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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Senate	DATE	October 8, 2010
FROM	Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP	PAGES	1/2
RE:	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review Report of the Department of History (SCUP 10-67)		

The Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP) has reviewed the External Review Report on the Department of History, together with responses from the Department, the Dean of Arts & Social Sciences and input from the Associate Vice President, Academic.

Motion:

That Senate approve the recommendation from the Senate Committee on University Priorities to implement the Action Plan for the Department of History that resulted from its External Review.

Following the site visit the Report of the External Review Team* for the Department of History was submitted in April 2010.

After the Report was received a meeting was held with the Dean of Arts & Social Sciences, the Chair of the Department and the Director of Academic Planning (VPA) to consider the recommendations. The Department then prepared an Action Plan based on the Report and these discussions. The Action plan was then submitted to the Dean on July 13, 2010. The Dean endorsed this Action Plan.

The Review Team members stated that the History Department *'has done a remarkable recruiting job over the past few years. New faculty are the recipients of an impressive number of research grants, promising to carry on the department's enviable, long-standing record of research and publication. The rate and quality of publication challenges the per capita productivity at larger and better-endowed research universities in Canada and the United States. Faculty members have recently published monographs in prestigious, mainline presses such as Oxford, Harvard University Press, and University of Toronto Press'*.

SCUP recommends to Senate that Department of History be advised to pursue the Action Plan.

Attachments:

1. Department of History External Review - Action Plan
2. External Review Report – April, 2010

*** External Review Team:**

Andrew Gow, Professor, Department of History and Classics, University Alberta

Linda Northrup, Professor and Chair, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto

Alan Tully, Eugene C. Barker Centennial Professor and Chair, Department of History, University of Texas at Austin

CC John Craig, FASS Dean (Pro Tem)
Mark Leier – Chair, Dept of History.

**Report of the External Review Committee of the Department of History
Simon Fraser University
April 19, 2010**

The members of the external review committee would like, first, to express our thanks to Dean Lesley Cormack, Dean Wade Parkhouse, Associate Vice President Research Norbert Haunerland, Professor Mark Leier and to the faculty, students, and staff of the Department of History for welcoming us so warmly to the Burnaby Campus of SFU and for sharing their views with us openly and generously. We learned a great deal about this fine department during our three days on campus, but we realize that there is much we do not know or understand. Nevertheless, we offer the following report in the hope that it will assist the University and the History Department in building on strengths that are palpable.

Departmental Culture

The chief challenge the Department of History has faced over the past few years and continues to face in 2010 is that of renewal. Virtually all of what was very much the founding generation of faculty are no longer active. The Department has hired 20 new historians over the past 7 years. The bulk of these hires (17) have been at the assistant level. Currently, the Department has 14 untenured assistant professors.

The History Department has done a remarkable recruiting job over the past few years. New faculty are the recipients of an impressive number of research grants, promising to carry on the department's enviable, long-standing record of research and publication. The rate and quality of publication challenges the per capita productivity at larger and better-endowed research universities in Canada and the United States. Faculty members have recently published monographs in prestigious, mainline presses such as Oxford, Harvard University Press, University of Toronto Press, to name just a few, as well as in more specialized presses highly appropriate to their field of study, such as the University of Arizona Press and Brill.

New faculty are also enthusiastic and committed teachers, willing responders to the many and increasing service demands on their time and extraordinarily collegial. This is particularly striking given the physical impediments to community in the AQ – the relative absence of common space and the stringing out of faculty along narrow halls. Positive comments come not only from faculty but also from students, and perhaps most tellingly from staff, who, despite the pressures they face are very appreciative of their local working environment. Recent chairs, John Craig and Jack Little deserve praise for their contributions to this renewal and current chair Mark Leier for being an effective steward of what he has inherited, for fostering continuing growth among his colleagues, and for furthering the development of a salutary departmental ethos. Despite widespread subject interests, methodological differences and both area and periodization specializations, the vast majority of faculty see themselves, “not just as part of a program” as one of them put it, but as department citizens. Again and again and from

different constituencies, we heard about faculty "commitment" to the department.

Clearly, morale that emanates from *department* interaction is quite good. **But**, at the same time, this localized sunshine is oft shadowed by clouds gathering around Faculty and University decisions and priorities.

Research Trajectory of Young Faculty

History at SFU has a tradition of active and excellent scholarship. Two recent CRC chair appointments reinforce that tradition but so, too, does the record of book publication of new faculty. Department members have published seven books over the past two years and additionally two assistant professors have contracts for their first monographs. The challenge here, of course, is the perpetuation of an environment that encourages publication beyond an initial book. The Department is doing things to promote this. The regular faculty seminar, for example, is a forum that builds an expectation of continued scholarly engagement. The kind of "community of scholars" that is emerging in interrelated and overlapping fashion around various programmatic, thematic and geographical areas, including the capacious world of social and cultural history is promising, but will need opportunities for self-expression in both intra- and inter-institutional symposia and related activities. What is impressive to historians is often lost on administrators who come from an academic culture in which research success is measure by the monetary magnitude of collaborative grant projects and a tally of multiple-authored, short publications. The History Department needs to take a lead in

fully articulating the different ways in which the excellence of their work and the extent of their accomplishments can be communicated more effectively.

The Faculty and the University must also contribute meaningfully -- by providing appropriate teaching resources so that, in the face of a need to keep up classroom and related programmatic strength, faculty are able to take advantage of both regular and irregular research opportunities; by providing tangible recognition of what appears to be an increasing expectation of community service; and by providing research money within parameters that is respectful and supportive of both the ways in which most historians work and the cycles of research and writing needs that attend a book culture, which are **not** necessarily recognized in the funding matrices of standard granting agencies and are clearly **not** accommodated in the current formula for the awarding of the Community Trust Endowment Fund grants.

A related major challenge for History is that of faculty retention. Recent past foreshadows future. Over the past few years the Department has lost promising young faculty to UBC, Toronto, York (Britain) and just recently to Chicago, Cambridge, NYU Abu Dhabi (And, of course, from a very thin senior group, the Dean and her partner to Alberta.) Because of the closeness of the cohort of junior faculty these losses are wrenching and they sap morale. There is little the department can do to address this issue directly. Counteroffers, preemptive offers, attentiveness to partner concerns and the strengthening of particular areas of scholarship are always at or near the core of retention problems and they lie with the Faculty and University. For example, the Faculty and

University's apparent indifference to the recent loss of the Department's two African historians and a British historian, the earlier loss of a Latin Americanist and the huge lacuna of a South Asianist raise the question of Faculty and University commitment to the academic integrity of established programs that constitute the scholarly and teaching *raison d'être* of a number of the continuing faculty. Bleeding from attrition, stung by *what is perceived as indifference* to the Department's weakened state, good History faculty will be prompted to look elsewhere – and once they look over the institutional fence many will frequently think they see greener pastures.

