

Review
Historical Studies Programme
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College,
Memorial University of Newfoundland
by
Margaret Conrad, David Peddle, and Christopher Youe
29 March-1 April

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Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	The Historical Studies Programme	2
3.0	Faculty Research and Scholarship	6
4.0	Faculty and Staff	7
5.0	Community and University Service	7
6.0	University Support.....	8
7.0	Plans, Goals, and Resource Allocation	8
	Appendix One – Itinerary	9
	Appendix Two – Notable Academic Achievements	
	Historical Studies Students, 1997-2005	10
	Appendix Three – Summary of Recommendations.....	13

1.0 Introduction

At the invitation of H.E.A. Campbell, Vice President (Academic), Margaret Conrad, Canada Research Chair in Atlantic Canada Studies, University of New Brunswick, David Peddle, Philosophy, Chair of Humanities, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, and Chris Youe, Head History Department, Memorial University, St John's Campus, conducted an on-site review of the Historical Studies Programme from 29 March to 1 April. In advance of the on-site visit, the review committee received the programme's self study and other documents relating to the investigation. More documentation was made available at the beginning of the campus visit. Despite a massive snow storm that closed the campus on the two busiest days of the review, most of the administrators, faculty, and students who planned to make presentations to the review committee risked life and limb to do so. We were sorry not to be able to meet with Wade Bowers, Associate Vice-Principal (Research).

Our itinerary kept us busy from 9:00 to 4:30 on 30 and 31 March (See Appendix 1). On the evening of 29 March, Margaret Conrad and Chris Youe were given a general briefing by Principal John Ashton and Vice-Principal Holly Pike. The review committee met with all the faculty appointed on a full-time basis to the programme (Rainer Baehre, James Greenlee, Olaf Janzen) and with the two cross-appointed faculty (Gerard Curtis and Michael Parker). We were uniformly impressed with the frank discussions which ensued. Likewise, we met with the following students: Christine Abbot, Cassie Buckle, Sean Burton, Melissa Harnett, Jennifer Hillier, Sherry Hodder, Michael Jones, Heather Perry, and Amanda Warren. In addition, College Librarian Elizabeth Behrens made a presentation to the review committee. The review process was well organized and highly congenial.

2.0 The Historical Studies Programme

The Historical Studies Programme received approval in 1996-97. Since that time it has grown considerably in the number of majors (5 in the fall of 1997 to 28 in the fall of 2003) but it still remains one of the smallest programmes in the Division of Arts in terms of overall enrolment (129 in the fall of 1997 and 148 in the fall of 2003). Given the numbers of students, faculty in the Historical Studies Programme, for the most part, have enviously small classes and students receive close personal attention. The Historical Studies Programme provides an admirably comprehensive approach to Western history. Wisely, its curriculum is focused so as to be provided regularly within the expertise of a three-person department (with two additional cross-appointments). The programming is cogent and effective, and the remarkable results achieved by its students, in terms of university awards and success in post graduate studies (see Appendix 2), are a clear testament to its academic integrity. Further, without exception, the students we interviewed spoke highly of the programme and their teachers. The programme nevertheless faces a major challenge in the near future with the retirement of two faculty members (Greenlee and Parker). The committee was pleased to learn that there is a general consensus that the Classics professor will be replaced and we assume that Professor Greenlee, who covers several

historical fields essential to a well-rounded Western Civilization programme, will also be replaced. The committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 1: That every effort be made to sustain the Historical Studies Programme that has been developed over the past eight years and, to that end, ensure that future hires support the programme's comprehensive chronological approach to Western Civilization.

