

Department of Classics
Memorial University of Newfoundland
October 5, 2001

Action Plan

Background

The Department of Classics was one of two departments in the Faculty of Arts that underwent a review process in the academic year 2000-2001. This process included the creation of a self-study document, which was given to a review committee comprised of two members from within the faculty but outside the department (Dr David Bell and Prof. Jean Guthrie) and two prominent Classical scholars from other Canadian universities (Dr Catherine Rubincam, University of Toronto, and Dr John Yardley, University of Ottawa). Their report, submitted April 21, 2001, assessed the Department's activities over the preceding five-year period and was very useful in confirming and clarifying the Department's perception of itself. It is particularly encouraging to note the Report's positive view of the Department's research and teaching (p. 1), and its unreserved insistence that the Department size be maintained for the Department to have a continued strong place in the Faculty and the University (pp. 5-6).

The Review Committee's recommendations call for a detailed and thought-out response. This Action Plan, created in consultation with Department members, follows up on the short letter from then-department head Iain Bruce (dated June 4, 2001). It will outline the response of the Department of Classics to the recommendations of the Review Committee. For each recommendation, we have outlined (1) the actions already undertaken as a result of the Departmental Review, (2) actions we expect to take this academic year, and (3) longer-term actions that will require more than one year to implement. The structure of the Report had two parts: "Strengths of the Department" and "Problems and Recommendations." This second part was divided into eight numbered sections, the first seven of which contained recommendations. For the sake of clarity, this numbering will be maintained in what follows, as we outline our plan of action for the seven numbered recommendations.

Actions

1. An overall reconsideration of undergraduate programmes

A number of helpful ideas were presented in the report, and the department agrees that, despite its 1999 revision of its programme offerings, further improvements are warranted.

Throughout the 1990s the Department of Classics has regularly examined its course and programme offerings with a view to keeping them current and relevant, and to best utilize the resources of the faculty. Further change is therefore a continuation of a long-established practice.

Actions already undertaken.

- i. The Department has considered more than 20 specific changes to our course and programme offerings, some of which have been incorporated below.
- ii. The Department has made requests of two other departments to allow Classics to cross-list their courses, as suggested by the Panel. Specifically, we would like the following courses taught by other departments to be included as Greek and Roman Studies courses:
 - a. History 2020 "Introduction to Ancient History." This we expect would become a staple of our second-year programme, and has usually been taught by a member of the Department of Classics.
 - b. Anthropology 3580 "Bronze Age Archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean." This would be a welcome complement to our second-year courses in Greek and Roman art, and, given that two of our recent undergraduates have gone on to graduate work in Classical Archaeology, it is an option students seem likely to pursue.
- iii. The Department has further directed the Acting Head to investigate the possibility of cross-listing Linguistics 3500 "Historical Linguistics." The department recognizes the potential benefit of Historical Indo-European Linguistics for students of Greek and Latin. One potential obstacle to this link is the number of prerequisites that the course requires, courses which could not be counted toward a Classics degree. The Acting Head has contacted the course instructor (Dr V. Bubinek) and asked about the amount of Greek and Latin material in the course and whether a background in Classical languages may be satisfactory preparation for the course.
- iv. The Department has written to three other departments to investigate the possibility of their cross-listing Classics courses, as suggested by the Panel. Specifically, we believe the following Classics courses possess a content and methodology consistent with the offerings of the department named:
 - a. Classics 2010 "Greek Art and Architecture" with Fine Arts (Art History) at SWG.
 - b. Classics 2015 "Roman Art and Architecture" with Fine Arts (Art History) at SWG.
 - c. Classics 2060 "The Heroic Epic in Greece and Rome" with English.

- d. Classics 2805 "Greek Tragedy and Society" with English.
- e. Classics 2810 "Ancient Comedy and Society" with English.
- f. Classics 3060 "Sport and Athletics in Ancient Society" with Recreation, in the Faculty of Physical Education.

As is often stated, Classics is the original interdisciplinary discipline. These links would complement those already existing with the Departments of Folklore, History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies. In the case of English, these links (c.-e.) would restore a connection between departments that has existed in the past.

- v. The Department has asked the Department of English to consider including Classics 2805 "Greek Tragedy and Society" and 2810 "Ancient Comedy and Society" in its theatre/drama specialization (p. 157 of the Calendar).

