

# Crossing the Educational Rubicon without the TAH: Collaboration among University and Secondary-Level History Educators

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IN APRIL 2011, Congress slashed funding for a majority of programs tied to education. Several programs related to professional development for teachers did not survive. While cut severely—from \$119 million in Fiscal Year 2010 to \$46 million (a loss of \$73 million or 61% of its funding)—Teaching American History (TAH) grants lived, albeit by their fingertips, another day.<sup>1</sup> Yet, given the economic challenges the United States faces and what appear to be prevailing attitudes in regard to social services and teacher development, it has become clear that history educators cannot rely on federal funding to support efforts to improve the teaching of history.

Nevertheless, meaningful collaboration among K-12 teachers and academic and public historians continues to be vital.<sup>2</sup> This essay describes in detail a current collaborative relationship between a history department and high school in western Michigan. Focusing specifically on four levels of interlocking benefits of collaboration—benefits for high school teachers, for teaching candidates, for high school students, and for historians—the essay documents the strengths of this collaborative effort and notes areas where purposeful concentration and improvement might benefit all parties. Significantly, the relationship examined here,

between the history department at Western Michigan University (WMU) and Portage Central High School (PCHS), developed without a promise or expectation of financial incentives. It demonstrates that collaboration, while challenging, can survive in the twenty-first century without funding from a TAH grant.

### **The Benefits of Collaboration: Multiple Perspectives**

In 2003, Gordon Andrews, a WMU Ph.D. student in history and social studies teacher at nearby Portage Central High School, approached Wilson Warren, professor of history at WMU and the department's history education specialist, about pursuing a TAH grant to bring together WMU's history department and teachers in the Portage School District. Although the submitted proposal was not funded, discussions about the potential benefits of a joint effort laid the groundwork for subsequent collaborative efforts. The collaborative relationship that emerged focused on various types of interaction between WMU secondary education majors in History and Social Studies and teachers at Portage Central High School, purposeful interaction among faculty from the respective schools, invitations to teachers to speak to WMU teacher education majors and invitations to historians to speak to the high school students, and greater understanding among faculty about the missions and purposes of history instruction at the secondary and collegiate levels.

### **Fostering a Craft Approach to Teaching History: Collaboration among Teachers and Teaching Candidates**

Placement of student intern teachers in appropriate learning environments is one of the under-discussed dilemmas facing universities and school districts.<sup>3</sup> Like many universities, WMU has faced this problem for many years; there are relatively few districts and teachers who are willing and able to take the fifteen to thirty secondary history and social studies interns in the program each semester, but all candidates need placements as required by state teaching certification requirements. Understandably, part of the reason for this scramble for placements is due to concerns of parents and administrators about who is really teaching their children. As high-stakes assessment dominates the school culture, schools are increasingly reluctant to surrender their students to teaching candidates who are just beginning to experiment with their craft. In the words of Eric Alburtus, principal of Portage Central High School, "almost every year, parents comment that they feel like their kids are guinea pigs."<sup>4</sup> Adding to administrative reluctance is the hesitancy of master teachers to

become involved due to a host of issues, real or perceived, including the time commitment, potential problems in the classroom, loss over content control, and possible parental/administrative problems.

One of the key aspects of collaboration between WMU and Portage Central High School centers on the improved interaction between teachers and teaching candidates. While the Portage Public School District had previously committed itself to assisting in the preparation of teachers and worked with WMU as a “cluster site,” placements had tended to be quite limited. As a result of collaborative efforts, many of the candidates in HIST 4940: Teaching Methods for Secondary Schools—a class that is required for all WMU secondary education majors in History and Social Studies before they intern teach—now either teach a lesson in one of the Portage Central High School social studies classes or have a lesson plan critiqued by a social studies teacher prior to student teaching. Pre-service teachers already participated in a WMU College of Education-administered pre-internship experience, but the additional teaching opportunity established as a result of collaboration between the high school and the history department tends to be a much more focused instructional opportunity. Candidates submit a lesson plan that is reviewed by a teacher, who then gives discipline-specific feedback on how the lesson might be taught and what aspects of the lesson might be improved. If the pre-service teacher is given the opportunity to teach a lesson, then the plan serves as the starting point of discussion between the observing teacher and teaching candidate.

