

Ascenda School of Management:

Ascenda School of Management is a private degree granting institution that has been offering a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree for ten years. Renewal of consent for the BBA was granted for another five years in 2014. The BBA has five concentrations: Accounting, Human Resources Management, International Business Management, Marketing Management and General Business Management. Ascenda also has approval to offer a Bachelor of Hospitality Management degree due to open in April 2016.

In June 2014, Dr. Lindsay Redpath joined Ascenda as the new President and Vice Chancellor. The former Vice President Academic, Dr. Bill Garrett, has retired and Dr. Tess Ireneo-Manalo continues to provide leadership as Dean of Business and Campus Principal. The governing body is the Academic Council that includes six external members, faculty members, and student and alumni representatives.

A new Director of Library, Information, Technology and Instructional Services was hired in August 2014. Adam Farrell, who has a Master's degrees in Library and Information Studies and in Archival studies is an experienced librarian who has greatly enhanced the library resources, services and usage. Ascenda recently became a member of the BCELN (BC Electronic Library Network).

During an intensive review of the curriculum in 2013-14 the faculty identified a set of five program level learning outcomes which are being incorporated into course learning outcomes and assessment. An English bridging program introduced two years ago has been improved and the two lower level English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses have been eliminated.

Enrolments at Ascenda have grown significantly in the last year. There are currently 180 students at Ascenda most of whom are international students from over 20 different countries. The largest group of students is from China, followed by Korea, India and Latin America. Ascenda also has a significant number of students from Eastern Europe. Cultural diversity, along with managing classes where students have a range of post-secondary experiences, is a challenge for the 15 part time and 5 full time faculty members who teach at Ascenda.

Ascenda has recently completed consultations with faculty, students, alumni and staff regarding the development of a new three year strategic plan. One of the objectives is to expand the number of transfer credits accepted for transfer credit by other institutions. We trust that our continuing participation in the annual BCCAT articulation meetings will result in a better understanding of the quality and comparability of our courses in the different subject areas.

Camosun College:

Faculty: We have two former fulltime instructors, Clarence Bolt and Larry Hannant, now working part time on post retirement contracts. These contracts are not sessional nor are they regular positions. So I have reported 2 retirements and 2 part time faculty for these two people.

Class size limits: no collective agreement class size limits but norm is 35 and total # of students per full time faculty is 140 per term.

Registrations: enrollment numbers are based on the final numbers after the drop date, not on initial enrollment.

Prior Learning Assessment: most courses but not all have the PLA yes box ticked.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University:

- one PT/regular faculty – joint hire with Asian Studies (Jack P. Hayes) teaches 4 sections for History and 4 for ASIA
- 3 retirements but budget is frozen. Dean of Arts asked for 3 replacements last year but nothing forthcoming to date [update: we have received funding for a permanent ½ time Canadian position and a ¾ time World History position]
- 8 sections x 3 contact hours per week remains a “pilot project” as it has for the past six years – collective agreement says 8 x 4
- one new course: Canadian Crime in Historical Perspective; in addition, several new cross-listed courses with Asian Studies, including Tea in China & Japan, Martial Arts of East Asia, Folklore of East Asia
- enrollment is up in third and fourth year courses, down substantially in first year

Langara College:

It has been another steady year for history at Langara College. Enrolments have dropped only slightly (by 32), so we do not see any cause for alarm there. However, we are re-thinking how to re-brand or market courses (especially in Canadian history) to address the shortfall.

The threatened re-allocation of sections from some departments to others has not materialized, fortunately, but the administration continues to widen its attempts to recruit international students as the major measure used to address budget deficits. Thus we continue to see increasing numbers of students in the classroom who face language difficulties as well as the usual challenges faced by students taking history. The administration has recognized that this is a problem that is present throughout the college, and is planning on taking action to address this, though what form that action will take is unclear at the moment.

The department will be under review this Fall. What form this review will take, and what precisely its objectives are, is currently unclear, but it seems likely that it is intended to be a formative rather than a summative review.

