

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST BAY

Designation Code: 2007-08 **CAPR 9**

Date Submitted: December 12, 2007

TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: Committee on Academic Planning & Review (CAPR)

SUBJECT: Five-Year Program Review for the Philosophy Program

PURPOSE: For Action by the Academic Senate

ACTION

REQUESTED: Acceptance of the Five-Year Program Review of the Philosophy Program and approval of the continuation of the program without modification

Executive Summary

1. Background

Since the last Five-Year review of Philosophy program, the Philosophy Department at CSU East Bay has revised its major options. It offers a BA degree program in philosophy in four areas: Classical Philosophy, Religious Studies, Law/Human Rights and Social Justice, and Science/Technology & Values. The Department also offers a minor in 3 options: philosophy, religious studies, and cognitive studies. These major options reflect the changes made following the last Five-Year Review process and became effective in Fall Quarter 2005.

All options of the Philosophy major consist of 60 units. Each major takes 24 units in a core set of required courses including a touchstone course PHIL 3305 Fundamental Questions: Self, Nature, and God and the capstone course PHIL 4606 Philosophical Seminar, as well as courses in the central areas of ethics, metaphysics, and history of philosophy.

The Department of Philosophy is actively engaged in General Education through three freshmen clusters (as of 06-07 academic year) and two sophomore level courses to help native students to the campus fulfill their lower division humanities GE requirements. They also teach upper division courses which satisfy the Upper Division Humanities GE requirement and the Cultural Groups and Women GE requirement.

The department's plans for the next five years are to continue to build enrollment and majors. The program plans to reassess the program to determine how best to serve its majors and increase the number of majors while continuing to service the General Education needs of the campus with very limited tenure track resources.

2. CAPR Recommendation for Continuation of the Program

CAPR recommends the continuation of the Philosophy program without modification. The date of the next Five-Year Review is 2011-2012.

Overview description of the program

Included in the Department of Philosophy's self-study is a Mission Statement that states, "Philosophical education seeks to cultivate the intellectual and ethical virtues of our students...philosophy teaches and encourages students to critically assess and integrate the different claims and values produced and under disparate perspectives and methodologies with an eye to constructing frameworks of understanding within which action can take on meaning." The Department has ten student learning goals/outcomes that speak to the student centered philosophy of the program and goals to engage students in critical thinking and to develop well-rounded philosophical thinking and action generated from their ideas.

The Department of Philosophy at CSU East Bay offers a diverse BA degree program in philosophy with four options:

- Classical Philosophy
- Religious Studies
- Law/Human Rights and Social Justice
- Science/Technology & Values

These major options reflect the changes made following the last Five-Year Review process and became effective in Fall Quarter 2005. All options of the Philosophy major consist of 60 units. Each major takes 24 units in a core set of required courses including a touchstone course PHIL 3305 *Fundamental Questions: Self, Nature, and God* and the capstone course PHIL 4606 *Philosophical Seminar*, as well as courses in the central areas of ethics, metaphysics, and history of philosophy.

The Department also offers a minor in 3 options: philosophy, religious studies, and cognitive studies.

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Documents submitted to CAPR: As required, the report to CAPR included a self study that reviewed the Program's Mission Statement and Student Learning Outcomes, profile of the Major and Minor Program over the last five years, statistical analysis of the Program, a five year planning process document, an outside review document, and a departmental response. Also included were copies of recent tenure track job search requests and descriptions, course descriptions, assessment documents of Philosophy courses, and student feedback on the major/minor.

According to the IRA statistics, the department currently has 29 majors listed as of Fall Quarter 2006 and Blackboard lists the number of majors as 35, and nearly 204 Full-Time Equivalent students. The Department offered 16 courses and 28 sections in fall 2006. The Student-Faculty ratio is 27.3. They have large numbers of students enrolled in their courses, for example, 347 lower division and 417 upper division students took Philosophy classes in Fall Quarter 2006.

