Tri-University Graduate Program in History
Annual Report 2009-10

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Director

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It was another year of considerable activity for the Tri-University Graduate Program in History. We expanded the advertising campaign launched in 2008-9, held the third international Tri-University History Program Conference, launched the alumni and fundraising campaigns, taught the first Tri-University MA summer course, and moved a proposal to create three new PhD major fields into its final approval stages. Applications for 2010-11 rose significantly at the PhD level and remained steady at the MA level. Because of financial uncertainties in 2010, the universities were again slower than we would like in sending out official acceptances and so, as of this moment, we are still unsure of our final acceptance ratios. This issue and the other program initiatives will be reviewed below:

A. The Year in Review:

1. Progress of students in the PhD Program:

PhD program revision was undertaken in order to streamline, simplify and focus the doctoral program in keeping with the recommendations of the OCGS appraisers’ report of 2007. The new program requirements are modeled around a four year-to-completion degree and they include a number of novel provisions, such as a teaching practicum, a colloquium, a single year of field work and a streamlined examination structure.

The 2009-10 cohort of 11 students is now completing their seminars and all are on course to sit their major fields in September. All but three of the 2008-9 cohort of admissions (the first to fall completely under the new program regulations), passed their comprehensive exams in fall 2009. We are currently examining this same cohort on their thesis proposals and as of this point 12 of the 17 have presented their proposals with 3 more to present in May (one of the deferred comprehensive exam students will also be presenting in May). Of the 2007-8 cohort of 14 students, all but three have now completed their thesis proposals and four still need to present their colloquium papers. We are pleased with the progress of the students through the doctoral program. From what we are hearing, the students appreciate having a more structured program and having faculty serving on committees more involved at earlier stages in the dissertation writing process.

One failed experiment in 2009-10 was the attempt to incorporate colloquium paper presentations into the Tri-University Conference. Because of time constraints and the presence of a large audience, the conference proved an unsatisfactory venue for an examination of a student’s work. Faculty responses indicate a preference for discrete colloquium sessions where students and committees have more time to discuss the papers.
2. MA Pre-registration System

The Tri-University MA-course Pre-registration system was inaugurated in May 2008. It allows students at the three universities to pre-register on the same day for courses at the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. In spring 2009, the pre-registration system was extended to include the University of Guelph. The on-line registration system was revised and updated and ran successfully in both May and October 2009. All three campuses are now participating in the MA registration system. The system will reopen for MA student registration on 15 May 2010.

3. MA Summer Course and Directed Studies Courses

The Tri-University Program launched its first team-taught MA seminars in summer 2009. The two courses mounted were designed to allow students in the course stream to finish program requirements in three consecutive terms and three consecutive-term MRP stream students to reduce course loads in fall and winter terms. A major goal was to eliminate the large number of independent study courses offered each year by establishing a regular summer course.

In each of the MA summer courses, one third of the classes were taught on each campus. Twelve students enrolled in each of the seminars but the results remained disappointing. Only 2 University of Guelph students and 1 University of Waterloo student enrolled in the courses. The disproportionate registration of WLU students meant that as an experiment in jointness the summer course was a failure. The experiment will not be repeated in 2010.

MA completion times and course loads remains problematic, but the program will attempt to address these issues through a revision and clarification of MA regulations. MRP students will be informed on entry to the program that independent study courses are allowed only under exceptional circumstances and that they must complete three courses in each of their fall and winter terms if they intend to graduate in three consecutive terms. Course work students will be informed that they may only take this option if they are prepared to return in the fall term of their second year.

The program is determined to reduce the number of directed readings courses to the minimum and to concentrate student learning in the regular seminars.

