

Department of Philosophy
Academic Program Review
Third Year Report
Steve Yalowitz, Chair
January, 2017

The Department of Philosophy underwent an Academic Program Review (APR) in 2012-13. The Dean's report, responding in part to the external committee's report, emphasized a number of key issues that the Department needed to attend to during the post-APR period, many of which were reflected in the post-APR Action Plan. These included: increasing the number of upper division course offerings, a review of the existing curriculum and the development of a 3-5 year course offering plan, increasing faculty research productivity, conversion of two long-term adjuncts to Lecturers, an increase in the number of tenure-track faculty, revision of key Departmental policies, a reconsideration of the status of its Masters in Applied and Professional Ethics program (MAPE, suspended since 2009), the possible introduction of tracks within the major, and additional resources and support to foster faculty research. As indicated in discussion below, the Department made great strides in all of the areas over which it had control, and in all others except the increase in number of tenure track faculty, which it was unable to pursue because of past and current flux in faculty (see below). The Department thus believes that it has accomplished almost all that was asked of it, as represented in the Action Plan, and more as well.

The Philosophy Department has conducted one faculty search since the APR, in 2014-15, which was needed to fill an opening created by the departure of one of the faculty hired in the dual faculty search conducted during the APR (2012-13). In the earlier dual search, the Department hired Dr. Whitney Schwab, a specialist in Ancient Philosophy, and Dr. Sonny Elizondo, a specialist in Ethics. Dr. Elizondo left UMBC after one year to take up a position at another university, and so a year later the Department conducted another search in Ethics and hired Dr. Eric Campbell. The Department has subsequently not been in a position to request additional searches because of impending faculty academic leaves in 2016-17 (and also upcoming in 2017-18) that prevent a Department of our size from being able to conduct searches, which typically receive 250-400 applicants depending on field, without undue hardship on faculty in residence and also the participation of both senior faculty members. The Department anticipates requesting a search for 2018-19 in one of its two prioritized fields, Philosophy of Science and Ethics, both broadly construed. Discussion of the Department's hiring plan is included both in its 5 Year Hiring Plan as well as its Extended Hiring Plan, each of which was requested by CAHSS.

All three new (as of 2012) tenure track faculty have benefited from the Eminent Scholar Mentor program, which was in the development stage at the time of the APR and is now fully functioning. Dr. Nance and Dr. Schwab had overwhelmingly positive 3rd year contract renewal reviews.

The Department was able to convert two long-term adjunct faculty members who had been teaching four courses a semester to the position of Lecturer: James Thomas (converted in 2015) and Greg Ealick (converted in 2016).

The Department has revised its Department Assessment Plan and its Department Workload Policy, as directed in the Action plan, as well as a number of other policies as requested by CAHSS. The Department's FRAP and adjunct instructor budgets are currently undergoing a college-wide review and revision. The Department emphasized in the current review of its FRAP budget that as new tenure track faculty come off of their start-up packages, which provide generous research support, the current FRAP budget will be unable to provide matching funds for CAHSS's travel funding of \$1,200 per faculty member. As discussed below, the current budget also will not allow for funding of colloquia that are necessary to the undergraduate experience as well to faculty research and morale. These are the Department's key financial concerns at this time.

The Department has created and launched a new website (<http://philosophy.umbc.edu>), has updated almost all of its course descriptions in the UMBC catalog, and is in the process of updating all other content in the catalog. It revised its major requirements, mandating that majors take intermediate 300-level survey courses in the required areas of Ethics and Metaphysics/Epistemology, in order to provide background for more intensive 400 level courses in those fields (previous requirements had allowed 400 level courses to meet those requirements).

The Department has created several new catalog-level courses through UGC in the past few years, and has made changes of different kinds (course titles, course descriptions, course level, prerequisites) to almost all of its course catalog. The Department has offered a large number of new upper division courses to students since the 2013 APR. APPENDIX I contains a list of these courses, indicating the semester in which it was offered, the instructor, as well as its planned rotation schedule.