Five-Year Program Review/Self-Study and Five Year Plan (Spring 2007)

- **Summary of specific areas of the Self-Study:**
- **Mission Statement and Student Learning Goals:** Department has clearly defined Mission Statement and Student Learning Goals/Outcomes.
- **Total program evaluation:** Self-Study of the CSUEB Philosophy major includes a five year review of curriculum, students, faculty, Mission and Goals and Assessment Elements and status of goals of the 2002 CAPR report.
- **Curriculum:** The curriculum was revised following the 2002 program evaluation. The newly designed major became effective with the fall 2005 catalogue. Students have commented that the revised major meets their needs.
- **Student performance:** Focus of improving student performance was to revise the Major offerings to attract more majors.
- **Faculty:** Focus is on the need to increase the number of permanent faculty to address critical needs in the program, and to further diversify the faculty.

Status of Goals and Plans from the Previous 2001-2005 Five Year Review

Since the last five-year review in 2001-2002, the Philosophy Department has:

Revised and implemented the redesigned major with four option areas. Students began to enter the new major in fall 2005, with the first graduates of the revised program in Spring 07.

In spite of a reduction of regular faculty, the department's FTES increased from 190 in 2001 to nearly 204 in fall 2006. The Department has benefited from enrollments in General Education courses including participation in three freshman clusters. The Department has at the same time kept all its courses capped at 25, 30, or 35 students in order to facilitate Socratic dialogue in the classroom. They have maintained an average number of students per section of 28.

The Philosophy program has also increased their number of majors. They have grown from 17 in 2001 to 29 in 2006. This is within the target goal of the Department in 2001-2002. Since the majority of undergraduate students at CSUEB are transfer students, they will continue to reach out to local community colleges to attract new majors.

In the last external Reviewer's report in 2002, it was noted that the department's extensive service to General Education and devotion to several options and inter-disciplinary areas "has stretched it as thinly as is prudent for the good of the Department and the University." In this regard, the department's situation has gotten worse, as they have lost 3 tenured faculty members since the last review, and only hired one additional faculty member, which has resulted in greater reliance on the 8 lecturers (fall 06), who while providing excellent service to the Department, its students, and the University, cannot fulfill the service role required of tenure track faculty.

Most notably, the share of FTEF, sections and students taught by lecturers has increased. As noted in the Department's report, "our ratio is the inverse of the CSU system wide ideal of the 75% tenure and tenure-track faculty to 25% lecturers." In fall 2006, nearly 79% of sections offered were taught by Lecturers and the lecturer percentage of FTES taught was 77%.

The external reviewer also noted the need for the University to help the Department to enhance diversity and multicultural nature of the department, particularly through the hire in Religious Studies. In response, the Department revised its major program to appeal to new majors, which the

Department believes has had the desired effect. They have also hired a new tenure track woman of color who can contribute to helping to boost diversity efforts.

Philosophy Program's Five Year Plan (as of Spring 2007)

1. Curriculum changes envisaged during the next five years:

While the Philosophy Department just revised their curriculum in 2005 and does not anticipate significant revisions in the major program, they have four future areas of attention:

- Revise the Minor: create a minor with simple set of courses and many electives to attract students.
- Create new courses: they have plans to diversify a few courses with the addition of new faculty interests.
- Streamline course offerings: they will review their courses to determine, given current staffing and budget, which courses “works both in our new major and for General Education.”
- Freshmen clusters: the program will also develop proposals for the new freshmen clusters to reach new students and potentially attract them to the major.

2. Future Assessment Plans: the Philosophy program plans to continue its assessment plan to gather data and communications with students. They have developed a flexible and useful mode of assessment that is not too onerous to administer. They already include in their curriculum a Touchstone course, and Capstone experience, and they plan to use focused discussion groups and surveys of alumni to provide guidance to faculty on how to improve the program and to determine better if the philosophical training the student received is actualized in the student's life.

3. Faculty: the Philosophy Department would like to have at least one tenure track faculty member to anchor each of the four options they offer, to accomplish this they seek to hire at least two tenure track hires in Religious studies and Philosophy of Science (the program received approval to hire a Religious Studies tenure track position for 2008/09.