4. Advertising and Promotion

The Tri-University program expanded the scope of its advertising and promotional campaign in 2009-10. Existing poster advertising and our one-page handouts were sent out to all Canadian universities and were featured at university recruiting fairs. For the 2009 recruiting year the program also experimented with targeted advertising at a American colleges without their own graduate programs in 4 north eastern states. The program prepared 3 more postcard advertisements promoting different areas in the program was also created and sent out to all Canadian history departments and the targeted US colleges.
for distribution. The postcards feature short-profiles of faculty teaching in areas of program strength. The postcards are designed for both MA and PhD recruiting. The format is a good one as the postcards are small enough to be emailed, are used as pop-ups on the website and can be pinned on campus bulletin-boards. Three more postcards are planned for summer 2010 and with this next set, the initial run of postcard advertisements will be complete.

Although there is obvious value in spreading the program’s name and reputation, tangible results from the promotional activities were limited. Only two MA and one PhD application originated from the targeted US colleges and MA applications remained stable.

It is still too early to judge the effectiveness of the program’s advertising because there isn’t an immediate and clear connection between promotion and recruiting. Consistency and repetition are needed to establish a program’s profile and so we will be continuing with our promotional activities even while we explore new methods of attracting student attention.

The Tri-University website, which was launched in September 2007 is, however, one very effective and proven promotional instrument. Since it was created, the website has received a total of 36,000 unique visits. Visits to the website have increased steadily year by year. From April 2009 and April 2010 it received 20,000 discrete visits (more in that one year than in the previous eighteen months). It is hard to know for certain how many visitors are coming to the site from outside the Tri-University community, but one indicator may be the fact that 10,000 visits to the site were made through Google and other search engines (visits from external search engines quadrupled in 2009-10).

5. Connecting to the Alumni and Fundraising

External fund raising is a priority if the program is to continue to grow and attract the finest applicants. Among targets for fund raising are international student scholarships and fee-waivers, student research and travel fellowships and funds to support collaborative faculty research. The director met with the Development officers at the three universities to design a strategy for fund-raising. Following on their recommendations, a letter was sent to all program alumni inviting them to the Tri-University Conference in February 2010. In addition, proposals have been submitted to the University Development offices at UG and WLU for targeted gifts.

Ongoing contact with the alumni will be maintained over the coming year in order to interest them further in the program. The director has begun discussions with the TUGSA executive about establishing a newsletter which can be mailed electronically to our alumni. TUGSA is currently advertising for a newsletter editor.

6. Doctoral Field Development

For a program of its size, the Tri-University is surprisingly narrow in its formal scope. The program is authorized by OCGS to advertise in only 6 doctoral fields, which leaves many of the country’s leading faculty unrepresented in our PhD field structure. A proposal for new fields in “Cold War Era” history and “Medieval” history was prepared in the fall of 2008 together with a proposal to transform the “Race, Imperialism and Slavery” field into a “World History” field.
The new fields have now been approved by the two of the three universities and the proposal is in the final stage of review at the University of Guelph. The goal of field expansion is to broaden the base of faculty supervision and to involve in the program the substantial body of individuals whose areas of expertise are not covered by the existing doctoral fields. By broadening our areas of potential study the new fields should also increase our ability to attract good applicants. We anticipate making the new fields available to students in September 2010.

7. Tri-University Program Conference

The Tri-University Program Conference has been held annually for 16 years. It provides a forum for the program’s graduate students and faculty to present papers and discuss their research. It connects students and faculty in the program to scholars working at other universities. The conference also operates as an advertisement for the program, attracting visitors and potential students from area universities. This year the conference organizers (Elizabeth Ewan and Catharine Wilson, UG) placed the call for papers on H-Net (the leading website for academic historians) and several other conferencing sites and we receive proposals from a large number of students and faculty. This year’s conference at the University of Guelph, featured fifty presenters from Canada, the United States, the Caribbean and Europe. A slightly higher percentage of presenters than usual were from inside the program: 27 Tri-University students and faculty, 13 students and faculty from Canadian universities, and 7 students and faculty from non-Canadian universities. The drop in international and non-program presenters was in part due to the fact that we moved the conference from November to February. The mid-winter date appears to have discouraged out-of-province and international applications. Although the large numbers of internal students presenting is a wonderful indicator of our students’ activities and a testament to their abilities, the conference must also serve as an international advertisement for the program. We do not want the conference to become a forum for in-house talent and will strive to ensure that at least half the presenters are from outside the program.

