

# **REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PANEL**

## **Department of History, Memorial University 27 February-2 March 2002**

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This review of the Department of History at Memorial University forms part of a cycle of reviews initiated by the Senate in 2001 to support the University's objectives. The review panel consisted of the following:

Dr. Margaret Conrad, Professor of History, Acadia University  
Dr. Gerald Friesen, Professor of History, University of Manitoba  
Dr. Ronald Rompkey, University Research Professor, Department of English, Memorial University (chair)  
Dr. Andrea Rose, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Memorial University.

The report is a collective effort reflecting the agreement of the members. Throughout the review process, the panel was supported by Joan Bessey, Academic Program Review Coordinator, and the staff of the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning.

1.2 The panel met on 27 February 2002 with the Vice-President (Academic), Dr. Evan Simpson, and the interim Dean of Arts, Dr. James Black, to consider the purpose of the review and the strategic objectives of the University. It was told that the Department of History was at a crossroads as a result of recent deaths, departures, and retirements, as well as curriculum changes and new directions in the University's strategic plan. Now it needed to regroup, focus its energies, and find new leadership in the face of further changes predicted over the next two years. The panel was also told that its advice would play a role in helping the Department decide how best to maintain the quality of its undergraduate and graduate programs, both of which contribute considerably to the University and to the cultural and educational life of the province.

1.3 On 28 February and 1 March, the panel held a series of meetings with interested parties. The first day began with the Head, Dr. David Facey-Crowther, and a tour of the facilities, followed by discussions with Dr. James Black concerning the place of History in the Faculty of Arts. These meetings confirmed the view that the faculty complement was shrinking and that imaginative ways needed to be found to help the adjustment to the new reality. An hour had been set aside for undergraduates, but only the president of the Undergraduate History Society, Julie Laite, was available at that time. Although she presented an interesting and informative summary of student concerns, the panel wanted to hear from a broader cross-section of students and arranged another period later in the afternoon. Four members of the faculty presented themselves for individual interviews: Dr. Sean Cadigan, Dr. Jeff Webb (contractual), Dr. Robert Sweeney, and Dr. Ranee Panjabi. After lunch with several faculty members, the panel met the administrative staff specialist, Fran Warren, and the secretary, Beverly Evans-Hong, as well as the acting Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr. Noreen Golfman, followed by seven master's and doctoral students and still later a group of fourteen undergraduates.

1.4 The second day began with the Undergraduate Studies Committee, consisting of Dr. Lindsay Bryan, Professor Louise Dawe, Professor Thomas Evans (Honours Co-ordinator), and Dr. Raneé Panjabi, followed by a discussion with the Head about preliminary findings and a round-table with ten members of the Department. The panel then lunched with faculty members. In the afternoon, it held a discussion with the Graduate Studies Committee: Dr. Sean Cadigan, Dr. Christopher English, Professor Lewis Fischer, and Dr. James Hiller. At the panel's request, a further meeting was held separately with Professor Fischer to discuss the status of the Maritime History Archive and the Maritime Studies Research Unit, as well as with Dr. Peter Hart, who holds a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Irish Studies. The panel also received written submissions from Dr. Valerie Burton and Dr. Linda Kealey, both of whom were out of the province. The proceedings then concluded with a briefing of the interim Dean of Arts and a final meeting with faculty, staff, and students to communicate preliminary findings.

## **2.0 Department of History**

2.1 The discipline of History has formed an integral part of the liberal arts program at Memorial since the inception of Memorial University College in 1925. When Memorial University was established as a degree-granting institution in 1949, History occupied a privileged place, encouraged by the pre-confederation National Convention's desire to fashion a university that would reflect the cultural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador. Beginning with the appointment of new faculty in the 1950s, the Department of History has offered a rich environment for undergraduate work and expanded its capacity for master's and doctoral studies to the point where it now features one of the largest graduate programs (measured by the number of students) in the Faculty of Arts. It has produced able and distinguished scholars, including one, Dr. Leslie Harris, who served as president of Memorial University from 1981 to 1990.

