

# **INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT**

**Name of Program/Department: Department of History**

**Year: 2018-2019**

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## **PROGRAM MISSION**

The mission of the History Department is to train the intellect of and to prepare students for lives of personal enrichment and constructive achievement. The study of History comprises the elements of liberal education: the acquisition of knowledge, the nurturing of understanding, and the development of perspective of oneself and one's society. The reconstruction of the human past conveys an appreciation of cultural contexts and traditions, and it enhances critical thinking and communication skills. The major in History provides a broad understanding of the development of various cultures throughout the world. Through their History courses, FMU students gain a better understanding of contemporary events, a knowledge of people in various times and places, critical thinking skills, and the ability to express themselves effectively in oral and written communication. In so doing, the Department of History assists the university in meeting a number of its General Education Goals, particularly goals 1, 3, and 7.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

The History Program at Francis Marion University offers coursework in United States, European, and non-Western fields. Through the variety of classes available to them, students will meet nine program goals:

1. Learn to differentiate between primary and secondary sources, and the value as well as challenges in using both.
2. Engage in independent research.
3. Develop basic formatting skills such as footnoting.
4. Express an understanding of the past through effective communication.
5. Learn the historiography of different historical fields.
6. Identify the broad contours of the past, including the people, ideas, and events that have shaped our world.
7. Think critically and logically.
8. Express an understanding of the past via cogent, analytical papers that include both primary and secondary material.
9. Complete the program with a greater appreciation for History.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In light of past performance, the History Department felt confident that it could raise the benchmarks for five of its eleven Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) from the original objective of 80%. Moreover, while the department had in the past offered a significant number of indirect assessments for each SLO, it needed to do a better job of addressing direct assessments for them and, accordingly, made sure to provide a variety of additional measurements to achieve that goal. These additional measurements include: 1) the findings of a "Course Level Assessment" (CLA) form that is filled out twice a semester for each History class and that relies on a rubric to judge students' written work; 2) the individual assignments in HIST 299, The Historians' Craft, which is the department's methodology course and is required of all History majors; 3) the draft and final paper required of all student in HIST 499, Senior Thesis, which is the department's capstone course. Those papers in HIST 499 are evaluated by two professors who use a rubric to determine grades for them.

In looking at the results in the History Department's 2018-19 IE report, the following conclusions can be made:

- There is an obvious disconnect among students who took General Education-level History classes, and those who were in upper-level courses (and, therefore, likely History majors and minors). Whether this suggests an improvement in skills and concepts, however, is not clear. More data-gathering here will be needed.
- For the most part, students who took HIST 499 showed a marked improvement in their abilities as compared to HIST 299. This offers strong evidence that the knowledge and skills learned in HIST 299 and in upper-level classes are transferred to HIST 499.
- There remain areas for improvement. For instance, while the department reached its benchmark for eight of its eleven SLOs, it failed to do so for the other three. Furthermore, in comparing their draft and final papers, students in HIST 499 exhibited a decline in their ability to footnote properly (SLO 4.0) and to show how people have existed, acted, and thought in particular historical periods (SLO 5.0).
- In a continuing effort to "close the loop," the History Department will look for opportunities to adopt additional measurements, particularly insofar as gauging knowledge and skills outcomes. The recent adoption of portfolios will be particularly important on this score.
- History majors leave the program with a greater appreciation of the past. They are confident in their abilities to conduct research, to write essays and papers, and to analyze a wide array of material.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The History Department seeks to achieve its goals through a variety of SLOs, which can be divided into those that are skill-related, knowledge-related, attitudinal, and behavioral in nature. These can be summarized as follows:

