
Overview
The External Reviewer examined the department's self-study, attended the March 30th Internal Review Committee's interviews with the department chair, seven faculty members and four graduate students, and conducted a telephone interview with Graduate Advisor, Professor Gretchen Adams on May 3, 2007. As well, he was furnished a complete set of the responses to the faculty and graduate student questionnaires. The Department of History at Texas Tech University has the basis of a strong history graduate program especially in its traditional fields of Texas, Southwest and military history. With the hiring of junior faculty since the last review, it is also developing additional strengths in European history, sports history, and world history. The new department members have improved the gender balance and given the department a younger profile. Overall the faculty has been productive, and many are active in professional societies—both important, if not necessary, for the strength and reputation of a graduate program in history. Unfortunately the department suffers from cultural factions within the faculty which at times even affect graduate students. These factions revolve around fields of study as well as gender questions. The healing of those factional rifts would certainly go a long way toward strengthening the department.

The Graduate Program

Graduate Students:
The department has held to its effort to tighten admission standards with an admission rate of 64 percent of applicants this year, a significant decline from the 95 percent in 2001. However, the average GRE scores of accepted students do show a decline, and GPAs have been erratic. Evidently this increase in admissions standards has come from the work of the Graduate Studies Committee which is responsible for admission to the graduate program. It is strongly recommended that the department continue with this effort.

The itemized list of graduate completions in the Self Study (this differs slightly from the charts in the Self Study) shows 61 graduate completions between 2000/1 and 2005/6. Seventeen percent (10 people) of those are still at TTU (either as TAs or fully employed) and six are unknown. A total of 33 are either pursuing further higher education, employed as adjunct or tenure-line faculty at other institutions, teaching in the public schools, or employed in a related history field. The remainder have found employment outside of education. That is an acceptable rate of placement. Such a rate reflects national trends in which an increasing number of graduate-trained historians are finding employment outside of higher education. It is expected that that trend will grow in the future.

Questions about the selection and oversight of Graduate Part-time Instructors (GPTIs) were introduced in some interviews. The Graduate Studies Committee is to be
commended for its change of policy that now requires GPTIs to have a master's degree. The quality of the undergraduate program of the department, often the recruitment ground for graduate students, is closely tied to the quality and training of those instructors. It is imperative that quality control and good training be part of the program. It is strongly recommended that the department continue to support and pursue a rigorous program of training, qualification, and selection of GPTIs.

TAs also play a large role in a university history program. Some faculty noted a problem with scheduling of discussion groups led by TAs in that those discussions occurred too late after the weekly lectures, an imposition not only to students but also to the TAs. Every effort should be made to schedule discussion groups as close to the large lectures as possible. Some note was also made of outdated equipment, such as maps, but on the whole physical resources were rated as adequate.

There are real differences, both among students and faculty, in perceptions about the awarding of graduate support. On the one hand, it was stated that "money follows quality" and on the other hand, some observed that the basis for the awarding of support was not clear at all. The Graduate Studies Committee makes the rankings for awards. It is recommended that the criteria for support of graduate students and the appointment of TAs and GPTIs be made very clear in the forthcoming graduate handbook. There has been an effort to reduce the size of the classes taught by the GPTIs. It is recommended that the department hold to that policy.

Director of Graduate Studies:
Almost all faculty interviewed indicated that the work load of Director of Graduate Studies far exceeds the capacity of a full-time faculty member. The Self Study reports a total graduate student enrollment in 2005 of 79. The paper work alone warrants at the least a single class release time. It is strongly recommended that the guidelines of the American Historical Association's The Education of Historians for the Twenty-first Century be implemented by the department by adding an administrative assistant to aid in the administration of the graduate program.