Actions this year

- vi. The Department will make proposals to the Faculty Committee on Undergraduate Studies on the basis of the response to the initial queries outlined in Actions 1.ii, 1.iii, 1.iv, and 1.v above.
- vii. The Department will clarify the description of the Major in Classics. At present the Calendar presents two streams, the first of which can be entirely contained in the description of the second. This straightforward "housekeeping" correction will provide an increased clarity and accessibility for potential students.
- viii. The Department will consider removing the streaming of the Honours and Joint Honours programmes in Classics. At present, both programmes have three options (Greek, Latin, and Greek and Latin). Eliminating the option to specialize in only one of the ancient languages does remove some element of choice for prospective students, but it will simplify the calendar entry and bring the programmes more in line with other Canadian departments of Classics. It will also avoid giving students the misleading impression that students who have learned only one language will be prepared for further work in Classics.
- ix. A number of minor alterations to the course offerings have been suggested, and, depending on the nature of the proposals which will ultimately be made in Action 1.vi and 1.viii, may be implemented to consolidate our course offerings, as the Review Panel suggests. Among the possibilities to be considered are the following:
 - a. That we combine Classics 3150 "Early Christian thought" and Classics 3270 "Christianity and the Roman Empire" into one course, amenable to both History and Religious Studies. Normally, members of Classics and Religious Studies have taught these courses, but some economy may be possible given the retirement of Dr I. Bruce.

- b. That we delete Classics 3030 “Greece and Persia” as a course unlikely to be offered after the departure of Dr A. Tronson.
 - c. That we move Classics 2020 “Hellenistic Civilization” to the third-year level, perhaps renaming it “Alexander and the Hellenistic World” to show it as a logical successor to courses on “Socrates and Athens” and “Augustus and Rome” (cf. Action 3.i).
 - d. That we delete the degree requirement for Honours and Joint Honours students in Classics to do Prose Composition (Classics 4295 and 4395). While some prose composition is an element of language courses at all levels, this requirement may dissuade some students, and will not always be the best use of faculty resources.
- x. The Department will revisit the question of the number of hours per week in which first-year language courses should be taught, and the possibility of using a common examination for courses with multiple sections (especially Classics 120 A/B). While these issues have been considered in recent years and have been voted on by the Department, the decision to teach first-year Greek and Latin in four hours per week rather than three has been challenged. The *ad hominem* resolution to this challenge has left the Department with no authority to implement its decision. Investigation into the practices of other departments, particularly those teaching languages and using common exams, should give the Department precedents to establish future practice, but it is unlikely that this alone will be sufficient to resolve the genuine *aporia* that is felt. The Department will seek a definitive statement to resolve these matters.

Future Actions

- xi. If, as is hoped, new appointments will be authorized so that the Department may maintain its size, the Department will incorporate any specialized research interests into the curriculum. The scope of such changes cannot be anticipated at the present time.
- xii. The Department will monitor the effects of these changes on its students, and consider whether further changes are necessary.

2. Increasing enrollments

The department is pleased to note the growth, albeit slow, in the number of its students over the past two years, a result due in part to the introduction of Classics 1050 “Introduction to Greek and Roman Mythology.” This has been achieved despite a reduction in the Department’s teaching resources. The two figures at the end of this

document (pp. 14 and 15) demonstrate this clearly. They show not only a recovery of student numbers over the past five years (fig. 1), but also a more marked increase in the number of students taught by each faculty member over the same period of time (fig. 2). Nevertheless, even when students with a minor in Classics are included with majors and honours students in Classics and in Greek and Roman Studies, the Department recognizes the need to increase the number of its programme students. While more and more students are taking Classics electives, this is not as yet translating into an increase in programme students. Sometimes this is beyond departmental control: one Department member (Dr C. Marshall) had hoped that his Fall section of Classics 1050 could be integrated into the new Arts 1000 programme, as a way to increase enrollments and increase personal contact with students; at this time, the Arts 1000 coordinators were unable to integrate the course.

Further improvements will come through word of mouth. The Classics Society has organized social and academic events, and in the past year there has been an increase in extra-curricular academic activities: faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates have met outside of class and in the summer to read Greek for fun (one group reading Sophocles' *Antigone*, another the New Testament book of Galatians), to recite Homer aloud in Greek (to practice scansion), and to stage ancient plays. This sort of activity represents both the dedication of Classics students at Memorial and the rewards available to them. Still, the Review Panel presents a number of suggestions, which the Department is currently implementing.

