

Program Review Guidelines

Committee on Educational Policy of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate

1. *Authorization*

Regulation 555 of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate calls for a review of each undergraduate teaching program at intervals not exceeding seven years. The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) is designated by By-Law 67 to establish guidelines for these reviews.

The role of the CEP is:

1. to define the goals and framework of program reviews; the elaboration of specific procedures and detailed criteria is delegated to the individual colleges.
2. to work with college program review committees, the deans, and the provost in order to assure that program reviews are completed and forwarded to the Provost's Office no later than four quarters after the submission of the program self-study.
3. to evaluate program reviews in order to ascertain that the established objectives for program reviews have been addressed in a meaningful and incisive manner.
4. to examine the assessment and plan of action submitted by the college deans in response to the recommendations of the college program review and executive committees.
5. to assess the program's contribution to undergraduate education beyond the major in such areas as General Education, cultural diversity, honors programs, freshman seminars, and undergraduate research programs.
6. to forward to the provost recommendations for a plan of action.
7. to set a date within the next seven-year cycle when the dean and/or the provost are to report to CEP about the progress of the plan's implementation.

2. *Goals, Procedures, and Criteria*

The review of undergraduate teaching programs required by By-Law 67 and Regulation 555 shall focus on the following goals and adhere to the following criteria and procedures.

1. *Goals*

The primary goal of periodic program reviews is to ascertain whether an undergraduate teaching program contributes to the collective teaching mission of the university in an optimal way. It is, therefore, important that programs demonstrate that the philosophy guiding the structure of the major program is coherent and convincing. It is, however, equally important that the program demonstrate also that the allocation of teaching resources to the major is compatible with the program's obligation to contribute in an appropriate manner to the broader college and campus programs for students outside the major. While the college program review and executive committees and the deans will examine all aspects of the program's performance (according to the criteria listed below and those established by the colleges). CEP will focus its review primarily on those areas with implications for the general student population: the appropriateness of the program's contribution to the campus GE program, the integration of issues of diversity into the general curriculum, the availability of honors programs and courses, the availability of freshman seminars, the involvement of undergraduates in research, and issues of similar broad importance. CEP may also examine the program's function within the academic plan of the Davis campus.

2. *Procedures*

1. **Early each Spring quarter the college dean and program review committee shall jointly review the list of program scheduled to be evaluated during the next academic year.** The dean and program review committees shall determine whether a particular program has a history that warrants a more intensive review, a review by an external *ad hoc* committee, or a review that focuses on particular issues. Programs without a history of problems or well-established needs may be targeted for a less searching review. A list of all programs that are scheduled to be reviewed and the specific plans for the proposed reviews shall be forwarded to the Provost who may wish to focus the reviews on certain issues that appear important for academic planning purposes.
2. **The entire review from the time of submission of the program self-study to the final recommendations by CEP and the provost shall take no more than four quarters. The review within the college should be concluded within two quarters after the submission of the program report.** The Dean's Office should hold department Chairs and program directors accountable for substantive and timely reports.

3. **The review shall culminate in clearly stated plans of action by the deans and provost.** These plans should be based on the reports of the college program review and executive committees on the one hand and on the reports by CEP on the other. If particular actions are proposed, the deans and provost will indicate a time frame for the implementation of these actions and CEP will determine, in conjugation with the deans and provost, a date for an audit regarding the progress of the implementation.

3. *Criteria*

The task of establishing detailed criteria for program reviews is delegated to the colleges. All reviews need, however, to examine the following areas:

1. **The quality and structure of the major and the entire teaching program.** Are the design of the major and the available teaching resources of the program compatible with the program's obligation to contribute in an appropriate manner to the college and campus programs beyond the major? Does the program address issues of ethnic and cultural diversity in its curriculum? Does it provide adequate opportunities for honors level work and undergraduate research? Does it keep up with changes in the field by periodically examining its curriculum and by assessing its effectiveness?
2. **The quality and quantity of teaching in the program.** How is teaching evaluated? How is the teaching load for senate and non-senate faculty in the program justified in relation to programs in which the faculty teach more or fewer courses? What is the impact of the program's teaching load practices on its ability to contribute adequately to its broader teaching obligations in college na campus programs beyond the major?
3. **Advising and faculty-student relations.** What is the form and adequacy of academic advising in the program? Are senate faculty members available to advise and guide undergraduates?
4. **Resources.** How does the program justify the request for additional resources, in particular new teaching positions, with respect to its contributions to the collective mission of the university?

