We Object to the Discontinuation of the Master of Arts in History Degree Program
Fayetteville State University
May 31, 2005

Established in 1989, the Master of Arts in History is one of the oldest graduate programs in liberal arts at FSU. Consistent in its productivity, the History Graduate Program has produced an average of four graduates per year during its sixteen year existence. Moreover, it has a sizable enrollment of students who take courses for teacher certification, the Master of Arts in Teaching, the Master of Education, and for elective graduate credits. The productivity of the M. A. in History and the attached document show the latest numbers in the program and justifications for retaining this program. This program has proven to be vital to our students, the public schools, and the status level of FSU as a Comprehensive Level I regional university. The Master of Arts in History program should be maintained.

I. Comparable Productivity of MA Programs

A. The productivity of the M.A. in History program is comparable to all of the other master’s level programs in sociology, political science, English and psychology.

B. The M.A. in History program is offered in the evenings, weekends, and online because the clientele for these courses have full-time jobs, often teaching jobs. Their day-time jobs preclude them from taking more than one or two courses each semester. With part-time matriculation, program completion usually takes two to three years.

C. The M.A. in History draws from a local, fairly small population of non-traditional students with few students coming from the local military reservations; the other Masters have the same limits.

D. Elimination of the M.A. in History might begin a domino effect for other masters in the liberal arts that have similar productivity rates; the disastrous results would damage the academic reputation of Fayetteville State University and its status as a Comprehensive Level I regional university.

II. Continued Need for MA in History

A. The M.A. in History is program is necessary for the regional needs of our service area. History is the centerpiece of secondary social studies in North Carolina. The M.A. in History serves FSU’s constituents well in the local and regional secondary and middle grades through professional development, certificate renewal and irregular route certification. It also prepares our students for study at the doctoral level at other institutions.

B. This program has two tracks, United States and Latin American history. Many of these courses are taught online, and the appeal to distant learners is surpassing the enrollment for regular brick and mortar classes.
C. Members of the faculty in the graduate program provide workshops, demonstrations, and other services in the public schools and for state education committees.

D. Deletion of this program could have erosive results on undergraduate history programs for students who contemplate getting their B.A. or B.S. and M.A. in history from FSU.

III Ways to Strengthen Program Productivity

A. Funds should be directed specifically to the M.A. in History for fellowships, brochures, and teaching assistants which should help to increase its productivity. The major success of the Master in School Administration Program is owed to the Principal’s Fellows program which provides $20,000 per year to students for full time study.

B. The History discipline is now housed in a multi-disciplinary department which inhibits the capacity of History to make important planning and recruitment decisions; a disciplinary department would avert such problems.

C. The current curricular offerings need self-study and major change to make the program more attractive to potential students of history throughout the region. This includes more on-line courses, expanded fields of study, and a full-time program plan.

Conclusions

The Master of Arts in History has proven to be one of the most productive graduate programs in the Liberal Arts. This program is vital to our mission as a teacher education institution, a regional university, and as a provider of services to the region. We request continuation of the Master of Arts in History.