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**TO:** Mike Mahon  
President and Vice Chancellor

**DATE:** June 1, 2023

**FROM:** Alan Siaroff  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

**RE:** Department of History Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee approved the review of the Department of History at its May 25, 2023, meeting.

The Self Study Committee for this review was comprised of: Chris Epplett (Program Review Coordinator), Amy Shaw, Gideon Fujiwara, and David Hay.

The review produced 4 documents:

1. Self Study Report. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received October 12, 2022.
2. External Review Report. Written by Erika Dyck (University of Saskatchewan) and Jordan Stanger-Ross (University of Victoria) based on a site visit (March 7 to 8, 2023). Received March 17, 2023.
3. Program Response. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received April 18, 2023.
4. Dean's Response. Written by Matt Letts, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science. Received May 15, 2023.

## ***Self Study Report***

The Self Study Report asked for External Reviewer feedback on several areas:

- Indigenization and Diversity: How do we work to better reflect our population, broaden our offerings in non-Western history, offer a necessary variety of perspectives, and respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee etc., given the various constraints we face? (e.g., hiring freeze, small size, competition for excellent candidates) We've added questions on this to the questionnaires.
- Independent Studies and Graduate Supervision: Things we don't get compensated for and probably should: how to work that out?
- Modes of Teaching: The pandemic brought everything online and now we're returning to in-person instruction. But there were some benefits to remote teaching. Should we continue to offer some of our courses that way? If so, what proportion of our classes should be offered online, and how might their delivery be improved?
- Communication: How might we better inform students of such departmental initiatives as our tutoring program and colloquium series? In addition, how can we better communicate to other units in the university, as well as the broader community, the important work we do in the Department of History?

The body of the report noted several strengths of the History Department:

- Strong enrolment numbers.
- Quality of teaching.
- Accessibility to students.
- Research record.

The following weaknesses and challenges were mentioned in the body of the report:

- Lack of breadth in course offerings.
- Limited resources (especially for graduate studies).
- Lack of related language classes.

Recommendations from the body of the report:

- In the last Academic Quality Assurance Review of the Department in 2014, both the external reviewers and the final recommendations from the Provost suggested as our next new hire the appointment of a scholar of Indigenous History. The then-Dean, however, did not support a hiring priority in Indigenous History, and such a hiring was not mandated by that review. The Department nonetheless still supports this recommendation strongly. A position in this field would benefit the offerings of the History Department, complement, and enhance several other programs across the Faculty, help meet the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, and support the Department's long-term commitment to shifting to a broader cultural and geographic scope, meaning histories outside the dominant narratives of the Western world.

## ***External Review Report***

The External Review Report contained eleven (11) recommendations for improving the History Program.

Recommendations from the body of the report:

- We suggest that the department undertake strategic planning. It might, for example, be supported by the Faculty in scheduling a brief retreat, including members from Religious Studies, to discuss key issues and set a direction for the 7-year period leading to the next review.
- We recommend that the Department consider preparing written standards for Salary Review, Tenure & Promotion.
- We encourage the Department to consider crafting a written statement of teaching standards, articulating how teaching is evaluated, both in terms of quantity and quality. Members may wish to divide undergraduate from graduate teaching, further articulating core principles for learning objectives at each level.
- A written set of standards describing and even enumerating the value of historical outputs, may help to support the Department internally as well as to guide Faculty and University-level discussions about the research activity in the History Department that are not always well understood across non-Humanities disciplines.
- The Department may also wish to monitor more closely the total number of students taking their courses (the famous “bums in seats” metric) which is not reported in detail in the self-study. Particularly with the addition of Religious Studies, a program less focused on majors and more on service teaching, this may be a key metric for the Department moving forward.
- Is there latitude to build more capacity for Indigenous history in the short term, with existing course offerings? For example, rather than following a somewhat older approach to Canadian history courses, divided temporally as pre- and post-Confederation; could these courses better highlight a more explicitly decolonized approach by embracing a different temporal organization, i.e., Turtle Island to 1885 (or Canada to 1885), simply to de-emphasize Confederation as THE turning point.
- In light of the merger with Religious Studies, the Department may consider existing areas of strength, overlap, and opportunities to highlight genuine advantages provided in program delivery by combining teaching strengths. I.e., Asian Studies is a good example of where synergies already exist; updating the program guide with minor changes may help to further underscore this strength.
- We support the Department and the Faculty in the objective of hiring an Indigenous historian, which is overdue. Few, if any other history departments in Canada offer no courses in Indigenous history.
- We recommend that the Department develop a strategic plan to address the looming need to confront its distinctive identity in a competitive landscape for History programs in the region.
- The Department might consider ways in which it could support grant applications by members. They might, for example, create their own mentorship or review processes, with scholars who have received external funding advising and supporting new applications.
- We might suggest, following the model in many peer departments, that the department create a regular talk series with members presenting works in progress. We believe that a practice of more regular presentations of research within the Department would likely engage students with this facet of the program – its connection with research – and encourage their attendance at

