



**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**HISTORY PROGRAM REVIEW**

**SELF-STUDY REPORT**

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# 1. Program Overview

## **Program Description**

The Kwantlen Polytechnic University History Department offers an Associate of Arts degree, a Bachelor of Arts Minor, and a Bachelor of Arts Major. History at KPU aims to provide a broad-based understanding of how the peoples and societies of our world today have changed over time and geographic space. In our history courses, we critically engage, study, discuss, and analyze how peoples, cultures, economic, and political systems have together shaped the world in which we live and the debates which continue to dominate contemporary discourse. For us, the study of the past is an essential part of an undergraduate education, and to this end, we pay particular attention to improving our students' skills in recognizing and evaluating sources, thinking creatively and critically, communicating effectively in both oral and written forms, and applying their knowledge to produce informed and articulate analyses of contemporary global issues.

As a department within the Faculty of Arts, and the broader KPU community, we see our department as providing three, interrelated, contributions:

- highlighting 'moments that matter' and relating these to our contemporary world in such a way as to enable students to understand the critical connections between past and present;
- helping to guide students who choose to make history a significant part of their undergraduate education, and offering them a diversity of pathways that best suit their future goals;
- continuing to emphasize the essential skills that students gain throughout their history education.

While the History program does not have a formal mission statement, in 2005 the members of the History Department completed a 'Plan for the Future' wherein department members agreed that the primary goal of our program lies in "providing our students with a high quality, learner-centred education. ... The study of history is an essential part of a well-rounded education and of democratic and global citizenship"; it is as relevant to new high school graduates as it is to mid-career professionals. By understanding the peoples and cultures that have created our contemporary world, we are better able to navigate the complexities of our increasingly interconnected and globalized lives. While an interest in history often draws students into our courses, we also offer courses that are relevant to students in political science, geography, business, sustainability studies, and many other disciplines and programs of the university.

As a department we are strongly committed to knowledge-based historical research. Although individual faculty members have made substantial contributions through scholarly

research, our focus remains on teaching<sup>1</sup> More recently (Fall 2019), the department discussed at length the future directions for the department, including specific goals to further Indigenize the program and to explain our focus on digital history, to be realized through the completion of this program review process.

### **Brief History of the Program**

The current Department of History evolved in the mid-1990s from a combined History-Political Science Department. However, History courses – in particular Canadian and European History courses – have been offered ever since Kwantlen College split from Douglas College in 1981. Over the years the Department has grown steadily, first offering an Associate of Arts Degree, and subsequently developing a Minor in History under the Bachelor of Arts Framework in 2005. In 2008, the Department launched a full Bachelor of Arts Degree in History with two streams – Asian and Military History – and a general BA, History, which students could customize to meet their own career and educational aspirations.<sup>2</sup> Between 2013-2019, several new hires and the development of a number of thematic – rather than traditional geographical or regional – courses further added to the diversity of department offerings. With the new themes (including global, digital, and environmental history, plus a renewed focus on material culture), as well as increased emphasis on experiential, digital, and applied learning, these course offerings have been an increasingly popular addition to our traditional regional histories. Most recently (2019-20), the Department refined the history streams in the wake of faculty changes and the success of the thematic courses, and now offers three specialized streams – Asian, North American, and Global History – as well as the general BA Major, Minor, and Associate of Arts degrees.

We currently have eight regular faculty (seven 100% Regular positions and one 50% Regular) in the History program, as well as a number of visiting instructors. Three retirements in rapid succession between 2015 and 2017 meant a period of instability within the department; however, with the support of the Dean of Arts, the department has been able to hire three new, permanent faculty members whose expertise has strengthened our commitment to globalizing and Indigenizing our curriculum.

Our program and our faculty are firmly committed to creating an exceptional learning environment committed to preparing learners for leadership, service and success. The aim of the BA in History, as with the mission and mandate of the University, is to enable students to become innovative, critical and creative thinkers who are flexible and can adapt to a rapidly changing world.<sup>3</sup> The History degree and studies at KPU is a concrete way to realize Kwantlen Polytechnic's determination to "reflect and serve our diverse, dynamic

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<sup>1</sup> Kwantlen University College Department of History, "A Plan for the Future: 2006-2011".

<sup>2</sup> Program Review Self-Study, Department of History, Spring 2013.

<sup>3</sup> KPU Vision 2023, p 1.

and growing region by providing a wide range of offerings,”<sup>4</sup> and as a program with applied elements in a polytechnic university setting, History combines theory and practice, creativity and quality, critical understanding and adaptability, and the collaboration and social awareness necessary for good citizenship and rewarding careers.<sup>5</sup>

## **External Accreditation**

N/A

## **Scope of the Review**

### **Program Review History**

This is the second program review for the History department, with our previous review completed in 2013. The key goals and outcomes for the 2013 program review included three primary targets. First, to continue to diversify our history course offerings across the three different campuses and offer a more balanced and timely range of course offerings. Second, to reframe our applications course (HIST4400) to focus on applied work and career offerings and linked to our curriculum and undertake a systematic reevaluation and reassessment of the then current curriculum in light of the polytechnic mandate. And third, to better market the program, build synergy and work collaboratively with other programs, and to develop field schools or with other areas of the institution, field school opportunities. Many of these goals have worked out fairly well for the department, and our current programming reflects these efforts at a systematic overhaul and improvement of key elements of the curriculum and offer a more timely, varied, and balanced range of offerings to our students on three campuses. The department has also worked collaboratively, cross-listed courses, and developed a variety of opportunities for our student within, and to a degree, outside the institution. What was less successful, however, was while we increased our outreach within the institution and for the HIST 4400 Applications course, we have had less successful with the wider local communities and field schools ideas.

Building on some of these successful elements of the earlier review and its findings, the department identified four goals and issues to address in the current program review:

1. To analyze the structure of the History Program, its curriculum, and its ability to meet the needs of its students, as well as the level of satisfaction among our students, faculty, and alumni;
2. To gauge how effectively the History department is Indigenizing its curriculum;

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<sup>4</sup> KPU Vision 2023, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> KPU Vision 2018, mission statement, p. 4 and KPU Vision 2023, p. 1-2, p. 5.

3. To gauge how effectively the History department is incorporating digital methods and tools into its curriculum;
4. To determine how effectively we have developed our relationships with our broader community (both within and without the institution, including our alumni).

### **Program Specific Issues**

We have identified several program-specific issues related to our core questions above:

1. ***Fill rates and enrolment trends***

An important priority of the History program remains the rebuilding of our fill rates and ensuring that we do not face course cancellations. There have also been concerns about our DFW rates and retaining student numbers in our program. Improved fill rates align with both Faculty of Arts and department priorities—and with the increased shift to thematic rather than geographical courses, our enrolments have increased steadily after a significant drop in enrolments during 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. While the enrolment trends are generally positive, there may be ways to improve on these trends and better prepare students for upper division courses by requiring another 1xxx course; such a course may help our outcomes and retention. Seat fill rates could be improved, and student feedback further shows that course availability is a concern.

The flexibility of the History BA major and minor programs has been a hallmark of the degree's success. However, the tremendous flexibility of the degree, requiring only two courses at the 1xxx level, and two at the 2xxx level before students move on to upper division courses, may be contributing to DFW rates in upper division courses, as students are less prepared for the rigours of work at this level. To this end, we will use the program review data to consider whether or not to expand the lower level requirement by 3 credits. This would align the degree more closely with the BA requirements of similar programs in Arts at KPU.

2. ***Opportunities for further curricular development***

Based on general trends noted in the student, alumni, and faculty surveys, the new thematic and global focus of the program has been positively received, as have innovations in digital history. Given the importance of digital skills and global awareness in our graduates, as echoed in the discipline/sector survey, History needs to create additional opportunities for students in these areas as we continue to refine our digital, world, and thematic course offerings.

3. ***Indigenization of our program and curriculum***

In this program review, we received significant feedback from students, alumni, and faculty around the need for more Indigenous history content. KPU is uniquely situated within the City of Surrey, which has the largest urban Indigenous

population in British Columbia. In addition, our campuses sit on the traditional territories of the Kwantlen, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Kwikwetlam, Qay'qayt and Musqueam First Nations. As an institution, KPU emphasizes the importance of Indigenization, as has been highlighted in both the KPU Strategic Plan: Vision 2018 and the current Vision 2023, as well as the Tsilhqot'in decision and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions calls to action.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, we see it as imperative for the department to more meaningfully Indigenize its curriculum and its pedagogy.

While a number of courses in the History program discuss Indigenous peoples and their pasts in North American and global contexts, no one course looks exclusively at Indigenous peoples on the land we now call Canada from an historical perspective. This is an omission that will be remedied as a result of this program review. In addition, we need to foreground the Indigenous content in our existing courses. As institutions are called to meaningfully decolonize and Indigenize their curricula and pedagogy, we see clear opportunities for the Department of History to contribute substantially to this vital effort.

4. ***Need for greater outreach/enhanced awareness of the program***

As in the department's first program review, awareness of the program within KPU and in our wider communities remains limited. This points to the continuing and pressing need for more comprehensive outreach to help to grow our program and retain students. More focused advertising, educational advising, internal & external marketing, and engagement with an external board will all be vital in this effort. Student, alumni, and sector surveys highlight that our department website and the online calendar continue to draw students and inform them about our program, but other channels of information do not seem to do so as effectively. The program review will therefore look for specific ways to enhance the profile of the program, both within KPU, and among our wider communities.

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<sup>6</sup> KPU Vision 2023, pp. 1, 2, 4.



## 2. Program Currency and Connections

### **Competitive Context**

The History program at Kwantlen has existed since Kwantlen College split from Douglas College in 1981. The current Department of History in the KPU Faculty of Arts evolved in 1995-96 from a combined History/Political Science Department that offered only an Associate of Arts degree. The department launched a minor degree in 2005, and since 2008, a major degree, with several optional thematic streams. At this point, there are over 200 students enrolled in the program and over 100 History majors and minors (2019/20). History enrolment has increased steadily each year, from 183 students in 2016/2017 to 201 students in 2019/2020. While not an enormous increase, the upward trend has been both positive and steady, and significantly, the number of students identifying as 'history intended' has increased from 71 to 101.<sup>7</sup> These encouraging trends also compare well with aggregate History enrolment trends in BC: 1-2% gains in KPU History and 1-2% gains in BC History student trends.

KPU History is the fifth largest History program in BC (after UBC, SFU, UVic, and UFV) by student seats,<sup>8</sup> and is comparable in student headcount with UFV; the latter, however, has several more faculty than KPU History.

### **Program's Connections to Other KPU Academic Units**

History has a close relationship with Asian Studies. Eight 2xxx and 3xxx courses have been cross-listed and serve students in both programs, ranging from East (China & Japan) and South Asian (India) perspectives, to pan-Asian thematic courses (Tea, Drugs & Alcohol), and pan-Pacific/global offerings (Chinese Overseas, Chinese & Japanese Immigration to North America). This has been a positive relationship for both History and Asian Studies, though several history students noted that there seems to be too much focus on Asian history, and not enough on other regions, including global history, Latin America, Africa, pre-modern Europe, and the Middle East) As one student put it, "...more classes should be offered in different areas. [F]or instance more on racial segregation around the world, more global history ...", and another, "I love the global history classes, though there are few."<sup>9</sup>

History also provides an elective course for the Fashion Design program: HIST 3310 The Fibre of Society: Textiles in Global Development. There have also been preliminary discussions with other instructors and faculties (Certificate in Brewing; Science & Horticulture; etc.) about developing further cross-listed and elective courses, but the pandemic of 2020-2021 has put those discussions temporarily on hold.

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<sup>7</sup> History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 5 (Appendix I).

<sup>8</sup> History Articulation Committee Reports Summary 2018-2019 by Institution (Appendix II).

<sup>9</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, pp. 33-34 (Appendix III).

In addition, students enrolled in a variety of other BA programs take History courses as part of their breadth electives. Students from the School of Business, Science & Horticulture, and other programs in Arts often enroll in HIST 1xxx and 2xxx courses, at times earning enough credits to graduate with a minor in History, alongside their major area. History also draws from programs and students planning a career in primary and secondary teaching, who must complete introductory Canadian History as part of the post-degree programs for teachers in British Columbia.

### **Program's Articulation and Credential Recognition Processes**

All lower and mid-level History courses have been fully articulated with other post-secondary institutions throughout BC. All of our upper-level courses have been articulated as well, including with research universities such as UBC and SFU and other teaching universities including the University of the Fraser Valley, Capilano University, and Thompson Rivers University. More recently, private colleges such as Alexander College and Coquitlam College have also articulated courses with KPU History. The BC History Articulation Committee is the primary body responsible for governing and facilitating these agreements and promotes consultation and coordination among the History departments of all universities and colleges in the province. The committee is composed of a group of disciplinary colleagues who are guided, coordinated, and overseen by the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer. The KPU History Department has had a long and fruitful relationship with the History Articulation Committee, has hosted a number of their meetings, has had members of the department serve as articulation table officers,<sup>10</sup> and the History department hosts the BC History Articulation Committee website (including meeting information, department reports, minutes and archives).<sup>11</sup>

### **Program's Public Information and Community Outreach**

The external survey was sent out to twelve history discipline/sector representatives in the wider public and over half replied (response of 58%); despite the low number of responses we were able to draw some information from these surveys. Beyond some interesting comments on emerging trends with implications for our curriculum and course design, these sector representatives highlighted several issues for KPU History. First, they were only marginally familiar with our program (29% somewhat, 57% slightly, and 14% not at all familiar with KPU History/limited exposure to students). Second, that KPU somewhat or effectively engages with broader communities (75% and 25% effectively and somewhat effectively). But third, that KPU History could be doing more to engage in the wider community – perhaps through more student work placements and student participation in regional “graduate student”/student conferences (the department regularly sends students to the regional/BC Qualicum graduate student conference). At this time, KPU

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<sup>10</sup> A KPU History Faculty member is the current chair of the BC History Articulation Committee.

<sup>11</sup> KPU History Department website: <https://www.kpu.ca/arts/history/bc-history-articulation>.

History does not have an external advisory board, though preliminary plans to establish such an organization were initiated by our past Chair.

Beyond the sector survey and official tools of this program review, the department has engaged with the public in a number of different ways over the past several years. Several History faculty perform public outreach in local school districts through student-led research and curriculum development projects, faculty presentations and workshops, and practicum placements (through the ARTS 4800 Arts Practicum course). Courses (including HIST/ASIA2359, HIST/ASIA 2156, HIST2390, HIST3180) include experiential components, and excluding the pandemic year of 2020, have engaged students and wider community groups, institutions, and businesses in productive and interesting dialogues. As one student noted, “[d]efinitely would love to see *more* off-campus learning. ... These outside opportunities allow the students to tie the events they learned to what they have experienced. This would allow for a deeper understanding to the subjects and increase the willingness to learn.”<sup>12</sup> The department maintains good connections with the Surrey Museum and Archives, organizations such as the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, Nikkei Museum and Cultural Centre, White Rock Museum & Archives, Historic Stewart Farm, Chinese Canadian Museum, as well as the City of Richmond. Our students have worked and volunteered in these and other institutions. It goes without saying, however, that the department must continue to build more and effective relationships with the wider local community.

