

2-4 Project – Response from Classics

The 2-4-project, which asks graduate programs to rethink critically the way in which students make the transition from the seminar stage to independent dissertation research, falls in a period in which Classics is critically examining its graduate programs in light of the many new appointments and other changes in the Department.

Areas that have attracted particular attention during the past one and a half years include: recruiting and admissions (the Department now organizes visits of prospective graduate students *before* they have been admitted, with interviews and presentation of the Department, the University, and their collections); internal consistency; clarity of rules and procedures; adequate communication of rules and procedures; improvement in the presentation of the graduate programs in Classics (the text for the 2006-2007 *Programs and Policies* of the Graduate School has been substantially overhauled and an entirely new web portal for the Department's graduate programs is currently being drafted).

Of particular interest for the 2-4-project would seem to be the following initiatives, which pertain to the third year of study, the year of the qualifying examinations and which have been partially rephrased as response to the 2-4 project:

- The written comprehensives (translation examinations based on the Latin and Greek PhD reading lists) will be moved from late October/early November to mid-September of the student's fifth term in residence. This frees up time for the Greek and Latin oral examinations on the history of the literatures (mid-December) and does more justice to the importance of the preparation for this exam for the student's subsequent professional life; it also creates a temporal "buffer" in case a student fails the Greek and/or Latin written exams.
- Detailed documentation as a basis for the preparation for the oral comprehensives (comprehensive bibliography of relevant scholarship, current and past trends in research, etc.) will be provided to the students.
- The Greek and Latin written comprehensives can now be taken in separate years (e.g., Latin in September of the third semester, Greek in September of the fifth semester), after consultation with the DGS. This allows students who are particularly well-prepared in one of the two languages to take the examination a year early, with obvious positive consequences for the student's progress in the program and the quality of his/her preparation for the examination in the other language.

- Enhanced preparation for the written comprehensives will be available through a better coordination between the seminar offerings of the first and second years and the PhD reading lists.
- Under study is a petition of the graduate students to have input in the composition of the PhD reading lists, with an eye toward their developing research interests.

In further response to the 2-4-project of the Graduate School, the Graduate Committee has adopted the following changes to the program:

- Following the suggestion in the 2-4-report of mentoring: each second-year student will be assigned to a faculty mentor, who advises him/her throughout the second and third years of study, that is, the year in which course work will have to be combined increasingly with preparation for the fifth-semester examinations, as well as the examination year itself. In addition to the documentation mentioned above, students will be encouraged to consult more systematically with faculty responsible for the oral comprehensives (Greek literature, Roman literature; Greek history; Roman history).
- The Graduate Committee has adopted a modification of the Special Field examinations that fill up the student's sixth term in residence. Formerly in-depth study of four topics was required, based on substantial independent research and tutorial-style meetings with faculty members. The four topics (two Greek literature/history; two Roman literature/history) were different from the student's subsequent dissertation research. After the successful completion of the student's third year, the summer and seventh semester was spent on preparation of the dissertation syllabus, with the Dissertation Colloquium falling in December. The change adopted is to allow one of the four special topics to be on the student's dissertation research. This "head start" combined with intensive summer research would allow the student to do the Dissertation Colloquium in September (instead of December), which frees up a whole semester.