



University of Colorado **Boulder**

2025 Program Review

Department of Classics

Academic Review and Planning

Advisory Committee Report

Approved

Signed by:

Ann Stevens

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Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs | Date

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Process Overview

The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) review of the Department of Classics (CLAS) was conducted in accordance with the 2025 program review guidelines. The degree program report and goal setting exercise were prepared and submitted by the unit. An external review committee (ERC), consisting of two experts from outside of the University of Colorado Boulder, engaged in a virtual visit and submitted a report based upon review of relevant documents and interviews with faculty, staff, and student unit members and university administrators. ARPAC staff, employing web conferencing tools, facilitated the external review as a remote visit over March 10 and 11, 2025. The ARPAC unit liaisons submitted a summary of findings derived from the goal setting exercise. ARPAC reviewed and considered these materials, met with the chair, and wrote this report.

Past Reviews

The Department of Classics last underwent ARPAC review in 2016. At that time, the department had 11 tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty (four professors, five associate professors, and two assistant professors), two instructors (now called teaching-track faculty), two visiting professors, 15 teaching assistants (TA), and two graduate part-time instructors (GPTI). Classics offered three undergraduate major tracks (Greek/Latin; Literature/Culture/Thought; and History/Art History/Archaeology) and was lauded for the roughly 50% increase in bachelor's degrees awarded compared to five years prior, as well as more modest increases in total undergraduate majors and increased diversity among students majoring in classics. For academic year (AY) 2014-2015, student credit hours (SCH) was 6,933, a five percent increase from five years prior, and in defiance of national trends in humanities. Similar trends were observed in the department's Master of Arts (MA) (which had five tracks), with 11 degrees awarded in AY 2014-2015, a 22% increase over five years.

Impressed with the department's enrollment success, in 2016 ARPAC recommended (1) sustained focus on career placement for undergraduates, including summer internships; (2) the development of formal mechanisms for measuring student success; (3) continued development of the department's internationally recognized scholarship; and (4) continued enhancement of both the MA and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs. As further detailed in subsequent sections, it appears the department has done an excellent job with regard to (3) and, as to (4), has continued the success of its MA program. As the ERC observed in 2025, faculty mentoring of MA students continued to help the MA program serve as a national model. However, further attention needs to be paid to career placement for all students, measuring student success, and revitalizing the department's PhD program.

Unit Analysis

The campus' standardized description of the Department of Classics is available on the website of the Office of Data & Analytics (D&A) at <https://www.colorado.edu/oda/institutional-research/institutional-level-data/information-department/academic-review-and-planning>. D&A updates the profile annually in the fall semester. Generally speaking, this report cites data for the Unite Data Profile posted in October 2025. Additional data was obtained from Classics, including the degree program report, the goal setting exercise, and the unit profile.

Teaching and Learning Excellence and Assessment

As to undergraduate education, the department offers a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Classics with two major tracks (Greek and/or Latin Language & Literature; Classical Studies), as well as an undifferentiated/single-track minor. As of fall 2024, Classics had 61 enrolled majors across all grade levels. Consistent with that overall enrollment, the department issued 22 BAs in 2025 and 16 in 2024, numbers that are relatively stable over the past five years prior with modest year-to-year fluctuations. The department notes that it also has roughly 80 minors. During 2024, Classics faculty taught ~7,300 SCH, a number that has been relatively stable since 2018, with modest year-to-year fluctuations. With regard to graduate education, the department offers an MA in Classics that had 20 enrolled students and awarded 8 degrees in 2024. The department also offers a PhD; however, there are not currently any students enrolled in the program. Beyond these metrics, Classics defines its teaching mission as fostering “engagement with cultures of the ancient Mediterranean” while also emphasizing “the interdisciplinary nature of Classics as a field that allows us to explore beyond these geographical and chronological parameters.” The department seeks to ingrain in students how by “delving into the ancient past” we can better develop “essential approaches to addressing pressing questions of our times.” To achieve these goals, the department aims to develop students’ communication and critical thinking skills across cultures and disciplines while training them in the language, literature, and culture of their field.

Classics assesses the effectiveness of its undergraduate and graduate programs against whether they are meeting their Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which includes not just assessing performance against those outcomes, but also determining whether any changes to goals need to be implemented. The department also has a longstanding practice of conducting regular peer observations of teaching. The department offers a robust range of large undergraduate courses, which give students broad exposure to Classics, while also serving as a gateway into the Classics major or minor.

