

**VICE-PRESIDENTIAL PANEL 2002**

*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

---

## Navigating the Shoals: Teacher Training in Our Graduate Programs

---

**KENNETH F. KITCHELL, JR.**

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

THE IMPETUS FOR THE FOLLOWING four papers lies in several developments currently affecting the teaching of Classics in America. Each fall at Ph.D.-granting institutions first year Classics teaching assistants stand before a class for the first time in their lives and do so with virtually no formal training in how to teach. Elsewhere, often in the same city or town, a pre-collegiate level Latin program is canceled for lack of a teacher or, almost as bad, is taught by a teacher with insufficient training in Latin. Frequently, and ironically, an extremely competent candidate with years of advanced Latin study applied for such a job but was rejected for not having certification or formal pedagogical training.

These phenomena have for too long been seen as unrelated. Yet they are all related by the simple fact that each of us, school teacher and professor alike, spends a great deal of time teaching. A panel centering on the Latin teacher shortage (*“Disciplina abhorret vacuum: Addressing the Latin Teacher Shortage”*) was therefore convened at the 2000 CAMWS meeting in Knoxville, Tennessee. Here, speakers from a range of instructional levels and institutions<sup>1</sup> gathered to discuss the current crisis we face in providing teachers for our pre-collegiate Latin and Greek classrooms.

<sup>1</sup> Adam Blistein, Executive Director, APA; Kenneth F. Kitchell, Jr., Graduate Program Director, M.A.T. in Latin and Classical Humanities, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Peter N. Howard, Troy State University and Director of the ACL Placement Service; Cathy P. Daugherty, LT/Specialist for Foreign Language, Hanover County Public Schools, Ashland, Virginia; Daniel P. Tompkins, Provost’s Fellow for Teaching and Learning, and Associate Professor, Department of Greek, Hebrew & Roman Classics, Temple University.

Lively discussion made it clear that, much like the blind men around the elephant, everyone had a grasp on a piece of the problem but the entirety of the problem was largely unseen. Ph.D.-granting institutions looked down on teaching high school as a poor second choice to employment at the college level, and secondary school systems often held a bias against those with advanced Classics degrees as having no demonstrable teaching skills.

From the discussion arose a simple question—"How well, if at all, are we training our graduate students in Classics as teachers?"—and from this question arose the panel entitled "Navigating the Shoals: Teacher Training in our Graduate Programs," presented at the 2002 annual APA meeting in Philadelphia under the aegis of the APA Education Division.

The papers presented here spring from that panel and attempt to demonstrate the breadth of the current problem, to examine ways in which it may be addressed, and to examine candidly the problems that might arise in implementing two basic propositions. These propositions are (1) that it is in the best interest of the entire field of Classics, at all levels, for graduate students to receive formal training in teaching and (2) that a concerted offensive needs to be launched by our national and regional groups to address the Latin teacher shortage before it is too late to repair the damage it is causing.

The papers below, then, address various facets of this issue. It will help the reader to know that their authors were reacting to two concrete proposals: (1) that every Ph.D.-granting institution should offer a formal teaching-methods course for its graduate students, and (2) that some Ph.D.-granting institutions might consider instituting a minor field in pedagogy for their candidates.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The author wishes to thank Adam Blistein, Minna Duchovnay, and the Center for Teaching of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, for invaluable assistance in helping this panel and article come together. A number of respondents also participated in the 2002 APA meeting and their comments greatly informed the discussion. Our thanks, therefore, to Peter Cohee, Greg and Cathy Daugherty, Ed DeHoratius, David Frauenfelder, and Teresa Ramsby.