

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs
Department of Classical and Religious Studies
Cycle: 2022-2023
Date: November 9, 2023

I. Programs

- Honours BA in Greek and Roman Studies
- Major in Greek and Roman Studies

II. Evaluation Process (Outline of the visit)

- The Final Assessment Report for the evaluation of the above programs was based on the following documents: (a) the self-study brief produced by the academic unit, (b) the report produced by the external evaluators following their site visit, and (c) the comments from the Department Chair, Geoffrey Greatrex, and a response by Kathryn Prince, Dean, Faculty of Arts.
- The on-site visit took place on November 22, 2022, and was conducted by Victoria Wohl, University of Toronto, and Alban Baudou, Université Laval.
- During the site visit, the external evaluators met with the Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs, Aline Germain-Rutherford, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Kathryn Prince, the Vice-Dean, Programs, Marc Charron, the Department Chair, Geoffrey Greatrex, regular and part-time professors, members of the administrative personnel, and students.

III. Summary of Reports on the Quality of Programs¹

This section aims to inform the unit on the strengths and weaknesses observed during the evaluation process in order to improve its programs.

EMPHASIZING THE STRENGTHS AND IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

Strengths

- **Multidisciplinary Breadth.** The Greek and Roman Studies Program (GRSP) is well-designed to give students both a broad foundation in the study of Greco-Roman antiquity and a deeper appreciation of specific aspects of the field. Classics is an inherently interdisciplinary field that synthesizes a diverse range of topics (language, literature, history, visual arts, material culture) and their corresponding methodologies.
- The program structure and curricula are well designed to achieve the objective of a “well-rounded grasp of the classical world in all its multiple aspects.”
- The program’s two streams allow students to choose whether to focus on the acquisition of the ancient languages and study of literature in the original (Classics) or engagement with classical civilization in translation (Classical Studies), while the common course

¹ Based on excerpts, often verbatim, from the self-study, the external evaluation report, and the program and decanal responses.

requirements give students a common framework of knowledge – including training in both the Latin language and in archaeology – and no doubt contribute to the strong esprit de corps we noticed in our interviews of students in both streams.

- Several 1000 and 2000 series service courses attract high enrolments, drawing in students from several other academic units and programs.
- Program structure, curriculum, and pedagogy are well designed to teach skills of analysis, interpretation, research, and communication.
- The GRSP is unique in North America – and, as far as we know, the world – in offering a fully bilingual education in Classics.
- One of the strengths of the GRSP – and an area for further enhancement – is the opportunities it offers for enriching the students' experience and training beyond the formal curriculum, notably in archeology and in the use of the program's museum.

Challenges

- Covering the full breadth of the field always poses a challenge to small departments such as this one. The Greek and Roman Studies Program is meeting this challenge admirably. Not only does it introduce students to the diversity of the discipline, but it does so over an exceptionally broad chronological scope. But coverage is a constant struggle. The consistent availability of qualified part-time instructors cannot be taken for granted and this makes long-term planning difficult. Any diminution of the current faculty complement would require structural changes to the program and a reduction of its outstanding present breadth of offerings.
- The rational structure of the program, with its stepped learning objectives and clear progression, is occasionally compromised by the cancellation of low-enrolment classes (particularly in Greek and Latin) and the offering of required courses only in alternate years (especially in French). This can make it hard for students to complete their requirements in a timely fashion.
- The bilingual nature of the program comes with attendant challenges. There is an imbalance between the enrolments of French and English classes: lower enrolments in francophone courses can lead to less frequent or unpredictable course offerings while large enrolments in anglophone courses (sometimes as many as 500 students) limit the amount of writing students can do. The imbalance can also create workload inequity and can make planning difficult.
- The museum remains a valuable but underexploited resource for teaching and learning.
- The program's contribution to the mission of the University is not fully recognized: promoting the program's activities, both within and beyond the university, is a challenge. Recent centralized changes to the website have rendered it less clear, informative, and adaptable, and have made the program less visible within the university. The unit is not able to control its own website.
- Links with other academic units and programs such as History, Religious Studies, Philosophy, Lettres françaises and English could be developed further.

