

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Senate Committee on University Priorities
Memorandum

TO: Senate

FROM: John Waterhouse
Chair, SCUP and
Vice President, Academic

RE: Department of Humanities

DATE: October 24, 2007

The Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP) has reviewed the External Review Report on the Department of Humanities, together with responses from the Chair and Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, and input from the Associate Vice President, Academic.

Motion :

That Senate approve the recommendations from the Senate Committee on University Priorities concerning advice to the Department of Humanities and the Dean of Arts & Social Sciences on priority items resulting from the External Review.

The report of the External Review Committee* for the Department of Humanities was submitted in May following the review team's site visit. The site visit took place March 2007. The response from the Department of Humanities and the response from the Dean were received in June 2007.

The Review Team reported that the *'Humanities Programme is clearly a shining star'*. The Team was highly impressed with the curriculum, the academic productivity of the faculty and the intellectual maturity of the students. A number of recommendations were made by the Team which may further strengthen the Department.

SCUP recommends to Senate that the Department of Humanities and the Dean of Arts & Social Sciences be advised to pursue the following as priority items.

1. Curriculum

- Consider introducing study of the pre-classical Greek cultures and adding related thematic studies.
- Continue to prioritize the hiring of faculty to teach courses on the relationship of culture-science-society.

- Explore the pros and cons of a 'historicist' approach to understanding Western cultural evolution via a departmental seminar.
- Consider reviewing the introduction of prerequisite courses to upper division courses.
- Reassess the format of the Capstone course to provide strong preparation for graduate school.

2. Faculty

- Explore with the Dean the possibility of hiring a Chinese or Indian scholar in the area of art and culture, a language instructor in Greek and Latin, replacements in the areas of science, culture and religion and fine arts and humanities.
- Consider an external search for the next Department Chair.

3. Staff

- Appreciating the pressures on resources, explore with the Dean the appointment of an additional support person to assist with a new MA programme.

4. Asia-Canada Programme

- Further integrate the Asia-Canada Programme with the Department of Humanities and enhance the public image of the programme.

Dr. Peter Emberley – Review Team Chair (Carlton University)
 Dr. Haijo Westra (University of Calgary)
 Dr. Yuen-Fong Woon (University of Victoria)

CC Lesley Cormack, Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
 Stephen Duguid, Chair, Dept of Humanities

External Review of the Department of Humanities
Simon Fraser University

Report of the External Review Team:

Peter Emberely (Chair)
Haijo Westra
Yuen-Fong Woon
Michael Kenny (Internal)

Site Visit: March 14– 16, 2007

Report Submitted: April 16, 2007

REPORT ON THE SFU HUMANITIES PROGRAM

With 116 majors the Humanities program is clearly a shining star. Since the last review, it continues to service the university, now with 2277 students registered in its courses, and it has also now developed a clear, dynamic focus, which ensures its visibility within the spectrum of liberal arts programs in Canada. The evaluation team was highly impressed with the comprehensiveness of the curriculum, the rigor and academic productivity of the faculty, the intellectual maturity of the students, the energetic engagement among the students, and the initiatives under study ensuring future success.

I) Quality of Teaching Program

The quality of teaching is by all measures exceptionally high. Teaching evaluations were consistently very high, and written comments very favorable. Statements such as, "Probably the most life-changing influential educational course I've taken at the university," are repeated often. There was an intense intellectualism in the students we met, and they responded to our probings with clarity, balance and insight. The classroom visit allowed us to see how exceptionally the teaching staff animate their students and engender a truly interdisciplinary liberal arts perspective. The curriculum has achieved the commendable goal of bringing a spectrum of disciplines together, in a coherent and vital manner, and opening up the canonical texts to new readings, thus providing the opportunity for comprehensive understanding and judgement. The students expressed very high praise for the quality of the teaching. Interestingly, they also expressed a desire for a more canonical curriculum. (The department's double aim of "text and context," is commendable, the students' comments notwithstanding.) Openness to new initiatives, such as the Certificate of Religious Studies, shared with other departments, but housed in Humanities, reinforces the existing strong focus in the curriculum on contexts and foundational sources of human endeavour.

There are, however, some suggestions department members might explore:

- There are no materials in the curriculum ante-dating the Greeks. Given all the work done in the last twenty years showing the direct impact that ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Assyria, and even India had on what came to be called the "west," some inclusion of these materials might merit discussion.

- The program offers a very comprehensive curriculum, and it stands out from other humanities' programs in Canada, in particular for its recognition of "threshold" periods, often neglected in other curricula (the Latin Humanist Tradition, the Carolingian period). It might be useful to consider adding the Greek East-Latin West dispute, the 12th century Muslim-Christian-Jewish encounter and recovery of Aristotle, the Roman and British writings on legal institutions and constitutions, and (for a connection with the ACP) the dialogue between Heidegger and his Japanese admirers (eg. Count Kuki Shuzo and D.T.

Sukuzi)

One evident lacuna was the absence of science, or science and religion, and this study area could be a candidate for a new Associate Level position. It might build on the use that was made of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, or open up opportunities to become acquainted with continuing debates about the nature of "objective reality," or evolutionary theory versus intelligent design. We consider it highly important that Humanities students receive exposure to a systematic discussion of the culture/science/society relationship

It was difficult for us to see the overarching principles governing the design of the curriculum, and hence the criteria employed to add or change courses. The Calendar entry, especially its wording "study of the humanities raises critical questions about achievements and controversies associated with civilization itself" and "students are encouraged ... to integrate these concerns with degree programs in original and critical ways" seems to place substantive weight on a post-Enlightenment understanding of thought. Examining the progression of courses in the curriculum, one is tempted to interpret the curriculum to be based on historicist principles, with western history portrayed as a lockstep movement forward to modernity, away from an irretrievable past. One sign of that (as it appears to an outsider, to potential students) is that there is neither a revisiting in the third or fourth year of materials of the first two years, nor an anticipation in the first two years of how the materials of the last two years could be assessed. Students, presumably, work their way forward in time, and the past remains an unrecoverable trace. An alternate, but complementary, perspective might focus students' attention on the West's recurring tendency to retrieve the past so as to deepen or accelerate the present. From this perspective, watershed periods such as the Hellenist, Roman, Medieval, Romantic, and post-modern could be used to expose students to how the West periodically renews itself, widening the present moment by a return (and revision) of classical antecedents. The use of the Massey Lectures in Hum 381-4 is commendable, and might be a vehicle for this theme, since many of these lectures - Jean-Bethke Elshaint, George Grant, Charles Taylor, George Steiner - supply materials for such study.

