



American Philosophical Association

Department Advocacy Toolkit

*Drafted by the Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession
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Preamble

Philosophy, like many disciplines in the humanities, has long held a prominent place in the academy. Recently, however, colleges and universities have increasingly turned their attention and their resources to pre-professional programs, de-emphasizing the humanities and increasingly removing them from the center of the curriculum. As administrations look for ways to trim budgets, many philosophy departments have faced or are facing an existential crisis.

In fall 2016, the American Philosophical Association (APA) Executive Director and Chair of the Board of Officers asked the Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession to create a toolkit that might be used by programs at risk, programs hoping to insulate themselves against future risk, and programs aiming to strengthen and/or expand. This toolkit is motivated by our belief in the value of philosophy. As philosophers, we know that our students, institutions, and societies need what we have to offer. But our discipline must do a better job of persuading others—especially those who are not familiar with philosophy—that our expertise is vital.

In its [Statement on the Role of Philosophy in Higher Education](#), the APA clearly articulates the value of philosophy in higher education.

The discipline of philosophy contributes in an indispensable way to the realization of four goals that should be fundamental to any institution of higher learning: instilling habits of critical thinking in students; enhancing their reading, writing, and public speaking skills; transmitting cultural heritages to them; stimulating them to engage fundamental questions about reality, knowledge, and value.

In an effort to increase the visibility of the value of philosophy in institutions of higher learning, the committee understands this toolkit as a curatorial process to collect and disseminate ideas among philosophy departments. These ideas have been selected from across different types of institutions and departments. It is up to the faculty members within a department to decide which ideas will be effective at their institution and in their department. One reasonable recommendation is to focus on one to three strategies from the toolkit, and engage in a process of implementation and assessment (where appropriate) over the course of at least a year.

The toolkit is organized alphabetically; no single tool is presented as the guarantor of future success, but we hope that all different types of departments will find something of value herein. We have a lot to learn from each other—from both our failures and our successes.

Acknowledgements

Many dedicated people from a wide variety of institutions played a role in the creation of this toolkit. Their creativity and optimism for the future of philosophy burst from these pages. We are grateful to all the philosophers who participated in its development, and we hope many more will contribute to its continued relevance in the years to come. Members of the APA Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, chaired by Sally J. Scholz, contributed entries, read drafts, offered ideas, and maintained interest in this important project. They deserve mentioning by name: Luvell E. Anderson Jr., Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, Amy Berg, Sven Bernecker, Alexandra E. Bradner, David Chan, Sarah K.

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The APA board of officers read and commented on a draft of the toolkit in November 2017; we are grateful too for their studied comments and enthusiastic support. Thanks, too, to the devoted APA staff who proofread and copyedited the toolkit and prepared it for publication and distribution.

Admissions

Students might not think of philosophy when they are selecting colleges or careers, but hearing about interesting courses in philosophy and possible career paths can spark their interest. Here are some thoughts to make sure the admissions office at your college or university has the information it needs to recruit students to take courses and major in philosophy.

Importantly, philosophy departments need to develop a relationship with the admissions office. Deans of enrollment set the target for the number and type of student admitted to colleges and universities. Admissions counselors may not even know what to look for in seeking students who would find their academic home in philosophy. Develop a relationship with your admissions counselors and provide them with information about the skills and interests relevant to philosophical study.

Campus tours

- Provide suitable sound bites about the philosophy department as well as information about individual faculty members to the admissions office or student group that runs the tours. Tour guides like to tout interesting faculty research, student-faculty joint projects, and study opportunities that take place outside the walls of classrooms. Make sure the innovative and interesting aspects of your department, faculty, and course offerings are well known to the tour guides. Refresh this information annually so that philosophy and the philosophy department stay in everyone's mind and in the scripts for the tours.
- Pay attention to signage: make sure the department is marked, inviting, and easy for prospective students to spot. Signage should comply with [ADA Standards for Accessible Design](#) and be informative, readable, and easily understood. Multilingual signage might also be appropriate. Check campus maps to verify that the department appears on them.
- Remember that the department needs to be present outside of its singular location on campus. Post fliers for events, invitations to major, and news and pictures of successful alums throughout campus so that prospective students (and their parents) realize the potential of the philosophy major. Target especially athletic facilities and dining spots, as campus tours usually highlight these. Also consider multilingual posters.
- Plan special events and open houses on days or weekends when tours are frequent or when the college or university has an event that will bring prospective students to campus. Make sure such events are accessible and open to all prospective students and their family members.
- Encourage philosophy majors to sign up to give tours so that they can represent the importance of philosophy to prospective students.