Discussing the practice of teaching has benefits for teachers as well as pre-service teachers. A mentor teacher’s opportunity to reflect on his or her own craft is invaluable. The pace of the day for any teacher is so rapid, that time spent reflecting on the day’s lessons is practiced less frequently than one would like to admit. Time dedicated to mentoring a teaching candidate, whether spent in a discussion about a lesson plan or immediately following an observation of the candidate’s teaching, can evoke educational dialogues, fruitful not only for the intern who benefits from immediate feedback, but also for the master teacher. In a reflective moment, Principal Alburthus noted that “teaching can be a lonely profession and it makes me sad when we see others work in teams, yet in education it is really hard to do...A good intern takes those good colleagues and makes them even more comfortable sharing ideas.”<sup>75</sup> Responsibility for an intern teacher then, can serve as a catalyst for the sorts of dialogue which, during those precious few moments throughout the day, can lead to the honing of the craft of teaching.

In addition to providing better experiences for large numbers of pre-service teachers during their practicum, collaborative discussions between

Andrews and Warren centered on the student teaching experience. To this end, in 2007, WMU's History Department established the Smith Burnham Outstanding Intern Teacher Award.<sup>6</sup> In creating this award, named after a well-known history educator from WMU, the Portage Central High School's social studies department and administration entered into an agreement with WMU's history department; each award winner completes the student teaching internship at the school and receives supervision and letters of recommendation from multiple teachers and the school principal.<sup>7</sup> The award has been given each academic semester since Fall 2007. Award winners must compete for the honor by submitting application materials and then interviewing with WMU history department and Portage Central High School faculty members.

The Smith Burnham program appealed to Dr. Richard Perry, then assistant superintendent for curriculum at Portage Public Schools, particularly because it removed a number of the potentially damaging variables, so "you know you are getting an outstanding candidate and you can get this synergy in people working together, and that's what I see as a powerful thing."<sup>8</sup> Because of its competitive nature, the Smith Burnham program places the best WMU intern teacher each semester in Portage Central High School. The school district understands it is getting a superior candidate from the teacher education program at WMU, and this assurance has alleviated some of the building principal's and the selected master teacher's reservations. Instrumental to the success of the program, Principal Alburthus, himself a history teacher before embarking on his administrative career, agreed with the tenets of the project, and approached Dr. Perry, who recognized the program as a win-win proposition for the district and WMU. The district, Perry reasoned, would be getting highly qualified intern teachers, averring that he didn't "think any member of the community will mistake a low quality individual for a high quality individual."<sup>9</sup>

For Alburthus, the benefits of the program were manifestly positive. He explained, "some students go into education, particularly at the high school level, because they like the content...but don't necessarily work that well with students."<sup>10</sup> Due to the rigorous efforts of the history department to screen candidates who are Smith Burnham winners, some of Alburthus' concerns have been addressed. He recalled crossing paths with a recent Smith Burnham winner on her way to teach a multi-week unit that she had voluntarily undertaken for another teacher, which spoke volumes to him about the sense of dedication these interns have. This type of experience, Alburthus declared, "gives me an overall confidence about the quality of interns coming out of WMU," as the candidates have acquitted themselves well in the classroom and outside of it.<sup>11</sup>

Because placements are so carefully made, the program also offers a guarantee that each intern teacher is placed with a master teacher. This secure placement, as opposed to the all too frequent random placement, helps to further underscore a craft approach to the internship. Master teachers and interns are together expected to exchange ideas, develop curriculum, craft lessons, and discuss relevant literature regarding historical thinking and its implementation in the classroom. It has also facilitated the implementation of current pedagogies concerning technology and historical thinking.

Unfortunately, as many students progress through their undergraduate work, they never encounter the types of technologies that are available in many school districts, including Portage. At Portage Central High School, interns are able to utilize a number of new technologies, from smart boards, interactive tablets, and clicker systems, to software that allows them to create their own documentaries and prepare meaningful classroom lessons. All too often, the use of much of this technology is ineffective, perhaps holding students' attention with bells and whistles, but leaving looming questions about the extent to which students have engaged in disciplinary thought or used relevant historical habits of mind. As a result of the expectations communicated through creating both the Smith Burnham award and the relationship established between candidates who are methods students and the teachers who critique their work, teachers and candidates sit down and discuss the applications of the best pedagogies and the use of specific technologies to create the most historically relevant lesson. These interactions also reinforce a vital lesson for interns: that teaching history is a purposeful act that must be carefully cultivated to achieve an efficacious end.