3. *Guidelines for CEP Action*

1. CEP shall determine that the colleges have conducted a meaningful review that takes into account the goals, procedures, and criteria outlined under II: A,B,C.
2. CEP shall ascertain that the chair or director of the program under review and the chair of the faculty of the college of the program under review have received a copy of the review and have had an opportunity to reply to it.
3. CEP will conduct its review in accordance with its mission as outlined under I, 1-7. The review file forwarded to CEP shall contain all pertinent reports, recommendations, and replies. CEP shall accept only those reviews that meet the standards and criteria outlined above and which provide enough information to allow it to make recommendations to the Provost. The entire review process should be governed not by adherence to bureaucratic rules, but by intelligent judgment.

June 1992

College of Letters and Science
Teaching Program Planning and Review Committee

GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENTAL SELF-REVIEWS

- The Departmental self-review should address the items below in a succinct and straightforward manner. The review should not exceed 10 pages. Supporting materials may be included in an appendix. It is not necessary, however, to append the vitas of the faculty.
- Please submit review in hard copy and on disk.
- Submit review to:

Doug McColm, Chair
Teaching Program Planning & Review Committee
c/o Michael Schwarz
L & S Dean's Office

1. Departmental/Program Description Statement
This should serve as a narrative statement that serves as an introduction to the department's undergraduate curriculum and major. Where appropriate, the statement should address issues/topics such as the following:
 - A. Explanation of the major, with subdivisions or tracks, if any, and its educational objectives of the major(s);
 - B. Profile of major: number of majors (for the current year and two preceding years), number of courses usually scheduled, typical class enrollments, and other pertinent data.
 - C. Accuracy and currency of program requirements and course descriptions;
 - D. Service courses taught by the department and their role(s) in the educational mission of the campus;
 - E. The program's contribution to general education, ethnic and cultural diversity, honors, undergraduate research and the like.
2. Outcome of the Previous Undergraduate Teaching Program Review
Please list the recommendations made at the conclusion of the previous review (these may have been made by the reviewing committee, by Executive Committee or by the Dean) and comment briefly on the current status of the matters noted in the recommendations.
3. Future Plans
Please submit the most recent draft of the departmental/program planning statement. Discuss any out-of-date aspects of the plan.
4. Instructional Staff
Please provide information on the following:
 - A. Senate Faculty
 1. Explain the department's rationale for faculty teaching assignments and faculty teaching workload. Discuss any department policies for increasing or reducing teaching workload.
 - B. Non-Senate Faculty
 1. Explain the criteria used in appointment of non-senate faculty.

2. Explain the department's rationale for non-senate faculty teaching assignments and faculty teaching workload. Discuss any department policies for increasing or reducing teaching workload.
 - C. Teaching Assistants/Associates-In
 1. Explain the criteria used for appointment of Teaching Assistants and Associates-In.
 2. Explain the department's rationale for teaching assignments and related workload of Teaching Assistants and Associates-In. Discuss any department policies for increasing or reducing teaching workload.
5. Teaching
- A. Please note any recognition or achievements of instructional staff in the area of undergraduate education since the last review.
 - B. Please describe innovations in teaching which may have been developed or used in the department since the last review.
 - C. Evaluation of Teaching.
Describe the department's policies on the evaluation of teaching.
 - 1) Note methods used. Attach evaluation forms that are used.
 - 2) Note any differences in policies/practices of evaluation for senate, non-senate and graduate student instructional staff.
 - 3) Discuss policies/practices for addressing problems that are revealed through evaluation of teaching.
 - D. Describe any programs the department has for the improvement of teaching and note the extent of participation in those programs.
 - E. Describe any specific policies/practices that the department has for grading. Discuss any methods used by the department to uncover and remedy problems involved in grading.
 - F. Describe the extent of faculty participation in guided research projects with undergraduates. Note any programs the department has developed or participates in. Discuss the department's involvement in internship programs for undergraduates.
6. Describe how the department monitors the performance of majors after graduation. If the program is not presently tracking such performance, the report should describe future plans to do so.
7. Curriculum.
8. Advising and Faculty-Student Relations -- Please discuss
- A. Discuss the policies/practices pertaining to advising majors in the department. Attach samples of any advising materials that are used.
 - B. Discuss any practices/policies on faculty accessibility to undergraduate majors.
 - C. Describe any opportunities the department provides for student activities associated with the major. Attach relevant materials if available.
9. Equipment, Space and Staff --
- A. Staffing. If the department has any current or projected staffing needs, describe them briefly.

