

Department of History  
Westmont College  
Six-Year Program Review Report  
September 2018

## **Executive Summary**

Why study history and how well are we doing at it? In some fundamental sense, those are the most essential questions animating the report that follows. To put it in other words, over the past six years the history department has sought to refine for ourselves and our students the ways in which we articulate the purposes and desired outcomes of historical study while at the same time evaluating the effectiveness of our work. To consider how well we are actually doing is to ask, are students learning what we desire. Are they becoming the kinds of people we seek to make them? Are the curriculum, teaching methods, mentoring, advising, spending, and much else of the department proving effective? Are they sustainable? Are they enabling both students and faculty to flourish? Our Six-Year Report will provide a status report on these matters, largely based on the following pieces of evidence: annual assessments of the department's program learning outcomes; several college-wide assessments of institutional learning outcomes and General Education student learning outcomes; an alumni survey; and statistical data about our majors, course enrollments, and departmental staffing. It also draws upon departmental meeting minutes, annual program review reports, evidence of faculty and student accomplishments, budget data, and a recently completed college-wide senior survey. Together these materials suggest that the history department continues to succeed at a high level though naturally there are places for improvement and further development.

In reviewing the period from 2012-2018, a number of key developments stand out that will be introduced here and highlighted throughout this report. A dominant characteristic of the department during the past six years has been stability, much of which is attributable to continuity in staffing. The five full-time faculty members have now been together for seven years and four of the five have completed fourteen years together. Not only longevity but high levels of collegiality and cooperation characterize intra-departmental relations. We like one another, we encourage one another, we support one another, we have fun with one another, we challenge one another's ideas, we empathize with one another's struggles, and we share deep commitments to the missions of our department and the college. The result is a welcoming and stimulating work environment that nourishes faculty and students alike. It also helps that all department faculty are highly competent, as evidenced in student evaluations, rank promotions, teaching and research awards, endowed chairs, publications, institutional responsibilities, and roles in the wider academy. We are all mid-career or beyond, seasoned veterans who know what we are doing and remain enthusiastic about its value. Such rootedness allows for a willingness to innovate or go outside the comfort of what we have done before. Since 2012 that has taken a variety of forms. Dr. Heather Keaney has led four off campus programs, three times in Istanbul and last spring in Cairo, each time having to design the semesters anew. Dr. Rick Pointer has led two Westmont in Europe programs (2012 and 2017) and taught revised or new courses in each case. On campus, Keaney's presence has allowed us to expand greatly our course offerings in Middle Eastern and Islamic history. Meanwhile, Dr. Robins anticipates moving beyond the strict bounds of history to team-teach a new course on environmental studies beginning in the fall of 2019. Additionally, the professors who teach HIS 010 Perspectives on World History individually and collectively have undertaken major revisions in their approaches to the course.

Department faculty have contributed substantially to the college-wide assessments of the Thinking Historically, Thinking Globally, and the World History in Christian Perspective General Education requirements, three examples of the significant contributions the department

has made to institutional assessment during this last six-year cycle. The department also continues to make very significant contributions to the actual teaching of General Education courses, as reflected in its high student to faculty ratio (as measured by average class size for department courses compared to other departments). Efforts more specifically focused on our majors have included a substantial revision to our International Studies Track and expanded activities aimed at aiding students in their vocational reflection such as our half-day, off campus department retreats in 2016 and 2017. Like history departments across the country, we saw a dip in our number of majors between 2012 and 2016. But unlike most institutions, we have now seen an overall resurgence in the last two years. Finally, the department re-wrote our mission statement and program learning outcomes early in this six-year cycle, enabling us to identify more precisely what we seek to gain from our historical study and why. Those defining words have guided our assessment work and closing the loop activities.

### **Responses to 2012 PRC Recommendations**

The history department received the response of the Program Review Committee to its 2012 Six-Year Program Review Report on October 31, 2012. That response included many observations, suggestions, and recommendations. Here we will concentrate on describing how the department has responded to the seven recommendations included in the Conclusion section of the PRC's response.

1. "Refine your mission statement . . ." We began discussions of how to revise our mission statement in 2012-2013 and then completed the work in 2013-2014. All department members contributed ideas and language to this effort. In the end, the department finalized its mission statement to read: "The Westmont College History Department is committed to the study of the human past across the world and in many eras. We believe that an understanding of the complexities of history helps students to develop skills relevant for many professions; to grow in empathy and curiosity; and to understand better their own place and calling in the world." The revised statement was posted on our departmental website in the spring of 2014 and remained there until the college undertook an overhaul of all departmental websites in the spring of 2018. The formulation of a History Department Vision statement for 2013-2018 by April 2013 helped to inform our work on the mission statement. The Vision statement identified five foci for our work during this six-year cycle: Pedagogy; Communication and Recruitment; Curriculum; Vocation; and Faculty-Student Research. (See the Mission Statement and the Vision Statement in Appendix A)
2. "Refine your PLOS . . ." During the remainder of 2012-2013, the history department undertook the work of reducing the number of our Program Learning Outcomes to four and developing new language to articulate them. The goal was to make each outcome more precise and measurable. The department succeeded in writing PLOs for Primary Sources, Research, and Vocation but decided to wait until 2015-2016 on Global Awareness/Diversity since the college had announced that it would undertake a college-wide conversation on that Institutional Learning Outcome during that academic year. As it turned out, the Global Awareness ILO assessment took place in 2016-2017. As discussed elsewhere in this report, the department played a major role in that assessment, which included the General Education Committee's simultaneous assessment of the Thinking Globally requirement. To date, however, the department has not formulated the language for its PLO in Global Awareness/ Diversity. This is due in part to the "coverage" already provided in this area by the Global Awareness ILO, the Diversity ILO, and the Student

Learning Outcomes that exist for the General Education requirements in Thinking Globally and World History in Christian Perspective. We nevertheless included questions on our Alumni Survey that addressed Global Awareness and Diversity and will plan to discuss whether to write this Program Learning Outcome early in our next six-year cycle. It is also possible that we will devise one or more new PLOS for assessment during the next six years. Our three existing PLOs are as follows:

**Primary Sources:** Students will be able to read primary sources historically and use them effectively.

**Research:** Students will be able to select an appropriate research topic, and locate, evaluate, and responsibly use primary and secondary sources relevant to their work.

**Vocation:** Students will show evidence of mature reflection on the relationship between their education at Westmont and their vocational pursuits.

3. “Develop a detailed multi-year assessment Action Plan . . .” The department completed this work during the summer of 2013 and submitted its plan to the PRC by the prescribed date of September 2013. The department began implementing the plan that fall. The results of that assessment work are discussed in the Student Learning section of this report.

4. “Review the History curriculum and provide evidence of its cohesiveness.” During 2012-2013, the department developed a Curriculum Map that detailed where in our curriculum each of our PLOS is introduced, developed, and mastered. Our two required methods courses, HIS 099 (formerly HIS 001) and HIS 198 play essential roles in introducing and mastering the PLOS in primary sources, research, and vocation. Although HIS 010 is not part of the major, it is required of all Westmont students and so we can count on all of our majors having had it. It provides an essential introduction to and considerable student development in global awareness and diversity. History majors who choose to take another lower division history offering such as HIS 007 or HIS 008 (the two halves of the U.S. history survey sequence) get considerable practice in reading primary sources historically and using them effectively since these courses meet the Thinking Historically General Education Requirement and its Student Learning Outcome (“Upon completion of this course, students will be able to analyze historical sources with appropriate attention to their various contexts”). The same thing is true of our required course in ancient and medieval civilizations (HIS 009), which also provides a considerable introduction to Global Awareness due its coverage of world history across the globe. Upper division courses assist further student development in source analysis, research, and global awareness/diversity. All the tracks of our major require that students select among a range of upper division courses that ensure they receive this additional training and exposure to the non-Western world. HIS 198 functions as a capstone course for all our majors. Its requirement of a major research paper demands that students exemplify an undergraduate level mastery of research and source analysis skills. The course also includes considerable attention to vocation, both through in-class activities and the one-on-one mentoring students receive from departmental faculty in doing their projects. Our vocation PLO is also being supported by department-wide activities such as alumni panels and department retreats (to be discussed more fully elsewhere in the report). As suggested here, then, the history program provides a clear scaffolding of courses and co-curricular activities from the introductory to the capstone level which enable students to progress appropriately toward a mastery level competency in each of our PLOs.

