Philosophy
College of Arts

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:
Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts

MEMORANDUM
Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

TO: Joanne MacLean, Chair, Senate

FROM: James Mandigo, Chair, Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

CC: Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts
Claire Carolan, Associate Director, Program Development and Quality Assurance

DATE: March 6, 2024

RE: Philosophy Program Review

The Philosophy Program within the College of Arts, Faculty of Humanities, underwent a program review in 2023-24. The Academic Planning and Priorities Committee reviewed all of the documentation related to the program review and accepted them at its February 28, 2024 meeting and recommend to Senate for approval.

An overview of the review was given and the APPC highly commended department's hard work on the review. The Dean notes that the external reviewers also noted "that the diversity and structure of the course offering stands clearly above what would be reasonably expected of a department of that size". The external reviews were very complimentary mentioning that this is a solid, healthy, and sustainable program and brought forth some thoughtful suggestions.

Suggested motion:

THAT Senate accept the documents related to the Philosophy Program Review as presented.

Attachments:
- Memo to APPC
- Action Plan and Deans summary

Instructions: Consider the data gathered through the program review process (i.e., self-study report, external reviewer report and recommendations and commendations, survey results, consultations with community and industry partners, and internal consultations). Identify goals for improvement of the program over the next five-seven years. Detail the specific steps that will be taken to advance these goals including key milestones, measurable outcomes, and people responsible for implementing the changes. Depending on the results of the program review, some areas may require greater attention than others. Please add/remove rows to each section, as needed.

ERR refers to External Review Report

Curriculum and Assurance of Learning
Goal: Discontinue Extended Minor
Describe the rationale for the Goal and provide evidence supporting the necessity for the Goal. ERR Recommendation #1: Eliminate the extended minor. The extended minor appears to offer students no advantage over the regular minor, as it does not credentialise distinctive student achievement.
Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed): *Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.*

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Submit proposal for discontinuance to College of Arts Council		November 2023	Department Head
Submit proposal for discontinuance to APPC		January 2024	Department Head

Goal: Submit PHIL courses to satisfy BA requirements (Written, oral, or visual communication; Quantitative literacy; Civic engagement; Inter-cultural engagement)
EER Recommendation #2: Consider whether there are additional courses that would be suitable candidates for meeting BA competencies in the following areas: Writing; Quantitative literacy; Civic engagement; and Intercultural engagement. Especially after the recent revisions made to Philosophy's curriculum, there are PHIL courses that should be designated as alternates for meeting core competencies. This would be in line with practices in many other institutions in British Columbia, where philosophy courses are relied upon not only for education in Critical Thinking, but also for core Writing, Communication, and Quantitative Literacy skills, and in some cases for Science Literacy as well. This enables more students to meet their core requirements by taking courses in philosophy and as a result indirectly supports enrolment in upper-year courses. Possible requirements: Written, oral, or visual communication: PHIL 101 (Introduction to Philosophy), PHIL 110 (Introduction to Ethics and Moral Problems), PHIL 120 (Knowledge and Reality) Quantitative literacy: PHIL 300 (Symbolic Logic in Context) Civic engagement: PHIL 365 (Teaching Children Philosophy) Inter-cultural engagement: PHIL 311 (Contemporary Political Philosophy : Recognition and Resurgence), PHIL 353 (Classical Indian Philosophy), PHIL 354 (Classical Chinese Philosophy), PHIL 355 (Indigenous Philosophy)

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Write memos justifying the designations		May 2024	Faculty
Submit courses to CACC		September 2024	Department Head

Goal: Create Associate Certificates (pre-law, cognitive science, philosophy for children)

ERR Recommendation #3: Create certificates credentials for achievement in small clusters of related PHIL courses, such as ethics and/or philosophy for children.

The possibility of gaining a certificate in a subarea of philosophy would help students showcase their unique educational journey to future employers. Given that a large proportion of UFV students pursue careers in education, such certificates would be relevant to their career path. Moreover, if such a program were created as an Associate Certificate, it would require few additional courses from students. As such, small certificate credentials could be an effective incentive for students to take more philosophy courses.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Create Program Working Group for Pre-Law Certificate	Submission of Pre-Law Certificate to PDQA	Start January 2024; with May 2024 goal for submission	Faculty
Create Program Working Group for Cognitive Science	Submission of Cognitive Science Certificate to PDQA	Start January 2024; with May 2024 goal for submission	Faculty
Create Program Working Group for Philosophy for Children	Submission of Philosophy for Children Certificate to PDQA	Start January 2024; with May 2024 goal for submission	Faculty

Goal: Create 100-level special topics

ERR Recommendations #4 and #5: Develop more courses in applied philosophy, especially in applied ethics, with the objective of serving the needs in ethical studies for students in other disciplines and of attracting students by means of courses that have proved popular in other institutions. Create a new first-year course with changing topics and titles that are attractive to students who may not otherwise take a philosophy course.

