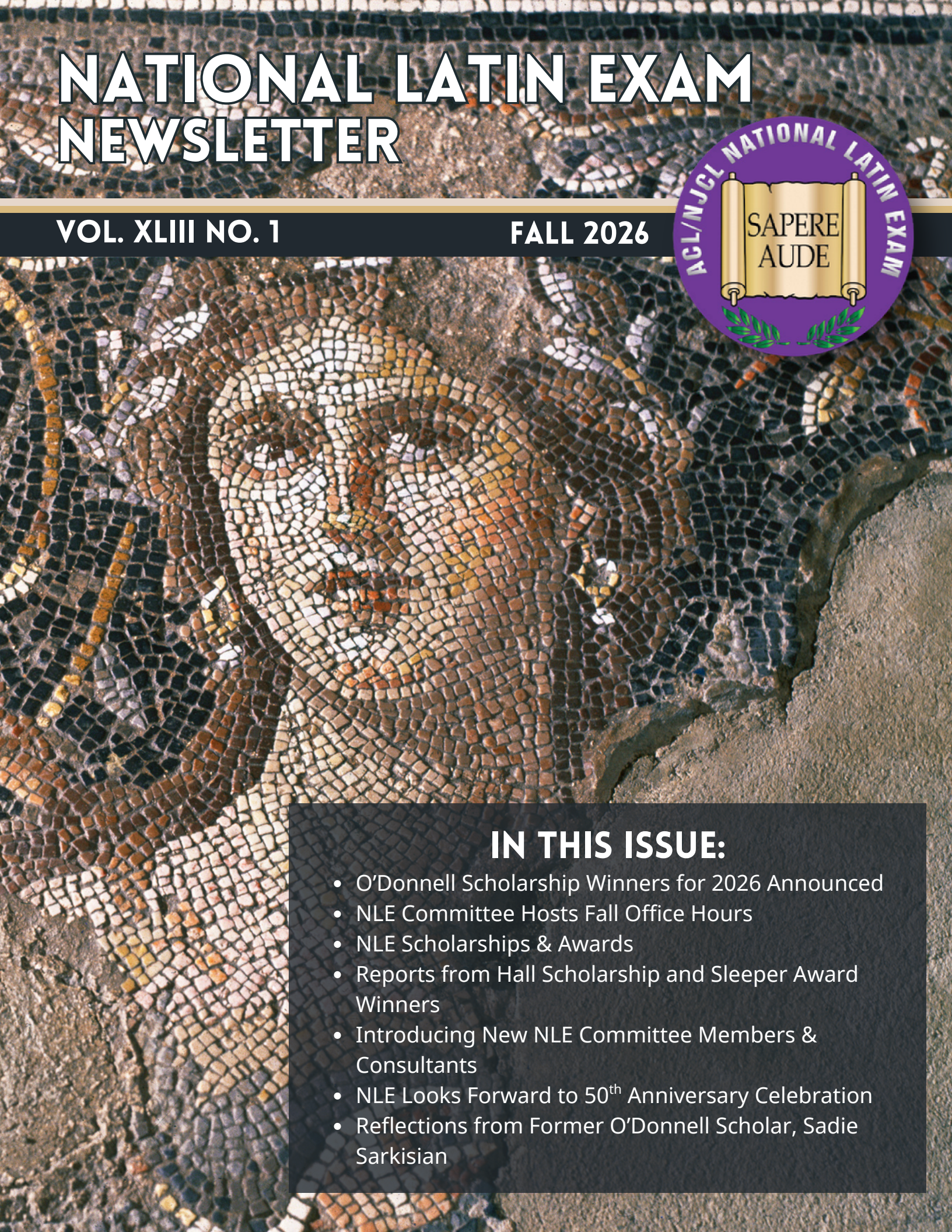
NATIONAL LATIN EXAM NEWSLETTER

VOL. XLIII NO. 1 FALL 2026



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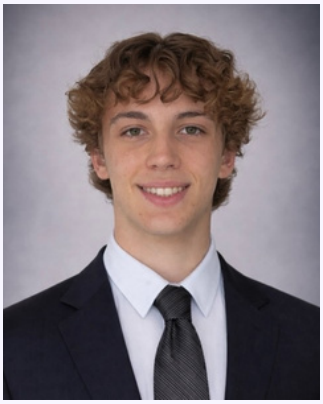
O'DONNELL SCHOLARSHIP FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The National Latin Exam is pleased to celebrate the winners of this year's Maureen O'Donnell Scholarship for Academic Excellence for their outstanding achievement! Seniors with a gold medal on a 2026 Advanced NLE are eligible to apply. These seniors, recognized for their exceptional academic achievements in Latin and other classes, have been awarded $2,000 scholarships.

These scholars are required to take a course of Latin or ancient Greek each semester of their first year in college to receive the scholarship funds. In future years, scholarship winners will be able to renew their scholarships annually as they continue their study of Latin or Greek.

Congratulations to our recipients, and we eagerly anticipate their continued success in their academic endeavors!

