Executive Summary: Department of History

Mission

The Department of History trains individuals to appreciate the complexity and diversity of the human experience, to question simple explanations, to evaluate evidence in multiple forms, and to offer insightful interpretations with clarity of expression. Faculty produces excellent scholarship that pushes the boundaries of historical enquiry, mentors the next generation of historians through our MA and PhD programs, educates undergraduates especially about the value of research through our BA, BGS and minor programs, serves as leaders in expanding the university’s commitment to globalize its curriculum, and reaches out to the public to advance its understanding of history and to encourage an appreciation of historical thinking.

Faculty

History faculty has maintained an excellent record of research, while undergoing a dramatic shift in its composition since the last program review in 2002. Every individual promoted from assistant professor to associate since 2002 has published a peer-reviewed monograph. Overall, our faculty has published 41 books, with 22 of these being single-authored monographs. Faculty has published 69 articles in 64 different scholarly journals, presented papers at the top scholarly conferences, and been invited to give talks in venues around the world. Our faculty has also excelled in teaching. We currently have 11 Kemper winners in our faculty and our program continually receives recognition from the Center for Teaching Excellence. The strength of our faculty has led to an upsurge in our undergraduate majors rising from 361 in fall 2002 to 512 in fall of 2005 and stabilizing above 400 since then. The numbers reflect in part the recruitment of students from the various classes that faculty offers that fulfill General Education requirements.

Bachelor’s Degrees (BA, BGS)

Faculty educates numerous undergraduates, both history majors and non-majors, particularly about the value of research, and help them develop their own analytical and communication skills that will serve them well in their future careers. Student credit hour production has remained strong, while showing a general shift away from lower-division courses to upper-division courses. This reflects a major curriculum revision in 2003-04 that gives our majors more flexibility in their degree program as well as an increased need to provide instruction for a larger number of majors. A number of popular courses at the 300 level have also been developed to give non-majors more variety to fulfill their need for upper-level credit hours.

Master’s Degrees (MA)

The vast majority of our graduate students that we admit with funding have as their ultimate goal completion of the PhD in our program. The Master’s degree program, thus, remains largely a precursor for our graduate students on their way to receive the PhD. The quality of graduate students in general has increased with admission limited to those students we can fund through fellowships or graduate teaching assistantships, or to individuals who are funded through special programs such as the U.S. Army or the U.S. Department of Education Teaching American history grant program. The improved quality of our Master’s students is demonstrated by the increase in GRE verbal scores from 596.3 in 2004 to 642.9 in 2009 and a decrease in time to degree from 3.1 in 2005 to 2.3 in 2010.
Doctoral Degrees (PhD)

History faculty mentor the next generation of historians through our PhD program, one in which our students benefit from advisors who serve as models of actively engaged scholars and one in which our students develop research, writing, and teaching skills that make them competitive for academic and non-academic positions across the nation. As with the Master’s program, admitting fewer students has led to an increase in quality as measured by GRE verbal scores, increasing from 565 in 2004 to 633.8 in 2009. Changes in admissions practices, along with a new portfolio exam, have also led to modest improvement in time to degree, decreasing from 9.8 in 2005 to 8.2 in 2010. We have yet to complete a systematic study of placement of our graduate students but in recent years we have placed our doctoral recipients in tenure-track jobs at Texas Tech University, Marshall, Valdosta State, Colorado State, University of Nebraska-Omaha, Iowa State, Johnson County Community College, University of Arkansas, and others.

Changes as a Result of the Review Process

The Review Team commended the History Department for its excellence in teaching, research, and service, and the Department will build on its strengths by continuing its longstanding relationship with the Center for Teaching Excellence, perpetuating a culture that celebrates the research accomplishments of our colleagues, and nurtures the many links our colleagues have with units across the university, especially the area studies centers. In response to the Review Team’s recommendation, we have already adopted a new Faculty Evaluation Plan, requested new hires at the senior level, established a mentoring system to develop future leaders, adopted a plan for the succession of officers that creates a culture of equitable service, created a works-in-progress seminar to feature faculty and advanced graduate student research, and combined the roles of Honors Coordinator with Phi Alpha Theta and History Club Advisor to re-instill a sense of community among our undergraduates.

Overall Evaluation

Through their teaching, research, and service activities, faculty in the Department of History engages individuals in global issues and illuminates diverse human experiences across time and space. Students of history, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, will have a broad knowledge of events, issues, and processes that have shaped our current world, and skills to discern myth from reality and to effectively communicate their own informed interpretations. The Department is a recognized leader in teaching and contributes to the general undergraduate curriculum at KU in a number of essential and irreplaceable ways. Through its graduate program, the Department mentors a new generation of research scholars who will prepare future students to think historically and pursue life-long learning. The Department of History plays an essential role within the University of Kansas by preparing residents of Kansas and beyond to make intelligent choices in a world increasingly changing in ever more complex ways.
The Department of History has been consistently ranked highly among public research universities by U.S. News and World Report. The Department is currently ranked 26th and is second only to Texas among Big XII schools. KU Historians have a variety of research expertise and offer courses that include all chronological periods of human history—antiquity, medieval, early modern, and modern—and many of the major geographic regions—United States, Latin America, East Asia, Western Europe, Russia/Eastern Europe, and Africa. All of our degree programs, BA/BGS, MA, and PhD, have been acknowledged for their innovative curriculum and teaching.

- The BA degree offers a variety of innovative and popular courses that regularly enroll to capacity with both majors and non-majors.
- The faculty currently includes 11 winners of the prestigious Kemper Award for Teaching Excellence and has won a total of 14 of these awards since its inception, tied for the most received by any one department.
- The Department has partnered with Olathe Public Schools in two different U.S. Department of Education Teaching American History Grant programs. The current grant pays the tuition for 20 teachers for graduate level credit that can be applied toward an MA degree in our program.
- The PhD program includes the innovative Portfolio Exam that stems from the Department’s participation in the Carnegie Initiative for the Doctorate and that has served as a model for other units to emulate.
- PhD recipients have had remarkable success in landing tenure track jobs. Our doctoral students have taken positions at such places as Texas Tech University, Marshall, Valdosta State, Colorado State, University of Nebraska-Omaha, Iowa State, Johnson County Community College, University of Arkansas, and others.
- The faculty continues to produce an abundance of excellent scholarship. Since the last program review, faculty have published 41 books and published articles in 69 different scholarly journals since 2002.
- KU Historians proudly represent their home institution and the State of Kansas, delivering talks and scholarly presentations in 31 states and 18 countries since 2002.
Department of History
University of Kansas

Program Statement for External Review
November 2010

Submitted by
Paul Kelton, Chair
History Program Statement—2010 External Review

Table of Contents

Introduction
Part I: Faculty Staffing, Development, and Research
Part II: Undergraduate Program (BA, BGS, and minor programs)
Part III: Graduate Program (MA and PhD)
Part IV: Facilities and Instructional Resources
Part V: Leadership and Governance
Conclusion
Appendices
   A. Faculty Questionnaires
   B. Academic Information Management System (AIMs) Data Report
   C. Departmental Newsletters, 2009 and 2010
   D. Major Advising Forms, Old and New
   E. Graduate Handbook
   F. Article from Chronicles of Higher Education
   G. Pivotal Events Flyer
   H. By-Laws
Introduction

This document was prepared by Paul Kelton (department chair) with contributions from a self-study committee composed of Nathan Wood (director of undergraduate studies), Kim Warren (director of graduate studies), Donald Worster (advisory board chair), and Elizabeth MacGonagle (associate chair). It is derived from a self-study process initiated by the distribution of two questionnaires (see Appendix A) sent to tenured/tenure-track faculty. The first asked each faculty to list the products of their scholarly labors from 2002 to the present, and the second, an anonymous survey, asked them to identify areas in which they would like to see the department improve. Thirty five out of 37 faculty responded to the first survey, while 21 out of 37 responded to the latter. Members of the self-study committee consulted with their respective boards/committees to consider the results of the second survey, utilized data supplied to us from KU’s Academic Information Management System (AIMS) (see Appendix B), and passed on their input to the chair. The entire document was then sent out to all tenured/tenure track faculty for feedback. This feedback was received and incorporated into this document before being sent to the dean.

