Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement

2019-2020 Membership

David Chan, chair (2020)

Sam Cowling, associate chair (2020)

Victor Kumar (2020)

Ileana F. Szymanski (2020)

Shay Welch (2020)

Gil Hersch (2021)

Ram Neta (2021)

Seth L. Shabo (2021)

Chloe Armstrong (2022)

Lauren Ashwell (2022)

Christopher Kulp (2022)

Barak Krakauer, ex officio (2021)

Richard Legum, ex officio (2022)

Emma McClure, GSC liaison (2020)
Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement

2019-20 Report

Submitted by David Chan (Chair)

Committee members reviewed APA small grant proposals in July and August 2019. After that, our Committee resumed work on a guidance document for non-tenure track faculty to assist them in seeking improvements in conditions of employment, and transitioning to tenure line positions.

The Committee held an hour-long online meeting using Zoom on January 15, 2020, during which it was decided to add one more section to the draft of the document. The Committee decided to use the remaining time to review our work and prepare the document for approval by the APA Board at its May 2020 meeting.

Approval was received from the Board and the document was announced and posted on the APA website on June 11, 2020, and made available for downloading. This is a noteworthy and proud moment for the Committee which had been working on the document for two years.

During the year, the Committee also discussed and worked on the issue of an increased number of ads in PhilJobs that did not follow the APA job market calendar. We were concerned that departments that set earlier deadlines for applications, and who may also make job offers early, put other departments at a disadvantage, and job candidates in a dilemma of having to accept or reject an offer before they hear from all the places that they have applied for.

The Committee decided that the situation with early application deadlines should be monitored to see if it is a trend or outlier. The Committee chair drafted a letter to remind department chairs of the reasons for adhering to the hiring calendar (Attachment 1 below). It was agreed with the Executive Director to send the letter out in April 2020. But it was decided at the end of March that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on philosophy departments made it inappropriate to send the letter when many departments are under stress, and it has not been sent.

The Committee co-sponsored a session on the program at the 2020 Pacific Division meeting, which was unfortunately cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic:

5M. APA Committee Session: Applying for Teaching Positions at Two-Year Colleges and Making the Most of the Teaching Demonstration
Arranged by the APA Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement; co-sponsored by the American Association of Philosophy Teachers

Chairs: Marc Bobro (Santa Barbara City College) Jordan MacKenzie (Virginia Tech)

Commentators: Marc Bobro (Santa Barbara City College) Ian Duckles (San Diego Mesa College) Rebeka Ferreira (Green River College) Kristina Grob (University of South Carolina Sumter) Mary Gwin (San Diego Mesa College) J. Robert Loftis (Lorain County Community
This is the final year of my three years as Chair of the Committee, and it has been a privilege to serve with the members of the Committee and to do important work on one of the APA’s Standing Committees. I believe that the Committee has an important role to play in providing support to philosophers in academic careers at a time when university budgets are facing shortfalls due to the pandemic, putting philosophy programs and jobs at risk.

I do want to note before stepping down that there has been an issue of not enough nominations for replacements for the three members who rotate out each year. This is surprising given the importance of the Committee, and shows a need for the Committee’s work to be more visible in the future, including a Committee blog and a table at evening receptions at APA meetings.

The committee will be led by Sam Cowling for the next 3 years. Sam has five years of experience on the Committee and I am confident that the Committee’s work will continue on behalf of those in the profession of philosophy who are pursuing academic careers.

Attachment 1

Subject: Aligning your hiring process with the APA Job Market Calendar

Dear [Name],

As you may be aware, the American Philosophical Association published a Statement on the Job Market Calendar that took effect with the 2016-2017 academic job market season.

The statement reads as follows:

For tenure-track/continuing positions advertised in the second half of the calendar year, we recommend an application deadline of November 1 or later. It is further recommended that positions be advertised at least 30 days prior to the application deadline to ensure that candidates have ample time to apply.

In normal circumstances a prospective employee should have at least two weeks for consideration of a written offer from the hiring institution, and responses to offers of a position whose duties begin in the succeeding fall should not be required before February 1.

When advertising in PhilJobs: Jobs for Philosophers, advertisers will be asked to confirm that the hiring institution will follow the above guidelines. If an advertiser does not do so, the advertisement will include a notice to that effect.

As the chair of the APA Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement, I am writing to you to share why it is important that hiring departments follow the timing for applications and acceptance of job offers as described in the statement above.

Uniform deadlines for the job application process ensure fairness and provide job seekers the option to consider applying to and accepting offers from more institutions. Otherwise, a candidate may receive an
offer that she has to accept or reject before she hears about the outcome of other applications that she has interviewed for.

An early deadline for applications also affects the ability of job seekers to prepare their application materials and get advice and coaching from placement directors at their grad schools.

Additionally, when some advertisements have early deadlines and make early offers, departments that have not received approval for hires early in the fall are put at a disadvantage. This may disproportionately affect departments from universities that are less well-funded.

We understand that some departments may face pressure from administrators and deans to start the hiring process early. We encourage such departments to share the APA Statement on the Job Market Calendar with their leaders to help explain the need to follow the recommended job calendar, which may differ from the hiring schedule in other disciplines.

PhilJobs is set up to request advertisers to state whether they are hiring in accordance with the job market calendar. There is no prohibition on setting deadlines that are early, but the reason for the exception should be explained in the ad.

We thank you for considering the APA job market calendar when hiring is done in your department. The philosophy job market is stressful for job seekers, and departments that adhere to the calendar help to reduce the stress that job seekers face. It also enables hiring departments to receive applications from a wider pool of candidates—a win-win on both sides.

All the best,

David K. Chan
Chair, APA Committee on Academic Career Opportunities and Placement