Below are the names of this year's winners, along with their respective high schools, Latin teachers, and the name of the college or university to which they are matriculating:



BLAISE BARBIER
Westlake High School
Austin, TX
Natalie Cannon
Santa Clara University



ANDREW CAUSEY
Stoughton High School
Stoughton, MA
William Gorman
Harvard University



MARY CORNWELL
Gonzaga Preparatory School
Spokane, WA
Jennifer Judge
The University of Chicago



JUDE HOLLIS
Homeschool
Austin, TX
Robin Hollis
Christendom College

KATHERINE JUNG
The Pingry School
Basking Ridge, NJ
Margaret Kelleher
Stanford University



SARAH KATE KANGAS
Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
Alexandria, VA
Patricia Lister
William & Mary



DANIEL MAYA
Sierra Canyon School
Chatsworth, CA
Steve Faulkner
Dartmouth College



OLIVIA MCGUIRE
The Brearley School
New York, NY
Sarah Lannom
Yale University

WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR 2026



LUKAS ODENIUS
St. Paul's School
Concord, NH
David Camden
Columbia University



SAMUEL PORTER
Bridgewater-Raritan High School
Bridgewater, NJ
Lucinda Jaffe
Columbia University/
Trinity College Dublin

SANJANA SRIVASTAVA
Millburn High School
Millburn, NJ
Jonathan Warner
The University of Toronto



NOAH THALER
Miramonte High School
Orinda, CA
Jennifer Mullowney
University of California - Davis



SOPHIE TOMA
The Linsley School
Wheeling, WV
Rebecca Brogan-Johnson
Princeton University

GABRIELLA TROMBA
Garden City High School
Garden City, NY
Kathleen Durkin
New York University

2026-2027 SCHOLARSHIP RENEWALS

SECOND-YEAR RENEWALS

Zosia Collins – University of Virginia
Abigail Keller – Washington and Lee University
Jade Li – University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Max Millstine – University of Cambridge
Jacob Sadowski – Baylor University
Kendall Smith – Wesleyan University
Paco Sze – Colby College
Lev Weitzman – University of Pennsylvania

THIRD-YEAR RENEWALS

Amanda Beaver – University of Dallas
Samara Choudhury – Harvard University
Louis Dearman – Yale University
Ben Krietemeyer – University of Cincinnati
Austin Phung – University of California-Los Angeles
Whit Uden – Sewanee-The University of the South

FOURTH-YEAR RENEWALS

Karter Hanley – University of New Hampshire
Devin McDonald – University of Chicago
Colmcille Rottinghaus – Baylor University
Anna Zoltowski – Yale University

REGISTER FOR THE 2027 NLE

Did you know? The sooner you register the earlier you will get your results in April. Results are mailed out in the order registrations are received!

Language Labs Lingco

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE 2027 NLE!

NLE OFFERS OFFICE HOURS TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS

Want to know what the NLE is? Need help with registration? Unsure which exam your students should take? Have suggestions or feedback?

Come to the NLE Fall Office Hour on Wednesday, November 11th, from 7:30-8:30 pm EST!

Members from the NLE Writing and Steering Committee will answer questions and listen to feedback. Join the Zoom here.

Dates:

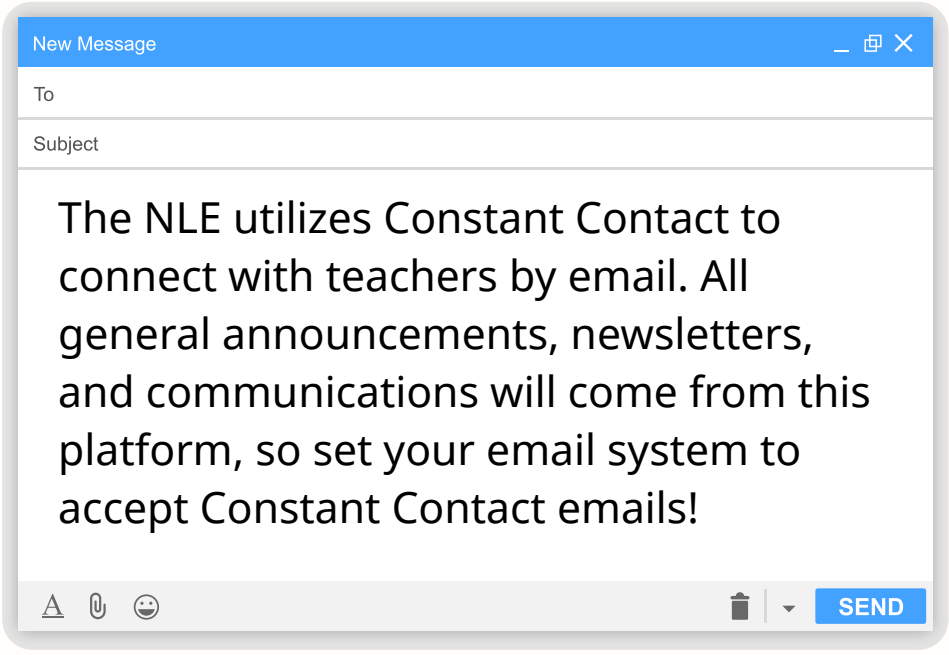
- Office Hour #1: **Wednesday, November 11th, 7:30-8:30 pm EST**
- Office Hour #2: **Thursday, January 14th, 7:30-8:30 pm EST**
- Office Hour #3: **Monday, April 12th, 7:30-8:30 pm EST**

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

If you prefer the paper exam, be sure to register by **January 29, 2027**. After this date, only online exam registrations can be accepted.