The success of Historical Studies belies the difficulties of offering this programme in the light of the necessarily heavy administrative responsibilities of its members. In a campus of Grenfell's size it is required that the burdens of administration be widely shared and the members of Historical Studies have taken on more than their share of these responsibilities. Professor Olaf Janzen, for example, is in his second term as Head of the Division of Arts. Professor James Greenlee has served as Head of the Division of Fine Arts. Professor Baehre is the Chair of the programme. These duties bring with them teaching remissions which strain the resources of the programme beyond acceptable limits. The situation is made worse by the fact that faculty who take sabbatical leave or agree to assume administrative positions which come with course release are not normally replaced. While History departments in larger universities can perhaps adjust to the absence of one or two professors, this is not the case at Sir Wilfred Grenfell. The loss of Professor Greenlee, who teaches a wide range of courses and this year supervised all of the special projects (HIST 4950), will almost certainly leave a gaping hole. It is unlikely that a newly-minted PhD will be able to fill it. Further, "A Strategic Framework for Memorial University" (December 20, 2000) calls for provisions for "the appointment of new faculty and staff" and states, "We will use bridging appointments ... and other means for achieving a renewal rate of at least 25% over the next 7-year period". Thus, in light of the Strategic Framework, Professor Olaf Janzen's administrative duties that reduce his teaching load until 2007 and the imminent retirement of Professors Greenlee and Parker, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 2: That a bridging appointment, ideally beyond the early level of assistant professor be hired in 2006.

and

Recommendation 3: That, since it is critical to the delivery of the Historical Studies programme, sabbatical replacements be the norm rather than the exception.

While we believe that the maintenance of the current programme is the best course of action, we cannot ignore the fact that faculty and students expressed the strong desire to expand programme offerings. The self-study (pp. 76-77) noted a number of desirable options, including American, modern European, and Public history; students told us that they would like to take courses in Russian and Asian history. The faculty and students also expressed interest in developing an honours programme that would include a 4000-level honours seminar in historiography and an expansion of the special projects essay. However, this option also seems difficult to achieve at

the present time without sacrificing other aspects of the programme. A step in the direction of a full-fledged honours programme can be achieved by making History 4950 a 6-credit course to enable ambitious students to develop a more comprehensive research paper, while allowing those students who struggle to develop the project over one semester some breathing room.

Further, the programme describes itself as recognizing, “that some historical methods and content can be taught effectively by non-historians and that interdisciplinary perspectives help to develop a wider understanding of issues and methodologies” (p. 29). One of its award-winning students recommended, for example, that the programme cross-list two history of philosophy courses, History of Ancient Philosophy (2701) and History of Modern Philosophy (2702). Historical Studies would better live up to its self-identification were it to make a more aggressive effort to draw on such apposite resources from other disciplines. Political Science, Religious Studies, Environmental Studies, Social/Cultural Studies, Tourism, and Visual Arts are likewise areas in which significant collaboration can take place. If such cross-listings and joint appointments prove as successful as the ones currently in place, they would dramatically alter the range of courses available to Historical Studies students.

We therefore recommend:

Recommendation 4: That the range of course offerings in Historical Studies be enhanced by the addition of cross-listed courses.

and

Recommendation 5: That the programme’s faculty pursue opportunities for joint appointments with other programmes in the College.

Finally, in relation to future hires, the committee was happy to note that the faculty in the Historical Studies Programme recognized the gender and diversity imbalance among the teaching complement. Such an imbalance reflects the difficulties Grenfell as a whole faces in faculty recruitment. Nevertheless, the committee recommends

Recommendation 6: That in future hires, serious consideration continue to be given to issues of gender balance and diversity.

The interdisciplinary profile of the programme would be enhanced by specially tailored Historical Studies minor programmes, which draw heavily on other disciplines. A focus on special topics (e.g., gender) or time periods (e.g., Victorian) might prove very attractive to students and aid in the programme’s recruitment efforts. Therefore, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 7: That the faculty in Historical Studies explore the possibility of a special minor in history that encompasses cross-listed sources.

