

## **Decennial Review**

### **Department of History, University of Washington**

Devin De Weese, Professor, Department of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University

Katharyne Mitchell, Professor of Geography, University of Washington (committee chair)

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April 2012

## **Decennial Review of the Department of History, University of Washington**

### **Summary of Process**

In Fall 2011, the Graduate School formed a committee to conduct the decennial review of the Department of History. Professor Katharyne Mitchell, (committee chair), Department of Geography, and Associate Professor Richard Watts, Department of French and Italian Studies, served as internal University of Washington members. Professor Devin DeWeese, Department of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University, Professor Penny Von Eschen, Department of History, University of Michigan, and Professor Mark von Hagen, Professor and Director of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies at Arizona State University, served as external committee members. Ms. Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist and Academic Affairs and Planning, the Graduate School, coordinated the review and the activities of the committee.

On December 14, the internal committee members attended a charge meeting with Graduate School Council Representatives Marshall Brown and Thomas Lee, Assistant Dean Deborah Wiegand, Associate Vice Provost and Associate Dean James Antony, Senior Academic Program Specialist Augustine McCaffery, and Chair Kent Guy. In preparation for the charge meeting, the committee reviewed a number of documents, including the academic program review guidelines, the core questions for the history department, and the charge letters. The committee asked some questions of Kent Guy relating to the Core Questions for Departmental Review.

Prior to the on-site meeting of April 5-6, the committee members were asked to review a comprehensive self-study report prepared by Kent Guy and the history department in February 2012. The committee also reviewed the GPSS survey report. Augustine McCaffery issued invitations to faculty, staff, graduate, and undergraduate students to contact the committee by email and to meet with the committee in groups during the site visit. The chair of the committee received emails from four individuals and met with Margaret O'Mara prior to the site visit.

During the site visit, the entire committee met with faculty organized by rank and by area, with the staff, and with both graduate and undergraduate students. They also met with individual faculty, including the following: Kent Guy, Chair of the Department of History, Resat Kesaba, Director of JSIS, Lynn Thomas, Incoming Chair of the Department, Anand Yang, Professor in JSIS, Joel Walker, Associate Professor of History, and Glennys Young, Director of Graduate Studies. The committee also met with subfields such as European History and Chinese History. In all, the committee met with 26 faculty members of the department. The committee also met approximately five graduate students and eight undergraduate students with no departmental representatives present.

The exit discussion consisted of the following people: Department faculty: Kent Guy and Lynn Thomas (incoming chair); Executive Vice Provost Douglas Wadden; Divisional Dean

Judy Howard; Assistant Deans: Aanerud, Wiegand, Brown, and Lee; Senior Academic Program Specialist Augustine McCaffery. This was followed by an exit meeting with University administrators and graduate school representatives only.

Additionally, the committee re-reviewed many documents. Among them were the previous review committee report from 10 years ago, the department response to that report, and the department's recent self-study. Finally, the committee met at the end of the site visit and subsequently continued to consult via email.

## Overview

**Based on its thorough review, the review committee enthusiastically recommends the continuing status of each of the programs, with a subsequent review in 10 years.**

In the remainder of this report, we will assess the overall health of the Department, as requested in the charge letter to the committee, and offer some advice as to how the state of what we regard as an already "healthy" department might be further improved. We have paid special attention to the four questions posed to us at the beginning of the process:

1. Are they doing what they should be doing?
2. Are they doing it well?
3. How can they do things better?
4. How could the University assist them?

### *Department's Strengths*

In recent years, several strategic and exciting appointments at the junior and associate level have earned the department a national and international reputation for scholars at the cutting edge of work in transnational and global histories of empire, comparative colonialism, racial formation, and the intersections with gender and sexuality. The department's Europeanists are contributing to important debates about the impact of Europe overseas; likewise, several of the Americanists stress ties with diasporas and the US's engagement with the world. The department has also made excellent appointments in the history of science, health and medicine, and environmental history. Several faculty have collaborated on areas of common interest and complementarity, such as the conference that produced a volume of essays entitled *The Modern Girl Around the World*. (This project brought together the department's two modern China historians, its historians of modern Germany and Africa, together with colleagues in other departments at UW and elsewhere.) Another site of intellectual collaboration has been critical race studies. A lecture series has been funded with the Hanauer gift; two other members of this group have won a grant for a project on "Race Across the Disciplines."