Admissions Fliers on Philosophy

- Visit the admissions office regularly (once a term or once a year) to look at their fliers. Is philosophy mentioned? How is philosophy represented? If there are special brochures on specific programs (especially pre-law and pre-med), make sure that philosophy is mentioned. This may take sitting down with the admissions personnel who create the fliers. Help them see how philosophy and/or the humanities are being represented. Enhance that representation. For instance, if a liberal arts school produces admissions fliers that focus almost exclusively on how the humanities can aid a

career in finance or business, then students who are attracted to the humanities for their own sake will not consider attending. Look at the admissions information through the eyes of a 17-year-old.

- If your admissions office will allow, provide attractive, easy-to-understand, professionally produced literature on the philosophy department and its offerings—feel free to use or adapt the fliers presented alongside this toolkit. This literature will be collected by prospective students and parents.
- Think too of the amount of space dedicated to majors in the arts and humanities. Make sure other programs and majors don't overshadow the space for philosophy (and other humanities) in the college or university literature.
- Don't forget about web-based information and program finders. Find out how the admissions webpage is set up and how the philosophy program is described. Without input from philosophers, the admissions team may not have the information needed to represent the value of philosophy to prospective students.

Catalog Copy

- Regularly examine the catalog description of the philosophy department to ensure that it accurately represents the course offerings and requirements.
- Courses that attract students should be permanent features of the catalog listings in the departments, not special topics courses. Prospective students will look at the catalog to determine their course of study.

Personal Connections

- Consider asking the Office of Admissions for a list of students who specified an interest in philosophy. If the office can provide one, faculty or current students could send a personal note to tell prospective students about your department and invite them to learn more about philosophy.

See also: **ADVISING**, **CAREER CENTERS**, **INTERNSHIP OFFICES**, and **MARKETING PHILOSOPHY**

Advertising

Advertising is the public face of the department. Review department advertising periodically to ensure that the information is accessible, up to date, attractive, and timely.

- Link course offerings to contemporary debates in the news. For example:
 - A course on epistemology could be tied to “fake news” discussions.
 - A course on the philosophy of law could be presented as providing relevant information for changes in the Supreme Court.
 - A course in the philosophy of race could address contemporary social movements and issues.
 - A course on the philosophy of disability could be connected to efforts to push the national agenda on issues of accessibility and equity.
- Be sure to check all advertising media: webpage, social media, brochures, posters.
- If the college or university has electronic bulletin boards, make sure philosophy department events and accomplishments are included on a regular basis.

Offer advertising not just of course offerings but of faculty and faculty research as well. Advertise the unique talents of your personnel. Teaching awards, new publications, and even interesting hobbies can be attractive to students when considering what electives to take.

See the fliers presented alongside this toolkit—they can be used as provided or adapted for your particular program.

Advising

Like admissions, student advising is often provided by personnel who do not have backgrounds in philosophy.

First-Year Advisors

Many colleges and universities assign first-year advisors from among (a) the faculty or (b) specially hired faculty-staff advisors. Given that first-year advising is often the site for discussing possible majors with students, it is important that all advisors understand the value of philosophy. If the school uses advisors from among the faculty, philosophy faculty will need to participate in this important service. If the school uses specially hired advisors on a faculty-staff model (i.e., advisors who teach one or two courses but primarily advise) or an all-staff model, then the philosophy department ought to reach out to these advisors on a yearly basis to ensure that majoring in philosophy is one of the options they present to students.

