Tenure, Promotion, and the

Publicly Engaged Academic Historian

A White Paper

by the Working Group on Evaluating Public History Scholarship

American Historical Association:
 Kristin Ahlberg, Edward Countryman, Debbie Ann Doyle
National Council on Public History:
 Bill Bryans, Kathleen Franz, John R. Dichtl
Organization of American Historians:
 Constance B. Schulz, Gregory E. Smoak, Susan Ferentinos

INTRODUCTION

While obtaining tenure is never easy, the process holds special challenges for the growing ranks of historians practicing public history in college and university departments. Over the past half century, a reward system that privileges the publication of original scholarship in limited forms has become entrenched in American academia. For historians, the peer-reviewed, single-authored monograph and/or a series of peer-reviewed journal articles serve as the keys to tenure and promotion. Departments tend to hold in lesser regard or dismiss outright other forms of original scholarship and often devalue collaborative research and publication.

Even as history departments focus faculty evaluation criteria on the monograph, they have expanded their curricula to prepare both graduate and undergraduate students for a variety of careers, developing public history programs that prepare students to interpret the past for public audiences in museums, historic sites, tours, preservation, and cultural organizations. In the last two decades, the number of public history programs has doubled, from about 60 in the 1990s to approximately 110 to 130 programs in 2008.[1] This expansion has hastened the hiring of public historians to oversee or develop those programs. Often the lone public historian in a department, the public historian on faculty frequently must serve two masters,[2] publishing a monograph to ensure favorable evaluation of the tenure application while remaining active in the field, or find some other way to reconcile traditional tenure expectations with public history work.

At the same time, their colleagues must determine how to evaluate public historians whose scholarly work differs dramatically from their own. Sustaining growth in public history programs requires that the historical profession establish equitable guidelines and best practices for fair evaluation of public history faculty.

The Working Group on Evaluating Public History Scholarship (WGEPHS) seeks to improve the review of public history work for tenure and promotion. A collaborative project of the National Council on Public History (NCPH), the American Historical Association (AHA), and the Organization of American Historians (OAH), the WGEPHS offers models for evaluating a specific group of faculty members fairly. This white paper will provide useful advice for public historians on the tenure track; history departments and department chairs seeking fair evaluation standards for their colleagues; and deans, provosts, and other administrators at colleges and universities that employ public historians. The working group by no means intends to devalue traditional scholarship; rather, we argue for expanding the definition of scholarship to incorporate the types of work public history faculty are hired to do. Because public history often blurs the lines between the traditional categories of scholarship, teaching, and research, this white paper will address all three aspects of scholarly life.

The working group continues a conversation initiated by the 1993 report *Redefining Historical Scholarship*.[3] That report concluded that the single-minded focus on the monograph as the measure of scholarly achievement is "inappropriate and unfairly undervalues the work of a significant portion of professional historians." As a remedy, the report suggested that history departments adopt a broader definition of scholarship based on the influential essays of Ernest Boyer and R. Eugene Rice.[4] This conceptual model envisioned scholarship as four separate but complementary categories: the *advancement* of knowledge through original research, the *integration* of knowledge through synthetic work, the *application* of knowledge in a community, and the *transformation* of knowledge through teaching. The report urged historians to develop and adopt fair and appropriate strategies for documenting and evaluating such varied scholarship.[5]

Since that time, some departments have revised their tenure guidelines; the AHA Task Force on Public History's 2004 report exhorted the association to "reopen the discussion about what 'counts' in the work of history faculty."[6] Participants in a town hall meeting convened by the OAH Committee on Public History at the 2007 OAH Annual Meeting emphasized the urgency of addressing how departments evaluate public history work. As a result, the NCPH Board of Directors voted in April 2007 to undertake a formal study of this issue, inviting the AHA and the OAH to form the Working Group on Evaluating Public History

Scholarship.[7] Working group members initiated their review of current tenure practices by considering the context of the problems faced by public historians.

Context

The traditional workload categories of scholarship, teaching, and research fail to reflect the reality of many scholars, not just those engaged in public history. Historians who value mentoring, teacher training, and curriculum development also find the current system extremely constraining. Minority historians committed to serving their communities find that their efforts are not rewarded, and the growing number of scholars engaged in digital work struggle to define evaluative criteria for their projects.[8] Graduate students and junior faculty members fear that exploring varied modes of communication with diverse audiences could endanger their chances of gaining tenure.

Other organizations have recognized the barriers current tenure policies present to public scholarship.[9] Early in 2008, Imagining America, a national consortium of colleges and universities dedicated to public scholarship and engagement in the arts and humanities, released the report of its Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship, entitled "Scholarship in Public." The report, which echoed many of the conclusions of earlier reports on the issue, is focused on scholarship in the public arena. As such, it speaks directly to the problems facing public historians. The report concluded that if colleges and universities truly want to embrace public engagement as an institutional value, they must not only establish a tenure process that expands the definition of "what counts" for purposes of tenure, but also create a broader definition of "who counts" in terms of peer review.[10] The report also recommended developing clear guidelines for evaluating public scholarship.

Several other efforts have urged universities to increase community engagement. The 1996 Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, produced by the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, defined "engagement" as an active partnership between a university and a public entity. A central premise of the commission's conclusion was a call for public universities to "return to their roots" and become "engaged institutions" in the spirit of the Morrill Act that created land-grant colleges.[11] The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has opened a new elective institutional classification of "community engagement," defined as the "mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity."[12] These efforts bode well for publicly engaged scholars in all disciplines and, as a result, may well attract colleagues who previously shied away from public projects fearing that such work would not count toward tenure and promotion.

Such an array of undertakings, spanning multiple disciplines and backed by major foundations, suggests that narrow definitions of scholarship no longer reflect the reality either of scholars' lives or of university missions. Slowly, universities and departments are identifying the need for community relevance and realizing that professors who engage with broader public audiences become better teachers and scholars. This WGEPHS white paper is designed to help institutions recognize this reality by accounting for public history work in the academic reward system.

The White Paper

The initial phase of the working group's efforts focused on fact finding. Members reviewed promotion and tenure guidelines from numerous colleges and universities with or without public history courses or programs, ultimately collecting thirty-five examples. The group used these examples to ascertain how departments treat public history scholarship in tenure cases and to identify a set of best practices. Members devised a survey to enable public historians to share their experiences and opinions. The survey asked respondents to discuss issues related to tenure and to address how, if at all, the academic reward system should be changed. The three participating organizations also held open sessions at their respective annual meetings, at which working group members outlined the goals and progress of the effort and facilitated wide-ranging discussions. These sessions revealed two critical issues: creation of an equitable system of peer review and the redefinition of workload categories to more fairly recognize publicly engaged scholars.

Building upon these findings, the working group offers in this white paper a number of best practices and possible approaches to evaluation and tenure of public historians. The intent is to provide public historians with useful examples to help them better define and explain their work and offer decision makers a set of guidelines for tenure processes approved by the major professional historical organizations. The white paper is divided into five sections, which illustrate how public history fits into the traditional categories of service, teaching, and scholarship and discuss how those definitions might be refined or expanded to better reflect the nature of public history. Each section of the paper—Existing Tenure Standards, Community Engagement, Research and Scholarship, Teaching, and Service—features an overview, delineation of critical issues, and recommendations for best practices.

The best strategy will, of course, vary according to departmental and institutional culture. Our hope is to further the understanding of public history work and to suggest meaningful guidelines to help history departments fairly evaluate and reward their colleagues.

I. EXISTING TENURE STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC HISTORIANS

The emergence of public history as a field of historical specialization presents both problems and opportunities for institutions and for tenure-track scholars in the field. Some of the problems facing public historians occur with any new specialization. Women's history did not exist five decades ago. Now it is a major field with a full intellectual apparatus. Like women's history, public history as a subfield is well developed, as demonstrated by the existence of the National Council on Public History (NCPH), its peer-reviewed journal *The Public Historian*, and university programs from undergraduate to doctoral levels. But public historians face an additional hurdle, as they do not necessarily produce the monographic literature that represents the traditional standard in academic achievement.

Thus, a central issue at stake is the redefinition of scholarly productivity to include the type of work public historians actually do. That process is under way, as evidenced by information on tenure practices collected from thirty-five institutions, ranging from four-year colleges to elite private and state-flagship universities.

The amount of information on tenure and promotion standards offered by individual institutions varied widely, from short e-mails to full institutional statements. Teaching loads and levels of research support differed among the sample institutions. So did general expectations for tenure, from completely unspecified through a few articles to a major monograph (or more) with a top-level press. One respondent institution does not offer tenure, substituting "rolling contracts." Some policies do not adequately define tenure standards for public historians. A midwestern state institution with a master's program in public history has no mention of the subject of public history in its tenure policies. One east-coast state flagship treats public history solely as service. Another east-coast doctoral institution describes its single public history faculty member as a "professor of practice" in an apparent effort to sidestep the problem.

