

Final Assessment Report

Academic Review

Classical Studies

The Final Assessment was approved by Senate at the May 13, 2016 meeting. The following is the review:

A. Summary

- i. The Self Study was presented (electronically) to the PPC on February 3, 2014.
- ii. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Dr. Judith Fletcher, Wilfrid Laurier University and Dr. Padraig O’Cleirigh, University of Guelph and two internal reviewers, Dr. Steve Muhlberger and Dr. Rob Breton.
- iii. The site visit occurred on March 20 and 21, 2014.
- iv. The Reviewers’ Report was received on May 1, 2014.
- v. The Department’s response was provided on October 20, 2014.
- vi. The Faculty Dean’s response was received on July 2, 2014.

The academic programs offered by the Department which were examined as part of the review included:

BA Honours Specialization
BA Specialization
BA Major
BA Minor

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by the Nipissing University Senate on May 17, 2013, and ratified by the Quality Council on June 28, 2013.

B. Strengths

The Review Team noted the following regarding the strengths of the Program:

‘We have been greatly impressed by the ambitious scope and high level of proficiency demonstrated by the Classical Studies Program at Nipissing University. With only a relatively small contingent of faculty, the program meets the authoritative standards of the American Philological Association, the professional association of Classical Studies, by offering Greek and Latin courses in addition to a comprehensive survey of the history and culture of the ancient Greco-Roman world. Nipissing presents a well-developed pattern of instruction which brings students from accessible introductory courses to more complex and specialized senior courses.

All of these courses are rigorous, demanding and well-structured. Nipissing has an advantage over many other Canadian post-secondary institutions in that most of its intermediate and senior

classes are smaller than those at larger universities. This allows for more personalized instruction and for strong pedagogical bonds between students and faculty. Especially notable are innovative courses in social history, and the application of interactive digital media resources. While Classical Studies at Nipissing offers programs that prepare students for graduate work in the discipline, it also teaches them transferrable skills such as critical thinking, writing and communication, and has application to contemporary social issues such as gender. The creators of the program have dedicated themselves to creating a course of study that is comparable to that of larger universities.”

C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

The Review Team offered the following specific recommendations:

1. The appointment of a third full-time faculty member seems vital to sustaining the quality of the programs.

In its response, the Department stated that “the program’s response to the recommendation, of course, is limited to rearticulating the benefits to the program and the wider Nipissing community. An appointment of a specialist in ancient drama, for example, could be shared between English and Classical Studies, and perhaps with the theatre program at Canadore. One of our present part-time instructors, [name deleted], who joined Nipissing this year, holds a PhD in Classical Studies and Theatre Studies from the University of Melbourne, and brings 30 years of teaching and practical theatre experience to the University, as well as international experience and connections. Such an addition would not only enrich the Classical Studies program and the wider University community but would have much potential for community outreach endeavors. It is a unique opportunity for Nipissing University to have such a qualified specialist in North Bay, and we strongly recommend not to let this opportunity pass by.”

The Faculty Dean advised that “while staffing recommendations are outside the purview of this review, the model of remunerating faculty on a per capita basis for low enrolled (language) courses in Classics is not sustainable in part because enrollment in the language courses is increasing. There are a number of opportunities in the Classics programme that could be seized with another appointment (consolidating efforts in the digital humanities and language instruction are only two ways of thinking about a third appointment).”

PPC response is as follows: PPC notes according to Quality Assurance Framework Reviewers are asked to comment on the “Appropriateness and effectiveness of the academic unit’s use of existing human, physical and financial resources in delivering its program(s)”. In making this assessment, reviewers must recognize the institution’s

autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation.” Accordingly, PPC refers this matter to the Dean for consideration as part of the normal budgetary process.

2. Enhanced administrative support is necessary for the reasons stated above.

The Department advised *“that the lack of a departmental administrative office has already been criticized by the previous program reviewers in 2005. It would make good sense to create such an office to be shared with the History department. This remains an important goal which would be particularly beneficial for our students who would have a central point of reference.”*

The Faculty Dean noted that *“it is widely recognized that departments and programmes need a different level of administrative support than is currently provided. Nipissing University is working towards this end.”*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC notes according to Quality Assurance Framework Reviewers are asked to comment on the “Appropriateness and effectiveness of the academic unit’s use of existing human, physical and financial resources in delivering its program(s)”.** In making this assessment, reviewers must recognize the institution’s autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation.” Accordingly, PPC refers this matter to the Dean for consideration as part of the normal budgetary process.

3. We suggest that the website for the program be improved for the purposes of recruitment, for example a You Tube video by one of the professors that highlights some of the unique features of the program

The Department advised that *“they are presently working on redesigning our individual faculty websites and are updating the University website as well. We are also looking into other means to reach out to prospective students through facebook and/or youTube. The student-run Classics Club already has a facebook page.”*

The Faculty Dean noted that *“there is a deep, clear, widely supported view in A&S that the departmental and programme websites should reflect that content of the programme in order to enhance recruitment and the profile of faculty research/teaching.”*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC considers this recommendation to be somewhat outside the scope of the program review. However, PPC recommends that the relevant University units (Recruitment, Marketing and Communications) continue to consult with all**

academic units and the Deans in the development of their marketing/recruitment/communications strategies.

4. We would recommend that the program coordinator consider revising Myth and Religion courses (CLAS 2006 and CLAS 2007) to a one semester course in mythology at the second year level. If necessary there could an additional third year course in religions of the ancient world (which could include early Christianity). The enrolment in the current courses, compared to that of other institutions, is surprisingly low. Although this is the most popular course in the program, there is potential for growth here. We are mildly concerned about the word "Religion" in the course title, which is unusual, since myth has broader significance than its religious connection.

