

Report of the External Review Committee
Department of History
University of Oregon
Spring, 2007

Introduction

The External Review Committee visited the University of Oregon over two days, April 30-May 1. We had the opportunity to talk with a wide range of students, staff, faculty, and administrators regarding the conditions, current practices, effectiveness, and aspirations of the Department of History as well as its standing in the University as a whole. This allowed us to gauge the caliber of the undergraduate and graduate programs in history, the quality of the department's faculty and its graduate students, governance within the department, and administrators' perspectives on future prospects. We found a robust spirit of professional dedication and an impressive degree of collegiality among its faculty, a high standard among them of scholarly achievement, and evidence of real teaching effectiveness. At the same time, daunting challenges—particularly in sustaining *and enhancing* the material resources needed to continue its mission—lie before this department. Its record justifies confidence in the ability of the department to make the most of its circumstances and to continue raising its standards in all respects (teaching, research, and service). These prospects depend, however, on growth in resources and strong support from the University administration. Otherwise, the department's professional potential may not be fully realized.

The review committee commends the History Department for the excellent job it did in compiling the April 2007 Self-Study (and the supporting documents). The department's report provided us with a thorough survey of all aspects of its work, backed by copious data and a degree of self-critical insight that can come only from a department whose faculty shares a strong sense of mission and includes numerous individuals willing to devote great time and energy to common projects. The Self-Study aptly framed the key issues facing the department and helped orient us in learning about the academic environment at Oregon. We appreciate the time spent with us by the department head John McCole, associate head Ellen Herman, director of the graduate program Glenn May, undergraduate director Robert Haskett, the additional members of those program committees and other faculty members, staff members, and students who joined us at various points over the busy two-day visit. We also wish to thank Provost Linda Brady, Vice President Rich Linton, vice provosts Russ Tomlin, Karen Sprague, and Marian Friestad, Dean Wendy Larson and Associate Dean Marianne Nicols for their support and hospitality in conducting this study. Stephanie McLaughlin expertly handled the logistics of our trip.

Three features of the department's and university's status at this time are crucial:

- As a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), the University of Oregon stands as one of the smaller institutions in the set of distinguished research universities to which it belongs—and has labored under limits on

- resources, as have other public universities, but in this case, we believe, of an especially stringent sort.
- New leadership has recently joined, or will shortly join, the ranks of the University's administration—notably, Provost Linda Brady and the upcoming appointment of a new Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. We believe these leaders, critical for the academic fortunes of the History Department, will provide the University and Arts & Science both vigor and hope.
 - The History Department has done excellent work—in scholarly output, undergraduate and graduate instruction, and service to the larger College and University community—with resources that are tightly constrained and appear to us to have been largely frozen for several years (indicated most clearly by the effective suspension of new faculty hiring).

At this juncture, we believe, the University of Oregon faces a good moment at which to invest in *key* departments—flagships of the College and Graduate School that have demonstrated their centrality to the University's mission in liberal arts education, have performed well already, and have thought intelligently about their futures. The History Department in our view clearly stands among such key departments. Indeed, given rising numbers of students and majors, the development of the scholarly discipline, and the admirably high attainments and ambitions of the History faculty, this department *must grow*—to hire and retain first-class faculty and draw excellent graduate students—if it is to help the University maintain its AAU standing.

Facilities and Physical Plant

This is an area where the Department is in a very good position. We found the Department main office and the faculty offices satisfactory. The departmental facilities are attractive, well laid-out, and welcoming. The placement of the staff's desks allows students and visitors easy and direct access into the office. The chair's office is also well-located, allowing for privacy while, at the same time, placing him in close contact with activities in the front office.

As to faculty offices — we had the opportunity of examining a few of them — although they are small, they appear to be comfortable, with a suitable work area and space to meet and counsel students. The move to the former Law School seems to have been a fortunate one, permitting the members of the Department to remain close to each other and to graduate students. This fosters a sense of community and collegiality which is obvious among those we met.

