

American Philological Association
Classics Advisory Service
Director: Thomas Falkner

Report submitted December 23, 2004

Since September 2, 2004, the Director of the CAS has received eight requests for assistance from colleges or universities. General descriptions of the situations and responses, in order from early September through December, 2004, are as follows.

- A liberal arts college in the Southeast was faced by its administration and curriculum committee with the elimination of its classics major, the reduction of its two-person staff by one faculty position, and the reduction of the program to the teaching of Latin and translation courses. The Director offered counsel and suggested strategies for response. The College's curriculum committee subsequently reversed the decision on the staffing reduction and asked the CAS for nominations for composition of a review panel for its Classics department from classicists in the general region. The Director provided a list of possible reviewers.
- A liberal arts college in the Southwest asked the Director for nominations for the composition of a review panel for its Classics department from classicists in the general region. The Director provided a list of possible reviewers.
- The Dean of Faculty at a well known independent boarding school asked the Director for nominations for the composition of a review panel for its Classics department. The Director provided a list of possible reviewers.
- A liberal arts college in the Midwest asked the Director for suggestions for the composition of a review panel for its Classics department from classicists in the general region. The Director provided a list of possible reviewers.
- A faculty member at a mid-size university in the Midwest raised concerns about the future of the program in Latin and classics. The CAS Director made inquiry of the Dean of Arts and Sciences and received assurances of an impending tenure-track position there.
- One department at a small university in the West with a modest program in Latin and classics (one full-time faculty member) sought advice regarding concerns that on his retirement he would not be replaced.
- The CAS was notified by a consultant who served as an external reviewer for a foreign language program at a liberal arts college in the Midwest that his review included a recommendation that the college's administration make use of the CAS in connection with the program in classics.
- One classics department in a major research university in the East with a strong program in classics has consulted extensively regarding a variety of changes the administration has proposed that would threaten the quality and the existence of the program in Classics including: the possible elimination of the teaching of ancient Greek; a reduction in the number of full-time staff from four to three; the restructuring or elimination of the Department itself. Leadership in the APA and

other Deans in the area who are also classicists have advised the administration directly and urged the Dean not to proceed with these changes.

One cannot but be concerned by the pattern emerging in this report and the previous (see below). As more institutions attempt to address budgetary and organizational challenges by eliminating or reducing faculty positions and programs, the burden tends to fall disproportionately on small departments in the humanities: positions are cut, descriptions are rewritten with little regard for the people in them, and departments are “reconfigured” as programs. This year saw evidence of these patterns in Classics programs at large universities and small liberal arts colleges, at public and private institutions, at institutions with large and distinguished programs and modest non-major programs. The reasons in each case seem to be the same: classics programs tend to be relatively small, with less visibility than others and smaller constituencies, internal and external; the small enrollments in upper-division languages courses are often adduced as evidence of the weakness or dispensability of the program; and the value of the classics, the nature of the discipline and of the positions classicists hold, are often badly understood by the groups and individuals who make the decisions.

The CAS will continue to provide counsel and strategic support. But as classicists challenge these decisions in the higher levels of administration at their institutions, what is equally important to them are the data that can put the discipline and these decisions in a larger context. To the extent that the APA can legally and ethically provide data on size of departments, teaching loads, numbers of majors, class sizes and other such matters, both in general and by institutional peer group, the better equipped our colleagues will be to educate the decision makers at their institutions about these vital issues.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas M. Falkner

Report previously submitted September 2, 2004

Since January 2004, the Director of the CAS has received five inquiries and four requests for assistance from colleges or universities.

- One classics department about to undergo a regularly scheduled review asked for assistance in identifying possible external reviewers. The Director responded with suggestions.
- An inter-institutional consortially based electronic project asked for assistance in identifying possible external reviewers. The Director responded with suggestions.
- A small department facing a reduction in size through loss of a position asked for assistance. The Director offered advice and the Vice President for Professional Matters offered comparative data on course enrollments.
- A university committee reviewing a classicist for promotion asked for assistance in identifying possible external reviewers. The Director responded with suggestions.
- One college department that raised concerns about the future of the program declined to pursue the matter.

Respectfully submitted,
Thomas M. Falkner