**Annual Departmental Assessment Report**

**Department or Program: Classics**

**Academic Year of Report: 2017-18**

**Department Contact Person for Assessment: Malcolm Wilson**

**Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report**

For each major in the department, list the learning objectives that were assessed during this period.

*Classics Major*

1. Mastery of Basic Greek Grammar

**Section 2: Assessment Activities**

For each learning outcome, describe what information was collected, how it was analyzed and discussed, and the conclusions that were drawn from the analysis. In the narrative, reference all relevant means of collecting information about learning goals, including direct measures (e.g. assessment of student assignments), indirect measures (e.g. overall grade patterns in a particular course, student reflections on learning, SERU data), and qualitative information (e.g. faculty observations, student input). While the choice of which assessments are most meaningful is up to the department, a mix of direct and indirect measures is requested.

We have explained elsewhere the complexity of the task in teaching basic Ancient Greek grammar. It involves a prodigious amount of memorization, both of inflectional forms and of vocabulary items. This is something modern students have not been trained to do in their modern school education. Quite simply the course breaks down the grammar into management units. After each unit the students are tested on their knowledge of the inflectional forms, the syntactical structures and the vocabulary items. We also give a midterm and final exam. This is how we collected formal information about this learning outcome. The results of such quizzes and exams have always, in our experience, correlated very highly with the students' proficiency, and have been excellent prognostics for a student's ability to move to the next level of instruction. In addition, because this is a small class with intense teacher-student interaction, the instructor always has the "pulse" of the class and can always and immediately assess in a non-quantitative way how well the students gave grasped and assimilated the material.

For the purpose of this exercise, we collected grades in the GRK 101 class as taught in 2015 and 2017. The instructor was different, but the syllabus and textbook were the same. In 2016 there were 15 students and their average final raw score was 84. In 2017 there were 11 students and their average final raw score was 73%.

**Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis**

For each learning goal assessed for each major, describe any actions taken as a result of assessment information, or plans to take action during the next academic year. Describe how the actions or action plans are meant to address the issues arrived at through the assessment activities in Section 2.

Here we face one of the most challenging aspects of adapting "assessment" to our language curriculum. Our classes are small, and since the Great Recession our entire language program is has become more vulnerable. It is one thing to assess; it is quite another to use that assessment to take concrete actions in the classroom. Let me explain: the Department of Classics strongly believes that we should teach Greek with the intended outcome that the students will have full mastery of grammar and can make their way through ancient Greek texts with facility. Our best students, who have put the effort into memorizing the material, succeed in doing this. But, frankly, many of our students never really get it. And yet we cannot sustain the program with one or two of the best students. Independently of the present assessment effort, our department has for decades discussed and pondered how to improve our students' performance. Quite simply, there is no magic bullet and there is no royal road to Greek grammar. In consequence, we teach Greek in a serious way to the best students (and anecdotal evidence, from students who have attended international programs or graduate school, confirms that we prepare our students very well), and we do our best with the other students. If we push harder we'll lose our students; if we teach a less demanding course, we'll fail our best students.

From the current mode of assessment, we cannot tell whether the two different instructors applied different grading standards or whether the students were better in one class than in another.

**Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience**

Briefly describe other continuous improvement efforts that are not directly related to the learning goals above. In other words, what activity has the department engaged in to improve the student educational experience? This might include changes such as curriculum revisions, new advising approaches, revised or new co-curricular activities, etc. Describe the rationale for the change(s) and any outcomes resulting from the change(s).

The Classics Department has continued to increase its undergraduate activities. In the last three years we have markedly increased the number of academic talks (this is conjunction with our Diversity and Inclusion efforts), fieldtrips, financial support for students going to work on archaeological digs abroad and support for the undergraduate Classics club. The rationale for these activities was simply to provide a richer intellectual life for our students. The outcome has been, I think, that the students who have taken advantage of these activities have appreciated them.

**Section 5: Plans for Next Year**

Briefly describe tentative assessment plans for the next academic year. Which goals will be assessed and how? What actions will be taken as a result of this years’ analysis of assessment information? What other plans does the department have to improve the student educational experience? What are the budgetary implications of any proposed actions? How will those be addressed?

The department will consider extending its assessment efforts to other areas of our curriculum, in particular the larger service classes, where there may be more opportunities for evidence based improvements in learning outcomes.

The department will also consider changing the mode of assessment in the first year Greek class so as to take account of varying grading standards.