The seminar room — in which we held interviews with faculty and staff members — is spacious and well lit, although a bit bare. It may benefit from some posters or maps. There is, nonetheless, ample space for storage and kitchen facilities, all of them well kept behind folding doors and out of view. The seminar room is well suited for entertainment,

seminars, faculty and students' gatherings. The graduate lounge/library (where we met graduate students) is even more attractive and welcoming. Graduate Teaching Fellows are also provided with adequate space. We looked into some of these offices and found that, even though they lack windows and are shared by two students, they were most suitable and, in some cases, superior to the facilities available to graduate students in most of our own institutions.

A note of caution is to be entered here. If our recommendations for an increase in the number of faculty, staff, and graduate program are carried out, the Department will need a corresponding increasing of their available space. To do one without the other is to create a whole new host of problems. At present, however, the Department is fortunate to have modern and attractive facilities and no immediate investment in renovating or expanding their physical space is required.

Computer and Web Support. New Instructional Technology.

Unlike the physical plant, we found that the Department lags behind many of its peer institutions and departments in the use and deployment of new web technology for teaching and research. Considering the veritable computer revolution that has taken place in education over the last decade, this is an area that requires immediate attention. Since some of these issues are directly related to staffing and funding, we will revisit them in detail below. For the present, we should emphasize that technical support and resources should be found to maintain a more attractive and user friendly departmental web site. Part of the problem is that the university's general web site, the entry portal into the University of Oregon, is not easy to navigate; nor does it lead directly to the Department's own web site.

Recommendations:

1. To place all syllabi, undergraduate and graduate alike, on an easily accessible (to students, faculty, and outsiders) departmental web site. (Only a handful of courses for the Spring term have posted syllabi on the web site, though many are apparently accessible online through other routes.)
2. To fix unyielding or presently not working links to other parts of the university and the department.
3. To provide an attractive listing of individual faculty CVs, announcements of fellowships, forthcoming books by faculty members, and other such material that would help enhance the profile of the Department.
4. To provide (and this may necessitate a university-wide initiative) a tentative annual schedule of courses. Such a development would allow students to plan their program accordingly, engage the faculty and graduate students in long term curricular planning, and would relieve staff and faculty from the time consuming scheduling of courses every quarter.

5. Access for undergraduates in all courses to class web sites where they can post notices, queries, and papers.

Staff

We also met with members of the staff and found them enthusiastic about what they do, committed to the Department's pedagogical mission, positive in their attitude and morale, and glad to work for the Department. They are however obviously overworked. The staff is presently at a crossroads. The rise in the number of students, the bureaucratic demands of a public university, and the lack of full technical support will create in a very short time fractures which may deter from the high level of productivity and commitment of faculty and staff to the Department's mission and well being.

The staff will benefit from one additional line or, at least, from half a line and greater student aide support. Beyond that, there are matters that need to be addressed as soon as possible. For example, we learned that internal research funds and fellowships are done manually by the office manager, that one of the staff members, besides a whole host of obligations, is responsible to maintain the web site. Another is continuously involved in multiple and very diverse tasks, such as arranging scholarly visits, scheduling of courses, and the like. That they do all of this with good humor and quite well speaks volumes as to the efficient working relationship between staff and faculty and to the staff's commitment to the well being of the Department, its faculty, and its students. But something needs to be done before a breaking point is reached.

Recommendations:

1. The addition of one or, at least, one-half additional staff position.
2. The electronic handling of research and fellowship funds for the easier disbursement of payments and a more streamlined system of accounting.
3. The assignment to the Department, on either a full or part time basis, of a computer technician (it can be a student aide) to improve and maintain web sites

Development

The department faces, and has faced for a long time, enduring and debilitating fiscal pressures. Because of the low level of state support for public education — an issue that plagues most public universities in this country — and the restrictions imposed by the College Development Office on the Department's ability to solicit funds on its own, it is imperative that the Department locate additional independent public and private sources to help its faculty's research and teaching mission. Although in an ideal world, the College leadership should address the fiscal needs of the Department, the reality is that it could never be enough to sustain what is quite a remarkable effort in educating

history majors and general university students and in maintaining high standards of research and publishing. Other sources of income must be found.