The Department of History last underwent a program review in 2002. Since that time dramatic changes have occurred. While the department with its current membership of 30.85 FTE is slightly higher than the 29.1 in 2002, the composition of the faculty is quite different. A total of 15 people left the department, either by retirement, accepting employment elsewhere, or death, while 17 joined. Most of these new faculty members have come in at the assistant rank, marking a major generation shift in the department. The undergraduate curriculum underwent substantial revision and the number of majors has increased, from 361 to 426.\(^1\) The graduate program also has revamped in part due to an external review conducted in 2004 and to our participation in the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate. We have been led by five different department chairs (Lewin, Moran, Wilson, Tsutsui and Kelton) and have had our offices moved to a new addition within Wescoe Hall. This study will use 2002 as a baseline and provide details concerning changes since then as well as point out our strengths and areas for future growth.

\(^1\) AIMS data has us with 426 majors as of fall 2009. The current number of majors is in flux due to ongoing enrollment. See Appendix B., p.11.
I. Faculty Staffing, Development, and Research

A. Changes in Staffing

Currently, 37 individuals hold appointments in the department and the department’s total FTE is 31.8. These numbers are quite similar to those in 2002, when we had a total of 34 individuals and a total FTE of 30.8. Underneath this apparent stability, however, was a dramatic change in personnel. Since 2002, 15 of our colleagues left either because of a new position elsewhere, retirement, or death, while 17 people joined us. In many cases, new additions cover areas of those who had left either before or after 2002; Jake Dorman (African-American), Steven Epstein (medieval), Megan Greene (modern China), Ernest Jenkins (medieval), Eve Levin (pre-modern Russia), Yang Lu (pre-modern China), Roberta Pergher (20th-century Europe), Leslie Tuttle (early modern France), Kim Warren (U.S. Women), Jennifer Weber (U.S. Civil War), Nathan Wood (modern Eastern Europe), and Adrian Finucane (early America) have research foci in the same general areas as individuals who had left the department. Still, they have not simply plugged gaps. We are stronger now in areas such as comparative race and gender, comparative empire, religious, economic, family, indigenous peoples, military, and sexuality thanks to the arrival of new colleagues with up-to-date research agendas. Currently, we are searching for an assistant professor of Central America/Circum Caribbean history, which will fill a long vacant position in that area. The additions of Greg Cushman (global environmental), Afshin Marashi (Middle East), and Sheyda Jahanbani (U.S. international) have added new foci in the department, while the appointment of Adrian Lewis (military) has given us even more strength in one of our areas of emphasis. Lastly, Christopher Forth (modern European cultural and gender) has transferred .25 of his appointment to our department from Humanities and Western Civilization and also strengthened us in an important area.

Still, there are areas that we had covered that remain unstaffed due to departures. These include modern Japan, US Latino/Latina, modern Russia, modern France, 20th-century Indigenous Peoples, South Africa, and U.S. business and economic. We will also lose coverage of pre-modern China due to the departure of Lu Yang, who is currently in his terminal year following a negative decision on his promotion and tenure candidacy. Last spring, the department approved a multi-year hiring plan brought forth by our Staff Needs Committee that would fill some of the above gaps and gaps that would emerge as current faculty fully retire. This priority list is as follows: modern Russia, modern Japan, Kansas /the West, pre-modern China or China’s borderlands, science and/or technology since 1500, imperial history (Europe and the World),

2 AIMS data (Appendix B., p.4) has us with 31.3 FTE in fall 2009. The change in FTE for fall 2010 is accounted for by the loss of 1.5 FTE with the phased retirements of DeKosky, Lewin, and Wilson and an additional loss of .25 with the departure of William Tsutsui, and then the addition of 2.0 FTE with the hires of Afshin Marashi and Adrian Finucane and .25 FTE with the transfer of portion of Christopher Forth’s appointment from Humanities and Western Civilization. Finucane will start full time with us in January 2011 but for the purposes of this study she will be considered as part of our 2010 faculty.

3 Those who left include: Jay Alexander (pre-modern Russia/retired), Anna Cienciala (Eastern Europe/retired), John Dardess (pre-modern China/retired), Valeria Mendoza (U.S. Latino/Latina/position elsewhere), Norman Saul (modern Russia/retired), Charles Stansifer (Latin America/retired), John Sweats (Modern France/retired), William Tsutsui (modern Japan/position elsewhere), Debra Blumenthal (medieval/position elsewhere), Donald Fixico (Indigenous Peoples/position elsewhere), Carl Strikwerda (Modern Europe/position elsewhere), Gail Bossenga (early modern France/position elsewhere), H. Ray Hiner (Early America/retired), Suresh Bhana (South Africa/retired), and Lloyd Sponholtz (US business and economic/ deceased).
Africa, Ancient Greece, global capitalism, nineteenth-century European, US military, and 20th-century US. Not included on this list are two positions that the department committed itself to in Middle Eastern/central/southern Asia/Islamic World if seed money was acquired for positions through the Department of Defense. So far it does not appear that this money will be forthcoming. The list also does not include positions that might be vacated by anyone who has yet to enter phased retirement but who might retire in the near future. The hiring plan is subject to yearly review and alteration, and it has been the department’s practice to do so as new opportunities or conditions emerge.

New hiring opportunities will certainly help us further diversify our department. We have made some significant strides in this endeavor since our last program review. In 2002, 29.4% tenured/tenure-track faculty were women, while in 2009 37.1% were. In the hires made since 2002, nine were males and 8 were women. The percentage of individuals who identify themselves as something other than non-Hispanic Caucasian also increased, going from 14.7% in 2002 to 20% in 2009. Hiring since 2002 has indeed brought more diversity into the department. Among the 17 new additions are one Iranian-American, three African Americans, one Chinese national, one Italian national, and one Latina. These demographic changes reflect a careful effort to recruit women and minorities. Still, the department realizes that the percentage of female and minority professors does not mirror the U.S. population as a whole and will continue its efforts to recruit diverse candidates.

The change in personnel has also led to a generational change within the department. The department is somewhat younger. In 2002 the mean age was 50.1 and median age 51, while in 2009 the mean was 49.8 and median 47. But more telling is how the distribution of professors at the various ranks has changed. New hiring largely at the assistant rank, success of our assistants at gaining promotion to associate, and little movement from the associate to full rank has led to a department with a growing number of mid-career faculty. In 2002, there were 13 full professors, 10 associate professors, and 11 assistants. Currently, there are 10 full professors, 18 associates, and 9 assistants (four of whom are currently up for promotion to tenured associate). Clearly, one of the department’s greatest challenges will be how to increase its track record of moving its faculty to the top rank.