However, other institutions have developed effective models for evaluating public history scholarship. One west-coast public master's department offers a "public history option area" and ranks "instructional achievement" ahead of "professional achievement" on its detailed promotion and tenure criteria. It gives specific credit for faculty "performance, exhibition, and consultation." A Midwestern university that offers public history courses at all levels, from BA to PhD, states that "a scholarly monograph and/or a corpus of published or exhibited work in other forms is a norm," treating (according to a faculty member's report) "exhibition" as being "on a level with publication."

A west-coast land-grant university lists five historians on the faculty as public historians and has granted doctorates to seventeen public historians since 1991. One monograph and three articles published in refereed journals constitutes the university's normal tenure standard for historians. Public historians must meet that standard or:

demonstrate sufficient research productivity through a substantial and consistent record involving: public programming (exhibitions, tours, etc.) in museums and other cultural and educational institutions; expert testimony, litigation support, and consulting on public policy issues; historical editing; contract research on policy formulation and policy outcomes; reviews of materials related to film and other media projects; writing or compiling institutional and other histories; historic preservation and cultural resource management projects; creation of bibliographies, archives, and databases; directing a public history or related specialization field school; successful grant applications and reports.

A southeastern flagship state university offers doctoral study in public history and stresses the field on its departmental website. According to its departmental standards:

> Candidates for promotion to Associate Professor must demonstrate that they have made significant contributions to the advancement, integration, and/or application of knowledge, normally through the publication of a monograph and scholarly articles or their public history equivalents, and that they have been successful in transferring this knowledge through teaching.

At this university, scholarly productivity in public history includes films and work in museums and other educational institutions, as well as historic preservation and cultural resource management.

Another southern doctoral university's tenure and promotion document addresses the issue this way:

> For applied or public history, the department assesses quality around a similar set of criteria: 1) a work's impact on the field, shown through reviews, citations, honors and awards, or other evidence, 2) success in broadening appreciation of the field by transmitting current scholarship to non-specialist audiences, 3) the candidate's explanation of the importance of his or her work, 4) the comments of outside reviewers in the promotion and tenure process, and 5) the Committee's own assessment of a candidate's work.

Finally, consider the policy of a mid-Atlantic non-doctoral state university that stresses public history at the undergraduate and master's level:

> No single standard can apply other than to require that the candidate's work be nationally recognized. The flexibility in this standard is likely to be even more true as the historical profession generally and the History Department specifically diversifies in methodology, venue and media. It is often said that the gold standard for the area of research in the promotion and tenure review is publication of a good monograph with a good academic press. In very, very general terms that is still the case; but exceptions and alternatives to that standard are so many and so varied that any attempt to impose a single criterion for success will stunt rather than encourage fine, cutting-edge research. . . . In the present, it is entirely likely that several of the electronic, web-based and/or multimedia projects currently under way will result in finished products which are far from monographic but are no less important for the faculty members' professional standing. To take another example, the Department's growing expertise in public history will result in projects whose end products do not at all resemble the traditional monograph, but should count just as strongly toward favorable review: exhibits, for example, or catalogues, or electronic dissemination of data assemblies. The point here is that faculty mentors work with untenured faculty to establish the appropriate outcomes for research productivity. This is a collaborative effort, as established scholars in the field determine what forms and levels of production constitute standards for advancement, and—well in advance—fully convey those standards to junior faculty.

In short, the tenure and promotion policies that the working group reviewed offer a wide range of models for evaluating publicly engaged scholarship. Some procedures and standards fail to take account of the unique concerns of public history. Other departments, and their parent institutions, have adopted policies that creatively address both traditional professional standards (meaning intellectual productivity and outside peer review) and the specific conditions of public history.

Existing Tenure Standards: Best Practices and Recommendations

- If a department hires faculty to teach public history, it should make a commitment to ensuring that departmental guidelines for tenure and promotion reward public history work.
- It is imperative for any institution that hires faculty members in the field of public history to take account of best practices elsewhere. Models of good practice exist at highly reputable colleges and universities.
- Departments and universities should look beyond the traditional monograph for models in evaluating public history creativity and productivity. For models of the possibilities for evaluating such work, they might look to standards for evaluating performance in theater, music, dance, the visual arts, and *belles-lettres*.

II. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Most existing tenure standards undervalue community engagement, a vital component of public history. For public historians, community engagement means applying their specialized skills and training in an active scholarly partnership with a community, in order to create and/or apply knowledge for the mutual benefit of the community and their institution. Ideally, community engagement should infuse all three of the traditional workload categories. In some cases, community engagement results in scholarly products—such as exhibits, National Register nominations, and oral histories—that may be evaluated through an appropriate process of peer review. Whatever its form, however, community engagement in public history differs from the traditional concepts of "service" or "outreach" in its collaborative nature.

In every aspect of its practice, public history engages communities beyond the campus. Publicly engaged historians:

- Develop interpretive plans for museums, communities, and historic sites (see "Case Study I–Developing History Museum Exhibitions" in Appendix);
- Write studies of historic resources, documenting their significance and condition;
- Write administrative histories in cooperation with government agencies and private institutions;
- Give talks and lead open forums with public groups;
- Act as consultants to historic sites/historic preservation projects;
- Write National Register and National Historic Landmark nominations (see "Case Study II–Nominations for the National Register of Historic Places and the National Historic Landmark Program" in Appendix);
- Develop museum exhibits that stimulate and facilitate civic dialogue;
- Direct and/or advise community history projects, often aimed at underserved groups;
- Consult on urban redevelopment projects that promote heritage tourism and historic preservation;
- Run internship programs and teach service learning courses, which make community engagement part of the curriculum;
- Serve on boards and advisory councils for historical societies, museums, and historic preservation boards;
- Work on teacher training grants aimed at improving history education in primary and secondary schools.

Public historians, then, offer valuable connections with larger communities and, in the process, help to fulfill institutional missions, secure external funding, and raise the public profile of their departments and institutions.

Public historians are also, in most departments, the faculty members most in step with a larger trend in higher education. A growing number of universities, colleges, and national organizations encourage collaborative projects and partnerships between institutions of higher learning and larger communities. The National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), partnering with the

W. K. Kellogg Foundation, called on universities to bring "research and engagement into the curriculum" and "put [their] critical resources (knowledge and expertise) to work on the problems the communities [they] serve face."[13] The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching lent its weight to the movement toward engagement when it opened a new elective classification of "community engagement."[14] In an era marked by shrinking funding and a growing public perception that institutions of higher learning are detached from and unresponsive to larger societal needs, engagement is an important consideration. Departments and institutions embracing civic engagement should have a system in place to evaluate community projects.

Community Engagement and Tenure Standards: The Critical Issues

Unlike teaching, research, and service, "engagement" generally has not been considered a workload category in American colleges and universities. Most often, community engagement has been relegated to the undervalued category of service. This puts public historians in academia at a great disadvantage when they apply for tenure. To do their jobs responsibly and stay current in their area of expertise, public historians must remain publicly engaged scholars. Yet, when these faculty members apply for tenure and promotion, they are frequently judged solely on the basis of their published research. [15]

This double bind emerged in large part from American academia's adoption of the German research model in the twentieth century. Community engagement had always been expected of American academics. The first generations of the American professorate represented a direct link between their institutions and the communities in which they lived. The land-grant colleges and universities founded as a result of the Morrill Act redefined the nature of engagement in important ways, but the expectation remained. Over the course of the twentieth century, however, the growing influence of the research university model led to narrower tenure and promotion criteria that rewarded a limited range of published scholarship to the exclusion of other types of scholarly production.

The tradition of community engagement, which is at the very heart of public history, remains central to the stated mission of many institutions. Moreover, it is essential for twenty-first-century colleges and universities to maintain these community connections. Publicly engaged scholars in all disciplines can help to strengthen their institutions by directly serving public needs and mobilizing the single greatest asset of any college or university—intellectual capital. The central issue, then, is to recognize community engagement as a modern imperative in American academia and to find equitable ways to evaluate and reward this work. Just as the emergence of the research university model led to new expectations, the recognition of community engagement should be understood as a valid evolution of tenure standards.

Making Engagement Count: Best Practices and Recommendations

Evaluating community engagement means first recognizing it as a valuable scholarly endeavor, vital to the work of public historians and, ideally, to all scholars. Failing to recognize the value of engaged scholarship forces historians seeking tenure or promotion to limit the time they devote to community engagement.

In order to fairly reward efforts in this area, departments might consider the following:

- Tenure standards should be calibrated with departmental and institutional values and missions and work valued accordingly. If the institution has stated a commitment to community engagement and public history, that commitment should be reflected in how faculty members are tenured and promoted.
- Workload categories should be rethought in order to give due weight to community engagement. One scenario might envision the creation of a separate workload category of engagement to supplement the traditional tripartite division of research, teaching, and service. Another option would be to hybridize the workload categories of research and teaching to explicitly value the scholarly and pedagogical results of community engagement projects.
- Public historians should be allowed to negotiate their contracts to adjust workload distributions and expectations in order to allow for, and reward, quality engagement projects.

