



DOUGLAS COLLEGE

Comprehensive Program Review
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
History

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Scope

Name of DPP		History Department		
Full title and Type of each degree		Open Enrolment	Year of Program Launch	Year of Most Recent CR
Associate of Arts, History		Open Enrolment	N/A	N/A

Recommendations: Summary and Summary List

Recommendation Number	Related Report Component	Recommendation	Status / Timeline
1	12	Pursue curriculum diversification and decolonization	Ongoing
2	12	Faculty redouble efforts to develop students' communication skills, especially regarding academic writing	Ongoing
3	12	Prioritize experiential learning	Ongoing

Acknowledgement of Territory

Douglas College respectfully acknowledges that our campuses are located on the unceded traditional and ancestral lands of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the q'ícəy' (Katzie), q'w'a:n̓l'ən (Kwantlen), k'wík'əłəm (Kwikwetlem), x'w'məθk'əy'əm (Musqueam), and qiqéyt (Qayqayt) First Nations.

External Reviewers:

Marcel Dirk, Instructor, History, College of the Rockies

Tracey Kinney, Teaching Professor, History, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Douglas College History Department, Humanities and Social Sciences:

History Department faculty as a committee of the whole; Dr. Cedric Bolz and Dr. Denis McKim principal report writers.

Date: March 15, 2024

1. Territorial Acknowledgements

I have researched and written my portion of this review while residing in the East Kootenays and working at the College of the Rockies.

All the College's campuses are in the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa people, home also to the Kinbasket people. Additionally, the College partners with the Kootenay Regional Office of the Métis Nation, BC.

I would like to thank the Ktunaxa People as I value the opportunity to learn, share, and grow in *?Ktunaxa ?amak?is?*.

M.D.

My portions of the review have been written on the territories of the Snuneymuxw peoples and while working at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. KPU is located on the territories of the ᑭᓄᓐᓂᓐ (Kwantlen), xʷməθkʷəṽəm (Musqueam), ᑭᓂᓐᓂᓐ (Katzie), SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), s̓cəwəθən (Tsawwassen), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), and kʷikʷəṽəm (Kwikwetlem) Peoples, who have cared for these lands since time immemorial. As part of this acknowledgement, I hold myself accountable to participating in the work of decolonization, reconciliation, and Indigenization at KPU and in our communities.

T.K.

2. The External Environment

The post-secondary landscape in the Lower Mainland is crowded, to say the least, with no fewer than two research universities, four special-purpose teaching universities, two public colleges, and six accredited private post-secondary institutions all offering History education in the region. Within this milieu, Douglas College's History Department has established and maintained a reputation for excellence in its two-year programs as well as has developed upper-level courses as part of various agreements. The department has also been able to maintain strong enrolment numbers. Finally, its students evidently are well-prepared to complete their degrees at the four-year institutions.

5. Audit of the Self-Study Recommendations

Self-Study Recommendations		Agree ✓	Comments/Rationale
No.	Content		
1	Pursue curriculum diversification and decolonization	✓	<p>Both of these recommendations are admirable. Program review comments noting a, "continuous process of renewal and responsiveness to new and emerging areas of historical inquiry"¹⁴ substantiate faculty commitment to first part of this recommendation. The development, articulation, and delivery of HIST 1195, for example, speaks to the faculty's foresight in anticipating student interest in the ongoing and worsening climate crisis.</p> <p>The faculty also make plain their commitment to the second part of this recommendation. As they say, "The work of further diversifying and Indigenizing the curriculum, however, must be seen as a process and not an end goal."¹⁵ Their perspective is worth repeating not only because it is valid, but also because it speaks to something of a gap between goals and outcomes, revealed in both the report and the followup interviews.</p> <p>During their interview, the student commented that they hoped for big thematic courses moving away from western chronologies.¹⁶ They also cited several examples of courses that were taught thematically, providing a less Eurocentric educational experience.</p> <p>In our interview with the Dean, she clearly stated that a focus on the "how" would be required as the program review moved forward.¹⁷ The department will need, as she phrased it, to state "Here is what we need. Here is why we need it. And here is how will get there." Work, then, should begin immediately on shaping this action plan.</p> <p>A possible first step: Re-evaluate the program's fundamental structure with its dependence on so many second-year European courses. The department's strong record of garnering articulation</p>

¹⁴ Bolz and McKim et al., "9. Faculty and Faculty Development," 29.

¹⁵ Bolz and McKim et al., "9. Faculty and Faculty Development," 29.

¹⁶ Student, interview by Tracey Kinney and Marcel Dirk, February 26, 2024, in person.

¹⁷ Dean, interview by Tracey Kinney and Marcel Dirk, February 26, 2024, in person.

