



Tennessee State University

Department of History, Geography, Political Science, and Africana Studies

TBR Academic Audit Self Study

Undergraduate Program (B.A.) in History

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1. Introduction

For much of History's recent existence, the program has been part of the Department of History, Geography, and Political Science, but in Fall 2011, following a major reorganization of departments and programs, the Africana Studies program joined the department. Although the four disciplines in the department cooperate in many areas, most notably co-curricular activities and approval of curricular changes, final oversight of most academic initiatives rests within the disciplines.

The history program serves a wide variety of students. At the undergraduate level, these include History majors (there are about 50 active majors each semester), History minors, students seeking to fulfill the General Education requirements in History (two courses are required from HIST 2010, 2020, and 2030) and in the Humanities (HIST 1210 and 1220 are two of the options available), students in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program, students in TSU's three interdisciplinary minor programs (Women's Studies, Intelligence Studies, and International Affairs), Urban Studies students, and students pursuing teacher licensure. At the graduate level History serves students pursuing teacher licensure and is an elective in other graduate programs.

Tennessee State University is a historically black institution that remains majority African-American (about 80%) with a significant non-black enrollment. About 15% of TSU undergraduates are over 25 years old (Academic Master Plan, p. 4). History majors and non-majors in History courses for the most part mirror the overall population of TSU students (Department Profile).

Currently the History faculty includes nine tenured faculty (a tenth, Dr. Bobby Lovett, retired at the end of Fall 2011), one tenure-track faculty member, two full-time temporary faculty, and six part-time adjunct faculty. In addition to the department head, two of History's tenured faculty currently have significant administrative duties that remove them from the classroom (Dr. Dark as interim associate dean of Liberal Arts and Dr. Corse as interim director of Interdisciplinary Studies).

The normal full-time load for History faculty is four courses a semester plus a research project considered equivalent to another course. Most faculty teach three sections of a survey course and one upper-division course per semester, though there are some variations for faculty who have administrative or advisement duties or who teach RODP courses. Faculty show their strong commitment to teaching in a number of ways, ranging from curricular initiatives to development and teaching of on-line courses to participation in the WRITE program (see Section 3.4) to authorship of textbook study guides. Furthermore, faculty commitment to the university, the profession, and the Tennessee community can be seen in faculty involvement in university service (chairs college-wide and university-wide committees, participation in the governance of interdisciplinary minors), in professional organizations (Southern Historical Association, Southeastern Medieval Association, etc.) and in community service (support of History Day, Sister Cities of Nashville, NAACP programs, historic sites, etc.). Finally, although History faculty have teaching as their primary job responsibility, their scholarly production remains high. Ten of the eleven tenured or tenure-track faculty have recent publications, including books, edited volumes, book chapters, journal articles, and encyclopedia articles, as well as numerous conference presentations. The activities of the History faculty indicate the high degree of integration of teaching, service, and research in their professional lives.

The self-study process involved a series of meetings (with two focal areas to be discussed per meeting) open to all faculty. Faculty teams undertook responsibility for specific focal areas in which to lead discussion and write reports (originally two or three faculty for each focal area, though one area dropped to a single faculty member due to a mid-semester retirement announcement). In addition one faculty member (a former adjunct faculty member herself) acted as a liaison to survey the adjunct faculty about curricular and other matters. The faculty had additional opportunities to discuss written materials in the weeks leading up to the submission deadline.

2. Overall Performance

An overall assessment of the History program reveals many strengths. History has a highly qualified faculty with a strong commitment to teaching, research, and service and an engaged group of majors who are eager to rise to the intellectual challenges of the discipline. The areas where the program needs work include building the number of majors and carrying out ideas generated through the large number of reports that we have had to produce as part of Tennessee State University's response to budgetary and other crises. Better support from the office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research would increase the department's overall effectiveness in these endeavors.

The History program is showing success in increasing the numbers of majors and graduates. The program slowly gained graduates from 2000 to 2006 (going from 5 in 2000-2001 to 10 in 2005-2006), but numbers of graduates dropped about the time of the last academic audit (4 to 6 graduates annually for the period from fall 2006 through spring 2009). The number of graduates is growing, however, with 13 and 11 graduates respectively for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 years. We expect this trend to continue based on advisement records and are working to actively promote the major among prospective students and undecided students in lower-division courses. The program should also see an increase in new students entering the program thanks to correction of a previously unnoticed (and apparently longstanding) omission of History from the major choices on TSU's on-line admission form. This indicates the need for closer monitoring of forms generated through other offices.

History has taken an active part in the development and implementation of TSU's latest Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), the WRITE program (see Section 3.4). Former department head Joel Dark was an important leader on the development committee, and the American History survey has become a key component in the program. As an early result of WRITE implementation, the American History survey is experiencing several significant changes. The result has been the addition of two full-time temporary faculty and a reduction in class size to support more emphasis on writing and feedback. The implementation of prerequisites for the courses has decreased the total number of sections offered from about 45 sections per semester before implementation of the program in Fall 2009 to about 35 sections per semester. This has allowed History to rely less heavily on adjunct faculty to teach American History. World History sections are not part of the WRITE program requirements and have continued to maintain their enrollments at around 25 to 30 students per section with two or three sections offered per semester. Because of administrative reassignments, one or two sections of World History are now taught by adjunct faculty each semester. Upper-division courses remain relatively small (generally fewer than 20 students per section), which allows faculty to concentrate on helping students with research and writing. Faculty are working on creating a seminar course that will bridge the gap between the junior-level History Workshop and the capstone Senior Project and serve as History's final addition to the WRITE curriculum. In order to better assess programmatic learning outcomes History is piloting a new faculty-generated essay-format major field assessment that will replace the former multiple-choice examination provided by ETS.

As have many TBR schools, Tennessee State University underwent a punishing round of budget prioritizations between 2008 and 2011. The History program generally fared well in these assessments. In August 2010 the committee charged with the first round of prioritization recommendations included the History B.A. among "mission centric and highly productive programs." (This was the highest of four possible rankings, one achieved by 30 of the 76 programs studied.) Nevertheless, a presidential memo, citing a follow-up by another committee, in April 2011 placed History on the "retain and monitor" list.