B. Equipment. If the department has any current or projected equipment needs, describe them briefly.

C. Space. If the department has any current or projected space needs, describe them briefly.

10. Additional Matters.

The department is encouraged to discuss other issues or concerns pertaining to undergraduate teaching that have not been addressed elsewhere in this report.

Guidelines for Department/Major Self-Evaluation

Revised Version June 1996

A. Overall Program Evaluation

1. Description of the program (mission, objectives, goals, success at achieving the goals, quality of the students).
2. Strengths (including evidence of national/local stature, external ranking or certifications, comparisons with similar majors elsewhere, information on success of graduates, evidence of uniqueness here, value of the major to the University and to society).
3. Weaknesses.
4. Plans for the future.

B. Outcome of Previous Review

1. Attach previous review.
2. Respond to all the recommendations of the previous review.

C. Teaching

1. Comment on innovations, undergraduate research, honors programs, teaching awards, curriculum development, use of computers in teaching, unusual class formats etc. that have occurred since the last review. Describe any changes in curriculum reflected in the current catalog copy.
2. How are teaching and grading practices monitored and evaluated?
3. Comment on GE and service courses (address diversity, freshman seminars, value of the courses, to the major and campus needs, ability to meet student needs etc.).
4. Attach summarized teaching evaluations for depth subject matter courses in the major.

D. Instructional Resources

1. List the instructors and courses taught in tabular form (for the last 3 years).
Instructor Course name Course number Senate (S) or non-Senate (NS)
2. List core lower- and upper-division courses in the major for which department faculty (permanent FTE) do have responsibility.
3. Use of TA=s and Associates-In.
 - a. List number of TA=s, Associates-In and the courses for which they are responsible for the last 3 years.
2
Courses using teaching assistants and associates-in
Number of
TA=s or associates-in
Number of
students in class
Course name Course number
 - b. Comments (e.g. allocations for TA=s, training programs, quality of TA=s).
4. Comment on instructional and non-instructional staffing needs.

5. IRMA data. Comment on any information in the IRMA reports for the last 3 years that you think is relevant.

6. Comment on variable unit courses not listed in IRMA.

7. Comment on and justify need for additional instructional resources such as equipment, space, and other material as appropriate.

E. Advising

a. Describe and evaluate the advising structure within the program.

b. List faculty, staff, and student advising positions (for the last 3 years).

Title of advising positions Student, Staff or Faculty Full-time (FT) or Part-time (PT)

c. Describe student application/acceptance procedures (if applicable).

d. List activities which foster student/faculty interactions outside of the classroom.

F. Comment on Student, Faculty & Alumni Surveys.

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Note - *Criteria of the Committee on Educational Policy of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate follows:*

The task of establishing detailed criteria for program reviews is delegated to the colleges.

All reviews need,

however to examine the following areas:

1) The quality and structure of the major and the entire teaching program. Are the design of the major and the

To: **Executive Committee, College of Letters and Science**

Fr: L & S Teaching Program Planning and Review Committee

Re: TPPRC Review of the Undergraduate Program in the Department of History
June 2000

1. OUTCOME OF PRIOR TPPRC REVIEW.

The prior TPPRC report was submitted in April of 1995. Four recommendations are included verbatim below. History's responses to these recommendations are included in brackets.

1. "Grade inflation does not appear any worse, but does not appear any better. Although the Department's report states that they are now calculating grade distributions for upper division courses, the Chair's memo on November 23, 1993 stated that they did not have complete records on this. TPPRC recommends the Department should keep its own records on grade distribution per course over time and record average grades for the Department per quarter and per year." [The Department still does not track its grades.]

2. "Like all other campus units, History Department has lost at least 14 faculty over the past four years, four replaced and two replacements pending; these replacements combine the goal of diversity in the faculty with diversity or ethnic studies focus in the curriculum; these goals are not synonymous and are not always compatible."

[History is now above the NSF normative figures in hiring women, and the department has made a number of excellent faculty hires over the past five years. According to the Chair, plans for hiring new faculty focus largely on the most innovative and interesting areas in History.]

3. "Since there has not been any information on undergraduate student opinions, experiences, or suggestions for the past two reviews, TPPRC recommends that the next History Department report submitted to TPPRC include a stronger effort to solicit student opinions such as a survey of undergraduate majors' opinions, a survey of past graduates, an exit poll of graduating seniors, and a thorough review of teaching evaluations." [The History self-review did not include information on undergraduate student opinions. The self-review suggests that the turnover in the Undergraduate Assistant position has prevented soliciting such information.]