We do, of course, recognize that making any single theoretical rationale for curricular decisions explicit may suppress the healthy tension of competing methodologies.

We were made aware of a few problems, which might need to be attended to: a) an over-enrollment in tutorials which may undermine the integrity of the tutorial structure, b) a concern that prerequisite requirements in courses in cognate disciplines freeze the students out of courses that would supplement their Humanities program considerably, and c) the students' dissatisfaction with weak TA's from the Graduate Liberal Studies program (the new MA program will, partially, solve this problem), d) some students registered concern that courses on the books were not always available, and that advance

notice had not been provided. Some students complained of a lack of courses in the university at large that support the approach of the Humanities program, which translated into the suggestion that the department develop better networks around the university

Additional points to consider: a) many courses do not have prerequisites, though this policy is defensible in terms of ensuring enrollments; nonetheless, some faculty tend to support this policy, while others do not. The issue should be addressed at a departmental meeting; b) should consideration be given to enhancing the program with a third-year course that requires a long essay? c) the Humanities coop/practicum is not utilized. Consideration might be given to using the practicum to pair students up with university, government, and non-government research groups, or in law firms, political offices, and other public service agencies, not to say placing students in art galleries and museums, d) the Scottish Studies and Prague Study Abroad are highly appreciated by the students, and appear to add value to their liberal education. But there is no evident curricular necessity to the choice of Scottish Studies and Prague (though this has obviously not effected its popularity), and there appears to be neither advance study nor formal academic follow-up after the trip. As faculty retire, and new faculty join the department, the place most appropriate for study abroad, and its role in the curriculum, may need to be re-assessed (we were informed that Prague is a constant, while Scotland could be changed, e) though not uncommon in liberal arts programs, the students complain of being in classes with non-majors; the department, rightly in our judgement, is resisting the pressure to make the classes exclusively for Humanities' students, f) the dedication of the faculty is evident, and remarked upon repeatedly in the teaching evaluations, especially the fact that the faculty provide such personalized and dedicated attention to the students. But this also entails a volunteerism that goes unrewarded - such as directed studies, project supervision, and high amounts of unrecognized additional teaching and committee work in other departments. As a small department, there is more committee work annually, where in larger departments such obligations can be spread over a span of years. A formula should be designed which rewards high levels of supervision and additional teaching with some course release, as practiced in other Canadian universities. More positively, what emerges from the students is their recognition that the education they are obtaining in the Humanities is special, and that it is built on the deep respect for the students.

Finally, one matter - which is more endemic across the university system, than unique to the SFU Humanities Program - is a definite cultural-generation gap between students and faculty, as evidenced by certain recurring comments in the teaching evaluations. Whether it is the effect of a culture which trades on curt text-messaging, the impatient mouse-click from one URL to the next, and slick graphics/avatars, or is the consequence of a school system which has failed to instill habits of slow reading (not to say moderation, generally), an appreciation of the architecture of a classic lecture, or openness to startling

unscripted insights, the students' comments signal a new challenge to today's faculty. A comment by one student about a faculty member is illustrative: "very good at dumbing down complex and abstract concepts." In evaluating their faculty, the students focus heavily on non-cognitive tempers ("passionate," "enthusiastic"), and complain extensively if faculty deviate from the syllabus. There is a recurring plaint of "too much information" (which can be taken to mean, the students have insufficient highschool background), and the difficulty of "complex and abstract concepts." One might sympathize with the students, but when put together with the routine complaints about faculty who fail to use power-point presentations, or who extemporize, or who fail to satisfy the taste for visuals, it seems that students are inadequately prepared prior to university admission. Certainly, the uniqueness of the academic vocation, and the beauty of the inner architecture of a carefully designed traditional lecture, seems inadequately grasped by some of the students. All this leads to a suggestion: perhaps the faculty would entertain introducing a yearly tradition, to take place before fall classes begin, where faculty members take turns giving a lecture to the Humanities students on the nature of teaching in the traditional university.

That said, the students also clearly realize that the standard of the program is very high, the professors very passionate and enthusiastic, and student participation highly encouraged. The classroom visit which we sprang on the department, and which was thus an unrehearsed seminar, was a model demonstration of well-organized, intellectually-challenging and rewarding teaching. The student questions were sophisticated (indeed, at graduate-level complexity), the discussion was animated, and the instructor, Dr. O'Brien, was exceptional in her receptivity to the wide-range of student questions and comments, and in her ability to steer the discussion methodically to a rich conclusion. And the three students, with whom we spoke at some length, confirmed our judgements of the very high calibre of the program. We were impressed by the clarity and maturity with which they expressed themselves, and by the depth of their comments.

ii) Quality of Faculty Research

Overall, the research achievements of the faculty are very good, and the breadth of topics being studied is highly commendable. Articles and books both contribute to disciplinary fields and to cross-disciplinary concerns. Statistically, the number of books produced by the department amount to 16 monographs, 18 edited books, and 3 translated books. By our calculations this translates into one book every 3.5 years if one adds up the years served at SFU by all members of the department. The strongest faculty are Angus (11) and Dutton (8). Mezei follows with 3, Mirhady with 2 to 3, Stebner with 2, and Duguid and Jones, each with 1. The junior faculty show good promise with books in preparation or forthcoming: Gandesha (3), O'Brien (2). Crowe, due to his heavy workload (8 courses/year and 10 Directed Studies!) at present has none; Kawasaki has 2 manuscripts in preparation, but no published monographs. A common measure of scholarly output is one book every seven years over an entire career. Some members

of this department would fall short, but others far surpass this measure. Article publication is equally very strong, notably Angus (44), Mezei (44), Mirhady (27), Dutton (18), Gandesha (17), Kawasaki (15), Duguid (9) and Stebner (9). Given the variety of backgrounds and activities, the discrepancies in number is not surprising, but may occasion problems of evaluation.

