

History Department Executive Summary

The History Department has flourished over the last seven years. We have revised our curriculum, enhanced our student advising, supported multiple interdisciplinary programs, created a new Religious Studies minor, facilitated an International Visiting Professorship, expanded opportunities for student research and internships, increased the number of scholarships we award, enhanced our lecture series, revised our website and initiated a social media campaign, and strengthened our relationships with local, regional, national, and international communities. Our students have been successful in getting jobs and gaining admission to selective graduate programs. Significantly, the overall number of all majors has *increased* despite the challenges presented by Covid and the department being down at least two full-time, tenure-track faculty for most of the evaluation period. The program remains robust and attracts high achieving students. Meanwhile, despite a heavy teaching load, members of our faculty have been productive scholars, with many books and articles to show for their efforts. We have also improved the way we assess our programs and our classes. The result has been what we believe to be a more effective curriculum and a more collegial environment for students and faculty alike. Collectively, these achievements demonstrate the program viability of History and its essential role in the overall mission and vision of Weber State University.

Mission Statement: The Weber State History Department embraces the vital role of history as the record of political, social, economic, and cultural events and achievements of humankind. We recognize and promote history's power to illuminate the present and inform the future, reflecting the core values and missions of both the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Weber State University's *Amplified* Strategic Plan. Our overarching mission is to empower students with a comprehensive understanding of history while nurturing their analytical and interpretive skills. Our seven goals represent our department's commitment to excellence and inclusivity, aligning closely with the mission statements of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Weber State University's *Amplified* plan. **Goal of Academic Excellence:** To maintain rigorous academic standards, fostering critical thinking and research skills among our students, in accordance with the College's commitment to scholarly rigor. **Goal of Career Readiness:** To prepare our students for diverse career opportunities in teaching and history-related fields, aligning with the university's mission to enhance students' career prospects and lifetime success. **Goal of General Education and Lifelong Learning:** To offer courses that enrich the general education of all students, emphasizing cultural diversity and promoting a lifelong interest in history, which resonates with the university's commitment to holistic education. **Goal of Civic Engagement:** To cultivate models of civic engagement and provide the necessary skills for students to actively participate in meaningful dialogues and address contemporary challenges, mirroring the university's mission of promoting responsible citizenship. **Goal of Scholarly Contribution:** To advance historical scholarship, create new knowledge, and make historical materials accessible to public audiences, aligning with the College's mission of contributing to the community's intellectual growth. **Goal of Program Diversity:** To provide a range of undergraduate pathways, including history majors, minors, and teaching licensure, contributing to cultural diversity and fulfilling the state's American Institutions requirement to foster informed citizenship. **Goal of Community Engagement:** To

foster relationships with community members, educational institutions, and the broader public in our region, as a testament to our commitment to community engagement and the university's role as a positive force in society.

Curriculum: The History and History Education programs at Weber State University offer a comprehensive curriculum structured around three key areas (U.S., Europe, and Global history), emphasizing progressive skill development from introduction to mastery. While facing challenges in History 1700 enrollments due to Concurrent Enrollment's detrimental effect on on-campus, in-person classes, the department has effectively countered this by actively marketing courses to non-majors and those interested in diverse career paths. The analysis of time to graduation from 90 credit hours highlights a growing number of students completing degrees within a year of reaching this milestone, with our efforts focused on identifying and addressing obstacles. The department's commitment to adaptability is evident through regular curriculum reviews, updates, and additions, reflecting a proactive response to evolving student interests and societal needs. High Impact Education Experiences (HIEE) are integral, with efforts to expand designations and promote career development opportunities. In summary, Weber State's History programs prioritize student success, adaptability, and continuous improvement, providing a robust and transformational educational experience.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment: The History Department has proactively aligned its assessment plan with the American Historical Association's learning outcomes, focusing on developing students' historical thinking skills for workforce readiness. Over a three-year cycle, comprehensive reviews of capstone papers and upper-level assignments revealed consistently high achievements in capstone outcomes, particularly in historical skills and argumentation. Student testimonials underscore the program's positive impact on critical skills development, while the introduction of new courses addressing diverse historical experiences reflects the department's commitment to innovative and inclusive pedagogy. The department actively contributes to General Education, offering numerous sections each semester, and is implementing a standardized rubric for American Institutions courses to inform data-driven decisions for continuous improvement. Overall, the History Department serves as a key contributor to Weber State University's mission of academic excellence and inclusivity.

