28 January 2004

To: Dr. Nancy "Rusty" Barcelo  
Vice President and Vice Provost for Diversity  
Chair, Diversity Appraisal Steering Committee

From: James J. Clauss  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Classics

Re: Diversity Appraisal

I am pleased to report that the Department of Classics has supported a number of courses and programs devoted to enhancing diversity on campus. In fact, in our mission statement we acknowledge diversity as a key component of our work: "To study Classics is to take an active part in the humanistic enterprise, and to grasp the complexity of its diverse historical manifestations from Plato's Academy to our own. Yet research and teaching in Classics is not confined to celebrating the achievements of antiquity and analysing its impact on the present. The vast temporal and geographic gulf that divides these ancient cultures from modernity brings students and scholars of Classics face to face with the Otherness of antiquity and forces a critical examination of our purported cultural roots. In adjusting our perspectives on ancient Greece and Rome, we find that our perception of ourselves, too, has been altered, and our interests, preconceptions and prejudices challenged, by a critical examination of their "classical" genealogy. Like a fun-house mirror in which we can observe ourselves in a state of distortion, simultaneously familiar and other, Greek and Roman antiquity furnishes us with a special vantage point from which to critique what is taken for granted in our own time and place." (The entire mission statement can be found at http://depts.washington.edu/clasdept/majorintro.html.)

As part of our study of diversity in the ancient world, we offer several courses to UW undergraduates in which foreign language experience is not required:

**CLAS 322 Intellectual History of Classical Greece (5)**
Uses Plato's Republic as a core text to explore a range of issues of ancient and contemporary interest, such as justice, political theory, male attitudes toward women, and the nature of the soul.

**CLAS 326 Women in Antiquity (3)**
A broad survey of primary sources in medicine, law, philosophy, religious ritual, myth, history, and ethnography, informed by perspectives from literature, art, and archaeology.
Provides students the tools to analyze the social roles of women in ancient Greece and Rome.

**CLAS 328 Sex, Gender, and Representation in Greek and Roman Literature (3)**
Affirmation and inversion of gender roles in Greek and Roman literature, myths of male and female heroism; marginalization of female consciousness; interaction of gender, status, and sexual preference in love poetry. Readings from epic, drama, historiography, romance, and lyric.

Courses specifically geared toward minority students include:

**CLAS 102 Grammar and Syntax through Latin (3)**
Improve familiarity with basic grammar, syntax, logic through study of mechanics of the Latin language. For Educational Opportunity Program students only. No auditors. Knowledge of Latin or Greek not required.

**CLAS 399 Introduction to Rome (5)**
For Educational Opportunity Program students only.

The latter course, which I first offered ten years ago, features ten days in Rome during which time students not only study Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance art and architecture on site, but also learn how it was that Rome was multicultural from its very beginning—a melting pot of Etruscans, Latins, Greeks, and other Italic tribes—and in time conquered and included peoples from Europe, Africa, and the Middle East among its citizens and even leaders. This opportunity to expose the diversity of ancient Rome has been one of our most effective and visible enterprises on behalf of EOP students.

Other occasions for outreach to this student population that have occurred over the years include our participation in the Upward Bound and the Summer Bridge Programs, the first addressed to High School Students and the second to entering UW freshmen. In addition to the involvement of one of our professors (in this case me), these programs employed some of our graduate students as TAs, an experience that exposed them to the need and desire for reaching out to a larger, more inclusive audience.

While the vast majority of our undergraduate majors are Caucasian, we have begun to attract what is for us a significant number of Asian students (there are 17 among our 88 majors and minors). Our only African American student, brought much attention to our program this year by winning a Rhodes Scholarship. Our percentage of minority students, according to the information I have, is 19%, which compares with 16% in the College of Arts and Sciences, according to the information sent around recently by Gabe Gallardo ("Resource for Diversity Appraisal Reports"). Our graduate student population is similar: mostly Caucasian, but with several outstanding minority students of Hispanic, Asian and African origin. Where the profile of those pursuing Classics has changed most noticeably over the years is the increasing parity of male and female students and professional scholars. This is the case with our faculty and staff. Among the faculty, six members are male and four are female; there is currently no one of minority status. Our
staff consists of a male administrator and female secretary, neither of whom is of minority status. When we have run job searches over the years, minority candidates were encouraged to apply in our job advertisements. There are currently very few non-Caucasian applicants in the pool, but there is hope for the future as we look to our increasing numbers of minority students; one of our former undergraduate majors, by the way, is about to complete her PhD in the Department of Classics at Harvard University.

With regard to student opportunities, development and retention, we were particularly fortunate several years ago to have received a remarkable gift from the estate of Meg Greenfield. The money that is generated by her endowment goes entirely for student support by way of scholarships, fellowships, and travel bursaries. With this money we have supported both graduate and undergraduate students, and among those supported are minority students. The finest example of how effective this support has been is the case of one particular student, who, as I mentioned above, won a Rhodes Scholarship this year. She has had at least three years of support from the Jim Greenfield scholarship.

From our perspective, Classics would benefit from a more diverse student population. Not only do the demographics suggest that our universities will be more varied racially and culturally in the future, but if Classics as a discipline is to survive it needs to reach out to a larger base. It is my contention, however, that the issue here is not survival alone but intellectual growth. We advance as a discipline when people of different backgrounds and orientations bring their ideas to the discussion. As mentioned above, the ancient Greek and Roman worlds were multicultural, and yet for so long few minority scholars turned their gaze in our direction. The experiences of people in the minority communities will surely enhance our appreciation of Greek and Roman literature, history, and culture. To make this happen the university needs to bring in a broader spectrum of our society and, if they come, we need to offer the educational opportunities—courses and programs—that will lead them to our door.

While our spirit is willing, unfortunately the number of Classics teaching staff (professors and TAs) is weak. I have not been able to offer Classics 102 (see above) for some time because of course pressures elsewhere and I continue to offer Classics 399 as an overload for the same reason. Similarly, it has been difficult to offer the other Classics courses mentioned above regularly. We want to offer these courses and will continue to do so, but until our numbers grow, we shall have to do so inconsistently.

Despite being a discipline focused on the culture of ancient Greece and Rome, an area of study primarily associated with white civilization, the approach taken in our research and teaching has been to a notable extent interdisciplinary and, as intimated above, our discipline is of necessity multicultural. Over the past years, we have worked to find ways of reaching out to a more diverse audience by creating new, hopefully envelope-pushing, courses. The intellectual openness behind our teaching is mirrored in the atmosphere in the department where all people and viewpoints are welcome. We look forward to continuing along this path.