

February 5, 2020

**PROFESSOR MONTE JOHNSON, Director**  
**Classical Studies Program**

**PROFESSOR NANCY KWAK, Director**  
**Institute of Arts and Humanities**

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Program Review for Classical Studies

Dear Professor Johnson and Professor Kwak,

At its November 8, 2019 meeting, the Undergraduate Council (UGC) discussed the Classical Studies Program's 2019 Undergraduate Program Review. The Council supported the findings and recommendations of the review subcommittee and appreciated the thoughtful and proactive response from the Program. The Council was pleased to review an overall positive report, but did note an area of concern regarding the lack of resources for Latin and Greek classes. The Council had the following comments:

- Hiring: The recruitment of new faculty to teach Latin courses is paramount to the Program's future success. We are aware that hiring to address curricular needs of programs not specific to a single department is fraught, but are hoping that a solution can be found. Furthermore, incoming UCSD faculty should be briefed how to properly affiliate with Programs.
- Undergraduate Curriculum: There was strong enthusiasm from undergraduate majors, with an increase from 5 to 12 students. However, the two-year language requirement of Greek and Latin has been a challenge. As long as the Program is short-handed with dedicated instructors, perhaps students can take classes elsewhere to apply towards the major. Another alternative might be the creation of an additional major that might potentially require fewer language requirements.
- Enrichment Programs: The Program introduced enrichment programs that have been both beneficial and attractive to students. The Center for Hellenic Studies was a valuable partner to the Program, and moving administration of the program under the umbrella of the Institute of Arts and Humanities has been beneficial.

The Council will conduct its follow-up review of the Program in Spring Quarter 2020. At that time, our goal is to learn about the Program's progress in implementing the recommendations of the program review subcommittee and the Undergraduate Council. The Council extends its thanks to the Program for their engagement in this process and we look forward to the continued discussion.

Sincerely,

Anthony Burr, Chair  
Undergraduate Council

Attachment

(1) Undergraduate Program Review Report and Response for Classical Studies

cc: S. Constable  
M. Corr

J. Moore  
R. Rodriguez  
J. Teranes

## **Undergraduate Program Review Classical Studies**

### **Introduction**

The Undergraduate Program Review of the Classical Studies Program took place on May 17, 2019 at Price Center West. The Review Committee consisted of Professor Mira Balberg, UC San Diego, Professor Giulia Sissa, UCLA, and Professor and Review Chair Paul Goldstein, UC San Diego. The review committee met with the Dean of Undergraduate Education; Classical Studies Program Director and Core Faculty Members; the Program's Affiliated Senate Faculty (two sessions); the Program's Undergraduate Advisor and Business Officer; Undergraduate Majors and Minors; and concluded with the Program Director, Senior Associate Dean of academic affairs at the Division of Arts and Humanities, Director of IAH, Dean of Undergraduate Education, Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Education and Senate Analyst.

The Committee's review of the program is overall positive. We note improvements since the prior review in administration, as well as in enrollment and curriculum. The program launched compelling enrichment programs, and demonstrates vibrant student support. The committee also noted continuing challenges, most notably in regard to the security of language teaching resources.

### **A. Analysis of the current operation of the program**

The UCSD Classical Studies program is to be congratulated for a significant uptick in majors (from 5 to 12) since the last review. This comes at a time when comparable programs elsewhere are declining in majors, and shows the laudable energy of the program's director, faculty, and staff.

The administrative structure of the Classical Studies program has changed since the prior review, with the program now situated as one of 14 programs in the Institute for the Arts and Humanities (IAH). This shift has brought some advantages in shared staffing resources, knowledge, and logistics. Importantly, the program can now rely on an IAH staff person for undergraduate advising. Student advising follows a "Comprehensive advising model" in which IAH staff track courses and requirements and meet with each major. Current students spoke positively of Classical Studies' advising services, citing personal service and small scale as positive attributes. In addition, The IAH offers the programs a "Breaking out of the classroom" grant, which Classical Studies used for the Getty Villa student trip. Although the program's annual budget is modest, it is a significant improvement compared to the \$0 budget of the past, and it allows the program to increase faculty and student interaction.

As an interdisciplinary program, Classical Studies relies on participation from faculty from multiple departments. Overall, interdepartmental relationships appear positive, and Classical Studies exhibits collegial synergy across disciplinary lines of the several participating departments. Mutual participation in research contexts such as those offered by the Center for Hellenic Studies seem an important point of contact.

The program's primary, and perhaps existential, operational challenge pertains to language instruction, as the study of Greek and Latin is crucial for the major. There are key issues here, the first (more pertinent to Latin classes) is staffing, and the latter (more pertinent to Greek classes) is minimum class size.

