



University of Colorado **Boulder**

2016 Program Review

Department of Philosophy

Academic Review and Planning  
Advisory Committee Report

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl Weid', written over a horizontal line.

02/13/2017

Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs : Date

# Contents

Process overview – 3 2016

ARPAC members – 4 Unit

Overview – 5

Past reviews – 18

Campus context – 20

National context – 21

Analysis – 23

Recommendations – 29

Required follow-up – 33

## Process overview

The review of the Department of Philosophy was conducted in accordance with the 2016 review guidelines. The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) conducts and writes the final reviews of all academic units on the Boulder campus. The unit prepared a self-study, which was reviewed by an internal review committee (IRC) of two CU Boulder faculty members from outside PHIL. The IRC generally found the report accurate but asked the department to amplify its responses in some areas and to consider additional information garnered by the IRC's surveys and interviews of faculty and students. An external review committee (ERC), consisting of two disciplinary experts from outside of the University of Colorado, visited the unit over March 7 and 8, 2016, reviewed the relevant documents, and met with faculty, students, staff, university administrators, and members of ARPAC. The reviewers' comments and recommendations are cited at appropriate points throughout the report. This public document reflects the assessment of and recommendations for the Department of Philosophy as approved by ARPAC.

Academic Review  
and Planning  
Advisory  
Committee  
(ARPAC)

Marie Banich, Professor, Institute of Cognitive Science  
Sanjai Bhagat, Professor, Leeds School of Business  
Adam Bradley, Associate Professor, Department of English  
Erin Furtak, Associate Professor, School of Education  
David Korevaar, Professor, College of Music  
Clayton Lewis, Professor, Department of Computer Science  
Jack Maness, Associate Professor, University Libraries  
David Mapel, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science  
Susan Nevelow Mart, Associate Professor, School of Law  
Bryan Taylor, Professor, Department of Communication

Academic year 2016-2017  
voting members

Non-voting members

Jeff Cox, ARPAC, Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs and Professor of English and Humanities  
Bob Boswell, Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement and Professor of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology  
Katherine Eggert, Quality Initiative Leader and Professor of English  
Bill Kaempfer, Senior Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor for Budget and Planning and Professor of Economics  
Mary Kraus, Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education and Professor of Geological Sciences  
Ann Schmeising, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures

Staff

Andre Grothe, Office of Faculty Affairs

## Unit overview

The campus' standardized description of the Department of Philosophy, and information regarding comparable units, can be found on the Office of Data Analytics' (ODA) website (<http://www.colorado.edu/oda/institutional-research/institutional-level-data/information-department/academic-review-and-0>). ODA updates the profile annually in the fall semester. This report cites the ODA data for Philosophy posted in October 2016, the most recent update available; these figures reflect the state of the unit in academic year (AY) 2015-2016. Additional data from the revised self-study and from ARPAC communication with the department chair is cited where relevant.

The unit offers three degree programs in philosophy: a BA comprising three different tracks, an MA, and a PhD. It teaches a significant number of core curriculum and non-major courses as well as courses cross-listed with other departments. The unit's self-study declares its aspiration to maintain and further develop excellence in teaching and scholarship in three major areas emphasized by most comprehensive philosophy departments: "(1) the history of philosophy, with coverage of the ancient, medieval, and modern periods, (2) metaphysics and epistemology, including related areas such as philosophy of science and philosophy of language, and (3) values, encompassing moral, social, political, and legal philosophy." The unit has traditionally prided itself on the research, publication, and awards records of its faculty; on the rigorous education offered on both the undergraduate and graduate levels; on its record of placing master's students in top doctoral programs and doctoral students in academic positions; and on the interdisciplinary nature of the work done by individual faculty as well as by unit-sponsored initiatives.

Unit strengths and recent successes emphasized in the self-study and echoed in the internal and external review committees' (IRC

and ERC) reports include a productive and distinguished faculty; dedicated teaching on both the undergraduate and graduate levels; undergraduate satisfaction with the major; efforts to extend the curriculum into new and interdisciplinary areas of philosophical inquiry; an excellent staff; and an ongoing commitment to improving department climate issues, signified most recently by the hiring of a new department chair with experience in his previous position in improving department climate.

The foremost unit-related concerns and challenges noted in the IRC and ERC reports pertain to the ongoing and continuing need to improve department climate, including issues of trust, mutual respect, and communication, and the ongoing and continuing need to overcome explicit and implicit bias, especially but not exclusively gender bias. Other, partly related challenges have to do with the depleted numbers of tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty, the low percentage of women on the faculty, a somewhat strained relationship between the department and the administration of the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S), and the decline of the department's reputation among philosophy programs nationwide and worldwide. Depleted faculty strength has led to a decline in courses taught by TTT faculty and to gaps in the curriculum. The IRC and ERC reports describe graduate students as especially negatively affected by all of these issues, as well as by issues surrounding funding.