In addition to session participants, the conference continues its tradition of inviting an internationally celebrated academic to provide the keynote address. This year’s presenter was Dr. Rashid Khalidi, Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies at Columbia University. Professor Khalidi is editor of the Journal of Palestine Studies, and was President of the Middle East Studies Association, and an advisor to the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid and Washington Arab-Israeli peace negotiations from October 1991 until June 1993. He is author of Sowing Crisis: American Dominance and the Cold War in the Middle East (2009); The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood (2006); Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East (2004); Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness (1997); Under Siege: PLO Decision-Making During the 1982 War (1986); and British Policy Towards Syria and Palestine, 1906-1914 (1980), and was the co-editor of Palestine and the Gulf (1982) and The Origins of Arab Nationalism (1991).

Attendance at the conference was strong this year, with one hundred and twenty faculty, students and guests attending.
8. Recruiting

The Tri-University program recruits intensively. Our goal is to process applications quickly and to be the first offer made to successful applicants. All applications to the program are reviewed by an admissions committee made up of the director and the three graduate officers. No offers are made without the approval of all three graduate officers. Electronic offers are sent out by the individual graduate officers and the director telephones all students admitted to explain to them the distinct features and advantages of our program. Supervisors then contact their potential students to discuss the students’ projects. The graduate officers and director follow up with additional communications. It is a time-consuming and labour intensive process and it depends on our speed in assembling, processing and following up on applications. The graduate officers in the program work extremely hard to ensure the success of the process, they work wonderfully well together, share all information on funding and admissions and devote countless hours to recruiting.

8.1 2009-10 Admission Targets

The History Departments at Wilfrid Laurier University, the University of Waterloo and the University of Guelph looked to maintain MA admissions levels of 2009. MA targets were kept steady at 60. At the PhD level, UG and UW both set steady state targets (9 between the two departments), while WLU increased its admission target from 3 to 7.

8.2 2009-10 Recruiting

For the 2008-9 academic year we received 169 applications (127 MA and 32 PhD); for the 2009-10 academic year we received 150 applications (109 MA and 41 PhD). For 2010-11 we received 164 applications (105 MA and 59 PhD). The dramatic rise in PhD applications, noted in the last report, is again worth highlighting. It is surely a sign of the program’s higher profile and the success of its revised four-year program structure. It also evidences the program’s place among the most prominent doctoral programs in the country. MA applications were down again slightly which remains a troubling and perplexing issue. Increasing the number of MA applications must be the program’s top recruiting priority.

8.3 2009-10 Admissions

Ultimately, 61 MA and 20 PhD offers were extended. To date we have received 40 MA and 12 PhD acceptances and 11 MA and 5 PhD rejections. We are gratified that MA acceptance rates to date are back up to the 80% level of 2008 (they had fallen to 60% in 2009) and that PhD acceptance rates remain at a healthy 70%. It is worth noting that prior to preparing an improved funding package in 2009, WLU’s acceptance rate on PhD offers was 40%. Since the new financial package was put in place in 2009, WLU’s admission rates match the Tri-University average of 70%.

We were again dismayed by the slow pace at which the universities processed our recommendations for admission in many cases, acceptance letters only went out week
after we had contacted the students. This makes a very poor impression and the universities are urged to try to coordinate their processing of files more closely with the program’s.

8.4 The Crisis at the University of Guelph

Admissions in 2010 were severely affected by a financial crisis at the University of Guelph which hit just as offers to applicants were being extended. The program was first instructed to freeze all offers and then to curtail further funded admissions. The financial panic which gripped the university seriously impaired recruiting. We responded as best we could, by transferring as many qualified UG MA and PhD applications to the other Tri-University departments and attempting to secure as many un-funded admissions as possible. It is troubling that the university did not consider the impact of the cuts on the Tri-University program which is a resource shared by three universities. Individual actions cannot be taken by any one institution without affecting the others and special consideration needs to be given to joint programs by single-campus decision-makers. Since three universities have embraced the concept of jointness in graduate programs, they cannot ignore the special responsibilities which that concept entails. The crisis at UG is responsible for the 10 outstanding MA offers noted in 8.3 above.