In wider news, the Langara Faculty Association was bargaining with the administration this year, which proved to be a difficult process. It even required a strike vote, taken by the faculty to express our opposition to some of the more obnoxious proposals presented by the administration (such as the right to veto elections of department heads), to force the administration to come to a reasonable agreement. This agreement, which principally involves a pay raise (5% over 5 years) and some changes to benefits, has now been ratified by the faculty.

University of British Columbia – Okanagan

Dr Sahadeo Basdeo of UBC Okanagan's History Department retired as of 31 March 2015. He taught non-western history and had a 2-2 teaching load. As of August 1st, 2015, we will have a new unit head for a position shared by Unit 6 – History and Sociology. Dr Catherine Higgs is an historian of Southern Africa. Because of her administrative duties she will teach 0-1. We are looking forward to welcoming Dr Higgs to the department. However, as she will teach one course, she is not a replacement for Dr Basdeo. For 2015-16 we will have a sessional instructor teaching several non-western courses.

University of the Fraser Valley:

The UFV History Department offers a diverse and engaging range of programs and courses. Its faculty includes 4 Canadianists, 3 Europeanists, 1 Latin Americanist, 1 Asianist, and 1 Imperial/Trans-Atlantic historian. We regularly hire 2-3 sessional instructors. In addition to the geographic specializations, we have cross-regional thematic strengths in military, cultural, and local history. We also contribute to inter-disciplinary programs: Latin-American Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, Indo-Canadian Studies, and Mennonite Studies.

Highlights

The department has spearheaded or supported a number of initiatives over the last year that have enriched the student educational experience. These include study tours, scholarly and public events, and student community building events.

Study Tours:

Last year, our long-term sessional instructor Larissa Horne organized and led a field school to St Petersburg, Russia. This was fully enrolled and was very successful. Later this month, Geof Spurling will be leading a study tour of Peru. This is also fully enrolled and is interdisciplinary being coordinated with the Fashion Design Department. Next year the department plans on a tour of Germany and Poland to observe Holocaust sites.

Events:

To commemorate the centenary of the First World War, we hosted a "Great War Day." This was a public history event that invited exhibits presented from military and regional museums, personal collectors, and class projects. The university organized a choir to sing WWI-period songs, the Theatre Department presented an excerpt from their play "Birdsong" and faculty presented lectures in the student union pub.

Through the winter term the department hosted a very well attended series of films on the theme of slavery. These films were open to the public but we also linked to course content.

In the wake of events in Quebec and Ontario, the department participated in an interdisciplinary panel on terrorism.

We are in the process of planning a Pro-D Day event for social studies and history teachers in the region (from the Surrey School District east). The focus will be historical thinking and the transition from high school to university especially in light of the new curriculum that is being designed for grades 8-12. Indeed, education is increasingly being conceived of as "K-16" and we believe that creating these professional linkages will benefit the students working their way through the entire system.

Community Building:

The department has supported a revitalized Association of History Students. This body has hosted "Coffee Breaks," casual drop-ins for faculty and students to interact. In addition, AHS has hosted a very well organized pub night. The department is planning an event for AHS that has been done frequently in the past: "What to do with your history degree." In coordination with AHS and the Alumni Association we will invite alumni to talk about how they used their degrees to pursue a variety of professions beyond graduate school and teaching.

Finally, the department has created an electronic newsletter. This once-per-term publication will highlight student and faculty research and initiatives and communicate news about past events.

Challenges

For several years enrolment in history courses at UFV has declined. Stagnant institutional enrolment combined with a proliferation of program options offered by departments across the university has resulted in a competitive environment for student interest.

In light of this situation, the History Department has committed to the formulation and application of a strategic plan to retain existing students, attract additional students, more flexibly utilize faculty expertise, and further support the community of students and faculty in History. This plan includes short term and longer-term solutions to problems that are

immediately apparent and those that will be identified through data collection. These solutions will ensure a healthy utilization rate in our courses, stabilize how workload requirements are fulfilled for full-time faculty, and allow for a more predictable allocation of sections to sessional faculty.

In spite of these efforts, it seems that the notion of “disciplines” is increasingly challenged in the new educational environment. Accused on being silos, the independence of institutional departments is being questioned by senior administration who seem to feel threatened by emerging globalization of education.

