

May 31, 1984

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW PANEL
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

Findings

Introduction

With eight rostered FTE (six tenured) and approximately 30 undergraduate majors and 20 graduate students over the past few years, Classics is a small department. The range of its activities is very broad, however. Having the whole of classical antiquity as its subject of inquiry, the Department offers courses of instruction in the Greek and Latin languages, on the literature of Greece and Rome both in the original and in translation, and on the history, culture, and art of the classical Mediterranean world. Undergraduate majors may concentrate on the study of the Greek language, the Latin language, a combination of both, or "a broadly based program in classical antiquities" (1984-5 Catalog, 47). The Department provides the only MA program in Classics available in the state of Colorado and apparently the only Ph.D. program in the discipline in the Rocky Mountain region. It offers a variety of programs for graduate students. At the MA level, students may choose to "emphasize Greek, Latin, classical antiquities, classical humanities, or the teaching of Latin;" at the Ph.D. level, students may structure a program emphasizing "Greek and Latin languages and literatures or classical archaeology and history" (ibid., 48). Faculty research interests are equally if not more sweeping: chronologically, they range from Greek prehistory to the study of classical scholarship in the modern era; topically, faculty publications have dealt with philology, literature, history, archaeology, and the culture of antiquity. The Department has also oriented itself to providing professional services, assistance, and lectures for teachers and lay persons in the state and region who are interested in Classics.

Instruction

Members of the Department teach four courses a year. Nine 100-level language courses each year have been taught by GPTIs in recent years. The Department's lower-division courses are frequently quite large (in 1981-82, they averaged 52.6 students per lower-division course in comparison to an A & S average of 29; the statistics alone are somewhat misleading, since courses in language instruction are kept well below the average while lower-division survey courses sometimes run into the hundreds in enrollment). That the Department does considerable "service" teaching for the College at the lower-division level is also reflected in the fact that less than 10% of SCH have been taken by majors in recent years (9.7% in 1981-82, a percentage well below the College norm but somewhat above the percentage for foreign-language departments). The sizes of upper-division and graduate courses in Classics, on the other hand, are close to normal (an average of 16.4 students in each upper-division class in Classics in 1981-82, 15.3 students in A & S courses in general; an average of 3.8 students in

graduate courses in Classics in comparison to 3.5 students in each A & S graduate course in the same period). Both the IMPOSE figure and the SCH/FTE ratio are considerably higher in Classics than for the campus as a whole (IMPOSE figure of 1.436 for Classics, 0.956 for the campus, in 1981-82; a SCH/FTE ratio of 827 for Classics, 502 for UCB, over the same period). Clearly, the Classics Department carries more than its proportional share of the undergraduate teaching load of the College and the campus. It was in the context of this heavy load of students at the lower-division level in particular that the Self-study demanded a minimum of three additional FTE for the Department while the Internal Report suggested an additional two FTE.

From the data available, it appears that the Department is doing a good job of teaching. Student evaluations of Classics courses have consistently been above the campus average in recent semesters (e.g., 3.11 for Classics courses, 3.03 for all campus courses, in the Spring 1983 semester). Several of the regular faculty and the graduate instructors of the Department have won teaching awards over the past decade.

The problems of the Department's undergraduate program and instruction appear to be minor ones. The Self-study noted a need for closer faculty supervision and guidance of graduate instructors, while both the Internal Report and the External Report felt that more needed to be done in the way of providing additional TA support, and possibly a system of sectioning, for the Department's large lower-division courses. An informal meeting of undergraduate students sponsored by the Department last fall pointed to student desires for more literature-in-translation courses, for a better system of advising, and for more rigorous language requirements for majors (i.e., an "acquaintance" with both Greek and Latin for majors). All three reports raised the broader curricular issue of the relationship between the Classics Department and the courses offered elsewhere in the College which deal with classical literature (in translation), maintaining that the quality of such courses was not what it could be were qualified classicists involved in the instruction. The Self-study called for "a full investigation" of the issue; the Internal Report suggested an interchange of TAs between different departments concerned with aspects of classical antiquity; and the External Report recommended Classics Department participation in such courses on classical literature.

In contrast to the apparent health of the undergraduate program in Classics, the graduate program appears to have greater problems. As our Introduction noted, the Department provides several concentrations for its MA and Ph.D. students. According to the Self-study, "essential" graduate courses are offered on a three-year rotation, with a total of seven and one-half graduate courses offered each academic year: six of these are in language, one in archaeology, and the course offered every other year is an introduction to the discipline. (400/500 courses are also available to MA students) It is questionable that the Department's graduate offerings are adequate for the several programs offered: e.g., where the MA in Greek or Latin requires 24 to 30 hours of course work for the degree, apparently only 9 are offered on the 600/700 level each year; the MA in Classical Antiquities requires students to take additional work (how much?) outside

the Department; the Self-study itself pointed to gaps in graduate offerings in paleography, textual criticism, art and archaeology, and Roman history; and the External Report was critical of both the "lack of focus" and the number of different graduate options offered by the Department.