Linkages with the Department of History in St. John's are tenuous and *ad hoc*. Those linkages can and should be strengthened. Recently, the history faculty members in Corner Brook were added to the e-mail list for Memorial's History Department so that Grenfell is at least made aware of guest lecturers, departmental agendas, course changes, etc. James Greenlee is currently supervising a PhD student who is off-campus, taking over from the recently-retired David Facey-Crowther. Nonetheless, the Committee believes these ties can be strengthened with, perhaps, more frequent opportunities for faculty to give guest lectures at the other campus, or the possibility of post-comprehensive PhD students from MUN doing a one-semester teaching apprenticeship with a mentor at Grenfell. Memorial professors could serve as readers for independent study projects. Stronger linkages can only enhance both programmes. The committee recommends:

Recommendation 8: That financial and other resources be committed to strengthening the linkages with the History department on the St John's campus of Memorial University, including but not confined to guest lecture exchanges and a teaching mentor programme.

The anticipated changes in faculty, the service commitments of Professor Janzen, and the governance structure of the university suggest that the programme may face a crisis of leadership over the next few years. When Professor Baehre finishes his two terms as chair in 2006, it may be difficult to find a replacement. The committee recommends:

Recommendation 9: That plans be developed for the succession of Historical Studies Programme chairs over the next seven-year cycle.

The committee recognizes the difficulty of making long-range plans when the future seems so uncertain but, by thinking ahead, the faculty in Historical Studies will be well-positioned to argue its case with administration. The committee also suggests that the programme's faculty make an effort to anticipate the likely course options over a four-year cycle so that students and faculty alike can better plan their agendas. The committee thus recommends:

Recommendation 10: That, to the extent feasible, a rolling four-year cycle of course offerings be developed beginning in the fall of 2005.

While the students find the faculty welcoming and helpful, they acknowledged, when asked, that there were few activities that brought faculty and students in the programme together. They spoke wistfully of a recent History Society event, which was for some of them the first opportunity that they had to socialize on a collegial basis. This lack can be easily rectified and we strongly recommend:

Recommendation 11: That the faculty in the Historical Studies Programme work with the students in the History Society to organize a meet and greet early in the fall term and at least one other programme event in the winter term.

Students and faculty confirmed the assertion of College librarian Elizabeth Behrens that library

facilities were adequate, primarily because of access to the resources on the St John's campus, which has the best university library in the Atlantic region. There was some frustration because loans from the main campus take several days to arrive and because books are sometimes inaccessible because they have been placed on reserve in St John's. To a considerable degree faculty and students agreed that Internet access to journals was an enormous benefit to them, although students often found that there were not enough computer terminals during peak hours of use.

3.0 Faculty Research and Scholarship

When it was founded, Wilfred Grenfell College's mission was focussed on teaching rather than research. The ground has shifted in recent years, even for small university campuses, as the hiring of an Associate Vice Principal (Research) testifies. All faculty in the Historical Studies Programme are active researchers, some impressively so, but their work tends to be funded by modest internal grants rather than by larger standard and special grants from SSHRC. In the current science-driven research climate, grants seem to be more important than the research itself, but universities are pressed to keep up with the times which, the review committee acknowledges, seem out of tune with traditional humanities approaches to research.

The faculty in Historical Studies write books and/or articles, regularly review books for national and international journals, conduct peer reviews for SSHRC and various academic publishers, and keep up-to date in their fields of expertise. While most of the faculty members do not participate actively in national organizations such as the Canadian Historical Association, a few have participated in local and international professional groups. In the committee's opinion, the faculty in Historical Studies compare favourably with the faculty on the St John's campus in matters relating to research and with faculty in small undergraduate universities elsewhere in Canada.

Given the age of most members of the faculty and the increasing competitiveness of the SSHRC competitions, it is unlikely that the success rate for external funding will improve markedly in the near future. That said, there may be opportunities to collaborate in research grant applications being developed on the St. John's campus and beyond. More importantly, new hires should be encouraged to develop a balanced approach to teaching, research, and community service. To achieve this goal, the administration, and most especially the Vice Principal (Research) at Sir Wilfred Grenfell, must play an important role. Without guaranteed course release to support the work associated with external research grants and a staff to manage the paper work associated with these grants, the hard-pressed faculty will only be faced with an added burden rather than an exciting research opportunity.

