Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department/Program: History/Core

1) Have formal learning outcomes for the department’s Core courses been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

The History Department has developed two learning outcomes salient to all History Core courses, regardless of subject matter. Through the History Core, students will know how to:
   1) use primary sources to interpret the past
   2) explain change over time

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department’s expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

The learning outcomes are available on the History Department Core website. In addition, the learning outcomes are printed in the syllabi for all History Core courses.

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

Direct assessment of the learning outcomes is undertaken by instructors and teaching assistants using a quantitative scale. The assessment rubric consists of two questions, each of which are rated on a five-point scale.
   1) Please rate the student’s ability to make meaningful connections between a variety of primary sources.
   2) Please rate the student’s ability to produce a written or verbal interpretive narrative of historical events.

Data was collected via Canvas (Boston College’s web-based learning management system) based on a final assignment (final exam, paper, etc.) of the instructor’s choice. Data is analyzed course by course in order to generate mean, mode and standard deviation.

Students also provided indirect assessment via an online questionnaire.

4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

Initial data analysis for direct assessment is carried out by the Center for Teaching Excellence at Boston College. The Core committee in consultation with the department chair undertakes secondary analysis and interpretation of direct assessment data and conducts the analysis of indirect assessment data. Data and conclusions are then shared with the History faculty for consideration and debate.