Governance

Recently, the Department has updated its constitution and reaffirmed its open, democratic ethos in the processes of committee selection. That is laudable; but problems remain. One is the lack of clarity on how recruitment to the nomination level occurs. While it is always difficult to handle this process with sufficient transparency to satisfy all, it would be worthwhile making regular calls for volunteers so that individual faculty may indicate their interest in specific committee positions. Matching interest with assignment is an important way to encourage and satisfy the urge for faculty voice.

A second problem with governance has to do with the absence of departmental policies on important issues or the existence of policies without systematic procedures for their distribution and/ or implementation. Too many faculty profess to have no more than a general idea of the criteria for promotion and tenure and report getting conflicting advice

regarding both preparation for tenure and promotion and on how to put together an annual report. The Department chair and the advisory committee clearly need to turn their attention to the development of policies where needed, particularly in areas that are crucial for academic progression and evaluation. They also need to develop clear procedures for **implementation** and a consistent and repetitive **educational** cycle that becomes an ingrained part of department administration.

Much of the problem here has to do with the extent of faculty turnover and the Faculty and University decision to hire only at the entry level. Senior faculty are the custodians of procedural clarity and the obvious mentors for new appointees. There is no doubt that the Department is now, through the experience of younger faculty with what History has lacked in process, in a much better position to supply what has been missing through the absence of senior leadership. But the Department should consciously and concertedly draw on that recent, hard-won experience to improve its codification of mentoring relationships, impressing upon mentors the importance of their various obligations and upon mentees, expectations that are reasonable. We understand that the Department is attached to rapid rotation through administrative positions but some thought might be given to a slightly longer term for department chair and certainly to avoiding simultaneous turnover of major committee chairs.

Such has been the scale of faculty turnover in History that untenured faculty have recently occupied major committee posts. In our view, these individuals have done awfully well, but we are quite critical of the practice of saddling untenured faculty with

such burdens. New faculty should be concentrating on their scholarship and teaching, not heading up major department (or Faculty) committees. Our comment here is directed, not so much toward the Department as at the central administration for not recruiting a small number of more senior professors who could fill these administrative roles amid the turmoil of major faculty renewal. There is also clearly a need for more and better administrative training sessions for incoming department chairs and major committee chairs, and for some system of follow-up given that terms are short and turnover quite rapid.

Staff

Four fifths of the History Department staff have taken up their positions within the last year. They have been configured in a way that has allowed them to adjust to the loss of one half a position and to try to accommodate some of the new demands that are currently being made of departments in numerous universities. Good news exists on some fronts. Staff members appear to have come together in a close working relationship that exemplifies a cooperative work environment populated by conscientious individuals. Staff members clearly appreciate their co-workers and the overwhelmingly positive character of faculty/staff relations. We think the department has taken a progressive and needed step by hiring a publicity and public relations person. To single out any one of the regular four staff could be misleading, however, for all are making important contributions. And manager Judi Fraser is providing excellent leadership. No department, however, exists without moments of friction and we suggested to Ms. Fraser

that in such circumstances -- especially when these arise at the interstices of staff and faculty – that she might bring the issue to the chair and expect this person to intercede in a constructive way. Part of the problem here goes back to the inexperience of new faculty who are not fully aware of the cycle of staff work, which creates bottlenecks from time to time. We suggested that Ms. Fraser, with the cooperation of the chair, draw up a calendar of deadlines and attendant workload estimates, which should be circulated and discussed at departmental meetings both at the beginning of the academic year and at appropriate intervals throughout. We commend the Department for its forward looking hiring of a communications person and recommend that the Faculty increase her work hours so that the Department can more effectively respond to the increasing University demand for community service and the self-promotion. Finally, the staff is overworked. This seems most clear in the case of the joint chair/graduate chair secretary position but extends beyond that. In the intermediate run, this will wear on the principals and will undercut morale. It is best to address this situation before that happens to any great extent.

Graduate Programs

A clear priority for the University and a stated question of the department's terms of reference for this review is increasing the number of graduate enrolments, esp. in the PhD program. In particular, Dean Cormack raised the issue of what she sensed as reluctance on the part of a number of history faculty to sacrifice the M.A. program for a higher enrolment of doctoral students in the face of University emphasis on graduating more

PhDs. It is clear that this hesitancy does exist and for understandable reasons. Overall, we recommend that the Department should certainly try to augment its PhD numbers but very slowly and selectively. We are impressed by the Department's success in placing its M.A. graduates in competitive and prestigious Ph.D. programs elsewhere, and felt this will have to remain the department's primary focus for the foreseeable future, with the possible exception of the PhD in Canadian history.

There are a number of reasons for this. The first and most important is that SFU does not offer adequate language training for PhD students in non-Canadian fields, with the possible exception of Spanish— although currently there are not enough faculty in the history of the Spanish-speaking world to constitute more than the odd 'one-off' supervisory committee at the PhD level. Although junior faculty members are publishing very successfully and at a high level in many fields, from Byzantine, Chinese and early modern European to modern Italian history, none of these pre-tenure faculty has yet established enough of a publication record and reputation to attract larger numbers of good PhD students. That will change over the next five to ten years. With this realistic time-frame in mind, it is possible for the University to begin now to find ways to provide some of the language resources necessary for PhD level work -- although a senior administrator flatly stated to us that at the moment SFU has no intention of investing in the kind of language teaching resources that would support a serious PhD program beyond that in Canadian history. One possibility might be to work out joint programs with UBC or piecemeal accords with any other institution that could provide instruction in requisite language skills.

We therefore conclude that only the PhD program in Canadian history can be expanded in the short to medium term. There is excellent supervisory strength among the Canadianists at both the senior and junior level and sufficient coherence to encourage Canadianists to think about how they might promote their Department as a competitive “destination” choice for prospective doctoral students in, not only a regional, but also a national market.