For instance, the department might host a breakfast for advisors at which philosophy faculty are present to explain their courses and talk about the value of philosophy in itself as well as the value of philosophy for other disciplines. Provide advisors with literature developed to explain the major. Often, advisors are unfamiliar with all that the discipline of philosophy has to offer. Departments can do quite a lot to ensure that advisors have philosophy at the forefront of their minds when they meet with students. (Consider also the fact that advising is often perceived to be a thankless task. Perhaps the department could find ways to thank advisors, e.g., by giving small plants that will sit on an advisor's desk with a label that says "Thank you, From the Department of Philosophy." The power of suggestion—seeing "philosophy" every day—is a wonderful thing!)

Advising in the Major

Attentive faculty advising can attract students to the major, as students look for departments that can offer individualized attention. The philosophy department should come to be known as the department where students receive quality advising and professional mentoring from faculty members.

Peer advising is often a useful tool as well. Students who are considering a major in philosophy—or just considering taking another course in philosophy—might find the opportunity to talk with a current philosophy student productive. Consider using work-study dollars to fund a regular position for peer tutors in the department.

See also: **ADMISSIONS**, **CAREER CENTERS**, **INTERNSHIP OFFICES**, and **MARKETING PHILOSOPHY**

Alumni

Alumni networks can be a useful source for student support and departmental engagement. Alums often feel quite attached to their home departments and wish to maintain that connection in some form. Maintaining a network of former students helps to sustain departmental programs and could potentially lead to longer-term support.

- Invite alums to speak on the importance of philosophy for their careers.
- Invite alums who have gone to graduate school in philosophy back to the department to advise prospective applicants.
- Invite alums to be guest speakers in courses that might have an impact on professional careers such as law, medicine, social work, politics, and advocacy.
- Create an annual newsletter where alums can learn about departmental programs and changes and may also submit articles or updates.
- List alumni on the department's website, especially if they have gone on to have success in a variety of careers.

See also: **DATA** and **DEVELOPMENT**

Career Centers

Career centers and internship offices often work in isolation from academic departments. However, students benefit from academic advisors facilitating a direct connection with the career center. Faculty might consider inviting a representative from the career center to offer a brief presentation at a faculty meeting about the center so that faculty are well versed in what the college or university offers regarding career counseling and services. Departments might arrange for career centers to offer specific information and planning sessions for philosophy majors. Inviting other departments in the humanities has the added benefit of fostering community as students of the humanities connect in their shared efforts to map out a post-graduation path.

Like admissions and advising offices, career centers may benefit from having fliers about all one can do with a philosophy degree. Feel free to use or adapt the fliers presented alongside this toolkit.

See also: **ADMISSIONS**, **ADVISING**, **INTERNSHIP OFFICES**, and **MARKETING PHILOSOPHY**

Core Requirements

Colleges and universities often have foundational or core requirements. Introductory courses in philosophy, ethics, and logic traditionally have been included in those general education requirements at many institutions. Some suggestions for departments include the following:

- Ensure that such courses continue to serve the goals and objectives of the core curriculum.
- Ensure that such courses provide students with an opportunity or invitation for further study in philosophy by introducing the variety of topics and methodologies in the discipline.
- Ensure that such courses champion the relevance of philosophy to a wide array of career paths by connecting philosophical topics or methods to real-world practices (e.g., the study of democracy for civic engagement, the study of objectivity for social scientific practices, the study of values for interpersonal relationships, etc.).

Note that introductory courses in philosophy, ethics, and logic may not be the only philosophy courses that meet core or general education requirements. Faculty should look for opportunities to promote their courses as meeting general education requirements whenever possible. Most philosophy courses will meet skill-based general education requirements in oral communication, critical thinking, and writing. Courses on race, gender, class, or disability will fulfill college diversity requirements.

In terms of core content areas, logic courses will often meet mathematics requirements. Philosophy of science, philosophy of biology, philosophy of physics, science and technology studies, and bioethics courses, depending upon their content and the instructor's background, can meet science and/or history requirements. Philosophy of art, film, dance, and literature can meet core requirements in visual arts, performing arts, and English literature. Political philosophy and feminist philosophy courses can meet core requirements in social science and in civic engagement and service learning. More and more institutions are adding high-impact learning requirements to their cores, so philosophy departments should look to add courses to their catalogs that meet these new requirements.

