Expected Outcomes: Historical Knowledge

Graduates of the M.A. programs will exhibit a strong knowledge of the general area in which they specialize: American, European, or Latin American history, or the history of technology.

Assessment methods

Method: Oral Examination

M.A. students should be assessed at the level of “Good” or better on their M.A. oral exams by the examining committee.

Findings:

In the 2011-2012 academic year seven students graduated with M.A. degrees, a significant increase from the preceding year, and two direct track Ph.D. students earned the MANT degree (Masters Non-Thesis) as a credential accompanying successful passage through the preliminary exam process. All were judged “good” or better on the examinations, but the graduate committee noted two concerns with time to degree and breadth of knowledge. Only one of the M.A. students who successfully completed the degree in the 2011-2012 year completed coursework, research, writing, and thesis defense within four semesters, but four other M.A. candidates finished during the summer term following their fourth semester in the program, and there were special circumstances that lengthened the time-to-degree trajectory of the other two candidates.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Following up on recent assessment cycles, the Graduate Committee and Graduate Program Officer (GPO) have continued to emphasize the importance of M.A. track grad students taking appropriate courses and moving into M.A.-level research as quickly as possible. As a means of trying to ensure as many M.A. students as possible graduate within four semesters, the Graduate Committee has continued to debate whether to require M.A. students to write a thesis prospectus articulating research questions, methodology, and archival research plans similar to the dissertation prospectus required of Ph.D.-track students. The Department has now implemented a reform requiring that archival and Public History students enroll in at least some non-archival education / non-Public History courses.

Additional comments:

None

Expected Outcomes: Archival and Public History Knowledge

Graduates of the M.A. program whose goal is to pursue a public history and/or archival career will exhibit a strong knowledge of the theories and practice of the appropriate archival and public history professions.

Assessment methods

Method: Archival or Public History Thesis Defense

Students in the MA program specializing in archives or public history must write a thesis. The
examining committee assesses both the written thesis and specific knowledge in archival and/or public history theory and practice at the time of the final (oral) examination of the candidate and his/her thesis.

Findings:

In the 2011-2012 academic year four students graduated with M.A. degrees with a focus on either public history or archives, with two receiving the Archival Certificate and two receiving the Public History Certificate. All students adequately demonstrated archival and/or public history knowledge and skill on the M.A. thesis oral examination.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The archival studies and public history programs provide M.A. and Ph.D. history graduate students who have completed the requisite requirements to claim a recognized professional credential with the certificate program. Thus far graduates of the archival and public history programs have had good results in securing employment. One of the key program goals is to provide students with the necessary training to succeed in a variety of archival and public history settings. In an extremely tight job market and with competitive applications for academic programs the fact that students are finding placements is important to note.

Additional comments:
None

Expected Outcomes: Placement

Graduates of the M.A. programs will be highly competitive in the job market.

Assessment methods

Method: Placement

Survey graduates of the MA program to determine what percentage are successfully employed within three years of completion of degree.

Findings:

Both archival and public history-track M.A. students have continued to be highly competitive in the job market and in terms of Ph.D. program placement. As noted above, among 2011-2012 M.A. graduates, one is serving as Curator of Education at the Oklahoma History Center and another has entered the Ph.D. program at the University of Southern Mississippi with an emphasis in oral history.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The Graduate Committee will continue to monitor placement carefully, and beginning in 2012-2013 will use a newly-constructed database to track more methodically the placement of M.A. program graduates.

Additional comments:
None