B. Faculty Development

Since 2002, career development opportunities have remained fairly static, with one major exception. In spring 2007, our assistant professors became eligible to take a Research Intensive Semester (RIS), a term free of teaching responsibilities ideally taken after successful completion of the third year review. The development of assistant professors also involves opportunities and practices of longer standing. The department assigns all assistant professors a faculty mentor and a guide from the associate and full professor ranks. The mentor is to meet regularly with the assistant professor and discuss issues related to career development, especially issues related to pursuing publication of scholarship and how to balance the demands of teaching, research, and service. The guide is to be the go to person for information on how to navigate the bureaucracy of the department, college, and university. The chair holds regular meetings with all junior faculty as well. All assistant professors are encouraged to work with the grant development officer of the Hall Center to craft their applications for a New Faculty General Research Fund (NFGFRF) grant, a quasi-competitive award that KU gives to support the research of assistant professors. All our assistant professors have had success in their applications for this grant, although the university decreased the amount from $10,000 in 2002 to $8,000 currently. Assistant professors also are
given priority by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in the award of General Research Fund (GRF) grants, awards in amounts up to $4,600 to support summer research. Eighteen applications by our colleagues submitted when they were assistant professors were successfully funded, while seven were not. Mentoring, NFGRFs, GRFs, and RISs have all contributed to the success of our junior faculty. Since 2002, eleven out of the twelve assistant professors have successfully obtained tenure and promotion to associate.

For associate and full professors, faculty development opportunities have remained static since 2002 and less available than for assistant professors. The university offers sabbaticals to tenured faculty on a competitive basis. One becomes eligible to apply after six years of service. (Years in which someone takes an external fellowship, even for just a semester, or any other leave without pay do not count toward the six required years.) Since 2002, twenty history faculty were awarded sabbaticals; one applicant was turned down the first time and was successful the second; another applicant was turned down and chose not to reapply the following years; and some successful applicants turned their sabbatical down because they won year-long external fellowships. Associates and full professors have applied for GRF funds but have been less successful in obtaining them. Fifteen applications submitted by associate and full professors were successfully funded, while eleven were not. Many, however, have worked with the Hall Center to successfully gain external fellowships. Since 2002, three associates went up for full professor (Levin, Sivan, and Tsutsui) and all were successful. Nevertheless, six associates have remained at that rank over the past 8 years with three of them currently in phased retirement.

For the development of all its faculty members, the department has played an active role in supporting intellectual exchanges both at KU and away. We encourage our members to present their research to their colleagues at conferences and make available part of our state funds to pay for travel expenses to conferences. The current amount is $350 per individual per year, certainly not the amount we would want to be able to provide but an amount that can augment funds available through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. A number of opportunities exist at KU for intellectual exchange. Our faculty present papers in Hall Center seminars such as Nature and Culture; Early Modern; Gender; Latin American; Peace, War, and Global Change; as well as events sponsored by KU’s area studies programs. These outside opportunities have pulled attention away from the department and have led many to lament our lack of intellectual cohesion. We are making an effort to solve this problem. Our Pivotal Events in History Program, which will begin fall 2010, will in part function as a department specific event, one in which a selected faculty member will give a talk to his or her colleagues, alumni, and friends of the department. We also have a departmental seminar planned this fall in which historians in our department and other departments will gather and discuss the president of the AHA’s annual address. We have done this before but not on a regular basis. We hope that it will become a regular and formal event, one in which colleagues can gather and discuss the state of the profession. Our Pivotal Events Program and departmental seminar, however, will have to compete with a large number of opportunities for intellectual exchange that KU offers. The department has sponsored or co-sponsored more than its share of guest speakers on various topics of interest to us and our many colleagues outside of the department. Since 2002 we have brought in Peter Gay (European cultural), Carl Kaestle (U.S. education), Scott Palmer (modern Russian aviation), James Brooks (Indigenous and African-American interactions), Renee Poznanski (Holocaust and historical memory), Daniel Blatman (Holocaust and historical memory), Arnold Offer (U.S. national security ideology), John Pettegrew (US cultural/intellectual), Scott Magelssen (Iraq wars), Robert Citino (World War II), William Chafe (Civil Rights Movement), Anika Walke (Holocaust), Chris
Frazer (Mexican Revolution), Elizabeth Borgwardt (human rights post-WWII), Walter Johnson (antebellum slavery), Jack P. Greene (British North American colonization), David Nirenberg (medieval), William Jordan (medieval), Phil Deloria (Indigenous Peoples), Jonathan Scott (early modern England), Britt McCarley (public history), Dawa Dolma (Tibet), Yongey Mingyur Dorje Rinpoche (Tibet), Adam Rome (Earth Day), and Eric Foner (Abraham Lincoln) among others.

C. Research Productivity

Since 2002, history faculty, who are still currently in the department, have published 22 single-authored monographs, 1 co-authored monograph, edited or co-edited 8 works of collected essays, authored or co-authored 5 textbooks, and edited or co-edited 5 document readers or anthologies. KU historians have also had 2 of their previously published books translated and reissued. A number of top academic presses have published our books including the university presses of Kansas, Washington, North Carolina, California, Harvard, Oxford, Northern Illinois, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Cambridge, Stanford, Pennsylvania, Rochester, Nebraska, Illinois, Missouri, and Sheffield [UK]. KU historians have also published with a number of trade and international presses. Ten awards have been given to faculty members for pre-publication subvention or post-publication recognition of their books.


KU historians report $676,547 worth of external grants or fellowships that they have won that have supported their research, either by paying for travel expenses or buying out a semester or year of their teaching/service duties at KU. In some years faculty won multiple fellowships and declined those less desirable than the one they accepted. KU historians have won numerous internal research grants provided through KU’s General Research Funds as well as grants and fellowships through the Hall Center. In addition to these, history faculty have been instrumental in bringing institutional grants from such sources as the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of State, Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, Ford Foundation, National

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4 Figures giving the total number of publications are derived from the information that faculty provided on questionnaire #1 and the cv’s of the two individuals who did not fill out the questionnaire. The production of all faculty currently holding FTE in the department since the time of their appointment at KU is included. Neither the production of individuals prior to coming to KU is considered nor the production of those who have left since 2002.

5 This figure is derived from data that faculty members reported on questionnaire #1. AIMS data (Appendix B., p.8) includes data on awards administered through KU’s Center for Research, which are predominately institution-wide grants such as those from the Department of Education and which does not include many external short-term grants.
Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Science Foundation to KU that have supported their research as well as their colleagues and graduate students across the university.

With such wide-ranging and well-known expertise, KU historians have been invited to give talks at local, national, and international institutions. KU historians have taken an active role in promoting history within the state including giving talks sponsored by the Kansas Historical Society and Kansas Humanities Council. Our faculty members have given invited talks at 59 universities and colleges in 31 states and the District of Columbia, including top ranked institutions such as Penn, Chicago, Yale, Berkeley, Washington (St Louis), Harvard, Illinois, Princeton, Southern California, North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio State, Johns Hopkins, MIT, University of Texas at Austin, and UCLA among others. The U.S. Military has also called upon the expertise of our faculty members, who have given invited talks at the National Defense University, U.S. Army War College, School of Advanced Military Studies, and Naval War College. Our colleagues have also presented their research at many historical societies and libraries across the nation. KU historians have given invited talks at universities and other institutions in 18 different countries, including Canada, Japan, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Austria, Finland, Mexico, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Peoples’ Republic of China, Iceland, Brazil, France, Israel, Italy, Denmark, and Spain. In addition to these invited talks, faculty members have given at least 212 presentations of their research at the annual meetings and conferences of a variety of professional organizations as well as at topical conferences and symposia. Most notably thirteen different faculty members presented at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association.

Our colleagues have not only presented as individuals but have played an important role in planning several academic conferences including the annual meetings of the History of Science Society, Society for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies, Central Renaissance Conference, Urban History Association, Mid-America Conference on History, Society of Historians of American Foreign Relations, Consortium of Humanities Centers & Institutes Annual Conference, Conference of Latin American History (of the AHA), Brazilian Studies Association, Rocky Mountain Conference on Latin American History, Athens Institute for Teaching and Research, International Society for the Study of European Ideas, and Association for the Study of Eastern Christian History and Culture. KU historians also served as organizers of three different topical conferences at the Huntington Library and one at the University of Texas at Austin.