presentations by distinguished visiting lecturers. The Department might consider, for example, monthly talks, within which visiting guest speakers might feature as highlight events. In other months, members of the department (and perhaps advanced students) might present their own ongoing research, as might scholars with historical expertise in other departments in the faculty, thereby also enhancing cross disciplinary linkages.

Challenges discussed in the report:

- The most concerning metric in the Self Study is the lack of enrolments by Indigenous students in the Department. It would appear, from the numbers presented, that the representation of Indigenous students in the Department is roughly half that in the university, even after a recent uptick. This enrolment challenge likely reflects the lack of an Indigenous historian in the Department as well as the absence of courses explicitly dedicated to Indigenous history.
- The course options outlined in the program guide do not seem aligned with broader trends across Canada. We did not review syllabi and did not see a full range of course options beyond those required to complete a major in History.
- Throughout our visit it became evident that the Department feels some division over its direction. In terms of hiring priorities, this is expressed most acutely in concerns over whether to prioritize a position in Indigenous History to meet an existing gap and a responsibility to respond to the TRC and serve the local community, especially as the University sits on Blackfoot territory. Alternatively, the Department has recently assumed Asian Studies through the merger with Religious Studies and needs a position in South Asian history and/or religion due to an upcoming retirement. This position can equally be justified as meeting one of the University mandates of Internationalization, while serving another important population both locally and through connections with International Students, and the existing JET program.

Opportunities discussed in the report:

- The Department has an opportunity with the recent merger with Religious Studies to embark on some strategic planning for the future, including reviewing hiring priorities over the long-term, and adjusting existing course offerings (or at least their titles) to maximize the potential to underscore the richness and diversity available through the University of Lethbridge History program. While a modest-sized department cannot be expected to cover all areas and time periods in history, there are considerable strengths in the Department that might be better advertised and celebrated by first articulating, and then aligning the research and teaching objectives of the Department.
- While the current budget crisis suggests that a new position is not on the horizon in the short term, we strongly encourage the Department to confront this exercise in prioritization with further reflection and forward planning that goes beyond the implications of one or the other position, but rather helps to more clearly define the identity of the program in light of the recent merger, and the changing dynamics in the Faculty, which may create more opportunities (or requirements) to work cooperatively with other units to share resources, or even faculty appointments in the future.
- If the University is not able to open immediately a line for an Indigenous historian, we would urge the strategic use of resources – for example the allocation of sessional resources or a course buyout to support a current member of the department in developing a new course with an emphasis on this topic area – to create a stopgap measure to bring the curriculum in the Department into line with the interests of students, the imperatives of the TRC, and the offerings of peer departments.

## ***Program Response***

In their Program Response, the Self Study Committee addressed the recommendations from the External Review Report:

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1. We suggest that the department undertake strategic planning. It might, for example, be supported by the Faculty in scheduling a brief retreat, including members from Religious Studies, to discuss key issues and set a direction for the 7-year period leading to the next review.

The committee members certainly agree that more in-depth strategic planning would be beneficial moving forward. One caveat is that we are not sure that funding would be available for the faculty retreat envisaged by the external reviewers. Whatever form such planning sessions might take, however, the department is currently at a crossroads, which necessitates careful planning for its future. As the external reviewers note, the History department's recent merger with Religious Studies is one of the most compelling reasons for the newly-minted department of History and Religion to take stock of both challenges and opportunities moving forward. Opportunities include the identification and fostering of shared areas of expertise within our new, larger department. Such efforts could result in not only new courses offered to our students, but potentially new research initiatives and programs as well. Challenges include making efficient use of limited resources, as well as not only being able to hire new faculty, but keep those we already have as well. A more specific objective in terms of new faculty is the hiring of an Indigenous historian, something which we hope will inter alia increase the appeal of our departmental offerings to Indigenous students.

