History Department Assessment Plan 2011

Mission of the Department:

Consonant with the mission of Saint Peter’s College the Department of History seeks to develop the whole person in preparation for a lifetime of learning, leadership and service in a diverse and global society. The study of history supports the mission of the College by preparing students to participate knowledgeably in this society by exposing them to the myriad and varying cultures of the human past. The methods, content and values of the discipline of history will foster in students a spirit of inquiry and the ability to think critically. An emphasis on clarity in oral and written communications will help prepare students for success in any future endeavors.

Student Learning Outcomes for the Core Curriculum:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with major themes in the Western tradition from the Classical Age to the Enlightenment.
   This learning outcome supports a fundamental mission of the Core Curriculum to help students become “intelligently appreciative of a common culture heritage.” Core Curriculum mission statement p.14 of the Student Course Catalogue 2010-12.

   Measure
   a. The traditional direct measures of this objective, i.e., examinations, quizzes, reports will continue.
   b. Questions on the Student Opinion Questionnaire, given for every course, will serve as an indirect measure of effectiveness. In particular questions 8 and 9 on the questionnaire would be most helpful. (8. The learning objectives for this course have been made clear. 9. The course activities are related to the learning objectives.)
   All syllabi for the course will list the Student Learning Objective. The History Department could then decide what favorable percentage should be attained to consider the outcome was reached in a particular section.

2. Demonstrate familiarity with the major historical trends and events of the modern world.

   This learning outcome provides the basis for our students to become aware of how various civilizations have responded to the challenges of the modern era. See “The Educational Objectives of Saint Peter’s College p.10 Student Course Catalogue 2010-12. Only with this knowledge can students analyze the present in any meaningful way. Core Curriculum mission statement; paragraph III, p.14 of the Student Course Catalogue 2010-12.
Measure

This Student Learning Outcome refers to the second Core Curriculum requirement in history. It is more modern and global in nature. The same measures for the first course, however, would also be pertinent for this offering.

Student Learning Outcomes for the Major:

1. Majors should gain an understanding of various historical themes including non-Western ones to give them some exposure to the broad scope of history.

Measure

The department’s requirement that all majors must pursue at least one elective in Pre-Modern History, Modern Western History, U.S. History and thematic or non-Western History fulfills this outcome; it can be tracked by an examination of the student’s audit for graduation. Also, question two on the Survey of Senior History Majors seeks an opinion on this requirement to take a broad variety of courses.

2. Underclass students should develop the ability to do historical research, write with clarity on historical matters and effectively communicate their ideas orally. Such activities would enable students to reach more effectively their educational goals and prepare them for lifelong learning.

Measure

There are multiple means employed to measure these abilities. In the two Main Currents in American History courses all students are required to do a multi-draft research paper. Here they are introduced to the method of scholarly reference approved by the department for all research papers, K.L. Turabian’s *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. All subsequent electives require multi-draft assignments using this method. All electives require examinations. They are almost exclusively in essay form. Class participation and oral reports encourage non-written communication. As with the Core Curriculum courses all department electives are surveyed by the Student Opinion Questionnaire. The same procedure will be used. Student Learning Outcomes will be included in all Syllabi and questions 8 and 9 will be reviewed. Results should at least meet the school average for these questions.

In order to better gauge the progress of students in fulfilling this outcome some quantitative analysis will be used. Research assignments after the first draft of papers in Main Currents I and after the final draft in Main Currents II will be analyzed. The percentage of those who fulfill requirements in the following areas will be tabulated: clear statement of a viable thesis, effective support of that thesis with research, less than ten grammatical or proofreading mistakes, the use of approved academic format (Turabian). The Survey of Senior History Majors in questions 5-8 and 12-15 also addresses this outcome.
3. The Tuleja Seminar, the History Department’s Capstone course, provides seniors with the opportunity to do extensive independent research, develop greater academic self-discipline and refine the skills they have been acquiring in their underclass years.

**Measure**

Seminar members must produce a 25 to 30 page paper on a topic approved by the seminar director. The director and historical period change every year. The paper is a multi-draft assignment and must be in proper Turabian form, use primary sources, and show evidence of knowledge of the historiographical background of the topic. Upon completion of the paper students defend their theses at a public forum attended by their classmates and members of the history faculty. To check on the effectiveness of these seminars three papers of various qualities are kept by the department. Seniors are also given an exit questionnaire to gauge their opinions on the seminar and their general experiences as majors. Questions 10 and 11 on the survey address the seminar. In addition the same criteria used to analyze the Main Currents courses will be used here. A higher percentage in compliance should be expected.

4. To prepare students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for careers in history and education, and participation in and service to the community.

**Measure**

Within 3 years of graduation at least 30% of our students will have entered graduate school, law school, be teaching history or be involved in service to the community, broadly defined. A survey of graduating seniors will discover those who plan to further their education beyond college and the percentage of students who passed the Praxis examination for certification in social studies.