Committee on the Defense of the Professional Rights of Philosophers

2019–2020 Membership

Scott A. Anderson, chair (2020)
Leslie Francis, associate chair (2020)
  Ann Garry (2020)
  Andrew Sepielli (2020)
  Donald W. Bruckner (2021)
  Tziporah Kasachkoff (2021)
  Amy Olberding (2022)
  Wendy Salkin (2022)
  Janet Stemwedel, ex officio (2020)
  Mark van Roojen, ex officio (2021)
  Michelle Kosch, ex officio (2022)
2019-20 Annual Report of the APA Committee for the Defense of the Professional Rights of Philosophers

2019-20 Membership:


The committee received requests for assistance from a small number of members. Two were in regards to withdrawn offers of employment. One of these resulted in the committee reaching out to express our concerns to the department/school involved, though the circumstances (occurring during the turmoil of the pandemic) made it difficult to fault anyone for more than proceeding incautiously as if things were normal while they were rapidly becoming quite abnormal. The other was also a matter of poor communication by a hiring department regarding the candidate’s eligibility for the position. My own failures as chair of the committee led to sufficient delays in addressing the matter that it became untimely, and I ultimately let it drop.

Over the course of 2019-20 year, the CDPRP continued to address a complaint from an APA member mentioned in the last two years’ Annual Reports. After receiving replies to our queries from the department against whom the complaint was made and engaging in further deliberation, our committee determined that it could not make a persuasive case that the member’s professional rights had been violated, such that it would justify the APA to issue a public rebuke of the institution. So we regard this matter as closed.

The committee received a request for assistance from a graduate student regarding their treatment by their graduate program. This complaint did not fall within our mandate, so far as we understand it. It raises the question, which the APA may wish to consider, of whether it should provide a facility for addressing the complaints of students in graduate programs concerning their treatment by the departments and schools they study at.

The committee organized a panel discussion that was to be held at the Pacific Division Meetings, on the topic of “What Should the APA Do to Defend the Rights of Philosophers Employed in Non-tenure-track Positions?” Unfortunately, we were unable to hold this discussion due to the cancellation of the Meetings.

This was my third and final year as chair of the committee. I thank the members with whom I served for their thoughtful, diligent service to the profession and the APA. While I believe the committee dealt with the issues put before it as best as it could as a committee, I feel I did not manage some of the tasks put before us this past year as well as they should have been, and did not give some the attention they deserved. I do not think that doing so would have improved the outcomes of those who were neglected, but it would likely have reflected better on the APA. I am sorry for not having done better this year.

report prepared by Scott A. Anderson, Chair