I. Program Summary

The Department of Philosophy has been teaching undergraduate courses since 1933, offering a B.A. major in philosophy and initiating an M.A. Program in 1974. A joint J.D./M.A. program was begun in 2001. The Department of Religious Studies was formed from the department in 2005. The department hosts the Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics, created in 1995, to promote ethical knowledge and understanding and support faculty research, student engagement, graduate students, and community outreach.

Faculty, Staff, Enrollments and Service. Over the reporting period, the Department of Philosophy averaged 11 tenured/tenure-track and 8 non-tenure track fulltime faculty members, one part-time instructor, and 20.3 graduate teaching assistants. Two or three assistant professor positions, one non-tenure-track position, and none or one visiting position were held by females. One visiting line was held by a minority male. The department shares three staff members with the Department of Religious Studies.

Total credit hours increased 2.5% from FY2006 to FY2007 and 11.5% from FY2007 to FY2008. Average credit hour generation by faculty category appears in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Type</th>
<th>Undergrad Core Phil 1010/2010</th>
<th>Undergrad Lower Division</th>
<th>Undergrad Upper Division</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-track: 11</td>
<td>1,721</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>4,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non tenure-track: 8</td>
<td>3,524</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>1,925</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>6,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTE: 1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTA: 20.3</td>
<td>4,549</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>509</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average total</td>
<td>10,138</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>3,272</td>
<td>1,689</td>
<td>15,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty members have fulfilled significant service roles. The chair was active in campus-level consideration of a Board of Regents proposal for revising the core curriculum for all University System of Georgia institutions. Other members have prominent roles in college and university committees.

Scholarly Productivity and External Funding. Over the reporting period, tenured/tenure-track faculty members annually averaged 1.6 (1.6) unduplicated (by author) refereed publications and 0.4 (0.5) unduplicated (by author) scholarly books per faculty member. Three faculty members had ethics-focused publications supporting the research mission of the Blumenfeld Center for Ethics. Faculty members have produced more articles over the last seven years than any top M.A. program except Tufts. Furthermore, they have produced nearly twice the number of articles and books as the average produced by the other nine programs ranked below Tufts. Based on a quality point value scheme for journals and presses established by an external panel, faculty members produced research of a higher quality than any program except top-ranked Tufts.
External funding sources have included the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Association of University Women, Wisdom Grant, and Page Fellowship. Funding is shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Three-Year Total</th>
<th>Average Annual Funding Per Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External direct and indirect</td>
<td>$269,000</td>
<td>$8,152*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal grants</td>
<td>$99,000</td>
<td>$3,000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Self-Study Appendix Table B-6 shows $20,750 and $8,250 for average external and internal funding.

Student Numbers by Degree Programs and Degrees Awarded. The number of majors and the number of degrees by year and on average appears in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>FY2006 Majors</th>
<th>FY2006 Degrees</th>
<th>FY2007 Majors</th>
<th>FY2007 Degrees</th>
<th>FY2008 Majors</th>
<th>FY2008 Degrees</th>
<th>3-Year Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Law</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brains &amp; Behavior</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.D./M.A.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over the review period, undergraduate majors and degrees were stable while master’s students (degrees) increased 30% (60%).

Mission statements for the department’s courses in the core (Phil 1010 and 2010), the B.A. program, and the M.A. program are identical. The mission statements do not indicate what post-graduation endeavors the B.A. and M.A. programs prepare students for.

The department has two courses in the undergraduate core: Phil 1010 and 2010. Learning objectives in Phil 1010 address the portion of the general education goal of critical thinking concerned with evaluating arguments and constructing new arguments. The course does not address the sub-goals of formulating questions, collecting evidence, and using analysis results to formulate new questions. Learning objectives for Phil 2010 are for students to have basic understanding of (1) philosophical problems, (2) application of ethical theory to practical ethical problems, and (3) writing of some philosophical authors, and to have a basic ability to think and write philosophically. The role of Phil 2010 in the general education core was not specified. For both courses, the assessment plan is for a three-person faculty committee to assign letter
grades for each learning objective to the final papers of the first four students on the roll turning in papers in five randomly chosen fall term sections.

Based on the sampling methodology, for 2007-08, Phil 1010 and 2010 students were deemed to have met learning objectives by virtue of the average of scored papers exceeding 2.50 on each measure. Planned actions included (1) redesigning Phil 1010 although the assessment report was silent on how, specifically, a potential redesign would be different, what it was intended to achieve, and how it might be associated with greater learning, and (2) enlarging the assessment committee to four faculty members.

Phil 1010 and 2010 have been the targets of two RPG (Retention and Progress to Graduation) grants from the Provost’s Office for implementing supplemental instruction (SI) to decrease the rates of DFW grades. Although other concurrent changes mask the results, DFW rates in Phil 1010 have declined about 5 percentage points over the two years. In Phil 2010, DFW rates have not changed appreciably. Most of the SI leaders have been graduate students.