Funding, of course, is integral to any discussion of graduate programs, whether expanding or not. Unsurprisingly, faculty, students and senior administrators all brought it up. To begin with, we make two bedrock observations. A full year of funding (three semesters) made up of any combination of GFs (Graduate Fellowships) and TAs is barely adequate given the cost of living in the Lower Mainland. Second, even at current levels of graduate enrollment there is insufficient funding for these students. We understand that the Dean of Graduate Studies has given a few more GFs to History this year; yet even with these (and without comparative data for other departments either for GFs or TAs we cannot be sure of this) our impression is that History is underfunded relative to other comparable departments as well as in relation to the University’s stated educational goals. And, while the University is pushing for expanded PhD programs, the Dean of Graduate Studies’ student budget for GFs has flat lined. At the same time, cuts in the FASS budget have reduced and will reduce its soft money budget, from which TAs are funded. It also appears to us that some of the senior administrators’ comments about streamlining undergraduate courses suggest either or both reducing

faculty numbers and those of TAs. One very troubling comment from students was that straightforward promises of support at program entrance were appearing to become more tentative as the year progressed. Our view on the PhD program is that adequate funding should accompany both current and expanded PhD programs and every offer of student support should be conveyed **clearly** in writing, in either a letter of offer or contract.

One possibility for increasing the M.A. numbers is to admit another group of highly qualified applicants who fall below the funding cut-off. While this can cause jealousy among the students, we should recognize that work environments are rarely without such features. Among other things, past performance, marks and letters of reference are not especially accurate indices of future performance; experience in other universities suggests that M.A. candidates who are comfortably above the minimum for admission but for whom the funding is not sufficient can do very well in external and internal fellowship competitions, and can turn out to be among the hardest-working and most successful students. This option is one the Department should consider.

The graduate program also seems to have a number of challenging organizational issues that require attention. The most important of these point out the need for increased administrative clarity. The three-semester thesis M.A. clearly is not working and needs to be revisited. So far, not one of the students admitted to this new M.A. has finished on time. Of 12 students admitted in 2008, 7 have left the program and 5 will finish (not one on time). Further funding has to be found for continuing students (ALL so far, in the one year program) or the organization of the program has to be changed. No service is done

to either institution or student by false advertising (a one year M.A. that cannot be finished in one year) or by failing to provide funding precisely when the student needs to concentrate on thesis research and writing. It is possible that some students do receive additional TAships but our impression is that if so, the process by which this occurs is insufficiently transparent. There also appears to be no consistency in carrying out TA evaluations. Some students reported being evaluated, others not. Also students reported that they did not receive any written contract or letter of appointment for TAships and that news of financial support (often conveyed verbally) came too late for the student to plan for the coming (or in some cases current) semester. Some graduate students felt that the role of supervisor was not sufficiently clear and that there was considerable variation in practice. The reviewers would like to point out, however, that this is the norm at most universities. Students and supervisors have traditionally had to find their own *modus operandi* with each other to avoid overly interventionist types of interference in what tends to be a rather individualized type of teaching and learning. History at SFU might be advised to address these and related concerns by following the lead of others in adopting and paying close attention to a statement of Best Practices for PhD Supervision.

The M.A. Program needs to be quickly and thoughtfully reassessed. And this needs to be done in the light of: 1) a clear understanding of where the PhD program is headed; 2) an accurate assessment of upcoming graduate support resources, and; 3) a recognition that the large number of non-Canadianists in the Department have an important vested interest in mounting and promoting an excellent M.A program. This is because, in the absence of adequate language training for PhD students, Masters students provide these faculty with

their only opportunity for regular graduate teaching. The Masters program also invites innovation. At this level it may be possible to put together graduate concentrations that foreground Departmental strength in cultural and social history. Emphasis on thematic M.A.s might be a way to distinguish a SFU Masters and engage even more the young faculty whose interests take them in this direction.

Undergraduate Programs

For many years the Department organized itself and its course offerings into three streams – Africa, the Middle East and Asia (AMA), the Americas and Europe. With the increasing emphasis on the transnational, internationalization, and thematic clustering that cut across traditional boundaries, History has recently added a fourth Global/Comparative stream. This addition complements both larger institutional priorities and the re-structuring of the Department's identity around shared faculty interests in social and cultural history. This development again raises challenges. Foremost among these is the question of whether the Department, at its current level of strength, can continue to cover all its teaching obligations including graduate work without rationing leaves that are crucial for individual scholarly achievement and do not leave students feeling (in our view, it is currently a feeling rather than fact) that they are unable to find sufficient courses to meet distribution requirements necessary for graduation. It is clear to us that **absent** Faculty and University attention to the very recent vacancies, the Department should undertake a thoughtful reappraisal of the character of the four streams (something it will need to do even if additional resources

become available) with the knowledge that some kind of retrenchment of programs and concentrations may well have to take place. We do not propose to answer that hypothetical; it will be incumbent on the Department in its collegiality to consider the options open to it.

Further Department discussion is needed in other respects as well. We were struck by the different views sub-groups of faculty had about the relevance of stream organization. Some stated that streams were passé and the real future of the Department lay with the further cultivation of an identity based on cultural and social history and on the elaboration of thematic specialties. Others took the view that area streams remained central to their self-conception and to how they conceived of their future. These different views seemed correlated to a degree with faculty satisfaction or dissatisfaction with lower level course capacity allocation. Habitual adherence to past practices can also prevent experimentation, which might well give the Department a better sense of what student course preferences are. When we pressed for information about student course preferences, we always met the assurance that this was not an issue because all History courses filled up. This seems wonderfully true, something central administrators should note, particularly because historians have **not** given in to grade inflation. But it is also very important in the current budgetary climate, and given the demographic profile of SFUs student body, to get some read on where student interests lie. A related issue, of course, is to what degree a department should embrace a specialization in cultural and social history at the expense of other historical approaches. Coherence and identity is certainly important but there is a case to be made for some diversity of approach in

building and sustaining a vital intellectual climate and in recognizing the variety of student interests.

These are all issues that beg for further open discussion among department members. The openness and collegiality of the Department is real but over time such characterization (particularly such self-characterization) can slip into a superficiality, which masks differences that need airing. There are **always** legitimate differences in departments -- the trick is to acknowledge them and address them with the respect they deserve.

As for the quality of teaching, in general it is clearly quite strong. (Any exception is a management issue for the chair to address.) Faculty are conscientious, enthusiastic and reflective about pedagogy and engaging. These are scholars who bring their research to their teaching and include their students in the kind of primary source work that develops strong analytical and critical skills, multiple literacies, communications skills, and the confidence that can accompany such capabilities. The pedagogy SFU historians practice certainly complements the articulated educational goals of the University.