Actions already undertaken

- i. Encouraged by the Review Panel, the Department has recommended the de-linking of Classics 120A/B and Classics 130A/B.
- ii. The Acting Head has updated the Faculty of Education concerning changes to the programmes in Classics in recent years, in order to keep the status of Classics as a "second teachable" current. While this was established through correspondence with the Faculty of Education in the 1990s, students in general remain unaware of the option to take courses in Classics.
- iii. The Department has requested the Faculty of Education to include an acknowledgement in the University Calendar, to indicate that Greek and Roman Studies is a second teachable subject.
- iv. The Acting Head has asked Dr J. Butrica to chair a departmental committee to consider the question of a suitable textbook for Classics 120 A/B.

Actions this year

- v. Department members will continue to promote programmes in Classics to their students.

- vi. The Acting Head has undertaken to produce, in consultation with interested Department members, a handout on the Minor programme in Classics for distribution to students in the Department. Since so many students who come to university have an erroneous or incomplete understanding of what Classics is, if they have heard of it at all, it is thought that such a resource will encourage students to commit themselves to the Department early in their degree programme.
- vii. The Department will consider which of its offerings can be developed as distance courses, perhaps with a web-based component. While the Department does offer a number of distance courses, they are for the most part run by a single member (Dr M. Joyal). The development of additional courses would increase distance enrollments. Among the courses that have been suggested for such development are Classics 1050 "Introduction to Greek and Roman Mythology" and Classics 3010 "Greek Religion."
- viii. The Department will work with the Arts Computing Centre to create a web page for each of its first-year course offerings.
- ix. The Department will investigate the use of StemNet, as the Review Panel suggests, to increase awareness of the Department in the school system.
- x. The Acting Head will write to St. John's area high school guidance counselors to increase their awareness of the Department's offerings.
- xi. Department members will make themselves available for visits to high school classes. When this has been done in recent years, both teachers and students have responded favorably. Teachers are grateful for the specialist knowledge Department members can bring, and students are introduced to aspects of the discipline.
- xii. The Department will act on the recommendations of the committee set out in Action 2.iv.

Future Actions

- xiii. The Department will continue to offer large-enrollment first-year courses, Classics 1050 "Introduction to Greek and Roman Mythology" in particular, at least twice a year. While current departmental resources do not allow greater frequency, it may in the future be possible.
- xiv. The Department will continue to attempt to link one of its courses to the Arts 1000 programme.
- xv. The Department will work with the Arts Computing Centre to create a web page for its second-year and upper-level course offerings.

3. Research and Writing courses

The Review Panel recommended the Department restructure its Research and Writing courses. Conflicting pressures are at work. On the one hand, the current policy of offering first-year Research and Writing courses (Classics 1100 "Introduction to Greek Civilization" and Classics 1200 "Introduction to Roman Civilization") has the effect of limiting enrollments to 35 in courses that could attract (and historically have attracted) as many as 60. The effects of this reduction can explain the decrease in enrollments following the introduction of these courses in the Fall semester, 1998 (fig. 1). Individual members of the Department regularly increase the enrollments of their sections to 40 because of student demand, but this is not an ideal solution. Transferring our Research and Writing courses to the second year would diminish this problem. On the other hand, there is serious concern among some Department members about the academic consequences of postponing what is essentially a remedial degree requirement to the second year. While we are concerned about increasing enrollments generally, this desire remains secondary to serving students best.

Actions already undertaken

- i. The Department has discussed, with no clear consensus, whether we should move our Research and Writing offerings to the second year, as the Review Panel suggests. Specifically, the possibility of moving Classics 3040 "Socrates and Athens" and Classics 3050 "Augustus and Rome" to the second-year level and making these our Research and Writing courses, designed as a follow-up to Classics 1100 and Classics 1200, has been considered.

Actions this year

- ii. The Department will continue to monitor the enrollment patterns of students who have taken its Research and Writing courses.
- iii. The Department will continue to discuss the merits of implementing the Review Panel's recommendations concerning Research and Writing courses.