On numerous occasions our faculty members have been called upon to serve as peer reviewers of the scholarship of colleagues outside of KU. KU historians have evaluated book manuscripts and proposals at the bequest of 41 presses including Oxford, Cambridge, Pennsylvania, Yale, Johns Hopkins, California, North Carolina, and Princeton among others. They have reviewed article submissions for 59 state, national, and international historical journals. In addition, faculty members have published at least 105 book reviews in state, national, and international historical journals. Academic departments at fifty-five universities have called on the expertise of our faculty on a number of occasions to serve as outside evaluators for individuals going up for promotion at their universities including Virginia, Yale, Brandeis, UC Berkeley, Notre Dame, Ulster, London, Chicago, Harvard, Oklahoma, Royal Society of Canada, Johns Hopkins, Pennsylvania State, Arizona, Texas A&M, Nebraska, Northwestern, Rice, Columbia, Michigan State, Indiana, Florida, UCLA, Michigan, Swarthmore, Smith, and Washington among others. Lastly, faculty members have served as evaluators of grant applications for numerous institutions and agencies, including NEH, National Humanities Center, ACLS, Ford Foundation,
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Science and Society Program, National Science Foundation, Canada Council for the Arts, Economic and Social Research Council (UK), Nuffield Foundation Social Science Programme (UK), Fulbright Group Studies Abroad, French government, Swiss Academy of Science and Letters, Guggenheim, and International Research and Exchanges Board.

In addition to the above, KU historians have served on the advisory boards and prize committees of several professional organizations, served on various editorial boards of presses and journals, organized and conducted multiple seminars and symposia, served as visiting professors and scholars, and have been interviewed for several television and radio programs. We also have among our ranks the editor of the Russian Review, the general editor of the Modern War Studies series published by the University of Kansas Press, the editor of Cambridge University Press’s environmental history series, the past Vice President of the Lusophone African Studies Organization, and the current President of the Early Slavic Studies Association.

D. Growth Areas:

While the last eight years has been a period of tremendous productivity and positive changes in the development of our faculty, we realize that we must continue to change and evolve. According to the last US News and World Report rankings of history graduate programs, we ranked 27th among public research universities, behind only the University of Texas at Austin among Big XII schools. We had been ranked as high as 25th in earlier rankings and would like to regain and then surpass that position. We have indentified three growth areas that we believe will help us elevate the scholarly profile of our department:

1.) Increase the awareness of KU administrators, the historical profession, and citizens of Kansas of our program and its accomplishments. We realize that US News and World Report rankings are based exclusively on perception, but we do not dismiss perception as an important factor. We will attract the best and brightest of graduate students only if they know about us and our high caliber program. State and university support for us hinges in part on what they know about us, and if we do not tell it to them, then who will? We have been making positive steps toward this goal. Last year and this year, we published a newsletter that went out to over 4,000 individuals, including alumni, administrators and supporters in which the activities and accomplishments of our faculty are emphasized. (See Appendix C.) We need to find ways to make ourselves better known to individuals and institutions, particularly Midwestern colleges and universities which might serve as feeder schools for our graduate program.

2.) Improve our faculty members’ consistency and quality of production over the course of their careers. Clearly, the most pressing issue we will face is the advancement of associate professors to the full rank. To this end, we need to develop a mentoring program for associates, enhance our career development opportunities for associates, and derive ways in which service and teaching responsibilities are distributed equitably so that all have an opportunity to advance.

3.) Define our research emphases to enhance depth rather than breadth of our coverage. Collectively, we cover an impressive array of geographic areas, especially for a university of our size. One wonders, however, if we can maintain such breadth, when we have expressed an interest in going into new areas such as the Middle East and in enhancing our thematic fields. The faculty will have a tough choice in determining which specific areas of
research will truly enhance our profile and thus guide our hiring decisions. In making this
decision, the department should be cognizant of strengths of KU outside of our department and
build on those to promote interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research foci.

II. Undergraduate Program

A. Overview

The study of history is central to the mission of the College of Liberal Arts and the
University of Kansas. Long considered fundamental within a liberal arts education, training in
history remains an important part of educating 21st-century students, as well. The skills we teach
across our curriculum, including the ability to sift through masses of information, ask relevant
questions, and present one’s interpretation of the material convincingly in oral and especially
written work, prove valuable in a variety of professions. Students who are trained in historical
skills recognize the importance of interpretation, use of evidence, and, thanks to a curriculum that
requires that students take courses from both Western and non-Western history, the significant role
of historical context and location in determining human attitudes and behaviors. The mission
statement of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences affirms that at “the core of a liberal arts
education are research and informed engagement with global issues, multiculturalism, and
diverse experiences; these goals represent our greatest hope for a better understanding of
differences in the human condition and the potential for enhanced tolerance.” As our university
endeavors to train students for the challenges and opportunities of a global society, teaching in
history remains a vital component of that training.

The history department has been consistently recognized for its excellent undergraduate
teaching. The department can boast 11 W. T. Kemper Fellows (six since 2002), and numerous
recipients of other university-wide and international teaching awards. In the past three years
alone, the department has been the recipient of two KU Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE)
departmental grants (AY2008/09 and AY2010/11) designed to improve teaching across the
curriculum in the department. We have used these funds to hold working sessions on curriculum
reform, send members of the department to national and international scholarship of teaching and
learning conferences, and to invite leading historians in the field of the scholarship of teaching and
learning to speak at CTE and lead workshop discussions within the department. In 2005, Lendol
Calder spoke to the department about the importance of “un-coverage” in teaching an introductory
history survey. Since 2007, Professors Leah Shopkow, David Pace, and Arlene Diaz, all from
Indiana University and pioneers of the “decoding the discipline” methodology, have each visited
our department to share their expertise and participate in structured discussions on teaching.

History undergraduate majors likewise excel. In recent years, several of our honors thesis
students have won university undergraduate research awards enabling research in locales as
diverse as Washington, D.C., France, and Namibia. In 2007 history honors undergraduate Taylor
Price worked with Professors MacGonagle and Hannah Britton (Political Science and Women,
Gender, and Sexuality Studies) on a project related to the “double burden” faced by Namibian
women before independence in 1990. Last year history honors student Patrick De Oliveira used an
undergraduate research award to travel to Lyon, France over Winter Break to conduct archival
research for his award-winning honors thesis on urbanization in nineteenth-century Lyon. Another
of our undergraduates, Regan Buck Bardeen, wrote an honors thesis using Nigerian market
pamphlets at the Spencer Research Library, presented the results of her research at two conferences, and won a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship for a year of study at the University of Ghana.

B. Changes since 2002

The undergraduate curriculum in the history department has undergone substantial changes since AY2001/2002. As a department, our focus in undergraduate education has shifted decisively away from the “coverage” model and toward the development of historical thinking skills. Whereas in 2001/02 our primary contact with undergraduate students tended to be in lower division classes, frequently structured as survey courses (e.g. U.S. since 1865, Europe since 1789, Medieval History), now more students take upper-level courses, particularly at the 300 level, which are frequently thematic and stress the development of historical skills. The specific innovations we have enacted are as follows:

1. Category system and emphasis on upper division courses. In AY 2003/04 the department radically reformed the undergraduate major and minor curriculum, with the most visible outcome being the creation of the Category I/Category II system (See Appendix D.) As it presently stands, majors should take the skills course, HIST 301, (formerly 396, more on this below) as soon as possible after declaring a history major. (Typically, they may have already taken several history courses already.) Students then choose a concentration either in Category I (Ancient, History of Science, Medieval, Modern Western Europe, Russia/East Europe, United States) or Category II (Africa, East Asia, Latin America, Native America) and take five courses in their area of concentration and three in the other area. In order to encourage the development of historical skills at the upper levels, majors and minors may not count more than two 100 or 200-level courses toward the major. The major is completed by writing a research paper, a piece of original scholarship crafted over the course of a semester (HIST 696), or if written as an honors thesis (HIST 490/1) over the course of an academic year.

