

## **Department of Economics, History & Political Science 2017-18 HISTORY Program Review**

### **Departmental Overview**

#### **History of the department, organization, and the mission of the department.**

##### *History of the Department*

History has been central to the course of study at Fitchburg State since its beginning as the Fitchburg Normal School, a state teacher's college, in 1894-1895. Students were required to take courses and exams in areas of American history and geography. By the time the institution was renamed State Teachers College at Fitchburg 1932, the curriculum also included Ancient, Medieval, English and Modern History. The study of history was required of teacher candidates across training programs in elementary and secondary school education, as were courses in geography and economics. At midcentury, the curriculum continued to focus on history and geography, grouped together as the Department of Social Science, but elective offerings were added to include courses in sociology, industry and government. Fitchburg State grew from a teachers' college into a comprehensive institution of higher education in the decades following World War II, adding additional professional programs such as nursing and the addition of a liberal arts curriculum.

In 1964, the Board of Higher Education authorized the Bachelor of Arts in History degree at Fitchburg State, providing history students an additional degree option besides the long-standing Bachelor of Science in Education History Major. Bachelor of Arts degrees were offered as well in Biology, Chemistry, English and Physics. History course offerings expanded to include areas of South America, the Middle East, Asia and Russia as well as thematic courses on intellectual history, economic history and imperialism. This growth was reflected in the organization of the History Department and the addition, in the 1970s, of courses on the history of African Americans, US Women, Mexico, Latin America and the Caribbean, the American West and South, the Soviet Union, and US diplomatic relations. History was central to the General Education requirements during this period, and was considered both a Humanities and Social Science discipline, reflecting the variety and breadth of history methodology. The creation of four government courses and hiring of Political Science faculty resulted in Political Science joining with History, Geography and Economics and a return to the broad structure of the Department of Social Science. With the migration of Geography to Earth Sciences in the 1980s, reflecting their move away from human and cultural geography, the department evolved into its present form. The BHE authorized the Economics major in 1983 and Political Science in 1997. In 2008, the department's name changed to Economics, History, and Political Science

(EHPS) to reflect the department's distinct disciplines. Two years later, the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts approved the change of state colleges to university status, resulting in the renamed Fitchburg State University.

### *Organization*

The history faculty direct their own program within the departmental structure of EHPS. They meet together monthly with colleagues in Economics and Political Science for department meetings. The department has one Chair, nominated by secret ballot by full-time members of the department and appointed by the President for a three-year term with a term limit of three consecutive terms. The department also has two standing committees: a Curriculum Committee with one representative from each of the three disciplines and a Peer Evaluation Committee. Both committees are elected annually by the entire membership of the department. Because History offers an M.A. Graduate Program, the history faculty elect a Graduate Program Chair every three years to administer the program. The Graduate Program Chair is compensated by the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education. The History program has a Secondary Education Coordinator who works with the Dean of Education to oversee the History Secondary Education track within the program. The History Assessment Coordinator is responsible for collecting assessment data and producing annual reports. The history faculty meet at prearranged times during the academic year to discuss curriculum, assessment and program-specific issues. Currently there are nine historians in the department out of a total of 16 faculty members.

### *Mission*

According to its mission statement, "Fitchburg State University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and blends *liberal arts* and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment. Our comprehensive public university prepares students to lead, serve, and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and *civic and global responsibility*. A Fitchburg State education extends beyond our classrooms to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities. As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the *economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth.*"

History at Fitchburg State fulfills the mission of the university by teaching the analytical, rhetorical and communication skills that are the bedrock of the historical discipline and ensure its central place in a liberal arts education. The History program provides students across the general education curriculum with habits of historical thought that are essential for an informed citizenry in local, state, national and global contexts. History is a foundational discipline within liberal arts with a scholarly tradition that reaches back over two thousand years of inquiry and knowledge. Practitioners of history at Fitchburg State have provided teacher candidates, undergraduates in the general education curriculum, history baccalaureates and graduate students with knowledge of the human condition and processes of change for more than a century. at Fitchburg State has become richer, more inclusive and insightful over the decades, responsive to trends in the profession and in higher education. What has remained constant, however, is historians' commitment to providing students at a public university with a rigorous education in the past to better inform their present, allowing students to grow as informed and empathetic citizens of their communities and the Commonwealth.

## **Centrality of Department and Program Mission and Visions to the Mission and Vision of the University**

At Fitchburg State, the history program serves both majors and minors in the field of history as well as the broader university population through the Liberal Arts and Science curriculum. As stated in the Liberal Arts and Sciences Objectives in 2006, Fitchburg State University students will show proficiency in areas of Problem Solving, Communication, Citizenship, Ethical Reasoning and the Arts. The history program's objectives are organized under the following categories:

### **1. Historical Knowledge**

Graduates with a baccalaureate in history should understand the diversity of human experience in the past, as well as the nature of the historical enterprise. Specifically, graduates should demonstrate that they can explain the historical development and significance of important events, institutions, and ideas in United States and world history and apply different approaches to, and methods of, historical study.

### **2. Historical Reasoning and Research**

Graduates with a baccalaureate in history should understand the nature of historical interpretation, the variety of historical sources, and the structure of historical arguments. Specifically, graduates should demonstrate that they can pose a significant research question about history; locate, explain, evaluate, and utilize information from and about the past to answer a research question; interpret a variety of primary sources, evaluate secondary sources, and utilize both types of sources to support a historical argument.

### **3. Communication**

Graduates with a baccalaureate in history should be able to demonstrate that they are critical readers and writers of history. Specifically, graduates should demonstrate that they have mastered the written and oral forms of communication appropriate to history, such as the critical review, analytical summaries of historical events and arguments, and the research paper.

