

## **Department of History**

### **Flagship Agenda for 2004-2010**

#### **Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Department of History is (1) to provide students at all levels with an understanding of the history of the world and particularly the history of the United States; (2) to extend historical knowledge through research and publication; (3) to serve the people of the state of Louisiana by providing a pool of historical expertise upon which the public can draw; and (4) to continue to achieve the fundamental objectives of the Department, which are teaching, research, and service. The Agenda below lays out short-term plans for enhancing the Department's status and attractiveness to prospective graduate students; in the longer term, it is hoped that additional positions can be added to further increase global coverage and deepen emerging areas of concentration.

#### **An Agenda for Growth**

There are three essential new faculty lines requested for 2004: a specialist in West African history, with an emphasis on what had been French West Africa; a specialist in African-American history; and a specialist in the history of the Ottoman Empire. Each of these positions will build upon and broaden areas of historical scholarship and teaching in which the department has traditionally been strong.

The position in West African history will provide the department with expertise long missing in our program. Our hope for the position is that its geographic focus would be on West Africa, from which so much of the slave traffic to the Western Hemisphere, including the American South, originated. Moreover, such a position would increase the department's existing coverage and strength in the history of the Atlantic World and in African-American history. The position would also increase the diversity of the department's undergraduate and graduate course offerings and lend additional strength to the University's program in French and Francophone Studies.

The position in African-American history would be the department's third such position and would permit the department to offer major graduate work in the field of African-American history and especially in one of the most rapidly growing subjects of historical interest and scholarship, 20<sup>th</sup>-century African-American history. Moreover, the position would substantially increase the diversity of the department's course offerings and, very likely, its graduate student body—though such an increase is contingent upon the continuation of the Perkins Fellowships Program, without which it will be almost impossible to compete for African-American students. The position would also contribute to strengthening one of the department's rapidly emerging areas of interest, the history of the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century.

The department will also seek to hire a specialist in Ottoman Empire history/Near Eastern history. Not only is this a field emerging in prominence; it is also a field perfectly

positioned to offer insight both into the development of modern central and southeastern Europe and into the history of empire building in Eurasia. Rulers for centuries of an enormously diverse territory, ranging from the Pamirs to the gates of Vienna, great patrons of the arts and sciences, highly successful participants in the late medieval and early modern 'global' marketplace, and masters of the far-flung 'House of Islam,' the Ottomans hold the key to much of world history from the time of the Mongols to 1918, and the multiple legacies of their dominion are only now becoming clear. Adding a scholar in this field to our faculty would add not only add diversity to our course offerings (as it is, we offer no courses in Middle Eastern, Mediterranean or Islamic history), but also strengthen the preparation of our students in European, British, and intellectual history.

### **The Graduate Program**

A key component of any successful graduate program in history is the quality and scope of its seminar and course offerings. The addition of the faculty lines described above would substantially increase both the breadth and depth of the preparation offered to graduate students in the department's M.A. and Ph.D. degree programs. These additional faculty lines will also facilitate the implementation of the results of the department's ongoing revision of its graduate curricula.

Recent and projected increases in graduate assistantship stipends, as well as the current program of phased-in tuition waivers for assistant-ships, will make the department's support for graduate students more competitive with levels of support offered by departments of history at peer and benchmark institutions. Even with the tuition waiver, our assistantships will remain well below the average level of support reported in the Oklahoma State University study of graduate history programs. The department will seek further increases in funding and more assistantships and fellowships to enhance further its competitiveness

### **The Undergraduate Program**

The increase in the number of faculty members of the department should greatly enhance the quality of the educational experience we all desire for our students. More undergraduate colloquia and upper-level courses for both majors and non-majors, alike, would allow greater choice and flexibility for undergraduates. An increase in the number of faculty members in the department will also make possible a greater number of sections of the department's large survey courses, thereby also affording students more options in constructing course schedules. These additional faculty lines will facilitate the implementation of the results of the department's ongoing revision of its undergraduate curriculum.

The most important change in the undergraduate program in History will be the creation of a concentration in secondary education. Beginning in 2003, all secondary education teachers to be certified must major in a subject area, and History will be the major for those wishing to teach social studies in middle and high schools. This change has

required that History create three new one-hour courses and a capstone seminar, all of which must be offered every regular semester, to serve those in this concentration. The program will be phased in, beginning with the first one-hour course offered in spring 2004, followed by the addition of one new course each semester until the complete program is in place in the fall semester, 2005. The addition of this concentration will require the hiring of an additional full-time, regular faculty member, who will supervise the program, teach the courses, and advise those students enrolled in it. The academic area in history of this faculty member will be negotiable, since his/her main focus will be on the new concentration. Moreover, this position must be in addition to the three positions discussed above and cannot be combined with any of them.

### **Facilities and Support**

Increased numbers of faculty will require additional space for offices and seminar rooms. Transfer of space currently occupied by the Office of Student Aid, when vacated, would provide the department with the space necessary to accommodate such growth.

The department will also apply for funding to cable and equip the third-floor offices of the department's graduate assistants with internet and e-mail access. Such facilities will permit the assistants to stay in touch with the undergraduates whose papers they grade, thereby permitting them to give more individual attention to students in the department's very large survey courses.