This is putting department’s like history in a difficult position as enrolments stagnate and budgets shrink. While we have a responsibility to communicate the relevance of our discipline, the institution around us seems to be worried about a future for the brick-and-mortar classroom construct. Part of this is driven by the notion of the student as a customer that must be served.

Excessive pandering to the desires and habits of the student “customer” is a fundamental conflict of interest. While quality and relevance must be embedded in our course and program offerings, to amend these qualities to the detriment of the scope and depth of what the department provides is to undermine the value of a university education. When we offer courses that are popular to increase utilization rates we risk offering the students more of what they know or with which they are familiar through the dominant culture. While courses on war and sports draw large enrolments (and do surprise the students with discipline-based approaches that challenge them) we need to offer courses on themes and regions of the world with which students are not familiar. This not only fulfils a philosophical and institutional commitment to making world citizens through exposure to new ideas, but also supports the central concept of a university education as a transformative experience. Offering courses that are popular does far less in transforming the students than ensuring a broad selection of courses. Whether many take the opportunities that choice provide is less important than providing them to those students that do. By doing this we communicate our commitment to quality and this should help to sustain the reputation and enrolments to the institution.

This final point must not be dismissed as an ivory tower perspective isolated from lived social and economic realities. After a boom period in the oil industry, the recent decline in oil prices and the concomitant repercussions this is having on the economy reveal the problem of focusing on popular or career driven narrow program development. Catching trends and shaping programs to suit them is a dangerous and ultimately futile pursuit; by the time a university produces the graduates to satisfy a need, the need has passed or will soon become saturated.

Recently our President advanced the notion that universities are threatened because of the “knowledge” available through the internet. Knowledge certainly is not available through the internet; Holocaust deniers and other agents of deception and propaganda would find

comforting the suggestion that their misinformation is “knowledge.” But even the fact that masses of unfiltered ‘information’ is available should not be threatening to universities. Quite to the contrary, universities might be more important than ever before. In such a volatile economy we need people with broad skill sets, flexible minds, and a global perspective. We need people that don’t just have information, but the means to process it critically. These are attributes that universities can develop and should do so in all the varieties that the disciplines can provide. The institutional leadership needs to trumpet this, not from ivory towers, but from the classrooms of inquiry, interpretation, and imagination.

The entrepreneurial spirit is driven by creativity. University should transform students from individuals whose perspectives are limited to what they already know (and don’t know what questions to ask to know more) to those who can imagine new possibilities for their lives and that of their communities. The History Department will continue to respect the ideals of a university and understands the part it plays by staying true to the broader discipline, itself dynamic and evolving, that it serves. By doing this we contribute to UFV, an institution striving to provide the best undergraduate education in Canada.

University of Victoria

Dear Colleagues,

My apologies. I had hoped to be able to attend at least the afternoon part of the meeting on Monday and represent UVic but I am teaching a field school at the moment (in Chilliwack) and we had to switch a classes so I am now teaching all day Monday.

We have sent in the standard report but I appreciated Chris' more narrative summary. In that regard I can report that we too have been experiencing an enrollment decline, that we have lost two colleagues to retirement (John Duder 1/2 time and Greg Blue) but have thankfully been able to give one of our long term sessionals (Kirsten Semmens) a half time and we have special Canada Research Chair funding to hire an historian to teach in Greg's area (Neilish Bose).

Administratively there has been some musical chairs. Lynne Marks stepped down as chair in January and when she returns from leave in July she will be our graduate advisor; Jason Colby has been acting as temporary chair until July 1 when I will assume the awesome mantle of the chair.

Best wishes for the meeting and my regrets for not attending in person. Hoping to see you next year....

John Lutz,
Department of History

University of Victoria

Vancouver Island University:

The academic year 2014-2015 brought some unanticipated challenges to the VIU History department, as two full-time faculty members went on unexpected sick leave in the summer of 2014, and neither taught any courses for us in 2014-2015.

As a result, several courses had to be cancelled, which others were picked up with short notice by sessional or other full-time instructors. Our student numbers were certainly impacted by this. On the positive side, the newest member of the department – Dr. Katharine Rollwagen – had a very successful year and has already become an active and valued member of the department.