Dear incoming Hill parents,

I am writing to ask that you encourage your child to take Latin to fulfill the school’s three year Foreign Language requirement. To that effect, in this letter, I will outline for you some of the practical benefits of the study of Latin—such as increased standardized test scores and favored college admission status—as well as offer you a preview of course offerings, faculty bios, and recent college admissions results in the Classics Department.

Since the founding of The Hill School in 1851 by the Reverend Matthew Meigs, a classics Ph.D. himself, the study of Latin and Greek has been a central piece of Hill’s academic program, and it is a program that to this day still enjoys national renown. Currently, we have students completing advanced degrees in Classics at Stanford (Ph.D.) and Oxford University (one an M.A. the other a Ph.D. on a Rhodes Scholarship) and at the undergraduate level at Princeton, Penn, Georgetown, Dartmouth, Columbia, Cornell, Brown, and Middlebury, among others.

The Classics program at Hill is uniquely rigorous. Our graduates learn to think and write with a precision, care, and depth that is truly unique at the high school level. In addition, they gain an understanding of the cultures that form so much of the basis of our language, law, architecture, literature, and government. Our survey of great ideas is not superficial. Rather, when our students read Vergil or Plato in the original, we ask them to confront the ultimate questions such texts pose: what is the nature of human excellence and can it be taught? What responsibility does the victor have toward the vanquished? What qualities does an outstanding leader possess?

In Classics and at Hill generally, we are passionate about our teaching, our scholarship, but most of all about our students. To that end, we provide a personalized approach to each student who enters our classes, guiding him or her to actualize his or her full intellectual potential, in a way which is as rigorous as it is supportive and nurturing. In closing, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of my colleagues should you like to learn more about the Classics program at Hill. We welcome enrollment at all levels of our program and pledge that, with application and consistency, your child, like those of the past one-hundred and sixty-three years, will be considerably enriched by the sequenced study of Latin and Greek under our tutelage.

Sincerely yours,

Patrick G. Lake, Ph.D. (plake@thehill.org)
Isaac Thomas Chair of Classics
The Hill School
Why should a student study Latin and Greek at The Hill?

In an era where distances shrink with just a touch, where information is as readily available as the air we breathe, why should any intelligent, rational person take up the serious study of languages which are spoken nowhere in the global village, and whose civilizations are long gone?

More than ever, in choosing a course of study in high school, students and parents alike consider first what college one will gain admission to or what job will be accessible as a result of completing a given program of study. This downward spiral of educational choice, makes one’s education no more than a means to an end. At Hill, in contrast, we view one’s education primarily as an end in itself, as a life-experience. And the study of Classics is preeminent in this pursuit. To study the Classics is to become part of an unbroken chain of human experience, stretching from remote antiquity to the present day. Such a study gives one a unique and deep perspective on the human condition; it vastly increases one’s cultural literacy; and it allows a student to gain direct access to the ideas of the ancient peoples who have largely shaped our modern world. Greek is the language of the Gospels, Socrates, Homer, and Alexander the Great. Latin is the language of Vergil, Julius Caesar, and St. Augustine, not to mention the preferred mode of discourse for such thinkers as Descartes and Galileo. The Greek and Roman civilizations form the basis of our law, language, architecture, and literature.

But for those of us who justifiably have an interest in the practical, consider the fact that over 90 percent of all English words of three or more syllables come directly from Latin and Greek. The difficulty of the technical vocabulary in the medical and scientific fields instantly dissipates once one masters the classical languages. The great irony, then, is that a course of study in the classical languages, which on the surface seems so remote and impractical, is, in fact, precisely the opposite. Indeed, it is no wonder that, according to the ETS’s Total Group Profile Report in 2010, students who took the SAT Subject Test in Latin on average scored 173 points higher than their peers on the SAT’s. The graduates of our Classics program at Hill have certainly benefited in this respect, having gained admission over the years to the nation’s and world’s most elite colleges and universities (see our College Matriculation list below), thereafter entering professions as diverse as the law, finance, the arts, and medicine.

The structure of the Latin and Greek languages, in which changes to the ends of words communicate changes in meaning, compels the student to understand fully the basic functions of language, to move from analysis to application, in short, to think. The analytic and associative skills and the capacity for memory and recall that the Latin and Greek languages require of a student are not only crucial in developing one’s mental faculties, but, not surprisingly, they are also well-respected in the world of college admissions. According to a 2010 Bloomberg article by Janet Lorin, William Fitzsimmons, Harvard’s Dean of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, said of Latin students, “We certainly do take notice. It [Latin] can end up tipping the student into the class.” Furthermore, Quenby Jackson Mott, Vice Dean and Penn’s Director of Admissions, stated for the same article that “Applicants who indicated a potential major in classics this year had an admission rate of 19 percent compared with 14 percent for aspirants generally.”

The study of Latin and Greek allows a student to enter new worlds of thought and experience, giving that student ground level entry into the very blueprints of the linguistic and cultural edifices of the Western world. As William F. Wyatt, a professor of linguistics at Brown University once noted, “Although Latin is not the language of our culture, it is the language of Roman culture and Roman culture forms the basis of our own ... we are all as residents of the United States, heirs of the linguistic, literary, legal, and cultural tradition the Romans inherited and developed from Greece and the Near east. If we wish to know ourselves and our civilization, with all its virtues and defects, it is incumbent upon us to learn of the Romans and their accomplishments. And one must begin with their language – Latin!”