Direction of the Graduate Program:
It was not clear at all, especially from the interviews and the faculty questionnaires, that the department has a clear vision of the direction of its graduate program. The very fact that there is a proposal to create a separate department is evidence of that. The University possesses two very strong graduate training resource bases: The Vietnam Center and the Southwest Collection. According to the material presented in the Self Study, these areas have produced the largest number of PhDs in the last six years. However, the Self Study states that the department intends to strengthen programs in the broader areas of European and world history. This appears to be one of the sources of the faculty rifts. It is imperative that the department conduct a transparent self-examination to define its direction. The addition of the broader European and world emphases, and even a broader perspective on American history, will not only offer more opportunity and diversity to its graduate students but would almost certainly also serve to enrich the military and Southwest emphases.
The last review recommended that the department drop the number of field examinations from five to three. The department subsequently dropped the number to four. This reviewer recommends that the number of field examinations be held to four, which addresses the broadening of the department's emphases.

Graduate Offerings:
Both faculty and students raised questions about methodology and historiography courses. It is recommended that the faculty jointly consider a thorough review of the graduate curriculum. This would be to streamline, perhaps even standardize, the methodology course. As well, some dissatisfaction with the two-language requirement for the PhD was expressed by faculty. Some faculty, who originally supported a two-language requirement, stated that they had changed their minds. The most commonly stated reason referred to the administration of the language examination. A change in the language requirement could present a problem if the department continues to expand its offerings in non-Western fields. It is therefore recommended that any change in the language requirement be considered in light of the direction the graduate program is to take.

Faculty Resources

The Graduate Faculty:
The department reports that 26 faculty members have served on graduate committees since the last review. One member left the faculty in 2005. Another is an associate dean. Of the remaining 24 faculty, only 50 percent of those are/were on PhD committees. Thirteen serve as chair of one or more PhD committees. The majority of those PhD committees are concentrated in the areas of the department's traditional strengths: Western, American Indian, Southwestern, and American military history. This means that there has been a disproportionate committee workload. There is some evidence that new faculty interested in European, world, and broader areas of American history are gaining some graduate student interest. That student interest and the department's commitment to the strengthening of broader emphases should naturally result in expanded faculty participation on graduate committees.

The department is to be commended for the change in faculty gender balance since the 2001 review. The active faculty is now 48 percent female. It is also to be commended for establishing a 2/2 teaching load. This seems to be particularly helpful to younger faculty involved in the publication process, as reflected in faculty vitae.

The Question of Separate Departments:
It has been proposed that the somewhat hostile culture of the department could be addressed with the creation of a new department--The Department of Military and Diplomatic History and Military Science. This reviewer does not agree that this is an acceptable solution. Without a very large infusion of resources into both departments, both programs would be weakened. Military History does account for a good percentage
of the graduate program in the present department, but for it to become a separate program, with present staffing, it would have to rely heavily on supplemental course work offered by the History Department. Any attempt to broaden the military history side beyond Vietnam would make the Military History Department a duplicate History Department, creating larger demands on finite resources in both departments. The quality of the graduate degrees from either department would thus be weakened. Further, if there were two departments, where would the responsibility be assigned for teaching the massive numbers of undergraduates who are required by the State of Texas to take American history? If that were the responsibility of a single department, without the large infusion of new faculty positions, how would the quality of graduate training be maintained?

It is clear that a majority of the faculty members interviewed or completing the review questionnaire perceive the attempt to form a separate department as an administrative act brought on by personal connections and, perhaps, single-focused fund raising. Such a perception would only be strengthened by an administrative order to form a separate department. It is this reviewer’s belief that the gradual integration of a military history track within the History Department, perhaps even with a separate Director of Graduate Studies, would in the long run ease the tension within the faculty. Evidence is that some tension has been lessened since the appointment of a new department head who, apparently, has done much to foster professional attitudes within the department. Further easing of that tension should continue with the above recommendation for integration rather than separation.

Conclusion
As stated above, the Department of History under the leadership of a new department chair, Professor Jorge Iber, has made progress since the last review. However, there is still strong evidence of a hostile environment and some unprofessional behavior. The lack of trust among colleagues can only be overcome by a renewal of professional attitudes and a clear transparency within the workings of the department. This reviewer recommends every effort be made to implement the standards of the profession as outlined by the American Historical Association. There is a strong potential within the department to create an atmosphere that could contribute not only to the advancement of its professional image but also, more importantly, to a sound education for graduate history students.

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