



Meeting chair: Professor Keir Reeves, Federation University Australia

Minutes: Dr Karen Downing, Australian Historical Association

PRESENT: Dr Melissa Bellanta (ACU), Professor Nicholas Brown (ANU), Associate Professor Georgine Clarsen (UOW), Professor Robert Cribb (ANU), Associate Professor Joy Damousi (Melbourne, attending on behalf of Professor Jane Lydon, UWA), Dr Karen Downing (AHA), Dr Charles Fahey (La Trobe, for Associate Professor Tracey Banivanua Mar), Dr Brett Holman (UNE, for Dr Nathan Wise), Associate Professor Grace Karskens (UNSW), Professor David Lowe (Deakin), Dr Keith Moore (QUT), Professor Melanie Oppenheimer (Flinders), Professor Keir Reeves (Federation), Professor Penny Russell (Sydney), Professor Paul Sendziuk (Adelaide), Dr Ann Standish (AHA), Professor Sandra Wilson (Murdoch)

APOLOGIES: Dr Anna Clark (UTS), Professor Phillip Deery (VU), Professor Deborah Gare (Notre Dame), Professor Jeffrey Grey (ADFA), Dr Patrick Jory (UQ), Dr Julie Kimber (Swinburne), Professor Jane Lydon (UWA), Professor Philippa Mein Smith (UTAS), Associate Professor Dominic Murphy (Sydney), Associate Professor Bobby Oliver (Curtin), Professor Christina Twomey (Monash)

1. Journal rankings / research performance measurements (Robert Cribb)

Robert Cribb briefed the meeting on AHA Executive Committee initiatives taken in establishing a journal rankings process and distributed a draft set of criteria. He explained the criteria had been developed using 2010 ERA rankings and lists that institutions are already using. The Academy of Humanities had been approached about rankings and were unenthusiastic about rankings; DASSH had also been approached and might get involved.

Melanie Oppenheimer argued that this was a crucial issue that AHA needs to do at the highest level and as soon as possible. Joy Damousi said the rankings could be finalised by the end of 2016 and the AHA would set time table in place to achieve that. Robert Cribb said that distributing draft criteria would help with debate around rankings, as it was a contentious issue. He also said that while a journal list would be possible by end of year, H-index and ranking of publishing houses was more complicated and might take longer.

Penny Russell said a message needs to go back to universities with that the list has AHA authority. Melissa Bellanta added that any list would need to be accompanied by a strong statement from AHA on how rankings should be used

It was agreed that the AHA would distribute draft criteria to membership for feedback; AHA to work on producing a list by the end of 2016.



2. Major curriculum survey

It was agreed that a curriculum survey equivalent to the 2004 and 2006 surveys by Carly Millar and Mark Peel would be advantageous. Discussion ensued about how this might be achieved in terms of funding and people driving the project.

Karen Downing pointed out the limits of AHA resources for these initiatives, which needed considerable input in preparation, distribution and analysis. The AHA currently has neither the staff nor the money to support such a project.

Joy Damousi argued it would be very useful to have another thorough survey. Paul Sendziuk said it was important to consider what we use the information for. Robert Cribb said it should encompass more than than Australian history. Keir Reeves raised the possibility of including HTAA information. Karen Downing said there were two initiatives to consider: information sharing plus curriculum survey and considering how the information would be used was highly relevant. Penny Russell said there would also be information around pedagogy that could be collected. Paul Sendziuk said there was existing material on teaching and learning, and that it would be worthwhile looking at what's already available. Joy Damousi said perhaps this information could be collected in one place. Paul said it would still be useful to have FTE counts, etc.

Paul Sendziuk volunteered to develop questions and pursue the survey through the AHA EC.

The meeting agreed.

