



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Cc: Paul Dunscomb, Professor; Chair, Department of History
Songho Ha, Professor
Talis Colberg, Director, Mat-Su College
Dan O'Connor, Director, Prince William Sound College
Gary Turner, Director, Kenai Peninsula College
Betty Walters, Interim Director, Kodiak College

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: History BA

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): None

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage, MSC, KPC, KBC, KOD, PWS, C-ER

Members of the program review committee:

Paul Dunscomb, Professor and Department Chair
Songho Ha, Professor

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role

UAA's mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities and its diverse peoples. It is also committed to instruction at multiple academic levels, success of all students regardless of their higher education goals, and service to the diverse peoples and communities of the state. UAA's core themes are (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, (3) Student Success, (4) UAA Community, and (5) Public Square. UAA values international and intercultural education, diversity of experiences and perspectives, and the diversity of our unique location in Southcentral Alaska that comes from the Alaska Native peoples of this area.

The College of Arts and Sciences CAS contributes to UAA's mission with a suite of programs that provide, among other things,

1. general education courses for undergraduates in CAS and other Colleges,
2. opportunities for undergraduates to pursue majors in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the arts, and
3. opportunities for faculty and students to pursue research and creative activities in CAS's academic disciplines,
4. graduate programs for advanced studies.

Given decreased enrollments across UAA and significant budget cuts to CAS, the challenge is to serve UAA's and CAS's missions with only 75% of the funds it had in 2018-2019. CAS's shrinking budget is especially challenging for programs that rely on state financial appropriations through CAS because the programs have a gap between (a) the total costs of everything the program does and needs, and (b) the tuition CAS receives to cover those costs. This describes most programs in CAS: most rely on state appropriations and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

CAS's Department of History contributes to CAS's and UAA's mission with six courses that apply to the humanities component of the general education requirements for all UAA students, it provides a BA degree for students who want to study history and historiography in more depth, and it provides students with an opportunity to learn from faculty with active programs of research.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity

One measure of program demand is the number of incoming high school students who select History as their initial major. By this measure, the BA in History has modest demand, averaging only 9 such students each year, a number that is below the CAS median (10) for baccalaureate programs. But, by another measure, History courses are in high demand. History courses produced more than 5,300 student credit hours in 2019, putting it among the top 25% of programs in CAS. Additionally, it produced that much teaching very efficiently. Not only did the tuition CAS received from History courses cover the instructional costs of those courses, it also covered all the important things that we ask History faculty to do (namely, their teaching, their research, and their service), making the History Department one of the few departments in CAS that does not operate with a deficit or require state appropriations through CAS. As to productivity, approximately 9 incoming high-school students select History as their initial major, but approximately 31 per year graduate with a BA in History. There is no other department in CAS that boast of such productivity.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success

While faculty in all CAS programs are dedicated to quality, the History faculty are unusual in their commitment, something that might explain why some many non-History majors switch into History. To that end, the faculty quoted my review of their program last year when I stated "The History Department is an exemplary department. It provides high quality instruction, high-impact practices to students across UAA program, and does so with relatively few faculty, all of whom are deeply committed to student success." I stand by that quote. Worth adding is the fact that the faculty are providing more and more classes to students though online delivery, increasingly bringing the classroom to the students instead of just bringing students to the classroom.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness

UAF also offers a BA in History. Between 2016-2019, the two programs combined to produce 137 degrees with 117 (85%) coming from UAA. With an average of almost 30 awards per year from UAA's History Department, there is a clear need for a History BA at UAA.

Commendations and Recommendations

Program faculty are commended for their commitment to high-impact teaching, flexible delivery, and classes with few empty seats. They are also commended for their work on program review.

Decision

Continuation. This department is a model of one way CAS could operate in the future.