#### Personnel and governance

As of August 2015, the unit employed 18 TTT faculty and five instructor/senior instructor full-time employees (FTE). Distribution of TTT faculty included nine professors, six associate professors, and three assistant professors. The unit's self-study emphasizes the decline in TTT faculty numbers since 2010, when there were 25 TTT faculty (ODA lists 24); that number in turn, however, represented significant growth from a low of 15 TTT faculty in

2004. As of August 2016, the TTT faculty count has increased to 19 with the hiring of a full professor as department chair. Program delivery is also supplemented by the use of lecturers, seven of whom were employed as of fall 2016 according to the department web site. Unit operations are supported by three full-time classified staff members and several student hourly employees.

The unit is governed by bylaws most recently revised in February 2016. A majority-elected chair serves a three-year term (possibility for renewal unspecified) and appoints two associate chairs, one for graduate studies and one for undergraduate studies. The unit also elects an executive committee and a salary committee, each of which has four members, one from each faculty rank (including instructor). Provisions in the bylaws insure rotation of all faculty members eligible and willing to serve on these two committees. The chair appoints the members of other standing committees: colloquium, undergraduate studies and curriculum, graduate studies and curriculum, graduate admissions, fellowships and appointments, and climate. Other appointed positions include an honors representative, a teaching mentor, a placement director, a diversity representative, and a library representative. Graduate student representatives serve on the colloquium and graduate studies committees. These structures conform to university norms and also reflect recent governance and committee-representation changes deemed necessary by the department. The bylaws define a two-stage voting process for faculty hiring: in stage one, “any candidate who receives fewer than twice as many ‘yes’ votes as ‘no’ votes will be removed from the pool” and in stage two, “the department will vote to rank the remaining candidates.” This rule does not specify whether this voting takes place in regard only to finalists or whether the entire department votes during the process of winnowing down the pool to finalists. The IRC notes that this rule is used to allow “one third of the department to vote a

potential job candidate unacceptable prior to conducting interviews” and reports hearing concern about this practice.

The unit has three full-time staff members, and the self-study reports that this level of staff is not only adequate to its current needs but can also accommodate some growth in faculty numbers and in activity generated by the Center for Values and Social Policy and the Committee for the History and Philosophy of Science. The ERC considers the staff, along with the undergraduates, “the happiest group in the department.”

Research, scholarship, and creative work

In the unit’s three broad areas of emphasis, there are, as of 2016-2017, four TTT faculty specializing in the history of philosophy, eight in metaphysics and epistemology, and 10 in values, which encompasses moral, social, legal, and political philosophy. (Some members’ expertise includes more than one specialty.) The unit is currently pursuing a special opportunity hire for a colleague at the assistant professor level specializing in metaphysics. The unit has one affiliated center, the Center for Values and Social Policy, and is also the home base for the multidisciplinary Committee on the History and Philosophy of Science. The self-study emphasizes both strength in research and scholarship and threats to that strength posed by declining faculty numbers and by outside scholars’ perceptions of the current state of the department. In terms of Academic Analytics data of faculty article and book publication and of faculty awards and prizes, the department ranks highly compared to peer and nationwide departments. As with many other humanities and arts units reviewed in this cycle, the unit’s self-study questions the usefulness of Academic Analytics data on publications, noting that this data does not distinguish among publication venues in terms of quality and prestige; the self-study points to awards as a more telling index of faculty quality. The 2014-2015 reputational rankings of the



influential Philosophical Gourmet Report (PGR) have the department tied for 31st place overall among US philosophy programs. The PGR also places the department among the top 37 philosophy programs in English-speaking countries worldwide and ranks eight subspecialties highly: philosophy of language, ethics, metaethics, applied ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of law, philosophy of cognitive science, medieval philosophy, and feminist philosophy.

#### Undergraduate education

The unit offers a major and a minor in philosophy. The major includes three tracks: a general philosophy major; Law and Society, which is directed especially at pre-law students; and Values and Society, which is directed especially at students interested in policy-oriented careers. The two topical tracks of the major require coursework in allied disciplines as well as philosophy. The minor in philosophy requires 18 hours, including at least one course in each of the areas of logic, history of philosophy, and values. ODA figures for fall 2015 indicate a unit total of 166 majors (a 30 percent decrease over five years) and 69 minors (a 25 percent increase over five years). The number of majors has stabilized as of the fall 2016 census. Focusing on undergraduate degrees awarded from 1989-2014 rather than on the five-year numbers of majors, the self-study argues that the department has seen “steady growth in the major over the long term, consistent with various fluctuations within different shorter periods of time.” The undergraduate median time to degree for 2015-2016 graduates was in the bottom third (longest time) among the units reviewed in the current cycle, but the previous year’s graduates (2014-2015) had a much shorter median time to degree that put the unit first (shortest time) among the units under review. In 2014-2015, four percent of degrees were awarded with Latin honors, a very large decline over five years (by 72 percent). The self-study does not address the unit’s honors program, but

subsequent ARPAC communication with the chair clarified that the 2015 number of honors degrees was unusually low and that the 2012-2016 period overall saw eight percent of degrees awarded with honors. In 2015-2016, 11 percent of students graduated with honors. This is still a decline, however, from the 2007-2011 period, during which 15 percent of degrees were awarded with honors.

