Committee on Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges

2016–2017 Membership

Richard Legum, chair (2019)
Marc E. Bobro (2017)
Bill Hartmann (2017)
Richard Legum (2017)
Ari L. Krupnick (2018)
Sarah Morales (2018)
Andrew D. Wible (2018)
William A. Behun (2019)
Mark D. Sadler (2019)
Kerry Ybarra (2019)
Alexandra E. Bradner, ex officio (2018)

Thomas Urban, newsletter editor
The committee chair, Rick Repetti, resigned his position in the spring of 2017 due to a sudden increase in academic responsibilities. I was honored to be appointed to chair the committee on March 13. I would like to thank Rick for his service as a long time committee member and for his service as chair. I would like to thank Thomas Urban and Bill Hartmann for their service to the committee. I would also like to thank Sarah Morales for her service. Sarah resigned from the committee and from her position at Baltimore County Community College for personal reasons. I would like to welcome back to the committee A. J. Kreider (Miami Dade Community College, Miami Fl.) and Basil Smith (Saddle Back College, Mission Veijo, CA) who have filled that vacant positions.

Projects/Activities Planned, Approach for Accomplishing Plans, and Results of Projects/Activities for 2016 -2017:
The committee planned the following projects and activities pursuant to its goals and objectives (see the last section of this report for an enumeration of the same):

Panel Discussions on at each of the annual APA Eastern, Central, and Pacific Division Meetings
Approach: Based on feedback from the committee members, the chair planned a committee sponsored panel discussion for each of the three divisional annual meetings. The title of the sessions was: “APA Committee Session: Jobs and Rewards: Teaching Philosophy at Community Colleges.” The following panelists were recruited for the sessions from current and former committee members:

Eastern Division Session:
Chair: Thomas Urban (Houston Community College)
Speakers: A. J. Kreider (Miami-Dade Community College)
Richard Legum (Kingsborough Community College)
Sarah Morales (Community College of Baltimore County)
Rick Repetti (Kingsborough Community College)
Mark Thorsby (Lone Star College)
Andy Wible (Muskegon Community College)

Central Division Session:
Chair: Rick Repetti (Kingsborough Community College– CUNY)
Speakers: William Behun (McHenry County College, Illinois)
Bill Hartmann (St. Louis Community College–Forest Park)
Richard Legum (Kingsborough Community College–CUNY)

Results: Our session at the Eastern and Central Division Meetings went well. We made some last minute changes to the panels due to illnesses and other conflicts that arose for our planned panel participants. These include my chairing both sessions and the addition of committee member Marc Bobro (Santa Barbara City College, CA) to the Eastern Division panel. The session was attended by full-time and adjunct two year college faculty members, graduate students applying for and interested in learning about job opportunities at two year colleges. There was a lively discussion about the process for filling and being offered a Philosophy position at community colleges, as well as the rewards and challenges of teaching Philosophy in this environment.

Areas for Improvement:
• As a result of an administrative error, the Pacific Division session did not make it to the program. This was a problem for at least one of our panel members who expected funding from his school because he was scheduled as a speaker on this panel. Moreover, this was the first time in several years that the committee did not have a sponsored session at all three annual division meetings, even though we had committee members ready to participate.
We had fewer attendees at our sessions. From my informal and unscientific perspective attendance at the this year’s Eastern and Central Division Meetings appeared lower than in the past. Never the less, I have reason to think that the attendance at the Eastern Division session seemed to be off even more due to a conflict between a Teaching Hub session and the committee’s session. I personally observed at one teaching hub session that a significant number of attendees identified themselves as community college faculty members (most of whom did not attend the committee’s session).

**Recommendation for improvement:**

- The process for offering and getting placed in a Two Year College Philosophy job is significantly different from both the four year college teaching focused job and the research focused college an university positions. Given the trends in enrollment, the Two Year College Philosophy jobs have become more critical to the future of Philosophy in the US. I am planning on having the committee focus on doing what we can to get the word out to graduate departments, especially department placement officers, and to graduate students about the availability of Philosophy jobs in this segment of the market.

**Publication of the two semi-annual Issues of the APA Newsletter on Philosophy in Two Year Colleges**

**Approach:** Thomas Urban (Emeritus - Houston Community College) launched, edited, and oversaw the publishing of the first edition of the newsletter last year. Thomas graciously agreed to continue on as newsletter editor. The newsletter provides a forum for Philosophers to submit papers on subjects related to the committee’s charge. Papers are peer-reviewed by the editorial staff composed of members of the committee to ensure.

**Results:** The second issue of the newsletter was published in the spring containing:

From the Editor (by Thomas Urban) and
the following articles:
- "The Value of Studying Philosophy for Community College Students," Richard Legum
- "Lower Division Pedagogy," Darren Jones
- "A Tale of Two Professors: A Case Study in Justice at the Community College," Ian M. Duckles

**Areas for Improvement:**

- We received no full length articles before the fall issue submission deadline. Members of the committee were asked to contribute smaller pieces highlighting issues of interest to them related to the committee’s work. We need to do a much better job of publicizing the newsletter and the committee’s work.

