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## MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION: Senate

TEL

FROM: Peter Keller, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP

RE: External Review of the Department of History (SCUP 17-38)

DATE: November 10, 2017

TIME

At its November 8, 2017 meeting, SCUP reviewed and approved the Action Plan for the Department of History that resulted from its External Review.

The Educational Goals Assessment Plan was reviewed and is attached for the information of Senate.

**Motion:**

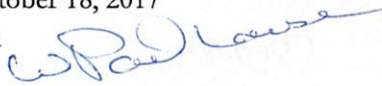
That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of History that resulted from its External Review.

c: J. Spear  
 J. Pulkingham

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www.sfu.ca/vpacademic**MEMORANDUM**

**ATTENTION** Peter Keller, Chair, SCUP  
**FROM** Wade Parkhouse, Vice-Provost and  
Associate Vice-President, Academic  
**RE:** Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review of the Department of History

**DATE** October 18, 2017  
**PAGES** 1/1



Attached are the External Review Report and the Action Plan for the Department of History. The Educational Goals Assessment Plan is included, for information only, with the Action Plan.

Excerpt from the External Review Report:

*"This is a dynamic Department. Its future plans are appropriate and manageable. Its Educational Goals are clearly thought out, and are guiding an active program of curricular renewal and program improvements at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Its faculty are active in research and publication. They are diligent in taking their work and their students both into the Lower Mainland and across the globe."*

Following the site visit, the Report of the External Review Team\* for the Department of History was submitted in March 2017. The Reviewers made a number of recommendations based on the Terms of Reference that were provided to them. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Chair of the Department of History and the Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (VPA) to consider the recommendations. An Action Plan was prepared taking into consideration the discussion at the meeting and the External Review Report. The Action Plan has been endorsed by the Department and the Dean.

**Motion:**

**That SCUP approve and recommend to Senate the Action Plan for the Department of History that resulted from its external review.**

**\*External Review Team:**

Nicholas Terpstra, University of Toronto (Chair of Review Team)  
Shirley Tillotson, Dalhousie University  
Kenneth Mills, University of Michigan  
Betty Schellenberg (internal), Simon Fraser University

**Attachments:**

1. External Review Report (March 2017)
2. Department of History Action Plan
3. Department of History Educational Goals Assessment Plan

cc. Jane Pulkingham, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Jennifer Spear, Chair, Department of History

Department of History  
Simon Fraser University  
2017 External Review

*1. Overview*

The review team of Kenneth Mills (Michigan), Nicholas Terpstra (Toronto) and Shirley Tillotson (Dalhousie) visited the SFU campus 22-24 February 2017. The site visit was very well organized, and we appreciated the warm hospitality that was extended to us, and the participation of Prof. Betty Schellenberg of the English Department as a colleague who was able to orient us to the local institutional forms and culture.

We received the departmental brief in good time and appreciated the wide range of supporting documentation that it held, including the Department constitution, data tables, the previous review of the Department, summary CVs, and course syllabi. Supplementary material that we requested was provided promptly.

During our site visit, we met with a wide range of individuals both in and outside the Department of History, including the chair, the graduate and undergraduate chairs, various program and Centre directors, department administrative staff, graduate and undergraduate students, tenured and tenure track faculty members, and limited term members. We were impressed that all faculty members with the exception of those out of town on leave came to speak with us. Meetings with senior administrators framed our visit, and we appreciated this opportunity to discuss issues and questions directly with the VP and Associate VP Academic, the Director of Academic Planning, the Associate VP Research, the Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Associate Dean of FASS, and liaison librarians. The three days of the site visit were very well planned, and discussions were frequently so engaged and animated that they took over the times built in for breaks – this is not a complaint, but an indication of how actively Department members engaged with us. We were also happy to be able to participate in a Department reception on Thursday evening at Harbour Centre, and in the open forum that followed on themes related to regionalism and Canada's Sesquicentennial. We were very impressed with the turnout by the public, students, faculty, and staff.

Our visit left us with the impression of a department that has many strengths and an abundance of energy. Its members are committed to analyzing and actively addressing its challenges. Its physical space is adequate, and includes areas for social and study activity. A number of public research projects like “(Re)Claiming the New Westminster Waterfront”, “Vancouver Walks” “Archives of Lesbian Oral

Testimony” and “Japanese Canadian Oral History Digitalization” demonstrate a strong commitment to community-based research and outreach.

Undergraduate and graduate students alike praised faculty members for their dedication to teaching and mentorship. Honours students noted the generally strong course offerings and the wide range of resources and activities that testified to the Department’s commitment to their success. While there are challenges at the graduate level, which we highlight below, the MA and PhD students that we interviewed were generally quite satisfied. One graduate student did note that the Department and the University are still working to create an environment that is welcoming to First Nations students, and to adequately respond to the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We found universal appreciation for the departmental staff by faculty and students. The staff, in turn, are clearly committed to the Department. Both those with longer and shorter terms of service in the Department feel valued, and believe that the department offers appropriate opportunities to advance in their careers. They are grateful for the department’s consideration of work-life balance, and for the confidence that the department shows in their ability to carry out their tasks. The cohesiveness of this unit is striking given the turnover that occurred in recent years, and the reorganization of roles that came in conjunction with that.

We were also impressed by the transparency in the department’s administration, as evidenced by a written constitution, and administrative forms and procedures that ensure a frequent rotation of faculty through administrative roles by means of open nominations and votes. One problem in relation to this is that the relative lack of full professors in the complement has meant that administrative roles fall heavily on Associate Professors. Our concern here is not at all with their capacity, which is extraordinary, but rather with the potentially negative impact on their own career progress.

