The year 2012-2013 marked Dr. Andrew Hunt’s final year as director of the Tri-University Program in History. The program continues to slowly evolve in various ways, while still retaining certain aspects of the new structure implemented as a result of the massive overhaul that followed the 2007 OCGS review. Hunt characterizes his tenure as Tri-University director as having a largely “wait and see” approach – that is, assessing which aspects of the new system implemented in 2007-08 work and which do not. Because the changes to the program at that time were so extensive, it took time to assess the real strengths and weaknesses of the Tri-University Program in the aftermath. This report will thus contain not only an assessment of the state of the program now, but it will also offer Hunt’s views on possible new directions for the program in the years ahead.

A. The Year in Review (2012-2013)

1. The PhD Program

On ongoing concern of the current director is the inability of doctoral students to complete the program in four years. In Ontario, universities receive grants from the provincial government to support PhD students for four years of study. This has remained a problem during the 2012-13 academic year. The model of a four-year funded program does not jibe with typical doctoral completion times. Even one more additional funded year would likely encourage and result in much faster doctoral completion rates. The Tri-University Program in History is not alone in the difficult adjustment to a four-year regimen. An article in *University Affairs* (February 6, 2013) titled, “The PhD is in Need of Revision,” noted that many other universities across Canada are grappling with the same issue. As the article noted:

For those about to enter doctoral studies, the statistics are sobering. The completion times are long and the success rates, though improving, are dismally low in certain disciplines.... Yet, PhD enrolment continues to climb, more than quadrupling over the past 30 years. The increase was spurred by government policies that sought to fill a perceived labour market need for highly skilled workers and to keep pace with the United States and other industrialized countries that outrank Canada in PhD production. Since 2000, almost 200 new doctoral programs were launched in Ontario alone, according to data compiled by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. Enrolment growth occurred in almost all disciplines and was strongest at mid-sized institutions.
The piece in *University Affairs* went on to discuss the problem of long completion times in doctoral programs and highlighted struggles at certain campuses such as Queen’s, where large sums of the university’s budget are spent on funding doctoral students beyond four years. Ultimately, the article suggested that faculty in the humanities and social sciences could be doing a better job to shepherd their doctoral students through programs faster. One factor the article emphasized was the relative isolation of humanities and social sciences students: “Students in the social sciences and humanities more often work alone while those in the natural and health sciences collaborate on research projects with colleagues and supervisors. Research shows that students who work on teams are less likely to abandon their studies.”

While there is no doubt that faculty could and should be looking at ways to facilitate the advancement of students in the doctoral program, it is also true that the province’s decision to scale back to the four-year funding model will likely prove detrimental to Canadian higher education in the long run. Our PhD candidates are facing a tight job market, which often includes direct competition with newly minted American PhDs who enjoyed longer periods of funding in their programs. The goal of Canadian higher education should be to encourage the highest quality output of research, but fully funding that research and giving Canadian scholars in the making the support they need to make it through their programs, is crucial.

The conventional wisdom is that the four-year model is here to stay and there is nothing that can be done to change it. However, it makes sense for university faculty and administrators to act as advocates for their doctoral candidates and defend the implementation of a more feasible funding model. As mentioned earlier, even the addition of one more year of funding would make a tremendous difference to candidates in doctoral programs. The province of Ontario, now confronting massive deficits, may not ever adopt such a model. They should understand, though, that the four-year model is not ideal and even has the potential to undermine the ability of some PhD students to successfully complete their programs.

