



**SENATE COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE PERIODIC REVIEW OF
THE TRI-UNIVERSITY HISTORY GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
of
FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

July 2014

Membership of Internal Review Subcommittee (IRS)

External Reviewers: Dr. Doris Bergen, Department of History, University of Toronto
Dr. Jim Miller, Department of History, University of Saskatchewan
Facilitators: Dr. Judith Cukier, Department of Geography, University of Waterloo
Dr. Anthony Clarke (AVP Graduate Studies), University of Guelph
Dr. Mark Eys, Department of Kinesiology, Wilfrid Laurier University

The Internal Review Committee (IRC) received the Final Assessment Report for the Bioinformatics master's programs from the IRS on 21 February 2104. The IRC now presents an Executive Summary of the review, which includes the following:

- Introduction
- Summary of the review process
- Review Committee's recommendations
- Administrative responses to the report from the Chair, Dean, and Provost

INTRODUCTION

The Tri-University Graduate Program in History is the joint program for graduate research and education operated by the history departments of the University of Guelph, Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo. It currently includes more than 60 core faculty members drawn principally from the history departments of the three universities, the University of Waterloo's colleges and Laurier's Brantford campus. Founded in 1994, the Tri-University Doctoral Program in History admitted its first doctoral candidates in Fall Term of 1995. The new PhD program combined the two previously existing yet separate doctoral programs at the University of Guelph (established in 1966), the University of Waterloo (established in 1974), and integrated the faculty at Wilfrid Laurier University.

The success of the joint doctoral program led to the creation of the Tri-University Master's Program in 2001 that integrated the three existing Master's programs into the joint program. Prior to this consolidation, the separate Master's programs at all three universities had all been favourably reviewed. This change dramatically increased the number of students that the program was admitting and administering (the approximate total number of students at any given time since the 2007 OCGS appraisal is about 40 PhD students and 60 MA students with 10 to 15 incoming PhD and 40 to 50 incoming MA students each year).

The directorship of the program rotates between the three universities every three years. In 2013, it will move from the University of Waterloo to the University of Guelph. That process will repeat again in 2016, when it relocates to Wilfrid Laurier University. Given the dramatic increase in the size of the program, the departmental support staff at the University of Guelph (where the directorship resided from 2004 to 2007) hired an administrative assistant to participate in running the program. Thanks to the generosity of Guelph's History Department, the administrative side of the Tri-University Program has been housed in the Department of History at the Guelph campus since 2004. The department has paid for administrative expenses, including the use of a telephone, photocopiers, electricity and supplies. The department has also offered much-needed office and cabinet space for the program.

The Tri-University Graduate Program in History experienced major changes in 2007-8 following the last OCGS appraisal. Among program achievements were an outstanding OCGS appraisal, PhD program reform, the creation of an outline MA pre-registration system, a new website, the formation of a Tri-University Graduate Students Association, new advertising and promotional initiatives and the first internationally-attended Tri-University History Conference.

The chief goal of the Tri-University MA Program in History is to provide MA students with the opportunity to explore and deepen their knowledge of diverse fields of history while simultaneously develops skill sets with universal applications. The three streams (Thesis Stream, MRP Stream, Course-Only Stream) are designed to ensure that all students will become familiar with primary research, the process of conceptualizing and structuring a hypothesis, and the writing of an extended historical document. The Doctoral Program encourages the pursuit of outstanding graduate teaching and research, nurture intellectual curiosity among doctoral candidates, and facilitate the learning process through small seminar educational experiences. Acting on the 2007 recommendations of the OCGS assessors, the Doctoral Program transitioned from an open-ended program (that averaged 5.1 years to completion) to a four-year program.

