Outcomes Assessment Report
Public Affairs: Concentration in History

M.A. Public Affairs, Concentration in History

Report Year: _____2019-2020_____

New Mexico Highlands University: Mission Statement (Adopted as part of Strategic Plan, 2016):

New Mexico Highlands University is a public comprehensive university serving our local and global communities. Our mission is to provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to attain an exceptional education by fostering creativity, critical thinking and research in the liberal arts, sciences, and professions within a diverse community.

Mission of the Public Affairs Program:

The Master of Arts in Public Affairs is an interdisciplinary program in the Social Sciences that provides academic training for careers in public and private organizations, both nationally and internationally. The multidisciplinary core curriculum includes courses in political theory, social theory and historical thought, human culture and economic theory. These courses foster a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural environment or public and private organizational policy design and implementation. The program prepares students for professional positions in managerial and leadership roles in government agencies, consulting firms, human services, public-interest organizations and businesses significantly affected by public policies, as well as training them for doctoral studies.

Goals of the Public Affairs Program, History Concentration:

It is our goal to train students for careers in teaching plus various kinds of professional employment. Professional applications of history include careers in public affairs, business, and the private sector where research, communication, and other liberal arts skills are required and appreciated. In addition, the program seeks to prepare students for advanced graduate programs in history and the law.

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose Linkage & Institutional Mission Reference:

The University's commitment to programs focusing on a diverse campus community, especially the rich heritage of regional traditions and cultures.

College/University Goals Supported:

The university aspires to develop broadly literate citizens and leaders, educated in analytical and critical thought and the appreciation of the arts and sciences. University's commitment to programs focusing on a diverse campus community, especially the rich heritage of regional traditions and cultures.

Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes:

1) Students exhibit an understanding and appreciation of a multidisciplinary approach in relation to the work they eventually do and the social environments in which they live.

2) Students will demonstrate understanding and appreciation of the nature of history as a discipline, and the relationship between historiography and historical research.

3) Students will develop skills in reading, research, writing, critical and reflective thought, and communication. The acquisition of these skills will prepare graduates of the program for teaching in secondary schools and community colleges, for research-oriented employment in non-academic and applied settings, and for the additional education necessary to earn a PhD or other additional advanced degree.

4) Students will master the scholarly literature in their chosen field of concentration (History)

Student Learning Outcome 1:

Students exhibit an understanding and appreciation of a multidisciplinary approach to graduate education.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills

1st Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

Students will successfully complete the program's Interdisciplinary Core requirements earning a B or above in the non-history courses:

- **ANTH 651 – Seminar: Concepts of Human Culture (3)**
- **POLS 563 -- Political Economy (3)**
- **POLS 654 -- Seminar: The State (3)**
- **SOC 638 -- Advanced Classical Social Theories (3)**

2nd Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

Students fill out surveys (see attachment 2) at or after their comprehensive exam or defense, including questions asking them to comment on the program's impact on their research, writing, and analytical skills. Criteria for success, majority rating program as excellent or good in all three areas.

Summary of Data:

1)

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	4	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	4	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: Indicates general success in meeting this measure	**100**

Note: Includes approved substitutions for core courses.

2)

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	0	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: not useful given lack of respondents	**0**

Note: No students completed the questionnaire.

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

The students enrolled the History concentration of the Public Affairs program are enjoying success in the core courses that make up an integral part of the Public Affairs program as a whole. A number of substitutions for required courses reflects a lack of history faculty, which has been rectified through the hiring in 2020 of an American historian.

Student Learning Outcome 2:

Students will demonstrate understanding and appreciation of the nature of history as a discipline, and the relationship between historiography and historical research.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills

Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

1) Students will achieve a grade of A or B in Hist/Poli Sci 615: Contemporary Historical Thought. Criterion for success, 75% of students earning A or B.

2) The program's Graduate Coordinator will fill out a portfolio checklist (attachment 1) evaluating a sample of each graduating student's written work, including his or her thesis,

professional paper(s), or comprehensive exam. Criteria for success, rating of good or excellent on Checklist Item Nº 2 (understanding of history, particularly the historical period(s) reflected in their coursework and thesis/professional paper).

Summary of Data:*

1)

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	5	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: not useful given small cohort	**100**

2)

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	0	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: not useful given small cohort	**0**

Note: No Public Affairs/History students completed the program in this academic year.

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

With limited data, there are few concrete conclusions to be reached. The students assessed successfully grasped the fundamentals of history as a discipline, and developed an understanding of the importance of historiographical analysis as an integral part of historical research and writing.