The communication that best practice should be a focal point of discussion between teachers and teaching candidates improved collegiality in the social studies department overall, and it facilitated discussions between staff members and Warren. For example, the co-teaching model (between mentor teachers and candidates) is increasingly in use, and it has become quite common to see teachers going in and out of classrooms watching the interns work. On one occasion, as an intern directed a "fishbowl" exercise involving the entire class, several other instructors were drawn to the room. Interested observers included not only Warren, but also the mentor teacher, an economics teacher from down the hallway, the head of the department, and another history teacher. This situation created an opportunity to critique the method used in that particular instance, and it fostered further conversations among teachers and the historian about the application of the method in other disciplines. This type of collegiality among teachers and between teachers and university faculty does not exist in every school.

Taking advantage of improved collegial relations and a commitment to their practice, members of Portage Central High School's social studies department have engaged in broader conversations about what it means to teach history. While department meetings generally focus on attending to the bureaucratic details of student distributions, class sizes, class assignments, district assessments, new class proposals, and curriculum, the collaborative relationship with WMU and the conversations sparked by consistently working with pre-service teachers has created an occasion for departmental discussions on the topic of pedagogies. Importantly, Warren often participates in these conversations. The administration also takes part in discussions relating to the teaching of history. Having read Sam Wineburg's *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* as a result of the collaborative effort between Portage Central teachers and WMU, Alburto lauded these types of interactions, declaring that "it helps you take more pride in what you are doing, not because you don't have other reasons to be proud of it [the teachers' work] but because it just does! It raises the level of professionalism."<sup>12</sup>

### **Newfound Enthusiasm for History: Collaborative Efforts and the Impact on High School Students**

In addition to the enhanced internship program, the relationship between Western Michigan University and the teachers at Portage Central has reaped benefits that were not immediately foreseen, and as the relationship matured, other projects flowed from this association. Perhaps sensing their teachers' enthusiasm for the discipline, high school students began to react with increased interest in history as intriguing options presented themselves. Among the achievements associated with the collaborative effort between Portage Central and WMU were the founding of a history club, increased communication between historians and high school students, and the development of an oral history project. In total, the substantive energy and interest created by this program only reinforce the notion that these types of relationships should be encouraged.

As teachers focused increasingly on best practice in history pedagogy and conveyed their enthusiasm to students, one of the first outgrowths of the partnerships was the chartering of the National History Club in 2008 at Portage Central with Kent Baker, the social studies department chair at the time and a recipient of the Michigan Council of History's Annette and Jim McConnell Secondary History Teacher of the Year Award, as its staff sponsor. The organization itself is user-friendly, and at the time, Montrose High School was the only school in Michigan with a charter, so it was a great opportunity for students to found a unique club in their region.

When students were presented with the idea, they earnestly embraced it, and Portage Central became the second high school in the state to become a member.

Membership provided students with an exceptional opportunity to participate in historical activities. *The Concord Review*, a journal published by the national organization, offered a competitive format for students to submit essays for publication, and is the “only scholarly review of history essays written by secondary students.”<sup>13</sup> Since Portage Central is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, many students write extended essays that fit the structure of the contest, and the incentive of publication inspired non-IB students to participate as well. The National History Club also sponsors an advisor-nominated “history student of the year,” and with the strong backing of the school’s administration, planned a number of relevant activities. These events included field trips, group discussions, historically based movie screenings, a book club, and guest lecturers.

It was the latter option that sparked a novel idea for the students. The club, taking advantage of the relationship with WMU, solicited history professors from the university to speak. The response from the department was positive, and one of the first historians to visit the campus was Edwin Martini, whose areas of expertise include the Vietnam War, and particularly the wartime use of Agent Orange. Organized by students, this event provided an exciting opportunity as it broadened the audience to include all interested parties. Students prepared for Professor Martini’s visit and the promised question-and-answer segment by examining the subject matter on their own.