While moving into these new and important fields of history, the department has maintained its traditional strengths in several areas, most notably Asia (especially East Asia), Europe, and the Pacific Northwest. The department also has an excellent reputation for its public scholarship, the two most outstanding and visible examples of which are the Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest and its journal, the *Pacific Northwest Journal* (John Findlay/Moon-Ho Jung) and the University's Center for Labor Studies (housed jointly in history and political science departments), directed by Jim Gregory in US history. The Center produces an important labor history and civil rights website that is a valuable resource for teachers of Seattle history and secondary and primary education in the community.

Several faculty have received prizes and other awards of distinction for their scholarship. Most recently, Stephanie Smallwood's first book won the prestigious Frederick Douglass Book Prize from the Gilder Lehrman Center at Yale University, Moon-Ho Jung's first book won prizes from both the Organization of American Historians and the Association for Asian-American Studies, and Raymond Jonas' book has been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Several colleagues have served in important positions in national and international scholarly associations and on boards of important journals in their fields. Currently one colleague is the immediate past President of the Western History Association (Quintard Taylor) and another serves as President of the Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies. Other faculty have served in University administration; most recently, Robert Stacey, a distinguished European medievalist, was appointed interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The department's broad geographic and chronological coverage allows colleagues to serve as bridges that connect the Atlantic and Pacific worlds and as an important nexus for the entire university, especially within the social sciences, humanities, and increasingly beyond to the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, the College of the Environment, the medical school, and others. Seven colleagues specializing in Asian and Russian history hold joint appointments in the Jackson School, making history one of the most important social sciences serving the area studies communities. Historians have regularly chaired the area studies programs and the federal Title VI area studies centers. The current director of the Comparative History of Ideas program is Phillip Thurtle, also a historian. Other colleagues hold adjunct appointments in: Anthropology; Gender, Women and Sexuality studies; French and Italian Studies; Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations; and the Program on the Environment.

The department, through its hiring decisions, has transformed itself over the past two decades from a community of relatively homogeneous scholars to one of great diversity. This diversity is expressed both demographically and in terms of the research and teaching profiles of the faculty. There is a wide variety of accepted scholarship and a sense of openness to collaboration both inside and outside the department.

Nearly all colleagues expressed appreciation for a department that is genuinely collegial despite its size and diversity. Junior colleagues praised the department's attention to and help with their tenure and promotion decisions, though associates expressed anxiety about

the next stage of promotion to full from associate. Most colleagues shared the perception that faculty at all ranks share teaching responsibilities across the curriculum.

The department is widely recognized and prides itself on being a fabulous teaching department. Its members have won numerous university teaching awards, including nine Distinguished Teaching Awards, and earned the enthusiastic endorsement of both undergraduates and graduates for their expertise, their accessibility to students, and their flexibility in the types of projects students are encouraged to pursue. Two of the professorships are named after the department's most famous teachers, Jon Bridgman and Giovanni Costigan. Despite diminishing resources, the faculty are doing more with less, and are deeply committed to adhering to the high standards of learning that they believe are integral to the teaching of history: critical thinking, reading, writing, and speaking. The department makes a concerted and systematic effort to assess student satisfaction by conducting exit surveys for all graduating seniors and advanced degree recipients. The department is fortunate to have a very talented, effective and popular academic advisor for its undergraduates.