5. “Collaborate with the GE committee on refining certification criteria and assessment tools for the World History course as well as tools for assessing student learning in the GE courses.” During 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, the history department took leadership roles in assessments of

the Thinking Historically and Thinking Globally General Education requirements. Also during 2016-2017, the department conducted an assessment of the World History in Christian Perspective GE learning outcome. These projects required substantial amounts of history faculty time and effort, one indication that the department has collaborated extensively with the GE committee and the Dean of Educational Effectiveness during this six-year cycle. The results of these assessments are discussed in the Student Learning section of this report. The full reports may be found in Appendix B.

6. “Collaborate with the Department[s] of Philosophy and Religious Studies on identifying areas of overlap or redundancy between Common Context courses and addressing this issue.”

Individual members of the history department have had informal conversations with members of the Philosophy department about their approaches and content for the Introduction to the Liberal Arts component of their Common Context courses. For example, Dr. Robins’s interactions with her Philosophy colleagues have prompted her to emphasize particular aspects of the Liberal Arts in her HIS 010 sections, namely global education and interdisciplinary learning. Overall, some greater clarity has been achieved regarding what HIS 010 and PH 006 cover and seek to do with students.

7. “Act upon your data as much as feasible.” History department closing the loop activities are described elsewhere in this report.

## **Student Learning**

Since our last Six-Year Program Review Report, the history department has engaged in a range of activities to assess student learning. For clarity’s sake, a year-by-year description of our assessment work follows.

During the 2012-2013 year, the department re-wrote its mission statement, wrote three new Program Learning Outcomes, prepared a Vision Statement, and designed our Multi-Year Assessment Plan. All of these actions were essential prerequisites for the work of years 2 through 5 in our six-year cycle. Much of this work has already been described in the previous section on responses to the Program Review Committee’s response to our previous Six-Year Report. The Multi-Year Assessment Plan set out a schedule that called for assessment of one of our four PLOs per year. The one significant alteration we made in that plan was to delay assessment of our Global Awareness/ Diversity Outcome from year 4 to year 5 to coincide with a college-wide assessment of Thinking Globally and the World History in Christian Perspectives requirements.

In 2013-14, the history department set itself the task of assessing our students’ work with primary sources. Our learning outcome was: “Students will be able to read primary sources historically and use them effectively.” We decided to assess the outcome in our senior capstone course, HIS198. Each student was asked to bring a primary source related to their research topic, and then the instructor gave them an hour to produce a thorough analysis of the source. Two professors then assessed their work using a rubric (see Appendix C). We were looking for two things: did students instinctively use the appropriate categories of analysis they had been taught throughout their major, and did their analysis move beyond surface answers to deeper engagement?

The results of the assessment can be found in Appendix B. We were pleased with how many of our students did but worried that more did not meet the level that we would have hoped. One of our aims in our introductory methods course, HIS 099 Foundations of History, is to help students

develop certain reflexes when presented with a primary source, i.e. they will know to ask questions about genre, author, audience etc. That not all the students did this is a concern, as we feel these basic historical skills reflect important critical thinking abilities.

In response, we have continued to work on how best to teach primary source analysis in our foundational HIS 099 course. Meanwhile, two department members have increased the amount of primary source work in their upper division courses substantially (Chapman and Pointer in HIS140, HIS 171, and HIS173). Primary source analysis also remains a core emphasis in our senior seminar, and occurs to some degree in every one of our courses that meets the Thinking Historically General Education requirement. Although our assessment results were disappointing, we felt evolutionary rather than revolutionary change was in order.

In 2013-2014, the department also participated in the college-wide assessment of our Critical Thinking Institutional Learning Outcome. Dr. Pointer was a member of the core team and attended a several-day seminar in Washington, DC to learn how to administer and evaluate the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT). He then participated as co-moderator of the scoring process after the test had been administered at Westmont. Results of the assessment may be found in Appendix B.

In 2014-15, we focused on another core skill that we want our majors to excel at, namely research. Our learning outcome was: “Students will be able to select an appropriate research topic, and locate, evaluate, and responsibly use primary and secondary sources relevant to their work.” Again, we used our senior capstone seminar (HIS 198) as the place to assess student work. We conducted the assessment in concert with library faculty working on the college’s information literacy ILO.

The great majority of our students were competent or proficient in the three areas assessed by the ILO team—100% for source evaluation; 96% for source integration; and 75% for source attribution (data taken from Information Literacy ILO Report provided in Appendix B). These scores suggest that our major succeeds in teaching our students the basics of good research technique. However, we still have work to do, not least in helping students locate sources relevant for their topics, which 30% of students reported finding hard or very hard.

We have continued to refine our work in this area in response to these findings. Assignments have been tweaked in HIS 099 Foundations of History. HIS 198 now includes more intensive guidance from our library liaison on research strategies, including individual assistance. In addition, we have increased our emphasis within the course on students working closely with faculty mentors. Part of what the latter can offer is additional feedback on the quality of sources and tips on source attribution. As another help to students with source attribution, the department has also produced a handy reference guide that is distributed in many of our history courses. It lays out for students the basics of the Chicago style for citing works.

For 2015-2016, as indicated above, the department’s original Multi-Year Assessment Plan called for doing an assessment of our Global Awareness/Diversity Program Learning Outcome. However, we decided to delay that assessment until the following year since the college had announced it would be doing a college-wide assessment of both General Education and Institutional outcomes in those areas in 2016-2017. We decided to coordinate our efforts with

that wider project. For 2015-16, then, the department chose instead to devote sustained attention to our PLO in Vocation. Our indirect assessment methods included devoting much departmental meeting time to discussing this issue and conducting a survey among our majors. Our discussions included very helpful consultations with Celia Howen of the Office of Career Development and Calling. We started by identifying what we already do, which has included regular conversations with advisees and work with Celia's office with students in both HIS 099 and HIS 198. Faculty concluded that what was most necessary was to systematize the good work we are doing and add a couple of new elements. A key new element added right away was hosting a departmental retreat in the spring of 2016. Among other activities at the retreat, Celia worked with students on identifying what they currently value most in a work place and job. The department judged the retreat very successful and determined to continue the practice in future years. From the student surveys at the retreat, we learned that students want more help thinking about vocation. Seven out of seventeen respondents expressed a desire for more information on careers that history majors tend to pursue. Interestingly, even those interested in teaching felt a need for more direction. Many students wanted to see us continue to provide concrete activities, such as the retreat, and assignments to help them think about vocation. Planned activities coming out of these results for the following year included hosting an alumni panel in the fall of 2016, holding another retreat, and continuing to liaison with the office of Career Development and Calling to provide students assistance inside and outside the classroom.

During 2015-2016, the department also played major roles in the assessment of the Thinking Historically General Education requirement. Dr. Pointer was the lead assessment coordinator and other members of the department contributed to the effort, alongside faculty from other departments who teach thinking historically courses. Assessment work employed a number of different instruments: a syllabi review of thinking historically courses; a student survey; revision of Certification Criteria language; revision of Interpretive Statement language; creation of a Student Learning Outcome for Thinking Historically; direct assessment of student learning with respect to using primary sources (fall semester 2015); and direct assessment of student learning with respect to using secondary sources and connecting the past with the present (spring semester 2016). Full results of that work may be found in the General Education Thinking Historically Assessment Executive Summary contained in Appendix B. But a review of the results may be reported here. First of all, a new Student Learning Outcome for Thinking Historically was developed. It reads as follows: Students will be able to analyze historical sources with appropriate attention to their various contexts. In terms of assessment of student learning, during the fall semester, a student survey was administered that had students answer a series of close-ended questions as well as one open-ended question. A total of 128 students participated, all of whom had completed a Thinking Historically class. Close-ended questions drew on the language of the Certification Criteria and presented students with a series of statements with which to agree or disagree (five options along a scale). For example, the first question/statement was "The Thinking Historically course that I have completed helped me to develop awareness and appreciation for the particularities of time and place." On that question, 103 out of the 128 agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and of the rest 20 were neutral. Similar positive results were recorded for the other six close-ended questions, with percentages in the 75-80% range agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. The open-ended portion of the survey asked students to list the course activities (inside and outside the classroom) which were especially conducive to the development of a "thinking historically" mindset. Students cited

