

**DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS
STRATEGIC PLANNING DOCUMENT 6/1/06**

Classics is more than the study of the history, literature, languages, and material culture of the ancient Mediterranean world. It is also the study of a living tradition that has shaped—and continues to shape—the way in which we construct our world today. To this end, the Department of Classics, founded in 2000, offers high-quality, student-centered courses which allow students to explore Classical antiquity and the Greco-Roman world, including their relation to the world today. We offer a major with emphases in Greek, Latin, Classical Languages, the Classical Tradition, and in Latin Secondary Education. We have strong inter-programmatic ties with the Honors College, the College of Education, the English Department, the Anthropology Department, Art and Design, and the School of Communication. We aim to become a regional center for classical studies by continuing to maintain our program of student-centered curricula, rigor, faculty development and research, and connection to the broader community.

Unit Mission Statement

The Department of Classics is a student-centered, inquiry-based program that fosters the continual exploration of and critical inquiry into the living traditions and legacies of the Greco-Roman (Classical) World.

Vision

We provide a student centered high-quality program with a focus upon the classical languages and an emphasis in encountering the classical world through primary sources, both textual and material. Through this work, we will enlarge the state of knowledge in the field by contributing to the broader community as demonstrated through student achievement and placement, faculty development and research, and the creation of a regional center for classical studies in western Michigan.

We became classicists because of the interests we discovered in the civilizations of Greco-Roman antiquity and because of our investment in the living legacy represented by the classical tradition. All of us have had the pleasure of seeing our students—very few of whom have come to GVSU intending to study Classics—“catch fire” and learn the value of struggling to master the classical languages and to come to grips with the ancients on their own terms. That value, as we see it, is twofold: our students receive excellent training and preparation for future challenges by acquiring and refining the analytical and communications skills, study habits, and work ethic that equip them to approach any problem creatively and successfully; their studies are also the springboard to a lifelong experience with literature, philosophy, and culture.

Values

- We value a student-centered curriculum with a face-to-face learning community of students and faculty.
 - Students are drawn to Classics because they know that it is impossible to remain “a face in the crowd”: our language courses and advanced

seminars expect and empower students to express themselves and to make themselves known to members of the faculty and to one another. Students have ready access to the departmental office suite, lounge, and seminar room. As a department this is something we encourage: it leads to close relationships between students and teachers, and it promotes cooperation, discussion, and intellectual interaction.

- We value proficiency in at least one classical (ancient Greek or Latin) language.
 - All of the emphases within the Classics major require an advanced level of proficiency in at least one of the classical languages (e.g. the ability, in a semester, to read a play of Euripides or Sophocles in Greek or a speech of Cicero in Latin). This training teaches students analytical grammar and rhetoric, makes them close and critical readers, and involves them in a student-centered, inquiry-based program of active learning. Our recently-implemented Latin Secondary Education emphasis places pedagogy and learning strategies at the heart of our approach to language instruction.
- We believe that Classics lies at the heart of a liberal education.
 - The courses we offer in classical civilization (history, art and archaeology, cultural studies) enhance and enrich not only our program but the curricula of the College, of the General Education program, and of the Honors College.
- We value a commitment to teaching by highly qualified, full-time, permanent faculty.
 - Nearly all of the courses offered by the Department of Classics are taught by full-time, tenure-line faculty. Only by remaining fully accountable to our students and to one another can we assure ourselves of the quality and consistency of our program.
- We value high standards of evaluation and assessment.
- We emphasize student writing and direct exposure to primary sources.
- We invest in the success of our students by taking a proactive approach in making our students aware of opportunities which equip them to succeed.
- We value the connection of Classics faculty, student, and programs to the wider community.
- We value a sharing of resources and collaborations with interested partners, both within the university community and across the region.

Simply put, there is scant value in doing what we do unless one is prepared to do it as well as one possibly can. We strive to put this principle into practice and to inculcate it in our students. Our program has been designed to offer our students a level of preparation comparable to that of our most distinguished and successful peers within the field.

Goal One: To continuously improve the current quality of instruction and maintain a state of the art curriculum.

Objectives:

- To hire two-three full-time faculty members in the next five years.
 - We are all working past full capacity now with a 9-16 credit teaching load per semester (not counting independent studies), the heavy service requirement of our new program and Honors, and active scholarship in our fields.

Action item: Locating additional office and work space.