We have also encouraged the creation of more courses with engaging titles at the 300-level to attract CLAS students seeking “junior-senior hours” into history courses and to increase the number of majors. Courses such as “China: From Mao to Now,” “Sin Cities,” “Goddess and Witches,” “Everyday Communism in Eastern Europe,” and the like, can thus serve as gateway courses into the major or as the bulk of the Category I and II courses that majors take before writing their senior theses. As a direct consequence of these reforms and an active recruiting policy that targets top students in 100-level courses with a personal invitation to consider majoring in history, the number of majors went up in AY2005/06 and AY2006/07 before gradually declining in the past few years. (Two reasons for this slight decline include the addition of a history minor in AY2005/06 and a College-level policy to suspend students on probation). The number of declared majors in fall 2009, 426, still exceeds any of the years before these reforms were introduced.

The transition of emphasis in our curriculum from 100-level survey courses to upper-level thematic courses is clearly borne out in the AIMS data for departmental Student Credit Hours (SCH). SCH in history undergraduate courses in 2001/02 and 2009/10 are roughly equivalent; though there was a peak in the middle of the decade, with the undergraduate SCH total for AY2006/07 at 116.2% of our present total. Over this time, however, one can see a consistent reversal in the balance of student enrollments from 100-level survey courses to upper division courses. Whereas in 2001/02 there were 9,600 SCH in lower division courses and 7,385 SCH in
upper division courses, now the ratio is almost exactly reversed. In AY2009/10, lower division courses accounted for 6,978 SCH, while upper division courses accounted for 9,800 SCH (see Appendix B., p. 3). This shift is particularly significant given the fact that 100-200-level courses are typically much larger than upper division courses.

More of the students in our classes are history majors now than in 2001/02, though the majority of our students are still non-majors. Whereas in AY2001/02 nearly four-fifths (78.6%) of all student credit hours in history classes were taken by non-majors, this number has declined each year to slightly more than two-thirds (65.6%) during the last academic year (see Appendix B., p. 3). This seems to be a direct consequence of shifting our focus from 100-level surveys to 300- and 500-level courses.

2. Reform of core courses, HIST 396 and 696. During the middle of the decade, we set about reforming the two required courses in our major, the HIST 396 historical methods course and the HIST 696 senior thesis. We held several departmental discussions on prospective reforms and invited Professor Leah Shopkow of Indiana University here for a discussion on teaching research courses such as our HIST 696. Unfortunately, no lasting policies seem to have resulted from the meetings related to HIST 696. For the methods course, we attempted a lecture/TA-led discussion format in order to meet the needs of more students, but have returned to individually-taught courses with approximately 15 students in them. The renumbering of the course as 301 instead of 396 was designed to emphasize the centrality of taking the class as early as possible; while renaming it “The Historian’s Craft,” we hoped, would help students and instructors think of the course as an apprenticeship in historical practice.

3. Handling of Academic Misconduct. Thanks to a policy adopted in 2006 that centralized the reporting process with the Undergraduate Director, we now have a more efficient and consistent method of dealing with case of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct. Once the program was implemented cases rose almost immediately from 5 to 10 a year to more than 30 annually. We have designed training workshops for faculty and graduate teaching assistants to facilitate good practice in designing syllabi, informing students, and proper reporting when necessary. The addition of a designated academic adviser for the department, a policy implemented in AY2007/08 has freed up more time for the DUS to deal with cases of academic misconduct.

C. Growth Areas

1. Clarification of skills in lower-, mid-, and upper-level courses. In the past two and half years, we have begun the process of reformulating the curriculum so that there is more continuity among courses numbered at the same level and a clear distinction between low-, mid-, and high-level courses. We have set a goal to create a set of guidelines that would help faculty determine appropriate benchmarks for the skills that students would acquire in their classes. We believe that by defining the basic skills and structure for our 100, 300, and 500-level courses, not only will we help students make better-informed decisions regarding enrollment, but also improve student preparedness for upper-level coursework, thanks to the achievement of mutually-agreed upon criteria in lower-level courses. If we can work out what expectations we have of students at each level, and by extension, what skills we will teach them, we could help make the major much more transparent and improve the abilities and skill-sets of our upper-level students.
The department has won two CTE grants to work on this. Thus far we have used the funds to send faculty members to conferences, hold a departmental workshop, and bring recognized experts on teaching history to KU for collegial discussions and an exchange of ideas. In October 2009 Nathan Wood attended the ISSOTL (International Society of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) international conference in Bloomington, Indiana as a departmental emissary and attended five sessions and workshops related to this topic. Associate Chair Liz MacGonagle attended the Association of American Colleges and Universities Meeting in Washington, D.C. in January 2010 with a similar mission. In March 2010 Professor Arlene Diaz of Indiana University came to KU for a discussion on the ways that her department undertook similar reform and in May, using techniques and topics learned at these conferences, Warren, Wood, and MacGonagle led a workshop to reflect on the skill-sets we would like to see at the 100, 300, and 500 level. These reforms will continue throughout this academic year. Our ultimate goal is for our students to begin learning a subject of field at the 100 level, build on that knowledge at the 300 level, perform more advanced historical research and writing at the 500 level, and begin their senior papers or theses with greater competency.

2.) Advising. While the advising specialist assigned to us has helped us immensely in the realm of navigating through paperwork and bureaucracy, many faculty members have expressed concern that our advising has suffered in recent years as students find ways to enroll without meeting with faculty. We need to find ways to have students who declare a major speak to faculty about their interests, longer-term goals, and the like. It is wonderful to have an advising specialist, but the specialist’s knowledge cannot replace the kinds of counsel students need from the faculty.

3.) Cultivating our brightest majors. We need to develop ways in which we increase the contact between faculty and our undergraduates, especially the brightest ones who may be thinking about graduate study in history. There seems to be a lack of honors courses, leading to a general belief that we are not challenging our brightest majors. There is for all practical purposes not a functioning Phi Alpha Theta chapter or history club. We do initiate a cohort of undergraduates into Phi Alpha Theta in the spring but the initiation ceremony is the extent of our contact with our brightest students outside of the classroom.

III. Graduate Program

A. Overview

The Department of History’s Graduate Program includes the following objectives: 1) to provide graduate-level coursework by qualified faculty in geographical, chronological, methodological, and topical areas essential to train professional historians in a variety of fields; 2) to contribute to historical knowledge through original research made available to the profession through publications, scholarly presentations, etc.; 3) to provide service to the historical profession; 4) to serve the graduate educational needs of other departments and programs within the university; 5) to train professional historians qualified to contribute in a variety of historical fields, teaching, research activities, and professional and public service at the local, state, and national levels. The department offers the MA and PhD degrees. The MA is designed primarily to prepare students for further graduate work, although a terminal MA degree can qualify students for careers in secondary teaching, library and information science, or museums. The PhD is the terminal degree for professional historians. (See Appendix E.)
B. Quality of Students

In 2004-2005, the department revised its admissions process to improve quality control. Now all of the faculty in a subfield (such as United States history or Russia/Eastern European history) review and rank the applicants in their area. Then the Graduate Awards committee reviews the subfields’ recommendations and makes final admissions decisions. This two-tiered selection process facilitates reliable, qualitative judgments. To ensure such quality control, the department now accepts applications for fall admission only, except in exceptional circumstances.