- Departments should seek to create an appropriate peer-review process for publicly engaged scholars, which considers work beyond the monograph.
- The review process should incorporate evaluations from community partners, just as the process of reviewing teaching performance incorporates evaluations from students.
- Engagement projects should be valued at all stages of a scholar's career. Public historians at the assistant professor level should be encouraged to develop community engagement projects with the knowledge that their work will count toward their promotion to associate professor.

III. RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Public historians, like all historians, embrace the definition of scholarship laid out in AHA's *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct*:

> Scholarship—**the discovery, exchange, interpretation, and presentation of information about the past**—is basic to the professional practice of history. It depends on the collection and preservation of historical documents, artifacts, and other source materials in a variety of institutional settings ranging from libraries to archives to museums to government agencies to private organizations. Historians are committed to protecting significant historical evidence wherever it resides. Scholarship likewise depends on the open dissemination of historical knowledge via many different channels of communication: books, articles, classrooms, exhibits, films, historic sites, museums, legal memoranda, testimony, and many other ways.[16]

Public history scholars *discover* information about the past through study of a wide range of primary sources: textual records, landscapes and the built/engineered environment, material culture, oral sources, and visual materials. They participate in the *exchange* of information with other historians, scholars in other disciplines, and community partners who study the past. They *interpret* information about the past by framing relevant questions about the past and analyzing information they have gathered from primary and secondary sources, and they *present* information and interpretations to—and, often, with—a variety of publics in a wide variety of interpretive and presentational formats.

The 1993 report *Redefining Historical Scholarship* described the process of historical scholarship as having "four distinct yet interrelated components":

1. The advancement of knowledge—essentially original research.
2. The integration of knowledge—synthesizing and reintegrating knowledge, revealing new patterns of meaning and new relationships between the parts and the whole.
3. The application of knowledge—professional practice directly related to an individual's scholarly specialization.
4. The transformation of knowledge though teaching—including pedagogical content knowledge and discipline-specific educational theory.[17]

The authors of the report saw most public history scholarship as falling primarily within the scope of application of knowledge.

The WGEPHS, in contrast, argues that public historians make contributions in all four areas of scholarship.[18] Public historians do not differ from their more traditional colleagues in producing scholarship that reflects the discovery, exchange, interpretation, and presentation of historical evidence. The differences between public historians and academic historians lie not in the quality of their work but in its range, which extends beyond traditional scholarship, in the contexts in which it is presented, and in its collaborative nature.

Public historians expand on traditional scholarship and the monograph in several ways. First, while academics often focus intensely on a specific national, regional, temporal, or topical content area, public historians' expertise often lies in thematic issues or in the mastery of the historical process itself as it is applied to problems that emerge in the context of community engagement. While some public historians

locate their work within communities and address local historical issues in the particular city, county, or state in which the they and their students live and work, as professionals, they also contribute academically informed perspectives that place community histories within larger national and transnational contexts and balance memory with current historiography.[19] Public historians develop a deep understanding of and an expertise in the *process* of doing history in forms and venues that document, preserve, and ultimately inspire public dialogue about the past. These include authoring exhibitions and public programs in conjunction with museums, historical societies, and libraries; preserving and interpreting the historic significance of the built environment with state and national authorities like the National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Offices; defining and interpreting artifactual and archival collections; documenting oral histories; researching and writing historical documentaries for film, television, and radio; and presenting historical scholarship on the web.[20]

The second major difference lies in the inherently collaborative nature of public history scholarship. While more traditional history scholars may at times choose to collaborate on a particular project, their work is primarily a solitary endeavor. On the other hand, public history—that is, the joint endeavor in which historians and their various publics collaborate in making the past useful to a larger audience—nearly always involves a team effort that includes professional historians employed in public institutions, community stakeholders, and varied audiences. As public historians work closely with community stakeholders, in particular, they seek to balance informed and learned historical practice with community knowledge and to incorporate multiple points of view on the substance and meaning of history.

Public historians proceed from a professional ethic that respects and is open to learning from eyewitness accounts, oral histories, and personal as well as collective memory.[21] At the same time, while they adhere to standards of reflective practice and shared authority, public historians do not cede historical authority by privileging particularized experiences over rigorous examination of evidence, a thorough knowledge of historical context, and current historiography. Rather, as academically trained historians, they bring scholarly expertise to the public documentation, interpretation, and discussion—including the passionate and informed debate—of history.

Finally, public historians' scholarship differs from traditional research in the types of primary source materials public historians employ and the varieties of venues in which they present their interpretations. For public historians, the format and venue in which they "tell about the past" may be as divergent as the sources upon which they draw. Museum exhibitions, film or video scripts, interpretive plans for historic sites, websites, contract research reports, policy papers, archival documentation strategies, and curricula developed for K-12 teachers all involve the key elements of scholarly research: primary sources, secondary sources, and an interpretive framework. These products meet the AHA definition of scholarship as "the discovery, exchange, interpretation, and presentation of information about the past."

Public History Scholarship and Tenure Standards: The Critical Issues

No consensus exists within history departments or higher levels of tenure decision making regarding how to evaluate historical scholarship presented in public history venues. An undue emphasis on traditional research in the standard three-pronged evaluation system too often excludes or undervalues public history scholarship. Although, as James Gardner has stated cogently, "scholarship is a process, not a product,"[22] many departments employ a definition of research and scholarship that prioritizes products over process by equating quality scholarship to publication in printed media. Such scholarship usually also counts most heavily toward short-term reward decisions such as annual pay or merit raises. For example, in at least one department, a standard formula is used to calculate yearly salary increases based on the previous year's publication of a book or an article in a major journal.

Such a limited definition of historical scholarship constrains public history tenure-track faculty by placing them in a catch-22 situation. It is imperative that public historians, as scholars, teachers, and mentors, maintain their scholarly reputations in areas of practice outside of the academy and model scholarly research methods and outcomes to the next generation of public historians. But in so doing, these scholars either diminish their opportunities for rewards and retention within the existing academic system or shoulder a double burden of scholarly productivity: public history work in addition to the standard

scholarly monograph. With the growth in public history programs, more and more scholars, especially younger scholars entering the field, will be caught in this dilemma: they will be hired to undertake a wide range of activities and run the risk of being denied tenure when those activities and concomitant products do not fit with existing tenure and promotion criteria.

Broad acceptance of the expansive definition of scholarship expressed in the AHA's *Statement of Standards of Professional Conduct* would go a long way toward addressing this critical issue. The profession should develop an equitable means of evaluating public history scholarship within this broadened definition.

One component of evaluation that must be reconsidered is the range of professionals who may serve as peer reviewers for a tenure application. In a traditional academic history environment, evaluation by one's peers begins with the process of publication, or putting scholarly work out into the world. It takes place again when scholarly products are reviewed in scholarly journals or the public press. And it takes place again when a department identifies outside peer reviewers to critique the scholarly productivity of a candidate for tenure or promotion. Each of these stages represents particular challenges for public historians in the academy, but these difficulties can be overcome by recognizing a wider scope of reviews and reviewers for public work.

Rigorous peer review and refereed evaluation before publication takes place as surely in most public history work as in scholarly presses and academic journals. No museum exhibition reaches a public opening without a continuous review and commentary by myriad committees of outside reviewers and humanities scholars and outside and inside teams of registrars, curators, educators, public relations specialists, and funders. New site interpretations at state, national, and local historic sites or outdoor historical parks undergo similar scrutiny by resource providers, public focus groups, consulting scholars, and internal review committees. Consulting work or sponsored research by historians has a built-in peer-review element as historians compete to be awarded contracts or submit proposals for projects to granting agencies. These examples suggest that pre-publication review and validation is as varied as the scholarly products of public history. The resulting products deserve to be accepted as having undergone a rigorous peer-review process comparable to that accorded more traditional forms of scholarship.

Review of public history products can and does take place within the scholarly journals to which departmental tenure and promotion committees turn for evaluation of the significance of scholarship. But it also takes place in other places and formats as well—local newspapers review museum exhibits; local community organizations and national professional associations recognize public history projects with awards and commendations; specialized online publications offer critical evaluations of museum exhibitions or the "gray literature" of contract reports.

As well, audience feedback can provide key insight into the success or failure of a public history project. Above all, these projects are meant to engage public audiences. Increasingly, public history institutions are committed to capturing how their audiences understand and make use of their work. Museums often hire outside audience-research specialists to conduct formal summative evaluations of their exhibits, statistically rigorous surveys that shape how an institution learns from a project and, often, chooses to revise it. Museums also increasingly create visitor feedback stations within their galleries, opportunities for visitors to give their point of view on the exhibit, whether in video stations, blogs, or index cards. While less rigorous than a summative evaluation, these testimonials can offer unvarnished insight into how visitors make sense of the public historian's work, much as teaching evaluations provide insight into a historian's performance in the classroom. All available sources should be considered when evaluating the significance of public history projects.