Graduate student applications are up, a sign of the continuing vibrancy of the graduate program and its reputation around the world. UW graduates have an excellent record of placement in four-year and community colleges, regional institutions, and research universities (including Brown, Yale, University of Michigan, UCLA, UC Riverside, UC Irvine, Harvard, USC, and many foreign universities), despite an overall dismal employment market for historians. The department has begun to reform the program with an eye to reducing time to degree; a dissertation prospectus requirement has been introduced that must be passed within the first quarter after the written exams. Also, a core colloquium has been planned and will be offered for the first time next year. These reforms are viewed positively by the graduate students.

The department has been very successful in raising external funds, largely through appreciative alumni. Over the past decade, the department has been able to endow six new professorships and two faculty fellowships. Some colleagues have held university-wide endowed chairs, such as the Bullitt Chair in U.S. history. The funds held by the department allow for coverage of some summer salary, research and travel expenses.

### ***Challenges Facing the Department***

History has seemingly weathered the state budget crisis and concomitant College-level budget cuts relatively well: while there have been a few notable departures, the number of faculty has not declined precipitously, the graduate program seems to be finding its level following cuts in TA funding, and the undergraduate major remains robust. It is therefore striking to find faculty, graduate students, and—to a lesser extent—undergraduate students and staff describing a department in some peril.

This angst is surely the result of the changing material conditions of working and learning at the UW, which we will address here. However, it also stems from the less tangible prospect of further losses of key personnel related to the department's demographics

(upcoming—though, for now, unannounced—retirements) and the UW’s comparative disadvantage in the retention of early- and mid-career faculty.

The most significant change in material working conditions and the greatest challenge to the department in the transition to activity-based budgeting is the increase in the student-TA ratio in History classes. In response to the Dean’s mandate to use TA resources more efficiently, History has moved from a maximum 50-1 student-TA ratio to 75-1 and in certain cases 100-1. The jury is still out on how this has affected the quality of instruction—especially as it concerns one of the central missions of undergraduate teaching in History: written communication—but it has noticeably harmed faculty morale. To be clear, the problem isn’t simply that faculty are working with TAs who are stretched to the point of being unable to, for instance, provide assistance in grading written work; it is that the imperative to use TA resources more efficiently was quickly followed by a mandate to maintain or improve the quality of instruction. This, not surprisingly, was experienced by most faculty as a double bind. It is clear that better communication between the Department and the Dean will resolve at least some of these problems. But the committee also noted the faculty’s strength of conviction regarding teaching with appropriate TA-to-student ratios, and encourages the department to convey this position more effectively to the Dean.

Even though the overall numbers of undergraduate History majors has not dipped significantly, some faculty expressed concerns regarding the distribution of student credit hours by area; namely, that there are an especially large number of students enrolling in Ancient, Medieval, and Early-Modern courses. With the loss of Bob Stacey to the Dean’s office several years ago, many undergraduates are consequently taught by one person, who works as a part-time lecturer on a year-by-year basis. This is a situation that the committee sees as unsustainable over the long-term for the lecturer as well as for the department and recommends that a contract be offered that provides both with more stability.

The less tangible threats the department faces coalesce mostly around the sustainability of excellence in particular fields. Chinese History remains an area of strength, but faculty in this area feel that upcoming retirements will imperil the renowned subfield. Likewise, European History has lost key personnel in recent years, and the remaining faculty felt that they were one departure away from imminent collapse. Several faculty and groups of faculty in specific subfields spoke passionately about the need for an historian of modern Germany and for one working in the area of Islamic history. The recent loss of Florian Schwartz was felt particularly strongly, as he ‘knit together’ several of the regional subfields, and graduate students in particular were better able to form committees because of his role as intellectual bridge-builder.

Clearly, hiring in the areas identified above and in the self-study is important. However, the committee feels that, without abandoning strengths in place and time, the department needs to present their thematic strengths better and find more effective ways of connecting them. Future hires should also be thought of in this way. A faculty member who can fill a particular chronological and geographical hole should also be able to plug into wider thematic networks on campus. Linda Nash’s strategic partnership with other parts of the university (College of the Environment) is exemplary in this regard. Other possibilities

include themes of health, empire, mercantilism, etc. These types of thematic interests (accompanied by in-depth knowledge of a particular region and time period) may provide opportunities for even more partnerships that will benefit history over the long haul, especially in more uncertain future times for the humanities and social sciences more generally.

