

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION\ACADEMIC AND PERSONNEL

March 17, 2021

ACTION: **Approve Continuation of History Program at Chadron State College with Annual Monitoring**

Per Policy 4200, existing academic programs shall be reviewed every seven (7) years by each College to determine the quality and effectiveness of each program, the efficiency with which each is delivered, and to avoid unnecessary duplication. Each program is evaluated based on the minimum threshold requirements established by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE). Should a program not meet the established thresholds, Nebraska Statute 85-1414 establishes the expectation for the institution and its governing board to complete an in-depth review. Programs continued by the governing board shall be further monitored by the governing board which shall report the status and process of the monitoring to the CCPE.

During its last review, the History Program at Chadron State College did not meet the required minimum 5-year mean threshold for number of graduates for baccalaureate programs, which is seven (7). The program has completed an in-depth review and has recommended continuation of the program. The findings of that review are provided to the Board in the attached report for approval and subsequent submission to the CCPE for consideration for continuation of the program.

The System Office and Chadron State College support the findings of the in-depth review and the recommendation for continuation of the program. For each of these in-depth reviews, the Colleges are asked to outline strategies/approaches for continuing to improve enrollments and graduate production in the future, which warrants ongoing assessment and evaluation by the Board. An annual review of enrollment and graduate numbers will be shared with the Board each Spring term to monitor progress of the program's growth related to these recruitment efforts.

The System Office and Chadron State College recommend approval of the Continuation of History Program at Chadron State College with Annual Monitoring.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 2021 CSC History Existing Program Review Report with In-Depth Review (PDF)

NSCS Existing Program Review Report 2021
History

1. Section One: Overview of Program Offerings

Major	Teaching Endorsement	Option	Minor	Degree	Credits
History	History Education Subject Endorsement (7-12) - 36			BSE	42
History		History		BA	36
History			History		18

This program is not externally accredited.

2. Section Two (Option A): Analysis of Program, Including Adequacy of Resources and Related Concerns

Program Analysis

The faculty members within the CSC History program have established clear student learning outcomes that scaffold curricular goals by course level (100, 200, 300, 400). The History program assessment plan has been in place in its current form for the past seven years and program assessment data has been collected, scored (using common rubrics), and stored in Tk20 at scheduled intervals for the 200-, 300-, and 400-level courses. Additionally, the program's students who pursue the history education endorsement have been required since September 2015 to take the national Praxis II content knowledge exam in World and US History and receive a grade of at least 147 in order to receive Nebraska state certification. As a result, the program enjoys an unusually robust data set upon which to draw for review.

The history faculty meets together twice during each academic year to review and discuss this assessment data. The data suggests that one of the program's strengths is that its students annually perform at levels consistent with program expectations at each level of assessment. Indeed, over the past two years, steady gains in student learning have been observed both in the program-level assessments and in the reported Praxis II exam results for graduating history education students. Another strength is the significant emphasis placed within the program upon the development of critical thinking and written communication skills among its majors and minors, growth that is supported by the program's assessment data and signifies the leading role that the program has taken to prepare its graduates for success in the workplace and leadership in the communities in which they will eventually live.

At the same time, the program notes with concern the declining enrollment trends that have impacted the history major not just at CSC but also nationwide over the past five years. While the program continues to reach a large number of CSC students through its large footprint in the general studies curriculum, our Essential Studies Program (ESP), it is clear that efforts must be made within the program to reaffirm the value of the history major and minor to potential students and their families. The CSC History faculty members are committed to this endeavor.

Program Resources

The CSC History program is currently comprised of three tenure-track faculty members. At current College and program enrollment levels, this number is sufficient to provide an appropriate depth and breadth of regional, national, and world history coverage, meeting the demands to support the existing history major, minor, education endorsements, Essential Studies Program (ESP), and the graduate focus area in history within the Master of Arts in Education (MAE). A recent full-time hire in Political Science has relieved the temporary stress placed on the program when it needed to provide additional graduate-level course offerings in order to facilitate timely graduation of its graduate students. A pool of adjunct instructors has also been cultivated in order to meet unanticipated online and face-to-face teaching needs should they arise. Meanwhile, the current faculty is willing to continue its ongoing practice of teaching large 100-level classes within the ESP in order to minimize the fiscal impact of their lower-enrolled upper-division and graduate-level history courses.