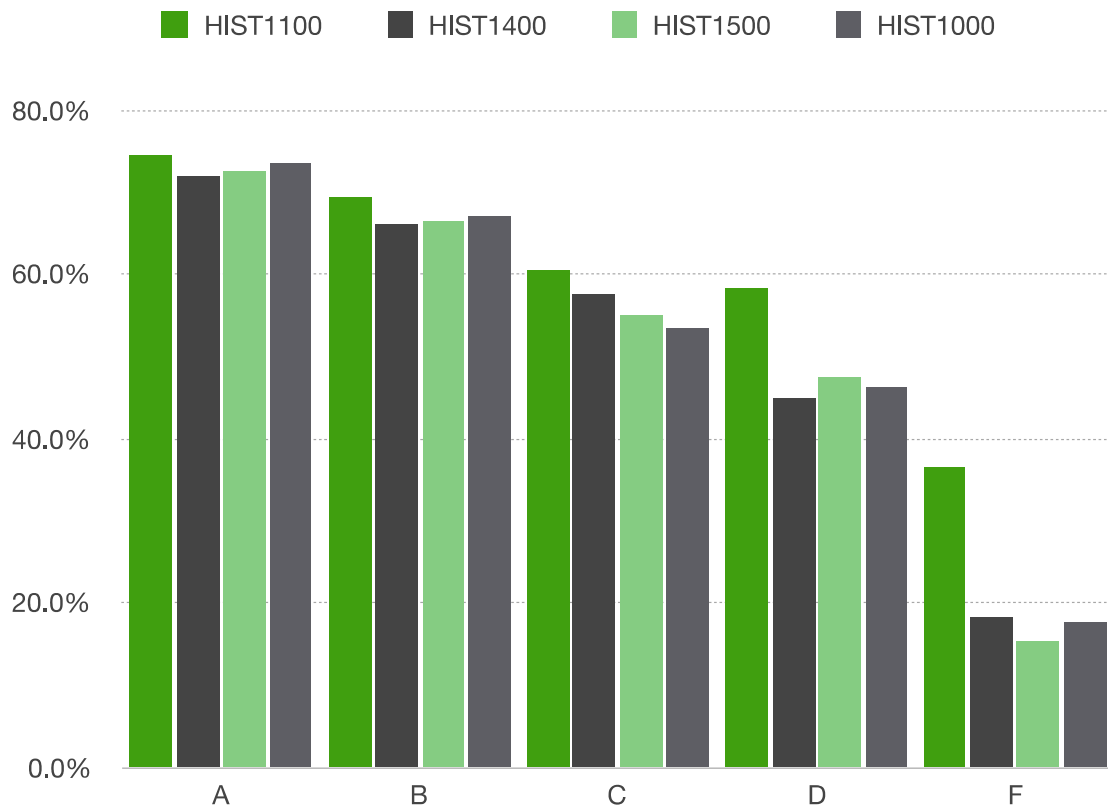
Through each of these three areas, students taking history courses are trained to: solve problems through the analysis of data, including literary and artistic evidence; put forth and evaluate arguments; practice effective skills of communication in expressing ideas; obtain knowledge of citizenship at the local, national and global levels; confront ethical issues in historical reasoning and research; and understand the context that produces historical artefacts of all kinds. As such, the history program fulfills many of the university's Liberal Arts and Sciences objectives.

University data indicates that history courses provide an important service to the Liberal Arts and Sciences core curriculum and programs. Most significantly, the four survey courses drive enrollment in History and are effective in teaching students the skills necessary for successful completion of their degrees across a wide range of disciplines. For example, majors in Elementary Education take the two U.S. surveys as part of their program requirements. History courses also meet the "Citizenship and the World" (CTW) requirement.

The four survey courses are integral to driving and reflecting the success of Fitchburg State students. Any change to the LAS requirements will not only have a significant effect on survey enrollments, but changes would remove a rigorous course that introduces key skills that are important for college-level success. Moreover, it would remove a highly predictive course for student success and graduation rates.

The surveys are among the most predictive courses on campus for future graduation. For Undeclared students, these courses rank 4th (HIST1500), 6th (HIST1400), 17th (HIST1000) and 22nd (HIST1100) in predicting graduation among the most commonly enrolled courses.

As the following graphs demonstrate, success in History surveys are reliable indicators of student graduation rates at the end of four years, demonstrating that students' acquisition of historical knowledge, historical reasoning and research and communication skills increases student success at Fitchburg State.



Course	A	B	C	D	F
HIST1000	73.5%	67.1%	53.3%	46.2%	17.6%
HIST1100	74.5%	69.2%	60.4%	58.3%	36.5%
HIST1400	72.0%	66.0%	57.5%	45.0%	18.3%
HIST1500	72.5%	66.5%	55.1%	47.6%	15.2%

### **Identification of the Major Recommendations for Improvement Made by the Previous Reviewer and the Departmental (Program) Responses to these Recommendations**

*Replace retirement in the field of American History:* In our prior program review, Dr. Lisa Boehm recommended the replacement of Dr. Williams, who specialized in Early America. We hired Dr. Joseph Wachtel in the same field.

*Meet regularly as a discipline outside of department meetings:* The historians accepted this recommendation and schedule meetings as a discipline throughout the academic year, in addition to meeting at the beginning and conclusion of each academic year.

*Consider the requirement of a minor at the university level:* The previous reviewer noted that history is the only major on campus that requires a minor and that history students did not find the requirement onerous. The evaluator believed “this requirement seems to make these students well-prepared graduates who would be interesting to the job market.” She also suggested that the minor requirement might discourage some students from choosing a history major but suggested that this should be considered at the university level. The reviewer recommended a university-wide minor fair to introduce students to the minors that are offered, including interdisciplinary minors. Requiring a 6 course minor, instead of the 4 course LAS Option B under the current LAS structure, has been discussed over the past three years among the members of the LAS Committee with little support for change. The historians continue to require a minor of their students, convinced it adds breadth and rigor to their students’ preparation.

*Revive History Honors Society Chapter:* This recommendation has been accomplished, and the honors society chapter has been reconstituted with students inducted each spring. After being inactive for several years, the History program re-activated the local chapter (Xi Upsilon) of Phi Alpha Theta (ΦΑΘ), the National History Honor Society, and began inducting new members at Fitchburg State University during the spring 2014 term. Eleven high-achieving students who fulfilled the qualifications (including having completed four or more history courses, holding a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, and a GPA in history coursework that is 3.1 or higher) were inducted in a ceremony held on Tuesday, April 29. Since that time, it has become customary for each new cohort of inductees to be welcomed into the society during the spring term with a similar event, where Program faculty and previously inducted members have attended and served as officiants. In 2016, six new members were inducted. In 2017, nine new members were inducted, bringing the total number of inductees to twenty-six since re-activation.

Members of Phi Alpha Theta have regularly served as student representatives of the History program at Open Houses and at other recruiting events. The Program intends to maintain our chapter moving forward and to look for ways to further increase the Society’s presence and activities, such as pairing it with a History Club or by having the local chapter volunteer to host a Phi Alpha Theta regional undergraduate history conference in the near future. Daniel Sarefield has acted as Advisor for Phi Alpha Theta since its re-activation in 2014.

Additional recommendations about encouraging community among majors has been attempted through a book club that failed to garner interest. There is no financial support for taking students to lunch in the dining hall as recommended by the reviewer.