Academic Programs included in Review:

- MA
- PhD

SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

Submission of Self-Study by Program: 11 September 2013

Site visit: 27 – 29 January, 2014

Final Assessment Report received: 21 February 2014 (*expected: February 15*)

Response of Director: requested, 24 February 24: received, 12 May (*expected: 10 March*)

Response of Deans: requested, 14 May; received, 14 July 2014 (*expected: 28 May*)

Response of the Provost: requested, 17 July; received, August 27 (*expected: 04 August*)

The IRS conducted their site-visit to review the joint History graduate programs offered by the Universities of Guelph and Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier University over three days on January 27th to 29th. Their agenda included meetings with the: Associate Vice-Presidents (Graduate Studies), Deans of Faculties/College; Department Chairs; Director of the Tri-University History

Program; Faculty members, graduate students, and staff of the respective Departments, and Library staff. They were given a tour of the research facilities and the library, and an exit interview with the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies and Program Quality Assurance) was deemed unnecessary.

REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

By way of a general comment, we have concluded that the Tri-University Graduate Program in History offers degree programs of very good quality, and the organization of the Program, while it could be improved in certain of its details, is on the whole sound. The three institutions can be confident that they are supporting a tri-university graduate program that operates in accordance with practices used at other good institutions and provides an education and training of high quality to its students.

Specific Recommendations:

The following are the main recommendations that appear in the sections (presented in the report).

- Program administrators should make it clear in Program literature and policy statements that a vocational element is central to the nature and purpose of the PhD program.
- The several departments should investigate ways to smooth out the consultative phase of the admissions procedures.
- The departments should monitor the performance of their MA students and, if appropriate, reduce the intake, particularly at the bottom of the pool of applicants.
- Communications with applicants should be coordinated so that they each receive only one letter of acceptance or one rejection from the Tri-U Program.
- Presentation of the Program's strengths and successes should be updated and improved for both internal and external purposes. While it may not be necessary at this time to revise the major fields offered, the Tri-U historians should be prepared to explain those fields and their rationale in more compelling ways.
- We recommend that the departmental chairs take seriously the need to help the Tri-U Program Director recruit minor field advisors. We also encourage the Tri-U Director and Graduate Coordinators to explore ways to help faculty develop a larger stake in the success of graduate students, including those for whom they are not the main supervisor.
- We recommend that the Program institute examination of all three PhD fields.
- We recommend that the departments take steps to ensure that doctoral students take field-preparation seminars in which there are other students.
- We recommend the departments consider requiring the professional development seminar during the term in which the student presents his or her colloquium.
- We recommend that the timing of the professional development seminar and the seriousness with which individual instructors in it take their role be matters of high priority for departments and graduate chairs.
- Expectations for the student presentations to the colloquium should be made more uniform.
- We recommend that Waterloo History department alter its approach for offering mentored undergraduate courses to bring it into line with the other two departments, while maintaining the assistance of mentoring faculty.

- We recommend that the departments revisit the question of allowing MA students to take doctoral field-preparation seminars as seminars that earn credit in the MA in appropriate circumstances. Conversely, PhD students preparing fields in which MA courses are being offered could be encouraged to join in the MA seminar rather than working in isolation.
- Professors should make their syllabi available well in advance of the beginning of the course.
- We recommend that the three institutions provide resources to fund the grant for travel between the campuses at a substantially higher level. If necessary, the universities could offer the higher grants on an accountable basis.
- We recommend that the librarians involved consider the difficulties that students reported concerning access to books, including e-books. We suggest that the administrators at all three institutions monitor how the work of resolving the problems with access to library resources proceeds.
- In addition to making their syllabi or at least reading lists available to prospective students well in advance of the beginning of term, field supervisors and course instructors should also work with librarians to ensure that the books are available, and if possible are on reserve in more than one of the Tri-U libraries.
- We recommend that the Program make it clear in the material it provides to applicants to the MA program that all research assignments – MRP or thesis – are to be based on research in primary sources.
- The Program Handbook is seriously in need of revision. We recommend the Tri-U Director work with Graduate Coordinators and perhaps TUGSA or other graduate students to update and revise the Handbook as soon as possible.
- The duration of the seminars should be the same in all three departments.
- We recommend that one meeting of a student’s advisory committee be held per year, provided that the student is required to submit a progress report in advance of the meeting.
- We recommend that formal TA training sessions be held each year, at least for MA students.
- We recommend that incoming students be provided with a brief introduction to the members of the Tri-U “team” so that they know to whom to turn regarding certain frequently asked questions. There should be some kind of orientation session where new graduate students meet the key people face-to-face.

