

September 22, 2016 Audit Meeting on Major Field Assessment

Present: Dachowski, Brown, Schmeller, Corse, Dark, Bertrand, Oyebade, Williams, Patrick

Joel started the meeting by giving some context for major field test, data, and what to do next.

First of all the criteria has changed for the academic audit to larger scale. This rubric was emailed earlier. Joel suggested we look at spectrum and think about where we are, and where we can improve and push into highly developed.

Learning Outcomes are central to all of this. We currently function under the 8 Learning Outcomes as published in the catalog. Most have been operationalized. For our majors, we had used major field test and opted out as it was being discontinued. It didn't deal with any analytical or applied skills. Around 2011 we moved to a system that collapsed the outcomes to 4: Historical Content Knowledge, Methods, Written Communication, and Original Research and Historical Analysis.

We aren't really consistent with how we assess all four. Our main assessment is the essay based, online assessment on eLearn. Joel continued that we have a wide range of responses. It has revealed some gaps in what our students know. The particularly good thing is that we have responses back to 2010.

Joel then moved to data that will be shared with everyone in a combined format. We first looked at 2010-2011, only 4 students and a our pilot year. Only 50% of the students made expectations. 2011-2012 improved, but we start to see a pattern. Our seniors were better at talking about content, but not so much methodology or philosophy of history. Most recently, Content and Writing strongest.

Questions: For audit would it be useful to go back and look at them as a group? Would it be useful to have this data in one single document? (yes was the response)

Do we want to as part of audit, change how we do the assessment? Andrew's portfolio idea was mentioned again as a viable option to move toward.

Michael suggested a preparatory meeting with those seniors about to take the exam, but this probably needs to be more formalized. It was suggested that perhaps we need to be doing this even earlier than with seniors, or focusing more on the areas in our classes. Theron does focus more on Periodization. Joel doing some of that as well.

Andrew suggested that we stick with the process for the exam, but that it be an essay for their portfolio where they do reflections. He also mentioned the idea of an oral defense of degree as something that other programs he looked at are doing.

For those that have read the essays over the year, it is apparent that students are essentially already doing reflections.

Joel reiterated that we have never met our standard.

Beth asked if we have data showing a correlation between grades in history and performance on exam.

Michael chimed in that there is a correlation between GPA, history GPA, and performance on the major field exam.

Keisha asked a question about the rubric. Joel responded that the goal has been to get everyone to satisfactory, and we haven't done that...ever.

Beth suggested that we do both the essay and begin the process of building the for a sequence of years. The portfolio idea would be open to exams, essays, etc.

Bayo asked if we could have a mock exam before they come to the exam? Hopefully students would be better prepared.

Michael then raised a concern about continuity between classes. Students losing methodological pieces between classes, and how should we better address this?

Theron asked are we really teaching what we are assessing? Results telling us we need to be more deliberate with learning outcomes and then building course structure around that.

Joel added that the auditors will see that in our syllabi.

Suggestion that we do both for next four to five years with current system while students begin to build a portfolio of artifacts from every upper-division course. Currently what we have is students already doing a reflection so let us formalize it.

Michael--suggesting we do a similar exam and that we do this at

the beginning of workshop and then compare it with what they do at the end. Idea being that we can show that they have progressed.

Andrew then added that for his focal area a more detailed discussion about how we teach writing, reading, and the content would be useful.

Joel raising issue again of making learning outcomes that include more detail on the application of learning. (I think I got this right?)

Michael asked what do we think our majors want to do? If most are going into teaching, do we need to be doing something different?

Theron asked do we need to do some faculty development on how to better talk to students about what they are going to do with the major?

Beth referenced the Tuning project and their willingness to assist if can define what we want.

Andrew asked how many learning outcomes do we have 8 or 4? Joel answered that the ones in catalog are more specific so it is fine to continue using them. In the audit we will need to clarify connection between 8, and the 4 and then 5 on our rubric. We also have to have our outcomes displayed.

We concluded the meeting by agreeing that we needed to meet again regarding instructional materials/how we teach, and the US History Survey. We also agreed that we would propose to the history faculty an alteration to the major field test as discussed above with a more formalized review process for students prior to the exam, and begin defining what items from upper-division courses will begin going into student portfolios as well as how they will be assessed.

Meeting was joyously adjourned.