

Classics

A department in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts offering the B.A. and M.A.T.

■ The Review Process

This was a standard AQAD review. Reviewers were:

Madeleine Henry, chair (Iowa State University)
Gregory Staley (University of Maryland)
William Ziobro (College of the Holy Cross)

■ Main Issues

The visiting team praised the scholarly strength of the department, and made special note of its leadership in the preparation of high school teachers of Latin and Classical Humanities through its M.A.T. program. The effects of the ongoing, budget-driven “crisis management mode” within the department and the campus were cited with concern, and the ongoing salary freeze were said to be “jeopardizing retention and compromising morale” of the faculty.

The team identified several specific challenges for the department:

- Address infrastructure and support needs. The team found departmental space to be inadequate (both the departmental office and the space allocated to TAs). In addition, inadequate support staffing (one secretary and some work/study students) cause the faculty to spend too much time on non-academic activities.
- Curricular Planning. The team noted that the undergraduate curriculum has been constant for some years, and that faculty course assignments seem imbalanced, especially with respect to coverage of the large General Education courses. The team suggested that a formal curriculum planning effort could address these issues, optimize use of faculty resources, and ensure that necessary courses will be available to students.
- Revisit the M.A.T. program. While confirming that the M.A.T. program “is widely acknowledged by Classicists throughout the United States to be the finest of its kind and an influential leader in our field,” the team also felt that “the time has come ... for the department to revise and rethink both its curriculum for the M.A.T. and the structure of its organization and support within the department.” Such a process might result in a more flexible and accessible program (especially for part-time students) and strengthen the emphasis on Classical Humanities (vs. Latin language).
- Develop new resources. The team acknowledged the scarcity of resources on the campus, and suggested that the department pursue a number of development strategies. These included specific fundraising topics as well as greater participation in summer school.

■ Results of the Review

In a response to the visiting team report, the department reported that many of the team’s recommendations are already being acted upon: a Curriculum Committee is at work, course assignments are being revisited, and a comprehensive curriculum review is planned. The Dean is encouraging these efforts. The Dean also offered the prospect of a space realignment, a small amount of additional work/study funding, and a continuing review of faculty salaries.