Additional suggestions:

In addition, the following are matters the departments and universities should consider:

- What about a seminar series to bring faculty across the campuses together? Strengthening the intellectual community as a whole can only benefit the Tri-U Graduate Program.
- At Waterloo at least there are no mandated department meetings. It is up to the chair to call meetings as required. Perhaps there should be one Tri-U meeting per year to be chaired by the Tri-U Director and organized in conjunction with the Graduate Coordinators to discuss policy, check for problems or issues, and report on progress.
- Is there any effort to coordinate building the Tri-U Graduate Program? Presumably each department deals with its own staffing issues. But even some discussion would help fit those decisions into a vision for the future of the graduate program.

- Might the seminar offerings be recalibrated slightly to make it easier for PhD students to prepare their minor fields in conjunction with participating in a graduate seminar?
- One practical suggestion from a student was to provide each graduate student with a Tri-U email address that could be used to communicate. As it is, they now need a separate login for each university.
- What about some research travel funds for graduate students? It seems there is possible funding for presenting research at a conference but not for travel to archives or for other kinds of research support. Even a small summer stipend at the right time can be crucial in helping a graduate student shape a dissertation project and write an effective proposal for outside funding.
- Some CVs indicated that certain faculty had won an award for good mentoring – what is that? Is it given regularly? Maybe TUGSA could also institute a prize for a faculty member who has contributed significantly to student intellectual life? Could there also be a Tri-U History Graduate TA award? Such things need not cost much money; the recognition itself is worth a lot.
- Perhaps the three universities could explore the possibility of some postdoctoral awards for top PhD students – possibly in conjunction with the endowed chairs in Scottish Studies and War and the Canadian Experience. Or this could be a broader initiative, not only for History but in competition with other Arts and Humanities programs.
- On the transportation issue, which appears to be longstanding, we encourage appointment of one or two members of the faculty and perhaps a graduate student who would be responsible for gathering information and preparing a recommendation for the Tri-U Director. This is the kind of problem that only gets addressed if it is someone’s job to do so, because the most immediate effects are felt by a different group of people each year.
- Meanwhile, students suggested that, to the extent possible, times for seminars, TUGSA meetings, and other Tri-U events should be chosen with an eye to the bus schedules.
- The librarian at Waterloo informed us that, budget permitting, she will order things for graduate students. We suggest steps be taken to ensure that students know of this offer.
- As a “quick fix” one student recommended that all incoming graduate students be advised to get a municipal library card, so that they can also access books through that system.
- We encourage assessment of the administrative load, particularly at Waterloo, with an eye to providing some form of temporary assistance at rush times.
- We encourage departments to consider ways to ensure that there are more collaborative projects that would generate experience and research and travel funding for graduate students. At the very least it should be the norm rather than an exception that faculty use their SSHRC funds to help support research by graduate students.

Re: Response to the Report of the External Reviewers of the Tri-University Graduate Program in History, University of Guelph, University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University

From: Linda Mahood, Tri-University Program Director, Department of History, University of Guelph, Adam Crerar, Graduate Coordinator, Department of History, Wilfrid Laurier University, Sofie Lachapelle, Graduate Coordinator, Department of History, University of Guelph, Dan Gorman, Graduate Coordinator, Department of History, University of Waterloo

Date: April 26, 2014

The History Departments at University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and University of Guelph, which make up the Tri-University Graduate Program in History (hereafter Tri-U program), appreciate the careful and thorough report based on the three-day visit made by the External Reviewers, Dr. Doris Bergen and Dr. Jim Miller. We particularly value the set of recommendations which the Reviewers generated on the basis of their extensive study of and conversations with administrative staff responsible for the MA and PhD students in various stages of the program at the three campuses, the faculty who supervise and teach graduate students, and the executive of the Tri-U Graduate Student Association (TUGSA) and in-program MA and PhD students.