The History program maintains a modest digital footprint, including a department website, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the latter three of which have a small but growing following. These sites remain important communication tools and the program is updating them as rapidly as possible. As a large number of students noted in the Student Survey (52%), the website and digital footprint/social media account for a significant portion of their information on the program. These sites are maintained by the department as a way to communicate upcoming courses and important program information to students. The department has further designated a faculty member the ‘digital footprint manager’ to help coordinate and manage social media, website, and digital marketing of courses and information. In addition to digital communication and public information, the department has program brochures for public events (which we will update for post-pandemic public events), and engaging course posters in targeted rooms on the Surrey and Richmond campuses and around our department offices.

## **Student Demand for the Program**

History students are currently drawn in large part from the later Millennial (1994-1996) and Gen Z generations (1997-2010s), with 60% of students 22 years or younger. This is roughly

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<sup>12</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 35 (Appendix III).

in line with the Faculty of Arts. History has a small percentage of international students (+/- 6%, less than half of Faculty of Arts average), and is close in gender parity (48-49%).<sup>13</sup>

Data from Institutional Analysis and Planning shows relative growth in enrolment trends. Enrolment across the History Department has been increasing since 2016/2017, with an increased fill rate from 76% (16/17) to 88% (19/20), substantially higher than the Arts increase – from 88% to 93% – across the same time period. More specifically, History enrolment has increased steadily each year, from 183 students in 2016/2017 to 201 students in 2019/2020. While not an enormous increase, the upward trend has been steady. Perhaps more importantly, the number of students identifying as ‘history intended’ has increased from 71 to 101.<sup>14</sup> The FTE headcount for History, like the Faculty of Arts total has seen a modest increase.

#### **FTE Headcount for History and Faculty of Arts Students by Academic Year**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	%Change
History Total	199	183	183	194	201	1%
Intended	54	71	88	99	101	87%
Associate Degree	37	11	4	3	4	-89%
Bachelor’s Degree (Major)	98	80	70	66	69	-30%
Minor	20	27	27	34	37	85%
Faculty of Arts Total	5,712	5,692	5,895	5,737	5,843	2%

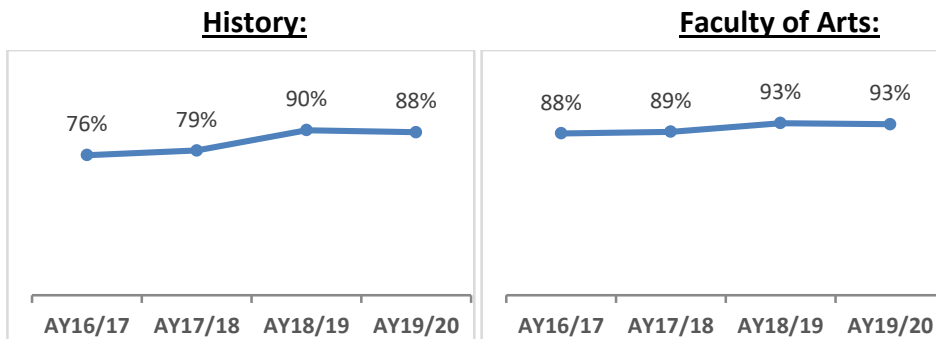
While Intended and History Minor enrolments (85% from 2015/16 to 2019/20) have increased, the number of BA Majors appears to have decreased over the same time period. More positively, 2019/20 has seen an increase, and the current inability to code students as double majors in the Faculty of Arts<sup>15</sup> has meant that some students are currently coded as minors, when they will graduate with a History Major. Thus, the decline in majors is not as drastic as the stats would make it appear.

Fill rates have been generally increasing across both our program and the Faculty of Arts as well.

<sup>13</sup> History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 6 (Appendix I).

<sup>14</sup> History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 5 (Appendix I).

<sup>15</sup> A proposal is currently before Senate that would rectify the issue regarding double majors.

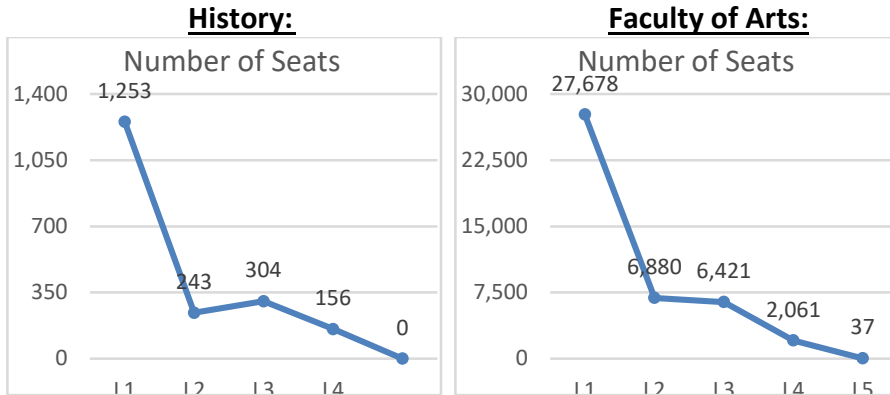


While History fill rates were not quite high as has as average fill rates for the Faculty of Arts overall, the fill rates have generally been increasing. In addition, one reason for the decrease in seats and fill rates for 2019/20 was related to the unexpected passing of a popular member of the department and the cancellation of a number of related courses. Our average seats per class also compare well with the Faculty of Arts. History has an average overall seats per class of approximately 29 (keeping in mind the very modest dip in 2019/20 for the aforementioned cancellation of some courses) and is better than the Faculty of Arts average of 27.<sup>16</sup>

The number of seats and repeat rate are also in line with or better than the Faculty of Arts average. The graphs below show this based on the seats filled by our program's courses versus the Faculty of Arts' courses by level. There are many students taking history courses at the 1000-level and then the number drops considerably at the 2000-level, which is the case with most open-intake programs. In many cases, the numbers continue to decline as the level increases but in the case of History, we see an increase on average in the number of seats filled from L2 to L3. In other words, rather than a steady decline in seats filled in relation to the Faculty of Arts as a whole, we regularly gain seats at L3 and L4 as students from a variety of other disciplines move over to history to take upper division courses. This also speaks well of the flexible prerequisite structure adopted by the History program after our last Program Review. The repeat rate also compares favourably for History as against the Faculty of Arts (4%-2% for 1xxx-3xxx courses).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 7 (Appendix I).

<sup>17</sup> History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 9 (Appendix I).



Overall, these numbers show a program that is regaining its vitality after a period of decline related to the retirement of several key faculty members and a resulting period of instability in course offerings due to the need to rely on sessional instructors. Of course, History remains focused growing its seat fill rates. To this end, History will continue to offer more and varied thematic topics. We plan to continue this strategy (and possibly expand upon it). As well, History has been fortunate to be able to hire several new, engaging permanent faculty members, whose areas of expertise will guarantee that the department will be able to build upon its diversity of thematic and topical course offerings.

## Summary and Recommendations

The modest but real growth in the number of students enrolled, intended, and FTE headcount, and seat fill rates and utilization (especially for 3xxx courses) for History is encouraging, but we could be marketing the degree and the department more effectively, as well as engaging with students and the wider community in different ways. While we have a solid share of the province-wide History enrolment, we are well positioned to grow our enrolment substantially.

We need to maintain and grow the number of majors. History courses are clearly drawing students from a variety of KPU programs, but more communication around our geographical and thematic offerings, other initiatives, the benefits of the major, and marketing in general might help garner more majors or transition more of our minors to majors (or more double minors and majors). While our demographic seems to indicate that students are coming to KPU History directly from secondary education/high school, we could further target this population as well as highlight our program and make more connections with the wider Lower Mainland community.

If History's positive enrolments (despite a variety of recent challenges and some dips in numbers) may be taken as a measure of success, then this is a good thing. We know, however, that the History degree exists among a variety of interesting options under the Bachelor of Arts umbrella, so History cannot afford to take a passive approach to enrolment

management. We will need to continue to be actively involved in advertising our program, continue our community outreach and engagement (leading to some placements for our students as well), work collaboratively with other Arts departments to encourage students to take our courses, build synergy with other programs, and continue to consider our major and minor programs as a complementary or primary degree.

In specific terms, we must:

- continue to work with marketing, advising, and FSO (the Future Students Office) to expand our marketing and interaction with prospective and continuing students;
- enhance relationships and initiate dialogue across faculties to build greater multidisciplinary collaboration;
- explore ways to build more public participation and community outreach by working with community stakeholders, providing more experiential opportunities for students, and continuing to build upon the successful relationships created through the Arts 4800 Practicum course;
- create an external advisory board to build stronger ties to our communities.

### 3. Quality of Curriculum Design

#### Assessment of the Curriculum

##### *Curriculum Profile*

The present History curriculum reflects a number of key transformations over the past fifteen years. The introduction of the B.A. Minor in 2005 and then the B.A. Major in 2008, produced the most substantive curricular changes, with the addition of a limited slate of 3XXX and 4XXX courses. This period also saw the introduction of the capstone course: History 4400 Applications of History. Subsequent revisions have vastly expanded our offerings at the upper level, allowing us to reorganize our curriculum to ensure that students have a wider range of choices as they move through their degree program.

As a result of feedback received in our 2013/2014 program review, History began a shift towards thematic and global courses and away from traditional area studies. In consultation with the Dean of Arts, we also reorganized our upper level offerings such that all third-year courses are lecture courses; while all fourth-year courses are true seminars. Following the retirements discussed above, we were able to expand upon these curricular changes as the new faculty members developed courses within their specializations. All of these changes led to the introduction of new history streams in 2020 and the commitment to meaningful Indigenization going forward.

Our curricular design is based on clear, straightforward principles. Each course analyzes human history within a specific timeframe and geographical space or from a particularly thematic structure (for example, Asian history through the lens of the commodity tea or global history through the experience of pandemics), providing students with the opportunity to understand how people have responded to change.<sup>18</sup> Students examine how societies are structured, in what ways cultural values and practices evolve, economies develop, revolutions succeed or fail, and why some groups have prospered (for a time) and others have not. Courses analyze causal relationships, evaluate the accuracy and relevance of a variety of forms of evidence, construct coherent explanations of historical events and developments, and gain experience in communicating effectively with others, in both oral and written form. Thus, by studying history, students learn and hone the thinking and communications skills that will prove vital to their future progress. These skills enable them to be the kind of creative, adaptable employees and people that public and private sectors actively seek.

The curriculum of the B.A. Major and Minor in History allows students to develop independence of thought, an appreciation for intellectual rigour, the ability to critically analyze claims and concepts presented in a variety of media, the ability to test a hypothesis,

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<sup>18</sup> See the History Course Descriptions (Appendix IV).



and the ability to consider another person's point of view and to charitably reconstruct his or her argument. Our curriculum is built around the belief that the greater our knowledge of the past – whether of our own society or of another – the greater our understanding of society in the present. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, on every level, so too the capacity to understand our partners and our competitors becomes an absolute necessity. How well we understand the past – especially now – will largely determine our future. Whether our goal is to prepare our students for individual success or to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens, they will profit from an exposure to the discipline of history. In this way the History Department is clearly supporting the mission and mandate of the University stated in the past KPU 2018 Academic Plan that highlight, among other things, “[c]reative and critical thinking, media literacy, social intelligence, global perspectives, history and world views...”<sup>19</sup> as well as the current Vision 2023.<sup>20</sup> The individual program requirements follow:<sup>21</sup>

### **Bachelor of Arts, Major in History (HIST)**

The Bachelor of Arts History Major at KPU provides students with a broad-based education in the principal areas of history, as well as a variety of distinctive learning opportunities and thematic streams. The BA in History provides students with the opportunity to study in depth the many peoples and cultures whose contributions have created the world in which we live. The BA degree allows students to develop the knowledge and core competencies characteristic of a traditional BA program while preparing students to respond effectively and creatively to a range of challenges in our communities and world.

Effective Spring 2020, students in the BA History Major can choose to focus on one of three streams: Asian History, North American History, and/or Global History. Completion of a stream is recognized by a certificate signed by the Dean of Arts; it is not a formal curricular element. On the whole, we have found that students tend to tailor their slate of history courses to their own interests or career goals rather than rigidly following a defined stream, but we do have a modest number of students at each convocation who apply for and receive the stream designation. A small number of students have been able to attain multiple stream certificates.

### **Bachelor of Arts, Minor in History**

The BA Minor in History was created in 2005, mindful of the fact that students in other programs often maintain an interest in history, but do not have enough elective space to complete the Major. Students find that a History minor combines very well with other

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<sup>19</sup> Vision 2018, 3-9; Vision 2023, 1, 3, 4.

<sup>20</sup> We reference both academic plans (Vision 2018 & Vision 2023) as we both started the initial work for this program review summer 2018 and as both ‘visions’ have key components linked to what the department explores in this current review.

<sup>21</sup> See also: History B.A. Major (Appendix V), History B.A. Minor (Appendix VI), and History Associate of Arts (Appendix VII).

disciplines while complementing their research and educational interests. A Minor in History teaches students to think critically and creatively, to challenge accepted opinions, and to develop their own research, writing, and presentation skills.

### **Associate of Arts in History**

The Associate of Arts in History credential is a two-year degree program which provides students with a basic foundation in the study of History and also ensures that students obtain the literacy and numeracy skills essential to success in the workplace and in further studies. Students continuing on to upper-level courses at other British Columbia universities receive block transfer credit for an Associate Degree in History.

### **Credential-Level Specifications**

- Declaration requirements: good academic standing with the university, completion of a minimum of 18 credits of undergraduate coursework (minimum grade of 'C'), including 3 credits of ENGL at 1100 level or higher, 6 credits at the 1100 level or higher in HIST
- HIST Major: 12 credits from lower-level HIST courses, including at least 6 credits of HIST courses at the 2xxx level; 27 or more credits from HIST courses at the 3xxx or 4xxx level, including at least 6 credits at the 4xxx level; successful completion of HIST4400: Applications of History; a total of 42 credits with a minimum grade of 'C' or better.
- HIST Minor: 12 or more credits from courses in HIST at the 1xxx or 2xxx level, including at least 6 credits at the 2xxx level; 15 or more credits from courses in HIST at the 3xxx or 4xxx level, including at least 6 credits at the 4xxx level; a total of 27 credits with a minimum grade of 'C' or better.
- HIST Associate of Arts: 12 or more credits of designated HIST 'core' courses (1113, 1114, 1120, 1121, 1130, 1131, 1145, 1146, 1150, 2101, 2102, 2119); at least 9 credits from HIST courses numbered 2300 or higher; a total of 21 or more HIST credits with a minimum grade of 'C' or better.