The reported total undergraduate student credit hours (SCH) for the unit in AY 2015-2016 was 16,413, representing a decrease of 19 percent over five years. Philosophy ranked fifth of the 17 units under review in SCH. Of those SCH, 87 percent were taken by non-majors; the unit was ranked fifth out of 17 for this metric. At 36 students per section, the average class size was high (fourth out of 17) compared to other arts and humanities units. The percentage of SCH taught by TTT faculty in AY 2015-2016 (28 percent) showed a significant five-year decline (by 25 percent); the self-study attributes this decline to lower TTT faculty numbers. The percentage of SCH taught by graduate part-time instructors (GPTIs), teaching assistants (TAs), and lecturers saw a concomitant five-year increase (by 79 percent for GPTIs and TAs and 73 percent for lecturers), whereas the percentage taught by instructors/senior instructors remained about the same (a one percent increase).

Average faculty course questionnaire (FCQ) ratings (84 percent for instructor and 76 percent for course) are below the median for comparable units, having remained about the same (a zero percent increase) over the past five years. However, the ODA report of 2013 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results places the unit at the top of six comparable US philosophy departments for graduating-senior evaluations of academic quality and advising quality. Course availability was less highly rated by

graduating seniors in the NSSE survey. Student ratings of the program from the 2016 IRC survey results—referring to course sequencing and availability, satisfaction with the program, diversity, and climate—were consistently in the 3.75-4.25 out of 5.0 range. The IRC’s review of these findings focuses on the undergraduates’ impression of department climate, describing the general view as favorable but also noting “a few troubling comments” among undergraduate written responses on this issue. The ERC finds the undergraduates to be “the happiest group in the Department [. . .] enthusiastic about the education they receive in Philosophy and about the accessibility and commitment of the faculty.” The ERC also comments on the desirability of adding courses on Continental philosophy, Asian philosophy, and (as described in the self-study) interdisciplinary topics such as cognitive science and politics, philosophy, and economics.

Outside the classroom, the unit has sought to enhance undergraduate education and attract more students to the major via a longstanding Philosophy Club, which sponsors weekly discussions and regular philosophy and film nights, and participation in a newly instituted regional Ethics Bowl, among other efforts. To supplement centralized, non-specialist undergraduate advising, the department is piloting a new “faculty advisor” position with support from the A&S Academic Advising Center. A philosophy instructor serves in this position.

#### Graduate education

As noted above, philosophy offers an MA and a PhD in Philosophy. The MA is a terminal degree and has a separate admissions process from the PhD. The department considers its MA program to be good preparation for doctoral study in philosophy as well as good training for other occupations and

graduate programs that require high-caliber research and critical-thinking skills. It maintains public data on the placement of MA graduates in academic programs and employment. The self-study also describes a proposal in progress for a BA/MA program; a similar BA/MA proposal in progress was described in the 2008 self-study. The ODA census for 2015-2016 reports a total of 40 majors across graduate programs (fifth among comparable units), with eight in the MA program (a 53 percent decrease over five years) and 32 in the PhD program (a six percent decrease over five years). The drop in MA students may be attributed to the fact that graduate admissions were suspended for one year, meaning no new students were admitted in fall 2015. The total number of PhD students, however (32 in both fall 2015 and fall 2016), was unaffected.

The unit awarded eight MA degrees in 2015-2016 (sixth of 13 unit rank; an 11 percent decrease over five years) and two PhD degrees (fourth of nine unit rank; 67 percent decrease over five years). Median time to degree completion is 2.3 years for the MA (seventh of 13) and 4.97 for the PhD (second of seven). In 2015-2016, SCH on the graduate level totaled 415 (seventh of 14; a 439 percent decrease over five years). FCQ ratings (80 percent course; 85 percent instructor) are in the bottom third of units under review (both seventh of nine) and have remained about the same over the last five years (slight decrease of five percent and three percent, respectively).