The Director and the three chairs of the Tri-U program are pleased that our Reviewers recognize that the “Tri-U program benefits both from committed and enthusiastic graduate instructors and able and energetic students.” We are also pleased that they concluded that “the Tri-University Graduate Program in History offers degrees programs of very good quality, and the organization of the Program is on the whole sound.” We also appreciate the Reviewers’ assessment that we are “supporting a tri-university graduate program that operates in accordance with practices used at other good institutions and provide an education and training of high quality to its students.”

The Reviewers made 23 generally minor recommendations under the following headings: Objectives, Administration Requirements, Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment, Resources, Quality Indicators, Additional Graduate Program Criteria, Quality Enhancement and Other. The Tri-U Program Director and the three program Coordinators have discussed all of the Reviewers’ suggestions in detail and will develop an implementation plan at the Tri-U Executive retreat in late autumn 2014. In this report our responses to the Reviewers’ recommendations have been combined under the following headings: Tri-U Program Objectives, Program Delivery and Logistical Matters.

Tri-U Program Objectives

The Reviewers made recommendations (1, 5, 6, 18, 19, 21, 23) that deal with program objectives, clarification of administration requirements, and the presentation of the Program’s strengths and weaknesses. The Tri-U Program is committed to the recruitment

and retention of the best national and international students. The timely dissemination of information that helps place students with the best faculty within the Tri-U Program is our priority. We agree with the Reviewers that we can improve and update our individual department websites and the Tri-U website to reflect more accurately our strengths and revise our mission statement to make our program objectives more closely reflect current faculty expertise. We are pleased that the Reviewers have stated that the 8 fields we offer are appropriate and in line with current faculty expertise. We agree with the Reviewers' suggestion that the Tri-U Program MA and PhD handbooks are in need of revision and this work is currently under way. The members of the Tri-U Graduate Student Association (TUGSA) and the TUGSA executive have been consulted and their ideas are welcome.

We agree that revising and updating the MA and PhD handbooks can resolve a number of the Reviewers' suggestions concerning communication across all 3 institutions. Handbook revisions and updated websites will clarify the MA and PhD programs' objectives and requirements. Following our Reviewers' recommendations, there will be an emphasis on how the PhD trains students for academic jobs and also a stronger emphasis on the success we have had in training PhDs for "vocational" positions in public history, the private sector, government, and nongovernmental organizations. The revised handbook and website will direct incoming and in-program MA and PhD students to orientation dates; TUGSA events; the program newsletter (*Triumvirate*); information concerning deadlines for travel grants, conference funding, SSHRC and other scholarships; seminar training; and the annual Tri-U Conference. It should be noted that students are provided with internal emails reminding them of upcoming dates and deadlines, however we realize that faculty also need to be reminded of dates and deadlines. Revised handbooks will clarify questions concerning the pedagogical requirements of MA and PhD coursework, milestones, and syllabi. Following the Reviewers' suggestion, students will continue to be encouraged to contact professors for information concerning course requirements (14, 17). Other items for future discussion include the increasing cost of program administration, student's transportation costs, and the stress and strain on administrative staff. We agree with the Reviewers' additional suggestions (6, 15) that the Tri-U Executive, which includes three department chairs, the Director, and three coordinators meet on a more regular basis and streamline communication.

Program Delivery

Our Reviewers made recommendations (3, 7, 13, 14, 15) concerning curriculum, teaching and assessment.