Recommendations :

1. As presently run the summer program yields only about \$25,000. Although the Department has maintained its rigorous standards in its summer teaching, the program needs to yield much more to become a meaningful contributor to the Department's mission. We think a target of \$100,000 would be a good one. Additional funds can be used to support young faculty (travel grants, small research fellowships) and to support graduate students financially or release them from teaching. The Department should consider the following: a) run larger General Education courses in the summer; b) do not run courses at a loss; c) offer additional courses. These additional courses should be attractive offerings not duplicated in either the previous Spring term or in the following Fall term.
2. One additional source of income could be history courses taught abroad as part of a summer abroad program. This would require some significant logistical support, but it could also be quite lucrative.
3. The Department's chair with the support of other members of the Department should seek to organize a group or groups, for example something along the lines of "Friends of History, or History Ducks." This group can consist of local history alumni and those interested in history, willing to sponsor quarterly salons or faculty lectures. Assessing a membership fee would bring some immediate income; members could also be solicited for larger goals, such as the endowment of a graduate fellowship or graduate award.
4. The Department, through the granting of release time and clerical support, should encourage some of its most distinguished members to organize and apply for NEH Seminars or Institutes (some possible topics may be US Western History, East Asia). They are profitable for the University, the Department, and the faculty or faculty members chosen to direct these seminars or institutes. They will also bring to Eugene a good number of young scholars in the Summer who will enhance the Department and the University's visibility and standing in the discipline
5. Along the same lines, the College and the Department should support such initiatives as the recently awarded Title VI. Renewal is not, by any means, guaranteed, and the College and the Department need to make a commitment to sponsor and maintain such efforts.

Undergraduate Education

The members of the External Review Committee were most positively impressed by the dedication and signal success of the Department in educating undergraduates. We wish to emphasize that this is commendable indeed. With diminishing resources and growing numbers of majors and students, the Department does, nonetheless, an excellent

job in its pedagogical mission. We should also emphasize several things about the Department's commitment to its majors and to the general undergraduate population.

1. According to the self-study, the number of history majors eleven years ago stood at 242. By 2007, the number of majors has risen to 436 for an 80% increase as compared to 28% for the social sciences at the University of Oregon during the same period. This has been accomplished without any significant increase in faculty. While in the ten top public university Departments of History in the nation the average ratio of faculty to major is around 12 majors per FTE, the Department of History at the University of Oregon teaches approximately 17 majors per FTE.
2. The same period has also produced a noticeable increase in the Student Credit Hours from 21,159 to 24,651 (2005-06) and in the total number of students taught.
3. This growth has been accomplished while maintaining a time to degree that is lower than the average time it requires a student to complete a degree in the social sciences, the college, and the university as a whole.
4. In addition, the Department insists on a rigorous program that emphasizes critical thinking and writing. Its grade distribution is less inflated than that of other departments in the social sciences and the college. And, in spite of the high intellectual demands placed on the students and its rigorous program, students flock to history classes. The Department of History is obviously doing something right.

Most remarkable and worth of praise is the commitment of the faculty as a whole to teach General Education level courses and to staff most if its classes with tenure track faculty. Unlike other institutions throughout the country that increasingly depend on adjunct faculty to teach undergraduates — an unfair and pedagogically unsound practice — historians at the University of Oregon have made a commitment to teaching undergraduates that is remarkable indeed. We find the faculty commitment to teaching, and to using adjuncts only in exceptional situations, one of the most salient and admirable aspects of this Department.

That they have done so on a voluntary basis, following an unwritten code that allows for the rotation of lower courses among **all** of the faculty is indeed exemplary. That often faculty members take on the responsibility of teaching an additional discussion section without compensation or release time is even more deserving of praise and calls for additional support from the administration. But this is also a sign of collegiality and a collective commitment to the Department's mission.