There were five SSHRC grants to faculty last year, and six SSHRC grants ongoing, which is very high. The SSHRC grants have the additional benefit of providing paid research opportunities for graduate students, which provides further justification for a graduate program. Recent major awards to Professors Duguid, Dutton, Gandesha, Jones and Kawasaki are highly commendable.

At an informal level we had two luncheon opportunities to discuss the scholarship of the faculty, and we considered the breadth, theoretical sophistication, and diversity of ongoing research projects to be highly commendable. It was clear that a fine balance had been struck between traditional commentaries on classical texts/visual media and the process of using the tradition to widen the present moment.

This scholarly productivity has inevitably garnered awards, and we are struck by their prestigious nature - the Harold Innis Prize to Professor Duguid, the honour of being named Fellow to both the Medieval Academy of America and the Royal Society of Canada by Professor Dutton (among other prizes), the Humboldt Research Fellowship for Professor Gandesha, a CRC Post-Doctoral Fellowship for Dr. Jones, and the Japan Foundation Fellowship for Professor Kawasaki. These awards place their recipients in the top national and international tiers.

iii) Participation in Administration

The faculty are all significantly involved in the general administration of the department. As a small department there is, relative to larger units, more committee work annually. Examining individual faculty member's workloads, we recognized a volunteerism that often goes unrewarded - directed studies, project supervision, additional teaching and committee work in other departments. The one item we flag for attention is the upcoming process of choosing a new departmental chairperson. There was some modest anxiety expressed about what changes a new chairperson may initiate. Since the department is moving into a new era (it is an established program, it has acquired a critical mass of exceptional and collegial scholars, it is putting resources into graduate studies), new opportunities and pressures will require someone who can imaginatively sustain the thematic unity of the department (academic programs, ACP, the Institute of the Humanities, etc.), be involved in the development of the new M.A. program, nurture the young faculty, initiate outreach to the public, identify and cultivate funding sources, and cultivate potential patrons. We are recommending that serious consideration be given to appointing an outside candidate, someone who might also have experience in fundraising, be a presence in the Vancouver, even national, media, and be a liaison with other liberal-arts

programs around North America.

iv) Environment

Every indication suggests that the environment is highly positive, collegial and creative.

One measure is how students and faculty work to weave the themes of the diverse course-work into a viable curriculum. We learned a great deal from the students of the part they contribute to the program's success. They expressed high content with a practice whereby texts they study in one class come up again in other classes, giving them very different perspectives on the same texts. The students seem to enjoy taking writers whom they encounter in one class, and interrogating an instructor of another course about this writer. They create links which the faculty members have to respond to. This is one of the informal ways in which the Humanities' instructors and the curriculum are woven cohesively together. This payout justifies the departmental practice to have students highly involved in the curriculum.

There are, however, also small fault lines in the environment. Younger faculty expressed concern about the lack of a formal feedback mechanism from senior faculty, though they were pleased with informal channels of communication. We also were made aware that, similar to other programs, good and innovative teaching is, perhaps, insufficiently rewarded, while publication is emphatically promoted. In this demanding Humanities program, where students are particularly praising the dedication of faculty in going above and beyond the required contact hours with students, a moderately higher weighting towards teaching might be usefully entertained.

Space concerns are evident. Justifiably, the department is requesting an additional classroom, and the new hallway of offices promised to the department in the near future is much anticipated. Important to the general environment the department is fostering is a lounge/reading room for the students and faculty. If space is available, we also suggest setting aside a reading corner for Asian language newspapers, preferably those published in the Lower Mainland itself.

We were pleased with the strong endorsements of the Humanities program offered by the senior administrators of the university. We were impressed with the level of library support in the form of needs being addressed through the Gifts Program, the renewed support of classics books, the acquisition support through Paul Dutton's scholarly work, and the use of endowment funding for Humanities' acquisitions.

Yet, we are somewhat concerned that the Humanities program, on the evidence of some of the faculty, seems to have an "image problem," and that the Humanities degree is not valued as highly as it should be. This is evident in the restriction of access to courses (such as in Philosophy). If the department were to sponsor a series of public events (lectures, debates, guest speakers), and colleagues around the university became more aware of the high degree of professionalism in the faculty, and the depth of textual exegesis the students are undertaking, perceptions may change. One has to opine that much of the problem is a clash of methodologies -

the Humanities program encourages students to pursue close exegetical analysis of texts from a (philosophically defensible) "naive" perspective, where often departments of philosophy, for example, work with the received ideas, and the body of scholarly conclusions of their discipline. thus finding original re-readings problematic. Only renewed efforts at collaboration can solve this issue.

v) The Proposed MA Program

The introduction of a Master's program in the Humanities is a commendable initiative, clearly marking the significant transition the department is going through from a service department (praiseworthily contributing to the general education of students as diverse as business and history majors), to a stand-alone discipline, preparing students for advanced studies in the humanities and, in some cases, serious scholarly vocations.

Every graduate humanities program is unique in setting out the particular stress-points, linkages, problems, tensions, inheritances, etc. which it has identified as characterizing the history of western civilization. A great deal of thought has gone into this plan, and the formulation which will differentiate it from others across the country. The five modules (Classical and Medieval Thought and Culture, Modernity and its Discontents, Humanities and Citizenship, Religion and Culture, and Cross-Cultural Translation) have been exceptionally well-chosen, reflecting themes and arguments drawn from the current academic self-reflection of European continental thinkers, but also the world dynamic.