Many other departments have successfully adopted this strategy in other departments across Canada. Topics for such a course are meant to be on the lighter side of philosophical theory and be directly attractive to students starting college who otherwise would be daunted even by an introductory course in philosophy. Rotating topics that have frequently been used for such a course in other institutions include philosophy of sex and love, philosophy of science fiction, philosophy of food, philosophy of death, philosophy of conspiracy theories, philosophy of witchcraft, etc.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):

Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Create 199 Course outline + memo		Start May 2024	PHIL department
Implement PHIL 199		Fall 2025	PHIL department

Student Achievement			

Goal: Maintain admission to the major as is, after completion of 30 credits			

ERR Recommendation #1: Maintain the current admissions practice.

There currently is no direct admission of first-year students to the philosophy major. The external review panel and the department agree that there would be very little gain from a direct admission of first-year students to the philosophy major. Although the new Philosophy 12 course has become one of the most popular Social Studies electives according to BCSSTA numbers, it remains the case that comparatively few students have encountered philosophy in high school. As a result, it is to be expected that few students would find direct admission in philosophy attractive. The Dean notes that direct admission to the majors in the BA will be under discussion and that adding this option to the Philosophy major, while maintaining the option for students to declare after 30 credits, might be advantageous.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
No action needed at this point			

Goal: Create space for Philosophy Student Association to meet.			

ERR Recommendation #2: Seek ways to make the new physical space of the department more functional for students.

Student suggested that having a more readily accessible space to philosophize together would improve the cohorts' cohesion. They also suggested that the space would benefit from having a hallway board dedicated to posting ads about philosophical events would make the space more appealing. On the other hand, the shared faculty office (D3119) has led to students pointing out that, during meetings with their professors or instructors, it is more difficult to have a sustained philosophical discussion than it was in the old space.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):
Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Reach out to Humanities Student Associations		January 2024	Faculty
Find space on campus for multiple student associations to use		May 2024	Faculty , in consultation with Manager, College of Arts

Goal: Develop sustained speakers' series			

ERR Recommendation #3: Develop a more sustained speaker series.

Academic talks are an important resource both for students and faculty, as it builds connections, stimulates the exploration of underappreciated ideas, and supports a shared sense of the current state of the discipline. Accordingly, the review panel encourages the department to have a more developed speakers' series.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):
Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Designate a faculty member as Event Coordinator		January 2024	Faculty
Secure financial support for speakers		May 2024	Faculty + Department Head, in collaboration with Manager, College of Arts
Start planning for speakers for 2024-2025		May 2024	PHIL department

Governance and Resources			

Goal: Increase Departmental Coordinator support			

ERR Recommendation #1: Increase departmental coordinator support from 30% to 100% to support activities meant to make students more aware of the programs and events Philosophy offers.
Recent changes to the department's curriculum and the structure of its major bode well for its adaptation to future trends in philosophy. The recent changes together with plans to advertise opportunities in philosophy to more students should help draw more students into the program. Some of the planned actions include creation of a philosophy newsletter and blackboard page to provide students with more information about upcoming courses, events, research and employment opportunities, fostering of the UFV philosophy student association, advising support for students, and sustaining a speaker's series to highlight philosophical research in the Fraser Valley. Staffing increase will be explored, along with other alternatives, including work study position(s).

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):
Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Assess workload of Philosophy coordinator and resources needed to support activities and events described above (speaker series + Blackboard page + social media + event coordination + course promotion)		Start May 2024	Faculty in collaboration with Manager, College of Arts

Goal: Succession planning for junior faculty
ERR #3: Seek to limit the administrative burden imposed on junior faculty members so as to enable them to pursue their research agenda in their most productive years.
Placing too much administrative burden on more junior faculty members unavoidably makes it difficult to pursue an active research agenda

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):
Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Succession-planning to not consider pre-tenured faculty for Head		Winter 2024	Department Head

Planning and Sustainability
Goal: Adding a new hire line in applied philosophy (applied ethics and philosophy of law)
ERR Recommendation #1: Create a new full time equivalent position, potentially in applied ethics or some area of applied philosophy.
Further program development in applied philosophy will improve the robustness of the program. The fact was recognized in the previous program review, which recommended adding a Faculty position in applied ethics, and the current review panel agrees with the previous reviewers. A propitious area in which a student majoring in another field would want to take one or more courses would be applied ethics. Applied ethics is highly valued on the current job market and courses in applied ethics are readily accessible to students with few prerequisites. Applied ethics (and applied philosophy more generally) provides opportunities for multidisciplinary study and employment opportunities. Students with whom we spoke expressed an interest in studying with future faculty members with cross disciplinary expertise, and specialists in applied ethics often fit this description. For many people the ethical quandaries that draw them to philosophy arise after they become familiar with a context like health care, business, engineering, agriculture or technology. The department has recently developed a course in environmental ethics,

but there are many more appealing options to explore, including courses in bioethics, business ethics, food ethics, engineering ethics, AI ethics, as well as topics at the intersection of ethics and the law.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):
Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Monitor growth in Philosophy course enrolment with Dean and request a new position in applied ethics		June-September 2024	Department Head

Goal: Create more work-integrated learning (WIL) possibilities

ERR Recommendation #3: Explore WIL possibilities in environmental ethics and in Indigenous ways of knowing.