One practice that most Department members seem to endorse is a variation of a tutorial system, iterations of which vary from university to university. Our view is that supplementary tutorials at SFU serve their purposes. They do provide a forum, from which many undergraduates benefit in developing the aforementioned skills. They also serve as teaching apprenticeships for graduate students. Assuming the University wants

to expand its Humanities graduate programs (and given the fact that less than 20% of the current graduate student body is in FASS, it probably should) and assuming the university will provide adequate funding for TA appointments, we see no reason to abridge the tutorial system. The Department should hold more open discussion about balance in the allocation of TAs (there is **some** now) between different lower division courses and their deployment in more senior writing intensive courses. We expect that History will adopt the Writing Intensive designation for many of its senior courses and that step should prompt such discussions. We are more tentative about faculty-led tutorials in third year courses. Our understanding is that faculty may end up spending an additional two to three hours leading tutorials that supplement a lecture component. As a consequence faculty may spend eight –nine hours in the classroom in what is formally a two course-teaching load. This is, in a sense, a voluntary subsidization of the instructional system, which we are sure, benefits students. But it also takes up time and energy that untenured and junior associate faculty might direct elsewhere. As the University demands more community engagement, as well as more service from its younger faculty (because of the demographic changes to the faculty complement), it is fair to suggest the question of priorities and allocation of time, as an important topic for discussion among department members.

A related issue is that of what is often referred to as a “streamlining” of the curriculum. This issue is driven by optics emanating from programs with a series of prerequisites. The History curriculum is not so structured, nor in the case of this department, should it be. History is frequently at its strongest as an array of “boutique” courses, such as SFU

offers. Such concerns are also often fueled by hard evidence that students are delayed in graduating because they cannot get into courses necessary for graduation. This is not the case in History so far as we can tell – and it is more likely to be taking place in departments where there is a regimen of prerequisites and required courses. The distribution requirements in History are modest in their demands. Expressions of student dissatisfaction seem to emanate from a far less serious disappointment at not being able to take particular courses that are listed but are not offered for successive terms -- and that, in this budgetary climate has more to do with faculty retrenchment than anything else. Nonetheless, it is our understanding that History has streamlined some of its lower division courses and has deleted a number of infrequently taught upper division offerings. We encourage the Department to consider developing a list of topics courses rather than specific course designations and descriptions. This might allow greater flexibility and prevent some of the disappointment that students have allegedly expressed.

One specialized undergraduate program that has been recently reinvigorated is the Honors program. Clusters of faculty have signed on as willing instructors of the two sequential courses and the intake of students has increased to the 12-15 range. It is clear that students appreciate professorial enthusiasm and commitment and the opportunity to discuss with specific faculty their practice of the historians' craft. What the program needs now is a healthy dose of systematization in the form of close attention to policies and procedures. Once the Department sends out a letter of invitation to students to consider Honors, the program director needs to hold information sessions, and once students have been accepted, an orientation session at which policies, guidelines,

timelines, sample thesis prospectuses and such are circulated and reintroduced and reemphasized during the academic year. Some thought needs to be given to how to organize the introduction of the full range of potential thesis supervisors to the students. Regularized and publicized processes are essential for programs as well as for department governance.

Specific Programs

Of the various programs that the History Department offers there are those of considerable strength and others that are in a very weak state. Canadian history is in the former camp for it is relatively well populated with strong faculty, offers a solid array of undergraduate courses and is the obvious area to serve as the centerpiece of any systematic expansion of the PhD program. On the other hand, Latin America is weak. British history likewise so, and Africa (one third of AMA) obliterated. Because of this last circumstance and because of the presence of a prominent Middle Eastern historian, Dr. Linda Northrup, on our review committee we want to take a closer look at AMA and the Middle Eastern component of the Department.

AMA

The History Department at SFU has from its inception had an important international focus and the Asia/Middle East/Africa stream currently reflects SFU's internationalizing, "thinking of the world" goals, its desire for inter- and multi-disciplinarity, its efforts to

reflect the wider BC and Vancouver community and to interact with that community and involve it in the University. SFU is the only university in western Canada to give such prominence to an AMA concentration. Its Canadian competitors, at least in the Middle Eastern component of the stream, are the long-established and strong programs in Middle East and Islamic Studies at McGill and the University of Toronto. The Asian component of AMA does not seek to rival East Asian Studies at UBC or programs at Toronto and McGill. However, the Department of History does make an effort to distinguish itself from its competitors in the Middle East component of the stream by its emphasis on comparative history with a social and cultural and largely pre-modern and modern orientation. The comparative skills learned in this stream make the Middle Eastern concentration in History at SFU unique in Canada.

At the time of the last External Review in 2002 AMA had been decimated by retirements or impending retirements and that trend has been exacerbated by recent faculty departures. Over the past few years the stream has been revitalized with the hiring of several young faculty members all at the Assistant Professor rank, but the group is aware that they now constitute just half the strength of other streams

Course offerings confirm strength in curriculum and teaching at the undergraduate level in two thirds of the AMA stream. Asia and the Middle East are well-covered at all four levels of the undergraduate curriculum. Asia includes courses on China and Japan that provide basic chronological and geographic coverage as well as thematic focus that intersects with thematic interests of the Department as a whole. Similarly, Middle East

courses provide chronological coverage of Muslim societies from the 9th century on with particular emphasis on the geographical areas of the Arab Middle East, the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, the Indian Subcontinent, as well as the civilizational/religious focus of Islam. Students also have the possibility of taking methodology courses or topics/studies courses to solidify their professional and research credentials in history in this stream. Moreover, the AMA curriculum is enriched and strengthened by course offerings on the Byzantine Empire, European history and religious history, especially Christianity, since these areas are often intertwined with AMA concerns. The curriculum is coherent, well structured and embeds the thematic interests of the Department as a whole. It offers both an excellent degree of breadth and depth. The Africa component, on the other hand, is close to expiration. Perhaps the best solution for next year is to keep it on life support by making a limited term appointment. But the Faculty and the Department will have to decide shortly on any longer term commitment or risk being accused of false advertising.

The number of graduate students with an AMA concentration is small. According to a list made available to the Review Committee by the Graduate Chair, 5 of the 26 total admissions at the MA and PhD levels were in the Middle East area. Without statistics on applications to each stream or its components, it is impossible to determine relative demand for the AMA concentration at the graduate level as a whole, or any aspect of it, in relation to other areas, but 5 admissions would seem to be a relatively healthy number indicating that the demand is there. That there is only 1 admission at the PhD level is not surprising given the lack of resources available to the PhD program.