Finally, as noted in the section regarding the department's strengths, History prides itself in its collegiality. It would be absurd to suggest that collegiality in itself is a problem, but the disconnect between the confident tone of the department's self-study and the expressions of profound concern about the department's future was notable. These concerns—primarily relating to the viability of the graduate program and key area studies fields, as well as the quality of undergraduate teaching—suggest that the imperative of collegiality may at times curtail frank discussions. The much appreciated individual freedom and lack of central oversight in the department seems to have created an atmosphere where it is difficult to deliberate about collective needs and future trajectories—especially when those group-defined trajectories might impinge on long-held individual rights and more localized freedoms and responsibilities.

### **Graduate Program**

The Department has recently undertaken some significant reforms of the graduate program, addressing concerns on the part of both graduate students and faculty about progress through the department. Prior to this, many felt that the graduate program did not have adequate structure.

Partially addressing these concerns, and in line with best practices currently being adopted in peer departments nationwide, for the MA degree the department has abolished the old model of examinations based on book/field lists and adopted a portfolio system. Here, the exam material is based on what students have done in seminars. Students prepare three or four fields in which they present either a paper or syllabus, along with scholarly work from research seminars, and are then examined on those fields. In another significant reform, a core course on theoretical and methodological approaches to history will be taught for the first time this year.

At the PhD level, the department introduced a formal prospectus requirement, including a presentation in the quarter after the PhD candidacy exam. Not only has this innovation added structure to the program, it has also contributed positively to the desire of students and faculty for broader intellectual engagement in the department. A number of students requested input on a redesign of the PhD exam to make it more in line with the reforms at the MA level. Several expressed dissatisfaction with the 'old' model of broad-based reading, and advocated for more selective and intensive reading, and the introduction of a portfolio system.

The committee applauds these current and pending reforms. They are especially opportune, as the college and department have moved to an emphasis on accelerated time to degree. The current goal is six years to degree including the MA, but this rarely happens.

As demonstrated nationwide, that model is dependent upon full funding, including at least two fully funded years for research (without teaching and/or other work responsibilities). In fact, for students at UW who have been teaching throughout, funding in later years often dries up.

Acknowledging the severe challenging in funding faced by UW and other public universities, the committee nonetheless urges the College to provide a more consistent and predictable funding source for graduate students. There is currently a disconnection between funding realities and expectation for time to degree. One possible reform might be to 'backload' the fellowship funding, so that fellowships, instead of TA funding, come at the dissertation writing stage.

Other reforms may be more straightforward. Some PhD students asked for quicker feedback from faculty on their work. Currently, there's no institutional or collegial support for putting together student writing groups. This is especially urgent because funding cuts have resulted in very small cohorts that require additional intellectual sustenance. Along with the mandatory methods class for the cohort coming in, these community-building exercises and intellectual exchanges may take pressure off what may be unrealistic expectations for rapid turnaround times from faculty.

Following best practices in peer institutions, the committee recommends that the department support the graduate students in exploring employment other than academic possibilities. It could be useful to track alternate jobs that graduates have obtained outside of academia and create a database for use by current students. In addition, providing students with more information on public history would be highly desirable, as this is an area where the department has excelled in placement.

At present, the department lacks a clear tracking of current students—e.g. a list of current students and addresses, their advisers and fields. Providing such data is relatively simple and would benefit the department considerably.

