

CLASSICS DEPARTMENT

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT RETREAT 2007

The Campaign for Student Success mini-grant allowed the Classics department to begin a complete redesign of its curriculum, and the outcome is a program of study that will better prepare Brooklyn College Classics majors both for graduate study and for the marketplace.

Over Friday 16 March and Saturday 17 March the full time faculty of the Classics Department gathered at St. Ignatius Retreat House in Manhasset in order to develop a new undergraduate curriculum and major which reflected the needs of today's Brooklyn College student and the talents of the faculty. The doubling of the number of majors and the hiring of three new faculty over the last three years provided the impetus for this development.

The Friday morning began with a session dedicated to 'blue sky' thinking. The following questions provided the framework for our discussion.

- What knowledge do we think essential for the modern classicist?
- What skills do we think essential for the modern classicist?
- What topics and concepts does it give us pleasure to teach?
- What kinds of classroom experiences are meaningful?
- What kinds of experiences do we want to supply outside the classroom?
- Where do we want classics to intersect with other BC programs?

The first afternoon session was dedicated to thinking about the structure of the degree program as a whole, before moving onto the second afternoon session in which courses for modification, creation, and deletion were identified. Discussion of specific details carried on into the evening and over the next morning. Work was expedited by the wireless network which allowed documents to be instantaneously shared and modified.

The final outcome of our discussions is a new classics major with four possible concentrations: languages, literature, ancient history, or material culture. Approximately half the department's courses will now be designated as 'Research Electives'; meaning that these courses will emphasize the teaching of research methodologies and require a significant research project. All majors will be required to take at least three semesters of either Greek or Latin; a choice, depending on their concentration, from among a variety of electives; one or more 'Research Electives' depending on their concentration; and a capstone seminar towards the end of their degree.

Among the many new courses being created are:

Ancient Cities
Rise of Macedon

Greek and Latin Poetics
Government and Society

Rhetoric

Another new course, Ancient Explorations, is designed to be taught in the January or Summer Terms and to incorporate overseas travel. In addition there are a number of new upper level language courses focusing on specific authors and genres in Greek and Latin literature. Finally, the degree as a whole will be designated as a Writing Intensive Major. The new curriculum will be in place Fall 2008.