



UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

To the Recommending Latin Teacher

Dear Colleague,

Due mainly to the labors, for which we are very deeply grateful, of teachers like you— *Latin in Rome* has more and more been able to attract really superb young Latinists from all over the United States. Their excellence has allowed us to shape a program that tries not merely to improve their knowledge of Latin but also, with that tool, to see the full complexity of these great, strange old texts, that have shaped our own culture, yet remain as startling as they ever were. Students are taught to argue about them, puzzle over them, or at times simply gaze astonished at their exactitude and depth, and the beauty of the Latin. But we know that without the hard work and dedication of teachers like you, none of this is possible.

Now and then, we find that a few students we accepted were not quite ready. Some are a bit startled by the program's academic rigor (on which more below); some work hard and are very bright, but suffer simply from having read as yet too little Latin, and from not having a strong grasp of fundamentals; and a few, strong academically, as yet lack the social maturity that only time can bring. We ourselves know that there is no great *shame* in any of these problems; but they can cause a student to worry terribly. This potential damage to a good student's self-esteem, or his or her love of Latin, concerns us. With these few 'unready' students in mind, I want to clarify for you, as recommending teacher, more exactly what the program entails.

In the brochure we say that "successful participants *can* earn three college credits in Latin." As a small liberal arts university which is proud of its growing academic reputation, we do not grant such credit as a matter of course. The Latin course is at the college level and rigorous. The readings may seem hard at first, and very many, and for some students this is the first time they encounter actual texts, rather than simplified or heavily glossed texts. We know how surprising this can be; we even intend that, and we find that most students relish the challenge. Nevertheless, they *do* need to come with a secure grasp of the fundamental principles of Latin syntax, and a good knowledge of all the inflections: especially verb-forms.

We do not, of course, expect flawless Latin. For example, a student might basically understand indirect discourse, but be puzzled by some infinitive tenses, or by the changes in conditional clauses. He might basically understand sequence of tenses, but be baffled by a tense in a subordinate clause. Another will always get the basic sense of participles, but struggle to render them idiomatically; or handle relative clauses easily, yet be baffled by the word order, or the attraction of a relative to its antecedent. All this is expected. But students who can discern the basic structure of a sentence prior to translating it, and can recognize forms, tenses and moods, will be at a very distinct advantage.

Of course, some students do come with less preparation, but are so bright and so hard-working that in the end they learn the most, and write the best exams of all; but others struggle.

For the students' own sake, then -- so that some will not be accepted into too hard a program, with damage to their self-esteem; and so that for those we do accept, we can shape the program better -- we ask that you evaluate their present command of Latin as frankly and exactly as you can. Any **letter** from you, sent in addition to the form, will be read gratefully, and very attentively. On the **recommendation form**, in the little table where it asks about strength or weakness in particular areas, it would help us if you said whether any weakness is (a) peculiar to this student, or (b) shared by the class as a whole. (Always some teachers seem to mean the first, and some the second; we are often unsure which is meant.) When we ask "*what Latin authors?*" a student has read, we would be glad to know also what works were read, and how roughly much of them (for there is a difference between reading, for example, a whole speech of Cicero and only brief extracts).

I hope that this letter helps to clarify the character of the program. I also wish to express, again, my gratitude to you for your labors; not simply for recommending your students to us, and enduring the tedium of these recommendations, but also for that love of the language which the students would not have without your example.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David R. Sweet". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'D' and a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Dr. David R. Sweet
Director, *Latin in Rome*
Associate Professor of Classics

UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

Summer Programs for High School Students

Latin in Rome Recommendation Form

◆ TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT

This recommendation form must be submitted by a recent Latin teacher. Please be sure to provide your Latin teacher with both this form and the letter "To the Recommending Latin Teacher". Remember to return both recommendations with your application prior to either the December 1st or February 1st deadline. *Be sure to request your recommendation early.*

Name: _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Address: Street & Number _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

◆ TO BE COMPLETED BY TEACHERS OF LATIN (ONLY)

The above student is applying for an academic program abroad with the University of Dallas. The program in general requires from its participants intellectual, emotional, and social maturity -- your honest insights are essential to the success of our program. The Latin program requires 3 years of high school Latin or equivalent training by the time of the trip. Successful participants earn three college credits in Latin. This form is provided as a guideline. Please read the attached "To the Recommending Latin Teacher" before completing this form. You are also encouraged to submit a letter in addition to this form. After completing this form, please seal it (and any additional sheets) in an envelope, sign your name across the flap, and return it to the student to be mailed. Thank you.

Name: _____ Position _____

School Name _____

School Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ Phone _____ Email _____

How long have you known the applicant? _____ In what capacity? _____

Please evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in this student's present command of Latin.

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Comments
Knowledge of Inflectional Forms					
Knowledge of Subjunctives					
Knowledge of Conditions					
Knowledge of Indirect Speech					
Knowledge of Sequences of Tenses					
Solid Working Vocabulary of Latin					
Understanding of English Grammar					

What (if any) unadapted Latin authors, and roughly how much of each, has this student read? _____

What is this student's chief strength in Latin? _____

What is this student's chief weakness in Latin? _____

If one asked this student to identify the verbs in a Latin sentence by giving the principal parts of each- e.g. these six taken from a sentence in Tacitus: *caesis, oppressum, interfecto, tuendam, contentum, pellexit*- so that one had to write "*caedo, caedere, cecidi, caesus; opprimo, opprimere* (etc.)", how many of the 23 forms do you think he or she would be able to identify confidently? _____

If you have additional comments that would assist us in our Admissions decision, please attach an additional sheet or letter.

Signature _____ Date _____