Another relevant issue raised by the external reviewers was the department's alignment with the University of Lethbridge's Strategic Plan. In the past, we have certainly attempted to conduct ourselves in accordance with the university's priorities. In the opinion of the reviewers, however, we have not always made explicit in our planning process how our departmental goals align with those of the university. Clarifying our adherence to the Strategic Plan should be an aspect of a more formalized departmental planning process in future.

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2. We recommend that the Department consider preparing written standards for Salary Review, Tenure & Promotion.

As part of the strategic planning process moving forward, the external reviewers also recommended the implementation of more precise standards in evaluating faculty work for the purposes of salary, tenure, and promotion review. In theory, the members of the committee think this is a good idea in theory. We have found in the past, for example, that evaluators of our

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work from outside the disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences sometimes have difficulty assessing the proper value of our research, and more precise criteria to guide them would be useful.

Our main concerns with this suggestion relate to its practicality. First, the adoption of such standards is contingent upon the Dean's Office: if it objects to the standards drawn up by our department, then the process would be futile. If the Dean's Office is indeed interested in adopting such written standards, would it provide guidance in drawing them up? Their implementation might also provoke some disagreement within the department, although we appreciate the external reviewers' optimism that our collegiality would overcome any potential dissension arising from this issue. Certainly, in addition to any assistance the Dean's Office might offer, we would appreciate any input from other History departments which have implemented such guidelines.

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3. We encourage the Department to consider crafting a written statement of teaching standards, articulating how teaching is evaluated, both in terms of quantity and quality. Members may wish to divide undergraduate from graduate teaching, further articulating core principles for learning objectives at each level.

The committee favours a specific written statement of teaching standards. The main issue we see, however, is how to implement more precise metrics of teaching performance which both the Dean's Office and all members of the department can agree upon. The relative weighting of undergraduate courses versus graduate courses and/or supervision, for example, could prove to be a sticking point, since some members of the department are much more involved in graduate teaching than others. As stated above, we would appreciate any guidance the Dean's Office or our colleagues in other History departments might be able to offer on this issue.

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4. A written set of standards describing and even enumerating the value of historical outputs, may help to support the Department internally as well as to guide Faculty and University-level discussions about the research activity in the History Department that are not always well understood across non-Humanities disciplines.

As stated above, the committee supports the idea of more precise standards with which to evaluate the work of the faculty, including research output. As the external reviewers state, such a set of standards would allow fellow faculty from outside our discipline to better appreciate our work. A more precise quantification of research output, such as weighing a journal article against a chapter in an edited collection, for example, might also aid the department Chair in evaluating our work for Professional Activity Reports. Once again, however, the issue lies in implementing research metrics

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which are amenable to both the Dean's Office and the department.

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5. The Department may also wish to monitor more closely the total number of students taking their courses (the famous "bums in seats" metric) which is not reported in detail in the self-study. Particularly with the addition of Religious Studies, a program less focused on majors and more on service teaching, this may be a key metric for the Department moving forward.

The committee agrees that 'bums in seats' is a statistic that needs to be analyzed in greater depth in future reports.

We would however note that the current report does present a graph of the total enrolments for the department by year (p. 9, History Department: Undergraduate Credit Hours Taught, 2004-21), which the University of Lethbridge's department of Institutional Analysis tells us is the most accurate measure of 'bums in seats.' Nevertheless, this information is easy to overlook since it was moved from its place in the previous report: it appeared in section 8 (on students) in the 2014 report but in section 4 (on the program) in the 2022 report. The committee therefore recommends that the data on total enrolments for the department by year be moved back to section 8.

