**Chair:** Penny Russell (University of Sydney)

**Attendees:** Claire Brennan, Sean Brawley, Nicholas Brown, Robert Cribb, Martin Crotty, Nancy Cushing, Kate Darian-Smith, Karen Downing, Sarah Ferber, David Garrioch, Kiera Lindsey, Philippa Mein Smith, Keith Moore, Jolanta Nowak, Anne O’Brien, Bobbie Oliver, Melanie Oppenheimer, Fiona Paisley, Richard Scully, Shurlee Swain

**Apologies:** Phillip Deery, Mina Roces, Paul Sendziuk

1. **Location of History as a discipline (teaching and research) within tertiary institutions**

Identify specific ways in which the AHA can mitigate the isolation of some historians.

Discussion began with introductions and summaries of the state of history as a discipline at various institutions. Experiences are mixed: at UNSW, for example, history is now part of a faculty that has become very vocational; at the ANU School of History where they are competing with named degrees, undergraduate figures are ‘soft’; and the University of Tasmania is struggling with low literacy and having to accommodate students of lesser schooling. On the other hand, the rise in numbers at Curtin University might partly be attributed to the new law school where students can study social science and law subjects together in an undergraduate degree, or Curtin's continued offering of popular professional courses, such as journalism, at undergraduate level, as this can be studied as a double major with history. History in a number of institutions is now part of, or associated with, international relations and the success of this arrangement was uneven.

A number of specific ways that the AHA could assist were raised:

* organisation of more than one meeting a year and/or regional meetings and/or other forums for communication such as social media or a HoH newsletter
* higher visibility of teaching issues on the AHA Executive Committee
* identification of key issues around which to gather information
* provision of information for benchmarking that would give historians ammunition in their individual institutional arguments; this information could also be used to raise the profile of the discipline at the institutional level

1. **Data collection** (see *HoH\_cata-collection-to-2014.xls*)

1.1 Design of survey questionnaire: what information can we reasonably collect?

1.2 Timing of survey: at what time of the year should a survey be distributed?

1.3 Distribution of results: how would HoHs prefer to receive the results?

There was unanimous agreement on the need for data collection but the type of data to be gathered was debated. Ultimately, the group agreed that both hard figures and reflection on issues (data and stories) was needed; that an annual collection was necessary; that the AHA could act as a repository for data with analysis being done by those who use the information or at less regular intervals dependent on AHA resources. The survey design will be key. All agreed that a restricted access area on the AHA website would be suitable for the dissemination of this information.

1. **Major curriculum survey** (see *2004\_Curriculum-Survey\_Final-Report.doc* and *2006\_Curriculum-Survey\_Final-Report.doc*)

2.1 Identify funding possibilities.

2.2 Establish a working group to drive the project.

The viability of a new major curriculum survey should be assessed by specific working group for which we can ask for volunteers.

1. **Journal rankings (or measurements for research performance)**
   1. Brief the AHA Executive on the institutional pressures being felt.
   2. Advise the AHA Executive on what course of action the HoHs would like them to take.

There was group consensus that the AHA show leadership on the issue of measurements for research performance in history. This was not necessarily limited to journal rankings – other criteria suggested included:

* non-traditional research outputs that other humanities have lobbied for which could be useful to historians
* H-indexes and how they apply to history

A list of history journals was, however, seen as necessary, if not completely desirable. There is valid concern that a history journal list would support the normalisation of a science-based model of measurement, however, many other disciplines have their own lists and historians are continuously being asked by their institutions for theirs; younger scholars especially like rankings for the guidance they provide; the 2010 ERA list is the default list if nothing else is available and that list is increasingly obsolescent; and some institutions are using lists that benchmark with overseas journals and, therefore, disadvantaging Australian history.

The key question of how to support the disciplinary culture of history while appeasing the bean counters may be best resolved by a journal list. In the absence of such a list the AHA might provide a case for not using rankings and/or alternative suggestions for measurements of research performance.

The AHA might also consider:

* working jointly with other fields such as Asian Studies and Slavic Studies on a journal list
* argue for a higher value on books
* provide warnings of predatory journals
* use the HoH group to identify ‘dodgy’ measurement practices

1. **Casualisation of teaching workforce**
   1. Identify specific ways in which the AHA can assist HoHs to share their experiences.
   2. Advise whether the AHA should be playing a role and, if so, what role?

Information on the use of casual staff and adjunct staff should be built into data collection. Inequity in the treatment of such staff is, however, a union issue.

1. **Financial support for graduate students**

Further information on financial support for graduate students can also be part of the data collection.

1. **Web sharing of data, resources and communications**

It was unanimously agreed that the AHA website will be used for information sharing.

1. **Affiliate membership of the AHA**

It was unanimously agreed that the AHA drop affiliate membership for schools and departments – but ask that HoHs participating in meetings and receiving communications from the AHA be members.

1. **Any other business**

**ACTION ITEMS**

1. The HoH group will ask for representation on the AHA Executive Committee: Martin Crotty proposed this at the meeting of the Executive Committee on 6 July 2015 and it was agreed that a nominated member of the HoH be co-opted onto the Committee.

* Volunteers for this post should identify themselves to Penny Russell (cc Karen Downing) by mid-August 2015 in time to attend the next ECM on Friday 25 September in Canberra.
* The nominated member should be willing to brief the AHA Executive on the institutional pressures being applied regarding measurements for research performance and advise the AHA Executive on what course of action the HoHs would like them to take.

1. A data collection working group will design an annual survey to be distributed in March 2016 (tbc by the group).

* Volunteers for this group should identify themselves to Penny Russell (cc Karen Downing) by mid-August 2015 so that the group can be convened.

1. A major curriculum survey working group will be convened to assess the viability of such a report.

* Volunteers for this group should identify themselves to Penny Russell (cc Karen Downing) by mid-August 2015.

1. Karen Downing will establish a restricted access area on the AHA website for sharing HoH information and resources and will advise members of the group when it is ready.