Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement

2015-2016 Membership

Krista Lawlor, chair (2017)
Yubraj Aryal (2016)
George Rainbolt (2016)
Jennifer Whiting (2016)
Stephan Blatti (2017)
Lisa L. Fuller (2017)
Michael Nair-Collins (2017)
Sam Cowling (2018)
Susan Dieleman (2018)
Miriam Solomon (2018)
Thomas Urban, ex officio (2016)
Amelie Rorty, ex officio (2018)
Our committee this year has continued to grapple with the recommendations of the Diversity Task force.

We have been engaged in the following: (a) drafting a statement encouraging diversity in graduate admissions (to be considered at the upcoming board meeting); (b) revising all our guidance documents on placement, hiring and job seeking, with an eye to making them more helpful about diversity issues; (c) starting a discussion about how to increase mentoring for underrepresented minority graduate students and junior faculty; (d) providing comments and suggestions on the forthcoming Good Practices document that Peter Railton’s committee is drafting.

Regarding (a): we propose that the APA might place on its website a sample statement regarding the importance of diversifying the profession, beginning at the point of graduate admissions. (See attached.) Departments would be encouraged to draft similar statements. We also propose a letter directed to the chairs of nationally ranked schools that train graduate students, with the sample statement attached, to encourage action. (See attached.)

Regarding (b): the revision of the Handbook and Guidance for Job Seekers was a huge task, and at the end has interacted with (d). Just by way of background: our committee had undertaken this year to revise all three of our Guidance documents (Best Practices for Placing Departments, Best Practices for Hiring Departments, Guidance for Job Seekers) in light of suggestions directed to us by the Task Force on Inclusiveness. We were nearing the end of our edits when the Good Practices Guide hit our (collective) desk, and it touches upon much of the material in two of our three Guidance documents. So we were left with a bit of a puzzle. Should we keep our documents with their revisions, and simply make references to the GPG (along with suggestions for some edits to the GPG)? Or should we suggest additions to the GPG incorporating relevant material from our existing documents?

In the end, we chose the latter. The Good Practices Guide is wonderfully helpful and elegant. Much of the material in our own Guidance documents is well covered. So, our committee sent to Peter Railton’s committee a suggestion for edits and for the incorporation of some key material from our Handbook. At present, we are waiting to hear from the GPG committee, and once they have decided how much to incorporate, we’ll return to finish our revision of the Handbook.
The upshot could be revisions of the Handbook documents, or possible removal from the APA website the Placing and Hiring Guides altogether, depending on how much material ends up in the Good Practices Guide. (We will continue to maintain the Guidance for Job Seekers document, as it contains information that is not found in the Good Practices Guide.)

One further item: In mid-August our committee was asked to investigate a possible misrepresentation by an advertiser in PhilJobs. The complaint is about a company based in Minnesota called “Sophia Learning.” (It's a private education firm linked with several on-line universities such as "A Capella University." The person making the complaint was asked to produce not one, but two short videos with lecture content, as a precondition of getting an interview, which never materialized.) We are following up, and have contacted the complainant for more details. We are also attempting to contact Sophia Learning for more details. We will keep in touch with Mike Morris about what we find out.
**[Note to departments]**

Dear [dept chair],

In response to the APA’s recent Task Force on Inclusiveness, the APA Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement is seeking help from your department.

The APA’s core mission is to promote the discipline of philosophy. Like many professional and private organizations, the APA recognizes the value of diversity. Our discipline will only flourish if we see a greater inclusion of under-represented groups in the ranks of philosophers. A first step is bringing more diversity into our graduate student population. Training students from diverse backgrounds can require more resources and time, for both student and departments, and time to degree can in turn negatively affect job prospects. In light of such facts, every department that trains graduate students must take concrete steps to promote diversity and to publicly espouse the value of a diverse department.

Toward that end, we invite your department to develop an explicit written commitment to the recruitment and success of a diverse group of graduate students, and to publicize this commitment on your website and other department materials. The following is an example of such a commitment that may be useful as a starting point for local discussions.

**[Sample Statement]**

Our department seeks to do all it can to make Philosophy an inclusive discipline. We understand the value that diversity brings to philosophical inquiry, and that the health of our profession depends on greater inclusion of under-represented groups in the ranks of philosophers. In recognition that our reputation as a training program depends on our ability to cultivate a diverse philosophical community, *we seek to recruit and sustain a diverse graduate student body.*
Specifically, in order to realize this goal, we will

*attach no demerit* to student applicants with backgrounds from 2-year community colleges or from “non-elite” undergraduate institutions

*collect and make public* data concerning the demographic makeup of graduate students, along with career outcomes such as time to degree and job placement

provide financial support, academic assistance, and advisement that reflects the diverse needs of a diverse population

strive for a curriculum that illustrates that a diverse group of people have, will, and should contribute to the richness of philosophy

*continuously strive toward an environment of greater inclusion and respect* through critical self-examination, paying due attention not only to overt forms of prejudice or exclusion but also to its more subtle manifestations.