Committee on Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges

2017–2018 Membership

Richard Legum, chair (2019)
Ari L. Krupnick (2018)
Sarah Morales (2018)
Andrew D. Wible (2018)
William A. Behun (2019)
Mark D. Sadler (2019)
Kerry Ybarra (2019)
Bill Hartmann (2020)
A.J. Kreider (2020)
Heather Wilburn (2020)
Alexandra E. Bradner, ex officio (2018)
Ileana F. Szymanski, Liaison (2020)

Thomas Urban, newsletter editor
Projects/Activities Planned, Approach for Accomplishing Plans, and Results of Projects/Activities for 2018 -2019:
The committee planned the following projects and activities pursuant to its goals and objectives:

Panel Discussions on Teaching Philosophy at Two-Year Colleges at each of the annual APA Eastern, Central, and Pacific Division Meetings

- **Approach:** The chair planned a committee sponsored panel discussion for each of the three divisional annual meetings based on the advice of the committee members. The sessions were entitled: “APA Committee Session: Jobs and Rewards: Teaching Philosophy at Community Colleges.” The sessions primary objectives were to (1) disseminate information to job seekers and graduate department placement officers about the “ins and outs” of teaching Philosophy at two-year college, (2) to provide a forum for discussing pedagogy and administrative issues that are germane to two-year college Philosophy professors, and (3) provide a forum for APA participation for two-year college Philosophers.

The following panelists were recruited for the sessions from current and former committee members:

Eastern Division Session:
- Chair: Richard Legum (Kingsborough Community College)
- Speakers:
  - Marc Bobro (Santa Barbara City College)
  - Timothy Davis (Community College of Baltimore County)
  - A. J. Kreider (Miami-Dade Community College)
  - Rick Repetti (Kingsborough Community College)
  - Andy Wible (Muskegon Community College)

Central Division Session:
- Chair: Richard Legum (Kingsborough Community College–CUNY)
- Speakers:
  - Will Behun (McHenry County College, Crystal Lake IL)
  - Aaron Champene (St. Louis Community College)
  - Bill Hartmann (St. Louis Community College)
  - Andy Wible (Muskegon Community College)
  - Kristin Zbikowski (Hibbing Community College)

Pacific Division Session:
- Chair: Aaron Champene (St. Louis Community College)
- Speakers:
  - Ian Duckles (San Diego Mesa College, CA)
  - Heather Wilburn (Tulsa Community College Community College, OK)
  - John (Wes) McMichael (Fresno City College, CA)

**Results:** Our planning was to put the committee’s work on track by holding sessions at each of the divisional meetings. However, due to an act of nature, our Eastern Division session was cancelled due to an unusually severe snow storm that resulted in the cancellation of flights to Savannah, GA. Three panel members had their flights cancelled, and two of the remaining three panelists, though managing to get to Savannah, could not get across the river to the meeting.

Our session at the Central and Pacific Division Meetings went well. These sessions were well 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 application through hiring process at community colleges, as well as the rewards and challenges of teaching Philosophy in this environment. At the central division meeting there seemed to be a larger than usual contingent of graduate students who were adjuncts at two-year colleges or interested in pursuing Philosophy positions at two-year colleges.
**Areas for Improvement:**

- The planning committee and APA staff need much better crystal balls to predict the weather when selecting a venue for the meetings. Perhaps a special APA prayer or supplication to God, Nature, etc., could be developed. On a serious note, the APA should have a contingency plan to broadcast sessions should an act of nature or the public enemy interrupt the meeting schedule.
- We need to devise a better method of making the appropriate individuals aware of the nature of the sessions. In particular, we need to find a way to engage graduate department placement officers and advisors to provide them with an understanding of the application and hiring process.
- There have been scheduling conflicts between Teaching Committee sessions and the Two-Year College Philosophy Committee session. As both types of sessions appeal to a common audience it presents a particular problem for those wishing to attend both.

**Recommendation for improvement:**

- It would be a great benefit if a method were devised for providing online access to sessions without detracting from the goal of getting philosophers together for face-to-face meetings.
- 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 and 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. The committee should focus on doing what it 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 current and former members of the committee.