In the tenure process, peer reviewers should be in a position to assess the merits of candidates' work *within the public history field*. Outside peer reviewers chosen at the point of the promotion and tenure decision frequently come from the ranks of scholarly historians and are often unfamiliar with the ways in which public historians work, the sources they draw upon, and the venues in which their scholarship is presented. Too often, poorly chosen external reviewers do a disservice to candidates, damning with faint praise or, worse yet, criticizing public historians for failing to produce monographs or scholarly journal

articles. Yet, tenure committees can easily remedy this situation by turning to the legions of academically trained and professionally active public historians in the selection of external peer reviewers. While many of these scholars work outside of academic institutions, they have the potential to offer a combined expertise in both scholarly subfield *and* public history practice.

Defining and Documenting Scholarly Work: Best Practices and Recommendations

In evaluating public historians, departments should address two broad issues. The first is intellectual: establishing an inclusive definition of the *sources, content, and format* of scholarship that encompasses all scholarly work, including that of public history. The second is procedural: defining the *processes* by which documentation and evaluation of scholarly achievements is carried out so that public history work is recognized and legitimated.

Individual historians have a role to play in ensuring fair consideration of their publicly engaged work Public historians seeking tenure or promotion must be careful to provide clear documentation of the ways in which the work they do qualifies as scholarship in the eyes of the historical profession as a whole, as articulated in the documents cited in this section of our white paper. That may require not only explicit explanations of the scholarly contributions of a candidate's work in the personal narrative common in many tenure and promotion files, but also an introductory analysis of the meaning or significance of specific evidence submitted for evaluation. For instance, scholars submitting evidence of their scholarly role in curating museum exhibits might include not only the exhibit script and the text of all object labels, but also primary and secondary source bibliographies, databases of exhibition checklists, photographs of the installation, press release and publicity materials, educational materials developed in conjunction with the exhibition, and reviews by local media as well as scholarly journals. The burden of proof should not be entirely on the candidate, however. Departments and universities might consider the following:

- In writing or revising tenure and promotion criteria, departments should expand the definition of historical scholarship to include the variety of products generated by all department faculty members. Department guidelines might list products, venues, and media relevant to tenure decisions; however, the primary criterion should be excellence in the historical scholarly *process* and recognition at the regional, national, or international level (depending on the rank for which the candidate is being considered) for the quality of historical work produced. In the words of one example: "No single standard can apply other than to require that the candidate's work be nationally recognized."
- Departments supporting public history faculty for promotion and tenure need to articulate clearly in letters of support to upper levels in the university's tenure and promotion decision-making process that the work of public historians, in whatever format it appears, meets the high standards of the profession for scholarly rigor.
- Public historians should be supported and encouraged in nontraditional activities that lead to scholarly productivity. Historians frequently are granted research leaves or sabbaticals to conduct research in libraries and archives. It may be equally important for faculty teaching museum or archival administration to spend a semester or year's leave working professionally in a museum or archive. Similarly, a faculty member teaching cultural resource management might spend a summer involved in an archaeological excavation, or a public policy faculty member might use a leave to serve as a staff member of a legislative committee or political campaign. These activities may have a clear connection with the transfer of knowledge element of public history faculty responsibilities, but they can also be an important part of the development of scholarly knowledge for a public historian.

IV. TEACHING

Besides the usual classroom-based activities, teaching public history includes working on projects with students, coordinating student internships, and presenting public programs; as with scholarship, the range of teaching activities in public history engages a more expansive definition of teaching than has traditionally been employed in the academy. Traditionally, the evaluation and reward of teaching in higher education has focused on instruction occurring within the classroom. Yet faculty—and especially public

history faculty—interact with learners outside the classroom, and this work should be recognized in the tenure and promotion process.

Learning is always a collaborative enterprise, but it is even more so in the public history classroom. It is common, for example, for a public history course, either at the undergraduate or graduate level, to include individual or group projects. Such projects are often undertaken in cooperation with or for the benefit of off-campus parties. For example, a class may conduct an oral history project for a local community, prepare an exhibit for a museum, develop a walking tour for a National Trust Main Street program, or document and record resources for a historic preservation organization. Such projects are analogous to the term paper which is the usual exit requirement in more traditional classes, and they require significant work outside the classroom. Their collaborative nature often demands greater effort from both the students and instructor. The instructor often serves as project director as well—framing the project's questions, establishing community connections, shaping research methods, identifying sources, evaluating conclusions, shaping the design and form of the final product, and guiding its dissemination. A well-designed and well-executed class project, then, can be thought of as a work of scholarship for the instructor as much as for participating students, as well as a significant additional teaching commitment. Through collaborative public work, the instructor has indeed contributed to the "advancement, integration, application, and transformation of knowledge."

Like large class projects, internships are an essential component of any public history program. Students need opportunities to apply the theoretical training received in the classroom and develop professional skills and can benefit from interacting with professional public historians in a work environment. Internships clearly are an extension of classroom teaching and a key component in the training of students. Just like classroom-based activities, effective internships delineate the learning objectives to be addressed, define how those objectives are to be met, and describe how the student and the internship experience are to be evaluated. Normally, a significant work product is required of the intern. Establishing a successful internship program requires meeting with representatives of host institutions and negotiating tasks to be undertaken, work schedules, compensation, daily supervision requirements, and the role of the host in evaluating the internship. The faculty member typically maintains contact with the intern and the host institution during the duration of the internship, through periodic on-site visits if possible. The level of commitment and scholarly attention and the amount of time required to coordinate and supervise an effective internship experience is certainly commensurate with that which most professors give to their classroom teaching.

In addition to working with students outside the classroom, public history faculty also interact with learners outside the institution. Drawing upon their professional expertise, public historians present talks and workshops at museums and historical societies, instruct Elderhostel classes and other continuing education settings, participate in media programs, and contribute to Teaching American History (TAH) grants—to name just a few venues. These are all teaching events, requiring the same level and type of preparation and scholarly engagement, and a greater degree of community engagement, as that required of scholars teaching in the traditional classroom environment. Too often, such activities are relegated to the least valued category of service. In truth, all deserve to be valued as an extension of teaching.

Teaching and the Public Historian: The Critical Issues

Academia has long recognized the symbiotic relationship between research and teaching. However, most history departments continue to evaluate faculty performance using systems that define research, teaching, and service as distinct spheres. Tenure and promotion guidelines clearly demark them. The AHA's 1993 report *Redefining Historical Scholarship* suggested a more holistic approach, defining what traditionally has been called teaching as scholarship entailing the transformation of knowledge.[23] Such an acknowledgement of the interplay between scholarship and teaching better fits the public historian's reality. Yet departments incorporating this continuum model remain relatively rare. In the more common tripartite system, the unique and time-consuming aspects of teaching public history negatively impact traditional scholarly output and thus the public historian's future in the academy.

Recognizing the Public Historian as Teacher: Best Practices and Recommendations

The public history faculty member's teaching responsibilities typically extend beyond the traditional classroom and demand additional time and effort. Departmental guidelines for tenure and promotion should recognize and accommodate this reality. The mechanisms for accomplishing this will vary, but departments and universities might consider the following:

- Departments may adopt the more holistic definition of scholarship suggested by the AHA and include such teaching activities as a form of scholarship. Rigorous documentation and evaluation, including some form of peer review, would be part of that process.
- Whatever approach is adopted, it should also be based on a consideration of the department's and institution's missions, as well as an assessment of the faculty member's role in fulfilling those missions.
- Given the time involved, the establishment and supervision of internships should be factored into a faculty member's workload. The establishment and supervision of internships should be considered and rewarded as a form of teaching in the traditional evaluation rubric and as scholarship, involving the transformation of knowledge through teaching, in a continuum evaluation process.
- Public history projects that include student participation should be recognized as a form of teaching that requires time and effort beyond that of traditional courses. In this way they are much like overseeing an honors thesis. Consequently, it is proper for departments to consider this in determining a faculty member's course load. Departments need to decide whether such projects also constitute scholarship based on their own guidelines. Such activity might also be appraised as civic engagement if the institution includes that category in its evaluation rubric.
- Public programs that draw on a faculty member's expertise and specialized skills should be recognized as a form of teaching or the transformation of knowledge. Inherent in this is the recognition that teaching and the transformation of knowledge often occurs outside the traditional classroom.[24]
- Public history-related teaching activities—be they internships, projects with students, or public programs—should undergo review, preferably by peers, to determine their quality and assure that such efforts are appropriately recognized in the evaluation and reward process.

