Assessment Report
2013

DEPT / PROGRAM ASSESSED: Graduate Program, History

ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR: Kathryn Meyer

The review was conducted by Kathryn Meyer, Director of Graduate Studies, and Dawne Dewey, Coordinator of the Public History Program

Enrollment Summary

45 Currently active Students; 33 in Public History

11 Graduates in April 2013; 6 graduates in December 2013

19 admitted this fall 12 in Public History

Recruitment

Web site
Graduate School Open House
Meetings with Prospective Students
Mailings of information to interested students
Word of mouth – This is an effective method. Our public history graduates work in museums and archives nation-wide. Many inquiries about the Public History Program came from people who have had contact with our graduates.
Alumni recommendations.

Communication

Orientation for new students

Publication: Public History Newsletter each term; distributed electronically

Weekly email announcements to current students and alumni with news about jobs, internship and capstone projects, events.

Dialogue with the Director sessions are held once per semester to get feedback from students on program strengths and weaknesses.

Director meets with each student in advising session at the beginning of each semester and throughout term as needed.
Professional Development

Phi Alpha Theta Chapter

Active student organization: Public History Professionals

Students go to regional, state and local conferences: American Association of Museums, Ohio Local History Alliance, Society of Ohio Archivists

Special Events

Public History Symposium March 22, 2013 9 student presenters 2 poster sessions

Public History Symposium scheduled for March 14, 2014

40th anniversary of program is coming up in 2014. Plans are underway to host reunion, Fall 2014.

Spring field trip to Lincoln Library, Springfield, IL

Adjunct Faculty

Held biannual adjunct faculty meeting to discuss student success, curriculum, course scheduling, community partnerships

Community Partnerships, Projects and Internships:

Five Rivers Metro Parks
Dayton Rotary
Dayton History
National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian
National Museum of American History, Smithsonian
Archives of the City of New York
National Marine Corps Museum, Quantico, Virginia
National Park Service
Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park
University of Dayton Archives
Garst Museum
National Museum of the United States Air Force
Rock and Roll Hall of Fame
1913 Flood Commemoration Community Project
Clark County Heritage Center
Dayton Art Institute
International Efforts

Director traveled to China in October 2013 to investigate public history education. Explored partnerships to recruit Chinese students to WSU and also send WSU students to the Terra Cotta Warrior Museum and University of Hong Kong for internships.

1. ASSESSMENT MEASURES EMPLOYED

For this year’s (2012-2013) Assessment of the History Department’s Graduate Program, the measures employed are as follows:
   -- informal contacts with alumni of the graduate program
   -- regular contacts with recent graduates of the graduate program
   -- review of work and achievements of graduates

2. ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

1. Current students and graduates will communicate a sophisticated knowledge of history and disseminate it to the general public through completion of thesis projects, Public History conferences, and other presentations and exhibits

Findings: The Assessment finds that Objective 1 has been met. Four graduates completed the master’s thesis in the year under review, and presented their work in an open, formal defense. Graduate students in the history department organized a Public History Graduate forum, held March 2, 2013 at the Student Union, at which nine students presented papers. Public history graduates have also been extraordinarily active in the presentation of museum exhibits nationwide. So, too, have current students, making presentations at the Garst Museum in Greenville, the Wright Dunbar Interpretive Center in Dayton, and Beale Air Force Base in California.

2. Current students and graduates will encourage others to explore and understand the historical context of their lives through public contact in societies, historical organizations, community and social groups, museums and archives.

Findings: The Assessment finds that Objective 2 has been met. Graduates and current students alike have been very active in the annual meetings of major professional associations, including the Ohio Academy of History, the Society of American Historians, the Society of American Archivists, and the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums.

The recent graduates under review have strong connections with professional institutions, having interned with, or completed projects in conjunction with the
National Air and Space Museum, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Marine Corps Museum, National Museum of the US Air Force, Dayton Art Institute, Carillon Historical Park, Clark County Historical Society, Boonshoft Museum of Discovery, the Children's Museum in Cleveland, and many others.

3. Graduates will continue to develop their own appreciation and knowledge of history through contact and friendship with other historians (through the department, alumni, and professional organizations), and through a continued quest for knowledge by readings and perhaps archival research.

Findings: The Assessment finds that Objective 3 has been met. Many of our graduates are members of Phi Alpha Theta, the history profession's honor society. Thanks to Dawne Dewey, the director of our Public History program, the alumni have continued to keep in close contact with fellow WSU graduates, as well as with the faculty.

4. Students enrolled in the master of history program are prepared to matriculate into Ph.D. programs or to advance their careers in secondary education. Graduates in the Public History plan will be qualified to obtain employment in historical organizations, archives, or museums.

Findings: The Assessment finds that Objective 4 has been met. Of the 22 students (16 in Public History, 4 in thesis-track, and 2 in the Course-Intensive track) who graduated with the MA in History in the period being assessed, at least 12 are currently employed in history or teaching-related field. Of the remainder, 3 are employed in other fields, while the status of 6 is not known. The Public History program is especially successful in this area. About 60% of graduates found work in the field in the first year.

3. RESPONSE TO ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Strong job placement within the Public History track, as well as successful placement of current students in prestigious internships, shows that students in this program are being more than adequately prepared for their professional careers.

Our faculty has successfully guided six other students to completion of an academic master's degree in history in the past year. These graduates have used their degrees to enhance their teaching credentials, or to pursue personal advancement. In the past, our graduates have continued into more advanced graduate studies. None of the graduates from 2011-12 have yet chosen to do so.

The graduate program has undergone significant redesign in the shift to semesters. One of the guiding principles has been to introduce flexibility into the program to enable students to complete their work in a timely and efficient way. This has meant, for example, that our program is less hide-bound by geographical and chronological
categorization. Graduate seminars are increasingly designed as theme courses, incorporating different geographic and chronological dimensions, such as both European and American components. This makes them more attractive and helpful to a broader group of students.

Our department has successfully incorporated the War and Society concentration to our academic master's program. This builds on the particular strengths of our faculty, and is giving shape to the program. Longer term, we would like to increase the diversity of our graduate students. We would also like to increase the scope of our recruiting. For this purpose in this academic year we are going to open up our recruiting in China. This project is already underway. Dawne Dewey represented the University and Department last October on a trip to Xi’an China where she met with the curator of the Terracotta Warrior exhibit. She also stopped in Hong Kong where one of our graduates works at the University of Hong Kong.

4. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES FOR COMING YEAR

The professional success and involvements of our graduates will be monitored as before. There will be a more vigorous effort to track our academic graduates as well as our public history graduates. Most important will be to assess how the Wright State master's degree has advanced the professional and social lives of our graduates. How many have employment in history-related fields? How many pursue higher degrees in academia? Have graduates been active in history-related institutions or activities? Finally, how has higher study of history assisted in their careers and community activities?

5. NEW ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENTS

The primary goal in the current year is to compile a more complete list of alumni, and to reestablish contact with as many as possible, particularly those from the thesis and course-intensive tracks. If successful, it may be possible to survey them more formally on their professional experiences, as well as their perspective on their Wright State training.