4. TPPRC recommends that Department of History develop an advising system that reduces the burden on faculty without diminishing the quality of advising. Changes can include the use of a staff advisor. The Master Advisor should receive a one course reduction in order to adequately deal with the high numbers of History Majors."

[The department recently requested an upward reclassification of the staff advisor position in order

to improve its undergraduate advising. According to the self-review, the Department did not believe that the advising burden on faculty warranted a course reduction for a Master Advisor.]

In sum, the Department has made notable progress in the area of faculty hires. It is aware of problems with

staff advising turnover and has initiated steps to improve retention of a staff adviser. However, it has not

addressed other issues raised by the prior report, including grade tracking, reliable undergraduate student

opinion surveys, and other issues regarding advising.

II CURRENT STATUS OF THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

A. Department Program Report

A Self-Evaluation by the Department was reported to TPPRC in June 1999. The Department Chair at that time, Ted W. Margadant, submitted the report.

B. TPPRC Report

The coordinator met with the Chair, Daniel R. Brower, and communicated with Dean Steven Sheffrin and with Assistant Dean, Steven Roth. The coordinator also met with the Chair of the Undergraduate Committee, five faculty advisors, the former Undergraduate Assistant, the MSO, Peer Advisor, and several other faculty members. Additional comments by faculty were solicited via e-mail. Grade distribution information was gathered from Banner Student Information. In addition, several students were interviewed. Finally, student evaluations of the undergraduate major in History were obtained from several undergraduate classes. It should be noted, however, that these student evaluations were not easy to obtain from the department. The department postponed the initiation of the evaluation process, and several faculty members delayed significantly, or refused to cooperate, in the gathering of this information. As it is, only a small minority of students responded to the quantitative portion of the questionnaire.

1. Educational Objectives: Role on the Davis Campus

History is a nationally ranked department. Its undergraduate program has a number of strengths, and these include the system of small sections, the many opportunities for writing, the wide geographical and thematic range of course offerings, the honors program, the use of various teaching innovations, and the tireless work of faculty advisors. Furthermore, it is clear that many History faculty care deeply about undergraduate teaching, are rightly proud of their program, and have thought carefully about ways to further improve it. This report makes a number of suggestions regarding ways in which the program may be further strengthened.

The History Department consists of 31 tenure-track faculty hired on 30 FFE. There are approximately 325 History majors declared at any one time.

The educational objectives of the History Department include making students aware of the nature of their own, and other, societies, in order to place their own world into perspective.

Other objectives are that students be able to analyze historical documents and that they learn to write clearly about historical issues. One of the unique goals of this History Department, as compared to those at other institutions, is that majors are required to complete either a seminar, or write an independent research paper for a letter grade.

The History Department continues to offer a large number of service courses for the campus. In

1998-1999, the Department of History taught over 2536 students in lower-division courses and

over 2904 students in upper-division courses.

2. Competence and quality of the teaching staff

The quality of teaching in the Department appears to be quite high. For example, two faculty

members won teaching awards in 1999. Michael Saler was awarded the Academic Distinguished

Teaching Award at UCD, and Michael Smith was the recipient of the ASUCD Magnan Ronning

Award for Teaching Excellence. Another faculty member received the Chancellor's Teaching

Fellowship to mentor an advanced graduate student in undergraduate teaching. In addition, several

faculty members each year have been awarded Undergraduate Instructional Improvement Grants

from the Teaching Resources Center.

Students express very high opinions of the quality of teaching in History, particularly in their

written comments. (The majority of students did not respond to the quantitative portion of the

evaluation.) Students rated the quality of lower-division course in History to be 3.7 (on a 1 to 5

Likert scale, where 5 is excellent). They rated the quality of upper-division courses to be somewhat higher, approximately 4.2, on the same scale. The open-ended comments of the

students are particularly telling. Approximately one-half of the students (48%) who wrote open-ended

comments mentioned that one of the main strengths of the History major was its professors.

A few sample comments are: "Professors in History are the best I've had." "Instructors have vast

depth of knowledge in subject matter, were enthusiastic about subjects they teach."

"...overall

quality of professors is very high." "Professors care about their students' progress."

"Excellent

professors!"