2.2 The last departmental review, conducted in 1980, found the Department of History at a crossroads and recommended a number of changes to meet new circumstances. Likewise, this panel finds it at another crossroads, following the loss of an extraordinarily high number of productive and respected faculty members through death, retirement, or departure to other universities, as well as alterations in the shape of the bachelor's degree. These circumstances invite imagination and planning if the Department is to continue to play a significant role in the University's liberal arts strategy and in academic research contributing to the expansion of historical knowledge, especially as it pertains to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

2.3 At present, History is taught by a permanent faculty complement of nineteen, a reduction from twenty-eight, and by an assortment of highly qualified contractual and part-time instructors. These faculty offer a balanced selection of undergraduate courses to serve those pursuing a BA with a major in History and a particularly rigorous honours degree praised by faculty and students alike for its thoroughness and breadth. In graduate studies, the Department enrolls approximately twelve master's students and one to four doctoral candidates per year in selected fields. With an overall enrolment of 2,645 students in 2000-2001, it compares favourably, in quantitative terms, with History departments in Canadian universities of similar size, but it is much reduced from the 4,000 or more enrolments of the early 1990s. This decline can largely be

attributed to changing requirements for the arts degree in the late 1990s and to the reduction in course offerings which paralleled the shrinking faculty complement, as well as a reduction in the provincial population.

2.4 In addition to a decline in faculty and students, the Department is susceptible to other, more widespread trends. Since the end of the expansive period of higher education from 1945 to 1975, a period characterized by increasing dependence on state funding and the centrality of the arts and humanities in undergraduate programs, universities everywhere have followed a new scientific paradigm. Scholarly tendencies emphasizing theoretical and empirical rigour and entrepreneurial measures to raise funding for collaborative research have been carried into the mainstream; the more generalist or “belletrist” approach to scholarship has been pushed to the margins. These shifts are reflected, to some degree, in the position in which the Department finds itself today.

2.5 One of the biggest problems facing the Department is low morale. Interviews with faculty and students alike have confirmed the impression conveyed in the Department’s self-study (an early phase of this review) that the future for History at Memorial University looks bleak. With a large number of imminent retirements, declining enrolments, and shrinking university resources, many people in the Department feel there is not much hope of sustaining the undergraduate and graduate programs at the level of excellence achieved in the 1990s. This litany of woe, the panel believes, has become something of a mantra, discouraging active planning for the future. (Indeed, certain members suggested that the operative departmental mode was now reactive.) Such an approach must be abandoned if the Department is to meet the challenges it faces.

2.6 While the trends are troubling, the panel took a more positive view. The balance struck between a broad range of undergraduate courses designed to serve the History majors, honours students, and elective students and a graduate program focused on Newfoundland and Labrador history and Maritime Studies seems to work well, and the panel saw no reason why it could not be maintained—even enhanced. The recent appointments of Dr. Sean Cadigan to the directorship of the Public Policy Research Centre and Dr. Peter Hart to a Canadian Research Chair in Irish Studies offer exciting opportunities in interdisciplinary research, while the appointment of Dr. Lindsay Bryan in medieval history and the imminent hiring of a European social historian have led the panel to believe that European History is undergoing renewal. Undergraduate course offerings will inevitably shrink with the decline in faculty complement, but with careful planning and new hiring, the commendable breadth of the undergraduate program may well increase. In comparison with History departments at the University of New Brunswick and Dalhousie, the current faculty complement of nineteen makes it still the largest in Atlantic Canada, and historians at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College augment the critical mass with whom collaborative projects might be undertaken.

2.7 Memorial University shares with other comprehensive universities in Canada the unenviable challenge of maintaining a high level of excellence at two levels. It is not primarily an undergraduate institution such as Mount Allison or Trent; nor does it possess the resources of

a primarily research institution such as McGill or Toronto. Given this reality and the current state of flux, the Department needs to consider carefully and collectively how to position itself.

2.8 The panel heard from the faculty and the Head of the Department that the current Policy Committee serves primarily a “reactive” function. Based upon the current need for departmental renewal, the panel therefore advocates the establishment of a planning committee to lead the way. With the Head having only one more year in contract, there exists an ideal opportunity for the faculty (via the planning committee) to establish future directions and resource requirements so that the hiring of a new head will be more effectively executed within the context of an overall strategic plan.

**Recommendation 1. That the Department of History elect a Strategic Planning Committee consisting of four departmental faculty members, two History students (one graduate and one undergraduate) and one faculty member from a cognate department to develop short- and long-range plans, outlining specifically what program areas need attention, where future hiring should ideally occur, what balance should be struck between graduate and undergraduate programs, and what relations should exist between the History Department and other departments and divisions of the University.**

In undertaking this process, the Department should consider the University’s strategic plan and the recommendations embodied in the present report.

