



2009-2010 Assessment Plan Report

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT AY 2009-2010

Report Date: June 1, 2010
School/College: Arts and Sciences
Department/Program: History
Person completing the Report: Uldis Kruze

1. **Overview Statement:** Briefly summarize the assessment activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:
 - a. which program learning outcomes were assessed this year.
 - b. who in your department/program was involved in the assessment of the above learning outcomes

The History Department discussed our three-year assessment plan at its November, 2009 meeting. At that time we confirmed the Department's initial decision to evaluate learning outcome #2 for the Spring, 2010 semester. Candice Harrison, Taymiya Zaman, and myself (Uldis Kruze) offered to assess the History majors in our classes for the Spring, 2010 semester. Kruze had developed a rubric (see attachment called "history majors learning outcome #2 assessment rubric spring 2010") for assessing Learning Outcome #2. The rubric was discussed at the November, 2009 meeting and approved by the Department.

Learning Outcome #2 reads as follows:

Our students and History majors will be able to

2. exhibit historical consciousness by understanding past societies and civilizations in their own contexts and times

The rubric to assess this learning outcome has four components, as follows:

Can the student demonstrate awareness of the existing intellectual "climate of opinion" or the material and/or institutional context (in a holistic sense) of the time and place?

Choice and contingency: Is the student aware of the range of choices or options or dilemmas that the historical actor confronted at the key moment of decision?

Factual content: Has the student included relevant facts that "place" or "situate" the



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historical moment at a unique time and place?

Historical perspective and judgment about the past. Can the student demonstrate an ability to draw implications from the past and apply them to the present? Has the student learned something from the past that illuminates or helps us understand present concerns or moral dilemmas?

2. Please Answers the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:

a. What did you do?

Describe clearly and concisely how you assessed the learning outcomes that were evaluated this year (e.g., measures, research methods, etc.). [please use bullet points to answer this question]

Participants in the assessment were Candice Harrison (US History); Taymiya Zaman (Islamic World); and Uldis Kruze (East Asia) who assessed a total of 20 History majors in 5 separate courses (US History Intro; US Popular Culture; the Islamic World; US-Japan Relations; and the Rise of China). The faculty members assessed student research papers, essays, and final exams. Uldis Kruze assembled the scores submitted and entered them as follows in the attachment “assessment history majors learning outcome #2 6.1.10.”

b. What did the faculty in the department or program learn this year?

Summarize your findings and conclusions as a result of the assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses in student learning demonstrated by this assessment.

It seems that we do relatively well in preparing our students in two categories: factual control and the ability to draw historical lessons. The two categories tied for the fewest “excellent” scores were 1) contextual awareness (awareness of climate of opinion or material context) and 2) awareness of choice and contingency for the historical actor (what range of choices lay before the person or persons at key moments of decision-making). These seem to be the areas where we need to address our current teaching strategies in order to develop greater student competency in “historical consciousness.”

c. What will be done differently as a result of what was learned this year?

Discuss how courses and/or curricula will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

My recommendation to the Department would be to increase the number of primary sources used in our courses, in order to draw out and enhance both issues of context and choice for our History majors.



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d. **What actions were taken this academic year “to close the loop” relative to what was discovered from last years assessment activities?**

Discuss how courses and/or curricula changed to improve student learning as a result of last year’s assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty helped students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

The results from last year’s assessment seemed to indicate that we needed to focus on improving the writing skills of our majors, expecting them to write more micro-themes or similar history-based writing exercises. However, we have not done this yet as a department. This will need to be addressed at our meetings for Fall, 2010.

3. **Attach a copy of the components of the department/program assessment plan that have been modified since its initial submission:**

- a. Program Mission
- b. Program Learning Goals
- c. Program Learning Outcomes
- d. Program Learning Rubrics aligned with outcomes
- e. Curriculum map that shows the courses that pertain to the outcome

Please return to: Provost Office by June 1, 2010

You can send your replies as either a Word attachment (to: marin@usfca.edu) or as a hard copy to: Provost Office, Lone Mountain Rossi Wing 4th floor.

If you have any questions, please contact: William Murry, Director of Institutional Assessment (wmurry@usfca.edu or x5486).