- *Skills outcomes* are those that are fundamental concepts in History. These skills fall into two areas: research and writing. The former includes an understanding of how to use technology in the library, among them computers and microfilm/microfiche machines, to access the online card catalog and various databases, to make interlibrary loan requests, and to examine materials on microfilm and microfiche; in turn, the students acquire the ability to locate the source material required for their assignments. The latter refers to expressing ideas via proper spelling, grammar, and footnoting; distinguishing between primary and secondary sources; and recognizing that coherent essays and papers have component parts (among them an introduction, a thesis statement, a main body that includes narrative and analysis, and a conclusion). Such skills meet Program Goals 1, 2, 3, and 4. They also contribute to achievement of FMU's General Education Goal 1, "The ability to write and speak English clearly, logically, creatively, and effectively," and Goal 3, "The ability to use technology to locate, organize, document, present, and analyze information and ideas."
- *Knowledge outcomes* build on the foundation developed through the skills outcomes. Knowledge outcomes encourage historical inquiry through an appraisal of sources, an understanding of historiography—that is, the history of historical writing—making connections between cause and effect, and evaluating what impact the past has on the present. Knowledge outcomes, in short, require a higher level of analysis and a stronger ability to communicate ideas than do skills outcomes. These outcomes have a hand in accomplishing Program Goals 5, 6, 7, and 8. Furthermore, they contribute to achievement of FMU's General Education Goal 7, "The ability to recognize the diverse cultural heritages and other influences which have shaped civilization and how they affect individual and collective human behavior."
- *Attitudinal outcomes* reflect students' perceptions of their courses. These outcomes measure whether the students believe they have developed the skills and knowledge asked of them in their coursework.
- Whereas attitudinal outcomes are course-specific, *behavioral outcomes* relate what impact the students believe the History curriculum has had on their understanding and appreciation of the past. These outcomes, in conjunction with those that are attitudinal, are essential in meeting Program Goal 9.

## ***Methods of Measurement***

To measure its SLOs, the History Department has used a variety of direct and indirect assessments.

### **Direct Measurements**

#### Skills Outcomes

Skills outcomes are measured through Course-Level Assessments (CLAs) that are filled out by department faculty for all History classes, as well as through assignments in the two classes required of all History majors: HIST 299 and HIST 499. Additionally, members of the department meet once a year with Writing Center tutors to help them understand the key skills desired of students taking History classes. Specifically:

- The CLA is a form filled out twice for each History course, first at midterm and then again at the end of the semester. This form assesses students' writing and analytical skills, with the professor indicating the number of students who exceeded, met, or did not meet expectations. This is very similar to Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio that is used by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Lawshe's Ratio relies on a judging panel to determine if the content of a particular assignment is "essential," "useful but not essential," or "not necessary."
- Homework from HIST 499. Students must complete a number of homework assignments, among them an exercise on proper citation.
- Draft Paper in HIST 499. Students in Senior Thesis write a major paper of 18-20 pages that uses at least five primary and five secondary sources. ("Source" here means not individual documents or articles but published sources. Hence, two articles from the *New York Times* constitute two articles from a single source.) Moreover, the students have to set up a committee of at least two professors, one of whom must be an expert in the field, to read and grade their papers. The draft, which has to be a minimum of 10 pages in length, provides the committee an opportunity to check whether the students are correctly applying the skills they have learned in their classes, including proper grammar and style, a thesis statement, and *Chicago Manual of Style* citations.
- End-of-Semester Quiz in HIST 499 (Senior Thesis). This quiz tests students on differentiating between primary and secondary sources, and on locating thesis statements from book and article excerpts.
- End-of-Semester Survey in HIST 499 (Senior Thesis). This survey asks students to provide feedback on key skills taught in the course as well as the broader pedagogy.
- Meetings with Writing Center tutors. Held once a year with tutors from the Writing Center, 2-3 professors from the department describe the skills they wish to impart on

their students. While this includes standard concerns, such as proper grammar, attention also is given to aspects of writing and citation that are History-centric, including the use of active voice and of *Chicago Manual of Style* citations.

### Knowledge Outcomes

Knowledge outcomes are measured through the following:

- Course-Level Assessments (CLAs) for all History classes. As noted above, CLAs assess not just the ability to write an essay but to offer a piece of work that includes a high level of analysis.
- Essay on human agency for HIST 299 (The Historian's Craft). Graded by the professor of the class, this essay asks students to "weigh human agency against the larger social and material forces in history."
- Draft Paper in HIST 499 (Senior Thesis). This paper requires students not only to indicate that they have mastered the skills asked of them but that they can use those skills to create a paper that offers a high level of analysis. This includes, but is not limited to, demonstrating a knowledge of the historiography, delineating change over time, and connecting cause and effect.