Academic Advising: The History Department prioritizes effective advising as the cornerstone of student success. Through a centralized advisory model in place since 2013, led by dedicated History Advisor Dr. Stephen Francis, the department ensures clarity for students navigating various majors and minors. Proactive efforts, such as reaching out to inactive students and collaborating with the registrar's office, have boosted retention and re-enrollment and assisted students in more successfully navigating graduation requirements. Faculty actively mentor students, guiding them on career paths in the public and private sectors, as well as graduate studies. The department's annual Career Day fosters direct student-employer interaction. Currently, the department is actively integrating career development into key courses (the new CDEV attribute) and the Public History Director Dr. Leah LaGrone supervises all departmental internships. These initiatives collectively align with the university's focus on career readiness, preparing History students for success in diverse professional pursuits.

Faculty: The History Department has 12 full-time members and 7-10 adjuncts (including Visiting International Faculty) who offer 82 courses, up from 61 courses (plus internships and workshops) listed in our previous Program Review. These courses span the globe and the centuries in their coverage. The department is unwavering in its commitment to student success through effective advising, diverse faculty engagement, and High Impact Educational Experiences. Despite challenges in recruiting diverse faculty members, initiatives like the West/Utah History job search in 2023-24 continue the department's long-standing commitment to the university's mission, vision, and EDI initiatives. The department's student and faculty exchange programs with the University of Tübingen and study abroad experiences contribute to global perspectives. Faculty are responsive to student feedback and evaluation and the department actively monitors course offerings to ensure timely graduation. The History Department at Weber State University is dedicated to providing a comprehensive and inclusive academic experience, preparing students for diverse career paths, and addressing challenges through innovative educational practices.

Program Support: The History Department, led by Chair Dr. Sara Dant, has garnered consistent acclaim for its effective leadership and operational improvements. Dr. Dant's adept management of budgetary concerns and her leadership during challenging times have been crucial to the department's success, earning her a 100% acceptability rating from faculty. The single full-time staff member, Jenna Daniels, has played a pivotal role in administrative support and received recognition through the Presidential Outstanding Staff Award. While facilities and equipment are generally deemed adequate, concerns persist about ongoing issues with computer equipment reliability in the seminar room. The Stewart Library, essential for academic research, faces financial constraints limiting resource acquisition, and competing demands on its space (particularly its physical book collection) raise concerns about future faculty recruitment and student research. Despite these challenges, the department maintains a commitment to academic excellence, necessitating ongoing attention and strategic planning for sustained growth and improvement.

Relations with External Communities: The History Department provides a rich array of activities and initiatives that strengthen its vibrant academic community. Notably, the department organizes two annual endowed lectures, the Lampros Civil War Lecture and the Sadler American West Lecture, showcasing prominent scholars in the field. Additionally, the Weber Historical Society hosts a monthly lecture series (7/year) featuring diverse topics, with both on-campus and off-campus speakers, fostering community engagement. The department actively participates in events such as Women's History Month, Black History Month, and collaborates with international scholars through the Tübingen program. Moreover, the History Department plays a pivotal role in promoting sustainability, receiving recognition for its commitment to green initiatives. The Social Science Education Center, housed within the department, collaborates with various state and local entities to enhance social science education, offering seminars for teachers and engaging in community outreach. The department's engagement extends beyond academia, as exemplified by its Career Day, providing students opportunities to interact with community members, and the "welcome back" Open House, fostering a sense of belonging. The History Department's commitment to excellence is further reflected in its use of external advisory committees, which in turn strengthens the assessment and enhancement of programs.

Graduate success is tracked through strong alumni relationships, revealing diverse career paths ranging from academia and secondary education to public history, law, and beyond. The department's impact extends beyond its academic contributions, creating a dynamic and supportive environment for students and faculty alike.

Program Summary: The History Department has responded thoughtfully and proactively to the feedback received during the 2016/17 Program Review. Notable achievements include the implementation of a strategic plan, revitalizing the Public History program under the direction of Dr. Leah LaGrone, and addressing curriculum gaps by bringing in a specialist in Middle Eastern and Ancient history. Digital literacy has been integrated across courses, and the department now hosts the prestigious *Journal of World History*, providing new internship opportunities for its students. Advising improvements include mandatory meetings for majors and incorporating graduate school orientation into Career Day. The department actively supports program enhancements, including advocating for salary raises for administrative staff and faculty. History is also pioneering changes in Concurrent Enrollment, earning praise for our new Master Class for HIST 1700, conducting rigorous assessments of CE student and teacher performance, and offering up-to-date training in mandatory seminars for CE teachers. These efforts collectively showcase a commitment to continuous improvement and excellence within the History Department.