The department has recognized that the market for History PhDs is not rapidly growing, and therefore, should maintain some responsibility in maintaining a respectable but limited number of doctorates. In 2004, members of the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate reported that limiting the number of incoming students was not a controversial decision when compared to strategies employed by other institutions. The department wants to fill its limited number of slots (approximately 12 per year at the MA and PhD levels combined) with outstanding nationally competitive students. Therefore, the department has accepted a smaller number of high-potential students and recruited these students by offering them GTA funding. For the past two years, increased financial support from the College and restrictions on enrollments have allowed the department to offer 5-year funding packages (renewable in yearly increments) to incoming graduate students, therefore, making the department slightly more competitive with peer institutions than in past years.

The total number of MA degrees granted between 2002 and 2009 averaged 6.6 with a high point of 14 in 2009 and a low point of 1 in 2002. The number of PhD degrees granted between 2002 and 2009 averaged 8.7 with a high point of 13 in 2005 and a low point of 6 in 2008. There has been a relative increase in the GRE verbal scores of admitted MA applicants from 596.3 in 2004 to 642.9 in 2009. The GRE verbal score of admitted PhD applicants has risen from 565 in 2004 to 633.8 in 2009.

In a Graduate Student Satisfaction Measurement Survey that compared 2005 to 2009 results, students reported an increase in overall satisfaction in program quality, academic advising, climate of program, professional advising, and choice of school. (See Appendix B., pp.17-18.) The quality of graduate teaching by faculty decreased slightly from 4.21 to 4.00, and, yet, course scheduling dropped from the second highest barrier for graduate student progress to the fifth position. Work/financial commitments ranked first in 2005 and second in 2009. Family obligations took on the first position in 2009. In a 2010 survey, faculty recognized the need to provide more consistency in class offerings with an examination of the timing of courses and the availability of courses in both thematic and traditional fields.

Annual evaluation of graduate students has taken place on an informal and formal basis. In 2010, the department adopted a new evaluation of first-year students in order to give them useful feedback about their academic performance. Beginning as a pilot program in spring 2011, the feedback will combine impressions from teaching faculty, advisors, and the Director of Graduate Studies. In addition, in spring 2011, the department will adopt the required annual process of evaluation of GTAs mandated by the Human Resources and Equal Opportunity Office (HREO), the College Office of Graduate Affairs (COGA), and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (RGS).
C. Funding for Graduate Students

RGS now tracks how many History Department graduate students hold GTA and GRA positions in any unit. Between fall 2005 and fall 2009, the department maintained financial support through GTAships for approximately 75% of its graduate students. The department and RGS have found anecdotally and statistically that students with university funding complete their degrees more quickly than students whose financial support primarily comes from other sources. In the past two years, the department has decreased the ratio of GTA to undergraduate students from 90:1 to 70:1. The new ratio allows for better student-GTA interactions and also helps GTAs maintain their contractual duties as half-time employees of the university (a maximum of 20 hours per week.)

In order to increase the number of students who can be financially supported, the department actively encourages current graduate students to apply to teach in Humanities and Western Civilization. According to an external review of the department in 2004, there were concerns that some of the strongest GTAs, who might otherwise enrich the department’s own curriculum, are drawn to Western Civilization because it has a larger pool of teaching assistant opportunities. While the success of History graduate students as excellent teachers in Western Civilization classes brings pride to the department, the arrangement continues to allow for a splintering of authority over graduate students, whose funding is not necessarily tied to their academic performance or professional promise in their home department. The arrangement also diminishes opportunities for History Department faculty to maintain close mentoring relationships with GTAs. The department still maintains faculty mentoring of its own GTAs, including informal and formal evaluations and an annual orientation for new students and new GTAs. The University requires specific training for new GTAs, and the department endorses that training.

In recent years, the department has appealed to the College for a larger number of GTA slots, in response to undergraduate enrollments, and has received more GTAships. In addition, the History Department is one of three departments across the University that has been selected to participate in a three-year pilot program directed by RGS allowing for three additional fellowships. In the University Graduate Fellows (UGF) program, three excellent students (ranked and recommended by the department) receive fellowship funding in their first and fifth years with GTA funding during the middle three years. The aim of the UGF program is to lessen the burden of teaching on a set of students to determine whether such support accelerates their time to degree. RGS will work with the department to assess whether there is an overall impact on the department when fellowship funding is available as a recruitment and retention tool.

D. Number of Students Completing Degrees and Time to Degree

Several years ago, the department identified two significant slow-down points en route to a PhD: the MA thesis and the comprehensive exam. The department has eliminated both by restructuring the completion of the MA with an MA exam and the move to ABD with a portfolio exam instead of a written comprehensive exam. Data suggests that these changes have helped the department to significantly decrease the time to degree for both its MA and PhD students. The average years to degree for MA students in 2002 was 3.7 and in 2009 it was 2.0. The average years to degree for PhD students in 2002 was 6.7 and in 2009 it was 6.3.

The decrease in time to degree for both MA and PhD students can be attributed to a greater percentage of students holding GTAships during their graduate program (a maximum of 10
semesters is allowed by RGS), smaller and more qualified incoming cohorts, and replacement of the comprehensive exam with the portfolio exam. While the faculty members (according to 2010 surveys) are still split about the efficacy of the portfolio exam as a rigorous assessment of student work, early anecdotal data suggests that students are focusing on the dissertation prospectus and subsequently beginning research and writing on their dissertations earlier in their programs than in past years.

E. Program Innovations

While the department needs to think about training students for a broad-based, global focus in the 21st century, faculty are also aware that many jobs are still defined in traditional geographical/chronological parameters. According to a 2010 survey, faculty members continue to have mixed views about the combination of traditional and thematic fields. Since 2002, the department has expanded in the thematic fields of military, Indigenous Peoples, gender, and environmental history with new hires, which has allowed for greater flexibility and creativity in the formulation of fields. Faculty in the department work across the university by collaborating with area studies centers and programs, including Global Indigenous Nations Studies; Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies; Latin American Studies; Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies; Environmental Studies; African and African American Studies; and East Asian Studies.

A 2004 review recommended a move of History 805, “The Nature of History,” to the front end of the program. Since that time, students are advised to take 805 in their first or second semester. The enrollment in this course has swelled—not only because History graduate students have responded to this schedule change but also because graduate students in Museum Studies, American Studies, and related programs also find the 805 class important to their intellectual development. The department has responded to the demand by offering the course twice a year rather than in the fall semester.

In 2005, the department partnered with the Olathe [KS] School District, which earned a US Department of Education Teaching American History grant. The professional development program is designed to improve American history instruction in Olathe schools, which currently serve over 23,000 students. Starting in spring 2006, KU historians offered a series of five seminars to high school history teachers. Twenty students participated in the program; five students took additional coursework at KU to obtain MA’s in history, and one student is presently enrolled in our PhD program. A second grant was awarded in 2010 for a second cohort of Olathe teachers, and the program is under consideration as a model for a KU graduate program, an MA in History Education, specifically designed to enhance content learning in American history for middle school high school history teachers.

F. Portfolio Exam (Review of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam)

In 2005, the Department of History adopted a new format for the doctoral examination to replace the traditional comprehensive and oral. The traditional examinations consisted of written essays addressing topics or responding to questions from professors with the aim of demonstrating the student’s knowledge of three fields of specialization. During the oral examination, the faculty committee discussed those essays with the student and determined whether or not the student had the qualifications to write a dissertation. As part of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Initiative to Re-Envision the PhD history faculty designed an alternative to the traditional written examinations consisting of a portfolio of materials that include the student’s research
papers, a dissertation prospectus, and a “professional essay.” In 2005, the Department of History adopted the doctoral portfolio. (See Appendix F.)