### **Indirect Measurements**

### Attitudinal Outcomes

Attitudinal outcomes are measured through surveys:

- On-line survey given to students in all History classes. There are two such surveys each semester, one for lower-level courses and an expanded survey for upper-level classes. Consisting of 23 and 35 questions, respectively, this survey asks students a variety of questions, including whether: 1) they can identify primary and secondary sources; 2) their classes have led them to think more critically; 3) they can discern cause and effect, and continuity and change. They also assess how difficult they believe their courses are compared to others they have taken at FMU.
- Survey given to students in HIST 299 (The Historian's Craft). This survey includes questions that ask students about their expectations going into the class, whether the course met those expectations, whether the class met a variety of intended goals, and if the course prepared them to research and write a major research paper.

## Behavioral Outcomes

The department has a means of measuring this outcome and has begun to incorporate it into its IE reports, which is described under “Closing the Loop.”

### ***Closing the Loop***

While relying on the above-mentioned measurements, the History Department during the 2018-19 school year took additional steps to “close the loop,” that is, to identify areas where students are struggling so as to improve student learning:

#### **Direct Measurements**

### Skills Outcomes

- Include assessments of the three other major assignments in HIST 299. One of those requires students to use a web site to understand the process of historical research behind the book *A Midwife’s Tale*, authored by the historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich.
- Develop portfolios that will track the progress of its majors from their freshmen through senior years. This will be achieved by having the students download papers from their History classes to the university’s U drive. In that student’s last semester, a committee of two professors from the department will select papers from several of each major’s classes – including HIST 299 and 499 – to see if/how that student’s work had improved. The reason for including HIST 299 and 499 is that these are the two classes required of all majors, and it is not uncommon for a student to take a paper he/she wrote in HIST 299 and use it for the larger paper required in HIST 499. John Petrush plans to have the U drive set up to receive papers by the fall semester of 2019.
- Incorporate a detailed assessment of the final paper for HIST 499, which will help in seeing how students’ abilities improved as compared to the draft paper for that course.

### Knowledge Outcomes

- Use both the portfolios and the detailed assessment for the final paper for HIST 499. While these measure skills, they also provide key information on students’ knowledge.
- Include assessments of the three other major assignments in HIST 299. While one was mentioned above, the other two are knowledge-related: 1) Students examine the methods, approaches, and interpretations of a major journal over the past 5-10 years. 2) Building on assignment (1), students consider how historiographical debates have changed over time, how they might further explore a particular subject that includes

primary and secondary sources, and where they see their future scholarship fitting within the field in question.

- Revise the exit exam to offer more questions in non-Western history. That exam, which includes as well questions from U.S. and European history.

### **Indirect Measurements**

#### Attitudinal Outcomes

- Review the on-line survey given to students in all History classes to determine if revisions are necessary.

#### Behavioral Outcomes

- The exit exam has questions on it to assess how students felt about the History Department curriculum and what they learned from their History courses. These questions from now on will be incorporated into the department's IE report.

### ***The SLOs***

The History Department measures eleven student learning outcomes. In 2016-17 and 2017-18, it established a benchmark of 80% on each. The baselines, which are the average of the results for those two reports, are provided following each SLO. In some cases, the department has established a new benchmark; an explanation follows in each case as to why it did or did not set a new benchmark. A target benchmark—where the department would like to be in 3-5 years—is provided as well following each SLO.

#### **SLO 1.0: Would be able to identify primary sources.**

- Baseline: 81.25%
- Benchmark: 82%. This is based on the achievement of an 82% benchmark for 2017-18.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 299 Survey, Question 3e
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- HIST 499 (End-of Semester Quiz)
- HIST 499 (End-of-Semester Survey)

**SLO 1.1: Would be able to identify secondary sources.**

- Baseline: 78.9%
- Benchmark: 83%. This is based on the achievement of an 83.25% benchmark for 2017-18, which was substantially higher than in 2016-17.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 299 Survey, Question 3e
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- HIST 499 (End-of Semester Quiz)
- HIST 499 (End-of-Semester Survey)