			<p>agreements should alleviate faculty fears of the impact on the articulation of the Associate of Arts.</p> <p>New hires with “breadth and depth of teaching and research experience in Indigenous histories”¹⁸ and service on related internal and external committees are strong indications this work has already begun, as noted by both alumni and students.¹⁹</p> <p>The dean seemed genuinely supportive of this recommendation as well. She mentioned how the new Indigenous/Settler history course aided the college in meeting its strategic objectives/initiatives. She further mentioned that the Director of Indigenous Academic Initiatives would be able to assist with the goal. And, when informed of the faculty member pointing out the need for a small token to accompany Indigenous honorariums, she mentioned her budget for gifts and was even receptive for ones purchased from Indigenous businesses.²⁰</p> <p>Again, it would be wise if a clear plan was drawn up, so these sorts of developments/initiatives were communicated to and from the department and the College.</p> <p>In addition, faculty should bear in mind how a decolonized curriculum could be integrated into potentially forthcoming conflict resolution and interdisciplinary degrees respectively mentioned by the chair and dean.²¹ Second, it is important the action plan link directly to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. The TRC calls for the provision of Indigenous history courses for social workers, medical and nursing students, lawyers, law students, public servants, church congregants, teachers, journalism students, business managers and staff, and newcomers. Therefore, as part of the action plan, outreach to these groups could be included.</p>
2	Faculty redouble efforts to develop students’ communication skills, especially	✓	<p>Historians are noted for their focus on communication and writing skills and inevitably take great pride in passing these skills to their students. These skills are, of course, the most transferrable for those heading into other careers. It is comforting, then, to see our Douglas College History Department colleagues wanting to continue their work in this regard, if not improve upon it.</p>

¹⁸ Bolz and McKim et al., “9. Faculty and Faculty Development,” 30.

¹⁹ Bolz and McKim et al., “PACs and External Relationships,” 27.

²⁰ All points from Dean, interview.

²¹ Chair, interview by Tracey Kinney and Marcel Dirk, February 26, 2024, in person and Dean, interviews.

	regarding academic writing		<p>Scaffolded research projects, writing intensive classes, and presentation of findings are also hallmarks of how to follow through on this recommendation.</p> <p>Redoubling of their efforts does raise concern about workload impacts, especially since faculty commented that the generalists in Learning Support Services are not always prepared to provide history-specific instruction/guidance to students. This workload concern may, however, be alleviated somewhat by the faculty's effective and positive relationship with Library Services. The presence of a subject-specific librarian able to work with students on essential skills was noted during our interviews. Further note was made of the librarian's willingness to create discipline-specific assignments.</p>
3	Prioritize experiential learning	✓	<p>The Program Review's Experiential Learning section listed site-based visits, guest speakers, cultural sector work opportunities, field schools, and STEP UP teams as examples already incorporated into courses by faculty.²² The Chair and several faculty members spoke favourably of a potential public history option, which, if developed with a focus on the communities that Douglas serves, including local Indigenous communities, could be substantially experiential.</p> <p>When reminiscing about the orally based/evaluated Greek Civilization course, the student spoke glowingly of experiential learning being more than simply assignment based.²³ Future hopes, especially the reference to public/ community engaged history—allude to the faculty accepting this type of learning is done outside of the classroom.</p> <p>The Dean is also very supportive of hands-on and work integrated learning. She mentioned that planning for a Humanities and Social Science practicum is underway.²⁴</p> <p>Therefore, to aid in prioritizing this recommendation, faculty should ensure 1) their definition of/vision for experiential learning are on the same page as the institution's and 2) the needs of history education are considered so students can take advantage of the HSS practicum.</p>

²² Bolz and McKim et al., "3. Experiential Learning," 11.

²³ Student, interview.

²⁴ Dean, interview.

6. Additional Context, Recommendations, or other Conclusions

No.	Content	Comments/Rationale
1	Program / Course Delivery	<p>Though the Program review did not offer any recommendations in this area, it became apparent online instruction has become a vexing issue at Douglas.</p> <p>On the one hand, Douglas clearly sees itself as an in-person institution with the new residence, amongst other developments and directives, aimed at creating an onsite learning community; on the other, data shows student demand for online courses and enrolment patterns indicate online courses fill earlier in the registration cycle. Hence, some balance must be achieved here.</p> <p>Though the Dean believes in this type of instruction and wants there to be an equitable distribution of this type of work,²⁵ it seems reasonable some faculty may be more willing and better experienced in this mode of instruction than others. It may be worthwhile, therefore, 1) to survey department members to determine their (un)willingness to so instruct, 2) to enable and support the willing to design and teach such offerings, and 3) to rotate these offerings so students can take different online courses over their time at Douglas.</p>
2	Marketing and Communications Support	<p>In some of our interviews the issue of marketing support was raised, a concern acknowledged by the Dean in our meeting. Faculty spoke of the challenge of promoting individual courses and the need to take it upon themselves to visit classrooms and put up promotional material. In addition, the department website was clearly a source of some consternation. History faculty hoped to be given the web-editing role; however, the Dean mentioned the possibility of an HSS marketing assistant taking this on. In either case, it remains clear the deep dissatisfaction with the website specifically and marketing more generally is an issue that must be addressed in the action plan after discussions between faculty, the Dean, and (if applicable) the HSS staff person.</p>
3	Chair Transition and Training	<p>The Dean acknowledged the most recent Chair transition occurred at a difficult point—just as the Departments of History and Political Science were being merged (See below). She further noted the current Chair has made great efforts to ensure this merger has been as seamless as possible. We note however, that no consistent process of transition exists to prepare a faculty member to take on the Chair's role. Moving forward, it could be beneficial to the next Chair to have</p>