Please mark this crucial date on your calendar!

ATTENTION TEACHERS!



NLE SAMPLE PROGRESSION CHARTS

NOTE: Students may only take ONE exam per year.

INTRODUCTION TO LATIN
This exam may be taken once.

Most programs start here

BEGINNING LATIN
This exam may be taken twice.
ONLY ONE TOTAL NLE EXAM PER YEAR

BEGINNING LATIN READING COMP
This exam may be taken twice.
ONLY ONE TOTAL NLE EXAM PER YEAR

INTERMEDIATE LATIN
This exam may be taken twice.
ONLY ONE TOTAL NLE EXAM PER YEAR

INTERMEDIATE LATIN READING COMP
This exam may be taken twice.
ONLY ONE TOTAL NLE EXAM PER YEAR

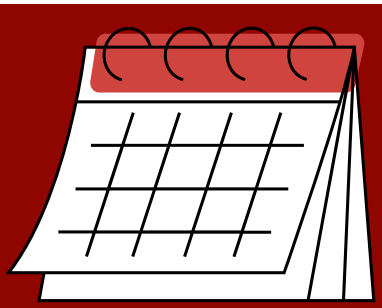
ADVANCED LATIN PROSE
This exam may be taken twice.*

ADVANCED LATIN POETRY
This exam may be taken twice.*

*The advanced level exams may be taken only twice collectively. A student may either take Adv. Prose twice, OR Adv. Poetry twice, OR take Adv. Prose once and Adv. Poetry once.

ADVANCED LATIN READING COMP
This exam may be taken multiple times.

Seniors who earn a gold medal on one of these exams are eligible to apply for the Maureen O'Donnell Scholarships for Academic Excellence.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Dates for the 2027 NLE
March 1-19, 2027

THE LINDA S. MONTROSS NEW LATIN EDUCATORS SCHOLARSHIP

DETAILS:

- This is a scholarship for students who aspire to become Latin teachers in K-12 settings.
- A maximum of ten $2000 scholarships are given each spring.
- The application deadline is **February 15**.
- Each scholarship is renewable for as long as the recipient is a student enrolled in a bachelor's or master's degree program with the intention of teaching Latin at the K-12 level. The maximum funding is four years for a bachelor's degree and two years for a master's degree (exceptions at the discretion of the scholarship committee).
- The NLE will cover the cost of attending one American Classical League Institute occurring from the end of their junior year in college through their third year of teaching (or a similar professional development opportunity should recipients live outside the U.S.). For more information on this conference, consult the ACL Website.
- Recipients will be offered informal mentoring by experienced Latin teachers for the first three years of teaching upon request.

APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS:

- Are not required to have taken the National Latin Exam
- May be a high school senior, undergraduate, or graduate student enrolled in a master's degree program
- Must be planning to teach Latin at the K-12 levels
- May not apply for this scholarship if currently receiving another National Latin Exam award

For the application form, please go to this link:
https://tinyurl.com/nleeducatorapplication

For the teacher recommendation form, please go to this link:
https://tinyurl.com/nleeducatorrecletter

IMPORTANT REMINDER:
LATIN TEACHERS CAN ADMINISTER NLE EXAM

Salvete, omnes! The National Latin Exam Writing and Steering Committee wants to remind you that as a Latin teacher, you are permitted to be the primary, and if necessary, the sole administrator and supervisor during your students' exam sessions, though we do encourage teachers to enlist the aid of administrators, colleagues, and other adults in exam administration.

While this flexibility empowers Latin teachers, we still encourage the collaboration of fellow teachers and school staff as proctors and assistants, especially if you have a larger group of participating students. Your colleagues' support can greatly enhance the smooth administration of the exam.

Please note that Latin teachers are still required to designate a principal, department head, or another authorized school official to receive the exams. This designated individual receives and confirms delivery of the exams, and securely maintains the exam until the scheduled test administration.

If you have any questions or require more information, we encourage you to reach out to the NLE Office at 1-888-378-7721 or via email at nle@umw.edu.

Thank you for your dedication to the success of the National Latin Exam!

LOOKING FOR MONEY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

PURPOSE:

The **Jane Harriman Hall Professional Development Scholarship** is designed to support teachers in their ability to teach Latin. The scholarship was developed in honor of Jane Harriman Hall, founder of the National Latin Exam, in order to continue her efforts to bring high-quality Latin instruction to students throughout the United States. Examples of Professional Development opportunities are coursework at a college/university, participation in an oral Latin summer course, and attendance at a classical conference.

