

**THE CENTRE FOR ORAL HISTORY AND DIGITAL
STORYTELLING /
CENTRE D'HISTOIRE ORALE ET RECIT NUMERISE
(COHDS/CHORN)**

Governance Structure

20 March 2010

MISSION STATEMENT

New media and the arts are transforming how we research, preserve, and disseminate history. The Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling / Centre d'Histoire Orale et Récit Numérisé (COHDS/CHORN) serves as a point of convergence for collaborative digital historical research, teaching and publishing among faculty and students at Concordia, as well as community-based projects operating at the local, national and international levels. The Oral History Lab aims to explore the connections between oral history, new media, and the arts, and open up access to and analysis of audiovisual oral history record. The Digital History Lab produces digital archives, tools, and scholarship that aim to share the task of historical research and interpretation with online audiences worldwide—scholars, students, and the general public. Community-based researchers and artists are an integral part of our community of practice. Sharing authority is at the core of our research ethic. Our long term goal is to establish COHDS/CHORN as one of the world's foremost centres of oral history research, digital innovation and artistic creativity.

CATEGORIES OF AFFILIATION

Major external funding bodies such as the FQRSC have specific expectations regarding categories of affiliation, particularly as it relates to university faculty. COHDS/CHORN has the following five broad categories of affiliation:

CORE MEMBERS – are active and productive university researchers or practitioner-researchers/creators who are deeply invested in the research activities and intellectual life at COHDS/CHORN. They must also be eligible under FQRSC rules. University faculty applying to become core members, for example, must indicate that at least 25% of their research is directly connected to COHDS/CHORN, have some level of internal or external funding and not be a core member of another FQRSC research centre. Community affiliates may also become core members if their involvement in COHDS/CHORN is similarly substantial and is of longer term duration. Core members will be primarily responsible for the strategic direction of COHDS/CHORN as well as its research activities. In return, core members will be eligible for direct research support as determined by the Administrative Board.

AFFILIATED MEMBERS – are faculty members, students, community-based researchers and artists or affiliated organizations whose oral and digital history activities enrich our community of practice. Affiliated members are still expected to significantly advance the mission and outreach of COHDS/CHORN, through regular collaboration and attendance at seminars or special events, but will not be expected to take on an unpaid administrative load.

VISITING RESEARCHERS/ORAL HISTORIANS – are visiting researchers who have applied to be affiliated with COHDS/ CHORN during their stay in Montreal. The duration of these residencies are from one month to one year.

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS – are those affiliated researchers who have been awarded a post-doctoral fellowship under the supervision of a core member.

STAFF - are members directly employed by COHDS/CHORN or by core faculty members on specific research projects based wholly or in part at the Centre.

MEMBERSHIP IN COHDS/CHORN

Anyone wishing to become an affiliated member of COHDS/CHORN must fill out an application form and attach a cover letter, a curriculum vitae, as well as a 150-200 word project statement. The cover letter should indicate if the applicant would affiliate with either the Digital or Oral History Labs. New applications will first be vetted by the Centre's Associate Director and its co-directors before going to the Administrative Board (AB). The AB might invite the input of all existing core members in cases where a person is applying to become a Core Member of COHDS/CHORN. All core and affiliated members must submit a short annual report of their activities by April 15 each year so that these might be integrated into our Annual Report. Members who have not been active in the previous year will cease to be an affiliate of COHDS/CHORN but are welcome to re-apply. Affiliates are expected to acknowledge the contribution of COHDS/CHORN in their work when appropriate.

ACCESS TO RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

All core members and affiliated members of COHDS/CHORN will have access to the Centre's recording equipment and computer workstations during designated lab hours. During these times, COHDS/CHORN will provide limited lab support. Any affiliate may book the video-conference room, training lab or interview room on a first-come, first serve basis. However, should the demands on these spaces grow significantly – preference may have to be accorded to core members. Core members may request a key so they can access the COHDS/CHORN complex at their convenience.

Depending on the budget, core members may be eligible for partial payment for conference travel for COHDS/CHORN related research, as are student or community co-authors. Free printing, translation subsidies, and grant writing support may also be provided. Should COHDS/CHORN be able to offer student bursaries, those who have

a supervisor who is a core member will have preference – though other student affiliates would still be encouraged to apply.

The Associate Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Centre under the overall direction of the two Co-Directors. Should an affiliate member fail to bring back equipment on schedule or return damaged equipment (without compensation as per the lending agreement), their affiliation with the Centre may be forfeit.

THE ARCHIVES

The COHDS/CHORN archive is composed of oral history projects, as well as individual audio and video interviews, which have been donated to the Centre. The archive is maintained by COHDS/CHORN in order to offer academic and community-based researchers access to the unique information contained in the donated material. Hundreds of interviews are accessible to researchers, who may access our collection through our catalogue. The material may be accessed by researchers who agree to respect the COHDS's regulations for use of all archival material, as well as any specific restrictions placed upon the material in question. The *COHDS/CHORN Norms, Procedures, and Protocols* document (as amended June 2009) sets out our guidelines for the donation of and access to oral history interviews.

