

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW (APR) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
FOLKLORE, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND
March-April 2006**

The APR Committee, convened to conduct the review of the Department of Folklore, comprised four members:

- Dr. Shannon Ryan, Department of History, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Chair
- Dr. Wayne Fife, Department of Anthropology, Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Dr. Erika Brady, Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology, Western Kentucky University
- Dr. Carl Lindahl, Department of English, University of Houston

I. Outline of the Committee's Activities

I.i. The Committee first assembled Wednesday evening, March 1, 2006, then met throughout the days of Thursday and Friday, March 2 and 3, and concluded its joint work sessions on Saturday, March 4.

I.ii. On Wednesday evening, the Committee met with Ms. Joan Bessey (Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning), Academic Vice-President Dr. Eddy Campbell and Interim Dean of Arts Dr. Steve Wolinetz. It is the Committee's understanding that the academic officers stressed attention to four matters: the Department's efficiency in attracting and employing resources, the Department's ability to attract graduate students, the timely completion of graduate degrees, and the question of whether the Department was trying to do too much.

I.iii. On Thursday, the Committee convened at 8:30am in the Department of Folklore - Room ED4051 - for its morning session, and Room ED4036 during the afternoon. (The Department of Folklore is situated in one wing of the fourth floor of the Education Building). The Committee met first with Dr. Martin Lovelace, Head of the Department of Folklore, and then toured the Department's facilities with him. There followed individual meetings with associate professors Diane Goldstein and Diane Tye, and a session with six students in the Ph.D. program. During its lunch, the Committee was joined by Dr. Ronald Labelle of the Department of French and Spanish. (20 per cent of whose course load is devoted to courses in the Department of Folklore.) Lunch was followed by individual meetings with Drs. Gerald Pocius, Cory Thorne, and Philip Hiscock; a group meeting with six undergraduate Folklore majors; and a second group meeting with nine M.A. students in Folklore. Then the Committee withdrew to work on summarizing its findings and called it a day at 7:00pm.

I.iv. Friday's meetings began in ED4036, at 8:30am, with an interview with Dr. Paul Smith of the Department of Folklore. This was followed by a group interview with three

members of the support staff (Ms. Sharon Cochrane and Ms. Cynthia Turpin of the General Office, and Ms. Eileen Collins of the Office of folklore Publications; an interview with archivist Patricia Fulton and transcriber Barbara Reddy of the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA); and a session with retired professors Neil Rosenberg and Peter Narvaez.

The Committee then moved to the Arts and Culture Center on the other end of the south Campus and not really part of MUN (it is rented) to meet with three graduate students in Ethnomusicology. This was followed, at the same Centre, by a working lunch with Dr. Beverly Diamond, Director of the Research Centre for the Study of Music Media, and Place (MMAP), Music Professor Kati Szego, and Drs. Philip Hiscock and Martin Lovelace.

The Committee then returned to the ED4036 and discussed its findings. The Interim Dean of Arts, Steve Wolinetz, arrived to discuss the preliminary findings with the Committee (an exit meeting), and a similar exit meeting was held with the Department Head, students, faculty, and staff.

The Committee also consulted an e-mail from an eminent British folklorist.

The committee conferred on its Saturday schedule and adjourned for the day at 6:00pm.

I.v. On Saturday, March 4, during 10:00 – 3:30, the Committee met in the Board Room, Arts and Administration Building, to construct the first draft of the following report.

II. Brief Overview of the Department of Folklore and the Committee's Findings

II.i. The Department of Folklore.

Founded in 1968, Memorial University of Newfoundland's Department of Folklore has offered B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in Folklore for 38 years. MUN's program quickly attained, and has since sustained, a worldwide reputation for excellence. In 2004, the membership of the American Folklore Society declared MUN's Ph.D. in Folklore the preferred program on the continent, surpassing all eight of the U.S. Folklore Ph.D. programs, including the internationally renowned programs of Indiana University, University of Pennsylvania, University of California at Los Angeles, and University of Texas at Austin.

MUN's Department of Folklore has attained worldwide prominence through its inspired combination of intensive regional research with the leading methods and theories of international folklore studies. One work representative of MUN's dual approach is the two-volume *Folktales of Newfoundland* (1995), created by Herbert Halpert, the founder of the Folklore program and its first Head, in collaboration with Dr. John Widdowson, Halpert's first Ph.D. student, who went on to found a similar program at the University of Sheffield and continues to remain actively involved with MUN's Department of Folklore. *Folktales of Newfoundland* is not only the largest single collection of English-language märchen (fictional folktales) from any single region, but also the most highly praised folktale collection of the twentieth century: three reviewers cited *Folktales of Newfoundland* as the most important such work since the Grimms' *Kinder- und*

Hausmärchen of 1812. In similar ways, the scholarly productions of the Department's current faculty and students continue to demonstrate the global importance of meticulously conducted local research. As an example, Dr. Diane Goldstein's recent book, *Once Upon a Virus* (2004), presents her extensive studies of Newfoundland legends and legal cases related to HIV/AIDS and then demonstrates their worldwide implications for our understanding of the interrelationships between folk narrative and attitudes towards public health systems as well as towards those stricken with the virus.

