

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements**  
**Medieval and Byzantine Studies Program**  
**B.A. Program in Medieval and Byzantine Studies**

**AY 2013-2014**

**Key Assessment Findings**

Graduating seniors in Medieval and Byzantine Studies are required to complete a Senior Thesis based on an interdisciplinary research project developed over the course of two semesters as part of the course sequence *MDST 496A: Senior Tutorial* and *MDST 496B: Senior Thesis*. This senior thesis fulfills the comprehensive examination requirement. The choice of a research topic, the research itself, and the crafting of a research paper of significant length are done under the close supervision of a faculty member (area advisor) and it is preceded by the completion of relevant coursework in the field. The area advisor is chosen for his or her expertise in the relevant area of study. The choice of the research project must be approved by the Director or Undergraduate Advisor of the Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies. The completed thesis is to be submitted in the spring semester of senior year (as part of MDST 496B) and it is read and evaluated by the area advisor and a second faculty member. Both faculty members confer in assessing the success of the thesis in meeting the goals outlined in the student learning assessment rubrics.

In Academic Year 2013-2014 the MBS program did not graduate any majors. (We did graduate six minors who did not need to take comprehensive exams or equivalents).

Due to the limited data set, no numerical assessment data is attached to this report.

**Curricular Improvements**

While MBS has never had a large number of undergraduate majors and minors (usually 1-2 majors and 3-6 minors per class), the quality of students has usually been very high. Our graduates have gone on to prestigious MA and PhD programs in Medieval Studies, English, History, Philosophy, and Law. In recent years we saw a significant increase in the enrollment of MBS minors, especially among Honors students. The number of majors remains low but consistent, creating a total of 3-5 undergraduate MBS major in total at any given time.

Our unique interdisciplinary gateway course, *MDST 201: Medieval Pathways*, has been significantly redesigned in 2013-14 to include more field trips to CUA special collections and Washington area museums and research institutions. The course continues to be team-taught by MBS faculty members and features a series of invited lectures by CUA faculty in the field of

Medieval Studies. The course continues to attract students from a variety of academic fields, either as a gateway to the MBS major or minor or as an elective course.

We make continued effort to support undergraduate advancement and involvement in research by inviting advanced undergraduate students to present at our annual on-campus graduate conference. This is designed to give students recognition for the effort invested in their senior theses and other projects, to gain valuable feedback on their work, and to further strengthen a community of young scholars.

Submitted by Dr. Lilla Kopár, Director of the Center for Medieval and Byzantine Studies