The Reviewers recommended that a comprehensive examination be added to the PhD minor field. We believe that an additional oral examination would add additional pressure to students struggling to complete the Program milestones in 4 years. The PhD Handbook indicates that the purpose of the minor field is to "provide students with a supplementary teaching [at the undergraduate level] area and a comparative understanding of work in their dissertation research area." Students work very hard in minor fields. They read the equivalent of 50 books, write an extensive research essay, and answer questions in field

seminars. We believe that this is an adequate assessment of learning outcomes. We appreciate the Reviewers' recommendation (6) that department chairs play a greater role in assisting the Director with coordinating major and minor field seminars.

The Reviewers express concern that some of our doctoral students might be isolated in their field courses, and recommend accordingly that they be allowed to attend MA seminars in relevant subjects in partial fulfillment of their minor field requirements. We agree that MA and PhD students might benefit from interacting with each other in seminars, but regard the problem of isolation as relatively unusual. Moreover, PhD and MA students have separate needs and benefit from seminars, and major and minor fields, that are tailored to those needs. Indeed, the Program's wide range of MA-only seminars and PhD-only field courses, made possible by the combined resources of the three departments, distinguishes it from most other programs in the country. That said, the Program does permit PhD students to sit in on MA seminars and some students and faculty may take advantage of this informal option. This approach is characteristic of the Tri-University Program's flexibility, which the Reviewers note as one of the Program's strengths and an attribute appreciated by its students.

Logistical Matters

The Reviewers identified three areas that appear to be logistical concerns: admission, library, and transportation. Our reviewers made recommendations (2, 4, 6, 14, 16, 17, 18, 23) and suggestions that "several departments should investigate ways to smooth out the consultative phases of the admission procedure." The Tri-U Director and Graduate Officers feel that the consultation phase of the application process currently works very well. We appreciate the face-to-face meetings that give us the opportunity to become familiar with all incoming students and to match students with the most appropriate supervisors. It also gives us the opportunity to monitor the progress of in-program students and faculty supervisory workloads and to envisage the most appropriate field-offerings for academic term. The universities of Waterloo and Guelph have recently adopted online application systems (Laurier will do so soon). We are confident that the initial disruption this caused is over and application procedures are now running smoothly. Following the Reviewers' recommendation, the Director will send a comprehensive welcome letter to all students who accept their offers of admission with specific information on the pre-registration process, lists of courses and information concerning how to contact supervisors and instructors with questions about syllabi.

The Reviewers recognized that the libraries at the three institutions are major stakeholders in the Tri-U Program. We agree with their suggestion that we monitor library holdings more closely. The integrated Tri-U library system (Trellis) has streamlined the ordering of books, which has reduced multiple book ordering. This has reduced the number of copies for Tri-U students and causes frustration. We recognize that faculty may not anticipate a shortage of books and we can work more closely with librarians. We will suggest that Tri-U students get Public Library cards and consult library reps for log-in options for off-campus borrowing. Field instructors will be made aware of this situation.

Inherent in the Tri-U Program is the cost of transportation, a burden which falls most heavily on Guelph students. The Reviewers suggested increasing the travel grants currently awarded to students for travel. We fully agree with the suggestion and hope the allocation of funding at all three institutions will be increased to enable us to offer more than \$80.00 to cover travel and mileage costs. In the interim, we will continue to encourage ride-shares and carpooling.

Conclusion

We are delighted that the Reviewers recognize the high quality of the Tri-University program, students, and faculty. We all continue to work together to refine the program to ensure its continued excellence.



COLLEGE OF ARTS
Office of the Dean

To: Anthony Clarke, Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies & Program Quality Assurance)

From: Donald Bruce, Dean of Arts, University of Guelph
Douglas Peers, Dean of Arts, University of Waterloo
Mike Carroll, Dean of Arts, Wilfred Laurier University

Date: July 25, 2014

Re: Response to Tri-History Graduate Program IQAP Review

The Deans of the three sponsoring Faculties/Colleges of the Tri-University History Graduate Program have consulted in order to present a common response to the IQAP Review of the program. The content of this letter has been approved by all three deans.