*Retain Surveys and Make them More Appealing with Themes:* This recommendation was already being done within survey courses. The recommendation that introductory courses contain subtitles in the seats list was a good idea, but the software used at the university does not allow this specificity.

*Modify Senior Seminar into a Two-Semester Course and Importance of Sophomore Methods Course:* The reviewer suggested that Senior Seminar be a two semester course and that students write on a topic of their choosing, not a proscribed theme. She also advocated for the importance of the sophomore methods course. The historians took a slightly different approach, and created an additional semester at the sophomore-level, rather than at the senior level, to improve both the research process as well as course work in upper-level electives. This was also in response to students' desire to have additional help with knowing how to read effectively. The new two-course sequence of HIST 2021 and 2022 addresses these concerns. Faculty determined that the topics of Senior Seminar were broad enough to allow students freedom of research topics while providing common foundations for discussion and learning.

*Coordinate Education and History Courses:* In response to student requests conveyed by the external reviewer, HIST 4500 Senior Seminar and the HIST 2021 and 2022 courses are scheduled to eliminate conflicts with required education courses and required history secondary education courses of HIST 4850 and HIST 4860.

*Graduate Program Recommendations:* The reviewer suggested that a thesis be required of all MA students and that the education courses in the MAT program were a source of dissatisfaction with those students. Both suggestions were dealt with differently. The push by DGCE for all-online graduate programs to increase enrollments rendered the MA thesis requirement moot. The MAT program was decommissioned by vote of the department. The suggestion of a 4+1 program is something that could be considered once the all-online graduate program is established.

*Course Learning Outcomes Assessable and Uniform Across Sections:* Syllabi contain course learning outcomes as mandated by the All-University Committee in 2007. The suggestion that sections of the same courses have the same learning outcomes has been discussed by the historians, as has the Board of Higher Education's adoption of recommended learning outcomes for history survey courses across the university system. Historians have the freedom to incorporate these into their syllabi.

*Removal of GPA as a Measure of Assessment:* The historians considered this suggestion and found it lacked merit. The reviewer was unaware that the rubric used in Senior Seminar is used to measure student work in the 2000-level methods courses.

*Course Release for Faculty Working on a Manuscript:* In an effort to support faculty research on a 4-4 teaching load, the reviewer suggested a one course release be given to faculty working on a manuscript. The university administration did not support this suggestion.

### **Best Practices**

We aim to align our curricular design and program learning outcomes with the American Historical Association's 2016 statement on the "History Discipline Core." According to this core, history students can:

- "build historical knowledge"
- "develop historical methods"
- "recognize the provisional nature of knowledge, the disciplinary preference for complexity, and the comfort with ambiguity that history requires"
- "apply the range of skills it takes to decode the historical record because of its incomplete, complex, and contradictory nature"
- "create historical arguments and narrative"
- "use historical perspective as central to active citizenship."

For more details see: <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/tuning-the-history-discipline/2016-history-discipline-core>

### **Departmental (History Program) Initiatives & Significant Changes during the Past Five Years:**

#### *Undergraduate*

Initiatives in the program over the period of review have been based to a large extent on the issue of declining history enrollments nation-wide and the corresponding trends in public higher education and Fitchburg State particularly. According to the American Historical Association, public institutions' history enrollments declined at a rate of 9.2% from AY 2012-2013 to AY 2014-2015 (Brookins, *Perspectives*, 9/2016). During the same period, enrollments in history courses at Fitchburg State, derived from the Registrar's "seats lists," declined from 1637 to 1463, or by 10.6%. Based on University Phase I data, enrollments in history courses at the university declined from 1769 in AY 2012-2013 to 1522 in AY 2014-2015, representing a 14% decline. The AHA reports that the proportion of history degrees to all baccalaureate degrees awarded has declined from 2.2% in 2007 to 1.7% in AY 2013-2014. By comparison, the history program at Fitchburg State remains strong university-wide, comprising 2.56% of all university degrees in AY 2013-2014.

Data on history majors and minors nationally and at FSU suggest potential causes for decline and opportunities for growth. The AHA suggests that the economic recession and the decline in male college enrollments may play a role in the decline of history enrollments and majors nation-wide (Brookins, *Perspectives*, 3/2016). At Fitchburg State, the number of majors has declined between AY 2012-2013 and AY 2015-2016 by 26% (from N100 to 74) according to Phase I data. Minors in history, however, have shown robust growth of 34% in the same period (from N57-N87). There is evidence, moreover, that the History program has responded to the national trends and reversed the decline in enrollments. Enrollments between AY 2015-2016

and AY 2016-2017 increased from 1455 to 1505, resulting in a modest 3.4% growth. We believe these positive indications are the result of specific initiatives taken by the faculty through innovations in course offerings and pedagogy at the undergraduate and graduate levels of the program.

The History faculty have created an impressive number of new courses that are relevant to non-majors, majors and minors. These include Climate Change and World History, Immigration and American Identity, Women in the Industrial Revolution, Life in the Roman City, Sports and American Society, America in the Nuclear Era (1945-1968), America Since 1968, and (as a topics course) History by Design. In addition, Oral History and History by Design were designed to enable students to engage with varied methodologies of history that cross disciplines.

All the survey courses are offered in traditional, online and hybrid formats. History faculty utilize a wide range of new instructional techniques and methods while retaining a sharp focus on historical analysis, reading, and writing. The History faculty have implemented new pedagogy, including

- Oral history leading to performances
- Arranging for history students in methods classes to use virtual reality headsets to explore virtual historical environments so they can understand possibilities and pitfalls for representing the past in new ways.
- Creating courses and assignments in which history students work directly with students in communications media to produce digital exhibits for public history sites.
- Using emerging theories of classroom gamification via Barnard College's *Reacting to the Past* series to engage students in historical role-playing so they develop historical empathy by interpreting the past from specific historical points of view.

At the graduate level, faculty are also teaching a growing number of courses on-line. For example, the graduate HIST 7450 (Historiography) was redesigned as an online course in the Fall 2015. Urban America, China Since 1900 and African American History have all been redesigned for online teaching. This has resulted in increased enrollments and student satisfaction.

