

THREE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

May 10, 2005, prepared by Chairperson Sharon Hartman Strom

What the Department of History Does:

The history major at the University of Rhode Island, leading to the BA degree, is growing in popularity, and there is every reason to believe it will continue to do so. There are also plans to increase the incoming student body in the next two years, most of whom will take at least one history course during their years at URI. History courses are listed as requirements for several majors and minors, including journalism, international relations, Asian Studies, Latin American Studies, and underwater archaeology. We also serve Education majors who earn certification in History or Social Studies. We offer courses and an undergraduate major in Providence through the College of Continuing Education. Staffing courses and running a coherent program at CCE has become an ever larger piece of the mission of the department, and will become an even greater priority in 2006-2007, when the Providence campus will expand its majors and need more Letters courses.

Indeed, our faculty is heavily committed to the undergraduate general education program through its teaching of courses for the Letters division and the Foreign Culture and Diversity requirements. We will also serve the classes of 2005, 2006, and 2007 with "culture clusters" during the transition to the new requirements. The revised skill categories in the Letters requirements intensify the need for quality teaching emphasizing writing and critical thinking in relatively small classroom settings taught by tenure track faculty. Our capstone sequence at the 400 level has been heralded as a model one and requires seminar sized classes for effective learning.

Our graduate program is expanding and attracting outstanding students. In addition to the MA in history we have recently added the Archaeology and Anthropology Option in conjunction with Oceanography and the departments of Art and Sociology/Antropology. We continue to offer a joint degree program (MA-MLIS) with the School of Library and Information Studies. We also participate in the examining, thesis and dissertation committees of other graduate level programs, including English, Rhetoric, Education, Communications, and Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design.

The department has had a long association with interdisciplinary programs on campus, including the Women's Studies and African and Afro-American Studies. The faculty of the history department is frequently invited to teach in the Honors program. For many years our faculty has provided for new freshmen in the Special Programs for Talent Development. We are in the process of making a transition to new leadership for URI in England, an academic summer program we share with the department of English. The History Department has been deeply engaged in the creation of the Center for the Humanities, and a History faculty member is currently serving as director of the Center. Her efforts, in collaboration with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, have resulted in outside grants and fundraising that make it possible for some faculty and

graduate students in the Humanities to receive funding for their research and to present programs of great interest to the general community at URI. Humanities studies in general have become more important to the mission of URI.

Old and New Needs; An Aging Faculty:

We continue to do what we have always done, have added new duties, and have fewer resources than we have had since the early 1990s. Our Middle Eastern and Ancient historians left for more prestigious positions and were never replaced; the same was true of one of our U.S. historians. One of our African-American historians is leaving for a new position in the fall, reducing our minority representation to two members of the faculty. (See Appendix A.)

One of our major priorities is to add new teaching assistants, one in 2005-2006, and another in 2006-2007. This would enable us to teach general education courses more efficiently and to free up some faculty for staffing 300 and 400 level courses for majors, courses that are now in great demand. We are not always meeting that demand.

Five of our full professors are well over 60, and one is already in partial retirement. It is our expectation that over the next three years as many as five full professors, nearly half the department, will retire. We now have *NO* assistant professors! Indeed, we have not made a new tenure-track hire since 2000. Hiring lecturers is not a viable solution to our instructional shortages. We need multi-faceted faculty who can serve on the Graduate Faculty and teach courses to majors, as well as teachers of Letters courses, and participate in university governance and service.

It is our intention to create positions that emphasize new concerns of the world and of the University of Rhode Island while maintaining traditional areas of strength. Thematic studies may replace or be combined with the traditional emphasis on chronological epochs and geographical areas. Our most recent hires and new courses have provided strength to three of the University's four focus areas: marine and environmental studies, health, and technology, and we hope to continue in this direction.