**Recommendation for improvement:**

- The scheduled publication submission deadlines on January 1 and June 1 are not conducive to getting submission from two year college Philosophy professors. These philosophers have a higher teaching load than philosophers at four year colleges and many (if not most) are not subject to the “publish or perish” requirements for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. It would be helpful if the APA could be somewhat more flexible on the publication deadlines. Given the heavy teaching load at two year colleges, philosophers who would like to write and submit articles to the newsletter have more time between January 1 & March 15 and June 1 and October 15 to prepare submissions. Submission deadlines of March 15 and October 15 may help us.

- We need to do a better job of “getting the word out” about the newsletter, especially to community colleges who have a “publish or perish” rule.

**Committee business meetings at each of the annual APA Eastern, Central, and Pacific Division Meetings**

**Approach:** The committee meets at each of the annual APA Division Meetings to discuss progress on projects and identifying projects that should be undertaken. This is followed up with emails to define the agenda for the future.

**Results:** The committee members developing relationships and discussing issues of the day for community college philosophers at these meetings. Often times, they identify better ways to engage the Two Year College Philosophy faculty in the work of the committee.
Areas for Improvement: While many good ideas and suggestions are raised and discussed, we need to do a much better job to follow up and make the necessary changes to make progress on the agenda.

Suggestions for improvement: We need to develop and implement a better method of following up on project and activity planning and execution. If would be helpful to have a tool like “Go To Meeting” to facilitate online meetings. A telephone conference system may be a good second choice. Besides the tool, a realistic schedule for meetings and frequency of meetings needs to be established.

Coordination of Effort with the Committee on Teaching Philosophy
Approach: We have discussed the possibility of working more closely with the Committee on Teaching Philosophy in order to engage two year college Philosophy faculty member in the work of the committees and the APA to advance Philosophy. Alexandra Bradner (Chair, Teaching Committee) reached out to us to get us to set up a session on Teaching Philosophy Online. One committee member identified a colleague to take the lead in arranging this session.

Results: The Teaching Philosophy Online session was chaired by our representative. He developed a call for papers, was involved in the selection of papers for presentation and will be chairing a session as part of the Teaching Hub at next year’s Pacific Division Meeting.

Areas for Improvement: This effort accomplished the goal of setting up an interesting session that will be part of the Teaching Hub at the Pacific Division Meeting next year. However, it is not clear that the session will address the particular challenges of teaching online in the community college environment where many students are not well prepared to take on college level courses.

Suggestions for Improvement: A session sponsored jointly by the Teaching Committee and the Committee on Philosophy in Two Year Colleges addressing issues related to the teaching of Philosophy to students with remedial issues and/or with students for who a Philosophy course with be the one and only course in the subject for their lifetime.

Credentialing for Two Year College Philosophy Instructors
Approach: Quite frequently community college Philosophy courses are taught by faculty members or adjuncts who have had little or no training in Philosophy and often have never taken a graduate level course in the discipline. In rural areas, it is not uncommon for a local clergyman with no academic background in Philosophy to teach Philosophy course at two year colleges. To be clear, we are not talking about a Saul Kripke or Wilfred Sellars who were never awarded a Ph.D. in Philosophy; nor of a St. Thomas Aquinas or Moses Maimonides. Given that there are many more Ph.D.s awarded in Philosophy than there are teaching jobs available for Philosophers, it is not unreasonable to expect community colleges to seek instructors for their Philosophy courses that have done graduate level work in Philosophy. To address this issue and the pressure that some have seen to accept non-philosophers as instructors in Philosophy courses in their two year colleges, the committee undertook to develop a set of credential (a Credentialing Standard for two year college Philosophy instructors) which the APA could adopt.

It should be noted that the goal of the adoption of a Credentialing Standard is not to curtail the frequent practice of a community college professor teaching a course outside of his/her discipline as a result of enrollment anomalies. Nor is it to make it impossible for a Political Scientist as a school may need to teach a course in Political Science. However, the goal of a Credentialing Standard is to encourage community colleges to hire individuals with graduate degrees in Philosophy to teach their Philosophy courses.

Results: A Credentialing Standard was developed and approved by the committee. This initiative has been dormant for the last several years. At our committee business meetings, we have begun to raise the issue again. We would like to propose that the APA adopt a standard on this issue and request that ours be considered.
Areas for Improvement: The declining college enrollments that we have seen may threaten jobs of some philosophers at two year colleges. Adopting a Credentialing Standard may help to alleviate these pressures.

Recommendations for Improvement: The APA should consider the Credentialing Proposal that was developed. Adoption of such a standard would not force any community colleges to follow the standard. However, that adoption of such a standard could be referred to the college accreditation agencies that would be inclined to use it when considering a community college for recertification.

Goals and Objectives for the Projects and Activities:
The APA Committee on Philosophy in Two Year Colleges planned projects and activities for 206-2017 focusing on the following goals and objectives:

- Create an awareness and understanding in the Philosophy community about the two year college segment of the job market for philosophers and the process for obtaining and keeping such a position.
- Expand APA membership among two year college Philosophy professors by identifying and increasing the value of the APA to members of the community.
- Creating visibility of issues of concern to two year college Philosophy professors to the APA.
- Providing a forum for improving Philosophy pedagogy, course, and program design in two year colleges.
- Discussion and dissemination of information about events and trends affecting philosophers in two year colleges and their effect on the discipline of Philosophy, e.g., credentials for teaching, effects of changes in enrollment.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Legum, Chair
September 30, 2017