### ***Overview of the Program***

Within the structure of the university, the Department of History strives to fulfill a number of roles. History seeks to provide our degree program students with a thorough grounding in the discipline. Students who complete our degree programs will have obtained critical thinking, problem solving, and especially writing and oral communication skills. From the first year of a student's program to the fourth, they are encouraged and guided in developing their writing skills and oral argumentation. They are taught to develop cogent analyses and are given multiple opportunities in all of courses to demonstrate and build upon their skills. Outcomes are scaffolded in such a way that students continue to enhance their rhetorical and analytical skills throughout the program. In addition, students should

have increased their own historical consciousness, while, at the same time, learning to apply theoretical concepts to the real world in which they live and work. In addition, within the broader university community, history courses often provide valuable electives for students in other programs and they make up a significant component of the Bachelor of Arts, Major in Asian Studies. Finally, as noted above, History has developed one course in conjunction with the Fashion Program and is actively seeking additional opportunities to develop courses for students in other programs across the university.

History is frequently commended for the flexibility of its curriculum. Our students do not proceed through the major program in lock-step, limited by lengthy prerequisite chains. Student pathways through the degree may differ widely. Students must complete two lower-level history surveys (six credits)<sup>22</sup> before moving on to senior lecture courses, but no one specific course is required to progress to the next level of the program. Students who complete nine credits in History are then eligible to take fourth-year seminar courses.

The curriculum design in our History program allows for both depth and breadth of knowledge, while retaining flexibility and choice. Only History 4400, the capstone, course is required of our B.A. major students; otherwise they are free to tailor their courses to their particular interests or career plans. Students may choose one of the streams (Asian, North American, or global history), or simply fulfil the credit requirements of a general B.A. Major or Minor. Additionally, there is space in our program for a student to link their studies in history to a cognate major or minor in another discipline, selecting courses that complement their work in another area.

One of KPU's greatest strengths is its open-access admission policies. This means, however, that many of our students have not attained the minimum standards required at other universities. This then creates challenges with respect to academic preparedness in reading and writing-focused courses. The creation of History 1100: Reel History which incorporates carefully scaffolded, skills-based courses (1100 is a Pathway 3 course) has helped some students to develop these foundational skills. However, this course is not required and so the department continues, through the regular process of curricular revision, to incorporate new skills-building elements into its lower-level courses.

The multi-campus environment presents a further challenge in terms of delivering the program curriculum. With a relatively small faculty, we are stretched to provide an adequate number of courses on each of the Surrey, Richmond, and Langley campuses. The flexibility of the degree goes some way to ameliorate this concern, but we are aware that students would like to see a greater variety of courses on the Richmond and Langley campuses.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> In total, students must complete 12 credits at the lower level; as noted above, however, the department is considering increasing this to 15 credits in order to better prepare students for the capstone and for senior seminars.

<sup>23</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 35-36, 51 (Appendix III).

KPU's 2018 Academic Plan included the following goals: (1) To offer exceptional learning environments attuned to learners; (2) to offer experiential learning opportunities; (3) to further define learning outcomes and methods of demonstrating student capability; and (4) to ensure student success and well-being. KPU Vision 2023 further notes that we are looking at future where "as a result of digital transformation, the nature of work and ways of life are quickly evolving; awareness of and demands for action around social injustice are heightened; environmental impacts such as global climate change are requiring significant adaptation in the way we work and live; and decolonization of institutions and full inclusion of Indigenous peoples is a priority." KPU Vision 2023, then, highlights some of the key elements that our students attain through their program.

Our students realize these goals and aspirations both directly and indirectly. History is attuned to its learners through the personal attention we provide our students enrolled in our classes (none of which is larger than 35, while no seminar class is larger than 25). Through its participation in the Arts Practicum course, the department is now able to offer regular practicum opportunities to its students. Of the 42 placements secured by the Arts Practicum working group, eleven of them have been assigned to History students. In addition, courses such as Tea in Asia and World Civilizations, offer less formal experiential components. The curriculum is revisited on a regular basis to review and refine learning outcomes and to ensure student success through our collective knowledge of, and attention to, disciplinary norms and standards. As several of our discipline sector participants noted, we prepare our students well (key characteristics of the KPU History program) with "sound historiographical training", "comparative perspectives", "multiple voices", and "intellectual excellence."<sup>24</sup> Over the past six years, the department has also hired new faculty members whose thematic course development have also served to acknowledge and grow our student opportunities in these areas. Furthermore, our students are expected to participate in and think critically about history and the world around them, not simply to read and to theorize. The capstone course, through its engagement with museums, archives, the K-12 system, and various forms of public history, solidifies this 'real world' focus of the program.

### ***Broad Program Competencies and Learning Outcomes***

A summary of competencies articulated in the 2018 Academic Plan, and further highlighted and elaborated in the more recent KPU Vision 2023, include:

- Creative and critical thinking;
- Media and digital literacy;
- Social intelligence;
- Global perspectives;
- History and world views;

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<sup>24</sup> History Discipline Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 92 (Appendix VIII).

- Environmental stewardship, awareness, sustainability;
- Embracing all cultures (interculturality) and promote a renewed, authentic approach to Indigenization and a broad understanding of Indigenous culture;
- Scientific and technological capacities;
- Social and economic entrepreneurship.

History's most obvious contributions to these competencies include "creative and critical thinking", "global perspectives," and "history and world views." Besides teaching students to become skilled in the methodologies particular to history, history courses teach universally applicable principles of good reasoning, analysis and interrogation of sources, and cogent writing. Students are not only taught to analyze and evaluate historical documents and historical contexts, they are also expected to develop coherent, evidentially-supported analyses, communicate these through appropriate media, and to take into account regional, global and often comparative historical contexts. The teaching of the intentional and disciplined use of the imagination and research methods with documents and media, along with critical scrutiny helps students be creative problem solvers.

Critical thinking is also emphasized through our focus on media literacy and digital learning. Numerous situations around the contemporary world illustrate the pivotal importance of critical thinking. To be aware of cognitive biases and how media plays into them, to understand the power of appeals to emotion, to recognize real and "fake" news or conspiracy theories—all of these skills are vitally important to our graduates.

The global focus of much of our program further contributes to the development of citizenship and stewardship skills. We look at environment, social justice questions, the impacts of technological change across time and space. All of this produces graduates who are well-rounded citizens of our contemporary world.

### ***Specific History Program Competencies and Learning Outcomes:***

The curriculum in the Department of History has been deliberately designed to achieve key learning outcomes. These outcomes are identified in every course outline and are consistent across the department. Outcomes have been carefully integrated through course content, pedagogy, and assessment methods and are also ladderized throughout the program such that students achieve basic outcomes in our lower-level courses, and then refine and build upon these outcomes as students progress to upper-level lecture and seminar courses.

Graduates of the KPU History program will have attained the following program-level competencies:

- the ability to critically evaluate arguments and their supporting evidence, taking into account context, perspective, and assumptions;
- the ability to interrogate a wide range of source materials and utilize these sources to support ideas and arguments;
- the ability to write effectively according to the rhetorical conventions of the discipline, taking into account audience, purpose, and situation;
- the ability to speak in a public context with confidence and clarity of purpose;
- the ability to articulate similarities and differences among cultures and peoples across time and geographic space.

Each of our courses further reinforces the following foundational learning outcomes:

- analyze global and local connections between past and present
- evaluate/interrogate differences in historical interpretations
- locate and interpret multiple forms of evidence (visual, oral, statistical, artifacts)
- assess patterns of change and continuity over time
- attain an appreciation of the diversity of global historical experiences
- interrogate the role of history in shaping public policy and perception

In addition, our curriculum has been designed to meet the following essential skills: critical analysis, problem resolution, the ability to learn on one's own, the ability to work in teams, media and digital literacy, environmental awareness, and the development of a global perspective.

By utilizing a broad range of pedagogical techniques, meeting at least once (sometimes twice) a year to discuss teaching strategies, assignments, and pedagogy, and often providing remedial instruction in foundational skills such as reading critically, engaging in group work and debates, and writing academic papers, we are able to provide our students with the skills listed above, as well as a thorough disciplinary foundation.

### ***Program and Curriculum Progression***

At the lower levels, the History curriculum is built around a number of introductory courses, broad lecture-based survey classes, with a geographical (Canada to 1867), trans-national (20<sup>th</sup> Century World), or thematic (Changemakers, Explorations in History) focus. These courses introduce students to major developments across the globe, as well as key themes in historical development. Often these courses are taught chronologically, with a strong focus on the historical narrative and basic skills (in particular, writing and oral argumentation), given the varying levels of historical knowledge among our students as they enter the program.

In their second year, students progress into more specifically defined thematic courses, considering social and cultural developments in a transnational or global context.

Currently, our students are required to take a total of twelve credits (four courses) at the first and second year (with at least six of those credits at the 2xxx level).

At the third- and fourth-year level, students are required to complete twenty-seven credits (nine courses; including at least six credits at the 4xxx level) where they undertake in-depth studies of particular countries or particular themes in global development. All 4xxx courses are true seminars – a key strength of our program. B.A. History Majors are required to take HIST 4400: Applications of History, which combines an introduction to historical methods with a focus on the practical applications of the discipline. The capstone course is very much an applied course (in the spirit of the polytechnic university) where students draw upon theoretical frameworks but apply them in a variety of practical real-world settings. The course culminates with an ePortfolio that students use to prepare themselves for future careers or further education at the graduate level.

Apart from the BA History Major, students can also choose to complete an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree in History or a BA Minor. History Minors must complete the same twelve credits at the lower level (at least six at the 2xxx level), and fifteen credits at the third and fourth year (at least 6 at the 4xxx level). A.A. students complete a minimum of twelve credits from a designated list of core introductory courses, and a further nine credits at the 23XX level or higher.

Overall, the student, alumni, and faculty surveys each confirmed that the program is meeting its learning outcomes and is generally achieving its program-level competencies. However, all three surveys indicated that the program is lacking in group collaboration opportunities and/or the level of group collaboration in the curriculum compared to other areas. This is a core outcome of Arts programs at KPU.

The survey data also reveals that the program must do much more to achieve one of the stated goals of this program review: namely the Indigenization of the curriculum. A number of courses in the program include content and outcomes which point towards Indigenization. These efforts, however, are piecemeal and incomplete at this point and do not directly achieve the intent of the 2018 Academic Plan or Vision 2023.

One of our key questions directing this program review was whether or not we were meaningfully addressing Indigenization through the curriculum; the feedback in the student, alumni and faculty surveys was ambivalent at best. Given the importance of the Tsilhqot'in decision on the duty to consult, and of Vision 2023's strategy to "create university-wide awareness of Indigenous perspectives, cultures, traditions, histories and ways of knowing among all members of the university community",<sup>25</sup> the History Department must do more. Each of our students, whether domestic or international, resides, at least temporarily, on Indigenous land, so learning these histories is important

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<sup>25</sup> Vision 2023, p. 4.

and our current learning outcomes are not adequately preparing our students. This is further noted in the student/alumni/faculty/sector survey responses below.

### ***Degree-Level Standards***

The Bachelor of Arts in History provides students with a high-quality degree which, over the course of 120 credits, meets the degree level standards of the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB). The learning outcomes are ladderred from years one to four in order to build specific research, writing, and analytical skills, while simultaneously allowing students to attain the core program competencies noted in the previous section. Taken together, these competencies ensure that students are well-prepared for their future careers and/or for graduate studies.

### **Discipline Competency and the History Curriculum**

Results from the discipline survey demonstrate that some key curricular components figure more prominently than others. In considering the needs and expectations of programs, and linked to graduate school applicants, we asked about our disciplinary competencies and skills. We found that we had full or very strong agreement that the competencies listed were important in graduate admissions. Evaluating differences in historical interpretations (analysis and critical thinking) and appreciation of the diversity of global historical experiences ranked highest, followed by locating and interpreting evidence and assessing patterns of change and continuity. Group collaboration and problem resolution did not rank as highly but were still considered somewhat important. Among the skills noted earlier, written and oral communication, critical analysis, and reading and comprehension all ranked high as well, or as one respondent put it, "...[g]ood listening skills; ability to debate contentious issues rationally and respectfully; basic public speaking skills."<sup>26</sup> And while all of the competencies were considered essential or important, this would suggest that applied skills are the most important to employment or moving on to graduate school for our program graduates.

We also asked about Indigenization (as it relates to reconciliation and decolonization), and while the answers and feedback were mixed, 72% of the respondents noted this was either essential or important for our graduates.<sup>27</sup> KPU's increased emphasis in Vision 2023 and reconciliation and decolonization work stemming from the Tsilhqot'in decision suggest this is a core competency that we must foreground in our program. One respondent noted the critical importance of, "...decolonization - looking for/ analyzing/ understanding that there are different perspectives that have shaped history, understanding the concept of reconciliation, and including stories from all people (Indigenous as well as BIPOC groups) in interpretation of history, plurality of meaning in accounts, artifacts, interpretation, etc."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> History Discipline Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 91 (Appendix VIII).

<sup>27</sup> History Discipline Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 91 (Appendix VIII).

<sup>28</sup> History Discipline Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 91 (Appendix VIII).



## Student, Alumni and Faculty Satisfaction with the Curriculum

We surveyed discipline/sector experts, students, and faculty on our History curriculum and general Arts competencies, with the results shown below. The focus of any History course is critical analysis, and in more advanced courses, greater application of advanced research, critical thinking, and writing skills to the resolution of specific historical issues and related to the interpretation of history.

<b>History Competencies</b>	<b>Discipline (n=7)</b> Essential and very important	<b>Students (n=75)</b> Very and somewhat satisfied	<b>Alumni (n=36)</b> Very and somewhat satisfied	<b>Faculty (n=8)</b> Very and somewhat satisfied
Analyze global and local connections between past and present	71%	89%	94%	75%
Evaluate differences in historical interpretations	85%	85%	89%	88%
Locate and interpret multiple forms of evidence (visual, oral, statistical, artifacts)	86%	81%	89%	88%
Assess patterns of change and continuity over time	86%	91%	92%	88%
Attain an appreciation of the diversity of global historical experiences	57%	89%	89%	75%

Understand the role of history in shaping public policy and perception	57%	88%	89%	75%
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In the student and faculty surveys, respondents indicated that they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied that the curriculum was meeting their needs and relevant to their future goals. We were gratified to see that, among student respondents, 88% noted that they were either very satisfied (46%) or somewhat satisfied (42%) with the overall content of the History program's curriculum. This speaks to the fact that the curricular structure is working effectively at the current time. 82% to 92% expressed a similar level of satisfaction that the curriculum is meeting their competencies (5% were somewhat dissatisfied).<sup>29</sup>

This a positive view of the History program's work to date—but as several faculty noted, we could continue to improve our curriculum and teaching around global & local connections, diversity of historical experience (especially related to Indigenous histories), and the role of history in shaping wider public policy and perception. We could also, in the process, work to improve the student experience. While the flexibility and success of the curriculum as it currently exists is in a positive trend for History, students may need some more opportunities to develop their critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills prior to attempting upper division courses. In this sense, there may be some opportunity here to review the Major/Minor requirements and the curriculum as a whole.