One of the strongest proofs of the Department's international status is the fact that (as we read the figures presented on p. 5 of the Self Study), nearly half (more precisely, 46 per cent) of its M.A.s and Ph.D.s were international students. The importance of the Department to the entire nation is demonstrated in the fact that 37 per cent of the Department's advanced degrees were awarded to Canadians who were not Newfoundlanders. Thus, 83 per cent of the program's advanced degree holders came to Newfoundland from abroad—a figure that speaks volumes about the role of the Department in attracting students and recognition to the University and the province.

As currently constituted, the Department of Folklore offers undergraduate and graduate degrees and undergraduate minors, manages the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA, which also embraces the Centre d'études franco-terreneuviennes), and partners substantially in two major campus research centers: the Centre for Material Culture Studies and the Centre for the Study of Music, Media, and Place. The Department also organizes and conducts summer instruction at MUN's Harlow campus in England

In its Self Study report (p. 3), the Department declared a list of seven responsibilities, all of which the Committee finds fully consonant with the objectives of the University: “producing graduates at all three levels who reflect the high quality of a comprehensive program,” “contributing to the international discipline of folkloristics,” “increasing the reputation of Memorial University through the dissemination of our research and the production of employable graduates,” “continuing to develop the Newfoundland and Labrador studies component” of the program, “operating the Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA)”, “providing expertise, support and consultation within the University, the province, and beyond” in its many areas of expertise, and “sustaining links with the community beyond the University.” These seven responsibilities reflect the Department's strong commitment to its academic discipline, its students, and its University, as well as to the local, provincial, and national communities that it serves.

II.ii. The Current Status of Faculty Size, Enrolments, and Departmental Resources

The Department's faculty currently comprises seven full appointments (Diane Goldstein, Philip Hiscock, Martin Lovelace, Gerald Pocius, Paul Smith, Cory Thorne, and Diane Tye), a tenure-track appointment that at this writing is unoccupied, and two partial appointments: Beverly Diamond (MMAF), who devotes 40% of her teaching to the Department, and Ronald Labelle (French and Spanish), who devotes 20%. In addition, other faculty members from English, History, Music, and other departments teach courses that are cross-listed with Folklore. Conversely, Folklore faculty members

teach many courses that provide credits for students majoring in Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Music, and several other disciplines.

As retirements have shrunk the faculty, enrolments have grown. Most notably, the undergraduate major in Folklore has attracted increasing numbers of students, including its traditional majority of students from Mainland Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, mainland Europe, and Asia. The number of graduate students has also increased significantly. Reductions in teaching time occasioned by administrative responsibilities (4 course remissions are due all told: 2 for the Department Head, 1 for Director of the Archives, and 1 for Graduate Coordinator), special professorships (3 remissions), and sabbaticals place strain on the Department's teaching resources. Thus, the already problematic graduate student/faculty ratio of 6:1 is often actually substantially higher.

Similarly, and equally unfortunately, the staff and physical resources of the Department have been diminished. Over the past two decades, MUNFLA has lost staff and space, and has not received the equipment and technologies necessary to retain its pre-eminence.

II.iv. Recent Developments Affecting the Department of Folklore and Its Mission.

Two developments of special significance should be noted. First, most of the major North American Ph.D. programs in Folklore have dwindled in recent years as the enrolment at MUN has increased. The major programs at the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Texas, and UCLA have lost international status while MUN's has gained to the extent that it has arguably achieved the position of the leading folklore department in the English-speaking world.

Second, folklorists worldwide have been creating jobs and enjoying increasing success beyond the walls of the university. The disciplines of applied folklore and public folklore have grown enormously, creating careers for graduates working with local, national, and regional governments to mount festivals, plan museums, conduct folklife surveys, and promote cultural tourism, among many other community activities. Due to its pre-eminence in folklore scholarship and its commitment and expertise in the study of local cultures, the Department stands poised to attain even greater prestige while attracting significant funding to the University and the province through the teaching and practice of public folklore.

II.v. Department Morale.

The faculty of the Department of Folklore has demonstrated tremendous enthusiasm for its subject and concern for its students. Our Committee members have never seen a university teaching unit more demonstrably committed to its mission.

That said, the faculty is overworked, by all accounts. Not only the faculty, but also students at all levels have commented on the exceptional level of faculty commitment, and on the faculty's willingness to work with students, but all also mentioned that, with recent retirements, the current complement is too small to meet the academic needs of the Department without excessive sacrifice.

Possessing the continent's premier folklore program is certainly a boost to morale; and repeatedly ranking either first or second in the Arts faculty in attracting financial support provides both faculty and students with reasons for pride and optimism.

Yet, until the size of its faculty is restored and its scholarly resources are enhanced, the Department remains in danger of being overwhelmed.

II.vi. Overview of Good Points.

The teaching and mentoring work of this faculty is excellent. They are strong scholars, who have developed one of the best Folklore departments in the world. The comprehensive coverage and depth of the teaching program, from undergraduate to graduate levels, is a rare achievement in this field of study.

II.vii. Comparison with Other Universities in Canada.

