This edition of the Annual Report of the Humanities Research Institute marks the end of the 2013-14 academic year, and comes in the middle of a significant anniversary year—Brock University is 50 years old. This is not a long span of time for a university, perhaps, but long enough to be a clear indication of success as an institution. It’s also long enough for a university to develop a sense of identity and some traditions of its own.

Part of the development of identity and traditions has been the creation and flourishing of the Humanities Research Institute, which has been in existence for a full quarter of Brock’s lifetime. The creation of a body with the goal of supporting and promoting research and creative activity in the Humanities was a bold move, and an unusual one. The HRI is unique in Ontario, and a rara avis in Canada overall, and is now part of the Brock identity.

This annual report comprises an overview of some of the aspects of the work of the HRI and, more importantly, its Associates.

The annual HRI Symposia are among the longest-standing traditions of the institute; we began with one Symposium per year, and several years ago began to hold two – one at the end of each term of the academic year. In recent years we have established a pattern of having an open call for papers for the December Symposium, and a theme around which to base the April Symposium. The open pattern for the December Symposium has helped to frame that event as a venue in which new members of our Faculty can make their debut, presenting for the first time to a mixed audience of their new colleagues in the company of more established scholars. The thematic approach to the April Symposium has brought about more focused discussion of issues and topics of interest to Humanities scholars from across the spectrum. The programs from the 2013-14 symposia are included in this report.

As living entities, universities and their component parts, such as the HRI, cannot rest on existing traditions, continually playing out the same patterns year by year. New traditions must be created and incorporated into the patterns already in place. As a newer university, Brock is well placed to develop in this way, and the HRI has been particularly good in recent years at incorporating new initiatives into established patterns. Two years ago we created the Graduate Associate membership status in the HRI, it involves graduate students more fully in the research culture of the Faculty of Humanities as well as the HRI Monday Morning Bulletin, to keep HRI Associates and friends informed on a week-by-week basis of events happening in the Faculty. Last year we invited Graduate Associate participation in our December Symposium. This year we have gone in a new direction, with the creation of the Faculty of Humanities Award for Excellence in Research and Creative Activity. The winner of the first award, with a profile and comments, is announced in this report.

The Humanities Research Institute began its work in 2001, and has been in full and vigorous operation ever since. In February 2014, after a long review process, Brock Senate approved the renewal of HRI. We have a mandate for another five-year term of operations – the best possible outcome to a review by Senate’s Research and Scholarship Policy Committee. This renewal is due, for the most part, to the excellent research and creative activity of the members of the Faculty of Humanities, who should all be congratulated for this success.

For the work of the HRI, and its continued smooth running, I must express my gratitude to the members of the HRI Advisory Board, who meet regularly to adjudicate applications for research funding, conference and colloquia support, graduate student membership, graduate student travel support, and anything else that comes our way. Many thanks to James Allard, Gale Coskan-Johnston, Gyllian Raby, Jane Koustas, Virginia Reh, David Schimmelpenninck, and Douglas Kneale. Michèle Black is an expert at organizing everything and keeping things running smoothly, and is personally responsible for the great successes of our regular symposia. Gratias maximas omnibus ago.

Carol U. Merriam, PhD
Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies
Director, Humanities Research Institute
Award for Excellence in Research and Creative Activity

Professor Michael Carter of the Department of Classics is the inaugural winner of the HRI-created Faculty of Humanities Award for Excellence in Research and Creative Activity.

Professor Michael Carter is a scholar of Roman history, and one of the world’s experts on Roman gladiators and gladiatorial display. Colleagues who nominated him for the award wrote that he is a most deserving candidate given his international reputation for his transformative scholarship on Roman gladiators and also his dissemination of his research to the larger community.

“An award like this is especially humbling for me, since I know what fantastic researchers I work with in the faculty and in my own department,” says Carter. “I am continually inspired by my colleagues and our students in the Department of Classics, who together have created a dynamic research environment: our academic year is filled with visiting scholars, a departmental research seminar series, conferences, undergraduate student symposia, and numerous graduate student symposia. I may be a researcher and a teacher, but like our students, I am always learning too.”