Even with all of the limitations of a four-year program, doctoral students in the Tri-University Program are effectively coping with the challenges of time constraints. There were several doctoral defences in the last year (*listed below*), and the number of requested comprehensive exam deferrals remained low and were successfully completed. Four students from the previous year’s (2011-12) first-year cohort requested – and received – comprehensive exam deferrals, and those four successfully completed their comprehensive exams in Winter Term 2013, according to the timetable. While not as high as the 70 percent deferral rate of Dr. Hunt’s first year (2010-11) as Tri-University Director, in a cohort that contained 10 (one dropped out, bringing from 11 to 10), four deferrals is 40 percent of the first-year doctoral students from 2011-12, which means the Tri-U Program is not quite out of the woods yet with this issue of deferred exams. Fortunately, going into the 2013-14 academic year, there has been only one deferral request from the 2012-13 doctoral student cohort. This is definitely a good sign.
On a bright note, the Program also welcomed back Christopher Bowles in 2012-13, who dropped out in the 2011-12 due to health reasons. We are pleased to he not only returned to the program, but did superb work in all of his Doctoral Fields during the 2012-13 academic year.

1.A. Successful PhD Defences in the 2012-2013 Academic Year

Congratulations to our newly minted PhDs for their successful thesis defences in 2012-13! They are:

**Suzette Blom**, “Implications of Jewish divorces that became causes célèbres: The reform of Jewish status and juridical centralization” (Supervisor: William Cormack), University of Guelph, January 28, 2013.

**Laura Greaves**, “’No longer helpless recipients of food and clothing’: UNRRA’s work rehabilitating the DPs in the American Zone of occupation in Germany, 1945-1947” (Supervisor: Lynne Taylor), University of Waterloo, April 29, 2013.

**Tavis Harris**, ”Treaty is better than a Battleship: Canada, Autonomy and Interwar Naval Disarmament” (Supervisor: Roger Sarty), Wilfrid Laurier University, April 29, 2013.


**Daniel MacLeod**, “Servants to St. Mungo: The Church in Sixteenth-Century Glasgow” (Supervisors: Elizabeth Ewan and Peter Goddard), June 14, 2013.

**Jan Raska**, “Freedom’s Voices: Czech and Slovak Immigration to Canada during the Cold War” (Supervisor: Marlene Epp), University of Waterloo, May 22, 2013.


2. The MA Program

Unlike the PhD Program, which seems to absorb a great deal of the director’s time and attention, the MA Program is far more self-sufficient, self-regulating and therefore generally lower maintenance. In large part, this has to do with the strong degree of institutional support for the MA Program and the relatively short duration of the program’s length. Unlike the PhD Program, the MA Program involves far more direct planning by department chairs and administrators. Courses are scheduled for times and locations far in advance of when they’re taught. Faculty that teach MA courses receive teaching credit for those courses at all three campuses. By contrast,
PhD Fields are scheduled much closer to when doctoral students are accepted into the program (due to unpredictable numbers and individual areas of scholarly focus), and Tri-U faculty teach Doctoral Fields on an overload, good citizen/labour of love basis. The MA Program is also a much shorter program than its PhD counterpart. The average duration for students in the MA program is one year (with a significant minority taking an extra term or two beyond the year in order to finish their theses), a far shorter than the length of time that of Doctoral students. As a result of all of these combined factors, MA students tend to be less invested in the graduate program and more inclined to complete it with minimal direction and supervision.

MA students also represent a much more transient or constantly shifting element of graduate student culture than PhD students. It is harder to get MA students to attend graduate student events and more difficult to persuade them to become involved with TUGSA. The brief and highly structured nature of their program often means that MA students are singularly focused on first completing MA seminars, then researching and writing their MRPs or theses. The essence of the program creates a natural barrier preventing many MA students from playing a more active role in graduate student culture. How to overcome this problem has been an ongoing concern of past directors and leaders of TUGSA, who have always been Doctoral students. This is not to say that MA participation in extracurricular graduate student activities has been nonexistent. There has always been a fairly robust coterie of MA students that have participated in events and attended the Tri-University Conference. Still, their numbers tend to be small, and they are often the most dedicated MA students with ambitions for continued graduate studies beyond the MA.