Université Laval is the only other Canadian institution that can offer a Ph.D. program (in Ethnology) that stresses folklore, although it must be stressed that Laval's program is not free-standing. Laval and MUN's Folklore programs are complementary in many ways, but MUN's Department of Folklore offers both regional expertise and international appeal. At MUN, folklore studies are conducted, courses taught, and theses and dissertations written primarily in English (with the important exceptions of the contributions of Dr. Ronald Labelle of the Department of French and Spanish and the activities of the Centre d'études franco-terreneuviennes; the Committee hopes that MUN will restore its francophone and French Canadian resources to earlier levels in order to offer its students an even greater range of study).

Other Canadian folklore programs (enumerated and described on p. 2 of the Self Study) cannot compare to MUN in size, comprehensiveness, or ability to confer a folklore degree.

II.viii. Recommendations.

The Department of Folklore is one of MUN's best known and most valuable resources. In the past, no other program has equaled Folklore in its mandate to attract graduate students as well as students. Despite their relatively smaller size, they remain one of the strongest departments in the Arts Faculty at Memorial University (See below for specific recommendations.)

The remainder of this report addresses specifically and in order the 43 questions posed on pages 9 through 12 of the document, "Procedures for the Review of Units and Programs." Rather than summarizing the Self Study compiled by the Department of Folklore, the Committee has considered its report in many ways a supplement to that document. Thus, although we will occasionally resort to the details of the Self Study to emphasize the points we consider most important, we will more often speak of that study in broader terms, leaving it to our readers to resort to Self Study for further details and examples.

III. Undergraduate Program

III.i. How well is the unit performing its undergraduate teaching function?

In meeting with 21 undergraduate, M.A., and Ph.D. folklore students, the Committee heard universal praise for the teachers as well as for the content and comprehensiveness of courses. The Department's course calendar and the syllabi of recent courses attest that there is no equal on the continent in the number of offerings and the emphasis on fieldwork, which is folklore's defining method. The Department also presents to its advanced undergraduate students unparalleled opportunities for serving as researchers in mentored relationships.

The students also communicated a positive sense of the broad potential for applying their knowledge in folklore. All expressed interest in continuing their folklore education, but some mentioned the possibility that they may find careers in disciplines as diverse as law enforcement and social work; all students mentioned folklore's positive role in preparing them for these different career tracks.

Students did, however, mention having difficulties with fourth-year courses in two respects. First, a relatively small number of such courses are offered; second, relatively few courses requiring prerequisites are offered. It is possible for an undergraduate student to take well over a dozen courses without taking a senior-level course (though not to complete a major or minor in the Department).

III.ii. Is the curriculum sufficiently comprehensive and rigorous?

The course calendar, the syllabi, and student testimony affirm that the offerings are both comprehensive and rigorous. Students have access to a large number of courses covering a vast range of subject matter. The Department's Self Study documents contain syllabi of 38 different undergraduate folklore offerings recently taught at MUN. There is no other institution on the North American continent that can make available to its undergraduates such a wealth of courses.

III.iii. Are the grading norms consistent with those used in similar programs in Canada and elsewhere?

The grading standards articulated in the syllabi are rigorous, certainly equaling in rigor those applied in comparable disciplines in Memorial, as well as those applied by folklore programs elsewhere in North America.

III.iv. Is the unit properly staffed to fulfill its undergraduate responsibilities?

The Department of Folklore is more than fulfilling its undergraduate responsibilities by sheer force of its commitment to its subject and to its students, but it is not adequately staffed. While all students expressed gratitude for their teachers' commitment, they also expressed their feelings the faculty are overextended, a sentiment echoed by all the faculty members whom we interviewed.

Faculty members are so committed that they are unable to exercise their contractual right to take advantage of banked time courses. Without exception, the faculty sacrifices this valuable research opportunity in order to staff undergraduate and other courses. If faculty members were to exercise their contractual rights to using their course release time, it is hard to see how either graduate or undergraduate programs could be adequately offered to their students.

III.v. Are classes the appropriate size to accomplish [the unit's] teaching goals?

Neither students nor teachers indicated dissatisfaction with the size of their classes, but the sheer numbers of students taught in such upper division offerings as "Urban Legend" and "Folklore and the Supernatural" come close to tripling the average enrolment for senior courses in Arts at MUN. Several other courses regularly draw between 40 and 60 students. Grading demands on folklore faculty are thus abnormally great.

III.vi. Is there sufficient demand from students for the program?

Course enrolment attests to a great student interest in MUN's folklore offerings. The numbers of students regularly enrolled in such 3000-level courses as "Contemporary Legend," "Folklore and the Supernatural," and "Women and Tradition" constitute one of many measures of the popularity of undergraduate Folklore courses.

III.vii. How competitive are the unit's undergraduate programs nationally and regionally in attracting qualified students and placing graduates in suitable positions?

The undergraduate program attracts internationally. There is a clear demand throughout the province, throughout Canada, and throughout North America.

We believe that a systematic study of the students' places of origins would demonstrate that the undergraduate folklore program attracts an exceptional number of students from mainland Canada and the United States.

III.viii. Are recruiting and retention opportunities being maximized, both by the unit and by the university?