As successful as the Department has been in fulfilling its pedagogical mission, it is clear that without additional faculty and graduate students, their present success in undergraduate education cannot be sustained. It is not clear that faculty can continue to teach more and more students without reducing the amount of writing to be corrected. The declining size of the graduate program (see below) threatens the ability to run

enough sections, and sections should absolutely not get any larger. Twenty-five students per discussion section is already too large as it is.

The point has already been reached where the Department must seek graduate students outside history to staff their discussion sections. Faculty have taken on added responsibilities (teaching undergraduate sections, tutoring graduate students without compensation, etc.) and, as enrollment expands, the ability to supervise and provide an appropriate setting for writing across the discipline and for critical thinking, as noted above, diminishes. Since recommendations for added FTEs and a modest increase in the number of graduate students will be discussed later, we would like, at this point, only to emphasize the connections between graduate and undergraduate education. One depends on the other for the smooth running of the program.

While we wholeheartedly agree that undergraduate education is one of the big successes of this Department, we would like to make some specific suggestions.

Recommendations:

One area where the existing program may be improved is by enhancing its already existing and strong capstone experience. This can be done by providing history majors with additional preparation and context for their 407 research seminars. This can be accomplished through a 307 proseminar open only to history majors (or seminar for sophomores and juniors). Trying to write a substantial research paper in one quarter is very challenging and, often, impossible for the students. Doing so over two quarters provide important pedagogical advantages. There are various possible models for this proseminar.

1. These 307s can be formal courses taught by advanced Graduate Teaching Fellows (under faculty supervision) and by some of the tenure-track faculty as well.
2. The classes can be linked to a larger lecture course as a type of mini cluster. For example, a Fall lecture in Chinese history may be followed by a small number of proseminars in the Winter quarter that explore in detail some of the themes discussed in the lecture. These proseminars will be open only to students who had previously enrolled in the lecture class.
3. It may be advisable to experiment with some type of proseminar by first making it part of an honors track within the major, and then, if the experiment works, to make it available for everyone. This too would require more resources since, ideally, these writing and methodologically intensive seminars should not exceed 20 students per session.

Graduate Education

The review committee also found much to praise in the Department's program of graduate education, but here the constraints on available resources are painfully evident and pose real quandaries to the faculty as it hopes to maintain and build Oregon's reputation in the field. The spirit and camaraderie among the graduate students we met, and among the faculty most directly engaged in teaching and mentoring those students, were again very impressive. Still, the record of recent years includes some real danger signs that must be addressed in the coming period of academic development.

Despite its relatively small size, and a correspondingly small body of graduate students, the Oregon faculty has striven to maintain a comprehensive program of graduate training. For many years, graduate education focused on granting a terminal Master's degree. What distinguished Oregon's program in this regard was that its M.A. program served not only school teachers seeking enhanced certification but also—and even primarily—students who were considering (but yet unsure about) pursuing a Ph.D. in the field, or those who aimed for the Ph.D. but lacked for one reason or another all the credentials needed to gain entry to the very best doctoral programs. Partly because Oregon offers financial support to M.A. students when many other such programs do not, the department has been able to enroll some very good students in this situation and provide them with the crucial preparation they need to make the next step in advanced training. The M.A. curriculum, therefore, was designed to be rigorous, and in our view, has maintained that rigor in a thorough three-term introductory course sequence (HIST 612-613-614), required competence in one or more foreign languages, plus a full-scale Masters thesis or in its place, two professional-quality research papers. The department has an excellent record in keeping a high proportion of its M.A. students to a two-year time to degree, and many have succeeded thereafter in gaining admission to excellent Ph.D. programs at places such as UCLA, UC Santa Cruz, Michigan, Northwestern, Yale, and Johns Hopkins.

This kind of program provides an important service to the discipline nationally, and it should be maintained.