We are appreciative of the very detailed and thoughtful report prepared by the external reviewers of the Tri-University Graduate Program in History and the candid manner in which our colleagues have responded to the report. The program has been successful over the last years and continues to be so. All three universities share the desire to continue the program, and to improve it where possible within the constraints that we all face in the PSE system. The responses below follow the structure required by the UG Regulations concerning the Conduct of Joint Program Reviews.

- a. Plans and recommendations proposed in the Self-study report
 - a. This is covered by short section at the end of the report (7: Topics for Advice): the issues presented here (Logistical Challenges, Doctoral Teaching Challenges, Combining MA and Doctoral Courses, Funding Challenges, The Colloquium) are long standing issues which have not yet received solutions. It is imperative to make decisions concerning some of these issues, since they have impact on resources and sustainability. These issues should be addressed, and where possible, solutions determined during this coming year. The three Deans of the universities involved should be consulted in order to solve some of the issues.
 - b. Other significant issues raised are to be found in the section concerning Graduate Student Feedback (6.8). There are many issues here which have been clearly outlined, several of which are susceptible to solutions: the need for greater consistency across the three universities, a greater sense of collective identity for the program, more professional development for non-academic careers, and logistical problems due to the distances between campuses. Again, these issues can and should be addressed; this can also be done with the assistance of the Deans' offices in the three universities.
- b. Recommendations advanced in the JPRC report

- a. The external reviewers made 23 recommendations concerning the Tri-University History program. Though some of them are indeed minor, as the Director says in her report, others are not and require more significant attention.
 - b. We agree with the program faculty in their response to the recommendation that exams for minor fields not be introduced on the grounds that they have already advanced: namely that this could well extend times to completion and would not necessarily improve the outcomes that are already provided by the rigor with which students undertake their minor fields.
 - c. We do, however, believe that faculty must reflect more deeply upon the relationship between the learning outcomes associated with the program and the kinds of careers that graduates can reasonably be expected to pursue. Given the rapidly changing conditions of the job market that our students must expect (and this was identified clearly by the students in their solicited responses), not to mention the extent to which historically many graduate students have not pursued academic careers for a variety of reasons, further discussion of the kinds of skill training and professionalization that the program could provide in the future is essential.
 - d. In addition, suggestions of ways by which the program can best track its graduates in order to demonstrate employment outcomes would also be very useful. This is increasingly a criterion for continued funding of programs. Not only would this allow the program to position itself better with respect to *differentiation*, and in relation to the issue of identity raised by the students, but it would also address the specific recommendation from the report that the program ought to reflect upon the professional development seminar.
 - e. Discussion of the advantages versus disadvantages of maintaining the separation of the MA and PhD seminars, particularly in light of practices elsewhere, is urgently required. This should include a consideration of the resource implications since the existing structure of 'separation' is ultimately unsustainable in the current model; many universities currently run merged seminars of this kind.
- c. The Director's response to the external report
- a. The Director's response speaks to all the recommendations put forward by the external reviewers, and groups them together for ease of understanding. Many of the 'minor' issues are addressed in this document and solutions can be found. The external reviewers' suggestion that the Tri-History Executive meet more frequently in order to enhance the management of the program is an important recommendation. The Director's response could address the issue of preparing students for non-academic career opportunities more clearly: this is a major change in PSE that all graduate programs must deal with more resolutely.
- d. Changes in organization and governance to respond to the external report
- a. We do not see a need to make changes of this sort to respond to the report. The issues can be addressed without major changes of this kind; however, it would be advisable to seek the support of the three deans together when seeking solutions

to these problems. If the program is truly a Tri-University program, then we should expect a high level of cooperation and communication between the History departments involved and their deans' offices.