Students will, presumably, be exposed to how the lineaments of classical thought can be re-appropriated, what crises modernity has survived and still faces, what the fading of the nation-state effects on traditional notions of citizenship, what effect the recrudescence of religion may have, and what the prospects for dialogue among civilizations can achieve. These are all timely and profoundly engaging themes, and they will resonate deeply with students contemplating graduate studies. The proposed program will satisfy, in a way that another university's program may not, the "unfinished business" of the undergraduate program. The students informed us that a very high number of graduates go on to graduate school. The proposed curriculum very satisfactorily promises to take students to an additional level of complexity and depth. The focus on "a community of inquiry" rather than isolated, individual research is also highly commendable, as a practical illustration of the theoretical underpinnings the curriculum appears designed to promote.

Sensibly, the program will start with only ten students. It might be asked if it is starting with too many themes, which may add pressure on faculty. It is good to hear that two graduate fellowships and six teaching assistantships have been committed to the program by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

There is some concern among the faculty whether the additional work of the Graduate Program

will be counted towards their faculty workload. And the additional work may also lead to a situation where faculty cannot cash in the additional credits, because of the tightening of resources. Directed studies and project supervision are already seen as unrewarded volunteerism, of particular concern to the young faculty trying to find time to write and publish.

There may be a need to investigate, and then broadcast to students, the potential problem of admission to discipline-based Ph.D. programs in history, philosophy, literature etc., especially in the United States where, among other formalities, subject-based GRE examinations are often required. From our own experience, this does not always proceed seamlessly, especially as Ph.D. programs become professionalized, and disciplinary prerequisites are more rigorously reinforced. The department might wish to collect the entrance requirements of the graduate schools to which graduates might apply, and preempt any surprises that come after graduation.

The graduate program will provide some very needed teaching assistants. It is not that the current provision of teaching-assistants from the Graduate Liberal Arts Program is not greatly appreciated, but in many cases they lack the broad inter-disciplinary perspective which would more specifically assist the Humanities' students.

vi) Integration of Western and Asian Curriculum

As the relationship between the Asia Canada Program and the Humanities program was not evident, and yet the potential for linking them into a dynamic and creative engagement seemed like a rich opportunity to explore, we spent considerable time discussing ways of coordinating them and building fruitful points of convergence.

It is quite evident that the ACP faculty not only work very hard, and are remarkably committed to their students, but also have made proposals to strengthen their visibility in the university. These don't appear to have been implemented, evidenced by one of the ACP students who answered our question as to how well the program is advertised by saying that none of his peers had heard of it. Yet, their work is highly meritorious. For example, to show the uniqueness of the Asia Canada Program, language instructors designed their own language text that catered to the Asian-Canadian milieu in Vancouver, rather than following a text provided by the Education Ministry in Beijing, currently adopted by both UBC and UVIC Asian Studies Departments. Although it did not conform wholly to the mandate of the Modern Language Training Centre in the Department of Linguistics, this text serves the clear mandate of the Asia Canada Program at SFU.

There also is no overall coordination at the university level of all the Asia-Canada courses - at least as evident in the Calendar - which would give a public face to the Asia-Canada initiative. Hence we are proposing a modified direction, with hopes that a deeper collaboration both with the Humanities program and the rest of the university, may develop. Since the Humanities program is conceptualized to include "comparative and cross-cultural studies and philosophic inquiry," here is an opportunity to develop a rich and lasting symbiosis.

The most obvious lacunae in the ACP is a theoretical model, or conceptual framework, both for itself, and to create a bridge between the two programs. But this could be solved by encouraging the ACP faculty, in collaboration with the Humanities faculty, to build a strong theoretical core into the program. The ACP is uniquely conceived, with spades of potential. By looking at Asians in Canada, it not only provides a forum for the discussion of Asian cultures in a diaspora, and the challenges of cultural adaptation, both at a practical and a theoretical level, but *mutatis mutandis*, it is also a discussion of the impact of westernization on the non-west. There is a growing literature on "cultural hybridity" (Canclini, 1995; Pieterse, 1995) or "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt, 2000), which might serve as a bridge between the Humanities program and ACP, particularly if courses in the 4th year of Humanities - which ACP students could be required to take - were to consider topics such as these within the general rubric of the theoretical reassessments comprising late-modernity. Or, a course on the topic of globalization could be developed, whose theme is the changing face of how the universal and particular have exhibited themselves historically. To bring a critical mass of talent to these inquiries may necessitate making some cross-appointments from departments such as sociology, political science or history. At the very least, on the argument that language is the house of Being, the Asian language teachers should be moved to the department to contribute to the enrichment of the ACP program. Other means of strengthening the program is our strong encouragement to build a better channel to Canadian Studies, to use Canadian literature as one of the bases for a stronger bridge to the Humanities program, and to develop a "town and gown" relationship with the Asian communities (with lectures, debates and exhibits). Professor Crowe has already commendably proceeded with such an initiative, and his efforts should be reinforced.

We hope this review will provide the stimulus for a substantive reassessment of the Asia-Canada Program, especially since this appears to be the first substantive review of ACP, and we were apprized of the fact there had been no changes to the curriculum since 1974!

The chair asked us to consider the Eurocentricity of the curriculum, in contrast to the multicultural nature of the student body. Although we did not hear any concern from the students about this (which may suggest how successful the faculty are in presenting the materials in such a way as to how they transcend narrowly-understood western formulations), a closer integration of the ACP and liberal arts program along the lines suggested would allay any concern if it should become an issue. However, we also make mention of the absence of India in the curriculum which, in light of its (and China's) looming major presence on the world stage, might be a significant shortcoming. (This could be remedied with a hire for the Surrey campus). We did hear persuasive arguments that consolidating the Chinese expertise in ACP by the appointment of another China scholar was a good strategy for strengthening the ACP. Strong Asian hires satisfy one of the strategic goals of the "Three Year Academic Plan," namely "Maintaining and enhancing SFU standing as a major international university," and should be appealed to in justifying an Asia-Pacific hire.

From the ACP students' perspective, the program needs much more advertising, as it seems to be

known only by word of mouth. The students themselves expressed a desire for a more theoretical core to the program, and wished that the program was more "main-streamed." They added that ACP could be made more attractive by emphasizing its contribution to second-generation students eager to retrieve their heritage, in addition to any student intrigued by how complex cultural identities are negotiated. They also suggested that having more permanent, rather than sessional, faculty would enhance ACP's profile. But without these improvements, they were concerned that ACP would remain primarily only as a useful adjunct to other studies.