In addition, the department offers a Ph.D., generally (but not exclusively) emphasizing doctoral training in Oregon's signature specialties: U.S. West, East Asia, and Latin America. Until recently, students seeking the Ph.D. entered the program already holding an M.A. in History, but in 2003 the department began admitting some students with only a B.A. directly to doctoral studies (known as the B.A.-Ph.D. track). This move signaled a desire to train more doctoral students and reflected the rising scholarly aspirations of the department, especially among the younger professors. Whether admitted with an M.A. or B.A., Oregon's Ph.D. students have included several who have gone on to distinguished academic careers themselves.

The general program in Ph.D. program includes the HIST 612-613-614 sequence. (Those already holding M.A.s are sometimes excused from 613-614, which focus on providing early graduate students with experience in preparing a substantial research paper.) It expects doctoral students to complete two graduate-level research seminars, and take three courses in a minor field. An oral examination tests competence in the

student's major field of research, and a formal dissertation prospectus is required shortly thereafter before the student embarks on the dissertation project itself. Ph.D. students—like M.A. students—may take 400-level courses also taken by advanced undergraduates (for 500-level credit, often with additional readings and regular additional tutorials with conscientious faculty members); independent readings with an individual faculty member; or exclusively graduate seminars usually numbered 608 on varied, specialized topics.

The department's graduate students count about 30-35 in all, and while the department has aimed to admit 10 new students a year (combining the M.A., Ph.D., and B.A.-Ph.D. tracks), recent years have seen a significant fall-off in actual intake—despite the same number of admission *offers* each year and a growing applicant pool (hence, too, a rising degree of selectivity). In this year's round, only seven new students will enter in September. A decline in the intake of new students, particularly doctoral students, poses a number of significant problems:

- It injures the morale of faculty sponsors who repeatedly lose promising applicants to other doctoral programs, and it hurts as well the morale of students continuing in the graduate program.
- A smaller body of graduate students means that the demand for graduate courses declines; that is, it becomes more difficult to assemble the minimum number of students needed to offer a course *exclusively* for graduate students.
- The department has fewer students to appoint to GTF positions in its survey courses, and has in fact already begun to hire GTFs from other departments.
- The caliber of incoming students—as measured by standard GRE scores—has not risen and in some recent years has even declined, despite the rising selectivity of Oregon admissions, since the best students are drawn elsewhere.
- In general, the number of History graduate students tends to fall below the critical mass needed to sustain intellectual engagement and stimulation in a group of peers devoted to a common scholarly endeavor.

The review committee recognizes limited resources available for graduate student financial aid as the critical factor responsible for the apparent loss in Oregon's competitive ability to recruit a suitable number, and a high caliber, of graduate and especially doctoral students. While living costs are relatively low in Eugene, and the University offers an excellent health-insurance plan, graduate stipends are less than half the dollar figure offered by the most prestigious research universities and often less than 2/3 that of stipends offered by comparator state universities. Moreover—and this bears special emphasis—Oregon's financial aid consists almost entirely of GTF assignments, and incoming students cannot count on time free of teaching responsibilities to concentrate wholly on their studies.

In contrast, it has become routine at competitive institutions to provide first-year doctoral students with a stipend and no teaching duties (as they learn the ropes of advanced study) and often a free year during the end stages of dissertation work. While Oregon's Graduate School does have an internal competition (among applicants from all

disciplines) for a full-year Dissertation Research Fellowship (DRF), such grants are not widely available. Indeed, it is an ominous sign that only one of the department's students has won a DRF in the last six years—after a six-year streak from 1996 to 2001 in which a History doctoral student won a DRF every year.