Further agreeing with the external reviewers, the committee recommends that, in future reports, the data on enrolments also be analyzed in greater depth in section 8. The standard set of statistics provided by Institutional Analysis does not include the number of FTE faculty members in the history department per year (which can vary considerably due to leaves, retirements, etc.), and thus does not allow analysis of statistics such as average credit hours taught annually per faculty member, nor majors, minors, or non-history students taught annually per faculty member. However, upon request, the University's Director of Curriculum and Academic Scheduling (Shawn Johnsrude) was able to provide that information to our committee. The committee therefore recommends that future reports request from Institutional Analysis or from the Director of Curriculum and Academic Scheduling, and analyze in section 8 (Students), statistics on the following metrics:

- Credit hours taught per faculty member per year.
  - Average non-major enrolment in history courses per faculty member per year.
  - Average number of history majors per faculty member per year.
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- Average number of history minors per faculty member per year.
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6. Is there latitude to build more capacity for Indigenous history in the short term, with existing course offerings? For example, rather than following a somewhat older approach to Canadian history courses, divided temporally as pre- and post-Confederation; could these courses better highlight a more explicitly decolonized approach by embracing a different temporal organization, i.e., Turtle Island to 1885 (or Canada to 1885), simply to de-emphasize Confederation as THE turning point.

We agree with the importance of significant Indigenous content. One caveat, however, is that it is not easily integrated into all our courses (e.g., those examining Ancient and Medieval Europe). One other point to note is that it is already a significant presence in our Canadian courses (the externals did not ask about syllabi or current course content, where this becomes apparent.)

Our broader concern is less with the content of the courses than in attracting Indigenous students to them in the first place. Altering the titles of the Canadian survey courses might be a step to that end, but it seems potentially problematic both as far as it is predicated upon unverified assumptions about why Indigenous students might feel uninterested in such a course and might force changes in chronological parameters in potentially cumbersome ways. Canadian history before 1867 (HIST 2710) already encompasses hundreds, (if not thousands) of years, while its counterpart looks only at the following century and a half. While changing the division from 1867 to 1885 de-emphasizes Confederation, it also shifts important content (the Red River and Northwest Resistances) into the already crowded earlier history, potentially reducing other Indigenous content in HIST 2710. We thus approach the recommendation to reconfigure such courses with some caution. If a change were to be made, it might be preferable to change the cut-off date to before rather than after Confederation (e.g., 1848).

The decolonization the courses have already involved (and to which we are continually attentive) does need to be more apparent. To that end we will revisit and revise the descriptions of relevant courses in the calendar to ensure that their Indigenous content is clear. We will also undertake a survey of Indigenous students to discover, from them directly, what their preconceptions and experiences are of history courses, so that we might make alterations from a more informed position.

It is worth noting that numbers are small here, giving significant statistical weight to the course selections of one or two students. It is possible as well that, while our number of majors who identify as Indigenous is lower

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	<p>than we would like, a broader accounting of course registrants who are not majors might reveal the situation as less egregious than we have feared. Anecdotally, our Canadian history courses draw in significant numbers of Education and Indigenous Studies majors, some of whom are Indigenous. While a significant Indigenous presence here would not entirely make up for a dearth of majors, and we would still need to work diligently towards making History an attractive major for Indigenous students, evidence that they are enrolling in our courses on an individual bases would make it less of a crisis.</p>
<p>7. In light of the merger with Religious Studies, the Department may consider existing areas of strength, overlap, and opportunities to highlight genuine advantages provided in program delivery by combining teaching strengths. I.e., Asian Studies is a good example of where synergies already exist; updating the program guide with minor changes may help to further underscore this strength.</p>	<p>The department fully supports this recommendation of the reviewers. On an informal basis, History and Religious Studies faculty within our new department have already discussed how their respective areas of expertise might contribute to new course offerings for our students. Dr. Khalil's expertise on the Near East, for example, might afford the possibility of offering more material on Near Eastern history in future, something which up to this point has not been a strength of the department. More particularly, his research certainly complements Dr. Hay's teaching on the Crusades. As referred to above, a discussion of potential synergies between History and Religious Studies can certainly form an important part of more formal planning moving forward.</p>
<p>8. We support the Department and the Faculty in the objective of hiring an Indigenous historian, which is overdue. Few, if any other history departments in Canada offer no courses in Indigenous history.</p>	<p>We agree with this recommendation. An Indigenous historian has been on our hiring plan since the last external review.</p>
<p>9. We recommend that the Department develop a strategic plan to address the looming need to confront its distinctive identity in a competitive landscape for History programs in the region.</p>	<p>The department concurs with this recommendation. One of the issues we have had in the past is advertising our accomplishments effectively, not only to prospective students but to our fellow faculty elsewhere in the university as well. As noted by the reviewers, advertising the unique features and research foci of our faculty is certainly an important means of maintaining enrolment levels in the face of competition from other institutions. With the merger of History and Religious Studies, we have a unique opportunity to enhance further the unique features of our department, both in terms of teaching and research. We plan to collaborate more</p>