It was also noted that there is insufficient interaction with Canadian Studies, an obvious "interlocutor" whose participation should be fostered, perhaps by hosting a joint colloquium.

To increase the visibility of the Asia Canada Program, we recommend the offices of the Chinese and Japanese language teachers should be moved from their present location to the same corridor as the Department of Humanities, perhaps adjacent to Dr. Crowe's office. Their office doors should bear the label "Asia Canada Program." We are not suggesting a merging of the Asia Canada Program with the Department of Humanities, but just to make their affiliation and collaboration more visible to students, visitors, and possible donors.

vii) Faculty Retirements and Renewal

There is one retirement which is imminent (Burton, 2007), and two others to follow (Duguid, Feenberg-Dibon, 2008), with others which may follow in the near future depending on the outcome of legal decisions concerning mandatory retirement. However, this plays out, it is appropriate to plan for renewal, and to establish priorities. After discussion with the diverse stakeholders of the department, and assessing the growth potential and components in the program needing strengthening, we make the following hiring recommendations:

- I) an associate-level appointment to the ACP, either Chinese or Indian scholar, possibly in the area of art and culture
- ii) a senior language instructor in Greek and Latin (the yearly instruction of Latin is particularly important)
- iii) an associate-level appointment in the area of science and religion, or the nexus of culture-language-religion
(replacement on Duguid's retirement)

All of these recommended positions are essential to the delivery and coherence of the curriculum.

viii) Department Structure and Programs

Although the different aspects of the Department (undergraduate program, ACP, the Prague Field School, The Institute for the Humanities, the Centre for Scottish Studies) seem at first sight incongruously associated together, we experienced a rich engagement between faculty, and the

students attested to the value of the creative tensions.

We were pleased to see the schedule of activities planned by Professor Stebner for the Woodsworth Centre. When we had asked what the "values" were on which the curriculum was designed, or how they competed for the students' attention, and how they were integrated in the curriculum or teaching, we never received a direct reply. But it is quite evident that the presence of the Woodsworth Centre within the department encourages students to find the moral links between their formal studies and the world. Woodsworth's remarkable synthesis of charity, justice and the intellectual life are being richly highlighted in the line-up for the coming year ("Peace and Social Movements," "Building Native-Non-Native Alliances," "Difficult Conversations Across Significant Differences," "Preventing Gender-Based Violence, Spiritual Practice for Peace and Justice," among many other events.)

We are not as certain about the presence of the Graduate Liberal Studies program in the department. Its commendable work at fostering creative liberal arts study among professionals, and the refreshing observations and enthusiasm contained in the Spring 2007 "Capstone Papers," indicate a wide-ranging interest in the liberal arts, and a desire to connect this interest to work lives. The papers are a rich demonstration of how an education in the liberal arts opens dimensions of rich analysis and understanding of everyday life. Michael Fellman gave us a helpful tour through its various offerings and achievements. Whether the program rightly fits within the Department of Humanities, and whether the general impulse we are recommending of building stronger theoretical linkages between the diverse components of the department is applicable to the place of GLS, is something we cannot adequately judge. The GLS serves an important constituency, but it is a different constituency from the department's undergraduate and graduate students. That each is on a separate campus makes the link more tenuous. However, the GLS's achievement is to link the everyday world of professional careers and life to the study of the humanities, equally salutary to both sides. Perhaps if there were more common events and more dialogue it would be easier to see the possibilities of an interesting synergy. (We thought, for example, that various articles in the latest edition of *Hastings Bridge* had some potential to spark debate among the undergraduates, but we were not aware if anyone invited the writers to the Burnaby Campus for discussion.) But we would tag the GLS's place in the Department of Humanities as an "ongoing experiment," which could be reevaluated in three years' time.

The numerous initiatives pursued in the department are signs of mature creative ambition, public responsibility, and the ability to build on existing strengths. For example, The Certificate in Religious Studies capitalizes on the return of widespread interest in the religious life, religious doctrine and the history of religious debate. Its breadth is matched by well-selected specificity ("Protestants, Papists and Puritans: Culture and Belief in Early Modern England"). Its interdisciplinary perspective and methodology will serve well in coordinating the array of religious studies courses taught across the university. The same salutary contribution is made by the Centre for Scottish Studies, especially with courses such as Professor Acken's Religion in Context, which speaks not only to the renewed interest in Celtic spirituality, but equally, as a case study of the regional variations of Christianity, or topically, the adaptation of the universal (or, global) to

the particular. Overall, if one were to try to identify one thread that connects the diverse facets of the department it is their praiseworthy ability to cultivate the creative tension between thematic and historical approaches, thus generating debate and discussion and nuanced observation of contemporary life.

x) Faculty

Clearly the original core of faculty members, and the young faculty they subsequently hired, are deeply dedicated teachers, substantive and creative scholars, and good citizens as it pertains to administrative and committee work. Credentials of the faculty are outstanding, teaching is undertaken with evident enthusiasm, research and publication measures are very high especially for a department which places such a premium on outstanding teaching.

i) The quality of teaching was measured both by the students' oral and written evaluations and a classroom visit. In the evaluations we consistently heard/found comments as follows: "she goes beyond and above in every area," "best prof I have ever known at SFU," "very passionate." A point repeated often was faculty members' deep respect for the students. We attended, without much advanced warning a seminar by Dr. Emily O'Brien. The seminar was exceptionally interesting, well-designed, inter-disciplinary and engaging. We noted how carefully the students had read and prepared for the seminar, and were impressed by their capacity for sophisticated ideas. There was a commendable instructor-student rapport, strong encouragement, and a highly affirmative atmosphere. It also gave us an illustration of how the department's commitment to interdisciplinarity in both "reading lists and instructional methods" is operationalized.

ii) We have commented on the strong record of publication above. This scholarly productivity has inevitably garnered awards, and we are struck by their prestigious nature - the Harold Innis Prize to Professor Duguid, the honour of being named Fellow to both the Medieval Academy of America and the Royal Society of Canada by Professor Dutton (among other prizes), the Humboldt Research Fellowship for Professor Gandesha, a CRC Post-Doctoral Fellowship for Dr. Jones, and the Japan Foundation Fellowship for Professor Kawasaki. These awards place their recipients in the top national and international tier.

iii) The academic administrative responsibilities both within the department and at the university level appear to be equitably distributed, and accepted with equanimity.