The reports all raised questions concerning the graduate students of the Department. The Self-study noted the problem of students with differing backgrounds in graduate language courses, and suggested an increase in credit hours for advanced language courses and the possibility of computer-assisted language instruction. Both the Self-study and the Internal Report pointed to a need for augmented and/or extended financial assistance for graduate students in Classics (a problem which probably contributed to both reports suggesting the possible use of Classics graduate students in courses of literature-in-translation in other departments). The External Report felt that the Department had admitted too many graduate students for its size, and questioned whether too many of the students were drawn from the department's undergraduate program (here it may be relevant to note that university figures show the Classics Department to have admitted over 90% of MA applicants and 100% of Ph.D applicants in recent years).

While all three reports were supportive of the continuation of the Classics graduate program, they also raised serious questions about its scope and structure. The Self-study discussed an ongoing debate within the Department over "the continued viability of the [Ph.D.] Archaeology/History option" and raised, but did not resolve, the issue of strengthening weaknesses (history/archaeology) versus building off existing strengths (language/literature). After a careful review of both these issues, the Internal Report stated that a "majority" of the Department faculty viewed the graduate program in History and Archaeology as "the most likely area for retrenchment." After criticizing both the breadth and the lack of coherence of the Department's graduate programs, the External Report suggested a reduction in the number of graduate options offered as well as a greater emphasis on "the core areas of the discipline" and more "attention to central authors and areas of the Classics" at the graduate level. Although the External Report's explicit recommendation was for the Department itself to define and narrow the scope of its graduate program, it did suggest three as the number of separate programs which the Department could adequately support and cited literature and history as the areas where the Department might wish to concentrate its efforts. Its suggestion for the hiring of a prominent classicist as chair of the Department, although offered primarily in the context of the issue of departmental governance, nonetheless would add appreciably to the resources of the Department for its graduate program.

Service

In the area of service to the university, the community, and the profession, the Classics Department has a superior record. Professionally, several of its members have been or are prominent in professional organizations, speaking at other institutions, and in editing professional journals and festschriften. Some of the Department's professional activities are

oriented to the local and regional community as well, such as the frequent sponsorship of lectures by visiting scholars, the publication of regional newsletter for high school teachers and others interested in the Classics, the "Classical Reawakening" program which was funded by the Colorado Humanities Program in 1982-83, the local Classics Club for which the Department provides support services, and a new summer school program devoted to the training of high school teachers of Latin. Members of the Department appear to have been at least "normally" active in university service. Clearly, the faculty of the Classics Department have taken the obligation of service seriously and have performed it well.

Research

As noted in the Introduction, the Department's current faculty have published on a wide range of periods, subjects, and dimensions of the discipline of Classics. Based on the observations made in the External Report and the material presented in faculty CVs, approximately half of the continuing faculty of the Department can be considered to be involved in solid, productive, and ongoing research in the field while the other half of the Department either has a poor record of publication or has done little in recent years. Faculty salaries average well (12%) below the AAU average for Classics Departments at the professorial rank, somewhat (5%) below the average at the rank of associate professor, and slightly (1.5%) below at the assistant's level. It needs to be noted that the research achievements of the Department's faculty have been realized without any outside grant support over the past few years, and with only minimal internal (CRCW) financial assistance.

Probably due to the prominence of the "collegiality" issue, on which more will be said later, the reports have little to suggest concerning improving faculty research. The Self-study mentions the possibilities of "retooling" or differential teaching loads, but makes clear that the Department has no definite plans for either. The Internal Report notes that a full-time typist and more travel money for Department faculty might facilitate more research. The External Report had no specific suggestions concerning improving research; it did note, however, that the Department is in danger of losing some of its more productive faculty and that that would have very adverse effects upon it.

Governance/"Collegiality"

While the Self-study offers little substantive evaluation of departmental governance and inter-faculty relations, both the Internal and the External Reports single out governance and what they euphemistically term "collegiality" as the central problems of the Department of Classics. The comments of both reports on this issue are strong and serious enough to be quoted at length. In the words of the Internal Report:

[t]he most pressing problem facing the Classics Department is collegiality. Although some members attempt to maintain harmony at all costs, there is a kind of feud among a few which is having a most deleterious effect upon the functioning of the department in certain respects. We believe that it is a dangerous situation that must be dealt with or it will destroy the department.

Referring to the lack of communication among Department members, the Report noted the conduct of Department business by mail rather than in physical meetings, the feelings of at least some faculty that departmental rules have sometimes been ignored, and the recent appointment of the Chair by the Dean rather than through an election. It also reported that the feud between faculty had begun to affect both the relationship of some faculty with graduate students and the external reputation of the Department of Classics.

