History Public History Certificate Assessment Report, 2013-2014 Academic Year

Expected Outcomes: Applied Public History Knowledge
Recognizing that public history is both a scholarly and service-oriented field, students in the certificate program will complete an educational internship experience that requires 140+ hours. Interns will learn how to effectively function in a public history field setting that encourages collaboration and teamwork, apply the theories and skills they have learned to real-world environments, demonstrate an ability to explain the ethical issues and range of knowledge and skills required of public history professionals, and begin building a network with public history professionals.

Assessment methods

Method 1: Internship Sponsor Evaluation
Beginning in Summer 2014, internship sponsors will submit a nine-question Likert format evaluation of interns, and also provide a qualitative report which outlines student strengths and weaknesses. See Appendix A for an example of this form.

Findings:
Public history students at Auburn complete internships in a variety of settings, including museums, historic preservation organizations, and historical organizations. During academic year 2013-2014, two students completed internships. Sponsor reports indicate that both students completed the required number of hours and provided valuable services to the sponsoring organization. One intern assisted with planning and preparation for the Alabama Historical Association Fall Pilgrimage, and her internship sponsor praised her contributions. The assessment tool was not in place at the time of the internships, so no further findings are available.

How did (will) you use findings for improvement?
The internship helps students apply knowledge in public history settings and prepare for work after graduation. More detailed findings, as will be included in the new assessment measure, will allow us to better evaluate the internship program in the future.

Additional comments: None

Method 2: Student Internship Reflective Report
Student interns will provide a reflective report to the public history program officer detailing the student’s work and accomplishments.

Findings:
During academic year 2013-2014, two students enrolled in internships. Both provided reflective reports which highlighted the fact that internships were crucial to a broader understanding of public history. One commented that the internship brought her into contact with professionals in the field which would help with job placement after graduation. Both successfully completed the internship.

How did (will) you use findings for improvement?
The internship helps students apply knowledge in public history settings and prepare for work after graduation. Successful completion of internships allows students to apply public history theory to
actual practice, as evidenced by the qualitative data in the reflective reports. As noted above, students also recognized the linkage between internship participation and job placement. These findings support the fact that internships are an important student learning tool, and we will continue to offer quality internship experiences to students as part of the certificate program.

**Additional comments:** None

**Expected Outcomes: Public History Placement**
Those awarded a graduate a public history certificate who are pursuing a career in public history will be competitive in the job market. Under normal circumstances, graduates of the program find employment in the field within three years of graduation.

**Assessment method: Public History Placement Survey**
Survey the students who earn a graduate certificate in public history and are seeking a job in the field to determine what percentage are successfully employed within three years of completion of degree.

**Findings:**
The Public History Certificate Program had 5 awardees between Summer 2012 and Spring 2014, of which 2 were awarded this academic year; all in Fall of 2013. Generally, students seeking a public history position should be successful within 3 years. A survey conducted in Summer 2014 via Survey Monkey and email found that 80% of the graduates from the last three years were either employed at least part-time in the archival field or continuing their graduate historical study. Of this number, 40% (2) found full or part-time employment in the archives field, 40% (2) were continuing graduate education in a history degree program, and (1) 25% had yet to find employment related to archives. Recent students who completed the certificate are working as in a museum and at a regional college. Two students from the MA program elected to work toward the PhD in history.

**How did (will) you use findings for improvement?**
Public History Certificate students are actively pursuing and acquiring employment in their field of study, as evidenced by the success of our recent graduates. Based on job descriptions, the formal training provided in the Auburn Public History program was an important factor in job acquisition for recent graduates, and continued evaluation of the curriculum is needed to ensure all students get the skills they need to acquire employment in the field.

**Additional comments:** None

**Expected Outcomes: Public History Knowledge**
Graduates of the Public History Certificate Program will exhibit a strong knowledge of theory and the practice of the profession.

**Assessment methods: Public History Knowledge Assessment**
At the current time, no clear method exists to assess student knowledge at the completion of the certificate program. The History Department proposes to develop a multiple choice assessment tool to measure student knowledge in Fall of 2014. The incoming Public History Program Officer will develop this assessment.
**Findings:**
In the 2013-2014 academic year, two students graduated from the Public History Certificate Program. Both students were MA students and passed a thesis defense. While this is not an assessment measure, it does support the fact that our students have an in depth knowledge of the field when they leave our program.

We will institute the assessment exam detailed above in 2015 to better assess student learning outcomes.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**
Other than Pass rates for the thesis defense, which is 100% percent for the two awarded the Public History certificate, no assessment measures were in place this academic year. This will change in the near future as we have an assessment measure in place effective in 2015.

**Additional comments:** None