	effectively with Communications in future to increase awareness of such notable aspects of the department, both within and without the university.
10. The Department might consider ways in which it could support grant applications by members. They might, for example, create their own mentorship or review processes, with scholars who have received external funding advising and supporting new applications.	While some of the recommendations of the reviewers fall under the purview of Research Services, and we do not have departmental funds for research, we support mentorship and collaboration within the department. Such co-operation is already happening on an informal basis with successful grant applicants offering advice and guidance to their colleagues. We can move to formalize and institutionalize such mentorship and support.
11. We might suggest, following the model in many peer departments, that the department create a regular talk series with members presenting works in progress.	The committee notes that the lecture series recommended by the reviewers would look quite like the existing History Colloquium series, which has included all the above categories of speakers. The History Colloquium Committee has historically tried to limit the number of colloquia to roughly one per month, since it found that attendance tended to decline when too many colloquia were offered. However, the merger with Religious Studies, which has hitherto maintained its own series of colloquia, offers the opportunity to expand our potential audience and body of speakers. Therefore, the committee recommends that the new, joint Department of History and Religion Colloquium Committee embrace the recommendations of the external reviewers and explore ways in which they might encourage members of the newly merged department to participate in our joint colloquia as a way of fostering a research culture.

## ***Dean's Response***

The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science responded to the eleven (11) recommendations from the External Review Report:

1. We suggest that the department undertake strategic planning. It might, for example, be supported by the Faculty in scheduling a brief retreat, including members from Religious Studies, to discuss key issues and set a direction for the 7-year period leading to the next review.

The most prominent message delivered in the External Review Report is that the History program is an excellent program, with high quality teaching and enviable collegiality that needs to prioritize the enhancement of its research culture to differentiate itself from competing institutions in the Province of Alberta. As the University of Lethbridge is a comprehensive academic and research university (CARU), we value a robust research culture in all Departments and Program areas. As such, we are excited by the specific suggestions provided by the external reviewers and look forward to the results of the Department of History & Religion strategic planning and visioning process for its History program.

We support the view that the Department “would benefit from collective direction-setting” and that such an activity would be well-timed with the merger with the Department of Religious Studies into the Department of History and Religion. There are many important visionary goals that have been established and that are easily achievable within the next seven years. Some of the most prominent priorities include the hiring of an Indigenous historian and an expert in South Asian Religion. It is true that the current budgetary environment presents a challenge, but it is our hope that the efforts made throughout the institution, including the Faculty of Arts & Science and the Department of History & Religion in the budgetary efforts in Fall 2022, have increased our changes of securing replacements in the face of attrition, allowing renewal and the setting of new directions, including an enhanced emphasis on the excellent transdisciplinary research that is performed in this unified department.

We agree with the Drs. Dyck and Stanger-Ross that there are existing strengths in the Department that can be promoted, by elucidating and describing these strengths and then aligning the research and teaching objectives within the newly merged Department and expressing them in terms of institutional strategic priorities. We were also excited to see the Department’s enthusiasm for the “identification and fostering of shared areas of expertise” and “new initiatives and programs” that “make effective use of limited resources.” We were further delighted to see that specific examples of synergies are already being discussed, such as Near Eastern History and connecting research areas that open

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doors for transdisciplinary collaboration. The potential is extensive.

With respect to cost, the Dean's Office notes that effective visioning sessions and retreats can be undertaken at little cost. It is possible to book spaces on campus, at the Penny Building in downtown Lethbridge, or at the beautiful and historic Coutts Centre near Nanton. Each Department has \$500 that can be drawn upon for Department events and a retreat could be supported by these funds. We also encourage the Department to follow the External Review Report recommendation that the Department apply the motto "Teaching is informed by our research activity" to such a retreat.

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2. We recommend that the Department consider preparing written standards for Salary Review, Tenure & Promotion.

Criteria and Guidelines for Salary Tenure and Promotion are the same for all Faculty Members at the University of Lethbridge, as governed by Articles 13 and 26 in the Academic Staff Collective Agreement (ASCA), with respect to Teaching Effectiveness, Research and Creative Activity and Service to the University and Society. The requirement of Chairs involved in professional activity report evaluation, as well members of STP committees is to make assessments based on the ASCA. Given the wide variation among and within Departments and Programs in the types of research activities and outputs, pedagogical approaches and contributions to service, both internally and externally, that are appropriate in a given field or subfield, there is a risk that setting strict, internal standards could impede the freedom of an individual Member to allocate their workload toward the types of activities that optimize their career, the student experience and outputs for society. There is also risk that standards could be set that are not consistent with the ASCA.