The History program is supported by an assigned library liaison who assists faculty members in reviewing and updating history-related holdings and electronic database subscriptions. The current coronavirus pandemic has prompted a thorough review of instructional technology resources, leading to the acquisition of additional video conferencing cameras and video displays for the classrooms most frequently used by history faculty. It is anticipated that these types of technology upgrades will continue. Heretofore, the fiscal resources have been available to support such purchases. Pandemic-related spending freezes, budget cuts, and declining enrollment trends make it difficult to gauge whether to expect the same (or similar) level of financial support for faculty development and high-impact faculty/student travel that existed prior to the 2019-2020 academic year. If it does not resume, it will likely impact the ability of the current full-time history faculty to maintain currency in disciplinary knowledge and in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

3. Evidence of Demand and Efficiency (per established CCPE standards for 5-year means)

Number of Degrees/Awards in Program		SCH/FTE
Baccalaureate	7	300
Masters	5	300
Specialist	4	300

		15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	5 yr avg
Student Credit Hours (SCH)		2,107	1,862	1,827	1,642	1,598	1,807.2
Faculty Full-time Equivalency (FTE)		3.14	3.25	3.38	3.76	2.63	3.23
SCH/Faculty FTE		671.02	572.92	540.53	436.70	607.60	565.75
Number of Degrees and Awards	BA	9	7	2	3	3	4.8
	BSE	2	1	2	1	0	1.2
<i>(list degrees/awards separately)</i>							

4. Section 4 (Option A): Justification and Evidence of Need

The History program at Chadron State College supports members of the CSC community (students, faculty, staff) and important constituencies throughout northwestern Nebraska and the High Plains region in a number of important ways. These include:

- Supporting the CSC Essential Studies Program in its mission to “provide an integrated, coherent learning experience to prepare students for a life of responsible inquiry.”
- Supporting the CSC Education program in its mission to “prepare candidates to use current pedagogical methods that impact student learning in [the] candidate’s respective content area of study.”
- Supporting CSC’s partnership with the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society and its mission to “honor the land and the people about [whom] she wrote: Native Americans, ranchers, farmers, and the people who settled the High Plains Country.”
- Supporting history majors and minors by providing training and expertise in local and regional history and associated historical sites (i.e., Fort Robinson, Fur Trade Museum, Chimney Rock) with the potential for future employment.

Several of these points are discussed in greater detail below.

Program is critical to the role and mission of the institution

Chadron State College’s mission is to “deliver experiences that foster knowledgeable and engaged leaders and citizens to enrich the High Plains region and beyond.” Rigorous and critical investigation of the past familiarizes students with human institutions that continue to have bearing on present-day awareness. As William H. McNeill argues, critical engagement with history “broad[ens] our humanity and extend[s] our sensibilities.”¹ This expansion contributes to a self-awareness that helps prepare for meaningful engagement in our world. The CSC history program makes a significant contribution to the development of a reflective and informed citizenry through its coursework and also through its sponsorship of co-curricular activities and events such as the Martin Luther King Commemoration and National History Day.

Program contains courses supporting general education or other programs

Chadron State College’s general education program is called its “Essential Studies Program.” The Essential Studies Program (ESP) is comprised of courses covering five broad categories: First-Year Inquiry, Skills, Modes of Inquiry, Personal and Social Responsibility, and Capstone Integration; the CSC history program and its faculty offer courses in four of the five. The ESP is built and assessed around twelve (12) student learning outcomes (SLO); of these, the CSC history program contributes most significantly in SLO 8 (Human Behavior-Social Sciences) and SLO 9 (Civic Engagement). The history program also sponsors one of CSC’s most successful study abroad programs through its ESP course (HIST 402/CAP 469B) titled “Cuba Libre.” A new study away course (ANTH 430), titled “Biking USA,” in which faculty and students will travel across the continental U.S. by bicycle and train, was created by a member of the history faculty, although its debut has been postponed due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Within CSC’s education program are several endorsements, academic areas, concentrations, and focus areas that are supported exclusively or significantly by CSC history courses:

¹ William H. McNeill, “Why Study History,” *Papers of The American Historical Association* (1985) available at: <http://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/archives>