To help the unit to develop plans for its research goals in the next seven year cycle, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 12: That the Historical Studies faculty, in conjunction with the Associate Vice Principal (Research), explore the potential for research support both within and outside the university.

4.0 Faculty and Staff

Faculty resources (there is no dedicated staff support) are being exploited to the limit. As indicated above, the faculty work hard and their teaching loads (6 courses a year) are high by national standards. In the course of its inquiry, it became clear that the faculty felt that there was little room to manoeuvre and certainly no incentive to engage in imaginative long-range planning. The review committee believes that the time may be appropriate for a so-called “visioning exercise” to more fully articulate the programme’s goals for the future. If there is a recommendation to be made here, it is that programme meetings need to be held more regularly and that long-range planning should be included in the matters discussed at these meetings. There was a palpable sense that the current Chair of Historical Studies needs to ensure that collegial governance practices are visibly observed so that consensus be more fully established and reflected in the day-to-day operations of the programme.

To that end, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 13: That meetings of Historical Studies faculty be held on a regular basis (at least monthly) and that written records be kept of decisions made as well as time-lines and responsibilities for action.

Further, we sense that tasks relating to carrying out the programme could be more equitably distributed among the three full-time faculty members. We therefore recommend:

Recommendation 14: That the academic service responsibilities of the Historical Studies Programme, to the extent possible, be equitably distributed among the full-time faculty.

5.0 Community and University Service

The Historical Studies faculty have an exemplary record of service to the community and to the university. Among other things, they have served as expert witnesses in court cases, organized oral history workshops, taught in the Elderhostel programme, visited local schools, and served as consultants in a number of local history projects. In addition to participating in programme administration, the faculty have taken on other administrative positions, including the Division leadership. In sum, they are reliable colleagues and good ambassadors for the university. While there is no formal process by which students are introduced to professional community service opportunities, they learn by example, and in some cases by working as student assistants in community projects.

6.0 University Support

The self-study raised a number of issues relating to university resources, including the need for more internal research funding, course release for active researchers, sabbatical replacements, support for visiting lecturers, and more scholarships and prizes. The review committee also noticed that offices were small and cramped – more like graduate student carrels than faculty offices. None of these problems are unique to the Historical Studies Programme. Instead they speak to the need of a relatively new campus to find additional funding to raise the quality of intellectual life for faculty and students. The reviewers can make no formal recommendation in this matter, but we do encourage the faculty in Historical Studies to work with college administrators to find ways of improving the resources available.

Students told the committee that they would like to have a Historical Studies common room with computer facilities, and this addition would almost certainly raise the esprit de corp of those enrolled in the programme. If resources permit this request should be seriously considered.

As far as the review committee can tell, the reporting structure seems appropriate and the small size of the faculty at Sir Wilfred Grenfell facilitates easy communication.

7.0 Plans, Goals, and Resource Allocation

The objectives of the Historical Studies Unit are entirely appropriate to the strong liberal arts focus of the Sir Wilfred Grenfell campus. While the review committee would not say that the faculty is trying to do too much, it is clear that resources are stretched and morale would be improved by an additional faculty member.

