

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-027-234

Program Review for BA in Philosophy

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 03/21/2024

**Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded**

Date: 09/17/2025

Academic Senate

**Date: 09/24/2025
First Reading**

BACKGROUND:

As part of the regular review cycle of campus programs, the Philosophy Department conducted a self-study in early 2023. Drs. Lombart (English and Modern Languages) and Osborn (Geology) evaluated the self-study report, met virtually with the department on March 14, and completed an internal review report. An external review by Drs. Nellie Wieland (CSU Long Beach) and Amy Kind (Claremont McKenna College) was conducted virtually on April 13 and in-person on April 18. After a meeting between Dean Johnson and the Department in November 2023, the Dean outlined key strengths and priorities for action, and the Department completed a post-review action plan.

The Department's self-study covered the program's core values, its quality, and faculty and administrative support. The review covers the General and the Law and Society options within the Department, but not the interdisciplinary Science, Technology, and Society program (which is housed in the Philosophy Department).

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Dr. Dale Turner, Chair, Philosophy
Dr. Camille Johnson, Dean, College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences
Dr. Jocelyn Chong, Coordinator, Assessment and Program Review
Dr. Kathryn McCulloch, Faculty Fellow for Program Review

DISCUSSION:

The external review of the program was highly positive, characterizing it as "[...] a high functioning department with a clear vision of who they are and what they want to offer to students and how they want to achieve it." Since its last program review in 2010-2011, the Philosophy Department has revamped its mission to cultivate intellectual development and ethical reasoning, with core values of belonging, equity and justice. The reviewers highlighted faculty unity behind these goals, and the robust emphasis on social and political philosophy "[...] while maintaining ample coverage of other philosophical areas."

Of particular note is the external review's praise for the Department's high impact teaching practices, forward-thinking curriculum for underrepresented students, and high functioning, collegial departmental environment. A challenge for the Department was that "their faculty are sorely overworked," and that this might impact their commitment to high impact teaching practices. In part, this load derives from (1) high university administrative turnover that translates into "churn" in planning and priorities; (2) inadequate support ASC positions; (3) the Department's small size, which means that research and teaching are impacted by outsized per person loads from outreach, recruitment, and service efforts; (4) the outsized impact of legislative directives (GE pattern changes) on the Department; (5) budgetary impacts, especially for release time; and (6) lack of office and class room space.

The external reviewers recommended that the administration (1) approach committee work in a more nuanced way, taking into account the headcount in departments; (2) provide for class sizes that "optimize student learning" for high impact teaching practices; (3) find ways recognize/compensate high impact practices; (4) affirm support for ASC positions; (5) improve communications with the Admissions Office to

facilitate outreach to philosophy-interested students; (6) streamline teacher-scholarship/sabbatical applications; and (7) facilitate College-wide mentoring for junior faculty. They also encourage the Department to (1) continue to innovate on keeping faculty workload manageable; (2) implement their own faculty mentoring program; (3) partner on cross-listing course with other departments; (3) continue outreach to admissions, advising, and the career center; (4) develop a set schedule for continual improvement of student learning outcomes (“closing-the-loop”); and (5) continue to seek external funding to combat declining internal funding for high-impact practices outside of the classroom.

In its response to the review, in the short run, the Department prioritized (1) relieving faculty workload through negotiations with the Dean; form a departmental PolyX Experience committee to maintain high-impact instructional practices; (2) replace retiring faculty; (3) form a recruitment committee to mitigate enrollment decline (with assign time); (4) recruit and retain a high quality ASC and train them in recruitment processes (with assign time); and (5) be strategically involved in the GE committee to lead in protecting and revitalizing GE at CPP (assign time). Longer term, the departmental action plan calls for (1) a formalized departmental policy to ensure protection against increased workload, collective strategies to manage faculty workload, and eliminate unnecessary, duplicative, and uncompensated service workload; (2) “work in solidarity with the CFA” to achieve a fair contract; (3) continue to develop and implement the curriculum redesign project to enhance foundational skills and high-impact practices; (4) expand GE offerings; and (5) implement student recruitment to grow the number of majors.

Dean Johnson responded to an AP consultation with praise for the Department’s continued innovative and adaptive approach to current and future student’s needs that focus on equity for all - but also noted that some of the action items were out the College’s and Department’s hands. Dr. Chong echoed the reviewers’ concern about faculty workload and emphasized the recommendation for improved coordination with other departments. Dr. McCulloch reviewed post-review responses and action plan and was satisfied with the overall process and outcome.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Academic Programs Committee commends the Department of Philosophy on the successful operation of their programs, and on the high-impact value they provide to their students, despite the many obstacles they face.