

CAMWS 2017 Annual Report
Gulf States Region
VP T. Davina McClain

Below you will find the reports from each state. The good news is that most of the GSR is doing well or holding its own. Louisiana is the state with the greatest challenges, because of years of fiscal mismanagement by the state government. Governor Edwards is doing his best with a horribly inept state legislature.

The other difficulty that Louisiana has faced was the flooding that destroyed a number of homes and schools in the Baton Rouge area. Classics programs at Baton Rouge Episcopal and The Runnels School were especially hard hit. By sending out a call to the CAMWS-nation, however, we were able to assist these teachers in getting funds and books for their classrooms. I am especially grateful to the CAMWS members from across the CAMWS territory for responding to the call for help. It was a reminder of just how good the people in this organization are.

Travel funds, as you can see from another report below, remain an issue for some. My own university offers no guaranteed travel funds, although for the first time in years, we can now apply for competitive awards. Funding issues and the lack of raises does make the commitment to active involvement in classics, and especially in the meetings, a challenge, if not financially impossible. Perhaps CAMWS can address this in some way.

Alabama and Texas are both doing well. I am especially delighted by the return of Latin to University of North Texas, in my home town. Mississippi is holding its own.

Louisiana – Wilfred E. Major

It has been another difficult year for the state of Louisiana in general. The state government is struggling to restore fiscal stability, but so far has mostly spared education further cuts. Tragedies like the widely publicized shootings in Baton Rouge and the catastrophic flooding inevitably played out in the Classics communities. Schools in general are feeling the impact of reduced enrollments stemming from families affected by the floods.

Colleges and Universities

For Louisiana students, reductions in state scholarships taking affect just now in 2017 will likely affect overall enrollments and Classics accordingly. On the positive side, a new Classicist from Greece has just moved to the New Orleans area.

K-12

A number of Latin teachers and schools were impacted and in some cases devastated by flooding.

Alabama - P. Andrew Montgomery

1. Information on the activities of the state/provincial Classical association

The membership of the Alabama Classical Association is open to any interested individuals, but is composed primarily of secondary and post-secondary teachers throughout the state. There are two primary meetings of the association each year. In the fall there is a day long colloquium that usually attracts about 15-20 teachers who meet and share pedagogical ideas and participate in a workshop. The formal business meeting is usually held in late January and is frequently accompanied by a reading of papers and presentations. An informal meeting of the ACA is also held during the annual Alabama Junior Classical League meetings each spring.

The largest single recurring event of the year is the annual Junior Classical League meeting with an average attendance of about 500 high school students representing more than 15 of the state's middle and high schools. The most recent event (2016) was held at Vestavia Hills High School in suburban Birmingham. The forthcoming 2017 meeting will be held at Samford University.

Two major events are looming on the horizon for the Classics community in Alabama:

1) This coming summer the annual National Junior Classical League Convention (July 24-29, 2017) is being hosted by Troy University in Troy, Alabama. This event will bring around 2,000 high school students along with sponsors and teachers. Many, if not most of the members of the state's Alabama Classical Association will be involved that week in participating in colloquia and other events connecting to the meetings.

2) In the spring of 2020, CAMWS is coming to Birmingham.

2. Promotional activities in the state or province

Nothing to report.

3. CAMWS membership (efforts at promotion and results)

Even though there is a large pool of potential members in Alabama, there has been little progress in increasing CAMWS membership in the state. A review of the most recent census of CAMWS membership distributed reveals very few of the state's secondary teachers have been a member in recent years. In fact, several whose membership have lapsed are no longer teaching in the state.

Direct pitches for CAMWS membership has been routinely made at meetings of the ACA, but CAMWS membership is in direct competition with other professional organizations, including the American Classical League and the state Foreign Language association. Because of limited

funds and the generally long distances to travel for meetings, many potential CAMWS members in the state of Alabama choose other options that they feel are more helpful to them and afford them more tangible benefits.

Because of the forthcoming CAMWS 2020 in Birmingham, I do anticipate an increase interest in state membership as we begin to form local committees and recruit for help with the meetings. The immediate challenge is to aggressively advertise and recruit with a view toward participation in that very accessible meeting, followed up by the corollary challenge of retaining that membership once the meeting is past.

4. Efforts in the state or province to meet the CPL annual goals

Efforts at increased CAMWS membership is needed in order to promote an interest in CPL monies. Although it seems natural that the availability of CPL monies should attract CAMWS membership, the cost of CAMWS membership has actually been a deterrent.

5. Use of CPL monies, interest in CAMWS scholarships, etc.;

No known requests of CPL monies in the State of Alabama

6. Problems and challenges in the state or province

In general, the public school systems and private schools of Alabama have been very supportive of Latin programs. Many of the larger suburban schools throughout the state have maintained Latin programs for decades. With few exceptions, school systems that have lost teachers due to retirement, have been quick to replace the positions with new hires. There is no reason to suspect that any of these programs are in any immediate danger.

Conclusion:

Although the state of classics has been healthy, in the state of Alabama for at least a decade, this report indicates that there is much work to be done in raising the awareness of the value of CAMWS membership and participation. In the past, CPL money has not seemed to be a sufficient incentive to participate. Long distances to meetings and available funds for travel and cost of meetings is a strong deterrent, especially when more readily available opportunities are at hand for encouragement and development. The forthcoming CAMWS 2020 meeting in Birmingham is likely to generate much local interest in membership. The challenge will then be to retain that membership.

Texas - Deborah Beck

Middle- and high-school Latin continues to thrive in Texas. The annual Texas State JCL convention, held in Atascocita in April, was attended by a whopping 2200 students despite very heavy rains in the Houston area that weekend, up nearly 50% from 2015. The annual Texas

Classical Association meeting was held in Waco in November. Many schools host annual certamina that take place throughout the year, and hiring rates indicate continued liveliness of Latin programs around the state, particularly in the more populous eastern and northern areas. Dripping Springs (home of the CAMWS stalwart Ginny Lindzey) is even expanding their program by hiring additional teachers, and Latin is being taught to fifth graders in the Austin area.

The recovery of of the temporarily closed Latin program at the University of North Texas (Denton) has begun with the Fall 2016 reinstatement of Latin instruction. The original intent was to offer one Latin 101 course, with the idea of progressively reinstating more of the curriculum depending on enrollments, but the course was so popular that a second section had to be added. In fact, Latin teachers are sufficiently thick on the ground in north Texas that they have a monthly lunch together, where both informal shop talk and reading Latin together are the order of the day.

Mississippi – Jonathon Fenno

Last February around 300 persons attended the JCL state convention at Mississippi State, and a similar crowd is expected to attend this year's convention in April at the Mississippi School for Math and Science in Columbus.

Latin Students from Murrah High School in Jackson enjoyed a demonstration of Roman Armor in September, and Madison-Ridgeland Academy will do the same in February. Nearly three dozen Latin students from Madison-Ridgeland attended an Archaeology Day at the University of Mississippi in October.