ELIGIBILITY:

Applicants must be current teachers of Latin at the pre-K-12 level in a public or private school who spend at least 50% of their instructional time with students. Applicants are eligible for the award only once every ten years. If you are currently receiving another scholarship from the National Latin Exam, you are not eligible to apply for this award. If you currently serve on a National Latin Exam Committee, you are not eligible to apply.

FUNDING:

Scholarships will be awarded based on the impact they will have on students and the effective use of the funds. A total of $5,000 will be allocated to the scholarship annually. This may result in one or more awards being given based on the number and quality of the proposals.

TERM OF THE AWARD:

This annual scholarship may be used any time from March through February.

APPLICATION PROCESS & DEADLINE:

Applications are available at https://www.nle.org/scholarships
Application Deadline: **February 15**

FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL: THE CHRISTINE FERNALD SLEEPER EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL AWARD

PURPOSE:

The **Christine Fernald Sleeper Educational Travel Award** is designed to support teachers of Latin by encouraging educational travel. The award was developed in honor of Christine Sleeper, one of the "Founding Mothers" of the National Latin Exam and a lifelong travel enthusiast, in order to offer Latin teachers the opportunity to expand horizons for themselves and their students. This award may be used to enroll in an established program abroad, such as the American Academy in Rome, a trip to a classical site such as those offered by the Vergilian Society, or an educational trip of one's own design – something which Christine herself often advocated.

The recipients understand that they will share their travel experiences by means of a short article for the NLE newsletter and a possible presentation at ACL (or regional or local meeting of classicists).

ELIGIBILITY:

Applicants must be current full-time teachers of Latin with at least three years of experience at the middle school/high school/community college/college level who offer the NLE to their students. Applicants are eligible for the award only once every ten years. If you are currently receiving another scholarship from the National Latin Exam, you are not eligible to apply for this award. If you currently serve on one of the NLE Committees, you are not eligible to apply.

FUNDING:

The applicant will present a proposal and a budget for expenditures at the time of application, up to the award limit of $5,000.

NUMBER OF AWARDS:

There will be **one** award granted for the period of March through February.

APPLICATION PROCESS & DEADLINE:

Applications are available at https://www.nle.org/scholarships
Application Deadline: **February 15**

ECHOES OF ANCIENT ROME IN MODERN MOROCCO: TINA HANSEN'S TRAVEL AWARD REFLECTIONS

Many years ago, my interest in Roman North Africa was sparked by a presentation at a ClassConn conference. Two Latin teachers spoke passionately of their travels to Volubilis on a GEEO Highlights of Morocco trip. I pursued my curiosity about the multiculturalism of this Roman frontier and its legacy through books, podcasts, poetry and videos while harboring the hope that one day I would be able to experience this region myself. This dream was realized this summer through the generous support of the **Christine Fernald Sleeper Educational Travel Award**.



*Standing beneath Volubilis' towering Roman columns, **Tina Hansen** realizes dream of exploring Morocco's multicultural past, supported by the NLE's Christine Fernald Sleeper Educational Travel Award.*

Volubilis at first sight is an easily recognizable Roman settlement featuring triumphal arches, a basilica, aqueduct, bathing complexes and a Capitoline temple. Upon closer inspection, details reveal the cultural complexity of the inhabitants and the influence of the natural surroundings. Inscriptions are recorded in Latin and Greek but also in Hebrew, Punic and the indigenous Berber script. A mosaic of Orpheus was embellished with elephants and other African flora and fauna. The surrounding fertile plains once filled with olive trees accounted for the numerous oil presses filling the small workshops lining the regular grid of streets. Despite my eagerness to investigate and explore these telling details, the heat of the afternoon, a long drive ahead and a group of teachers with a wilting interest in archaeology did not allow for an extended visit. While initially disappointed, I discovered the benefit of this trip was not so much Volubilis itself but its living echoes in the vibrant Moroccan cities yet to be explored.

Our next stop, the medina of Fes, brought ancient Rome to life in unexpected ways. The noisy, crowded labyrinth of narrow, covered streets lined with small, open-faced stalls, workshops and snack shops helped me to imagine the feel of an inhabited Volubilis. The marketplaces rang with a variety of languages: Berber, Arabic, French, and English. Just as diverse was the dress from traditional, modest, religious attire to the latest fashions and everything in between. Traditional craftsmen cutting tiles for mosaics, women bringing bread to the communal ovens, and tanners stomping hides in odorous thigh deep vats were reminiscent of ancient practices. A quiet lunch in a converted riad, a traditional inward-facing, courtyard-centered Moroccan home, enabled me to envision what it might have felt like to live in an Roman urban villa. A later trip to a hammam complete with a massage, steam room and scrub made me understand the allure of public bathing. The hustle and bustle of the large open square of Marrakesh, alive with henna artists, snake charmers, juice sellers, souvenir peddlers, and snack sellers made me wonder if ancient fora had a similar vibrancy.