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training deems the following to be essential skills, including written and oral communication, group collaboration, critical analysis, problem resolution, independent learning, and reading with comprehension. These are core learning outcomes deliberately linked into the curriculum in the Department of History, and students should gain or enhance these skills with every history class they take. In most courses, students are taught and expected to demonstrate facility with written and oral communication, critical analysis, independent learning, and reading with comprehension.

All the Arts competencies are considered critically, very or moderately important by disciplinary respondents. Based on student and faculty satisfaction, the program is preparing students well. One area of particular concern is noted in **red**. Group collaboration and work is something that the department could help better prepare students for. As some students, alumni and faculty noted in their surveys, group collaboration and

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<sup>29</sup> See History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 32 (Appendix III), History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 100 (Appendix IX), and History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 120 (Appendix X).

independent learning had more ambivalent feedback (mid-80% satisfaction compared to 90%+ satisfaction with written, oral, critical analysis, and reading and comprehension feedback). Some students, alumni, and faculty further, specifically noted less preparation in group collaboration; this then is an area in which we must improve.

<b>Arts Competencies</b>	<b>Discipline (n=7)</b> Essential and very important	<b>Students (n=75)</b> Very and somewhat satisfied	<b>Alumni (n=36)</b> Very and somewhat satisfied	<b>Faculty (n=8)</b> Very and somewhat satisfied
Written communication	100%	92%	91%	88%
Oral communication	100%	91%	88%	88%
Group collaborations	43%	71%	80%	50%
Critical analysis	100%	91%	92%	88%
Problem resolution	58%	83%	81%	88%
Learn on their own	86%	82%	92%	88%
Reading & comprehension	100%	92%	92%	88%

While student, alumni and faculty satisfaction with the curriculum and competencies are largely positive (88% very & somewhat satisfied students, 76% for alumni, and 88% for faculty), three issues stand out. The ‘group collaboration’ issue mentioned above is one area noted for improvement, even if the disciplinary survey ranks it a bit lower than other areas of importance. Further, despite some positive comments on the incorporation of some digital curricula and experiential courses and teaching, there is more that History could be doing in this particular area. Finally, the issue of Indigenization, as discussed above, must be addressed.

As one student respondent put it, “...education is changing, students can learn so much more through different projects.”<sup>30</sup> The History program did ask to what extent was History incorporating digital technology into the classroom, not just as online courses (one kind of

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<sup>30</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 33 (Appendix III).

‘digital’ area), but digital projects, research, and thematic topics linked into the curriculum and student experience. Students surveyed were largely satisfied (72% very or somewhat satisfied) or ambivalent on this issue (20%), and only 8% of respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied.<sup>31</sup> Every student that graduates with a History major takes the capstone HIST4400, and in the process completes a formal ePortfolio—thus, all of our students have at least minimal exposure to digital tools and experience beyond Microsoft PowerPoint. In other courses (4405 Digital History; 3180 North American Environmental History) digital projects are incorporated into the curriculum (for example, podcasting, ArcGIS StoryMap, and related digital tools). On the other hand, alumni were slightly more concerned (17% ambivalent), with 14% somewhat or very dissatisfied with digital incorporation into the curriculum and student experience.<sup>32</sup> More to the point, though, as one student noted “[t]here also needs to be more inclusion of technology - beyond making powerpoint presentations - like what are the datab[a]ses, statistical tools and real software that historians and those working in the field are really using.”<sup>33</sup> It should be noted however, that some of the alumni who received this survey graduated up to ten years ago, and the inclusion of digital content and the use of digital platforms, such as those discussed above, has become a much more prominent element of our program in the last two to three years.

Faculty were largely satisfied with digital learning in the classroom (50% very satisfied, 25% somewhat), but several were still ambivalent or concerned with the level of digital technology and engagement.<sup>34</sup> Only three faculty regularly require digital learning. While on the plus side, History and its “[p]edagogical approaches that emphasize community engagement and experiential learning...”, and “the role of digital technologies, the diversity of pedagogical approaches among instructors... are major strengths of the program's curriculum”, others noted “It could have... more ‘digital’ content...”<sup>35</sup> Our collective recent experiences with the pandemic shift to online services, teaching, testing, and research further highlights how significant digital skills can truly be. In this sense, while the curriculum seems to be doing well in this regard, the level of ambivalence and some dissatisfaction are indicative of need for further efforts in this direction.

The most prominent curriculum issue, however, is linked to Indigenous peoples, decolonization, and the curricular framework. History must consider ways to better integrate Indigenous perspectives, reconciliation, and decolonization into our course learning outcomes, curriculum, and course offerings. A number of History courses, as noted earlier, do prominently (or to some degree) address Indigenous history in Canadian, American, and global contexts. However, we received significant feedback from students about the need for more Indigenous history content. One student respondent wrote that “a mandatory First Nations history course should be offered since we are on Kwantlen tribe

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<sup>31</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 31 (Appendix III).

<sup>32</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 97 (Appendix IX).

<sup>33</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 102 (Appendix IX).

<sup>34</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 119 (Appendix X).

<sup>35</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 121-22 (Appendix X).

[sic] land.” In reply to a question on possible areas for improvement in the program as a whole, another student wrote that “there’s really no courses focused on Indigenous Peoples,” which was a problem because of the current provincial mandate for that knowledge in the new public school curriculum: “SFU requires an Indigenous course to be taken for students applying to teach Socials.” Another student provided similar feedback, advising the department to “work on making a mandatory First Nations course” as, in their view, most HIST students “want to be teachers and it’s recommended we have an Indigenous history course.”<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, alumni shared similar perspectives. When asked about what kinds of courses would have helped them prepare for future work or study, one respondent noted “Indigenous studies.” Three alumni who answered a question about areas for improvement told us that the department needs to incorporate Indigenous history courses with one further stating that “there needs to be a larger focus on Indigenous history – for real though, the university is named after the Kwantlen First Nations...”<sup>37</sup> And finally, our faculty and discipline surveys make further comments in the same vein. Among our discipline/sector experts, one noted that “...interdisciplinary methods; decolonization critiques of Western epistemologies and methodologies” and “...decolonialization - looking for/ analyzing/ understanding that there are different perspectives that have shaped history understanding the concept reconciliation and including stories from all people (Indigenous as well as other minority/ marginalized groups) in interpretation of history plurality of meaning in accounts, artifacts, interpretation, etc.” were emerging trends in the workplace and important for our graduates.<sup>38</sup> Over fifty percent of our History faculty were either ambivalent or ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ with the extent to which the History program includes Indigenous perspectives and content in the curriculum. More specifically, faculty noted that “[s]everal themes are arguably in need of further attention, in particular Indigenous histories...,” and “...greater emphasis on Indigenous histories is something that can be improved...”, and we “...could have more on Indigenous and Asian content...”.<sup>39</sup> It seems clear, then, that previous and current History students, the faculty, and to an important degree the discipline sector believe we need to revise our curriculum in this respect.

## **Career/Further Education Preparedness**

### *Career Pathways*

The History curriculum prepares our graduates for diverse career pathways. An undergraduate degree in History is not meant to prepare a student for a specific career,

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<sup>36</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 31, 35-36 (Appendix III).

<sup>37</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 97, 98, 102-03 (Appendix IX).

<sup>38</sup> History Discipline Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 91 (Appendix VIII).

<sup>39</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 119, 121 (Appendix X).

rather, the skills and experiences acquired in the course of studying history assist our students in transitioning to the workplace. While it is rare to be able to walk straight into a history-related occupation upon graduating, this sometimes happens, and history graduates gain many transferable skills, such that employers in business, government, and education are often keen to recruit them.

The addition of the Arts Practicum will provide invaluable experience to our students in workplace settings. Feedback on the History participants within the first cohort of Practicum placements far exceeded our expectations and underscored the degree to which our students are gaining much-needed workplace skills over the course of their degrees. One employer's report noted the following: "I was really impressed with \_\_\_\_ professionalism, which included **strong communication skills, both in-person, over the phone and via email.** All three modes of communication were used regularly and \_\_\_\_ worked between them seamlessly, again adapting to changing circumstances in terms of the practicum goals and objectives. He was always very careful to check-in on a regular basis. \_\_\_\_ is a very capable student and shows a maturity beyond his years. He was sensitive to the politics of some of the campaign research and work that we did. He asked careful and thoughtful questions, **showed excellent initiative by going above and beyond on some of the research tasks we gave him (very thorough) and both \_\_\_\_ and I were impressed by his tenacious research, including personal communications** with external sources of research to get answers to important questions we had about government agencies, shareholder activism policies and political candidates in relation to a public interest communication campaign and related legal questions."<sup>40</sup>

We are confident that the versatility of our degree allows our students to design their program of study in such a way that it will prepare them for careers or further study in areas such as business, community service, law, policing, elementary and secondary education, public history, the military, professional writing, public administration, religious studies, self-employment, and social work. Potential career pathways include:

Industry/Sector	Career Possibilities	Next Steps
<b>Education: K-12</b>	Classroom Teacher Educational Assistant ESL Specialist	PDP or B.Ed. EA Certification PDP or B.Ed.
<b>Post-Secondary Education</b>	Professor Instructor Researcher	MA or PhD depending on the position and institution

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<sup>40</sup> Names redacted for privacy reasons; emphasis added. Excerpted from the rubric completed by the employer at the end of the Fall 2019 ARTS 4800 practicum placement.

<b>Law/Policing</b>	Lawyer Legal Assistant Law Enforcement	LLB. or JD Paralegal Certificate or Diploma RCMP Academy or Justice Institute Police Academy
<b>Public Administration/ NGOs</b>	Director Executive Director Administrator Frontline Staff Member Researcher	Direct Entry or further training such as MPA Direct Entry or NGO Certificate Foreign Service Exam Direct Entry
<b>Business &amp; Marketing</b>	Writing / Publishing Branding Advertising International Trade	Business degree + HIST Major or Minor
<b>Museums &amp; Archives</b>	Archivist Librarian Frontline Staff Community Programming	MLIS or MAS  Direct Entry
<b>Cultural Sector</b>	Arts Programming Cultural Programming Creative Arts Filmmaking	Direct Entry
<b>Journalism</b>	Journalism	Journalism Major with HIST Major/Minor
<b>Social Services</b>	Social Worker  Counselling Home Care Nursing	Double Major HIST/Sociology or Sociology Major with HIST Minor Graduate Degree HIST Major or Minor and diploma Nursing Degree + extended year to obtain HIST Minor
<b>Self-Employment</b>	Consultant	Direct Entry

The program effectively transitions students into traditional graduate programs, post-baccalaureate programs, as well as more specialized graduate degrees offered at a variety of institutions such as the University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, University of Victoria, and others.

Many of our Bachelor of Arts (History Major or Minor) students continue on to further undergraduate or to post-baccalaureate studies, usually in primary or secondary education, most often the PDP programs at SFU or UBC. As our Alumni survey notes, 43%

of our respondents pursued further education-related training or work and are currently employed in those fields.<sup>41</sup>

The History Alumni survey (Alumni Data, Appendix VI) demonstrates that our students are employed in a wide variety of fields.<sup>42</sup> The majority of our students go into education-related fields (43%), business/retail/marketing (14%), government services/public administration (10%), research services (7%), and law/legal services (7%). Others are now employed in policing/investigations (financial crimes investigator), real estate, social services, and health services among other occupations. Some of these were direct entry jobs, and others were part of a process of pursuing multiple degrees. Of these alumni, almost 30% noted they were in a job related to their original history studies.<sup>43</sup> On the whole, over 80% of our students were employed, 14% were part-time employed, and less than 3% unemployed.<sup>44</sup> The Alumni data survey notes slightly different employment rates, but was generated during spring 2020 as the pandemic unfolded in Canada and the economic sector started its current transformation.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, this data offers little in the way of long term trends among our graduates.

We are gratified to note that the Student Outcomes measures for KPU History noted that 98% of respondents were satisfied with their degree and 100% were satisfied with the quality of their education in the KPU History Department.<sup>46</sup> The more targeted Alumni data survey (spring 2020) was a bit more mixed. Overall, 76% of alumni were very or somewhat satisfied with how History had prepared them for work/further education. Only 6% were somewhat or very dissatisfied.<sup>47</sup> As noted earlier (the curriculum and skills section above), with the exception of group work/collaboration, alumni were very positive about their curricular outcomes and skill sets they gained. We would also note, once more, that the program has changed dramatically over the past five years and so it would be useful to see a breakdown of alumni data in relation to date of graduation.

While these survey results and data sets are overwhelmingly positive, some data points that are worthy of note. In the Alumni data, two qualifications about the program as a whole stood out. Over 50% of our alumni responded that they had been well-prepared for their careers, but 23% were ambivalent, and 15% somewhat or strongly disagreed. One alumnus noted that there needs to be “...more skills development”, more “training” in seminar courses, and more “focus on aspects that can help build a career” not just related

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<sup>41</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 105 (Appendix IX).

<sup>42</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 105-07 (Appendix IX).

<sup>43</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 104 (Appendix IX).

<sup>44</sup> 2017-2019, Student Outcomes Measures, History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 14 (Appendix I).

<sup>45</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 104-09 (Appendix IX).

<sup>46</sup> History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 14 (Appendix I).

<sup>47</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 100 (Appendix IX).



to history.<sup>48</sup> Of course, other alumni were much more positive about their preparation for life after undergraduate studies, as was perhaps best summarized by the following comment: “[t]his program was invaluable to my educational goals and exceeded my expectations. The program was everything I needed to become a well-rounded student, and provided an environment that allowed me to work on my academic weaknesses.” 83% of alumni agreed that the program prepared them for further education (57% strongly so!), and 85% felt their time and 80% that their money was well invested in their History degree.<sup>49</sup>

The other key qualification raised by alumni was that the program did not adequately provide opportunities to develop connections with industry/potential employers. Only 37% of alumni strongly or somewhat agreed that the program provided adequate opportunities in this sense, 34% were ambivalent, and 29% somewhat and strongly disagreed. One alumnus noted that the program needed “more work outside the classroom in the community”, “[m]ore experiential learning is needed. More help needed with connecting degree to potential careers”, and to “...get students out of the classroom and into the community.” One student specifically recommended “...[p]airing up students with museums or schools to create real exhibits or curriculum suggestions would put the school actually in the community and show students what kind of work a history degree can really do.”<sup>50</sup> These two qualifications, coupled with the earlier discussion of curriculum goals and skills building, highlight that the program could consider building up more applied learning opportunities and community interaction with our students (beyond those already offered in the capstone HIST4400 and ARTS Practicum).<sup>51</sup> While there are a handful of courses in History that build in experiential opportunities, this is something that could definitely be pursued further.