3. Focal Areas

3.1. Focal Area 1: Learning Objectives

History's learning objectives are, in part, developed through standards set by the American Historical Association, the State Board of Education, and the National Council for Social Studies. The

learning objectives also reflect the General Education standards as they relate to content knowledge, critical analysis, research, and communication skills. Program faculty may also consult the objectives and best practices set forth by TBR, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and to continue to refer to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to enhance the curriculum for teacher licensure.

The department's American History Survey Committee coordinates many aspects of the course. In the American History surveys, students have common textbooks, syllabi, examinations, and writing assignments. Now that the American History Survey is a component of the WRITE program (see Section 3.4), all students will produce writing artifacts for an e-portfolio. Professors teaching the survey may order and recommend additional books to supplement the main text and lectures. Many professors also use primary sources found in the textbook and elsewhere, and utilize additional assessment procedures including the evaluation of oral presentations, regular homework, and quizzes to assist students in meeting their courses' learning outcomes.

The department has seven agreed upon learning outcomes for its surveys. Students taking our American History surveys should be able to:

- recognize and correctly identify persons, institutions, and events of importance in American history from the Colonial Period through the present;
- discuss major themes in the development of American politics, society, and culture during this period;
- demonstrate an understanding of the global context of American history;
- apply historical perspective to contemporary issues;
- recognize and critically evaluate historical interpretations;
- analyze documents in their historical context;
- and construct well-written essays using basic academic writing conventions.

The common starting point for students in their efforts to achieve the course's learning outcomes is the American History survey text, Gary Nash, Clayborne Carson, et. al., *The American People and The Struggle for Freedom: Second Custom Edition for Tennessee State University* (Pearson Custom Publishing, 2011). The department's American History Survey Committee created this custom textbook to better meet our students' needs. The text is a combination of two textbooks, a traditional American history text and an African American history text. It provides students with a broad but very inclusive history of the United States with both a narrative and an interpretive examination of the past. Adjunct faculty have asked to be included to be included in the selection process and will be included during the next adoption cycle. The survey's role in the WRITE program may also cause the rethinking of some course materials. The amount of reading required of survey students is ambitious for a sophomore-level survey course. By the semester's end, students enrolled in HIST 2010 will have read twenty-seven chapters of text if they complete all required readings. Faculty need to determine whether this amount of reading is having a detrimental effect on our students' ability to meet course objectives.

The objectives of the department's advanced courses mirror those of its surveys, although the level and amount of writing required are significantly greater. Examinations in these courses are a combination of essay and identification, and writing assignments include traditional research papers (which vary from 10-20 pages in length), analytical essays, and book reviews. In many advanced courses and seminars class participation plays a significant role in student assessment. The department's capstone course, Senior Project, requires students to compile an annotated primary source document on their selected topic and present it to the department at the semester's end (see Section 3.3). Other advanced courses require students to present, discuss, and defend their research to their class. More recently, the department's Public History course has required students to actively engage both local and state public history sites by visiting properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Civil War battlefields, and state libraries and museums.

A review of survey and advanced courses reveals an active engagement of faculty with students in an effort to meet stated course and programmatic objectives.

3.2. Focal Area 2: Curriculum and Co-Curriculum

The faculty's most recent discussions regarding the curriculum and co-curriculum have centered on the twin goals of increasing the number of majors and improving the overall educational experience of all students. The faculty's commitment to the process is evident in the large number of innovative and successful endeavors in these areas.

Curricular changes have largely arisen from faculty concerns about providing an attractive and coherent curriculum for majors that draws on the strengths of existing faculty with adequate offerings to serve the needs of the wider student body. The timeframe for changes has often been set by a recent slew of internal reporting requirements, including the Academic Prioritization Report and the Action Plan. Concerns about increasing the number of history graduates and making the major more appealing to TSU students triggered discussions on curriculum design and sequencing in the fall of 2009 (Planning Meetings, 2009 and 2010). This discussion primarily arose as we developed a five-year course rotation (Appendix II) as well as a discussion regarding creating a new seminar course to help students better connect HIST 3500 (History Workshop) with HIST 4500 (Senior Project). The idea for this emerged from interviews Dr. Dachowski held with colleagues (Appendix I), and the expectation is that the new seminar course will better help students connect Workshop with the Senior Project.

Those faculty who regularly teach upper-division courses have continued to build on skills learned in Workshop, as was recommended by our most recent curriculum evaluation. Curriculum design in the upper-division courses is both formal and informal. The process for proposing and changing courses is through the Departmental Curriculum committee, but faculty most often work together on new and changing courses prior to that phase. For instance, Dr. Schmeller and Dr. Browne are in the process of swapping an upper-division course. Dr. Schmeller is also offering a Special Topics course on "Conspiracy in History" this semester based on conversations with several faculty about the need for more appealing and engaging course offerings. Dr. Williams, who taught a similar course at his previous institution, has provided many useful insights and text recommendations and will be guest lecturing as well.

The majority of curriculum discussions surround the American History survey courses, HIST 2010 and HIST 2020. A good example of this is the textbook adoption process, which led to the creation of a custom textbook for the HIST 2010-2020 (see Section 3.1). The most significant change in the history survey has been the participation of the History Department in the WRITE program (see Section 3.4). The assessment process and collaborative discussions within the department have only just begun as we begin the implementation of WRITE in our upper-division courses as well. Course design will necessarily have to change, and part of that process is the previously mentioned new history seminar course that is in development.

The History faculty foresee future changes in emphasis due to the closing of the Africana Studies major, proposed creation of an Africana Studies minor, and merging Africana Studies administratively with History, Geography, and Political Science. Although the disciplines will retain their independent identity, the merger will facilitate greater collaboration in curricular and co-curricular planning. The merger will also give a wider scope for development of History's already strong offerings in African and African-American History. The department recently lost an eminent scholar of African American history due to retirement, but it still has several faculty with expertise in the field and others who can discuss the Civil Rights Struggle with a perspective, style, and nuance that few faculty in the state or textbooks can match. Given these assets, the department will undoubtedly continue to pursue programs (both curricular and co-curricular) to engage students with the history and culture of Africa and people of color.