To teach is to share. My hope is that this experience will allow me to model my love of learning, curiosity and respect for others no matter how foreign or distant. This trip has allowed me not only to learn more about Roman North Africa but also to experience what it might have felt like to live in the ancient Roman Empire. Being able to speak firsthand from my own experiences will enable me to be a convincing and inspiring voice for my students, sharing with them my newly gained knowledge and enthusiasm. I am confident that I will be able to provide my students with the feel of the lived experience of a multicultural society in the Mediterranean world, a place where tradition has a strong hold and life for some has changed little over time. In sharing my experience, I hope my students will develop a greater sensitivity to other cultures as well as a greater appreciation of the legacy of Rome.

FROM ACL TO CONVENTICULUM DICKINSONIENSE: JOANNE FAIRHURST SHARES HER SUMMER EXPERIENCES



***Joanne Fairhurst**, 2026 Jane Harriman Hall Professional Development Scholarship Recipient*

I was extremely fortunate to receive the **Jane Harriman Hall Professional Development Scholarship** in the Spring of 2026. With the scholarship, I had two formative professional development experiences in the summer of 2026. Over a week and a half, I traveled from Louisville, KY to Virginia and Pennsylvania. First, I travelled to William & Mary to attend American Classical League Institute 2026. I attended many sessions and made many new connections, as well as reconnecting with other teacher friends. One of my favorite sessions was about developing a Scope and Sequence for novellas in the classroom. I have been using novellas in the classroom, using active Latin, for the past two years, but I have yet to formulate a scope and sequence for their use in my classroom. By attending several sessions based on this theme, I was able to get a head start in developing my department's own Scope and Sequence for our Latin program.

After attending ACL Institute 2026, I travelled to Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA for a week-long immersive spoken Latin retreat. This is my second year attending *Conventiculum Dickinsoniense*. The workshop's theme was centered upon what makes a happy life. The entire workshop, breakfasts, lunches, and dinners are conducted in spoken Latin. We read excerpts from many different authors, from many different time periods and discussed them in Latin. Speaking Latin and becoming more fluent in speaking has been a driving focus for my teaching in the past three years. I relish every opportunity to take classes with Dr. Terence Tunberg, Dr. Milena Minkova, and Dr. Laura Manning at University of Kentucky. All three professors run *Conventiculum Dickinsoniense*. My ability to speak fluently (and simply and comprehensibly) with my students increases exponentially with each class and *conventiculum*. I cannot recommend *Conventiculum Dickinsoniense* or their Graduate Certificate in Latin Studies (at University of Kentucky) highly enough.

I am very grateful to the National Latin Exam and the **Jane Harriman Hall Professional Development Scholarship** for the opportunity to develop my Latin pedagogical goals. It is a great benefit to my students and their success.

MATTHEW DRACOULES SHARES HIS IMMERSIVE LATIN EXPERIENCE

The National Latin Exam's **Jane Harriman Hall Scholarship** enabled me to begin the Veterum Sapientia Institute's "Teaching Credential in Latin Pedagogy" at their summer Latin immersion workshop *Ancient Feasts of the Church*. This workshop, held at St. Bernard Abbey in Cullman, Alabama, entailed a week of total Latin immersion and complete dedication to speaking exclusively in the target language.



***Matthew Dracoules**, a Jane Harriman Hall Scholarship recipient, rediscovered the joy of living Latin during a week of immersion at St. Bernard Abbey in Cullman, AL.*

Students began each day hearing Holy Mass, having breakfast, and spending the morning in immersive Latin lessons. After the morning session, students convened for lunch at the refectory before reconvening in the classroom for the afternoon session. In the evenings, students enjoyed eating dinner together, saying the Holy Rosary, and passing the time in recreation. The week concluded with plays produced and performed in student groups before the whole cohort. The program instructors planned and played a delightfully theatrical version of the Founders drafting the Declaration of Independence.

Program texts included the Propers of the Mass, Gospel readings, and commentaries from Sts. Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and Leo the Great. Because Latin typically restrains itself to first-century pagan authors, reading literature outside of these limits was altogether refreshing. In fact, breaking out of these confines required an entirely new vocabulary: *Nativitas*, *Epiphania*, *Pascha*, *Pentecostes*, *Festum*, *Martyres*, *Confessores*... The novelty of the program recaptured that old and faded but familiar mystique of Latin. The same mystique you felt when you first saw that captivating illustration in your upper-level Latin book. Or the mystique that you felt when you worked through your first passage of authentic Latin in high school. You remember that feeling, don't you?

Outside of academics, participants forged friendships and sang tomato-faced songs late into the night. Now, months later, I can still hear the triumphant roar of *Gaudeamus Igitur* ringing in my ears. Another major highlight of this program was hearing Father preach his homily in Latin about the magnanimity of Christ and the shock of actually understanding the homily. As a side note, crossing paths with a monk on the monastery grounds and speaking Latin with him are not things of the past. Lastly, I can never forget trading philosophical perspectives in Latin on peripatetic strolls through the Alabama heat under the orange gaze and the indigo countenance of the rosy-fingered evening. This unique experience with the Latin language was thoroughly revitalizing. It was an experience like no other. I am so thankful to the National Latin Exam for enabling me to share with my fellow Catholics in the Latin heritage of our Roman tradition in a living, tangible, comprehensible, and joyful way.