dozens of different activities, an implicit endorsement of the varied teaching approaches and assignments faculty teaching in this area employ. Students benefit from the diversity of pedagogical strategies being used in Thinking Historically courses. The most frequent response was engaging with primary sources. All faculty teaching Thinking Historically courses agreed that student interaction with primary sources should be an element in such courses. Also in the fall, sixty-eight students participated in a direct assessment in five Thinking Historically courses offered by four departments – political science, art history, economics and business, and history. The assessment instrument was designed to evaluate students' abilities to analyze primary sources<sup>1</sup>. The assessment was embedded in existing assignments in these courses, four of which were upper division courses. Faculty evaluated student learning using a rubric adapted from one developed by the history department in 2013 for use with its majors. A common prompt for student writing was developed. The results showed that each year in school made a difference in performance. That is, seniors outperformed juniors, juniors outperformed sophomores, etc. This suggests that students are learning to think historically both within specifically designated Thinking Historically courses but also as a product of their overall liberal arts education at Westmont; in other words, they are making progress over time. It is also worth noting that in each category, female students performed somewhat better than male students, and that white students and students of color performed at comparable levels. Faculty teaching Thinking Historically courses were satisfied with these results but determined that they should encourage themselves and colleagues to spend a bit more time assisting students in understanding how and why the genre of a primary source (e.g. diary, memoir, letter, publicity piece, government document, photograph, map, etc.) must be carefully considered when using it. In the spring of 2016, seventy-three students participated in a direct assessment instrument designed to evaluate students' abilities to analyze secondary sources and to make appropriate connections between the past and present. The assessment was once again embedded in existing assignments within the three participating courses, two of which were lower division, and used a rubric developed by participating faculty. The rubric used four levels of student ability (highly developed, developed, emerging, and initial) and evaluated student work with respect to two aspects of analyzing a secondary source: understanding an author's context; and understanding the evolution of historical interpretations or scholarship on the topic. The rubric also evaluated student ability to make effective connections between the past and present. The results indicated that more advanced students in the upper division course performed at substantially higher levels on author's context and connecting past and present, and somewhat higher levels on the evolution of interpretations than lower division students. The main take away from these results was the need to revise the language of two of the Certification Criteria for this GE requirement so that faculty teaching Thinking Historically courses have clearer guidance on what to expect of students.

In 2015-16, the department also participated in the library's assessment of student ability in source evaluation. Specifically, students in Dr. Keaney's HIS 010 were part of the sample group used by the library. The results of that study are contained in the library's 2015-2016 Annual

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<sup>1</sup> Students will be able to read primary sources historically – asking and answering basic questions about historical sources (historical context, author, audience, genre); drawing historical conclusions from the sources and assessing their reliability and usefulness; and reflecting on how their own background shapes their interpretation (Thinking Historically Certification Criterion # 1).



Assessment Report, II A. Program Learning Outcome assessment, which may be found in Appendix B.

During 2016-17, the department continued its focus on our Vocation PLO. Dr. Pointer met with Paul Bradford on two occasions in the fall to discuss ways the Office of Career Development and Calling could continue to partner with the history department in assisting students in vocational development. He also met with Jenny Wood from that office in the spring to discuss a presentation to our students at the department retreat. Out of those meetings and departmental discussions, we decided to host an alumni panel in October to expose students to vocational possibilities post-graduation, to devote a major portion of our spring department retreat to vocational concerns, and to augment our web page alumni section with many more profiles of history alums working in many different fields. We implemented those plans by having: 1. HIS 198 devote a full week of its seminar to vocational development 2. We hosted three recent alumni for a panel discussion. Approximately 25 current history majors attended along with most department faculty. Students expressed great appreciation for the session. 3. The department retreat in March included a presentation by Jenny Wood on job networking skills as well as an interview with recent alum John Detrich about his job searching techniques since graduating in December 2016 based on advice provided by Jenny. 4. We added approximately 15 additional alumni profiles to our web page, thereby expanding the range of vocational possibilities being presented to current and prospective majors.

In 2016-17, the department also assessed the work it does in HIS 010 as part of the General Education curriculum. More specifically, we assessed the World History in Christian Perspective GE learning outcome as part of the college's Global Awareness ILO assessment. Our work supplemented the GE Committee's assessment of Thinking Globally in the same calendar year. We assessed our work in multiple ways, namely reviewing syllabi, direct assessment of student work, indirect assessment of student learning through a focus group, and departmental discussion of the World History learning outcome and certification criteria. Full results of this work may be seen in Appendix B. A summary of our findings follows.

We used indirect assessment to gauge whether students had grown in their ability to “reflect on the importance of world history for the Christian” (Student Learning Outcome), and were pleased with the results. Focus groups with students gave us a window onto how they had become more interested in current affairs, developed in their ability to engage cultural and religious difference, and grown in humility and compassion. We used direct assessment to see whether students were “acquir[ing] literacy in the histories of diverse peoples across the globe” (SLO). We created a test that asked twenty multiple choice questions about world history, which we administered to students at the start and end of the semester. Here, the results were less clear cut, because although the assessment produced some encouraging data points—students understanding the non-Western world better; many fewer students scoring less than 50% on the test; students of color making the greatest improvements—overall the increase in student scores (from 56% to 66%) was disheartening. We discussed a variety of possible reasons for the modest increase. In the end, we decided that our instrument and method were flawed, so although we talked about what we would want our benchmark to be, we were not able to implement it. The department is deeply committed to teaching world history well, and we are now better prepared

to assess this aspect of our work in the future. We would welcome discussion with other colleagues about what it means to teach literacy well in an age of access to instant information.

## **Curriculum Review**

The history department's curriculum reflects strong continuity over the past six years. Only minor changes have been made to course offerings due to high levels of student satisfaction (as verified by the alumni survey), stability in departmental staffing, and perceived coalescence with national curricular trends (as verified by comparisons with programs at peer institutions). We remain persuaded that our scaling/sequencing of lower-division and upper-division courses in the four tracks of the major is effective, particularly in relation to our two core methodological courses, HIS 099 Foundations of History and HIS 198 Senior Research Seminar. Among the minor changes we made are the titles of those two courses, and the numbering of HIS 099. The latter was formerly HIS 001 Introduction to History. The new number and title better communicate the content and challenge of the course to our students. Similarly, the new title of HIS 198 (replacing Historical Method, Bibliography, and Research) better reflects the thrust of that course. In teaching it, we have also trimmed away some content to allow students an even greater focus upon producing their own piece of substantial historical research and writing. Here are some additional curricular changes made in the last six years:

1. The addition of HIS 177 Transnational America – this course is taught each fall by Dr. Rachel Winslow at the Westmont Downtown program and is available to all Westmont students. It is now approved as an option for fulfilling the required 4 upper division units in United States history for the Standard and Graduate School tracks of our major.
2. Regular course offerings every year in Middle Eastern and Islamic history – Dr. Heather Keaney had joined our department shortly before our last six year report was completed. Since then, she has established a strong teaching record both on campus (3 out of each 4 semesters) and abroad (one semester every two years). Her presence in the department has greatly strengthened and expanded our non-Western history offerings, augmenting Dr. Mallampalli's coverage of Asian history and our every-other-year course offering in Latin America (adjunct taught). In this six-year cycle, we were also able to offer a course on Chinese history.
3. During the past six years, the provost office has made an institutional commitment to funding at least one Latin American history course offering every two years. This has allowed us to offer that course on a more predictable pattern.
4. With the assistance of an Innovative Edges Grant, Dr. Mallampalli made substantial changes in his teaching of HIS 010 Perspectives on World History. He re-designed the course with an eye to increasing the agency and initiative of students in the learning process. With the help of a student assistant, he revised the syllabus to become less dependent on a textbook, more varied in its media (using Youtube sites, podcasts, Netflix, etc.), and tailored to the types of conversations appropriate for a thematically organized course.
5. Dr. Chapman offered a new course on Russian History and Culture and twice offered Reacting to the Past honors courses.

Every year the department dedicates meeting time to discussing whether any changes are needed in the design of our major or minor. Since our last six-year report, the International Studies Track was significantly revised to make the requirements for students more straightforward, enlarge the geographic areas of the world open to student concentration (previously limited to Europe and Latin America), and simplify the advising process for faculty. The specific changes included the

following: increasing the number of required upper-division history units from 20 to 24; reducing the foreign language unit requirement from 12 to 8; increasing the required units in related fields from 4 to 8; retaining the requirement of an off-campus semester but eliminating any specific number of courses that that semester program must contribute to the major. We also revised the requirements for the history minor, retaining the 20 unit count but providing more flexibility for students as they select upper division courses that suit their interests.

