

## “The Classics Tuning Project”: Articulating the Competencies and Skills of a Classics Student

The humanities in general face a raft of challenges from students and their parents who feel pressured to see the value of an undergraduate major purely in terms of its "return on investment." Classics, in particular, is not well-understood (“classical music?” “great books?”), and in small programs, resources and faculty focused on Classics can be spread across Classics, History, Archaeology, and even Art History departments. Students fall in love with the ancient world, but often struggle to articulate to themselves and others the skills, understanding, and qualities of mind provided by their work in Latin, Greek, Classical Civilizations or Archaeology.

“The Classics Tuning Project” is a collaborative venture initiated by faculty members from the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM). In this workshop, we will present the preliminary results of this grant-funded project designed to develop a common language around the competencies and skills learned through the study of classics.

Inspired by the American Historical Association’s “Tuning the History Discipline” initiative, our project is creating several bodies of data to further our goals. First, through the participation of classicists across numerous small departments, and a 2-day workshop, we intend to articulate the learning outcomes or competencies associated with an undergraduate degree in classics, and craft compelling arguments for their value outside the academy. Second, we will create and administer a survey of classics alumni showing what paths they have taken and how their classics education, and the learning outcomes associated with it, applies to their current lives. Third, after the workshop and with the aid of survey data, participating ACM faculty will generate resources to make these learning outcomes and their value more explicit to students and the wider community. We intend to deposit all materials in an online repository and to use this workshop to develop and share them with the profession. We hope that these materials will

also prove valuable for facilitating program-level assessment of individual colleges' classics learning outcomes.

The purpose of this project is to enable faculty better to promote the visibility and popularity of the field, and to help students articulate the value of their skills. We hope that our preliminary results will both spur dialogue and help us refine our list of competencies and other resources; additionally, we believe that this workshop can help to gauge interest in pursuing a national Classics "tuning" project. This could enable faculty better to promote the visibility and appeal of the field, and help students understand and articulate the value of their new skills. Such "tuning," as this process has been labeled, is not only critical to the field of classics, but to the promotion of the humanities and liberal arts, which have recently struggled to "sell" their value in national dialogue about education.

- 1) Presentation of the "Classics Tuning Project": An Introduction (5 minutes)
- 2) Presentation of core competencies list (10 minutes)
- 3) Presentation of survey data thus far collected and sample assignments (10 minutes)

After a brief question period regarding the third presentation, the presider and presenters will divide the room into several breakout groups and invite them to discuss the core competencies and skills and ask them to comment, refine, and improve the list and to suggest effective learning outcomes to accompany each competency. (The link to the list of competencies will be available for participants in the program.) After 30 minutes for breakout sessions, everyone will reconvene for a large group discussion of the highlights of each group and offer suggestions for future directions of "The Classics Tuning Project."