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TO: Friends and colleagues interested in *Classicizing Philadelphia*

RE: ***Classicizing Philadelphia***   Dec. 31, 2010
          Project Activities 2010

This memorandum reports progress to date toward realizing *Classicizing Philadelphia*, a research project to document and investigate American reception of Greece and Rome in the city and region of Philadelphia. *Classicizing Philadelphia* begins with the assumptions that America's conversation with Greece and Rome has been and continues to be important, that this conversation has been as diverse and varied as our country itself, and that Philadelphia has played a significant part in it.

Classicizing Philadelphia takes inspiration from *Classicizing Chicago*, a project at Northwestern University; together, these two projects may become the first nodes in a projected network of centers for the local study of American receptions of Greece and Rome. On November 18, 2010, Dr. Pearcy met with Prof. Kate Bosher, director of *Classicizing Chicago*, and Prof. Konstantinos Nikoloutsos of St. Joseph's University. Prof. Annette Baertschi of Bryn Mawr was kept informed by e-mail of these early discussions. The purpose of this meeting was to learn about *Classicizing Chicago*, to consider whether *Classicizing Philadelphia* might be a viable concept, and to identify possible first steps. It was agreed that Dr. Pearcy would try to find out who in the Philadelphia academic community might be interested in taking part in such a project, and that if interest seemed to exist, he would set up further meetings.

In November and early December, Dr. Pearcy continued informal discussions with Mr. Alex Pearson and other members of the technology team at the Episcopal Academy and described the project to Prof. Radcliffe Edmonds of Bryn Mawr. Mr. Pearson pointed out that newly developing approaches to digital analysis of very large data sets in the humanities might enhance *Classicizing Philadelphia*, and Prof. Edmonds provided valuable insights into the institutional culture of Bryn Mawr.

On December 13, following a suggestion from Prof. Edmonds, Dr. Pearcy met with Provost Kim Cassidy of Bryn Mawr. The Provost outlined Bryn Mawr's efforts to develop digital humanities projects. In developing and assigning priorities to such projects, the College looks always to the research interests of its own faculty and the degree of student involvement. President MacAuliffe has asked Prof. Katherine Rowe to coordinate the College's efforts in this area through the Tri-College Digital Humanities Consortium.

It is important to understand that none of the meetings and conversations described in this memorandum establishes or implies that Bryn Mawr College has or will endorse *Classicizing Philadelphia*. The project is still inchoate, and much further work will be necessary before an institutional home for the project can be found. Still, Bryn Mawr seems in many ways a natural

choice. The College has strong graduate programs in Classics, Art History, and Archaeology and an innovative undergraduate program in Growth and Structure of Cities. Several faculty members are already engaged in research on classical reception or on the historical culture of Philadelphia. Libraries and Special Collections have recently developed digital catalogs using open source software. The College has a tradition of involving students in faculty-led research projects. The Tri-College Consortium of Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore has established an office to coordinate digital humanities projects Finally, Dr. Pearcy, who has taken the lead in organizing *Classicizing Philadelphia*, has a long-standing affiliation with Bryn Mawr.

On December 15, Dr. Pearcy had a productive meeting with Prof. Rowe. She offered an overview of the landscape of digital humanities projects and pointed to a number of projects at other institutions that might serve as models or inspirations for *Classicizing Philadelphia*. For example, *Classicizing Philadelphia* might exist as a coordinated network of modules within larger or more general local history projects like the Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia (http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/) or the archive of photographs at http://phillyhistory.org/PhotoArchive/. The kind of technical innovation exemplified by projects like the Encyclopedia of Egyptology (www.uee.ucla.edu) or Hypercities (www.hypercities.com) also provides food for thought. Along with technical innovation, sustainability is important to successful—and successfully funded—digital humanities projects. Discussions with Prof. Rowe have continued by e-mail, and she will play an important part in any *Classicizing Philadelphia* project that comes into existence.

Following his conversation with Prof. Rowe, Dr. Pearcy approached Prof. Deborah Roberts of Haverford College about applying for a Mellon TriCo Faculty Forum Grant to continue discussion of issues in local reception of classics and to plan *Classicizing Philadelphia*. Discussion with Prof. Roberts will continue.

On December 22, Dr. Pearcy met with Dr. Jeff Cohen, Senior Lecturer in Bryn Mawr's Growth and Structure of Cities program. Dr. Cohen's research focuses on the built environment of cities, and he was able to offer valuable information on digital and print resources in this area. He suggested that education, libraries and archives, and buildings could be initial areas of investigation for *Classicizing Philadelphia*. He also raised an important question: What will this project do that cannot be done some other way?

Dr. Pearcy continues to explore the potential of quantitative analysis to reveal trends in classical reception. In late December it seemed that the data available through Google Books' Ngram Viewer might show differences between British and American reception of certain Greco-Roman concepts and authors. Dr. Pearcy asked GoogleLabs whether these data could be filtered by city of publication; he hopes to receive an answer soon.

Let me now shift from the descriptive third person to the speculative first. What lies ahead, and what are the next steps?   So far *Classicizing Philadelphia* is nothing more than a set of assumptions about classical reception and a vision of the potential of digital humanities. Neither the final shape and organization of the project nor its scope and audience are clear. It exists only as a series of informal discussions among and between a few people. The most urgent task is to continue and broaden this discussion, and to develop a clear idea of the project's audience, goals, structure, and institutional viability.

I propose the following course of action:

Phase I: January 2011 – June 2012

- Continue and expand conversations at Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore
- Prepare "White Paper #1: Testing the Hypotheses"
- Apply for Mellon TriCo Faculty Forum Grant
- Use initial funding to expand conversation to include representatives of Philadelphia academic and cultural institutions, *Classicizing Chicago*, other digital humanities projects
- Finalize local coordination and planning team for *Classicizing Philadelphia*
- Clarify audience, mission, methods, and sustainability
- Secure institutional sponsorship, probably from Bryn Mawr
- Apply for Phase II funding

Phase II: 2012-2013 (depending on funding and institutional support)

- Initial web presence for *Classicizing Philadelphia*
- Develop prototypes of digital methods for analysis of data
- Engage students, possibly as funded interns, in data analysis, article writing, and software development
- Develop formal partnerships with local institutions and digital humanities projects
- Hold conference on "Local Receptions of Greece and Rome" at Bryn Mawr
- Apply for Phase III funding

Phase III: 2013-2015 (depending on funding, institutional sponsorship, and the results of Phases I and II)

- Ensure institutional stability and on-going leadership for *Classicizing Philadelphia*
- Develop public programs
- Make Phase II prototypes fully functional; continue publication of data and analysis
- Continue to support student internships and participation in research