



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

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*Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
&  
The Graduate School*

December 10, 2009

To: Phyllis M. Wise, Provost and Executive Vice President  
Douglas J. Wadden, Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Planning

From: Gerald J. Baldasty, Vice Provost and Dean  
James S. Antony, Associate Dean and Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

RE: Review of the Department of Classics

This memorandum outlines the Graduate School's recommendations on the ten-year review of the Department of Germanics in the College of Arts and Sciences. More detailed comments on the department can be found in the documents referred to below. The review included the following milestones and documentation:

- Classics self-study (January 22, 2009)
- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (February 4, 2009)
- Site visit (February 26-27, 2009)
- Review committee report April 17, (2009)
- Graduate & Professional Student Senate (GPSS) Report (March 31, 2009)
- Department response to the report (June 9, 2009)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (October 22, 2009)

The review committee consisted of:

Richard G. Salomon, Professor, UW Department of Asian Languages and Literature,  
(Committee Chair)  
Albert J. Sbragia, Associate Professor, UW Division of French and Italian Studies  
Brigitte Prutti, Associate Professor, UW Department of Germanics  
Kirk Freudenburg, Professor, Department of Classics, Yale University  
Sheila Murnaghan, Professor, Department of Classical Studies,  
The University of Pennsylvania

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented the following findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on October 22, 2009.

**Program Strengths**

The Department of Classics is "the very model of an outstanding Humanities program deserving of crucial institutional support." It is strong, its leadership is effective, the faculty is high quality,

they have a strong sense of collegiality, there is quality of instruction, mentoring at all levels, and strong commitment of the staff. The faculty is highly productive and respected in the field. In 1998, the NRC ranked the department among the top 20 in productivity and 16 in effectiveness; both external reviewers from Ivy League institutions consider the program to be among the top 10 nationally. It has attracted graduate students who have had significantly better financial offers from other institutions, and has achieved “an unparalleled level of success” in its graduate placement record. The undergraduate majors have won a number of important awards, and have been recruited by institutions as Columbia, Berkeley, Harvard and Yale. The department has used the Rome Center and its participation in the Tel Dor (Israel) dig to enhance undergraduate and graduate instruction, and TA training and mentorship.

Following the 1999 review, the department hired distinguished faculty and added a new material culture emphasis to its well-established strength in the literary disciplines. It reviewed, revised and partially restructured its undergraduate curriculum. Significant strides have been made in student diversity. It has a diversity plan with a multi-prong approach, effectively using the Rome Center, to recruit and retain undergraduate and graduate students from under-represented minority groups. Graduate students gave high marks to the department in the areas of professionalism, mentorship, advising, and teaching opportunities. The department has “an excellent record of success” in its development efforts. It has several sources of funding, including the Greenfield Endowment (valued at \$4.5 Million in June 2008), which it has used to enhance support for students and research.

### **Challenges and Risks**

The department is understaffed by at least one faculty position. Faculty lines are down from 12 to 10, one faculty member is in a 5-year administrative appointment and two are in the process of retiring. A pressing need is for a faculty position in Greek poetry. Both the prominence of faculty and the two overseas programs result in chronic shortages of faculty and TAs who might offer sought after courses.

The staff is most dedicated but consists of only one administrative assistant and one secretary at .75 FTE. The review committee recommended increasing the secretary’s position to 1 FTE. Graduate student funding is very important since it affects the unit’s ability to attract the best applicants, to enhance its diversity, and to provide quality undergraduate instruction. The review committee noted that additional tuition waivers would be a cost effective way to bridge the gap.

### **Areas of Concurrence**

The department concurred with the review committee’s assessments and recommendations. While the committee noted the need to fill the vacant faculty position in Greek poetry, it also urged consideration for a hire in the emerging field of reception studies. The unit indicated its primary need is to replace the vacant position, but it is cognizant that reception studies is an emerging field and noted possibilities of addressing the idea with a cognate unit such as Comparative Literature or the Division of Art History.

The GPSS reported on students’ concerns regarding the number of course requirements and the availability of courses. The department indicated that staffing determines the availability of courses. Concerning graduate course requirements, the unit stressed that proficiency is required

in two ancient and two modern languages in addition to solid grounding in two cultures. It agreed the issue “warrants revisiting” if the trend toward better prepared students continues.

### **Council Recommendations**

The Council made the following recommendations:

- The Council concurs with the review committee’s recommendation that continuing status of the Department of Classics B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees be reaffirmed, with the next review to occur in 10 years (2018-2019).
- Given the current economic situation, the anticipated faculty retirements and the unfilled faculty position, that every effort should be made by the administration to ensure that faculty lines do not decline below the current 10 positions. Staffing maintained at the current level will enable students to complete degree programs in a timely manner.
- The Council supports the department’s willingness to reconsider the required Ph.D. course work as it affects student recruitment and time to degree completion.
- The Council encourages the department to continue its effective and impressive development efforts, perhaps with more help from the University.

We concur with the Council’s comments and recommendations.

c: Ana Mari Cauce, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Robert Stacey, Divisional Dean, Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences  
Edward Taylor, Dean and Vice Provost, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
Janice DeCosmo, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
Alain Gowing, Professor and Chair, Department of Classics  
Classics Review Committee  
Graduate School Council  
Jacob Faleschini, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate  
Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School