ODA reports 2015-2016 appointment of 15 graduate students as GPTIs and 14 as TAs. Following the 2009 ARPAC process, the unit was among the first arts and humanities departments to be given funding for first-year research assistantships (RA-ships) for PhD students; these RA-ships have been funded by the Office of the Chancellor. The self-study describes the first-year RA-ship as

making the department's admissions more competitive with other institutions and predicts that students admitted with this funding will proceed more quickly to the PhD. The self-study and ERC are concerned about whether this program will continue; its funding as of the time those reports were written was guaranteed only through 2016-2017. The self-study states that the unit "has made a concerted effort to provide financial support for as many qualified MA students as possible (in the form of TA-ships, for example)" but does not specify the typical funding package or how many MA students receive funding.

Teacher-training support for graduate students includes a graduate student acting as lead GPTI, a faculty teaching mentor, recently instituted teaching awards for graduate students, and opportunities to develop courses.

Results of an ODA survey of Philosophy graduate students from 2009, the most recent available, evaluate program quality and the relationship between faculty and graduate students at the highest among comparable units (first of 13), with academic advising and assistance finding employment also highly rated (both third of 13). The opportunity to interact across disciplines (fifth of 13) and program space and facilities (seventh of 13) were less highly rated. While the ODA survey does not reflect recent upheaval in the unit, results from ten items used in the 2016 IRC graduate student survey were similar, averaging 4.0 out of 5.0, with a low of 3.17 for financial support and highs of 4.43, 4.48, and 4.38, respectively, for "ease of identifying an advisor," "quality of advising," and "help determining a research project." The department has recently added what it calls an "MA Czar" to assist the director of graduate studies in advising students in that degree program.

The self-study reports that the department has taken steps to involve graduate students more in department governance, especially on the climate committee that was established in 2012. Both the IRC and the ERC, however, express concerns about the impact of departmental climate on graduate students. Regarding its 2016 survey of graduate students, the IRC notes “some troubling comments, e.g., about some faculty acting unfairly toward women and displaying a dismissive attitude toward feminism in general,” as well as one complaint that the department has not addressed persistent instances of faculty bullying of students. Similarly, the ERC reports “gender issues” being mentioned in their interviews of graduate students, and recommends the department “make every effort to recruit talented women” into the graduate program. The unit’s response to the IRC report, citing an internal 2012 survey of current and former graduate students, describes progress having been made between 2012 and 2016 regarding sexism and the graduate-student climate, but acknowledges that work remains to be done. The ERC also reports hearing from graduate students about climate issues regarding diversity, including “significant unhappiness about the lack of ethnic and racial diversity in their ranks” and “minority students’ feelings of isolation and lack of community.” This issue is discussed further below.

#### Space

The self-study describes the unit’s current faculty office situation as adequate, largely because faculty departures have freed up office space. It also notes, however, that future growth of the faculty may present space challenges and that one faculty office is awkwardly located inside the department’s reading room. The self-study describes the need to remodel graduate student office space in the basement of Hellems; this work has been completed as of fall 2016. The self-study also requests full departmental

scheduling control over at least one classroom, noting that rooming problems have hindered its course offerings at times.

#### Inclusive excellence

As of fall 2016, the 19 TTT faculty in Philosophy include four women (21 percent) and two members of underrepresented minorities (11 percent). The self-study describes the diversity of the unit's faculty as "reasonably respectable [. . .] compared to the discipline of philosophy as a whole." In terms of the male-to-female ratio, however, that assertion runs contrary to data on female TTT faculty tracked by Julie Van Camp (California State University Long Beach), which put the department's percentage of women faculty in 2014-2015—then 17 percent—near the bottom of 98 US doctoral programs in philosophy ([http://web.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/doctoral\\_2004.html](http://web.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/doctoral_2004.html)). The increase to 21 percent women as of fall 2016, brought about by the departure of several male faculty from the department, would still put CU Boulder in the bottom third of those 98 programs. The self-study reports "vigorously targeting and encouraging members of underrepresented groups to apply" in its 2015-2016 search for a chair—which resulted in the hiring of a white male—and says the department "is united in insisting the new Chair, in turn, be committed to enhancing diversity through future hires." The self-study also reports success in recruiting women graduate students in the most recent admissions season and hopes that this serves as "a foundation for making further progress" in recruiting women and members of underrepresented minorities to the graduate program. The unit has just started a chapter of the national MAP (Minorities and Philosophy) organization, which serves undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty, and asks for campus support in this effort. In addition, the self-study cites the high percentage of international faculty (from Europe, Australasia, Africa, and Canada) as an important contributor to cultural diversity in the department.

