

# Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges



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## FROM THE EDITOR

Thomas Urban

## ARTICLE

Richard Legum

*Issues and Concerns in Philosophy at Two-Year Colleges*

## CALL FOR PAPERS



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## FROM THE EDITOR

Thomas Urban

RETIRED PROFESSOR, HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

It is with great pleasure that I announce the appointment of a new editor for the *Newsletter on Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges*, Aaron R. Champene, PhD. Professor Champene is a tenured faculty member at St. Louis Community College, Meramec. A past member of the APA Two-Year Colleges Committee, and divisional panel participant, he is also active in the organization of the AAPT/CTP (American Association of Philosophy Teachers/Committee on Teaching Philosophy) "Teaching Hub" at the APA Central Division meetings. He received his doctorate degree from the University of Arkansas in 2009, with an AOS in epistemology.

This issue of the newsletter is limited to a message from Two-Year Colleges Committee Chair Richard Legum. What readers will find is essentially an outline of issues and concerns that Professor Legum believes match up with the core purposes of the committee, many of which have served as the basis of divisional panel discussions over the past decade, and all of which present ongoing challenges to those who see philosophy as an integral part of a two-year college education. As an outline, the hope is that readers will submit their comments and suggestions for future publication, and discussion at our three 2019 divisional gatherings.

Finally, my thanks to all of the authors who have contributed to make this newsletter a reality, and also to our editorial board and committee members, past and present, for the unwavering support they have given me.

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## ARTICLE

### *Issues and Concerns in Philosophy at Two-Year Colleges*

Richard Legum

KINGSBOROUGH COLLEGE (CUNY)

*The APA Committee on Philosophy in Two Year Colleges oversees activities of the association related to the teaching of philosophy at two-year and junior colleges and initiates efforts to encourage and improve teaching in such institutions. It prepares periodic reports to the board and*

*to the members of the association. The committee seeks to encourage cooperation between philosophers, other teachers in the humanities, and administrators in planning and evaluating instructional programs and in identifying appropriate qualifications for teaching philosophy in two-year institutions, while at the same time advising graduate departments of philosophy concerning ways of preparing philosophers to teach most effectively in a junior college setting. (<https://www.apaonline.org/group/twoyear>)*

Given the preceding charge and with an aim to be effective, the Two-Year Colleges Committee must continually identify and review the key issues and concerns that present over the course of every year, and identify activities and goals to be undertaken to address these issues and concerns. In hopes of increasing the effectiveness of the committee's activities, I will begin by highlighting the importance of the committee to the APA's role of promoting the philosophy profession. In particular, I will argue that philosophy in two-year colleges is becoming increasingly important given (i) the overall declining enrollments in colleges and universities, (ii) the increase in the number of students beginning their college educations at community colleges, and (iii) the increasing importance of two-year college philosophy professors to the APA.

As our major activity at the APA meetings concerns providing advice to job seekers and their advisors, I highlight various issues concerning the two-year college philosophy job market. I outline the goals and objectives of the sessions that we plan on sponsoring at the 2019 APA meetings of the three divisions.

Finally, I outline the five issues or areas of concern that I propose for consideration by the committee in 2018–2019. They are as follows:

1. attracting highly qualified philosophers to two-year college job openings;
  2. establishing proposed requirements for credentials for these positions;
  3. creating an ongoing annual summer institute for addressing pedagogical, curriculum, and research for two-year philosophy professors and job candidates;
  4. proposing recommendations for community college philosophy programs, philosophy course learning outcomes, and assessment of courses and programs; and
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5. increasing the value of APA membership for two-year college philosophy faculty members.

I propose these activities and issues for the consideration of the members of the APA Committee on Philosophy in Two Year Colleges, former committee members, and other interested parties. I encourage you to reach out to me with your comments, suggestions, and additions, including the identification of other issues on which the committee should focus.

### THE APA AND PHILOSOPHY IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

As the organization of professional philosophers in America, the APA rightly concerns itself with the *status of the profession*. We philosophers may believe that studying philosophy is intrinsically good, perhaps the *summum bonum*. If pressed to defend this claim, we may invoke the Socratic dictum that the unexamined life is not worth living. However, without a continuing stream of students, we will not have a profession. This challenge is pressing as we are in a period of declining college enrollment.