The redesigned exam now serves as the basis upon which the department certifies students’ command of subject matter of their fields and their ability to demonstrate their readiness to proceed into the dissertation phase of their graduate work. The rationale for this change included five areas: 1) the traditional written exam structure lacked consistency; 2) the “data-dump” exams did not provide an accurate measure of the students’ command of their fields; 3) students often spent a year or more in preparing for exams, thus seriously delaying their progress to the degree; 4) the written system did not require, or even encourage, graduate students to focus on likely dissertation topics until after they were ABD; and 5) the written exam emphasized undergraduate-style test-taking skills.

After required coursework is finished, students now submit a portfolio of professional work that demonstrates competency in their major and minor fields. The portfolio includes, at a minimum: a CV and table of contents, all research seminar papers and any published historical writings, major written work from all colloquia and readings courses, a 15-20 page professional essay, and a 10-page dissertation prospectus plus bibliography and 150-word abstract.

The central part of the portfolio presented at the time of the comprehensive examination is the professional essay. It should be 20 to 25 pages long and represent the candidate’s best writing. The essay should not be autobiographical, casual, or informal in tone nor should it resemble the “personal statement” made in applying for admission to the program. The essay should offer an overview of the fields that the candidate has been studying and a scholarly assessment of their status, direction, and needs. The essay should identify the fields (major, minor) the candidate has chosen to pursue in colloquia and seminars and explain why those choices were made and how the candidate’s thinking about them changed with professional growth. It should identify the leading issues confronting particularly the major field today, the “big questions” that the field is debating, and the kinds of research and evidence gathering that dominate current research. The candidate should indicate where he or she stands on those questions and venture appraisals or criticism of key works in the field. Overall, the candidate should demonstrate a firm knowledge of what the most influential works and interpretations have been in the field. The essay should also present a concise discussion of the candidate’s long-term ambitions as a historical scholar.

Since the fall of 2008, the graduate director has worked with the Center for Teaching Excellence and the provost’s “Project on ‘Documenting Undergraduate and Graduate Learning Success’” to design rubrics that will enable the Department of History to evaluate the effectiveness of the doctoral portfolio.

The benefits of the portfolio exam ought to include: 1) more uniformity across the department, while still making allowance for the differences among fields; 2) evaluation based on the totality of their work in the program; 3) a structure in which students can continue with their professional preparation outside of structured courses; 4) directing students into thinking seriously about possible dissertation topics early in their careers; 5) a compilation of students’ professional work that will situate them better to compete on the job market. The department needs time to collect more quantifiable data to determine the efficacy of the switch from a written comprehensive exam to a portfolio exam. Although initially the innovation seems to have had a positive effect on time to degree, the department and RGS are interested in knowing how the
portfolio exam helps students prepare for the job market and their future careers. The department is also investigating the possibility of moving the portfolio exam into an electronic format to stay with current digital trends as well as allow for more flexibility in presentation.

G. Growth Areas:

1.) **Graduate student funding:** The department has made strides, particularly in partnership with the College and RGS, in enhancing funding packages for its incoming graduate students. The department enacted a practice this past year of awarding each graduate teaching assistant $1,000 for research expenses incurred within the U.S. or $2,000 for research outside of the U.S. The money comes from several endowed awards and scholarships funded by private benefactors and is given when a graduate student completes his or her second year of course work. However, more data needs to be gathered to determine how much more competitive the department is with peer institutions that offer more funding and funding that is not attached to teaching responsibilities. An assessment of the UGF program will help make those measurements.

2.) **Enhancement of strengths:** The department is still split on its priorities regarding thematic and traditional fields. Therefore, focusing on enhancing specific fields (a recommendation from the 2002 external review) rather than spreading resources across many fields ought to be considered. Setting such priorities will also help with course planning for graduate students (a concern raised in a 2010 survey of faculty).

3.) **Assessment of Portfolio Exam System:** The 2010 survey of faculty also revealed mixed reviews of the portfolio exam especially with regard to its rigor. Now that the innovation has been practiced for several years, it is time to study the efficacy of the portfolio exam in terms of assessing students’ academic preparation to write a dissertation. Although it seems clear that the portfolio exam has helped students reduce their time to degree, the department needs to understand the impact of this innovation on student preparation for future jobs.

IV. Facilities and Instructional Resources

A. **Office Space**

The department’s move to the new wing of Wescoe Hall in June 2007 significantly enhanced our working environment for faculty and staff. The office suite for department staff in 3650 Wescoe is a remarkable improvement from the old quarters in 3001 Wescoe. Many more faculty members now have offices with windows, and those who do not are in newly constructed spaces that are closer to natural light on both the 3.5 and 2.5 floors. Our GTAs moved into renovated spaces on the second floor of Wescoe, although they remain in the old part of the building and thus somewhat removed from activity and interactions in the new wing. Our lecturers have a new suite of offices near the department’s main office. We feel fortunate to have this new space, but the future needs of anticipated hires and an ongoing desire for faculty workspaces with windows will remain as challenges for the department.

B. **Instructional Space, Equipment, and Technology**

Our office suite contains a meeting room (3648 Wescoe) that accommodates numerous committee meetings and small gatherings of about 8 people. Many faculty also use the room to
read files and other confidential materials that are not to be removed from the main office. This room is too small, however, to accommodate undergraduate seminars or large graduate classes with an average size of 15 students. Indeed the fire marshal’s maximum capacity is 12. Instead, we use the department’s (window-less) seminar room in 3134 Wescoe for both undergraduate and graduate seminars. We have found that this one media-equipped room (with a maximum capacity of 20) is unable to accommodate all of our scheduling needs for the host of seminar offerings each semester. Other rooms on campus with a seminar table, or even small rooms with a seminar-style atmosphere, are very difficult for us to secure through the Registrar’s Office. We have turned to the Kansas Union at times, but some alcoves or meeting rooms there are already booked for portions of the semester.

In addition to our control over the seminar room in 3134 Wescoe, the Registrar assigned four other classrooms in Wescoe to the department for scheduling use. They are 4002 Wescoe (49 max. capacity); 4008 Wescoe (49 max. capacity) 4012 Wescoe (48 max. capacity) and 4045 Wescoe (36 max. capacity). The three larger Wescoe rooms are fully equipped with media equipment (projector, computer, DVD/video and document camera), but 4045 Wescoe is not. However, 4002, 4008, and 4012 Wescoe are rooms that we often lose to other departments during the first pass of media-room assignments made by the Registrar’s Office each semester. Therefore, we only really have full use of 4045 Wescoe (with no media capacity). This has created many difficulties in accommodating our classroom scheduling needs for faculty, GTAs, and Lecturers.

The department currently has no auditoria allotted for its exclusive use every semester. We had the use of a small auditorium in Hayworth until about two years ago, but this room was reassigned by the Registrar. The Registrar’s current system for auditoria requests each semester often leaves our large classes unassigned and “homeless.” The Registrar has indicated that a specific course offered in an auditorium might be made available for the same course the following year at the same time. So, once we use an auditorium, we would be able to keep it for that class on the same time/day the next year, regardless of instructor.

C. Growth Areas:

1.) Faculty Lounge: Although our new wing of department space is conducive to friendly interactions among faculty and staff and has helped to improve our morale overall, we would like to see more communal space created where we can discuss department matters and engage in informal conversations. There was a lounge in the old office suite that is missed. We would like to create a lounge in our new quarters. One possible location is the back end of the History Department suite.