**SLO 1.2: Could demonstrate an awareness of the connections between sources and their historical context.**

- Baseline: 78.9%
- Benchmark: 80%. The benchmark remains unchanged because the department has yet to achieve it.
- Target: 82%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 299 Survey, Question 3f
- HIST 299 (Web Assignment)
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- HIST 499 (End-of-Semester Survey)

**SLO 2.0: Would be able to identify a thesis statement or sentence.**

- Baseline: 80.9%
- Benchmark: 80%. This benchmark remains at 80% because of a decline in the average on the 2017-18 report to 79.1%.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys



- HIST 499 (End-of Semester Quiz)
- HIST 499 (End-of-Semester Survey)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)

**SLO 2.1: Could effectively offer analysis that supported the thesis statement.**

- Baseline: 80.6%
- Benchmark: 80%. This benchmark remains at 80% because of a decline in the average on the 2017-18 report to 78.4%.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 299 Survey, Question 3c
- Course-Level Assessments (Qualitative Analysis)
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- HIST 499 (End-of-Semester Survey)

**SLO 3.0: Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time.**

- Baseline: 81.6%
- Benchmark: 82%. This is based on the achievement of an 82% benchmark for 2017-18.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 299 (Journal Assignment)
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- Exit Exam

**SLO 4.0: Could effectively write an historical essay.**

- Baseline: 77.6%
- Benchmark: 80%. The benchmark remains unchanged because the department has yet to achieve it.
- Target: 82%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line survey
- Course-Level Assessments (Writing)
- Exit Exam

**SLO 4.1: Could properly use footnotes and correct formatting for an historical essay.**

- Baseline: 82.8%
- Benchmark: 82%. This is based on the achievement of an 81.5% benchmark for 2017-18, which was a slight decline from the 2016-17 school year.
- Target: 85%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line survey (Upper-level courses only)
- HIST 299 Survey, Question 3g
- HIST 299 Citations Exercise
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)

**SLO 5.0: Could accurately explain how people have existed, acted, and thought in particular historical periods.**

- Baseline: 78.8%
- Benchmark: 80%. The benchmark remains unchanged because the department has yet to achieve it.
- Target: 82%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- Course-Level Assessments (Critical Thinking)
- HIST 299 (Historiographical Project)
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)

**SLO 5.1: Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect with a broad knowledge of the general chronology of historical developments in a variety of civilizations.**

- Baseline: 78.15%
- Benchmark: 80%. The benchmark remains unchanged because the department has yet to achieve it.

- Target: 82%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- Course-Level Assessments (Area Knowledge)
- HIST 299 (Essay on Human Agency)
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- Exit Exam

**SLO 6.0: Could explain what influence the past has on the present.**

- Baseline: 82.9%
- Benchmark: 84%. This is based on the achievement of an 83.25% benchmark for 2017-18.
- Target: 87%

*The following measurements are used for this SLO:*

- On-line surveys
- HIST 499 (Draft Paper)
- HIST 499 (Final Paper)
- Exit Exam

## ***Results***

These results are based on the following:

- Course-Level Assessment Forms. Professors in the department filled these out for each of their classes, assessing 831 students in the fall semester and 769 in the spring.
- On-line surveys. A total of 862 students in lower-level (100-level) courses and 264 in upper-level (300-400 level) classes took these surveys during the 2018-19 school year.
- Assignments in HIST 299, Historical Methods. This is one of the two courses required of all History majors and is taught each year in the fall. Fourteen students were enrolled in that course.
- The draft and final paper in HIST 499, Senior Thesis. This capstone class is required of all History majors. Nine students took that class, which is taught annually each spring.
- Exit Exam. Given to graduating seniors, of which there were six in the fall and five in the spring.

**SLO 1.0 The student would be able to identify primary sources.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 81.5% **Benchmark Not Attained**

Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey.

Results: 89%

HIST 299 survey. Results: 84.6%

HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 80%

HIST 499 final paper. Results: 100%

HIST 499 end-of-semester quiz. Results: 100%

HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 100%

**Grand Total: 90.7%**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Not Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**SLO 1.1 The student would be able to identify secondary sources.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 75%

**Benchmark Not Attained**

Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey.