As noted elsewhere in this report in greater detail, the history department makes a substantial contribution to the college's General Education program through the teaching of HIS 010 Perspectives on World History. Each year, we typically offer 9-10 sections of the course, plus an additional section in Mayterm. They constitute anywhere from a third to almost half of our course offerings in any particular year. Efforts to reduce the class size of these sections to a maximum of 40 have been successful but that of course necessitates that additional sections be taught to accommodate overall student demand. The department and the college need to continue to monitor the number of HIS 010 sections being offered to ensure a balance within individual faculty teaching loads and overall department course offerings.

The department remains satisfied with the unit count of the major. The Standard Track, the choice of a majority of our majors, requires 40 units, making it tied for the second lowest total among all Westmont majors. We have chosen to make the major comparatively low in required units to facilitate students double majoring, minoring, and/or readily participating on off campus programs. We also believe that the low unit count helps attract students to the major. We have had periodic discussions during the past six years regarding the possibility of lowering the required count to 36 most likely through eliminating our required lower division course in pre-modern World History but have chosen not to do so to date.

The department also remains satisfied with the four tracks it has devised as options for our students within the major. With the revisions made to the International Studies Track five years ago, it has begun to attract a more consistent number of students and adds nicely to the other three options. During the last six years, we have had 62 history graduates. Of those, 33 or 53% completed the Standard Track; 14 or 23% completed the Secondary Education Track; 9 or 15% completed the Graduate School Track; and 6 or 10% completed the International Studies Track. At various points, the department has considered adding a Pre-Law track but has chosen against that approach since law schools are very non-specific about what they prefer course-wise from undergraduates.

Our alumni survey results included a number of curricular recommendations including more courses in Native American, Latin American, and African history, as well as more attention to issues of gender and race. Some of those suggestions have already been addressed by the department since our last six-year report through the addition of courses such as HIS 177 Transnational America and HIS 188 Women in the Middle East, and through increased coverage of American Indian history in a range of courses including HIS 007 United States to 1877 and HIS 171 Colonial and Revolutionary America. Our ability to offer more in Latin American and African history depends on departmental funding and the availability of suitable adjuncts.

Comparison with a range of peer institutions – Pepperdine, George Fox, Gordon, Wheaton, Claremont McKenna, and Occidental – revealed that our program is consistent with what other schools are doing. Common features include dividing courses by region and time period, requiring introductory and senior-level research methods courses, offering streamlined majors in terms of unit count with significant flexibility for students, and including a pre-modern course requirement. Perusal of other history department web pages have provided some ideas for improvement of our own, but our ability to implement any changes may be limited by the recent standardization of department web pages at Westmont.

Going forward, we anticipate continued conversations on at least two matters. First, because we have recently deleted a focus on philosophy of history and/or the history of historical writing from our HIS 198 Senior Research Seminar course, we need to discuss whether to offer a seminar on those topics for students interested in pursuing history graduate school. Dr. Chapman has offered such a course in a tutorial setting once during the past six years but no regular class of this nature has been taught. Second, because many of our upper-division courses meet General Education requirements and have no prerequisites, they often attract a number of non-majors or minors. Such students add new perspectives to our courses but also sometimes are less prepared for the work of those courses. The department needs to consider the option of offering more lower-division courses that might serve those populations better. But we cannot do so at the expense of not offering sufficient numbers of upper division courses for our majors.

### **Alumni Reflections**

In the winter of 2017-2018, the history department prepared and distributed a survey to history alumni (that is, Westmont students who graduated with a history major) from 2007-2017. The department used the survey template provided by the Dean of Educational Effectiveness. The survey was sent to 140 persons, of whom 61 responded (a 43% response rate). We received some responses from grads from every year within that eleven year range. The survey consisted of 24 questions. Complete survey results may be found in Appendix D.

Respondents indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the history department and their history degree. Perhaps most striking, in response to item 19 “How effective was teaching in the Department of History?” 98.37% of the alums (in other words, all but one person) rated the department’s teaching at the superior or strong level. More than 93% gave the department a superior or strong rating on the question “How would you say your Westmont experience in History prepared you relative to your peers?” Those results square with the responses to question 8 on the adequacy of their Westmont education (including their history major) for pursuing an advanced degree. Of the 38 respondents who have done that, 74% indicated that they had received excellent preparation and the other 26% rated their preparation as good. Qualitative feedback on question 17 suggests that both majority culture and minority students found a welcoming environment within the history department, in some cases in contrast with less welcoming environments elsewhere at Westmont. Other qualitative responses to the final, open-ended invitation in Question 24 to add whatever comments they chose were also encouraging; we are humbled by the many kind and probably overly generous words of appreciation expressed there by recent alums.

Responses to other questions confirm longstanding claims made to our majors. Let us highlight several of these:

1. We assert that a history major is an excellent liberal arts foundation for pursuing graduate work in many different disciplines and professions. Responses to Question 7 bear out that claim. Our recent alums have done or are doing graduate work in history, law, medicine, education, intercultural studies, computer science, nursing, pharmacology, divinity, social work, and anthropology. If we were to have received responses from the other 69 graduates since 2007, we are very confident that that list would grow even larger to include business, international relations, public policy, and other fields. We know anecdotally from personal contact with many alumni that they have pursued advanced degrees in these other areas.
2. We assert that a history major is a solid liberal arts foundation for pursuing a wide range of vocations and careers. Responses to Questions 9-12 (and especially Question 12) confirm that a Westmont history degree may indeed lead to a great variety of employment areas. Those noted by our alums include digital marketing, tourism, social work, accounting, financial planning, carpentry, medicine, teaching, government service, land use consulting, journalism, global health economics, screenwriting, book publishing, software engineering, archival work, elder care, real estate, information technology, and alumni relations.
3. We assert that the skills and abilities we seek to impart within the major including evaluating sources critically, conducting advanced research, developing greater global awareness, and writing effectively will prove valuable and essential for almost all future work environments students may encounter. Responses to Question 20 indicate the validity of this claim. When asked “How important are the following items for your professional career,” over 90% answered Very Important or Somewhat Important for Reading Primary and Secondary Sources critically; almost 97% said that Research Skills were Very Important or Somewhat Important; over 98% indicated that Writing Skills were Very Important or Somewhat Important; and over 83% answered that Global Awareness is Very Important or Somewhat Important within their professional career. Given the wide range of professions listed in points 1 and 2 above, it is clear to the department that the skills and aptitudes we seek to build within our majors are not only appropriate and relevant but vitally important for our students’ post-graduate pursuits whatever those might be. That conclusion is further supported by the qualitative feedback to Question 16 in which alumni listed most frequently critical thinking and writing skills as those which should be emphasized in history classes.

The Alumni Survey results also provide a number of statistical indicators and recommendations worthy of ongoing departmental attention. For example, responses to Question 6 indicate that almost 40% of our recent alums spent less than four full years at Westmont. The department will want to continue considering the implications of that reality for the unit size of the major, when courses are offered, and prospects for “fitting in” a double major and/or off campus programs. If students are completing their degrees in six or seven semesters, they have fewer semesters to choose from when it comes to doing off campus programs or to take other electives if they are bringing in high numbers of units from advanced placement or community college courses. Responses to Questions 20 and 21 suggest that the department should continue to enhance its emphasis on helping students understand the relationship between their Westmont education and sense of vocation since alums reported feeling much less competent in that area than in the other four “skills” areas. A few alums recommended making more internship opportunities available. This has been an item of periodic conversation within the department and will remain so. One

dimension of addressing this issue is finding ways to make the option of doing an internship more visible to our majors. One solution that several of our majors have pursued in the last two years is doing the Westmont Downtown program (led by historian Rachel Winslow) which includes an internship. Alumni recommendations for more courses on certain regions or themes was noted and responded to in the Curriculum Review portion of this report.

The History Department plans to share some of the results of the Alumni Survey with its current and future students as a source of both information and encouragement. The responses can function as a type of digital “alumni panel” providing information on graduate school and employment possibilities, offering testimonials about the value and importance of the skills being developed and the General Education program, and embodying hope for life after Westmont. In addition, the department will investigate creating a poster on “What Historians Do” to give current students a broader sense of the vocational possibilities for them post-college. We may also make more visible through a poster or other means anecdotes from alums which communicate well the value of their history education.

### **Program Sustainability and Adaptability**

The history department is confident it will continue to be a vital part of Westmont for years to come. History is a discipline long perceived as foundational to a liberal arts education and essential for a mature Christian understanding of God, humanity, and the world. Westmont’s valuing of historical study is illustrated by, among other ways, the placement of World History within the Common Contexts portion of our General Education program and the inclusion of a Thinking Historically requirement within the Common Inquiries section. Those requirements afford all Westmont students good opportunities for discovering what historical study can do to and for them. We are hopeful that our faculty colleagues and the college’s leadership will remain persuaded of the immense value of history within a Christian liberal arts education.

