

The states of the Lake Michigan Region report a feeling of cautious optimism in a climate of steady enrollments and, in some areas, growth. The emphasis should be on the “cautious” however because all three states report that further efforts are needed to connect classicists at the K-12 level with those in higher education, and all three states continue to face external pressures that threaten the health of classics programs at all levels. In addition, while Latin programs appear generally strong, it was difficult to obtain good information on Greek programs. This is an area where CAMWS could devote some serious attention, because Greek programs nationwide, at least anecdotally, appear to be suffering.

In Michigan, post-secondary institutions are experiencing a high degree of success in most cases. One negative to report is that Michigan State University now only offers a minor in classical studies and has not received any new faculty despite recent retirements. Similarly, Calvin College has had its Latin and Greek programs downgraded to minors, although its classical studies major and minor continue to grow and produce strong students who often go onto graduate work at many other universities. The Latin program at Western Michigan University was threatened but saved through the combined efforts of local classicists and medievalists. WMU continues to welcome many Latin scholars for the yearly International Medieval Congress and to increase its Medieval Latin classes and programs. This year the Congress will be featuring its first CAMWS-sponsored panel, entitled Bridging the Gap: Classicists and Medievalists in Continuous Dialogue. At the University of Michigan, Classical Studies continues to thrive as one of the strongest programs in the country, and CAMWS Proconsul Ruth Scodel won the SCS Distinguished Service Award this year. At the K-12 level things are less rosy, with high school programs reporting a widespread lack of support across the state. One possible exception is that Detroit is considering a proposed charter school with a focus on the Classical World (Detroit Latin). Perhaps the strong post-secondary programs in Michigan could assist their K-12 colleagues in some way and CAMWS might well play a role.

In Indiana, there is a robust K-12 community. The IJCL boasts a membership of 836 students and sent 51 of them to Ohio for the national convention. In addition to the contests at the state convention in March of each year, the IJCL regularly hosts events like Fall Latin Day and certamen contests. The most recent Fall Latin Day was hosted by Bishop Chatard High School where 129 students were in attendance from 14 schools. The IJCL also hosts a Leadership Development Academy as a way to help high school programs encourage the fostering of young Classicists into potential leaders for their local JCL clubs. This year’s academy was attended by 67 students from 10 different schools. The Illinois Classical Conference hosted two meetings this year and undertook a survey of high school Latin programs around the state. The survey results showed some interesting findings, but most relevant to this report is that the vast majority of schools responding indicated that they had only 1 full time teacher to run the program and nearly 50% of them did not feel well connected to other teachers around the state. This result underscores the need to improve communication between schools and across levels of education. Some efforts are being made, as through the aforementioned Fall Latin Day and also Butler University’s Ancient Mediterranean Cultures and Archaeology Lab which hosted events in connection with National Archaeology Day. The universities of Indiana are basically strong. Indiana University is hiring a new TT Latinist, for example.

In Illinois, a long period of economic turmoil has given way to some exciting new areas of growth and innovation, showing particular strength in the field of classical archaeology and material culture.

Monmouth College hired Dr. Adrienne Hagen, UIUC hired Dr. Brett Kaufman, and Northwestern will be hiring for a tenure-track position in Fall 2019. Across the state, departments are bringing together faculty and students to re-imagine traditional approaches to the study of Classics, from the SCS Material Culture Seminar at UIUC, to a cross-disciplinary colloquium on monuments and memory at Knox College, to the Classical Reception Workshop at Northwestern University. Illinois' three AIA branches offered a wide range of lectures. At Augustana College, a shift at the institutional level from trimesters to semesters is leading to an overhaul of their department offerings, while at Loyola University a revision of their major requirements now allows students with no prior language training to complete a Greek or Latin major in 4 years. This change corresponds to a worldwide movement towards making Classics more accessible. Communication within the state has improved through deliberate effort. The Junior Classical League kicked the year off with their state convention, February 22-24. In the spring, a workshop for junior faculty was organized by Dr. Emily Austin (University of Chicago) and Dr. Alex Loney (Wheaton College). Held at the Wheaton College campus on April 28, this invigorating workshop drew around 20 attendees from around the wider Chicago area and has now turned into an ongoing series, strengthening the network of junior faculty in the region. The award-winning Classics Day festival was again held at Monmouth College on September 28th, bringing together hundreds of attendees from downstate high schools and nearby colleges. The Illinois Classical Conference was held at Northwestern University October 6-7.

On the whole, Lake Michigan is a strong region and is continuing to emerge from a troubled period. A need for communication within each state between K-12 and post-secondary institutions (especially larger research-focused universities) remains an issue. Although some measures have been taken to address the problem, it is difficult to overcome the fact there is very little institutional incentive for individuals to undertake this effort.

Respectfully submitted,

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