

## History Postgraduate Collaboration Day 17 March 2010 University of Nottingham

Present: Members of De Montfort University, Loughborough University, Nottingham Trent University, University of Derby, University of Leicester, University of Lincoln, University of Nottingham, University of York attended the morning training sessions. Representatives from Nottingham Trent University, University of Nottingham and University of York attended the afternoon discussion, to which the following notes relate.

### DISCUSSION NOTES

During the afternoon we discussed what shape future collaboration should take. It was agreed that there were two main reasons for History postgraduates to collaborate cross-institutionally. Firstly, History postgraduates have shared needs for specific training, which cannot always be efficiently or easily provided by more generic postgraduate training, and did not draw on the expertise of academic staff. Secondly, there was a desire to meet, discuss and collaborate on common research issues. The main points are summarised here.

#### **1. Communication**

We agreed the first and most basic stage was to formalise communication between the departments to publicise events (lectures, seminars, etc) and other opportunities (such as special projects), and existing research networks/clusters that exist at each university.

Various ideas were discussed regarding communication means, including the use of Academia.edu, Google Calendar or equivalent, and the setting up of a Facebook group. The most inclusive and direct approach, however, would be emails via institution email accounts, which would be the best place to start. We agreed this should aim to be non-intrusive, i.e. a summary email incorporating a list of all events from various networks, sent towards the beginning of each term/semester.

**Action:** All universities who are interested to provide contact information for a representative to circulate information from other universities to MA and PhD students, and to pass on information on events at their own university. This could be a willing administrator or a postgraduate, although if the former, they should be happy to edit events lists.

#### **2. Future events**

We agreed that the element of personal contact should be maintained, through similar training and collaboration days held once a semester at alternating host institutions. The format of morning training sessions with project or theme-based afternoons was deemed effective. Morning sessions would aim to offer skills training sessions relevant to all historians, run by experts in the field at the host university. Afternoon sessions could involve parallel workshops, grouped along interest/thematic/subject lines.

**Action:** Some ideas for these training sessions and workshops are listed below on p.2. However, these lists need adding to and should be organic and reflect the needs and interests of current postgraduates - all participants can keep this in mind and mention it to colleagues.

#### **3. Sustainability**

The current organisers at York and Nottingham feel this is a good stage to pass responsibility over to new committee members who have more time ahead of them to secure the future of the initiative. Equally, MA students should be included at organisation level to make sure they are represented. We should also aim to gain support from staff members in order to secure School assistance and continuity.

**Action:** Each institution to propose committee members from both the MA and PhD communities, and to identify a staff member keen to support the initiative.

**Action:** New committee to establish where and when the autumn event will take place.

#### **4. Funding**

This is a matter for future debate. Nevertheless, we should work on the principle (for now) that a host organisation would provide the space and refreshments, and guests would organise and provide their own travel (perhaps funded by their own departments if possible).

## 5. Other

We must bear in mind the History Subject Centre at the Higher Education Academy, who may be able to support various aspects of this initiative. We also discussed using this movement around the country to events as an opportunity for postgraduates to meet academics at the host centre that they'd like to meet, perhaps over lunch...

**Action:** Think of a name!

## EVENT IDEAS

### TRAINING SKILLS SESSIONS (AM)

Statistics for Historians

Cartography/Mapping

Widening participation ('Impact')

- Accessibility/communication
- IPOP
- Teaching History
- Communication skills

Update on philosophy of history

Publication - a general introduction

- Who, where and how?
- Process

Sources (by genre), eg:

- Visual
- Legal, etc...

Etc...

### PROJECTS AND THEMES FOR WORKSHOPS (PM)

Power

Identity

Sociability

Urban

Culture

Non-British history (by country?)

Family/household history

Heritage

Comparative

Latin

Environmental

Special collections/archives

Languages

Etc...

These could be introduced by work in progress papers on the theme, or complemented by a visit to a historical site of interest or special collection guided by experts.