Student Learning Outcome 3:

Students will develop skills in reading, research, writing, critical and reflective thought, and communication. The acquisition of these skills will prepare graduates of the program for teaching in secondary schools and community colleges, for research-oriented employment in non-academic and applied settings, and for the additional education necessary to earn a PhD or other additional advanced degree.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills
- Effective communication skills
- Critical and reflective thinking skills
- Effective Use of Technology

Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

1) Methods in History. Criterion for success, 75% of students earning A or B. Students will achieve a grade of A or B in Hist/Poli Sci 620: Research.

2) Students fill out surveys (see attachment 2) at or after their comprehensive exam or defense, including questions asking them to comment on the program's impact on their research, writing, and analytical skills. Criteria for success, majority rating program as excellent or good in all three areas.

Summary of Data:

1)

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	6	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	1
Total Number of Students Assessed:	7	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: not useful given small cohort. (Note: student not meeting criterion received B-)	**86%**

2)

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	0	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: not useful given small cohort	**0**

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:

The program has been successful in developing students who can conduct historical research, analyze and evaluate data, and present it in coherent ways. There does seem to be a continuing problem in getting students to finish the program in a timely manner.

Student Learning Outcome 4:

Students will master the scholarly literature in their chosen field of concentration (History)

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 4:

- Mastery of content knowledge and skills

Means of Assessment for Outcome 4:

1) Faculty portfolio checklists (attachment 1) ask Graduate Coordinator to evaluate student mastery of the relevant scholarly literature in graduating students' theses/professional papers. Criterion for success, rating of good or excellent on the relevant evaluative measure.

2) Students fill out surveys (see attachment 2) at or after their comprehensive exam or defense, including questions asking them to comment on the program's impact on their understanding of the literature of the field. Criteria for success, majority rating program as excellent or good in this area.

3) **Summary of Data:**

1)

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	0	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: not useful given small cohort	**0**

2)

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	0	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: not useful given small cohort	**0**

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4:

With no data available—no students having completed the program during the assessment period—there are few concrete conclusions to be reached. The program obviously needs to intensify its efforts to recruit students—and move them through the program expeditiously—in order to prosper. As noted in previous reports, a number of students who enrolled in the program in recent years are now approaching the completion of their exit documents. Subsequent reports should contain additional data for assessment and give a clearer view of the prospects of the program.

Utilization of Results:

The faculty of the Public Affairs/History concentration have reviewed our accumulated data about student outcomes, and we continue to discuss concrete steps going forward. The primordial problem facing this concentration of the Public Affairs program is that recruitment efforts over the last several years have yielded relatively little fruit.   A first step in improving the program is to increase student recruitment. The concentration is still fairly new, and we hope that going forward more students interested in historical study will enlist in our history army.
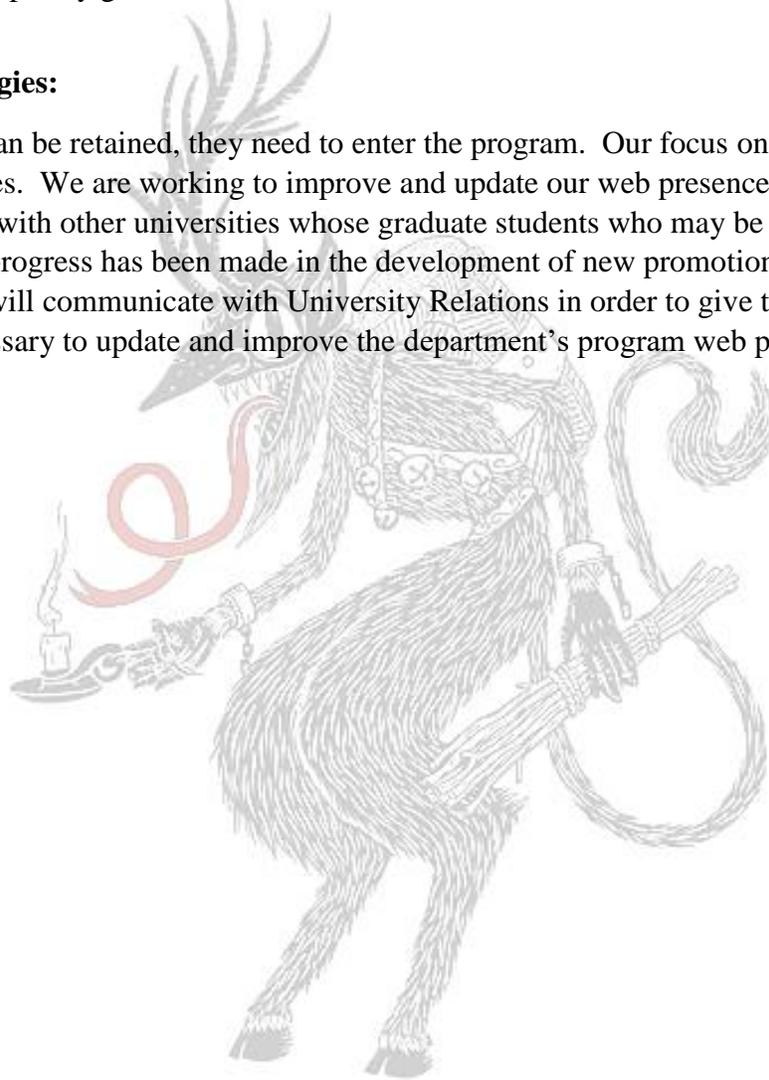
Changes to Program Based on Results:

