

**Comprehensive Program Review (CPR)
Department of Philosophy
Georgia State University
July 2020**

The following programs are critical to the institutional mission and thus MEET the institution's criteria for retention:

Bachelor of Arts with a major in Philosophy (38010100)

The Department offers a B.A. in Philosophy and a B.A. in Philosophy with Pre-Law concentration. Majors average about 130 per year (about 37 graduates per year). Action Steps 1-9 and 11 aim to maintain or improve the undergraduate programs, especially 8-9 and the CTC plans in 6-7 (see appendix).


Master of Arts with a major in Philosophy (38010100)

The Department offers an M.A. in Philosophy, with concentrations in Neurophilosophy and in History of Philosophy (in preparation for M.A.T. degree), and a joint M.A./J.D. degree. The program is ranked among the top five terminal M.A. degrees in the nation, and typically places almost every student who applies to Ph.D. programs (about 1/3, with others entering a variety of careers or other graduate programs). Applicants average about 150 per year, with incoming cohorts of 22-25. Action Steps 1-5, and 10-12 aim to maintain or improve the graduate programs, especially 5 (see appendix).

Provost/VPAA Signature and Date _____

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Provost/VPAA's Designee Signature and Date

 7/30/20

**Appendix: 2019 Action Plan
Department of Philosophy
Georgia State University**

Status of Action Items from Prior Review: Most steps from Philosophy's 2010 action plan have been completed, though some were hindered by faculty losses or funding constraints.

- Complete B&B hires and initiate 2CI proposals and hires. **Completed but not fully sustained.** B&B hires were completed, but one senior hire has since retired. Philosophy led a successful 2CI proposal in Neuroethics and hired Nicole Vincent (Philosophy) and Eyal Aharoni (Psychology), but Vincent left GSU and further 2CI hiring was not funded.
- Create interdisciplinary programs. **Completed.** Neuroethics Concentration in the PhD program in Neuroscience was created via 2CI. The Department led the development of a new Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) program, with a BIS degree concentration.
- Increase faculty grants and fellowships. **Completed.** The Department increased proposals for external grants and fellowships by rewarding applications with summer research money. Successful awards and total grant funds have been among the highest in the humanities.
- Redesign Phil 1010 with new textbook as a flipped class, increasing cap while lowering GTA workload, and lowering DWF rates with use of SI program using RPG funds. **Completed.**
- Improve funding for MA students. **Incomplete.** Remains a priority.
- Increase number of majors and minors. **Partially completed.** Number of majors and minors has remained steady (despite national downward trends in most humanities areas); diversity of majors has improved substantially. Overall undergrad course enrollment has increased.
- Improve RPG rates and placement of MA students. **Largely completed.** Despite 25% increase in the size of incoming MA cohorts, RPG rates have improved and PhD placement rates remain high, though there is now too much competition among students for top PhD programs.
- Increase Honors participation. **Largely completed.** Honors sections were added to all courses taught by TT faculty and Lecturers. Honors Theses are as high as any department in the university. Attracting more Honors students to major in philosophy remains a goal.

Major Findings in Current Review: As demonstrated in the Department's self-study, and confirmed by the external reviewers and the CAP report, the Department contributes significantly to each of the University's and College's strategic initiatives, especially in scholarly research, undergraduate education, and graduate education. For instance, Academic Analytics data shows the Department's faculty has produced substantially more research (books, articles, grants, and citations) than its peer programs. In contributions to undergraduate teaching, the Department averages over 20,000 credit hours per year, with over 12,000 in the core and SEI responses averaging 4.4 in these courses. The quality of applicants and incoming students to the MA program is among the best at GSU, averaging 150 applicants per year. Over 90% of MA students now graduate within three years, and 2/3 are admitted to high-quality PhD programs. The external reviewers' report reinforces the Department's self-study:

- *Regarding the Department's standing*, the reviewers write that Philosophy at GSU "offers an internationally recognized M.A. program that ... plays a crucial role in the ecosystem of academic philosophy; it draws strong M.A. students to Georgia State's Philosophy Department; and they, in turn, serve as teachers to GSU's undergraduates, instructing introductory courses in philosophy, especially critical thinking."

- *Regarding future challenges*, they write: “The Department is at an inflection point.... A failure to replace [senior lecturer] Dwyer ... will cause the Department to suffer grave degradation of its mission across both graduate training and undergraduate education. Longer term, failure to replace departing regular faculty and build the Department will result not only in a failure to build upon the Department’s current accomplishments, but in the decline of existing strengths and performance.”
- *Regarding competitor M.A. programs*, they write: “We find the support level for M.A. students to be significantly below the level of comparable programs, while the workload they are asked to take on is considerably higher. Addressing this disparity is important to sustaining the Department’s position as an M.A. training ground, and more aggressive steps to better fund M.A. students offers an opportunity to enhance its overall position among comparable programs in line with the Department’s aspirations.”
- *Regarding undergraduate diversity*, they write: “The success that the Department has had in increasing its appeal to women and underrepresented groups in philosophy is spectacular ... and it ought to provide a useful model ... across the philosophy profession for proactively addressing the ‘pipeline problem’ faced by some academic fields, including philosophy.”
- *Regarding the Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics*, they write that it is, “internationally renowned and delivers a remarkable return on Georgia State University’s modest investment. The broad focus of the Center allows it to contribute substantially to ... each of the five goals outlined in the University’s Strategic Plan.”