9. Tri-University Graduate Students Association

In the spring of 2008, graduate students at the three institutions met together and drafted a constitution creating the first students association covering the three campuses. The Tri-University Graduate Student Association (TUGSA) was again busy in 2009-10 organizing activities of special interest to students of the program. TUGSA started the year with a canoe trip on the Grand River and a pub night in Guelph that attracted more than forty students. Other social activities included pub nights, a Christmas party, and skating. The Association also undertook educational activities for graduate students, holding information sessions for M.A. students considering a PhD (one at Guelph with speakers Dr. Susan Nance and PhD student Heather Parker and one at Waterloo with speakers Dr. Geoffrey Hayes and PhD student Serge Dupuis). In February, we hosted a well-attended session entitled “Non-Academic Careers in History” open to both graduate and undergraduate students. Elisabeth Adrian from UW Career Services spoke about career planning and Dr. Ryan Touhey, Dr. Tim Cook and Dr. Roger Sarty all spoke about their experiences working outside the academic realm with a doctorate in history. We finished the year with a Film and History Night entitled “Three Films that Shook the World” with speakers Dr. Dan Gorman, Dr. Dana Weiner, and Jonathan Crossen at Wilfrid Laurier University. Throughout the year we have also continued a project that we began last summer in conjunction with the director to improve the Tri-University website. We have instituted a paid student position for the Tri-U to make repairs to and update the website on a regular basis. Student and faculty web pages are currently in the process of being updated.
10. Success of Tri-University Students

It was an outstanding year for Tri-University’s students. Appendix A contains a list of major external award holders in 2008-9 and Appendix B lists student conference and publication activity.

More than 9 scholarly articles published and 46 conference papers were delivered by our students in 2008-9.

The program funded travel to international and Canadian conferences for 11 PhD students.
Appendix A

Student Awards (External)

OGS Award Winners:

Evan Bernier (UW, MA)
Shane Martin (UW, MA)
Ryan Kirkby (UW, PhD)

SSHRC Award Winners:

Andrea Gal (WLU, MA)
Jonathan Minnes (WLU, MA)
Geoff Keelan (UW, MA)
Kellen Kurschinski (UW, MA)
Scott Harrison (UW, MA)
Jeremy Wiebe (UW, PhD)
Serge Dupuis (UW, PhD)
Jill Campbell-Miller (UW, PhD) Canada Graduate Scholarship
Ian Haight (UW, PhD)
Jonathan Crossen (UW, PhD)
Nathan Hatton (UW, PhD)
Katherine McGowan (UW, PhD)
Erica German (UG, MA) Canada Graduate Scholarship
Jason Wilson (UG, PhD)
Chris Los (UG, MA) Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship
Appendix B

Student Scholarly Publications and Conferences

Conference Papers Presented:


Luke Stewart (PhD) “History from the Bottom-Up:” On Radical History and Radical Historians.” Graduate Women’s Studies Student Association, York University Activism and the Academy: Struggles Against Hegemony, 16 April 2010


Norman Erwin (PhD), "Kristallnacht: A turning Point in Canadian Antisemitism?" Invited Conference Paper to be presented at the Kristallnacht Conference, York University, Toronto (Oct. 2010).


Jodi Campbell (PhD), "'To Insult the Church and Ruffle the Magistrates': James Greenshields and Episcopalian Networks of Resistance, 1707-1712." Jacobites and Anti-Jacobites, Culture and Diaspora Conference. University of Strathclyde. 24-26 June 2010.


Anthony Hampton (PhD), "'I don’t think Canadians are going to sit still and let it happen': The New Brunswick Ad Hoc Committee on the Constitution and Citizens’ Response to the Meech Lake Accord" 11th Annual University of Maine / University of New Brunswick International History Graduate Student Conference, 25-27 September 2009.