Future Actions

- iv. The Department understands that a periodic review of the Research and Writing courses is due early in the term of the new Dean of Arts, who is still to be appointed. We expect that the review will address the concerns outlined in the introductory paragraph above. Only once this has been done will the Department be in a position to consider any change in this element of its course offerings.

4. The graduate programme in Classics

As the Panel notes, the Masters of Arts in Classics is a rigorous and challenging programme that is able to produce students in the forefront of Canadian Classics graduates. Current students have presented academic papers at national and international conferences, and have plans to publish in academic journals before completing their degree. It is our belief that students with an M.A. in Classics from Memorial can be accepted into whatever doctoral programmes they may wish. Memorial has the opportunity to continue to offer an M.A. in Classics that is known nationally for producing good students who have success at the doctoral level, capitalizing on the research expertise of its faculty. At present, the degree has three main components: coursework, an exam based on reading lists of Latin and Greek authors and works, and a thesis (there is also a modern foreign-language requirement). The M.A. programme is relatively new, and as yet no graduates have pursued further work. Nevertheless, some change is required.

The Department accepts the Review Panel's suggestion that M.A. students are currently being asked to do doctoral-level work. We believe that a revision of the programme is required so that the goals of the programme may be better served: that all graduate students be prepared to enter competitive doctoral programmes and have the ability to read Latin and Greek with fluency.

Actions already undertaken

- i. The Department has had an extensive discussion concerning the nature and implementation of the current M.A. programme in Classics, and concerning the nature of graduate-level education in Classics generally. This discussion included comparison with other M.A. programmes, both within the University and in other Classics Departments across Canada. The need to revise or replace the current degree programme was also acknowledged.
- ii. The Department has voted to reduce the entry requirements for the M.A. from 27 credits in one language and 18 in the other to 24 credits and 18 (p. 460 of the Calendar). This formalizes the Department's current practice, and perhaps presents a less intimidating face to potential students. Proposals will be forwarded to the Graduate Studies Committee in due time.

Actions this year

- iii. The Department will undertake an overall reconsideration of its graduate programme. Any change would be extensive. The Department will consider programme options that can be completed in twelve months (three semesters) and

two years (five semesters). An increase in coursework is probably required to consolidate language training best. Additional components, such as a thesis or research paper, or an exam of some kind (either a reading list as under the present system, or an exam on passage analysis and interpretation) will all be considered. The Department is concerned to offer a meaningful degree that can be accomplished in a reasonable time frame.

- iv. If the Department chooses to maintain the reading list component, there is agreement that its nature must be changed. At a minimum, this would entail the following:
 - a. The Department will reconsider the nature of the Greek and Latin reading lists, considering both their length and the circumstances under which the tests are written, in consultation with current graduate students.
 - b. The Department will consider changing the way it presents its list to students, in consultation with current graduate students. As it is, students must exercise an element of choice with every component in the list. So much choice may be a liability. Prescribing certain texts, while still allowing substitutions to reflect a student's previous readings in Latin and Greek, will bring the Department's list more in line with those of other North American departments, and will more clearly articulate what needs to be read at an earlier point in the degree programme. While this in no way would alter the flexibility present in the lists already, it could assist students less prepared for self-guided study.
 - c. The department will in all cases clarify what is meant by "selections" in the reading list.
- v. The Acting Head has undertaken to produce a handbook for prospective and incoming graduate students, in consultation with the Graduate Advisor, current and past graduate students, and the Department. We believe that such a resource will assist new students to complete the Masters programme successfully. This would also serve to articulate all the Department's policies and procedures for the degree, some of which have accumulated in an *ad hoc* manner, and are presented to students only as the need arises.
- vi. The Department will more aggressively promote its programme in Classics departments across Canada. Emphasizing the availability of funding in this effort is essential.
- vii. The Department will monitor the success of applications of current graduate students to doctoral programmes in Canada and abroad.

- viii. The Acting Head will request additional funding from the Dean of Graduate Studies so that we can offer financial support for a limited number of students comparable to that at other Canadian universities. At least part of the reason for the low completion rates noted by the review panel can be tied directly to the need of students to hold other jobs while working on the degree, effectively preventing them from working at the degree full-time.

Future Actions

- ix. The Department will continue to monitor the success of applications of current graduate students to doctoral programmes in Canada and abroad.

