

Three-Year Review
Department of Ancient Studies
AY 2015/6-2017/8

ANCS has made notable progress in achieving five of seven items in its post-APR action plan; two items remain ongoing. The achievement of one item hinges on negotiations with the History department, while the other has been delayed because of ongoing workload issues in the department. ANCS continues to lead CAHSS in FTE students per FT faculty (30.9; college average: 20.1), FTE students per total faculty (23.2; college average: 12.4), FTE students per FTE faculty (27.8; college average: 16.7), and FTE students per T/TT faculty (61.8; college average: 28.5). It has become clear that we will not be able to offer a capstone course until we add another TT faculty member.

The first item on the department's action plan was the hiring of a new tenure-track faculty member in AY 2016-2017. Thanks to support from the Provost and Dean, this was accomplished on schedule. In addition, the Dean approved the department's conversion of a visiting Lecturer position to a regular Lecturer appointment in AY 2017-2018. At the time of the APR, the department had two T/T faculty, one regular Lecturer, a visiting Assistant Professor, and a visiting Lecturer. ANCS now has three tenured/tenure-track faculty and two regular Lecturers. We have stabilized our teaching faculty and now look forward to diversifying it.

Increasing the number of students in all ANCS plans was the second item on the action plan. The following table shows the number of ANCS majors and minors from Fall 2015 through Fall 2018 (Fall 2018 was added to illustrate the full extent of the increase in enrollment in ANCS plans):

Table 1: Students in ANCS Plans F2015-F2018

| | F2015 | F2016 | F2017 | F2018 |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Primary Plan | 16 | 15 | 23 | 30 |
| Additional Plans | 10 | 12 | 9 | 15 |
| Total Majors | 26 | 27 | 32 | 45 |
| Minors | 22 | 24 | 24 | 20 |
| Total in Plan | 48 | 51 | 56 | 65 |

Overall, the number of students in all ANCS plans increased 34% over the period (from 48 to 65; that becomes 46% if we include S2019 numbers of 70 students in all plans). The number of majors increased 73% (from 26 to 45); the number minors decreased by 9% (from 22 to 20; however, we have 25 minors in S2019). Environmental scans did not clearly identify potential feeder schools—our students come from an extraordinarily diverse range of schools in the region; no clear patterns emerged. A younger, more dynamic faculty, the increasing popularity of ANCS Week Events, intensified local and regional outreach, and the department’s strong presence in the University’s General Education Program all figure in an explanation of the increase. An especially strong draw for Ancient Studies Majors is the annual study tour, which has attracted between 15 and 40 travelers per year, and Dr. Michael Lane’s ongoing fieldwork in Greece, which attracts as many as 10 UMBC students per summer. It is worth noting that ANCS’s increase in numbers is all the more extraordinary in light of declining numbers of students in CAHSS, particularly among comparably sized humanities majors such as AMST and GWST. Slightly larger PHIL has increased by 11% over the same period.

During this period, the number of degrees awarded to students in all ANCS plans declined:

Table 2: Number of Graduates in All Plans/Number of Students in All Plans

| Year | # of Graduates All Plans | # of Students All Plans |
|---------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2015-16 | 17 | 48 |
| 2016-17 | 17 | 51 |
| 2017-18 | 10 | 56 |
| 2018-19 | N/A | 70 |

The overwhelming majority of students in ANCS plans has been transfer students, who take classes in the department for 4 semesters. As a result, we graduated 33% or more of our majors and minors in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. In 2017-18, however, the portion of students in all plans who graduated declined to under 20%. The numbers for 2018-19 are not yet available, but all indications are that the fraction of students in all plans who will graduate will be closer to 20% than to 33%. This should lay the groundwork for continued increase in the number of students in ANCS plans.

The department’s commitment to expanding its direct assessment of courses to include a sampling of all classes taught in the department—ANCS, ARCH, GREK, LATN, HIST—was the third item in our action plan. The department has completed a broad sampling of courses. The

most tangible result of our assessment has been experimentation with Latin textbooks; this, however, proved to be inconclusive. Newly adopted textbooks were strong where the superseded texts were less instructive. Much to our surprise, the new textbooks suffered from unanticipated weaknesses in the classroom. They turned out to be even worse for student learning than their predecessors. While we continue to seek solutions to this problem, we have returned to the textbook used in Introductory and Intermediate Latin classes prior to 2015.

ANCS has made progress on its sixth action plan item, strengthening ties with the Classics Department at UMCP and with Classics Departments in Universities throughout the Greater Washington, D.C. region. The department has partnered with UMCP as co-institutional members of the Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome (the Centro), enabling UMBC students to study abroad there. The chair of the ANCS department has become a member of the Washington Area Mediterranean Studies (WAMS) steering committee, working with colleagues from Catholic University, UMCP, Georgetown, McDaniel College and others to bring scholars and students working on the ancient Mediterranean together for a variety of events, including seminars, lectures, and workshops.

The department has made less progress toward fulfilling items four and five of the action plan: reclassifying its ancient History offerings (HIST 453, 454, 455, and 456), which are taught by an ANCS faculty member and required for the ANCS major, as 300-level ANCS courses cross-listed with HIST, and implementation of a 400-level ANCS capstone course and determination of appropriate methods of direct assessment for it. The department's case for reclassifying the HIST offerings as ANCS classes cross-listed with HIST met with stiff resistance from the former chair of History. These classes were first offered in 1967 before the Ancient Studies Department existed and were taught by ANCS faculty member Dr. Rudy Storch. They remained in the HIST department after the ANCS department was formed in 1971 even though they continued to be taught by ANCS faculty. HIST 453, 455, and 456 are currently the History Department's highest enrolled and best reviewed classes. The ANCS Capstone course has been put on hold until we can figure out how to staff it. All current faculty members teach more than a standard load.

The ANCS department has added three new courses to the books since the APR: ARCH 325 (Pompeii), ANCS 305 (Warfare in the Ancient World), and ANCS 375 (Ancient Medicine) and is preparing to add several more courses that have been offered at Topics courses, such as Magic and Witchcraft in the Ancient World. ANCS has also added two pressure-funded sections of ANCS 210 (Classical Mythology): one hybrid section enrolling 120 students and another online section enrolling 50 students.