Short Term Goals for Hiring in 2005-2006

Please see memo of April 17, 2005, with our hiring requests for 2005-2006 (Appendix B). Two of these hires are for tenure track faculty in fields that are critical to URI – Islamic Civilization and Ancient History/Archaeology. One is a replacement for one of our now two unreplaced 20th century U.S. historians (Findlay and Joseph). A third is a half-time position in the area of Environmental Studies and the History of Technology, part of a dual career hiring strategy that will retain Andrea Rusnock, fill in for courses normally taught by Maury Klein and Rusnock, and add important expertise to Environmental Studies at URI. All of these positions are desperately needed to support our mission described above in What the History Department Does and will enhance the

academic mission of the University of Rhode Island, particularly in the areas of marine and environmental studies, and technology studies.

Long Term Goals for Hiring between 2006 and 2008 in anticipation of more MA and BA students, and retirements

1. *Early Modern European/Gender Studies.* Exciting new scholarship on the History of Europe, particularly Spain, Italy and France between, roughly, 1500 and 1789, is being done at major universities. Some of the most interesting work on family and gender studies is often combined with this field. A hiring in this area would complement our strength in Women's Studies and provide badly needed courses such as History 113, *History of Western Civilization from the Late Middle Ages to 1789* and new courses in Comparative European history and Gender Studies.
2. *Public History/New England Studies.* We are in a region with an exciting history and a rich variety of museums, historic buildings, art collections, and archival repositories. Many of our MA candidates are also in the MLIS program as well, and both undergraduates and graduates would benefit from instruction in museum studies, creating public programs, and investigating Native American and colonial life in New England. This position would provide continuation of the critical role played by Cohen in our curriculum.
3. *Eastern Europe/Humanitarian Studies.* Teaching the Holocaust and Russian history have long been strengths of the URI history department. Some of the most rapidly occurring change in the world is taking place in the new states created after the end of the Cold War, along with some of the worst crises in the human condition since the 1930s. An expert in these subjects would provide continuity after the retirement of Weisbord and Thurston.
4. *African-American/Caribbean Studies.* Many of our future students will come from countries in Central America and the Caribbean. This appointment would strengthen our long-time commitment to the African and Afro-American Studies department and provide help to Pegueros, who is now expected to cover all of Latin America and the Caribbean in her courses. There is ever more demand for such courses and we should be fulfilling that need.
5. *European History or Urban History at CCE in Providence.* As the Providence campus is expanded and more two/three class per week general education courses are required in Providence, a full-time tenure track person in that location will be essential to the smooth functioning of teaching and advising. The appointment of Alison Rose as a part-time director of our program at CCE has been a great success, allowing us to create a more professional teaching staff in Providence and to meet the needs of students there more fully.

APPENDIX A: Appointments, retirements and resignations of tenure-track faculty

I. Appointments and replacements

- Marmon (Middle East) resigned in 1992: not replaced
- S. Schwartz (Ancient) resigned in 1993; not replaced
- Daniel died in 1994; Rollo-Koster hired in 1996
- Gutchen retired in 1997: Mather hired in 1997
- Costigliola left in 1998: Sterne hired in 1999.
- Kim retired in 1998: George hired in 1998.
- Findlay retired (recent U.S. history) in 1999: not replaced.
- Briggs retired in 2000: Rusnock arrived in 2000
- Ferguson and Joseph hired in 2000, on assumption that Weisbord would retire eventually and that we needed more African-American history.
- Joseph resigned in 2005; not replaced.

II. The impact of retirements on the history department:

- Klein is in partial retirement for three years (through 2008)
- Thurston, Cohen, Weisbord, Strom might retire or partially retire by end of this period (2008).

Appendix B – Hiring Goals for 2005-2006

Date: April 17, 2005

To: Winifred Brownell, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

From: Sharon H. Strom, Chair, Department of History

Subject: **Request to conduct tenure-track searches in the fall of 2005.**

- Our main priority is Islamic Civilization with specialization in the history of Africa, the Middle East, and/or South Asia. Teaching responsibilities would entail courses in Islamic history and civilization, including some existing courses and those devised by the person in his/her specialty. This position is a suitable replacement for Peniel Joseph, who leaves his tenure track position on July 1 and taught African-American history. Our rationale includes the following additional points:
 1. The University is shockingly bereft of courses on this important region/religion of the world.
 2. The History Department has four courses in this field which it cannot offer (HIS 177, 376, 377, 378) and that are requested, frequently, by students.
 3. Courses in this field are required for certification in teaching in the state of Rhode Island.
 4. Hiring in this field will contribute to URI's emphasis on diversity in its faculty.
 5. The position will serve the Letters, diversity, and foreign culture categories of general education.