The Department state that *"we agree with the reviewers' recommendation to revise the current courses. We are presently developing two new courses to replace the present Myth Courses CLAS 2006/2007 with a 3-credit 2nd year course CLAS 2xxx Myth and Imagination in the Ancient Mediterranean World, and a 3-credit 3rd year course CLAS 3xxx Religions in the Greco-Roman World."*

The Faculty Dean reiterated that *"the programme is considering this revision of course name and tweak to content."*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC recommends that the Department revise the Myth and Religion courses as suggested.**

5. The possibility of a course that incorporates some form of travel to the Mediterranean could be a very strong incentive for students, based on our knowledge of other programs. As we have noted, art and archaeology are not areas of strengths at Nipissing, but there are several available opportunities at other institutions for summer travel, or for archaeological experience. We recommend that Nipissing's Classical Studies program investigate these possibilities.

The Department stated that *"they are looking into the possibility to arrange a travel opportunity to Italy in the Spring of 2016."*

The Faculty Dean stated that *"as interim dean of A&S, I have encouraged faculty to design courses that involve travel to the benefit of the educational experience. Classics is an ideal programme for such travel. Travel at third year would serve as a capstone to much of the learning and would set students up for very challenging fourth year projects. It would also serve as a recruitment tool into the programme, would allow returning students to recruit by virtue of the retelling of their experience, would allow students to earn money in years 1 and 2 to pay for*

the travel, and would complement the strategic directions of the faculty (which may include global citizenship).”

PPC response is as follows: **That the program coordinator investigate the possibility of a course which includes a visit to the Mediterranean and report back to the Dean.**

6. We encourage the current faculty to consider creating a course in the Classical Tradition that includes films, but is not exclusively based on films (which can be an expensive project), to broaden the appeal of Classical Studies for non-majors.

The Department advised that *“they are actually developing two new courses in the Classical Tradition: The Ancient World in Film, and a second one, The Ancient World in Modern Pop Culture, both on the 2nd year level. The course in Pop Culture will be developed in collaboration with Computer Sciences here at Nipissing to include projects that would allow students to develop games as well as digital animation based on ancient myths, historical figures or events, for example. These projects could also become elements of existing courses such as Greek/Roman drama and Greek Mythology.”*

The Faculty Dean noted that *“this is an idea the faculty are considering, this will require an instructor with particular expertise.”*

PPC response is as follows: **That the program coordinator investigate whether the introduction of a course in Classical Tradition is feasible, especially with existing resources, and report back to the Dean.**

7. We recommend streamlining the program requirements in the manner suggested above, i.e. students would be required to take a certain number of second and third year courses, rather than selections from particular groups. This modification will not compromise the integrity of the program since it exists de facto at the present in that only a certain number of courses can be offered every year.

The Department advised that *“they will remove the requirements to take course from particular groups of courses since it is rather confusing and not necessary, as the reviewers rightly pointed out since the number of courses we offer in each given year is limited, and students have to take what is being offered.”*

The Faculty Dean advised that *“this recommendation is being considered by the department; it would need to be submitted to committees of A&S for approval in the fall.”*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC recommends that the Department review the program requirements with a view to streamlining the structure as proposed by the Review Committee.**

8. We wonder whether a requirement to take one of the two ancient languages as part of an Honours (as distinct from a Specialized Honours) program in Classical studies would improve the rate of survival - or simply discourage students from registering in the program in the first place. Therefore we suggest that faculty canvas students to get a feeling for how this might affect enrolments. It may be noted that at the University of Guelph the requirement to take three semesters of either Greek or Latin has not prevented more than fifty Major Honours students from facing the challenge.

The Department advised that *“to require all majors to take three credits in Latin is a possibility but one we have to carefully explore first. We are seeking feedback from our students on this. Latin would be the language of choice for its benefits for majors in English, Sciences, and students thinking of pursuing a legal or medical career. However, students may not share our enthusiasm, and we do not want to scare them away.”*

The Faculty Dean stated that *“the question is whether students in honours should be required to take two ancient languages or just one.”*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC recommends that the Department review the language requirements of the Classics program.**

9. The student Classics Club could consider networking with similar clubs at other Ontario institutions in order generate new projects and possibly collaborate in student conferences, and other endeavors.

The Department responded that *“the Classics Club has now over 100 members! This makes it the most popular club on campus. The students have reached out to other Classics clubs and are discussing some possible projects including an undergraduate conference. They have already organized some events including the viewing of films and have invited a Classicist, [name deleted] from Western U who will give a talk on Roman dress in late November. This event will be advertised to the wider Nipissing University and the general public.”*

The Faculty Dean advised that *“the reviewers noted that the Classics Club at Nipissing University exceeds 30 students. The reviewers encourage the club to network with other such clubs in the province. This might represent a way of thinking about recommendation 3 as well (website).”*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC considers that this is somewhat outside the scope of a program review. However, the suggestion should be considered by the Department.**

D. Recommendations

Below are the recommendations that require specific action as a result of the Review, along with the identification of the position or unit responsible for the action in question. Notwithstanding the position or unit identified as the being responsible for specific recommendations, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the recommended actions are undertaken.

Recommendation	Responsible	Projected Date
PPC recommends that the Department revise the Myth and Religion courses as suggested.	Department	December 2016
That the program coordinator investigate the possibility of a course which includes a visit to the Mediterranean and report back to the Dean.	Department	May 2017
That the program coordinator investigate whether the introduction of a course in Classical Tradition is feasible, especially with existing resources, and report back to the Dean.	Department	May 2017
PPC recommends that the Department review the program requirements with a view to streamlining the structure as proposed by the Review Committee.	Department	May 2017
PPC recommends that the Department review the language requirements of the Classics program.	Department	May 2017