4. Staff Resources:

The Program has an excellent office staff person to serve the Philosophy department who meets the needs of the department.

Outside Reviewer's Comments & the Department's Response

An outside reviewer, Rita Manning, PhD, San Jose State University, visited the campus on April 27, 2006 and made the following recommendations regarding the program:

Curriculum:

- The mission statement and student learning outcomes reflect the role of Philosophy in undergraduate education.
- The Core courses are well designed and the touchstone and capstone courses provide a frame for the major and serve as a reference point for assessing the major and how the students are learning.
- The outside reviewer notes that the major has four different programs: Classical Philosophy, Religious Studies, Law/Human Rights and Social Justice; and Science/Technology and Values, with a relatively small number of majors, this requires offering many courses to

facilitate progress towards graduation even though some of the courses also are available for GE. This appeared to be an inefficient use of resources.

- The three Minor tracks appeared to be well conceived, provide a solid understanding of the three areas and should be attractive to students.
- The outside reviewer also noted that department is very involved with the GE program with a large number of courses in the lower and upper divisions.

Students:

- The outside reviewer met with major and minor students from one upper division class who reported being satisfied with the education they received and given a fair amount of personal attention. Student demographics did not appear to match the overall campus demographics.

Faculty:

- Outside reviewer noted with only three full time tenure track faculty, one of whom also teaches outside the department, it is not a sustainable situation. The Department has an excellent chair who recently was promoted to Associate Professor, “but the workload created by the small number of regular faculty is clearly excessive.”
- The heavy reliance on lecturers enables the department to cover the basic fields of study; however, the reliance on lecturers for many aspects of department work is worrisome. The system does not reward them for their efforts beyond the classroom and they are not a long term solution to the problems of the department because of the high level of scholarship among the lecturers, they will seek opportunities elsewhere and “the department is in real danger of finding itself unable to staff even the core courses.”

Budget and Enrollment:

- Outsider reviewer notes the pressure to increase the number and variety of class offerings by students and faculty, yet the Chair also faces pressure to be efficient in its use of resources from the college office.

Recommendations from Outside reviewer:

- The department needs to build its core of tenure track faculty. Hire at least two tenure track faculty members in the immediate future and look for another 1-2 in the next few years. Recommendation is to hire in the fields of Religious studies and philosophy of science. Other areas in need are history of philosophy, metaphysics and epistemology, logic, and ethics.
- The department should consider making one of these appointments at the full professor level and appoint this person as department chair.
- Department should drop two of the four major tracks. Keep classical and religious studies. Students could continue to specialize in other tracks by choosing appropriate coursework but advising would be less complicated and the department could streamline its upper division offerings.
- Increase visibility and course offerings in the religious studies track as soon as possible as there is large interest in this field of study.
- Department should market itself more aggressively to pre-law students. Should consider hiring a tenure track member with a JD to attract pre-law students.
- Manage enrollment more efficiently by streamlining its upper division course offerings and raise the caps on enrollments in its courses.
- The College should assist in the enrollment management process in three ways: first, provide additional tenure track hires in exchange for improvements in efficiency. Second, give the department more control over its faculty salary budget and allow the department to

divert some of these funds to student assistants for grading. Third, allow the department to average enrollment across sections rather than merely focus on low enrolled sections. These suggestions would allow the department the means and an incentive to manage budget and enrollment in a way that is more efficient.

- The Department needs to work to increase its female and nonwhite students to reflect the campus diversity.

Philosophy Program's response to the outside reviewer's comments:

The department agrees with many of the observations made by the outside reviewer, Rita Manning, from San Jose State University, and had these responses to the specific recommendations.