²⁵ Dean, interview.

		training in both the expectations of the Chair and the specific technologies currently in use at the College (training, the Dean assured us, is available).
4	The Merger	In our meeting with the Dean, we were assured that the merger of the History and Political Science Departments was effectively only an operational change. She reiterated the degree to which the merger “won’t impact scholarly work.” ²⁶ Nonetheless, there is clearly residual anxiety and stress resulting from this merger. Each of our interviews (with the exception of the one with the student) circled back to the merger at some point. Perhaps the Dean and all of the impacted faculty members – both History and Political Science – getting together would be useful to clear the air and ensure everyone is operating from the same, correct assumptions. This meeting clearly would not be part of the action plan, but nonetheless seems imperative to be held as soon as possible.
5	Enrolments	<p>Initially the reviewers did not understand the greater than one hundred percent enrolments in certain courses, the explanation of aiding colleagues by balancing low/under enrolled courses offered support for the faculty’s perception as a group concerned about each other. However, accepting more students into classes with collective agreement defined limits is problematic for more than that reason alone. Advantage may be taken of the existing “gentlemen’s agreement” to demand these overloads in future. As well, while seasoned instructors could very well cope with increased numbers, new faculty will find it onerous. Finally, the potential exists with a less collegial group for all sorts of other problems to arise.</p> <p>Therefore, without wanting to diminish faculty autonomy to make decisions in the interests of students, 1) clarification should be sought that exceeding class limits is on a case-by-case basis and cannot be expected in all, 2) guidelines should be established that the best case for permitting overloads should be if the student(s) need the class to graduate, and 3) communication of these ideals should be provided to all new faculty and their buy-in sought.</p>
6	Alumni Survey Responses	This survey’s response rate was low. For future Program Reviews or even just alumni outreach, the Department/College could contemplate offering an inducement (gift card(s) draw/swag) when it hopes to hear from more course/program graduates.

²⁶ Dean, interview.



**DOUGLAS COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW (CR)
RESPONSE FROM THE
OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST**

Douglas College Administration policy A38: *Program Review* requires a follow-up plan be developed by the Vice President, Academic and Provost, in response to the Self-Study and External Report.

FACULTY (Lead Dean/Associate Dean)	<i>Humanities and Social Sciences</i>	
Department / Program	History Department	
Date Submitted	March 2024	
External Review Panel (ERP)	Marcel Dirk, BA, MA, PDPP Tracey Kinney, BA, MA, PhD	Instructor, History, College of the Rockies Teaching Professor, History, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Reason for Timing of Comprehensive Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Schedule (routine) or <input type="checkbox"/> Off-cycle, due to emergent concerns (<i>specify below</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in discipline/field/licensing <input type="checkbox"/> New program development <input type="checkbox"/> Demand/enrolment/budget concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>specify</i>) 	
Date of last Comprehensive Review	N/A	
RESPONSE/RECOMMENDATIONS		
SUMMARY RESPONSE	<p>The VPA&P notes that the external reviewers spoke highly of the History Department's reputation among post-secondary institutions in the province noting that it <i>"has established and maintained a reputation for excellence in its two-year programs as well has developed upper-level courses as part of various agreements."</i></p> <p>The external reviewers suggested that the Department has been able to maintain <i>"strong enrolment numbers."</i> The VPA&P interprets this to mean <i>"strong"</i> in comparison to other BC Colleges and Universities since, over the last 5 years, there has been a fall in student demand for History courses at Douglas College and a corresponding reduction in the number of instructional sections offered by the department. The current sectional fill rate in History (i.e., seats filled versus seats available) is roughly 87%. Student waitlists and over-enrolment of instructional section are not relevant issues to this review (more about this later in the response).</p>	