The history faculty have revised the undergraduate curriculum in response to student needs and changes by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to history licensure. Two new required courses, HIST 201(Reading the Historical Landscape) and HIST 202 (Constructing History) have replaced HIST 2000 (Historical Methods). The history program made these changes in response to assessment data indicating the need to further build knowledge of historical methods and skills earlier in the plan of study so that students would be better prepared to succeed in writing Senior Seminar papers. The history program also replaced the History Secondary Education major with a two-track minor in Secondary Education. Under the new system, History majors have the flexibility to complete a minor in secondary education even if they do not meet all of the licensure requirements of the Commonwealth. In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education DESE has expanded the scope of History licensure, from an 8-12 grade secondary licensure to a broader middle school and secondary inclusive license spanning grades 5-12. These changes have led to continuing adjustments in our history and education curriculum to help our students meet the requirements for endorsement for state licensure.



### *Graduate*

The History graduate program has made changes in response to the growing preference of graduate students to take summer courses instead of in-person classes during the Fall and Spring semesters. In addition, the end of the Teaching American History (TAH) federal grant prompted revisions to the program. The faculty resolved to streamline our graduate program and to pursue new methods of delivery to attract new students. One of the two existing degree programs, the Masters of Arts in Teaching History, was decommissioned by a vote of the program faculty (and approved by the Graduate Council during AY2016-2017) in order to focus on the other program, the Master of Arts in History. At the suggestion of the administration, the faculty began to offer on-line graduate courses regularly. This change is in keeping with the university's trend of converting existing graduate programs into online programs and introducing new programs as on-line programs. This has made the history graduate program more convenient and accessible to busy professionals in the local area and opened our program to a new market of individuals beyond North Central Massachusetts. Beginning in AY2017-2018, graduate courses in History are being offered on-line each fall, spring, and summer term, so that our program can now be completed entirely on-line. Preliminary evidence demonstrates that this change is well-received. HIST 7450 (Historiography) became an online course in Fall 2015 and enrollments increased fivefold. HIST 9006 (The American Revolution) was offered online this spring (2018) and the enrollments have been on par with the on-line historiography courses. These preliminary results have prompted faculty to redesign more graduate courses for the on-line environment.

The Graduate Program Chair and program faculty are expanding our outreach by hosting programming. In November 2016, Ohio State University professor and Digital Historian David Staley presented a lecture on "A History of Digital History." Professor Christian Appy of the University of Massachusetts will speak in April of 2018 on "The Vietnam War: Fifty Years Later" as part of the historians' efforts to grow the graduate and undergraduate programs and expose our student population to historical scholars and their scholarship. The revised graduate program has been publicized through a live webinar in November 2017 and ongoing blog postings on the GCE website and social media.

In recent years, our graduate degree candidates have completed courses and directed studies to complete their degree and, for those who have opted to do so, their Masters Theses. Some of our students have taken the opportunity to present papers at regional history conferences and to share their scholarly research with their peers and the public. Some of our recent graduates have succeeded in gaining acceptance into advanced studies programs, such as Masters in Public History and even the Ph.D. in History.

### **Program Structure, including Concentrations and Minors.**

The History program includes the major and three history minors: History Minor, History Secondary Education Minor Initial Licensure, and History Secondary Education Minor Non-Licensure.

### **Interdisciplinary Programs**

In addition, the History program offers courses that support the interdisciplinary minors of African American Studies, American Studies, Latin, Social Science, and Women, Gender and

Sexuality Studies. Students in International Studies, Italian Studies, and Asian Studies may take history courses to fulfill their requirements as well.

Over the past five years historians have continued to develop strong interdisciplinary connections, both within the major and within the University. For example, Dr. Baker is working with Kelly Morgan to take oral histories and turn these histories into dramatizations. Dr. Jewell collaborates with Economics, and Dr. Lieberman continues his collaboration with Geophysical sciences.

### ***Faculty Development***

The Faculty in History at Fitchburg State University maintain active and productive research while teaching at a high level and with a 4/4 teaching load. Faculty are active and teach in fields including American political, economic, cultural, and social history from the colonial period to the present, and employ methodologies such as oral history, analysis of environmental and economic data, and a variety of theoretical approaches to teaching and scholarship. They engage with debates in environmental, policy, labor, transnational, ethnic and immigration, and religious history. Areas covered include Latin America, China and India, Ancient Greece and Rome, and Modern Europe, with specific focus on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. Scholars engage with themes in the history of genocide, climate change, medicine and science, war and democracy, women's history, and they explore historical developments from the innovation of the Silk Road to the Cold War in global perspective.

In the period under review, Susan Williams, a specialist in colonial America and material culture, retired. In Fall 2013, the department conducted a successful, nation-wide search for a new tenure-track historian. Joseph Wachtel (PhD, The Ohio State University) joined the faculty in Fall 2014. This replacement maintains coverage of American history across its chronology, extending into the period before settlement, from the development of exploration and the Atlantic World through the Revolution and ratification of the Constitution. Moreover, Prof. Wachtel adds expertise in religious history.

Faculty are active in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Laura Baker presented her approach for teaching in hybrid form at the Massachusetts Colleges Online Annual Conference on eLearning and the paper "Let's Do It! Activities for Teaching Historical Thinking" at the National Council for Social Studies. She also presented "Teaching *Slavery By Another Name* and *The New Jim Crow*: Understanding Racialized Social Control in the Post-Emancipation Era" at the New England American Studies Association and "Beyond Coverage: Toward a Signature Pedagogy for History Survey Courses" at the Organization of American Historians. FSU faculty in history have also engaged in several activities related to teaching and pedagogy on campus, including numerous presentations at the all-faculty Development Day, through the Center for Teaching and Learning, and other fora on campus. Katherine Jewell attended an annual *Reacting to the Past* symposium, and will attend a regional *Reacting to the Past* conference in 2018 along with Joseph Wachtel.

### ***Faculty Teaching, Research, and Community Engagement***

Faculty have actively published, presented, and offered commentary on current events in historical perspective.

FSU historians published four books during the period under review. These are: Katherine Jewell, *Dollars for Dixie: Business and the Transformation of Conservatism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2017); Benjamin Lieberman, *Remaking Identities: God, Nation, and Race in World History* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2013); Benjamin Lieberman and Elizabeth Gordon, *Climate Change in Human History* (Bloomsbury, 2018); Teresa Fava Thomas, *American Arabists in the Cold War Middle East: From Orientalism to Professionalism* (Anthem Press, 2016) and *The Reluctant Migrants: Migration from the Italian Veneto* (Teneo Press, 2015). Benjamin Lieberman and Teresa Fava Thomas also published chapters in edited collections: Lieberman “Expulsions from Eastern Europe after 1945” in *The Routledge History of Genocide*; Thomas, “German Immigration to Fitchburg, Massachusetts,” in *Kleve am Niederrhein und Fitchburg in Massachusetts – Partnerstädte*, and “The Assimilationists: Sarah Wool Moore and the Society for the Protection of Italian Immigrants,” in *What is Italian America?* Christine Dee continues her work as series editor at Ohio University Press in *The Civil War in the Great Interior*.