Curriculum

- Major Program - In response to the recommendation to drop two of the four major tracks to make advising less complicated and streamline its upper division course offerings, the Department of Philosophy agrees they need to have serious conversation about how to address this problem given they don't have the faculty to keep all these options afloat.
- In response to the recommendation to increase its visibility and offerings in religious studies, they strongly agree and hope to address this issue with a new tenure track hire.
- The Department also agrees with the recommendation to promote itself as a good major for pre-law students and since the last five year review has initiated a new course designed to help students with preparation for the LSAT, PHIL 3010 *Critical Legal Reasoning*.
- Minor Program – the Department notes that there have been few cognitive science minors and will consider a more open minor program to allow students to pursue interests of their choice and help them streamline their course offerings.
- Contribution to General Education – GE as an important part of the University's mission and will continue to actively participate in GE in the areas of Critical Thinking and the Humanities both the lower and upper division. The Department notes the cluster program is demanding and labor-intensive and should be served by regular faculty members.

Faculty

- The Department strongly agrees with the outsider reviewer's recommendation of the urgency to hire immediately two additional tenure track faculty and look for another 1-2 in the next couple of years. The department notes the ratio of tenure track faculty to lecturers is worsening and needs to be addressed for several reasons including recent departures in the department of tenure track faculty, need for tenure track faculty to work with students and attract more majors, to fill critical needs in Religious studies and other areas such as Philosophy of Science and History of Philosophy.
- In response to the recommendation for a tenure track hire at the Full Professor level to serve as chair, instead, they believe hiring two junior faculty members would serve the needs of the department better at this time.

Budget and Enrollment

- The Department recognizes that streamlining its upper division offerings would be beneficial to students so that courses in the catalogue can be offered on a regular basis, however, they disagree with the recommendation to raise the caps on their courses since nearly all their courses satisfy General Education requirements and provide labor intensive writing and oral communication in their courses and would unduly burden faculty members.
- The recommendation to manage the Department's resources directly with incentives from the College office is supported by the Department as it would enable them to better control their major and GE offerings.

Profile of Majors

- The Department agrees with Outsider Reviewer's recommendation to diversify its student major population of women and nonwhite students. They recently diversified the faculty in the last tenure track search. They plan to continue to diversify the faculty and continue to increase the variety and relevance of their courses for CSU East Bay's diverse student population

CAPR Analysis of the Program's Five-Year Review

- We praise the efforts to restructure the program to appeal to a wider range of students in the midst of very limited resources. We acknowledge the revamping of the curriculum in 2005 and the attempts to serve the demand for General Education courses with limited tenure track staffing.
- We note the steady growth of the Program's enrollment since the last review five years ago. The steady growth of majors is a healthy sign of the faculty's efforts to recruit, retain students interested in philosophy and we encouraged continued efforts to maintain and expand this growth where appropriate to do so.
- We note the use of a narrative assessment of Philosophy 3305 (touchstone) and 4606 (capstone) and meeting of students to gather feedback. Further development of regular program assessment, possibly a standard tool that is used over time by the program with succeeding years of students will produce enhanced knowledge of the benefits and deficiencies of the program to students. We also agree systematic contact with recent graduates and alumni will also help the program measure the usefulness of the program's content for student success in their chosen fields.
- We support the effort to diversify the composition of the students in the major and the faculty to reflect the campus multicultural environment.
- The major challenge for the program continues to be how to balance providing service to the university for important humanities courses in the general education program while at the same time providing comprehensive educational experience for its majors, all within the existing reality of limited permanent faculty and heavy reliance on lecturers to teach most of the courses. Regardless, CAPR supports the program's efforts in general education. This is a viable service for the university and allows the program to teach larger enrollment classes to support their overall program.

Resource challenges and needs

- Currently, in the Philosophy program, there is a total of three tenure track faculty (after two resignations of TT faculty) and several lecturers whose duties do not include advisement for majors. This is insufficient resources for the number of majors, and the long term needs of an essential program in a liberal arts university. CAPR recommends the addition of another Tenure Track position to help build a diverse cohort of junior faculty to take this program forward in the coming years.

CAPR Recommendation for Continuation of the Program: CAPR recommends the continuation of the Philosophy program without modification.

Date of the Program's next Academic Review: The next CAPR review will be in 2011-2012.