Co-curricular programs in History are a significant portion of what we do. While most of our co-curricular activities reach larger groups of students, we are also in the process of developing an internship course for majors interested in public history to reflect the addition of Dr. Williams to our faculty.

The most prominent example of co-curricular activities that the department sponsors remains the Samuel Shannon Distinguished Lecture Series, named in honor of Dr. Samuel Shannon, who served in the Department of History, Geography, and Political Science for over thirty years. Dr. Shannon frequently invited guest speakers to the university during his tenure at TSU, and the lecture series continues his vision of welcoming renowned scholars and community leaders to the campus to enrich and inspire students, faculty, and the general public with engaging lectures each semester. The five members of the committee have diverse intellectual pursuits and represent a wide array of academic interests among our students and colleagues. Committee members' awareness of this shared responsibility has enriched our lecture offerings particularly for Black History Month and Women's History Month as well as for the opening lecture in the fall semester. In 2010 and 2011, the committee began co-sponsoring lectures with other departments on campus, both to diversify the Shannon lectures and to stretch our resources in the face of budget cuts. During the past two years, the following lectures were presented, with an average attendance of 60; however, several lectures had 150 attendees (marked with *). Others had well over 300 attendees (marked with **).

- Mr. Gary Younge, award-winning author and journalist, co-sponsored with TSU's Common Reader/Freshmen Orientation Program
- Dr. Portia Holmes Shields, Interim President, Tennessee State University**
- Mr. Cyril Sartor, Senior Analyst, Central Intelligence Agency*
- Dr. Lydia Pulsipher, geographer, University of Tennessee-Knoxville*
- Dr. Michelle Scott, music historian, University of Maryland-Baltimore County**
- Dr. Patricia Heberer, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (co-sponsored with TSU's College of Education)
- Dr. Anwaar Ibrahim, Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt (co-sponsored with the TSU Dept. of Africana Studies)*
- Dr. Thomas A. Schwartz, historian and political scientist, Vanderbilt University
- Dr. Beverly Bond, historian of Tennessee women, University of Memphis*
- Former U.S. Ambassador Thomas Miller, founder of Model U.N.*

The Samuel Shannon Lecture Series has brought students into contact with many first-rate scholars and prominent individuals in the global community whom they would not ordinarily meet. These opportunities provide wonderful thought-provoking moments of engagement and learning that are a service to Tennessee State University.

The Phi Alpha Theta chapter (a national history honorary) at TSU has struggled for the past few years. Finding an appropriate time for the chapter to meet that is convenient for students and encouraging them to assume responsibility for the chapter have been definite challenges. Faculty have remained connected to PAT on a national and local level. Dr. Michael Bertrand, advisor to TSU's PAT chapter until 2010, has been a judge for the Phi Alpha Theta National Paper Competition for the past several years. The competition includes categories for both undergraduate and graduate papers. In addition, in January 2011, Dr. Bertrand was invited to Austin Peay State University to give a paper at their Phi Alpha Theta banquet. He presented "Remixing the Master: Music, Race, and the Central Theme of Southern History Revisited," which is now under consideration for publication by the *Journal of Southern History*.

Phi Eta Sigma is a national freshman honorary housed in the Department of History, Geography, and Political Science advised by Dr. Erik Schmeller. Open to all majors, 286 freshmen have been inducted since its founding in May 2004.

Finally, History faculty continue to sponsor and organize scholarly meetings on or near campus. Two events this spring are exemplary of faculty initiatives. History and Africana Studies faculty play an important role in the annual Nashville Conference on African-American History and Culture (<http://www.nashville.gov/mhc/docs/conference/AAHCconfreg2012.pdf>). Dr. Oyebade is also organizing a conference on U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa (<http://www.tnstate.edu/usafriacconference/>). Both of these conferences have as an audience professional scholars but offer many opportunities for students and the general community to enrich their historical understanding.

3.3. Focal Area 3: Teaching and Learning

The most important initiatives in teaching and learning have focused on courses at the very beginning and very end of the History program. The American History survey and the Senior Project in many ways set the tone for the rest of the curriculum.

The American History Survey courses (HIST 2010 and HIST 2020) have common syllabi, developed by a departmental committee, the American History Survey Committee. The committee also develops examination study guides designed to help students prepare for the two common examinations in the courses, the midterm and the final, which are departmentally administered under the auspices of the committee. The examinations are designed to test the courses' learning outcomes (see Section 3.1). Another benefit of having common questions is to assure collaboration among faculty teaching different sections of the courses. This tradition of collaboration among faculty has greatly facilitated the early phases of applying the WRITE program to the American History survey (described more fully in Section 3.4).

The examinations comprise two parts: (a) multiple-choice and (b) essay. The multiple-choice questions are based the terms and concepts derived from significant people, events, and concepts presented in the required text. For each term, students are expected to know basic factual information (who, what, when, where) and recognize significance (why the term is important). The questions are thus designed to test students' familiarity with historical persons, institutions, and events. The essay questions require students to demonstrate their ability to use the knowledge acquired in the course to make connections, analyze arguments, and present their own ideas. The questions also provide students the opportunity to demonstrate writing competency in matters of grammar, spelling, clarity, legibility, and organization.