### **3.0 Undergraduate Program**

3.1 The Department’s calendar entry lists a wide range of courses for the History major and honours programs. Moreover, since 1998, the Department has embraced the university-wide goal of encouraging research and writing skills across the curriculum by making most of its introductory courses conform to the research/writing designation. According to the Memorial University “fact book,” the number of major and honours graduates declined from seventy-six in 1997 to forty-five in 2001, yet the Department still managed to graduate 9.52 % of the total Arts Faculty graduates in 2000-2001, and it has graduated from nine to eighteen honours students annually over the past five years. These are respectable numbers. They in no way suggest a crisis in enrolment. Moreover, various members of the Department offer courses that sustain interdisciplinary programs elsewhere, including Canadian Studies, European Studies, Law and Society, Medieval Studies, the diploma in Heritage Resources, Distance Education, and the Harlow program.

3.2 However, both faculty and students expressed the fear that the shrinking faculty complement, coupled with the University’s goal of enhancing graduate studies and encouraging research/writing service courses at the first-year level, will compromise the breadth and depth of the undergraduate program. Their fears have some basis in fact. Research/writing courses impose a ceiling of thirty-five students. This ceiling arguably keeps enrolments in History down (courses at the first- and second-year levels normally impose a ceiling of sixty) and commits considerable

faculty resources to the first year. At the same time, a growing number of research/writing sections (five of the twelve offered in fall 2001) are taught by post-doctoral and contractual appointments, reflecting a trend that may or may not be desirable. Often, graduate students and part-time teachers bring commitment and empathy equal to that of full-time faculty. Indeed, without underestimating the problems inherent in a two-tier faculty, it seemed obvious that the Department is well served by part-time and sessional instructors. Nevertheless, the growth in courses taught by graduate students and part-time faculty reflects a troubling trend manifested throughout Canadian universities, one all too clearly reflected in the *Macleans*' ranking system, and it has been flagged in the Departmental self-study as a pressing matter needing study by the Department and the University as each tries to balance its commitment to undergraduate and graduate excellence.

3.3 Although the undergraduates spoke highly of their professors and programs, they drew attention to a number of matters for concern, some of which were echoed by faculty. At the top of the list was the absence of a sense of community. Students noted the lack of a dedicated space for undergraduates and the failure of faculty to engage in student activities. In this respect, the History Department was said to compare unfavourably with others on campus—Geography and Anthropology among them—departments that seemed to have acquired more space and developed a stronger community spirit. The lack of computer access for undergraduates was also a cause of complaint. The panel further noted that the History Department offered few annual awards and prizes to recognize undergraduate excellence and rarely hosted events such as seminars or mixers to bring students and faculty together informally. In many universities, the recognition of achievement often takes the form of a book prize or a certificate that is relatively easy to finance. Such recognition offers the opportunity for mutual celebration.

3.4 In its discussions with the Undergraduate Studies Committee, the panel learned that the system of faculty advisors was a hit-or-miss operation in need of better organization. Students were sometimes unaware of new course offerings and “fell between the cracks” when information was posted on websites and bulletin boards. In some universities, History majors and honours students are linked by e-mail, in others by regular newsletters produced by the students themselves. The History Department might consider some of these options—faculty advisors, chat lines, and newsletters—along with the creation of an attractive undergraduate common room as ways of making the Department more accessible and welcoming to their undergraduate charges.

3.5 Another complaint was related to the decreasing number of courses offered in spring semester, inter-session, and summer school. Dr. Valerie Burton noted in her memorandum to Professor Evans on 25 October 2001 (Self-study, Appendix C) that students appreciated the fact that the Department took the spring semester seriously but that students pursuing a degree year-round were offered much less choice in the spring. To some extent, this problem can be alleviated by the availability of Distance Education courses, but that option adds to yet another problematic trend: the growing tendency of students located in St. John's to take courses through Distance Education so as not to be inconvenienced by campus schedules.

3.6 The panel did not have time to investigate the Department's involvement in Distance Education, but it was told that the general pattern amounted to two courses each semester. With a cut-off at sixty students for each course, this policy can provide for a maximum of 360 students a year. The courses are well subscribed, and often there is a waiting list. But this semester, because of the need for an additional section on campus, only one course has been offered through Distance Education. In recent years, web-based instruction has supplemented print manuals, video, and teleconferencing as a means of course delivery. Therefore, because many students, especially mature students both in St. John's and beyond, appreciate the flexibility provided by Distance Education, this service is likely to grow over the next decade. Mount Saint Vincent University beams its Distance Education courses into the province, and if Memorial wants to develop the reputation it once had as a leader in extension services, it would need to commit more resources to this aspect of its program. But given the other demands placed upon the Department, it will not be able to expand its commitment to Distance Education without more support from the University.

