



# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

*Department of History, College of Humanities and Social Sciences*

800 N. State College Blvd., Fullerton, CA 92831-3599 / T 657-278-3474 / F 657-278-2101

California State University, Fullerton  
College of Humanities and Social Sciences

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
Dr. Jochen Burgdorf, Professor and Chair

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REVIEW

## Chair's Response to the External Review Team's Report

June 3, 2013

### *Introduction*

In 2012, the Department of History at California State University, Fullerton, in accordance with the university's "Program Performance Review Guidelines and Procedures" (version of October 2012), prepared a self-study. This self-study was discussed at a departmental retreat on November 9, 2012, subsequently finalized, and, on November 20, 2012, submitted to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (Dr. Angela Della Volpe), the H&SS Associate Dean for Administration (Dr. Sheryl Fontaine), the Director of the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness (Dr. Gerald Patton), and the external review team (selected by the H&SS Dean and consisting of Dr. Jesse Battan, Professor and Chair, Department of American Studies, CSUF; Dr. Cheryl Koos, Professor and Chair, Department of History, California State University, Los Angeles; and Dr. Jeffrey Wasserstrom, Professor and Chair, Department of History, University of California, Irvine).

The external review team visited the Department on December 4, 2012, and submitted its report on January 31, 2013. The Department discussed this report at its February 8, 2013, and March 8, 2013, faculty meetings. A preliminary draft of the Dean's response to the external review team's report was communicated to me on March 11, 2013. Due to unforeseen circumstances - including, but not limited to the death of a faculty colleague in the Department (Dr. Mougou Nyaggah, who passed away on March 29, 2013) - my response has been delayed until today, June 3, 2013. For this delay, I hereby express my sincere regrets.

I am pleased to note that the external review team found the Department "doing extraordinarily well in difficult budgetary times (report, p. 1) and that it described the Department as "a strong unit, which has been well led, enjoys a high degree of cohesion, and has a realistic view of how it can move forward, even in challenging times" (ibid., p. 8). The quantitative and qualitative evidence available to me confirms that the Department is, indeed, a place of excellent and innovative teaching, outstanding and internationally recognized scholarship, as well as dedicated and extensive service to the profession, the university, the college, and the community.

My "Chair's Response" addresses some of the points raised in the external review team's report. It furthermore comments on some other points that have since occupied the Department's collective mind.



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## *The Center for Oral and Public History*

It has been a source of frustration that many in the university and the college seem to take the public profile of COPH, as well as its exhibits and events, for granted, while perennially complaining about any and all expenses associated with COPH. COPH is the Department's premier teaching/training and research/resource laboratory which, in the form of various High Impact Practices and outreach activities far beyond Orange County, benefits many of its undergraduate and graduate students, as well as the communities of southern California, the nation, and indeed the world. The external review team's report devotes an entire section (report, pp. 6-8) to COPH, and I wish to reiterate that section's opening sentence: "COPH is a jewel in the crown of not only the History Department, but also the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the University" (report, p. 6).

I agree with the external review team's recommendations with regard to COPH, particularly the need to fully restore the assigned time provided to COPH at its inception (*ibid.*, p. 7); the need to "lend ... full financial and administrative fundraising support" to COPH (*ibid.*, p. 8) in order to fulfill the terms of the National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant received by COPH; and the need to establish a permanent position for a full-time COPH archivist.

Therefore, I note with profound gratitude the personnel action to establish a permanent position for a full-time COPH archivist recently authorized by Dr. José L. Cruz, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (May 2013). Supporting COPH speaks strongly to Goal 1 of CSUF's Strategic Plan, according to which "CSUF aims to provide innovative, high-quality programs and services that offer students broad educational experiences, facilitate lifelong habits of intellectual inquiry and prepare them for successful careers." The departmental self-study and the external review team's report clearly demonstrate that COPH provides such "innovative, high-quality programs and services." Supporting COPH's fundraising efforts to fulfill the terms of the NEH Challenge Grant also speaks strongly to Goal 4 of CSUF's Strategic Plan, according to which, in "an environment of decreasing resources, CSUF seeks to increase funds available to the entire campus community."

## *High Impact Practice Space*

In its last Program Performance Review (2004/2005), the Department was admonished by the external review team that - given the size of its major and graduate program, as well as the nature of its many co-curricular activities - it needed a student meeting and study space. However, the Department's efforts to convince the university and the college to support the acquisition, equipment, and "running" of such a space have, thus far, not been successful. This time (2012/2013) again, the external review team reiterated the need for such a space (report, pp. 1, 3). Student-faculty research and collaboration, internships, and professional development programs are a priority for the Department, but these can only be successfully realized with institutional support in the form of a dedicated "High Impact Practice Space."

