Template

Program ___ MA History _______

Department _ History __________________

Number of students enrolled in the program in Fall, 2011 ______ 126 _____________________

Faculty member completing template ___Aaron Cohen_________ (Date __1-31-12_______)

Period of reference in the template: 2006-07 to present

1. Please describe your program’s learning-outcomes trajectory since 2006-07: Has there been a transformation of organizational culture regarding the establishment of learning outcomes and the capacity to assess progress toward their achievement? If so, during which academic year would you say the transformation became noticeable? What lies ahead; what is the next likely step in developing a learning-outcomes organizational culture within the program?

   The MA History program does not have a formal assessment program, since the department has focused on BA learning outcomes. In 2011, however, the department developed a set of “graduate program goals” that will be the core of future learning outcomes.

   While ten years ago many faculty members were skeptical about assessment, at present the great majority accept the need for assessment. Our BA History assessment is a model process. The department expects to continue to develop its assessment plan to take into account further changes in assessment strategy and technique as recommended by the university.

2. Please list in prioritized order (or indicate no prioritization regarding) up to four desired learning outcomes (“takeaways” concerning such elements of curriculum as perspectives, specific content knowledge, skill sets, confidence levels) for students completing the program. For each stated outcome, please provide the reason that it was designated as desired by the faculty associated with the program.

   Students graduating from our MA program should be able to:

   a. Analyze and interpret primary and secondary historical material (demonstrates specialized and applied knowledge, critical and independent thinking skills, mastery of disciplinary standards of documentation)

   b. Identify and explain major problems in historical study (historiography) for their areas of study (demonstrates broad integrative knowledge, critical thinking skills, mastery of subject matter)

   c. Develop the pedagogical skills necessary to teach at the secondary, community college, or university level or the professional skills to work in their chosen specialty of public history.
d. Be competitive for admission to a nationally recognized Ph.D. program or for jobs in their area of specialization

3. *For undergraduate programs only,* in what ways are the set of desired learning outcomes described above aligned with the University’s Baccalaureate Learning Goals? Please be as specific as possible.

N/A

4. *For each* desired outcome indicated in item 2 above, please:
   a) Describe the method(s) by which its ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.
   b) Include a description of the sample of students (e.g., random sample of transfer students declaring the major; graduating seniors) from whom data were/will be collected and the frequency and schedule with which the data in question were/will be collected.
   c) Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument” (e.g., survey or test), “artifact” (e.g., writing sample and evaluative protocol, performance review sheet), or other device used to assess the status of the learning outcomes desired by the program.
   d) Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome.

The MA History program does not yet have a formal assessment program. Our BA History assessment is a model process and will serve as a starting point for our graduate committee in developing an MA specific assessment plan.

*If the requested data and/or analysis are not yet available for any of the learning outcomes, please explain why and describe the plan by which these will occur. Please limit your response to 500 words or less.*

5. Regarding each outcome and method discussed in items 2 and 4 above, please provide examples of how findings from the learning outcomes process have been utilized to address decisions to revise or maintain elements of the curriculum (including decisions to alter the program’s desired outcomes). If such decision-making has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.

The MA History program does not yet have a formal assessment program. The department graduate committee will be responsible for consulting with the department assessment committee and devising a formal assessment program. The department has begun this process in 2011 with the development of graduate program goals.

6. Has the program systematically sought data from alumni to measure the longer-term effects of accomplishment of the program’s learning outcomes? If so, please describe the approach to this
information-gathering and the ways in which the information will be applied to the program’s curriculum. If such activity has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.

In 2010, the department undertook an investigation and gathered data about how many of our former MA students are employed at regional community colleges or secondary schools and the private sector or were accepted to PhD programs in history. We also have some anecdotal evidence about these achievements. The public history concentration has conducted a survey of MA history graduates, and the standard concentration has considered adopting this survey.

7. Does the program pursue learning outcomes identified by an accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization as important? Does the set of outcomes pursued by your program exceed those identified as important by your accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization?

The MA History program does not have an accrediting agency.

8. Finally, what additional information would you like to share with the Senate Committee on Instructional Program Priorities regarding the program’s desired learning outcomes and assessment of their accomplishment?

The appropriate practices for graduate-level assessment is still under review and development on the national and university level. The history department expects to respond and adapt to any future recommendations that are made regarding MA assessment.

While the history department has not yet systematized an assessment program for the MA, the department has nonetheless devoted considerable time to discussing program strengths and weaknesses and revamping the program accordingly. For example, beginning in fall 2004 the department implemented a series of course requirement changes designed to allow students to demonstrate more specific training on their transcripts, to allow students more flexibility in signing up for seminars, and to allow them to plan more easily a program of study that meets their personal and professional interests. More recently, beginning in fall 2010 we restructured the standard program to encourage more students to complete exams rather than theses for their culminating requirement. This change was implemented in response to the desire to speed students’ time to graduation and to provide them with a culminating requirement more closely linked to their post-graduate goals (for most, teaching at the secondary school and junior college levels).