Long ago, the Good Lord spoke, "*Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you*." The NLE's generous gift of the **Jane Harriman Hall Scholarship** fulfilled these words. You might even say I was hungry and they fed me or that I was naked and they clothed me. I sincerely thank the National Latin Exam for its constant work in propagating the continuity of Latin studies and for granting me the indispensable financial support to meet my professional development goals. Almighty God reward you!

BETH CALAMIA SCHECKEL SPENDS A WEEK AT LATIN CAMP

I applied for the **Jane Harriman Hall** scholarship intending to use it at Dickinson College's Summer Latin Workshop, fondly called "Latin Camp." Having attended the inaugural summer program 20 years ago (yikes!), and several other times over the years, I knew it would be an excellent investment in my time and in the scholarship funds.

Dickinson's Latin Camp is an opportunity for teachers and other lovers of Latin to delve deeply into one author. This summer, we focused on Apuleius, well known for The Golden Ass but should-be-famous-but-isn't for his Apologia. This courtroom speech has everything you would expect from a modern based-on-a true-story dramedy: intrigue, humor, bumbling accusers and a cast of characters who stay with you long after you've finished reading. In this piece, Apuleius defends himself in court, accused of using magic spells to entice an older widow named Pudentilla to marry him.

For nearly a week, a group of us spent three and a half hours every afternoon reading, translating, and learning about everything from Latin courtroom vocabulary to ancient toothpaste. We laughed through Apuleius's insults against his accusers (male relatives of the widow Pudentilla) and their legal representation. We struggled together through vocabulary and grammar unique to Apuleius. And we spent hours and hours on our own prepping for the next class. On average, I spent about 8 hours a day on Latin while there, and I loved every minute of it.

Latin Camp is the brainchild of Dickinson Classics Professor Christopher Francese, who has organized it every year since. In addition, in the past 15 years, Chris has spearheaded the Dickinson College Commentaries, a treasure trove of commentaries on various Greek and Latin authors. I could not have gotten through the week of Apuleius without the DCC on the *Apologia*.

I am so grateful to the National Latin Exam organization and the scholarship committee for honoring me with the **Jane Harriman Hall Scholarship** and giving me an opportunity to spend a wonderful week at Dickinson with a group of Latin teachers and scholars. As the only Latin teacher at my school, it's unusual for me to be in a community of peers. And as a middle school teacher, my opportunities to challenge myself with "real Latin" are few and far between. For these reasons, and for the sheer fun of spending a week on a college campus, I give Latin Camp 11 stars out of 10. I hope that everyone who has made it to the end of this essay will give it a try!

For more information:

- Dickinson College Commentaries
- Dickinson College Summer Latin Workshops



***Beth Calamia Scheckel**, returned to Dickinson's "Latin Camp" with Jane Harriman Hall Scholarship support to explore Apuleius' Apologia alongside fellow Latin teachers and scholars.*

ATTENDING GRADUATE SCHOOL TO BECOME A LATIN TEACHER?

PURPOSE:

The National Latin Exam offers a $2000 Graduate School Scholarship which is specifically for "graduate study leading to the teaching of Latin and/or Greek at the elementary, intermediate, or high school level." It is with great pride that we name this scholarship in honor of Sally Davis, one of the original members of the Writing Committee of the NLE.

ELIGIBILITY:

Applicants must be college seniors or other professionals who are seeking a graduate degree. If you are currently receiving another scholarship from the National Latin Exam, you are not eligible to apply for this award. If you currently serve on a National Latin Exam Committee, you are not eligible to apply.

FUNDING:

The National Latin Exam **Sally R. Davis Graduate School Scholarship** is a one-time $2000 scholarship awarded for post-graduate study that leads to the teaching of Latin and/or Greek at the elementary or secondary school level.

APPLICATION PROCESS & DEADLINE:

Applications are available at https://www.nle.org/scholarships
Application Deadline: **April 16**



NLE ANNOUNCES RECIPIENT OF ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Congratulations to **Paul Dimitri**, the recipient of this year's **Sally Davis Graduate School Scholarship**. He is attending the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.



WELCOME MELISSA TOOMEY AS NLE CONSULTANT

Dr. Melissa Toomey serves as Isaac Thomas Chair of Classics and Athey Family Master Teacher of Classics at The Hill School in Pottstown, PA. She holds a Ph.D. in the field from Johns Hopkins University and is entering her fifteenth year in education.

Melissa teaches The Hill's AP and Seminar courses in Latin, along with the school's Honors Latin 1 program. Melissa's students have greatly enjoyed taking the National Latin Exam over the years, and she is thrilled to contribute to the exam team as a consultant.

