A. ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING
What actions did you take in 2012-2013, based on previous assessment findings, to improve student learning in your program? (Refer back to plans indicated in “Response to Assessment Findings” in 2011-2012 Assessment Report.)

With the transition to semesters, we restructured the major, replacing HST 400 with HST 3000, a class designed to introduce students to how historians write and research. The goal in moving this class to the 3000 level was to indicate clearly to students that it should be taken before any 4000-level classes are taken. This was intended to ensure that students have taken HST 3000 before they take HST 4900 (the capstone research seminar, previously HST 401). In the past, students sometimes took HST 401 before HST 400, because they did not understand that one was a foundational course for the other. This meant that they were not well-prepared for the independent work required in HST 401 (now HST 4900).

We have also asked the faculty teaching both HST 3000 and HST 4900 to include the benchmarks in their syllabi, so that students understand the goals for the course. This year we asked all faculty to include the relevant benchmarks in all their syllabi, and those teaching HST 1100 and HST 1200 to include the learning outcomes for Area 3: Global Traditions.

B. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSED AND EXAMINED
Which Program Level Student Learning Outcomes did you assess and examine during 2012-2013? List the Program Level Student Learning Outcomes using the format of “Graduates will be able to __________________.”

(Please note that due to specialized accreditation requirements, accredited programs may be required to assess and report on all program level student learning outcomes every year; accredited programs should report in a manner that will align with their accreditation. Programs not carrying specialized accreditation may assess all of their learning outcomes every year but may choose to report on 2-3 per year, looking at several years of data.)

Graduates will be able to:

- write proficiently,
- understand the methodology that historians use, and
- analyze primary sources and secondary works in order to arrive at a coherent and well-organized conclusion.

C. METHODS FOR COLLECTING DATA
Which students were included in the assessment? (For example, all seniors completing Course X in Spring 2013, all graduating seniors, etc.)

All graduating seniors, half the students who took HST 4900, and all students who took HST 3000. The department collected an upper-level history paper from all graduating seniors when they came for a graduation check; the faculty teaching HST 3000 and HST 4900 submitted copies of the final papers to the department. (Two sections of HST 4900 were offered, but one of the faculty members did not turn in copies of the final paper, leading to a slightly smaller overall sample.)

D. ASSESSMENT MEASURES
- What key assessments/assignments/student work did you examine to directly assess the Program Level Student Learning Outcomes listed above?
The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee assessed papers from the 2012-13 academic year in HST 3000 (2 sections) and HST 4900 (1 section). They also assessed the upper-level history papers turned in by graduating seniors.

- What, if any, indirect assessments (e.g. exit survey, alumni survey, focus groups, etc.) did you use to indirectly assess the Program Level Student Learning Outcomes listed above?

All graduating seniors completed an exit survey.

E. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS
What did you find from your assessments? What did your data reveal about how well students are achieving the Program Level Student Learning Outcomes that you listed above?

For the academic year 2012-2013, 44 students submitted papers for HST 3000: Introduction to Historical Analysis and/or HST 4900: Research Seminar. The HST 3000 papers are shorter and more narrowly focused, as students are just learning to write historically. The HST 4900 papers are lengthy (20 pp.) research papers that utilize secondary and primary materials in writing on topics of the students’ choosing. The 16 graduating seniors who came for a graduation check also submitted an upper-level History paper of their choice.

Members of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee read all of these papers, basing their assessment on the following set of measurable benchmarks:

a. The student’s work demonstrates writing proficiency.
b. The student’s work demonstrates a command of the methodology employed by historians.
c. The student’s work demonstrated the analytical, organizational, and critical skills desired.

The members of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee gave a rating of “M” (“meets”), “N” (“does not meet”), or “E” (“exceeds”) for each of these benchmarks for each paper for both courses.