The Department's excellence advertises itself. Therefore, no formal recruitment strategy or expenditure is necessary. The students' visibility at such academic events as the annual meetings of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada (FSAC) helps make the program known and respected across the nation. A significant number of undergraduates from the United States have enrolled in MUN's Department of Folklore because of its pre-eminent place in North American folklore studies.

Without statistics, we nevertheless sense that retention levels are high.

III.ix. Does the university supply the library resources, computing and laboratory facilities, and other resources necessary to support the undergraduate program?

Undergraduate students mentioned that the QEII folklore collections were excellent and readily available.

However, an important and unique library facility for undergraduates is MUNFLA, the folklore archive, and its lack of staffing has become so severe that undergraduate instructors have often been discouraged from directing their students to use this key resource. (For a fuller description of the status of MUNFLA, see section IX.ii, below).

Because fieldwork is the most important single tool in folklore studies, students' success in their future careers depends to a significant extent on their familiarity with and ability to use digital recording equipment. The Department of Folklore makes recording equipment available to students, which is rare by North American standards. Nevertheless, the fieldwork orientation of the Folklore program makes better and more equipment necessary. The equipment needs to be updated, with digital recorders replacing the currently available analog. Furthermore, the recorders currently available are housed in, and checked out through, the archive. The understaffed status of the archive makes access to equipment a persistent problem.

The lack of smart classrooms is also a problem, especially for such larger classes as "Urban Legend." Furthermore, the maintenance of those few available smart classrooms needs to be improved.

III.x. Is the unit fulfilling its service responsibility to other units in the University?

The Department of Folklore has provided services to other Arts departments through numerous classes cross-listed with Music, Anthropology, Archeology, History, English, French, and Women's Studies, among other departments and programs.

The Department has also provided scholars to serve in positions of leadership for various programs and study centers. Among recent examples, one Folklore professor has recently completed a stint as Director of the Women's Studies program and another is the founder and current Director of the Diploma Program in Heritage Resources. The latter program also provides invaluable services for the Newfoundland community beyond the university.

Folklore formerly supplied additional and substantial academic service through its status as a Teachable Subject allowing entry into the Faculty of Education. The Committee was disappointed to learn that this important subject is no longer recognized by the Faculty of Education.

IV. Graduate Program

IV.i. How effective is the unit in performing its graduate teaching and supervision responsibilities?

Graduate teaching is extremely effective. Students in both the Master's and Ph.D. tracks expressed unqualified praise of the faculty's teaching of and commitment to its courses. Students repeatedly spoke of the importance of the individual support they received in developing appropriate degree plans and also in pre-professional counseling

and aid in grant applications. In addition to their teaching and supervisory responsibilities, the faculty support student grant-writing, devoting an enormous amount of time to this activity (particularly in October, for SSHRC applications and during the winter semester for local funding [e.g., Smallwood, Aldrich, and Hatcher]).

That said, concern was expressed that the small faculty size prevented the offering of some key courses on a regular basis. Masters students commented that some courses were not available even on alternate years, thus making it impossible for them to complete their degrees with all the courses that they preferred to take.

IV.ii. Is the research and scholarly productivity of the unit appropriate to its graduate responsibilities?

Emphatically, yes. The Department boasts an impressive list of books, including a winner of the continent's most prestigious folklore book award (the Chicago Prize, awarded to Gerald Pocius for *A Place to Belong*) and a special panel of the American Folklore Society convened in 2005 to discuss Diane Goldstein's *Once Upon a Virus*. Books by faculty members have been translated into Japanese and Polish.

The Department's leadership roles in the International Society of Contemporary Legend Research (ISCLR), and in editing ISCLR's journal, *Contemporary Legend*, have facilitated students' participation in international conferences and preparation of papers for publication. The positive effects of such modeling are apparent in *Culture and Tradition*, a periodical that many folklore scholars consider the finest student publication in the discipline, which is edited by MUN Folklore students, who also supply many of the journal's best articles.

The Department's prestige and success in publishing has doubtless had a positive effect on students' ability to obtain SSHRC grants, for which the faculty urges them to apply. Faculty members provide invaluable service in guiding students through the application process.

The faculty's international reputation in public folklore, international narrative studies, and the folkloric study of music has, to the present, provided graduates with expert guidance. But in order to continue emphasizing these historical strengths of the Department, faculty renewal in these areas is essential.

IV.iii. Are the graduate program's admissions criteria appropriate?

The criteria are appropriate and of a consistently high standard, as reflected in the performance of those admitted (e.g., most students carry grade averages of higher than eighty per cent).

Furthermore, as there are many colleges and universities that do not offer graduate programs, MUN's Department of Folklore makes appropriate provisions for those who enter the program with no or little prior exposure to the academic study of folklore by providing a rigorous three-course core for first-year students.

IV.iv. How successful are the unit's graduate programs nationally and regionally in attracting students and placing them in appropriate employment?

The Folklore program is strikingly effective in attracting students from Newfoundland and Labrador, mainland Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. The Department has also shown that it can attract students from continental Europe and Asia.

Our general impression is that the program is very successful in placing its students. Pages 9 and 10 of the Self Study list numerous specific instances of the important academic and public folklore positions that MUN students have attained.