### **Undergraduate Program**

The committee was thoroughly impressed by the commitment on the part of the department's faculty to providing outstanding teaching for large numbers of undergraduates in the UW system--majors and non-majors alike. We were also impressed by the enthusiasm, poise, and engagement of the undergraduate majors with whom we met. The department's undergraduate majors are, by all evidence, an outstanding group, and the skills they develop in the program are a source of admiration both within the university (as suggested by the distinctive phenomenon of students transferring from the Business School to History) and beyond (as evidenced by two Rhodes finalists in this year's senior class). The undergraduate majors with whom the committee met spoke highly of the department and left no doubt about the individual impact particular faculty members had had on their education and on their lives. In particular, the students appreciated the support they got from the department, the flexibility afforded majors and double-majors, and the Honors Track. They also valued the intellectual experience afforded by small



seminar settings, and the sense that faculty members genuinely cared about teaching and their students. The large number of History majors (this year 225 BAs will be awarded in History) is itself a testament to the importance of the field and to the excellent job this department does in representing that field for UW undergraduates. On the faculty side, the committee was made aware of the high number of teaching awards won by the department's faculty, an indication that its reputation for excellent teaching is deserved and is recognized widely in the university.

The hallmark of the department's excellent reputation for undergraduate teaching is its commitment to training students in critical thinking, writing, and speaking. The department's faculty members make a strong case that this kind of teaching serves not just the department and its majors, but also the university and the state. The department's commitment to critical thinking skills also reflects the nature of the discipline itself and the recognition that thinking historically requires a specific skill set involving the ability to utilize and synthesize large amounts of data, to craft narratives and arguments, and to offer coherent presentations of complex causal connections and relationships. This kind of teaching demands individual attention and is often in tension with calls for larger class sizes and a higher student-to-TA ratio. The committee shares the concerns expressed by many faculty that too many understaffed, large classes may conflict with intensive, high-quality teaching. The committee also agreed that a departmental course portfolio dominated by very large lecture classes, on the one hand, and very small seminars, on the other, was unnecessarily limiting. Offering several small lecture classes of 30-50 students would round out the curriculum, and provide an optimum educational experience for undergraduates. Several faculty advocated for a greater opportunity to discuss these types of changes together as well as to reimagine the undergraduate curriculum overall.

There are, of course, factors other than large class sizes and reduced TA slots that could erode the department's profile in undergraduate teaching. The recent loss of an undergraduate advising position has placed enormous burdens on the sole remaining undergraduate advisor, undermining all other components of the advisor's activities (alumni relations, outreach, a reception for majors, etc.). The recent decline in the numbers of graduate students admitted, and in the number of TA positions, threatens the effectiveness of undergraduate teaching in the department; the basic problem of insufficient classroom space for a growing number of large undergraduate classes remains unaddressed as well. The focus on writing and oral discussion emphasized in the department will become more difficult to maintain as the student body shifts toward a higher percentage of non-native English speakers. And the somewhat surprising distribution of course enrollments, with larger numbers attracted to courses in pre-modern history, may come into conflict with the shift in faculty interests towards more recent periods. In the committee's view, however, the two most pressing issues for the department's undergraduate programs are the potential long-term threat entailed by the tension between quality and quantity in undergraduate teaching and the shorter-term crisis in advising.

## **Staff**

The History Department currently has nine staff members: four in the main office, three in the Graduate Studies Office, one technology specialist, and one undergraduate adviser. While this seems a reasonable staff size for the faculty and graduate and undergraduate students populations being served, it is clear from our discussions with all departmental stakeholders that staff responsibilities need to be redistributed.

The single most obvious challenge the department faces in its attempt to maintain a thriving undergraduate major lies in the significant understaffing in advising. Currently, the sole advisor, Matt Erickson, is responsible for 400-500 active majors and 200 prospective majors at any one time. This year, he will have seen 225 History BAs through to graduation. Matt's work rate is remarkable and he is highly regarded by faculty and students, but the current situation is untenable. Students now have to wait 2-3 weeks for an appointment (this is one of very few complaints voiced by the undergraduates with whom the Committee met). In a context of rising tuition, response times of this kind are unacceptable. Furthermore, Matt has virtually no time to attend to the very important ancillary responsibilities of the advisor position, namely recruitment into the major and alumni relations. Abandoning these outreach missions produces effects that are not immediately felt, but threaten the department over the long term. The department needs to be able to continue to convey to students the benefits of studying History and the crucial service to undergraduates the faculty provide in their emphasis on written communication. Likewise History has an excellent record of partially funding faculty positions through endowments, but the pipeline will eventually be empty if future donors are not cultivated now.