In closing, the members of the Classics Department hope that you consider beginning or continuing your course of study in the Classical languages at Hill. Should you have any questions about placement or course sign-ups, please contact Jay Spencer in the Academic Office directly (jspencer@thehill.org). All other questions may be directed to Patrick G. Lake (plake@thehill.org), Chair of Classics.
Latin and Greek Course Offerings

For a full-list of course offerings, please visit www.thehill.org/classics > Classics Course Descriptions. At Hill, we offer Latin beyond the AP level. Our highest level Latin course, the Advanced Latin Seminar, is equivalent to a 300 level college course. In similar fashion, we offer four years of Greek and also electives in Classics Mythology, and Greek and Roman art and archaeology. This past year, Hill students accounted for over a third of all students nationwide reading Homeric Greek.

Classics Faculty

Since the school’s founding in 1851 by Classics Ph.D. Matthew Meigs, Classics has been a flagship program at the school and has long been recognized as one of the finest high school programs in the country. Below is a brief synopsis of the professional activities and qualifications of the members of our department. For more information about our Classics faculty, please visit www.thehill.org/classics > Highlights of Hill Classics Department:

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**Name:** Dr. Patrick G. Lake (plake@thehill.org)  
**Position:** Isaac Thomas Chair of Classics  
**Head Coach Girls’ Track and Field**  
**Education:** Fordham University, M.A., Ph.D.  
Boston University, B.A.

Member of the Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Sigma Iota honor fraternities; CAAS Director of Eastern Pennsylvania; Referee for Classical World; Recipient of the Presidential Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Paper, CAMWS; College Prize for Excellence in Classical Studies, Boston University; E. Ray Speare Award, Boston University; Division I Academic All American in Track & Field; Author of several articles and book reviews, including the Greek textbook series, *A Course in Attic Greek*, I-II.

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**Name:** Mr. Stephen Ciraolo (sciraolo@thehill.org)  
**Position:** Instructor of Classics  
**Head Coach Boys’ and Girls’ Rowing**  
**Education:** Villanova University, M.A.  
Cornell University, B.A.

2009 recipient of the Matthew W. Houliham Foundation Award for excellence and dedication to the students of Tabor Academy; Author of *Pro M. Caelio Oratio* (Bolchazy-Carducci, 1997), long the standard text for the Latin AP curriculum; Presenter of numerous papers at several national conferences; Successful crew and debate coach.

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**Name:** Ms. Melissa Browne (mbrowne@thehill.org)  
**Position:** Instructor of Classics  
**Assistant varsity girls' basketball coach**  
**Education:** Villanova University, M.A.  
Oxford University, study year abroad  
College of The Holy Cross, B.A.

Member of the Phi Beta Kappa and Eta Sigma Phi honor societies; Charles A. Dana Scholar for Leadership & Excellence; Awarded prize for Highest Academic Performance of a Visiting Student, Mansfield College (Oxford University); Graduate Fellow at Harvard’s Center for Hellenic Studies, working on manuscript digitization and writing on a previously unpublished manuscript of the *Iliad*.  

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Name: Dr. Henry Bender (hbender@thehill.org)
Position: Instructor of Humanities & Classics, Emeritus
Education: Rutgers University, Ph.D.
Pennsylvania State University, M.A.
Fordham University, B.A.


**College Matriculation for Recent Graduates of Hill’s Classics Program**

**Class of 2009**
Jae Choe  
Joseph Donley  
Erin Forester  
William Harris  
Richard Lafferty  
Washington U. at St. Louis  
Oberlin College  
St. Joseph’s University  
Union College  
Georgetown University  
Evyn Cosgrove  
George Fleming  
Kerri Haley  
Caitlin Klein  
Stefane Victor  
Vanderbilt University  
Colgate University  
Elmira College  
Davidson College  
Georgetown U.

**Class of 2010**
Carlo Bettini  
Henry Eve  
Brianna McGuire  
Boston University  
Boston University  
Wheaton College  
Samantha Cassidy  
Anthony Ferrara  
Dinora Smith  
Tufts University  
Princeton University  
St. Andrews

**Class of 2011**
Erika Andersen  
Jesse Fleck  
Carolyn Minks  
Henry Rand  
Princeton University  
Princeton University  
University of Michigan  
Sewanee: U. of the South  
Robert Dougherty  
Samuel Griffiths  
Emily Overholt  
Katharina Turcios-Wiswe  
Princeton University  
Gettysburg College  
Boston University  
NYU

**Class of 2012**
Amy Amuquandoh  
Addy Colona  
Michael Galamba  
Lyndsey Hassinger  
Abby Mortimer  
Hollyn Taylor  
Vivek Venketesh  
Swarthmore College  
George Washington U.  
Dickinson University  
Brown University  
UC Santa Barbara  
Wake Forest University  
Cornell University  
Blair Bellis  
Katherine Ferrara  
Tiffany Gordon  
Ronuk Modi  
Raye Sosseh  
Anita Venketesh  
Alex Young  
Boston College  
Princeton University  
Weslayan University  
Penn State (6 yr. MD)  
Brown University  
Cornell University  
George Washington

**Class of 2013**
Michelle Adjagba  
Adam Beards  
Charles Buschmann  
Jake Eckhart  
Theodore Poatsy  
University of Pennsylvania  
Penn State University  
Hamilton College  
Columbia University  
Dartmouth College  
Nabil Shaikh  
Tyshawn Simeus  
Nate Smith-Ide  
William Worrilow  
Princeton University  
U. of Southern Calif.  
Middlebury College  
Davidson College