Retention rates and figures regarding time-to-degree are quite good with regard to M.A. students. Time-to-degree for Ph.D. students appears not to diverge much from the national average in History, but the numbers of such students are small, and retention rates for students entering the Ph.D. or B.A.-Ph.D. track are not clear. The department would like Ph.D. students to reach completion in a shorter time (than 6 or 7 years from M.A.), but recognizes the obstacle posed by the pressure of GTF assignments—relatively heavy at a rate of 50 students per term in survey course sections, or 85 students to grade in large lecture classes—and the lack of release time for graduate research. The department makes an ardent effort to provide benefits, having built out of its own funds a pool of \$8,000-12,000 annual to support graduate research, but this is hardly adequate overall.

The review committee does not see this as a situation that can be resolved by choosing between reverting to a virtually all-M.A. program or proceeding to greater emphasis on Ph.D. production. As indicated above, the terminal M.A. program has been very effective in a special niche of the U.S. academy: providing a step up for some hesitant or otherwise incompletely credentialed but promising students to get on a scholarly track of advanced research. The production of Ph.D. students in at least the specialty fields of a department is also expected of a department that claims to be a research department of AAU standing. The problem of low numbers in the graduate student body as a whole means both that the students are deprived of the “cohort experience” derived from intense interaction with a sufficient number of diverse peers *and* that faculty devoted to graduate education provide a great deal of this instruction in independent-readings courses (or special tutorials added on to undergraduate courses) that constitute an overload beyond their normal teaching obligations—instead of in dedicated graduate courses that can be included in their roster of two courses a term. In the long run, either faculty will be dissuaded from participating in graduate education, or those devoted to it will be overworked and denied the time they need for their own research progress—itsself a sine qua non of vital graduate education.

The review committee met for an hour with a half dozen graduate students (in all tracks of the program) and found them sharp and engaged, grateful for the individualized attention they receive in a small program, and yet acutely aware of the problems posed by insufficient course offerings for graduate students alone and inadequate funding. At the same time, while some faculty do not play an active part in graduate training, those faculty involved in graduate training ardently wish to raise the quality of the program by means of more effective recruitment of more highly qualified students, regular offerings of more HIST 608 topical graduate seminars, and perhaps further enhancements such as special graduate courses devoted to the broad historiography of particular fields of research (in preparation for qualifying exams).

The review committee stresses that the History faculty has actively sought to do the best it can with limited resources. Individual faculty members spend time devising graduate-only courses that straddle diverse field specialties in order to attract a critical mass of students who can share an intriguing common theme across geographic areas; and faculty also invite graduate students from other disciplines to join young historians in joint discussion. The East Asia field has been successful in obtaining a number of FLAS scholarships to assist their graduate students in language training (while the clearing-house on campus, the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, still hungers for sufficient institutional and Title VI support to upgrade its general graduate packages). At the very least, the department should strive to convert some graduate teaching assistantships to research assistantships, which would give some relief from regular classroom time.

Like many graduate programs, too, Oregon's would benefit from better library resources and more in-house fellowship money to support student travel to archives.

Above all, however, the department needs an investment of funds that would add faculty lines, allow sufficient time in faculty schedules to teach dedicated graduate classes in-load, and assure competitive stipends with some teaching-free time in order to increase and upgrade the intake of engaged graduate students, particularly on the Ph.D. level.

Recommendations:

1. Make it a goal to maintain the current MA program while increasing the size of entering Ph.D. cohorts at least back to the level they were at several years ago.
2. Significantly increase the size of graduate student aid packages, at least for Ph.D. students.
3. Try to provide some support that is not tied to teaching, particularly in the first year and during dissertation-writing. Fellowship support is optimal; research assistantships also have some advantages over a diet based on teaching support only.
4. Provide a larger number of 608 course, designed to appeal to students from multiple fields and, if possible, multiple departments. Aim to reduce the share of graduate instruction done in 400/500 and individual reading courses.