We were impressed with the high quality of the Department’s programs. The Department adopted a set of 5 Educational Goals in January 2016 after an extended consultative process. Briefly stated, these commit Department members to helping students develop:

- i. Historical mindedness: a deep appreciation of the complexities of global human experience both past and present
- ii. Experience in information management: skills in critical research in various forms and sources
- iii. Effective analytical abilities and practices: assessing evidence and interpretations
- iv. Skills & habits of mind: critical reading, research, and communication; collaborative work
- v. Active and empathetic citizenship: public engagement

The Department is revisiting and revising both its undergraduate and graduate curriculum so that students can develop these skills and qualities. While it is an ongoing process, we were impressed with both the genuineness of the commitment and the progress made to date. In the sections below, we address the various questions set out in our Terms of Reference, and offer more specific comments and suggestions regarding curriculum, degree requirements, course offerings, and student progress.

## *2. Faculty Research*

In their research record, this is an impressive department. Almost half have won national or area prizes for their published scholarship, and three have received the Dean's medal for excellence in research, teaching, and service. The department also attracted two Canada Research Chairs. About half a dozen members of the department have succeeded in the SSHRC national competitions for the larger grant competitions, and many have made use of the small grants system.<sup>1</sup> Since the last unit review, the percentage who were holding research grants in any given year ranges from 26.1% to 53.8%. Others have won research fellowships at libraries and research institutions around the world. We were surprised that this data is not consistently captured and recorded in the university's research services system. The Office of Research Services does not, therefore, have a complete description of the research funding won by members of the department, or an adequate measure of the Department's overall research record.

The department members' CVs typically show a smooth process through tenure and promotion with a book and some articles, with a different profile appropriately for the two teaching professors on a CFL. The associate professors are individually making progress toward a second book, a series of substantial articles, and in several cases, a variety of digital presentations of their scholarly research. The full professors remain active as scholars. It was not clear to us whether the metrics adopted by the office of the VP Research adequately captured or assessed the full range and weight of faculty publication. We were particularly concerned that these might undervalue the importance of monographs and peer-reviewed essay collections published with academic presses, both of which are vital demonstrations of scholarly excellence in the discipline of History and bring prestige to Simon Fraser University.

Many members make a very substantial contribution through their research to the University's community profile, making their expertise available through media interviews, journalistic pieces, and public talks. For several, there is a strong public history element in their research, blending discovery and communication.

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<sup>1</sup> The number would be higher if we include one very recently retired member and one very recently hired member (but not yet at SFU).

On the question of the research climate of the department, it is harder to get or convey a picture through numbers. The department colloquium seems to be intermittent, but it exists and it offers members an opportunity to share their work. Lectures from visiting scholars in a variety of fields provide other occasions to meet and engage in discussion. It must be said that at a commuter campus, travel time is a serious disincentive to attend talks outside one's immediate area of teaching competence or research interest. In a department with a youngish demographic, childcare may limit on-campus time more often than if the age distribution were different. Moreover, as a discipline, historians often have their most important intellectual networks with colleagues at other universities, colleagues who share specialist knowledge. For instance, one of the Canadianists is on a research team centred in Montreal. Research collaboration is not a common model among colleagues in a History department. That said, two members of the History department have worked together with a larger team from the FASS, Education, a union, and a museum in a SSHRC-funded project on "(Re)Claiming the New Westminster Waterfront."

The department struck us as having a congenial climate, and having a few good informal conversations a year about one's research with a colleague seems likely. That's really the standard for a good intellectual community among such busy faculty members. With respect to the department's research environment, there are no major challenges, and we are confident that the department members are taking up opportunities as they present themselves.

Recommendations:

- i. The University should devise a system that allows it to record research grants from outside the Canadian TriCouncil granting system. This could readily be drawn from faculty members' annual reports.
- ii. If research productivity at SFU is to be evaluated by metrics, the measures should be sufficiently precise to capture the forms of publication and research presentation that are common in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

*3. Administration*

The participation of the members in the administration of the unit was commendable. Our judgment here is based on the CVs submitted with the report, conversations during our site visit, the self-study, and comments on the process by which the self-study was prepared. Aside from the reasonable concern expressed in the self-study (27-28) about whether the department could reasonably now fill all of the department service roles mandated in its constitution, we heard no complaints about the administrative life of the department. We thought that the 2 year terms of

the two Associate Chairs might be too short to implement any meaningful initiatives, but the scale of ongoing curricular changes demonstrates that the Department has managed to avoid falling into a managerial status quo, and that its committees are active and fully engaged. We were impressed that, apart from seven members who were out of town, all faculty took the time to meet with us.

The Self Study's description of a Chair's role as "democratic co-ordination" seems to us to have been followed well in this department. With the exception of one member jointly appointed with Humanities (and therefore likely accountable for service there), all members' CVs listed department service. While quantities and complexity of roles varied, there has been real contribution by all members. An important part of coordinating the work of a department is to continue to spread responsibilities as widely as is feasible and to avoid making any unnecessary work. The Chairs of this department seem to have succeeded in meeting these goals.

We were very favourably impressed with the administrative staff of the department. They seemed engaged, collaborative, and competent.