If we are to maintain the integrity and quality of our program, we will need additional office space near the Classics suite (260 LHH) to accommodate new faculty members. We also need a secure room to house imaging equipment and artifacts for our archaeology and ancient culture courses; ideally, the room should be large enough to serve as a usable workspace.

- To develop and offer regularly courses in the classical tradition.
 - These courses allow students to explore aspects of the classical tradition that range far beyond Classical antiquity and the Greco-Roman world. Indeed our courses in the classical tradition distinguish the Classics program at GVSU from most other classics programs, which offer curricula more narrowly focused on the ancient world.
- To forge and enhance ties across disciplines with other units and programs.
 - By its very nature, the study of Classics is an interdisciplinary pursuit. The Classics department is committed to forging ties across disciplines with other units and programs, and to enhancing already existing ties with departments such as Communications (Theater) and Art and Design. We look forward to more collaborative ventures with these units, such as jointly sponsored theater productions and gallery exhibitions.
- To take the lead in the University Archaeology Consortium.
 - The Archaeology consortium, which brings together faculty from Classics, Anthropology, and History, will help faculty coordinate course offerings for students interested in archaeology and the proposed archaeology minor. The consortium will also give archaeologists housed in different departments a forum in which to meet and exchange ideas.
- To create a Translation Center.
 - A translation center, using the University of Michigan's "Contexts for Classics" program as a model,* will offer another venue in which students and faculty

* "Contexts for Classics (CFC) is an interdepartmental faculty initiative which aims to rethink the discipline(s) of Classical Studies from various critical, historical and pedagogical perspectives. CFC sponsors several events annually and emphasizes curricular offerings across the University that explore the relationship between antiquity and modernity and interrogate the construction of a Classical ideal" <www.umich.edu/~cfc>.

from a wide variety of fields—linguistic and literary—can develop their skills and promote literary translation.

- To attract, retain, and place our students in careers or further education.
 - An increased external visibility will increase the likelihood of attracting students with prior experience of Classics. But the fact remains that most majors and minors catch that indefinable "spark" in the classroom, and quite unawares. Thus our attention will need to rest more on retention and placement. We are currently quite effective in this regard: although we are a young program, we have already placed students in graduate programs, prestigious study-abroad programs, professional programs, and other career paths.
- To maintain and develop new learning technologies.
- To serve the College and University through General Education and Honors service and teaching.
 - We in the Department of Classics are committed, as well, to teaching in the University Honors College, where we staff five courses per year: two sections per semester of the year-long Classical World sequence and an honors mythology course. Besides our substantial investment in the Honors program, we will continue serving a broad spectrum of GVSU students through our General Education courses and through courses developed for various General Education "themes."

Goal Two: to improve opportunities for students, both curricularly and co-curricularly, and after graduation.

Objectives:

- To promote opportunities for faculty and students to learn with each other outside of the classroom.
 - Close mentoring relationships between students and faculty lie at the heart of this process, and we take special care to create opportunities for significant forms of faculty/student collaboration within the department. We encourage students to engage in research projects with faculty, for example, and our students regularly present the results of such projects on Student Scholarship Day and in other public venues. Students who elect the Classical Tradition degree emphasis also work intensively with faculty to write Integrative Senior Essays on topics that expand and refine their burgeoning intellectual and professional interests. Moreover, several students interested in careers in art history and collection management have assisted Classics faculty in the development and maintenance of the unit's collection of pedagogical images (slides and digital) of Greco-Roman material culture.
- To maintain a suitable environment that allows student study and meeting with faculty and staff.

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- To encourage students to pursue GVSU grants and scholarships (e.g., Padnos Scholarships, Student Summer Scholars grants) that provide support for special research- and career-related projects, both at GVSU and abroad.
- To encourage and support student activities related to Classics.
 - These include the Senior Classical League chapter, performances of ancient plays, and field trips.
- To continue and expand the co-curricular speaker program.
 - Classics has brought several nationally and internationally recognized scholars to campus to speak on topics of broad interest to faculty and students across the university, and we hope to expand this aspect of the unit's contribution to liberal arts education in the future.
- To identify and increase opportunities for student internships and service learning at local institutions such as GRAM.
- To develop Classics-led programs for studying abroad.
- To raise funds for student scholarships for these and other summer or semester study-abroad experiences.
- To encourage students to participate in conferences, either as presenters or by accompanying faculty with whom they have collaborated on scholarly projects.
- To establish a Classics Undergraduate teaching apprenticeship.
- To increase the number of students pursuing graduate training in Classics, related fields, or professional disciplines.