FSU historians also published articles in the *Proceedings of the Deportate, Exili, Profughi Conferenza*, and *The American Historian*, editorials in the *Washington Post*, and commentaries in the *Worcester Telegram*, *Lowell Sun*, and *Sentinel and Enterprise*. They have also published with websites such as *Teaching U.S. History*.

Fitchburg State faculty and administration also recognized faculty with several awards. Teresa Fava Thomas and Ben Lieberman each received the university’s Research Award. René Reeves and Laura Baker each received a Ruth Butler grant for research, and John Paul received a Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation Grant. Laura Baker, Katherine Jewell, and René Reeves all received Fitchburg State Special Projects Grants for research. Laura Baker received a Massachusetts Online Course of Distinction Award. Teresa Fava Thomas has received several Center for Italian Culture grants.

Faculty presented at numerous conferences, including New England American Studies Association, Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Annual Meeting of the Pop Culture Association, the German Studies Association, the Italian American Studies Association conference, a conference on Italian women and war in Venice, Italy, New England Historical Association, American Political History Institute Seminar (Boston University), “In the Shadow of Enlightenment: Religion Reform, and Revolution in the Age of *Unigenitus*,” Textual Turning Point: The Futures of 1944, Policy History Conference, Business History Conference, Camp Florida, and the Southern Industrialization Project.

They also presented research in invited lectures and panels on immigration, teaching, World War II, college radio, and other topics at Harvard University History and History of American Civilization Departments, Bungie Lecture Series (AAA Game Studio), Roger Williams University Department of History and American Studies Joshua B. Stein Works in Progress Lecture Series, Jacob Edwards Library in Southbridge, Bolton Public Library, Lunenburg Public

Library, Gardner History Museum, Fitchburg Historical Society, New Ipswich Historical Society, Center for Italian Culture at Fitchburg State, Fitchburg State University Harrod Lecture Series, Cumberland University History Society Annual Lecture, and many panels and events at Fitchburg State, including TEDxFitchburgStateU in 2014.

Additionally, faculty continually publish book reviews in journals including, but not limited to, *The Americas*, *The American Historical Review*, *American Studies*, *Journal of American History*, *History (U.K.)*, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, *Journal of Southern History*, and *Georgia Historical Review*

Historians have taken a leading role in civic engagement at the university. Dr. Baker led work on the 1969 Fitchburg State Free Speech Case. In 1969 Fitchburg State student John Antonelli, then editor-in-chief of the student newspaper, took college president James Hammond to federal court for restraint of his First Amendment rights. *Antonelli v. Hammond* became a landmark case, establishing the precedent that school administrators could not censor student expression solely because they did not like it. Laura Baker's spring 2014 HIST 3130 (Oral History) class conducted interviews with eight Fitchburg State alumni about their participation in the case and related cultural changes on campus in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Six of these interviews were suitable for inclusion in the University Archives. Dr. Baker uses excerpts from the interviews for a HIST 1500 U.S. History II class assignment that asks students to write an essay about student protest culture at Fitchburg State. A student who took the class, Merrick Henry, went on to complete a Communications Media independent study this past fall in which he produced music based on the topic.

Drs. Baker and Sarefield also participated in a one-day public symposium celebrating the legacy of Robert Cormier, one of the most censored young adult authors of our time. Titled "Robert Cormier: Censorship and Intolerance," the symposium was hosted by the university on October 1, 2015. Cormier is an FSU alum and his collections are part of the University Archives. Drs. Sarefield and Baker participated in a panel discussion of regional, historical, and literary perspectives on censorship. Dr. Sarefield discussed his research on Roman book burning, and Dr. Baker discussed her research on the 1969 Free Speech case at Fitchburg State.

Dr. Jewell has developed an important voice as a public historian by presenting numerous public lectures and authoring pieces on free trade and college radio for the "Made by History" blog of the *Washington Post* (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/>) Among the public presentations, Dr. Jewell delivered "Gay Rights in Historical Perspective" as the opening talk for the exhibit "Journey to Equality: The History of the LGBTQ Civil Rights Movement" at the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library, Fitchburg State University in October 2017. She presented "Vietnam Memory and the Public" at the Bolton Public Library in September 2017. Dr. Jewell also presented "Explaining Trump: The Historical Origins of an Unconventional Candidacy," at Fitchburg State University in March 2016.

### **Service to the University**

History faculty provide service to the university and university faculty in key areas. To list only a few examples, Dr. Baker was elected to the Executive Board of the Fitchburg State University Chapter of the Massachusetts State College Association from 2014 to 2017. She also served on

the Search Committee for an Interim Dean of Education (2013) and was elected to, and served as Chair, of the Tenure Committee (2012-2013). Dr. Dee was elected to the All-University Committee for 2017-2018 and the University Committee on Promotions from 2012 to 2016, which she also chaired. She served on the Search Committee for a Dean of Arts and Sciences in AY 2016-2017 (Dr. Franca Barricelli), and chaired a successful search committee for a full-time position in Early American History, AY2013-2014 (Dr. Joseph Wachtel). Dr. Jewell has served as Co-Coordinator of the Center for Teaching and Learning from Spring 2015 to the present; as a member and secretary of the All University Policies Committee, AY 2014-2015; and as a member co-host, project originator and co-director of TEDxFitchburgStateU in AY 2016-2017. Dr. Lieberman has served on the Liberal Arts and Sciences Council from 2015 through 2017. Dr. Reeves was elected as Secretary for the Fitchburg State University Chapter of the Massachusetts State College Association, 2017-2019, and a member of the All University Committee from 2012 to 2014 & 2016 to-2017. He also served on the All University Policies Committee in AY 2015-2016. Dr. Thomas has served since 2003 on the Advisory Board for the Center for Italian Culture [the CIC]. Dr. Wachtel has served on the Community Building Committee. Please note that this is only a very partial overview of the many important contributions by History faculty to the advancement of Fitchburg State University.

