Committee on Non-Academic Careers

2019-2020 Membership

Barak Krakauer, chair (2021)

James E. Bruce (2020)

E. A. Howe (2020)

Mark Barber (2021)

Michael J. Murray (2021)

Shane Wilkins (2022)

Martin Willard (2022)
Report of the Committee on Non-Academic Careers
September 2020

2019-2020 Members

Barak Krakauer, Chair
Mark Barber, Associate Chair
James “Jay” Bruce
Daniel DeLoma
Shane Wilkins
Martin Willard

The 2017-2018 report from this Committee recommended that the Non-Academic Careers Committee be led by individuals who have successfully made the transition from academia to non-academic positions. During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Committee Chair, Associate Chair, and all but one of its members were non-academics. All of the Committee members are strongly committed to the goal of supporting graduate students and graduates who are considering leaving academia to begin non-academic careers.

In July 2020 two new members, Sherri Conklin and Jacob Heim, were added to the Committee. Both are current graduate students completing their dissertations, both have worked with Humanists@Work at the University of California, and both are very familiar with the challenges facing graduate students who are considering leaving academia.

Activities This Year

The Committee generally meets every six weeks by videoconference. We have developed both near- and long-term goals, and we have been very active during 2020. In May, the Committee Chair along with one current and one former member of the Committee gave a webinar presentation entitled “Philosophers Beyond Academia,” which was well-attended and generated a lively discussion.

Committee members are currently working on a revision of the 2016 edition of Beyond Academia. In connection with this work, the Committee has researched both placement and retention statistics for doctoral programs in the United States and Canada. We are working with Carolyn Dicey Jennings, who leads the research conducted for Academic Placement Data and Analysis, a research project funded in part by the APA.
To date our members have drafted revised sections of Beyond Academia containing relevant information and resources for students currently enrolled in graduate programs in philosophy, graduates of these programs, and departmental faculty.

In addition, Committee members recently recommended certain revisions to placement and retention survey questions used in the online Guide to Graduate Programs in Philosophy on the APA website. The recommended changes are intended to clarify survey questions and responses, making the survey responses more useful to prospective graduate students. We anticipate that these recommendations will be implemented during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Near-Term Goals

The Committee has proposed a webinar for placement directors, directors of graduate studies and other interested faculty entitled “Supporting Non-Academic Careers: Suggestions for Graduate Philosophy Departments.” This webinar will also serve as a workshop for some of the ideas we are developing for the revision of Beyond Academia. In addition to a stand-alone webinar, the presentation can be given at one or more of the divisional meetings, either virtually or in-person.

The new version of Beyond Academia will be an online version, hosted on the APA website as a “group” page. Our plan for the Beyond Academia web page includes subpages that—

• Link to interviews of various non-academics on the APA blog
• Summarize retention and placement statistics for doctoral programs in philosophy
• Advise current students and others considering leaving the academy on how to launch a non-academic career
• Provide advice to departmental faculty on how they can assist students and graduates who are considering leaving academia

Long-Term Goals

We plan to incorporate a mentorship program into the Beyond Academia page. Non-academics will be asked to volunteer for informational interviews with doctoral students and graduates who are considering leaving academia.

We will continue to identify non-academics who can provide personal narratives for the APA Blog. We believe that blog posts of this kind can give those who are considering non-academic careers a better sense of the kinds of opportunities available outside academia. New blog posts relevant to non-academic careers will be linked to the new Beyond Academia web page.