The program's curriculum provides work-integrated learning, something that was remarked upon and appreciated by students interviewed as part of the program review process. We would encourage consideration of these other opportunities for work-integrated learning, given that most philosophy majors seek career paths outside of graduate education in philosophy.

Tasks to complete the goal (add rows as needed):
Identify the task(s) and describe the specific steps needed to address the goal, including key milestones and measurable outcomes. Identify potential issues and barriers, if relevant.

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Work with the CoA External Liaison Coordinator to identify practicum opportunities for Philosophy students		Fall 2024	Faculty
Create External Advisory Board		Fall 2024	PHIL department

Dean's Summary Statement

I commend the Department for engaging productively in this program review process by producing a robust self-study and responding thoughtfully to the external review report.

As part of the site visit which took place on October 5-6, 2023, the external review panel met with me, the Philosophy faculty members, upper-division students, one Academic Advisor and the Associate Vice-President, Indigenous.

The panel assessed the philosophy program as overall healthy and sustainable. They praised the current contingent of Faculty members for sound and innovative curricular practices. They noted that the diversity and structure of the course offering stands clearly above what would be reasonably expected of a department of that size. Faculty members have proved to be resourceful and able to deliver opportunities that effectively support student achievement. The panel encourages the department to continue developing their program in the current direction.

The department and the dean accept the majority of the panel's recommendations. Those not addressed in this response fall outside of the purview of the department or the dean (e.g. increased professional development funds, increased course releases).

The panel's report makes a number of commendations, signaling areas where the department shines:

Commendations related to Curriculum and Assurance of Learning:

Commendation #1: The department has developed two courses in indigenous philosophy and made changes to the syllabi or course outlines of other courses to include indigenous approaches. This approach to infusing indigenous knowledge in philosophy courses, also praised by the Associate VP, Indigenous, is commendable for many reasons. Students are interested in indigenous

philosophy, and adding the courses will open doors to new philosophical collaborations and discoveries. This action is responsive to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.

Commendation #2: Instead of having one course in Asian philosophy as is more typically the case in many North American departments, the program offers a course in Indian philosophy and a course in Chinese philosophy. The course in Chinese philosophy has been added more recently.

There are many reasons why this deserves special mention. One is that Asian philosophy includes too much to do even an adequate survey (if it is a philosophical survey) in one course. Another is that by merely having the courses available as options for people to view, it is shown that Asian philosophy is not a single 'other' approach but comprises multiple styles, sets of prominent topics, and scholarly lineages.

Commendation #3: Creating a thriving major and honours program with a small faculty contingent is a significant challenge. The department is to be commended for their continuous effort to have an increasingly flexible and inclusive course offering that will facilitate students' completion of degree requirements. The new major requirements and the practice of announcing course offerings well ahead of time are important steps, and the review panel encourages the department to continue their work in this direction.

Commendations related to Student Achievement:

Commendation #1: Based on reports from students who met with the review panel, student satisfaction with the support they receive from faculty members and instructors is very high. Students made a point of voicing their appreciation for the personal nature of this support. The department is to be commended for creating such a positive atmosphere.

Commendation #2: In North America, philosophy is often one of the few remaining programs in Arts, Humanities, and the Social Sciences where a gender enrollment gap remains. The department is to be commended for successfully going against that trend.

Commendation #3: The department is to be commended for improving its research output, thus responding to the previous program review. We find that the department is in line with peer institutions, despite very limited professional development funds.

Commendations related to Governance and Resources

Commendation #1: The collegial governance of the department positively compares to many other philosophy departments and its members deserve much credit for managing this difficult task.

Commendation #2: Members of the department deserve credit for managing the affairs of the department effectively with little staff support. They are in addition taking on a significant role as academic advisors (in addition to the advisors shared by all departments in the College of Arts) which plays an integral part in student satisfaction.

Commendations related to Planning and Sustainability

Commendation #1 : With its recent curricular reform increasing the diversity and flexibility of the curriculum, the department of philosophy has proved to be able to meet the challenge of facing the realities of philosophical education in the 21st century.

Commendation #2 : The department's initiatives creating work-integrated learning opportunities for students studying philosophy for children is commendable, especially given the large proportion of UFV students pursuing career paths in education.

Commendation #3: As for students that will more directly rely on their philosophical training for their career, be it academic or not, the program offers students an excellent basis that is very much in line with the current trend in the discipline.

The areas of strength identified in the above commendations indicate that the Philosophy department is a strong contributor to UFV's mandate and institutional priorities. The action items identified will ensure continued success of the program, and enrolment growth.

Action Plan reviewed and approved by:
Information verified by: Department Head: Date: January 29, 2024   Dean: Date: January 29, 2024