## **CURRICULUM: History Undergraduate Curriculum**

### **Program Objectives**

The History program at Fitchburg State provides a powerful foundation in historical knowledge, reasoning and research as well as communication skills. By means of critical inquiry into the history and diversity of human action and thought, we seek to produce informed citizens of the Commonwealth, the nation, and the wider world. History majors and minors gain expertise in close-reading and analysis of non-fictional texts, statistical and geographical data, and artifacts from arts and literature. Critical thinking skills are emphasized through coursework that hones qualitative analysis and interpretive skills. This allows students of history to organize evidence and support for ideas and arguments that are as diverse as the pasts and cultures studied. Historical knowledge is conveyed creatively, through writing, computer modeling, game design, fiction, and multimedia presentations. Graduates who have studied history at Fitchburg State strengthen their ability to research, analyze and communicate and take these skills with them in careers in education, including teaching as well as policy analysis, information storage and technology, research and library sciences, and the world of communication and business.

Program Learning outcomes are as follows:

#### *Historical Knowledge*

Graduates of the history major should understand the diversity of human experience in the past, as well as the nature of the historical enterprise. Specifically, graduates should demonstrate that they can:

- a. explain the historical development and significance of important events, institutions, and ideas in United States and world history;
- b. apply different approaches to, and methods of, historical study.

### *Historical Reasoning and Research*

Graduates of the history major should understand the nature of historical interpretation, the variety of historical sources, and the structure of historical arguments. Specifically, graduates should demonstrate that they can:

- a. pose a significant research question about history;
- b. locate, explain, evaluate, and utilize information from and about the past to answer a research question;
- c. interpret a variety of primary sources, evaluate secondary sources, and utilize both types of sources to support a historical argument.

### *Communication*

Graduates of the history major should be able to demonstrate that they are knowledgeable readers and writers of history. Specifically, graduates should demonstrate that they are proficient in:

- a. the written and oral forms of communication appropriate to history, such as the critical review, analytical summaries of historical events and arguments, and the research paper
- b. the formal style appropriate for academic writing, including the use of the Chicago style of citation.

### **Description of Curriculum: History Major**

Majors progress from introductory survey courses and two historical methods courses (HIST 2021 and HIST 2022) that expose students to the practices of analytical reading, argumentation, research and historical writing. Electives (HIST 2000s-HIST 3000s) focus on specific topics and/or periods. Electives are not sequenced and require only introductory-level prerequisites. This policy reflects faculty desire that electives remain accessible to non-majors as well as majors. The prerequisites are as follows: ENGL 1200 or HIST 1000 or HIST 1100 or HIST 1400 or HIST 1500 or AMST 1800. Students must take five elective courses for 15 credits. The major culminates with a required research capstone, HIST 4500 (Senior Seminar). All majors must complete a minor in a field outside of history. The history major is one of few on campus that requires a minor field, reflecting the value that the program places on depth of study and the importance of broad disciplinary training in an undergraduate education.

### **Description of Curriculum: History Minors**

The history program offers three history minors: History, History Secondary Education Initial Licensure, and History Secondary Education Non-Licensure. In addition, the program offers courses that support the following interdisciplinary minors: African-American Studies, American Studies, Latin, Social Science, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS).

### *History Minor*

The History minor consists of 18 credits with at least three courses at the 2000-level or above. Students across university departments and disciplines pursue a minor field in history, and the minor has shown marked growth in its popularity and relevance to other disciplines. For example, from 2012 through 2016, history minors have increased from 47 to 87 students.

### *Social Science Minor*

The Social Science consists of 18 credits from Economics, History, and Political Science: one Economics course, one Political Science course, and three History courses, one from each of three History sub-fields (United States History, European History, and World History). The final course may be in Economics, History, or Political Science. At least two courses must be 2000-level or above.

#### *History Secondary Education Minor Initial Licensure & Non-Licensure*

The History Secondary Education minor offers two tracks: an 18 credit non-licensure track, and a 30 credit licensure track (see table below). All courses in the minor include fieldwork. To be admitted to the minor, students must have a minimum 2.5 GPA, pass HIST 2860 Introduction to Teaching Secondary School, and pass the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL) in Communication and Literacy skills. To remain in the minor, students must maintain a minimum overall GPA of 2.5.

Students wishing to achieve the History 8-12 Initial license, a requirement to be fully licensed to teach high school history in Massachusetts public schools, must complete the licensure track, which includes a semester of fulltime student teaching. To qualify for student teaching, candidates must pass the History MTEL, achieve a minimum overall GPA of 2.75 and a minimum 3.0 GPA in the History major and History Secondary Education minor, and have completed all other coursework for the bachelor's degree.

Students in the licensure track are advised to complete, in addition to courses required for the History major and History Secondary Education Minor Initial Licensure, PSY 2230 Adolescent Psychology, GEOG 1100 Human Geography, and the Social Science Minor. GEOG 1100 and the Social Science Minor help to prepare students to pass the History MTEL and meet Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) requirements for the History 8-12 Initial License.

	Non-Licensure Track	Licensure Track
HIST 2860 Intro to Secondary Education ( <i>pre-requisite</i> )		
SPED 3800 Teaching Adolescents w/Spec Needs	3	3
HIST 4850 Spec Methods in Teaching History	3	3
ENGL 4700 Teaching Reading & Writing Across Content Area	3	3
EDUC 3122 Sheltered English Immersion	3	3
EDUC/SPED Elective	6	6
HIST 4012 Practicum Seminar		3
HIST 4860/4870 Practicum I & II		9
Total Credits	18	30

### **Overview of Recent Curricular Revisions**

#### *History Major*

Since the previous review, the History major has been revised in response to longitudinal assessment data of student learning outcomes through the senior seminar capstone projects. In

2017, proposals to replace the single HIST 2000 (Historical Methods) course with two new courses, HIST 2021 (Reading Historical Landscapes) and HIST 2022 (Constructing History) were approved by university governance and the president. As its name indicates, Reading Historical Landscapes seeks to improve students' ability to read for argument, use evidence, and acquaint them with historiography. This change was driven by assessment data that indicated persistent achievement deficits in the category of perceptive reading. Deficits in this area also affect the student learning outcomes in both evaluating interpretations and effective expression. Perceptive reading is of central importance to knowledge acquisition in the field of history. By focusing on these outcomes in Reading Historical Landscapes, it allows more time to be devoted to the process of historical research and communication, which is emphasized in the spring semester course, Constructing History. This course emphasizes locating, utilizing, and organizing historical evidence, formulating theses, and conveying these ideas. Assessment data indicated persistent deficiencies in students' ability to analyze evidence, propose interpretations, and convey this information effectively. By isolating these outcomes into specific courses, these reforms have met the needs of our student population and provided the skill acquisition for success within the major and at the university.