The administration has indicated a desire to grow the PhD program, but without infusion of new resources, this goal seems utterly unattainable. Without university support for language instruction, for instance, a PhD program in an international stream such as AMA is but a pipe dream. Scholarship in the history of AMA cultures and societies requires the ability to use primary language resources such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish/Ottoman, or Urdu as appropriate, as well as other languages of modern scholarship such as French and German, but also possibly Russian, Italian, Spanish, or Greek. A PhD program in AMA, or even an MA program for that matter, in an international stream that does not include language training to a level sufficient to allow the student to engage with primary source textual materials is simply not credible. Without resources for language instruction, SFU History students in international streams, whether, AMA, Latin America, or Europe, will be unable to complete a PhD or compete with Toronto or McGill or other North American and international graduate programs where these languages are taught. The only students the Department of History can possibly admit to the international or global streams at the MA or PhD level are students who already have the required language skills. Yet even then, although such students may speak the language, they may not have the academic training to use a diglossic language like Arabic, for example, in its classical or literary form. If the graduate program in History is to be grown, especially at the PhD level in any area but Canadian, British, or U.S. history (e.g., Middle East, South or East Asia, Europe, or Latin America), the University will have find ways to support appropriate language instruction.

A second essential resource necessary to the enhancement of the graduate program in AMA is library resources. A PhD program in the history of the AMA cultural region is unthinkable without access to primary source materials in the appropriate languages.

The Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures
(CCSMSC)

The Africa/Middle East/Asia stream is enhanced and strengthened by The Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures (CCSMSC) and the Drs. Fereidoun and Katharine Mirhady Endowment in Iranian and Persianate Studies. The Centre, established in 2006 with an endowment of \$4.3 million, raised notably solely from BC sources, encourages discussion of Muslim societies and a more nuanced understanding of their complexity. Though based in the Department of History, the Centre interacts with other units in FASS, e.g., International Studies and the World Literature Program. CCSMCS is also behind the Middle East and Islamic Consortium of British Columbia, a collaborative project of BC academics interested in the study of this area.

CCSMCS is headed by Dr. Derryl Maclean, one of the more senior members of the History faculty. CCSMCS aspires to expand and recognizes the need to continue fundraising to achieve its aims. Dr. Maclean who has spearheaded fundraising efforts until now should be encouraged to continue these efforts that have brought important advantages to the Department of History as well as to other units in FASS and the University. But again, successful fundraising must not replace central administration

efforts to provide the essential resources to History that will enable the Department to achieve its full potential.

The endowment has strengthened the Middle East component of AMA in History in a number of important ways. It sponsors a summer school that is now entering its third year of operation, supports conferences (proceedings for two of them now in press) and has made it possible to strengthen library resources in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu, which constitute a necessary foundation for research in this concentration. In addition, the endowment makes possible the appearance of an internationally known scholar to deliver the annual Mirhady Endowed Lecture. This activity stimulates interest in the wider community, especially perhaps among the Iranian Diaspora, and in turn enhances the reputation of the University internationally and in the community.

The Asia and Middle East components of AMA remain strong, are of vital interest to the region and have identified important foci that distinguish the concentration not only from offerings at other universities in western Canada, including UBC, but also from the powerhouses in these fields in eastern Canada, Toronto and McGill. Since 9/11 there has been a surge of interest in the Middle East. Moreover, immigration to Canada, and more particularly the Vancouver area, from the regions covered by AMA, especially South Asia, makes it imperative that these cultures be reflected in the curriculum. Similarly, Canada's relations with China are front and centre in foreign policy and trade discussions. It is essential that students gain basic historical knowledge of AMA regions and accompanying analytical and communications skills. Interest in these regions and

thus, demand for courses in this concentration, is likely to remain high for the foreseeable future. CCSMSC success in fundraising also underlines the interest in and importance of this program to the wider community that is the donor base.

The stream continues now, as in the past, and despite its diminished complement, to be an important strength in the Department of History. Its aspirations should be encouraged and supported in order to validate several of the stated goals in the SFU mission.

Hellenic Studies

Hellenic Studies is another vibrant center of activity, in this case fortuitously anchored in History by the fact that its director and holder of a University chair is a historian. Professor André Gerolymatos, Hellenic Canadian Congress of BC Chair in Hellenic Studies is one of those very rare scholar/entrepreneurs who is shaping a program in Hellenic Studies on the strength of his admirable prowess as a fundraiser. To this point he has skillfully employed these resources in ways that enhance the History Department as well as strengthen his program. There are no observable signs that we could detect of significant tensions between program and Department. Our view is that the Department and the University should encourage Professor Gerolymatos to continue on the course he is charting. As he becomes more successful (and he will do so because success brings success) it will be important – another challenge as it were – for program and Department to regularly reflect on the evolving relationship. The biggest danger is that posed by Faculty and University. The Center must not be seen as an excuse **to avoid** putting resources into the Department. In fact, the reverse should be the operative principle.

Administrators should take up the challenge of building in more conventional ways a History Department that complements the dynamism of Hellenic Studies.

Supporting Roles

Superior History departments need superior libraries. Because it is a relatively new university the SFU's library must always be on a building mission. Acquisitions and access appear to have the prominent position they must have in the minds of the librarians we met. Relations between the History representative and the librarians seem strong and collegial. It is clear that a number of faculty take an active interest in advising on and pushing for the resources they need for teaching and scholarship and the librarians are responsive and open to dialogue. We are concerned, however, about where the library sits in relation to university priorities given the large cut in last year's library budget. It is worth reminding the University that Library resources are the humanists' laboratories, just as crucial to vital FASS scholarship as labs are to scientists.

Despite all the new construction and renovation on Burnaby Mountain, there are physical plant shortcomings that impact History. One is the uneven availability of the Information Technology that supports modern classroom teaching. The relative dearth of large or even medium-sized classrooms is a second. An administrative push for larger classes makes little sense if suitable classrooms are not available during high demand hours, particularly if it is coupled with an anticipatory dismantling of the tutorial system. The Department's self-study also identified the poor state of repair or dinginess of classrooms

and common areas, as well as the cleanliness of the halls, washrooms and common areas, as a moderate concern.

New Faculty Issues

New faculty issues are legion and must be addressed at a number of levels. On the Department level, careful attention to the articulation and regular review of policies, procedures, and timelines are crucial for the education of young faculty as departmental citizens, and in preparing them for the various hurdles they face as tenure-track appointees. On a more individual level senior faculty mentorship is also extraordinarily important and we urge the History Department to establish clear mentoring guidelines, institute a supervisory mentoring committee and regularly evaluate Departmental mentoring success and shortcomings. It is the responsibility of the central administration to attempt to keep a balanced and diverse faculty profile so that role models exist for various new faculty. One bit of advice most senior faculty might give both to incoming assistants and to the central administration is to avoid joint appointments at the untenured level. Untenured faculty who are in such positions should be given the opportunity to transfer to one department immediately (Courses can still be cross-listed.) The burden of service in two units and stresses of satisfying units for tenure are more than should be demanded of assistant professors. When desirable make joint appointments from the ranks of more senior tenured faculty.