3.7 The panel was told that the prerequisites recommended in the University calendar were often ignored, so that first- and second-year students sometimes floundered when permitted to register in fourth-year courses. The panel had no means of verifying this allegation, but the question of prerequisites needs to be revisited so that everyone is clear about whether they work or not. The panel also encourages the Department to enhance its promotional material. No brochure appears to exist to promote the undergraduate program other than the Harlow courses. The Department's website should also be enhanced to highlight the virtues of the undergraduate experience.

3.8 Since the panel was given minimal information about the recruitment practices of the University, it could not judge whether they were being used to full advantage, but the number of out-of-province students is generally low, and there may be some value in casting the net further. Undergraduate recruiting is the domain of the administration, though the panel was told that members of faculty still participate in information campaigns in provincial high schools. At the other end of the process, students graduating from undergraduate History appeared to be as capable of finding positions in graduate schools and in the job market as students elsewhere, often in other provinces.

3.9 While students and faculty alike praised the range of undergraduate courses, they also expressed the hope that "neglected" areas of the world--notably Latin America--and a number of special topics--environmental, film, and sports history--would be added. The panel also noted that while the offerings in any given two-year cycle was impressive, the calendar promised even greater variety. As the Department continues to change, the discrepancy between actual course offerings and calendar listings may widen. Thus, every effort should be made to strike out redundant courses.

3.10 The panel heard few suggestions for change in the undergraduate major and honours programs. Indeed, there was almost universal agreement that the wide choice offered students majoring in History (there are no core courses for majors, only credit hours required at each of

the four levels) allowed students the advantage of exploring a variety of fields, while the honours program, with five required courses, offered a challenging and worthwhile experience. The panel agrees with the Department that the major and honours programs are well organized and efficient. Although some concern was expressed that grade inflation might exist in some courses and that shrinking numbers might compromise the program, the Department received high marks in all areas under scrutiny. The panel feels confident that it performs its teaching function well, that its curriculum remains sufficiently rigorous, and that its grading norms are consistent with similar programs in Canada. Even under the present circumstances, it has managed to offer a wide range of courses and maintain appropriate class size. Classes are restricted to thirty-five in research/writing courses, sixty in other first-year and all second-year courses, forty in third-year courses, and fifteen in fourth-year seminars. Library resources appear to be more than adequate for their support.

3.11 Despite these accomplishments, the panel encourages the Department to anticipate future problems and strive for even greater excellence. Even if major policy changes are not currently called for, a number of important issues relating to the undergraduate program need to be monitored. For instance, the university-wide requirement for two research/writing courses appears excessive, given the fact that students often repeat in the second course the methods taught in the first. If students were required to take only one research/writing course as a general university requirement, the teaching resources thus liberated could be redeployed to teach a three-credit core course in History methods (such as History 3480), a core requirement that increasingly forms part of History major programs in Canadian universities. The panel understood the need for flexibility and choice in the major program (and perhaps the necessity of changing the wider university requirement regarding research/writing courses before proceeding), but it believes that a core course in History methods could bring to the major program some of the rigour and professional identity so prevalent and highly regarded in the honours program.

**Recommendation 2. That the Undergraduate Studies Committee review the History major and honours programs and make recommendations to the Strategic Planning Committee with respect to the resources committed to research/writing courses at the first year level; the desirability of introducing a required course in History methods for majors; the role of graduate students and part-time faculty in undergraduate teaching (especially in first-year courses); the range, balance, and prerequisite requirements of undergraduate courses; the role of Distance Education in the overall service to the University; and the processes by which a sense of community can be enhanced.**

#### **4.0 Graduate Program**

4.1 The panel was impressed by the Department's graduate teaching and supervision and convinced that the School of Graduate Studies and the Faculty of Arts are committed to its continuation. However, some uncertainty prevails. University administrators worry that the Department's resolve has been shaken; members of the Department worry that the administration

does not appreciate the burdens imposed on them at a moment when they lack the resources to do everything. The administrators suggest that the Department could do more to help itself, whether through securing research grants to support graduate students or through the discovery and cultivation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians eager to pour money into research. The Department points to the amount of money coming from outside agencies in recent years and hands the fundraising responsibility back to the administration. The administrators ask the Department to declare a direction; the Department asks for faculty replacements that would represent choices. Does this constitute a crisis? Or is it a sign of change, the beginning of a new era?