Issues of diversity relate to the question of department climate. The department has taken a number of steps to improve the climate for diverse groups, including a climate committee, a *Best Practices* document, and annual retreats, among other actions. The dean, the provost, and the department have all committed three years' funding for the climate committee's future work. However, the IRC and ERC outline concerns expressed by a significant number of faculty and graduate students about ongoing gender bias, about a backlash against internal and external scrutiny of the climate for women, and about a general sense of distrust and discomfort that especially impacts junior faculty and graduate students. The unit's response to the IRC takes up these issues and acknowledges tension between faculty who do and faculty who don't perceive gender bias as a continued problem in the department. The ERC recommends that the department "make it a priority in this hiring cycle to improve the diversity of its faculty by hiring women and, if possible, members of other underrepresented groups." The ERC also observes that diversifying the faculty depends on the department's establishing a "cordial collegial climate," and vice versa.

Budget                      The self-study describes funding decisions as being made in three ways. Small, one-time amounts may be distributed by the chair at his/her discretion. Ongoing funding pools, such as for graduate student travel or the department colloquium, are set aside by the chair, but funding decisions are made by a group administering the funds, e.g., the department's colloquium committee. The department as a whole may decide upon the distribution of a larger pool of funds. The unit also engages in fundraising from its alumni and other supporters, and the self-study expresses hope that recent stability in both the department and the Office of Advancement will also help stabilize and improve its fundraising



success. Like most of the arts and humanities units under review, Philosophy does not house any endowed chairs.

#### Library resources

The self-study indicates a high degree of faculty satisfaction with the University Libraries. The unit benefits from its relationship with its excellent bibliographer liaison and feels adequately served in terms of acquisitions of books, journals, and electronic resources in philosophy, including materials in emerging fields of research such as the philosophy of race.

## Past reviews

The department was last reviewed in 2009. At that time, the unit, college, and provost were congratulated for having successfully rebuilt the faculty after significant raiding in the earlier part of the decade, and the unit was praised for its productivity and high reputation in research and scholarship. Graduate funding was identified as a major barrier to the department's moving up even further in national and international rankings. The college and campus acted upon ARPAC's recommendation that first-year graduate research assistantships be created to make graduate funding packages more competitive. As noted above, the department describes this program as successful but fears that future funding is in danger.

The unit was also directed to reassess its undergraduate curriculum for both majors and non-majors. It is unclear from the 2009 reporting what gave rise to this recommendation or what was in need of reassessment. Since that time, the department has created new courses on topics such as critical thinking, is currently developing new courses on such topics as "Philosophy of Sport" and "Ethics and Economics," and has enhanced other aspects of the undergraduate experience as described above.

The unit was directed to revise its bylaws as they relate to the rights and responsibilities of instructors and to comply with campus policies regarding multi-year appointments for instructors. These changes have been made.

The unit was directed to devise a strategic plan that put faculty hiring in the context of establishing its larger goals as a unit, beyond advancing in national ranking. The unit, dean, and provost were directed to postpone hiring until such a plan was made. This recommendation seems not to have been implemented, but to some extent, it was preempted by the unforeseen drop in

undergraduate students and the unforeseen significant loss in faculty numbers. The unit now classifies the three aims of its strategic planning as (1) increasing diversity and inclusiveness; (2) hiring in under-covered areas (values, history of modern philosophy, and metaphysics and epistemology); and (3) undertaking interdisciplinary initiatives in undergraduate education.

The unit was directed to “ensure that all members of the community are aware of and complying with norms of collegial and professional behavior and that mechanisms are employed to deal with inappropriate behaviors when and if they occur.” Much of the department’s energy in the last several years has been devoted to this issue.

The dean was directed to reassess the unit’s staff needs in light of department needs and faculty numbers. Staff FTE were increased from 2.75 to 3.0.

## Campus context

The self-study describes the unit as a “division leader in interdisciplinary teaching and research” even though its efforts have been hampered by its loss of faculty members working in such interdisciplinary areas as philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, environmental ethics, and the like. Currently, the department has undergraduate courses cross-listed with Classics, Computer Science, Environmental Studies, History, Linguistics, and Psychology and Neuroscience, and it is planning other new course with departments like Economics. Some of these courses are team-taught. The unit would like to consider developing an interdisciplinary major, minor, or certificate in a topic such as bioethics or cognitive science, although it is unspecified how the latter might differ from the current interdisciplinary certificate offered through the Institute for Cognitive Science. The Center for Values and Social Policy and the Committee for the History and Philosophy of Science involve faculty and graduate students from departments not only outside arts and humanities but also outside of A&S. One faculty member is part of the group working to establish the Center for the Study of Origins, funded by the chancellor’s Grand Challenge. Individual faculty members who engage in interdisciplinary roles on campus including a jointly appointed member of Women and Gender Studies and the director of the Center for Western Civilization, Thought, and Policy. Recently, two faculty members served concurrent terms as associate dean for Arts and Humanities within A&S.