Latin appears to be one of the more popular languages among UCSD students, but the program has been struggling to staff those language courses since the department of literature, in which those languages are housed, did not hire FTE faculty to replace Latin instructors who had retired in over a decade. We were delighted to find out, shortly after the program review was conducted, that the Dean of Arts and Humanities approved the hire of an Assistant Professor of Latin through the Literature department, to start in 2020-2021. The importance of this development cannot be overstated: without a

long-term Latin instructor, it is doubtful that the program could survive. There still remains the fact that Latin language classes, unlike other language classes, do not have any TA support, which makes the instructor's work quite onerous.

The more difficult issue to tackle is that of low enrollments in language courses, particularly in second year Greek. Contributing factors to low language enrollments (particularly "melt" between the first and second year of languages) may include the decline of foreign language requirements on campus, the increasing proportion of students who place out of language requirements of the majors and the two colleges that still do have language requirements, and the availability of other language options. As a result, several Classical language courses required for the major tend to have low enrollments (most notably second year Greek, and especially the third quarter of the second year). The offering of these required courses (and thus the viability of the Classical Studies major) is tenuous, often relying on UCSD faculty teaching overloads, other ad hoc solutions, or students finding instruction elsewhere at their own expense. It was noted that comparable institutions run major-required language courses with lower enrollments than seem to be allowed at UCSD – sometimes as low as 2 or 3 students. In the past, the Literature department supported occasional low (even single digit) enrollments in some Classical language courses if the professors also teach some large lectures. More recently, Literature appears reluctant to continue this policy, specifically for those professors who teach large lecture courses in the college writing programs, rather than the Literature Department itself. Literature's reluctance reflects a perception in some Humanities and Social Science departments that the departments are not adequately credited or compensated when their faculty teach in the college writing programs, rather than the home department.

A final element of concern is the prospect of retirements of Classical Studies affiliated faculty and lecturers without comparable replacement, notably in Literature, Theater, and Visual Arts (which have all lost faculty members without comparable replacement). The Classical Studies Program has limited influence on the hiring priorities of the affiliated departments, and the departments have no formal obligation to replace Classical Studies specialists with comparable hires if they prefer to go in other directions or address other service requirements with their hires. This is doubly problematic when potential Greek and Latin language instructors are involved (see above).

Overall, these concerns about security of language teaching resources and retirements were recurrent themes with program leadership, affiliated faculty, instructors, and the undergraduate students themselves.

## **B. Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum**

The current Classical Studies major curriculum follows a traditional model that qualifies majors to apply for graduate work in Classical Studies by requiring two years each of Greek and Latin study. Conversations with the undergraduates themselves showed a high level of enthusiasm among majors and minors for the Classical Studies faculty and a positive record of curricular enrichment and grad consortium courses.

Six Classical Studies majors and minors met with the review committee, showing a high level of involvement, commitment, and enthusiasm. Students mentioned the "great faculty" and that "the professors are the strongest part of the program".

The program has made several strong initiatives towards curricular enrichment and enhancement outside of the classroom. Nine of the twelve current majors participated in a recent trip to the Getty Villa. Several undergraduate students participate in Graduate reading groups in Greek and Latin, and others stated intention to take graduate courses. This is relatively uncommon at UCSD and a sign of high interest among advanced undergraduates. Three majors are involved in paid internships in a Digital Humanities project.

Like the faculty, the students' most acute area of concerns was the uncertainty of language courses. Availability of language courses is a significant concern, because as the major is currently constituted approximately 50% of each major's courses in the program are language courses, and the major course of studies cannot be completed without two full years of language study. Several students expressed anxiety about the availability of required language courses (notably the second year Greek sequence). The students described a recent case in which they themselves campaigned to reinstate a language offering that had been cancelled, ultimately finding a faculty member to take on the course as an overload (each of the nine students registered for an "Independent Study" with the instructor). Students affirmed that an additional major with lessened or optional language requirements could attract more students, although they also expressed pride in completing the current language-intensive major.

Other curricular suggestions mentioned course availability, student scheduling, and content. A transfer student noted that for a student unable to take summer classes, the major can be almost impossible to manage in two years, due to uncertainty about the language offerings and difficulty in fitting everything in along with other requirements. This concern was echoed by a Classical Studies minor who is majoring in a different department, who stated she would have taken on Classical Studies as a second major if it had been feasible.

For lower division prerequisites, some students expressed dissatisfaction with LIT 19, and were far more positive about the content of the MMW and HUM writing sequences of Eleanor Roosevelt and Revelle Colleges as a lower division entrée to the Classical Studies major. It is notable that seven of the 12 current Classical Studies majors are from Roosevelt or Revelle Colleges (in which most of the program's faculty regularly teach), suggesting that these writing courses are indeed attractions for potential majors.

While most majors were quite positive about upper division course content, one mentioned that some courses combined too much content for 10 weeks (language, literary analysis, history, etc.), and expressed interest in more specialized, rather than general courses. A specific request was for additional training in research methods, in the form of courses that could help prepare for thesis and other advanced research and writing. Students were asked about the lack of dedicated physical space for the program, and responded that while it would be nice to have a lounge or seminar room, their top priority is regular course offerings.