The staff expressed their pleasure at working with the History faculty, and the faculty were generally supportive of the staff. Still, a minority of faculty and graduate students expressed concerns regarding the professionalism of some staff and the efficiency of others. Some faculty identified the graduate program office as inefficient. Many others expressed a sense that the staff seemed to be setting the rules, although it is the committee's sense that the staff are simply enforcing rules that were decided by faculty subgroups and not clearly conveyed to their colleagues. Although it is difficult for the committee to make explicit recommendations regarding staff reassignments, it is clear that the new chair needs to undertake a re-organization of staff and to clearly delineate both the new responsibilities and their associated performance benchmarks to avoid the problems outlined above.

### **Resources and Funding**

The overall state of the department's budget and resources is well addressed in the recent self-study (2012, pages 3-4). The most critical issue is the low salary levels, which are felt at all faculty levels, although many faculty were quick to note the positive impact of the unit adjustment received by the department in the 07-09 period. Over the past four years, as a result of the budget crisis, however, salaries have remained stagnant, and the committee would like to highlight the impact of these financial concerns by noting the loss of seven key personnel to outside offers over the past five years. The other pressing concern is the funding for graduate students. As with many departments, the low level of 'permanent' funding allocations for TA salaries has hurt the department in its efforts to attract top

graduates applicants to the program. Receiving temporary funds in late spring is helpful, of course, but makes long-term planning extremely difficult.

On the positive side, the department has done extraordinarily well with fund-raising, and has established six new endowed professorships and two faculty fellowships during the past decade. This is a remarkable accomplishment. In addition, recent gifts from the Hanauer family have been critical in retaining faculty and in boosting morale by providing funds for research, conferences, and graduate student support. The department's success in attracting alumni support is a testament to its superb teaching to a broad undergraduate population over a long time period. Many of those students who enjoyed history classes three or more decades ago have returned to reward the department for that educational experience. This success is thus not an 'accident' of history (!), but rather the result of a long-term commitment to excellence in teaching, and as such, should be noted and applauded by university administration.

The Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest is a fabulous resource for the department that has been capably run by John Findley and now also by Moon-Ho Jung. While quietly successful, it seems to the committee that this Center could conceivably become more of a powerhouse on campus. Indeed, events such as the Spring 2012 Lecture Series, "From the Civil War to the Pacific Century," herald important partnerships with units such as the Simpson Center and the UW Libraries. These connections might be built on and expanded even further, including possibilities for strategic partnerships with units outside the College of Arts and Sciences.

### **Governance**

The current governance structure consists of three members of the chair's advisory representing all ranks in the department. Current members are Ray Jonas, Margaret O'Mara and Illeana Rodriguez-Silva. In addition, John Findley is Associate Chair; George Behlmer is Director of Undergraduate Studies, and Glennys Young is Director of Graduate Studies. The faculty overall expressed satisfaction with the governance structure, yet a number of issues arose in our meetings that suggest a need to clarify exactly how decision-making occurs and how communication might be more transparent to the faculty at large.

The question of TA allotment appeared as one of frequent confusion and/or dissatisfaction. There is a widespread perception that the department has lost TAs in recent years. The current chair has set up a committee on how to allocate TAs, as well as to explore how to teach without TAs. This committee recommended not to impose numbers (a specific TA ratio) but to urge faculty to consider other ways of teaching their courses. However, this message and suggestion have not been uniformly heard or accepted.