3. Balance in Faculty Workload

Ladder faculty are expected to teach four courses a year, three of which are undergraduate

courses. Nevertheless, a number of individual faculty reported concerns about imbalances in

faculty workload regarding two issues: 1) teaching of large undergraduate courses, and 2) advising.

a. **Teaching of Large Undergraduate Courses.** A number of individuals believed that the teaching load was not shared fairly by all faculty. There was disagreement, however, as to what should or could be done about the situation. A couple of faculty members reported that this inequality in teaching load was inevitable and that any attempts to rectify imbalances would be ultimately divisive. Many others believed that the situation needs to be addressed directly. The concern also was expressed by more than one person that certain important courses were taught too often by adjuncts and not enough by ladder faculty. It should be noted that the debates around teaching load were particularly volatile, with strong sentiments expressed on a variety of related issues.

History is one of the social sciences that consistently attracts large numbers of enrollments. The department needs to have a realistic workload policy that recognizes this reality. On a large

campus like UC Davis, all History faculty need to be prepared to teach large courses.

b. **Faculty Advising.** Several faculty thought that advising duties were not evenly distributed over the years, with certain faculty, especially Assistant Professors, assigned advising more often than others. More generally, the problem was raised that assignments to departmental committees are not rotated regularly.

4. Grading Practices and Standards

The overall GPA for lower-division courses taught by History in 1998-1999 was 2.99. The GPA

for upper-division courses was 3.05. History's GPA is the highest of the main social science

departments, although it is not widely different from that of most. In the main social science

departments, lower-division GPA's range from a low of 2.66 to a high of 2.99 and upper-division

GPA's range from 2.73 to 3.05.

Almost no faculty and very few students provided written comments on the grading practices in

History. One faculty commented that grade inflation probably had occurred in History, but noted

that it was common throughout the rest of the University as well. A few students expressed the

belief that grades in History were on the high side.

Table 1. Grade distribution for History Department (BSIS 9/99)

Lower Division (8 courses, 764 students) Upper Division (31 courses, 607 students)

Grade Total Students Percentage to

Total

Grade Total Percentage to

Total

A+ 0 --A+ 4 .7%

A 58 7.6% A 69 11.4%

A- 102 13.4% A- 85 14.0%

B+ 142 18.6% B+ 115 18.9%

B 178 23.3% B 117 19.3%

B- 104 13.6% B- 65 10.7%

C+ 79 10.3% C+ 58 9.6%
C 49 6.4% C 36 5.9%
C- 23 3.0% C- 21 3.5%
D+ 11 1.4% D+ 4 .5%
D 4 .5% D 11 1.8%
D- 2 .3% D- 1 .2%
F 12 1.6% F 21 3.5%

A breakdown of the grade distribution for several courses during 1998-1999 appears in Table 1, above. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of students in history classes receive grades in the A or B range, that is they receive grades ranging from A+ to B- (76.5% of lower division students and 75% of upper division students). About 21% of students in lower-division courses receive grades of A or A-, whereas approximately 26.2% of those in upper-division course receive grades in the A range.

5. Performance of Students after Graduation

There is no formal mechanism in place to track the performance of students who major in History after graduation. Nevertheless, it would be helpful to know the approximate percentage of History students who go on to graduate school, into business, or who get a K-12 teaching credential. This information would make it easier to evaluate the curriculum. It also would be useful to gather information from students concerning their overall evaluation of the History program (e.g., an e-mail exit policy, an overview of a sample of evaluations from all History classes). Such an evaluation procedure would allow the Department itself to uncover possible trouble spots in their program (e.g., advising) and to address them relatively quickly.

6. Curriculum

In order to satisfy the Lower-Division requirements of the major, students must take five courses, including at least two from each of the following two areas: Africa, Asia, Europe, and United States. There are two plans for the Upper-Divisional requirements. Plan I requires that students take courses in at least three fields (e.g., Africa, Asia, Pre-industrial Europe, Modern Europe, Latin American, and United States), and it gives a relatively broad overview of the study of history. Plan II requires students to take courses in two, rather than three fields. Both plans require students either to complete one seminar class with 15 or fewer students or to write a substantial independent research paper for a letter grade.

A number of faculty expressed some concerns about the curriculum. The main concerns revolved

around three issues: 1) a need for a broadening of the curriculum, and 2) a need for a deepening of

the curriculum, 3) a need for more discussion of the undergraduate curriculum.

a.) Broadening of the curriculum. A number of faculty members believed that the curriculum could benefit from a bit of broadening. In particular, they thought that the curriculum

requirements needed to be changed slightly to encourage greater familiarity with History outside

of the U.S. and Europe. As one faculty member put it: "I would like to see the requirements

altered slightly to reduce the emphasis on U.S. and (to a lesser extent) European history and to

require students to take two courses (preferably a sequence) in a 'non-Western' field. The reasoning here is that it provides a better balance of enrolled students that will take advantage of

the broad range of faculty specialties in the department – thus distributing the workload more fairly

–and it also broadens the students' education."

b.) Deepening of the curriculum. Some faculty argued that the curriculum needed more "cafeteria" and that some students do not build on what they have learned, but instead o from

subject to subject. One specific suggestion along these lines was to require students to take at least

one seminar from their major field.