Both the APA Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy and the American Association of Philosophy Professors (AAPT) can assist departments in developing both new individual courses and new courses of study for the major and minor. The APA/AAPT Teaching Hub routinely offers faculty development sessions that focus on general education issues at the three APA divisional meetings. And the journals *Teaching Philosophy* and *AAPT Studies in Pedagogy* publish articles on the ways in which philosophy departments can contribute to general education.

If there are no core requirements at your institution, introductory courses in philosophy still can be marketed as interesting and valuable general education courses that invite students to hone their critical thinking, close reading, and argumentative writing skills.

Courses and Curricula

Philosophy departments have long been a place of innovation in curriculum development. The following topics draw on philosophy departments' potential for innovation and point toward ways in which they can creatively extend their influence at their home institutions.

Attractive Course Names

Consider whether some of the traditional names of courses might be failing to attract students. The appeal of a course on "Epistemology," for instance, might be limited to students who are already "in the know" about philosophy. It is worth considering whether a name change might attract a wider audience. Words like "information," "knowledge," "truth," and "belief"—common topics in an epistemology course—might draw a student to read the course description more so than "epistemology." "God," "reality," and "time" might draw more students than "metaphysics." "Birth," "sex," and "death" might draw more students than "philosophy of biology."

Cognate Courses

Encourage other departments to add philosophy courses as cognates. For example:

- An environmental ethics class might meet an ecology or geography requirement.
- A healthcare ethics or philosophy of disability class might meet a nursing requirement.
- A computer ethics class might meet a computer science requirement.
- A philosophy of race class might meet a race studies or peace and justice requirement.

Cross-Listing

Every discipline approaches a topic from its particular methodology and disciplinary standards. Often, there are no opportunities to create connections with other disciplines. However, when course content overlaps with another discipline or when a course has the potential to significantly contribute to another major, philosophy departments might pursue cross-listing the course so that students in the other major may receive credit toward their major for a course in philosophy. For example:

- Philosophy of Psychology cross-listed in the psychology department
- Computer Ethics cross-listed in the computer science department
- Philosophy of Education cross-listed with education departments
- Philosophy and Disability cross-listed with disability studies
- Philosophy of Mind cross-listed with cognitive science programs
- Feminist Theory cross-listed in the gender and women's studies department
- Islamic Philosophy cross-listed with religious studies
- Logic cross-listed with the math department
- Philosophy of Art cross-listed with the visual art department
- Philosophy of Literature cross-listed with the English department

Elective Courses

- Create elective courses without pre-requisites. These help to boost enrollments (a data point of great interest to administrators).
- Cater some elective courses to fit in college distribution requirements.
- Create elective courses that “meet students where they are”—for instance, courses such as Yoga and Philosophy, Fitness and Philosophy, Food and Philosophy, and Philosophy of Sports might appeal to particular demographics served at a college or university.

Faculty Placement

Consider asking faculty members to identify their pedagogical strengths and placing them in courses accordingly. For example, lecturers who are especially engaging could be in introductory courses; instructors who excel at one-on-one writing instruction could be in sophomore gateway courses or advanced seminars with writing requirements; instructors who are presently engaged in a research project could be placed in an advanced seminar on that topic.

First-Year Courses

- Have your most engaging professors teach the first-year courses. This is where you will win students or lose them.
- Include engaging topics and diverse material in first-year courses to tap into a variety of student interests.
- Make sure professors who teach introductory courses also teach more advanced courses. Students often follow professors.
- Consider having other professors visit the first-year courses in order to introduce themselves, to pitch their elective courses for the following term, and perhaps even to give guest lectures.
- Advertise electives in all first-year courses during or before registration for the new term. Consider providing a list of electives with course descriptions or use a slide presentation to show students the variety of courses available through the philosophy department. Send a personal email to your best first-year students to guide and advise them toward the courses they might next explore.

