

Assessment Report, 2021-22
Classics Interdisciplinary Program

The Annual Assessment Meeting occurred on May 23rd, 2022. The meeting was attended by Dr. Stan Rauh, Dr. Rebecca Resinski, and Dr. Chris Campolo. The primary task for this meeting was discussing the scheduled learning goals for this academic year in hopes of making improvements in student learning. We also discussed ways to perform assessment more effectively at the program level, in addition to individual courses, as recommended by this past evaluation of our assessment report. The learning goals under review were:

- 3) to interpret and analyze Greek and Roman texts, whether read in the original language or in English translation.
- 4) to gain an understanding of key aspects of ancient history, literature, and culture

Our quantitative evidence for these learning goals is the result of combining the data for individual courses that pertain to these goals. Direct evidence includes a variety of daily assignments, examinations, exams, and writing assignments. Indirect evidence includes student surveys and classroom observation, which will be addressed further below. The combined data is:

Goal 3	Excellent (4)	Solid (3)	Basic (2)	Insufficient (1)
Direct	37	57	30	3
Indirect	40	58	23	4
Goal 4				
Direct	34	59	20	6
Indirect	36	59	19	5

Our faculty felt that the evidence does not call for any major alterations. We also feel that many experiences from the past year were still impacted by the Covid environment, which provides further caution for us against any broad changes. Our reflections, however, did suggest some minor changes that might be made at the course level. One adaptation involves more clearly defining the role of exams and written work as they pertain to program learning goals. One way to do this may be focusing exams on gauging understanding of basic information while writing assignments are more deliberately designed to gauge interpretation. Another issue that came up is student experience with primary sources. Students in recent courses seem to find standard translations less accessible or approachable than in past years, which suggests that it may be worthwhile to look into alternative editions or spending more time providing grounding in primary texts before students delve into them.

While the experience of students within individual courses does reflect achievement of program goals, we need to also discuss assessment at the broader program level, as suggested by our past evaluation letter. The most pressing task will be to commence aggregating data for graduating seniors by assessing all program goals annually. We discussed the possibility of including minors, given the small size of our program, but came to the conclusion that the experience of minors is simply too varied to be helpful; for instance, a student may achieve a minor through language study alone.

We have, however, been performing useful assessment at the program level through our capstone experience. This marks the second year of our new capstone structure, and student performance indicates that we need to continue tinkering with the formula. The primary area of change was introducing an “oral exam” component which is essentially a conversation following a brief presentation on a Classics project of that student’s choice. Based on student performance, we find that we need to refine our instructions and emphasize preparation to a greater extent. Finally, we will begin to include a more general exit interview at the conclusion of the capstone to serve as another source of indirect assessment.

Finally, I would like to note some concerns pertaining to indirect assessment. Our program feels some confusion as to what exactly constitutes indirect assessment, particularly in terms of the tools used. Some of the issues are captured by Dr. Resinski here, in a sentiment shared by the rest of the program:

“I have lingering questions about indirect assessment. Is the focus student self-assessment of where they stand in the rubric? Or is it student perception of how the course has helped them reach a particular learning goal? Or is it my indirect gauging of how they’re making progress toward a goal? All of these things can count as indirect assessment, but they’re very different.”

The answers to these questions are important for determining the correct tools to use and how to approach the exercise as a whole.