IV.v. How competitive are the unit's graduate programs nationally and regionally in attracting qualified graduate students and placing graduate degree holders in professional employment?

The Committee finds the Ph.D. program in Folklore the most highly recommended in North America as well as the most successful in attracting students. Copious support for this conclusion is found on pages 4-6 and 9-10 of the Self Study as well as in section II.i of this report, above.

IV.vi. Is the curriculum sufficiently comprehensive and rigorous?

Based on the Department's syllabi and on students' comments in their meetings with the Committee, the short response is 'yes'. Required readings are comprehensive and up-to-date and they compare favorably with folklore offerings in other North American graduate programs. The Ph.D. courses are incomparable in their attention to writing and fieldwork assignments.

IV.vii. Are the assessment standards consistent with those used in graduate programs in Canada and elsewhere?

Syllabi are more rigorous in requiring fieldwork, and at least as rigorous in other regards when comparable North American Ph.D. folklore programs are considered.

IV.viii. Is financial support for students at a level appropriate for the scope of activities desired within the unit?

No, all Ph.D. students expressed difficulty with the four-year funding limit, largely due to the fact that their Ph.D. work requires an extensive course load, followed by a rigorous comprehensive exam schedule, and, in most cases, extensive fieldwork-based dissertation work. The amount of compensation offered Ph.D. students is not competitive with the compensation available at arts programs in other Canadian institutions.

International graduate students (Ph.D. and M.A.) encounter special problems with funding, as they are not eligible for SSHRC and some other grants. Furthermore, employment opportunities for international students are limited by law, paying for healthcare insurance is a major concern, and many financial incentives are restricted to specific regional studies. Many international students face the choice of coming to Newfoundland before receiving assurance of a level of support that could keep them at the University.

IV.ix. Does the University supply the resources, computing and laboratory facilities, and other resources necessary to support the Department of Folklore graduate program?

Library facilities: the QEII facilities were repeatedly cited as very strong for books, but concern was expressed over substantial cutbacks in periodical funding, which

has recently threatened the retention of such flagship journals as the *Journal of American Folklore*.

In spite of its unique and important status, MUNFLA, the folklore archive, faces critical shortages of space, equipment, staff, and technology. All graduate students expressed dismay over the conditions at the archive, which are such that they impede the progress of their research. (For a fuller discussion of the status of MUNFLA, see section IX.ii, below).

V. Faculty Research and Scholarship

V.i. Are the research, creative activity, and scholarship of the faculty appropriate for providing first-rate academic programs?

Without doubt, the research level and scholarly range of the faculty are well documented in the Department's report and well known to folklorists throughout the world. We as a Committee can attest to this. It bears repeating that folklorists in the United States consider MUN's Ph.D. program to be the preferred program on the continent.

The Department's scholarly production, significant in itself, is all the more impressive when one considers the extraordinarily heavy teaching responsibilities of the faculty, and the fact that all Folklore faculty member sacrifice all of their bank-course research time in order to meet the Department's teaching needs.

V.ii. Are faculty members fully supported in their research by research facilities and library resources?

The QEII library maintains an impressive folklore collection that will continue to sustain the research needs of the Department *if* past levels of book acquisition and periodical subscriptions are maintained.

The excellence of the faculty's research has historically been linked to MUNFLA. The problems of this facility, already cited, are discussed at length in section IX.ii, below.

V.iii. Are faculty members generating external funding up to their full ability?

Given the extraordinary teaching and supervision demands on faculty, it is difficult to see how they could have also had the time to generate large amounts of external funding. The tremendous amount of time that faculty members give to their graduate students, ensuring that the latter achieve very high success rates in their applications to external funding agencies such as SSHRC, no doubt strongly impact faculty's own abilities to do the same for themselves. With more faculty members and a concomitant lessening of the teaching and supervision load for each faculty member, their scholarly records indicate that they could have more success in obtaining external funding if they had more time to pursue these time-consuming opportunities.

V.iv. What role are faculty playing in the University's research centers, interdisciplinary research groups and external partnerships?

The faculty plays a strong role in such work. It would be pointless to name all of the individual roles that faculty members play in these situations, as these are listed on

their individual C.V.s and can be read there. However, we can note some of the variety of connections here. Among other university relationships, various faculty members from Folklore are strongly involved with women's studies, several resource/research groups in the Faculty of Medicine, and the boards and committees of both the Institute for Social and Economic Research and the Smallwood Foundation.

V.v. Are the faculty engaged in regional national and international professional organizations?

Yes, the faculty members are extensively engaged in such organizations. Two of the Department's professors have served as president of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research (ISCLR), and other Department members have served as officers on the society, as well as editors of its major publication, *Contemporary Legend*,

The Committee also notes that in recent years there has been significant faculty presence on the editorial boards of *Ethnologies* (the premier Canadian folklore journal, formerly known as *Canadian Folklore canadien*), *Folklore* (the premier English folklore journal), *Journal of American Folklore* (the premier folklore journal in the United States), *Forum d'histoire orale/ Oral History Forum*, *Journal of Applied Folklore*, *Lore and Language*, *Material History Review*, *Newfoundland Quarterly*, and several other journals.

Currently, there are Department faculty members serving on the Executive Board of the American Folklore Society as well as in other international folklore societies.