V. SERVICE

Of the three traditional categories of evaluation, service is the least valued, often dismissed by academics who understandably wish to devote more time to scholarship and teaching than to time-consuming and often thankless committee work. The public historian's service responsibilities include the standard committee work and administrative tasks faced by all academics, but also extend to the time-consuming work needed to create robust public history programs and vibrant connections to the wider community. Their responsibilities also entail an increased obligation to cultural institutions and community groups, such as museums, historic preservation review boards, executive councils, and humanities councils.

Given its important role in the professional life of public history faculty, service should be revalued and its significance validated. The additional administrative service carried by public historians encompasses a variety of non-academic skills and duties that are fundamental to nurturing a vibrant program. Effective public history faculty members must hone their organizational, managerial, and creative skills to conduct the following tasks:

- Recruiting students;
- Hiring and managing clinical faculty;
- Tracking and reporting the achievements of the program, including enrollments and employment statistics for students (see "Case Study III–Program Director" and "Case Study IV–Program Director" in Appendix);
- Overseeing program budgets; and
- Ensuring the smooth operation of programs.

In many cases, program directors also become their department's ad hoc web master because they have the requisite skills. Some program directors assume the additional responsibility of raising money for graduate fellowships, either through grants and contract work or by working with development staff to identify and cultivate donors.

Finally, there are many duties, large and small, that can be considered under the general category of diplomacy. Some of these facilitate the collaborative and public relationships that constitute civic engagement, but are not fully formed programs or products. Diplomatic activities facilitate effective partnerships and may include:

- Engaging speakers for on- and off-campus talks and special programs;
- Working as liaison with university offices such as career services, service learning, and public relations; and
- Meeting with potential program partners.

Diplomacy also includes the innumerable acts of good will that build good community relations, such as answering telephone and e-mail questions from the public about the program or about random historical subjects. Public historians are not alone in responding to queries or in cultivating these external relations, but the volume and depth of diplomatic work for them is unique. A conscientious response to such inquiries often means finding the appropriate expert or the right reference sources and passing them on to the requester. It also requires time that could be spent on teaching or research or something with more direct benefits. But performing such service to the public, the community, and the profession is what public historians should do. Acting diplomatically wins friends, strengthens ties between the university and the community, and ultimately nurtures the public's engagement with history.

Public Historians as Administrators: The Critical Issues

The movement to redefine public historians' contributions in the academy has emerged, in part, from the expansion of public history programs. This remarkable increase has been accompanied by the hiring of new faculty members who are required to build or run a program in addition to research and teaching. The majority of public history programs, and especially newer programs, are overseen by a single faculty member with little or no administrative training. These ad hoc administrators are, often, junior faculty members who must balance the demands of the tenure system with administrative duties equivalent to those of a department chair.

Junior faculty and program administrators (whether these two groups overlap or not) are particularly vulnerable in the promotion and tenure process if history departments do not validate administrative service. Faculty members who double as program directors perform a range of duties that do not fit easily into the teaching, research, or even civic engagement categories. However, these administrative responsibilities should be recognized as both time-consuming and essential to the success of public history programs. Respondents to our survey indicated that the time public history faculty spent on service and administration far exceeded that of their peers. The working group also found that although many departments protect tenure-track faculty from service, especially committee work, during their first years in a department, public history faculty rarely have the same guarantee. In fact, junior faculty members often encounter the unstated expectation that they will not only serve on committees, such as a graduate committee, but also head a public history committee and perform undefined administrative tasks, all of which cuts into the time they have to produce scholarship and cultivate teaching skills.

Valuing the Administrative Duties and Responsibilities of Public Historians: Best Practices and Recommendations

History departments can recognize and reward administrative service in concrete ways. Departments and universities might consider the following:

- Departments should honestly evaluate the demands of running a public history program prior to hiring a new faculty member. In crafting job descriptions and devising work contracts, departments should

include administration as one of the primary duties and assign the new faculty member the title of director to signify the position's dual status as both faculty member and an administrator.

- Departments should strive to hire at the associate level for positions that have a significant administrative component, so that junior faculty need not struggle to complete a book and build a program at the same time.
- Departments can provide program directors with essential administrative support in the form of either dedicated secretarial time or a paid student assistant to help shoulder routine tasks.
- Public history program directors should receive the same course reduction as department chairs if they are to perform administrative duties and still pursue their own research goals.

VI. CONCLUSION

Public history has emerged as a full and vital academic subfield. It is rooted in the spirit of community engagement and civic involvement that runs through the long history of American higher education since its beginnings. It is especially in accord with the goals of the public college and university sector, particularly the land-grant universities. As the field matures, an increasing number of institutions will appoint tenure-track public historians and consider them for tenure and promotion.

These historians must be evaluated and promoted on the basis of the work they were hired to do. Of necessity, overall standards for tenure and promotion will vary with each institution's mission, its self-conception, and its vision for its future. But every department or program that seeks to hire a public historian should be absolutely clear what it expects of such a person from hiring and negotiation through tenure review. All expectations should be stated, in writing, to candidates for appointment. They also should be stated, in writing, to higher college or university officials, at every stage in the hiring process from initial approval of the search to appointment of the successful candidate. These clearly defined expectations should form the eventual basis for evaluation in the tenure and promotion process, and they should be made very clear to external referees. Similar clarity should obtain for a public-history full professor promotion, whether the candidate is continuing from a previous public-history specialty or has moved into public history as part of a plan for post-tenure professional development. Fairness demands it.

APPENDIX

The following case studies illustrate the individual experiences of public historians in the academy and provide guidance for evaluating scholarly products such as history websites and museum exhibits. Although these case studies are not universally applicable, they can serve as discussion points for historians and departments pursuing equitable treatment and evaluation of public historians.

Case Study I – Developing History Museum Exhibitions

Museum exhibitions are rich and complex forms of historical scholarship that engage public audiences. Developing a good history exhibit requires a good historian. And yet, the goals of exhibitions—and the tools used to create them—differ significantly from those of academic monographs. In developing an exhibition, every step is taken with an eye to the audience, a diverse population whose needs and predilections differ fundamentally from the community of scholars for whom most academic books are written. To make a substantive connection with a broad public, the exhibit developer deploys the skills of an historian in realms beyond the written word and makes room for visitors to determine the pace and depth of learning. The fundamental work of researching, interpreting, and disseminating ideas about the past remains a common endeavor between academic work and museum exhibitions.

Authorship and Exhibitions

"Exhibit developer" is a term that emerged in the last two decades to designate the person who crafts an exhibit's message and marshals an array of techniques to convey that message in a compelling visitor experience. In a smaller museum, the developer may design and build the exhibit, but more typically a developer collaborates with in-house or freelance professionals with expertise in design, graphics, multimedia, and exhibit fabrication. The work of the exhibit developer differs in scope from that of a consulting historian, who may be invited to comment on an exhibition script or take part in a content-review meeting. The exhibit developer discovers, shapes, and shares historical content by creating original and multifaceted public products. Even as the work involves a host of collaborators, the exhibition developer truly is the project's lead author.

Preparing an Exhibition

It is not uncommon for a major exhibition to be five years in the making. Smaller exhibits may be completed in a few months or a year or two. Whereas exhibits are traditionally seen as simply framed pictures with labels beneath, history exhibitions have evolved into complex installations that combine text, images, artifacts, multimedia shows, live programming, hands-on interactive activities, and fully realized environments.

An exhibition begins with a topic and a set of questions about the past. Topics may be identified by the exhibition developer, determined by an in-house exhibitions committee or director, or suggested by a community partner. Exhibition topics do not necessarily explore virgin historiographical territory—they are often broader in focus than a monograph—but they do seek to be original in scope and approach. Often, they explore a topic through the lens of a particular geographic frame, a city, state, or region. The exhibition developer takes the lead in framing the topic, drawing on his or her prior expertise or understanding of the literature to identify core questions that will prompt new understandings (or provoke engaging questions) for the museum's audiences.

Exhibition development begins with research. Developers may enter new academic subspecialties on each project, a process that requires them to familiarize themselves with a new body of secondary literature. The developer necessarily gathers a wide range of primary sources, not only manuscript documents and public records but often three-dimensional objects, images, recorded sound, oral interviews, and moving images. Since topics often require materials beyond the scope of a museum's existing collections, the developer solicits new objects and images, conducts new interviews, and engages in other activities necessary to collect essential materials. As materials are gathered, the

developer analyzes them, seeking patterns, identifying rich examples, and exploring how the sources fit within the broader contexts suggested by secondary literature.

Gradually, the developer identifies a central interpretive point for the exhibition. Exhibitions do have a main message, akin to a thesis statement. Equally, though, exhibits have goals for the visitor's experience: visitors will feel, sense, share, reflect. That experience should enable visitors to understand the exhibit's content.

The developer must convey the exhibition's message clearly and passionately to the team of creative workers—from two or three to two dozen or more—who work with the developer to create the three-dimensional exhibit. The message serves as a touchstone to which the team continually returns as it makes interpretive and design decisions about the various exhibit elements. The exhibit developer writes the text for these components and plays the lead role in shaping their interpretive content, but every aspect of the work is relentlessly collaborative. The final product is truly more than the sum of each individual's contribution.