Interdisciplinary Courses and Majors

Cross-disciplinary initiatives and interdisciplinary programs provide opportunities to demonstrate and communicate the value of philosophy. These programs also increase enrollment in courses already offered by philosophy departments.

See also: **INTERDISCIPLINARITY**

“On-Ramping” Courses and Initiatives

- Create courses specifically designed to attract new students to the major and the discipline. These can be one-credit enrichment courses or three-credit introductory courses with specific themes.
- One-off or special topics courses that are relevant to other departments and majors could also entice students to declare a double major or minor.
- Offer to guest lecture in other departments. A bioethicist who visits a first-year biology course for a day might end up with a number of biology students in her Philosophy of Science course next term.

Timely Course Material

Philosophy prepares students for so many of life's challenges. Course content and full-semester courses that address timely topics in culture and society demonstrate the value of the discipline to students and administrators alike. Philosophy courses on Human Rights, Poverty, Racism, Robot Ethics and Artificial Intelligence, and War and Peace may help to attract non-majors to the philosophy electives. Courses such as these serve the department best if they do not require prerequisites.

Data

Keep data and use it regularly. Be prepared to present data to important decision-makers in the institution. It is especially important to maintain data that administrators will be persuaded by, including longitudinal studies of the following:

- Enrollment figures for courses
- Number of majors and minors (and whether any initiatives demonstrate change)
- Number of students from other majors served in cognate courses
- Number of students served in service courses for general education requirements
- Extra-curricular leadership positions among majors and minors
- Summer internships held by majors and minors and undergraduate summer program acceptances
- Budget (and comparison figures for other departments, if available)
- Student and faculty publications and conference presentations
- Faculty credit hours

Work with your alumni association to gather data on placement and job satisfaction post-graduation. Alumni Offices can also assist in maintaining data on the following:

- Graduate school acceptances
- Graduate school matriculations
- Job offers, both in and outside of philosophy

A yearly email to the provost or other higher administrative officers reporting these data may also be a good idea.

See also: **STANDARDIZED TESTS**

Development

Development offices exist in order to raise money for special projects and units within the college or university. Philosophy programs should connect with a member of the development team to ensure that the program's relationship is regularly renewed and expanded.

Projects

Create a list of ongoing projects as well as a list of projects the department would like to pursue. Remember to include projects that support undergraduate participation in local, regional, and national philosophy conferences, summer programs, and journal work.

Look for opportunities for donors to add their names to initiatives that support your department. You might solicit donations for named lecture series, seminar rooms, common spaces, departmental libraries, and undergraduate or graduate prizes for departmental service, engagement, and academic performance.

Include named professorships or endowed chairs on your wish list. (It is surely more difficult for a department to be dissolved if there is an endowed chair affiliated with it.)

Alumni

Maintain lists of alums and find ways to involve them or to keep them informed of departmental developments. Alumni offices and registrars can help to generate a list of alums with contact information. A yearly newsletter with features about favorite professors, new happenings, and even news from alums themselves can help to create or sustain a strong network of support, should a department find itself at risk. In addition, direct appeals to these alums for special needs can relieve department operating budgets. For instance, appealing to alums to give \$20-\$50 each in order to support a student philosophy club can provide enough resources for that club to offer important college-wide programming that helps to make the department as a whole more visible and essential to the life of the college. It has become increasingly common for undergraduate philosophy students to give papers at conferences. Alumni can serve as a source of support for student travel.

See also: **ALUMNI**

Diversity

Students benefit from philosophy courses that demonstrate an understanding of, and sensitivity to, questions of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Philosophy courses with an EDI focus have broad appeal and assist students in professional programs who need intercultural understanding in order to be successful in their fields.

Developing more philosophy courses with an EDI component contributes to the goals of a liberal arts education and signals to students the contemporary relevance of the discipline. The American Philosophical Association has an extensive set of resources on diversity. Please see the [APA website](#) Resources tab. This website is continually updated and expanded. See also the [Best Practices for the Inclusive Philosophy Classroom](#) website maintained by Minorities and Philosophy.