The award was created because part of the HRI’s mission is to promote and support research and creative activity of the Faculty of Humanities more than 100 active researchers, many of them leaders in their fields. Providing recognition for a scholar who is nominated by his or her colleagues will help to highlight the fine work done by all of the Faculty’s members.

The Faculty of Humanities Award for Excellence in Research and Creative Activity is an internal award recognizing a consistent track record of outstanding research or creative achievements appropriate to the nominee’s discipline. Tenured and tenure-track members of the Faculty are eligible, and adjudication is done by the HRI board, which recommends to the Dean of Humanities.

Carter will present a public lecture, sponsored by HRI, in November 2014 as part of the requirements of receiving the award.

Nominators praised Carter’s contribution to his field of research. “Through his scholarship, Dr. Carter has transformed our knowledge of this Roman institution by recognizing its connection to Graeco-Roman socio-cultural values,” they wrote. “Gladiators are no longer simply criminals and other outcasts condemned to fight to the death, but highly trained athletes; gladiatorial games are an ancient sport with rules and regulations like boxing and wrestling. The research identifies a purely Roman contribution to the history of sport.”

Carter himself has this to say about being a researcher at Brock: “If we only consider a moment, we would appreciate how fortunate we are to be able to conduct research and teach at Brock University, especially to do so in the Faculty of Humanities. In my experience, support for the core of what we do —research-teaching-learning — has always been unquestioned in our Faculty. This support for research is evident in the strength of the Humanities Research Institute. The HRI not only supports our research endeavours but also promotes them, helps us disseminate them, and works to bring us together as a community of researchers.”
Natalee Caple joined the Department of English Language and Literature in July 2013. She came to Brock via Trent University, where she taught in English, Canadian Studies, and Women’s Studies.

Prior to her work at Trent, Caple worked at the University of Calgary where she completed her PhD in the only program in English Canada that allows a critical creative PhD dissertation. Her dissertation is a novel in the Western genre, taking up Hélène Cixous’s challenge to each woman writer to disrupt the logocentricism of traditional narratives and to “insert herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement.”

The novel, titled, In Calamity’s Wake, inserts a female anti-hero into the traditionally masculine narrative of the hero’s journey: a woman from Alberta hunts across the badlands of Alberta and South Dakota for the mother who gave her up for adoption – the famous cross-dressing frontierswoman Calamity Jane. The novel is accompanied by a critical exegesis that contextualizes her work in terms of Canadian literature, metahistoriographic fiction, and feminist criticism.

Caple’s current research includes an interdisciplinary study of Indigenous women heroes that will culminate in a series of graphic novels supported by teaching texts, digital archives, and critical materials, and a literary novel about women pirates. Ongoing interests include contemporary women’s writing, Canadian literature, the Western genre, Slipstream fiction, and feminist theory.

Caple enjoyed a very productive first year at Brock, simultaneously touring her new novel in Canada (published by HarperCollins) and the U.S. (published by Bloomsbury) and helping to design and mount the new creative writing program in English. She enjoyed teaching a small workshop-based writing course in fiction, and a large lecture on the Western genre that examined tropes and figures as well as aesthetic and political developments in the Western and the post-Western genre. Caple also taught the Contemporary Canadian Short Story in a fourth-year seminar, fulfilling her ongoing interest in promoting both critical and creative engagement with Canadian literary culture as a living culture.

In March, Caple was long-listed for a major international prize, the Walter Scott Award for Historical Fiction (U.K.). Over the course of the year, she attended six literary festivals, including the International Festival of Authors in Toronto and the Centre for Fiction in Manhattan, N.Y. She wrote for numerous blogs and was reviewed in numerous newspapers and magazines, which provided positive publicity for Brock and the new Creative Writing program.

Caple appreciates the enormous support she received from her colleagues. She is also deeply impressed by the variety of events and projects with which Brock professors and students are involved. She was equally impressed by the incredible excitement her students brought with them to the classroom and by the quality and depth of thought they applied to their studies. Brock students are truly some of the most open and diverse thinkers she has encountered.