Some faculty members are evidently over-worked. Crowe is an obvious case, but even generally it is evident that instructors are teaching overloads, additional courses, and tutorials, justifying the high praise of the students for their dedication, though also creating an environment susceptible to burnout and disgruntlement. One flag we raise is concerns expressed by the young faculty about the amount of service teaching they must do. As a small department there is, relative to larger units, more committee work annually. Examining individual faculty members' workloads, we recognized a volunteerism that often goes unrewarded - directed studies, project

supervising, additional teaching and committee work in other departments.

xi) Administration

There are two staff personnel, though one is currently on stress leave. The administrator also advises students and, inevitably there is a "counseling" element, as there is no "undergraduate supervisor," as in many departments in Canada, and this places an extra burden on the administrator. The master's program as of 2008 will create more administrative work for the staff. Because of the growth and increased workload, there is a need for a new staff member. The data supports the need for this position - compared to Archeology, Philosophy or French with similar enrollments or program students taught, the department should have three staff members. The department also legitimately claims that it needs more administrative office space, as the current office is very cramped, and provides no opportunity for confidentiality. In 1999 the unit had 2 staff members for its 13 faculty, 19 sessionals, 1074 students and 56 majors. In 2006, there are still only 2 staff members, but 14 faculty, 38 sessionals, 2481 students and 121 majors. The operating budget of 1999 was \$15,900, today it is \$21, 784 with all the additional management and labour ensuing from the increase.

The task of balancing all the components within the unit is not without challenge, especially where there is concern to ensure academic unity and synergy. It seems justifiable to provide the Chair some additional funds to sponsor events (colloquia, guest lecturers, journals) which provide a forum for identifying important links and mutual interests.

xii) Connection of the Faculty

There seems to be an excellent rapport between the faculty, who engage each other in a lively manner. The young faculty praise the collegiality, nurturing and support they receive from the senior faculty. They comment that they have been made to feel very welcome. There also seem to be informal mentoring processes between the senior and junior faculty, though this is somewhat piecemeal (Crowe has no mentor), and adopting a formal framework for such mentoring might prevent the appearance of inconsistency. A more institutionalized process of feedback from the senior faculty would be much appreciated.

To reduce unnecessary pressure on junior faculty, we strongly recommend that when re-appointment, tenure, and promotion evaluations are undertaken, "accepted" articles and books be recognized, even though the writing in question is not yet published. This seemed to us to be reasonable, and in line with practice in other Canadian universities. Equally worthy of discussion is a reasonable request by the young faculty to receive some modest course reduction for designing new courses. As the "old guard" retires, and the new faculty renew the curriculum, the large amount of work of future planning risks being underestimated. Again it is important for the next generation to understand the rationale, and philosophical underpinnings, of curricular decisions made in the past. There is some grumbling about whether teaching is sufficiently

rewarded, and what the status of work done prior to hiring is, but these are issues best discussed with the Dean.

Some faculty are very much in favour of (restoring) prerequisites to courses. Other faculty restate that there is great value in having business or science students exposed to the humanities, and so insistence on prerequisites is not as important. There is no obvious answer, as one side emphasizes the need to prepare for graduate studies, while the other sees the wider responsibilities to the student body at large. We also were apprised of pressure from senior administrators to facilitate efficient student progress through the system. In addition, there is a need to keep enrollments up, without compromising at the level of teaching. The only resolution lies in finding a healthy balance, the specifics of which need to be aired in a well-attended, candid department meeting where each side is exposed to the rationale of the other. In general, though, prerequisites are preferable to ensure that instructors are not constantly in the bind of having to devote a disproportionate amount of time to a constituency in the class unprepared for the materials.

xiii) Future Directions

There was some discussion of relations and unions with other units, even a suggestion that the university consider that all things pre-modern should be in Humanities. We limit ourselves to one strong recommendation: that the Asian language teachers be moved to be in proximity of the department, especially if ACP undergoes the revamping we are suggesting.

Numerous proposals, or identification of lacunae in the current academic program, were brought forward or identified by the evaluating team, which we put forward for your consideration.

- There is strong student demand for an honours program, which should be positively entertained, especially as an honours' degree is commonly necessary for admission to graduate school. The requirements should include a major essay.

- The current "Humanities Graduating Seminar," focused on Schiller is an inspired and compelling way to bring the program to some conclusions. We would, however, like to recommend an alternative, one particularly useful to those students continuing to graduate school, and the inevitable focus on methodology. We are suggesting the addition of a capstone seminar which provides a synthesis of the existing program, and a self-questioning about alternatives to the curriculum. Nowhere is there a statement of this program's "philosophy," (enlarging the present moment, nostalgia for the ancient past, necessary deconstruction), yet the list and description of courses offers some signals. Is the program essentialist or historicist, is the goal one of recounting a great narrative or methodological reflexivity, are the values of freedom or justice or charity being advanced, etc. Discussion of these issues would seem particularly important in preparation for graduate school. The seminar could address curricular alternatives (thematic, periodic, and textual approaches), methodological alternatives (experiential, positivistic, critical, hermeneutical, post-modern) and the general values which are being furthered (justice,

charity, liberty, community, etc). If this proposal were accepted, consideration might also be given to a proposal of reserving a third-year course for Majors, as preparation for the capstone seminar.

