

Committee on Non-Academic Careers

2016–2017 Membership

Amelie O. Rorty, chair (2018)

David W. Chambers (2017)

Henrique Schneider (2017)

Aine Donovan (2018)

Jennifer Faust (2018)

Jeremy A. Lent (2019)

Eleni K. Manis (2019)

As it becomes more difficult for philosophy graduates to secure tenured academic appointments, it is increasingly common for them to embark on non-academic careers. Committee Co-Chairs Amelie Rorty and Stephen Martin met regularly to discuss what this means for the profession as a whole, and how the APA should best respond to the changing profession. These discussions focused on the short and long-range aims of the Committee as well as on some of its general demographic and organizational problems.

Short range: We considered proposing a session on non-academic careers for the January, 2018 Eastern Division meetings, but ultimately decided against it. Aine Donovan attempted to organize a session last year. Although she invited a number of colleagues who had chosen to leave academic philosophy to do a presentation or lead a discussion about their experiences, she was unable to persuade anyone able or willing to find the time or the money or the interest to attend the meetings..

Long range: We are discussing launching a *Forum Newsletter*, targeted to graduate students and recent PhDs, to be edited by Steve Martin. He proposes to:

1. contact those who have established online resources for those employed outside academia to solicit their views on what is—and what should be—done.
2. invite essays from philosophers reflecting on their decisions to work outside the academy
3. create or contribute to current resources for those seeking employment outside academic philosophy
4. provide links to the many internet websites that host exchanges among philosophers who have left academic philosophy

Most non-academic philosophers do not belong to the APA. Having decided to leave academia, they see no particular reason to join the Association. Our ‘natural’ interest group largely consists of graduate students who are trying to decide whether to leave academic philosophy; they need and want counsel and information about how to find philosophy-flavored jobs. The best sources for their finding fruitful contacts are the Career Officers of their Universities, our brochure *Beyond the Academy* (now freely available on line) and philosophers who have found satisfying work Elsewhere. They can maintain their interests in philosophy through internet communication (e.g. Pea Soup) and through the many specialized regional conferences (e.g. the annual New England conference on Early Modern Philosophy; the annual NYU conference, the Bay area Group on Ancient Philosophy; the Arizona Workshop in Normative Ethics, the St. Louis Conference on Reasons and Rationality, the Princeton Epistemology meetings, the Hume Society; the Kant Society, etc. The meetings of these lively, local and focused philosophy discussions groups do not require membership or membership dues. They are announced on line, in *PhilEvents*.

We urge Department Chairs and Placement Officers to encourage those of their graduates who are considering non-academic careers to maintain an active connection to their academic

colleagues. Departments should circulate our brochure *Beyond the Academy*, continue to invite graduates to departmental events and colloquia, encourage them to join the APA and to attend regional philosophy meetings.

Many of the concerns of our Committee intersect with those of other APA Committees and are often better addressed by them. (Public Philosophy, Placement, Philosophy and Medicine, Philosophy and Law, Philosophy and Computers, International Cooperation, Lectures Publication and Research) . We recommend that the Board consider ways that the various Committees can coordinate their work, perhaps by increasing the number of over-lapping memberships.

Conclusion: As it stands, the APA is an academic association; for the most part, its members are professional academics. There are nevertheless strong reasons for the APA to welcome a more inclusive vision of its charge and its membership, to regard itself as an association of philosophers, independently of whether they are employed as academics. The intellectual vitality of philosophy has historically always been supported by non-academics, by lawyers, poets, scientists, physicians, theologians, statesmen. Increasingly we are now again discovering that philosophic originality –as it may be about the methods of new fields of inquiry-- comes to us from other disciplines and professions. We can only benefit from broadening the scope of our attention to philosophically minded colleagues in other professions. After all, many of them left academic philosophy because they found richer, more promising lines of inquiry elsewhere. They have something to teach us.

There is another reason for the APA to maintain strong working relationships with non-academic colleagues who have wide-ranging philosophically flavored interests. At a time when the humanities in general, and academic philosophy in particular are becoming marginalized, these colleagues can serve us as invaluable ambassadors. The APA should attempt to form working alliances with philosophically-minded colleagues who have chosen to work in non-academic professions. Taking its commitment to diversity seriously, the Board and the Program Committee should consider ways of including non-academic philosophers in APA activities. They might, for instance, schedule some lectures and colloquia presentations from such colleagues in the Programs of our Division Meetings.