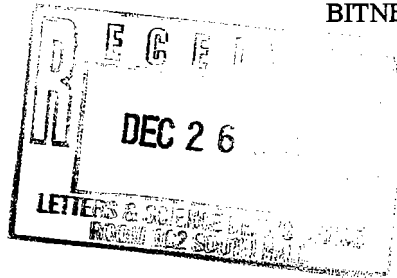


UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN--MADISON
Department of History

Office of the Chair
3211K Humanities Building
455 North Park Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1483

Phone: (608) 263-1807/1808
Fax: (608) 263-5302
BITNET: history@macc.wisc.edu

December 20, 1996



Dean Phillip Certain
102 South Hall
Campus Mail

Dear Phil:

I am attaching a copy of the preliminary assessment plan adopted by the Graduate Council and endorsed by the History Department which we will use in our evaluation of the History graduate program. Next week I plan to send you the assessment plan adopted by the Undergraduate Council and also endorsed by the History Department. David McDonald, our Associate Chair, is making a few last-minute revisions in this document prior to the deadline of December 31.

Yours most cordially,

Jim Donnelly
Chair and Professor of History

Attachment

Plan for a Preliminary Assessment
of the Graduate Program in History

Dept. of History
College of Letters and Sciences
University of Wisconsin - Madison

Introduction

The Department of History has a long tradition as a leading graduate program in the nation and a well-established international reputation for excellence. Its mission is to train productive researchers and analysts as well as committed teachers and engaged public intellectuals. With our assessment plan we seek ways to measure, monitor, and improve our record.

Long-Range Goals

In these straitened times, any assessment of the graduate program must consider the connections between admissions, funding, and employment. While many students and faculty members also strongly support a thorough qualitative assessment of the graduate program, the primary area of concern appears to be students' prospects for support during their years of study and for employment once they have earned the Ph.D.

Funding and employment statistics should be available, both for our program and for programs at peer institutions; a study of these statistics will help us determine how our students are faring in both absolute and comparative terms. This will help us determine how many graduate students we ought to admit, how best to support those we do admit, and what prospective graduate students should know about their long-term employment prospects.

Preliminary Goal

As the first step in this broader assessment of resources and their allocation, we should determine what support is available to graduate students in the History program and how it is distributed.

In local, absolute terms, this assessment should consider:

- total support in the form of compensation for teaching assistantships, research assistantships, project assistantships, and readerships;
- total support in the form of Graduate School fellowships, History Department fellowships, and other fellowships and grants;
- the percentage of students receiving each kind of support;
- the gap between available funding and basic living and research expenses;
- the amount of debt incurred during graduate study.

In comparing these data with the situation at peer institutions and other UW-Madison departments (e.g., Sociology), we might ask the following questions:

- How do our levels of support compare on a per-capita basis?
- Do University policies regarding out-of-state tuition put our students at a comparative disadvantage?
- Is our ability to fund graduate students affecting our ability to compete with peer institutions in attracting first-rate graduate students?
- What percentage of students we admit who enroll elsewhere do so for financial reasons?

This preliminary assessment, combined with a study of employment rates among students here and at peer institutions, ought to provide a starting point for a thorough evaluation of our funding and admissions policies.

Schedule and Future Goals

We plan to begin work on this first step of our assessment plan in May 1997. After completing the first stage of our ongoing assessment, we can go on to tackle additional steps within the limits of our resources. We plan to focus next on the following areas:

- Comparative employment data on our Ph.D.'s
- Their post-doctoral careers (positions, publications, advancement, honors).