I hereby note that the Department submitted, in April 2013, a \$75,000 "Instructional Facilities Proposal" to create a departmental "High Impact Practice Space" (intended to serve 20 students at any given time, and thus hundreds of students in the course of each semester). This proposal speaks strongly to Goal 2 of CSUF's Strategic Plan, according to which "High-Impact



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Practices (HIP), those pedagogical and programmatic approaches that promote student engagement, retention and graduation, are integral” to the university’s efforts to “improve student persistence, increase graduation rates University-wide, and narrow the achievement gap for underrepresented students.” The use of this space would include

- tutorials (to address bottleneck classes and to train students in key skills, for example discipline-specific systematic reading, note-taking, research, documentation/citation, writing, editing, publishing, and presenting);
- common intellectual experiences (such as student symposia and student research presentations, for example those sponsored by the History Student Association and Phi Alpha Theta, the History Honor Society, ranked best-chapter-in-the nation 32 years in a row);
- learning communities (such as faculty-led skills workshops, for example on paleography/reading and describing pre-modern and early modern script);
- collaborative projects (such as the Department’s student journal, “The Welebaethan,” ranked best-in-the-nation for 26 years in a row, as well as the preparation of exhibits);
- undergraduate research (such as faculty-and/or-student-led primary source analysis workshops);
- global learning (for example training in historical languages not currently offered regularly at CSUF); and
- internships (to respond to the phenomenal increase in History student demand for internships and to provide hands-on experience pertaining to a wide range of professional activities, for example editing and publishing).

I am hopeful that this “Instructional Facilities Proposal” will be funded.

## *Hiring*

The Department continues to have a high student-faculty ratio (SFR), a high full-time equivalent student (FTES) target, and a low ratio of tenured/tenure-track faculty members to its full-time equivalent faculty (FTEF) allocation (56% T/TT of FTEF allocation in AY 2011-2012 or 24 of 42.6). Despite a vigorous hiring campaign, the Department is still well below the university’s and college’s goals, due to a substantial wave of retirements, a few resignations (usually related to spousal hiring elsewhere), and a recent death. Thus, the external review team’s report (pp. 1-3) expresses the need for “continued hiring along the lines spelled out and well defended and explained in the self-study, so that the Department can continue to do what it has been doing very skillfully of late, which is to build in new fields that have obvious potential, while maintaining traditional areas of strength as needed” (ibid., p. 1). This speaks strongly to Goal 3 of CSUF’s Strategic Plan to “recruit and retain a high-quality and diverse faculty and staff.”

In the past 15 years, the Department has sought to significantly increase the diversity of its faculty. The gender balance now is 50% male (11 full-time, 2 FERP) and 50 % female (12 full-time). According to the 2010 National Science Foundation’s “Survey of Earned Doctorates,” the gender distribution for Ph.D.s in History is 55% male and 45% female. The Department’s diversity in terms of ethnicity and national origin has improved as well. Of its 25 faculty (including 2 FERP), 10 are native-born Americans of Caucasian descent. Among the others are 3 of Middle-Eastern descent, 2 of Asian descent, 1 of Hispanic descent, and 1 of Afro-Caribbean descent. In keeping with CSUF’s commitment to preparing students for “professional endeavors



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in a global society” (Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan), the Department has also been recruiting a globally diverse faculty: one third of the faculty are foreign-born. Striving to be the model comprehensive History Department in the country, the Department seeks to transcend the relative lack of diversity in the profession: according to the 2010 National Science Foundation’s “Survey of Earned Doctorates,” 70.9% of History doctorates are earned by Caucasians, 5.5% by African-Americans, 5.8% by Hispanics, and the remaining percentage by others/undeclared.

I hereby note that, in May 2013, the Department submitted a two-year hiring plan, proposing two tenure-track assistant professorship searches, one for the 2013/2014 academic year and one for the 2014/2015 academic year. The first search would be for “Latin America, pre-1800, excluding Mexico and the Caribbean, with an emphasis in the Andean regions, and preferred subfields in either environmental or indigenous history;” the second search would be for “U.S. History, Early Republic/Antebellum, with preferred subfields in either race/ethnicity or environmental history or legal/constitutional history.” Both searches speak strongly to issues of diversity, curriculum and courses, bottleneck courses, and student success. I am hopeful that the Department will receive the authorization to conduct these searches in the near future.

## *Other Points (in alphabetical order)*

- Administrative Workload: There appears to be no end to the “suggestions” that I regularly receive from the college and university about additional public relations work, different ways of scheduling classes, as well as collecting and evaluating student data. In response to these “suggestions,” I hereby state for the record that “more” is simply not possible. The 9 WTU of assigned time for the Chair and the 3 WTU of assigned time for the Vice Chair are not even remotely sufficient to get all the work done that is currently being done.
- Annual Reporting and Intramural Research Grants: The centralized gathering of data for the university’s annual report through the Office of the Associate Vice President for Graduate Programs and Research continues to be of concern to members of the Department. The format imposed by this data gathering effort appears to make it next to impossible to report some of the Department’s scholarly and creative activities, for example the organizing of conferences and exhibits, as well as the service on editorial boards and external dissertation committees. Furthermore, the impression that disciplines outside the College of Humanities and Social Sciences are being favored by the format utilized for intramural research grant applications continues to lead to frustration in the Department, so much so that some of the Department’s members have indicated that they will no longer apply for these grants.
- Assessment: The Department is a recognized leader in Assessment efforts on this campus. There are clearly defined Student Learning Outcomes for the major (B.A.) and the graduate program (M.A.) (see self-study, pp. 16-17). The Department was in the middle of conducting an Assessment of its major, and getting ready to launch the Assessment of its graduate program, when it was asked to run the university’s pilot in General Education Assessment for HIST 110A. The Department, being the “good soldier” it usually is, dropped (almost) everything, devised an Assessment Plan for HIST 110A (fall 2012), ran the pilot (spring 2013), and will run the full plan and evaluation next semester (fall 2013). I hereby note that the Department cannot run multiple