## Curriculum Development and Review Processes

Courses are currently reviewed every five years, although a handful of our current courses await more fulsome revision. Most of our course outlines have been reviewed, and in some cases redeveloped, since 2013. On the advice of the Arts Standing Committee on Curriculum (ASCC), the outstanding revisions will be completed following the program review process.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University and the History program have a rigorous process for course outline approval. Course outlines must first be designed, discussed, and approved by the members of the History Department, in order to ensure that there is no unnecessary

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<sup>48</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 98-99, 102 (Appendix IX).

<sup>49</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 99, 101-03 (Appendix IX).

<sup>50</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 102 (Appendix IX).

<sup>51</sup> It must be noted here that none of the alumni surveyed would have had the opportunity to complete the ARTS Practicum and gain a full term of work experience, since the practicum was only introduced in Fall 2019.

duplication of content. New course outlines are then discussed by the Dean's office, and if approved, submitted to the Arts Standing Committee on Curriculum. Finally, the outlines are approved by the Senate Standing Committee on Curriculum (S2C2). In addition, the department sends all of its course outlines for external transfer credit evaluation, thereby adding an additional level of outline review. We should note that no eligible course outline from KPU History has ever been denied transfer credit by an R1 institution.

## Summary and Recommendations

Taken together, the discipline, faculty, student, and alumni surveys confirm the strength of the History curriculum and its effectiveness in meeting both our learning outcome and program-specific competencies. In many ways, the History program is meeting its curricular and skills goals—but we also recognize that there is still room for improvement, including greater engagement with Indigenous learning and reconciliation learning outcomes, continuing to build experiential opportunities into courses where possible, and the provision of more explicit training in digital media.

Specific Recommendations:

- review and revise existing course outlines to foreground key program competencies, and to incorporate outcomes that have been insufficiently developed to date, such as digital literacy and Indigenization
- develop a new program competency that specifically addresses the importance of Indigenization; this should be developed by the department as a whole but might look something like, 'graduates will have demonstrated the ability to explore and appreciate Indigenous worldviews and to take the time to understand and disrupt beliefs and misconceptions.'<sup>52</sup>
- incorporate more signature assessments, digital media projects, and group work, and expand our existing departmental meetings to support instructors in the integration of these types of assignments
- review major and minor requirements such that the program's flexibility is retained, but the number of lower-level credits is increased in order to better prepare students for the rigours of upper-level courses.

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<sup>52</sup> The suggested wording has been drawn from "Holding Space and Humility for Other Ways of Knowing and Being –Indigenization for Teachers and Instructors," <https://sites.camosun.ca/indigenizationinstructors/2018/06/21/holding-space-and-humility-for-other-ways-of-knowing-and-being/> [accessed January 8, 2021].

## 4. Quality of Instructional Design

### Delivery Modes and Locations

Delivery modes for History are lecture, seminar, hybrid, and online. In a normal, non-pandemic situation, we usually offer the vast majority of courses in person, with a small number of classes offered either fully or partially online (HIST 1160, HIST 2156). This has clearly changed with our move online in the 2020 pandemic year, and four of the History faculty have indicated they will offer one or more online or hybrid classes in the post-pandemic years. So, moving forward, the department will likely offer at least one or two hybrid or fully online courses each semester. Our present online and mixed mode delivery courses are offered via podcast, asynchronous online delivery, mixed synchronous and asynchronous elements, and other innovative teaching methods. History offers in-class courses on three campuses (Surrey, Richmond, and Langley).

Although most History courses are officially designated as 'lecture' courses (at the 1XXX to 3XXX-level), most 2XXX and above courses include seminar discussions, teamwork projects, and small group components. Each of these courses currently has a 35 seat maximum; seminar courses have a 25 seat maximum). All 4xxx History courses, including the capstone, are designated seminar courses. This allows the instructors to incorporate experiential components, more intensive research projects, more specialized digital assignments, as well as a greater level of seminar discussion. As is best practice for seminars, these are student-led courses where examinations are minimized in favour of student-directed projects.

During the spring, summer, and fall semesters, we have traditionally offered multiple sections of lower level introductory courses on all three campuses. The Canadian, European, and Global introductory courses are regularly offered on all three campuses, but limited faculty resources mean that some first-year courses can only be offered on one campus. We do, however, endeavour to rotate these to other campuses in subsequent semesters. When faculty resources permit, we offer additional thematic courses such as 1105: Changemakers (12 biographical snapshots of lesser-known individuals who changed history) or 1190: Explorations in History.<sup>53</sup> This amounts to fourteen to sixteen 1XXX courses during the fall and spring terms, and five or six 1XXX courses during the summer term.

Offerings at the second-year level are usually more limited. We offer a maximum of 5 2XXX courses per term (or three in the summer). Our 2XXX courses are among some of our most popular offerings, with a fairly even split between regional and thematic foci, but our seat

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<sup>53</sup> We were fortunate to have a sessional instructor a recent semester who offered a course on child soldiers in Africa under the 1190 Explorations umbrella; this course has also been utilized to trial courses under consideration by the Department.

fill rates for 2xxx courses are often uneven, leading us to limit our offerings out of a concern for leaving seats unfilled.

3xxx and 4xxx courses are usually offered on a two-year rotational basis (sometimes 2½ years) or more selectively as special topics. As with 2XXX courses, History has found that providing a maximum of 5 to 6 upper-level courses a term (two or three in the summer) offers the best seat fill outcomes. The 'number of seats' and seat fill rates charts provided in chapter two demonstrate the relative success of this approach, with our 3xxx courses usually filling better (or significantly better) on average than Faculty of Arts averages.<sup>54</sup>

## Instructional Excellence

We have many gifted instructors in the History Department. In recent years, four of our faculty have been nominated for Faculty of Arts teaching awards, as well as one distinguished service award recipient for years of dedicated effort to the field and institution. Our faculty are a team of instructors connected by their search for innovative, effective teaching, and who have extensive research and publication records, as well as some academic, consulting, and professional experience beyond the classroom. Students and alumni commented on the quality of instruction in their classes, and that the dedicated and knowledgeable instructors were one of the great draws and positives of their History experience.

Quantitative student and alumni survey results show that students and alumni are satisfied with their History instructors as a whole (Students: 96% very or somewhat satisfied with overall level of instruction at KPU; 92% very or somewhat satisfied with presentation of course material; and 88% for level of information about current developments in the discipline (Student Data survey);<sup>55</sup> among Alumni: 85% strongly and somewhat agreed that the time invested in History was well spent, 80% that the money was well spent (Alumni data survey);<sup>56</sup> overall Student Outcomes Measures in the Administrative data also noted a 98% student/alumni satisfaction among KPU History students, 2017-19).<sup>57</sup>

Student responses underscore the effectiveness of our faculty:

- *Engagement and relatability is always a plus to have as I enjoy being able to have that strong working relationship with my profs.*
- *Each instructor is passionate with their courses ...*
- *VERY knowledgeable professors willing to share what they know. I have great respect for them and overall in their ability to communicate this knowledge to students.*

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<sup>54</sup> Exhibits 7, 8 & 12, History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 7, 10 (Appendix I).

<sup>55</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 28, 32, 41-44 (Appendix III).

<sup>56</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 99 (Appendix IX).

<sup>57</sup> History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 14 (Appendix I).

*The professors really take the time to get to know their students, and always make time for us if we need help during office hours.*

And from Alumni:

- *Dedicated teachers and a friendly, comfortable atmosphere/culture.*
- *The history professors are extremely knowledgeable in their chosen fields.*
- *This program was invaluable to my educational goals and exceeded my expectations. The program was everything I needed to become a well rounded student...*
- *Passionate and capable instructors who are experts in their areas; faculty continually challenging their students to pursue higher level academic inquiry; integration of community in academic learning.*

History faculty, as well as the other members of the Faculty of Arts, have access to a variety of faculty-wide and institution-wide PD workshops. Some faculty utilize their professional development funds to access instructional resources. KPU faculty also have access to online support resources for the Moodle platform and face-to-face Moodle as well as Kaltura workshops. The Department has also established a pattern of one to two meetings a year in which to discuss instructional issues, curriculum, and teaching methods.

## **Assessment Methods**

Assessment methods vary across courses depending on the topic and instructor but are directly related to the learning objectives/outcomes, course content, and the essential skills requirements of a particular course. Assessment methods may include in-class contributions (or online; small & large group discussions, discussion boards, debates, etc.), projects, essays, seminar presentations, ePortfolios or digital projects, journals, tests, critiques, demonstrations of expertise with specific methodologies and techniques, or examinations. Typically, essay writing, both in class and outside of it, is a big part of assessment of student work, and in seminar courses (4xxx), History students make regular presentations and discuss readings and topical material at length. All courses in the History program utilize the letter grade system. Kwantlen Polytechnic University has specific policies and procedures pertaining to evaluation in such courses that are detailed in AR6, *Final Examinations and Grade Reporting for Semester-Based Courses*, and C.20, *Student Evaluation and Grading*.

## **Quality of Student Experience**

### ***Student Success (Grade Distribution, Retention Rates and Student Outcomes)***

Administrative data for grade distributions for 2015/16-2019/20 is provided in Appendix I: History Administrative Data. Our grade distribution data shows a fairly well distributed bell curve: absent excessively high grades (A- to A+ range) or excessively low grades (DFW range). Grade distribution data demonstrates that the majority of students who attempt

History courses complete them successfully, with grades in the A to B- range (50% to 57% of student grades fell within this range over the last five academic years, based on IAP Cumulative Distribution data<sup>58</sup>); 76%-80% of students have a D/passing grade or better. B-/B is the median grade. On average, 11-12% of all students received a failing grade over the same time period. Gross DFW rates are generally declining (27%-24%, 2014/15-2019/20), though not at the same rate as the Faculty of Arts. More positively, DFW among students in the History program decline progressively as students progress through their program from 27% to 11% by the fourth year.<sup>59</sup>

Enrolment data shows that in 2015/16 that we had 37 FTE Associate Degree students in History. In 2016/17 we had 11, and from 2017/18-2019/20 we had 3 or 4 per year,<sup>60</sup> but 2015 was the year that the institution stopped requiring students to declare their AA degree upon entrance and instead students declared only their Faculty (e.g. Arts, Business, etc.), and have the opportunity to declare an intended area of study. We note also that when students transfer to other institutions, they do not need to have an AA in hand in order to do so; hence some who have met the requirements for the AA or the History minor choose not to take the degree, and this helps explain the rather precipitous drop in enrollments in History AAs over this period. We could do more to promote the AA, but this is very often the credential sought by students planning to transfer after two years, and at KPU History, we have focused on retaining our students for four years, not two.

Overall FTE headcount and enrollment trends are positive,<sup>61</sup> but our graduate headcount in the same period tends to fluctuate. On the positive side, there has been some overall growth in History enrolment since 2016/17, and looking at our trends from 2015/16 to 2019/20, we note that our total majors, minors and intendeds seems to be increasing. The upward trend has not, however, been consistent due to at least two factors beyond the control of the department. The loss of three dedicated and popular faculty members – two retirements and one untimely death – meant a period of upheaval in the department where a great many courses were being taught by sessional and emergency-replacement instructors, and others were cancelled altogether. We know that this impacted our students negatively for a period of several years. In addition, as mentioned above, the current inability to code students as double majors in the Faculty of Arts<sup>62</sup> has meant that some students are currently coded as minors, when they will graduate with a History Major. Thus, the decline in majors is not as drastic as the statistics would make it appear. We are confident that the addition of three permanent faculty members will once again rebuild the connection between our faculty and our students.

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<sup>58</sup> History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 8 (Appendix I).

<sup>59</sup> History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 9 (Appendix I).

<sup>60</sup> History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 5 (Appendix I).

<sup>61</sup> Exhibits 1 & 2, History Administrative Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 5 (Appendix I).

<sup>62</sup> A proposal is currently before Senate that would rectify the issue regarding double majors.

We plan to dedicate time and committee work to the further examination of strategies for recruitment and retention, as well as the creation of strategies to increase student success at the lower level. These strategies might involve:

- adjusting our B.A. degree requirements to require a further 1xxx history course to build the skills necessary for upper level courses;
- encouraging our faculty to further promote our discipline to new and lower level students. We do this in several ways already, including sending out short letters of commendation to promising or extra-hard-working students during the Fall and Spring terms, encouraging them to consider a major, minor, or AA in History, but there may be other vehicles to further promote the major effectively;
- exploring ways of identifying and encouraging second-year students to continue in our degree programs. This might include a personalized contact from the department to students in our second-year courses to highlight how easily they can ladder their courses to date into a minor or major;
- rebuilding the History Student Club in the wake of graduation of a large group of students, the effect of current pandemic restrictions, and the graduation of most of the club's leaders. Several alumni noted that this was one of the great attractions and stand-out elements of their History experience.<sup>63</sup>

### ***Student Satisfaction with Instruction***

As with many Arts disciplines, future History majors often do not apply or 'intend' to major in History. A small number 'love it', or "Just know" or were always "...interested in history",<sup>64</sup> but the majority of our students find the program through an engaging introductory class and in exploring program advertising, the History program website, or even the online Academic Calendar; they then find their way into further History classes and our degrees. Student survey feedback demonstrates the connection that students build to the program.<sup>65</sup>

There is a wide degree of satisfaction with the program overall. 96% (or 56% very satisfied and 40% somewhat satisfied) were satisfied with their classes and instructors. Many written comments speak positively about the student experience in the classroom, the quality of instruction, and strengths of the program. In more specific terms, "clarity of information" from the instructors received an 87% satisfied, "range of assessments" and learning was 85% satisfied, "consistency of assessment" was 82% satisfied, and feedback from instructors was 83% satisfied. "Instructor presentation of materials" and "instructor level of information about current issues" also came in at 92% and 88% satisfied respectively.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 101, 103 (Appendix IX).

<sup>64</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 19 (Appendix III).

<sup>65</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 19-23 (Appendix III).

<sup>66</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 37-38, 41-44 (Appendix III).

While it is almost a truism that ‘you cannot please everyone’, the student surveys revealed both the outstanding strengths of the program, but also some points that the department must take on board for further consideration. There was some dissatisfaction with the ‘range of [teaching] modes’ (11%), ambivalence around experiential learning (18% ambivalent and 6% dissatisfaction), and some dissatisfaction with ‘feedback from instructors’ (11% dissatisfaction);<sup>67</sup> these are discussed at greater length below. In terms of the modes concern, the data predates the move to online instruction during the pandemic year, and as already noted, some faculty intend to regularly offer more online and hybrid courses. On a positive note, we also choose to highlight the importance of ‘small class size’ to students—especially in light of current KPU administrative negotiations to this point.