To accommodate this reform, the number of history electives was reduced from six to five. The rationale behind this was that: 1) the program did not want to create an impediment for student progression through the major; and 2) both new courses contain historical content and knowledge acquisition comparable to an historical elective. In addition, the history major eliminated the distribution requirement for electives in World, European and U.S. history for two reasons. The first is that multiple course offerings transcend these categories. The second is pragmatic. Owing to the size of our department and the service faculty perform to other programs and within our own, as well as the number of electives faculty members teach, it would be unlikely that any student could accumulate five elective courses within a single geographic area.

### *History Secondary Education*

The History Secondary Education Minor Initial Licensure and Non-Licensure tracks were approved by university governance and the president in 2017. They are not new but rather a revision of the now discontinued History Secondary Education Major. The licensure track preserves the Initial Licensure core courses of the former major. The non-licensure track preserves this core exclusive of the practicum. Both tracks have added six elective credits in EDUC or SPED not previously required in the Initial Licensure core. Prior to university approval, the Director of Education Unit Accountability and Licensure confirmed with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that the History Secondary Education Minor may replace the History Secondary Education Major. All education programs at the university are recognized by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

Replacing the major with the minor provides a number of benefits to students:

- Previously, students interested in a concentration in history education had to major in History Secondary Education. Completion of the major required students to pass the History MTEL, have an overall GPA of 2.75, a program GPA of 3.0, and complete the practicum. Not all students were able to meet these requirements. These students were forced to graduate with a



degree in History without any formal recognition on their transcript that they completed a concentration in history secondary education.

- Not all students interested in history education want to teach in public schools but rather intend to seek careers in private schools, museum education, or other professions that allow them to combine their interest in history and education. By offering a History Secondary Education Minor non-licensure track, students uninterested in teaching in public schools can complete the concentration without having to pass the History MTEL, meet the higher GPA requirements, and complete the practicum.
- Insufficient pedagogical preparation has been an obstacle to licensure candidates' successful completion of student teaching. By including six credit hours of EDUC and SPED electives students can tailor the minor to build their competencies in areas of anticipated need, such as classroom management. Or they can take EDUC 3070 Middle School Concept and EDUC 3300 Curriculum and Instruction in the Middle School in order to obtain the middle school license, History 5-8, in addition to the History 8-12 license.
- Finally, replacing the History Secondary Education Major with a History Secondary Education Minor will bring Fitchburg State into alignment with Bridgewater State, Framingham State, Worcester State, and Salem State, which all offer secondary education minors as the route to initial licensure.

### *Plans for Change*

In July 2019 the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will discontinue the History 8-12 Initial license and replace it, along with the History 5-8 Initial license, with a single History 5-12 Initial license. This change will require the university to merge its History 5-8 and History 8-12 Initial licensure programs into a single pathway leading to the History 5-12 Initial license. The details of this change have yet to be determined.

In the meantime, current sophomores seeking licensure will be required to change from the History Secondary Education Major to the History Major/History Secondary Education Minor (current juniors and seniors will not be not affected by the licensure change). The History Secondary Education Minor will be revised to require students to take EDUC 3070 Middle School Concept and EDUC 3300 Curriculum and Instruction in the Middle School. These six credits will replace the six credit SPED/EDUC elective requirement in the plan of study.

### **Relationship of Courses and Curriculum to Objectives**

All history courses integrate common program objectives across the curriculum.

All history courses advance students' historical knowledge and address communication skills.

HIST 2021 (Reading Historical Landscapes), HIST 2022 (Constructing History), and HIST 4500 (Senior Seminar) are designed specifically to address historical reasoning and research.

For examples of student work from the HIST 4500 Senior Seminar, see Appendix **XX**.

### **Describe how each Concentration Relates to the Program Mission and Vision**

The history major does not have concentrations.

### **The Relationship of Minor(s) to the Program Mission and Vision**

The History minor provides students with a foundation in History. This minor has seen marked growth in recent years, from 41 minors in AY 2011 to 87 minors in AY 2016. The minor in history provides students in majors across the university with historical knowledge about the diverse past to infuse their creative projects, the reasoning and research skills to uncover and provide context for data and information across varied disciplines, and written, oral and technological communication that enables students to navigate their chosen paths in higher education and career development.

The History Secondary Education Minor Initial Licensure Minor prepares students to teach high school history. All courses in the minor include fieldwork. Students gain first-hand, practical knowledge in urban and suburban school settings, ensuring a well-rounded experience.

For students who do not intend to teach, the History Secondary Education Minor Non-Licensure can increase their marketability as a professional by enhancing their abilities to share information with others and work effectively with diverse populations.

The history faculty contribute courses to the Economics, History, and Political Science (EHPS) administration of a Social Science Minor. The primary purpose of the minor is to meet the needs of the History Secondary Education Minor Initial Licensure (HSE-IL) and Special Education/Interdisciplinary Studies Major (SPED/IDIS) to prepare students for the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). Prior to the existence of the minor students in HSE-IL and SPED/IDIS took a number of EHPS department courses in preparation for the MTEL, but did not do so within the framework of a minor and thus did not receive credit for a minor. In addition, the minor curriculum is flexible enough that non-HSE-IL and SPED/IDIS students can craft a Social Science Minor that reflects their specific interests within the disciplines of the EHPS department.

While not housed in the department, minors in African-American Studies, American Studies, Latin, and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies are supported by history faculty. Since the last review, WGSS has grown from its prior incarnation as Women's Studies. Historians continue to teach courses on women's history to assist with this program. In a similar manner, historians teach courses on African-American history and culture. When supported by Academic Affairs, history faculty team-taught the introductory course in American Studies with faculty in the English department.

### **Outcome Assessment Plan**

#### *Assessment Data*

Graduating seniors fall semester GPA in the major (adopted spring 2012)  
 HIST 4500 Research Paper Rubric  
 HIST 4500 Exit Survey

#### *Intended Student Outcomes*

1. At least 85% of students will have a major GPA of 3.0 or higher.

2. At least 85% of students completing the HIST 4500 Senior Seminar research paper will perform at an acceptable (3) or exemplary (4) level on each of the nine elements of the Research Paper Rubric.
3. At least 85% of respondents on the HIST 4500 Exit Survey will respond with “Strongly Agree” (4) or “Agree” (3) to General Impression About the History Major and The Goals of the History Major.

### *Program Review Cycle*

Fall Collect and tabulate HIST 4500 and GPA data.

Spring At the May Historians’ Retreat review data and complete the “Data Review and Analysis” form, which identifies what may be learned from the data and what actions will be taken.