Because of recently hired faculty developing new courses, academic leaves, as well as flux in both tenure track and adjunct personnel, the Department has not been able to develop a reliable 3-5 year course-offering plan for all of its courses. However, the Department has developed a regular schedule for the vast majority of its course offerings, with the understanding that upper division course offerings depend upon the availability of particular instructors. The schedule for these courses (see APPENDIX II) is listed on our website: <http://philosophy.umbc.edu/courses/frequency-schedule-for-regularly-offered-philosophy-courses/> , for advising purposes and so that students can make use of it in planning their philosophy course schedules. Several of these courses have been taught in special topics format (PHIL 399, PHIL 399b, PHIL 498, PHIL 499), partly because the teaching specializations of recently hired faculty are slightly out of sync with our existing course catalog, and partly as a way of developing new courses by continuing faculty. A number of these new courses have been or will be converted to dedicated catalog level courses in the next year.

The Department recruited an adjunct instructor, Dr. Thorian Harris, a specialist in Asian Philosophy, to teach a cycle of courses in that area, cross-listed with Asian Studies. These courses proved to be a resounding success – courses in Asian Philosophy, Chinese Philosophy, and Buddhist Philosophy rotated regularly, filled to capacity, with many students taking all three in succession. Both Dr. Constantine Vaporis, Director of Asian Studies, and our Department made great efforts to retain Dr. Harris in response to a job offer from another university but were unable to secure the funding and guarantees necessary to make our counteroffer competitive. While understandable – resources are of course finite – this retention failure was regrettable. It is also not easily correctible, given the extraordinary difficulty of finding competent adjunct instructors in this particular field. The Department has included a position in non-Western Philosophy as part of its extended hiring plan partly in response to this experience. Courses in non-Western Philosophy are on the rise in American universities, in keeping with globalism and immigration patterns, and require specialists for staffing. And they are supportive of UMBC's emphasis on inclusion and diversity.

The Department has had numerous discussions about plans for specialized tracks within the major, concentrations distinct from the minor, as well as the status of its currently suspended Masters in Applied and Professional Ethics (MAPE) program. Our discussions of these issues were disrupted by the departure of Dr. Sonny Elizondo, who was hired as our only ethicist in 2013 and then left after one year. In recent discussions, made possible by the hiring in 2015 of our current ethicist, Dr. Eric Campbell, the Department has determined that it is not in a position at this time to revive MAPE. The Department requires at least one senior ethicist to help revive and run such a program and two other ethicists – which was the faculty support for MAPE in its heyday – to support a reasonably diverse curriculum for it. We are nowhere near that level of personnel for at least the next four years.

The Department has begun the process of instituting tracks within the major in the following fields: (1) Logic and Philosophy of Science, (2) Ethics and Value, (3) History of Philosophy. These tracks will direct students with particular philosophical interests to philosophy courses in those areas that can be used to fill out electives for the major. This will provide both guidance as well as incentive, especially for those majors headed to different sorts of graduate programs. The Department is also looking into the possibility of a Pre-Law track or concentration (see below), since so many of our majors go on to law school. The Department is also considering the possibility of concentrations in STEM ethics and perhaps one or two other fields. These would be a series of 3-5 courses, different from the Philosophy minor, concentrated around a particular theme, that could help draw students to more courses within the Department as well as result in recruiting more majors. The Department has also decided to pursue the eventual formation of a certificate program in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law (PPEL). This sort of program exists in very different models on a number of university campuses, and has proven extremely popular and successful in attracting and supporting undergraduates majoring in Philosophy, Political Science, and Economics. Dr. Michael Nance would direct the efforts to establish this program on UMBC's campus and, if successful, eventually be its Philosophy Department director. Right now we envision the inclusion of

a number of different courses from these departments, as well as connections with the University of Maryland School of Law in Baltimore. There could be joint workshops, co-taught courses, and an associated visiting speaker series.

Tenure track faculty have been extremely productive since the APR. Both Dr. Nance and Dr. Schwab each published numerous papers in high profile, peer reviewed journals and collections, gave numerous invited talks, and each won major extramural research grants: Dr. Nance won a Humboldt fellowship for 18 months of research for his planned book on 18th century German political philosopher Johann Fichte and Dr. Schwab won a 12 month NEH grant for his planned book on the birth of the concept of knowledge in Ancient philosophy. Dr. Jessica Pfeifer is beginning her second term as Executive Director of the Philosophy of Science Association, the preeminent association for philosophy of science in the world. She also co-edited both a revised two-volume edition of the 2005 anthology *Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Science* and a festschrift in honor of Philip Kitcher. CAHSS has increased funding for travel support and a number of other funding support mechanisms in the humanities have been developed since the APR, all of which will contribute to supporting faculty productivity. However, as noted in the brief discussion of budget concerns above, the Department's current FRAP budget is unable to support faculty use of structural supports like CAHSS's Dean's travel funding of \$1,200 per faculty member per year, which requires matching funds from the Department.