Learning objectives for the B.A. program are for students to (1) gain philosophical knowledge and (2) develop philosophical thinking skills. The B.A. assessment plan is for seniors in fall term 4000-level courses to submit their papers electronically for assessment purposes. A three-person faculty committee assigns letter grades for content knowledge and philosophical skills to 20 papers chosen at random. Successful electronic paper submission was assumed to indicate students effectively using computers and other technology appropriate to the discipline of philosophy. Instructors evaluate students’ oral communication and participation in collaborative activities.

Based on the sampling methodology, for 2007-08, B.A. students were deemed to have met learning objectives (average of scored papers exceeding 2.75 on both objectives). Planned actions included “getting the average rating for skills up to the level students are achieving for content knowledge” and enlarging the assessment committee to four faculty members, but there was no indication of how improved skill ratings would be achieved.

Learning objectives for the M.A. program are the same as those for the B.A. program except that M.A. graduates are expected “to have a greater mastery of the content knowledge and a higher level of philosophical skills” (emphasis in original, Appendix D1, p. 72). The assessment plan is for three faculty members to assign letter grades for content knowledge and philosophical skills to each master’s thesis.

For 2007-08, M.A. students were deemed to have met learning objectives (average of scored papers exceeding 3.0 on each measure). There were no planned actions beyond “continue as we are” (Appendix D-7c Assessment reports 2007-2008 The M.A.).

II. Assessment

The APRC concurs with the external reviewers that the department has made important, high-quality contributions to the university, through its publications and research and through its teaching load in the undergraduate core courses Phil 1010 and 2010. Furthermore, the Committee commends the department on making progress on goals in its 2003 academic program review to hire a distinguished professor to anchor an area of contemporary philosophy and to convert visiting faculty lines to GTA positions to support graduate students. As the external reviewers said, “the department…has exhibited a perceptive eye for young talent.” Progress has been especially noteworthy in the department’s developing the terminal M.A. program into one of the top-ranked programs in the country.

1. Academic quality
a. **Instruction.** The department has been a leader in the CTW initiative and has strived to improve learning in Phil 1010 and 2010 through RPG grants. Its M.A. program is widely recognized as one of the best in the country.

The APRC concurs with the external reviewers’ conclusion that for M.A. students that “teaching requirements are high, especially in the second year.” Because the best students tend to go to programs with the best combination of stipend and workload, the Committee agrees that the teaching load of M.A. students may threaten the excellence of the M.A. program. Furthermore, the high proportion of Phil 1010 and 2010 sections taught by M.A. students may degrade the educational experience.

It is pedagogically inappropriate for the B.A. and M.A. programs to have identical learning outcomes differentiated only by the statement that M.A. graduates “have a greater mastery of the content knowledge and a higher level of philosophical skills that [sic] graduates of the B.A. program” (Appendix D1 p. 72). The differences need to be made specific. Learning outcomes tailored to skills differentiated by level would be more useful in specifying and assessing learning outcomes. Teasing out specific learning behaviors will likely require high-level objectives to be decomposed into sets of lower-level objectives.

Simply assessing once (seniors submitting papers in 4000-level courses in fall term and M.A. students submitting theses) does not provide evidence sufficient to identify skill variations with the potential to inform curricular changes to improve learning. Because of the lack of curricular structure, which precludes tracking students through the programs, there is no way to know where in the courses students do or do not learn as intended.

The APRC concurs with the external reviewers that the combined 4000/6000 courses detract from the educational experience of B.A. and M.A. students. B.A. and M.A. students are capable of and eager for different levels of discourse. In addition, in FY 2008, it was noted that enrollments in 3000 and 4000 level courses varied considerably with many courses being in the 8 to 25 range (Appendix D4 Table D1). Enrollments in 6000 courses varied from 5 to 32. As a result, because it is not clear how the average numbers of students by section are adjusted for cross-listed courses, it is difficult to ascertain the match of student demand with teaching capacity.

b. **Research.** The APRC concurs with the external reviewers that “the tenure track faculty are remarkably productive with respect to research.” The department has developed strength in the emerging areas of Legal and Political Philosophy and Neurophilosophy. The APRC concurs with the findings of the Senate Research Committee that the Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics continue as a research center. The APRC finds, consistent with the Center’s mission, that the Center has increased its research presence through its conferences and the scholarship that has been generated through those efforts.

c. **Service.** Faculty members’ service to the university community has been substantial, through University Senate committees and leadership and participation in campus initiatives such as CTW and RPG.

2. **Centrality of the programs.** Philosophy serves a genuine societal need in helping students “confront important questions about knowledge, meaning, and morality” (Self Study p. 1). Phil 1010 and 2010 support GSU Strategic Plan goals for developing critical thinking and making ethical choices.

Because the only diversity statistics provided in the Self Study concerned faculty composition, it is not clear how the programs contribute to diversity goals in the university’s strategic plan.
2.3 **Viability of programs.** With respect to enrollments, the programs are viable. The numbers of graduates are healthy. The department is mostly funded internally, which will likely continue.

2.4 **Strategic focus.** The department’s strategic foci of Legal and Political Philosophy and Neurophilosophy are well chosen to position the department to maintain strong degree programs, increase its research quality, and seek external funding for research. The department also participates in interdisciplinary programs such as the Brains and Behavior program.