Evaluating Exhibitions

Museum exhibitions are intended above all to have an impact on visitors, not to advance historiographical debate. Academic peer review, therefore, is an awkward tool for determining an exhibition's success. Nonetheless, history exhibitions are evaluated and subjected to revision and review at every stage of development, before and after their opening. Every step during the years of exhibition development is subject to internal critiques and, often, input and advice from community partners. External funders, such as granting agencies (e.g., the NEH), foundations, government agencies, and corporate or private funders, provide another layer of preliminary review. After opening, there are some outlets for professional peer review. *The Journal of American History*, *The Public Historian*, and *Curator* all publish formal reviews of exhibits. The American Association of Museums gives an award of excellence to one exhibition each year, the National Council on Public History gives an Outstanding Public History Project Award, and the American Association of State and Local History annually gives citations to notable projects in each state. Like academic conferences, the annual meetings of these associations serve as opportunities for presenting and discussing path-breaking work.

Any full assessment of a project's impact, though, must include the tools that museums themselves use to determine success—response in the popular press, formal summative evaluations (statistical surveys created by audience-research professionals), attendance figures, in-gallery visitor feedback stations, and unsolicited testimonials. Increasingly, museums see themselves as institutions rooted in their communities. Public historians need to be evaluated by their ability to create work that engages and inspires community members.

Suggested Best Practice

Serving as the lead developer on a major exhibition can legitimately be seen as equivalent to authoring a book; a somewhat more modest exhibit may be akin to an article. The distinction depends on the exhibition's scope and originality, its depth of original research, the array of sources it draws upon, its size, the diversity and elaborateness of exhibit components, and the project's impact on its audiences.

Case Study II – Nominations for the National Register of Historic Places and the National Historic Landmark Program

The National Park Service (NPS) is the federal agency charged with administering the nation's cultural and historical heritage. In pursuit of this mission, the NPS works closely with public historians on a range of projects. The preparation of nominations for the National Register of Historic Places [NR] and the National Historic Landmark Program [NHL] is one area of collaboration. Congress established the NR and NHL to identify sites worthy of preservation that illustrate the nation's heritage. There are nearly 83,000

listings on the NR, comprising over 1.5 million individual properties. While properties listed on the NR may be deemed significant at a local or state level, all National Historic Landmarks must be deemed nationally significant according to any one of six criteria (movements or events, significant persons, ideals of the American people, architecture or engineering, exceptional historic or artistic significance illustrating a culture or way of life, and major scientific importance). Landmarks must also exhibit a high degree of physical integrity. As a result, only about 2,500 sites currently hold landmark status. While the following example focuses on a NHL nomination, the nomination and review process for a NR nomination is similarly complex and rigorous.

Preparation of an NHL Nomination

Public historians may prepare an NHL nomination based on their own scholarly interests or at the behest of a public or private entity. Many potential sites are identified in peer-reviewed theme studies prepared by teams of academic and public historians. The nomination process begins when a scholar submits a detailed letter of inquiry to the NHL program. These letters are akin in depth and structure to an article abstract, usually run four to five pages, and must explain both why the proposed site is nationally significant and how it illustrates a high degree of integrity. The NHL staff, comprised of historians, archaeologists, and architectural historians, reviews the letters of inquiry, researches the author's claims, and may consult outside academic experts. If the site is deemed a likely candidate for landmark status, the author of the original inquiry then prepares a full nomination, which normally averages sixty pages in length. The nomination must not only explore the history of the specific site, placing it in a broad thematic context of American history, but also offer a framework of comparable sites and present a convincing argument that the nominated site is the best place to interpret a particular story. The nomination must address the criteria and guidelines set by the NHL as well as reflect the most recent historical scholarship. Throughout the process, NHL staff review and edit drafts until the nomination is deemed ready for external review.

The External Peer Review Process

The NHL Program employs a rigorous multilevel system of peer review, which parallels the system used in academic publishing and also reflects the collaborative and public nature of the process. The NHL staff has developed a growing list of peer reviewers with the cooperation of various historical organizations, most notably the OAH and the NCPH. Peer reviewers are primarily academics, but the pool also includes museum curators and other public historians who possess PhDs and have published in their respective fields. Nominations are sent to at least two reviewers (always at least one academic), one who can assess the narrow specifics of the nomination and one who can place its merit within a larger national context. As with a journal article or monograph, the peer reviewers remain anonymous and the nomination authors are required to address reviewers' specific comments and general concerns in a subsequent revision. If reviewers' demands for revision are extensive, the revised nomination is resubmitted for a second round of review. If the revisions requested by reviewers are relatively minor, NHL staff determines if the nomination is ready for the next level of review, the NHL Committee.

The committee is made up of historians, architects and architectural historians, and preservation experts from across the United States. It meets on average twice a year and considers between ten and twenty-five nominations at each meeting. Nomination authors make an oral presentation to the body and answer the committee's questions. The committee then votes to approve or deny the nomination for recommendation. The committee may also stipulate revisions for approved nominations. NHL program staff then present the recommended nomination to the NPS Advisory Board, which is made up of political appointees with widely varying backgrounds, for the first and only review by non-experts. The board decides whether to recommend the nomination to the Secretary of the Interior, who then reviews the final document and officially designates the nominated site a National Historic Landmark.

Suggested Best Practice

Due to the rigorous scholarly demands and the extensive peer review process involved in the preparation of an NHL or NR nomination, departments should consider treating nominations on par with a peer-reviewed journal article.

Case Study III – Program Director

Public history program directors who are also tenure-track faculty members often find themselves in a professional catch-22. The challenge is to acknowledge that administrative work is an essential and valuable component of running a program and should be counted as part of overall workload requirements.

In 2000, Professor A landed her dream job: a tenure-track position in the history department at a state university in the South with the primary responsibility of coordinating a graduate-level public history program. Although this particular department's public history offerings dated to the 1980s, a new group of faculty had undertaken a thorough review of the courses to restructure and rejuvenate the program. In addition, existing faculty had forged partnerships with other departments on campus and with a major museum that would act as a sustaining partner in the development of the program. Following the advice of outside evaluators, the department committed to building the program in several critical ways. First, it allocated secretarial support to assist with administration. Second, the chair acknowledged that running the program would be a significant added duty (something they did not ask of other junior faculty members) and provided a course release for administration, which was equivalent to the department chair's teaching load of 2-2. Finally, the department agreed to count publicly engaged scholarship under a category of creative work. These projects would have the same weight as a juried journal article in the promotion and tenure process.

This university required all faculty members to submit annual reports as well as to undergo more formal third and sixth-year reviews. To help them navigate this process, the department assigned mentors to all new faculty members. Mentorship meant that a senior faculty member had a firsthand view of the challenges of running the public history program. The mentor communicated these issues directly to the chair without compromising the junior faculty member's position. As a result, the public history coordinator felt empowered to discuss the trade-offs between administration and research frankly with the chair. To his credit, the chair asked her to write a thorough description of her job after the first year of service and used this description to negotiate a further course reduction based on the number of internships she supervised. The faculty member felt that the chair and, indeed, the entire faculty understood and respected her administrative work as a serious contribution to the health of the program and the education of graduate students. In addition, the department and the university balanced the administrative work against her scholarly production during the annual review process.

The requirements for tenure in this particular department included a book and the more-difficult-to-measure achievement of being "known in the field." Thus, the public history coordinator had to publish her dissertation to be promoted with tenure. The University, however, did not grant a regular junior leave to tenure-track faculty. Untenured faculty had to win outside fellowships or grants in order to take time off before the six-year review. Although this is not unusual, once the coordinator had won a national fellowship, she and the department faced the problem of what to do with the program during her absence. In the end, the department hired a one-year temporary faculty member who guided but did not substantially enhance the program over a year. With time off, the coordinator completed her first monograph as well as an exhibition at a national museum by her fourth year, and the chair suggested she come up for tenure early. This was wise advice because early promotion gave her more authority in the university and granted her a post-tenure leave.

In this case, the junior faculty member thrived and so did the public history program. She had the regular support of her colleagues who worked with public history students on projects and theses. In particular, she also benefited from working closely with the director of graduate studies, who shared some of the responsibilities of administration, such as meeting with prospective students and doing the lion's share of general course advising. This freed the public history coordinator to travel the state and build

relationships with external partners, apply for grants, and conduct a robust slate of public projects. By the end of her third year, the coordinator had enlarged enrollments from a handful of graduate students to 25 MA candidates who were working with a range of external partners. The program enhanced the university's ties to the state humanities council, the state office of cultural resources, and a host of nonprofit museums and preservation organizations.

Suggested Best Practice

This case study illustrates a number of best practices in evaluating public historians on faculty. The department began well by thoroughly evaluating their program needs before hiring a faculty member to act as program director. They also provided adequate resources to support the faculty member as she moved toward tenure, including substantial administrative support, mentorship, and flexibility in evaluation criteria for tenure.