On the afternoon of the talk, titled “Cultural Implications of the Vietnam War and American History,” the scope of the event was impressive. Attendance exceeded eighty people and included club members and, significantly, other members of the social studies department, an administrator, two counselors, librarians, and other PCHS staff. Students and staff members were able to ask questions of Professor Martini, a valuable and unique experience in a high school setting. Martini commented later that many of the students’ questions were as good as those offered at the collegiate level. The students’ excitement was palpable, and the future opportunities for students and staff were eagerly embraced. It was the first of many visits from Western Michigan University historians. Assistant Superintendent Perry mentioned that his sons, upon attending another lecture by a WMU historian, came home newly excited about studying history.<sup>14</sup>

Portage Central students’ enthusiasm was certainly a welcome result of having professors visit, and teachers—feeding off students’ excitement—were also energized by the university connection. Members of the history

club, with the support and coordination of Kent Baker, created an oral history project that focused on interviews with military veterans. The history club students contacted potential interviewees and conducted the interviews. Spurred by students' engagement with the project, teachers solicited the local library to act as a repository for the student-produced oral histories. The library had been involved in the production of oral histories within the community, and the student projects were a natural fit.

### **Wading Into Unfamiliar Terrain: Historians and Benefits of Collaboration with Teachers**

The benefits to the WMU History Department have also been considerable. As the department's teacher education specialist and main liaison with the area schools, Warren's consistent and long-term dialogue with Andrews and other secondary teacher colleagues provides insights into teachers' concerns that cannot be gained from simply reading professional journals or attending meetings of social studies educators. For instance, the Michigan Department of Education recently promulgated new content expectations for all disciplines that the schools have been busily implementing.<sup>15</sup> World History is now a required subject for all public school students in the state. Discussions with secondary teacher colleagues about their reactions to and problems with the new World History content expectations provide Warren with a better informed assessment of their benefits and costs. Partly because of these conversations with teachers at Portage Central High School and elsewhere, Warren was able to convince the TAH grant leaders at Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency, with whom he has worked since 2003 on five TAH grants, to use carryover funds from one of the TAH grants to support a workshop on "World History's Impact on U.S. History" for area middle and high school teachers in 2007. The workshop included presentations on several time periods and areas by WMU history faculty. The teachers were also able to ask specific questions regarding the new content expectations. For the historians, examining these expectations and listening to teachers' questions was eye-opening. A similar world history workshop with most of the same WMU history faculty took place in May 2011.

After working with secondary teachers in settings like the world history workshop, WMU History Department faculty now have a much better idea about the issues and concerns of their colleagues in the schools. This direct exposure to teachers' ideas and concerns enhances Warren's efforts to convey teachers' perspectives when discussing issues relevant to the preparation of WMU's secondary education majors with his History Department colleagues. As a department in an institution that teaches



thousands of future K-12 educators, it is essential that faculty have firsthand information about developments in the schools. Partly because the Michigan Department of Education demands it, WMU's history department must continuously revise its curriculum for future secondary teachers to meet new state mandates. It makes little sense for historians to make curricular changes based merely on a list from the state. Rather, it is imperative to hear from colleagues in the schools about how these changes may or may not make a positive impact on the schools' curriculum and instruction.<sup>16</sup> Because of the relationship between Portage Central High School and the WMU history department, historians have begun to engage in deeper conversations about course offerings and ways to best prepare history teachers to use the content and methods of the discipline with high school students. In this regard, the WMU-Portage Central collaboration has parallels to similar efforts associated with TAH programs.<sup>17</sup>

### **Continuous Work in Collaboration**

The collaborative spirit that exists between the teachers and historians at Portage Central High School and Western Michigan University provides an opportunity for further discussions in areas that have remained untapped. Two such areas are teaching for historical thinking and craft-based approaches to historical instruction and assessment of student learning. Both are increasing areas of concern for high school history teachers and historians.

