Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession

2018–2019 Membership

Jennifer Lackey, chair (2021)
Amy Berg (2019)
Sarah K. Donovan (2019)
Stewart Duncan (2020)
Tiger C. Roholt (2020)
Carole J. Lee (2021)
Yannik P. Thiem (2021)
Peter Graham, ex officio (2019)
Kenneth Taylor, ex officio (2019)
Sven Bernecker, ex officio (2020)
David K. Chan, ex officio (2020)
David Concepcion, ex officio (2021)
Gretchen Ellefson, GSC Liaison (2019)
The Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession (CSFP) identified four areas where we would like to focus our efforts:

1. How to raise the profile of philosophy, both in and out of the academy—especially with the closure of so many philosophy departments in recent years.
2. The mental health crisis among graduate students.
3. Providing resources and support for alternative careers.
4. Publication issues, particularly with respect to high rejection rates combined with scarcity of jobs and high expectations for publications.

Our work thus far has been addressing 1. To this end, we have been conducting research about the role that philosophy courses play in the General Education programs at institutions across the country so as to compile a document with this material. (The Toolkit very helpfully has one page on this topic, “Core Requirements,” but we are looking to provide more detailed and comprehensive information.)

The rationale for this is as follows: a central way in which philosophy departments spread the word about, and generate interest in, philosophy is by running courses in the General Education programs of institutions. This has at least three benefits:

1. Gen Ed courses typically fulfill mandatory requirements, and so enrollments are often high in them.
2. Since Gen Ed courses fulfill mandatory requirements, students who might not otherwise be exposed to a philosophy course might enroll in one and be drawn to take more.
3. Having philosophy courses deeply embedded in the Gen Ed program at institutions provides greater security for departments, especially as economic crises affect smaller colleges and universities.

In addition to the gathering of this data, we have started exploring a second project of trying to increase the number of awards and prizes available in philosophy so as to raise the profile of philosophical research. Awards and prizes attract attention, especially at the institutions of those receiving them, and philosophy has far fewer than many other disciplines. This second project will involve possible collaboration with other committees of the APA, but we are still in the early stages of development.