Double Major

In addition to emphasizing the value of a stand-alone philosophy major, it is also important to encourage students to consider philosophy as a second major. Students may not understand how they can benefit intellectually and professionally from philosophy as a second major.

Philosophy departments can clearly frame the added value of philosophy as a second major in department literature that they prepare for admissions. For example, departments can emphasize how philosophy teaches important transferable life skills such as critical thinking, clear writing, and ethical reasoning about important societal issues such as justice and equality.

Departments should explain to students how to present their second major to potential graduate schools and employers. For example, aspiring medical students who have also thought about diverse metaphysical, social, political, and religious worldviews can present themselves as intellectually flexible, attentive to the whole patient, and cognizant of the ethical demands of the medical profession. Medical schools are increasingly interested in students who have a broad academic background. Many schools require a letter of recommendation from a non-science faculty member. Likewise, philosophy students headed toward business careers can discuss how they are well equipped to engage in big-picture, long-term, and multiple-stakeholder thinking.

Philosophy departments interested in promoting double majors might review their own major requirements to make it easier for students to complete a second major.

See also: **RECRUITING**

Elimination or Reduction of Department or Program

An at-risk department should seek to understand why it is at-risk. The rationale and data offered by university leadership for cutting or closing a philosophy department (or proposing to do so) varies. Understanding the specifics of the situation is important because it sets the terms for how the success or failure of the department's subsequent actions will be measured. Once the specific situation is understood, the department will want to articulate a set of specific goals informed by the department's understanding of precisely why it is at risk. Once these goals are articulated, then the department can decide which initiatives offered in this toolkit are most likely to contribute to achieving them. It may be useful to consider the ways in which a few initiatives can be designed or focused to work together to achieve one particularly important goal. It may also be helpful to consider the ways in which one initiative can be fine-tuned to contribute to achieving more than one goal.

Although the hope is that departments will not face shuttering or reduction, there are some strategies to think about if a department faces such an eventuality. The following is an initial attempt of the Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession to provide some resources to philosophers and administrators in the event of the closing of a department or program.

At or Before the Announcement of (Proposed) Elimination

Departments facing elimination or reduction need to judge their own contexts to determine whether any of these suggested strategies would be beneficial or detrimental.

- Contact the APA executive director and ask for a letter of support from the APA board of officers
- Notify the network of supporters, friends, and alums and ask them to write letters (if that might help)
- Faculty should not instigate student protests; students should be allowed to speak for themselves, not encouraged (or pressured) to speak for faculty.

State Legislatures and Legislators

Many public university programs are closing or facing downsizing because of pressure from legislatures. Several of the resources listed below offer insights into the closing of departments and programs at both public and private institutions.

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Best Practices in Worst-Case Scenarios

If cuts or closure cannot be avoided, the APA recommends that closing departments ask their administrations for the following, at a minimum:

- Current majors and minors should be allowed to graduate from the philosophy department.
- All tenured philosophy faculty should be absorbed into related departments.
- All efforts should be made to hire non-tenure-track faculty into related departments.

Engagement on Campus

Active involvement in the life of the college or university can contribute to the visibility of and long-term commitment to the department. Philosophy faculty and students who actively participate in the administration as well as the extracurricular activities of the college or university are well positioned to articulate the value of philosophy while also contributing their skills to specific administrative tasks. Remaining actively involved in the life of the institution keeps the department informed about who makes important decisions about the program (hiring, resource allocation, the potential for cuts or closure, etc.) and how those decisions are made.

Administration

Service to the administration of colleges or universities in ad hoc positions, committees, or even permanent appointments acquaints other administrators with the skills of a philosopher. It also demonstrates the philosophy department's commitment to the college or university. Since commitment often flows both ways, effective institutional service on the part of the philosophy faculty can make it more difficult for administrators to seek to get rid of a department.

Critical thinking, organization of ideas, and understanding the implications of actions are some of the many skills philosophers can contribute to administrative tasks.

Philosophy faculty should stay attuned to administrative decisions that may have an effect on the department. For instance, decisions that merge departments and programs could affect faculty lines in philosophy.