Other concerns of junior faculty are less closely tied to department. But the University should be aware of these. Young faculty feel that the university could be more helpful in cases of immigration, in meeting their housing needs, and in a whole array of areas important to faculty retention. As the large entry level History group matures retention issues will be of critical importance.

Conclusion

The History Department has renewed itself with remarkable success given the institutional mandate to hire overwhelmingly at the entry level. It is an impressive collection of young historians with a sprinkling of excellent more senior colleagues, and a better one in the making as its predominant cohort of recent hires mature and add others of similar abilities to its ranks. The rapid pace of junior hiring has resulted in some policy lacunae and procedural deficiencies that present both governance and programmatic challenges. With attention, however, these can be remedied relatively quickly. More challenging given the current scenario of continuing budgetary restraint is the unanticipated loss of 5 faculty (now 7 with the departure of the Dean and her partner) over the past two years. This situation presents another version of the familiar challenge of renewal, providing the Faculty and University are prepared to give the Department sufficient resources. Given the Department's record since 2002, the laudable momentum the Department has gained and the centrality of History in the Humanities and Social Sciences core, the Department certainly deserves such support.

Whether provided or not and given what we view as mixed messages by the central administration – emphasis on expanding the PhD program with no evidence of expanding graduate student support; recent public statements that appear to shift attention to the quality of the undergraduate experience; emphasis on “internationalization” without addressing the crucial role language study plays in preparation for success in a globalizing world; the imposition of specific hiring priorities, yet stressing departmental responsibility in the shaping of curriculum; and a foregrounding of the rhetoric of celebration of the new at the expense of dispassionate evaluation of how to preserve the strengths of institutional reputation – we recommend that the History Department be given some certainty of the level of support the University is willing to extend to this maturing and improving, core department. Then, it will be up to the Department to hold open discussions to determine exactly what initiatives it can develop and sustain and what compromises with past practices it chooses to make. Given the establishment of some reasonable parameters of institutional support and some protection from the exogenous, this is a department that inspires confidence in its ability to spend precious resources wisely and to ground its decisions in the kind of academic integrity that has, since its founding, distinguished this University.

Main Recommendations to the Department

1. The Department needs to examine carefully its policies and procedures in relation to governance, promotion and tenure, and evaluations and rewards, adopt new or revised ones where necessary, and ensure that these are well-publicized and understood.
2. The Department needs to carry out a similar exercise to promote procedural, evaluative, and expectational consistency and transparency in its academic programs - both undergraduate and graduate.
3. The Department needs to facilitate faculty awareness of the cycles of staff work.
4. The Department should consider expanding its PhD program very slowly -- commensurate with faculty resources and strengths and the University's ability to provide such skills as language competency, where necessary.
5. The M.A Program needs to be rethought and reconfigured in realistic one-year and two year tracks.
6. The Department must discuss and agree upon appointment priorities, in the face of the most recent rounds of attrition, and reappraise the viability of its various undergraduate and graduate emphases, and programs in light of those decisions.
7. The Department should take the lead in exploring ways of demonstrating to the central administration and the public the accomplishments of humanities scholars and teachers.

Main Recommendations to the Faculty and Central Administration

1. The University and Faculty should recognize the Department's high quality and success in self-renewal by giving it some tangible evidence of support in the form of new hires, in resisting the temptation to micromanage hiring priorities, and in providing some clarity of resource expectations in the immediate future.
2. The University should consider earmarking the equivalent of one large CTEF grant for FASS faculty to be awarded within the Faculty according to criteria that suit the research models and timelines of Humanities and Social Science scholars.
3. The University should plan for the up coming problem of faculty retention.
4. The University should provide increased graduate funding particularly if it wishes to expand the PhD program.
5. The University should recognize that the relative absence of language training on campus will have a bearing on the character of any History graduate program. The University should explore ways for its graduate students to acquire necessary language skills from UBC or other institutions, through cooperative innovations such as joint programs or degrees.
6. The University should work with History to invent ways of fairly valuing and promoting the scholarly accomplishments of historians and other humanists.
7. The University should, through more balanced hiring practices, provide adequate tenured leadership in rapidly renewing departments. It should also support more

closely departmental mentoring practices, administrative procedures and provide adequate administrative training.

Andrew Gow, Professor, Department of History and Classics, University Alberta

Linda Northrup, Professor and Chair, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto

Alan Tully, Eugene C. Barker Centennial Professor and Chair, Department of History, University of Texas at Austin

EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director				
Unit under review <i>History</i>	Date of Review Site visit	Responsible Unit person, <i>MARK LEIER</i>	Faculty Dean <i>P. McFetridge</i>	
<i>Note: It is <u>not</u> expected that every recommendation made by the Review Team needs to be included here. The major thrusts of the Report should be identified and some consolidation of the recommendations may be possible while other recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.</i>				
External Review Recommendation	Unit's response notes/Comments (if any)	Action to be taken	Resource implications (if any)	Expected completion date
1 The Department needs to examine carefully its policies and procedures in relation to governance, promotion and tenure, and evaluations and rewards, adopt new or revised ones where necessary, and ensure that these are well-publicized and understood	Department members differed widely on the question of how well-publicized policies, etc., have been. Several members, ranging from new, untenured faculty to those of several years experience, held that policies were easily available. Others disagreed. Obviously this is a question on which reasonable minds will differ. Nonetheless, the Department recognizes the responsibility and	We take to heart the recommendation that we address the need for more stability and "institutional memory" in our committees (page 6). We have not yet discussed extending the term of the Department chair, but are keen to reduce the service requirements for untenured faculty and to develop "bench strength" in committees through strategies such as two-year terms instead of one, staggering appointments to committees, and explicitly recruiting people to committees with the expectation that they would later serve as chair of that committee. We will formulate these ideas into specific motions for the fall Department meetings. Nominations for committees have been called for; through Department meetings and emails, faculty members have been asked to nominate themselves and others for all Department committees (see page 5, para 2). We will formalize our informal practice of asking people to serve on committees with the	Costs for workshops; opportunity costs for participants	Workshops: end of fall semester, 2010 Revisions: calls for revisions, fall semester, 2010; further workshops, if required, spring semester, 2011; final revisions to Department for

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need to first publicize existing policies and then revise as needed.

expectation that they will later serve as chair.

The chair's secretary has compiled a kit containing SFU policies and procedures regarding promotion and tenure and the Department's guidelines for promotion and tenure, and given these to people going up for promotion and tenure in 2010. She will give all other untenured faculty this material in the fall, when the Department will hold a workshop outlining the policies, procedures, and expectations. The Tenure and Promotion Committee will also hold a meeting with people undergoing salary review, contract renewal, promotion, and tenure, to go over the mandate of the Committee, its procedures, and the expectations of the Department. Faculty members will be encouraged to attend the SFUFA workshops on tenure and promotion.