From the most recent to the most seasoned appointments, all the faculty members have served as reviewers of manuscripts for university presses and juried journals in one or more field (Folklore, Newfoundland Studies, Canadian Studies, etc.).

VI. Faculty and Staff

VI.i. How well are faculty and staff resources being used?

Faculty and staff are working to the absolute upper limit of their capacities and, nevertheless, producing in the process work that has sustained and enhanced MUN's status as an international center of folklore studies.

VI.ii. Are promotion and tenure policies appropriate to the unit's mission and aspirations?

We have found no evidence to think otherwise.

VI.iii. How successful is the unit in implementing employment equity policies?

There was no suggestion that there were any problems in this area.

VI.iv. Are faculty and staff workloads equitable and appropriate to the Department of Folklore's missions?

The workloads at all levels are excessive and threaten to compromise the Department's missions.

The burden of administrative paperwork rests with two individuals who have, together, given the University more than 55 years of service. It is our belief that in recent years the growing amount of work delegated by upper administration to departmental

staff has overwhelmed the latter. To cite just one example: the Department staff faces enormous budget and payroll tasks. An office staff of two must implement a departmental budget, an archival budget, the payroll of all graduate assistants, and the numerous grants awarded both to faculty and to students. Even with the staff's exceptional experience, expertise, and commitment, the growing administrative demands placed upon them endangers the success of the Department.

VI.v. Are administrative decisions and tasks made and carried out effectively?

The Department administrators are working with great effect, but faculty, students and staff all expressed concern over the excessive amount of work imposed on those who occupy the offices of Department Head and Head of Archive.

Specifically, Department members cited the double burden imposed on the current Department head by administering the archive as well. We realize that it will be difficult to find a solution for this problem, and hope that it can be resolved without imposing further burdens on an overextended faculty.

VI.vi. How does the unit rank among similar institutions regarding research productivity and quality, external funding, academic programs and teaching loads?

The teaching load of MUN's folklore program is as high as or higher than those of comparable programs in North America. That said, in spite of attending to large course loads and uniformly foregoing bank time in order to teach them, the quality of MUN's teaching is such that it was recognized in 2004 by the members of the American Folklore Society as the Ph.D. program of choice in North America. In terms of external funding for its graduate students, Folklore has attracted an exceptional amount of money to the University.

VII. Community Service

VII.i. Is the unit fulfilling opportunities to serve the community?

Emphatically, yes. Not only faculty, but also the students regularly plan and perform in providing a connection between the university and the community in a number of ways.

They provide the general public with education through innumerable media presentations, and interviews for television, radio, and newspapers. Both faculty and students have been involved in mounting museum exhibits, music festivals, dramatic performances, and numerous other special events through which Newfoundland residents and tourists have learned about the province's traditions and vernacular arts. The expertise of Folklore's faculty and staff is sought throughout the province. Their work in identifying, developing, and interpreting heritage resources is substantial.

Students have expressed gratitude for the faculty's past efforts to involve them in this important community work, as well as eagerness to enjoy expanded opportunities for community involvement.

Expert Folklore faculty and students, and MUNFLA, have served the community continually by providing information about the province's vernacular arts to artists,

writers, musicians, creators of documentaries, and others who celebrated the traditions of the islands and incorporated them into works known throughout the nation and beyond.

It is the belief of the Committee that, with some University support, the Department's mission of community education could provide even more substantial services that would benefit the community both educationally and financially.

VII.ii. Is the unit, where appropriate, effectively introducing students to professional community service opportunities?

The faculty and the students work together in applying their professional knowledge to community service; students, for example, regularly lend their specialized expertise to media, museums, theater, musical, and other community presentation. (For elaboration on this point, see Section VII.i., above.)

The oral evidence for such participation is pervasive. We believe that the quality and extent of these community services are so impressive that it would be in the interest of the Department to document them systematically.

VIII. University Citizenship

VIII.i. Does the unit effectively reinforce the goals of other units?

Yes, the Department of Folklore shares the Arts' faculty's general goals of good scholarship, maintaining programs, and supporting active teaching and learning situations.

VIII.ii. Do its members encourage and contribute to interdisciplinary activities?

Most certainly, as previously discussed, folklore's reciprocal listings with English, French, Music, Women's Studies, Anthropology, Archaeology, and History attest to its commitment to interdisciplinary work. For further documentation, see p. 4 of the Department's Self Study.

VIII.iii. Should the unit apply its resources in new and different ways?

The Department's resources have been applied in demonstrably effective ways and are remarkably efficient. The only way to increase the effectiveness of the program is to increase its resources. (For further discussion of this point, see section X.ii).

IX. University Support

IX.i. Is the unit receiving adequate resources from its Faculty and from the University at large?

The Department is receiving exceptional resources from its faculty, when one considers its per-person contributions. Through force of its excellence and dedication, a shrinking faculty has sustained the Department in the face of serious resource problems. The recent retirement of two extremely productive internationally known folklorists places great stress upon a Department that has attained leadership status in international folklore scholarship. The faculty has addressed this problem by continuing to teach a

huge complement of courses, direct a very large number of graduate theses and continues full-force in its scholarly and grant-raising activities.

