
THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

A Letter From The President

DECEMBER 20, 2016

Dear Online Course Students -

As the year is coming to a close and the new semester will begin shortly thereafter, I want to take a moment to address all of the recent changes to our online courses program with Adams State University. We here at the Gilder Lehrman Institute are very sympathetic to the fact that these changes were rather sudden and cause for concern and confusion for some of you.

Please note that our Director, Dr. Megan Elias, has been in constant contact with Adams State University. She has been working tirelessly to advocate on behalf of our students and to share information with you as soon as it is available (which has not been as fast as we would like). I can also tell you that all of the recent changes were dictated to us by the leadership of Adams State University -- they were and are all beyond our control. The only alternative we would have had was to withdraw from the program altogether, which would have left our students without the professors and courses we bring to it.

I want to assure you that our focus is entirely on serving the teachers enrolled in this program in the most helpful ways, and I hope the following list clarifies any lingering questions or concerns you may have. All of this information has already been shared with you through a series of emails and website messages, but we hope this letter further demonstrates our commitment to the program and to you, our students.

Adams States Accreditation Probation: the best place to learn about ASU's Accreditation Probation is directly on their website → <http://www.adams.edu/hlc/probation-faq.php.php>. On the site, ASU provides their plan for the unlikely event that their accreditation is revoked, and they state they are confident the probationary status will be removed when the final decision is made in February 2018. Per the ASU statement, "In the extremely unlikely event that HLC withdraws accreditation from an institution, the institution is typically required to prepare a teach-out plan and as needed, teach-out agreements with other institutions that will enable students to graduate from an accredited institution, despite the withdrawal of accreditation. Institutions also typically provide transfer assistance to students who do not avail themselves of teach-out arrangements."

students into its program without verifying that they had earned their BA. Because this was not in compliance with the university's application regulations for other programs, they have now made the submission of a transcript mandatory, which we believe to be good practice. Continuing students are also required to submit a letter of intent and new students must submit two letters of recommendation. These requirements are in keeping with University application procedures and we stand behind the practice because it ensures that the right students are entering the program.

Name of the degree: the change (from an "MA in American History" to an "MA in Humanities: American History Emphasis") was a unilateral decision made by ASU. We did not take the issue lightly and we pushed back on behalf of our students; however, we are unable to change ASU's decision. Happily, many students have since consulted with their schools, districts, and local community colleges and learned that the new name of the degree will not actually prevent them from teaching the courses they want to teach. We encourage you to have a discussion with your school leaders and to highlight that the courses on your transcript will be history courses with the same rich content.

Tuition: our courses are by far the least expensive online graduate courses in history available, and we have been working very hard to keep the cost low year after year. However, an increase in tuition may now be necessary and we informed everyone of the situation as soon as it became a possibility. There is no further information available at this time, however we will continue to fight to keep the tuition low and we will share more details as soon as they are available. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

Historiography: adding this course as a requirement of the degree was another unilateral decision made by ASU this year. However, it happens to be a decision we endorse. Only those students pursuing the MA need to take the course, and Historiography is a standard requirement of MA programs in history. The course also provides excellent preparation for writing the MA thesis so it is a welcome change that we think will benefit our degree-bound students. Please note: there is also a waiver of this requirement available to students who have earned at least 21 credits by the end of the Fall 2016 semester.

Registration: this process is handled entirely by ASU. Links and instructions were not provided to GLI until the morning of Monday 12/12, despite earlier messages from ASU that the links might be open the previous week. The delay was unfortunate and we shared the registration information as soon as we received it from ASU. Another issue with registration was due to an internal error with ASU's system - apparently, some students were able to access an unofficial point of entry into the registration system over the weekend prior to 12/12th. We regret this happened and as soon as we learned of the situation, we notified ASU and they sent official instructions to launch registration for all students. We have reiterated to ASU that it is crucial for registration to open as early as possible and for everyone to be able to register at the same time, after the official registration notice has gone out. We are hopeful this will be the model moving forward.

Auditing: We regret that in the Spring semester we will not be able to offer auditing for our courses. Students can still take our **self-paced courses**, which feature materials from our Online

Communications: at every step along the way, we have been communicating with ASU and sharing information with you about changes, as soon as learn about them. We would prefer to be able to share all relevant information at one time, but sometimes we are not able to do this simply because we ourselves receive information from ASU in bits and pieces. We have been working very hard to answer all your questions and communicate information on a timely basis. And for those questions we cannot answer, given ASU's direct hand in managing things like registration, we have been diligently forwarding along your emails and phone calls to them.

Dr. Elias and I are meeting in person with the leadership of Adams State University in early 2017, to take up all of these concerns and see if any of them can be further addressed and/or remedied. In the meanwhile, in the months ahead, we will continue to look for ways to improve the program, whether within this relationship or in a partnership with another institution. And we will keep all the participants informed, to the best of our ability.

Thank you and Happy Holiday Wishes,

James G. Basker

President, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

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