

Minutes of Meeting
Department of History
September 12, 2007

Those present: Mr. Olsen, chair; Ms. Chirhart, Mr. Clark, Mr. Fischer, Ms. Foster, Mr. Giffin, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Land, Ms. Phillips, Mr. Schneirov
Ms. Skinner, Mr. Stofferahn

Those absent: Mr. Nichols

Mr. Olsen called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

Mr. Olsen welcomed Ms. Phillips to the Department and announced plans for the upcoming department get-together.

Mr. Hunter moved approval of the minutes of the April 25, 2007 meeting; Ms. Chirhart seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Announcements

Mr. Olsen reminded faculty to sign the FERPA/IT release forms and asked for volunteers to cover the History Table at the Graduate and Professional School fair.

Mr. Olsen reported that undergraduate enrollment university-wide is flat but new freshmen were up 9%. Mr. Hunter asked how the History Department compares with other departments. Mr. Olsen reported that enrollment in History courses is up about 10% compared with enrollment in fall of 2006, and that the number of history majors has nearly doubled in recent years even as enrollment university wide declined.

Updates/Discussion

Mr. Olsen reported that members of the Chairs' Council discussed ISU's designation within the Carnegie classification system. The classification, Mr. Olsen explained, is based upon the number of PhDs granted and helps determine how money within the university and state system is distributed; the Provost has advocated more money will be channeled toward faculty research.

Mr. Olsen reported that the College of Arts and Sciences has authorized searches for five new tenure track lines for 2007-08. Mr. Olsen explained that the CAS intends to transfer money to the adjunct pool to stabilize it and help departments better meet their teaching needs. Mr. Olsen suggested that the History Department think about using adjunct funds to hire someone to teach upper level Asian History courses in the near future.

Mr. Olsen reported that the General Education Task force has met and briefly outlined its goals and desired outcomes. Mr. Olsen asked members of the Department to send him ideas about the History Department's General Education courses. The task force, Mr. Olsen reported, is considering reducing the number of General Education requirements. He also reported that the General Education Council is reconsidering both capstone and topics courses proposals that the Department of History submitted last year.

Mr. Olsen reported that the Interdisciplinary Task force has not met.

Committee Reports

1. Assessment Committee: The Assessment Committee has not met.

2. Budget Committee:

Ms. Chirhart reported that the Budget Committee has allocated the majority of its travel funds. Ms. Chirhart reported that faculty members who applied for conference travel money were allotted \$700-800 for a first conference; there was some money (\$1284 total) available to people attending a second conference.

Ms. Chirhart and Mr. Olsen suggested that faculty take advantage of money available in the distance learning fund; faculty may apply for funds to attend conferences and/or participate in conference sessions that deal with distance education.

Mr. Olsen reported that there is some money available to faculty members who would like to make use of a student worker.

3. Curriculum Committee: The Curriculum Committee has not met.

4. Graduate Committee:

Mr. Giffin reported Mr. Nichols and Ms. Phillips have been approved for Graduate Faculty Status.

Mr. Giffin reported that the Graduate Committee approved the change in designation from "MA" to "MA or MS" for the Specialization in the History of Labor and Reform Movements in the United States. Mr. Schneirov asked if the change will apply to students admitted last year. Mr. Olsen said that yes, students admitted last year can change from an MA to an MS (or vice versa in future years) depending upon whether they choose the paper or thesis option. The Department approved the change. (13-0-0)

Ms. Skinner and Ms. Foster suggested that the department adopt new procedural guidelines for graduate students. Ms. Skinner distributed a handout prior to the meeting, the handout is attached.

Faculty discussed the proposed changes at length.

There was discussion about whether these suggestions should be integrated into the general information packet provided to graduate students upon their admittance to the program. Mr. Clark suggested that the information be made available on the Department website.

