



College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Office of the Dean
P.O. Box 6850
Fullerton, CA 92834-6850
T (657) 278-3528 / F (657) 657-278-5898

To: Su Swarat, Assistant Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness

From: Sheryl Fontaine, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Date: April 10, 2020

Subject: Dean's Summary and Evaluation of the Philosophy BA, Program Performance Review

The Philosophy Department is a medium-sized department that offers a BA (both general and with a concentration in Social/Moral/Legal Philosophy) and a minor in Philosophy. As of today, there are 95 Philosophy majors (9 of whom are completing the concentration) and 44 minors. In addition to serving their majors, the Philosophy department offers key General Education courses in the Humanities area (area C); Implications and Explorations of Mathematics and Natural Sciences sub-area (subarea B5); and in Critical Thinking (subarea A3), which is part of the Golden Four, which are the courses that build skills and dispositions of mind that are essential for all future areas of study. A target of 484 FTES is carried by 8 tenure/tenure-track faculty, 3 full-time lecturers, as well as part-time lecturers.

Their thoughtful Self-Study and very engaged external review team's report were conducted before the campus shift to virtual operations due to COVID-19. The Department, however, has only had the post-COVID-19 period of time to engage with the external review team's recommendations. And this report, too, will be received while we are all still working virtually. Therefore, I encourage the Department to continue having conversations about the external review team's report and this one when we are all back on campus.

All one needs to do is attend a symposium or academic talk that includes Philosophy majors and minors in the audience to see what an impressive job the Department is doing at raising inquisitive students with supreme critical-thinking skills. When one of the Philosophy faculty members is giving the talk, I am inspired by watching the intellectual give-and-take between students and faculty members. It is very likely that this exchange provides a window into the dialogue that regularly takes place in Philosophy classrooms, one that is rooted in their particular disciplinary expertise and discursive practices. Department assessment data show that students leave the Philosophy program meeting or exceeding benchmarks in critical thinking. It is truly unfortunate that students from across campus may be dissuaded from taking Philosophy courses due to EO 1100R and the subsequent opportunity that unlimited double counting has provided for Departments across campus to flood into the Humanities. Internally in the College, we have tried to help maintain the number of Philosophy sections offered (For example, Psychology agreed to



reduce the number of A3 courses they offer so that Philosophy could meet that student need.), but ultimately a campus commitment to the Humanities is necessary if courses in this area of GE and their related learning outcomes are to be authentically established and maintained.

The Department has done a good job of amplifying the value of their major and minor programs to students and the community, revealing some benefits of investing faculty service time into web design and social media. Their outreach efforts include posters in the Humanities building stairwell and the Philosophy webpage that includes a subpage, “Why Study Philosophy,” with numerous videos and links. Even with these efforts, the number of majors and minors has remained largely stable, suggesting that tweaks to these strategies should be considered. The external review team suggests creating more promotional material. The Dean’s Office can provide assistance as the Philosophy department refines their messages to different populations. One particular population would be students who have been accepted to CSUF to enroll but who have not yet accepted their admission to campus. The department yield from admission to acceptance is well below the College and University average. Some of these numbers are captured in the Self Study, Table 1 & 2. The Department can use the Admissions Dashboard on the Institutional Research page to dig deeper. For example, in Fall 2019, across HSS, 18.9% of first-time freshmen admitted to HSS programs ultimately enrolled at CSUF. None of the 27 Philosophy first-time freshmen, however, decided to make CSUF their home in Fall 2019. The transfer numbers were a little better, with the College seeing 35% of their admits enroll, and the Philosophy Department seeing 6 out of the 29 admitted students (20.7 percent) enroll. The College marketing team, Mari Migliori and Alan Van Fleet, might be helpful resources in sorting out ways to identify and promote the clear benefits of joining the CSUF Philosophy Department.