The Self-Study signals that both the workload policy and the constitution do not now exactly describe departmental practice. The departures in practice from the constitution seem to have been reasonable ones, and should be reflected in the document as a minor but necessary bit of administrative housekeeping. The revision of the workload policy will be a more complex undertaking, given the list of factors to consider. The department has already done good work identifying the issues that need to be addressed (29-30), and is in a position to proceed now that the new SFUFA collective agreement is in place. These are similar to issues that other departments face, and SFU History may wish to look at peer departments elsewhere for models that it could adapt.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Here is the equivalent table of "box top" points from a smaller Canadian department where there is a standard 3/2 undergraduate teaching workload and where a "1/2 course" is a one-semester course. It was designed in part to support the replacing of directed reading courses with the cross-listed 400/MA courses:

- Supervision of an MA student, first full year (MA, year1): .5 point
- Supervision of an MA student, upon completion (MA): .5 point
- Supervision of a PhD thesis, 1st to 3rd year (PhD, year1): .5 point
- Supervision of a PhD thesis, last year (PhD): 1 point
- Supervision of a PhD field (major) (GF): 1 point
- Supervision of a PhD field (minor) (GFm): .5 point
- Supervision of an Honours thesis to completion (H): .5 point
- Stand-Alone Graduate Class of five or more History students (GC): 5 points
- Coordinating [course with guest lecturers] as an overload (OL): 2.5 points
- Points deducted for being exempted from 1/2 course: 5 points

Anyone who teaches over 215 undergraduate students (including students in other units) is eligible for compensation equal to 5 points, provided they are claiming those

Recommendation:

- i. Revise the workload policy to ensure that it continues to reflect a consensus view about what sorts of overload teaching should be compensated and to reflect changes in the working environment.

*4. Undergraduate Program:*

The Department of History has a strong commitment to providing an excellent and remarkably rounded undergraduate education. The current Chair and her administrative team of faculty and staff work extraordinarily well together: to effectively monitor and enhance the coherence of their curriculum; to allow for individual and highly original strengths to flourish; and to manage and deploy the human and other resources that enhance a high-quality learning experience for students in History courses and programmes. We were impressed that the Department has aimed to minimize reliance on teaching faculty (i.e., Senior Lecturers) handling heavier loads, and that its tenured or tenure-stream faculty members teach most of the courses at all undergraduate levels.

The Department faces enrolment decline: between 2005-06 and 2015-16, Majors declined from 536 to 246 and Minors from 250 to 135 (Self Study 104). Course enrolments went from 4,845 in 2007-08 to 3,375 in 2015-16. Similar rates can be found across North America. Yet we noted that the decline at SFU History may also be exacerbated by the emergence of new program options available to those wanting to study history, notably the opening of a separate School for International Studies (2006) and of a Hellenic Studies department (2014-15). Both of these openings corresponded to particular declines in History program and course enrolments, suggesting to us that FASS-level administrative restructuring may have more to do with the Department's statistical performance than any broader decline in student interest.

The undergraduate course offerings, remarkably diverse, are now appealingly organized according to a set of intersecting thematic streams which complement older temporal and geographic organizing principles. We appreciated the incremental tinkering with, and reform of, the "gateway" and introductory courses which so define History for most undergraduates in the first two years of undergraduate study. Upper-level students and the Honours specialists are well-served by offerings and the engagement of History faculty, and moves to ease pre-requisites and cap course size will improve recruitment.

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points retroactively and have not already had their teaching load reduced to 2/2 on the basis of approved projected enrolments of 215 plus (T215+): 5 points



The department's commitment to focus growth in areas of Asia, Middle Eastern, and North American and Indigenous history where demand is strong and community outreach and engagement are possible is based on a clear assessment of how student demand and needs fit with the Educational Goals. The creation of two new introductory courses, one in the History of Technology and one in Global Environmental History, also demonstrate this pro-active approach to anticipating/gauging student demand. It may be time to retire the Scottish Studies program which, by contrast, has relatively low student demand and community support.

The Honours cohort was eager to see us, and they raved about the Department as "home," treating us to an array of salutary examples: of exposure to interdisciplinary methods; of creative courses and assignments within; of development of their research skills; of constructive feedback on writing; opportunities for peer commentary; and for building on presentational and interpersonal talents useful in "real world" scenarios. We believe that their skills and preparation provide a strong argument for an accelerated BA/MA option that would include more joint Honours/MA courses.

The number of teaching awards won by historians at SFU is striking, but only the beginning of what we discovered upon close investigation. In the realms of innovative pedagogical practices, "experiential" and co-curricular learning within the undergraduate curriculum, the Department is showing extraordinary leadership within the Faculty and University. Some examples:

- Engagement with "oral history" approaches is notably high in several SFU history classrooms, with the SSHRC-funded "(Re)Claiming the New Westminster Waterfront" (Professors Keough and Kelm), "Archives of Lesbian Oral Testimony" (Professor Chenier) and the "Japanese Canadian Oral History Digitization" (Professor Geiger) projects as only the most high-profile cases in point.
- Targeting mid-and upper-level undergraduates at the peak of their learning potential, is seen in a variety of project assignments which complement more conventional research papers. Working together with technology and orientation in the digital humanities available through the library, and in conjunction with the "healthy city initiative" and the Museum of Vancouver, undergraduates in Professor Kenny's "History of Vancouver" course are challenged to research a neighbourhood's history, selecting the most significant points of entry and stories, engaging with silences. Students design podcasts, historical walking tours, and substantive plaques, some of which we understand are now candidates for formal adoption by the city.

- Deconstructing, editing, and re-composing Wikipedia articles in some classes builds students' understanding of what it takes to create accessible but still responsible and scholarly public history. Exploring and taking apart what can often go wrong in such enterprises helps improve student skills in analysis and communication.

Spearheaded by their knowledgeable Communications and Events Co-ordinator, the community- and media-liaison work of this History Department is in impressive shape. Efforts to promote broadly and to connect imaginatively what historians do in their undergraduate teaching and research to the public at large, appear robust. The downtown public event which used the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation as a pretext for openly interrogating and reflecting upon the nation's past, present and future was jam-packed and lively. Upon further investigation, it became clear that SFU History does this kind of thing regularly – both in established discussion series and in standalone events. Department leaders have developed an exciting and nimble capacity to respond to current events and themes, and to organize timely discussions of the deeper historical contexts from which events and ideas emerge.

In the realm of student-centred and publically-engaged scholarship and teaching, the Department of History is showing the kinds of initiative and leadership that SFU wishes for, and that is the envy of other institutions. It is our impression that more tangible recognition and encouragement of History's initiatives and leadership would pay enduring dividends.