	<p>The History Department supports an Associate of Arts Degree (AA) in History, and provides 'elective' courses for students across a variety of disciplines. However, apart from the AA, the History Department does not offer another credential that 'requires' History courses nor does it offer service courses required by other credentials. Consequently, enrolments are very much determined by the interest of students in the specific discipline of History.</p> <p>The reviewers observed that the Douglas College History AA compares favourably with the History AA offered at a nearby institution; Douglas History having broad perspectives in <i>"regional, national, comparative, transnational, thematic"</i> histories. It was also noted that the Douglas College History AA contains more upper division credits and there is effective transfer of 'assigned' credits to SFU, UBC, UBCO, UNBC and UVic.</p> <p>The reviewers spoke highly of the involvement of the Dean of Faculty <i>"who clearly expressed her support for the Department, its Chair and the Department's most recent curricular initiatives."</i></p> <p>During their review, members of the panel spoke to all but one faculty member in the History Department. However, student perspectives are not well represented in report as the panel was only able to speak to one student.</p>
All Self-Study recommendations accepted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No [The VPA&P offers qualified support for the recommendations.]
All External Report recommendations accepted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No [The VPA&P does not support certain recommendations.]
<p>VPA's RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>In particular, HIST should focus on the following:</p>	<p>The VPA&P accepts Recommendation #1 (Pursue Curriculum Diversification and Decolonization) with a qualification. The Department proposes to explore changes to the History curriculum that provide greater indigenous perspectives -- while de-emphasizing European-centric elements. The VPA&P notes that History already has a robust pool of upper-level (catalogued) courses which cover a broad range of histories. To achieve the goal of diversification and indigenization, the VPA&P advises the Department to adapt its existing courses rather than putting effort into the creation of new courses.</p> <p>The VPA&P accepts Recommendation #2 (Faculty redouble efforts to develop students' communication skills, especially regarding academic writing) with qualifications. While it can be fairly argued that all college disciplines have a responsibility to support the development of students' communications skills, 'Academic Writing' is the purview of the English Department, and Communications is the Purview of the Communications Department. The VPA&P is therefore opposed to the creation of new "writing intensive" courses in History. Moreover, the VPA&P does not support significant changes to existing courses to make them more</p>

writing intensive – if such changes were to result in a reduction in class size.

The Dean and the VPA&P are supportive of Recommendation #3
(Prioritize Experiential Learning).

Comments Regarding Additional Panel Recommendations:

The VPA&P disagrees that online instruction is a “vexing issue” for the College. Douglas College’s strength is in the quality of its ‘in-person’ instruction, as noted by the panel. And, despite the desire of some students to enroll in on-line courses, the College does not plan to expand the number of such offerings in History.

The College’s own research has found that students place a very high value on face-to-face contact with their instructors, and indicates that the majority of Douglas College learners achieve better educational outcomes when taught in-person.

With respect to questions about who should teach the on-line courses currently offered, Douglas seeks to have all of its instructors, regardless of discipline, equally skilled to teach in-person, online or in hybrid mode. This aim cannot be achieved if only certain instructors are privileged to teach certain modes.

The VPA&P does not accept that there is a problem with long-standing class enrolment practices. Instructors are not compelled to over-enroll classes. Further, the point of concern is entirely moot in the case of History as course fill rates are currently sitting at 87% and the Department is not wrestling with burgeoning waitlists. The VPA&P observes that in History, during the Fall 2024 semester, a total of 4 additional students were ‘over-enrolled’ across three course sections.

The reviewers stated that *“no consistent process of transition exists to prepare a faculty member to take on the Chair’s role.”* This observation is inaccurate. It appears that the reviewers were not aware of college-wide training for Chairs, who avail themselves, on a broad range of operational topics, and informal Chair training, within the Faculty, on Tableau, SharePoint, and evaluation processes. **The VPA&P recommends that new Chairs in the History Department take advantage of the training opportunities that are made available to them.**

The reviewers suggest that there is no marketing support for History – *“it remains clear the deep dissatisfaction with the website specifically and marketing more generally is an issue that must be addressed in the action plan after discussions between faculty, the Dean, and (if applicable) the HSS staff person.”* This observation is inaccurate and

	<p>misleading. All HSS Departments have access to a ‘Faculty-dedicated’ Marketing and Communications officer and are welcome to express concerns about Marketing and Communications support directly to the Dean. Therefore, the VPA&P strongly recommends that the History Department: 1) detail concerns about the website to the Dean’s office and 2) provide timely responses to inquiries from the Marketing and Communications officer.</p> <p>As per the College’s routine follow-up to comprehensive program reviews, the Department is to submit its Implementation and Action Plan (IAP) to the Dean within 45 days of receipt of this Report, and to report back to the Dean one year after submission of the IAP to account for progress made.</p>
Next scheduled PR (5 – 7 years):	2027



Vice President, Academic and Provost

October 30, 2024

Date