That is not to say that significant challenges don’t face proponents of historical study in today’s world. For most of the past two decades, college and university enrollments in history courses nationwide as well as the number of history majors have declined though some recovery has been recently noted. According to the latest data from the American Historical Association, total undergraduate enrollments in history courses fell 7.7% between 2013-2014 and 2016-2017. However, at baccalaureate colleges, enrollments actually increased between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 by 5%. Many departments self-reported to the organization that after years of “dramatic decline,” their enrollments were stabilizing. The economic recession of 2008 is often cited as a contributing factor to these trends as students and their parents have opted for more overtly career oriented majors. However, the presumption that a history major has little utility and narrow employment possibilities is clearly contradicted by the results of our alumni survey which show history graduates entering a wide array of fields. Meanwhile, the onset of the instant information age has prompted some to imagine that a serious encounter with the past is no longer needed. But on the other hand, globalization has tended to encourage the view that an understanding of national and international histories is vital for functioning well in our ever-increasingly interconnected world. At Westmont, we have been fortunate not to see any appreciable decline in our enrollments or sustained drop in our numbers of majors. The history department continues to have among the highest student: faculty ratios every semester, thanks to high enrollments in all of our lower division courses (HIS 007, HIS 008, HIS 009, and HIS 010)

and reasonable enrollments in our upper division courses. Meanwhile, the same sorts of fluctuations in the number of our majors that characterized the period from 1998 through 2012 (a low of 4, a high of 16, an average of 11) have continued to be the case in the last six years, though the last two years have seen a nice increase. Here are the numbers of our history graduates since then: 2013 = 9; 2014 = 10; 2015 = 8; 2016 = 6; 2017 = 16; 2018 = 13 (Note: these totals are based on when students actually completed their degree, not when they “walked” at graduation). Current projections are for a smaller group of history graduates in 2019 but numbers around 15 again for 2020 and 2021. At any one time, we typically have 25-35 majors declared and other non-declared but interested students in the pipeline. That is a sufficient pool to keep our upper division courses sufficiently populated, especially because those class enrollments are often augmented by non-majors taking those courses as electives or to fulfill a General Education requirement. To illustrate that point, the following table shows the cumulative number of students enrolled in each of our upper division courses over the past six years, and the General Education requirements met by those courses.

COURSE_NAME	History Majors	Other Majors	TOTAL	GE 1	GE 2
HIS-121	40	39	79	TG	TH
HIS-134	16	14	30	WSI	TH
HIS-140	15	7	22		
HIS-141	10	5	15		
HIS-142	26	14	40	TH	
HIS-151	6	147	153	TH	TG
HIS-156	1	4	5	WSI	TH
HIS-160	0	79	79	TH	
HIS-162	14	14	28	TH	
HIS-165	11	42	53	TH	CC
HIS-171	31	18	49	WSI	TH
HIS-173	7	3	10		
HIS-175	30	8	38		
HIS-177	4	18	22	TH	TG
HIS-178	23	130	153	US	
HIS-181	27	22	49	TG	
HIS-182	10	21	31	WSI	TH
HIS-185	22	46	68	TH	TG
HIS-186	19	25	44	TH	
HIS-187	13	3	16		
HIS-188	8	8	16	WSI	TG
HIS-190	1	0	1		
HIS-190SS	1	0	1	SS	
HIS-194	1	0	1		
HIS-195	24	62	86		

HIS-198	58	12	70	IMD	WSI
HIS-199	2	0	2	PP	

(Note: HIS 151 and HIS 160 are not taught by history department faculty)

The history department has engaged in a range of efforts to maintain if not increase our numbers of majors during the past six years. The department website was “freshened” a number of times with new information about faculty, additional alumni profiles and photos, and more inviting language about the value of historical study (the recent change in departmental websites has for better or worse eliminated some of those efforts). More important, the department has continued and enhanced our longstanding efforts to cultivate a sense of comradery and cohesion amongst our majors through outside-the-classroom activities. Each year this has typically included two socials, one or more history-sponsored guest lectures, a departmental chapel service, our senior breakfast, and special luncheons for history award winners. These occasions, along with student cohort experiences in HIS 099 and HIS 198, serve to give our majors a strong sense of identification with their faculty and student peers. In the spring of 2016 we initiated a half-day off campus departmental retreat for history faculty and majors as another vital means of augmenting what we can offer to our students. Another retreat was held in the spring of 2017. No retreat took place in the spring of 2018 mostly because of the many disruptions to the spring schedule caused by the series of campus evacuations. We anticipate resuming the retreats in future years. The intended purposes of the retreats appeared to be well accomplished in both 2016 and 2017 among the 25-30 students who attended: providing opportunities for student-student and student-faculty connections, and providing a venue for sustained instruction in and reflection upon vocation. Future retreats may not always focus on vocation but we have found this format to be a helpful avenue for facilitating our efforts to accomplish our Program Learning Outcome in this area. The department and its majors have also benefitted from donor generosity that has now brought the number of department annual awards to three, alongside the department-funded Outstanding Senior award. The longest standing of these awards is the Paul and Doris Wilt award in historical scholarship, established in 1997 to honor the best research paper of the year. More recently, generous donations from the Blenders Corporation funded a Student Leadership award that has been given out since 2012. It honors a graduating history major (s) who has made particularly distinguished contributions to the department inside and outside the classroom. And then in the last three years, the Ilene Coleman Henry award was established. Since the award is named after a long-time teacher, we have given it to students intending to pursue a career in teaching. These awards are fitting ways for us to honor a number of our graduating seniors each year and may provide some additional incentive for students to consider majoring in history. The department also established a chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honor society, in 2010. Each year we induct a number of qualified history students.

Alongside such awards, a more significant enticement to major in history, we believe, is the high quality of the department’s faculty. The stability and solidity of the department – a characteristic evident to students – is rooted in the comparatively long tenures of all five members of the department at Westmont (here are the starting dates of the department members: Pointer 1994; Robins 1996; Mallampalli 2001; Chapman 2004; Keaney 2011). Perhaps no academic department on campus has had lower turnover in its faculty in the last 15 years. The addition of



Heather Keaney in 2011 served to round out a distinguished group of teacher-scholars, all of whom (including Keaney) have won Teacher of the Year and/or Researcher of the Year awards. Dr. Mallampalli's recent appointment as the next holder (following Pointer) of the Fletcher Jones Foundation Chair in the Social Sciences is another indicator of the faculty's high quality. Continuity in staffing is of course no guarantee of ongoing effectiveness; it can produce instead a kind of staidness. But in this case, we are confident that it is an asset rather than a liability. Four of the department faculty may be described as mid-career. Three of them already have attained the rank of Professor, and all are poised to continue to make outstanding contributions to our students, the church, academia, and the broader world over the next 15-25 years. Department members aspire not only to remain current in their fields but to keep their teaching fresh and energized. A case in point is the recent efforts of professors Chapman, Keaney, and Mallampalli to make substantial revisions to the way they teach HIS 010. Some brief mention need also be made of the high quality of scholarship being produced by department members. Highlights from this six-year cycle include the following: Dr. Robins has published major articles in *Church History*, *European Drama and Performance Studies*, and *French Historical Studies* (forthcoming); Dr. Mallampalli has had his third book published, the second by Cambridge University Press, and is under contract with Oxford University Press for his fourth; Dr. Keaney has published a book with Routledge and is under contract for a second; Dr. Chapman has published an award-winning book with Oxford and a recent article in the *Journal of British Studies*; Dr. Pointer has researched and written a third book that is currently under publication consideration.

The strength of the history department has also been augmented by the outstanding work of our adjunct instructors (see Adjunct Faculty profiles in Appendix F). We have been blessed to have a series of terrific colleagues join us on a temporary or regular basis. Students have responded enthusiastically to their instruction and mentorship. Among them have been Dr. Rachel Winslow, Dr. Monica Orozco, and Dr. Jason Eldred. Winslow has won a Teacher of the Year award for her work at the Westmont Downtown program that includes her teaching of HIS 177 Transnational America, an upper division course available each fall to all Westmont students. She has also had her book published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. Orozco and Eldred have both been honored with Adjunct Teaching Awards in the last three years. The three of them, along with several other fine adjuncts, have expanded the regional and topical range of our course offerings and brought fresh perspectives to our students. For example, Professor Gina Tam taught a course for us on Chinese history several years ago that was very well received by students. We are deeply grateful for their contributions. At the same time, it should be noted that even with the normal rounds of sabbatical leaves and off campus teaching by full-time department faculty, in a typical semester 90-95% of department courses are taught by the full-time faculty. We think this is crucial for building strong relationships with our students (both majors and non-majors) and offering to students what the college promises when recruiting them.