Results: 87%

HIST 299 survey. Results: 84.6%

HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 93%

HIST 499 final paper. Results: 95.8%

HIST 499 end-of-semester quiz. Results: 87.6%

HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 100%

**Grand Total: 89%**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**SLO 1.2 The student could demonstrate an awareness of the connections between sources and their historical context.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 75%

**Benchmark Not Attained**

Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey.

Results: 87%

HIST 299 survey. Results: 81.5%

HIST 299 web assignment. Results: 80.1%

HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 98%

HIST 499 final paper. Results: 100%

HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 91%

**Grand Total: 87.5%**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

**SLO 2.0 The student would be able to identify a thesis statement or sentence.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 80%

**Benchmark Attained**

Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey.

Results: 89%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester quiz. Results: 70%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 94%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 100%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Grand Total: 86.6%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 2.1 The student could effectively offer analysis that supported the thesis statement.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 77%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 85.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 survey. Results: 89.2%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Qualitative Analysis). Results: 75.6%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 86%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 77.8%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 end-of-semester survey. Results: 94%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Grand Total: 83.6%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 3.0 The student would be able to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 77.5%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 89.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 journal assignment. Results: 40.7%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 94%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 88.9%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Exit Exam. Results: 90%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Grand Total: 80.1%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Not Attained</u></b>

**SLO 4.0 The student could effectively write an historical essay.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 63.5%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 84%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Writing). Results: 76.8%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Exit Exam. Results: 90%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Grand Total: 78.6%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Not Attained</u></b>

**SLO 4.1 The student could properly use footnotes and correct formatting for an historical essay.**

Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey.	
Results: 82%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 survey. Results: 84.6%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 299 citations exercise. Results: 86.25%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 84%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 66.7%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Exit Exam. Results: 90%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Grand Total: 82.3%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 5.0 The student could accurately explain how people have existed, acted, and thought in particular historical periods.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 77.5%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey.	
Results: 89.5%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Critical Thinking). Results: 76.6%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 299 historiographical assignment. Results: 53.5%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 98%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 77.8%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
<b>Grand Total: 78.8%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Not Attained</u></b>

**SLO 5.1 Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of cause and effect with a broad knowledge of the general chronology of historical developments in a variety of civilizations.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 75.5%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey.	
Results: 87%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Course-Level Assessments (Area Knowledge). Results: 74.8%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 299 essay on human agency. Results: 71%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 97%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 100%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
Exit Exam. Results: 90%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
<b>Grand Total: 85%</b>	<b><u>Benchmark Attained</u></b>

**SLO 6.0 Could explain what influence the past has on the present.**

Lower-division (100-level courses) on-line survey. Results: 80.5%	<b>Benchmark <u>Not</u> Attained</b>
Upper-division (300 and 400-level courses) on-line survey.	
Results: 90%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 draft paper. Results: 97%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>
HIST 499 final paper. Results: 100%	<b>Benchmark Attained</b>

Exit Exam. Results: 90%

**Grand Total: 91.5%**

**Benchmark Attained**

**Benchmark Attained**

### ***History Department Action Items***

The History Department's institutional Effectiveness Committee continues to monitor and seek new methods of enhancing its data collection process. As in past years, it obtained some of its data from on-line surveys conducted each semester, with one survey designated for students in lower-level courses and the other for those in upper-level classes. The Course-Level Assessment form, which the department began using in the 2017-18 school year, initially was filled out strictly for lower-level (General Education) classes. Only at the end of the fall semester of 2018 were these forms required of all classes. The department also made fuller use of the assignments in HIST 299 and HIST 499, and the Exit Exam. The indirect and direct data obtained has provided the department with a fuller understanding of its performance and where it can improve.

The data provided a clear distinction between students in survey classes, many of whom are not History majors, and those who are seeking a History degree. The on-line survey demonstrated that many students struggled with key skills and concepts but improved substantially as they made their way into upper-level History courses. Because it is impossible to determine how many people who were or might be History majors or minors took the surveys—particularly that for General Education courses—it is not clear if the results prove that History students' abilities improved as they moved from their freshmen to their senior years. That said, even in the cases of those SLOs where the department attained its benchmark, it is clear that there are opportunities for improvement in General Education courses.