xiv) Summary of Recommendations

- the unrealized potential of the Asia Canada Program is evident. We recommend an appointment of a Chinese scholar (to consolidate) or an Indian scholar (to broaden), who should be expected to contribute to a formulation of a theoretical model which would link the Asia-Canada Program with the Humanities Program
- for the students' experience of some closure after four years of a very rich and diverse liberal arts curriculum, we recommend a fourth-year capstone course which provides students with the capacity to understand the philosophical underpinnings of the four-year program, and philosophical alternatives to it. Fostering methodological reflexivity about the organization of the intellectual materials, and their organization into a curriculum, offers strong preparation for graduate school. This course should be cross-listed with graduate courses.
- some faculty appointments are essential for maintaining, and ensuring future success, as follows:
 - i) an associate-level appointment to the ACP, preferably in the field of either East Asian or South Asian art and culture
 - ii) a senior language instructor in Greek and Latin (the yearly instruction of Latin is, particularly, important)
 - iii) an associate-level appointment in the area of science, culture and religion (replacement on Duguid's retirement), and possibly billed as an 18th century hire
 - iv) a replacement appointment for Ann-Mary Feenberg-Dibon in the area of Fine Arts and Humanities
- the Asian language instructors should be moved back to offices in the Department
- an appointment of a Graduate Admissions' support staff should be made once the MA program begins the process of admitting students, someone who could double as the Chair's Administrative Assistant (we recognize that the department has requested a new undergraduate secretary).
- the department has already been successful at fundraising for a number of projects. Because of this proven strength, the program should be a strong priority in the fund-raising campaign of the university. Seeing the creativity, enthusiasm

and initiative of the members of this department, there seems to be a missed opportunity when it comes to creative fundraising and even recruitment, not to say acquiring a little public profile in the media. In our experience, senior professionals are often very receptive to the right kinds of approaches for funding, especially if they are invited, in creative environments, to participate directly in the liberal arts. The department should be encouraged to identify some means of having potential donors participate in the humanities' experience, and become acquainted with the students, the faculty, and the seminar experience. Given the exceptional talent in this community, some outreach might serve their own hopes and constitute a praiseworthy public service

the department should be supported by departmental Chairs and the Dean to negotiate more successfully with cognate departments on waiving some prerequisites of their courses to ensure the Humanities students are not de-barred from them. In addition, there needs to be a more collaborative mechanism for negotiating the involvement of teaching assistants from other departments, to ensure that they have adequate preparation to conduct tutorials in inter-disciplinary humanities (a problem which will partially be resolved with the new MA program in the Humanities)

we were made aware of the significant space problems facing the department, and their hopes for an additional hallway section that was promised. The department's success also would be enhanced if it were provided with a lounge in which undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty, could informally encounter one another

a modest amount of money should be allocated by the Dean to the Humanities Department to be used for a beginning of the school-year retreat, in which the issue of how the disparate elements of the program and department may be creatively held together is negotiated

Peter Emberley
Haijo Westra
Yuen-Fong Woon
Michael Kenny



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ATTENTION: Bill Krane, Associate VP Academic

FROM John T. Pierce, Dean

RE Humanities External Review

DATE November 14, 2007

I consider this a very positive assessment of the current teaching, research and outreach activities of the Department of Humanities. Through its effective hiring, innovative pedagogy and partnerships, Humanities is emerging as an important program in the field of Canadian liberal arts.

I do not intend to comment on all recommendations. My comments are limited to the following.

Curriculum

Given the shortage of resources and the development of a new MA program, the department will have to exercise caution in devoting more time and energy into pre-classical Greek topics and to developing new thematic or period studies (Recommendations 1 and 2).

The department has made it a clear priority to hire in the area of culture/science/society. We are currently reviewing hiring requests and will be able to inform Humanities very shortly about the outcome (Recommendation 3).

Staffing Issues

Requests for an external search for the department chair will be considered in light of available internal candidates, the current financial environment and potential bridging to a future retirement. Approvals are by no means automatic and require the authorization of the VPA (Recommendation 7).



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I would not support a change in the weightings assigned to assessments of teaching, research and service for the department as a whole. The workload policy allows for alterations in individual faculty shares of teaching, research and service. This would have to be done on a highly selective basis (Recommendation 8).

The reviewers recommend three net new positions. The department adds a fourth request in pre-Renaissance Europe. Currently FASS has no budget for net new positions. Unless this situation changes, we could not entertain these suggestions (Recommendation 9).

Related to net new faculty positions, there is also a request for a net new staffing position for the MA program. If sufficient students are attracted to the program, and if provincial funding is made available for these students, we would entertain a request for a staffing position (Recommendation 10).

Asia-Canada Program

I would agree that we need to rejuvenate the Asia-Canada Program and enhance its "public face". Since 2006, two new appointments have been made to the program.

I look forward to seeing the results of future discussions on closer relationships/ integration of the Asia-Canada Program with Humanities. There are clearly major fund raising possibilities that if successful, would provide a stronger resource base to develop programming and research (Recommendation 12).

John T. Pierce
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

JTP/rt

Cc: S. Duguid, Chair, Department of Humanities
T. Kawasaki, Director, Asia-Canada Program

21.

Department of Humanities Response to the *Report of the External Review Committee on the Department of Humanities, Simon Fraser University*

Stephen Duguid, Chair, Dept. of Humanities

The 2007 External Review of the Department of Humanities was a very positive experience, the reviewers opening their report by judging the department as “clearly a shining star” with a “clear, dynamic focus”. The mandate of the reviewers included assessing the Asia-Canada Program, one of the academic units affiliated with the department.

The reviewers of course had several suggestions for improvements, most falling within the categories of curriculum, staffing and Asia-Canada. What follows is our summary of these suggestions and our initial response:

Curriculum:

Recommendation 1: The department should introduce textual materials that ante-date the Greek Classical Era

Response: Material from the pre-Greek period is covered in some depth in Humanities 105 (Western Civilization) and particularly in Humanities 103 (The Invention of the Book) which spends a third of the course on Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian and Chinese examples of early writing and the texts produced. Some attempts are also underway to explore early texts in Humanities 101 (Introduction to the Humanities) and in our courses that centre on religion such materials are often present. But it is the case that there is no systematic study in the department of ancient cultures before Classical Greece. For us this remains a resource issue and should the University deem this a high priority we would be pleased to initiate a search for an individual able to offer cross-cultural courses in this area. Presumably such a colleague would be able to assist in enriching our existing courses with materials and approaches drawn from these cultures, much as our colleagues in the Asia-Canada program have helped infuse some of our courses with texts drawn from China, India and Japan.