During the 2005-2006 school year, the social studies department at Portage Central began a best practices self-study. Participants conducted interviews with students about their understanding of the discipline of history, and they interviewed fellow teachers in regard to their understanding of what history is. After combining these understandings with current research in history education, members of the department began to discuss various approaches to fostering historical thinking. Unfortunately, because of lack of funding, the study never moved beyond these initial discussions. While working with teaching candidates provides teachers with the opportunity to discuss "why I used this source or asked this question as opposed to that source or that question," teachers also need to have these conversations among themselves, and historians should be present for the discussion. Given the recent interest of many historians in the scholarship of teaching and learning and the push in higher education to document assessments, it would seem that the established collaboration between Portage Central teachers and WMU historians could be used to renew and push forward discussions about teaching and learning in history. Historians can lend their expertise in regard to domain-specific

concepts and disciplinary ways of knowing; teachers can contribute their experience in working with various learners, their skills in teaching, and their familiarity with assessment. Too often, the emphasis at both the high school level and university level has been on “getting the historical part right” in a history class. As many TAH initiatives have also stressed, the time has come for historians and history teachers to emphasize historical thinking in every teaching act and to communicate to students from the outset that while facts matter, history is about bringing meaning to facts through the interpretation of evidence.<sup>18</sup>

The development of effective history instructional and assessment practices is another area in which the collaborative effort between WMU and Portage Central might focus its energies in the future. Increasingly in Michigan, and elsewhere, school districts, sometimes in cooperation with state departments of education, have transferred curriculum and assessment from those most knowledgeable about the discipline—the historians—and those who possess pedagogical content knowledge—the teachers. This is evidenced by the increasing number of canned curricula or classes on a computer that reduce teaching to a process, effectively removing the teacher from the equation. Instead, teachers become the delivery mechanisms following the requisite steps, with the outcomes measured in a series of nauseating quizzes, tests, and district assessments, both formal and informal, throughout the week. In states like Michigan, there is a push toward online courses that mimic the old Skinnerian model, which moves students from one unit to the next, or the use of a “blended curriculum,” as in the Grand Rapids Public Schools, which follows a three-day rotation. On day one, the teacher reads a script to students; on day two, students complete a five-panel *PowerPoint* answering a question related to the script topic; and day three requires students to answer a new question, or complete the question from the day before. Students then return to day one, the teacher is handed a script, and the process begins again.<sup>19</sup> Reasons for the removal of a craft approach over that of process include a mix of political, educational, and economic policies that ignore years of research. What we can learn from the WMU-Portage Central collaboration, as well as many of the TAH programs over the past decade, is that professionals allowed to labor at the craft of teaching history enrich our students’ lives through continued education, deep passion for the scholarship of teaching and learning history, and the successful creation of imaginative and historically authentic lessons.<sup>20</sup>

### **Bridging the Educational Rubicon**

Although Gordon Andrews left Portage Central for Grand Valley State University in the fall of 2009, the Smith Burnham program has continued

with Tama Salisbury as its Portage Central coordinator. On the whole, the program has offered both direct and indirect benefits to the district, teachers, interns, community, and students, as well as WMU's History Department. This begs the question, why aren't more of these relationships in existence? The fact of the matter is that money and its availability tend to occupy the attention of most school districts when it comes to fostering institutional relationships. Most recently for history, that has been exemplified through the distribution of monies through the auspices of the TAH. Programs like the Smith Burnham Outstanding Intern Award offer opportunities for both collegiate and K-12 institutions to come together in a collegial fashion without the strictures of financing. Freed from the hindrance that money often presents, two entities that share so many interests and objectives need not be separated by a formidable and unbridgeable rubicon.

The relationship between WMU and Portage Central has served as the creative impetus for teachers, historians, and students to come together in ways that are too-often overlooked. The interlocking benefits of collaboration, specifically those for high school teachers and historians, described in this essay have also been achieved in many places in the country through the TAH program. Indeed, collaboration among a wide array of teachers, history and education faculty, and public historians has been arguably the crowning achievement of the TAH program. Perhaps most distinctive about the WMU and Portage Central effort compared to the TAH program has been its focus on collaboration among high school teachers and historians for the purpose of helping teacher candidates, at both the pre-intern and intern levels. The TAH program has generally had only indirect benefits for prospective teachers. High school students have also been more direct beneficiaries of the WMU-Portage Central collaboration than has been true in many cases with the TAH program.

The WMU and Portage Central collaborative partnership is also instructive in terms of the funding issue. Collaborations need not involve large infusions of capital in the traditional sense or require hours of grant writing and hand wringing, with hope for the acquisition of money that will certainly run out and leave districts in a continuous hunt for more. What this partnership demonstrates is the myriad positive results that can occur from the appropriate use of human capital toward creating energized historical communities. Just as the forums in the Portage Central media center provided a unique opportunity for students, staff, and historians to consider history together, so, too, did WMU and Portage Central's collaborative effort allow teachers and historians a unique opportunity to use current historiography and pedagogy as part of a vibrant historical conversation.