### *5. Graduate Program*

In 2014, the department surveyed alumni, current students, and faculty about their views on the graduate programs. The problems that emerged are not quite captured by the concerns set out in the Self Study and in our Terms of Reference with regard to improving funding and facilities and offering a better range of stand-alone courses. Nor does the current Graduate Program Chair's report have the same emphases. All parties are concerned about funding, and funding problems underpin other key issues facing the graduate program. Simon Fraser's History graduate students all must substantially self-fund, whether through family support, debt, part-time work, or some combination of the three.<sup>3</sup> After the MA student's first year's modest funding is gone after 3 terms, the student is likely working full-time for pay.

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<sup>3</sup> While no dollar amount for an acceptable standard of graduate funding was given (and naming a target amount would be helpful), the subsistence amount remaining after tuition and taxes on the TA income are paid seems to be about \$2,000 less per year than the poverty line for individuals living in cities larger than 500,000. Data on Low Income Cut-Off are from Canadian Council on Social Development (2006 data, adjusted for inflation with Bank of Canada data). Amount paid in income tax was calculated with a generic online Canadian tax calculator. Student income was assumed to be \$15,625 (2.5 GFs) plus \$10,948 (2 TA'ships at \$5,474 each). If only one TA'ship was assigned, the shortfall would be worse.

Their progress will slow down, and the prospects of completion become more remote.

The funding question thus hooks up to a question about program requirements. Is it possible to re-jig the MA program to make it reasonably easy to complete in a year (before the funding runs out) rather than over 4 terms? Or is it possible to organize at least the MA (not the PhD) so that, while a full-time option remains open, a part-time option is equally promoted and attractive?<sup>4</sup>

Two other serious concerns are directly related to the limits on graduate student funding: Retention and Time to Completion. We wondered whether these related issues of program funding and student outcomes might be critical to some comparative statistics offered in the Self Study (134) that suggest that History's graduate program is less well adapted to promoting student success. The MA withdrawal rate of 23% is significantly worse than either English (5%) or the FASS average (8%), and the 60% completion rate is significantly lower (English 94%; FASS 85%). Though not a substantially larger Department, English recruits over twice the number of MA students as History (78 to 35). At the PhD level, English took in one fewer student (11 to History's 12), but it had a significantly lower rate of withdrawals (27% vs 67%), and a significantly higher number of completions within 8 years (73% vs 17%). Some of these differences are certainly attributable to the greater time it takes History students to acquire languages and carry out archival research, and to better funding available in English, but we believe that a wider range of program options would allow more students to continue and complete their MA and PhD programs.

Discussions about changes to program requirements have not come from any concern that the basic educational project of the MA is misguided. The question really is whether the same educational goals can plausibly be reached, without a significant increase in faculty members' workload, if the program requirements are altered. The Department's discussions have resulted in a decision that there are two approaches that can achieve this result (Self-Study, 131). One is a concurrent BA/MA and the other is a course MA. Introduced together, these could recruit good numbers of strong students for thematic or regional classes at the 400 level, provided that not too many of these classes were offered. There may also be timetabling issues to consider in setting up these options. An extended essay for the course-MA option would be preferable to exams, so that prospective students would be eligible for SSHRC CGS-M scholarships. These are common options in peer and competitor institutions, and should be available to SFU History MA students as well. The Self Study notes that students polled in 2014 strongly supported the current MA by thesis, and feared that a course-based program would water down the value of their MA. We found the same in conversation with the current graduate students, but also

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<sup>4</sup> We assume that part-time students are not currently eligible for graduate scholarships, but a system that allowed funding for one full-time term might be an attractive option.

found that they were unaware that most other Canadian research universities offer course-based MAs, and that some actively discourage the thesis-based MA. This came as something of a surprise to them, and it was clear that their main concern was less one of course vs thesis than it was of an SFU MA being considered a less-rigorous outlier. We see no threat of that if History develops options for both a course-based and a short-thesis MA. In fact, the graduate program would likely become stronger, and its retention and time to completion statistics would certainly improve.

In addition to the new options designed to address the funding inadequacy and its consequences, we note that some small tweaks to the existing program might help. For thesis students, whether new or coming from the accelerated program, completion in a year might be more feasible if HIST 815 were demoted from a standalone course to a series of four workshops bridging the end of the first term and the beginning of the second. That kind of prospectus preparation might also address the gap, discussed in the 2014 study, that has sometimes emerged between the supervisor's views on thesis research design and those of the instructor and students in HIST 815.

The "all part-time" option is not in the control of the department to implement, but whether the above changes were adopted or not, it is an option that could work successfully with the current program if the University decides to reinstate it. The MA for teachers that the Department is also considering would be well-supported by a part-time option. We understood that the Graduate Dean does not want the graduate funding formula to stand as a barrier to useful innovations and we hope that a part-time option is in the cards for the near future.

We will not comment at any length on the Ph.D. program. There is no reason to suspend it: the faculty and library resources are more than adequate to support doctoral training in selected areas. But admissions will be few, limited to students who bring external funding. Of course, in some programs that enjoy strong donor support (eg., Hellenistic Studies and Muslim Societies and Cultures), fundraising for scholarships could in theory produce more support for doctoral students, both through fellowships and through language training and research funding.

In graduate program planning, as in other respects, this department is planning in a clear-sighted, evidence-based way, and taking action. They have already made some changes based on their 2014 study. We note that the changes are not yet reflected in the graduate student handbook, and we suggest that, while updating that crucial recruiting document, the FAQ about length of the MA thesis be supplemented with a sentence spelling out the assumption that this implies full-time academic work, with no more than 210 hours of part-time paid work per term.