Faculty Governance

Engagement with faculty governance provides an opportunity to get to know colleagues outside of one's discipline and to build bridges that may result in other interdisciplinary collaborations.

It is particularly important that philosophers be represented on the governance body that selects and guides the institution's General Education package.

See also: **FACULTY GOVERNANCE**

Student Groups

Many colleges and universities ask faculty members to serve as advisors to extracurricular and co-curricular student groups. In addition to fostering community, these service opportunities provide an avenue for demonstrating how philosophy connects to real-world experiences and for encouraging students to learn more about what philosophy has to offer.

Faculty Governance

The structure and influence of faculty governance varies at each institution. Regardless of how it is structured, faculty governance is important for communicating the challenges any given department faces and bringing awareness to the value of individual and departmental contributions.

Faculty members involved in faculty governance have a voice in or with the administration as well as allies from other disciplines. In addition, faculty governance bodies often receive advance information and may even have some decision-making capacities regarding significant infrastructure or programmatic changes at an institution. Knowledge of possible budget issues or organizational changes, and involvement in decisions that could affect a department, empowers faculty members and allows for ameliorative efforts to be more targeted and effective.

Even if a department does not have the personnel to be involved in faculty governance, all faculty should stay informed about how decisions are made and whether decisions involve faculty input.

See also: **ENGAGEMENT ON CAMPUS**

Funding

One reason often given for program closure is cost. Departments of philosophy cannot sustain themselves through grants. However, by alleviating some of the budgetary pressure, departments might be in a better position to negotiate their status and existence within colleges and universities.

Internal Grant and Development Programs

Explore existing opportunities in the college or university for internal grants that might fund student research or programming.

Competing for, and obtaining, internal grants serves as a measure for administrators to evaluate positively a program's continued importance on campus.

See also: **DEVELOPMENT**

External Grant Opportunities

Consider how aspects of programs already offered by your department or projects that the department would like to offer might qualify for small grants through any of the many small grant organizations:

- [APA Small Grant Fund](#)
- [AAPT Grants for Innovation in Teaching](#)
- [Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation](#)
- [Mellon Foundation](#)
- [NEH Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions](#)
- [Templeton Foundation](#)

Innovation

Teaching

Many campuses have innovative teaching programs (such as learning communities or great books series) that are a part of the general education curriculum. Teaching philosophy in a required program can introduce undeclared students to philosophy.

Equally, departments can innovate within the traditional core courses in their programs in a way that will attract a broader group of students. For courses that are designed around a period in Western philosophical history, consider diversifying the syllabus so that it is more reflective of the social, political, and historical context of that period, and more easily relatable to the world today. Consider including intellectuals who were representative but were not accepted as a part of the canon. Consider including material that connects philosophy to other disciplines. The APA has an extensive set of resources on diversity. Please see the [APA website](#) Resources tab. This website is continually updated and expanded.

Further, there is no shortage of articles published in philosophy journals that address how to diversify a syllabus (for examples of journals specifically devoted to discussions in pedagogy, see [Teaching Philosophy](#) and the recently launched [American Association of Philosophy Teachers Studies in Pedagogy](#)).

Departments could further encourage faculty to continue to update and develop their teaching by reading in the scholarship of teaching and learning, attending the sessions offered through the APA-AAPT [Teaching Hub](#) at the APA divisional meetings, attending the AAPT's biennial workshop-conference on the teaching of philosophy, and inviting the AAPT to campus to offer a one-day [teaching and learning or inclusivity workshop](#).

See also: **DIVERSITY**

Community Involvement

Many professional philosophers both within and outside of academia are actively demonstrating the value of philosophy through community involvement. Many opportunities are available to departments who wish to have an impact beyond the classroom. Departments can consider the following:

- [Intercollegiate ethics bowls](#) and [high school ethics bowls](#).
- Philosophy for children (examples of organizations include the [Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization](#), the [Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children](#), the Phi Sigma Tau Lyceum project, and the [North American Association for the Community of Inquiry](#))
- Philosophy in churches, community centers, or assisted-living facilities
- Philosophy in prisons
- Ethics consultation (medical ethics, legal ethics, political ethics, business ethics)

Even if department members themselves do not wish to become involved in local communities, it might make the major more attractive to a broader range of students if departments were to advertise how broadly our philosophical skills can apply, and support students who wish to explore community involvement.