According to the chair, the numbers of TAs have not been greatly reduced, but there are not enough given the number of people who want them. It appears that TA allocation has proceeded largely along lines of precedent, rather than through an examination of the new and emerging needs of allocation given shifting faculty and courses over the past decade. A related issue emerged concerning the enrollment size of individual classes. It appears that,

at least in some cases, members of staff are making decisions about appropriate course size and related TA allocations. If this is not the case, then some faculty are confused about the decision-making process, indicating a need for greater communication and transparency.

Hiring priorities is another critical area that will require expanded communication and sustained discussion. The committee noted a strong and somewhat melancholy perception of loss related to recent faculty departures. Addressing priorities such as these, in an emotional milieu such as this, requires a revitalized and transparent structure of governance and communication. The committee thus recommends the implementation of monthly faculty meetings, supplemented by a yearly retreat.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Recommendations to the University***

The committee commends the department for doing the best it can with shrinking resources, for maintaining its impressive profile as a department known for outstanding scholarship, and for continuing its strong commitment to undergraduate teaching of the highest quality. In order to sustain and improve the department, however, additional support from the university administration will be necessary, and the committee offers the following recommendations:

1. The university should authorize two or more hires, beginning with the 2012-13 academic year and continuing over the next several years. The committee regards this need as urgent and crucial to the maintenance of the department's strengths over the long-term. The committee would underscore that the way new positions are handled will itself affect morale in the department beyond the specific practical impact of new colleagues, and with this in mind the committee urges the administration to provide at least one hire in 2012-2013 and one in 2013-2014.
2. The university should assist the new chair in staff restructuring, possibly including a graduate student appointment to help with undergraduate advising, or possibly involving the reassignment of existing staff positions.
3. The university should work to address the serious practical obstacle to planning (and, by extension, to key elements of both undergraduate and graduate instruction) entailed by the late allocation of funds. These come too late in the academic year to allow for effective recruitment of graduate students and TA assignments.
4. Better communication among the faculty, and from faculty to the administration, must be matched by clear communication of priorities and realities from the administration. In order to address the perception, justified or not, that the administration does not properly appreciate the excellent teaching for which the department is known, it will be crucial to deal in substantive ways with the faculty's concern that the quality of the educational experience they are called upon to provide is potentially threatened by a one-size-fits-all stress on large enrollments and reduced reliance on TAs.

## ***Recommendations to the Department***

1. The department is doing well with limited resources; the challenge is to sustain that growth and to take advantage of opportunities when and if economic conditions allow. In order to be prepared for such a future, the department needs to find ways to achieve better communication among all constituent groups in the department and also with the administration. This does not mean formulating yet another strategic plan, but it does suggest a need for a greater measure of consensus on the future direction of the department and the field of history more generally. Some simple measures can go a long way to stimulating better communication. These include a regular faculty-graduate student forum for the presentation of new research, or the discussion of a book by an outside historian that provokes great interest across the department. The graduate students should also be encouraged and incentivized to hold their own dissertation writing seminars. A yearly event to celebrate new publications by faculty and grads provides a welcome opportunity to shine and also to discuss areas of mutual interest. An annual faculty retreat is a practice that many departments have found useful.
2. The committee sensed that the department could be a better advocate for its own strengths, both to the outside world and to the UW community and administration. One place to start is to highlight faculty research interests in the website directory. The area specialization listings are much less user friendly than the listing by faculty names. The department might consider two separate listings, one by region and period and one by the overarching comparative and global themes. This should help visitors to better comprehend the department's strengths and resources.
3. The committee recommends that the department consider more strategic partnerships with other parts of the University, in addition to the close ties it already has with the Jackson School. This will help in gaining access to both undergraduate and graduate students from those units and also in providing an environment wherein history faculty can have more regular interactions with colleagues in related disciplines and units. If more interdisciplinary, joint appointments are made across units, strong efforts at both the departmental and the College level are needed to ensure fairness and transparency in promotional and merit processes for the individual involved. There are still no standard procedures for how to handle joint appointments, which are often handled on an *ad hoc* basis.
4. The committee recommends a staff reorganization. The undergraduate advisor is currently over-taxed, and needs immediate relief. One plausible solution is to shift one of the staff members from the main office or the graduate studies office to advising. The second possibility is to train a graduate student to serve as an advisor for a 2-3 year period.
5. The committee believes that it does not make sense for the department to refuse to create a Lecturer position on principle, while continuing to employ individuals on short-term contracts. In light of the crucial undergraduate teaching provided, these individuals should be offered an appropriate multi-year contract.