The inclusion of lower-division history courses within the WRITE Program (See Section 3.4) is meant to make students in the early stages of their TSU careers build confidence in their ability to communicate in a traditional textual format. Many of the students who enter the university come from backgrounds that do not place a large emphasis on reading and writing; this makes it difficult for those students to achieve collegiate success over the long term. Essential to the program is the creation of an environment where writing (and reading) truly is fundamental. Because the discipline of history relies so heavily on written sources, its association with the WRITE program is a logical fit. The relationship is one that benefits both our department and the university as a whole. It puts greater stress on the fundamental skills necessary to think critically about information received. It likewise compels students to write in a style and format that relates to the human experience. Since all students at the university have to pass through history survey classes, this benefit extends far beyond the History program. As to the benefits accrued by the History Department, the WRITE program compels faculty to emphasize a skill set often neglected in an institution where scholarly research in the humanities is devalued above the departmental level. This tendency in turn creates enthusiasm throughout the department and boosts morale. The program also works to encourage the use of technology and wide-spread collegiality. The need to acquire new skills through attendance at various workshops encourages greater intercampus

exchange. This brings faculty together in ways that are ordinarily improbable. As a whole, the History Department's relationship to the WRITE program has produced benefits both expected and unforeseen.

Senior Project (HIST 4500) is a capstone course. It allows history majors to apply vigorously the various tools and perspectives that they have acquired in their academic careers. The course is built around the annotating of primary source documents. Students must place the documents in contemporary and historical contexts. This involves their working with traditional reference works, academic journals, and monographs. The course emphasizes the vital role of existing scholarship and the importance of library resources. Students become proficient in utilizing the *Chicago Manual of Style*, with a great deal of weight placed on writing in a consistent and cogent fashion. Through exercises that hone their skills, test their wills, and encourage collaboration, students learn the value of collegiality, organization, and discipline. The course treats them as junior scholars eager to continue their journey on the path to self-awareness and academic and professional fulfillment. It culminates in an oral presentation before peers, family, and faculty. The gathering concludes as a celebration of the student's hard work and transformation from the novice who entered the program into the lifelong learner who is prepared to face the many challenges that lie ahead.

When it comes to technology in teaching and learning, the History faculty vary widely in their utilization of technology within the classroom and in assignments outside of class. Many faculty are now using Desire2Learn (elearn) to create hybrid or entirely on-line classes. This will undoubtedly continue as faculty help students build portfolios in the WRITE program. Classroom resources include presentation technology (including projectors and computers with PowerPoint) and audio-video devices (for DVDs, VHS tapes, and CDs). These are available in a limited number of "smart classrooms" and on portable technology carts. More interactive technologies (such as clickers) are not readily available to History faculty. Several faculty make use of on-line resources (the American History textbook comes bundled with many on-line features, for example, and the library has extensive e-collections). TSU already provides training on the use of particular platforms so basic technology is available to those who choose to use it. Although History faculty are making good use of technology, better facilities would improve application of technologies and encourage late adopters. Likewise, faculty would welcome training on pedagogical applications in the humanities and social sciences.

3.4. Focal Area 4: Student Learning Assessment

The History program conducts a comprehensive, summative assessment of its learning outcomes for graduating seniors each fall and spring semester. The assessment (Appendices II and III) requires students to reflect on central questions of history as an academic discipline (continuity and change, causality, context, primary evidence, and historiography) with specific reference to topics in U.S. and non-U.S. history from courses completed in the program. This major field assessment, developed in response to the discontinuation of the ETS Major Field Test in history, represents a significant improvement over standardized testing for the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in the program.

Among the insights emerging from the Academic Audit in 2007 was the concern that that Major Field Test "does not reflect the breadth of instruction in the program, is insufficiently focused on critical analysis, and does not address the nature of history as a professional discipline at all." The program's new major field assessment addresses each of these deficiencies, aligns specifically with the program's learning goals of the program, and involves the faculty directly in assessment for program improvement.

Designed and submitted for THEC review last year, the new major field assessment is still in a pilot phase, but its first two administrations (on paper in the spring and on-line in the fall) demonstrate that it is easily implemented, engages students, and provides meaningful information for the faculty. In the initial pilot administration, for example, the average score for "Writing Style, Grammar, and Mechanics" was significantly higher than scores for either "Historical Content Knowledge" (second) or "Historical Thinking and Method" (third). This ranking, moreover, emerged consistently from the

application of the assessment rubric by three independent faculty reviewers. Although students' weaknesses in grammar and writing mechanics will certainly continue to concern the faculty, these results clearly, and perhaps surprisingly, suggest the need to focus on areas more specific to the History program and directly within the responsibility of the History faculty. Plans to reinforce our junior-level history methods course (History Workshop) by explicitly integrating concepts associated with historical thinking in all course syllabi (see below) emerged directly from these assessment results.

In addition to the summative, comprehensive assessment of learning outcomes provided by the major field assessment, the History program continues to ensure formative assessment of these outcomes throughout the curriculum. Items 3 and 6 in the program's review of course syllabi (Appendix V) address "Learning Outcomes" and "Assessment Information" respectively, with the former specifically linking course outcomes to "the role of the course in building toward the degree competencies of the academic major." Analyses of syllabi now form an important component of year-end faculty evaluations conducted by the department head, but the History faculty could make better use of them as programmatic guidelines as well.

Finally, as indicated above, the History faculty has taken a significant leadership role in the development and implementation of the University's 2010-2015 SACS Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), with enormous implications for improving the assessment of learning outcomes in its general education courses and in the History major. Entitled WRITE (Write→ Reflect→ Integrate→ Transfer→ Excel), the QEP establishes the sophomore American history survey (HIST 2010, HIST 2020, and HIST 2030) as a bridge between the University's First-Year Writing Program and the upper-level curriculum of participating programs, including History. In both the sophomore survey and in upper-level courses, culminating in the senior project, students in WRITE build an electronic portfolio demonstrating their development as writers and their achievement of course and major competencies.

The participation of the sophomore history survey in WRITE began in Fall 2011, with upper-level History courses scheduled to begin participation in 2012-2013. The History faculty has not yet conducted any systematic assessment of portfolio artifacts, but instructors in HIST 2010, HIST 2020, and HIST 2030 have begun using a common rubric developed to assess WRITE learning outcomes (organization, analysis, use of sources, etc.) within the context of a history course. With the expansion of the electronic portfolio to junior-level courses next year and to the senior project in 2013-2014, the History faculty will be able to combine portfolio assessment with its existing formative (course-embedded) and summative (senior major field) assessments to provide a fully integrated picture of student learning in the History program.