4.2 Graduate education in Canada has passed through a number of cycles in the last half century, and Memorial has participated in them all. The University of Toronto, for example, offered what Harold Innis once described as an adequate master's program at the end of World War II. The next level of university in size and resources, whether the University of Alberta or Western or Dalhousie, followed the Toronto path in the next two decades. Memorial established a master's program with thesis in the late 1950s, and over the next forty-odd years it graduated ninety-nine master's students in three MA programs, eighty-three with thesis. The panel notes that in the 1980 review, the MA program was described as "peripheral" and "on the verge of extinction." But it has been reinvigorated in the interim. Though the number of graduates was small in the early years and the time required to completion often long, the work was valuable. The students and their theses represent a substantial contribution to provincial and national knowledge.

4.3 Toronto built a large doctoral program in the early 1960s. This departure was followed in the rest of the country in the 1970s and 1980s, Memorial joining the trend when it created its doctorate in the late 1980s. It has since produced fourteen doctorates with another thirteen students currently enrolled. These students have made important contributions to the region as well as to Canadian intellectual life. They represent an appropriate reaction to the alternative view that specialized education should be centred in one or very few institutions.

4.4 Today, the Department of History is embarking on yet another transition, and its decision to eliminate the thesis MA is part of the next phase. No doubt, the decision was made reluctantly, but it represents the recognition of the doctorate as the true research degree. Department members believe that the MA has many uses, chief among them rigorous preparation in a range of research and writing tasks. However, they also understand that the MA can no longer be seen as an opportunity make an original contribution to knowledge of the type required of a doctoral dissertation.

4.5 The Department's commitment to graduate work has been challenged by the loss of senior faculty. Consequently, an important topic raised during the site visit was the balance to be maintained between undergraduate and graduate work. A second topic encompassed funding levels and research support. A third concerned study space and equipment. On the periphery, but always present, was the question of "areas of concentration," especially the hiring of new faculty.



4.6 The panel applauds the recent revision of the MA. By requiring a twelve-month period of study, the new program ensures timely completion of the degree with an extended essay based on primary sources. The new degree was supported wholeheartedly by students (except for a student completing the thesis MA). Some faculty members regretted the loss of substantial contributions to regional history made in the old master's program; however, they agreed that the new program represents the wiser course, and they did not suggest that the decision should be revisited. The panel sympathizes with the view that the thesis MA might serve part-time students, particularly more mature students who might wish to make a contribution to regional studies.

**Recommendation 3. That the Department confirm the current MA in the short term but that the program might be reconsidered if pressure for a renewal of the thesis degree arises in the next few years,**

4.7 The panel notes that twelve students are enrolled in the MA program and that twelve applications have been received for next year. This number leaves room for slight growth. However, any further increase would require a rethinking of the supervision and seminar system so that the demands do not place an intolerable burden on other degree programs. The present system is carried by too few faculty members, and it has not won full support from others. It requires student presentations to a larger student-faculty assembly and, in the original design, formal critiques of student papers by a faculty member. These critiques have had to be abandoned, apparently, because insufficient numbers of faculty participate. Moreover, students and some faculty expressed dissatisfaction with the failure of faculty members to attend presentations. Indeed, the report of the Graduate Studies Committee spoke of a "pervasive lack of interest in graduate studies across the Department, expressed in low attendance by colleagues at departmental seminars, graduate student presentations, and social events arranged for graduate students." The panel was thus left with a feeling of unease. The students would like more attention, but the professors seem divided between those who accept the students' concerns and those preoccupied by their other tasks.

4.8 One alternative would be to create joint seminars for MA students and senior undergraduates or honours students. The two levels would be marked on a different scale, would be required to do different levels of work, and would be allocated separate numbers in the calendar. This expedient was offered by the 1980 review committee, and the present panel endorses it as a strategy. As the 1980 committee noted, a few courses could be designed specifically for graduate students, while the wider range of Departmental offerings could be available to the most advanced undergraduates and to graduate students.

**Recommendation 4. That the Department consider the possibility of joint undergraduate/graduate seminars.**

4.9 A second alternative would be to increase cross-disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses and to use thesis supervisors from other departments. The Maritime History Group and the Maritime Studies Research Unit were often mentioned in this connection, but so too were

interdisciplinary programs ranging from Folklore and English to Anthropology, Geography and Political Science. One of those interviewed raised the possibility of an interdisciplinary doctoral degree. Another spoke of the potential for seminars and for the promotion of Maritime History. The goal of all these interventions was to build a strategic focus and to allow for the conduct of research on the province and the Atlantic region as well as for the promotion of the University. Such suggestions make sense. The great challenge is to identify faculty members who wish to be involved in such a focus and the administrative units that might contribute to it.

**Recommendation 5. That the University consider the creation of a single, multi-disciplinary unit in the humanities and social sciences (provisionally the Newfoundland Studies Research Institute) for the conduct of research and graduate studies in Atlantic regional studies and Newfoundland and Labrador Studies.**

4.10 Certain questions associated with the MA program are echoed in the doctoral program. Memorial has offered the doctorate in History for less than fifteen years, and in that period the Department has relied, in part, for recruitment and the winning of financial support on faculty who have since departed. A few faculty members may privately express doubts about whether the program should continue, but no one raised this view during the interviews. Defenders of the degree, students and faculty alike, spoke highly of the resources available and of the high level of education the degree represented. No one advocated a large annual intake of students, for the national job market is not likely to require large numbers of doctorates from small graduate programs, and the wealth of the most favoured institutions will always make competition for incoming students unequal. Nevertheless, the panel believes that a modest doctoral program, perhaps between two and four students per year, can be handled effectively. Such a group would contribute to the research atmosphere in the Department and ensure that regional studies would continue to be conducted. The only change proposed (it has already been implemented or will be implemented shortly) was to move the dissertation proposal to a later stage, following completion of the comprehensive examinations.

4.11 A few faculty members wondered whether the limits placed on the doctoral program—Canadian, Maritime, and Newfoundland history—should be maintained. Here the panel cannot help, for so much depends on new faculty. It cannot imagine how the three existing areas would be dropped, but it wonders whether they might be expanded. If Irish history, for example, becomes part of a larger interdisciplinary program and attracts students, why would the Department deny students and professors the opportunity to work in this field?

**Recommendation 6. That the Department continue the doctoral program in its present form and reconsider the present limits periodically.**

4.12 As far as graduate funding is concerned, the Graduate Studies Committee suggested that "the whole question of graduate funding urgently needs to be opened up, with particular reference to doctoral students." The current practice followed informally at the doctoral level is to fund students for three years, but some faculty members suggested that four would be preferable. They also noted that MA support is more limited and that the few existing fellowships are not sufficient

to compete with neighbouring institutions. They acknowledge, however, that research grants can be obtained on campus from the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) and the J.R. Smallwood Foundation. Two internships, one with the journal *Labour/LeTravail* and another with *The Northern Mariner/International Journal of Maritime History*, offered valuable training as well as financial support.

4.13 Administration representatives were not as negative. They regarded the fellowship and assistantship money as adequate, if not generous. They asked whether faculty members might raise funds through provision for student employment in their own applications and noted approvingly that a number of faculty supplement their research funds with salary-based research grants. The Department has been a model in orienting students to the "culture of grants" in recent years, the panel was told, and it has secured funding at least on a par with other graduate units in Arts.

4.14 In some universities, tutorials in first-year courses provide the means by which graduate students and faculty work together in the classroom. This approach, the panel was told, is used in a few classes, but the Department does not possess the resources to adopt the tutorial system for all first-year classes. Doctoral students are permitted or required to teach an undergraduate course, though only after completion of their comprehensive examinations. This measure ensures that they receive funds and acquire classroom experience. One of those interviewed suggested that this introduction to the classroom might occur even earlier.

**Recommendation 7. That the Department continue the practice of placing doctoral candidates in charge of undergraduate courses, but only after the candidates have completed the comprehensive examinations.**

4.15 The Maritime Studies Research Unit provides money for graduate students to undertake research and conference travel. ISER and the Smallwood Foundation support research but not conference travel. A number of students suggested that more support of this type was urgently needed, and their pleas were reinforced by several professors.

4.16 Are research and scholarship in the Department appropriate for providing first-rate academic programs? The 1980 review committee declared that "the majority of the History Department devote comparatively little of their time and energies to research and publication," but this is no longer true. After examining the curricula vitae, the panel concluded that a majority of the faculty have been very productive. Nevertheless, another comment from 1980, namely that the first-year program requires faculty members to spend a large amount of energy in teaching elementary skills, is still applicable. Part of the price to be paid, now as then, is a reduced capacity for research.

4.17 The panel observed some resistance to what is sometimes called "grantsmanship," in part an expression of the distrust of large-scale collaborative projects relying on large sums, much travel, and a good deal of talk. The panel respects these comments. However, it believes that the preparation of applications, whether to the local committee or to national agencies, constitutes a

vital part of modern historical scholarship, involving competition, peer review, awareness of changing trends in scholarship and accommodation to them, as well as debates about scholarly and public priorities.

**Recommendation 8. That the University consider making applications to local SSHRCC competitions contingent upon periodic applications to national competitions.**

4.18 As for interdisciplinary research groups and external partnerships, the panel was provided with evidence of a great deal of faculty activity in the University and farther afield. It did question whether the resources in the Maritime History Archives, the Maritime Studies Research Group, and related enterprises were working to their potential, and that is why it recommends a reconsideration of activities in the area. As far as regional, national and international professional organizations are concerned, faculty activity in professional groups is exceptional.

4.19 The History Department is well positioned for leadership in the development of a proposed Institute for Newfoundland and Labrador Studies, and the panel noted that such an institute would promote the University's mission to expand research in areas appropriate to the province's geography, history and culture. The Department might also play a major role in the renewal of the Maritime Studies Research Unit, a precious resource already established in the University but requiring new initiatives and new leadership if it is to continue to be effective.

**Recommendation 9. That the Dean of Arts, in consultation with the Department of History, undertake to develop a new method of leadership and administration for the Maritime Studies Research Unit.**

## **5.0 Faculty, Staff and Space**

5.1 Like other academic units of the Faculty of Arts, this department is composed of a mature and experienced group of faculty numbering nineteen full-time members (excluding Dr. Cadigan and Dr. Hart) but with few new hirings to balance a community in which the average age is approaching sixty. Thus, the university policy on gender equity has not had sufficient time to be engaged (six women, thirteen men). There is only one member of a visible minority. The current workload assignment (3/2) appears reasonable, and it is distributed equitably throughout the Department.

5.2 A significant number are engaged in professional activities related to community service, taking the form of memberships on curriculum committees of the provincial Department of Education and museum and heritage boards such as the Newfoundland Historical Society, as well as involvement with provincial and national agencies in projects such as planning for the new museum/archives complex in St. John's. Two or three members have given significant time to the construction of the Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Web Site ([www.heritage.nf.ca](http://www.heritage.nf.ca)) developed within the Faculty of Arts over the past few years, notably Dr. J.K. Hiller, who has acted as academic advisor. Several faculty members have actively supported the J.R. Smallwood

Foundation for Newfoundland and Labrador Studies as board members and grants committee members.

5.3 However, while individual faculty members have been engaged in community service, a number of students and faculty noted that there does not appear to be a departmental mandate to engage in community development. Students (both undergraduate and graduate) reported a general lack of faculty initiative in introducing and exposing students to professional opportunities such as membership in professional societies and subscriptions to journals. Both students and faculty suggested that more information about the Department of History itself, its programs and faculty, might be made available to students in a form such as an interactive departmental website or a brochure. Students expressed the desire for more invited speakers and faculty/student seminars to enhance communication between students, faculty and the community.

**Recommendation 10. That the Department seek opportunities for enhancing participation and leadership within the University and in the community at large.**

5.4 The panel was made aware of the History Department's service to other University departments through the provision of first-year research/writing courses. There is evidence that the Department is making significant efforts to promote interdisciplinary studies in its current course offerings and in the deployment of faculty in areas such as Economics and Women's Studies.

5.5 The physical space available to the Department is not adequate for teaching and research. Cramped at one end of a corridor, the Department continues to suffer while contiguous space is encroached upon by administrative offices occupied by Human Resources. The panel found it alarming to observe that an invisible line of demarcation exists between the academic and administrative spaces on the fourth floor of the Arts and Administration Building and that the more commodious and better decorated spaces were invariably occupied by administrative staff. Some departmental facilities are stretched across the campus, notably in the Henrietta Harvey Building and Feild Hall. Students, faculty and staff alike regard this state of affairs as a serious impediment to effective communication, interaction and esprit de corps. Moreover, the departmental administrative offices offer no core area or "front office" for the reception of students, faculty, or the community at large.