6. The department has a strong core already in public history, both in the Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest and the Center for Labor Studies. These two units ought to be replicated and expanded to more of the department's activities, together with some additional consideration of history education. State legislatures are often receptive to university efforts to train teachers for primary and secondary schools. Along with these two possible avenues for future development, and given UW's location in Seattle and its rich information technology industries, the department might consider more investment in digital history and humanities, above all in the training of graduate students, who will likely be expected to have more of these skills for future jobs.

7. In terms of teaching, the committee recommends not imposing a strict numbers (TA ratio) on faculty but urging faculty to consider other ways of teaching their courses and also other ways of designing the curriculum. With general democratic consensus, it will probably be more acceptable for faculty to teach with fewer TAs if there is a mix of TA ratios and courses from which to choose. In other words, some courses could be designated as more "writing-intensive" and have fewer undergraduate students per TA. Others courses could be small lecture courses of 30-50 students that will be solely taught by a faculty member, but get reader-grader support for papers and essay-type examinations. Some classes could be 'understood' to be more about critical reading and speaking skills, and have less TA support as a result. Having a greater variety and a greater faculty voice in TA allocation overall may help in reducing the angst around a perceived reduction in TA support by the administration.

8. The committee recommends working with graduate student representatives to help in the restructuring of the graduate program. The recent changes (e.g., dissertation prospectus) have been met with approval, but some morale problems remain. Most of these stem from issues related to funding, over which the department does not have much control. Many students appear uninformed about the reforms in the graduate program. Despite reforms, concerns persist, such as over the style of examinations, which some, characterized as old-fashioned and obsolete, that might be addressed with greater communication and a further willingness to try new things.

9. If the department receives new hires in the next few years, the committee recommends that it ensures a strong integration of new and existing thematic interests, with its traditional strengths in particular areas and periods. New thematic strengths include the current interests around 'race' and labor, and gender and modernity, but might also expand to include new themes. If the department prioritizes a hire in the history of the Islamic world, for instance, thematic linkages might involve the history of minority groups or 'ethnic' formation, or the history of science, etc., and candidates might be sought in ways that not only 'cover' the Islamic world, but also strengthen existing coverage in related areas (Russian/Soviet, Chinese, African, U.S.). Similar linkages and regional configurations are possible with the department's interest in positions defined in terms of modern Europe, Japan, or 'America and the World.'

## Summary

The History Department is a strong and vital unit on campus, with a long legacy of excellence in teaching, and with a reputation as a top research department in several fields. It contributes substantially to the overall teaching mission of the College, and provides service through popular courses that support general educational requirements on campus. The department has experienced some key losses of personnel that have affected morale in the short-term, but overall collegiality and sense of purpose and pride are very much in evidence among faculty and students. Critical concerns of the faculty are the perceived pressure to teach better with less assistance and the loss of colleagues in certain key regional subfields.

The state of the department is excellent, but it would benefit from better communication and some more attention, both inside and outside the department. The department could aid itself through facilitating internal communication and deliberation and through tackling some of the difficult questions about 'the future' that it has mainly avoided for fear of undermining its famed collegiality. It could also help itself through more aggressive attention-getting techniques, using modern technologies and also through old-fashioned networking and expansion to other units and Colleges on campus. The administration could aid the department through the provision of a few key resources, ideally two FTE in the next 1-2 years, with the likelihood of others in the near future as retirements occur. It could also help through better communication with the chair and key members of the faculty. The upcoming change in departmental leadership may provide the perfect opportunity to establish and maintain new channels of communication—particularly vis-à-vis questions of teaching, curriculum and graduate student support.