To the trustees of the College Board,

The teachers of Classics at all levels were stunned and dismayed to receive the announcement about the decision to discontinue the Advanced Placement Latin Literature exam. As I talked with my colleagues, I was further surprised to discover that this decision was made without consulting the profession or the development committee.

By contrast, the revisions that were made to the Latin Literature exam recently were made in a collaborative manner among the teachers, the development committee and the College Board. These changes have been well received, as can be seen by the growing numbers of students taking the exams. Teachers have worked hard to revise their curriculum to prepare students for both the Vergil and Latin Literature exams, which have very different content, using the vertical teaming philosophy, and publishers have responded to teacher requests for materials. This is the sort of positive change that can come about when all stakeholders are involved. It is surprising that the decision to completely eliminate one exam was made without that same collaborative spirit.

This decision will have immediate, negative consequences for Latin programs. The number of students and programs is growing, and we are working hard to have teachers for those jobs. The numbers for the National Latin Exam continue a steady climb. The numbers for the AP Latin exams are likewise growing, and will not likely decline, based on enrollment numbers. In the last ten years, the number of students taking the Latin AP exams has nearly doubled from 4,700 to 8,700. The Latin Literature exam in fact has more than doubled in size from 1,744 to 3,771. This significant percentage of growth cannot be ignored.

None of the constituents of the College Board, students, parents, teachers or colleges, is served by this decision. The students have one less option to prove their skills and gain advanced standing for college. Teachers who rely on the two exams will have to re-design their curriculum, and will also have to combat declining enrollment, as the loss of one exam puts Latin on a lesser standing, and in competitive schools, that is an issue. Parents who want their students to have the most challenging content may not chose Latin for their students. Colleges will have students who have not had the rigor of AP in the Latin Literature authors, which will impact their teaching. Colleges may also think less of the AP program in general when decisions like this are made without soliciting input.

As the decision is not immediate, this gives us time to open a dialogue between the members of the Classics profession and the College Board. There are surely options to be explored, to which our teachers may be open. As President of the American Classical League, which represents teachers of Classics at all levels, I welcome the chance to meet and find a solution which will be acceptable to both the College Board and our teachers. The American Philological Association, which represents scholars at all levels, joins me in expressing this concern and is interested in dialogue as well. They will be sending a response expressing their concern.

I look forward to beginning a conversation with the College Board. Please contact me either via email (president@aclclassics.org), work phone (513-272-4584) or home phone (513-563-5090).