Looking ahead, current staffing levels seem appropriate for the foreseeable future. If overall student enrollment increases, it is likely that the department would need additional staffing to handle the demand for HIS 010 and other General Education courses taught by the department. This might also be the case if the student increases occur as a result of enlarged off campus programs that might draw history department faculty participation. Enlarging the size of HIS 010 sections would not be an attractive option to the department. The process of condensing those

sections from as many as 65 students in the 1990s and early 2000s down to the current cap of 40 has been a significant departmental and college-wide accomplishment. We have no doubt that it has enhanced student learning and faculty sustainability. Any reversal of that process would be greatly disappointing. The department does need to anticipate one change in personnel during the next six-year cycle as Professor Pointer expects to retire. This affords the department the opportunity to bring in a new American historian, presumably at the assistant level, who can add energy, dynamism, and perhaps new areas of expertise. There will be no issues with respect to ongoing leadership in the department. Professors Robins, Mallampalli, and Chapman have all served capably in the chair role already and Professor Keaney seems well poised to assume that role in the near future.

As discussed in the Curriculum Review section, we have conducted a comparison of our program with a range of peer institutions – Pepperdine, George Fox, Gordon, Wheaton, Claremont McKenna, and Occidental – and primarily found strong similarities with what other schools are doing. Of these institutions, only Claremont McKenna is offering more thematically based courses on topics such as nationalism, childhood, or the environment. Its considerably larger department (13 members) makes such options more plausible but our department may wish to consider occasional course offerings of this type as staffing permits. Off campus programs have already provided opportunities for department faculty to teach such courses (e.g. Pointer has taught courses on nationalism on three Europe semesters, and more recently a course on the history of the city). The unit counts and course distribution of these other schools' history majors are very close to ours. Their web sites typically emphasize the wide variety of fields a student could pursue with a history major. We found Pepperdine's site particularly attractive and informative and may seek to incorporate elements of it into our own.

The spring 2018 Senior Survey on General Education suggests that the department continues to have work to do on at least two fronts with respect to HIS 010 Perspectives on World History: a) helping students have appropriate expectations about the difficulty of the course; b) helping students understand why the College requirement includes both HIS 010 and a Thinking Historically course. We are gratified that a high number of seniors identified HIS 010 as among the courses that most impacted them; at the same time, we are challenged to respond to the number of students for whom the course proved too difficult or especially dissatisfying.

The College's interest in requiring a first-year seminar presents another opportunity/challenge for the history department going forward. How if at all the department could adapt existing courses or create new ones to meet the desired outcomes of a first-year seminar will require careful attention by the department in the next few years.

Statistics on the race/ethnicity breakdown of our majors suggests that we continue to draw disproportionately from Westmont's white student population. Of our 60 graduates during the last six years who identified themselves by race or ethnicity, 47 or 78% were white, a figure somewhat higher than the overall percentage of white students at Westmont. The other 13 graduates identified in the following ways: 3 as multiracial; 1 as black; 1 as American Indian; 5 as Latino or Hispanic; and 2 as Asian. The underrepresentation of students of color among the department's majors was identified as a matter of concern in our last six-year report and remains so now. We have no clear explanation for this reality, particularly since our courses include some

of the strongest emphases upon matters of diversity and racial justice within the entire college curriculum. It is also surprising since our full-time faculty include one Asian American and two internationals, and our adjunct faculty have included two Latinas. We will continue to explore ways of attracting more students of color to our major.

Statistics on the gender breakdown of our majors indicates that we draw roughly equal numbers of male and female students; in fact, exactly equal over the last six years: 31 women and 31 men graduates. That suggests that we attract a somewhat higher percentage of male students than is representative of Westmont as a whole. We see this as an asset rather than a liability since the overall numbers indicate that our major is not associated predominantly with one gender or the other. The gender balance among the department's faculty (especially if Dr. Winslow is included) likely helps to draw such a gender-balanced set of students. The places a history degree will take you are open to all, a message we want to communicate to the entire student body.

### **Additional Analysis**

As described in several other sections of this report, the history department contributes very substantially to Westmont's General Education program. Almost all of the courses we offer meet one or more General Education requirements. As a result, almost all Westmont students take one or more courses from our department. This is particularly the case because students must take HIS 010 at Westmont. Exceptions include Liberal Studies majors who take HIS 009 World Civilizations to 1750 (offered by our department once per year) and a few transfer students who bring sufficiently equivalent courses from other Christian colleges. Students may fulfill their Thinking Historically requirement through courses in a range of departments (e.g. history, music, religious studies, art) or on off campus programs. In a typical year, we offer 10-14 courses that fulfill this requirement. Data as of 2016 suggested that approximately 50% of Westmont students fulfill the requirement through on-campus courses taught by the history department. Another small percentage fulfill the requirement through off campus programs (e.g. Westmont in Istanbul/Cairo) led by department faculty. We teach five courses that fulfill the Thinking Globally requirement (on average, 3-4 of them are offered each year); they consistently attract a steady supply of non-majors. Here again off campus programs led by department faculty allow students to meet this requirement (e.g. Westmont in Istanbul/Cairo; Westmont in Europe; fall 2019's Westmont in Asia). HIS 178 California Experience meets the Understanding Society requirement and is offered every spring. During the past six years, 85% of the students enrolled in that course are non-history majors (Liberal Studies majors are required to enroll in that course). Six department courses fulfill the Writing Intensive course requirement.

More substantial data can be provided for the department's contribution to the Thinking Globally requirement, thanks to research conducted by the General Education Committee in 2016-2017, especially Dr. Keaney. Of the 35 Thinking Globally GE courses (hereafter TGGE) in the catalog, the history department offers 5. Only the Religious Studies department offers more with 7. Ten percent of students fulfill the TGGE with a history course. This is misleadingly low for several reasons. The information is from the Registrar and so only records the first TGGE course that fulfilled the TGGE. History TGGE courses are not lower division and so many students who take a history TGGE course do so after they have already fulfilled the TGGE, either because it also counts for a Thinking Historically GE or because they are majors or because they are interested in the subject. Based on survey data students, particularly those majoring in the social sciences or

humanities, frequently take more than one TGGE course. Furthermore, the 10% from the Registrar does not include off campus programs, many of which fulfill TGGE. An additional 8% of students fulfill the TGGE this way. In light of the history department's contribution to off campus programs, this would include more history courses (listed as IS rather than HIS courses in the Registrar's office) as fulfilling the TGGE.

The History Department contributes significantly to the "Global Awareness" ILO of the campus through HIS 010 and the large number of TGGE courses offered. Furthermore, the large number of TGGE courses within the major and the high rate of participation in off campus programs by history majors means that our students have among the most robust exposure to global perspectives of any department on campus and are well equipped to share those perspectives with their peers inside and outside the classroom.

All of these indicators point to the reality that our department serves a wide swath of Westmont's student body. We regularly engage with students of virtually all majors and take seriously our responsibility to enlarge their interest in and understanding of the past. The inclusion of General Education students in our upper-division courses is both an asset and a challenge. Those students often bring insights and questions from their own disciplines that enliven our courses; on the other hand, such students sometimes lack the background content and methodological knowledge for doing well in those courses. The Student Learning section of this report provides results of various assessments conducted by our department and the college as a whole of history courses meeting the World History in Christian Perspective, Thinking Historically, and Thinking Globally requirements.

Our budget of roughly \$12,000 per year for the department remains adequate. As noted in our last Six-Year Report, a growing percentage of that money has gone towards a student departmental assistant. We have been fortunate during these past six years to be served by a string of highly competent teaching assistants who have aided our grading and research. We have also been fortunate to see some reductions in overall printing costs, affording us more funds for hospitality and special events such as our department retreats. During the past six years, the department also benefitted from several special grants from the President's office. In the spring of 2013, the department received a \$5,000 planning grant. For the summers of 2013, 2014, and 2015, the president's office provided \$10,000 per summer to underwrite faculty research. These grants enabled faculty to advance and/or complete major research projects, and in one case, provided funding for a student assistant to accompany a faculty member to England on a research trip.