AMANDA GREGORY JOINS NLE CONSULTANTS



Amanda Gregory is a Latin and Greek teacher at Princeton Day School with a Ph.D. in Classical Languages from the University of Wisconsin. After teaching Latin and Greek at the university level, she has spent more than a decade in independent schools, bringing the ancient world to life through Latin, Greek, history, and literature for students in grades 6–12. She also teaches college-level ancient history to incarcerated students through the RISE prison education program in New Jersey. Her teaching embraces "ludic rigor," blending intellectual challenge with creativity, playfulness, and joy.

An experienced program designer and school leader, she has developed curricula, mentored faculty, and presented at national conferences. Amanda is delighted to join the National Latin Exam committee and support students' engagement with Latin.



MEGHAN KIERNAN-CHOW JOINS NLE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Meghan Kiernan-Chow is a 12th-year Latin teacher at Freehold Township High School in NJ with a deep love for Classics and for creating opportunities for the next generation of Latin students. She earned her undergraduate degree in Classics from Rutgers University and her master's degree from Villanova University. The National Latin Exam has played a particularly meaningful role in her own journey—she was fortunate to receive NLE scholarships that helped fund both her graduate studies and two incredible opportunities to study in Italy with the Vergilian Society, an experience that was truly unforgettable! Most recently, she had the opportunity to present at the American Classical League (ACL) Institute in Virginia. Having personally benefited so much from the generosity of the NLE scholarship program, she is especially excited to serve on the Scholarship Committee and help provide similar opportunities for today's students and teachers.

MEET BRIAN ZAWISKI, NLE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE



Brian Zawiski is currently in his seventeenth year teaching Latin and his twelfth year at Don Bosco Prep in Ramsey, NJ. He went to The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, for both his bachelor's degree and his first master's degree. He majored in philosophy and minored in Classics and French. After graduating from Catholic University, he went to Rome to study at the Pontificia Universita Gregoriana. He studied in Rome from 2006 to 2008. He presented a workshop entitled “Having the Difficult Conversations in the Latin Classroom” at NECTFL in February 2026.

He lives in the Hudson Valley of New York with his wife and their three sons (an eight-year-old and twin six-year-olds). In his free time, he loves reading, playing golf, fishing, hiking, and most importantly, spending time with his family.

He has offered the National Latin Exam to his students since his very first year in the classroom. He previously volunteered as a consultant for the NLE, and he is so excited to be able to volunteer in this capacity.



JILLIAN DAVIDSON JOINS NLE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Jillian Davidson, born and educated in England, received her B.A. and M.A. in History before moving to New York, where she earned her Ph.D. for research on the First World War in Jewish literature. She has taught Latin at both the middle and high school levels for more than two decades and currently teaches Latin in grades 9–12 and 9th-grade World History. She served as the New York editor of *Centenary News*, which covered the centenary of the First World War, co-edited *There’s a Jewish Way of Saying Things*, and is a reader for The Elie Wiesel Ethics Essay Prize. Jillian enjoys travel and the arts, particularly where they intersect with the Roman Empire, East European Jewry, and the two World Wars. She lives with her husband in Riverdale, NY, where they have raised seven children.

THE NATIONAL LATIN EXAM IS LOOKING FORWARD TO CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDING IN 1977!



With 2027 just a year away, we are asking for your help in our celebration. The NLE is planning an "NLE 50 at 50!" celebration in which we spotlight fifty people associated with the NLE either now or in the past. These people range from former test takers, scholarship winners, and former and current teachers to exam writers, staff, and consultants. Please complete this form by November 15th.

We would love to spotlight you and are excited for you to join in the celebration by completing this Google Form to share some of the following:

- what you are up to now and how you use or care about Latin and Classics
- fond memories or anecdotes related to the National Latin Exam
- what the National Latin Exam meant (or still means) to you
- what you do for the NLE if you help produce the exam each year
- anyone you want to thank for offering the NLE to you or inspiring you improve on the exam each year

In addition, we welcome a few recent photos of you or throwback photos of you with an award or in a Latin Club/JCL setting.

UPDATES FROM O'DONNELL SCHOLARSHIP WINNER, SADIE SARKISIAN



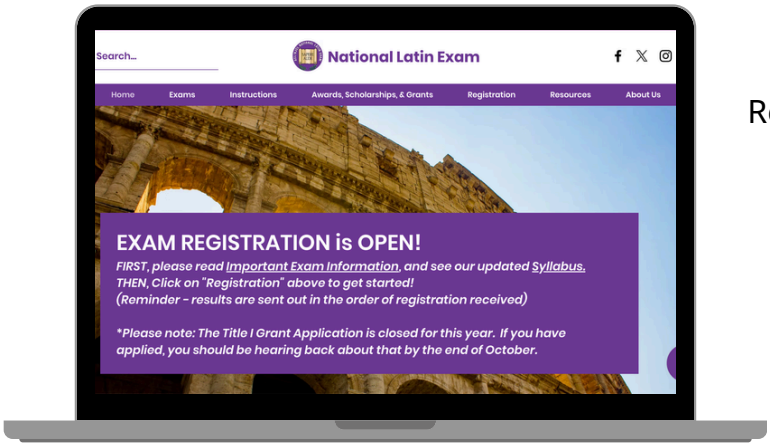
What teachers or mentors influenced your passion for Latin or classical studies?
My middle-school Latin teacher, Mr. Ingram, is one of the most passionate educators I have ever met, and his energy is infectious. Every day in his classroom, he showed how puzzle-like, intricate, and exciting grammatical structures and processes of translation can be. Each Classics teacher and professor I have had since has only built on this passion and strengthened my love for the language, and I am truly so grateful.