### ***Experiential Learning and Digital Instruction in History***

As noted earlier (see Public Communication & Outreach in chapter 2), several History courses provide a rich and engaged learning environment with experiential components in the wider community, often involving field trips (in a non-pandemic situation) to meet local artisans and craft producers, or bringing in guest lecturers, including professional practitioners, some of whom deliver in-class workshops or seminars (2156: Martial Arts of China and Japan; 2359: Tea in Asia). Other experiential courses (3180: North American Environmental History; 4405: Digital History: Apps, Video Games, and the Future of the Past) have more extensive requirements where students not only utilize and apply digital tools in developing and presenting their various research projects, but also go into the wider community for their research: from ‘walking history’ landscape/urban scape environmental analysis, to mapping projects, and geocaching through handheld apps. 4400: Applications of History further integrates digital tools into the classroom, primarily through the use of ePortfolio and other digital portfolio tools in alignment with various course outcomes and program competencies. Beyond these recent innovations and additions to our course development and delivery, a great many History courses regularly require online and physical archival research components that also get students out of the classroom and into the wider community of museums, archives, and libraries, as well as digital repositories.

It is worth noting that students do appreciate the opportunities for experiential learning and digital technology in the classroom. Regarding experiential learning, 75% of students note they are very or somewhat satisfied. However, 18% of students were ambivalent, 6% somewhat or very dissatisfied with this measure, so there remains work to be developed in this regard.<sup>68</sup> In terms of digital technology and opportunities in the classroom, 72% of students noted that they were very or somewhat satisfied with the extent to which History

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<sup>67</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 35-36 (Appendix III).

<sup>68</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 37 (Appendix III).



is incorporating digital technology into the classroom, but the 20% ambivalent and 8% somewhat and very dissatisfied rates highlight we could be doing more to highlight the importance of digital literacy in our graduates.<sup>69</sup> Alumni findings were roughly equivalent in this regard (70% very or somewhat satisfied; 17% ambivalent; 14% somewhat or very dissatisfied).<sup>70</sup> Again, it must be noted however, that most of our alumni graduated prior to the focus on digital literacy within our program.

While some students had concerns about digital elements of classroom learning (for example, “Some instructors should make more use of the Moodle website,” and “don’t do StoryMaps or other silly projects like that. just let me write essays”<sup>71</sup>), these seem to be outlier comments among all the rest of the suggestions for improvements in delivery. The need for greater use of digital tools (Moodle, online books and materials, better digital power points) was more widely commented on by students. In light of the pandemic shift, it is reassuring to see many more faculty members exploring the potential inherent in our digital platform.

As well, there was some student concern with experiential learning opportunities – “Experimental learning can be a missed opportunity sometimes as it has not always done well...”, and “Definitely would love to see more off-campus learning”.<sup>72</sup> However, it is worth noting that in both the overall comments about “strengths” of the program, how it is delivered, and even the curricular section, a significant number of students commented positively on digital learning, strong classroom preparation, experimental and experiential learning, and different methods and modes of teaching delivery. Considering these comments and levels of satisfaction, this is something the department will discuss at greater length. Moving forward, we realize that additional experiential and applied components would benefit our students as they move on to further education and particularly into the workplace.

While there were fairly high levels of student satisfaction with respect to program delivery, one particular issue that stood out in the responses was “instructor feedback”. 11% of students were somewhat or very dissatisfied with this, and in examining the student comments a couple of themes emerge. In specific terms, some students noted that “...could receive more feedback on improving writing and vocabulary skills”, “Marking of assignments and feedback could be better,” and “making academic expectations consistent throughout the department and different teachers.” There seems to be some concern with levels of feedback and consistency. And, as noted earlier regarding group collaboration and the History curriculum, students advocated for “more collaborations amongst the students to discuss the course material and ideas they may have,” “More Group discussions,

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<sup>69</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 31 (Appendix III).

<sup>70</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 97 (Appendix IX).

<sup>71</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 45 (Appendix IX).

<sup>72</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 35-36, 45 (Appendix III).

Historical debates,” “Maybe more group discussions in some classes include using more visuals by some instructors, and allowing for more group collaborations. I felt the latter one was especially lacking based on my experiences in the program,” and “Less focus on an Essay... and more focus on readings, group discussion and developments within the course.”<sup>73</sup> To this end, the department will consider putting more emphasis on group discussion and collaboration and will pursue professional development opportunities in this regard.

### ***Instructors, Class Size and Course Offerings***

Small class size (highlighted by both current students and alumni) is consistently listed as a positive of the program), along with the integration between our degree programs and their future career goals; but almost as strongly, the History curriculum (classes) and instructors are highlighted. Students “...enjoy history,” “The subjects appealed...”, “...KPU has a good history program”, and “The courses are always so interesting.”<sup>74</sup> This is backed up in the next section of the Student Survey Data, where in examining decision-making around enrolment in the program, curriculum, program connections to the discipline and sector, word of mouth from friends and family, and the reputation of the instructors and program courses all were essential or very important factors in taking history courses and/or joining the program.<sup>75</sup> The Alumni student data further reinforces this through comments on the positive classroom experience. Just to note a few of the student comments in this vein, the “[k]nowledgeable and approachable professors who are passionate about the subjects. Interesting courses/course projects”, and that KPU History “...offers a series of focused topic studies, these in-depth studies can benefit students with particular interests.”<sup>76</sup>

We would particularly like to highlight that small class size was important to our students and seminar courses are frequently singled out as the highlight of our students’ time in the KPU History program.<sup>77</sup> We are disheartened by the very real threat to our seminar courses, since we believe this is one of the elements that makes our program unique. Here students work alongside their instructors gaining agency and confidence in their abilities. This is precisely one of the key draws for students to our institution, as other regional universities have mega-sized most of their introductory and lower level courses, and seminars which may be led by sessional instructors. In any event, our students have noted just how important this was to them in several sections of the student and alumni feedback. Just to highlight a few of the student responses along these lines:

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<sup>73</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 35-36, 38-39, 45 (Appendix III).

<sup>74</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 22-23 (Appendix III).

<sup>75</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 24-25 (Appendix III).

<sup>76</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 101, 103 (Appendix IX).

<sup>77</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 23, 33-34 (Appendix III).

- *Small classroom size is perhaps the main reason I decided not to transfer during the middle of my degree. It allows me to form closer connections with students not only for social reasons but for academic ones. It also encourages frequent interactions with professors, which have been extremely valuable in my experience.*
- *The diversity of the classes and the passion of the Instructors is amazing, small class sizes are also very nice*
- *Small class sizes means the professor is able to interact and give more direct communication and tutor[ing]*
- *Professors and class sizes are good.*

These comments and more help to highlight how the History program continues to grow in the way that it has, and as importantly how a positive experience within a small class setting plays a major role for History students and their learning.

However, course availability and diversity of course offering are concerns highlighted by students. This is similar to the findings of our previous program review. Out of 73 respondents, only 58% of students were satisfied with the availability of courses for completion in a timely manner, and 32% of students were unsatisfied with this metric.<sup>78</sup> In specific terms, some student comments highlight some trends:

- *I really like the History department at KPU and would recommend it to others, however, I still wish to reiterate that I wish there were upper-level classes offered that focused on Medieval Europe, ancient Greece and Rome, first nations before colonization, Africa during colonization, genocide, war, etc.*
- *There are never enough 3rd and 4th year classes each term and its making graduating take longer.*
- *more courses, especially in spring*
- *More classes offered at multiple semesters and campuses in a timely manner.*
- *Need more classes and more variety.*

Specific to topical material, students raised the issue of diversity of courses and topical material, including:

- *Needs courses on other countries and events that have been overlooked in history.*
- *More diversity is history subjects, like lectures on the middle east or south america or africa.*
- *More African, South American, Eastern European and Oceanic*
- *but I would personally really like to see upper-level classes offered that focus on Medieval Europe, Ancient Greece and Rome, First nations histories before colonization, African studies during colonization, etc.*

Alumni responses also highlighted some of the same issues.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 40 (Appendix III).

<sup>79</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 101-03 (Appendix IX).

The course diversity and course availability issues are chronic student complaints. Since 2019, the department has largely hit upon a metric of offering a fairly consistent number of upper vs. lower-level courses each term and over a three-term cycle that has led to very few course cancellations. Furthermore, as History offers a variety of courses at the upper and lower level on multiple campuses (including upper levels on Richmond campus where enrollments are consistently lower than Surrey), our collective experience suggests scheduling additional courses on Langley and Richmond must be undertaken with great caution. The challenge, of course, is somewhat chicken and the egg—without program growth, we cannot run many additional courses, but without more course availability and diversity, we run the risk of frustrating students, negatively impacting our program reputation, and increasing challenges in growing the program. These concerns may be allayed somewhat as our new faculty members develop a full roster of courses of their own, enabling us to increase the diversity if not the number of core course offerings.

That said, we would also highlight that there are a large number of equally positive comments on student satisfaction with course diversity and offerings, with representative comments like “There’s a wide variety of courses and interesting topics to cover.” “Overall Quite Satisfied with the current content being offered and the staffing of the department.”, and “Courses being offered are diverse.”<sup>80</sup>

As noted above, the department, with the assistance of the Dean of Arts, is addressing student and alumni concerns, through both a recent hire with a specialization in Indigenous peoples of British Columbia and additional course development. And while some issues remain in terms of the diversity of our course offerings, in contrast to some student and alumni concerns, the range of geographic and thematic courses in History is increasingly robust.<sup>81</sup> And as faculty member noted:<sup>82</sup>

- *We buck the overall trend: nearly a full quarter of our courses have an unambiguously global or transnational focus, while another 26 percent of our offerings consider Asian pasts. A full half of our course offerings thus bring the ‘wider world’ into focus—regions outside a conventionally narrow focus on North America and Europe.*
- *two of our six program-specific competencies relate to students’ ‘appreciation of the diversity of global historical experiences’ and ‘global and local connections.’ One of our key strengths, in my view, has been the long-term development of a more geographically even-handed approach to our programming, paying attention to diverse themes across world regions.*

We do offer multiple streams that our students are able to complete without delaying their graduation, we pay close attention to scheduling in such a way that students can graduate

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<sup>80</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, for example, p.33-34, especially 54 (Appendix III).

<sup>81</sup>History Course Descriptions (Appendix IV).

<sup>82</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 121 (Appendix X).

in a timely manner, faculty do rotate their lower and upper division courses regularly, and we do offer a regular slate of upper and lower division courses to students with a wide variety of topical material. This means that, in practice, several faculty members always carry 4 different preps each term – a heavy workload that for the most part goes unrecognized – nonetheless, this is one way in which we have been able to maintain a broad range of course offerings for our students. We also acknowledge that with recent retirements and the passing of a department member, some of the diversity of courses in the last few years has suffered—but we are well on the way to addressing some of these student concerns around programming. Unfortunately, with a finite number of faculty members, addressing these issues further will be far from simple.

## Faculty Experience

### *Expertise and Qualifications*

The minimum qualification for regular faculty members in the Faculty of Arts is an M.A., M.Sc., M.B.A. (or equivalent, such as an M.F.A., LL.B, LL.M, etc.), a professional designation, or a Ph.D. depending upon the department. The Department of History's minimum qualification standard is Ph.D. preferred. We have 8 regular instructors and had 3 visiting instructors (NR2) teaching four or more classes over the course of 2019/2020. Six of the regular instructors hold PhDs from across Canada, the UK, and USA. All of the visiting instructors from the past academic year (2020) hold PhDs.

Almost all of our faculty are active historians and researchers. Members of the History Department continue to publish articles, books, and in other mediums. Despite the heavy 4x4 teaching load, many of our faculty members have maintained active research agendas and work with journals and presses in our field (as editors, reviewers, and the like.). Further, most attend national and international academic conferences on a yearly basis, and all strive to maintain currency in their discipline through a variety of professional development activities. Many of our regular and visiting faculty members have been successful in securing research funding and research time release via KPU Educational Leave/Releases, the .06 Professional Development Fund, OER Research Grants, and related KPU funding. As well, our faculty has become increasingly active in the open education movement, via the development of open resources and the introduction of open pedagogy.

### *Faculty Areas of Research and Teaching Expertise/Area of Concentration (AoC):*

Fuhr, Bob,	BA (UBC), MA (McGill) AoC: American History, Canadian-US Relations, Canadian History (pre-Confederation)
Hayes, Jack Patrick	BA (Colorado College), MA (Hawaii), PhD (UBC) AoC: Chinese & Japanese History, Environmental History, Global History, Historical methods
Hyland, Chris*	BA (UBC), BEd (UBC), MA, (UNewBrunswick), PhD (UCalgary)

Jackson, Kyle	AoC: Canadian History, Canadian Military History BA (SFU), MA (SOAS), PhD (Warwick) AoC: Global History, Imperialism, Digital History, Environmental History, Indigenous Peoples of South Asia
Kinney, Tracey J.	BA (UVIC), MA (UVIC), PhD (UBC) AoC: European & German History, Global history, Historical Methods
Knickerbocker, Maddie	BA (SFU, MMSt (UofT), PhD (SFU) AoC: Canadian History, Indigenous Canada/First Nations History, Gender and Sexuality, Museum Studies, BC History
Martin, Eryk	BA (UVIC), MA (UVic), PhD (SFU) AoC: Canadian History, Social history, BC History, Radical History
Menzies, Robert	BA (UManitoba), MA (UManitoba), PhD (Iowa) AoC: South Asian History, Asian Religions
Okawa, Eiji*	BA (UBC), MA (UBC), PhD (UBC) AoC: Japanese History, Japanese-Canadian History, East Asian History
Popovich, Alex	BA (Hons; McMaster), BEd (UofT), MA (McMaster) AoC: Modern Europe & Russian history, Balkan History
Stewart, Beth*	BA (Carleton), MA (UBC), PhD (UBC) AoC: Global History & Social Justice, Africa, Military history

\*NR2 faculty during the 2019-2020 years and not a part of the original faculty survey (as they arrived directly during or after the original surveys were sent out). Brief biographies of our regular and visiting faculty can be found in Appendix XI as well as at the history department website.

### ***Faculty Satisfaction with Instruction***

The faculty survey was sent out to all of the History faculty in 2019 and early 2020; all whom replied (100% response rate). On the whole, faculty were relatively consistent in how they viewed delivery of instruction. 88% were satisfied with program instruction; 88% with curriculum delivery; and, 75% with instructional methods facilitating student learning, methods facilitating student progression through the program, the clarity around evaluation, and program competencies and learning outcomes.<sup>83</sup> This is expressed in a couple of ways, and as a faculty member put it – “One of the greatest strengths is the innovation and diversity of approaches to instruction. In general, our instructors are committed to thinking deeply about their instruction and this shows in the different types of approaches taken, and the ways in which colleagues constantly work to try new methods out in the classroom.”<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 115-18, 123-29 (Appendix X).

<sup>84</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 121, 127 (Appendix X).