- Our second priority is an Ancient Historian/Classical Archaeologist with a joint appointment in the Graduate School of Oceanography. (As this appointment will be funded by R. Ballard, it should not be weighed as an alternative to Islamic Civilization but in addition to.) The individual should have expertise in the ancient world and interest in deep-sea ocean research. The faculty member would provide important undergraduate courses in ancient history, and critical courses at the graduate level. We anticipate that the faculty member would also help advise students in the new Archaeological Oceanography program (both the MA component in History and the PhD component at GSO), and play an important part in IAO's funded research agenda. The faculty member will teach courses that contribute to the BA in History, the Underwater Archaeology Minor, the History MA option in Anthropology and Archaeology, and GSO's program in Archaeological Oceanography. The rationale for this position is:
 1. In 2004, the University of Rhode Island established the Institute of Archaeological Oceanography (IOA) dedicated to the study of deep-water archaeological sites throughout the world. The department of history

worked closely with Dr. Robert Ballard at the Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO) to formulate the academic program associated with this pioneering institute, which comprises a PhD in Oceanography and an MA in History, Archaeology and Anthropology. The central component of IAO's research over the next decade will be to delineate the Mediterranean and Black Sea's ancient trade routes and to understand more fully the history and ancient economy of these areas. Dr. Ballard already has 3-5 years of funding for projects in the Western Mediterranean, Sea of Crete, and Black Sea and anticipates working in these regions for the remainder of his professional career. Unfortunately, the University of Rhode Island has no ancient historian to support this effort. As a result, key elements of the academic program cannot be taught and research personnel are being appointed from other institutions. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to see how the program can operate beyond 2006. This would represent a significant loss to URI and its marine and environmental focus area.

2. The history department has immediate and pressing needs for an ancient historian. The department is seldom able to offer courses in ancient history at the 100-level and can offer them at the 300-level even more infrequently. Graduate courses are impossible. Yet the undergraduate courses, when offered, fill almost immediately. This is because the subject matter is extremely popular, ancient history satisfies a requirement for secondary education/history majors, and because ancient history courses have been approved for the letters division. The History Department is responsible in large measure for an undergraduate minor in underwater archaeology. Ancient history and classical archaeology are important courses for this minor.
- Of near equal importance is a position in recent U.S. history, i.e., since 1945. The person's specialization might be in civil rights, public history, presidential history, Asian American history or African-American history. We might very well be able to hire a minority candidate for this position. The rationale for this position is:
 1. Prof. Sterne has taught very large sections of History 142 since her initial hiring date. It is one of the most sought after classes in the department, required for education majors, important in general education and learning communities.
 2. History 340 and 341, both Letters and Diversity courses, are always full every semester; 341 is a Journalism requirement.
 3. The exploding sizes of the freshmen classes make it imperative that we have another 20th century historian in a tenure track position.
 4. History 142 is a requirement for teacher certification in RI.

In Addition:

- The dean's office has agreed to work with the provost to create a visiting assistant professor position for Paul Lucier in order to retain Andrea Rusnock and to implement the dual career policy at URI. We suggest creating a half-time component of this position in the History department for 3 years, thus dove-tailing with Maury Klein's phased-in retirement. Dr. Lucier can teach several courses in Klein's repertoire, including History of Technology and Industrial America. He can also teach History of Science, freeing up Rusnock to teach other courses badly needed in History, the School of Nursing, and the Women's Studies Program. Dr. Lucier's main contribution will be in American Environmental History. The other half of his appointment could be made in CELS, GSO, or the Research Office.