The size of the Department's course load, as well as its high undergraduate and graduate enrollments, makes it necessary that the Department maintain a reasonable number of positions.

Faculty and students alike feel that teaching and scholarship are so intertwined that reducing the number of courses taught would not bolster research, but rather impede it. The Committee feels all the responsibilities assumed by the faculty are fully consistent with university-mandated goals and objectives.

IX.ii. Are its facilities adequate? Attention should be paid to space equipment, computing, laboratory, and library resources.

The facilities available to the Department of Folklore are inadequate. Among the most critical problems with space are offices for graduate students (two small rooms currently available for about 50 students), per-course instructors (two tiny offices, so small that they must be used in shifts) retired faculty (one room currently available for two professors and a third, active faculty), and office staff (who feel it necessary to work through their lunch period).

Students and faculty regularly complained of difficulties in accessing smart classrooms, and problems encountered with servicing those classrooms. For example, one faculty member waited three weeks for a broken projector bulb to be replaced. This is an especially critical problem for larger classes.

The keystone of this ongoing enterprise has been MUNFLA, whose holdings are unparalleled in extent, content, and quality. These holdings represent a record of the life stories and expressive forms of generations of Newfoundlanders, who have generously shared their knowledge in the understanding that their contributions would be safely housed for the future. In light of the university's responsibility both to scholars and to the community, the Committee is deeply concerned by the current status of MUNFLA.

In terms of space, MUNFLA requires special attention. The facility is not large enough to house the materials it contains under the proper climatic conditions. The crisis with regard to space is now so acute that fundamental archival principles are compromised. For example, original ethnographic documentation is now being stored side-by-side with preservation duplicates. Furthermore, space requirements will become greater as more collections are gathered and as the current collections are processed. No provision has been made for the natural expansion that any active archive undergoes in order to remain a viable research repository.

In terms of equipment, the archive lacks updated digital technology, from photographic resources, to recording equipment to computer resources for digitizing current collections. In order to maintain their professional status, current researchers need access to and knowledge of digital technologies, the condition of the archive is directly tied to the success of the students. In addition, basic security measures have never been put into place (e.g., a coded security system).

IX.iii. Is it adequately staffed?

The Committee considered three areas of staffing: the faculty, office staff, and MUNFLA.

The faculty is certainly overextended. We cannot contemplate the idea of reducing the size of the Department of Folklore. While this might be considered a viable option for other departments that are duplicated at other universities throughout Canada, the folklore program is the only stand-alone Ph.D. Department of Folklore in Canada, and the university has made a commitment to meeting the entire nation's academic needs through this Department. These needs are consistent with the university's expressly stated provincial, regional, and national objectives and goals.

The recent retirement of two full professors have placed critical burdens on the faculty.

We have identified three areas of study that require an investment of university resources in order to maintain the international reputation of this Department.

First, a professorship in public and applied folklore would meet the discipline's growing need for placing its students in nonacademic positions, and the university's commitment to community service.

Second, students (Canadian and non-Canadian) and faculty indicated strong interest in an appointment reflecting the increasing globalization of folklore as a discipline.

In addition, two recent retirements at the level of full professor in the folkloric study of music have left a gap in an area of historic strength in this Department.

It is the Committee's strong impression that the office staff is severely overworked. The staff is extremely efficient, but the workload is prodigious. However, the Committee recognizes that inadequate office staffing is a university-wide problem.

In the case of MUNFLA, we feel that the Department has reached a critical position. There is one archivist, an assistant about to go on leave, and a part-time transcriber. The transcriber's situation is most peculiar. She was one of three in 1982. At the moment she is laid off from her position each summer, and re-hired as a new appointment each September. This is a grossly unfair situation. In connection with this position, we would like to emphasize that there are approximately 30,000 recordings that are as yet untranscribed among the current collections. Many of these are older tapes that are deteriorating and there are increasing demands from the community, students, media, and academics for access to these and other untranscribed materials. The backlog dates back to at least 1978. The documented increase in demand includes inquiries from scholars outside the discipline of folklore (including social historians, anthropologists, women's studies specialists, and linguists). In addition, MUNFLA has experienced a significant increase in requests from media, community agencies (e.g., theatrical groups and arts organizations), and residents of the province reflecting the general increase in interest in traditional heritage. This increased demand requires more attention than the staff can currently provide. As a case in point, the staff can keep the archive open for general use only four hours a day. The staff must attempt to address needs of users while at the same time fulfilling the essential work of accession, stabilization, and preservation of its collections.

If MUNFLA does not receive substantial increases in space, personnel, and technological resources it will lose its status as the continent's premier regional folklore archive.

X. Plans, Goals, and Resource Allocation.

X.i. Are the objectives of the unit appropriate to the mission of the University?

Yes, in every respect.

X.ii. Is the unit trying to do too much?

This question was stressed by the administration during the Committee's pre-review meeting with the Department.