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Assessments at the same time - unless additional resources in the form of assigned time are provided from outside the Department.

- Budget: I am very concerned that the Department's ability to spend travel funds and operations/equipment funds is increasingly micromanaged and cut short by the college and university.
- Faculty Workload: In response to the full-time faculty members' respective concern, communicated in the external review team's report (p. 5), the Department will strive to increase assigned time for Advising, Assessment, and High Impact Practices, always within the parameters set by the California State Budget and the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the California State University and the California Faculty Association.
- Impaction and the Major: The Department is occasionally told to engage in public-relations efforts to increase the number of its majors. However, in light of information provided by the Office of the Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Analytical Studies, such efforts would make very little sense as long as History continues to be an "impacted" program. The number of applicants to the major far exceeds the number of majors the Department is "allowed" to accept. Thus, under the circumstances, public-relations efforts to increase the number of majors would appear to be disingenuous. That said, the Department is, of course, far from averse to public-relations efforts: it may well have the most exemplary newsletter ("Footnotes") in the College of H&SS (widely disseminated online); it maintains an active Facebook page; it is about to launch its new Omni Update website; it participates energetically in New Student Orientations, Transfer Student Orientations, and "Welcome to Fullerton Day;" it hosts an annual banquet that now regularly draws over 200 guests; and it recently added a \$35,000 research grant endowment (thanks to one of its emeriti and his wife, Dr. Leland and Mrs. Marlita Bellot), as well as a student research scholarship fund, to its philanthropic portfolio.
- Office Staff Members: Not sufficiently addressed in the self-study, due to the parameters set by CSUF's "Program Performance Review Guidelines and Procedures" (version of October 2012), are the Department's office staff members (ASC II Linda Rodgers, ASC I Lynne Azar, and ASA IIs Benjamin Perez and Rachael Amaro). They deserve special commendation for their contribution to the Department's ongoing success.
- Senior Research Seminars: In response to the students' respective concern, communicated in the external review team's report (p. 4), that more topics should be covered in the Department's senior research seminar (HIST 490T) offerings, particularly to avoid "a bottleneck for majors," the Department has increased the number of sections of HIST 490T, from the customary "three to four," to "six" in the spring 2014 schedule.
- Temporary Faculty Members: Not sufficiently addressed in the self-study, due to the parameters set by CSUF's "Program Performance Review Guidelines and Procedures" (version of October 2012), are the Department's temporary faculty members. They, too, deserve special commendation for their contribution to the Department's ongoing success. The Department, with the invaluable assistance of the Office of the H&SS Dean and the CSUF Office of Faculty Affairs and Records, does its utmost to implement the CBA between the CSU and CFA, particularly with regard to entitlements. However, temporary faculty members need to be more aware of the Department's course staffing



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guidelines (especially with regard to the teaching of upper-division courses) and the Department's interests in the context of Goal 3 of CSUF's Strategic Plan "to recruit, hire, and retain faculty members." The Department strives to provide its students with the newest insights in teaching and research via both full-time tenured/tenure-track and temporary faculty members. Whenever new faculty members, be they full-time tenured/tenure-track or temporary, are hired, the university invests in these individuals and offers them important professional-development opportunities. These types of opportunities, whether they take the form of tenured/tenure-track or temporary employment, need to continue to be available to recent Ph.D.s and occasional ABDs - as long as the CBA, the budget, the enrollment, and the curriculum permit this.

## *Acknowledgments and Conclusion*

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all individuals and groups that have been instrumental in the Department's 2012/2013 Program Performance Review thus far:

- all those who responded to the surveys (students, alumni, full-time tenured/tenure-track and temporary faculty members, and staff);
- the students who met with the external review team;
- the students in Dr. Allison Varzally's class who so impressed the external review team;
- the Department's office staff;
- the members of the 2012/2013 Department Program Performance Review Committee and Assessment Committee (Dr. Steven Jobbitt, Dr. Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, Dr. Lynn Sargeant, and Dr. Jessica Stern);
- the Department's faculty members;
- the members of the external review team;
- the Director of the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness (now retired);
- the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs;
- the H&SS Dean and the Associate Dean; and
- the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

It is an honor to serve as Chair of CSUF's excellent, vibrant, and dedicated Department of History.