### **Effectiveness of Curriculum**

Learning outcomes are assessed at the level of individual courses and across the curriculum through the outcomes assessment plan. Every history student is measured according to the Assessment Rubric used in the capstone seminar, HIST 4500. Assessment of licensure track student achievement of learning outcomes specific to licensure are ongoing, and consist of evaluations of coursework, pre-practica, and practica field experiences.

#### Review of Assessment Results 2015-2016 in HIST 4500

Assessment Category	Number of Students in Fall 2015 and 2016 Scoring in the Acceptable or Exemplary Range (N=30)	Percentage of Students in Fall 2015 and 2016 Scoring in the Acceptable or Exemplary Range
Ability to think critically about the past and its social, political and ethical implications	23	77%
Ability to locate, examine, explain and utilize information from and about the past	24	80%
Ability to propose and evaluate interpretations of events, artifacts, documents and images	21	70%
Perceptive reading	22	73%
Effective expression	17	57%
Citation, grammar, style and formatting	17	57%

While assessment data involves small sample sizes, significant patterns emerge and have prompted the curriculum reform previously mentioned. Students in the program are strongest in their ability to absorb information about the past and are proficient in locating information online including course materials and searching for information through the internet. Students are less successful when asked to develop their own interpretations, to read closely, and to convey their findings in a written format. To address these continued deficits, the curriculum was revised to require HIST 2021 and HIST 2022. In addition, the assessment rubric used in HIST 4500 has been incorporated into the evaluation process for both courses, to provide consistency across the curriculum.

## **Plans of Study, Two Year Rotations, Handbook**

Plans of Study are attached with the appendices.

We seek to maintain a two-year rotation for electives and regularly plan our rotation of courses when we plan our schedules.

## **Strengths/Weaknesses**

1. Description of areas of strength of the majors, minors and each of the concentrations.

## **Success in College, Academic Rigor, and Skills**

SSC Data demonstrates that history courses, and in particular history survey courses, have a strong ability to predict overall success in the university.

History courses:

- Develop key skills, including reading, analysis of sources, research, writing, and development of arguments
- Build the ability to contextualize contemporary problems and issues
- Enhance students' capacity to engage in critical reading of articles and books and provide them with practice in identifying arguments in texts and in contextualizing primary evidence

## **American and Global Expertise**

Historians, Historical courses at Fitchburg State University and the History Major:

- Provide expertise in applying the history of the United States and North America and of the world to current challenges in fields of tomorrow
- Create the foundation for Civic Knowledge and Civic Engagement as mandated by the BHE
- Provide students with a wide range of courses, geographically and chronologically in a small major
- Prepare students for success in varied careers, including as secondary school teachers, and in graduate studies
- Apply historical expertise to many forms of civic engagement

## **Minors**

Over the past five years, the number of History minors has increased. We actively work with other programs, including Political Science, Communications, and Middle School Education to help them see the benefits of the History minor to enhancing their students' learning. In this way, we are giving access to liberal arts training at a high level to future professionals in varied fields.

## **2. Weaknesses**

Like many other history programs across the United States, we faced a drop in the number of majors that coincided roughly with the Great Recession. Nationally, the Department of

Education reported a decline in numbers of undergraduate history degrees of “10.1 percent from 2014 to 2015, and 21 percent from the recent high in 2012.” Our numbers at Fitchburg State University have stabilized, and we have gained minors but we have reason to seek to grow the History major.

In an era when the Liberal Arts and Liberal Arts disciplines face headwinds both nationally and locally, we can make clear to students as well as to other constituents how studying history contributes to success in a wide variety of fields.

The history program also faces potential challenges as Fitchburg State University considers revision of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum or general education. At public forums some members of other departments have questioned the need for a history requirement and spoken in favor of a curriculum in which any objective can be met by many departments. Historians agree on the importance of working across the curriculum to develop skills in reading, writing, and analysis, but historians also strongly believe that an ability to analyze historical sources and to identify and answer historical questions is vital for Fitchburg State graduates. As mentioned previously, SSC data rank history courses very highly as predictive for success in college.

## **Five Year Plan**

### **Grow History Programs**

We will ensure the continued vigor and further growth of a thriving history program.

### **Adapt Teacher Training**

We will adapt the structure of training for middle school and secondary education as state requirements change.

### **Establish Greater Consistency in Objectives and in Writing**

We will establish greater consistency within the curriculum by renumbering and reordering courses to provide a consistent rationale for each level with more consistent learning objectives and equity in student workload and by drafting a program list of writing expectations to provide a consistent message

## **Plans for Change**

### **1. Program content and organization**

#### **We will encourage entrepreneurial development**

Entrepreneurs frequently come out of liberal arts backgrounds. Critical thinking and skills developed in history classroom directly support the development of entrepreneurial skills. We will highlight this trend to undergraduates and to the university community and build on work that features real-world applications.

#### **We will continue to develop liberal arts for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

We use key critical and analytical skills and we will leverage these for not only our majors, but also for students across the university both through minors and through the general education or

LAS curriculum. We will provide history graduates with a strong foundation in historical editing, either oral or written.

### **We will develop the on-line Graduate Program**

We will follow through with the opportunity to grow the rebranded and reconfigured online graduate program.

### **We will enhance analysis and communication**

We will assist students in developing the ability to identify key questions and paths for answering those questions. We will enhance students' ability to communicate in a global, digital and diverse world.

## **2. Department organization (staffing, committees)**

We aim to maintain staffing that permits the history program to support the major, the minors, education in the Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Mission of the University. This is critical to the University's Mission of "fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility" and of preparing "students for a global society," as well as for meeting the BHE's objectives for Civic Knowledge and Civic Engagement.

## **3. Procedures, policies**

### **4. Resources**

Sufficient resources are critical for maintaining a History program that supports the intellectual and professional development of majors and minors with both surveys and electives that provide depth in the history of the United States and the world.

## **Action Plan**

We will develop a proposal that renumbers courses to reflect consistent learning objectives for each course level.

We will create a history-specific list of writing expectations to help build skills in surveys and electives, and to support better outcomes for writing in the senior seminar.

Each semester, we will create a flier in advance of advising to better publicize history courses.

We will continue to make connections with survey-level students and faculty advisers in other departments, including professional programs, to grow the History minor.

We will work with relevant offices at Fitchburg State University to revise the content of the History program website to better describe the benefits of studying history and to further highlight the achievements of recent graduates and faculty members.

We will continue the transition to an online graduate program.