In the end, the result has been an ever-widening appreciation for the place of history in our students' and teachers' lives that benefits the broader

community. Through their participation in oral history projects and the creation of historical organizations like the history club, students learn that an understanding of history is necessary to become an informed citizen. Likewise, teachers have had the opportunity to participate in the kind of teaching and learning experiences that serve as a meaningful model of professional development. Professors have gained a better appreciation of the teachers' content and pedagogical challenges. Since this collaborative model stems from mutual interests and concerns for history education and was never dependent on monetary support, its collaborators have the luxury of focusing their energies on enhancing their relationship without worrying about whether or not the funding stream will run dry.

Collaboration works best when all parties share mutual interests and concerns. Certainly, the money provided with the TAH program has facilitated conversations, but long-term collaboration requires more than money. Andrews and Warren discovered over the years in their frequent conversations, including those that took place in hour-long car rides to and from Lansing for Michigan Council for History Education board meetings, that they share mutual concerns about many aspects of history as a profession and how history is conveyed to students. When educators invoke the notion of "seamless" K-16 education, this seems impossible to achieve on any large-scale level. But it seems realistic in more limited dimensions when it is based on long-term personal interactions among secondary school teachers and academics.

## Notes

1. National Coalition for History, "History Programs Make Major Cuts in FY '11 Federal Budget," <<http://www.historycoalition.org/2011/04/13/history-programs-face-major-cuts-in-fy-11-federal-budget/>>. For a generally laudatory scholarly assessment of the Teaching American History Program, see Rachel G. Ragland and Kelly A. Woestman, eds., *The Teaching American History Project: Lessons for History Educators and Historians* (New York: Routledge, 2009). Although his comments are not focused on problems with TAH-sponsored collaboration, Sam Wineburg recently questioned the program's effectiveness because of missing or inconsistent evaluation data. See Rick Shenkman, "OAH 2009: Sam Wineburg Dares to Ask if the Teaching American History Program is a Boondoggle," *History News Network*, 20 April 2009, <<http://www.hnn.us/articles/76806.html>>.

2. David Wrobel's essay on the benefits of collaboration between K-12 and academic historians challenges academics, in particular, to think about the benefits beyond TAH funding. See "A Lesson from the Past and Some Hope for the Future: The History Academy and the Schools, 1880-2007," *The History Teacher* 41, no. 2 (February 2008):

151-162. For other recent reflections on the value of collaboration in history education, see, for example, Patricia Cleary and David Neumann, "The Challenges of Primary Sources, Collaboration, and the K-16 Elizabeth Murray Project," *The History Teacher* 43, no. 1 (November 2009): 67-86; Rachel G. Ragland, "Changing Secondary Teachers' Views of Teaching American History," *The History Teacher* 40, no. 2 (February 2007): 219-246; Kelly Ann Long, "Reflections on TAH and the Historian's Role: Reciprocal Exchanges and Transformative Contributions to History Education," *The History Teacher* 39, no. 4 (August 2006): 493-508; and Kenneth T. Jackson, "The Power of History: The Weakness of a Profession," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (March 2002): 1299-1314.

3. See, for instance, Robert V. Bullough, Jr., "Teacher Vulnerability and Teachability: A Case Study of a Mentor and Two Interns," *Teacher Education Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 23-39; Edwin G. Ralph, "Interns' and Cooperating Teachers' Concerns during the Extended Practicum," *Alberta Journal of Educational Research* 50, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 411-429; and Sandra K. Abell, Deborah R. Dillon, Carol J. Hopkins, William D. McInerney, and David G. O'Brien, "'Somebody to Count On': Mentor/Intern Relationships in a Beginning Teacher Internship Program," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 11, no. 2 (March 1995): 173-188.