The data available indicate that our students are meeting our expectations in their coursework. They are performing well in many of the learning outcomes measured by the assessment plan. Nonetheless, the program's greatest problems lie in recruitment and successful completion of the program.   We are currently developing new approaches to aiding students to complete the

program and receive their degrees more quickly. The addition of a new American historian has proven to be a real boost to the program, and he has begun to work with many of our graduate students. With the addition of a new tenure-track historian, we have begun to revitalize the department's undergraduate and graduate programs, particularly the History Concentration of the Public Affairs Program. Another initiative planned for 2021-2022 is a thorough review and revision of the university's history offerings; we hope to systematize and expand upon recent additions to our courses, both undergraduate and graduate. We hope to improve upon our already solid course offerings and ensure that the Public Affairs concentration in History remains relevant to contemporary graduate students.

Retention Strategies:

Before students can be retained, they need to enter the program. Our focus on recruitment and retention continues. We are working to improve and update our web presence and will pursue targeted contacts with other universities whose graduate students who may be interested in our program. Some progress has been made in the development of new promotional materials; program faculty will communicate with University Relations in order to give them the information necessary to update and improve the department's program web pages.

Portfolio Checklist for Outcomes Assessment Public Affairs/History

Student: _____

Semester:_____

Evaluator:_____

Work Evaluated:_____

After reviewing the work being evaluated, assign a number from 1 to 5 for each of the categories below, with 5 signifying "excellent" and 1 signifying "poor."

	Poor		Fair		Excellent
1. Subject matter relevance to program mission	1	2	3	4	5
2. Understanding of history, historiography	1	2	3	4	5
3. Factual accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
4. Organization (chronology, logical progression)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Clarity of expression and argument		1	2	3	4	5
6. Review of literature (completeness, critical thought)	1	2	3	4	5
7. Original contribution to the field	1	2	3	4	5

Total Points:_____

Comments:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Survey of Graduating Students

Public Affairs/History

New Mexico Highlands University
Please help us to evaluate and improve the Public Affairs Program by responding to the
following questions. All responses will remain anonymous. **Note: PLEASE ANSWER
QUESTIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE SHEET.**

1. Name _____ ID N° _____.

2. Program Evaluation (please use reverse side if necessary)

    2.1. Considering what you learned while in the Public Affairs program at
        Highlands, what has been most useful or helpful to you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

    2.2. To what extend did your experience in the Public Affairs Program assist you in:

	Poorly				Extremely Well
Understanding the literature of the discipline	1	2	3	4	5
Critical analysis of written arguments	1	2	3	4	5
Appreciating cultural diversity	1	2	3	4	5
Writing clearly	1	2	3	4	5
Developing the skills necessary for research	1	2	3	4	5

    2.3. Is there something you wish you had learned while at Highlands that was not

included in your Master's program?

_____

_____

2.4. How would you rate the Public Affairs Program in terms of:

	Poor	Fair		Excellent		
Quality of courses offered	1	2	3	4	5	
Variety of courses offered		1	2	3	4	5
Availability of courses offered	1	2	3	4	5	
Accessibility and approachability of faculty	1	2	3	4	5	
Education and qualification of faculty	1	2	3	4	5	
Quality of academic advising	1	2	3	4	5	

2.5. What recommendations would you make concerning the Public Affairs Program at Highlands?

_____

_____

2.6. Looking back, are you pleased you chose to pursue a Master's in Public Affairs? Please explain.

_____

_____

2.7. In your opinion what is the academic quality of:

	Poor	Fair		Excellent	
The Public Affairs Program overall:	1	2	3	4	5
Your specific area of concentration:	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

_____
_____

Please return this questionnaire to Dr. Linder in Douglas Hall Nº 241. Thank you very much for your assistance.

* Please answer these questions only if they are relevant to your experience in the program and concentration.