Memorandum of Agreement

External Program Review

History Major

College of Arts and Sciences

Members of the History Department, the CAS Dean and the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs met on May 5, 2016 to review and discuss the program’s review by Dr. Marc Jason Gilbert from Hawaii Pacific University.

Summary Facts:

1. The History Department currently has 5 tenured faculty members: Dr. Kerri Inglis (Chair, Hawai‘i and Pacific History); Dr. Michael Bitter (European History); Dr. Doug Mikkelson (European History); Dr. Yucheng Qin (East Asian History); and Dr. Jeffery Smith (U.S. History). Dr. Smith is currently Interim Director of NERC.

2. The history major consists of five tracks: East Asia, Europe; Hawai‘i, the Pacific, and the United States.

3. The number of History majors has varied from a high of 67 in 10/11 to a low of 47 in 14/15 but on average there have been 58 major in the past 5 years. Likewise SSH has varied from a high of 1782 in 10/11 to a low of 990 in 14/15.

4. Besides teaching its majors, the History Department performs service to the university through it offerings in general education, writing intensive courses and the Hawai‘i-Asia-Pacific graduation requirement. It also provides courses for a career path in elementary through secondary education, Hawaiian Studies, Japanese Studies, Kinesiology & Exercise Science, Pacific Studies, and Gender and Women’s Studies. The department also offers a Public History Certificate and runs a Public History lab in support of two major archival collections (Christensen Photographic Collection and Helene Hale Collection).

External Reviewer’s Recommendations:

1. A search for a tenure-track assistant professor of Hawai‘i and the Pacific, with expertise in World History should be commenced.

2. UH-Hilo Foundation should approach the donor of the endowment that supports the History Department and discuss the desirability of supporting an endowed chair.

3. Consideration of a second course release for the Chair of History Department.

4. Increase the library’s budget for its History-related database.

5. Change the scholarship and faculty development policy so that $1000.00 per year is provided for faculty to use for their development.

6. University should display proactive engagement in resolving longstanding threats to the condition of the History Department.

7. Challenges faced by the History Department should be prioritized over and above reorganization.
Commitments:

The History Department agrees to:

1. Offer more courses in popular areas such as Hawaiian, Pacific Islands, and U.S. History once a replacement faculty position has been hired in Pacific and World History, since the department recognizes that it cannot offer more courses in these specialty areas without a replacement faculty position in this area.

2. Create a plan on how to more effectively attract history majors with more emphasis on careers in public history. Prior to the new General Education requirements, history majors were recruited primarily from the General Education World Cultures requirement. Given that many more courses are now available to satisfy the World Cultures requirement and that the Social Sciences requirement has been reduced from 3 to 2 courses, alternative methods of recruiting history majors need to be pursued, recognizing that societal and even parental pressure, as well as the academically demanding nature of the history major, will always limit the number of students at UH Hilo who are willing to declare history as a major.

3. Continue offering a number of WI courses and supporting majors such as Kinesiology and Gender and Women’s Studies, as long as the administration recognizes that the History Department’s continued offering of WI sections will result in lower course caps and SSH, should these numbers be used for budget allocations and/or determining the need for replacement.

4. Agrees to create a governance document which includes, but is not necessarily limited to, procedures for electing a chair by secret ballot to a fixed term.

Administration agrees to:

1. Provide support for recruitment of history majors. The administration, along with a representative from the UHH History Department, will meet with representatives from HawCC to discuss how their history offerings can be used to recruit more students into history.

2. Consider the immediate replacement of the World Historian faculty member with an expert in Pacific Islands history, and competency in world history, as the only way to allow the department to offer more courses in the high student-demand areas of Hawaiian and Pacific history, as noted in #1 above.

3. If the sixth position is associated with a substantial increase in history majors and increased student numbers in history courses, then consider an additional tenure-track position in the history department.

4. Ensure that the History Department will maintain a tenured, or tenure-track position, in US History, and that filling it, when vacant, will be a priority.
Dr. Michael Bitter
Chair of Social Sciences

Dr. Douglas Mikkelson
Professor of History

Dr. Kerri Inglis
Chair of History

Dr. Yuchen Qin
Associate Professor of History

Dr. Jeffrey Smith
Associate Professor of History

Dr. Susan Brown
Interim Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Dr. Matthew Platz
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs