

## FINAL SUMMARY REPORT OF PROGRAM REVIEW

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| <b>Undergraduate Program</b>                     | <b>Department of History</b> |
| New or Cyclical Program Review (please indicate) | Cyclical                     |
| Degree(s) Offered                                | BA                           |
| Date of Site Visit                               | March 8, 2012                |
| Evaluation                                       | Good Quality                 |

### Summary:

The external review was conducted by Professors Juanita De Barros (History Department, McMaster University) and Marcel Martel (History Department, York University). They met with Professor Alan Weedon, Vice-Provost (Academic Planning, Policy, and Faculty), Dr. John Doerksen, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs and Students), Professor Brian Timney, Dean (Faculty of Social Science), Professor Margaret Kellow, Chair of the History Department, Professor Margaret McGlynn, Undergraduate Chair, Professor Francine McKenzie, Director of the International Relations Program, the faculty members of the History Department, Eeva K. Munoz (Associate University Librarian), Liz Mantz (Subject Librarian-History), Rebecca Dashford, Undergraduate Program Advisor, and various undergraduate students.

The review of the Department of History is overall quite favourable. The reviewers identified a number of areas for improvement, many of which the Department was already aware of and was in the process of rectifying at the time of the review. In terms of undergraduate programs, the reviewers highlighted problems with the mandatory 2000-level Canadian history course (HIST 2201E), the only mandatory course in all of the Department's offerings. It was felt that little was being done to revamp the course and make it more innovative and relevant, precisely because it is mandatory. The Department has already dealt with this problem by making changes to the delivery of the course, which should help considerably. This concern, in turn, brought up for the reviewers the "difficulties in attracting undergraduate students to the 3000- and 4000- Canadian history courses." This problem is part and parcel of a continuing concern with enrollments in 3rd and 4th-year courses in History and in a number of other Departments across the University. The relatively recent shift from being a department that is largely a service course provider to a strong research unit in Social Science should help make history a more viable disciplinary pursuit at Western. The introduction of new 1000 and 2000-level courses, the rationalizing or "cleaning" of the curriculum, the continued internationalization (generally in terms of exchange opportunities and, specifically, by building on the success of the International Relations module) and development of internships should increase the interest in history as well. The latter two, however, will require a further investment in resources to make them an integral component of the Department's programs or, in the case of the International Relations module, further its important role in the Department.

The reviewers commended the Department's commitment to having tenure-track faculty teaching the 1000-level courses, however, the delivery of courses will be a challenge as there are no new anticipated hires in the next few years beyond replacing recent retirements, departures, etc. This necessitated in part the "cleaning" of the curriculum, namely in terms of rotating the course offerings so that some will now be taught every second year rather than every year. The constraints on staffing will obviously limit new initiatives. Nevertheless, the Department is developing a Middle East Studies program, and will be involved in the new Medieval Studies Minor housed in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities that will start in September.

The reviewers applauded the high level of commitment on the part of the Department's faculty members, noting in particular their involvement with extracurricular student activities. Conversely, they were a bit concerned at a perceived lack of communication between the Department and the Administration. The Department, in its response, did identify this as a problem but one that is well underway to being mended.

One last item that was mentioned by the reviewers but not directly relevant to the Department itself was the recommendation that such reviews occur over two days rather than one.

| <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>Responsibility</b>            |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Review of HIST 2201E as to whether it should be a mandatory requirement and in terms of the course delivery. | Department                       |
| Introduction of initiatives to increase the interest in senior Canadian history courses.                     | Department                       |
| Rationalizing of curriculum and its delivery.  | Department                       |
| Growth of internships.   | Department & Faculty             |
| Review of promotion of internationalization.   | Department, Faculty & University |