Appendix One

Historical Studies

Sir Wilfred Grenfell College

Site visit itinerary

Tuesday, March 29 6:00 PM: Panel working dinner with Principal, Dr. John Ashton and Vice-Principal, Dr. Holly Pike, Glynmill Inn.				
Wednesday, March 30 <i>Conference Room AS275</i>		Thursday, March 31 <i>Conference Room AS275</i>		Fri. Apr. 1 AS275
9:00 AM	Organizational meeting: Three Panel members	9:00–10:00 AM D. Peddle teaching 10:00- 11:15	Meet with Arts Division Head, Dr. Olaf Janzen	Review panel members only – working session to draft review report
9:30–10:30AM	Meet with Programme Chair, Dr. Rainer Baehre And tour the facilities	10:00–10:30 AM	Meet with Wade Bowers Associate Vice-Principal (Research)	
10:30-11:00 AM	Meet with College Librarian, Ms Elizabeth Behrens	10:30–11:30 AM (Upper Lounge, Student Centre)	Informal 'meet and greet' with faculty, staff, students Refreshments will be served	
11:00–11:30 AM	Break			
11:30–12:00	Meet with Dr. Michael Parker (Classics)	11:30–12:00	Meet with Dr. Gerard Curtis (Fine Arts)	
12:00–2:00 PM	Lunch and Unscheduled	12:00–1:00 PM	Meet undergraduate students D. Peddle teaching 12:30-1:20	
D. Peddle teaching 2-3:15		12:00–12:15	Amanda Warren/Michael Jones (2 nd and 3 rd year/Historical Studies majors)	
		12:15–12:30	Sherry Hodder/Sean Burton (2 nd year/Historical Studies majors)	
		12:30–12:45	Sara Young/Shannon Oldham (1 st year/Historical Studies majors)	
		12:30–12:45	Break	
		1:00–2:00 PM	Panel working lunch	
2:00–3:15 PM	Meet graduating/graduated students	2:00–3:00 PM	Panel meets to confer for exit meetings	D. Peddle teaching 12:30-1:20
2:00–2:15	Cassie Buckle (4 th year/Historical Studies major)			
2:15–2:30	Jennifer Hillier (4 th year/Historical Studies/English co-major/aboriginal background)			
2:30–2:45	Heather Perry (4 th year/Historical Studies major)			
2:45–3:00	Christine Abbott(Social/Cultural Studies graduate/lecturer in sociology/former student in cross-listed courses)			
3:00–3:15	Melissa Harnett (current 4 th year "History" major)	3:00–3:30 PM	Exit meeting with Vice-Principal and Principal – panel shares its preliminary findings	
3:15–3:30 PM	Break			
3:30–4:30 PM	Meet all faculty: R. Baehre, O. Janzen, J. Greenlee, M. Parker, Gerard Curtis	3:30–4:30 PM	Exit meeting with Division Head, Programme Chair, faculty – panel shares its preliminary findings	
4:30–5:00 PM	Meet with Dr. James Greenlee (History)	4:30 PM	Panel meets to summarize day's meetings, outline/draft sections of panel report	
5:00 PM	Panel meets to summarize day's meetings and distribute writing responsibilities			
7:00 PM	Panel only working dinner	7:00 PM	Panel only working dinner	
Reviewers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Margaret Conrad, Canada Research Chair in Atlantic Canada Studies, Dept. of History, University of New Brunswick • Dr. David Peddle, Assistant Professor, Philosophy, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial Univ. (Panel Chair) • Dr. Chris Youe, Head, History Department, Memorial University 			

Appendix Two

Notable Academic Achievements Historical Studies Students, 1997-2005

Distinctions (2004-05)

Mark Osmond:

- Pro-Vice Chancellor's Prize for Excellence in Undergraduate Scholarship, for his paper, "Revising Newton: a Modern Historiographical Debate.