Where faculty were rather ambivalent or least satisfied was in experiential learning opportunities (29% ambivalent, 14% dissatisfied) as discussed earlier, and especially the extent to which assessment practices were consistent throughout the program (51% somewhat or very dissatisfied).<sup>85</sup> Speaking to questions related to experiential learning, we do offer some very innovative and interesting approaches for students. As a faculty member puts it, “[Our] Pedagogical approaches that emphasize community engagement and experiential learning. The department creates the conditions for a wide range of community experiences for students, from hands-on archival research in local repositories to urban history ‘walking ethnographies’ through local neighbourhoods. Students engage with place-based learning experiences (for instance, ‘reading the landscape’ in historic local parks and critiquing public history displays) and enjoy opportunities to serve as real-world historical consultants with local National Historic Sites. Recent interdisciplinary collaborations signal a move towards partnerships across the institution. History students have installed original archive-based video games in a public gallery alongside Fine Arts students and have rubbed shoulders with students from other Arts disciplines in practicum placements around the Lower Mainland.” And another, notes that “...the role of digital technologies, the diversity of pedagogical approaches among instructors, and the decision to emphasize new streams are all major strengths of the program's curriculum.”<sup>86</sup> So, we are delivering to some degree on this, but not as consistently or universally as some faculty might wish.

As with our students, there seem to be some concern around assessment practices and consistency within the program.<sup>87</sup> As faculty noted,

- *In some cases, we need to do more to meet students where they are at, rather than insisting that students meet us where we think they should be.*
- *[We] Could be more consistent in rubrics and course objectives. Continued efforts to share and learn new approaches to top student potential.*
- *[We need] Greater consistency in delivery/awareness of course outcomes.*

And as noted earlier, there are some concerns among faculty around the opportunities for group collaboration for students (50% ambivalence),<sup>88</sup> as well as the aforementioned concerns around Indigenous content in the curriculum and incorporation of digital technology (beyond online learning).<sup>89</sup> Recommendations dealing with these issues have been made in other chapters of this report and will be reiterated in our conclusions.

To address issues around assessment practices and consistency in the program, wider discussion of and action on items from department meetings is needed. This includes the

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<sup>85</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 123-24 (Appendix X).

<sup>86</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 121 (Appendix X).

<sup>87</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 124 (Appendix X).

<sup>88</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 116 (Appendix X).

<sup>89</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 119 (Appendix X).

revision of curriculum and the refinement of connections between learning outcomes, class content, and assessments, alongside discussions around the development of new curriculum, learning and assessment outcomes focused on reconciliation/Indigenous content. Considering the findings of this review, the department will be reexamining, revising, and redrafting a number of course outlines in light of these questions.

It was also noted by students and alumni, faculty further highlighted that the program “could have more on Indigenous and Asian content and more “digital” content...” and that “[t]he department has a few geographical blind spots in its overall course offerings, most significantly Africa, SE Asia, and maritime history writ large (although these world regions of course appear within a variety of other thematic, state-based, or global courses).”<sup>90</sup> Until the opportunity arises to hire another history faculty member, however, the ability of the department to begin to address some of the ‘geographical blind spots’ in the curriculum and programming is limited, even as we move forward on addressing more digital and Indigenous content in the program.

## **Summary and Recommendations**

On the whole, the program delivery modes, faculty experience and expertise, and student and faculty satisfaction are positive. The student, alumni, and faculty surveys are remarkably consistent in identifying both our strengths and our challenges as a department. On one hand, the diversity of courses, dedicated faculty, and students are program strengths. Our numbers are largely healthy. Some students and faculty, however, express concerns around course consistency, assessments, and note that the availability and range of History courses is not ideal.

Recommendations in previous sections may help in some of these cases, and in any event, we plan to dedicate time and committee work to the further examination of strategies for recruitment and retention, as well as additional strategies to increase student success at the lower level, thereby more effectively ladder into upper level courses and addressing some of our retention and graduation rates. Student and faculty satisfaction around consistency of assessment practices, Indigenous and digital content and outcomes are also areas for wider discussion.

### **Specific Recommendations:**

- create a department working group to advise on assessment. This will need to balance obvious concerns around academic freedom with the broader concerns identified by our students and alumni;
- review and revise History course outlines, specifically learning outcomes and assessments, as recommended by the departmental working group;

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<sup>90</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 122 (Appendix X).



- review program requirements with an eye to ensuring effective laddering of outcomes, thereby increasing student success in later classes;
- review and revise History course outlines in order to better address issues related to Indigenization, digital content, and experiential learning
- ensure additional professional development resources for faculty, are made available to support innovative teaching, curriculum development, and faculty team-building. We must also explore opportunities to collaborate with areas such as Teaching and Learning in order to improve access to new digital technologies;
- encourage our faculty to further promote our discipline to new and lower level students. We do this in several ways already, including sending out short letters of commendation to promising or extra-hard-working students during the Fall and Spring terms to consider a major, minor, or AA in History, but there may be other vehicles to further promote our degree programs;
- explore new ways to address student and faculty concerns about course availability and geographical/topical diversity by continuing to offer more Special Topics courses on diverse topics;
- consider ways to offer courses in underrepresented topics through visiting instructors, and for the future, consider these gaps when addressing any potential, future hires in History;
- add a standing agenda item to department meetings to discuss instructional issues and methods, including the integration of more digital technologies, teaching and learning tools, more group collaboration and assignments, and more experiential offerings.

## 5. Quality of Services, Resources and Facilities

### Description of Program Resources, Services and Facilities

The resources upon which our program depends include library materials, especially electronic access to a wide range of journals and electronic monographs, alongside traditional academic books and visual materials. We also utilize books and required materials from the KPU Bookstore, depend upon adequate classroom space, materials, and meeting spaces, including study spaces in the library and history pod, and learning supports of various kinds for our students (including advising, counselling, the Learning Centre, and so on).

### Student Satisfaction with Program Resources, Services and Facilities

Students were to a greater and lesser degree satisfied with most aspects of program resources, services, and facilities (83% satisfaction) associated with the History program,<sup>91</sup> which has almost no control over these elements of student satisfaction with KPU. There were a few surprises however.

Probably the biggest issue for students was the availability of required texts and supplies in a timely manner from the KPU bookstore. This has been an ongoing issue for a number of years, and 29% of students expressed dissatisfaction with the bookstore services, and there were a large number of comments highlighting this as an area for improvement<sup>92</sup> – as in our previous program review. 42% of students were further ambivalent about the Learning Centre (perhaps reflecting limited use of its services).<sup>93</sup> These results would seem to indicate that the Learning Centre needs to do more to connect with students, but also that the History department could do more to promote the services of the Learning Centre to its students. This is somewhat ironic, given the number of our students who serve as tutors in the Learning Centre!

64% of students still commented positively (satisfied) about the bookstore, whereas 96% of students were satisfied with classroom space and 73% with areas for group work (including the History POD and library), and over 50% of students expressed satisfaction with the Learning Centre.<sup>94</sup> We believe that the History 'Pod', the space surrounded by the History department instructors' offices in Surrey Main building, remains a critically important space for students to gather, the History student club to meet and hold events, and for students to interact with the faculty on a less formal basis. This space has

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<sup>91</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, pp. 49, 46-50 (Appendix III).

<sup>92</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 46, 51-52 (Appendix III).

<sup>93</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 46, 51-52 (Appendix III).

<sup>94</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 46 (Appendix III).

contributed to building a strong sense of identity among History students on the Surrey Campus.<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately, space allocation is such that students in Richmond and Langley have no such area in which to meet in proximity to the History faculty.

The KPU library system is one of our most important student resources. Hard copy books and online resources ranked very favourably in the survey (78% and 86% respectively, with stand-alone eBooks at 82% satisfaction).<sup>96</sup> Students were a bit hard on the library in the data section, but in the comments were much more positive overall. A good example would be: “[t]he strengths of the program include the availability of material at the library, the content the instructors give students to read and study, and the accessibility of academic advising related to history”, and that “...The librarians have been a great resource for helping to find books when i need to use print books as well as online sources for papers. The professors are also amazing at sending over articles to help get research started.”<sup>97</sup> Four areas of ambivalence stood out: availability of audio-visual materials and computers, DVDs & streaming video, library orientation, and the study guides (Libguides).<sup>98</sup> In the comments section, there were a number of comments about the availability of computers. There were many more positive comments about the availability of electronic and print resources for History courses and ease of online access, as well as AskAway Livechat, and the vital assistance provided by the librarians at the Reference Desk. Ambivalence around the Library Orientations and Libguides perhaps indicates that faculty need to do more to introduce students to these resources by previewing them in class.

### **Faculty Satisfaction with Program Resources, Services and Facilities**

History faculty satisfaction with program resources, services, and facilities was generally favourable (75% satisfaction, only 13% somewhat dissatisfied).<sup>99</sup> While the overall view is favourable, there were several standout issues in the data.

As with the students, there was significant dissatisfaction with the KPU Bookstore (50% dissatisfied), and 26% dissatisfaction with classroom space and student space for group or individual work<sup>100</sup>. One of the key issues with the latter seems to have been concern for more dedicated computer access for students on all campuses, in particular to enhance digital strategies employed by some faculty.

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<sup>95</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 50 (Appendix III) and Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, 101, 103 (Appendix IX).

<sup>96</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 48-49 (Appendix III).

<sup>97</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 50-51 (Appendix III).

<sup>98</sup> History Student Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 48-49, 51-52 (Appendix III).

<sup>99</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 128-31 (Appendix X).

<sup>100</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 128 (Appendix X).

It is worth noting that the History Department has benefitted greatly from the History Pod on the Surrey campus: our department space in which single- and multi-faculty offices are combined with an open area for a Department Assistant, a small library, and excellent and inviting student study space. Faculty responses to this included that “The History POD continues to be welcoming and open,” and The History Pod is a great resource for students and is a major strength of the program.”<sup>101</sup> As importantly, one alum noted at length:

- *During my time at KPU, I met with other history students in the history pod to discuss course readings, current events, and have other debates and discussions. At the time, I merely thought that we were socializing before and after class, but as I am nearing the end of my Master’s degree, I now look back at the history pod conversations as a something that prepared me for graduate seminars. Having read the course materials, my classmates and I would discuss each other’s viewpoints, critique the authors and figures we are learning about, and help each other prepare for presentations. The location of the history pod, being nestled in the centre of all the history faculty offices, allowed for faculty members to join in on our conversations. The time spent in the history pod helped me learn how to think critically, have me life-long friends, and prepared me for a successful graduate career. Also, the course selections were very diverse and allowed me to gain new perspectives on concepts and figures that I had incorrect assumptions about, such as Gandhi, the authority of a peer-reviewed journal, and film analysis.*<sup>102</sup>

As for faculty opinions and the library, most categories were positive (60-88% satisfaction), but one area of concern stood out, print periodicals, journals, and etc., with 28% dissatisfaction.<sup>103</sup> It should be noted however, that the age of print journals has clearly passed, and the online repositories are outstanding. Otherwise, faculty satisfaction with the monograph collection, eBooks, and online library journal collection was high. More online textbooks and eBook availability were noted in areas for improvement, but this will likely be addressed in the post-online/pandemic year.

## Summary and Recommendations

Overall, students and faculty are satisfied with program resources, library resources, our facilities and spaces, though there is room for improvement in a few areas. Students and faculty have clearly identified the KPU Bookstore as one problematic area. The lack of student familiarity with key library resources (the Libguides, orientation) indicates that faculty (and the Library) need to do more to introduce students to these resources and to work alongside KPU librarians to continue to develop History-specific resources. Faculty should continue to work with and engage the Learning Centre to support student success,

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<sup>101</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 131 (Appendix X).

<sup>102</sup> History Alumni Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 103 (Appendix IX).

<sup>103</sup> History Faculty Survey Data (cleaned) 2020, p. 130-31 (Appendix X).

especially at the early stages of their course work, and alongside the Learning Centre, highlight their services and engage students in utilizing them.

Specific recommendations:

- review Study/Library Guides and work with the library to compile or revise existing library resources for History students;
- dialogue with the Library about ways to promote more student use and engagement with library services;
- explore ways to promote student support services, including the Learning Centre, Student Resource Centre, Peer Tutors, and Counselling Services;
- encourage instructors to work with the history resource librarian to increase our holdings in areas deemed insufficient;
- move towards more open education resources in order to minimize reliance on the KPU bookstore to provide resources to our students.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

### Summary of Conclusions

The department identified four goals and issues to address in this program review:

1. To analyze the current status of the History program, including the level of satisfaction among our students, faculty, and alumni;
2. To gauge how effectively the History department is Indigenizing its curriculum;
3. To gauge how effectively the History department is incorporating digital methods and tools into its curriculum and program;
4. To determine how effectively we have developed our relationships with our broader community (both within and without the institution, including our alumni).

After reviewing the data collected for this program review and the qualitative responses, we were gratified to find that the responses from our alumni and our students revealed a relatively high degree of satisfaction with the program overall, with some concerns around the expansion of group collaboration and experiential opportunities, and curricular issues linked to digital methods and tools and Indigenization of the curriculum. In general, the faculty responses were also positive, with some concerns around some of the same issues as students and alumni. Taken overall, the surveys showed that we are indeed meeting the needs of the great majority of our students, and our alumni and our faculty maintain a favourable view of our program.

Having established a relatively successful mid-sized program, which is, at present, meeting and exceeding the needs and expectations of a significant proportion of our stakeholders, the concern is to continue to sustain the program and find ways to do what we do well more effectively. To that end, this report has identified several program-specific issues related to our core questions above:

- ***Fill rates and enrolment trends***
  - An important priority of the History program remains rebuilding our fill rates and ensuring that we do not face course cancellations. Improved fill rates align with both Faculty of Arts and department priorities—and with the increased shift to thematic rather than geographical courses, our enrolments have increased steadily after a significant drop in enrolments during 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. While the enrolment trends are generally positive, there may be ways to improve on these trends, and better preparing students for upper division courses by requiring another lower-level course may help our outcomes and retention. Seat fill rates could be improved, and student feedback further shows that course availability is a

concern. Thus, the program will explore ways to address student and faculty concerns around course availability and range.

- Flexibility in the History BA and minor programs has been a hallmark of our program's success. However, the tremendous flexibility of the degree, requiring only two courses at the 1xxx level, and two at the 2xxx level before students move on to upper division courses, may be contributing to DFW rates in upper division courses. Thus, the department will address this as noted below in our summary recommendations.

- ***Successes and opportunities***

- Based on student, faculty, and alumni satisfaction, we note that the global and thematic focus of our newer courses has been appreciated and that we should consider offering additional courses to expand this area. There is untapped potential in advertising these courses within our wider communities as general interest options.
- Given the importance of digital, global, and interdisciplinary analysis and skills per our alumni and discipline survey results, History should be looking to offer additional opportunities for our students to develop their familiarity with digital technologies and to build more collaborations across faculties.
- Students, alumni, and faculty members raised concerns about the lack of opportunities for collaborative work within our program; thus, we must address this issue as we move forward with curricular revisions.