Within the Department of History & Religion, concern has already been expressed to the Dean by multiple individuals regarding specific departmental expectations that may not be consistent with the ASCA as it relates to both PAR scoring and STP processes. For example, reference is made in the review in relation to how the individual monograph is a gold standard expected for historians. However, it is very clearly outlined within the ASCA (and within the External readers' report) that varied forms of dissemination are acceptable and these should be judged on their quality and quantity. In support of equity, diversity and inclusion, it is also important not to narrowly define criteria. Book publication is a process that can take many years and may be equivalent in most cases to several academic journal articles, but it is not the only path to excellence in research. Faculty members are afforded

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the opportunity to provide a narrative that assists the Chairs and the Dean in the determination of their performance.

Similarly, varied approaches to quality teaching are celebrated and Faculty Members are afforded the latitude to decide what forms of evidence of teaching effectiveness are submitted and the quantity of teaching performed, especially at the undergraduate level, is determined by assignment, which becomes part of workload allocation. There is some reference in the External Report to teaching loads per faculty member, and much more useful information provided by the Department on historical enrolment. We are committed to fair allocation of duties, but this is a complicated assessment not fully captured by the class enrolments. Furthermore, the quantity element of teaching is often more a reflection of workload allocation than performance and faculty members and chairs have latitude to argue for greater allocation to teaching in evaluations if there are larger commitments to graduate students or new preparations etc. The establishment of administrative expectations by rank might be similarly problematic as workload allocation to service is permitted to vary at all levels, even if it is customary for early career faculty members to be allocated lower proportions of service as they develop their research programs and courses. Overall, this recommendation is about a complex issue that is not possible to perfect, and the variability and flexibility needed is effectively represented in the ASCA and related procedures for PAR evaluation and STP.

The Dean's Office would support an individual department undertaking a review of disciplinary best practices related to Salary, Tenure and Promotion benchmarks, with the understanding that this would help guide the process internally within the Department. We are encouraged that the Department sees value in this exercise, and we would be delighted to help answer any questions as such a process is undertaken. However, any such benchmarks or guidelines would need to be consistent with the Academic Staff Collective Agreement, especially as this relates to Article 13, the STP process and EDI goals. We would also be happy to provide whatever support is needed and answer specific questions.

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3. We encourage the Department to consider crafting a written statement of teaching standards, articulating how teaching is evaluated, both in terms of quantity and quality. Members may

Refer to the response to question 2.

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<p>wish to divide undergraduate from graduate teaching, further articulating core principles for learning objectives at each level.</p>	
<p>4. A written set of standards describing and even enumerating the value of historical outputs, may help to support the Department internally as well as to guide Faculty and University-level discussions about the research activity in the History Department that are not always well understood across non-Humanities disciplines.</p>	<p>Refer to the response to question 2.</p>
<p>5. The Department may also wish to monitor more closely the total number of students taking their courses (the famous “bums in seats” metric) which is not reported in detail in the self-study. Particularly with the addition of Religious Studies, a program less focused on majors and more on service teaching, this may be a key metric for the Department moving forward.</p>	<p>No response.</p>
<p>6. Is there latitude to build more capacity for Indigenous history in the short term, with existing course offerings? For example, rather than following a somewhat older approach to Canadian history courses, divided temporally as pre- and post-Confederation; could these courses better highlight a more explicitly decolonized approach by embracing a different temporal organization, i.e., Turtle Island to 1885 (or Canada to 1885), simply to de-emphasize Confederation as THE turning point.</p>	<p>The Department of History &amp; Religion has an interest in securing an Indigenous Historian and the Dean’s Office agrees that this is needed. Located on Blackfoot Confederacy Territory, the University of Lethbridge – Iniskim – had the first full program in Indigenous Studies (previously Native American Studies) in Canada, in an approximate tie with Trent University. Considerable Indigenous history is taught within that Department and in other units within the Faculty of Arts &amp; Science and beyond. It is unclear whether the limited Indigenous history content is related to such organization of program delivery, but there is, regardless a need for decolonization of curriculum across the Faculty and of an Indigenous historian. We were very encouraged to learn from the Department of existing efforts at decolonization that they are interested in expanding and their interest in working to make History an attractive Major for Indigenous students. With respect to whether there is “latitude to build more capacity for Indigenous history in the short term,” it is important that Indigenous content be delivered by experts in the themes, especially including by</p>

