

Visibility and Advocacy: Specific Steps You Can Take

Teachers at all levels want their programs to be effective, sustainable, and expanding. Good teaching, we trust, will help promote their goals. Too often, however, we find that considerations outside the walls of our schools hinder our success. Are there ways to build the positive reputation of our courses and, indeed, of our discipline? Are there ways to influence policies at the local, state, and even national level that will make a positive difference for us?

In this workshop we will begin by examining the difference between visibility and advocacy: Visibility brings attention to and generates interest in the ancient world and the study of its languages, literatures, and cultures; advocacy asks those who are able to make changes—legislators, e.g.—to adopt specific policies.

We will review some examples of successful visibility projects, like those sponsored by the SCS Classics for Everyone Project, or the ACL's visit to Good Morning, America. We will also introduce national advocacy organizations, like the Joint National Committee on Languages, whose staff members not only research educational policy and meet with Congressional staffers, but also educate others about policy issues and about constructive strategies for engaging legislators. The push for a national Seal of Biliteracy is an example of effective citizen advocacy; we will have updated information on its implementation.

In addition to sharing specific information (how to contact your legislators, what to say and when to say it, for example) this workshop will provide time for discussion and brainstorming about issues of interest to participants.