

2007 MASTER PLAN/PROGRESS REPORT

Educational Support Unit: Department of History

Person Responsible: Dr. Philippe Girard

Date Submitted: 31 May 2007

Mission: The Department of History provides education to prepare graduates for a wide variety of careers (in education, government, law, research) requiring critical thinking, analytical, and research skills that will enable them to become productive and ethically responsible citizens in a multicultural global community and value lifelong learning.

Institutional Mission Reference: The Department of History organizes lectures and activities that benefit the university and local community (EPO1). The Department offers general education surveys to improve the critical thinking skills and multicultural awareness of a wide range of university students, along with upper-division courses designed to teach research skills and advanced knowledge (EPO2). The Department publishes articles and delivers conference papers that are recognized by peers at other institutions as helping to advance scholarship in the fields of expertise of its faculty members (EPO3). The Department makes the best use of its resources to recruit students, offer quality education for a wide range of students, and fund research activities (EPO4).

Assessment Methods Utilized:

- Student Opinion Survey (SOS)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Internally-developed Survey
- Faculty Roster
- Annual Performance Review (APR)
- Community Involvement
- Exit Survey/Interview/Exam
- Grant Activity
- Number of Publications
- Participation in MSU Committees/Organizations
- Participation in Professional Committees/Organizations
- Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI)
- Unit Audit
- Data collection via Excel spreadsheet
- Data collection via Access database
- Other - Please describe: Peer review

Data Repository Location:

- _____
- _____
- History Department
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- Ibid
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Educational (Support Unit) Performance Objective 1: Engage in collaborative ventures and campus and community activities which enhance economic development and cultural growth.

<u>Expected Level of Achievement</u>	<u>Actual Data From Assessment</u>	<u>Actions/Decisions</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 100 percent of full-time faculty will engage in service to the University and / or community by participating in departmental, college, or university committees. ➤ The department will organize a total of 4 community events each year (public lectures, movie sessions, etc.). ➤ Phi Alpha Theta will initiate at least five new members each academic year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 80 percent (5/6) of full-time faculty participated in community events. ➤ Department members organized a total of seven community events. For example, one faculty member helped organize a tax session for foreign students on campus. Another received a grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities for the Banners Humanities Series. Another organized a movie / debate session on the Atlantic slave trade as part of Black History Month and delivered a lecture on the history of Peru for the Banners Series. ➤ Phi Alpha Theta initiated a total of six new members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ R: All faculty will be informed that organizing community events is an essential mission of McNeese State University and a component of their annual performance review. ➤ R: The department will organize one faculty research presentation a semester starting in the Fall of 2007 to help publicize its members' scholarly accomplishments. ➤ R: Phi Alpha Theta Members will be strongly encouraged to present papers at the annual meeting of the Louisiana Historical Association.

Educational (Support Unit) Performance Objective 2: Demonstrate excellence in teaching in order to enhance student recruitment, retention, and graduation.

<u>Expected Level of Achievement</u>	<u>Actual Data From Assessment</u>	<u>Actions/Decisions</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Every full-time faculty member will post a composite score of 80 percent or above on Student Evaluations of Instruction for their courses. ➤ On a scale of 1-4 on two questions from the Exit Survey which address all faculty teaching, the composite score will be 3.0 or better. The scale is: 1) poor, 2) fair, 3) good, and 4) excellent. ➤ Pedagogy and content will be considered satisfactory by the colleague conducting the peer review. ➤ Students will improve their knowledge of class content by 20% (in classes that use embedded questions to assess student knowledge of content). ➤ Students will improve their writing skills by 10% (in classes that have been earmarked as writing intensive and use rubrics to assess student writing skills). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All but one full-time faculty members scored 80 percent or more. Average scores were 89.48 percent (Spring-Fall 2006). Eight of the 14 people who taught in the department scored at or above the university average for the five universal questions on the SEI. ➤ The sixth question of the Exit Survey addresses faculty accessibility. The overall faculty rating was 4.00 (Fall 2006) and 3.64 (Spring 2007). The seventh question addresses quality of instruction. The overall rating was 4.00 (Fall 2006) and 3.78 (Spring 2007). ➤ Peer reviews were performed again after a one-year hiatus due to hurricane Rita. All full-time faculty were considered satisfactory or better. ➤ Twenty pre / post test embedded questions were introduced for the time as a pilot program in all sessions of HIST 201 and 202 in the Spring of 2007. The proportion of correct questions grew from 2800 / 7360 (38%) to 3233/5460 (59%) in HIST 201. The proportion of correct questions grew from 3909 / 9100 (42%) to 4334/7021 (62%) in HIST 202. ➤ Most history classes require significant writing components, but professors were only instructed to start keeping statistics half-way through the Spring 2007 semester and there is thus no available data yet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ R: The one faculty who fell just short of the benchmark received a peer review evaluation with suggestions on how to improve. ➤ M: no change made; continue to review data. ➤ M: no change made; continue to review data. ➤ R: Questions were fine-tuned to 1/ correspond to three themes emphasized in the class (politics, economics, and cultural diversity) 2/ rephrase some statements in a way that was less confusing for students. (May 2007) Embedded questions will be introduced in other General Education courses (101, 102, 121, 122) in the Fall of 2007. ➤ D: The World, Western, and U.S. history surveys will be designated as writing-intensive courses beginning in the Fall of 2007. Course review forms to that effect were submitted on 31 May 2007.