Discussion of curriculum. Several faculty members pointed to the need to discuss the undergraduate curriculum in the department as a whole. Faculty members lamented what they saw

as decreased communication with each other as the department has grown, and as the department

was divided between different floors of SSH. More specifically, one person notes:

"The most important change in my mind would be more coordination and communication about

the curriculum offerings. Currently, the Europeanists, Americanists, and the Others (Asia, Africa)

meet separately to determine their offerings... don't even discuss how our course offerings are

related to each other, what we think should be the purpose of different types of classes, and why

we think certain courses work well and don't. ...I'm not interested in some strict standard of what

each course or course type does, but rather a conversation about what we want to achieve."

7. Service Offerings

A number of courses taught by History support a large number of programs, such as East Asian Studies, African-American Studies, Chicano Studies, History and Philosophy of Science, and International Relations.

The Department of History also is home to an outreach unit to K-12 teachers, the Area 3 History and Cultures Project. The faculty in the department teach in outreach programs, mentor and advise

K-12 teachers in their respective fields and disciplines, and advise the administrators of the

Project. During the summer, history faculty teach in extended teaching institutes, and during the

year they support work in the campus “partner schools.” Over the past year, twenty-one history

faculty have been actively involved with the Project in one of these capacities working with about

400 regional teachers.

The departmental Undergraduate Program Committee has been working toward the creation of a

Subject Matter Competency program for undergraduates in history and the social sciences that

would allow BA graduates to be certified “subject matter competent” for the purposes of entering

teaching credential programs. The committee is considering a draft of the program and plans to

submit it to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing for approval next year.

8. Academic Advising

History has approximately ten faculty advisors, and every student is expected to meet with a

designated faculty advisor at least once per year. In addition, there is a staff

Undergraduate

Assistant and a student Peer Advisor. Nevertheless, there continue to be serious problems with

undergraduate advising in History, as was noted in the past TPPRC review. The second most

common problem with the History major (following difficulty getting classes), according to

undergraduates in History classes, involved problems with advising. Approximately 20% of the

written comments regarding weaknesses of the program concerned advising problems.

Concerns

with advising are reported to be as follows:

a.) **The high turnover in the Undergraduate Assistant position.** History’s self review notes this as a serious staffing problem. The turnover problem also affected TPPRC directly.

During the time the Undergraduate Assistant was helping TPPRC to collect student evaluations in undergraduate classes, and gather information on the undergraduate program, he quit his job with two days notice.

The reasons behind the high turnover in the Undergraduate Assistant position are not difficult to assess. The position is underpaid and overworked. The salary issue is being negotiated currently, and the Dean's Office has requested an upgrade from Assistant I to Assistant II. Such a pay raise should help in lowering job turnover. On the other hand, a pay raise alone probably will not solve all the problems with the position. It appears that the job of the Undergraduate Assistant (UA) does not only involve advising undergraduates. The UA seems to be the general Receptionist for the History Department. The UA was the only person acting as receptionist for the department on the 20 or so occasions when the TPPRC coordinator visited the department (or on a couple of occasions there was no receptionist). In addition, the UA carried out administrative duties for faculty, which involved such tasks as photocopying, ordering books, typing manuscripts, mail distribution, and reserving audio/video equipment.

b.) Unevenness of Advising Quality. A number of Faculty Advisors take their role extremely seriously. Faculty also clearly put in a lot of work at their job. For example, the TPPRC coordinator observed faculty signing forms, discussing requirements, and talking endlessly on the telephone in order to check out information for a student. All faculty advisors with whom the coordinator met were actively advising numerous students during their office hours. There also are dedicated faculty advisors who highly value their role, and who would be hesitant to turn this task over to a staff advisor. They appreciate having contact with students one on one, and find it very rewarding to help students progress over the years through the History major and to aid them in negotiating the intricacies of the UCD system. On the other hand, it is clear that the overall advising system needs serious improving, and several faculty members concur. In the first place, some faculty lack the necessary experience and