IV. Program Improvement²

The programs under evaluation are in conformity with the standards of the discipline. The following recommendations aim at maintaining or increasing the level of quality already achieved by the

Recommendation #1: Pursue the possibility of a cross-appointed position with a cognate unit, prioritizing the hiring of a professor/curator for the Museum and/or strengthening existing connections with Philosophy.

Recommendation #2: Develop the Museum's visibility and use both inside and outside of the University, with appropriate partners.

Recommendation #3: Work with the central administration to stabilize and support administrative staff and to ensure a staff presence within the Department.

Recommendation #4: Work to strengthen existing institutional connections with other units within and beyond the Faculty of Arts.

Recommendation #5: Return to the Department some of the administrative prerogatives that have been centralized. Create a clear, informative website, specific to the program, with a dual academic and administrative purpose.

Recommendation #6: Develop microcredentials in Greek, Latin and Classical Civilization as a way of making these programs more visible and attracting majors/minors.

V. Action Plan

The Department is actively pursuing those areas of improvement that are within their authority and scope for decision making, notably building links (e.g., micro-programs, academic cross-appointments with other units). Among those recommendations that require the approval of higher authorities, both the Department and the Dean's Office have expressed support in principle for Recommendations #1, #4 and #6 and work has begun on all three.

Recommendations #2 requires funding which the Dean's Office suggests the Department should raise from outside sources.

Recommendations #3 and #5 address issues that are of great importance to the GRSP, but which involve problems faced across the Faculty and the University (support staff and the content and management of departmental websites); the Faculty of Arts and Central Administration are working on these issues.

VI. Conclusion

The GRSP program is a well-run and highly regarded academic program that offers a high quality of undergraduate training and that attracts positive reviews from current and former students. The program and its success, however, remain fragile; the program's success depends on the high levels of dedication of a small number of full-time academic staff, the (far from guaranteed) availability of suitable part-time instructors for a high proportion of courses given, and a support staff that is overworked and under stress.

Among the strengths noted by the external reviewers is that the program the full-time faculty are exceptional devoted to making their program work, despite the difficult situation. Suggestions for improvement focus on finding innovative ways to provide high quality teaching and learning through,

² Reproduced verbatim from the External Evaluation Report.

for example, expanding links with other departments and programs via micro-programs and academic cross appointments, stabilising and improving the situation of support staff, increasing the visibility of the GRSP program on the website, and better leveraging the potential of the museum, seen as one of the Department's and the University's under-exploited assets.

Many of the challenges facing the GRSP depend for their resolution (or continuation) on decisions that can only be taken at levels higher than the Department itself. The full-time faculty available for this program are few and ageing, with no new hires having been made for a decade or more.

In light of this assessment, the committee members would like to thank all participants for the evaluation of the programs. They congratulate the unit on the rigour of the work accomplished and on the quality of the self-study report, as well as that of the report produced by the external reviewers.

VII. Schedule and Timelines

A progress report that outlines the completed actions and subsequent results will be submitted to the evaluation committee by December 15, 2025.

The next cyclical review will take place in no more than eight years, in 2029-2030. The self-study brief must be submitted no later than June 15, 2029.

Unit Response and Action Plan

Faculty:

- Faculty of Arts

Department:

- Department of Classics and Religious Studies

Programs evaluated:

- Major in Greek and Roman Studies
- Honours BA in Greek and Roman Studies

Cyclical review period:

- 2022-2023

Date:

- 25 January 2023

General comments:

On 4 January 2023, the Greek and Roman studies program was made aware of the External Review Report produced in the context of the cyclical program evaluation. We were extremely pleased with the positive evaluation of our undergraduate program. Given that the Greek and Roman studies program strives to provide as good an undergraduate experience as it can, we were gratified to see that the external reviewers found that our program to be 'of very high quality', thanks in no small measure to the huge dedication of both professors and students. The report makes six recommendations, of which two are considered high priority. We take all the recommendations seriously and feel confident that, should those concerned actually address them, our program will be even stronger. The recommendations and our responses are included below.