The main vexing issue for the Tri-U Director remains MA Pre-Registration. It is a cumbersome system involving a sometimes confusing Pre-Registration Website, coupled with the burdensome requirement of our MA students having to get OVGS (Ontario Visiting Graduate Student) forms signed to take courses at campuses other than the home campus. The Pre-Registration Website ought to be replaced. It was created by a private Web Developer around 2008 with the goal of creating First-Come, First-Served MA Class Enrolment Lists, which would secure seats for students (especially in popular MA courses), yet still necessitate OVGS paperwork. The Pre-Registration is still run by the same Web Developer and it is sorely in need of institutionalized technical support. In December 2012, an especially harrowing breakdown of the system delayed the preregistration process by a week and a half. It should be noted that outgoing director Andrew Hunt did seek and initially received support from the University of Waterloo to redesign the Pre-Registration Website and host it on the UW computer network. Regrettably, UW’s Arts Computing representatives backed away from their initial agreement and ended up not providing the support they promised. Now that the Tri-University Program is moving to Guelph, it makes a great deal of sense for that campus to take over the transfer and running of that website.
3. The 19th Annual Tri-University Conference

The 19th Annual Tri-University Conference in History, with the theme “New Approaches to History,” was held Saturday, March 23, 2013. It was an enormously successful conference, thanks in large part to the decision by conference organizers Dr. Catherine Carstairs and Caitlyn Holton to focus internally on exciting research going on in the Tri-University Graduate Program in History. The turnout of around 85 registrants proved to be the most successful participation rate since the last Tri-U Conference held at the University of Guelph in 2010 (which weighed in at slightly over 100 participants).

The keynote speakers at this year’s conference were all newer scholars in the Tri-U Program who spoke about their innovative research. Dr. Ian Milligan at the University of Waterloo, Dr. Amy Milne-Smith at Wilfrid Laurier University, and Dr. Norman Smith at the University of Guelph, each highlighted the challenges and rewards of thinking outside the box when doing research, and adopting new approaches and methods. The general sentiment following the conference, largely based on anecdotal evidence, is that this conference was widely viewed by all three campuses as a success and a much-needed shift back to focusing on the Tri-University Program’s remarkable faculty and students. It was a welcome change from the limited focus of the 2010-11 conference at Waterloo, and the low turnout/participation at the 2011-12 conference at Laurier.

It should be noted that this conference was the first to be organized by a successful collaboration between a faculty member at the host university (Dr. Carstairs) and representatives of the Tri-University Graduate Student Association. At a meeting at the end of Winter Term 2012, the Tri-University Program Coordinating Committee (consisting of the three Graduate Officers) arrived at a consensus agreement that henceforth, all Tri-University Program Conferences should be planned in consultation with a Tri-University Conference Program Advisory Committee that has three graduate student representatives (from all three campuses) voted onto the committee by TUGSA members. This change comes at the suggestion of graduate students who voiced a desire to have more input in future Tri-University Program conferences.

4. Admissions

We witnessed a slight decline in numbers this year in admissions, yet the overall rate remained relatively consistent with past figures. The Tri-University Program had 27 PhD applications (compared to last year’s – 2012-13 – figure of 30) and 96 MA applications (up from last year’s figure of 91). Some comparative figures: For the 2008-9 academic year we received 169 applications (127 MA and 32 Ph.D.); for the 2009-10 academic year we received 150 applications (109 MA and 41 Ph.D.). In 2010-11 we received 164 applications (105 MA and 59 Ph.D.). For the 2011-2012 academic year, we received 151 applications to the program: 112 MA and 39 Ph.D.).
The numbers of both PhD and MA applications have declined somewhat but still seem to be holding steady at respectable levels. This may have something to do with the current director’s move away from the intense recruitment policies of the previous Tri-University Director. It is hard to say, however, because previous recruitment campaigns typically consisted of sending printed material to other campuses, and there has never been any effective means of gauging the success (or lack thereof) of these outreach efforts. Any evidence in favour or opposition to such recruitment policies is purely anecdotal.