Recommendations:

- i. Adopt an accelerated BA/MA, with more joint Honours/MA courses
- ii. Adopt a course-based MA with a major paper requirement
- iii. Restore the fully part time MA
- iv. Update the graduate handbook

*6. Workplace Environment*

The Department's workplace is a positive environment. An atmosphere of constructive collaboration emanates outwards from a much-respected Chair and, in our experience, an unusually engaged and effective set of administrative staff members. Our meetings revealed trust, and strong, creative relationships both between faculty serving in the key administrative roles, as well as between and across the professional administrative staff. All department constituencies, including students, staff, and faculty, are represented on the Working Environment and Outreach Committee (WEOAC), and this no doubt contributes to that committee's success in organizing outreach, recruitment, intellectual, and social events.

With respect to faculty, we are impressed with the way in which the current Chair and Undergraduate Program Chair are working together to implement reforms to the undergraduate curriculum in a careful and incremental manner. They are paying particular attention to the suite of first- and second-year courses that are so key to enrollment, and which attract and channel students into History's many offerings. We also noted the intelligent ways in which the Department's administrative leaders encourage, and promote the work of faculty members towards a wider public community and alumni, particularly through the downtown campus and via the outreach assisted by the current Communications and Events Co-ordinator.

The positive environment for faculty also derives in large part from sound expectations. The teaching loads for research and teaching faculty members are reasonable, as are the normal annual workload expectations. There are necessary and sensible reductions for members who take on administrative responsibilities, directorial assignments, and key curricular developments. While, as in most institutions, greater burden falls on certain highly effective, engaged individuals, consultation appears to be extensive, with respect to teaching loads, graduate supervisions, committee memberships and other forms of service. We were impressed that History has set the load of its Senior Lecturers at 6 courses rather than 8; we believe that this is a valuable way of curbing development of a 2-tier faculty system which would be harmful to Department morale.

The only aspect of the faculty workplace in which we detected a measure of discontent was, in our experience elsewhere, unsurprising: the directed reading courses which faculty offer an excellent MA or PhD candidate in lieu of a graduate seminar take time and commitment that are often inadequately acknowledged, let

alone rewarded. We address this in our recommendation in Sections 3 and 5 above.

With respect to the administrative staff, we note that SFU History staff work very well together. The Department has been blessed by remarkable continuity from some clearly remarkable individuals, not least from the Undergraduate Advisor (to whom all defer, and who has served in her role for eighteen years). Even when challenges have occurred, staff members have responded in a cooperative and creative manner that speaks volumes. In one example, we learned that in this Department the Chair's Secretary also serves as Graduate Program Assistant (things have evolved thus, we gathered). When the arrangement initially overwhelmed, the Department Manager herself took on the majority of the Graduate tasks, performing these until such time as the Chair's Secretary had found her feet, grown familiar with key deadlines, duties, and all else that would be required, and could comfortably serve in both roles. Another example of intelligent cooperation and flexibility is shown by the way in which a person who is, by all reports, an excellent Financial and Administrative Clerk is able to perform her vital job on the three-day-a-week schedule she prefers.

The working relationships between the Department of History and other University units appear to be productive and complementary. To provide a few examples which became evident to us, History and its members are clearly the vital partner, if not the foundation, for The School of International Studies, the Centre for Hellenic Studies, and the Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies, all of which appear to thrive. We noted a deep respect for the Department and its contributions from other humanities and social science units, for example the Department of English, from which our review team colleague Professor Betty Schellenberg comes.

#### *7. Intellectual and social community*

In our discussions with faculty members, we did not come across complaints about a lack of intellectual community in the Department. We found ample evidence of a wide range of lectures and seminars going on, and as we noted earlier, we were very impressed with the number of students, staff, and faculty who attended the community forum on Confederation (featuring 5 faculty members) at Harbour Centre.

There seems to be a general awareness and acceptance of the fact that intellectual community in the traditional sense of frequent events that are well attended by a broad range of faculty will be hard to create when most faculty are living across a wide area of metropolitan Vancouver and when many of them have young families, working spouses, and busy schedules. The problem here may lie less in the reality than in the expectation – ideals of intellectual community that were created under the very different sociological conditions of the 1960s or before cannot and should not be a standard, aspiration, or measure of success.

We were impressed with one concrete, creative, and rare feature of the Department's intellectual community: its Communications and Events Co-ordinator. The department created this position in a reorganizational exercise a few years ago. We believe that her efforts at organizing, advertising, and covering events and activities through both social and traditional media is an extraordinarily effective means of creating intellectual community among students, faculty, and the broader public.

### *7. Future Plans*

This is a dynamic Department. Its future plans are appropriate and manageable. Its Educational Goals are clearly thought out, and are guiding an active program of curricular renewal and program improvements at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Its faculty are active in research and publication. They are diligent in taking their work and their students both into the Lower Mainland and across the globe.

In the realms of teaching, we noted above that incremental reform to the undergraduate curriculum appears a best way forward, and most likely to lead to successful evolution according to the needs of students and faculty alike. On the graduate side, determining ways of better setting and regulating best-practices and acknowledging directed reading courses would address a gnawing issue for students and faculty alike. Expanding program options and adjusting requirements to acknowledge issues around retention and time to completion can only strengthen both the MA and PhD programs.

In the realm of complement and faculty growth, while we reviewers understand the constraints on appointments in the present climate, we likewise studied an excellent Department that is not just fulfilling but rather exceeding expectations in accordance with SFU's stated goals and vision of itself.

We believe that it is critically important to focus resources on those units and programs within the Department that have demonstrated an exceptional ability to recruit students and donors, and that contribute substantially to the University's academic mission, community engagement, and international reputation. A critical example of this is the Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures. The convergence of a retirement and possible resignation is rendering this Centre suddenly vulnerable. Its extraordinarily diverse range of pedagogical, research, and community activities advance the reputation and mission of the university, and maintaining faculty complement should be a high priority.

