

# Annual Assessment Report

**Department: History**  
**Academic Year: 2015-16**  
**Date of Submission: September 2016**  
**Department Chair: Chapman, handing over to Pointer**

## I. Response to the previous year PRC's recommendations

Item: Evaluate research in courses other than HIS198	Response: We have traditionally focused related to research on HIS198, for the reasons you outlined in your 2015 response. However, it would be good to consider evaluating research in the context of other courses, and we will aim to do when we return to this outcome.
Item: Assess research in HIS198 again.	Response: One of the useful things about our HIS198 rubric is that it does allow us to monitor student progress in a number of areas. We will continue to use the updated rubric that we used in 2015, and this will allow us to look at how our students are doing in research whenever we use it.
Item: Closing the loop for research assessment	Response: See below under Follow-ups.
Item:	Response:
Notes:	

## II A. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

*If your department participated in the ILO assessment you may use this section to report on your student learning in relation to the assessed ILO. The assessment data can be requested from the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.*

Program Learning Outcome	
Who is in Charge	

/Involved?	
<a href="#">Direct Assessment Methods</a>	
<a href="#">Indirect Assessment Methods</a>	
Major Findings	
Closing the Loop Activities	
Collaboration and Communication	

or/and

### II B. Key Questions

Key Question	Vocation.
Who is in Charge/Involved?	Alister Chapman (chair), Marianne Robins, and Rick Pointer met with Celia Howen. We also discussed the issue with all the members of the department in several meetings.
<a href="#">Direct Assessment Methods</a>	
<a href="#">Indirect Assessment Methods</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We spent a good deal of time discussing this question in department meetings this year. Our vision is to embed discussion of vocation and its relationship to the major of history in the experience of each student who goes through our major. Celia Howen was present at two of these discussions, and was very willing to help us work on this venture.</li> <li>In addition, we surveyed our majors to ask what they would find helpful as they seek to explore vocation and careers.</li> </ul>

<b>Major Findings</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We started by identifying what we already do, which has included regular conversations with advisees and work with the Office of Career and Life Planning in our intro course (HIS99) and senior seminar (HIS198). We decided that what we really need to do is systematize the good we are already doing and add a couple of new elements.</li> <li>2. We decided to host a departmental retreat in the Spring Semester, along the lines of what the Sociology department has done, with a view to helping our students think better about vocation together.</li> <li>3. From the student surveys, we learned that students wanted more help thinking about vocation. Seven out of seventeen respondents expressed a desire for more information on careers that history majors tend to pursue. Interestingly, even those interested in teaching felt a need for more direction. Many students wanted to see us continue to provide concrete activities, such as the retreat, and assignments to help them think about vocation.</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We will continue to run department retreats. These need not always focus on vocation—we think they are worthwhile simply to build community among our majors—but they do provide a regular opportunity to discuss these questions with students.</li> <li>2. We will work with the office of Career Development and Calling each year to identify particular instruments (e.g. StrengthsFinder, Meyers Briggs, Strong Interest Inventory, Values assessment) to use in both HIS99 and HIS198.</li> <li>3. We aim to have an alumni panel at least once during each student’s time at Westmont.</li> <li>4. We will ask people in Career Development and Calling to help train us to work more effectively with our advisees on these issues.</li> <li>5. Specifically, in our senior seminar, HIS198, Chandra Mallampalli will host an alumni panel on October 24 and also have Celia Howen come to the class to provide tools that will allow students to assess their strengths and how these might relate to particular careers.</li> </ol>
<b>Collaboration and Communication</b>	

### III. Follow-ups

<b>Program Learning Outcome or Key Question</b>	<b>Research</b>
<b>Who was involved in implementation?</b>	<b>Marianne Robins, Chandra Mallampalli, Alister Chapman</b>
<b>What was decided or addressed?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We discussed how best to improve our students' research skills, with a focus on HIS99 in particular.</li> <li>2. We had several department discussions this past year on how to help students identify their HIS198 topics earlier, thus giving them more time to work with sources. Chandra Mallampalli was in communication with this year's students as early as May in an attempt to work towards this goal.</li> </ol>
<b>How were the recommendations implemented?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In HIS99, Marianne Robins switched from providing research training to the class as a whole to individualized sessions with Jana Mullen. This allowed Mullen to tailor each session to where individual students had needs.</li> <li>2. Alister Chapman introduced a new research paper assignment into HIS140. Students had to select an aspect of post-1945 European history, produce an annotated bibliography, write a 12-20 page paper, and also present their research to the rest of the class.</li> </ol>
<b>Collaboration and Communication</b>	

### IV. Other assessment or Key Questions related projects

<b>Project</b>	
<b>Who is in Charge /Involved?</b>	
<b>Major</b>	

<b>Findings</b>	
<b>Action</b>	
<b>Collaboration and Communication</b>	

**V. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)**

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing

**VI. Appendices**

- A. Prompts or instruments used to collect the data
- B. Rubrics used to evaluate the data
- C. Relevant assessment-related documents (optional)