2.5 **Financial resource analysis.** The self study and the external reviewer’s report identified several areas of concern with respect to financial resources. A pressing financial need concerns the level of support for M.A. students with respect to workload, which does not appear to be competitive with other top-rated programs. About half the M.A. students are funded from the tenuous source of RPG grants. The lack of summer research funding for faculty may hamper research productivity.

2.6 **Progress on strategic goals from previous program review.** Efforts to achieve goals set in the first academic program review in 2003 resulted in the following progress:

a. **Goal 1: Increase tenure-track assistant professors from 10 to 14 and hire a distinguished professor to anchor an area in contemporary analytic philosophy.** The department added three tenure-track assistant professors and hired a distinguished professor.

b. **Goal 2: Establish Religious Studies as a separate unit.** The separation was effective in 2005 with the “linked departments” sharing space and staff with a single budget.

c. **Goal 3: Convert visiting instructor positions to GTA positions to support M.A. students.** Three visiting instructorships were converted to GTA positions.

d. **Goal 4: Develop more international programs for B.A. and M.A. students.** The department is seeking to develop a graduate student exchange program in Britain and possibly one with Australia and/or Korea.

7. **Evaluation of goals.** Self-Study Section H contains the following objectives:

a. **Objective 1:** Complete the hires approved in the 2003 Action Plan.

b. **Objective 2:** Separate 4000 and 6000 classes.

c. **Objective 3:** Increase graduate stipends.

d. **Objective 4:** Hire additional senior faculty members.

e. **Objective 5:** Lower class size in Phil 2010 Great Questions of Philosophy.

f. **Objective 6:** Return summer research funding of research-productive faculty to 10%.

The APRC finds objectives 1, 3, and 6 to be reasonable and appropriate. The Committee examines objective 2 (separate 4000 and 6000 courses) in the next section in 4.d. With regard to objective 5, the Committee notes that the Phil 2010 sections tend to have 60 students enrolled while the FLC sections are capped at 25. The Department will need to balance increasing enrollment demands across
the University with specific disciplinary pedagogical concerns when determining how best to
decrease class sizes in Phil 2010.

III. Recommendations

In addition to concurring with the department’s objectives 1, 3, and 6 above, and supporting objective 2 as
indicated in 4.d below, the APRC makes the following recommendations:

1. **Hire to finish 2003 action plan.** Complete the one remaining hire from the 2003 action plan with the
proviso that it enable research strengths and ensure the fulfillment of programmatic needs.

2. **M.A. versus Ph.D.** Persist with the goal of being recognized as the best M.A. program in the country
rather than converting the terminal M.A. program to a Ph.D. program. The Committee concurs with
the external reviewers’ analysis for this recommendation.

3. **RPG grants.** Use RPG (Retention, Progress, and Graduation) grants to develop pedagogy for
improving learning that is sustainable even after the grant funding disappears. Transition funding for
M.A. students to a more long-lived source than RPG grants.

4. **Assessment**
   a. Develop distinct missions for Phil 1010 and 2010 (core courses), the B.A. program, and the M.A.
   program.
   b. Reformulate learning objectives, tailoring them to each degree program, in language that makes
   explicit what students will be able to do once they have mastered the objective at a level of detail
   that would permit diagnosing and remedying specific learning weaknesses. For example, rather
   than as for Phil 2010, “have a basic understanding of…” or “have a basic familiarity with…”, the
   learning outcomes should specify what students will do to generate evidence that can be assessed
   for the extent of the student’s competence.
   c. Assess learning outcomes at intervals during the programs with course-embedded assessments
   rather than just in the fall term of the senior year for the B.A. program and at the end of the M.A.
   program. Such an approach to assessment can be facilitated with redesigned curricula that offer
   students opportunities to build skills. The Committee projects the benefits from organizing by
   skills development over time would include better use of teaching capacity, better educational
   outcomes for students, and more nuanced opportunities for assessing learning outcomes. This
   granularity in assessment has the potential to reveal assessment outcomes that would enable more
   creativity in improving learning outcomes than simply to “continue as we are.”
   d. Separate 4000 and 6000 classes without additional teaching capacity through a well designed
   curriculum with required courses that develop skills and knowledge. Similarly, the Committee
   recommends redesigning the M.A. curriculum with required 6000 and 8000 courses that build
   skills and knowledge. While such revisions might result in substantially fewer undergraduate and
   graduate courses, they ought to lead to better learning outcomes, assessment of learning, and use
   of resources.

5. **Diversity.** The APRC recommends the department endeavor to address its lack of faculty diversity
by affirmatively seeking minority and women candidates when hiring opportunities arise.
5.6. **Blumenfeld Center for Ethics.** The APRC recommends, in the language of the Senate Research Committee, that in the next review cycle, the Center develop new goals to (1) increase external support in general and support for research-active affiliate faculty in ethics and (2) create new programs and opportunities to train graduate students.

**Self Study Format.** The self study was 30 pages, 5 pages longer than specified. For a unit with one B.A. and one M.A. program, that is excessively long. Appendix D-7c Assessment Reports 2007-2008 The M.A. duplicated the analogous report for the undergraduate Core (Phil 1010, 2010).