Advising loads for department faculty remain modest, as indicated by the numbers provided in Appendix E. Typically we are advising prospective and declared history majors along with small numbers of undeclared majors during their first two years at Westmont. With history majors we are committed to providing thorough academic advising but also considerable personal care. None of our majors go away feeling anonymous. Portions of department meetings are often devoted to sharing information and insights about particular students and how we might best aid them in their development. We seek to provide holistic care for our students, offering vocational and spiritual advice alongside discussions of what courses to take, possible off campus programs to explore, how to develop their academic skills, and navigating relationships with other

professors. Department faculty make themselves readily available for one-on-one meetings with students, spending long hours each week in their Deane Hall offices.

History majors participate at comparatively high rates in off campus programs. Our department has encouraged students to do so and in the case of the International Studies Track, requires students to do so. As noted elsewhere in this report, we have endeavored to keep the unit count of all of our tracks in the major as low as possible for among other things, to enable students to participate on off campus programs. Out of our 115 graduates since 2008, approximately 70 participated on at least one off campus semester or Mayterm program. History majors have been especially attracted to programs led by a member of our department. Hence, the Westmont in Istanbul/Cairo semester led by Dr. Keaney has drawn a number of our former and current majors. The fall 2017 Westmont in Europe program led by Dr. Pointer had six history majors on it. Other popular programs include Westmont in Northern Europe and Westmont in Mexico.

History faculty and students work closely with Westmont's professional librarians. In particular, we have fostered strong relationships with our library liaison, Dr. Jana Mullen. She has been especially helpful with students in our two methods courses. HIS 099 introduces students to research, and collaboration with Dr. Mullen is crucial for this course. Over the past six years, the library instruction for this class has changed. Class sessions in the library used to gather the whole class. The level of expertise among our students varied greatly, and some found this class instruction repetitive while others were overwhelmed. Drs. Mullen and Robins have now opted for individual instruction; first-year students typically need more time than more advanced students and start with basic instruction on finding a book in the library and using research databases. Three years ago, Mullen drafted a questionnaire that allows her to match the level of instruction to the student's level of preparation. Students complete the questionnaire early in the semester and schedule a time with her in the first couple of weeks of the semester. They can also come and seek help from Mullen whenever they need it. Furthermore, Mullen has accompanied the class on their visit to the UCSB library and has helped students navigate the library system along with Robins; one year, she even took the students on her own since Robins was sick. She also tried introducing Mullen on the first day of class, but realized this was too much information so early in the semester, and found personal interaction with Mullen more productive. This past semester, it became clear to Robins that she needed to reinforce some of the finer points students had learned from Mullen. In particular, students found it difficult to identify various terms to search for resources, to distinguish clearly between historical secondary sources and sources written by scholars from other disciplines (psychology or ethics in particular), and to develop an effective strategy to search for books (in particular because they could not distinguish between "keyword" and "subject" searches). So far, Dr. Robins has worked individually with students on those issues. But given the number of students facing similar problems who have come to her, she plans on dedicating some time in class to this later in the semester, when students have refined their topic and find that they need to conduct further and more narrowly focused research.

Similar kinds of partnership with Dr. Mullen occur in HIS 198, our senior research seminar. She once again has provided individual oversight on research strategies and accompanied the class to UCSB. Ideally, students are researching at a more sophisticated level in HIS 198 but review of some "research basics" by Mullen has been helpful. As a historian herself, she is very well

positioned to teach students foundational methods and new technologies for conducting their research. In recent years, Mullen has been asked to talk about the use of Zotero and Endnote, two powerful tools for accessing and storing book titles, articles, websites, etc. and categorizing their accumulated data. In addition to receiving from Mullen a formal tutorial in the use of these technologies, each student is required to submit a copy of their research proposal to her and remain in contact with her throughout the semester. The research proposal gives her an idea of what they are looking for and provides the basis for an ongoing conversation about locating the best primary and secondary sources for their projects.

Dr. Mullen has also assisted faculty with the teaching of HIS 010. In fall 2015 Dr. Keaney revamped her HIS 010 assignments. Previously students had done book reviews and research papers based on three historical novels and three historical films. In 2015 she assigned more traditional research assignments in which students would be graded on component pieces of work towards completing their project, such as an annotated bibliography and an outline, in addition to the final project. As this was an ambitious assignment for HIS 010, she worked with Mullen on this assignment. Students had library research guides to start them off with their research and Mullen did two student workshops on integrating sources into their papers. Mullen repeated the integration of sources workshops in 2016-2017. She and other librarians assisted Dr. Chapman's sections of HIS 010 in running reading groups between 2012 and 2017. In short, the collaboration between faculty and the library liaison (and wider library staff) has been very productive for these classes and the department is very thankful for Dr. Mullen's help.

History faculty have also worked closely with Dr. Mullen on several library initiated assessment activities. Those activities are described in the Student Learning section of this report.

The history department has had significant interaction with the Art department and specifically its Art History majors during the past six years. Over that span, five Art History majors have taken HIS 198 while two have taken HIS 099. In 2017, Dr. Lisa DeBoer changed the major requirements for art history to *either* HIS 099 or HIS 198 from HIS 198. Students who think they want to go to graduate school, and have the capacity are encouraged to take HIS 198. Weaker students or students with no interest in graduate school are steered toward HIS 099. In the last years, two students did not heed DeBoer's advice to take HIS 099 as opposed to HIS 198. Both really felt that they wanted to continue in school, and chose HIS 198 for those reasons, and struggled with the class. While they had each identified a reasonable topic, they kept sliding away from historical ways of addressing it to normative ways of discussing it. Why they struggled remains unclear; one of those students had a particularly difficult semester. They also did not work with DeBoer as extensively as students usually do, which was to their detriment. It seems that two elements could be enough to address the problem: a) emphasizing to students the need to work closely with DeBoer throughout the semester and not presenting that oversight as optional; and b) increasing the communication between DeBoer and the faculty teaching HIS 198, to hear what seems to be going well and where students need help. Of course, HIS 099 will continue to be an option for Art History students who wish to take it.

Early in this six year cycle, the excellent program of faculty-student research in the Natural and Behavioral Sciences led our department to wonder whether we might do something similar. There are significant obstacles to this: the core of our scholarship is reading sources and writing,

and it is difficult to incorporate undergraduate students into these tasks. To our knowledge, there are few good examples of such collaboration in the country. When one of us presented a paper at a professional conference with an undergraduate, he was met with surprise bordering on incredulity! Nevertheless, the department has sought to integrate students into our research programs where possible. We used a grant from President Beebe to allow one student, Rachel Hatcher to travel to England with Alister Chapman in 2013. Hatcher helped Chapman with research in archives, and it was this work that they presented together at a meeting of the Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies in 2014. This venture was a success, but it would not have been possible without this extraordinary grant from the president, i.e. the trial project was not sustainable. We have continued to involve students in our research in more modest ways that are nevertheless meaningful. Each year, we hire a student to work for our department, and although most of their hours are spent grading we do ask for their help with various scholarly projects. Over the past six years, this has included indexing, reading of primary sources, proof reading, source location, and reading draft chapters. For students considering graduate school in history, working for our department exposes them to the sort of tasks that occupy professional historians, and it has served as a useful way of “testing the waters” for many over the years.

Department faculty members regularly introduce new ways of helping our students understand the relationship between Christian faith and learning. Here are a number of examples of what is being done. In HIS 099, Dr. Robins is now assigning John Fea’s *Why Study History?* A colleague at Messiah College, he explores a wide number of essential questions relating to the study of history and reflects on them from a Christian perspective. Students engage in a series of discussions of the book. Similarly, Dr. Pointer has used a new book in HIS 007 United States to 1877 to aid students in learning what it means to think historically and how Christians might interact effectively with the past. The book is *The First Thanksgiving: What the Real Story tells us about Loving God and Learning from History*, written by Tracy McKenzie, a professor of history at Wheaton College. In Dr. Keaney’s HIS 010 course, every few weeks they take an extended time (20-30 minutes) to read together out loud an excerpt from *Devotional Classics* (edited by Richard Foster) from an influential Christian figure from the time period they are covering (such as John of the Cross or Pascal). They then discuss together what from the excerpt illustrates the timeless truths of Christianity and shared concerns of Christian discipleship through the generations on the one hand and on the other what strikes them as time and culture specific. She then asks what this means for us in terms of confidence in our faith and humility in our understanding and practice. Some students have reflected back to Keaney that these conversations have been a highlight of the course for them. In HIS 182, the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict course, Keaney begins each class period with a short centering prayer, punctuated by moments of silence: “God thank you for Minds that can grapple with the complexity of the I-P conflict, give us compassionate Hearts towards those who suffer from this ongoing conflict, and willing Hands to do what we can to be agents of Your peace, justice, and Reconciliation in the world.” At the end of the semester students read a chapter from *Reconciling All Things* by Emanuel Katongole and Chris Rice as the basis of a class dedicated to discussing what Christ and the Church have to offer in terms of Reconciliation in the I-P conflict. In Dr. Mallampalli’s HIS 010 sections, each of four readings in the course are designed to promote Christian reflection on various topics. This includes the themes of a) humiliation, estrangement and rage, and b) the ethical parameters of modern science in Mary Shelly’s *Frankenstein*. They also examine the ideas of Gandhi and Bonhoeffer from a Christian perspective, which requires