In terms of undergraduate metrics, as underscored by the ERC, Classics has succeeded in generating robust student engagement notwithstanding national enrollment trends in the humanities. Both the department and the ERC attributed this success in large part to the department’s “proactive approach that begins at the course level.” According to the ERC, “[b]y building large, engaging, but academically-rigorous courses, and staffing them with all of their faculty—from distinguished professors to teaching faculty—they have maintained large course enrollments in everything from perennial favorites like Myth to dark horses like Archaeology of Death.” Student enthusiasm for the department is also fostered through the Classics Club, which receives steady faculty support. The department’s success in terms of student interest is also attributable to cross-disciplinary bridges it has built with other departments. Though, as the ERC and Classics underscore, going forward it will be important to both further dispel myths regarding the marketability of a Classics education/major in the workforce while at the same time potentially investing in more obviously “career” oriented courses and internships. As discussed in more detail below, hiring a tenure-track Roman archaeologist could also help round out the curriculum offerings with respect to courses where students may find jobs specifically in the practice of archaeology. Relatedly, Classics has some concerns that the School of Education’s decision (at the recommendation of ARPAC) to end licensure in Latin is an impediment to recruiting students to the department and limits students’ employment opportunities (though whether there is student demand for this licensure is questioned by the School of Education).

The MA program is, according to the ERC, “a nationally and internationally recognized funded MA program that sends its graduates to top-tier doctoral programs all over North America.” The program’s success is driven by active faculty mentoring, a deep but interdisciplinary and flexible curriculum, and funding for MA students (though that funding is, in the view of the department, inadequate, and particularly so with regard to summer funding). Increased resources for pedagogical training of the MA students are a need and would enhance the students’ career opportunities.

Research, Scholarly, and/or Creative Work Excellence

In terms of areas of research expertise, the department’s areas of strength include Greek and Latin literature with three Hellenists and three Latinists, as well as a three-person art and archeology team, and two historians, among other areas of strength. The ERC described Classics as having a “nationally outstanding faculty.”

More specifically, the faculty includes a MacArthur Fellowship awardee, a distinguished professor, and two college professors of distinction, as well as winners of the James R. Wiseman Book Award and the Goodwin Award (the highest scholarly awards offered by, respectively, the Archaeological Institute of America and Society for Classical Studies). Those qualitative achievements are also supported by substantial quantitative research production. In 2024, based on a 7-year review period culminating in 2022, the department ranked 5th among the 16 Arts & Humanities units reviewed by ARPAC for refereed books and monographs (0.7) and 8th of 17 units for referred articles and chapters (4.9). As summarized by the ERC, the department’s output amounts to “an impressive standard of research publication by any measure . . . and confirms without any doubt the superb scholarly quality of the Department.”

While the department’s areas of expertise are generally well-balanced, the ERC and Classics both note one significant gap in expertise—they have no Roman archeologist since a 2020 retirement.

Hiring and Mentoring (Faculty, Staff, Postdoctoral Fellows)

According to the D&A profile for AY 2025-2026, faculty personnel in Classics consisted of 13 tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty (with seven full professors, three associate professors, and three assistant professors), three teaching-track faculty (teaching professors), and two lecturers, along with 15 teaching assistants, and one graduate part-time instructor. This appears to be a net increase of two TTT faculty since the prior review period, with the other numbers relatively stable. Faculty salaries for associate professors and assistant professors are on par with the Association of American Universities (AAU) peer averages, though salaries for full professors lag somewhat behind (80% of AAU peers). The department has a policy/bylaw of formally mentoring pre-tenured faculty at least until the acquisition of tenure (and beyond, at the employee’s request). The ERC praised Classics for its integration of teaching faculty into the faculty governance and culture.

As noted by both the ERC and the department, the 2020 retirement of their Roman archaeologist compromises the department’s scholarly mission by weakening its collective research and teaching profile.

Staff personnel in the department consist of two exempt staff members (a business services program manager and an academic services professional). The ERC recommended that additional staff support be added, and Classics has a goal of helping staff connect with colleagues across campus so that they can expand their network, resource pool, and community, while also further

including staff in department governance, including evaluation of potential new faculty.