- ***Indigenization of our program and our curriculum***

- In this program review, we received significant feedback from students, alumni, and faculty around the need to Indigenize our curriculum.
- While a number of courses in the History program incorporate and discuss Indigenous peoples and their pasts in a variety of contexts, there are no stand-alone courses on Indigenous History and our existing course offerings do not foreground Indigenous issues.
- As post-secondary institutions are called to decolonize and Indigenize their curricula, we recognize that the History program could be doing much more in this area. We have recently hired a Canadian historian who specializes in Indigenous history and we look forward to the ways in which their work and teaching will expand our program and its offerings. To that end we will be adding several new courses on aspects of Indigenous history while reviewing and revising our existing course outlines. We will also explore opportunities to increase institutional supports for instructors working to Indigenize and decolonize their curriculum.

- ***Improving outreach/awareness of the program***
  - In order to grow our program, retain students, and increase student opportunities we need to increase awareness of our program. This could be accomplished through more effective marketing, educational advising, and engagement with an external advisory board among other things. Student, alumni, and sector surveys highlight that our department website and the online calendar (menu of courses) continue to draw students and inform them about our program, but traditional advertising, contact with KPU representatives, high school and social media advertising do not seem to do so as effectively. We need to continue to work on our external marketing and recruitment, as well as continuing to build our community supports and awareness. We are encouraged by the successes of our students in the Arts Practicum program. As more employers become aware of the skills possessed by our students, we anticipate that community support for and knowledge of our program will increase.

## **List of Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this program review, the Department of History is making the following recommendations:

### **Recommendations, Program Currency and Connections**

#### ***Short-term and continuing***

- create an external advisory committee to build stronger ties to our communities;
- build/enhance connections to our alumni who are best able to promote our program and reflect on it (this should include adding history alumni to our external advisory committee depending on availability);

#### ***Continuing, medium, and long-term***

- continue to work with marketing, advising (Arts Degree Advisors), and FSO (Future Students Office) to expand our marketing and interaction with prospective and continuing students;
- explore new ways and encourage our faculty to further promote our discipline to new and lower level students. We do this in several ways already, including sending out short letters of commendation to promising or extra-hard-working students during the Fall and Spring terms to consider a major, minor, or AA in History, but there may be other vehicles to further promote our degree programs;
- enhance relationships and initiate dialogue across faculties to build greater multidisciplinary collaboration;
- explore ways to build more public participation and community outreach by working with community stakeholders, providing more experiential opportunities



for students, and continuing to build upon the successful relationships created through the Arts 4800 Practicum course;

- explore ways to build and strengthen institutional relationships with local First Nations and urban Indigenous communities, and in the process investigate additional experiential components, including field schools, and create more undergraduate research opportunities.

## **Recommendations, Curriculum Design**

### ***Short-term***

- develop a new program competency that specifically addresses the importance of Indigenization; this should be developed by the department as a whole but might look something like, ‘graduates will have demonstrated the ability to explore and appreciate Indigenous worldviews and to take the time to understand and disrupt beliefs and misconceptions’;
- add a standing agenda item to department meetings and/or curriculum and assessment meetings (annually) to discuss instructional issues and methods, including the integration of more digital technologies, teaching and learning tools, more group collaboration and assignments, and more experiential offerings;
- review major and minor requirements such that the program’s flexibility is retained, but the number of lower-level credits is increased in order to better prepare students for the rigours of upper-level courses;

### ***Continuing, medium, and long-term***

- review and revise existing HIST course outlines to foreground key program competencies, and to incorporate outcomes that have been insufficiently developed to date, such as digital literacy and Indigenization;
- incorporate more signature assessments, digital media projects, and group work, and expand our existing departmental meetings to support instructors in the integration of these types of assignments.

## **Recommendations, Instructional Design**

### ***Short-term and ongoing***

- review program requirements with an eye to ensuring effective laddering of outcomes, thereby increasing student success in later classes (including forwarding a program change linked to a further HIST1xxx course requirement);
- create a department working group to advise on assessment. This will need to balance obvious concerns around academic freedom with the broader concerns identified by our students and alumni;

- design and offer an Indigenous history of Canada (HIST111x) course to complement and expand on our existing North American and global history offerings (this course has been developed by one of our new hires and is working through ASCC as of spring 2021);

### ***Medium and long-term***

- review and revise History course outlines, specifically learning outcomes and assessments, as recommended by the departmental working group after a fulsome discussion of curriculum and consultation with various stakeholders, review and revise History course outlines in order to better address issues related to Indigenization, digital content, and experiential learning;
- considering the Department's and KPU's commitment to Indigenization and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions reports and findings, explore opportunities to increase institutional supports for instructors working to indigenize and decolonize their curriculum (this might include meeting with the Elder-in-Residence individually and as a department, instructional workshops, webinars, or instructor training and support, and utilizing PD funding for departmental and individual work on curriculum);
- ensure additional professional development resources for faculty, are made available to support innovative teaching, curriculum development, and faculty team-building;
- explore opportunities to collaborate with areas such as Teaching and Learning in order to improve access to new digital technologies;
- explore new ways to address student and faculty concerns about course availability and geographical/topical diversity by continuing to offer more Special Topics courses on diverse topics;
- add a standing agenda item to discuss and explore instructional themes, issues and methods in consultation with an external advisory committee, including integration digital teaching and learning tools, discipline or sector ideas on key themes or skills important in the workplace;
- consider ways to offer courses in underrepresented topics through visiting instructors, and for the future, consider these gaps when addressing any potential, future hires in History.

## **Recommendations, Services, Resources & Facilities**

### ***Ongoing, short, and medium-term***

- continue History promotion within the Faculty of Arts through working with Arts Degree Advisors, and further updating the History website;
- review Study/Library Guides and work with the library to compile or revise existing library resources for History students;

- dialogue with the Library about ways to promote more student use and engagement with library services;
- encourage instructors to work with the history resource librarian to increase our holdings in areas deemed insufficient;
- explore ways to promote student support services, including the Learning Centre, Student Resource Centre, Peer Tutors, and Counselling Services;
- incorporate more open online texts where possible as well as other open education resources in order to minimize reliance on the KPU bookstore to provide resources to our students.

## 7. Responses from the Dean/Associate Dean

### Program Overview

What do you see as the program's greatest accomplishments over the last 5 years?

HIST has made significant strides in restructuring its curriculum in recent years. From a program centred on Asian and Military history, HIST now includes three quasi-formal streams—Asian History, North American History, and/or Global History - while the department has also developed a range of innovative 'thematic' courses, e.g., histories of textiles, tea, digital history, etc., and brocaded experiential elements into several of its offerings. The 2020 hiring of a specialist in Indigenous history also represents an important step toward a more thoroughgoing Indigenization of the program (a goal which receives considerable attention in the Self-Study Report).

These progressive developments occurred against the backdrop of a highly challenging staffing situation brought about by the tragic death of one faculty member, and two retirements, including that of a Chair who stepped aside on somewhat short notice. These challenges overlapped with some fallow enrolments. In 2016-17, the program faced fill rates 12% below the Faculty average; yet despite challenging circumstances, HIST has narrowed this gap within two years to between 3-5%. Over the same span, the number of HIST Majors dropped from 98 to 69. But a corresponding spike in Minors from 20 to 37 helps to partially mitigate this concern, especially when we consider distortions created by our inability to code double minors. That HIST has come through this difficult period not only with improved numbers, but having made significant progress in restructuring its program identity, speaks to a resilient and dynamic department.

Four History faculty have been nominated for Faculty of Arts teaching awards, and one having received a distinguished service award. These are also very positive indicators which help to instill confidence in the program's collective acumen.

Does the program adequately fulfill the purpose for which it was intended? If not, how can it be improved?

Yes, the program adequately fulfills the purpose for which it was intended. It provides a strong disciplinary and experiential base preparing students to think independently and critically, and above all historically, about the past and its manifold ramifications for the present. History has close ties with Asian Studies, with eight courses cross-listed, along with one elective course for Fashion Design (HIST 3310). Dialogue with Science and Horticulture, begun pre-pandemic, is certainly worth pursuing when the situation permits. Indeed, we encourage discussions with other programs and faculties regarding further development of elective and cross-listed courses. In particular, we invite History to continue building connections to other Arts programs whose students may be particularly interested in a History degree (e.g., double Major, or Minor) as a complement to their existing field of

study. Disciplines such as Political Science, Geography, Sociology, and social/cultural Anthropology are examples; and although Education Studies has no degree as such, EDUC might be another promising site of outreach, given the prominence of HIST as a “teachable” discipline.

The program would also do well to explore additional ways of fulfilling its mandate, e.g., through micro-credentialing and efforts to attract experienced learners. Liaising with the Interim Director, Flexible Learning ([joel.murray@kpu.ca](mailto:joel.murray@kpu.ca)) could help to facilitate this.

How does the program’s curriculum support the following:

- graduates’ pursuit of meaningful employment and further education

Program graduates have a solid record of employment, although the Self-Study shows some concern among alumni about whether HIST afforded them sufficient opportunities to connect with potential employers. The program has anticipated this concern and sought to address it via energetic participation in Arts 4800 (Practicum), with 11 of 42 placements going to HIST students. HIST 4400, the ‘capstone’ course, affords further experiential learning opportunities, and the program has demonstrated some commitment to community outreach, a practice which should ultimately enhance connections with employers (e.g., through nurturing further practicum opportunities).

- the viability and continued development of the program

Setting aside hard-to-predict variables relating to the longer-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic upon higher education, and notwithstanding some worrisome fill-rates within recent memory, we are confident about program viability. History’s curriculum is well thought-out and continues dynamically to evolve. The further development of Indigenous content (both within existing courses, and as new stand-alone courses) represents a desirable trajectory for further growth, and one which the Self-Study Report embraces with enthusiasm.

The Dean’s Office has some concerns regarding the Report’s proposal to strengthen the program’s prerequisite structure by adding at least one additional required HIST 11XX course. On this front, HIST risks being caught between the Scylla of avoidably high DFW rates in upper-level classes, caused by under-prepared students, and the Charybdis of reduced fill-rates caused by added barriers to student progression. While the Self-Study Report recommends an additional HIST 11XX 3-credit requirement, then, we would encourage consideration of more flexible alternatives: e.g., a requirement of an additional 3 credits of HIST 11xx OR any 3 credits at the 11XX-level in what might be considered ‘cognate’ disciplines, such as Political Science, Asian Studies, Sociology, and social/cultural Anthropology, where core skills, if not always content, overlap considerably.

What challenges and opportunities for growth should the program consider based on the following?

- student demand (past, present and future)
- comparable programs at competing institutions
- trends and changing contexts in the discipline/sector

Demand for HIST has at times been soft, although the program has performed acceptably relative to Arts averages in more recent years. There is no magical ‘Hogwart’s Express’ to higher fill-rates; but the consistent implementation of a suite of smaller-scale actions, such as maintaining a lively social media presence, liaising on an ongoing basis with FSO, visiting high schools when the occasion affords, engaging reliably and dynamically with ‘outreach’ events such as KPU Open House, internal marketing (including in-class promotion, Declaration Month, and sending letters of commendation to hard workers and stellar performers at lower levels, with an eye to recruiting them into the program), rebuilding the HIST student club, etc., will undoubtedly help. So will nurturing ties to disciplines whose students may be particularly receptive to pursuing a HIST Major or Minor. Leveraging alumni as ‘brand ambassadors’ in the wider community and raising the program’s profile overall, to which end an external advisory board can help. The Self-Study shows a strong receptiveness to such ideas. A further thought is that, since teacher education programs in B.C. require at least 3 credits of Canadian history, promoting History as a key program for prospective teachers might be a useful part of the message.

We encourage HIST, as mentioned above, to give additional thought to positioning the program to attract experienced learners.

By moving toward more global and thematic curriculum, as well as embracing the challenges of Indigenization and decolonization, the program seems both distinctive in the Lower Mainland and ‘on-trend’ when it comes to developments in the discipline and sector.

What plans (departmental, faculty and institutional) are in place for program growth and development?

The department has, as discussed earlier, already undertaken considerable curricular revision (including redefining areas of program focus). This solid work should be allowed to take root and grow, nourished by the efforts at promotion and intra-institutional linkages mooted in previous sections. History is well-positioned to make significant strides in Indigenization, including the elaboration of a program competency in this area, and the development of relevant new courses and the revision of existing offerings with an eye to Indigenous content. The pandemic-driven switch to online delivery over 2020 has undoubtedly brought a substantial uptick in digital skills among faculty, and HIST is

encouraged to give thought to how these can be best marshalled for the benefit of the program and its students once the pandemic recedes.

What resources, institutional support, and/or external support would help address the program's plans for growth and development?

We strongly support the development of an external advisory committee for HIST. Further resources and support relating to Indigenization and decolonization would be of benefit to the entire institution, and especially to programs which show the keen interest in these themes demonstrated by History in its Self-Study. HIST's report does express a concern with limited access to computer space on campus. This is an issue which is not exclusive to History. Arts has worked with the Library to develop portable 'computer labs' (i.e., cabinets of laptops, on wheels), and while we recognize that this is no substitute for proper lab space, we encourage History instructors to use this resource until such space is secured.

Collectively, what qualifications and other human resources are required so the program will be able to make the changes required to improve and remain current?

The program has what it requires in these respects – as its dynamic approach to curricular revision demonstrates.

What areas should the program focus on for the short range (< 6 months), mid-range (6 mo. – 2 years), and long range (>2 years) program directions and improvement?

*Short range:* progress toward the development of an external advisory committee; implement the new course in Indigenous History of Canada

*Mid-range:* full implementation and regular meetings of the external advisory committee; develop program competency addressing Indigenization; consider further course development relevant to Indigenous themes; give serious consideration to micro-credentialing and strategies for attracting experienced learners;

*Long range:* review course outlines for Indigenization, digital content, and experiential learning; promote undergraduate research; advance the ongoing goals of strengthening intra-institutional connections, links to external stakeholders, and promotion.

## **External Connections and Support**

How could the program improve its connections with external groups (e.g. the discipline/sector, high schools, alumni, professional associations, other institutions)?

The department has a track record of faculty outreach to local schools and connections with significant external organizations (including Surrey Museum and Archives, as well as the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, Nikkei Museum and Cultural Centre, White Rock Museum & Archives, Historic Stewart Farm, Chinese Canadian Museum, as well as the City of Richmond). HIST's energetic participation in ARTS 4800 (Practicum) also nurtures connections with external stakeholders. Stronger links with local Indigenous First Nations and urban Indigenous communities should form an important dimension of the department's stated intentions around Indigenization. A major step forward in terms of outreach would be the development of an external advisory committee.

### **Final Comments**

What else do you think is important to add about the program that is not covered in the previous questions?

The department is to be commended for a thorough Self-Study and for the dynamic and innovative re-thinking of its curriculum in recent years.



## 8. Appendices for Self-Study Report

Provided in separate document.