One significant concern during the past year around the admissions process was the decision to remove the portable status of OGS scholarships. OGS scholarships are now anchored to the campus where an applicant applies. When an applicant applies to the Tri-University Program, she or he is supposed to select a preferred department, and they under the new rules of the OGS scholarship, they are supposed to select a home campus for each application. This creates problems with student mobility in the Tri-University Graduate Program. Under the old system, the director and the three graduate chairs could trade files back and forth among the three campuses, and because OGS funding was portable, there was never an issue. Now that OGS funding is linked to specific campuses and cannot be moved, this potentially undercuts the ability of the Tri-University director and the three graduate chairs to trade files from campus to campus.

It is certainly the case that this development represents a possible barrier to a fully integrated Tri-University Program. Efforts by the current director to alter the regulations, and return to the old system of OGS funding, were largely unsuccessful. This included contacting officials in the Ontario Ministry of Education (who were not particularly helpful and could not steer the director to anybody that could help) and contacting the heads of other joint programs, who also seemed at a loss of what to do to preserve student mobility. On the positive side, the students that apply for and receive OGS funding are typically the best and brightest, and most seem to have a firm idea of precisely which campus they wish to study at, and who they want as an advisor. This may or may not be an issue for Tri-University directors. Lobbying the Ministry and contacting other heads of joint programs are the most obvious approaches to seeking a solution to the problem. In the end, there may not be a solution, and the matter might end up being beyond the control of the program’s director.

5. Acknowledgment and Thanks.

The director benefited hugely from the support of the three graduate chairs at Laurier, Waterloo and Guelph. He wishes to thank Dr. Suzanne Zeller (WLU), Dr. Sofie Lachapelle and Dr. Linda Mahood (UG), and Dr. Dan Gorman (UW) for all of their work and support. In particular, Dr. Gorman should be singled out for his hard work on the onerous six-year self-study that fell into his lap on this rotation. He went above and beyond the call of duty in writing the report and collecting data for it. The support from the other grad chairs also proved indispensable in this matter.
The job would have also been impossible without the three administrative assistants, Donna Lang (UW), Cindi Wieg (WLU) and Michael Boterman (UG). The three chairs, Dr. Peter Goddard (UG), Dr. Darren Mulloy and Dr. David Monod (WLU) and Dr. Gary Bruce (UW) consistently backed the program throughout the year. The three Deans of Arts, Dr. Michael Carroll (WLU), Dr. Doug Peers (UW) and Dr. Donald Bruce (UG) proved, once more, incredibly generous with funding and support, and deserve strong thanks for their advocacy. Jonathan Crossen deserves strong thanks for his superb Website maintenance, as does Michelle Filice for her remarkable work as editor of the newsletter Triumvirate.

Finally, special thanks are reserved for Diane Purdy. The Tri-University Graduate Program in History would be essentially a non-functioning program if it weren’t for Diane. Always professional, gracious, efficient and quick in responding to emails and all concerns, Diane proved to be an absolutely vital presence and a key force in the running of the program. The duties for which she ought to be thanked are far too numerous to list here, but she has proven to be both the nerve centre and the heart of the program. So many of its successes are due to her diligence, hard work and unwavering professionalism.
Appendix A

Student Scholarly Publications and Conferences, 2012-13

Conference Papers Presented:


Sara Wilmhurst (PhD), "How to Eat Like a Canadian: Centennial Cookbooks and the Celebration of Identity" 2013 Tri-University History Conference.

Christopher Greenlaw (MA), Tri-U Conference 2012: Christopher Greenlaw (MA Candidate - Wilfrid Laurier University), "Failure to Act: The Rise and Fall of Nova Scotia’s United Steel Workers Local 1064 During the 1890s"


Christopher Greenlaw (MA), Tri-U Conference 2013: "Six Days In May: The American portion of the 1939 Royal Visit to Canada, the United States and Newfoundland and the development of the Anglo-American Alliance"

Christopher Greenlaw (MA), 2013 Canadian Nautical Research Society Annual Conference: "Railways at Sea - The Contribution of Canadian Railway Maritime Assets at War."