The simplest answer, we believe, is that the Department is doing precisely what it needs to do to maintain and enhance its position of pre-eminence in the study of folklore on the North American continent. The extraordinary number and quality of its undergraduate and graduate offerings, the sustained quality of its published research and international leadership in the field even in the face of enormous demands upon its research time, its efforts to maintain its most important research tool, MUNFLA—these are the aspects of the program that cannot be compromised without jeopardizing its current status. Given the seriousness with which the unit takes its mission it is difficult to see where they could cut back without compromising the quality and effectiveness.

It is important to stress once again that the major goals of the Department are also exactly those of the administration, that the Department has succeeded in meetings those goals, and that substantial support from the administration is the only sure agency through which these goals will continue to be met.

Considering the following points in tandem, we have concluded that the program is not only of superior quality, but also remarkably economically efficient—in fact, an enormous economic asset to the University.

First, the Department meets the goal of academic excellence by providing the continent's leading center for the study of Folklore.

Second, the Department meets the goal of national academic service by providing the nation with its only free-standing Ph.D. program.

Third, the Department meets the goal of community service by providing, through MUNFLA and through the expertise of its professors and advanced students, a pool of tangible and intangible resources that have been continually tapped to provide materials for the extra-academic education, media presentations, museum exhibits, dramatic and musical performances that have given Newfoundland's traditional culture its public face for citizens and tourists alike. We are convinced that further support of MUNFLA, the faculty, and those of its programs that bear directly upon the fields of public and applied folklore will add substantially to the University's reputation and its economic resources.

Fourth, the faculty expends enormous time and care lending its expertise to students who are regularly awarded a large number of SSHRC, Aldrich, and other grants.

Fifth, considering the second and third point in combination, Folklore's demonstrable potential for enhancing the economic status of the University and the province would only increase with enhanced University support. By providing a reasonable complement of faculty and regular support for MUNFLA and other departmental resources, the University would see its investment returned in the form of more grant money and more economy-enhancing public programming geared in large part to developing cultural tourism.

Sixth, no program in the University has been more successful in meeting the University mandate for attracting Mainland and international students to the University and to the Province. More than 80 per cent of the 103 M.A.s graduated by Memorial's Department of Folklore were not Newfoundlanders by origin. This is another way in which Folklore attracts both status and funds to the University and the community. We do not have precise statistics here, but we believe that the proportion of international and Mainland M.A. and Ph.D. students in the Department of Folklore is the highest of any department in Arts. We further believe that the proportion of international and Mainland **undergraduate** students exceeds those in other Arts departments. These numbers reflect the importance Folklore's service to the University, the province, and the nation, as well as the University policy to enhance its Mainland and international enrolments.

Only by providing Folklore with reasonable levels of faculty and staff, and by ensuring the viability of MUNFLA and the Department's other important research resources, can the University maintain or, we hope, enhance the tradition of excellence that the Department has enjoyed since its earliest years.

Given the university's mandate to train more graduate students, it is hard to see how the Department could do any less and still remain committed to this laudable goal.

X.iii. If the unit has made requests for additional resources, which requests does the panel support and why?

With the retirement of Neil Rosenberg, there is now a significant need for a faculty member qualified to take up his courses on applied and public sector folklore. This is currently the fastest growing area of employment for folklorists in North American, and the trend shows no signs of abating in the foreseeable future. The unit request for a hiring in this area represents an important element in maintaining the program's strength and the viability of its graduates in the job market.

In addition, the panel recognizes and supports the unit's expressed need for faculty staffing in three other areas that have been traditional strengths in folklore at MUN. In the area of vernacular music, the combined expertise of now-retired professors Narvaez and Rosenberg has been unmatched. Folklorists throughout the world have also looked to MUN for leadership in the areas of international folklore studies and folk narrative since the days of Herbert Halpert.

While recognizing that it is unrealistic to expect the hiring of four new faculty members in the foreseeable future, the hiring of at least two individuals sharing

qualifications in the areas mentioned above would maintain the high standard of folklore teaching and scholarship established at MUN in the face of losses due to retirement.

Finally, the panel regards the expansion of funding and staffing of MUNFLA as a necessity, lest a resource of international importance deteriorate beyond recall. (See below for list of recommendations.)

X.iv. How might the Unit's resources be redistributed to realize its goals and those of the University?

It is the Committee's considered opinion that the Unit's goals and those of the University cannot be achieved by redistribution of resources. Indeed, present needs are not being met adequately. In order to maintain the important status and current commitments of this program, serious consideration must be given to enhancing available resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 The Committee recommends that another wing of the fourth floor of the Education Building be assigned to the Department of Folklore. This would provide extra space for MUNFLA, student study cubicles and desks, storage and a larger General Office. And maybe, in this way, the Research Centre for the study of Music, Media and Place (MMAp) could be moved from its relative isolation to the Department.
 - 2 The Committee recommends at least two more faculty appointments.
 - 3 The Committee recommends an additional office person.
 - 4 The Committee recommends an additional three transcribers and an additional assistant archivist. Furthermore, a discussion should be held with Ms. Barbara Reddy regarding her annual summer layoff and an agreement suitable to her should be sought.
 - 5 The Committee recommends the continuation of the constructive tension between the study of Place (Newfoundland and Labrador) and International Studies.
 - 6 The Committee recommends that immediate steps be taken to provide basic security for MUNFLA. That is, a coded alarm system should be installed as soon as possible.
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