Action Steps for the Coming Cycle: The Department’s overarching goals are (1) to be the best terminal MA program in philosophy in the nation, as measured by the research profile of the faculty in its three areas of research excellence—social/political philosophy and applied ethics, interdisciplinary philosophy of mind, and history of philosophy—and by the philosophical and pedagogical training of the students; and (2) to maximize the academic and career success of all of its students. To achieve these goals, we will take the following action steps:

1. The Chair, along with relevant area faculty members, will contribute to a University-wide interdisciplinary program in Artificial Intelligence through the NextGen program, in coordination with CIS, CS, and Psych. The NextGen is expected to fund a philosopher specializing in the ethics of AI and data science to be hired Fall 2020 or 2021, a hire that will also develop the Department’s strength in applied ethics and the JBB Center for Ethics.
2. In the annual 3-year hiring plan sent to the Dean, the Chair will give highest priority for any available new hiring to three junior tenure-track positions in order to maintain and strengthen its three areas of research excellence: (1) philosophy of mind, with preference for foundations of artificial intelligence to supplement the NextGen initiative (funded for Fall 2020); (2) social/political philosophy, with preference for philosophy of race or feminist philosophy (for Fall 2021); and (3) history of philosophy (for Fall 2022).
3. The Department will work to maintain and strengthen its recognized teacher training program by hiring (funded for Fall 2020) a Lecturer to serve as Coordinator of Graduate Teaching (CGT). This hire and others (above) will allow expansion of curricular offerings in applied ethics (e.g., bioethics and/or ethics of computing/AI) and further development of College-to-Career (CTC) initiatives. Increased curricular development and demand in these critical areas may suggest the need for another Lecturer to develop and support this work.

4. With each new faculty hire, the Department Search Committees, trained in best practices by the Dean's office, will aim to increase faculty diversity.
5. The Graduate Director, along with the Graduate Committee, will work to simultaneously (a) lower the size of incoming MA cohorts to fewer than 20 per year, (b) increase funding of MA students to at least \$10,000 per year, more comparable with competitor programs, (c) maintain overall credit hour production in Philosophy courses in the core, and (d) maintain overall graduate credit hours. This can be achieved by (1) maintaining the existing graduate budget, (2) maintaining core-course teaching coverage with recent graduates trained in the program (rather than the former model of using third-year GTAs), funded by recent new demand and current PTI funds, and (3) creating or supporting new MA programs (and hence overall MA credit hours production), as follows:
 - a) The Director of the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) program, with the Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs, will explore whether to propose by 2021 an MIS degree in PPE, that would attract students in the BIS program (with a 4+1 program) and professionals in the Atlanta area seeking to bolster their credentials.
 - b) The Department, with the hire and resources of the NextGen initiative, will develop undergraduate and graduate courses in the ethics of AI, computing, and data science, with the potential to offer a graduate certificate for MA and PhD students from a wide range of disciplines. The timeline for this goal depends on the success of the NextGen initiative.
6. The Chair and Coordinator of Graduate Teaching (CGT) will develop, in support of the University's QEP, College to Career (CTC) modules in core courses designed to improve students' awareness of the competencies learned in those courses and their application to various careers. These modules will be piloted in 2019 and introduced in 2020.
7. The Director of Undergraduate Studies and Undergraduate Committee will develop a CTC alignment plan in 2020, which may include CTC modules within relevant courses, a CTC requirement to be satisfied among options (e.g., career-relevant courses such as bioethics or business ethics, an internship, or a thesis), or both.
8. The Director of Undergraduate Studies and Undergraduate Committee will aim to increase, by 20% over the next three years, Signature Experiences for majors, notably Internships, and Honors theses (or research projects through CASA programs).
9. The Director of Undergraduate Studies and Undergraduate Committee will work closely with CAS, University advisors, and the Honors College (a) to maintain or increase the total number, and diversity, of majors and minors (subject to expected loss of majors to the new PPE degree), (b) to increase the number of Honors students majoring and minoring in philosophy by 20% over the next three years, and (c) to increase retention and graduation by adding flexibility to the major requirements by 2020-21.
10. The Graduate Director, Graduate Committee, and CGT will develop by 2021 modules to be introduced into the Phil 8970/8980 sequence on preparation for thesis writing, applying to graduate programs, community outreach, and preparation for careers outside of academia.
11. The Assessment Committee will complete by 2020-21 ongoing revisions to the BA and MA SLO assessment measures, allowing us to identify ways to improve student learning.
12. The Chair will work with Development to launch a campaign, starting in 2020, to raise contributions towards an MA scholarship for students from underrepresented groups.

Signatures:



8/28/2019

Dr. Eddy Nahmias
Chair, Department of Philosophy

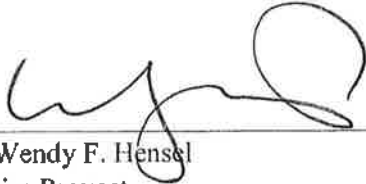
Date



8/28/19

Dr. Sara T. Rosen
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Date



8/29/19

Dr. Wendy F. Hensel
Interim Provost

Date