Lisa Cox (PhD), 2013, “"Tales from the Vault: Veterinary Medicine and Material History at the Ontario Veterinary College" Wellington County Historical Society, Wellington County, Ontario.


Lisa Cox (PhD), 2012, “Transnational Disease, Local Consequences: Bovine Tuberculosis in Ontario and New York State, 1890-1917,” American Veterinary Medical History Society, Ontario Veterinary College, Ontario.


Frank Maas (PhD), Paper presented at the Tri-University History Conference, March 2012 - “Defence Procurement in Canada: The Bison Armoured Vehicle.”

Frank Maas (PhD), International Committee for the History of Technology conference in July 2012 – “Transforming the American Army after the Cold War.”


Whitney Wood (PhD), “‘A Polarity of Expectations’: Vera Roberts and Outpost Nursing in the Canadian North.” Histories North and South, Tri-University Graduate History Conference, Waterloo, ON, March 2012.

Geoff Keelan (PhD), May 2012 22nd Military History Colloquium, University of Western Ontario, "“Our Own Kind of Peace”: Landmine Disarmament, the Ottawa Treaty and the Fading of Canadian Humanitarianism"

Andrew McLaughlin (PhD), "The Embedded Press Revolution: Cooperation, Camaraderie and the New Military-Press Relationship" at the Florida Conference of Historians, Lake City Florida, 26 February 2012.


Allan Downey, "Engendering Nationality: Haudenosaunee Nation Building, Sport, and the Lines of Gender," at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association at Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo, 30 May 2012.

Carla Marano (PhD), “‘The Splendid Work Our Women Have Done’: African-Canadian Women in the UNIA,” Presented at the Freedom Landing Festival Conference, January 28th, 2012 in Amherstburg, Ontario


Heather Parker (PhD), “Gender and Authority in the Late Medieval Scottish Marriage Market,” 5 May 2012, Gender and Transgression in the Middle Ages St Andrews, Scotland.


Jill Campbell-Miller (PhD), "Reluctant Beneficiaries: Cold War Politics, Economic Development, and Bilateral Aid in Nehru's India", at the LSE-GWU-UCSB International Graduate Conference on the Cold War at the London School of Economics, April 20, 2012.

Jill Campbell-Miller (PhD), "'The Canadian position was bound to be equivocal': Canada's Entry into the Colombo Plan, 1949-1952" at the Canadian Historical Association Meeting, University of Waterloo, May 29, 2012.


Katie McCullough (PhD), “‘For Their Own Good’: British Philanthropy and the origins of the Native Residential School System in Canada, 1822-1922.” At the 2012 British Scholar Conference (Britain and the World), University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK, 21-23 June 2012.


Journal Article Publications:

Sara Wilmhurst, "Tobacco Truths: Health Magazine, Clinical Epidemiology and the Cigarette Connection" accepted for publication in the Canadian Bulletin of Medical History (forthcoming).


Marc-André Gagnon (PhD), « ’Relever le niveau moral et intellectuel du peuple’’ : l’action politique du député ouvrier A. T. Lépine (1888-1896) », soumit au Bulletin d’histoire politique, (currently under review for the Fall 2012 number)

Other Publications

Lisa Cox (PhD) and Peter Conlon. Milestones: 150 Years of the Ontario Veterinary College. Guelph: Ontario Veterinary College, 2013.


Thomas Wendelboe (PhD), “’In a League by Themselves:’ The Exclusionary Nature of Advertised Health Discourse in Men’s Leisure Magazines” (forthcoming), Gender and Health: Histories, Barbara Brookes, Wendy Mitchinson and Tracy Penny Light, editors.


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


Carla Marano (PhD), Book review of Race on Trial: Black Defendants in Ontario’s Criminal Courts, 1858–1958, by Barrington Walker, *Canadian Historical Review* 93.2 (June 2012).
