




UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS
910 VAN HISE HALL
MADISON, WI 53706

memo:

From: John Bennet
Telephone: (608-) 262-3320
Fax: (608-) 262-8570
Internet: DJBENNET@FACSTAFF.WISC.EDU

Wednesday, January 29, 1997

To: Alex Nagel, Associate Dean
From: John Bennet, Chair 
Re: Assessment Plan for Classics

JAN 30 1997

My apologies for taking so long to get this to you. I hope it is satisfactory. If there are questions or modifications need to be made, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Department of Classics
College of Letters & Science
University of Wisconsin–Madison

PLANS FOR ASSESSMENT
January, 1997

Departmental Mission Statement, excerpted from department's Strategic Plan document:

"The Department of Classics of UW-Madison is an important center of research and teaching on the ancient world. It is situated within the confines of a world-class university. It draws upon the university's strengths and seeks to maintain the modern understanding of Mediterranean Humanism in two related ways.

"First of all, two of the ancient languages which preserve the cultures of the Classical Past—ancient Greek and Latin—must be mastered, so that modern observers may have direct access to classical learning instead of trusting to intermediaries. To meet this goal, the Department of Classics seeks to maintain instruction in Greek and Latin at all levels, from the rudiments of the two languages through intricate analyses at the doctoral level to the ongoing vitality of faculty research. Herein lies the heart of our mission.

"There is lively interest among the general public and the university community at all levels in the classical Mediterranean world. The Department of Classics is therefore fully dedicated to the second part of its mission, instruction in courses in translation and classical civilization. An ever-expanding set of course offerings on topics of general concern—the meaning of Greek mythology, and the role of women in the Classical Mediterranean, for instance—are a regular part of the UW–Madison's classics curriculum. The new undergraduate major in Classical Humanities and our certificate program for students who are interested in the ancient world but have chosen not to specialize for years in the study of Latin and Greek have contributed substantially to strengthening this important component of our mission. In addition, Classics faculty members contribute substantially to courses in Integrated Liberal Studies and Medieval Studies. The Department of Classics serves as the minor department for many doctoral students who are specializing in the history, science, art, or literature of the Middle Ages or in ancient philosophy, and, in conjunction with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, prepares teachers to teach on the secondary level."

UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS

Goals & Objectives

As part of our overall mission (see above), the department has two undergraduate major tracks:

- Classics, Greek, and Latin— in which high competency is achieved either in both classical languages (Latin and Greek), or in one of the two
- Classical Humanities— in which basic competency is achieved in one (or both) classical languages, and general familiarity with the classical world is achieved through a range of courses in translation within and beyond the department.

Instruments & Methods

- Within the Classics, Greek, and Latin majors our primary criterion for progress is to encourage sufficient linguistic competency for a student to continue to pursue study at the graduate level. Within language instruction, we define two fundamental stages in student achievement:

- The first represents the transition from elementary intermediate instruction (transition into our 300-level courses in Greek and Latin [Greek 305; Latin 301])
- The second represents high competency, normally achieved in the final year, and demonstrated in our upper-level Latin and/or Greek courses (500-level or above)
- In order to evaluate these two stages, we plan the following assessment review:
 - at the end of elementary (i.e. entry into Latin 301/Greek 305), two faculty would read 50% of the examinations in the preceding course (normally Latin 204; Greek 104) [This activity would be combined with assessment of our Classical Humanities major: see below.]
 - prior to graduation two faculty would read 50% of the exams in ONE 500-level final exam in each language
- Within the Classical Humanities major, our primary criterion for progress is to encourage familiarity with field for various purposes, such as general education, entry into related graduate study (e.g. Art History, Ancient History, Archaeology). In addition, because many of our Classics courses (courses in translation) are taken by students outside the department, it is possible to assess the effectiveness of our mission in offering service courses within the College. In association with this major, we define the following stages in student achievement:
 - Since one element in the major is basic linguistic competence, the first stage is again the transition from elementary intermediate instruction (transition into our 300-level courses in Greek and Latin [Greek 305; Latin 301])
 - The second represents a good overall familiarity with the field among graduating seniors. For those in the major, this is best assessed as part of our Capstone Seminar (Classics 591), but we would hope to examine a portfolio containing sample of papers/final exams from other Classics courses to achieve a more accurate assessment of our success in achieving our wider goal of serving the College community as a whole
- In order to evaluate these two stages, we plan the following assessment review:
 - at the end of elementary (i.e. entry into Latin 301/Greek 305), two faculty would read 50% of the examinations in the preceding course (normally Latin 204; Greek 104). [This activity would be combined with assessment of our Classics, Greek, and Latin majors: see above.]
 - prior to graduation two faculty would evaluate representative portfolios assembled by those Classical Humanities majors taking Classics 591, as well as reading a sample of final exams in Classics courses.
- Finally, in order to evaluate our overall success in our undergraduate program, we plan to maintain up-to-date contact information on graduates, and to track their careers by means of questionnaires mailed at 3-5 yearly intervals.

Dissemination of Results

- Each year, the department will form an Assessment Committee to report to a departmental meeting. The department as a whole will evaluate the findings of the committee, and develop strategies to deal with problems either with the effectiveness of the plan, or the effectiveness of our programs.

Timetable

- We hope to initiate the proposals outlined in this plan in the 1997–98 academic year.
- After that year, we would hope to conduct biennial assessments of the Undergraduate Majors in alternate years to those in which assessment of the Graduate Major is carried out.

GRADUATE PROGRAM

Goals & Objectives

- As per our overall mission statement (see above), the major goal of our graduate program is to offer instruction aimed at achieving professional competency in classics with a view to teaching at university level. The emphasis in our program is on literature in ancient Greek and Latin, and there is essentially one track towards the higher degrees.

Instruments & Methods

- Within the Graduate Major it the department distinguishes four major stages:
 - Incoming, at which point we would like to assess the level of preparation of students entering the program.
 - M.A. degree.
 - Preliminary Examinations to the Ph.D. dissertation.
 - Ph.D. and beyond.
- Evaluation of each of those stages would involve the following activities.
 - Other than the normal review of applications for admission to our graduate program, the most satisfactory means of reviewing the preparedness of graduate students in the initial stages of our program is by reviewing the “qualifying” exams set in both in languages. An advantage of such a review is that it will allow us to discern changing patterns of preparedness, and make appropriate adjustments in our graduate program. These exams would be assessed by two faculty.
 - At the M.A. level, we would assess the overall suitability of students to progress to the Ph.D., and the effectiveness of the M.A. program in providing suitable instruction for alternative employment opportunities, such as high school instruction, another part of the department’s overall mission. Here again, two faculty would review M.A. papers submitted by all candidates in partial fulfillment of the degree.
 - Review of the preliminary examinations would have a similar purpose to that of the M.A., in assessing the suitability of students to begin writing a dissertation, but it would also allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of our graduate program in bringing students to that level of achievement. Once again, two faculty would read the examinations.
 - At the Ph.D. level, the assessment committee’s main task would be to evaluate portfolios of graduate work assembled by students as representative of their seminar work and their preliminary examination performances.
- In addition, we plan to monitor the effectiveness of placement for our students, and to maintain contact with them, keeping track particularly of future employment and publication by sending a short questionnaire to Ph.D. and M.A. graduates on a 3-5 year basis.

Dissemination of Results

- Each year, the department will form an Assessment Committee to report to a departmental meeting. The department as a whole will evaluate the findings of the committee, and develop strategies to deal with problems either with the effectiveness of the plan, or the effectiveness of our programs.

Timetable

- We hope to initiate the proposals outlined in this plan in the 1998–99 academic year.
- After that year, we would hope to conduct biennial assessments of the Graduate Major in alternate years to those in which assessment of the Undergraduate Majors is carried out.