Evident as well is that students seeking a major in History showed in most cases they refined their skills and knowledge, as demonstrated by information gathered in the two courses required of all History majors: HIST 299 (The Historian's Craft) and HIST 499 (Senior Thesis). There were two notable exceptions to the rule, however: SLO 4.1 (proper use of footnotes and formatting) and SLO 5.0 (explaining how people existed, acted, and thought in particular historical periods). In these two cases, students performed as well or better on the draft paper for HIST 499 than they had for a similar assignment in HIST 299, but registered a marked decline on their final paper for HIST 499. Why this is the case is not clear, but it could be because the initial draft required in HIST 499 is about one-half the size of the final draft. As they complete their final draft, students may have failed to carry their analysis through the entire paper. Or they may have discovered themselves having to rush to complete their work, leaving

opportunities for error. As noted below, the department has identified steps it can take to address the difficulties students face insofar as SLOs 4.1 and 5.0

### ***Action Items for 2019-20***

Action items are divided into two categories: those that are broader in nature and those that are specific to the SLOs where the department failed to attain its benchmarks

#### **Broader Actions**

The History Department has identified and has begun or will begin implementation of two actions it will take to assist its efforts to “close the loop”:

- It has started to create portfolios for its majors, which will allow it to compare how students perform in the written work between the freshmen and senior years. Once the first cohort graduates, a small group of professors will assess those students’ work using a rubric based on the department’s eleven SLOs, and will see how/if the majors’ knowledge and skills improved during their time at FMU.
- While the department completed the second year of using Course-Level Assessments, it did not start assigning them for upper-level classes until the end of the fall semester of 2018. By assessing all classes, the department can look more closely at how the students’ skills in General Education courses compared with those taking upper-level offerings. The department can compare that data with what the students provide in their on-line surveys, which will allow for a better understanding of how students’ attitudes regarding their abilities compare with their actual performance.

#### **SLO-Specific Actions**

### **SLO 3.0 Would be able to demonstrate an understanding of connections between historical events, ideas, and values over time.**

The department failed to attain its new benchmark. The IE Committee has recommended the following measures to improve the department’s outcome:

- Draw clearer connections for students in survey classes by making sure to provide brief reviews of information from earlier lectures to help students see the connections described.
- Devote additional time to the journal assignment (or, if changed, a similar assignment) in HIST 299.
- Encourage instructors to spend more time on comparative history either by making comparisons alone or by inviting colleagues to deliver guest lectures.



- Use the above-mentioned student portfolios to better assess students' abilities to meet this SLO.

**SLO 4.0 Could effectively write an historical essay.**

This has proven one of the biggest challenges facing the department. The department will take the following measures to improve this SLO:

- Create a video/Power Point presentation on essay-writing that will be required viewing of all students in History courses. This will help students learn how to prepare for and write an essay, one that includes the component parts (introduction, thesis, supporting evidence, conclusion).
- Provide separate indicators for Course-Level Assessment forms filled out for lower- and upper-level courses. This will help the department better determine if there is an improvement in essay-writing.
- Require students to visit the Writing Center for all history courses.
- Potentially require students to purchase a writing guide such as *The Elements of Style*.
- Suggest instructors provide students with extra credit for submitting a draft to the instructor so problems can be eliminated before the final version is submitted.

**SLO 5.0 The student could accurately explain how people have existed, acted, and thought in particular historical periods.**

This has been one of the greatest surprises facing the department, as History is by its very nature the study of people, what they did, and when and why they did it. The department will take multiple measures to improve its outcome on this SLO:

- Emphasize in the above-mentioned video/Power Point presentation that students must make sure to include in their writing the actions of individuals or groups at particular time periods. This means not just what they did or when they did it, but why, as well as the impact they had.
- In light of the results on the HIST 299 historiographical assignment and the HIST 499 final paper, instructors can devote greater emphasis to the actions of individuals and groups. This would include not just narrative but analysis.
- Potentially provide journal articles for students to read in class. As these articles are highly analytical, they will show students how professional historians examine the past.