Student Success and Mentoring (Undergraduate and Graduate Students)

Classics ensures undergraduate student success by rigorous engagement and broad exposure to the ancient world. The undergraduate major headcount stood at 61 in fall 2024, an increase from 49 in 2020 (24%). Additionally, there are approximately 80 minors. Twenty-two bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2025 (representing a 6-year high) and 16 in 2024, both up from the five-year low of 11 (2020). In the most recent year (2024), the unit taught 7,275 undergraduate student credit hours (SCH), a 5% increase over the 2016 ARPAC review (6,933 SCH in FY2015) but down 6% over the last 5 years (7,777 SCH in FY2020). A substantial 87% of these SCH were taken by non-majors in FY2024, a decrease from 92% in 2020. For undergraduate SCH in 2024, 45% were taught by TTT, 42% by teaching-track faculty, 3% by GPTI/TAs, and 11% by others. Consistent with this data, the external reviewers noted the teaching load is shared across faculty types, with TAs leading recitation sections that enable the unit to teach large (>100 student) sectioned classes, and all faculty (from distinguished professors to teaching faculty) staffing courses. The unit reports a high proportion of Classics majors graduate with Honors and/or Distinction. The department fosters professional development opportunities, including studies abroad with faculty-run archaeological projects in Croatia and Egypt. The CU undergraduate Classics Club is noted as a vital component of the departmental community that further contributes to student academic and professional success. Student placement data highlights that graduates populate Latin teaching positions “in Colorado and beyond” and that Classics majors boast high success rates for admission to medical and law schools. The external reviewers noted that the faculty’s engaging style leads to a “positive contagion effect” on students’ overall education, making them more curious and inquiring – suggesting general student satisfaction with Classics teaching and culture.

In light of downward trends in humanities enrollments, Classics should celebrate its success in maintaining steady major numbers and student credit hours. Further, the department is to be commended for maintaining consistent, impressively high student learning outcomes (measured PLOs). Opportunities for the unit include expanding integrative curricula (e.g., Ancient Roots of Modern Medicine) and developing career-tied courses like Museum Internships.

Although a smaller department, Classics also fields successful graduate (MA, PhD) programs. Its nationally recognized MA program has trained students for top-tier PhD programs including Princeton University, Yale University, and Harvard University. Enrollments in 2025 included 20 MA students, but no PhD students; the MA headcount increased from 14 in 2020, while the PhD headcount decreased from 4. Eight master's degrees were awarded in 2024, and 2 PhDs. Smaller numbers are to be expected for graduate degrees in Classics, and the department is acting responsibly by not having a large PhD program. A key success is the formal mentoring system that assigns MA students two faculty mentors; a program that has been met with “unanimous enthusiasm.” Students are also supported with practical training through a first-year proseminar focusing on research, grant writing, and technology. Graduate students participate in departmental governance via two elected representatives who attend regular department meetings, though they do not have a vote. Students highly value the strong collegiality within the unit, and the department is formalizing a voluntary peer mentorship program to build confidence and morale.

The Classics MA program’s success in placing graduates in top PhD programs should be celebrated. Challenges include non-competitive stipends limiting recruitment, scarcity of summer

funding, and the loss of Latin licensure, which disadvantages MA graduates seeking public school jobs. Opportunities exist to formalize voluntary peer mentorship, increase pedagogical training (potentially leveraging the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL)) and to develop early workshops on turning research into publications.

Inclusivity and Unit Culture

In February 2022, a collaborative group met and identified the following [five goals to advance diversity, equity and inclusion](#) at CU Boulder: (1) employee skills and development; (2) student achievement outcomes; (3) community building; (4) employee recruitment outcomes; and (5) preparing students to participate in a diverse democracy.

Classics actively pursues inclusive excellence through focused efforts on culture, climate, and access. The department aims to strengthen its culture by promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) and plans to form a committee of faculty and students to organize events, facilitate dialogues, and set up a dedicated mailing list and webpage. This initiative's success is intended to be monitored via regularly administered climate surveys. Furthermore, the unit is reflecting on strategies to make the educational experience more welcoming for transfer and non-traditional students, such as scheduling occasional lunchtime community events. In graduate student recruitment and retention, the department acknowledges that additional funding would help increase diverse perspectives in their MA cohorts, as the current stipends are not competitive given the high cost of living. The unit also commits to the regular review and incremental improvement of the Advisory Policy on Contingent Faculty to ensure their rights are respected, and they remain enfranchised in departmental life.

Classics is characterized by a high degree of collegiality that extends from staff to distinguished faculty. The departmental culture is one that allows and encourages informal idea-sharing and makes good use of the diverse subject-matter specialties among faculty. This strong collegiality is also noted among graduate students, who appreciate informal mentoring from peers.

Unit Planning and Governance Structures and Processes

Departmental strategic plans are established through a “truly collaborative” process where faculty of all ranks, staff, and student representatives contribute ideas which the chair then synthesizes and refines. The unit’s goal setting exercise contains plans to continue meeting Program Learning Outcomes and to develop collaborative courses, as well as internships and career opportunities. The department also intends to augment research production by utilizing more undergraduate and graduate student research assistantships and by ensuring ready and reliable access to scholarly library resources. Additionally, the department seeks effective strategies to strengthen community for doctoral students and a formal framework for staff and student input on faculty hiring.