3. Web sharing of data, resources and communications (Karen Downing)

Karen Downing reported that Heads of History now have access to content restricted to the group on the AHA website. She explained how this section of the website worked. This is currently only documentation from previous meetings but can include anything that members of the group wish to share. Members of the group were encouraged to use it

4. Benchmarking for undergraduate teaching in Australian history (Joy Damousi for Jane Lydon)

Joy Damousi raised this issue on behalf of Jane Lydon, Head of History at the University of Western Australia from July 2016. Jane has identified that benchmarking for undergraduate teaching in Australian history has not been undertaken for some years and believes it is timely to understand and discuss the current range of approaches to this curriculum. It would be useful for Heads of History to share information regarding content, structure, pedagogical approach, online tools and other elements of the Australian history curriculum as the basis for planning and responding to change.

It was pointed out that the Heads of History only area on the AHA website would be an excellent place for HoHs to upload and share this information.

The possibility was raised that questions around undergraduate teaching could be included in the proposed broader survey.



It was agreed that HoHs would use the HoH only area on the AHA website more widely and organisers of the curriculum survey would consider u/g benchmarking questions.

5. Skills and scaffolding in undergraduate degrees (Robert Cribb)

Robert Cribb reported that there is an increasing belief that students may benefit from the structured introduction of skills in historical analysis over the course of a degree or major. Some universities have now required courses to focus on particular skills (and connected assessment tasks) at each year level: for example, primary source analysis, annotated bibliography and research essay. He felt it would be useful for the group to discuss how widely this prescription is found, and whether it is productive.

Discussion ensued. Sandra Wilson asked how this was reflected in other universities. Grace Karskens agreed it would be interesting to share reflections on this issue, that UNSW program had seen skill development and progression but there had been a top-down destruction.

Penny Russell reported that University of Sydney have a version of such skills training, driven by uni restructuring. Melissa Bellanta reported that ACU have a version, as a capstone subject and when she was at UQ, they had had a similar gateway with capstone structure.

Paul Sendziuk reported that at University of Adelaide there was a BA compulsory course formally in place for first year, taught as they were because they were capstone. He said there had been some student resistance to mandated skills education and this was a problem when subjects were competing for students.

It was agreed it would be good to have brief descriptions of current practices on the AHA website.

6. Assistance with data collection for ARC Discovery Project Gendered Excellence in the Social Sciences (Karen Downing)

Karen Downing reported that this [project](#) being undertaken by Dr Fiona Jenkins, Dr Helen Keane and Professor Marian Sawyer (ANU) and Dr Claire Donovan (Brunel University) needs assistance with statistical information on the numbers of women in history, eg, graduating with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, at all levels in full-time employment and in casual employment, etc. She (Karen Downing) would be working on this data collection. The project is running a conference at the ANU in November – [Gendered Innovations in the Social Sciences](#) – and the convenors are specifically want historians to be involved. Karen asked the following three questions: Would HoHs willing to give Karen their institutions' contact details for this data? Could this statistical information be included in regular HoH data collection? Are Heads of History willing to publicise conference call for papers to relevant colleagues?

The meeting agreed to all requests.



7. HoH representative on the AHA Executive Committee

To more effectively link the HoH group to the AHA Executive Committee it was proposed at the 2015 HoH meeting that a nominated member of the group be co-opted onto the Committee. The proposal was accepted by the AHA Executive Committee. For some part of the last 12 months there was an elected member of the Committee who was also a Head of History, Robert Cribb, who was able to easily and effectively undertake this role. The AHA Executive Committee, therefore, had proposed that should an elected member in the future also be a HoH, that they act as representative for the group. In the absence of a HoH on the Committee, the committee member responsible for teaching and learning matters can act as representative.

The meeting was asked if it would accept the AHA Executive Committee proposal for HoH representation on the committee.

The proposal was accepted.

Some discussion ensued about how the representative would be appointed. It was agreed that the representative should be nominated by the group. The representative would be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee unless already an elected member of the committee. It was noted that there were two HoHs, Jane Lydon and Christina Twomey, standing for election at the AGM, and a decision should be made about a nominee once the results of the election were known.

8. Proposed change of Head of History convenor

Keir Reeves reported that it has been the practice that the Head of History at the institution hosting the AHA conference be the chair of the HoH meeting and convene the group for the following year. To further enhance links between the group and the AHA Executive Committee, the AHA Executive is proposing that the HoH convenor and the group's representative on the Committee be the same person.

The proposal was accepted.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.