While overall college enrollment is declining, the number of students opting to begin their college education at community colleges rather than four-year colleges is increasing. Many (if not most) community colleges offer courses in philosophy. However, it is not uncommon for these philosophy courses to be taught by instructors who are members of the clergy lacking a degree and any formal training in philosophy or by instructors with degrees in history, political science, English, literature, etc. In times when jobs for new PhDs in philosophy are few and far between (i.e., for at least the last forty years), it is in the interest of the APA to have the philosophy openings at two-year colleges filled with especially well-qualified individuals completing their graduate degrees in philosophy.

With growing financial pressures, colleges and universities are increasingly considering closing philosophy and other humanities departments. No doubt this is due, at least in part, to the overall decline in college enrollment, as well as the growing sentiment in America that a college education should result in marketable skills. Creating an interest and demand for studying philosophy is, therefore, necessary for the continuing existence of the philosophy profession. We need to expand college students' interest in taking philosophy courses. Faculty members lacking academic credentials in philosophy will not generate this interest in the study of philosophy.

Finally, many two-year college philosophy professors are not members of the APA. It is in the APA's interest to maintain a connection with these philosophers to entice them to become members of the APA. We need to do a better job of building and maintaining their relationship to the APA.

### THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE PHILOSOPHY JOB MARKET

Many, if not most, seekers of jobs in philosophy are not even aware that teaching philosophy at two-year colleges is a viable option. Even those who are aware and interested encounter significant stumbling blocks in pursuing and landing these jobs. These include (i) a lack of understanding of this job market, (ii) perceptions of some graduate programs' faculty members that these are not *real* jobs worthy of *their* graduates, and (iii) a lack of understanding of the keys to successfully getting and keeping a job in such a position.

A primary objective of the APA Committee on Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges is to bridge this information gap. For the last several years we have sponsored panel discussions at the APA's annual meetings to provide a forum to disseminate this information to job seekers and to assist both job seekers and graduate department placement officers in understanding the ins and outs of the two-year college philosophy job market.

### PHILOSOPHY IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES COMMITTEE SESSIONS PLANNED FOR THE 2019 APA MEETINGS

For the last several years the Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges Committee sponsored sessions at the annual APA divisional meetings for two-year college philosophy position seekers and their advisors. These sessions focused on the following topics:

- informing the recipients of graduate degrees in philosophy about the alternative of pursuing a career as a philosophy professor at a community college;
- presenting a high-level understanding of the background, training, and experience that would qualify one for such a position;
- providing "how to" advice concerning
  - identifying open positions in philosophy at two-year colleges;
  - the materials one needs to prepare to apply for such positions;
  - navigating the application, selection, and final negotiation process of obtaining teaching positions in philosophy at two-year colleges;
  - reappointment, tenure, and promotion for two-year college philosophy professors; and
- explaining the vital role philosophy courses play in a two-year college education.

**AREAS OF FOCUS FOR APA COMMITTEE ON PHILOSOPHY IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN 2018–2019?**

I would like to suggest that the APA Committee on Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges consider focusing its work for 2018–2019 on the following areas:

1. ***Attracting Qualified Philosophers as Two-Year College Philosophy Professors***

The committee should continue its outreach to graduate students and graduate department placement officers to help them understand the two-year college philosophy market by:

- a. Continuing to sponsor sessions on this topic at all of the divisional meetings focusing on:
  - the rewards and challenges of teaching philosophy at a two-year college,
  - how to find open philosophy positions in two-year colleges,
  - the application and hiring-decision process at two-year colleges,
  - the required and desired qualifications for these positions, and
  - the career prospects for adjuncts and full-timers, including reappointment and tenure, teaching load, and salary.
- b. Developing documentation to outline the process to be incorporated with the documents compiled by the APA Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement. While our input was solicited for incorporation in updated versions of these documents, we held off on providing our specific feedback. The reason for this was that incorporating the required changes would have required major modifications to the documents which the Academic Career Committee had completed. We were concerned that this feedback would delay the other committee’s completion of these much needed documents. We should re-engage in this process.
- c. Initiating sessions, perhaps webinars, for providing information to graduate program placement officers and chairs on the hiring process at two-year colleges and to answer questions related to the process.
- d. Developing a pool of two-year college professors to provide advice and counsel to job seekers and graduate departments in the preparation of dossiers and CVs specifically tailored for two-year college positions. This may include mock job interviews and teaching demonstrations.

