courses, low completion rates, and lengthy time to degree. No later than the end of spring 2018, the department will submit a report to the Dean and the Vice Provost detailing the analysis of these issues and plans to address them; and, 4) The program will provide a biennial update on progress made towards the actions agreed to in this MOU, to be submitted in conjunction with its biennial assessment report.

The Department has met the terms of the MOU in regard to assessment completion and reporting. During the period under review, the Department has regularly filed assessment reports, as required. The Department filed assessment reports in 2018, 2019, and 2020, and was not required to complete annual assessments in 2021 (COVID) or 2023 (self-study year). Additionally, the Department completed a satisfaction survey of its majors in 2016. The Department also has met the terms of their MOU with their review of their MA program, the results of which will be reported later.

**Resources reviewed for the report:**

1. Self-study 2024
2. External review 2024
3. MOU 2017
4. Department of History website

**Strengths Identified in the Reports**

1. The Department identified HIST 301 as a potential barrier for majors and instituted appropriate student support measures. As a result, the passage rate went from 65% in the 2014-15 academic year to consistently above 90% in all academic years between 2015-16 and 2019-20. Consequently, the BA major increased the number of History degrees granted, bucking nationwide trends and earning attention in the Chronicle of Higher Education.
2. The BA program has a clear trajectory enhanced by strong departmental support in the first year to provide students with core knowledge and help them decide upon an appropriate field of specialization. External reviewers highly praised the teacher preparation program.
3. The Department's curriculum supports the University mission. PLOs are clear and assessment occurs on a regular basis.
4. External reviewers noted that "*faculty are passionate, accessible, highly engaged, and inspiring teachers*" who are actively involved in the success of their students, as well as scholarship and service. Lecturer faculty are well integrated into the Department.

**Concerns Noted in the Reports: None**

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**Opportunities for Development Identified in the Reports**

1. The Department has seen a decrease in undergraduate majors, going from 278 class-based FTES in Fall 2016 to 149 in Fall 2023. Student-based FTES has been stable, with 433 FTES in Fall 2023. High student-based FTES is due primarily to GE, with the Department offering courses to satisfy the American Institutions requirement and also upper-division B, C, and C requirements.
  2. The Department notes that 4-year graduation rates were rising, reaching the University expectation of 37.5% for the Fall 2017 cohort. Decreased total units earned from more than 130 to approximately 120 has likely contributed to improvement in graduation rates. Unfortunately, graduation rates decreased during the pandemic and are currently at 11.5% for the Fall 2019 cohort. Six-year graduation rates have remained fairly stable. The Department could re-employ some of their pre-pandemic strategies to improve retention and graduation rates, including individualized advising and support in gateway courses.
  3. Two -year graduation rates for transfer students exceeded the CSULB GI 2025 benchmark of 49% with rates of 54.8% (Fall 2017 cohort) and 51% (Fall 2018 cohort). The 2019 cohort, however, dropped to 43.9% which could be a reflection of the pandemic necessitating a transition to online teaching and the resultant problems that students experienced pandemic semesters. With current student cohorts potentially starting at a Community College post-pandemic, the Department has an opportunity to assess if drops in graduate rates are truly due to the pandemic or other conditions that are yet to be determined.
  4. The M.A. Program seeks to limit an incoming cohort to 15 students per year. They have recently surpassed this number with cohorts of 18-19 new MA candidates, and have found this number to be difficult to sustain, requiring additional course offerings. Once admitted, the first-year persistence rate for the 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 cohorts were 65%, 61.5%, 50%, and 57.1%, respectively per IR&A data. Internal tracking of student persistence reveals better persistence rates of 85% (17/20) in 2016, 100% (13/13) in 2017, 77% (7/9) in 2018, and 80% (16-20) in 2019.
  5. The Department attributes graduation rates of the master's program, ranging from ~50% to 69.2%, to the low first year persistence rate. Once students decide to remain in the program, they tend to finish. Time to graduation trends just above the expected 2.5 years, with students choosing thesis as the culminating activity take at least 3 years to graduate. The Department has an opportunity to evaluate the first year of the Master's degree to determine if any curricular or support changes would lead to both the ability to increase admission cohort size, and to increase persistence of students in the first year.
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6. Reviewers recommend a review of curriculum to better reflect the relationship between the geographical and thematic/critical facets of recent historical writing and teaching.
7. Some pre-tenured faculty expressed concerns related to prioritization of service responsibilities. Reviewers suggested prioritizing representation on curriculum committee and faculty advising. Advisors should include at least one faculty member whose teaching and research focuses on recent critical interventions in gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class.

### **Recommendations**

It is therefore agreed that the Department of History will collaborate with the College of Liberal Arts and Academic Affairs to:

1. Continue to implement the program's comprehensive assessment plan in order to complete annual assessments using direct and indirect methods and report on closing the loop activities to illustrate that continuous learning outcome data are used to inform decision making. Provide an annual update (due June 1) on progress made towards MOU actions to the CLA Dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Coordinators of Program Review and Assessment. Your review cycle will be from 2023-2030. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2030 for a 2030-2031 Academic Year review process.
2. Assess the decrease in undergraduate majors and determine an appropriate plan to improve undergraduate enrollments.
3. Re-employ some of the Department's pre-pandemic strategies to improve baccalaureate retention and graduation rates, including individualized advising and support in gateway courses. Assess if drops in baccalaureate graduation rates are truly due to the pandemic, or other conditions that are yet to be determined.
4. Assess the Bachelor's curriculum for potential update and revision.
5. Evaluate the first year persistence of the Master's program to determine if any curricular or support changes would lead to both the ability to increase admission cohort size and to maintain persistence of students in the first year.
6. Assess service commitment requirements (e.g., type and amount of service) for pre-tenure faculty on an individual basis to best serve the faculty members' and the Department/University needs.

This MOU has been read and approved by: *(DocuSign signature page on file)*

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