Committee on Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges

2019-2020 Membership

Richard Legum, chair (2022)

Bill Hartmann (2020)

A.J. Kreider (2020)

Heather Wilburn (2020)

Deirdre M. Frontczak (2021)

Mary Gwin (2021)

Kenneth Pike (2021)

Rebeka Ferreira (2022)

Shannon Kincaid (2022)

Rebecca Scott (2022)

David W. Concepcion, ex officio (2021)

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 Careers Teaching Philosophy at a Two-Year College: Find and Keep a Position.” 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.

These sessions were co-sponsored with:
APA Committee on Teaching Philosophy, and
APA Committee on Academic Careers Opportunities and Placement

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)
  Rebecca Scott (Harper College)
  Aaron Champene (St. Lewis Community College)

Central Division Session:
  Chair: Richard Legum (Kingsborough Community College–CUNY)
  Speakers:
  Bill Hartmann (St. Louis Community College, Emeritus)
  Rebecca Scott (Harper College, IL)
  Heather Wilburn (Tulsa Community College Community College, OK)
  Kristin Zbikowski (Hibbing Community College)

Pacific Division Session:
  Chair: Marc Bobro (Santa Barbara City College, CA)
  Speakers:
  Aaron Champene (St. Louis Community College)
  Rebeka Ferreira (Green River College, WA)
  Mary Gwin (San Diego Mesa College, CA)
  Kenneth Pike (Glendale Community College)

Results: Our planning was to put the committee’s work on track by holding sessions at each of the divisional meetings.

Our sessions at the Eastern Division and Central Division meetings were slightly less well attended than usual. These sessions were 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.
Unfortunately, the Pacific Division meeting was cancelled due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, the transition from face-to-face classes to online distance learning as Community Colleges closed their campuses in response to the pandemic created pandemonium among the committee members and our colleagues. Our activities were put on the back burner as we were learning to cope with the new teaching environment.

**Areas for Improvement:**
- We need to redouble our efforts to making the appropriate individuals aware of the nature of the the two-year job market. 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.

**Recommendation for improvement:**
- 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. We planned on improving on getting 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. We are going to undertake to provide online Zoom sessions in the future to augment the face-to-face sessions that we have. In addition, we should look into connecting with the Graduate Student Council of the APA to explore ways of connecting Philosophers to job opportunities and to improving their success in gaining employment in this sector of higher education.

**Publication of the one of the usual two semi-annual Issues of the APA Newsletter on Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges**

**Approach:** The Newsletter was not published this year. We did not receive sufficiently many submissions of appropriate quality to warrant its publication. Our new editors, Aaron Champene and Marc Bobro are onboard. 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:** The newsletter was not published this year.

**Areas for Improvement:**
- The editors have been looking into finding better ways to publicize the newsletter to receive a stream of appropriate quality articles.

**Recommendation for improvement:**
- The continued effort of the editors should has and we expect will continue to resolve these issues.

**Committee business meetings at each of the APA Eastern and Central Division Meetings**

**Approach:** The committee meets at each of the annual APA Division Meetings to discuss progress on projects and identifying new projects. These 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 scheduling conflicts at 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 and the Academic Career Opportunities and Placement Committee

Approach: The teaching committee and the American Association of Philosophy Teachers (AAPT) have been growing the teaching hub at the APA meetings. They are interested in our sponsoring Teaching Hub session related to pedagogy. Moreover, their focus is on these session leaving little room for the regular session that we have about what it is like to teach at a two-year college and how to get and keep a job in this environment. We have discussed coordinating our work more closely with the Committee on Teaching Philosophy on pedagogy related session. We continue to run such session at the teaching hubs. We need to engage with the Academic Career Opportunities and Placement Committees in order to engage two-year college Philosophy faculty members in the work of the committees and the APA to advance Philosophy.

Results: We continue to work on sessions for the teaching hub in coordination with the Teaching Committee.

Areas for Improvement: While members of our committee participated in the Teaching Hub sessions, the conflicting scheduling between the Teaching Hub and Two-Year College Philosophy Committee session is once again a problem.

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 revived a draft of the Credentialing Standard that was developed a few years ago and have reviewed it.

Areas for Improvement: We need to identify a sub-committee to work on this project and set goals for finalizing an appropriate Credentialing Proposal to be present 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 2020-2021 continue to focus 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
September 30, 2020