3.5. Focal Area 5: Quality Assurance

The History program at TSU, on its own and in collaboration with other programs in the department, has a number of assessment and quality assurance programs in place. Chief among these is the department's Assessment Calendar (Appendix VI), first developed in 2001 and reflected in the assessment program outlined in the department's entries in the Compliance Assist, TSU's comprehensive system for documenting assessment. Since the 2009-2010 academic year, the department has designated a faculty member as Assessment Coordinator (presently Dr. Joel Dark), who sits on the College's Assessment Committee. Both the department and the History program, in response to recent University mandates, have integrated their assessment programs with College and University-level assessment plans, primarily through Compliance Assist and the work of the Assessment Coordinator. The annual faculty evaluation process, which requires the development of faculty goals and objectives at the beginning of each academic year, is also a mechanism of quality assurance, while the advisement database provides an empirical basis for evaluating the effectiveness of advisement.

The Assessment Calendar, while a simple development, has led to more extensive and consistent assessment on the part of the faculty. Certain areas, such as instruction and learning outcomes, are scheduled for yearly assessment. Other areas are assessed once every four years. For example, both

advisement and co-curricular programs are scheduled for assessment during the current academic year. Besides the regular rotation of assessment, certain events have forced one-time assessment projects, as well as a re-evaluation of department and program assessment programs themselves. As noted above, recent financial crises prompted University officials to move forward on plans to cut programs, forcing an extensive and highly collaborative effort by the History faculty to closely evaluate the purpose and value of the program, as well as to expand an ongoing effort to study disciplinary best practices and compare our programs to others at peer institutions. The move by the University in 2009-2010 to an integrated assessment program using the Compliance Assist system forced both the program and the department to reevaluate assessment in terms of their integration with College and University goals and in the need to be more systematic. Further, the University's call for more clearly-defined tenure and promotion guidelines led to a broad collaborative effort on the part of the faculty to develop tenure standards, which will also serve as measuring stick for evaluating faculty progress.

- These efforts in assessment have led to real changes and are generating new initiatives. In response to the previous audit, to planned assessment, and to the more reactive assessment, the program identified low graduation rates as one of its key problems. As a result, a number of initiatives have been undertaken in advisement, scheduling, curriculum development and elsewhere. Numbers of graduates have improved (going from a low of 4 graduates in 2007-8 to 6 in 2008-9 to a high of 13 in 2009-10 with 11 graduates in 2010-11). The faculty's next challenge is to design methods for understanding the effectiveness of each of these recruitment, retention, and graduation programs, so that the faculty can identify areas for expansion and improvement.
- Assessment under the prior audit identified weakness in the senior major field exam as an assessment tool. The program ultimately settled on an in-house senior assessment exam tailored to program learning outcome goals. Data from the first year have already led the faculty to conclude that changes in the curriculum are required (see Section 3.4).
- Discussion between faculty and the current and previous chair have led to the conclusion that the year-end evaluation is incomplete in providing assessment data for faculty development. Already this has led to the chair establishing more frequent meetings with and classroom observations of tenure-candidate faculty, and calls for a new initiative in developing in-class evaluations of adjunct faculty. In a new initiative, faculty will design a peer evaluation system to provide further assessment data for faculty development.
- The University's adoption of the WRITE program will require the faculty to develop new assessment tools for both the U.S. history survey and the upper-division classes that will be integrated into the WRITE program over the next few years.
- While our assessment database has provided good data on advisement results, the faculty has identified a need for more student input. A final initiative will be a study of the Political Science faculty's use of an assessment survey for student advising to determine how it might be adapted for use by the History faculty (see Appendix VII).

4. Potential Recommendations and Associated Initiatives

History's involvement with the WRITE program (Initiative 1) has allowed the program to bring together several faculty priorities under a single initiative. Faculty have long discussed ways that we might strengthen student writing, build continuity between earlier and later courses in the curriculum, create a method of tracking student performance through several classes, and make clearer our relationship with the General Education goals of the university. The work we are doing with WRITE addresses all of these issues. It is not coincidental that WRITE figures so prominently in all five of the Focal Areas. In many ways changes in the major field assessment (Initiative 2), something that the faculty have wanted to revise for some time, have grown out of the portfolio/rubric model of WRITE. History's other initiatives grow out of a belief that we offer a strong program, leading students to a wide range of possible careers, but that we have hid our light under a bushel. Thus, we intend to put more

efforts into recruitment (Initiative 3) and building a career path through our Public History offerings (Initiative 4). Increased accountability and communication among History's stakeholders inspire the last two initiatives. Because adjunct faculty perform a significant role in teaching the American History survey (and more recently the World History survey as well), integration of adjunct faculty into the planning and execution of departmental initiatives is essential to the well-being of the program. History faculty are committed to developing a method for adjunct faculty to have representation on committees without overburdening a group of people who are notoriously underpaid with additional uncompensated work (Initiative 5). Finally, centralized advisement through a single faculty member has benefited the department in many ways, but the strengths and weaknesses of the current system have not been assessed from the student's point of view. This is particularly important given the greater emphasis being placed on retention at TSU and at TBR schools generally. A simple assessment form (adapted from one already used by our colleagues in Political Science) will allow the department to determine how to make advisement more effective (Initiative 6).