knowledge for the job. Many advisors are assistant professors, often first year professors, who do not have a lot of information or experience with either the History undergraduate requirements or with the UCD system more generally. There is no formal training for the advisor position, although a more experienced faculty advisor may help inform a new advisor. Of course some new advisors take this position very seriously. For instance, the first thing one new assistant professor did on arrival at UCD was to spend a good deal of time memorizing the History student handbook and studying the UCD student requirements and registration system. Yet, the lack of training for the position, and the lack of formal communication among faculty advisors, results in an advising situation that is “hit or miss”. In some instances, History students no doubt receive outstanding, in depth advising, but others receive information that is inaccurate and unhelpful. As one faculty member puts it: “The department’s practice of assigning the newest faculty to serve as undergraduate advisors is absurd. New faculty are learning so much about how the university works themselves that they cannot be very useful advisors to undergraduates.”

Comments by undergraduate students reflect the unevenness of the quality of advising. A few students (3) mention that the advice they received from faculty was one of the strengths of the program. For example, one graduating major reports: “My faculty advisor has been superb!” On the other hand, many more students (21) had negative comments about the quality of advising, and these comments were striking, especially when compared to student comments in other departments. Sample comments include: “Advisors are not competent.” “Never able to get any good advising.” “History professor/advisors should be better informed about all aspects of the major..” “The advisors are always too busy or irritated when you go see them. They seem bothered by students, although there are exceptions...” “Advising is very poor in that appointments aren’t an option...” “Academic advisors are not as helpful as they could be.” “Need a full-time advisor.” “The advisor is disorganized, gives bad advice.” “Advising appears to let students seep through the cracks.” “Faculty advisors do not meet with students to discuss their academic plans.”

c) The advising workload can become imbalanced. Not all faculty are given the role of advising and some are repeatedly assigned the job. Half of the Faculty Advisors are relatively new

assistant professors. In addition, certain faculty are used for advising more than others.

One

assistant professor faculty advisor saw over 100 students last year.

9. Availability of Faculty

Faculty members hold three regular office hours per week. As mentioned under advising, many

faculty appeared to be busy with students during their office hours. On the other hand, advising

hours for faculty sometimes overlap, and there are no Faculty Advisors available at certain times

of the week (e.g., after 2 Monday, 8-4 Wed).

10. Availability of Extra-Curricular Activities

There is a History Club for undergraduate majors that is sponsored by the department.

The History

Club is engaged in a variety of activities, such as field trips and film nights.

11. Adequacy of Equipment, Staff, and Facilities

One of the Department=s main needs in this area has already been addressed under advising. The

Department needs a permanent Undergraduate Assistant. The department also has pressing needs

for additional office space. Finally, History=s computing needs have been greatly alleviated

recently by the approval of a request to the Dean=s Office.

12. Additional Issues

The Honors program is considered to be one of the most successful and valuable departmental

offerings. Coupled with the extensive list of seminars (History 102 courses) it provides students

with an opportunity to move beyond lectures and conduct research under the supervision of a

faculty member. One person mentioned that the Honors program would be further improved,

however, if it were changed to a two-quarter, rather than three-quarter, sequence.

Individual faculty made several other suggestions for improving the general program that are too

numerous to discuss in detail here. Some of these include: 1) changing the student evaluation form

to have it rely less on quantitative scales and more on written, open-ended comments, 2) grouping

Faculty Advisors into specialty areas, 3) change the focus of History 104 to be less on historiography and more on research methods and approaches to writing history.

III. SUMMARY OF MAIN TPPRC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Resolve problems regarding undergraduate advising.

The Department is to be commended for encouraging involvement of faculty in student advising.

Nevertheless, there are serious weaknesses with the current advising system. One possibility for improving the system is to have a permanent, dedicated staff advisor who is utilized more frequently for routine advising and less often for other duties. This would serve the purpose of relieving some of the burden on Faculty Advisors and systematize routine aspects of advising.

Another suggestion is to improve the current system of faculty advising. A training system for advisors is needed, as well as a fair rotation system that does not involve heavy reliance on new assistant professors. Another option would be to utilize a small number of highly trained Faculty Advisors (e.g., Master Advisor(s)).

2. Discuss and resolve issues regarding the breadth and depth of the undergraduate curriculum.

The debates about whether to increase the breadth or depth (or both) of the undergraduate curriculum are important ones, and ones that cannot be resolved by an external review committee.

These issues concern a number of faculty, and they deserve discussion. It appears, too, that such a discussion should involve faculty throughout the department and not only those assigned to the Undergraduate Committee (which meets infrequently).