Goal Three: To enhance and expand professional development and scholarship opportunities for current and future faculty.

Objectives:

- To increase opportunities and resources for faculty research, scholarship, and development.
 - Much of our scholarly activity enriches our teaching directly or indirectly. However, in order to enact the other department goals and on its own merits, we must individually contribute to the broader community through the public venues of publication and presentation. As professionals in our areas of specialization, we take seriously our obligation to enhance and expand the state of knowledge in the field. Our different areas of scholarship—literary, historical, pedagogy, archaeology field research and analysis of material culture, and translation—demand a range of time and financial resources.
- To seek support for research projects through outside grants and fellowships as well as internal resources.
- To pursue academic and pedagogic projects as a means of improving our professional capabilities and credentials.

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- As faculty at an institution for higher learning, we have all made a commitment to a life of scholarly research and activity in our fields of specialization. Moreover, this continual engagement with the life of ideas, both our own and those of other scholars in our fields, has an essential and qualitative impact on the depth and vigor of our teaching. Internal funding through grants and awards such as those issued under the auspices of the Pew FTLC will continue to be an important aspect of professional development.
- To seek leadership positions in college and university governance bodies.
 - Although we are currently only six, the larger "presence" of Classics is often a subject for positive comment. This is a direct result of our efforts to develop leadership potential among our faculty. The value and importance we see in professional development through this kind of service and professional activity is apparent: we remain a very active group in spite of the demands of teaching and research, providing service beyond the physical measure of our Unit.
- To increase involvement and leadership in outside professional organizations.
- To offer a regular two-year postdoctoral teaching fellowship, aimed at promising young scholar-teachers.
 - Young scholar-teachers would have the opportunity to develop a professional repertoire of courses and pedagogies at one of the finest teaching universities in the region under the guidance of master scholar-teachers. As established faculty in a distinguished teaching department, we would benefit both from mentoring these individuals and from the ideas, energy, and knowledge these individuals will bring to us. The prestige, and indeed experience, of holding such a fellowship would enable our Department and Grand Valley to promote these promising individuals, as well as exert a positive influence on the broader profession by supporting the educational philosophies we espouse in a very practical manner; over time, the fellowship and these individuals will have the cumulative effect of promoting Grand Valley as an institution committed to the goals of liberal education and of promoting our students.

For these reasons, the position as envisaged should: (i) be a two-year position and not a visiting position; (ii) enable the incumbent to teach a special topics course on his/her subject of specialty (CLA 380) and team-teach in the Honors Classical World sequence (HNR 211/212/221/222); (iii) have a 3/3 teaching load.

Goal Four: to become the regional center for classical studies in western Michigan.

Objectives:

- To establish a cooperative regional Classics consortium among institutions of higher learning in western Michigan.
 - By means of a Regional Classics Consortium our Department will seek to establish a more structured and regular cooperative spirit among the various Classics programs in

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western Michigan at institutions of higher learning. This Consortium would serve as a catalyst and/or focus for activities of shared interest— *marquée* speakers, workshops, etc.—for students and for faculty at the cooperating institutions; it might also serve an important purpose in fundraising activities.

- To develop an annual Summer Latin (Classics) Institute for teachers of Latin in the region and advanced undergraduate students.
 - The Summer (Latin) Classics Institute, a week long, intensive, credit bearing or SB-CEU earning series of lectures, workshops, and discussions would fill a critical need within the regional teaching community for continuing education, and perhaps at the same time serve our own students (who would benefit greatly from the exposure to teacher networks and from the opportunity to carry out intense and supervised reading for partial credit during the summer months). Classics will work with the Office of PDP to build a plan that might include a two-credit course to be offered over the space of one week.
- To expand relationships with local and regional high school Latin programs.
 - We are especially eager to expand our contacts with local and regional high school teachers, who can host our student teachers in their classrooms, introduce them to a wider network of Latin teachers, and give them practical, hands-on experience. We anticipate that our contacts with the regional teaching community will also help in recruiting new students to GVSU.

For the Department of Classics, our four goals are a reflection of the vision that guides our strategic planning: an unwavering focus on the goals of a liberal education, a sharing of resources and collaborations with interested partners, and an engagement with our students, fellow faculty, and the wider community are all fundamental to our mission—and all representative of the values we hold.