

To: Jennifer Summit, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
APRC

From: Andrew Harris, Dean of the College of Liberal & Creative Arts

Date: May 18, 2019

Re: History Seventh Cycle Dean's Response

The external Seventh Cycle reviewers conclude that the History Program is actively and successfully reflecting on its program's strengths and challenges, noting among other initiatives curriculum and course revision which will make the History program more navigable and more flexible for undergraduates, pedagogical revision based on more intentional scaffolding of skills within the curriculum, assessing DFWI rates, and augmenting their graduate program's appeal with a certificate program in history education. Their report acknowledges the diligence and hard work of the History faculty and Chair to date across a wide range of programmatic improvements that indicate a high level of department self-awareness and engagement. This is not faint praise, particularly given the enrollment challenges humanities and social science disciplines have faced since the most recent recession. The underlying strengths of the faculty as teachers and scholars remain strong: surveys of student and alumni satisfaction with the program reveal a high level of enthusiastic support, and the faculty's research impact is high. The report suggests next steps, with the following recommendations:

- New faculty tenure-track hires in non-western history
- Continued emphasis on pedagogical faculty development and course revision
- Exploration of online and/or low-residency M.A. programs

Dean's Recommendation

I commend History for a well-written Self-Study that encapsulates their energy, their self-reflection, and their willingness to engage changes in the discipline and in student interest in the field. I also commend them for their considerable curriculum review and revision efforts at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; these are the long-term changes that will bear fruit in the next few years. It is expected that their initiative in curriculum revision will help turn around the decline in number of students majoring in History, and their highly successful emphasis on growing enrollment in GE courses outside of the major will in the long term provide more capacity to recruit students into the discipline. This comes with some risk, however, as the CSU GE Task Force calls into question some of the assumptions underlying the approach of strengthening the department's GE footprint, and that bears monitoring closely in coming years.

While enrollment in the major has stabilized since 2016 and may well increase again, it is important with every new hire to ask how the program can meet its goals with a smaller number of faculty than it had a decade ago, since there has been a significant decline in the number of students even if that decline has stopped. There is no ideal number of faculty, and programs can achieve their mission with different numbers of faculty depending on their enrollment. Recent

position requests reflect that awareness and I support the department's choice of specialties. I look forward to continuing alignment of specialties within the department with future separations and new hires.

The reviewers commended the sense of community within the program, a sense of community that is supported by their proximity and effective use of space in their current location. Since it is likely that the department will move in the coming two years as a result of campus construction, it is critical that we build a value on student community into our space planning decisions.

I support the exploration of new modalities of delivering graduate programs. While part of the decline of graduate enrollments is based in student interest and institutional support structures, it is clear that much of the decline is related to the high cost of living in the Bay Area. Given the research strengths of our faculty, there is no decline in their ability to recruit graduate students if those students do not have to live here, so there is great possibility here for our faculty to reach potential graduate students from well outside of the region. I support College investment in and development of this concept if the department is willing to undertake the exploration.

Finally, the department has been successful in raising funds in particular for improvements in history education. I commend this and support its ongoing success.