If your career took a different direction, how has your classics background still shaped your professional life?
Right now I serve in the U.S. Peace Corps as a health volunteer, living and working in rural Peru. Not only has a Latin background helped me find my footing with the Spanish language and medical terminology, but it has also shaped the way I approach problem-solving, communication, and critical thinking. As I hope to be a physician in the future, I feel so lucky that I can draw on my background in Classics and the analytical tools it has afforded me.

Where did you attend college, and what did you study? Did your study of classics lead you in any unexpected academic directions?
At Stanford University, I studied Classics with a focus on Latin, along with coursework for a pre-medical track. I first integrated Classics and medicine through a research paper tracking Latin's strong influence on medical systems, particularly Celsus' De Medicina's terminology and its modern-day impact on patient health literacy and doctor-patient communication. I later took a course in Stanford's School of Medicine that investigated Latin and Ancient Greek roots of medical terms. I also felt incredibly supported by the Classics department and professors to focus on the language of underrepresented people in Ancient Rome, seeking viewpoints from those without power or platform but essential to understanding ancient society and its effects on modern times; much of my research, culminating in my honors thesis, examined patterns of language and treatment of disability and deafness in ancient Rome and Greece.

Looking back, what does receiving the Maureen O'Donnell Scholarship mean to you now?
Receiving the Maureen O'Donnell Scholarship means so much. Having the support of the National Latin Exam organization throughout college gave me guidance and ongoing encouragement to pursue and continue pursuing a subject I love.

CHECK OUT THE NLE WEBSITE!



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COMMITTEES OF THE NATIONAL LATIN EXAM

WRITING & STEERING COMMITTEE

The individual members of the Writing Committee, all seasoned teachers with experience using a wide variety of textbooks and teaching methods, begin writing the exams each spring. By early August, the members, meeting together as a committee, begin the difficult task of reviewing each exam with respect to the level of difficulty, accuracy, and content. After numerous revisions, the exams are sent to the consultants for their in-depth critiques. Acting upon their suggestions, the committee makes further changes. After a final review, fine-tuning, and proofing, the exams are printed and sent to the schools or uploaded to Lingco, our online testing platform.

It usually takes the committee a three-day bootcamp/retreat in August and twelve to fifteen sessions, averaging two hours each, to complete the work associated with the exams. In addition to the general working sessions, each committee member spends hours taking care of specific tasks such as answering correspondence, word processing, record keeping, publicizing the exam, and writing newsletter articles.

Ian Hochberg, Co-Chair
Patty Lister, Co-Chair
Joe Davenport
Jackie Hillman
Mark Keith
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Lauren Marquard
Micheal Posey
Zoe Tasse-Winter
Veronica Vladimirova-Cambria
Sally Davis, *Emerita*
Betty Merrill, *Emerita*
Linda S. Montross, *Emerita*

CONSULTANTS

Every fall, the Writing Committee sends drafts of the eight exams to NLE consultants—current high school teachers, college professors, or former educators. The consultants are divided into two groups: one receives the exams in mid-September and the other in mid-October. Special consultants Sally Davis and Linda Montross, all former Writing Committee members, provide ongoing input throughout the writing process.

Special consultant Michael Bales provides in-depth input on the exams during the fall. David Perry, our macron specialist, adds macrons to all Latin words on the exams. Each consultant carefully critiques the exam questions, proposes improvements, and returns comments to the Writing Committee within two weeks. Their feedback is invaluable in preparing the exams for distribution to national and international Latin students.

Elizabeth Baer
Michael Bales
David Bloch
Chelsea Caivano
Sally Davis
Kathleen Durkin
Amanda Gregory
Will Killmer
Linda Montross
Andrew Olimpi
David Perry
Matt Thomas
Melissa Toomey

O'DONNELL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The NLE's committee for the Maureen O'Donnell Scholarships for Academic Excellence is composed of three readers, plus the Chair. The applications are read several times before selecting ten to twelve scholarship winners and five alternates. The Chair does the first screening of student applicants. A second screening is then done to determine which applications will be sent to the readers. Approximately ninety applications are sent to the readers for a third reading. Each reader selects their top thirty-five applications and returns these selections to the Chair. At this time, the committee members' choices are collated, and the winners are chosen. The names of the scholars are announced at the American Classical League Institute in June.

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NLE MISSION STATEMENT

The National Latin Exam promotes and supports the teaching and learning of the Latin language, its literature and culture, and its lasting influence in the modern world.

QUESTIONS?



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