The Department has been offering numerous campus-wide colloquia over the past three years, both as part of its annual Evelyn Barker memorial lecture series and also by receiving funding support from both the Humanities Forum and the Social Sciences Forum, as well as the co-sponsorship of a wide variety of departments: Economics, Political Science, Sociology & Anthropology, Gender +Womens' Studies, and Biology. Topics have included the science of happiness, the nature of race, lottocracy (sortition) as an alternative to elections, responsibility for implicit bias, feminist scientific methodology, disability and healthcare, and justice and healthcare. The Department also spearheaded bringing Dr. Kwame Anthony Appiah to campus as part of the festivities for the opening of PAHB. The Department is happy to continue to bring philosophers to campus to speak on topics of broad appeal. The Department does, however, need to bring in speakers more squarely within straight philosophy, both for pedagogical reasons – students learn a great deal about how to do philosophy by watching it being discussed, and by hearing talks on a variety of topics not covered by our faculty – as well as for research and morale reasons for the faculty.

The Department has sent majors to highly ranked graduate programs in the past few years and is poised to send at least two more this year and next to top ranked philosophy programs: Danielle Albrecht, University of Wisconsin, Madison (Philosophy); Gregory Strack, University of California, Irvine (Logic and Philosophy of Science); Nathan Engel-Hawbecker, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (Philosophy); Kwadwo Owusu-Boaitey, Washington University (Medicine); Jason Parkins, University of Baltimore joint MBA/JD program; Boris Tizenberg, University of Maryland (Medicine); Lauri Kai, William and Mary (Law); Nora Schafie, Georgetown (Law).

DeeAnn Spicer won competitive, fully funded scholarships for the UCSD Summer Program for Women in Philosophy (2014) and the PIKSI (Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute) program at MIT (2015), and was named a PIKSI Ambassador. She also won the UMBC Mary Akras Book Scholarship (2015) and was on a secondary list for class of 2015 valedictorian/salutatorian. She is currently applying for Ph.D. philosophy programs and we expect her to be admitted with full funding to a top-ranked program. Gregory Strack also won the UMBC Mary Akras Book Scholarship (2014). He won an Undergraduate Research Award (URA) and presented his research at URCAD in 2015. Kwadwo Owusu-Boaitey was class of 2014 salutatorian. Ronny Fernandez presented research stemming from his Philosophy Honors project to the 2016 Philosophy of Science Association international conference, where he also co-presented joint research with Dr. Jessica Pfeifer. Ronny Fernandez also won a competitive, fully funded scholarship for the PIKSI program at MIT (2016). He will be applying for Ph.D. philosophy programs in the Fall and we expect him to be admitted with full funding to a top-ranked program.

The only notable statistical change since the 2013 APR, other than the increase in tenure track faculty numbers, is a decrease in number of majors. The Dean's 2013 APR report notes fluctuation in the number of majors between 2008 and 2012 from 66 to 79 majors. In 2013, OIR reports 60 majors, followed by 53 in each of 2014 and 2015. The Dean's report also notes a fluctuation in graduation rates, from 8 to 17, during 2008-12. OIR reports 22 philosophy degrees for 2013. This was followed by 9 in 2014 and 11 in 2015, which while a steep drop from 2013 is nonetheless consistent with the range of 2008-12. The decrease in majors is likely the result of three unusual and interacting factors: the 22 graduated majors in 2013 – the most in more than 5 years, around 10 above the average for previous years – obviously cleared a logjam of senior majors, accounting for both a notable drop in graduating majors in 2014 (though within the range of 8-17) and also for the notable drop in the number of majors in 2013; this was accompanied by the almost complete overhaul of tenure track personnel as well as changes in curriculum and major requirements during 2012-15, which can be destabilizing and confusing for undergraduates; finally, in 2011-13 the Department was down to just three tenure track faculty and the vast majority of courses were being taught by adjuncts – it is therefore unlikely that as many students as normal would be declaring philosophy majors during this period. The Department will watch its enrollments closely to see whether there is a pattern emerging, but at this point there are too many other mitigating factors to draw any concerning conclusions.