5. Matrix of Improvement Initiatives (see separate sheet)

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	Initiative	Objective	Who	Performance Indicator	When
1	WRITE	Bring TSU in line with WRITE guidelines for upper-division courses.	Faculty, WRITE coordinator, Curriculum Committee	Junior-level research seminar course; new pre-requisites for History Workshop, seminar course, and Senior Project; portfolio assessment for relevant courses.	Course changes and changes to major in place by Fall 2013; program fully functioning by Fall 2014.
2	Major Field Assessment	Implement an exit exam that assesses student mastery of major and general education goals for graduating seniors	Department Head, faculty	Test approved by TBR/THEC and administered annually.	Pilot, Spring 2011; fully implemented by Fall 2012.
3	Recruitment	Develop a recruitment program that targets area high school and community college students and undecided students on campus.	Department Head, academic advisor, Recruitment Committee	Increase number of active majors by at least 50% over 2007-2012 averages	Begin immediately, assess annually through Fall 2016
4	Public History	Further develop the Public History component to prepare majors for graduate school and/or employment in museums, historical preservation sites, and archival repositories.	Dr. Williams, Department Head, academic advisor, other faculty	Development of fully functioning internship program in Public History.	Fall 2013
5	Increased adjunct faculty participation on committees	Identify committees that address issues of interest to adjunct faculty and establish a plan for providing adjunct faculty representation on those committees	Department Head, committee chairs, adjunct faculty	Adjunct faculty representation on one or more departmental committees	Fall 2012
6	Advisement assessment	Create and administer an instrument to assess student satisfaction with advisement	Department head and academic advisor	Administration of advisement instrument and summary of findings	Implementation by Fall 2012; analysis by Spring 2013

6. Follow-up of Previous Academic Audit

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1 –Explore the possibility of offering a Bachelor of Science in History major to parallel degree programs within TBR and other regional institutions. In doing so, the program will provide an alternative to History majors and improve the program’s opportunity for increasing its enrollment.

Response: Faculty considered this proposal seriously. On the one hand faculty welcomed the idea of making History a viable major for a larger number of students but feared that creating a B.S. degree in History would only divide our numbers, thus creating two low-producing degrees by THEC calculations rather than one strong program. (A senior faculty member specifically recalled that TSU lost its B.S. in History during a previous round of cuts of low-producing programs.) Dr. Dachowski did some research on what other universities require and discovered that the most highly ranked programs nationally required a foreign language at the undergraduate and graduate level, as did schools in Tennessee and neighboring states that had graduate programs in History. Not having a foreign language, it was concluded, would be a detriment to students wanting to pursue advanced studies in History. Thus, faculty decided to work on enhancing the B.A. program through recruitment and better student support. Once the B.A. program is healthy, adding a B.S. program (perhaps with a focus on Public History) will be a more viable option.

Recommendation #2 –Solicit support from the Institutional Effectiveness Department for required student data.

Response: The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has provided some data to the department in a timely manner, but attempts to use that office as a resource have been fraught with difficulties. Some requests for information are returned quickly, but in most cases there are numerous delays, some explained by the complexity of the request but others more puzzling. One thing that might help would be a menu of common data sets for which the office could guarantee quick turnaround. Another problem is that the migration to the current Banner system caused academic records from before Fall 2008 to disappear from ready access. Thus, a request made in September 2011 for data going back to 2000 has yet to be fulfilled. Likewise, a much older request for a program demographic profile for History (as opposed to an amalgam of History, Geography, and Political Science) has not been acted on.

Recommendation #3 –Seek more involvement of adjunct faculty in the assessment of American History survey courses.

Response: Faculty are reluctant to require any additional work from adjunct faculty, who are paid at a very low rate and frequently have numerous time commitments outside of their employment by the department. However, a recent informal survey of adjunct faculty indicates that they are very interested in matters such as textbook selection that directly affect their teaching experience. In order to better address adjunct faculty needs, the department is proposing to make bringing adjunct faculty representation onto more committees a priority in the next assessment cycle.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES

In the 2007 Academic Audit Self-Study the Department of History highlighted four primary initiatives: creation of a History Committee; implementation of a syllabus review; new ETS Major Field Test questions; and assessment of co-curricular activities. In addition the self report highlighted two secondary initiatives: a Senior Project assessment and an assessment of the American History Survey examinations. This retrospective will examine each of these initiatives in turn.

Primary Initiative #1: History Committee: All department committees are interdisciplinary. A new History Committee comprising all permanent History faculty will work with the Curriculum Committee on matters pertaining to the quality of the History curriculum.

Actions: The creation of a History Committee, consisting of all interested History faculty, has been beneficial to the program as a whole. The committee has functioned well both through in-person meetings and through e-mail discussions of planning documents. Meeting as a discipline several times in the course of the academic year has allowed faculty to discuss common concerns and possible solutions in a collegial setting. The committee has also pulled together to produce strong reports when required to do so on short notice.

Primary Initiative #2: Syllabus Review: Syllabi for 3000 and 4000 level courses, made available online will be evaluated for adherence to best practices and program learning objectives. Appended forms will be used.

Actions: The syllabus review is an important first step in creating more unified standards and a common sense of purpose, as well as an added tool for use in year-end evaluations of faculty teaching. The implementation could be improved on in some areas. For the past few years the department has asked the Curriculum Committee to coordinate the review, something usually carried out towards the end of the semester. Last year, however, the Curriculum Committee decided that the review would be more fruitfully carried out by the disciplines, so the History Committee will take over this year. Carrying out the review earlier in the academic year will increase the value of the review, as faculty will discuss the results before the end of the year. From the review faculty will create a matrix to allow for the comparison of skills taught, subject matter covered, amount of writing, and amount of reading in courses at various levels. (Note that on-line availability of syllabi has been temporarily interrupted due to a university-wide restructuring of departmental web pages.)

Primary Initiative #3: New ETS Major Field Test Questions: History faculty will submit new questions to be added to the ETS exam designed to assess achievement of program learning objectives. Fifty will be selected by the History Committee to be added to the 2009 exam.

Actions: As described above (Section 3.4), the initial plan to add questions to the ETS Major Field Test was overtaken by events. When ETS discontinued its multiple-choice test, the faculty decided not to seek out another multiple-choice exam but instead to create an essay exam that would allow faculty to evaluate students on the skills laid out in the program's learning objectives. As a result, we have now piloted an essay test that asks our students to apply historical concepts and skills to subject matter that they have studied as part of the History curriculum (see Appendices III and IV).

