Department of History  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Action Plan  

A Response to the Program Review Process  
May, 2008

Per the instructions of the Graduate Dean, the Department has examined the program review report and makes the following proposals for action to meet points raised in the document. These proposals represent responses to program reviewers’ concerns that can be remedied by the Department on its own initiative. The fullest benefit of the program review process can best be enjoyed if those items beyond the Department’s powers of implementation are taken up by responsible administrators.

Item 1  
Reviewers’ Observation

The faculty wish to recruit more students, and have drawn up a plan to do so. This plan was submitted to university administration in 2006 and has yet to be implemented. The stated reason was lack of funding for printed mailouts, lack of funding for travel for recruiting, and general lack of funding for any type of recruiting for this program. One of the objectives of this committee was to determine if the program was viable. We find that it is viable but needs more support for recruiting if it is to grow.

Departmental Response: The Department will continue dialogue with Marketing Communications so that as soon as funding can be obtained production of needed materials can begin. A review of the advertising prototypes developed in 2006 can be undertaken to make sure that they are up-to-date and ready for distribution once they are funded. This can be accomplished by the end of the summer.

Item 2  
Reviewers’ Observation

The program’s degree requirements are clearly stated, clearly understood, and standard for the field. Advising is good, but potential problems could be avoided by mandating that advising take place each semester before registration. Students should be strongly urged to take the Historiography course the first time it is offered.

Departmental Response: The Department will design and institute a new advisement protocol. The recommendation concerning HIS 590, the Department’s Historiography
course, is a bit more problematic. Since our graduate students do not enter in cohorts, it would be difficult to ensure that all students take the course first. The Department will use the new advisement protocol to insure that students take 590 at the first opportunity after joining the program.

**Item 3**  
**Reviewers’ Observation**

The name of History 555 should be changed so students other than teachers can take the class. Course names should be changed to indicate which ones are research seminars. This will help with SACS accreditation.

**Departmental Response:** The Department will reexamine the naming of HIS 555 and its other offerings in light of this recommendation. The Department will determine which of its courses are “research seminars” and change course names to reflect the “Seminar” designation. This will be accomplished in the Fall, 2008 catalog/curriculum revision sequence.

**Item 4**  
**Reviewers’ Observation**

Currently there are no written qualifying exams. These need to be instituted and given before the thesis process can begin. Assessment rubrics can be created for the exams, so program growth can be calculated.

**Departmental Response:** The Department will establish procedures for written comprehensive examinations to be taken before graduation effective for students entering the program in Spring, 2009. These examinations will be evaluated according to a rubric pegged to the Department’s stated learning outcomes. The Department’s catalog entries will be amended to reflect these changes.

**Item 5**  
**Reviewers’ Observation**

The program is willing to do whatever it takes to increase student enrollment and improve the program. One option is to offer the MA online, and focus it toward teachers. This niche market could expand the reach of TAMU-Commerce statewide. To make this happen, informational technology support is needed, including training in both software and online pedagogy, and instructional designers. It is understood by the committee that this is available now, it just needs to be implemented. Once this program goes online, new faculty will be needed. This will allow a wider variety of course offerings, which will increase the draw for more students, and the program should continue to grow. The monetary benefit to the university will be great, and the respect for the university will be even greater.
**Departmental Response:** With present staffing constraints implementation of a totally online master’s is a way off. However, the Department will commit to a phased expansion of its online offerings across the next two years in hopes of building enrollment and making the program more accessible.