In the small workshop course, which is always so dependent on group chemistry, Caple was moved to see the supportive way that students were able to give specific and useful criticism while still supplying the space and kindness that allowed them each to take in some quite direct advice. On one occasion, a student experiencing anxiety received support from the entire group and, although the workshop stopped briefly, the outcome was a great sense of community and recognition among students. This level of respect, combined with serious advice, is essential to the building of a classroom culture that enables students to personalize their experience and operate at their best, knowing that they do not have to be identical to each other.
Carrie Ann Murray joined the Department of Classics in August 2013 as an Assistant Professor of Roman Archaeology. She comes to Brock from Brown University’s Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Murray also held appointments at the University at Buffalo as a Fellow at the Institute for European and Mediterranean Archaeology (IEMA), at the University of Wales, Lampeter as a University Lecturer (the U.K. equivalent to Assistant Professor), and the University of Cambridge as a Leverhulme Trust-funded Research Associate in the Faculty of Classics.

Her research focuses on cultural interaction in the central Mediterranean region during the early Iron Age. During this period the Mediterranean is characterized by a dramatic increase in exploration, exchange, and the foundation of new settlements, including colonies, for the Etruscan, Greek, Punic, and Roman cultures. In particular, Murray investigates interaction in the sacred sphere, including religious worship at temple sites and funerary practices in cemeteries. Her two active research projects are representative of these long-term interests.

The first of these research projects delves into exploring ancient sacrificial practices. While Murray was a Fellow at IEMA, she organized an interdisciplinary conference on the theme of sacrifice in the ancient world. She edited the subsequent volume, Remains of Sacrifice, for SUNY Press during the 2013-14 academic year, which includes contributions from anthropologists, archaeologists, classicists, philologists, and theologians. The publication presents an extensive array of theoretical perspectives and specific case studies concerning different forms of animal, human, and symbolic sacrifice as a conduit for understanding complex social relations.

This work on sacrifice relates intimately with Murray’s investigation of the dynamics between Roman public and private sacrificial practices. In particular, she is investigating a number of unusually decorated shrines from kitchens in Pompeian houses, which she argues, demonstrate an important relationship among free and slave household members in the activities of food procurement, preparation, and enjoyment.

The second active research program relates to Murray’s archaeological fieldwork project on the island of Pantelleria. Pantelleria’s position between south-western Sicily and Carthage made the island a pawn during the Punic Wars as mentioned by the ancient historical sources. It is not clear, however, how the Roman conquest of the Punic island affected the existence of the inhabitants. The Brock University Archaeological Project at Pantelleria (BUAPP), which is directed by Murray, is exploring two areas of the island. The proposed “Sanctuary of Venus” and Punic necropolis form the foci to investigate the degree of continuity or sudden change in the fundamental sacred areas of Punic religious and funerary practices.

In the space of just two semesters at Brock, Murray’s research has been aided by the available resources and interaction with her new colleagues. The first season of the Brock University Archaeological Project at Pantelleria is occurring during June 2014. The research is made possible by the awarding of a Brock SSHRC Institutional Grant and a Humanities Research Institute Award.

The entire Classics Department has been instrumental in helping Murray get oriented during her first year at Brock and expanding the Classics Department’s Archaeology program. In keeping with Brock’s goal of celebrating both sides of the brain, interactions with colleagues in other departments have also been fruitful. Murray and Professor John Menzies in the Earth Sciences Department have planned to build the first interdisciplinary bridge between the two departments by integrating a micromorphology laboratory element into the Winter 2015 course CLAS SV13 Archaeological Landscapes and Materials. Murray and Professor Ernesto Virgulti in the MLLC Department have created a dialogue about representing the continuum of artistic and literary themes in Italy from Antiquity to the Renaissance.