Educational (Support Unit) Performance Objective 3: Demonstrate commitment to research and creative and scholarly activity.

<u>Expected Level of Achievement</u>	<u>Actual Data From Assessment</u>	<u>Actions/Decisions</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Faculty will achieve a combined departmental output of at least one Tier 1 publication (e.g., book), five Tier-2 publications (e.g., articles), 15 Tier-3 publications (e.g., book reviews or encyclopedia entries) in a five-year period (it is best not to set a yearly quota as it is common for faculty members to spend years doing research, then publish a series of articles and a book once all the research is completed). ➤ One-half or more of full-time faculty members will present papers or serve on panels at professional conferences annually (Note: there were 6 full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty in 2006). ➤ One-fourth or more of full-time faculty members will serve as office holders or members on standing committees of state, regional, or national professional organizations or associations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The department far exceeded the expected level of achievement. Department faculty published nine Tier-2 publications and 16 Tier-3 publications—an exceptional output for a small department at a teaching institution. One faculty member received an advance contract from the University of Georgia Press for a book of biographical essays on Louisiana women and will complete her project during a sabbatical (2007-2008). ➤ Five out of six department faculty attended conferences. They presented a total of 4 papers and attended 9 conferences altogether. One such paper was presented at the prestigious annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians in Minneapolis (March 2007). ➤ Four faculty members belonged to a total of 8 professional organizations. For example, one faculty member served on the membership committee for the Southern Historical Association and the Southern Association of Women Historians. One served on the publications committee of <i>Louisiana History</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ D: Faculty members expressed concerns that the numerous administrative duties added in the Spring of 2007 will impair their ability to continue publishing as much as they did. In particular, the three weeks following the Spring semester, normally dedicated to writing, were spent processing data from embedded questions, writing program reports and department progress reports, filling course review forms, and revising syllabi <i>per</i> new requirements (May 2007). ➤ R: The travel freeze imposed after Hurricane Rita was lifted. Travel funds are again available and will be distributed in priority to faculty presenting papers at conferences. ➤ M: no change made; continue to review data.

Educational (Support Unit) Performance Objective 4: Utilize resources efficiently and effectively to support the university mission.

<u>Expected Level of Achievement</u>	<u>Actual Data From Assessment</u>	<u>Actions/Decisions</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Department will help recruit students to the university by organizing classes at local high schools. ➤ The Department will make at least five research grant applications a year, including one to an organization outside the university. ➤ The Department will raise funds to help finance travel to conferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Department organized six sections of HIST 101, 102, 201, and 202 at local high schools in an effort to help recruitment. High schools classes were small (18.3 students on average) and ranged from 6 students (Barbe HS, Fall 2006) to 28 (Lagrange HS, Spring 2007), compared with 40 to 60 in typical surveys at McNeese. Informal surveys conducted at the end of these classes in the Spring of 2007 showed that very few students planned on attending McNeese State University because of the class itself. For example, of 16 students from Jennings and Oakdale who took HIST 202 in the Spring of 2007, none planned to attend McNeese at all. ➤ Department members obtained five research grants. For example, one faculty member obtained the John Hope Franklin Collection for African and African American History Travel Grant (Duke University Special Collections Libraries, July 2007) and the West Point Summer Seminar in Military History Fellowship (June 2007). ➤ Money obtained by selling workbooks in HIST 201/202 financed 9 faculty trips to conferences. For example, one faculty went to Washington, DC to present a paper at the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era. Five faculty members went to Alexandria for the annual meeting of the Louisiana Historical Association. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ D: Faculty recommended stopping classes at high schools altogether as they take away a lot of Department resources without offering any notable advantage in recruitment (May 2007). Classes at McNeese are so much larger that using faculty members to teach surveys at the university instead of high schools would be a more cost-effective allocation of resources. Offering more, smaller survey courses would also help faculty meet the university goals regarding “writing as required by each discipline” and “excellence with a personal touch” and thus boost retention. Gifted students could still be allowed to attend regular university surveys as a pilot program to see if that technique would help recruitment. ➤ M: no change made; continue to review data. ➤ R: Dr. Smith will edit a second edition of the HIST 202 workbook in the Fall of 2007 to better suit instructors’ needs.

Resources Allocated:

- (1) Digital projectors linked to a computer were installed in three classes used by the history department: KAUF 206, KAUF 213, and FARR 205. These have proved extremely popular with students and faculty alike and greatly improved the quality of the instruction at McNeese State University. In particular, they allowed instructors to add more multi-media material (such as movie clips, maps, and pictures). They also eliminated students' inability to read what was written on the board (acute in KAUF 205 and 206 due to poor classroom design). The department strongly recommends that funds be introduced to equip other classrooms with similar equipment to better the quality of instruction. KAUF 205 and KAUF 220, which are used repeatedly by the department, would provide the best return on investment.
 - (2) As explained in EPO 4 (3rd column, 1st paragraph), the Department recommends that faculty be used primarily to teach at the university itself rather than in area high schools as the most effective allocation of human resources.
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