2.) Seminar Rooms: Faculty have expressed deep concerns about the appearance and atmosphere of our department’s seminar room in 3134 Wescoe. One described it as “perhaps the most soul-killing space I’ve ever been asked to teach in.” Given the lack of windows, partially installed shelves, blank walls, and overall dreary look, some minor renovation and decorating is sorely needed to make this room more attractive. The need for additional seminar meeting space is also paramount. One possible solution is to convert the existing suite of lecturer offices in 3659 Wescoe into a seminar room. This space has windows looking out onto Jayhawk Boulevard, and it would be used much more frequently by students and instructors than by the current handful of lecturers. Our lecturers, however, would need to be re-assigned.
3.) Classrooms: The department needs to work with the administration to enhance our access to the rooms most conducive to our needs. The current system of requesting media rooms from the Registrar almost one year in advance, for example, is less than ideal for our scheduling needs. There is also the dearth of auditorium space for many of our classes of 70 students. We would like to have the Registrar allot us a small auditorium that holds 70 students to accommodate our scheduling needs, and on our end, we need to work to ensure that we start scheduling the same large courses at the same day and time every year.

V. Governance and Leadership

A. Overview

Over the past eight years the department has seen a rather rapid succession of different chairpersons: Thomas Lewin (2002-2004); Jeffrey Moran (2004-2006); Ted Wilson, interim, (2006-2007); William Tsutsui (2007-2008), and now Paul Kelton (2008-present). Tsutsui’s term was the shortest because he was asked by the College of Arts and Sciences to take on other administrative posts. He has since left KU to accept a dean position at Southern Methodist University. Succeeding to the office, Kelton has been chair since 2008, so that the top leadership position in the department seems to have stabilized. Kelton has recruited a set of highly capable departmental officers, has pushed through a new initiative—an annual day-long seminar and lecture on “Pivotal Events in History” designed to attract the department’s alumni back to campus and to promote better fund-raising (see Appendix G.)—and has brought back the annual departmental newsletter.

The case of Professor Tsutsui, who served as Director of the Confucius Institute and then as Associate Dean of International Studies, exemplifies a common pattern in the department: Our faculty have often served, and served all over the greater university community, as administrators. The department currently provides directors for the Center for East Asian Studies, Hall Center, and Office of Professional Military Graduate Education. Since 2002, history faculty members have served as directors of the Environmental Studies Program, Center for Latin American Studies, and the Dole Institute of Politics. In reaction, some historians have complained that such administrative leaves from departmental duties are too generous, that stricter time limits should be placed on them, and that the department should keep more of its talent at home.

The chairperson appoints three other officers (Associate Chair, Director of Graduate Studies, and Director of Undergraduate Studies). The Advisory Committee, in contrast, is elected by the faculty and serves the chair as a kind of “cabinet.” With the help of the Advisory Committee, the chair assigns every member of the department to one or more standing committees except those associated with the various “fields of study” into which the department is divided (e.g., United States, East Asia, Ancient, and so forth), where the faculty in those fields elect a chairperson from their numbers. Faculty typically serve on more than one departmental committee, and these assignments change from year to year.

B. Changes since 2002

Since the last program review, the Department of History has altered membership of various committees to distribute the service burden more equitably and reduce service overall. In spring 2009, the By-Laws (see Appendix H.) were amended so that departmental officers
(associate chair, director of graduate studies, and director of undergraduate studies) were ruled ineligible to serve on the Advisory Board, whose membership was reduced from 6 to 4. At the same time, the Advisory Board began to reduce membership on various committees that had membership in excess of what the By-Laws actually stipulated or whose membership, which was not specified by the By-Laws, was actually greater than it needed to be. Graduate Admissions and Awards, Graduate Board and Staff Needs were reduced by one each, while Undergraduate Committee was reduced by two. In other words, the department decided that many of its committees could function as effectively with fewer members and that the overall service burden would be lessened.

The most substantial change to our By-Laws involved our Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP), which stipulates how our Faculty Evaluation Board should evaluate the teaching, research, and service performance of tenured/tenure-track members. (See Appendix H, Sec. XII. H, pp. 20-29). Those evaluations are the basis for annual salary increases. The new procedure establishes four levels of performance (poor, fair, good, and excellent) by which faculty are evaluated in teaching, research, or service. To bring our Faculty Evaluation Plan in accordance with university policy, the revised FEP requires the chair to intervene in the case of a faculty member whose performance falls into the poor category in any one of the areas of performance. In the past, the scores for each of the areas of performance were added together and an intervention occurred only when this combined total fell within the poor category. In other words, a faculty member had to be performing poorly across the board, but now a faculty member faces intervention if he or she has a poor performance in just one area. In such cases, the chair is supposed to work with a low-achieving faculty member to develop and enforce a written plan for improvement in any area of deficiency. Three subsequent years of poor performance may lead to a differential allocation of effort or steps towards termination of employment.

C. Growth Areas

1.) Strategic plan for cultivating leadership at appropriate career stages. The department should develop a plan for cultivating new leaders and distributing the leadership tasks to more senior faculty. Currently, all the officers are either associate or assistant professors. This has never been the case in the past, and it is largely due to the imbalance in hiring and rank distribution, but it is a pattern the department should try to avoid or minimize. While they may be gaining good experience, junior faculty with major administrative responsibilities may also be putting their future tenure or promotion at risk. The department might do more to identify junior colleagues who have administrative promise and interest and give those individuals assignments that do not impinge too heavily on their research and teaching priorities. Generally, the department should avoid making any junior faculty person one of its officers. Associate professors with administrative promise might be given more support in the form of research leave time to secure senior status. Senior faculty who are not close to retirement might be given more administrative responsibilities and lessen the burden on their younger colleagues. Overall, a strategic plan should seek a balance between continuity of leadership and opportunity for new leaders to arise.

2.) Revising our Faculty Evaluation Plan. Despite changes that were recently made, there remains much dissatisfaction with the FEP, especially with how members of the Faculty Evaluation Board are chosen and with the laborious process of compiling data for evaluation. The department needs to streamline the creation of a portfolio so that it needs to include only the most relevant and up-to-date material and is not a drain on faculty time. The evaluative criteria might
be reduced from four to three “grades”; these might include “cause for concern,” “good,” and “exemplary.”

Most difficult of all is to decide which faculty should serve on the Evaluation Board. Currently this is done by lot, but should those who have received a rating of “poor” in some activity be on the Board, evaluating their colleagues? Who is best qualified or most likely to apply fair but demanding standards of evaluation? Is the activity of “research” being consistently downgraded for lack of any clear criteria on what research means? Is any scholarly book as good as any other? Clearly, the department needs to keep working on its Faculty Evaluation Plan and try to find a system that is encouraging rather than punitive, clear about the basis for evaluation, and applied by the best performers in the department rather than those with marginal records.

3.) Improving efficiency of decision making. Some departmental committees function less effectively than others, and all could use a renewed sense of purpose and a more effective process of addressing issues and reporting on them to the department as a whole. It may be that the committees have become less significant than they should be in departmental management. Some of their functions may be passed on too readily to the general faculty meetings; because those meetings are not always well attended and their agenda is long, they are not the best place to take up structural reforms without extensive prior committee reports and recommendations. Committees need to set time tables for doing their work, to tackle larger tasks in their purview, and to make timely reports to the whole faculty. More committee activism might enhance a stronger sense of community among the faculty and a greater sense that the service needs are being shared equitably.

Conclusion

The Department of History is a dynamic unit of productive scholars, effective teachers, and university leaders. Faculty members have published in numerous venues and made themselves well known within their respective fields. The History Department is widely regarded as a leader in teaching excellence, and we have enacted reforms to our graduate program that have gained national attention. We are experiencing a generational shift in the department that on one hand has thrust leadership into the hands of individuals at the earlier end of their careers than is desirable but that on the other hand has brought new energy and fresh ideas. Still, we are cognizant of the hard work and effort of our predecessors in establishing our department as a top-tier program among the nation’s public research universities. To this end, we must continue to reflect on our strengths and weaknesses and work to move forward. We have identified several tangible and achievable goals for growth. We aspire to make the Department of History into an even better program—one that we, the university, and the state of Kansas can be proud of.