Murray looks forward to the next academic year to continue developing these research and teaching connections, as well as presenting her findings from the 2014 season on Pantelleria.
Andrew Pendakis is an Assistant Professor of Theory and Rhetoric in the Department of English Language and Literature at Brock University. His research is concerned broadly with contemporary political culture, that is, with the rhetorics and narratives we use to explain to ourselves our own moment’s essential political possibilities and limits. More specifically, he is interested in the phenomenon of political centrist, in discourses that ground their legitimacy in the organizing trope of a middle or centre thought to be the idea site for the elaboration of effective political thought and practice.

Pendakis’s research seeks to fill a gap that is difficult to explain: though the political centre is omnipresent, invoked in ways we largely ignore—take, for example, the common notion of judiciously occupied middle ground—research into the discursive habits and history of the centre is almost completely lacking. His objects of analysis range from canonical philosophical texts to the statements and speeches of politicians, from journalistic discourses to popular culture and film.

Before arriving at Brock, Pendakis was a CRC Postdoctoral Fellow of Contemporary Culture at the University of Alberta. He also spent two years teaching at the University of Bonn in Germany and one unforgettable semester teaching at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics in China.

He is the co-editor of the forthcoming *Contemporary Marxist Theory: A Reader* (Continuum Press, 2014) scheduled for publication later this summer. The text promises to be an essential contribution to contemporary theoretical debates, one that reflects the recent turn within critical theory towards a re-evaluation of the Marxist and post-Marxist philosophical traditions. Collecting the writings of thinkers like Frederic Jameson, Gayatri Spivak, and Antonio Negri, the book is likely to become a key reference point for a new generation of students and intellectuals hoping to make sense of a highly changed theoretical landscape.

Pendakis has also published, or has forthcoming, writings on the thought of Alain Badiou, Theodore Veblen, and Martin Heidegger, among a range of other topics. He is also the co-author of a chapter on “Canadian Cultural Studies” for *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Literature* that is scheduled for publication in 2015.

“My first year at Brock was really any young professor’s dream fulfilled,” says Pendakis. “My colleagues are, to a person, as convivial and welcoming as they are intellectually engaged and rigorous. Many of them regularly put aside their evenings and weekends to ensure St. Catharines is a city with a disproportionate share of poetry readings, film screenings, and public lectures.”

He adds that his students are also “remarkable human beings. Many of local origins, emerging out of middle and lower class families in the Niagara Region, the best of them take to the new vistas and visions offered by critical theory with a speed and depth of interest that is astounding. The sincerity with which they approach these difficult texts by thinkers like Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze, as well as their openness to allowing these ideas direct contact with the ethical thrusts of their lives, makes daily work at Brock the very opposite of labour.”
The HRI Symposia: 2013-14

The Humanities Research Institute’s Fall Term Symposium was held Dec. 16, 2013 in the Dr. Charles A. Sankey Chamber. We entitled the symposium “Power, Position and Politics,” which was based on the paper proposals we received from members of the Faculty of Humanities, including graduate student associates of the HRI.

For the Spring Term Symposium, we continued the recently established practice of building the symposium around a theme that could accommodate a disciplinary range of papers. We also took steps towards establishing a new tradition, by designing the symposium as a celebration of the contributions of John Sainsbury, the first associate dean for Research and Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Humanities. The symposium, held April 22, 2014 in the Dr. Charles A. Sankey Chamber, reflected Professor Sainsbury’s scholarly interests, and was one of the most successful HRI symposia ever held; attendance at the event set a record. The title of the symposium was “Pressing Affairs: A symposium in honour of John Sainsbury.”

Program – HRI Fall Term Symposium

Session 1:
Chair: David Schimmelpenninck (History)
Natalee Caple (English Language and Literature), “Cultural Production as a Critical Lens, or, Creative Assignments in the Non-Creative Writing Classroom.”

Session 2:
Chair: Gyllian Raby (Dramatic Arts)

Program – HRI Spring Term Symposium

Session 1:
Chair: Andrew McDonald (History)
Leah Bradshaw (Political Science), “The Libertine and the Romantic: Twin Motifs from the 18th Century.”
Donna T. Andrew (History, University of Guelph), “Adultery a-la-mode: The Worsley Case.”
Allison Glazebrook (Classics), “Athens’ Bad Boy: Timarchos in Aeschines 1, Against Timarchos.”