### **C. Analysis of the program in the context of campus and University policies**

Like other interdisciplinary programs, Classical Studies has no faculty of its own. Beyond the major and minor programs, we can gauge the program's service to the university community by the collective participation of its highly productive affiliated faculty, who include major figures in Literature, History, Philosophy, Visual arts and other fields. The existence of a strong Classical Studies program helps attract excellent faculty hires and graduate students who teach and TA university-critical courses in both the affiliated departments and writing programs. Many Classical Studies affiliated faculty do considerable Lower-division teaching in large lecture classes of the UCSD college writing programs. This synergy is particularly important in the MMW and HUM writing sequences of Eleanor Roosevelt and Revelle Colleges, respectively. Affiliated faculty also teach upper division courses and advise and mentor majors in their home departments. Although Classical Studies has no graduate program of its own, most of the faculty train graduate students in their home departments. This provides qualified TAs for departmental and college writing program courses and offers potential for role modeling and mentorship for the undergraduate majors. Finally, the language courses offered through the program provide crucial training for graduate students in several departments (mainly History, Literature, and Philosophy) whose research depends on their proficiency in Greek and/or Latin.

#### **D. Recommendations for alleviating any shortcomings suggested by the description and analysis**

The new administration of Classical Studies under IAH seems to have resolved several issues that came up in the prior review, although continuing adjustment may be expected. The sharing of resources among 14 programs, and particularly the “fractional” assignments of staff time be considered carefully to guard against staff being overtaxed or spread too thin due to enrollment shifts or additions of new programs. The IAH program heads do currently meet twice a year, but since many of these interdisciplinary programs share some unique structural challenges, we would recommend some additional meeting or retreat time for the program faculty and staff to compare ideas and solutions to common or parallel problems (for example, support for language requirements).

Recruitment of additional majors and minors has been successful since the last review, but the program should continue to explore new contexts to get the word out. Several professors mentioned recruiting for the program in their classes, and the IAH program coordinator also noted some class recruiting visits. However, one Classical Studies minor noted that she was unaware of the Classical Studies program until she was a senior, when it was too late to consider it as a major. Coordinating and intensifying systematic outreach, teaching and recruiting across the college writing programs is recommended (particularly in the four colleges outside of Roosevelt MMW and Revelle HUM, where program affiliates already have a significant and attractive presence as instructors).

Programmatic enrichment has been appreciated by the students and should be expanded. The program should continue to seek funds for new events and programming for the majors and minors. Partnerships or matches might be sought to leverage the IAH “breaking out of the classroom fund” and greater coordination with the Center for Hellenic studies is also suggested. At the same time, the program might suggest and mentor a student-run Classics Club that could sponsor their own independent events and apply for AS funding.

The committee particularly notes the difficulty that language classes, and specifically advanced language classes, might encounter in reaching the minimum number of students required to run the class. Our recommendation is that the Literature department be strongly encouraged to accommodate small enrollments for second year Greek and allow the instructors to run the classes without having to take an overload. Both Greek instructors teach very large lecture courses in Roosevelt College, and in the past the Literature department allowed this service to balance against the small language courses the same instructors teach. Recently, the Literature department changed its policy and it no longer allows this exception, but we recommend that they reconsider this change of policy. If second year Greek courses would not be offered regularly, this would be detrimental not only for the majors, who will not be able to complete their required course of studies, but also for graduate students.

In the language courses themselves, to increase accessibility and enrollment, we recommend exploring new methods to update traditional language instruction. New methods could help both pedagogy and enrollments, perhaps through communicative instructional methods, new media, or alternate readings. It was also noted that the prior review’s suggestion of a technical language course, stressing Latin and Greek word elements to attract STEM and other non-majors has not yet been pursued. Whether or not new courses satisfy the major requirement, innovative offerings could bring in new enrollments to support the Classical language offerings overall.

A further recommendation is to consider adding an additional major track. This would give the program two distinct major tracks, one of which continues to require the traditional two years of Greek and Latin expected for students considering graduate studies in Classics, and a new major in which language requirements are lessened or optional. A similar two-major model exists in other regional studies departments, including some currently housed in IAH. A language-optional major could appear more attainable to transfer students who have limited time to complete requirements, or for students considering Classics as a second major. Such a major could perhaps take a “Global Antiquity”,

comparative, or multicultural approach to ancient civilizations, possibly adding non-Mediterranean courses to its list. Once secure in the program, it is likely that some interested students may opt to specialize and then upgrade to the language-required Classical Studies major.

Finally, the committee suggests expanding data collection on educational outcomes for Classics majors to aid in program assessment. Possibilities include exit interviews and follow-up contacts with alumni. Alumni contact may also lead to possibilities for networking and curricular enrichment for current students and other support for the program.