We also believe that the Department should also continue to foster links with those allied units that once were housed within it, like the School for International Studies and the Hellenic Studies Department, through cross-listed or jointly-numbered courses and cross-appointed faculty.

We see two shining opportunities for encouraging this Department's promising future and in delivering on SFU's potential for transformative leadership and vision: a tenure-stream position in aboriginal histories and one in global environmental history.

Respectfully Submitted

Kenneth Mills  
Shirley Tillotson  
Nicholas Terpstra (Chair)

23 March 2017





**\$19,864 per year (2 GFs and 1 TAsip) and is limited to three years. If eligible, students may supplement these packages with private awards and SSHRC scholarships. These sobering figures underscore the external reviewers' point that inadequate graduate funding slows student progress and is an obstacle to degree completion.**

**Educational Goals Assessment Plans: These drafts are still very much works in progress and the Department has not achieved consensus on how to best assess the Educational Goals it adopted last year. The current drafts follow the advice of Michael Lockett, educational consultant for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, that the assessment plan needs to demonstrate "only that curricular opportunities for that pursuit [of education goals] exist." Thus, we have mapped where in the curriculum – at the undergraduate and graduate levels – students in History courses have the opportunity to acquire the declared Education Goals. As a Department, we are firmly committed to the values of pedagogical autonomy, academic freedom, and diversity in the classroom and this framework will continue to inform the development of our assessment plans. We will continue to work on the assessment plans into the fall and intend to start the assessment process no later than Fall 2018.**

**Enclosures (3):**

**External Review – Action Plan**

**BA History Assessment Plan draft**

**MA & PhD History Assessment Plans draft**

## EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

### Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director

<b>Unit under review</b> HISTORY .....	<b>Date of Review Site visit</b> February 22-24, 2017 .....	<b>Responsible Unit person</b> Jennifer M. Spear .....	<b>Faculty Dean</b> Jane Pulkingham .....
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**Notes**

1. It is **not** expected that every recommendation made by the Review Team be covered by this Action Plan. 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.
2. Attach the required plan to assess the success of the **Educational Goals** as a separate document (Senate 2013).
3. Should any additional response be warranted, it should be attached as a separate document.

### **1: PROGRAMMING**

**1.1 Action/s (description what is going to be done):**

**1.1.1 Undergraduate:**

- Adopt an accelerated BA/MA.
- Participate in FASS and University discussions about indigenizing and decolonizing the curriculum in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.
- Create joint major with FNST.
- Assess results of past recruitment efforts and changes to the undergraduate curriculum and continue to implement incremental reforms to improve enrollments

**1.1.2 Graduate:**

- Update the graduate handbook.
- Transform History 815 (Prospectus Workshop) into a series of four workshops bridging the end of the fall semester and the beginning of the spring semester.
- Adapt the existing MA program for secondary school teachers by changing course sequencing.
- Adopt an accelerated BA/MA.
- Adopt a course-based MA with a major paper requirement.
- Support the Dean of Graduate Studies in restoring the part-time MA option.
- Explore fundraising opportunities for additional private awards and other resources for graduate students, especially for language training and to create funding packages commensurate with Vancouver cost of living.

**1.2 Resource implications (if any):**

One course release for each of the two faculty members tasked with the exceptional service of leading the development of the two new programs (accelerated BA/MA and course-based MA).  
Support from FASS Advancement in pursuing fundraising opportunities.  
Pursue the possibility of a cross-appointed faculty with FNST.

**1.3 Expected completion date/s:**

Summer 2017: Update of graduate handbook. To be updated thereafter as needed to keep current with policy changes.

Establishment of a working group of Graduate Program Committee members, past instructors of HIST 815, and graduate students to transform 815 from a spring-taught course into a series of workshops to be launched Fall 2017.

2017/18: The Undergraduate Program Committee will investigate accelerated BA/MA programs within the University and in other History Departments across North America (coordinating with the Graduate Program Committee as necessary) while the GPC will do the same for course-based MA programs. The UPC will develop the joint major with FNST for implementation by Fall 2018. The impact of recruitment efforts and curricular reforms will be investigated in order to help determine whether to continue or modify recruitment efforts and/or propose additional curricular reforms in an effort to boost enrollments.

2018/19: Program proposals for the two new programs will be discussed by the Department; if the Department decides to go ahead and develop either or both of these programs, the program approval process will be initiated with a goal of opening admission to the program(s) by Fall 2021.

Spring 2019: Admit first cohort into MA for secondary school teachers to begin program in Summer 2019.

Ongoing: explore fundraising opportunities and participate in campus discussions about the TRC calls to action.

## **2. RESEARCH**

**2.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):**

- Work with Associate Dean-Research, FASS, to encourage the University to develop a system that more accurately captures research productivity and funding successes of History faculty (and humanities researchers in general).
- Build on Department's historic strengths in Middle-East history and the presence of the CCSMSC.

**2.2 Resource implications (if any):**

Possible new faculty line in Middle Eastern history.

**2.3 Expected completion date/s:**

Ongoing.

### 3. ADMINISTRATION

#### 3.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- Revise the Department's operation of workload policy to ensure that it continues to reflect a consensus view about what sorts of overload teaching should be compensated and to reflect changes in the working environment.
- Minimize the substantial departmental service being carried out by Associate Professors.
- Revise the Department Constitution.

#### 3.2 Resource implications (if any):

#### 3.3 Expected completion date/s:

Fall 2017: Data collection and analysis of workload in the History Department over the past few years as enrollments declined and investigation into workload policies in other FASS units and at other similar History departments throughout North America. Solicit recommendations for changes to the Department Constitution.

Spring 2018: Discussion of results of fall's investigations and development of new process of workload allocation and equivalencies. Discussion and revision of the Department Constitution.