4. Eric Alburtus, interview with Gordon Andrews, 29 October 2009, digital tape in Andrews' possession.

5. Ibid.

6. From 1919 to 1939, Smith Burnham was chair of Western State Normal School's Department of History and Social Science. (In 1927, Western State Normal School was renamed Western State Teachers College, before it then became Western Michigan University in 1957.) Between 1918 and 1934, Burnham published six textbooks on United States history aimed at both elementary and secondary school audiences. His textbooks emphasized critical thinking and problem-solving perspectives. Burnham was also a tireless public speaker. In addition to speeches for educator audiences, he gave hundreds of speeches to various community groups in Michigan and the Midwest. On Burnham's career, see Wilson J. Warren, "The Evolution of a History-Centered Teaching Program: Western Michigan University's Preparation of Secondary Teachers," in *History Education 101: The Past, Present, and Future of Teacher Preparation*, ed. Wilson J. Warren and D. Antonio Cantu (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2008), 48-50.

7. Beginning with the Spring 2012 award, each recipient also receives \$250 from the History Department.

8. Richard Perry, interview with Gordon Andrews, 15 January 2010, digital tape in Andrews' possession.

9. Alburtus, interview.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Information regarding *The Concord Review* as well as the founding of a National History Club charter can be found at <[www.nationalhistoryclub.org](http://www.nationalhistoryclub.org)>.

14. Perry, interview.

15. The Michigan High School Social Studies Content Expectations can be found at <[www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SS\\_HSCE\\_210739\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SS_HSCE_210739_7.pdf)>.

16. Evidence of the efforts of Western Michigan University's History Department to work with secondary school colleagues, and improve its undergraduate and graduate curriculum, can be found in the following articles: James R. Palmitessa, "Retention of Doctoral Students," *Perspectives* 45, no. 9 (December 2007), 27-28; Wilson J. Warren, "Bridging the Gap between K-12 Teachers and Postsecondary Historians," *Perspectives*

46, no. 7 (October 2008), 52-54; and Linda J. Borish, Mitch Kachun, and Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, "Rethinking a Curricular 'Muddle in the Middle': Revising the Undergraduate History Major at Western Michigan University," *Journal of American History* 95, no. 4 (March 2009): 1102-1113.

17. The Teaching American History program has achieved considerable success in regard to making history professors better aware of the range of abilities, skills, concerns, and limitations of elementary and secondary history teachers. To some degree, these insights have also been applied to efforts aimed at modifying and improving how history is taught at the collegiate level. For an insightful survey of some of the TAH program's benefits for history professors, see Peter B. Knupfer, "A New Focus for the History Professoriate: Professional Development for History Teachers as Professional Development for Historians," in Ragland and Woestman, eds., *The Teaching American History Project*, 29-46.

18. The Teaching American History program has made considerable strides in alerting elementary, secondary, and collegiate history teachers to the scholarship of teaching and learning, particularly in terms of areas such as best practices in teaching and student engagement, pedagogical content knowledge, and collaborative methods. See, for instance, Rachel G. Ragland, "Teaching American History Projects in Illinois: A Comparative Analysis of Professional Development Models," in Ragland and Woestman, eds., *The Teaching American History Project*, 163-201; and Ann Marie Ryan and Frank Valadez, "Designing and Implementing Content-Based Professional Development for Teachers of American History," in Ragland and Woestman, eds., *The Teaching American History Project*, 216-239.

19. On "blended curriculum," see, for example, Brigid Schulte, "Hybrid Schools for the iGeneration," *Education Digest* 77, no. 1 (September 2011): 22-26; and Katie Ash, "Curricula All Over Map for 'Blended' Classes," *Education Week* 30, no. 15 (January 12, 2011), Supp. 5-Supp. 7. On the Grand Rapids blended curriculum context, see Kym Reinstadler, "Grand Rapids Public Schools Hopes Online Courses Will Boost Poor Graduation Rate," *Grand Rapids Press*, 30 April 2010, <[http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2010/04/grand\\_rapids\\_public\\_schools\\_ho\\_1.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2010/04/grand_rapids_public_schools_ho_1.html)>; and Katie Ash, "Hybrid versus Online in K-12," *SOETalk*, 14 January 2011, <<http://www.soetalk.com/2011/01/14/hybrid-versus-online-in-k-12/>>.

20. For a powerful expression of how the TAH program has motivated teachers to pursue craft-based approaches to effective history teaching, see Kelly A. Woestman, "Teachers as Historians: A Historian's Experiences with TAH Projects," in Ragland and Woestman, eds., *The Teaching American History Project*, 5-28.