5.6 The Department lacks adequate space for students, especially for the provision of computers and work stations for graduate students. It has at its disposal one small area designated for master's students in which twelve students share six desks. This same room serves as a kitchen and eating/social area of sorts. There is no allocated space for undergraduate students.

5.7 The space available for faculty and staff to conduct seminars is also inadequate. One small, windowless bibliography room serves mainly as a teaching area. A second seminar room is the only space available for larger meetings and seminars as well as for various professional and social events.

5.8 The general office resides in cramped quarters which need to be redesigned so that the photocopy machine is made available outside regular office hours. Photocopying is a vital service in an arts or humanities department. Faculty members have noted that inaccessibility to the photocopying machine for evening classes and research conducted outside office hours on evenings and weekends is a serious handicap.

**Recommendation 11. That the University administration review space and resource requirements in the Department of History with a view to redressing the concerns raised in this report.**

5.9 The Department urgently needs additional administrative personnel. The panel endorses the general feeling amongst faculty and students that while the two current staff members provide cheerful and effective support, they are sometimes pressed far beyond their means. One works overtime voluntarily for twelve to fifteen hours a week without additional remuneration in order to meet immediate demands. Areas such as the Honours Program, Graduate Studies and Computer Services, in particular, require additional help. The panel commends the administrative staff for doing yeoman service but feels that their requirements are not being met.

**Recommendation 12. That the University administration respond favourably to the History Department's repeated application for one additional administrative staff member.**

5.10 There remains the matter of leadership. The current Head, Dr. David Facey-Crowther, has indicated that he will not remain in the job later than 30 June 2003. By the time this report is disseminated, just over a year will remain for the Department to determine what kind of leadership it will require to take it into the next few years, during which time it will undergo further retirements and a reduction of its program. The panel therefore urges the Department to begin the process as soon as possible so as to ensure a timely and effective transition.

**Recommendation 13. The Department should begin the search for a new head as soon as possible.**

## **6.0 Conclusion**

6.1 The Academic Program Review Panel submits its report in the confidence that the Department of History will successfully meet its current challenges and sustain the role it has long played in the University and the province it serves. However, the Faculty of Arts and Memorial University at large must play a role in helping it make adjustments. Long-term planning, the appointment of new faculty and a new head, the allocation of appropriate space, the availability of such resources as computers and research funds for graduate students, and the reorganization and revitalization of studies related to Newfoundland and Labrador will ensure that it flourishes in the decades to come.

**28 March 2002**

## **REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PANEL**

### **Department of History, Memorial University 27 February-2 March 2002**

#### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Department of History elect a Strategic Planning Committee consisting of four departmental faculty members, two History students (one graduate and one undergraduate) and one faculty member from a cognate department to develop short- and long-range plans, outlining specifically what program areas need attention, where future hiring should ideally occur, what balance should be struck between graduate and undergraduate programs, and what relations should exist between the History Department and other departments and divisions of the University.
2. That the Undergraduate Studies Committee review the major and honours programs and make recommendations with respect to the resources committed to research/writing courses at the first year level; the desirability of introducing a required course in History methods for majors; the role of graduate students and part-time faculty in undergraduate teaching (especially in first-year courses); the range, balance, and prerequisite requirements of undergraduate courses; the role of Distance Education in the overall service to the University; and the processes by which a sense of community can be enhanced.
3. That the Department confirm the current MA in the short term but, if pressure for a renewal of the thesis degree arises in the next few years, that program might be reconsidered.
4. That the Department consider the possibility of joint undergraduate/graduate seminars.
5. That the University consider the creation of a single, multi-disciplinary unit in the humanities and social sciences (provisionally the Newfoundland Studies Research Institute) for the conduct of research and graduate studies in Atlantic, Newfoundland and Labrador Studies.
6. That the Department continue the doctoral program in its present form and reconsider the present limits periodically.
7. That the Department continue the practice of placing doctoral candidates in charge of undergraduate courses, but only after the candidates have completed the comprehensive examinations.
8. That the University consider making applications to local SSHRCC competitions

contingent upon periodic applications to national competitions.

9. That the Dean of Arts in consultation with the History Department undertake to develop a new method of leadership and administration for the Maritime Studies Research Unit.
10. That the Department seek opportunities for enhancing participation and leadership within the University and in the community at large.
11. That the University administration review departmental space and resource requirements in the Department of History with a view to addressing the concerns raised in this report.
12. That the University administration respond favourably to the History Department's repeated application for one additional administrative staff member.
13. That the Department begin the search for a new head as soon as possible.