History Action Plan
Executive Summary

Building on its recognized strengths as attested to by its self study and the external review committee’s report, the Department of History will propel its programs in Heritage Preservation/Public History and World History into the forefront of national programs while continuing to expand the well-regarded program in U.S. history.

The external review of the history department identified Heritage Preservation and Public History (HPP) as a core strength that “contributed to the University’s national reputation” and an area for high-impact growth. Numerous awards and other professional recognition attest to the core faculty’s extensive expertise and prominence, while HPP student work has also been recognized for excellence. A survey of the 147 public history programs identified by the National Council on Public History indicates that the HPP is distinctive in its interdisciplinary and international approach. The Department’s goal is to strengthen the HPP by expanding faculty expertise in Economic Development, Digital Media, and Urban Environment, and building on the program’s existing urban, public, and community-based orientations, thereby moving from a position of local and regional to national significance through the goals detailed in the report.

The Department will further achieve a national leadership position in World History. The external review panel lauded our “national reputation in world history.” It singled out three areas of strength: the wide range and talent of our faculty, an established and innovative curriculum, and our graduate program. The Department’s goals for the Program in World History and Cultures detailed in the report provide a reasoned path for genuine national distinction that rests on a solid foundation. In support of the Program’s push to preeminence, the department seeks the addition of three senior historians to increase the global reach of our crosscultural, transnational, and transregional program and to provide additional expertise in critical areas of world historical scholarship: Europe and the World, West Africa and the Atlantic World, and Human Rights in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts.

The Action Plan details specific goals based on its ongoing assessment of both its undergraduate and graduate instructional programs. It recognizes the need to maintain an appropriate balance of Americanists to other areas to train these students properly and in a timely manner, and to assure that that doctoral students are prepared to compete successfully for tenure track positions.

Resource Investment

With respect to the long term future of the History Department at Georgia State University, we must note that a top flight history department requires a certain size. To achieve the research and pedagogical goals detailed in the Action Plan and to obtain true national status, the Department must expand significantly, in part by converting visiting and lecturer positions to tenure-track lines. The immediate staffing plan of the department, in line with the research and instructional goals presented in the Action Plan, is more modest. The department seeks through resources obtained via internal redirection (as made possible by, for example, retirements), successful competition for hiring funds through the Second Century Initiative, and funding to cover additional courses in conjunction with the growth of the university to hire three positions in Heritage Preservation/Public History and three positions in World History. As detailed in the Action Plan, these strategic investments will strengthen the Program in Heritage Preservation and Public History to move it from a position of local and regional to national significance and permit the Program in World History and Cultures to increase the its global reach and to provide additional expertise in critical areas of world historical scholarship thereby positioning the program at the forefront of World History in the country.