

Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession

2016–2017 Membership

Sally Scholz, chair (2018)

Anita Silvers (2017)

Meghan E. Sullivan (2017)

Luvell E. Anderson Jr. (2018)

Eric Schwitzgebel (2018)

Amy Berg (2019)

Sarah K. Donovan (2019)

Krista Lawlor, *ex officio* (2017)

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, *ex officio* (2017)

Alexandra E. Bradner, *ex officio* (2018)

Peter Graham, *ex officio* (2019)

Kenneth Taylor, *ex officio* (2019)

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The Committee on the Status and the Future of the Profession worked on the following projects during 2016-17:

- Reviewed grant proposals for the APA small grant program (July/August 2016)
- Session at Eastern APA organized by Alexandra Bradner, Anita Silvers, and Sarah Donovan (and co-sponsored by APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy):
Friday, January 6, 2017, 1:30-2:55 p.m.: **Philosophy under Fire: How to Convey to Stakeholders the Value of Teaching Philosophy**
Chair: Spencer Knafelc, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania
Presenters:
 - James Rocha, Fresno State University, “On Recruiting Philosophy Majors”
 - Wendy Turgeon, St. Joseph’s College—New York, “Surviving the Purge: Reflections on The Program Prioritization Process”
 - Bryan Hall, St. Johns University, “Your Defense against the Dark Arts: An Administrator’s Advice for Preempting the Threat of Closure”
- Session at Central APA organized by Sally Scholz. Wednesday Afternoon, 2:00–5:00 p.m.: **At Risk Departments: Learning from Experience**
Chair: Peter Graham (University of California, Riverside)
Speakers:

- Gordon L. Pettit (Western Illinois University) “How to Respond When Your Philosophy Program Is Threatened”
 - David Beisecker (University of Nevada–Las Vegas) “Notes from a Department That Survived the Existential Crisis”
 - Laura Bernhardt (Buena Vista University) “Exile in Old Main: Prioritization, Program Elimination, and Philosophy”
- Project on Graduate Student Admissions policies and procedures
 - Blog post by Eric Schwitzgebel to gather information and feedback. The post is linked [here](#)
 - Proposal to amend the Statement on Graduate Student Aid Offers. Submitted to the APA board for consideration on Sept 22, 2016; voted on by Board at November meeting. (see revision in Appendix 1)
- Project on Language requirements (an outgrowth of the Diversity Task Force committee assignments)
 - Following up on a proposal from the 2015-16 Status and Future contribution to the Diversity Task Force, the committee revisited the proposal regarding language requirements in graduate school in philosophy. In addition to committee discussion, there was a blog post to solicit input and information.
 - Blog post by Eric Schwitzgebel to obtain information available [here](#)
 - Committee crafted a statement that was sent to the APA task force on diversity (Liz Anderson) as part of our committee contributions to that task force and to Amy Ferrer for possible consideration as an APA statement. The statement read:

Acknowledging that research in philosophy occurs in a globally diverse and inclusive academic environment, the APA encourages departments to consider additional paths toward the fulfillment of language requirements. Depending on the department, this might involve encouraging language study in a non-European language (Sanskrit, Mandarin, etc) or it might involve replacing the study of languages with formal research methods (statistics, linguistics, etc.). Broadening permissible training to include a wide variety of languages and research methods makes philosophy as a discipline more diversified, and also more responsible about developments in allied fields.
- The committee also addressed or clarified other points in the Committee’s Diversity Task force assignment and forwarded the revised document back to Liz Anderson, Chair of the task force.
- Statement on public engagement in philosophy
 - Scholz and Bradner joined select members of the Committee on Public Philosophy (Tirrell and Kolers) as well as a few at large members of the profession to draft the statement on public philosophy. The statement was forwarded to the National Office in March and was adopted by the APA at the May 2017 meeting of the Board of Directors. It is available [here](#).
- Project on creating a **toolkit** for academic departments under threat.
 - This is the largest of our ongoing projects.

Appendix 1:

Proposal to update the Statement on Graduate Student Aid Offers

The following statement was drafted by the Council of Graduate Schools and approved by the APA board of officers at its 1994 meeting. It has also been approved by numerous colleges, universities, and professional organizations. Originally published in Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association, Vol. 68, No. 5, p. 40. Proposed updates in Red (approved November 2016).

Acceptance of an offer of financial support (such as a graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by a prospective or re-enrolled graduate student completes an agreement that both student and graduate school expect to honor. In that context, the conditions affecting such offers and their acceptance must be defined carefully and understood by all parties.

Students are under no obligation to respond to offers of financial support prior to April 15; earlier deadlines for acceptance of such offers violate the intent of this Resolution. **Similarly, it violates the intent of this Resolution for graduate programs to seek from students a promise that an offer will be accepted if it is made, if such a promise is sought before April 15.**

In those instances in which a student accepts an offer before April 15, and subsequently desires to withdraw that acceptance, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer. It is further agreed by the institutions and organizations subscribing to the above Resolution that a copy of this Resolution should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.