The College could also help you focus your outreach for double-major or minor to students across campus. For example, some College studies have already revealed that Computer Science majors are drawn to Philosophy. This is not surprisingly given the Computer Science emphasis on logical structures. Computer Science majors choose to complete Philosophy courses for their GE requirements when given a choice between many disciplines and many take and succeed in Philosophy courses outside of their GE requirements. Philosophy converts more majors from Computer Science (CPSC) than any other major program. These data and some of the existing research in the department, particularly Dr. Liu’s highly recognized research Robotic Ethics, could lead to important collaborations between Computer Science and Philosophy.



Table 1: First-time freshmen who are now Philosophy Majors

Major at Entry	Cohort		Total			#	%
	fa15	fa16	fa17	fa18	fa19		
BSCI		2				2	6%
CMES	1					1	3%
CPSC	1	3	2	1	1	5	16%
MATE					1	1	3%
PBUS	2					2	6%
PHIL	3	3	1	3		10	31%
POSC		1				1	3%
PSYC	1	2				3	9%
THAR	1					1	3%
UNDC	2	2		2		6	19%
Total	10	13	3	5	1	32	100%
% of Major Latest who Found Major	70%	77%	67%	40%	100%	69%	

Source:
OBIEE
Student
Success
Dashboard,
Accessed
4/3/2020

As the external review team highlighted, given its size, the department’s faculty boasts a wide range of specializations across Anglo-American analytic and Continental approaches, as well as in Chinese philosophies, critical race philosophies, and incarceration. As the department grows (I am pleased that they will be running a search next year) its members will have the opportunity to expand its existing specializations or to build in new directions. In light of the strong possibility that the campus will adopt an Ethnic Studies requirement, a Latinx/Latin American Philosophy hire would allow the department to develop courses to complement the requirement. The external review team’s suggestion that Philosophy cast their first call broadly is a sensible approach. I urge



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the Department to execute the external review team's suggestion, which is in line with best practices, to create a very clear criteria for selecting the candidates before evaluations begin. Please consult with our College Office of Equity and Diversity, which has been creating materials to guide departments in their search processes.

I look forward to seeing more departmental discussion about the other major recommendations that the external review team made once the Department is back to face-to-face meetings. In particular, I ask the department to consider the external review team's request to weigh the pros and cons of their Chair rotation system. Like the review team, I have observed harmful drawbacks to this practice that takes little consideration of individual faculty skills or interests and makes one's turn in the rotation take on the air of a three-year sentence. In 2018 all departments created and made available in the chairs Dropbox, a summary of their key governance practices and policies. Philosophy could revisit their own guidelines with reference to those of other departments looking for ways to ensure consistent and appropriately- authorized department leadership that doesn't saddle the task to only one or two excessively long-term chairs.

Enforcing service requirements can be tricky, and I am glad that the Department will start the discussion about how to create an equitable service load. I encourage you to look back at the materials in the chairs dropbox (I shared these in Fall 2018) from KerryAnn O'Meara about creating equitable workloads, to work with the College Office of Equity and Diversity, and the Dean's Office, and colleagues on campus as you work on that plan.

Along with the Dean's Office broadly, I am eager to strengthen lines of communication with the Philosophy Department. I thank you for having invited our College Budge Manager, Pat Balderas, to attend a department meeting and provide an explanation of College and department budgets and budgeting. She and I would be happy to visit the department again in the fall when you have a new chair. We hope that this PPR process has also provided clarity about the Philosophy Department's budget, which has remained relatively stable. In the time during which the PPR was being written, I informed the department that in 19-20 the Provost provided funds (after the fact) to support new faculty teaching loads of 2-2. This support along with the budget and target that are provided to every department in the college assures that the full-time-faculty teaching load will not be jeopardized by your anticipated hires. My goal is to provide transparent and equitable budget distributions that include requested and assigned MCF, OE, and any earned course match funds and that, along with departments' philanthropic and research dollars allow as much financial independence as possible.

As the Philosophy Department continues to thrive, I congratulate them on their many pedagogical and research achievements and thank them for the continued commitment to their major and general education curricula.