3. Discuss and resolve issues concerning the distribution of the teaching load in undergraduate courses.

Concerns about imbalances in the teaching of large undergraduate classes were raised by a number of faculty members. Possible solutions to these problems also were offered (e.g., create course sequences in new areas, use an incentive system). These issues deserve attention and resolution.

4. Review grading policies and standards.

TPPRC recommends that the department review the issue of undergraduate grading standards. The issue of possible grade inflation was raised in previous TPPRC reports as well.

5. Solicit information from undergraduate majors concerning their experiences with the

program, such as a survey of past graduates and an exit poll of graduating seniors.

The last three self-reviews by History have not included information on undergraduate student opinions or suggestions. The prior TPPRC review recommended that the next History self-review

include information from students, “such as a survey of undergraduate majors’ opinions, a survey of past graduates, an exit poll of graduating seniors and a thorough review of student evaluations.”

Once again TPPRC recommends that this type of information be gathered.

Appendix A. History TPPRC Student Evaluations

History Survey

Section

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - DAVIS

Student Evaluation of Teaching

WINTER 2000

Enrollment Excellent Very Good Good Fair Poor

% responding 5 % 4 % 3 % 2 % 1 %

X SD N

1. Are you a History (A) major (13) minor (C) neither major nor minor 30 36% 21 25% 32 39% 0 0% 0 0% 4.0 0.9 83
2. If you are a History major, do you have a second major? (A) yes (B) no 14 31% 30 67% 1 2% 0 0% 0 0% 4.3 0.5 45
3. If you plan to go beyond the bachelor's degree, what is the highest level of 17 23% 9 12% 12 16% 16 22% 20 27% 2.8 1.5 74
4. Clarity of educational requirements for the major is: 14 23% 29 48% 13 21% 2 3% 3 5% 3.8 1.0 61
5. Flexibility of courses in the major to meet my 13 23% 21 37% 15 26% 5 9% 3 5% 3.6 1.1 57
6. The availability of advising for the major is: 8 17% 15 31% 18 38% 4 8% 3 6% 3.4 1.1 48
7. The quality of advising for the major is: 7 16% 18 41% 15 34% 0 0% 4 9% 3.5 1.1 44
8. Access to instructors outside of class is: 15 23% 30 46% 19 29% 0 0% 1 2% 3.9 0.8 65
9. The TAs in the course are: 13 25% 17 33% 18 35% 3 6% 1 2% 3.7 1.0 52
10. The availability of **lower division** courses in the department is: 13 21% 19 30% 20 32% 6 10% 5 8% 3.5 1.2 63
11. The availability of **upper division** courses 18 25% 31 43% 15 21% 3 4% 5 7% 3.8 1.1 72
12. The overall quality of instruction in **lower division** courses in the department is: 14 25% 19 33% 19 33% 3 5% 2 4% 3.7 1.0 57
13. The overall quality of instruction in **upper** 28 40% 28 40% 12 17% 1 1% 1 1% 4.2 0.9 70
14. 1 20% 2 40% . 2 40% 0 0% 0 0% 3.8 0.8 5
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: THE SUMMER INSTITUTE ON TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING WILL BE JULY 17-21ST, 2000
CALL THE TRC IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS - 7S2-6050

Printed 05/17/2000 Summarized by the Teaching Resources Center

Appendix A. TPPRC History Student Written Evaluations (Spring 2000)

Student comments on strengths and weaknesses of the department/major:

Total number of surveys with written responses: 141

Strengths:

- Instructors/Professors: 68 (48.2%)
- Variety/diversity of courses: 31(21.9%)
- Interesting courses: 19 (13.4%)
- Flexible requirements: 18 (12.7%)
- Upper division courses: 14 (9.9%)
- TAs: 6 (4.2%)
- Teaches skills (writing/critical thinking): 5 (3.5%)
- Advising: 3 (2.1%)
- Class accessibility (enrolling in classes): 2 (1.4%)

Weaknesses:

- Need more courses/difficulty enrolling: 29 (20.5%)

Advisors/advising: 21(14.9%)
Lower division requirements/courses: 13 (9.2%)
Courses need to be offered at different times: 11 (7.8%)
Too many requirements/need flexibility: 7 (4.9%)
Teaching: 7 (4.9%)
TAs: 6 (4.2%)
Course size too large: 5 (3.5%)
Unclear course/program requirements: 4 (2.8%)
Workload: 3 (2.1%)
Availability of professors: 3 (2.1%)