

## Lake Michigan Region

The Lake Michigan Region remains a strong and vibrant center of Classical education, with all three states demonstrating continued efforts to support existing commitments. A key area of activity identified in all three states in recent years has been communication, and in all three states initiatives have been undertaken to build and strengthen connections. While we still do not communicate well across state lines, within each state there have been many positive activities to report. While the challenges faced by the Classical community, and the humanities generally, must not be ignored, there is reason to face the future with courage and good cheer.

In Illinois, the long-standing budget stalemate has finally come to an end, although its effects can be felt across the state. The lack of funding for the MAP grants that allow lower-income students to attend college in Illinois is conspicuous in this area and has made a mark on Illinois colleges and universities, especially smaller institutions that could not afford to make up for the lost MAP funds themselves. An article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* from February 2, 2018 described a “hemorrhaging” of Illinois high school graduates enrolling at institutions in neighboring states, not only because of the recent budget crisis, but also because of recruiting initiatives from schools in neighboring states targeting Illinoisans in an effort to capitalize on Illinois’ woes. As the state government returns to a healthier condition, colleges and universities must act to restore confidence in students and parents as to the stability of higher education in Illinois.

Illinois Classics programs have sought to meet that challenge through a variety of means at multiple levels. The Illinois Classical Conference, held at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign on October 7-8, was very successful and was attended by 45 people. The Illinois Junior Classical League, South, met in Pekin on November 4, and the IJCL-North will meet in Itasca on February 22-24. On May 22, the Illinois Classical Conference is sponsoring the Latin Olympics. Several colleges and universities have reported positive developments, and Latin programs at the secondary level continue to thrive. Professors Alex Loney (Wheaton College) and Emily Austin (University of Chicago) are organizing a workshop for junior faculty in the Chicago area, modeled on a similar informal conference in New England. At Knox College in the fall of 2017, a two-day colloquium co-organized by Classics and Asian Studies involving students and faculty from several area institutions offered a model for cross-disciplinary collaboration. Three AIA chapters continue to thrive, and Monmouth College has announced an endowed lecture series on Roman Archaeology in honor of Professor Emeritus Tom Sienkiewicz.

In Michigan, recent areas of concern have settled down, although smaller programs continue to face difficulties. Faculty at Wayne State and Western Michigan University have struggled to replace retiring colleagues, for example. However, Hillsdale College has increased its Classics offerings, and numerous events around the state attest to the vibrancy of Classics in Michigan. Grand Valley State hosted a Homerathon, which is fast becoming a popular tradition at GVSU. The student-run GVSU Classics Society is now expanding to other events like the “Festival of Dionysus,” focusing on Greek drama. Undergraduate Allie Pohler was one of seven recipients of the 2016 Manson A. Stewart Scholarship, awarded by the CAMWS. Western Michigan University again welcomed many Latin scholars for the yearly International Medieval Congress, this year featuring 4 nights of medieval plays, some in Latin, and increased its Medieval Latin classes and programs. Michigan has many healthy high school Latin

programs, especially at Catholic high schools in the eastern part of the state, and Professors Anise Strong (WMU) and Ruth Scodel (UM) are building a linked SCS/CAMWS directory of all Latin and Greek high school teachers in Michigan this year in order to reach out to them.

The universities of the state have shown a commitment to increasing the accessibility of Classics. At Wayne State, the graduation rate for students of color in the program is 100%. They have been focusing on streamlining the major to enable completion in 2-3 years. The University of Michigan, a traditional leader in the field generally, has pioneered a new “Bridge” M.A., the first of its kind in the U.S., a fully funded, three semester program designed to assist promising students in Classical Studies, Ancient Philosophy, Ancient History, or Greek and Roman Archaeology in developing the Ancient Greek and Latin language skills needed to pursue a PhD in Classical Studies. The program has a particular focus on students from non-traditional backgrounds and ethnic diversity.

Indiana once again showed the strength of its Classics infrastructure, and although the state reports concern that it needs to improve communication strategies, appears to be a model in that area. The Indiana Classical Conference held its two regular yearly meetings in 2017 and continues to raise the profile of Classics in the state as well as connecting Classicists at various levels all the way from K to PhD. The massive Indiana Junior Classical League consists of 22 schools from around the state, with last year’s membership topping 750. The IJCL regularly hosts events like Fall Latin Day and certamen contests. The most recent Fall Latin Day was hosted by Indiana State University where over 100 students were in attendance. The IJCL also hosts a Leadership Development Academy to help high school programs foster young Classicists into potential leaders for their local JCL clubs. This year’s academy was attended by 74 students from 8 different schools. Fall Latin Day moves around the state and allows students to interact with the IJCL and meet talented professors teaching at schools all over the state. This year’s presenters were from Indiana State University. The Butler Ancient Mediterranean Cultures and Archaeology Lab, a mobile lab intended to be a resource to campus and community teachers, hosted events in connection with National Archaeology Day. People on Butler’s campus participated in shoebox archaeology digs and interacted with replica materials from lab’s collection. As the lab gets closer to full operation, there will be a public rollout so area teachers may borrow materials from the lab’s collection for use in their own classrooms. Steve Perkins of North Central High School undertook a tremendous survey project to inquire of former students how the study of Latin in high school has impacted their lives. The quotes he gathered from students in a variety of professions stands as a tremendous testament to the flexible skills that one gains through the study of Classics.

The many Classical activities in all three states are finding success in bridge-building, but so far this has mostly happened “horizontally,” i.e. K-12 teachers connect with other K-12 teachers and university faculty connect with other university faculty. In general, the three states could stand to make more use of CAMWS’ Bridge grants and other such strategies to link university faculties more closely to K-12 teachers. The outlook in the Lake Michigan Region has moved from a siege mentality to cautious optimism, and communication within and across state lines can only help.

Respectfully submitted,

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