Classics is governed by its departmental bylaws, last amended on January 24, 2022. The bylaws define voting rights, including those for teaching-track faculty on continuing rosters with at least 50% appointments. The unit’s major governing body is the Executive Committee, consisting of the chair (ex officio) and two elected tenured/tenure-track faculty members; the Executive Committee advises the chair, functions as the Salary Committee, and determines course offerings. Faculty hiring is detailed in the bylaws, requiring a simple majority vote of members at or above the rank under consideration (separate Spousal and Partner Hiring Policy guidelines exist). The unit addresses key personnel issues through dedicated documents appended to the bylaws, covering Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) Policies, Annual Faculty Evaluation, Salary

Recommendations, and Grievance Policies, and Policies for Reappointment and Promotion for non-tenure-track faculty. Faculty grievance procedures for annual and career merit are handled by the Executive Committee. A formal mentoring system for untenured tenure-track faculty is maintained per bylaws III C. Student representatives attend regular department meetings but have no vote. The unit plans to institute a procedure for the regular review of its bylaws by AY 2026-2027.

Classics is proactively updating its internal governing documents and establishing new procedures to operate more effectively and fairly. As noted by the ERC, the unit, in collaboration with the Dean of Arts & Humanities, could provide greater transparency regarding the process of promotion and movement from temporary to teaching faculty status. Furthermore, while governance review is planned, the ERC suggested the small department might benefit from a broad look at its internal administrative structures for greater efficiencies, given the high number of committees maintained.

Support Needs

The ERC observed that the department desired additional media and advertising support from the college or university for their public-facing events and programs. ARPAC concurs with the ERC that: "Support from the University would ensure that these events attract further interest from the local community and raise the local and state profile of the Department."

Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee address the following recommendations to the Department of Classics and to the offices of responsible administrators:

To the Unit:

1. Enhance pedagogic preparation opportunities for graduate students, possibly in partnership with CU Boulder's Center for Teaching and Learning.
2. Begin regular tracking of graduate students' career outcomes to document the program's strength, perhaps in conjunction with the office of the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Data & Analytics.
3. Given the high number of committees maintained for this size of department, review internal administrative structures and assess committees for greater efficiencies and consolidation, as well as possible opportunities for shared services for the Division of the Arts and Humanities.
4. Consider ways to responsibly revitalize and reevaluate PhD recruitment practices, with the goal of attracting quality students while also strengthening career outcomes, including by consulting with the Graduate School.
5. Continue to communicate event promotion needs to [the College of Arts & Sciences Communications Department](#) and seek support from the Dean of Arts & Humanities as required.

To the Dean of the Arts and Humanities:

6. Consider prioritizing authorization for the department to hire a TTT Roman archaeologist (perhaps with expertise in digital archaeology), which would fill critical research and teaching needs, while also ensuring the integrity of the nationally recognized MA program.
7. Work with the department to monitor and evaluate ways to support students interested in language education obtaining teaching licensure either internally or externally.
8. Explore centralizing graduate student administrative support across units.
9. Explore creating shared administrative support services for certain key functions for which individual units, especially smaller units, may not have staff personnel, e.g., graduate student administrative support, event support, budget and finance support, etc.
10. Advocate for media support for external CLAS events, in conjunction with [the College of Arts & Sciences Communications Department](#) and [University level media relations](#).
11. Emphasize and support the important role that CLAS—and the humanities disciplines as a whole—play in CU Boulder's mission when communicating and advocating to university administration, the local community, and the state of Colorado, including in central campus (SRC) communications and storytelling.

To the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Data & Analytics:

12. Work with unit leadership to begin regular tracking of graduate students' career outcomes to document the program's strength.

To the Provost:

13. Emphasize and support the important role that CLAS—and the humanities disciplines as a whole—play in CU Boulder's mission when communicating and advocating to university administration, the local community, and the state of Colorado, including in central campus (SRC) communications and storytelling.

Required Follow-up

The chair of the Department of Classics shall submit two follow-up reports—one due on the first of April 2027 and one due on the first of April 2029. The follow-up reports shall focus on the implementation of the recommendations from ARPAC detailed herein. The dean of Arts and Humanities and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as the provost and other relevant central campus leadership will also respond to all outstanding matters under their purview arising from this review year's recommendations. The dean of Arts and Humanities and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences will submit one follow-up report due on May 1, 2028, while the provost and relevant central campus leaders will submit one follow-up report due on June 1, 2030.