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TO: Nord Grants Committee

FROM: Jenifer Neils, Ruth Coulter Heede Professor of Art History and Classics

RE: Parthenon Frieze Video Project

I will be teaching the capstone course for art history and classics majors during the spring semester of 2011. While this course will deal with the reception of the classics in later western art and literature, it will also have a hands-on component that, with funding, could result in an innovative, educational DVD film that would be of considerable interest to classicists, archaeologists and art historians. It will be a student-driven project involving research, composing a script, live interviews, costuming, staging, music, and filming. It may even be possible to market the video as a CWRU educational film. (For a similar and highly successful project which served as my inspiration see the video clip at: www.fairfield.edu/caryatid)

In 2001 I published a book entitled *The Parthenon Frieze* (Cambridge University Press) which coincidentally included the first cd ever to appear in a CUP book. In this book I argued that the twelve Olympian gods who are depicted in sculpted marble relief on the east side of the Parthenon should be 'read' as sitting in a semi-circle – a radical notion since such a seating plan is unprecedented in ancient Greek art. The twelve gods are actually shown in profile, the norm in Greek art, in two separate groups facing left (south) and right (north), but I argue that the viewer is presented with the artist's (probably Pheidias) solution to a complex design challenge, namely how to show the gods seated in a semi-circle facing front, toward the religious ceremony taking place between the two groups. When I was teaching a class on this topic I asked for a student volunteer to render this concept in a drawing. The student (Joe Delly) who accepted the challenge used 3-D computer modeling to come up with a convincing arrangement, which I, in turn, published in my book on the frieze. I subsequently found some textual support for this seating plan of the gods in an ode by the Greek fifth-century poet Pindar. While many eminent scholars have accepted my thesis, some remain unconvinced. Therefore, I believe that by recreating this scenario in actuality we may not only convince the unconvinced but also produce a video that explores the relatively unstudied concept of three-dimensionality in Greek art.

For the video I envision stools set out in front of the Art Museum with costumed students acting the parts of the gods and filming the groupings both as they appear

on the frieze and as posited them in the artist's imagination, thereby determining which arrangement is more convincing visually. During the course of the semester while also studying the reception of Greek art, each student will choose a Greek Olympian god to research, will devise the appropriate costume and attributes (possibly modern as for example in camouflage for the war-god Ares), and finally will discuss the specific pose of his/her deity in the taped video. The students will also be responsible for choosing period music and documentary photographs to enhance the film. I assume the video will be approximately 15-20 minutes in length, and all students will be credited for their participation.

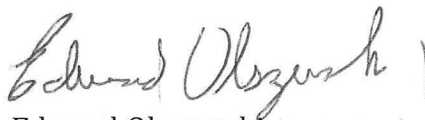
By cooperating in a group project and producing a multi-media educational tool, the CWRU students will be learning valuable skills. They will not only be doing library research and writing, but will be called upon to develop their communication abilities and to perform before the camera. They will be challenged to demonstrate in words and actions a sophisticated art historical concept, and one novel for the fifth century BC. I have enlisted the help of faculty in the classics, theater and music departments, as well as the staff of the Freedman Center who will produce and edit the video at no cost. When the project is completed we will invite the CWRU and local Greek community to a screening, and produce a press release that will hopefully be picked up by the international press. We will also establish a website for the project, listing the resources we used, crediting the participants, etc.

The budget of \$1,850 will cover the costs of the staging and filming as well as the production of 100 copies of the cd with an appropriately designed case. No money will be made on the video and it will be distributed at cost.

BUDGET	
Production hard drive	\$200
Duplication of dvds with case (100)	\$950
Trifold color brochure (250)	\$250
Costumes (12 @ \$25)	\$300
Ladder and stool rental	\$150
TOTAL	\$1,850



Jenifer Neils
Ruth Coulter Heede Professor
of Art History and Classics



Edward Olszewski
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