The faculty member in this case also worked to make the program and her career a success. She worked with her mentor and the department chair to ensure that she had protected her time in a way that allowed for a successful balance of administration, teaching, and research. She was a careful archivist and advocate of her work who could demonstrate concrete outcomes and products, including substantially increased program enrollment.

Case Study IV – Program Director

This case study illustrates the challenges for a junior faculty member juggling program director responsibilities with research.

A newly minted PhD obtained a tenure-track position at regional state university in the northeast with a new graduate-level public history program—and a 4-4 teaching load. One year later, she was named Public History Program Coordinator and given a reduced teaching load of 3-4 to allow for program administration. The challenges were great—establish administrative procedures, finetune curriculum requirements, build partnerships with other departments on campus, recruit students, forge alliances with local history institutions, and create a presence for the program within the state. The department had the advantage of another faculty member with public history training, but because of his own administrative load, he had limited time to commit to public history. The new program coordinator was largely on her own in terms of administering and staffing the program.

As impossible as the situation appeared, there were encouraging notes. First, the department had a deep appreciation and understanding of the work associated with administering a professional program, in part because it already housed a secondary education program leading to teacher certification. Like the public history coordinator, the secondary education program director was a PhD historian who was expected to split his time between teaching traditional undergraduate classes, conducting program administration and community outreach, teaching methodology or "skill" courses, supervising student interns (in this case, student teachers), and producing scholarship. He was a ready ally in making a case for the importance of administrative work and for expanding the definition of historical scholarship. The university's union contract, which provided course load credit for supervising interns and graduate capstone projects (the public history program's alternative to a traditional thesis), was also important to the coordinator's ability to carry out her administrative duties.

However, the contract posed its own set of challenges. In comparison to other teaching and administrative assignments on campus, the load credit for supervising internships and capstone projects was generous. The program coordinator used her time carefully and did not simply locate internship sites but built sustained relationships with local heritage organizations that became integral to the program. Still, in an environment in which release from teaching responsibilities and the opportunity to work with graduate students was highly coveted (the department had no PhD program), the public history coordinator feared resentment. To forestall this and alleviate her own overload, she decided to try to share some responsibility (and load credit) for internship and capstone project supervision with willing

department members, whose lack of experience with public history could be overcome through collaboration with the students' host institutions. Ultimately, sharing responsibility for public history students benefited the department, helping faculty members to become more invested in the students', the program's, and the coordinator's success.

The requirements for tenure also supported the professor's work as public history coordinator. Faculty members were evaluated in four categories, the first and highest-level category being "load credit activity," which included both teaching and administrative time. Because the faculty member was given one course of release time for program administration, her work as coordinator was given significant weight when it came to tenure evaluation.

The coordinator also took action on her own to ensure her progress to tenure. In her fourth year, she brought outside evaluators to review the program. They not only helped her make a case for increased university resources—including the hiring of a second public history faculty line—but they also helped her document her success as a program administer, particularly her efforts to align the program with the "best practices" recommendations of NCPH's Curriculum and Training Committee.

Owing to the university's substantial teaching load, the department did not require a book for tenure. In addition, the union contract stipulated "creative activity," as opposed to "scholarly research," as the second category for evaluation, allowing the coordinator to count public history projects toward tenure. Still, she decided to make her book a substantial portion of her tenure portfolio, in part because she had worked long and hard on her dissertation and wanted to see the project through to publication and in part because, contract language aside, she believed that her department would place higher value on traditional scholarship. She showed progress toward publication through conference presentations, a national fellowship, and a book contract.

The coordinator was awarded promotion to associate professor a year early (in her fifth year) and granted tenure the next. Since she received tenure, her department has taken additional steps to codify its approval of public history scholarship and the value of administrative work. While they are still not formally approved, the department has drafted guidelines for promotion and tenure that formally include public history projects within the creative activity category, using the language of the AHA report *Redefining Historical Scholarship*. While recognizing that the types of outreach, scholarship, and service department members undertake are very individual, the revised guidelines allow (and, hopefully, encourage) more department members to make room in their professional lives for the kind of outreach and community engagement practiced by public historians. Discussions about the new guidelines have also identified a need to better define the tasks associated with administrative assignments, as both the public history coordinator and secondary education program director now worried that their willingness to take on sizeable administrative projects in the past would lead to creeping expectations in the future.

Suggested Best Practice

This case illustrates a number of best practices for both departments and individual public historians. First, public historian program directors should see themselves as having allies in department colleagues with similar administrative assignments, such as secondary education program directors, graduate program directors, and assistant chairs. They should also take the lead in documenting successes, including, for instance, inviting outside program evaluators who can help make the case both for increased support and for administrative success.

If public history program directors are evaluated on their administrative work, departments should clearly define the responsibilities associated with that work and recognize accomplishments "above and beyond." Departments that decide to offer public history must also be willing to encourage wide participation among faculty members in both the program and the field. No traditional graduate program would operate with a limited faculty of one or two tenure-track positions, and public history programs should be no different. This means all faculty members should take an active role in the education of public history students and should include public history outreach in their professional work. Departments can

encourage faculty members to engage in public history by including it within the category of "scholarship" or "creative activity" for tenure and promotion review.

Case Study IV – History Website

Although the World Wide Web celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2009 and academic history websites have been widely available for well over a decade, there are few formal peer review mechanisms for scholarly work presented on the Internet. This lack of established structures owes partly to the relative newness of the medium, but also to the diversity of products historians create for the web and the rapidity with which new forms of online scholarship are evolving. It is not because the web medium is inherently less scholarly or because history websites cannot be evaluated or reviewed for intellectual merit, originality, rigor, or disciplinary contribution. History departments seeking to gauge the value of online public history may wish to conduct their own internal evaluations of faculty-produced web resources and also look for external recognitions of quality such as grants and awards.

Criteria for Evaluating a History Website

Reflecting the diversity of the web, there are many different kinds of history websites, including online exhibitions, digital archives, resources for teaching and learning, digital tools and services, e-journals, and scholarly blogs. This diversity makes it difficult to establish uniform assessment criteria. Instead, websites should be evaluated on their own merits, on the basis of how well they achieve their intended aims and whether that aim is interesting, original, and useful to the field.

Audience: When evaluating the success or failure of a history website, tenure and promotion committees should first consider the intended audience for the resource. An online exhibition intended for the general public will and should have a different tone, design aesthetic, user interface, and set of content resources than a digital archive intended mainly for researchers or a teaching module intended for secondary school teachers. Each of these may make an original contribution to the discipline, but the nature of that contribution will be very different. Committees should ask themselves first and foremost: "For whom is this resource intended and does it speak effectively to that intended audience in its content, design, and approach?"

Content: Once the intended audience is established and accounted for, committees should consider the historical content of the work in question. Although the tone and subject matter may be adjusted for different audiences, the historical content of the resource can still be of the highest standard. A digital archive, for instance, may provide access to previously inaccessible sources or a set of tools to view existing sources in a way that enables new discoveries. An online exhibition, on the other hand, may contribute new narrative insights or shift the historical conversation through the innovative use of multimedia. Committees should ask themselves: "Does the resource reflect the latest and best historical knowledge? Is the subject matter worthy of the effort? Does the resource present or provide for original insight and discovery?"

Design: In most print scholarship, visual elements such as cover art and typography are clearly secondary to the text itself. On the web, however, good design is an integral part of quality historical work. Without sufficient attention to its information architecture and visual design, a website will fail to reach its audience and meet its aims, no matter how good the textual content. Committees should consider such questions as: "Does the structure of the website allow users to navigate the available information easily? Does the resource's visual design (color palate, layout, artwork) add to or detract from the user experience? Is the website easy to use? Is the design appropriate to the intended audience and to the subject matter?"

Use: Wherever possible, history websites should be freely and openly accessible. Given that fact, actual use by intended audiences will be a key metric for committees to consider in evaluating a resource's success or failure. Committees should expect faculty members offering web-based projects as evidence for tenure to keep and present records of such measures of web traffic as unique visitors, page views,

average time on site, and bounce rate. Committees should also ask faculty members to track and present qualitative measures of use such as samples of activity from user forums or samples of email correspondence or other contact with users. Committees should ask: "Is this website being used sufficiently, appropriately, and effectively by its intended audiences?"

Process: Unlike books or journal articles, websites are not fixed media. They are easily updated and require continual maintenance. Also unlike books or journal articles, it is a rare historian who possesses all of the historical, technical, and management skills necessary to mount a successful history website. Moreover, as an emerging field, digital history is driven in large part by methodological questions. For all of these reasons, process is in many ways as important as product in evaluating digital history projects. Collaboration, project management, and responsive community engagement are often as important to a successful history website as its content. Keeping in mind the project's intentions, committees should ask such process-focused questions as: "Has the faculty member engaged collaborators with the skills necessary to carry out the project's aims and reach its intended audience? Has the faculty member made efficient use of staff and monetary resources? Does the website employ technologies and methods appropriate to its aims and audiences? Has the faculty member implemented a plan for the website's maintenance and long term sustainability? How effectively has the faculty member engaged real world and online social networks to disseminate the project and secure an audience?"