*Results:* Two issues of the newsletter were published in this year, Vol. 17, No. 1, Fall 2017 and Vol.17 No. 2, Spring 2018.

- The Fall 2017 issue contained: From the Editor (by Thomas Urban) and the following articles:
  - “Blueberry Madness,” by Kristen Zbikowski
  - “Students Who Don’t Give a Damn,” by Marc Bobro
  - “Specifications Grading: A Useful Two-Year College Alternative,” by William Behun
  - “A Summer Institute for Community College Philosophy Professors,” by Richard Legum

- The Spring 2018 issue contained: From the Editor (by Thomas Urban) and the following articles:
  - “Taylorism, Heidegger, and the Modern Academy,” by Ian Duckles
  - “How Hard Should an Introduction to Philosophy Class Be? By Andy Wible

*Areas for Improvement:*

- We are still experiencing challenges getting a steady flow of quality submissions for publication.
- Thomas Urban, the founding editor (and former chair of the committee) announced his plans to step down as editor at the end of year.

*Recommendation for improvement:*

- A new editor needs to be appointed who can carry on the work of the founding editor Thomas Urban. We have identified a new editor, who has been working with his predecessor to get up to speed on the
responsible. But it will take a little while for our new editor to get acclimated to the flow of work. We are considering alternatives to ensure that the publishing burdens are distributed among the reviewers and other committee members.

- We are trying to find additional ways of “getting the word out” about the newsletter, especially to community colleges who have a “publish or perish” rule. We will be engaging with the APA staff to identify those philosophers who teach at two-year colleges to solicit contribution for the newsletter.

Committee business meetings at each of the annual APA Division Meetings

Approach: The committee meets at each of the annual APA Division Meetings to discuss progress on projects and identifying new projects. The meeting are one of the main ways that committee members are able to develop relationships and identify the issues of the day for community college philosophers. This is followed up with emails to define the agenda for the future.

Results: The committee got off to a very slow start as a result of our missing the Eastern Division Meeting.

Areas for Improvement: The loss of the Eastern Division due to the weather problem significantly affected the committee’s ability to make progress on proposed projects.

Suggestions for improvement: We are going to use the APA’s subscription to the Zoom online video conference service to meet. Besides the tool, we need to develop a realistic schedule for meeting.

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 members 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 the Pacific Division Meeting.

Areas for Improvement: While members of our committee participated in the Teaching Hub sessions, it is not clear that the session succeeded in resolving scheduling conflicts between Teaching and Two-Year College Philosophy Committee sessions.

Suggestions for Improvement: We need to work to more closely connect the work of the two committees. In addition, we should work with the Committee on Academic Careers Opportunities & Placement as our mission intersects with the missions of these other two committees.

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 individuals with no academic background in Philosophy to teach Philosophy course at two-year colleges. 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 credentials (a Credentialing Standard for two-year college Philosophy instructors) which the APA could adopt.

It should be noted that the goal of adopting a Credentialing Standard is not to curtail the frequent practice of a community college professors teaching a course outside of his/her discipline as a result of enrollment anomalies.
Nor is it to make it impossible for example for a Political Scientist as a school may need to teach a course in Political Philosophy. 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: We have made no progress in this area.

Areas for Improvement: We need to identify a sub-committee to work on this project and set goals for developing an appropriate Credentialing Proposal to be present to the APA. Once this work has been completed we need to present our proposal to the APA for official approval.

Goals and Objectives for the Projects and Activities:
The APA Committee on Philosophy in Two Year Colleges planned projects and activities for 2018-2019 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.
- Develop documentation of the process of identifying, obtaining, and keeping two-year college Philosophy teaching positions for qualified philosophers.
- Expand APA membership among two-year college Philosophy professors by identifying and increasing the value of the APA to members of this community.
- Identify issues of concern to two-year college Philosophy professors to the APA.
- Provide a forum for improving Philosophy pedagogy, course, and program design in two-year colleges.
- Discuss and disseminate 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
October 7, 2018