students to directly engage ideas from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount. Students compare and contrast pacifistic ideas of these men with the Christian realism of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. In HIS 186, Mallampalli encourages students to critically engage ideas found in texts such as Valmiki's *Ramayana* and Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* from a Christian perspective. They also discuss the missionary movement in India and weigh the merits of various kinds of approaches missionaries have adopted in attempting to bring the Gospel to India. They also take up the issue of untouchability and the unique plight of Dalits in contemporary India, examining the work of Dalit theologians and reflecting on the impact of Christian institutions in India upon the poor and oppressed. The theme of missions is also taken up in HIS 185 (Imperialism and Independence), where students reflect on the relationship between Christian missions and colonialism, both in theory and in terms of their reading of history. Over the past two years, Mallampalli has also have made environmental issues a more salient feature of all of his courses. Amitav Ghosh's book, *The Great Derangement*, a series of essays on climate change denial, has proven to be a great catalyst for discussion of God's creation, humanity's stewardship of it, and the role of academic disciplines in subtly advancing a mindset of denial concerning the warming of the earth.

### **Looking Forward: Changes and Questions**

As indicated at a number of points and in a number of ways throughout this report, the history department believes it is well positioned to continue its excellent work for Westmont, the academy, the church, and the wider world. Some of that work is accomplished directly through faculty teaching, scholarship, and institutional service; some of it is accomplished through the graduates whose lives and work reflect the influence of department faculty. Looking ahead, the department sees possibilities for even greater effectiveness.

The revised Mission Statement of the department, formulated in 2013, captures well our purposes and desired outcomes for students. The Vision Statement we constructed in 2013-2014 also remains a helpful document in guiding department priorities, though it will be important for the department to re-visit that document in the next year to see what if any adjustments we wish to make for our next six-year cycle. Chances are the major areas of focus identified in the Vision Statement may remain the same but specific points of emphasis may need to be updated.

As the department has discussed its near-term future, most of the issues raised have to do with refining pedagogical approaches to enhance student learning. For clarity's sake, it will be useful to divide the following discussion into three sections, the first addressing General Education courses, the second focusing on our major, and the third concerning assessment issues. Embedded within these sections are possible Key Questions for our next review cycle.

#### **HIS 010:**

Given the results of the HIS 010 assessment done in 2016-2017, it seems overall that the department needs to be more successful in helping students acquire a baseline knowledge of main locations and movements in the course. It seems a shift needs to occur in either defining the goals of the course, or teaching it (the two are obviously related). Here are some possibilities: it seems that further conversations could occur within the department to reconsider (and perhaps shorten to the absolutely essential) the key movements we need our students to understand to function effectively in the world (see list in the last report). Perhaps the department could agree



on key terms such as "imperialism," or "industrial revolution" even if the approach to those movements differs from one class to another. Another possibility would be to consider team-teaching the lecture portions of the course and having discussion sections led by individual faculty. This approach helps to standardize what students hear in lecture but has the major disadvantage of requiring very large lecture sections to accommodate the nearly 400 students who enroll in the course each year. On a different front, after our conversations with the Philosophy department, it became clear that particular elements of the Introduction to the Liberal Arts were more central to the Philosophy classes (for instance, critical thinking). Without omitting entirely critical thinking from our teaching, should we try and focus on the aspects of the Liberal Arts that are more tangential to the Philosophy class, such as "global awareness" and "interdisciplinary thinking"? On the other hand, students might be well served by hearing similar ideas more than once. It would be helpful for the department to have conversations and decide:

1. As a starting point, whether to have further conversations with the Philosophy department. This might help us clarify our particular outcomes for our students.
2. What the current practices of different professors are for introducing the Liberal Arts.
3. Whether or not "global" and "interdisciplinary" are indeed the themes HIS 010 needs to focus on.
4. If this is the case, what particular global issues does the department want to focus on and what exactly is it expecting students to gain from the course?
  - Is the goal to come to understand global systems more thoroughly (in which case, an exploration of environmental history could be a topic, although there are clearly others that could work).
  - What exactly does the department understand its role to be in introducing students to interdisciplinary aspects of the liberal arts? It seems most department members teaching this class work across multiple disciplines, at least implicitly. Should this be more explicit in the course? This would certainly allow for great flexibility as each professor could consider particular disciplines to provide examples (political science or sociology for some, philosophy, literature, or art for others).

#### Other General Education Courses:

Recent General Education assessments of Thinking Historically, Thinking Globally, and Understanding Society courses have provided the department with helpful information on our levels of effectiveness in these areas. Those efforts have refined the Student Learning Outcomes desired by the college and given some indication of the nature of student learning within these GE categories. Overall, the department is satisfied with the levels of student learning being accomplished but there is always room for improvement. Potential questions for the department to address include:

1. Would it be helpful to offer one or two additional lower division courses that meet the Thinking Historically requirement? Would that enhance the percentage of students who complete this requirement within our department, particularly at the lower division level? Would such a move benefit or hurt our upper division courses? Do we have the staffing for such additional courses? Might the successful case of Dr. Chapman's two experiences of teaching HIS 047H Reacting to the Past be worth replicating?
2. If a first year seminar is adopted by the college as a requirement for students, which existing courses and what new courses might be "natural fits" for such a format and learning experience?

What consequences for our major course offerings would there be if we need to devote more staffing to such courses? Could those courses give us opportunity to recruit additional majors?

3. Beyond any specific General Education courses, the department wonders how to help our student body be more critical of sources of information, particularly as they relate to technology. We seem to be doing a fair job with our majors, but do we have a responsibility to our student body at large? In part, it seems like the issue is philosophically related to questions surrounding truth (how do we pursue truth? What are the criteria for a cogent argument?). Dr. Chapman is currently adapting his HIS 010 assignments to address these types of questions. Most likely, the Philosophy and Religious Studies departments are engaged in challenging students in this area within their Common Contexts courses, but how could our department connect the work of philosophers and theologians to contemporary issues (e.g. immigration, the environment, globalization)? If professors address this issue in class, how do they do so in an effective way? What themes have they chosen and what particular assignments do they use?

#### The history major:

Here are a handful of issues/concerns the department sees itself wanting to address in the years to come relating to the major:

1. Some department faculty members have felt constrained by their courses' titles. They wish to think about labelling their classes so that the titles flag the ways in which the classes are connected to contemporary issues or better reflect the course content and themes.
2. The history department is wondering how the current website reflects the department's mission. For instance, on our department page, might we change the initial questions concerning history? How much freedom do we have to change the content/wording?
3. How do we continue to pursue deeper conversations on faith and learning with our history students? When and how is it best to introduce and develop those conversations?
4. How do we attract a more racially and ethnically diverse group of majors, some of whom might be looking for histories that are more reflective of their backgrounds? Should this be central in our future search for an American historian? How might we partner more with Jason Cha and student organizations concerned with diversity issues?
5. In the past six years, our department has added some awards for its graduating seniors. How might the department publicize more fully the function of these awards? How exactly do we make students aware that they exist? How could we make them a greater part of the culture of the department?

#### Assessment:

1. One unfinished piece of business from the past six years is writing our Program Learning Outcome for Global Awareness/Diversity. Departmental conversations about what outcome we want for our students in this area have reflected some of the same ambiguities and uncertainties as wider campus conversations. Might it be wise to divide these two items and recognize that our desires for students might be better articulated one at a time? Should one or both of these be incorporated into our next round of PLOs?
2. On that score, there are a number of outcomes the department could consider for assessment within the major during the next six-year cycle. At the moment, we are inclined to think that a focus more narrowly on research to figure out more clearly how students come to master (or not) research skills may be wise. That focus also relates to the questions of discerning truth identified

above. But no decisions on our assessment plan will occur until later in the 2018-2019 academic year as we develop our Action Plan.