Recommendation 1: Pursue the possibility of a cross-appointed position with a cognate unit, prioritizing the hiring of a professor/curator for the Museum and/or strengthening existing connections with Philosophy.
Unit response: We are discussing this with the Philosophy department, with whom we are about to propose a micro-programme. The issue is particularly timely, given that one professor in ancient philosophy is now retiring. We are also in discussions with Visual Arts.
Decanal response: The Faculty strongly encourages any program initiative that would connect, in a truly interdisciplinary fashion, Classics and Philosophy or Visual Arts, as well as other fields/units in Arts (such as English, French and History).
Priority Level*: 2
Actions to be undertaken: A bid for one or two posts needs to be formulated by the head of department (in consultation with colleagues in the department and the others involved).
Assigned to: Head of department(s)
Timeline: We would like the first new colleague to start in autumn 2024
Curriculum change? No
Priority Level: 1
Actions to be undertaken: All remaining actions, viz. the accepting of our proposal to hire one or two professors, depend on people/institutions beyond our control.
Assigned to: N/A
Timeline: N/A
Curriculum change? No
Priority Level: N/A
Actions to be undertaken: N/A
Assigned to: N/A
Timeline: N/A

Recommendation 2: Develop the visibility and operation of the Museum both within the University and externally with appropriate partners.
Unit response: This depends on funding, which was cut completely by the central administration a few years ago. Volunteers and the head of department are scrabbling to secure funding from external agencies (notably in summer work programmes of the federal government). Despite the considerable effort involved in completing the necessary forms, no help has been forthcoming from the central administration. Yet if we can put in enough applications, both at the federal and provincial levels, there is hope to increase public interest in the museum (and, by extension, the department and its programs, not to mention the university itself). We hope also to collaborate with Visual Arts in developing a program in conservation, for instance, in which our seminar in Museum Studies would be very useful.
Decanal response: The department has, in fact, been successful in seeking outside funding with matching funds; we encourage them to continue to seek creative solutions including donors and collaborations such as those proposed with Visual Arts.
Priority Level*: 2
Actions to be undertaken: Ongoing attempts to secure funding.
Assigned to: Head of dept. and head of volunteer co-ordination of the museum.
Timeline: Ongoing, as deadlines loom.
Curriculum change? no
Priority Level: N/A
Actions to be undertaken: N/A

Recommendation 3: Work with the central administration to stabilize and support administrative staff and to ensure a staff presence within the Department.
Unit response: We are happy to work with anyone to improve things. But without the injection of desperately needed resources, no improvement can be made. Furthermore, we have a duty towards our administrative assistants. Until 2021 we had a full-time secretary and a part-time administrative assistant (who in effect worked full-time, such was her efficiency) for our department and a few other minor programs. Following a restructuring late in 2021, the administrative staff of three departments were pooled (History, Philosophy and Classics & Religious Studies) with a corresponding decrease in the overall number of administrators. Although there is some logic in administrative staff having a wider knowledge and being able to fill in for colleagues when one is absent, the strain of too few people trying to do too much has taken its toll. It is not only our two former staff who have been obliged to take sick leave. This problem lies beyond even the Faculty of Arts to resolve: the university has chosen to download a lot of work to faculties while at the same time reducing their staff.
Decanal response: The Faculty recognizes that administrative staffing has been a major challenge since the pandemic. The Dean and CAO are, on an ongoing basis, looking into ways of stabilizing and better supporting the Faculty's administrative staff. That said, this challenge currently affects all public institutions (large and small) and, most likely, will last for some years to come. It is why all of those in leadership roles are being asked to be more compassionate and understanding than ever with the teams they supervise.
Priority Level*: 1
Actions to be undertaken: Plead with the Faculty, esp. the head of personnel, to obtain more staff and lessen the burden on those currently working.
Assigned to: Head of dept.
Timeline: throughout 2023
Curriculum change? No
Priority Level: 1
Actions to be undertaken: All further actions lie beyond the control of the department.
Assigned to: N/A
Timeline: N/A
Curriculum change? N/A

Recommendation 4: Work to strengthen existing institutional connections with other units within and beyond the Faculty of Arts.