External Markers

In addition to their internal assessment, committee members should look for signs of external recognition of a history website's quality and success.

Funding: Most history websites require some amount of funding to build. Securing funding usually involves writing a proposal. Committees may ask for copies of grant proposals and for copies of evaluators' comments, which many funding agencies make available to applicants. Of course, a successful grant proposal doesn't necessarily make for a successful project, so committees may also ask for copies of the quarterly or annual reports required by most funding agencies. Committees may also look for evidence of continued, expanded, and diversified funding as measures of a project's continuing success.

Published papers and conference presentations: Many creators of history websites have opportunities to present their experiences and findings, both methodological and topical, in print or at scholarly conferences. Committees should consider these publications and presentations as they would any other refereed paper.

Journal reviews: Several scholarly journals, including the *Journal of American History* and *The Public Historian*, publish website reviews akin to book reviews. Any published reviews should be presented to and considered by committees.

Awards: Several scholarly associations, including the AHA, NCPH, and the American Association of Museums, award prizes to history websites of different varieties. Committees should consider these awards as they would book or journal article prizes.

Acknowledgments

Notes

[1] A listing of undergraduate and graduate public history programs can be found on the NCPH website at http://www.ncph.org/Education/GraduateandUndergraduate/tabid/323/Default.aspx (accessed 10.22.2009). See also "Public History: State of the Art, 1980," *The Public Historian* 2 *(*Special Issue: Fall 1979), especially "Public History in the Academy: An Overview of University and Course Offerings," pp. 84–116; *Public History Education in America: A Guide* (Morgantown, WV: National Council on Public History, 1986); *A Guide to Graduate Programs in Public History*, ed. National Council on Public History, Indianapolis: (2002).; Constance B.Schulz, "An Academic Balancing Act: Public History Education Today," *The Public Historian* 21 (Summer 1999): 143–154. On the difficulties of defining what constitutes a public history program, see Lawrence B. de Graaf, "Distinctiveness or Integration? The Future of Public History Curriculum," *The Public Historian* 9 (Summer 1987): 47–66.

[2] Robert B. Townsend, "A Survey of Tenure Practices in History: Departments Indicate Books Are Key and Success Rates for Tenure High," *Perspectives* 42 (February 2004): 5–8.

[3] *Redefining Historical Scholarship: Report of the American Historical Association Ad Hoc Committee on Redefining Scholarly Work*, December 1993, http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/RedefiningScholarship.htm (accessed 10.22.2009). Ultimately, the committee did not submit the report to either the AHA Council or the OAH Executive Board for formal endorsement. See also James B. Gardner, "The Redefinition of Historical Scholarship: Calling a Tail a Leg?," *The Public Historian* 20 (Fall 1998): 43–57.

[4] Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, special report of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990); R. Eugene Rice, "The New American Scholar: Scholarship and the Purposes of the University," in *Metropolitan Universities: An Emerging Model in American Higher Education*, ed. Daniel M. Johnson and David A. Bell (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 1995), 135–146. In 1996, the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) reprinted Rice's article in pamphlet form as *Making a Place for the New American Scholar: Inquiry #1* (AAHE Working Papers Series, Stylus Publishing, June 1996).

[5] Gardner, "Redefinition"; Lynn Hudson Parsons, Joan Shelly Rubin, and Owen S. Ireland, "Redefining Scholarship: Some Problems," *OAH Newsletter* 23 (February 1995): 6.

[6] "Key Recommendations," *Public History, Public Historians, and the American Historical Association: Report of the Task Force on Public History*, January 2004, http://www.historians.org/governance/tfph/TFPHreport.htm (accessed 10.22.2009).

[7] The Working Group on Evaluating Public History Scholarship is comprised of two representatives and a professional staff member from each organization: William Bryans (Oklahoma State University), Kathleen Franz (American University), and Executive Director John Dichtl represent the NCPH. Edward Countryman (Southern Methodist University), Kristin Ahlberg (Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State), and Public History Coordinator Debbie Ann Doyle represent the AHA. The OAH has appointed Gregory Smoak (Colorado State University), Constance Schulz (University of South Carolina), and Public History Manager Susan Ferentinos.

[8] For example, the AHA Committee on Minority Historians notes that much work by minority historians is devalued as "service." "Equity for Minority Historians in the Academic History Workplace: A Guide to Best Practices," *Perspectives* 45 (October 2007). Mills Kelly of the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University has discussed the dilemmas of evaluating digital work on his *edwired.org* blog; see, "Making Digital Scholarship Count," June 13, 16, and 27, 2008.

[9] Nor is the issue of creating an equitable tenure process and redefining scholarship limited to the discipline of history. The Modern Language Association's 2005 *Report of the MLA Task Force for Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion* found that the "increasing demands for publication as a qualification for tenure and promotion" failed to correlate to the modern realities of academic publishing, adversely affecting junior faculty. It concluded that departments and university administrators had to embrace a more "capacious conception of scholarship" beyond the single-author monograph. Other key recommendations included making the tenure process transparent, calibrating faculty expectations with institutional values, recognizing the legitimacy of scholarship produced in new media, creating "multiple paths" to tenure, and facilitating collaborative scholarship. The full report is available online at http://www.mla.org/tenure_promotion (accessed 10.22.2009).

[10] "Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University, A Resource on Promotion and Tenure in the Arts, Humanities, and Design," *Imagining America*, Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship Report, http://www.imaginingamerica.org/TTI/TTI.html (accessed 10.22.2009).

[11] Third Report (February 1999) of the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities, *Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution* http://www.aplu.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=183 (accessed 10.22.2009).

[12] The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, "Community Engagement Technical Details," http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/index.asp?key=1592 (accessed 10.22.2009).

[13] Kellogg Commission, *Returning to Our Roots.*

[14] "The foundation defines community engagement broadly as . . . the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity." The

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, "Community Engagement Elective Classification," at http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/index.asp?key=1213 (accessed 10.22.2009).

[15] For instance, the workload breakdown at a western land-grant institution with a public history MA program is 50 percent teaching and advising, 35 percent research, and 15 percent service. Yet, the department's most recently adopted tenure and promotion standards make it clear that research products in the form of books and articles weigh most heavily in tenure decisions. As an alternative example, one large Midwestern research university clearly defines engagement and provides for promotion to full professor on the basis of the "scholarship of engagement"; community engagement is only considered "desirable" when considering the tenure and promotion of an assistant professor.

[16] AHA, *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct.*

[17] AHA, *Redefining Historical Scholarship.*

[18] The "application of knowledge" inventory for Public History included: "Public programming (exhibitions, tours, etc.) in museums and other cultural and educational institutions; Consulting and providing expert testimony on public policy and other matters; Contract research on policy formulation and policy outcomes; Participation in film and other media projects; Writing and compiling institutional and other histories; Historic preservation and cultural resource management; Administration and management of historical organizations and institutions; Archival administration and the creation of bibliographies and databases; Professional service—editing journals and newsletters, organizing scholarly meetings, etc.; Community service drawing directly upon scholarship—through state humanities councils (e.g., public lectures), history day competitions, etc." (AHA, *Redefining Historical Scholarship,* 5–6).

[19] Recognizing that public audiences have a keen sense of history that is both local and material, and public historians have drawn on the power of place to document and interpret history in new ways, beginning with the new social history and have included alternative and often historically-silenced voices of women and racial and ethnic minorities. For examples, see Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT University press, 1995); James Horton and Lois Horton, eds. *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Robert Weyeneth, "History, Memory, and Apology: The Power of Apology and the Process of Historical Reconciliation," *The Public Historian* 23:3 (Summer 2001): 9-38.

[20] See case statements in this white paper that elaborate the process and standards for creating public scholarship. See also explorations of public history work in Gardner and Lapaglia, Hayden, Rosenzweig.

[21] Many scholars have shown that collective memory is intimately intertwined with the production and understanding of history. For a sample that encompasses cultural history, the philosophy of history, museums and archives, see Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American* Culture (New York: Knopf, 1991); George Lipsitz, *Time Passages* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004; Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémorie," *Representations*, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989), pp. 7-24. Susan Crane, ed. *Museums and Memory* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); Carolyn Kay Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

[22] Gardner "Redefinition," 95–97.

[23] AHA, *Redefining Scholarship.* See also, Rice, "The New American Scholar."

[24] Two of the surveyed public history programs residing in departments using the standard three-tiered evaluation method specifically recognize various public programs as a form of teaching. These include preparing materials for museums and heritage organizations, giving public lectures and mini-courses, preparing material for broadcast, and participating in various forms of continuing education.