Primary Initiative #4: Assessment of Co-curricular Activities: The Student Development Committee will evaluate co-curricular activities based on best practices and program learning objectives using appended evaluation form.

Actions: The department has begun keeping data on attendance at lectures and talks and has continued to work at building the Phi Alpha Theta chapter (both discussed in Section 3.2). Assessment of the lecture series indicates that the program is a strong one with good outreach into the TSU community. Further work at determining what would make the Phi Alpha Theta experience meaningful for TSU students is still necessary.

Secondary Initiative #1: Senior Project Assessment: The History Committee will develop a rubric for assessing student learning as reflected in the oral and written presentations of the History Senior Project, based on program learning objectives.

Actions: Faculty are extremely pleased with the work of students in Senior Project, which Dr. Bertrand and Dr. Browne significantly redesigned in 2006. The redesigned course will be the capstone course for

History in the WRITE program. Faculty have delayed creating an assessment rubric until WRITE training and guidelines have been implemented. This will involve the entire History faculty as well as coordination with WRITE to create a rubric incorporating both WRITE and History learning outcomes. The WRITE coordinator began collecting copies of finished projects in Spring 2011 to serve as a basis of comparison for achievements once a cohort of students has had the opportunity to participate in WRITE activities throughout their entire college career. Since the program began establishing portfolios with the class of freshmen entering TSU in Fall 2010, faculty should have some feedback on the writing component of the program by the end of Spring 2014. Dr. Bertrand, who currently teaches the course, has begun teaching it as a hybrid (on-ground/on-line) course to facilitate WRITE portfolio collection; this could also be a way to streamline assessment of other course features.

Secondary Initiative #2: American History Survey Examination Assessment: The American History Survey Committee will develop and review multiple-choice test items for the common midterm and final examinations linked directly to course learning outcomes.

Actions: The American History Survey Committee never tires of its work to improve the quality of teaching and assessment in the course. Faculty are pleased with the course as it stands, but do not want to rest upon their laurels. The examinations have been the subject of numerous discussions and revisions over the past few years and will undoubtedly continue to evolve as the faculty engage each other in discussion of how to provide the best possible education for our students.

Appendices

- I. Report of interviews with History Faculty
- II. Course Rotation
- III. Proposed TSU Major Field Assessment in History (see web for grading rubric)
- IV. Preliminary Results of Pilot of Proposed TSU Major Field Assessment in History
- V. Syllabus Evaluation Form
- VI. Assessment Calendar (Comprehensive Assessment Plan)
- VII. Survey of Satisfaction for Advising

Additional Materials (available at http://faculty.tnstate.edu/edachowski/academic_audit.htm):

- VIII. WRITE guide for sophomore History students
- IX. Proposed TSU Major Field Assessment in History (questions but not rubric included in appendices to report)
- X. History Curriculum Evaluation
- XI. TSU Academic Program Prioritization Report
- XII. Departmental Profile page from College profile (History, Geography, and Political Science are combined on p. 8)
- XIII. History Program Planning minutes
 - a. Agenda from from September 9, 2009
 - b. Minutes from September 9, 2009
 - c. Minutes from December 8, 2010
- XIV. Academic Master Plan
- XV. Conference: U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa
- XVI. Nashville Conference on African-American History and Culture
- XVII. WRITE Program QEP

Summary of Interviews with History Faculty

STUDENT OUTREACH

Revival of History Club. tell students to leave a time block (MWF 12:40??) open for club activities. Work with POLI club on movie nights.

Non-Club activities. Brown bag lunch and discussion for faculty and students (current events, special topics, career advice, etc.).

Personal Touch. Get-to-know-you event at the beginning of the Fall semester. Do little things (birthday cards, list birthdays for the month in the newsletter, send letters of congratulations when a student has accomplished something). Paper awards at Awards Banquet (students in HIST classes can submit papers).

Career Awareness. Find careers of former History majors. Make grad/prof school a brown-bag topic.

Publications. Continue newsletter (use for other outreach activities). Start student on-line journal (similar to Lincoln Herald), but maybe every couple of years a hard copy.

BUILDING ENROLLMENTS AND MAJORS

Offer more “interesting courses”

Have both BA and BS option for History majors. (Some say BS a bad idea as language is important academic component of program; others say a BS would stem hemorrhage to IDS and that we could always advise good students to take a language or get other technical skills as grad school prep.)

Create a pre-law curriculum in Arts and Sciences (remove it from POLI and CRMJ); talk to Business about getting courses in Accounting and the like into a pre-law curriculum.

Build basic skills: citations, bibliography, recommend a methods text for all HIST courses (Marius and Page), library familiarity, fight plagiarism (Turn-it-in mentioned by several, need consistency among faculty and record-keeping to catch repeat offenders)

Create a Senior year seminar (prelude to Senior Project), thus filling a gap between HIST 3500 (early JR year) and HIST 4500 (end of SR year). Could rotate among faculty and cover broad themes.

Work on course levels: sophomore, junior, senior, etc.

Develop better recruitment materials (brochure, etc.)

EVALUATION AND TRACKING

Add essay component to Major Field Test and give prize for best essay.

Separate work of Curriculum Committee into two (or more committees): One dealing with simply approval of courses, another dealing with evaluation of syllabi and the like, perhaps a third ad hoc committee dealing with long-range planning and redesigning course numbers

Course Rotation

	Sp 10	Su 10	F 10	SP 11	SU 11	F 11	Sp 12	SU 12	F 12
Req in day	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0
Req at night	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	2
Req on-line	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Req hybrid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
US day	3	1	4	4	5	0	2	2	0
US night	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
US TSU on-line	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
US hybrid	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
US RODP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
non-US day	2	0	2	2	4	0	1	3	0
non-US night	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
non-US TSU online	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
non-US hybrid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
non-US RODP	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
World day	0?	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0
World night	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
World on-line	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
World hybrid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total UD	9	3	12	11	11	2	10	8	1
									8

**Tennessee State University
Major Field Assessment Pilot
B.A. in History**

Time Duration: 120 minutes

In full essays of at least five paragraphs each, respond to **three** of the following with **specific reference to courses completed as a part of the History major curriculum**.