Fall 2018: Adoption of new process of workload allocation and equivalencies.

2017/18: In seeking new Department, Graduate, Undergraduate, and WEOAC Chairs from Fall 2018 and thereafter, the Chair's Advisory Council will make every effort to recruit nominees for these positions so that Associate Professors do not take on the bulk of this service.

### 4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

#### 4.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- Continue to build on strong interdisciplinary relations with First Nations Studies; Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Hellenic Studies; and International Studies through cross-listed courses and associate faculty memberships.
- Address faculty discontent with burden of directed readings through revision of current course equivalencies, "box-top" system.

#### 4.2 Resource implications (if any):

#### 4.3 Expected completion date/s:

See 3.3 (adoption of new workload allocation and equivalences)

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)

Name



Title

Chair

Date

16 October 2017

**Section 2 - Dean's Comments and Endorsement of the Action Plan:**

I met with Dr. Jennifer Spear, Chair of the Department of History on June 12 2017 with Glynn Nicholls (Office of the VPA) to discuss the external review prepared by Professor K. Mills (Michigan), Professor N. Terpstra (Toronto), and Professor S. Tillotson (Dalhousie).

Our office has given close consideration to the external review and to the detailed response from the Department of History. The external reviewers have produced a very thoughtful assessment, capturing the strengths found in the Department, identifying opportunities for new initiatives building on the department's strengths, as well as some challenges.

As the attached Action Plan outlines, the Department plans to pursue a number of well-considered programming initiatives. At the undergraduate level, these include adopting an accelerated BA/MA, a joint major with First Nations Studies and participating in FASS and university-wide deliberations about indigenizing and decolonizing the curriculum. At the graduate level, the initiatives include adopting a course based MA, adapting/regularizing the existing pilot MA program for secondary school teachers and redeveloping and maintaining an updated graduate handbook.

In order to address working environment issues associated with the administration of teaching and service responsibilities, the unit will review and revise its unit-level workload policy particularly in relation to matters of overload teaching and course equivalencies (in an environment of declining enrollments) and assignment of service by rank of professoriate. The unit will also revise its Constitution. Our office will provide support to the unit as it revises its workload policy, particularly as this policy intersects with implementation of minimum course enrollments at the Faculty level in FASS. A potential resource for the unit as it revised its unit-level workload policy is the comprehensive workload policy developed by the Faculty of the Environment.

The external reviewers commend the unit's impressive record of research, but urge the university to develop more robust and inclusive measures of research impact that better reflect research productivity of disciplines in the humanities and arts. Our office strongly supports this recommendation and will continue to urge the office of the VPR to adopt additional alternative metrics and will support the unit in its endeavours on this front.

The department identifies two possible areas for future faculty hiring: one cross appointment with First Nations Studies; and a hire in Middle-East history. The former hire is to align with the development of the joint major, and indigenization/decolonizing initiatives; the latter hire is to build on existing strengths and the work of the Centre for Comparative Muslim Societies and Cultures. The office of the Dean will endeavour to support future faculty hiring in the unit as identified above, while balancing renewal needs in FASS as a whole over the next three to five-year period.

Faculty Dean



Date

October 11, 2017

Department of History, Education Goals: Draft of Assessment Plan, BA, June 2017

Areas	Goals	Opportunities for Attainment	
		<i>During the Program</i>	<i>By the end of the Program</i>
<b>Historical mindedness</b>	Attain a deep, discerning appreciation of the complexities of human experience around the world from past to present	Written and oral/ practical assignments such as map tests, quizzes, examinations and primary source analyses set for HIST 1 XX and 2 XX lower division courses	Written assignments such as research essays, review essays, response papers, and primary source analyses set for HIST 3XX and 4XX upper division courses
<b>Experience in information management</b>	Find, filter, contextualize, and independently engage with a large number of print, digital, visual and specialized data pertinent to the examination of change over time	Written assignments such as primary source analyses, research essays and reading response assignments set for HIST 1 XX and 2 XX lower division courses	Written assignments such as research essays, review essays, response papers, and primary source analyses set for <i>all</i> HIST 3XX and 4XX upper division courses  Seminar discussion activities set for <i>some</i> HIST 3XX and 4XX upper division courses  HIST 494 Honours group projects
<b>Effective analytical abilities and practices</b>	Engage with and critique complex historical evidence and diverse theoretical and ideological perspectives	Written assignments and tutorial activities such as primary source analyses, essays and research papers set for HIST 1 XX and 2 XX lower division courses	Written assignments and seminar activities such as research essays, source analyses, review and response papers set for HIST 3XX and 4XX upper division courses  HIST 400, 494 Honours historiography and methodology seminars



Department of History, Education Goals: Draft of Assessment Plan, BA, June 2017

<p><b>Skills and habits of mind valued beyond the classroom</b></p>	<p>Acquire disciplined reading, writing, research, and oral communication skills relevant to history as well as associated disciplines and professional settings</p>	<p>Written assignments and tutorial activities such as response papers, classroom discussions and debates, quizzes and class presentations set for HIST 1 XX and 2 XX lower division courses</p> <p>Community-based experiential activities such as walking tours, outreach work, and oral history projects assigned for some 2XX, 3XX courses</p>	<p>Written assignments and seminar activity such as writing research papers of varied lengths, paper presentations, peer review activities set for HIST 3XX and 4XX upper division courses</p> <p>Community-based experiential activities such as walking tours, outreach work, and oral history projects assigned for some 4XX courses</p>
	<p>Acquire experience in independent and collaborative tasks required in varied professional settings</p>	<p>Small group work and activities set in HIST 1XX and 2XX lower division tutorials</p>	<p>Small group work set in HIST 3XX and 4XX upper division seminars</p> <p>HIST 400, 494 Honours historiography and methodology.</p> <p>HIST 494 Honours group project.</p>
<p><b>Active and empathetic citizenship</b></p>	<p>Routinely practice historical thinking and awareness of different times, cultures and politics</p>	<p>Breadth requirements in HIST 1XX and 2XX lower division courses</p>	<p>Written assignments and seminar discussions in HIST 3XX and 4XX upper division courses</p> <p>HIST 400, 494 Honours historiography and methodology seminars</p> <p>HIST 494 Honours group project</p> <p>Community-based experiential activities such as walking tours, outreach work, and oral history projects assigned for some 4XX courses</p>