5. A systematic gathering of students' perspectives

The Review Panel encouraged the Department to develop a system of questions to ask students concerning their experiences in Classics courses from the Department. Such information is of great potential value, and could be implemented with the course evaluations that are prescribed by University policy (Senate vote, June 9, 2000).

Actions already undertaken

- i. The Acting Head has undertaken to draft a sample questionnaire for Departmental consideration.

Actions this year

- ii. The Acting Head will investigate whether the Department has the authority to implement such a questionnaire and require its use in all classes.
- iii. The Department will consider implementing the questionnaire (cf. Action 5.i) taking whatever conditions may be present (cf. Action 5.ii) into account.

Future Actions

- iv. The Department will study the results if the questionnaire is implemented, and determine whether there exist any matters that need addressing as a result.

6. and 7. Faculty complement

The clearest and most emphatic recommendation in the Review Panel's report concerned the faculty complement: "**under no circumstances should the faculty complement of the Department of Classics be allowed to fall**" (p. 5). If the Department is to maintain its active and vibrant profile in teaching on campus, it is essential that this be true. The

previous pages document the many things the Department is doing in light of the Review Panel's recommendations to improve its offerings to the University community. This is not, however, the limit of its activities. Some activities have been detailed above in section 2, but there are more. One Department member (Dr N. Kennell) is currently Director of the Canadian Archaeological Institute in Athens. The Department edits one of the two print journals of the Classical Association of Canada, *Mouseion* (formerly *Echos du Monde Classique/Classical Views*). The editors (Drs M. Joyal and J. Butrica) have been able to put the journal into such a strong financial position that it may no longer be eligible for funding assistance from SSHRC. Currently in press at Memorial is a volume of classical papers edited by one Department member (Dr. M. Joyal), *In Altum: Seventy-five Years of Classical Studies in Newfoundland*, to which almost every current and past member of the department has contributed. Included in this is a history of the Department of Classics, which will helpfully position the Department's current activities in a historical context. This year, the Department is sponsoring Dr. Margalit Finkelberg of Tel Aviv University as a Henrietta Harvey lecturer. The Department is hosting the meetings of the Atlantic Classical Association, bringing together scholars from Atlantic Canada and beyond (from Ontario, New York, and Washington) to consider the place of the discipline of Classics in light of current theoretical discussions in the Academy: the conference, "Questioning the Classical Canon," involves faculty and graduate students from Memorial and elsewhere, and will increase the Department's profile regionally. The Department is also facilitating the production of a Greek Tragedy at the Basement Theatre in the Arts and Culture Centre: *Rhesus* is being directed by a graduate student in Classics and is perhaps the only modern performance of the play in North America and the English-speaking world. Recordings of the production will be used as a teaching resource in Classics departments around the world, and the production involves graduate and undergraduate students in Classics and other disciplines. There are many other editorial boards, review panels, university and external committees, etc., to which Department members contribute while maintaining their research and teaching (which is at a level above average for the Faculty and the university). Most members have been recent recipients of SSHRC external research grants and three have been awarded the President's Award for Outstanding Research.

That having been said, within a space of 15 months the Department will be losing two of its permanent members: Drs A. Tronson and I. Bruce. Since the Department's complement is currently only seven members (it is therefore the University's second-smallest department), this will endanger the life of the Department in every respect. Any long-term reduction in the Department's teaching resources will threaten undergraduate courses and programmes, the possibility of maintaining (much less expanding) the Master's degree in any form, in addition to the many extra activities in which Department members are involved. However, implementation of the Review Panel's

recommendations concerning the faculty complement is, ultimately, beyond the scope of the Department, but lies at higher levels of administration. The Department has undertaken some Actions, as detailed below. To these could be added the creation of this Action Plan, which the Department hopes will encourage decisions to maintain the Department's size and strength. The departure of two Department members can prove to be an opportunity to reposition the Department as a whole, and strengthen it in teaching and research areas where it is not currently represented. Combined with the increase in student numbers documented in fig. 2, we believe that new appointments will consolidate and reinforce the overall growth of the Department.