1. The Committee’s findings on the papers were as follows:

a. “The student’s work demonstrates writing proficiency.” 9 papers (15%) exceeded the standard (E); 38 (63%) met the standard (M); and 13 or 22% did not meet the standard (N).
b. “The student’s work demonstrated a command of the methodology employed by historians.” 10 papers (17%) exceeded the standard (E); 33 (56%) met the standard (M); and 16 (27%) did not meet the standard (N). (One paper was removed from this sample, because the professor had not required that the paper follow Chicago Style, which is the professional standard for historians.)
c. “The student’s written work demonstrates the analytical, organizational, and critical skills desired.” 10 papers (17%) exceeded the standard (E); 34 (57%) met the standard (M); and 16 papers (26%) did not meet the standard (N).

The exit survey results of 16 graduating seniors were more positive.

15 students plan to enroll in a graduate program in the future. Of those, 4 plan to attend Wright State University, 1 plans to attend either Western Oregon or Concordia University, and 1 plans to attend the University of Dayton. 9 students are uncertain where they will attend graduate school.

2 (12.5%) of students strongly agreed and 14 (87.5%) agreed with the statement “My experiences in the Department of History have influenced my personal life.”

5 (31.25%) students strongly agreed and 9 (56.25%) of students agreed with the statement that “My education in the Department of History has influenced my professional abilities.” 1 (6.3%) student disagreed and 1 student strongly disagreed with the statement.
On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest, students indicated that they were satisfied with the variety of History courses offered. All students rated this either 7 (7 students), 8 (6 students), or 9 (3 students).

They were also generally happy with “The attention the faculty gives to individual students’ work.” 13 students rated the department between 7 and 10. 4 students rated this a 10, 7 students gave it 8, and 2 students gave it 7. 2 students were dissatisfied; 1 rated this a 2 and 1 gave it a 1.

Students were also generally happy with “The required ‘mix’ of courses (i.e., HST 3000, HST 4900, and 6 hours each of U.S., European, and non-Western history).” 14 students rated this between 7 and 10 (10 – 2 students, 9 – 5 students, 8 – 1 student, 7 – 6 students). 2 students were not satisfied, rating this a 1.

Students were less satisfied with the scheduling of classes: most rated this between 6 and 10 (10 – 2 students; 9 – 4 students; 8 – 3 students; 7 – 2 students; 6 – 4 students. 1 student rated this a 3.

They were also less satisfied with departmental advising. While 13 students rated the department a 10 (5 students), 8 (4 students) and 7 (4 students), the ratings of 3, 4, and 5 were each selected by a single student.

F. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS
How were results shared? With whom were they discussed?

The assessment was completed and compiled near the end of the fall 2013 semester, so there were few opportunities to discuss these in committee or in the department. In the spring 2014 semester, these results will be discussed by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee first, and then by the entire department.

G. ACTIONS PLANNED TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING
Based on what you learned from your assessment of the Program Level Student Learning Outcomes, what actions do the faculty in your program plan to take to improve student learning in your program/area? Describe the steps faculty have taken/will take to use information from the assessments for improvement of student performance and the program. List additional faculty meetings or discussions and planned or actual changes to curriculum, teaching methods, approaches, or services that are in response to the assessment findings.

After the assessment was completed, we learned that the faculty member teaching HST 3000 did not submit final papers, but papers written earlier in the semester. Assessing final papers in that class, as we do for HST 4900, will improve the ratings.

Next year we will be able to judge the effectiveness of reminding students of the benchmarks against which their essays are evaluated. We expect that the explicit reminders of these standards will prompt students to apply them as they write their papers. We will also discuss with faculty the desirability of using Chicago Style in all their classes so as to prepare better students for HST 4900.

We will also participate in a CoLA-wide initiative to explain to students how studying the humanities will help prepare them for graduate or professional school and for a career. This should help students make the connection between their academic work and their personal and professional lives.

H. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (recommended)
Please attach minutes of program faculty meeting where discussion of results and action planning occurred and any other relevant documents.