Recommendation 2: The department should consider adding some new thematic or period studies such as:

- a. Greek East/Latin West dispute
- b. 12th century Muslim/Christian/Jewish encounter

- c. Roman and British study of legal institutions
- d. Link between Heidegger and Japanese thought

Response: The department has just been through a major curriculum review, but these suggestions for additional thematic courses will be reviewed by our Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. There are faculty in Humanities who could consider these specific themes (Prof. Mirhady, for instance has expertise in the area law in Classical Greece and the Muslim/Jewish/Christian encounter is considered in HUM 219 and in special topics courses, particularly the often offered course on Abelard and Heloise).

Recommendation 3: Introduce (via a new position) courses on the relationship of culture/science/society.

Response: This is a hiring priority for the department based on a replacement for Prof. Lynn Burton who retired this year. We would hope that the position would focus on the Medieval, Renaissance or Early Modern era and thereby be complementary to existing departmental strengths.

Recommendation 4: Faculty should assess the degree to which the Humanities curriculum has tended toward an historicist understanding of Western cultural evolution. To have students appreciate this issue a greater integration might be sought between courses in the first two years and the second two years.

Response: The issue of "historicism" has been a matter of on-going "conversation" among faculty in the department and will no doubt continue to be so. In light of these comments by the reviewers, however, we will endeavour in the coming year to have a more formal exploration of the pros and cons of an historicist approach via a departmental seminar. The further integration of our lower and upper division curriculum was the intention of our recent set of curriculum revisions, but more work clearly needs to be done. Such integration is challenging in a department that is intrinsically interdisciplinary.

Recommendation 5: The issue of prerequisites for upper division courses should be re-assessed.

Response: This has been discussed several times within the department and as the reviewers suggest, there is as yet no consensus. Some faculty wish to have their upper division seminars open to students from other departments and Faculties, feeling it greatly enriches and diversifies the discussions. Others feel that students without a background in the kind of texts and issues covered in lower division courses in Humanities or closely related disciplines has a negative effect on the quality of the seminars. We are considering moving a few of our 3rd year courses to 4th year, with specific Humanities prerequisites.

Recommendation 6: Reassess the format of the Capstone course

Response: The capstone course, HUM 495, was introduced after being recommended by our previous external review. It has been offered for the past three years as a two-credit, pass/fail course for Humanities Majors. While a successful course, we are in the process of assessing its format and the nature of the subject matter covered and will consider the review's proposal that it should utilize a more summary approach.

Staffing Issues

Recommendation 7: That the department give serious consideration that the next department chair be from an outside search.

Response: The department would support this recommendation.

Recommendation 8: Given the small size of the department, the focus on intensive and innovative teaching and the high degree of voluntarism observed, the department should consider giving more weight to teaching and service in assessment of performance.

Response: Given what seems a pervasive acceptance across the University of the 40-40-20 division among teaching, research and service, we are not sure that a major re-alignment toward a focus on teaching and service is possible or desirable given the need to remain a research-intensive institution. Steps can be made, however, to reward in other ways (e.g. teaching release) work on innovative teaching or greater-than-average service and we will focus on ways to do this that do not place an undue burden on the department's ability to meet student demand.

Recommendation 9: In terms of faculty renewal, the review committee recommends a Lecturer position in classical languages; an Associate level appointment in culture, science and religion; and an Associate level appointment to the Asia-Canada program in the area of art and culture (India or China).

Response: The department applauds these recommended faculty renewal positions since they parallel in many ways our existing proposals. We do feel that as well as these positions the department also needs a position in the area of art and culture, with a focus on pre-Renaissance Europe.

Recommendation 10: Recommendation for an additional staff person to work with the new MA Program.

Response: As the department is already under-staffed given its size in terms of faculty, courses and enrolments, we strongly support this recommendation.

Recommendation 11: Consider a more formal mentoring program for new faculty.

Response: The department will take steps immediately to implement this recommendation. Having made a rather abrupt transition from a unit dominated by senior faculty to one with a much larger component of new hires, this issue has obviously become more prominent and needs to be addressed.

Asia-Canada Program

Recommendation 12: Greater attention should be given to enhancing the "public face" of the Asia-Canada Program and integrating it more fully with the Humanities

- a. build a stronger theoretical core to the Asia-Canada Program (done in close liaison with Humanities faculty).
- b. Encourage more Asia-Canada cross-appointments with other departments
- c. Build stronger links between the A-C program and the local Asian communities.
- d. The issue of India or South Asian Studies should be considered

- e. Consider moving the Asia-Canada language instructors to the Humanities corridor.

Response: When the department of Humanities was formed in 1999, the already existing Asia-Canada then directed by Prof. Jan Walls was made an affiliate unit of the department. This was seen at the time as primarily as an administrative arrangement, with at the time only one joint appointment (Prof. Yu) and an independent budget, separate steering committee and curricular independence. The reviewers now envisage a greater degree of integration between Humanities and Asia-Canada, a view we welcome. This integration will be made more possible by the presence of two joint appointments between Asia-Canada and Humanities (Paul Crowe and (in 2008) Shuyu Kong) and a building interest among some Humanities faculty to enhance the presence of Asian texts and perspectives in existing courses.

In the coming year the Asia-Canada Steering Committee, working closely with its Advisory Committee drawn from several departments and with faculty from Humanities, will explore each of the review committee's specific recommendations. The current Asia-Canada director, Prof. Kawasaki (Political Science) has already initiated a discussion of the "theoretical core" issue and in the coming year the Chair of Humanities (who will be A/Director of Asia-Canada while Prof. Kawasaki is on research leave) will undertake to include Humanities faculty in that discussion.