APPENDIX I: New Philosophy Courses Since 2013

- PHIL 353: **Morality and Psychology**, Campbell (Spring 2017): every two years
- PHIL 354: **Ethics, Animals, and the Environment**, Ealick (Spring 2016): every two years
- PHIL 399: Topics in Philosophy: **Philosophy of Race**, O'Donnell (Spring 2017): dependent on available personnel, no plan to offer again in the short term
- PHIL 399: Topics in Philosophy: **Buddhist Philosophy**, Harris (Spring 2015): dependent on available personnel, no plan to offer again in the short term
- PHIL 399: Topics in Philosophy: **Chinese Philosophy**, Harris (Spring 2016): dependent on available personnel, no plan to offer again in the short term
- PHIL 399b: Topics in Philosophy: **Philosophy of Film**, Picciuto (Spring 2015): dependent on available personnel, no plan to offer again in the short term
- PHIL 420: Advanced Topics in 19th and 20th Century European Philosophy: **German Idealism**, Nance (Fall 2015): every two years
- PHIL 452: Advanced Topics in Ethics: **Nietzsche**, Campbell (Spring 2016): every two years
- PHIL 452: Advanced Topics in Ethics: **Metaethics**, Campbell (Fall 2016): every two years
- PHIL 482: **Aristotle's Ethics**, Schwab (Spring 2015): every two years
- PHIL 483: **Plato's Republic**, Schwab (Spring 2014): every two years
- PHIL 481: Advanced Topics in Ancient Philosophy: **Ancient Epistemology**, Schwab (Spring 2016): every three years
- PHIL 498: Advanced Topics: **Secondary Qualities and Reality**, Yalowitz (Fall 2016): every three years
- PHIL 498: Advanced Topics: **Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations**, Yalowitz (Fall 2013): no plan to offer again in the short term
- PHIL 498: Advanced Topics: **Philosophy of Perception**, Thomas (Spring 2017): every two years
- PHIL 499: Advanced Topics: **Self-Knowledge**, Yalowitz (Spring 2016): every two years
- PHIL 499: Advanced Topics: **Evolution and Cognition**, Ealick (Fall 2016): every two to three years
- PHIL 499: Advanced Topics: **Ethics and Evolution**, Ealick (Spring 2015/Spring 2017): every two to three years

APPENDIX II: Frequency Schedule of Regularly Offered Philosophy Courses

PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy (multiple sections) – every semester
PHIL 100H: Honor College Introduction to Philosophy – once a year
PHIL 146: Critical Thinking (multiple sections) – every semester
PHIL 150: Contemporary Moral Issues (multiple sections) – every semester
PHIL 152: Introduction to Moral Theory (multiple sections) – every semester
PHIL 152H: Honors College Introduction to Moral Theory – once a year
PHIL 251: Ethical Issues in Science and Engineering – every semester
PHIL 321: History of Philosophy: Ancient – every Fall
PHIL 322: History of Philosophy: Modern – every Spring
PHIL 345: Philosophy of Language – every two years
PHIL 346: Deductive Logic – every semester
PHIL 350: Ethical Theory – every two years
PHIL 353: Morality and Psychology – every two years
PHIL 354: Ethics, Animals, and the Environment – every two years
PHIL 355: Political Philosophy – every two years
PHIL 356: Philosophy of Law – every two years
PHIL 371: Epistemology – every two years
PHIL 372: Philosophy of Science – every two years
PHIL 373: Metaphysics – every two years
PHIL 380: Philosophy of Mind – every two years
PHIL 394: Philosophy of Biology – every two years
PHIL 399: Topics in Philosophy: Philosophy of Humor – every two years
PHIL 420: German Idealism – every two years
PHIL 452: Nietzsche – every two years
PHIL 452: Metaethics – every two years
PHIL 471: Freedom, Determinism, and Responsibility – every two years
PHIL 474: Possible Worlds – every two years
PHIL 475: Irrationality – every three years
PHIL 479: Paradoxes – every two years
PHIL 482: Aristotle's Ethics – every two years
PHIL 483: Plato's *Republic* – every two years
PHIL 499: Self-Knowledge – every two years
PHIL 499: Philosophy of Perception – every two years