The Department will hold further workshops outlining governance policies and procedures and expectations for our committees, and will consider at that time if revision would be helpful. If the Department determines that policies and procedures need revision, we will strike a committee to bring proposals to the Department for discussion and ratification.

We note that our efforts would be greatly enhanced if the seventh recommendation to the Faculty and Central Administration were acted on positively and our Department was provided with meaningful

ratification by summer 2011

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		administrative training.		
2 The Department needs to carry out a similar exercise to promote procedural, evaluative, and expectational consistency and transparency in its academic programs—both undergraduate and graduate.	We are aware of the need to clarify and communicate our policies and procedures. Clearly, posting them on the web page and the calendar are not sufficient, especially when time lags can mean that contradictory information is posted and when words such as “usually” and “normally” may not indicate common practice. There is some concern that students are not even aware that this information is available. We understand that efficiency and morale depend on our getting the information across, and this requires action beyond simply posting	<p>Our undergraduate and graduate committees will be instructed to examine our procedures and policies in conjunction with students. The committees will then recommend to the Department revisions and methods to disseminate information to students. Other proposals made at recent department meeting will be examined in due course.</p> <p>A policy and procedure checklist for graduate supervisors has been created and will be distributed to Department members. The graduate student handbook is currently undergoing revision, and when completed by the fall semester, will be distributed to all graduate students and made available on our website.</p> <p>Students will be reminded regularly to consult the handbook and the calendar for policies and procedures that apply to them.</p> <p>Our recruitment and communications officer will work with the committees to create a “The Basics” page to help students understand policies and procedures.</p> <p>The graduate chair and committee will arrange regular meetings with graduate students to go over policies and procedures and to inform them of</p>		Most of the above will be ongoing. The revisions to the handbook and letters will be completed for the fall semester.

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	the materials.	committee decisions and rationales regarding admission, funding, and other issues. The letters sent to students upon admission will be revised to reflect funding policy and ensure clarity.		
3 The Department needs to facilitate faculty awareness of the cycles of staff work.	The Department is keenly aware of the work and talent of staff, and is deeply appreciative of their commitment and efficiency. At the same time, the recent re-organization of staff positions has created new challenges and faculty members need to understand the roles of staff and the rhythm of work more thoroughly.	The chair and Department manager will prepare statements of staff responsibilities and duties, and distribute them to faculty. A timeline of events, increased workload periods, and deadlines, such as graduation, tenure and promotion, and graduate applications, will be drawn up and distributed to faculty members. Semesterly postings of staff hours and days will be distributed. Staff workloads will be evaluated and monitored, and when necessary and possible, modified.		Fall 2010 semester; ongoing as required
4 The Department should consider expanding its PhD program very	Our PhD program has always been very small, and expanding it means diverting	The graduate committee has already set out to increase our recruitment of Canadian PhD students, and has met with some success. Our plan is to recruit 2-3 more PhD students in the short-term, and		Ongoing

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slowly—commensurate with faculty resources and strengths and the University’s ability to provide such skills as language competency, where necessary.

resources from our very strong and successful MA program and from undergraduate teaching. Without sustained funding for students or for sessional instructors to cover undergraduate teaching, we have been reluctant to increase the PhD program. We do, however, recognize the university emphasis on producing PhDs and are committed to recruiting more PhDs. The lack of language training at SFU, however, means that we are largely restricted to supervising topics that require only English or French language skills. Furthermore, we no

increase this number gradually. Further efforts to expand will include publicizing the successes of our faculty and students, facilitating links with Canadian and non-Canadian historians in our Department to provide thematic depth for students across regions and periods, and developing a communications strategy with our recruitment and communications officer. This strategy will include surveys of incoming students and students who declined to come to SFU, increased communication with other Departments across Canada, and increased outreach through our successful students. We will work with the dean of graduate studies to develop and reallocate funding to target new PhD students and will continue our workshops on SSHRC funding, which have given our MA and PhD students an enviable success record. We will encourage faculty members to include funding for PhD research assistants in their own SSHRC applications, and will continue our recent efforts to restructure our PhD program to make it more efficient and attractive to students.’

We note that our efforts will only be successful if the fourth and fifth recommendations to the Faculty and Central Administration in this report are acted on positively and quickly: that we receive increased graduate funding and that the University explores “ways for its graduate students to acquire necessary

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	<p>longer have a strength in British history, while students wishing to specialize in US history will usually be better advised to take the PhD at a US university. That means that expanding the PhD program will focus on Canadian history, where we have some real strengths and competitive advantages. Our experience, however, is that the cost of living in BC puts us at a real disadvantage in recruiting students from outside the province.</p>	<p>language skills.”</p>		
<p>5 The MA program needs to be rethought and reconfigured in realistic one-year and two-year</p>	<p>We have revised our MA program, and no longer have a three-semester thesis MA or an option for a one-year MA, as suggested</p>	<p>Better and more consistent and more accessible application materials, letters of admission, and ongoing resources are being created.</p>		<p>Fall 2010; ongoing refinement and adjustment</p>

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<p>tracks.</p>	<p>in page 11 and in recommendation 5 of the external review report. Our program is a thesis MA that can be, and has been, completed in 4-5 semesters. We will admit highly qualified applicants who fall below the funding cut-off, as per the suggestion on page 11.</p> <p>Our chief need now is to make this clear to applying, incoming, and continuing students, and to reflect this in our offers of funding.</p>			
<p>6 The Department must discuss and agree upon appointment priorities, in the face of the most recent rounds of attrition, and reappraise the viability of its</p>	<p>The Department sees this as its most important and pressing task. Our numbers have been reduced considerably over the last few</p>	<p>The Department submitted a list of needed appointments last year, and has been instructed to provide a new list by August 2010. With many faculty members away for research in the summer, it is extremely difficult for us to engage in meaningful discussions by that date. We note in particular that the external review report has</p>		<p>Ongoing, 2010-2011.</p>

<p>various undergraduate and graduate emphases and programs in light of those decisions.</p>	<p>years, and will shrink further in the fall of 2010. Determining appointment priorities will affect every aspect of what we do: research collaboration, undergraduate teaching, the graduate program, and meeting the vision and mission statements of the university. We note that our efforts will only be successful if the first and third recommendations to the Faculty and Central Administration were acted on positively and quickly: that the Department is given "tangible evidence of support in the form of new hires" and that the University plans "for the upcoming problem of faculty</p>	<p>stressed the need for open processes and democratic decision-making (pages 5-7 and Department Recommendation 1) and we would add that these require time to be meaningful and effective. Nonetheless, we have begun electronic ballots and discussions to determine our list of most pressing appointments and will submit this list in July 2010.</p> <p>This will mark the beginning, not the end, of our work to reappraise our undergraduate and graduate emphases and programs. In the fall 2010 semester, the Department will undertake a strategic planning process to set priorities and determine the direction of the Department. This will include, but not be restricted to, retreats and workshops to ensure this is a collegial, inclusive process.</p> <p>We note that to be meaningful and productive, this work requires that the University act on the first and third recommendations to the Faculty and Central Administration: that the Department is given "tangible evidence of support in the form of new hires" and that the University plans "for the upcoming problem of faculty retention."</p>		
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retention.”