Faculty, Growth Plans, and Issues of Strategy

The Department's faculty is dedicated and productive, especially considering the resource constraints they face. While meaningful numbers are hard to come by, members of the Department appear to publish, win national grants, and gain recognition from their peers elsewhere at an appropriate rate. We did not find any of the tell-tale signs of troubled departments: complaints about governance, radically different interpretations of recent events, significant numbers of people who have stopped publishing, etc. Factors

well beyond the Department's control – in particular, low salaries – mean that retaining strong faculty will be a recurring problem, and unless more resources can be found for the graduate program, frustrations with the limits of Ph.D. training could also make it hard to prevent some people from looking elsewhere. (The positive side of this is that the Department does have plenty of people whom other institutions would be happy to hire; nobody should want a department where retention is *never* an issue.) But Eugene offers various quality of life advantages, especially for younger faculty, and there is no sign of a general rush for the exits. People in the Department seem to like working together, like their students, and feel comfortable with their colleagues.

At the moment, the department has an unusually small number of junior faculty: just two out of twenty six, one of whom is on the cusp of tenure. This may contribute to the general sense of comfort, but it is far from ideal -- any department needs the fresh blood and ideas that good junior people bring with them. This can only be solved by doing new hiring, which is also highly desirable for other reasons. (See below.) The two untenured people in the department feel well-supported by their colleagues in the Department, even though one of them, who has an excellent reputation in her field, had a very unfortunate experience with the CAS tenure committee last year. (As far as we can tell, this case represents a very serious failure of understanding on the part of the committee, which risked losing not one but two excellent young faculty because it failed to understand or ask about normal work routines for historians. It is possible that the department could have communicated more effectively about this, but the blame clearly seems to belong elsewhere.) The department protects junior faculty in what seem to us appropriate ways, such as not asking them to teach the largest survey courses. We would emphasize that it is important to also offer junior faculty some supported research leave. This is increasingly standard in the profession, and could well be important to successful future recruitment.

The department's self study lays out many of the issues pertaining to future hires quite well. Most of the more likely retirements over the next several years are in US and European history, especially European history, and pose interesting questions about whether to replace these scholars in the same fields or try to shift the lines. The department has chosen to emphasize three fields in its overall strategy, particularly at the graduate level: US West, East Asia, Latin America. These seem to us good choices, though it should be noted that several West Coast departments seem to be headed in these same directions. It is also worth remembering that even the fields the department is emphasizing are small relative to the same fields in many competing departments, and will remain so unless there is overall growth. It is simply not possible to continue strengthening these fields, expanding into new fields and retain acceptable levels of coverage in the fields likely to be hit by retirements without new positions.

Members of the department expressed desires to hire in new fields: adding an Islamicist and perhaps a South Asianist were the ideas that came up most frequently. (The desire for an Islamicist is also mentioned explicitly in the department's diversity proposal.) We would support doing so, even if this comes at the cost of *some* further thinning of the ranks in "traditional" fields. We would note, however, that the

representation of history before 1700 in the department is probably already as thin as it should be allowed to get.

One attractive strategy would be to try to define future hires so that they straddle more than one field, perhaps adding to an existing strength while also opening up a new field. A Chicano/Latino historian, for instance, would have many advantages: it would give the department a new field, appeal to a growing population group in the state, have synergies with Ethnic Studies, and probably be of assistance to both the US West and the Latin America fields. It would thus reach out and expand to new areas while also building on core strength areas. Similarly, the department might wish to concentrate its search for an Islamicist on areas to the East of Iran (where most Muslims live, anyway), rather than in the Middle East, to facilitate working relations with the Asian Studies group. Looking for a French empire person who did either Vietnam (building on the East Asia program) or Islam in the Maghreb or West Africa would be another possible hire that would straddle various needs (particularly if it replaced a retiring Europeanist, and the person hired could continue to also cover some European courses.) To what extent such desires for cross-field expertise should be written into a job ad – or simply kept in the minds of people as they examine candidates responding to a more generic ad – is something to be worked out on a case by case basis. People who would fit positions like these do exist, but the pools are often not large. It would be important that the department be willing to continue such searches for more than a year if necessary; we were therefore very pleased to hear the Provost say that it is UO's policy not to pull positions from departments that do not fill them the first time they try.