## National context

The unit is highly ranked nationwide/worldwide overall and in several subspecialties in philosophy. As mentioned above, “Anglo-American” departments of philosophy (US, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand) are regularly ranked by the Philosophical Gourmet Report (PGR) based on surveys of nearly 200 philosophers throughout the English-speaking world and continental Europe. CU Boulder’s department has previously ranked as high as 24th place among all US programs (2011), a year in which the subspecialty of applied ethics was ranked as among the top seven programs in the English-speaking countries listed above. In the most recent rankings (2015), CU Boulder was tied for 31st place among US programs. The editor of the PGR subsequently posted on his blog his opinion that CU Boulder’s slip in the rankings reflected not a decline in scholarly excellence, but rather the “troubles in that department,” which, he believes, prompted those surveyed to judge the program as less attractive to prospective graduate students.

Within subspecialties, the PGR groups the top programs in English-speaking countries (as listed above) according to rounded mean scores. By subspecialty, CU Boulder in the most recent PGR is ranked in Group 1 in feminist philosophy (in first through 11th place out of 23 programs). CU Boulder is ranked in Group 3 in ethics (in 12th through 18th place out of 42 programs), applied ethics (in 11th through 29th place of 59 programs), and medieval philosophy (in fifth through seventh place of 19 programs). CU Boulder is ranked in Group 4 in philosophy of language (18th through 37th place of 37 programs), metaethics (11th through 26th place of 26 programs), political philosophy (23rd through 36th place of 36 programs), and philosophy of cognitive science (14th through 32nd place of 32 programs).

The ranking of faculty salaries as of fall 2014 was generally close to the American Association of Universities public peer average for the discipline, with full professors at 93 percent; associates at 97 percent, and assistants at 96 percent.

As mentioned above, several members of the department serve as editors-in-chief of prominent journals in the field. Outreach efforts the department engages in include the long-standing Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado, which conducts philosophy classes for elementary, middle school, and high school students around Colorado, and a number of efforts sponsored by the Center for Values and Social Policy, including the “Think!” series of talks and the “Sandbox Symposium” at the Trident Bookstore and Café in Boulder.

## Analysis

Although Philosophy has been going through difficult times, the unit is to be commended for its recent dedication to confronting problems in departmental climate, attitudes, and norms that have apparently been of long standing. The fact that it has done so under the spotlight of local and national scrutiny and press coverage makes its efforts all the more laudable. Under the leadership of first a chair appointed from outside the department, then an interim chair, and now a newly appointed chair hired in a national search, Philosophy has not only made significant changes to its standard operating procedures but also sought to educate its members on best practices for professional conduct both among the faculty and between faculty and students.

ARPAC recognizes these efforts and hopes that they will continue and flourish, fostered by new departmental leadership and a return to stability. The unit has clearly made considerable progress. However, much remains to be done. As the ERC puts it, “[v]irtually everyone we spoke to feels that the Departmental climate has improved markedly [. . .]. At the same time, virtually everyone feels that significant problems remain.” Those problems include distrust and blaming among different factions of faculty, with a sense on one side that bias and discrimination continue and a sense on the other side that they have been unjustly accused and/or are the targets of reverse discrimination. ARPAC endorses the ERC’s recommendation that the department make every effort to follow its own guidelines for members “to hold their colleagues accountable in public [. . .] for failing to pursue best practices, and to support in public those who are on the receiving end of bad behaviors.” ARPAC also endorses the ERC’s strong recommendation that members of the department remain forward-looking, rather than nurse old (or new) grudges. Continuing to increase mutual tolerance, civility, and respect will likely require ongoing formal training as well as day-to-day effort—

for example, training in correcting for unconscious bias in hiring and admissions decisions, and training in combating bullying. No member of the department should assume s/he cannot benefit from exercises such as these. ARPAC acknowledges that participating in such programs may be trying for a department that has been going through such an intense, protracted, and painful period of self-examination. However, further improvement in departmental culture will require continued willingness to take advice from experts as well as continued commitment to improve collegiality in both day-to-day interactions and group decision-making. In addition, the department and A&S must establish a set of benchmarks and standards by which an improvement in climate will be measured; internal departmental assertions of progress are not sufficient. In the recent past, the department chair was assisted by a faculty advisory board made up of campus leaders from outside the unit, and the new department chair may wish to have such a board reconstituted as a way of assisting the unit and A&S in checking departmental climate against campus goals and norms.