Heather Perry:

- The David Kirkland Leadership Award
- Arthur M. Sullivan Award
- Edward P. Bourne Scholarship

Cassie Buckle:

- GCSU Student Merit Award

Graduate School Admissions and Scholarships (2004-05)

Mark T. Osmond:

- University of Victoria
- \$18,000 - MA in History

Cassandra M. Buckle:

- University of Guelph
- \$20,000 - MA in History

Cara M. Finn:

- McMaster University
- \$11,000 - MA in History

Jennifer Donovan (2004)

- University of Toronto
- Partial funding - MA in Museum Studies

Distinctions (1997-2004)

Sandra Payne:

- Mr. Justice P. Lloyd and Elizabeth Soper Scholarship, 1996-97
- Madeline Fowler Prize in English, 1997-98

Neil White:

- Captain George Cartwright Scholarship in History, 1997-98
- May Parker Memorial Scholarship in Classics, 1997-98
- Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty Association Scholarship, 1999-2000
- University Medal for Academic Excellence, 2000
- M.A. in History (MUN)
- completing Ph.D. in History (McMaster)

Johnathan Pope

- Madeline Fowler Prize in English, 2000-01
- University Medal for Academic Excellence, 2001

Jennifer Donovan

- University Medal for Academic Excellence, 2004

Cassandra Buckle

- May Parker Memorial Scholarship in Classics, 2003.
- The Joanne Swan Greenlee Prize in Historical Studies, 2004.

Earlier Graduates: Graduate or Professional Schools

Justin Hulan (2000)

- completed B.Ed. following graduation

Sandra Payne (2000)

- completed M.A. in History (MUN)

Neil White (2000)

- completed MA in History (MUN)
- Doctoral Student in History (McMaster)
- SSHRC Doctoral Scholarship Recipient

Johnathan Pope (2001)

- completed M.A. in History (UNB)

Jason Warren (2001)

- completed M.A. in History (UNB)

Karen Peddle (2002):

- completed MA in History (Dalhousie)
- currently studying international law (University of Leicester)

Shelly Hobbs (2002)

- M.A. student in History (MUN)
- conference presenter, annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Society, 2005. Conference participation supported by an Ireland Fund of Canada Scholarship.

Other Students (Historical Studies Related)

Linda Fitzgibbon (History minor):

- University Medal for Academic Excellence (English), 1999
- Completed MA in History (Carleton)
- Ph.D. candidate in History (University of Ottawa)
- Recipient, Ontario Graduate Scholarship

Colin Preston (History)

- Former Historical Studies student (3 years)
- Completed B.A. in history (MUN)
- M.A. student (MUN) in History

VA graduates who have gone on into Masters programmes, **utilizing their art history** courses as a strong, or the dominant, component of their application to graduate school include:

Rebecca Harris: MA Art History, York University (2003)

Natalie Rogers: MA Interior Design; University of Manitoba (2004-)

Richard Symonds: MA Architecture, University of Toronto (2002-2005)

Lee Olford: MA Art Conservation, Queen's University (1999-2003)

Chris Batten: MA Gallery and Museum Studies, University of Sheffield (1997-1999)

Social Sciences students with Historical Studies background, supervised in 4950 projects by cross-listed Historical Studies faculty include:

Christine Abbott (Social/Cultural Studies):

- winner of the University Gold Medal in Social/Cultural Studies
- completed M.A. (Queen's)
- lecturer in sociology, 2004-05 (SWGK)

Brandon Pardy (Environmental Studies)

- M.A. student in Environmental Studies (York)

Appendix Three

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That every effort be made to sustain the Historical Studies Programme that has been developed over the past eight years and, to that end, ensure that future hires support the programme's comprehensive chronological approach to Western Civilization.

Recommendation 2: That a bridging appointment, ideally beyond the early level of assistant professor be hired in 2006.

Recommendation 3: That, since it is critical to the delivery of the Historical Studies programme, sabbatical replacements be the norm rather than the exception.

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Recommendation 5: That the programme's faculty pursue opportunities for joint appointments with other programmes in the College.

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Recommendation 13: That meetings of Historical Studies faculty be held on a regular basis (at least monthly) and that written records be kept of decisions made as well as time-lines and responsibilities for action.

Recommendation 14: That the academic service responsibilities of the Historical Studies Programme, to the extent possible, be equitably distributed among the full-time faculty.