Unit response: This is going on already, e.g. through the creation of micro-programmes. Already two have been approved by the two departments concerned (excluding our own), viz. Philosophy and Lettres françaises. In doing so, we are seeking to attract students particularly to courses where enrolment has been low (e.g. language and literature courses).

Decanal response: The Faculty encourages the Department to pursue all such intra- and inter-faculty discussions. The Department can rest assured that the Dean's Office will offer any assistance it can to see these come to fruition.

Priority Level*: 2

Actions to be undertaken: Liaise with other heads of dept. and programme co-ordinators to build these bridges, as has already happened to some degree. When finally pressure on our programme diminishes, we can hope to look more widely across the campus, e.g. to Health Sciences or Law. But in order to build these links it would be necessary to be able to offer a few more courses (relating, say, to Health or Law). As things stand, the pressure is rather to reduce the number of courses we offer.

Assigned to: Head of dept. to try to establish relations with these other departments in conjunction with colleagues (e.g. Anne Vallely in SRS and Mélanie Houle in CLA for the health dimension). We already have some contact with the Faculty of Medicine with Susan Lamb (in the History of Medicine).

Timeline: Ongoing.

Curriculum change? No, though we may well want to create a few new courses that could serve the microprograms (e.g. in Health in Antiquity).

Recommendation 5: Return to the Department part of the administrative prerogatives that have been centralized. Create a clear, informative, program-specific website with a dual academic and administrative purpose.
Unit response: Hurrah! But of course this is not for us to decide.
Decanal response: We agree that issues regarding the website have caused some frustration. But, in all fairness, the Marketing Director of the Faculty and her team have been quite active and successful these past several months in solving many of the problems.
Priority Level*: 1
Actions to be undertaken: See above. The responsibility lies with those with the power to accomplish this.
Assigned to: N/A
Timeline: N/A
Curriculum change? N/A
Priority Level: N/A
Actions to be undertaken: N/A
Assigned to: N/A
Timeline: N/A

* PRIORITY LEVEL: 1. URGENT-IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED 2. IMPORTANT-ACTION REQUIRED WITHIN 18 MONTHS (MAXIMUM)
 3. ADVISED: DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY-ACTION TO BE DISCUSSED AND MUST BE IN PLACE BY MID-CYCLE (WITHIN 4 YEARS)

Recommendation 6: Develop microcredentials in Greek, Latin and Classical Civilization as a way of making these programs more visible and attracting majors/minors.
Unit response: We shall construct a few micro-programmes within our own offerings, in order, as suggested, to boost enrolment in certain courses that sometimes struggle to attract students: the recognition provided by a micro-programme may stimulate interest, as the evaluators rightly suggest.
Decanal response: Again, the Faculty would fully support such program initiatives, provided they have a solid business case.
Priority Level*: 3
Actions to be undertaken: We shall discuss this with in the CLA sector to make sure that we target these micro-programs at the courses most in need of beefing up, notably in French (e.g. Latin and Greek courses).
Assigned to: Head of dept. in conjunction with colleagues in CLA.
Timeline: This will take place over 2023-4.
Curriculum change? No
Priority Level: 3
Actions to be undertaken: N/A
Assigned to: N/A
Timeline: N/A
Curriculum change? N/A
Priority Level: N/A
Actions to be undertaken: N/A
Assigned to: N/A
Timeline: N/A
Curriculum change? N/A