We would add that we agree with the recommendation made in the review that that untenured faculty in joint appointments should be given the opportunity to transfer to one department immediately (page 26). We have begun the work necessary for this, and look forward to the situation being resolved in the very near future.

We would further add that we entirely support the external reviewers’ recommendation to maintain the tutorial system (page 16) while attending to imbalances in TA

of

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allocations. We strongly support the reviewers' assessment of the strengths and value of the tutorial system and will work to maintain it and to ensure that faculty workloads are fair and equitable.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that the external reviewers noted that History is highly productive as a research department. We have a long reputation for excellent scholarship and research, and our renewal over the past seven years has continued this reputation. But as the reviewers noted, faculty members need help and support to deliver their next books and retention is a crucial issue. Thus

	<p>History strongly supports the external review's second recommendation to the Faculty and Central Administration, that "the University should consider earmarking the equivalent of one large CTEF grant for FASS faculty to be awarded within the Faculty according to criteria that suit the research models and timelines of Humanities and Social Science scholars."</p>			
<p>7</p> <p>The Department should take the lead in exploring ways of demonstrating to the central administration and the public the</p>	<p>We agree wholeheartedly with this recommendation, and are entirely supportive of the recent FASS initiative to appoint a communications</p>	<p>We will continue to support and encourage faculty members to address historical and contemporary issues in the public media, and note that many already do extensive work in the community. We have created an ad hoc committee on communications and community that will explore ways to increase our visibility in the media and the broader community. We will work with teachers to</p>		<p>Ongoing.</p>

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accomplishments of humanities scholars and teachers.

expert. We will support this initiative by having our communications officer work with the FASS communications person and by increasing our own efforts to demonstrate our accomplishments to the University and the public.

History is uniquely placed in FASS for this role as it is a teachable major for PDP students; essential to understanding current events and formulating policy; highly popular as a subject among the general public; both global and rooted in local communities; and trans-disciplinary in approach and

bring high school students to our lectures and will step up our outreach to the two-year community colleges and four-year universities. We will approach the City of Vancouver to put together a series of historical lectures for 2011, the 125th anniversary of the founding of the city.

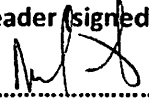
Within the University, we will work to demonstrate the work of the Department and FASS in general. Our recruitment and communications officer regularly asks Department members for news and information on their teaching and research, and ensures this is put on the FASS website. The chair of the Department is on the FASS Vision Working Group, which is charged to

1. Using the draft vision document (June 2009), develop FASS vision and mission statements
2. Consult with the Strategy Working Group and other stakeholders
3. Identify and develop measurements of success in all areas of teaching, research and community engagement
4. Identify and propose Key Performance Indicators for FASS
5. Consider both short and long-term proposals

Thus History is well-situated to help determine and demonstrate FASS's direction in the university and

	applicability.	the community. We would note that this requires resources that should be forthcoming from the dean and VP-A offices; at the very least, the work done by History faculty members to publicize the department, the faculty, and the university needs to be formally recognized as service above and beyond the norm.		
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The above action plan has been considered by the Unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Dean.

Unit Leader (signed)		Date
Name 	Title <u>PROFESSOR, CHAIR</u>	<u>13 JULY 2010</u>

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Section 2 - Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan :

The History Department is to be congratulated for a strong external review. The FASS Dean's office is in complete agreement that this is a collegial and well-run department. The recent hires have been exceptional and the research productivity of the Department is first rate. Likewise, staff are all operating at a high level.

With regards to the recommendations and action plans attached, we are in complete agreement with the steps suggested. They all seem designed to increase efficiency and collegiality within the department, as well as the smooth running of the graduate programs.

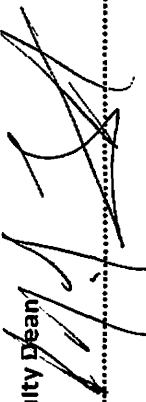
There are several larger issues addressed in the external review, which call for comment by the dean.

1. Language training. I am in agreement that in order for History to have a robust and multi-faceted PhD program, serious language instruction is a necessity. The future of language instruction at SFU looks slightly brighter than it did when the external review was written, but it still remains the case that all language instruction takes place only through 4 semesters, with the exception of French. We do have strong instruction to 4 semesters in Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and German. I would suggest to the History Department that they think creatively about how to give students more facility in needed languages. First, we have a large student population who speak and read other languages. Especially in Asian history, it might well be possible to attract students who already have facility in appropriate languages. Second, the FASS Dean's office would be happy to work with History to clarify and encourage the possibility of SFU graduate students taking language courses at UBC. Third, the Department should explore the possibility of fundraising for summer immersion programs for students, as well as facilitating students applying for scholarships and bursaries for such instruction (for example, DAAD for German immersion and the JET program for Japanese).

2. Faculty renewal. This is a difficult issue. History has been hard hit in the last few years with unexpected vacancies, resulting in a number of non-strategic holes in their program. Particularly egregious is the complete lack of African history – an area of importance to SFU from its foundation and one that has been a notable draw for students over the years. Equally, British history in particular and European history in general have been decimated. Unfortunately, in order to make the cuts necessary in the past few years, FASS has had to surrender every vacant position and it seems likely this will continue to be the case for at least 3 or 4 more years. Therefore, while I want to acknowledge that History has a legitimate claim to positions, it seems unlikely that they will receive more than one or two over the next 3 years and planning should be done on that basis.

3. Process and communications. The Department has recognized that while it has explicit procedures for decision making, re-examining them is a valuable exercise, particularly for junior colleagues who may be unaware of those procedures and as a reminder to others in the Department. In general, the Department is looking to communicate more broadly its academic programmes, the procedures by which decisions are made and resources allocated and the administration of the Department. These efforts will certainly benefit students, staff and faculty.

Faculty Dean



Date

July 13/18

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