



Senate Committee on University Planning

Academic Unit Review Summary: DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Site Visit	November 13-14, 2017
Informal Response to Planning	April 9, 2018
Formal Response to Planning	May 7, 2018
Implementation Update	March 4, 2019
Midterm Review	2021-22

Review Team Members:

- Dr. Carolyn Kay, History, Trent University (Chair, Review Team)
- Dr. John Reid, History, Saint Mary’s University
- Dr. Craig Brett, Economics, Mount Allison University

Note: The following recommendations are taken verbatim from the external review. For context they should be read in conjunction with the department’s formal response, particularly with respect to recommendations # 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 23, 24, and 27.

Recommendations of the Academic Program Review

Curriculum:

- 1) That the department discuss offering at least one team-taught course (theme-based) for the first year, and initiate dialogue with other Humanities programs to develop such a course.
- 2) That courses on Indigenous history be introduced, covering the history of Canada’s Indigenous peoples and also global Indigeneity.
- 3) That the department build an expanded and coherent suite of courses in the field of archival and museum studies, along with the related study of historical memory and commemoration, and public history in general. With a large number of collections and institutions to work with (as enumerated in the section of this report on research), there is potential for a program focus that would have attractive career prospects for students and the capacity to launch a co-op education option.
- 4) That some third and fourth-year courses be rethought, because of declining enrolment; and that cross-listed or new courses be introduced – such as courses on the history of science or business, and/or courses on World War One or World War Two, that could attract larger numbers of students from different disciplines.
- 5) That the prerequisites for courses from the second to the fourth year be made consistent and less restrictive for students.

- 6) That the structure, requirements and development of study within the fourth-year thesis courses be reviewed and made consistent, so as to attract students to these unique opportunities for study and to also make such courses manageable for students.
- 7) That courses in other disciplines, such as Fine Art, German, Spanish, and Politics & International Relations, be studied as possible cross-listings by History, to add to History's curriculum and extend the scope of the historical areas under consideration for students.
- 8) That courses in women's and gender history be fully supported and sustained and added to in future by thematic courses including studies of gender and masculinity.

Research

- 9) That insofar as tutorial classes are given in addition to normal teaching hours, and insofar as these arrangements are deemed to impinge on research time, department members be encouraged to develop alternative ways of accommodating small-group work.
- 10) That the department, in consultation with the university administration, work to ensure that (allowing for vacation periods and for necessary course preparation) faculty members are free of duties during the summer months that would compete with time for research and writing.
- 11) That the department's website, through a prominent and dedicated tab, should provide links to full scholarly profiles of all members.
- 12) That the department establish a regular department seminar that would facilitate dissemination of research findings to departmental colleagues, colleagues in other departments and programs, and senior students.
- 13) That the department seek to underline the importance of enabling members of faculty to be regular attenders at conferences relevant to their fields, and as far as possible to present research findings at such conferences.
- 14) That department members be encouraged to look into productive ways of presenting research findings through electronic communication networks, including blogs and social media.
- 15) That opportunities for interdisciplinary research be pursued in the context of areas of strength at Mount Allison, of which examples might be Canadian Studies, Indigenous Studies, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.
- 16) That, in conjunction with curricular innovations, the department and its members reach out to important museum and archival institutions in the Dorchester-Sackville-Amherst area with a view to exploring research activities in such broad thematic fields as Archival, Library, and Museum History, Art History, Cultural History, and Public History.

Enrolment

- 17) That the department undertake a study to determine plausible explanations for declining enrolments in recent years, especially at the third-year level. In particular, that it try to uncover whether the pattern reflects a decline in enrolment among non-majors, or whether it may signal an impending decline in the number of majors.

University Resources

- 18) That the university continue to strengthen expertise and availability of writing support for students. Given the writing intensity of the course work in History, especially at the first-year level, writing competency underpins success in History courses. It should be recognized that a Writing Center should help students develop abilities in essay construction, along with basic writing and grammar. Moreover, a Writing Center should have a complement of professional instructors in addition to student tutors. The university should give urgent consideration to allocating a dedicated budget line to the Writing Center so that the level of support can be adequately tracked.
- 19) That the level of secretarial and office administrative support provided to the department be maintained. The department currently shares support personnel with two other programs and it is difficult to see how the department could carry out some of our other recommendations (around departmental seminars, for example) with any further reduction of support.

Renewal

- 20) That the department make every effort to build on its praiseworthy achievement of a stable basis of civility by developing a deepening culture of active collegiality that will facilitate effective planning and healthy renewal.
- 21) That, in view of the small size of the department vis-à-vis comparator departments in the Maritime region, and of necessary curricular demands, the department is well-justified in pressing for an additional faculty position, with the understanding that in seeking such an additional position the department would have the duty of showing the expected benefit to the institution as a whole by marshalling evidence regarding enrolment trends and the productivity of the department's university-wide role.
- 22) That departmental renewal should focus initially on expanding the curriculum's geographical scope beyond the current coverage primarily of Europe, North America, and Asia, while also adding expertise in the early modern era. The establishment of a position in the history of the early modern Atlantic World, with particular attention to its Iberian dimensions, would be an obvious priority. Such an appointment would also allow for added curricular consideration of Indigenous history in an Iberian Atlantic context, and potentially it could also include an element of the history of Africa and Africans.
- 23) That, especially in the context of the ongoing consideration at Mount Allison of a minor in Indigenous Studies, as well as the broader effort to decolonize the university curriculum, another priority area

should be the addition of a specialist in Indigenous history, either an appointment in Canadian Indigenous history or a person with wider North American or global expertise

- 24) That the existing area of strength in women's and gender history should be carefully maintained as an ongoing priority.
- 25) That in all new appointments the department seek to add colleagues who can be reliably expected to be active and committed researchers.
- 26) That in all new appointments the department seek to add colleagues who are able to demonstrate that they can teach effectively in the context of broadly-defined thematic fields at first-year level, while also offering more specialized courses at the upper levels.
- 27) That in conjunction with curricular and research directions in the field broadly defined as archival and museum studies, along with the related study of historical memory and commemoration, and public history in general, an interest in this area be deemed to be an asset for an applicant for any future faculty position, whatever the main focus of the appointment may be.
- 28) That, in addition to maintaining an equitable gender balance, the department seek where possible to advance faculty representation from among people of Indigenous origin, people of colour, LBGTQ people, and/or people with disabilities.