Department of History, Education Goals: Draft of Assessment Plan, BA, June 2017

	Develop an understanding of the components of historical study as instruments of responsible engagement with the world today	Community-based experiential activities such as walking tours, outreach work, and oral history projects assigned for some 2XX, 3XX courses	Written assignments and seminar discussions in HIST 3XX and 4XX upper division courses HIST 400, 494 Honours historiography and methodology seminars. HIST 494 Honours group project
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**Department of History, Education Goals: Draft of Assessment Plans, MA and PhD**  
**June 2017**

<b><u>M.A. Educational Goals</u></b>	<b><u>Opportunities Provided In</u></b>
<p><b><u>Historical mindedness:</u></b> Attain mastery of a deep, discerning appreciation of the complexities of human experience around the world, from past to present. Develop advanced knowledge of historiography and historical methods.</p>	<p>814; any of 806, 810, 822, 843, 845, 852, 870, 821, 882, 889, 890, 892, 896, 872, 887, and 894            898, Thesis</p>
<p><b><u>Experience in information management:</u></b> Find, filter, contextualize, and independently engage with a large body of print, digital, and/or audiovisual materials pertinent to a comprehensive study of change over time. Through researching and writing assignments of varied lengths, the Master's student will excel at the collection and analysis of both historical primary sources and scholarly material.</p>	<p>Thesis prospectus            898, Thesis</p>
<p><b><u>Effective analytical abilities and practices:</u></b> Engage with, interpret and evaluate complex historical evidence as well as advanced theoretical, conceptual, and ideological perspectives. The student will demonstrate the ability to formulate an original research project, identify pertinent sources, and undertake a thorough, efficient, and even-handed examination of those sources within the context of the scholarly literature in the field.</p>	<p>898, Thesis</p>
<p><b><u>Skills and habits of mind valued beyond the classroom:</u></b> Acquire advanced capabilities in disciplined reading, writing, research, and oral communication skills essential to the independent and collaborative tasks required in varied professional and community settings.</p>	<p>898, Thesis            Thesis defense            Participation in candidates' seminar, colloquium, conferences, etc.</p>
<p><b><u>Active and empathetic citizenship:</u></b> Practice advanced historical thinking and awareness of different times, cultures and polities as instruments of responsible engagement with the world today. Evaluate and comment critically on the contemporary use of history in the media and in economic and political discourse. Provide context and interpretations to further public discussion of issues and debates.</p>	<p>Any of 806, 810, 822, 843, 845, 852, 870, 821, 882, 889, 890, 892, 896, 872, 887, and 894</p>

**Department of History, Education Goals: Draft of Assessment Plans, MA and PhD**  
 June 2017

<b><u>Ph.D. Educational Goals</u></b>	<b><u>Opportunities Provided In</u></b>
<p><u>Historical mindedness:</u> Attain mastery of a deep, discerning appreciation of the complexities of human experience around the world, from past to present. Develop advanced knowledge of historiography and historical methods. Demonstrate advanced awareness of the role of historians in the construction of the past and the role of the contemporary context in shaping the perspectives of historians.</p>	<p>814 860, 861, 861 (comprehensive exams) 899, Thesis</p>
<p><u>Experience in information management:</u> Find, filter, contextualize, preserve, and independently engage with a large body of print, digital, and/or audiovisual materials pertinent to a comprehensive examination of change over time. Through researching and writing assignments of substantial length, the PhD student will master the collection and analysis of both historical primary sources and scholarly material.</p>	<p>Thesis prospectus 899, Thesis</p>
<p><u>Effective analytical abilities and practices:</u> Engage with, interpret and evaluate complex historical evidence as well as advanced theoretical, conceptual, and ideological perspectives. Generate original conceptual or interpretive perspectives from independent research. Through the successful completion of a PhD thesis, the student will demonstrate the ability to formulate an original research project, identify a large variety of historical sources, and undertake a sustained and meticulous examination of those sources within the context of the existing scholarly literature in the field. Make an original contribution to the available knowledge of a specific area of historical study.</p>	<p>899, Thesis</p>
<p><u>Postsecondary teaching acumen:</u> Demonstrate preparedness to teach introductory, intermediate, and advanced postsecondary courses through the successful completion of three comprehensive field exams, based on a mastery of 45 books (or equivalent) per field.</p>	<p>860, 861, 861 (comprehensive exams) Teaching assistantships Sessional instruction</p>

Department of History, Education Goals: Draft of Assessment Plans, MA and PhD  
June 2017

<p><u>Skills and habits of mind valued beyond the classroom:</u> Acquire advanced skills in disciplined reading, writing, research, and oral communication essential to the independent and collaborative tasks required in varied professional settings. Through coursework and the successful defense of a PhD prospectus and thesis, and through speaking at academic conferences and talks, the student will demonstrate the capacity to arrive at independent conclusions through verbal discussion.</p>	<p>Prospectus and defense 899, Thesis and defense Participation in colloquium, conferences, etc.</p>
<p><u>Active and empathetic citizenship:</u> Practice advanced historical thinking and awareness of different times, cultures and polities as instruments of responsible engagement with the world today. Evaluate and comment critically on the contemporary use of history in the media and in economic and political discourse. Provide context and interpretations to further public discussion of issues and debates.</p>	<p>814</p>

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