STAFF

The Associate Director will be employed on a 12 month contract with 3 weeks paid holiday, plus “Concordia (vacation) Days”. Renewals will be the responsibility of the two co-directors. Hiring will be done by a committee consisting of the co-directors (or designates) and one other member of the Administrative Board. Normally, staff vacations are taken when universities are not in session. All vacation plans should be discussed at least two months in advance with the co-directors. It is the responsibility of the staff member to keep a record of their activities and their hours worked (over-time, days off). All full and part-time staff members, employed directly by COHDS/CHORN, will submit a report for each meeting of the AB (so it can be circulated 5 work days prior to the meeting).

STUDENTS

COHDS wishes to promote the professional development of undergraduate and graduate students from many disciplines and various universities. Student affiliates will be profiled on the website and be invited, whenever possible, to participate in COHDS/CHORN seminars and workshops as well as at conferences. In line with FQRSC and SSHRC rules, when the budget permits, financial support for conference travel is available to students. Space on the COHDS/CHORN server may also be allocated for their professional websites. A Student Committee will ensure the involvement of students in the research activities and intellectual life of COHDS/CHORN. One student will also sit on the Administrative Board of the Centre as an ex-officio member.

PARTICIPATION

All affiliates are expected to be active in the intellectual life of COHDS/CHORN, attending seminars and/or workshops whenever possible.

ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

COHDS/CHORN is required to submit an annual report to Concordia's Research Office with a copy to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts by May 31st. The report should provide an overview of the activities during the past year and its financial status (a budget for the past year and a budget forecast for the coming year). To facilitate this, all affiliated members must submit by April 15 a short email summary of their COHDS/CHORN related activities over the previous year.

RESEARCH ETHICS

All COHDS/CHORN affiliates and core members are expected to follow established ethical guidelines regarding research with human subjects. These ethical guidelines, as well as our model consent form, can be found on our website. At the core, is the requirement for informed consent and the mitigation of harm. The interviewee's right of withdrawal during the interview must also be respected. Faculty and students must get the approval of their university ethics board before conducting an interview. Concordia History students must also abide by departmental guidelines that include the requirement to submit the signed consent form with their final paper.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The administrative structure of COHDS/CHORN is governed by Concordia University's policy on Research Units. It consists of two co-directors, the Administrative Board, and the Annual Assembly.

APPOINTMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CO-DIRECTORS

The Co-Directors are the appointed heads of COHDS/CHORN, a University-recognized research unit. The Co-Directors, one associated with the Oral History Lab and the other the Digital History Lab, are responsible for the scientific direction and administration of the research unit. In addition, the Co-Directors oversee the coordination of the activities including student training, outreach and special events, as well as managing communications both within the unit and externally to partner institutions, external members, funding agencies, and the community.

The Co-Directors report to the VPRGS in consultation with the Dean or Associate Dean, Research in Arts and Science. Key areas for such reporting include: budget, space, human resources, and internal relations with other Concordia units such as departments and faculties, and inter-institutional affiliations.

The Co-Directors have the day-to-day responsibility for staff operations of the unit, as well as ensuring that the unit conforms to the relevant Collective Agreements and policies in effect within Concordia University.

The Co-Directors are responsible for the budget of the unit and for preparing the annual report and review material for renewal of the recognition status. A plan for securing external and internal funding for the unit's operations, as well as research activities,

should be developed and revised on a continuous basis. While each Co-Director will be primarily responsible for their own Lab, any course release accorded to administer COHDS/CHORN would go to the one who takes the administrative lead for the overall management and direction of the research unit.

The Co-Directors are appointed for three years which can be automatically approved for a second three-year term, for a total of six years. An outgoing Director can be re-nominated for a third term following this procedure. The procedure for choosing a Co-Director must conform to Concordia University's policy governing Research Units.

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD (AB)

This five member body will oversee the strategic direction and administration of COHDS/CHORN and its research projects. The AB will be responsible for determining the Centre's policies and procedures as well as core membership and affiliation. In addition to the two Co-Directors, the AB will consist of three other core members. A student representative will sit as a non-voting member. The core members will be elected to serve two year terms by a meeting of core members. The student representative will be elected to serve for one year by a meeting of affiliated students. The Associate Director will be an ex-officio member, acting as recording secretary for the meetings. There will be at least three meetings, yearly.

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

COHDS/CHORN will organize an annual meeting of all affiliated members. The purpose of this Annual Assembly is to advise the Administrative Board and to act as a forum for information exchange between affiliates.

CONSTITUENT LABS

COHDS/CHORN has two constituent parts: the Oral History Lab and the Digital History Lab, each headed by a co-director. All affiliated members will belong to one or the other of these two areas of primary research competence. It should be noted, however, that these research areas do not demarcate hard boundaries in research collaboration at COHDS/CHORN. We consider ourselves a single community of practice and a space of convergence. To promote synergy between researchers, members may form into research axes within or across the two Labs. These research axes may comprise a large project like Montreal Life Stories or a specific field of research such as Oral History and Performance.