At least one essay should address a topic in U.S. history, and at least one should address a topic outside the history of the U.S.

1. Periodization

Identify and discuss a question of historical periodization. Why have historians identified the era in question as a distinct historical period, and what perspectives or considerations suggest alternative patterns of continuity and change?

2. Causation

Identify and discuss a significant event or development attributed by historians to multiple short-term and long-term causes. What approaches to understanding historical change (political, economic, social, cultural, etc.) does each factor represent, and how do you rank their relative importance?

3. Context

Identify and discuss a historical subject for which you believe considerations of context are especially important in forming value judgments.

4. Primary Evidence

Identify and discuss an instance in which the examination of a primary source (or sources) has significantly challenged or changed your interpretation of a historical subject.

5. Historiography

Identify and discuss a historical interpretation that has changed significantly over time. What factors, internal and external to the discipline of history, contributed to this change?

Preliminary Results of Pilot of Proposed TSU Major Field Assessment in History

REVIEWER 1	Content	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Thought	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Writing	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Final Rating
Student 1	0.67	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.67	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.44
Student 2	2.33	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.44
Student 3	1.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.33	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.67	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.67
Student 4	2.67	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.89
	1.67	2.50	1.25	1.25	1.33	1.50	1.25	1.25	1.83	2.00	2.00	1.50	1.61
REVIEWER 2	Content	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Thought	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Writing	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Final Rating
Student 1	0.33	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.33	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.56
Student 2	3.33	3.00	3.00	4.00	3.33	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.56
Student 3	0.67	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.67	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.33	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.89
Student 4	2.33	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.33	2.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.56
	1.67	1.75	1.75	1.50	1.58	1.50	1.75	1.50	2.42	2.75	2.75	1.75	1.89
REVIEWER 3	Content	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Thought	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Writing	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Final Rating
Student 1	0.67	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.67	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	0.00	1.11
Student 2	2.33	2.00	2.00	3.00	1.67	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.67	4.00	4.00	3.00	2.56
Student 3	1.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	0.33	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.67	3.00	2.00	0.00	1.00
Student 4	2.33	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.67	2.00	3.00	3.00	2.67
	1.58	2.00	1.50	1.25	1.42	1.25	1.75	1.25	2.50	3.00	3.00	1.50	1.83

Tennessee State University
Department of History, Geography, and Political Science
Syllabus Evaluation

Course Number: _____ Course Title: _____

Semester/Year: _____ Faculty Member: _____

1. **Professional/Scholarly Presentation:** The quality of the syllabus is that of a published work of scholarship. Organization, format, and writing quality communicate to students the highest standards of the academic discipline.

Excellent Acceptable Improvement Needed

Comments:

2. **Essential Course Information:** The syllabus contains a thorough and compelling description of the course. The syllabus identifies the intended audience for the course and explains the rationale for its level (1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, graduate) and function in the larger curriculum, including prerequisites and related courses if applicable.

Excellent Acceptable Improvement Needed

Comments:

3. **Learning Outcomes:** The syllabus specifically communicates to students the essential knowledge and skills they will develop through successful completion of the course. The learning outcomes listed are comprehensive and consistent with the role of the course in building toward the degree competencies of the academic major.

Excellent Acceptable Improvement Needed

Comments:

4. **Resources and Methods:** The syllabus clearly explains to students the methods by which learning is achieved in the course (lecture, discussion, writing, activities) and refers them to resources (assigned books, additional reading, a bibliography) that will assist them further study and independent learning.

Excellent Acceptable Improvement Needed

Comments:

5. **Course Schedule:** The syllabus provides a calendar indicating the topics of each class meeting, examination dates, and due dates for assignments. The organization of the course schedule is logical and devotes appropriate amounts of time to the range of material covered in the course.

Excellent Acceptable Improvement Needed

Comments:

6. **Assessment Information:** The syllabus clearly explains assignments, examinations, and other assessment activities in the course and demonstrates their relationship to the course learning outcomes. Grading information, attendance expectations, and other policies are rational, consistent with university standards, and clearly stated.

Excellent Acceptable Improvement Needed

Comments:

Assessment Calendar

2010-2011

Advisement

Co-Curricular Programs

Syllabi (3000-4000 level courses)

*Political Science will begin assessment of Degree Competencies early

2011-2012

Degree Competencies

Internships

Public Service and/or Service Learning

2012-2013

Curriculum

Graduate Placement

Research

2013-2014

Grade Distributions

Facilities and Resources

Syllabi (1000 and 2000 level courses)

Advising

We are trying to learn about advising at TSU. Without your thoughts, we can't make it better. Your answers are anonymous. It will only take a few minutes. We hope you will participate and share your important thoughts. Thank you.

1) Overall, my experience with my advisor has been... *(please circle the appropriate number)*

- 1 Poor
- 2 Fair
- 3 Good
- 4 Very Good
- 5 Excellent

2) Do you agree, or disagree with the following statements *(please circle the appropriate number)?*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree/Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. My advisor listens to me.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I can ask questions of my advisor.	1	2	3	4	5
c. My advisor is prepared.	1	2	3	4	5
d. My advisor helps me pick the right classes.	1	2	3	4	5
e. I have confidence that my advisor knows the rules at TSU.	1	2	3	4	5
f. My advisor is helping me achieve my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
g. I would recommend other students to my advisor.	1	2	3	4	5
h. I know that I should see my advisor at least once a semester.	1	2	3	4	5

3) I am being advised for: *(please check all that apply)*

- History
- Political Science
- Teacher licensure
- Pre-Law
- Graduate School

4) My advisor today was:

- Dr. Dachowski
- Ms. McCutcheon
- Dr. Russell
- Dr. Schmeller

5) The advisor checked above: is my usual advisor, is not my usual advisor.

*Please use the back of this page to make any comments, or suggestions about advising that you think are important: **Thank You Very Much, Your participation is greatly appreciated!***