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TO: Friends and colleagues interested in *Classicizing Philadelphia*

RE: ***Classicizing Philadelphia***  
**Project Activities 2011**

Dec. 31, 2011

This memorandum reports progress during 2011 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.

### **TriCo Funding**

During February and March, 2011, Dr. Lee Percy (Bryn Mawr), Prof. Deborah Roberts (Haverford), and Prof. Grace Ledbetter (Swarthmore) developed an application for a TriCo Mellon Faculty Forum seed grant (<http://www.haverford.edu/provost/mellon/index.php#brainstorming>) to support a series of planning meetings and conversations among faculty from the three colleges. In May, the grant was approved.

The planning team includes faculty members from the TriCo colleges, the University of Pennsylvania, and St. Joseph's University, as well as representatives of the *Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia* (<http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/>). Two working lunches at Bryn Mawr's Wyndham Alumnae House (Sept. 16 and October 21) have explored fundamental questions about reception, offered advice on a First Year Seminar, Philadelphia as the "Athens of America," at Swarthmore College, and begun to develop plans for the next phases of the project. A future meeting, in February 2012, will include Prof. Kathryn Boshier of Northwestern University, a director of the *Classicizing Chicago* project.

### **Dialogue with *Classicizing Chicago***

*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 April 4, 2011, Lee Percy took part (via Skype) in a meeting at Northwestern of *Classicizing Chicago*'s directors and technical team. This meeting focused on improvements to the Chicago project's user interface. On November 3, Dr. Percy spoke with Julie Rudder, a digital collections specialist with Northwestern University's library who oversees the technical aspects of *Classicizing Chicago*.

These conversations made it clear that *Classicizing Philadelphia* will probably be different in scale and organization from its Chicago counterpart. Neither Bryn Mawr nor even the TriCo community can muster the resources of a large research university like Northwestern. The emphasis on undergraduate collaboration in research at Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore, and the proposed outreach component of *Classicizing Philadelphia*, may distinguish it from the larger project at Northwestern, whose contributors are either graduate students or faculty members.

In the November conversation with Julie Rudder Dr. Percy learned a great deal about the data architecture and management of *Classicizing Chicago* and about the kinds of open source software used for data management and storage. He also discussed workflow (what happens when) and personnel (who does what) in the Chicago project.

Conversations and frequent exchanges of e-mail with Prof. Kathryn Boshier have advanced plans for *Classicizing Philadelphia* and suggested possible avenues of cooperation between the two projects.

### **In addition**

At Bryn Mawr, Lee Percy met with Collections Information Manager Cheryl Klimaszewski to discuss Bryn Mawr's capabilities and current activities in digital humanities. In December, he also met with Nona Smith in the Office of Sponsored Research and with Madge Rothenberg in the Office of Foundation and Corporate Programs to get a sense of the funding landscape at Bryn Mawr.

Earlier in the year, Dr. Percy created a web site, <http://classicizingphiladelphia.blogs.brynmawr.edu/>, to report on the planning of *Classicizing Philadelphia*.

### **Next Steps**

In last year's annual report, I suggested three specific phases and actions. Here I review the first two phases, with comments in **bold** where indicated.

Phase I: January 2011 – June 2012

- Continue and expand conversations at Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore **Done**
- Prepare "White Paper #1: Testing the Hypotheses" **May not be needed, or may become part of funding applications**
- Apply for Mellon TriCo Faculty Forum Grant **Done**
- Use initial funding to expand conversation to include representatives of Philadelphia academic and cultural institutions, *Classicizing Chicago*, other digital humanities projects **There has been some progress in this area, but more needs to be done. The *Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia* is already represented, and the Free Library has indicated interest, but there are many other institutions that might become part of the project. A significant challenge for *Classicizing Philadelphia*, in fact, will be to identify and coordinate already digitized material in the city's many historical collections.**
- Finalize local coordination and planning team for *Classicizing Philadelphia* **This will be an important agenda item for the remaining Faculty Forum group meetings.**

- Clarify audience, mission, methods, and sustainability **Again, this remains a major challenge, and I hope that the planning group will be able to give sustained thought to these matters in 2012.**
- Secure institutional sponsorship, probably from Bryn Mawr **I hope to report progress on this during the next year.**
- Apply for Phase II funding **A critical step. Foundation and agency deadlines make it likely that any funding will not be in place until the 2013-2014 academic year.**

Phase II: 2012-2013 **or 2013-2014** (depending on funding and institutional support)

- Initial web presence for *Classicizing Philadelphia* **The site mentioned above, classicizingphiladelphia.blogs.brynmawr.edu, may satisfy this need.**
- Develop prototypes of digital methods for analysis of data **According to Julie Rudder at Northwestern, it is important to gather a large, representative sample of different kinds of data before thinking about digital methods. It may be possible to make a beginning on a data sample as early as the second half of 2012.**
- 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