- Among the many options within the **Bachelor of Science in Education (Secondary)** are two such endorsements:
 - 1) **Subject Endorsement in History, Grades 7-12** (33 of 39 required credits, or **85%**, are HIST courses; if a student were to elect to take 6 elective credits of ANTH to complete the endorsement, then **100%** of these courses would have been taught by history faculty)
 - 2) **Field Endorsement in Social Science, Grades 7-12** (24 of 60 required credits, or **40%**, are HIST courses; additionally, 3 required credits in SS and 6-9 required credits in ANTH are taught by history program faculty, making the actual impact greater: 33-36 of 60 required credits, or **55%-60%**)
- Among the options within the **Bachelor of Science in Education (Middle Level)** is one titled **Middle Level Education Academic Area in Social Sciences, Grades 5-9** (9 of 24 required credits, or **38%**, are HIST courses; additionally, there is a 3-credit ANTH option; since all ANTH courses are taught by history program faculty, that is potentially 12 of 24 credits, or **50%**)
- Among the areas of concentration within the **Bachelor of Science in Education (Field Endorsement in Elementary Education, Grades K-8)** is a **Social Science Area of Concentration** (3 of 9 required credits, or **33%**, are HIST courses; additionally, there are two HIST courses among the list of five electives, from which students must select two; thus, there is potential for all 9 required credits, or **100%**, to be HIST courses)
- Among the five options within the **Master of Arts in Education (MAE)** is a **focus area in History** (9 of 36 required credits, or **25%**, are HIST courses; additionally, these students must earn 18 elective graduate credits in either HIST, Political Science, or ANTH, meaning that a student could potentially take as many as 27 credits, or up to **75%** of the total degree requirements for the MAE in History, from history faculty)

Program provides unique access to an underserved population or geographical area

Chadron State College is the only public four-year college or university in western Nebraska. The 2010 U.S. Census lists the population of the Nebraska “Panhandle,” most of which is made up of rural communities, as 87,789. The nearest four-year Nebraska institution to Chadron is the University of Nebraska–Kearney (UNK), which is 311 miles away. Admittedly, there are other four-year institutions in neighboring states that may be equally close to CSC for many Panhandle residents (e.g., South Dakota School of Mines & Technology and Black Hills State University in South Dakota, the University of Wyoming, and the University of Northern Colorado), there are numerous inherent advantages to those same residents in attending a Nebraska college or university. Furthermore, CSC’s role as an open-enrollment institution provides access to a greater percentage of potential college students than most of the aforementioned schools; by extension, the CSC history program provides unparalleled access to citizens seeking a bachelor’s degree in history (or history education) when compared to any other available options.

Program meets a unique need in the region, state, or nation

The CSC history program makes many and varied contributions to the vitality and diversity of CSC inside the classroom, across the campus, and into the community and world. For example, CSC’s history faculty members have been instrumental in planning and hosting the annual Pilster Lecture and Mari Sandoz Conference in collaboration with the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society. These same faculty members have conducted significant research, published numerous articles, and given many public presentations on topics related to the history of the people who live (or have lived) within the CSC

service region. Efforts to revitalize CSC's American Indian Studies minor over the past five years has led to increased enrollment in these courses.

Overall, the CSC History program plays a vital role in supporting the mission and vision of the College. CSC's mission states that the institution "delivers experiences that foster knowledgeable and engaged leaders and citizens to enrich the High Plains region and beyond." The mission statement of the History program includes a parallel idea: "The History program contributes to the vitality of the College and the region by providing an educational experience for students who are preparing for a life of thoughtful engagement in a global society." CSC's Master Academic Plan (MAP) is centered on three priorities: People, Purpose, and Place.

The History program and its faculty are committed to upholding each of these priorities through continuous improvement in teaching and academic advising, ongoing incorporation of high-impact learning activities, and sponsorship of co-curricular activities, events, and student leadership organizations. Among its faculty are experts in western U.S. history who have developed and maintained important relationships with local, statewide and regional leaders interested in preserving the rich history of the northwest Nebraska and the High Plains. History faculty play leading roles in assisting CSC students with planning and carrying out important annual events on campus such as the CSC Powwow, Constitution Day, National History Day, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Commemoration. The CSC History is a key supplier of highly qualified middle- and high-school history teachers throughout the CSC service region.

During the past few years, CSC History faculty have worked with College Relations staff members to create new marketing materials for distribution by Admissions recruiters that appeal to potential history majors.. They have also become more visible when CSC hosts the Western Nebraska district's National History Day for middle school and high school students each March (although that has been temporarily curtailed by a pivot to virtual events during the coronavirus pandemic).

The History program's recruitment and retention goals are closely aligned with the institution's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEMP); for example, to retain approximately 70% of students from Year 1 to Year 2. One of the program's most historically (no pun intended) successful strategies for recruitment has been to maintain a strong footprint in first-year courses, hoping to attract students with undeclared majors through dynamic teaching and student-centered mentorship. The CSC History program faculty will continue to explore new avenues for program revitalization throughout the current semester (Spring 2021).