Terming the above a "gingerly" treatment of the subject, the External Report characterized the present situation in the Department as "intolerable." It complained of weak leadership by the Chair, of backstairs maneuvering by individual faculty, and of "unprofessional conduct" by faculty to the point where "the students (especially graduate students) and the program have suffered." After echoing many of the Internal Report's criticisms of the collapse of faculty interaction in the conduct of Departmental business, it concluded by saying "[t]hat the department functions at all in these circumstances is surprising, and one must wonder how much longer this situation can endure before the department's professional standing is irremediably eroded. The establishment of a workable system of governance is the most pressing need of the department, ..."

In its responses to both reports, the Department vigorously maintains that a greater degree of due procedure does exist than the tenor of the reports implies (e.g., two physical meetings of the faculty have been held "in the past year;" written departmental rules and regulations do exist and are followed; the selection of the Chair by the Dean was at the request of the faculty of the Department, and was informed by written recommendations from faculty concerning the appointment). The responses, however, do not address some of the adverse comments of the reports (e.g., frayed faculty relations affecting graduate students), and confirm others (that there is great personal and professional friction within the Department; that much departmental decision-making is done through written correspondence between the Chair and faculty, rather than in physical meetings of the Department).

What seems clear from both the reports and the responses is that

- 1) faculty relations have broken down in the Classics Department;
- 2) this has seriously affected the ability of the Department to conduct business;

- 3) some faculty have behaved unprofessionally towards colleagues and students;
- 4) the entire situation is affecting the morale and possibly the productivity of at least some of the faculty and graduate students of the Department.

The Internal and External reports differed on possible solutions for this problem. The former suggested several possibilities: rerostering of individual faculty; active supervision of the Department by the Dean or by a "respected" colleague drawn from the faculty at large; or the addition of two to five faculty members in order to change the internal dynamics of the Department and provide a critical mass for movement in a more positive direction; or a "weekend retreat" where Classics faculty could resolve their differences. The External Report was more definite, calling on the Administration to take the lead in creating a strong system of leadership for the Department, and recommending as the most fruitful avenue to achieving this the importation of a Classics scholar of international repute (and thereby authority) as Chair. It also suggested the possibility of shifting the archaeology program outside the Department.

Recommendations

- 1) Faculty collegiality and departmental governance are the central and crucial issues facing the Department of Classics. The existing state of rancor among faculty members and the breakdown in effective cooperation among faculty pervade all aspects of the Department's collective life: its instructional activities, its ability to adjust to changing circumstances and to plan for the future, and even the capability of faculty members to engage in research in a reasonably supportive environment all appear to have been affected adversely by the current situation. Certainly the successful development of the Department and possibly its very existence as a collective entity demands resolution of this problem.

PRP has neither the desire nor the ability to legislate a solution to this problem. It can, however, emphasize the need for a resolution of the issue and suggest initial procedures for moving towards a solution. To this end we recommend the convening of a formal meeting or a series of meetings of all Classics Department faculty with the Dean of A & S as well as representatives of (1) the Committee on Faculty Responsibility of the Boulder Faculty Assembly; (2) the Committee on Privilege and Tenure of the Faculty Senate; (3) the Counselling Service of the University. The purpose of such a meeting or set of meetings would be to remind all Department members of their professional responsibilities and obligations, and to inform them of possible avenues which might be useful in resolving departmental differences as well as the possible consequences should these differences continue to impede the proper functioning of the Department.

After such meetings, departmental members should continue consultations among themselves with the aim of developing at least an agreed-upon set of by-laws for the Department and a plan for departmental development over the next few years. PRP requests that a progress report on such efforts at reconciliation be presented to the Dean of A & S by October 1, 1984. Should departmental initiatives at restoring collegiality prove unsuccessful by that date, we recommend the creation of a committee of UCB faculty from outside the Department to:

- 1) undertake an investigation of the Department's problems of collegiality;
- 2) recommend to the Dean of A & S whatever measures it believes necessary to restore professionalism to Classics.

NOTE -- The recommendations which follow are contingent on the resolution of the above issues of governance and collegiality. Without their resolution, additional investment in the Department would be an unwise use of university resources.

- 2) Based on the material in the reports, the graduate program of the Department is in need of reevaluation. PRP requests the Department to develop a coherent plan for
 - a) focusing the graduate program more narrowly;
 - b) resolving the curricular shortcomings noted in the reports;
 - c) improving graduate student recruiting and tightening admissions standards.

The Department should report on the results of its deliberations on the above to the Dean of the Graduate School by December 31, 1984.

- 3) The Department can use additional TA assistance in its large lower-division courses (and also to provide necessary financial support for graduate students). If the issues raised in recommendations 1 and 2 are resolved successfully, PRP recommends the allocation of additional funds for TAs to the Department.
- 4) The Department should reconsider its undergraduate offerings and its system of undergraduate advising in light of the student opinions presented in the Self-study.
- 5) The Department needs to consider methods of improving scholarship. Its program relating to this subject should include plans for differential work loads and faculty development.