Personnel and  
governance

ARPAC further endorses the ERC's recommendation that the department attend to diversity and inclusion in faculty hiring. Demographics alone do not guarantee inclusive excellence, but increased numbers of women and members of other minority groups underrepresented in the discipline would not only demonstrate the department's stated commitment to diversity but also increase the likelihood that students and other constituents who are themselves female or from underrepresented groups will consider the unit welcoming. It would also increase the likelihood that women and members of underrepresented groups hold departmental leadership positions. Faculty search committees should take formal training in avoiding implicit bias before commencing their work. In addition, the unit should examine



whether its current practice of allowing the entire faculty to vote on faculty candidates before the interview stage—a rule that has led to some divisiveness within the department—leads to prematurely cutting qualified candidates from the pool of applicants based on widespread implicit bias or a desire to return to the department’s customary hiring patterns and practices. Given that faculty hiring in humanities units will likely remain low for the next few years at least, it is imperative that every faculty search in the department be attentive to these issues and that the dean and provost monitor the department’s progress. Future authorizations for faculty positions should be contingent upon improvement in diversity as well as continued improvement in departmental climate, as evaluated and affirmed by the dean.

Assuming the unit continues to improve in this regard, ARPAC endorses hiring in one faculty position in the near future, in addition to the current special opportunity position effort in progress, with the possibility of additional positions if the department sees further faculty departures or a significant uptick in enrollments. Given the current preponderance of tenured faculty in the unit, ARPAC strongly agrees with the ERC’s recommendation that hires take place at the junior level as a way to develop the department’s future. Although the unit has followed a policy of “open searches” in the past, rather than developing a strategic plan for hiring, ARPAC also strongly endorses the ERC recommendation to more narrowly focus the fields in which faculty searches are conducted. Such focus would not only fill significant research and curricular gaps cited in the self-study (such as in history of modern philosophy and in bioethics/environmental ethics), but would also build on department strengths (such as in philosophy of science). The current review procedure for hiring requests in A&S also militates in favor of focused faculty searches.

The unit must develop a strategic plan for hiring that takes all these factors into account.

In order to retain junior faculty and foster their careers, the department should make sure that the department chair and senior mentors advise junior colleagues about norms for achieving tenure and promotion. The chair should ensure that junior faculty are given lighter service loads throughout their probationary period so that they may devote sufficient time to their scholarship. Semiannual mentorship meetings should take place to review assistant professors' progress in research and teaching and to make sure that service loads are appropriate; the chair should step in to help assistant professors decline requests for service that would overload them. Finally, the unit should continue its work to involve instructors fully in departmental governance and should take steps to mentor them to help them develop their careers and prepare for successful reappointment reviews.

Undergraduate and  
graduate education and  
support

Philosophy has maintained a successful undergraduate program despite the challenges of declining enrollments and gaps in faculty coverage. ARPAC urges the unit to continue its efforts in marketing the program to undergraduates, in enriching the undergraduate experience, in supporting the faculty advisor position, and in developing innovative interdisciplinary courses that will appeal to students across a broad range of majors. The A&S dean should continue to support the faculty advisor position. ARPAC also encourages the unit to explore ways of recruiting more students into its program for Latin honors.

The graduate program in philosophy is well regarded, but it is facing challenges in regard to both department climate and funding. ARPAC believes that morale among graduate students will be raised if the department continues its efforts to improve

faculty behavior and to recruit and support a diverse population of graduate students. ARPAC commends the department for its efforts to involve graduate students in matters of climate and curriculum and recommends that these practices continue and be expanded to other matters of graduate student concern. Every faculty member is also responsible for ensuring that the department's "best practices" are applied to the treatment of graduate students. In addition, given that a time-to-completion edging toward three years for an MA causes concern, the department should examine the structure of its MA program and should advise and support MA students in the timely completion of their degrees. ARPAC encourages the unit fully to support the new MA advisor in guiding MA students toward the timely completion of their degrees and toward placement in further graduate work or in non-academic employment. The development of a BA/MA program, which has evidently been under consideration for many years, should be contingent upon improvement in time-to-degree for MA students and upon the department's clarifying and justifying the purpose of a BA/MA in relation to the existing MA degree.

The continuation of first-year RA funding is crucial for maintaining the department's competitiveness in PhD admissions. In addition, campus-level reform regarding student fees would be especially beneficial for students in the humanities and arts, whose stipends are generally lower than those for students in the sciences. For example, eliminating student fees for resources inapplicable to graduate students would make graduate stipends go further.

Space

The self-study describes current office space as adequate given current faculty numbers, but the college should work with the department, as it grows, to ensure that faculty and staff are adequately housed.

## Budget

The self-study expresses concern about funding for the growth of the Center for Values and Social Policy and the Committee for the History and Philosophy of Science, which also hopes to attain the status of a center. A&S has committed funding for both of these entities for the next two years, but each of them represents an opportunity for targeted external fundraising, as is the establishment of one or more endowed chairs in philosophy.

# Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) address the following recommendations to the Department of Philosophy and to the offices of the dean and provost. It is the committee's intention that the recommendations serve to benefit program improvement and development and to further the mission of the University of Colorado Boulder.