2. ***Developing Credentialing Requirements for Two-Year Philosophy College Philosophy Instructors***

We should develop recommendations for required credentials for two-year college philosophy instructors and recommendations for assisting instructors lacking those credentials to acquire them. Developing these requirements and providing them to the various regional college accrediting bodies should increase the likelihood that these positions are staffed by qualified philosophers.

3. ***Creating a Summer Seminar for Present and Aspiring Two-Year College Philosophy Professors***

We should develop an ongoing program of summer institutes to address issues and concerns of two-year college philosophers. Sessions would be devoted to topics like pedagogy, curriculum, and research.

4. ***Developing a Two-Year Philosophy Program and Course Learning Outcomes and Assessment***

We should develop standards for two-year college philosophy programs. These may include suggestions for course offerings, learning outcomes for philosophy courses and programs, and assessment procedures for courses and programs.

5. ***Improving Two-Year College Philosophers’ Connections with the APA***

A subcommittee should be appointed to investigate methods to better engage two-year philosophy professors in APA activities. Areas to be investigated may include the use of the committee’s APA web page, newsletter, and the APA Blog to engage this community.

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**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**The APA Committee for Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges invites papers for inclusion in the spring 2019 issue of the APA Newsletter on Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges.**

Papers should be devoted to topics of particular interest to two-year and community college faculty, and graduate students who are considering a two-year or community college career path. These include but should not be construed as limited to the following: lower division teaching pedagogy; text and textbook selections including the use of open-access resources; cross-disciplinary initiatives; student demographics and advising; student learning evaluation; program evaluation and program growth initiatives; faculty credentialing and hiring, including concerns for women and minorities, status of adjunct faculty, workload and related issues; faculty scholarship opportunities, research, and writing; and issues dealing with program administration. Co-authored papers are welcome.

All paper submissions should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Deadline: Friday, January 4, 2019
- Papers must be in 12 pt. Times-New Roman font, double-spaced, and should be in the range of 3,000 to 5,000 words, including endnotes. Exceptional papers that fall outside this range may be considered, though this is not guaranteed. Authors are advised to read APA publishing guidelines available on the APA website.
- Authors are advised to pay close attention to all APA formatting restrictions. Submissions that do not conform will be returned to their author(s). Endnotes should follow the Word default using roman numerals to number the notes.
- Papers should be sent to the editor electronically and should contain nothing that identifies either the author(s) or her/his/their institution, including any such references in the endnotes. A separate page with the author's name, title, and full mailing address should also be submitted.

**Submissions should be sent to the Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges Committee newsletter editor at [TwoYearEditor@gmail.com](mailto:TwoYearEditor@gmail.com), by January 4, 2019.**

The editor, serving in the capacity of a disinterested coordinator, will distribute all papers to an editorial committee of current and past Two-Year College Committee members for anonymous review and evaluation. This committee will report its findings to members of the newsletter editorial board. The editorial board will make all publishing decisions based on those anonymously refereed results, and conduct any further anonymous review(s) deemed necessary. The editorial board includes Kristen L. Zbikowski, Hibbing Community College ([kristenzbikowski@hibbing.edu](mailto:kristenzbikowski@hibbing.edu)); Anthony Kreider, Miami-Dade Community College ([akreider@mdc.edu](mailto:akreider@mdc.edu)); Bill Hartmann, St. Louis Community College ([bhartmann@stlcc.edu](mailto:bhartmann@stlcc.edu)); and Rick Repetti, Kingsborough Community College–CUNY ([Rick.Repetti@kbcc.cuny.edu](mailto:Rick.Repetti@kbcc.cuny.edu)).