Actions already undertaken

- i. The Acting Head has asked the Interim Dean of Arts to strike a search committee for the next Department Head as soon as possible. It was specifically requested that external candidates be eligible for consideration.
- ii. A committee to advise the Acting Head on the nature of future appointments, chaired by Dr. J. Butrica, has been struck, and has reported to the Acting Head. The Acting Head with his wholehearted endorsement forwarded this report to the Interim Dean of Arts on September 20, 2001. The Committee detailed the need for two new permanent positions in Classics over the next 21 months, one in ancient history, and one in material culture. It was hoped that one position could be made for the coming academic year at the Associate Professor rank and that the successful candidate could assume the headship of the Department. A request was also made for a limited-term appointment to counter a shortfall in teaching resources until both positions are in place.
- iii. The Department has acknowledged the value of the Review Panel's recommendation that, where qualifications and experience are equal, the appointment of female faculty to the Department should be a priority.

Actions this year

These are, at present, dependant on the Interim Dean's response to Actions 6 and 7.i and 6 and 7.ii above.

Future actions

These are, at present, dependant on the Interim Dean's response to Actions 6 and 7.i and 6 and 7.ii above.

Summary

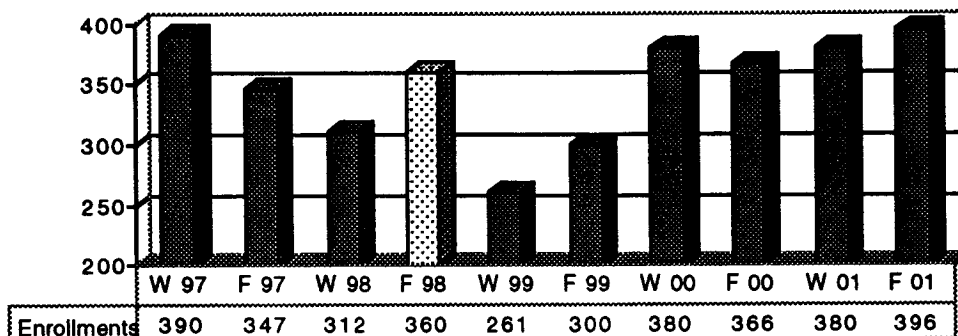
This action plan details 47 actions (some with more than one component) by the Department of Classics in direct response to the recommendations made by the Review Panel. Of these, sixteen actions have already been undertaken. Twenty-three actions will be completed in the current academic year. Eight actions are future actions that require a longer term to be implemented fully. The Department is certain that in following through on these actions more ways in which we can respond to the Departmental Review will be suggested. We believe we have addressed all of the recommendations of the review committee, and have ignored none. The Department of Classics sees itself as a key component in a liberal arts education at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. We firmly believe that these Actions, coupled with new appointments and ongoing self-evaluation, will allow the Department to maintain its place in the forefront of Classics education at the undergraduate and graduate levels in Canada.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Figure 1

Classics Enrollments 5 year perspective



source: Banner

Enrollment figures include students in cross-listed courses and distance courses, but not those in courses taken in Corner Brook.

Data Analysis

Enrollment figures for the Department of Classics over the past five years (the period covered by the Review Panel's report) show a decline from which there has been a complete recovery (fig. 1). The Department believes the decline in enrollments (especially in Winter 1999 and Fall 1999) can be attributed in large part to the introduction of the Research and Writing courses in the Fall semester of 1998 (stippled on the chart). The short-term increase in Fall 1998 may be attributed to students taking Department courses at the Harlow campus that semester. It was also at this time that the last curriculum review was implemented. In any case, the decrease for the academic year as a whole is less striking, and the evidence of growth remains clear:

97-98	659
98-99	621
99-00	680
00-01	746

This table demonstrates a 13% increase between the 97-98 academic year and the 00-01 academic year, with a projected 20% increase into the current academic year. A clearer picture emerges when these enrollments are understood in light of number of faculty

members teaching each semester (fig. 2). The growth noted in fig. 1 is shown to be more significant when the decrease in teaching resources is also considered. Note that the number on the y-axis represents the ratio of two terms: the total enrollments and the full-time teaching faculty. Since the members of the Department of Classics have an annual required teaching load of six courses, the points on this graph represent the average number of students in each semester per full-time equivalent instructor (FTE). Per-course appointments are calculated at .33 FTE.

The Fall semester in 1998 is no longer seen as exceptional. Further, substantial growth in the number of students taught by each faculty member on average can be seen over both two- and five-year periods.

Further data are available from the Acting Head.

Figure 2

**Ratio of enrollments to faculty teaching
Department of Classics**