## To the unit

1. Continue efforts to improve the department climate, especially (but not exclusively) in regard to matters of overt and implicit bias in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity, through the following means:
  - a. Adhere faithfully to the unit's *Best Practices* policy;
  - b. Continue to seek out and implement formal training for faculty in recognizing and correcting for overt and implicit bias, especially regarding faculty hiring and graduate admissions;
  - c. Seek out and implement formal training for faculty in identifying, countering, and controlling bullying behavior;
  - d. With the assistance of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement, carry out a plan for creating an atmosphere of inclusive excellence in the department;
  - e. Department leadership should regularly remind the faculty of their rights and obligations under the *Academic Affairs Policy on Professional Rights and Duties of Faculty Members and Roles and Professional Responsibilities of Department Chairs*, and create and

improve formal and informal procedures and channels by which faculty may report and resolve problematic behavior;

- f. Consider reestablishing a faculty advisory board made up of campus leaders from outside the unit to assist the unit, the chair, and A&S in checking departmental climate against campus goals and norms;
  - g. Participate in an annual review of department climate by the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences;
2. Increase the diversity of the faculty through hiring women and members of underrepresented minorities;
  3. Revise the bylaw that allows the entire department to vote on faculty candidates before the interview stage, since such a procedure can fail to correct for implicit bias and can lead to prematurely cutting qualified candidates from the pool of applicants;
  4. Contingent upon continued improvement in department climate and in faculty diversity, draft a new strategic plan in hiring. Plan for hires that not only improve the coverage of traditional philosophical topics but also build upon department strengths and/or build bridges to other disciplines on campus. Craft a proposal to A&S for a hire in a specific field described in the strategic plan rather than proposing an open search. Focus on assistant-level hiring in order to balance faculty rank and ensure the department's future. If faculty retirements and/or an increase in student enrollment warrant additional positions, undertake further such proposals;

5. Attend to mentoring of junior faculty in terms of expectations for tenure and promotion, and ensure that junior faculty service loads do not hinder their research and teaching. Formalize regular mentoring meetings between junior faculty members and the chair;
6. Develop a mentoring program for instructors;
7. Examine ways of increasing undergraduate participation in departmental honors;
8. Attend to graduate student morale in terms of department climate, especially (but not exclusively) regarding matters of overt and implicit bias. Ensure that women students and students of color are treated by faculty with respect and in the spirit of inclusion. Continue to attend to diversity in graduate admissions, and direct concerted support to the unit's MAP chapter;
9. Analyze and correct for the causes behind the long time-to-degree for MA students;
10. Contingent upon improvement in advising and time-to-degree for MA students, consider developing a BA/MA degree program;
11. Further extend graduate student participation in matters of unit governance that concern graduate education;
12. Craft a concrete proposal to A&S to expand the Committee on the History and Philosophy of Science into a center.

To the dean of the College  
of Arts and Sciences and  
to the provost

13. Support the department in continuing and increasing its efforts to improve department climate. Set clear benchmarks for improvement. Conduct annual reviews of departmental progress in improving climate and increasing faculty and graduate-student diversity;

14. Contingent upon continued improvement in department climate and increased faculty diversity, consider a proposal for one faculty hire, based on the position's capacity to cover traditional philosophical topics, build upon department strengths, and/or build bridges to other disciplines on campus, as well as its capacity to contribute further to faculty diversity. If the department reaches its benchmarks in improving climate and faculty diversity, consider further such proposals when faculty retirements and/or an increase in student enrollment warrant further hiring. Focus on hiring at the assistant-professor level;

15. Support the department in its efforts to secure ongoing funding for the Center for Values and Social Policy and the Committee on the History and Philosophy of Science. Contingent upon a concrete proposal, consider the growth of the Committee on the History and Philosophy of Science into a center.

To the dean of the College  
of Arts and Sciences, the  
provost, and the  
chancellor

16. To assist in recruiting excellent candidates for doctoral study in philosophy, establish a stable and ongoing system to fund first-year RA-ships for PhD students.

To the Office of  
Advancement

17. Assist the department in efforts to secure external funding for one or more endowed chairs and for the Center for Values and Social Policy and the Committee for the History and Philosophy of Science.



## Required follow-up

The chair of the Department of Philosophy shall report annually on the first of April for a period of three years following the year of the receipt of this report (i.e., April 1st of 2018, 2019, and 2020) to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the provost on the implementation of these recommendations. Likewise, the dean shall report annually on the first of May to the provost on the implementation of recommendations addressed to the college. The provost, as part of the review reforms, has agreed to respond annually to all outstanding matters under her/his purview arising from this review year. All official responses will be posted online.