Mr. Hunter raised questions about how much primary research should be required, particularly for those students doing research outside of the U.S. and who may have limited access to translated sources. Ms. Skinner suggested that students be directed toward topics with more, rather than fewer, translated sources. Ms. Foster suggested that students need to make use of primary sources, that the department does students a disservice by not requiring primary research. Ms. Foster reported that the Department's current guidelines for the M.A. thesis state that the thesis may be purely historiographical in nature. She suggested that some of these issues might best be addressed first in the graduate seminar, which currently contains no formal paper/thesis requirements or guidelines; the seminar, she suggested, might be a good place to provide students with explicit guidelines for research. Mr. Hunter suggested then that the requirements for the M.A. thesis should state: no exclusively historiographical works accepted. Ms. Skinner reiterated that translations may pose a problem for some students. Mr. Stofferahn suggested that the seminar guidelines are dependent upon who teaches the seminar, that whoever is teaching it should reiterate the need for primary research. Mr. Olsen suggested that developing general guidelines for the seminar is a good idea.

Discussion continued about whether graduate students should be required to follow some kind of timeline. Mr. Clark suggested that graduate students need to demonstrate some progression. Mr. Clark also suggested that graduate students be required to meet more regularly with their committee members, that the syllabus for the seminar require students to meet with their committee members. Mr. Fischer suggested that students cc their seminar papers to their advisor as a way to build communication into the system.

Mr. Stofferahn suggested that the syllabus for the seminar require students to meet with their committee chairs, when identified.

Discussion continued. Ms. Chirhart and Ms. Foster raised the issue of selecting committee chairs. Currently there is no penalty for students who do not select a committee chair.

Ms. Chirhart suggested that students be required to submit their work in hard copy and that students be required to perform spelling and grammar checks.

Mr. Stofferahn raised cycle issues. There are currently, he reported, three new graduate students. It was suggested that the issue of course rotation and incoming graduate student fluctuation be taken up by the Graduate Committee.

Mr. Schneirov suggested that the guidelines for graduate students include scheduling a defense date. Discussion ensued.

It was agreed that faculty send any further suggestions about graduate student guidelines to Ms. Chirhart and Ms. Skinner.

Mr. Olsen suggested faculty make sure their TAs do not record grades in public computer labs.

5. Retention/Tenure Committee:

Mr. Giffin will arrange classroom visitations to occur before Oct. 1.

Old Business:

Public and Applied History, revised curriculum

Mr. Olsen distributed a handout with the new language describing the revised curriculum for the Public and Applied History concentration and asked faculty for their reactions before the changes are made to the catalog. A question was raised about whether the Oral History course should have its own number. It was agreed that Hist 499 be kept as a generic topics course.

The raised guidelines for the Public and Applied History concentration was approved. (13-0-0)

New Business

1. Distance Education

Mr. Olsen reported that there is some money (over \$1500) in the distance education fund. He encouraged faculty to use the money for travel to conferences, particularly those that deal with, or have sessions that deal with, distance education.

Mr. Olsen also reported that the History Department is teaching more upper level courses in the prison program, including the Civil War, Sixties, and Early Modern Europe. Ms. Skinner suggested that it might not be too difficult to offer a traditional course concurrent with a distance version for the prison program in a given semester. Mr. Olsen stated that instructors who teach history courses in the prison program are approved by the History Department. He stated that currently the Department has little contact with the instructors in the program; that could change, he suggested, if the program were run a bit differently.

2. New Majors

Mr. Olsen reported that the History Department currently has about 80 majors.

Mr. Olsen suggested that the Graduate and Curriculum committees devote some time to recruiting new majors. This would be a good year, Mr. Olsen suggested, for the Department to focus its energies on recruitment. It was suggested that faculty use their survey courses to recruit majors and/or distribute questionnaires about students' interests in history. It was suggested that advanced history courses are a good place to recruit for the graduate program as well. New ISU freshman are more inclined to enroll in a liberal arts degree and less interested in job training types of degrees than in years past. The Department has some money, Mr. Olsen reported, earmarked for recruiting-related events.

Mr. Schneirov suggested that we identify 3-4 senior history majors, take them out to lunch or dinner, and use the time as a way to offer them some general advice about their future career options.

Ms. Skinner asked whether students have the option to minor in History and asked whether the Department requires students to declare a minor. Mr. Olsen reported that there are currently 20-25 declared minors in History. Mr. Clark reported that SSE majors often minor in history. He suggested that Sycamore Days has traditionally been a good place to recruit history majors. Mr. Olsen noted that one issue with increasing the number of minors is that history minors are required to take History 300, which is often full already. Minors are assigned an advisor. It was suggested that we mention the option of the History minor in our survey courses.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa A. Phillips