	those with lived experience, so the Dean's Office feels a responsibility to advocate on the staffing front to address this issue more sustainably. Indeed, this is a goal supported by the Dean's Office, the Department and the external reviewers.
7. In light of the merger with Religious Studies, the Department may consider existing areas of strength, overlap, and opportunities to highlight genuine advantages provided in program delivery by combining teaching strengths. I.e., Asian Studies is a good example of where synergies already exist; updating the program guide with minor changes may help to further underscore this strength.	Refer to the response to question 1.
8. We support the Department and the Faculty in the objective of hiring an Indigenous historian, which is overdue. Few, if any other history departments in Canada offer no courses in Indigenous history.	Refer to the response to question 6.
9. We recommend that the Department develop a strategic plan to address the looming need to confront its distinctive identity in a competitive landscape for History programs in the region.	The Dean's Office agrees that our strength in History research and our Faculty Members' involvement in teaching and mentorship at both the undergraduate and graduate level is a distinguishing feature of our institution as a CARU. The external reviewers have recommended a greater focus on securing external grants to support research-enhanced learning and this is indeed aligned with the strategic research plan as well as the Fiat Lux address several years ago, in which the President challenged Humanities and Social Science researchers, research and academic administrators to work toward achieving a level of external grant support that reflects the quality and productivity of our researchers. We fully accept the external review recommendations and note that action in alignment with their recommendations is coincidentally being undertaken by the Office of Research and Innovation Services (ORIS) and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGS) in terms of internal peer-review processes and the provision of small, internal grants to unsuccessful applicants for external funds who have made use of ORIS services in a timely manner. Grant funding, research activity and training opportunities are valued by the Dean's Office and are also to be considered by Chairs in terms of professional

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activity review, and STP committee members in evaluative processes. We also appreciate the external review recommendation that the Department enhance internal presentation of research, while noting that the History department already does a particularly good job in this regard, with well-regarded speaker series, including the History Colloquium series, the Driedger Lecture, and the Johnston lecture series shared with the Department of Geography & Environment. The Department of Religious Studies with which the program has merged also has a very well-funded and popular lecture series, including the Khan Islamic Studies Lecture Series and deep involvement with the Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden, which regularly holds events involving the former Department's members as well as historians, kinesiologists and others.

As a final note, the Dean's Office is pleased that the external reviewers recognized the high quality of our History program, including a strong undergraduate student experience, student satisfaction, stable enrolment, a strong connection to the community and especially collegiality. This latter element is sure to yield success as the Department carves its own destiny with the benefit of this well-constructed and thoughtful external review.

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10. The Department might consider ways in which it could support grant applications by members. They might, for example, create their own mentorship or review processes, with scholars who have received external funding advising and supporting new applications.

Refer to the response to question 9.

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11. We might suggest, following the model in many peer departments, that the department create a regular talk series with members presenting works in progress.

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Refer to the response to question 9.

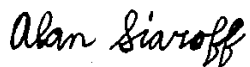


While the External Reviewers' Report contained 11 recommendations for improving and/or maintaining the History program, the History area, Dean Letts, and the Academic Quality Assurance Committee each felt that the recommendations were too narrow in focus and were better presented as broad goals to be met before the next review. The committee modified and consolidated most of the 11 recommendations into the following four:

1. The Department of History and Religion will hold a retreat to develop a mission and strategic plan. This retreat will be supported financially by the Dean's office and include a third-party facilitator.
2. The Department of History and Religion will focus their next hire on a South Asianist or an Indigenous scholar.
3. The Department of History and Religion will consider how their engagement with the current state of research and teaching in the field might be reflected in refreshed course titles.
4. Both the University and the Dean's office will put more emphasis on marketing and communications related to the accomplishments of the Department of History and Religion.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the History Program academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Siaroff". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr. Alan Siaroff  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee  
Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science

cc Erasmus Okine, PhD., PAS, FICN  
Provost & Vice-President (Academic)