

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, HAYWARD

DESIGNATION CODE: 99-00 CAPR 13

DATE SUBMITTED: May 11, 2000

TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: The Committee on Academic Planning and Resources

SUBJECT: Five-year Program Review for the History Department

ACTION

REQUESTED: That the Academic Senate approve the CAPR Program Review of the Department of History

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On May 11, 2000, CAPR met with Dr. Henry Reichman, Chair of the Department of History, for discussion of the five-year program review. The review had been delayed for four years because an outside reviewer had failed to submit his report. Professor Jeremy D. Popkin, Chair of the Department of History, completed a second external review on March 14, 2000, at the University of Kentucky. The Department's self-assessment, the external reviewer's report, and the Department's response to the external review were all part of the Five-Year Program Review submitted to CAPR.

The Department of History offers the B.A. and M.A. degrees, plays a vital role in General Education at the University, and has a major role in the training of teachers through extensive participation in both the Liberal Studies major and the Single Subject Preparation Program in Social Science. The History Major comprises 60 quarter units, allowing students to minor in another field or to double major. The department has no statistics on how many students do so, but it is the strong impression within the department that many students do. The Department also offers a 24-unit minor in History. The requirements for the History option in the Liberal Studies major are similar to the History minor and twenty percent or more of the students in History classes are in fact Liberal Studies majors. History courses are also required in several other major programs, including Latin American Studies, Nursing, Criminal Justice, Ethnic Studies, Geography and Environmental Studies, Speech Communication, and Women's Studies. The department also administers, for the University, an Urban Studies Minor that has been moribund because of faculty retirements. A new faculty hire has expressed interest in revitalizing this minor.

The M.A. in History trains students in advanced skills in historical research, writing, and teaching. The majority of students in the master's program are employed full-time during the day so courses are offered in the evening, usually on a one-night-a-week basis during the regular academic year. The adviser for the M.A. program receives a 4 WTU release time for this activity.

Over the past decade, the department's regular faculty has changed significantly. In 1990 the department had seventeen full-time tenure-track faculty. Today it has twelve. During the same period, the department's use of part-time lecturers increased dramatically. Lecturers have taught courses at all levels in the department, including in the graduate program. On average, nearly 50% of courses have been taught by lecturers in recent years and in Spring 1999, nearly three-fourths of the department's FTES were taught by part-time faculty.

In the past four years, three new tenure-track faculty were hired and a faculty member from another program transferred to the History Department. The Chair describes the department as the "new" History Department. The Department has recently revised its advising practices and anticipates programmatic changes and assessment policies as a result of the new faculty.

PROGRAM REVIEW

The reviewer found that the Department of History has hard-working faculty and enthusiastic students who are receiving a good history education. He also found that the department faces many challenges because of a lack of resources, particularly full-time faculty lines. Summaries of his comments are provided below.

Faculty: Because the department faculty has declined from ¹20 to 12 and relies heavily on part-time faculty for teaching, responsibility for advising and leadership fall disproportionately on the shoulders of a few faculty. The regular faculty are divided into distinct age cohorts and the senior faculty are gradually retiring and/or FERPing; as a result new junior faculty are taking on heavy service roles. An additional problem is that it is difficult to supervise the large number of part-time lecturers to ensure the quality of instruction. The reviewer expressed concern for the department's ability to maintain faculty leadership in program development and participation in campus governance by having so many faculty who are not full-fledged citizens of their campus.

Undergraduate Program: The reviewer questioned the limitations in the range of courses offered at the undergraduate level. Courses that are not offered at CSUH range from ancient history to Middle Eastern history to period courses covering most of U.S. history. He also noted that there is enough diversity in the curriculum to offer undergraduate students a reasonable choice. He ~~questioned the necessity for four courses aimed at developing students' abilities to read, analyze, and write history.~~

His major concern related to the quality of syllabi that he had reviewed. He found little consensus among the faculty as to what students should have to do in a normal course and how their learning should be measured. He recommended that faculty look at types of assignments suggested in programs for writing across the curriculum and that the department develop a set of standards for minimum course requirements and for the structuring of syllabi.

In talking with students, he found that the most consistent complaint was of undergraduate advising. Students complained that it was hard to make advising appointments and that general undergraduate requirements are so complicated that faculty advisors are often unable to answer student questions. Until recently, a single faculty member has been responsible for all undergraduate advising.

Graduate Program: The majority of M.A. students seek the degree to prepare to teach at community colleges or to upgrade their credentials as high school teachers. A few have gone on to Ph.D. programs in history. Students understand that the range of courses available are limited. The M.A. program is modest but seems to fill a definite niche, distinguishes CSUH from campuses that teach only undergraduates and appears to attract some highly motivated students. The faculty needs to give the program more support as too much of the work in the program seems to rest on the Graduate Coordinator.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO THE OUTSIDE REVIEWER

Faculty: The department agrees with much of the reviewer's report and especially his assertions that the department is in need of additional resources. Since the report was written, the department has learned that two more senior faculty will be retiring this year, another faculty member has been named Associate Dean of the School and the department's search for a new tenure-track faculty was terminated. As a result, the number of full-time regular faculty will decline even further next year from 12 to 9. The department has recently approved a new Policy on Hiring, Review, and Use of Lecturers which will involve them more in departmental governance and will improve evaluation of lecturers.

Undergraduate Program: The department disagrees somewhat with Professor Popkin's observations about course limitations. The department does regularly offer courses in ancient history and two courses each quarter in periods of U.S. history. The department does not offer courses in the history of the Middle East, India, or Africa because of faculty size and has made a conscious decision to cover only those areas that they can do well—U.S., Europe, Latin America, and East Asia.

The problems with undergraduate advising are being addressed by the department. The department has recently developed a new advising policy to have students assigned to one of several advisors rather than the previous practice of all advising being done by the undergraduate coordinator and the Chair. The department is developing an e-mail list and one of the new faculty has developed an active History Students Association which has also improved advising. The department believes that some of the complaints Professor Popkin heard relate to General Education advising which department faculty are not equipped to do.

The department agrees with the reviewer's concern about the consistency of expectations in the course offerings. It will use his suggestions as part of efforts next year to design an outcomes assessment program.

CAPR'S EVALUATION

CAPR finds the external review and the History Department response to be satisfactory and concurs that the department offers quality programs despite serious resource problems. CAPR recommends approval of the five-year review of the History Department without modification.