We were also impressed with the Department's diversity proposal. We strongly support the Department's desire to fill their anticipated vacancies in both African and African American history with regular line faculty; this is simply essential if the Department is to be taken seriously in the profession at large. We also support the idea of creating a 3-year rotating post-doc in African American history. This is a difficult field in which to hire and retain people, and can be especially difficult for a campus that is not located close to a large African American community; having only one African American historian, though obviously much better than none, makes retention harder still. Having both a tenure track position and the post-doc would probably help with critical mass issues, and thus in attracting students; it would probably help with retention of the tenure track person, and it might create a path towards a further tenure track hire for somebody who would already have roots in Eugene. The idea to create a parallel post-doc in Chicano/Latino history should also be considered, though it would be better yet if the administration could provide a tenure track line in this area; as noted above, this would be a "straddle hire" that could strengthen key fields while simultaneously opening a new one. The proposal for an Islamicist has been discussed above: we agree that this is a vital area for any 21st century university. The idea of a professorship in trans-national Asian history is also a good one: one could easily imagine that such a person would also build on existing strengths while opening up new areas. (The Chinese and Indian diasporas are obvious subjects that such a person might cover, but there are many others as well.)

The department has good morale and people are interested in making the effort required to help the program grow – but resources will be needed. We have discussed above (See “Development”) some recommendations that we believe might bring additional money to the Department.

Ultimately, however, the Department needs resources of a scale that they cannot be expected to raise for themselves. Perhaps most important, they need additional FTE – perhaps 4 (above and beyond replacements) over the next 6 years. Even with such an infusion, they would be quite a small department compared to their peer institutions. They would, however, be in a position to accommodate continued growth in majors without diluting quality, and to offer regular graduate courses (other than 612-614) that were solely for graduate students. Both of these are important goals that may well be impossible without further resources.

Adding a few faculty lines, as well as the further staff support discussed above, would be a good way of investing in a strong program that has shown it can make the most of what it gets, and has thought carefully about how it would utilize further resources. It would make it possible for the Department to raise its profile beyond the campus, especially as a center for research and graduate training, and to maintain its important roles on campus: as an attractive and rigorous major, a provider of high quality general education classes, and as a crucial partner and provider of leadership for programs in ethnic studies, area studies, and other areas. In short, even a modest increase in the University’s investment in the History Department could pay large dividends, and help a great deal in maintaining and improving the status of the campus overall.

Recommendations:

1. Expand the Department’s size by roughly 4 FTE (net) over the next few years.
2. Include in this expansion the positions discussed in the Department’s diversity proposal, including both replacement positions in African and African American history, and new positions for an Islamicist, a “transnational Asian” and/or a South Asian historian.
3. Provide the post-doctoral position in African American history described in the same proposal.
4. If possible, add an FTE in Chicano/Latino history. If not, consider a post-doc position in this area, too.
5. As retirements occur in “traditional” fields, consider crafting replacement positions that straddle multiple fields: e.g. historians who can teach both the history of some major European power and the history of some of its non-European colonies. In redeploying positions, avoid reducing the department’s commitment to pre-1700 histories any further.

6. Attempt to provide some supported research leave for junior faculty prior to their tenure decision, above and beyond whatever they may win in national competitions.

We recognize that our recommendations – particularly this final set – are not cheap, and that the University faces both straitened financial circumstances and reasonable requests for further funding from other units. We feel strongly, however, that a number of considerations make the case for investing in this department compelling. These include the strategic position of history (i.e. the synergies it offers with many other disciplines); the track record of this particular department in using its resources well; the current willingness of department members to extend themselves for the good of the whole; and, more ominously, the threat to the department's graduate program (and, ultimately to faculty retention) posed by increasingly attractive offers and programs at various competitor institutions.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Brick (Washington University in St. Louis)
Kenneth Pomeranz (University of California, Irvine), chair
Teofilo Ruiz (University of California, Los Angeles)