- e. Resources that would be provided to implement selected recommendations
 - a. Most of the recommendations do not require significant resources for implementation: the two which do—transportation between the universities, tracking of graduates—will require special attention and perhaps assistance from other levels within the universities. Re-allocation of resources and sharing are the principle methods by which a number of recommendations can be realized.
- f. Timeline for the implementation of recommendations
 - a. We look forward to hearing more of what emerges out of the scheduled **Planning Retreat** to be held this fall where a number of the recommendations concerning organization and logistics will be more thoroughly addressed. We would expect to have a report from and indeed meet with the Tri-University Executive after the retreat; we would also expect to see a two year Implementation Plan prepared which presented the conclusions as well as the various options that arise from the meeting.

The Deans of the three Faculties/Colleges involved with the Tri-University strongly support the continuation and future success of this program. We will work to provide the support that we can reasonably supply to assist the program to grow and improve in quality over the years ahead. It is a strong program and its inter-university nature make it a fine example of the type of collaboration that can be successfully undertaken amongst institutions for their common good.



MEMORANDUM FROM THE PROVOST AND VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC)

To: Anthony Clarke, Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies & Program Quality Assurance)

From: Serge Desmarais, Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Date: August 27, 2014

Subject: Provost's Response to the Final Report of the Internal Review of the Tri-University Graduate Program in History

I have had an opportunity to review the Final Report of the Internal Review of the Tri-University Graduate Program in History, and I am pleased to accept the report.

The external reviewers, Dr. Doris Bergen and Dr. Jim Miller, offer strong support for the Tri-University Graduate Program in History, citing the "committed and enthusiastic instructors and the able and energetic students" (1). The external reviewers recognize that members of faculty participating in the Program are "highly accomplished scholars with significant publications and other notable achievements. . ." (18). Dr. Bergen and Dr. Miller commend the Program as a collaboration which allows for the effective use of resources. As an example, they cite both Medieval and Early Modern History as two areas which are viable only because the Tri-University Graduate Program in History allows for a sharing of resources (5).

The external reviewers make a number of thoughtful suggestions on how a very strong program might be enhanced and bettered. The suggestions, taken as a whole, are expressions of concern around practices, particular to each institution, which do not align fully and impede the students' experience of the Program as a seamless collaboration between the three institutions. An example is: students register at one of the three universities participating in the program. When a student registers, she or he is assigned a log-in which is particular to the institution but may not allow students to access easily the resources of the other two institutions (11). In reading the report by the reviewers, I note that each of the concerns, taken individually, is an irritant rather a serious obstruction, but the aggregate of these irritants generates frustration for students, staff or faculty. Throughout their report, the reviewers identify isolation as a result. Dr. Bergen and Dr. Miller strongly urge greater communication between the three

graduate programs in history to resolve misalignments when possible. An inference of the report is that faculty and staff can become habituated to the institutional differences, and so lose awareness of their impact on students. As Acting Provost, I endorse the recommendations which circulate, broadly, around communication between the three programs with a view to optimizing the experience of the students in the program, and to fostering a sense of the Tri-University Graduate Program in History as cohesively integrating the strengths of three participating programs. The goal should be an alignment of practices and expectations, to the degree that the particulars of institution practice allow.

I wish to offer my personal thanks, and that of the University of Guelph, to Dr. Bergen and Dr. Miller, and to the students, staff and faculty who participated in the preparation of materials for the review, and in the visit of the reviewers. This indicates the strong engagement of all involved in the Tri-University Graduate Program in History, and bodes well for engaged consideration of the recommendations, and appropriate action. I look forward to receiving a report within a year outlining the progress being made in response to matters raised by the reviewers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Desmarais', written in a cursive style.

Serge Desmarais
Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

cc: D. Bruce, Dean, College of Arts
C. Carstairs, Chair, Department of History