Jill Campbell-Miller (PhD), “Federal Approaches to Regional Development in Canada’s Resource Dependent Communities in Old Economy Regions: The Role of Nature in Social Change”, Adaptation and Resistance Workshop, St. Catharine’s, Brock University, October, 2009

Alan Downey (PhD), “our game, and now we have the voice to tell the world: The Haudenosaunee’s Re-appropriation of Lacrosse, 1970-1990” Sport and Society International Conference, University of British Columbia, 8-10 March 2010

Alan Downey (PhD), “Presenting The Last Vestiges of Savage Play: Six Nations Iroquois Lacrosse in the Late 19th Century” North American Society for Sport History Coronado Springs Resort & Convention Center 28-31 May 2010

Ryan Stackhouse (MA), "Apologist for the Infallible: Ranke on the Prussian Kings" at the McGill-Queen's Graduate Student Conference in History on March 14th 2009

Ryan Stackhouse (MA), "Life on the Political Fringe: The Gestapo's Treatment of 'Racial Comrades' and Outcasts in the Files of 'Radio Criminals'" at the Tri-University History Conference on February 27th 2010
Jonathan Crossen (PhD), and Bessma Momani and Jonathan Crossen. "Rebuking Soviet IMF Membership in an Era of Glasnost." The Review of International Affairs, Vol. LXI, No. 1137 (January/March 2010)


Jeff Nilsson (PhD), "'No Patience for the Patriot who Thinks Himself Too Good': The Legion of Frontiersmen and Recruitment in Canada, 1914-1915" 21st Military History Colloquium. Apr 29th-May 1st, 2010. Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo

Jonathan Crossen, (PhD) "Indigenous Internationalism: Beginnings and Meanings," Tri-University Graduate Conference, Waterloo, 27 February 2010

Nathan Hatton (PhD), "Thrashing Seasons; Roughness, respectability and Professional Wrestling on the Canadian Prairies Before 1930," presented at the University of Saskatchewan, 29 October 2009.


Heather Parker (PhD), “The Management of Marriage in Pre-Reformation Scotland: family Power and Social Status in the Carnegie Family”. To Have and to Hold: Marriage in Pre-Modern Europe, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto17 October 2009.


James Jensen (PhD), ”Group Dynamics and the Fluctuating Nature of Canadian Views Towards the Other”, The conference was the 14th Annual New Frontiers Graduate History Conference, York University, Toronto, 20th February 2010.

Kristin Hall (PhD), Participant in the Oxford Journals Doctoral Colloquium in Business History, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.


Michael Pitblado (PhD), “Between the Lines: An Assessment of the Havemann Controversy and the Nazification of German Football?”. History in the Making Graduate Student Conference, Concordia University, Montreal, March 6, 2010.


Serge Dupuis (PhD), « L’émergence d’un groupe nationalitaire franco-floridien? L’exemple de la communauté francophone de Palm Beach (Floride) », 77e Congrès de l’ACFAS, Ottawa, 14 mai 2009.

Suzette Blom (PhD), "Jews, divorce and the French revolution: building a secular identity". Tri-University History Conference, Guelph University Minorities, Rights and the State 28 February 2010 paper also presented in Toronto and Ottawa.

Katharine McGowan (PhD), “Lions of the Frontier: Strathcona’s Horse, the Boer War, and Canadian Settler Identity”. Paper Presented at the From Borderland to Backcountry: Frontier Communities in Comparative Perspectives, Dundee University, Dundee, Scotland, July 2009.

**Journal Article Publications:**


Other Publications


Tavis Harris (PhD), review of: Shaw, Amy J. Crisis of Conscience: Conscientious Objection in Canada During the First World War. Left History (Publication Forthcoming).


Nino Scavello (PhD), review of: If We Must Die: Shipboard Insurrections in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade. In *The Northern Mariner*, Volume XX, No. 3, July 2010 (Book Review) (expected publication date)

Elizabeth Ritchie (PhD), review of: The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women, Family and Community Studies (forthcoming)