Session 2:
Chair: Elizabeth Sauer (English Language and Literature)
Tom Glasbergen (History, McGill University), “John Wilkes’ Demotic Classicism.”
John Sainsbury (History), “Vision of Virgin Mary Gave Me Power to Grow Giant Vegetables: Secrets of the Tabloids Revealed.”
The impending move of the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts to downtown St. Catharines is a good example of Brock’s desire to engage the local community, but there are other ventures as well that are helping to fulfil the goal in Brock’s strategic plan of “Serving the social, cultural and economic well-being of the University, as well as the local, national and global communities.”

In 2012, the Faculty of Humanities began to take its research downtown. The Brock Talks series of public lectures, held at the St. Catharines Public Library, introduced research by Humanities scholars to the local community. The series, organized by Prof. Tim Conley of the Department of English Language and Literature, has been a great success. Attendance has often been standing-room only.

The following presentations have been featured in the Brock Talks series in 2013-14:

Oct. 1, 2013
Athena Colman, Philosophy:
"Philosophy’s Role in a Technological World."

Nov. 21, 2013
Brian Power, Music:
"Sacred discoveries: Late Medieval Music Manuscripts Unearthed in the Brock University Library."

Jan. 29, 2014
David Hayes, Applied Linguistics:
"Divided by a Common Language? The Spread of ‘Global Englishes’ in the Modern World."

Feb. 26, 2014
Elizabeth Vlossak, History:
"Fighting Against Their Will: Forced Conscripts in Occupied Europe, 1942-1945."

March 19, 2014
Leah Knight, English Language and Literature: "What Did Renaissance Women Read? The Case of Anne Clifford."

Research Projects Supported by the Humanities Research Institute, 2013-14

Lynn Arner (English Language and Literature); "Working-Class Women in the Professoriate"

Christine Daigle (Philosophy); "Nietzsche as Phenomenologist"

Fanny Dolansky (Classics); "Roman children at play: realities and representations"

Carry Murray (Classics); "Brock University Archaeological Project at Pantelleria"

Felipe Ruan (Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures); "The Mediating Bureaucrat: Shaping Knowledge and Culture in the Court of Philip II (1556-1598)"

Donna Szoke (Visual Arts); "Invisible Histories: Locative Media App"

Jean Bridge (Visual Arts); "Research/Creative Project, engineering through the lens of nature"

Gale Coskan-Johnson (English Language and Literature); "(Il)legal, (Ir)regular, (Un)documented: Rhetorics of Sovereignty and Transnational Migration"

Lynn Dempsey (Applied Linguistics); "Establishing Evidence-Based Benchmarks for Service Delivery for Children with Language Impairments and others with Communication Disorders"

Veena Dwivedi (Applied Linguistics); "The cerebral lateralization of language processing"

Leah Knight (Visual Arts); "Reading Green in Early Modern England"

Shawn Serfas (Visual Arts); "Tower and Line"

Mark Spencer (History); "David Hume: Historical Thinker, Historical Writer"
Conferences and Colloquia Supported by the Humanities Research Institute, 2013-14

Allison Glazebrook/Nick Hamilton, BUAS (Classics); “BUAS Scholarly Symposium”
Allison Glazebrook/David Farag, Graduate Student (Classics); “Approaches to Ancient and Modern Slavery”
Gregory Betts (Canadian Studies); “The 28th Two Days of Canada Conference: Avant Canada”
Behnaz Mirzai (History); “African Diaspora”
Behnaz Mirzai (History); “World History for Global Citizens”
Gregory Betts (Canadian Studies); “The 27th Annual Two Days of Canada: Educating [in] Canada”

Irene Blayer (Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures) “Exploring the Portuguese Diaspora”
Karen Fricker (Dramatic Arts); “Performing arts criticism in the Niagara region: possible futures”
Behnaz Mirzai (History); “Enslaved women and the politics of freedom in the Caribbean”
Cristina Santos (Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures); “Em/bodying Human Rights in Post-testimonio”