Interdisciplinarity

Philosophy is a fascinating discipline on its own, and we hope that all students will see the inherent value of philosophical thinking, regardless of their major. Building bridges with other majors and disciplines can embed or entrench philosophy programs into the curriculum and create opportunities for cross-, multi-, or interdisciplinary interaction. Some ideas that might be useful include the following:

Biology

- Courses in Philosophy of Biology, Bioethics, Philosophy of Science, Science and Technology Studies, Modern Philosophy, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Mind.
- First-year, fall-term, writing-intensive seminars in bioethics are particularly appealing courses to both students and administrators. Moreover, such seminars often deliver students to second-semester courses in philosophy.

Business

- Courses in Business Ethics, Philosophy of Economics, Philosophy of Exchange, and Globalization.
- Workshops offered by philosophers for faculty and students in business to exchange ideas and develop cross-disciplinary interests.
- Programs that combine the expertise of business professionals with philosophers.
- Internship partnerships with business leaders specifically designed for philosophy students.
- Career-planning sessions that connect the skills of philosophers to career opportunities in business.

Cognitive Science

- Courses in Philosophy of Mind, Neuroscience and Ethics, Philosophy and Psychology, Philosophy and Psychiatry, or Psychoanalysis.
- Interdisciplinary major or minor.
- Programming that brings faculty from philosophy and cognitive science together.
- Interdisciplinary grants.
- Student research opportunities that bridge the disciplines.

Computer Science

- Courses in Computer Ethics, Artificial Intelligence, Robot Ethics, Cyber Security, and Cyber Warfare.
- An interdisciplinary minor.

Criminology and Sociology

- Courses in Jurisprudence, Philosophy of Law, Theories of Punishment, Justice, and Freedom.
- Experiential learning courses in prisons.

Critical Race Studies or Africana Studies

- Courses in the Philosophy of Race, Critical Race Theory, Race and the Law, Latinx Philosophy, African Philosophy, and Caribbean Philosophy.
- Programming on contemporary issues of race and racism.

Disability Studies

- Courses in Philosophy and Disability, Philosophy of Law, Phenomenology of the Lived Body, and Medical Ethics.
- Interdisciplinary minor with, for instance, Education and Psychology departments.

Economics

- Courses in Business Ethics, Philosophy of Economics, Philosophy of Exchange, and Globalization.
- Intradepartmental programming.
- Philosophy, Politics, and Economics cross-disciplinary major.

Engineering

- Courses in Engineering Ethics.
- Study-abroad opportunities or service trips that explore justice and civil engineering projects (e.g., potable-water projects, road-construction projects, housing projects).

Environmental Studies

- Courses in Environmental Ethics, Environmental Philosophy, Philosophy of the Natural World, and Philosophy and Biology.
- Programming on contemporary environmental problems (e.g., environmental racism, climate change, resource allocation).
- Cross-disciplinary praxis or service opportunities (justice and open space in an urban environment).

Ethnic Studies

- Courses in Native American Philosophy, Latinx philosophy, African Philosophy, Caribbean Philosophy, Asian Philosophy, and more.
- Programming on contemporary issues (e.g., migration and immigration, race and racism).
- Interdisciplinary contributions to programs like Cultural Studies, Africana Studies, and Hispanic Studies.

Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies

- Courses in Feminist Theories, Intersectionality, Gender and Sexuality, Women Philosophers, and Queer Theory.
- Faculty support for interdisciplinary program and programming.
- Collaborative student projects in activism and scholarship.

Law

- Courses in Philosophy of Law, Bioethics and the Law, Jurisprudence, Social and Political Philosophy, and Legal Realism.

Nursing, Pre-Med, and Medical Humanities

- Courses in Healthcare Ethics, Bioethics, Health and Well-being, Bioethics and the Law, Philosophy of Biology, and Philosophy of Science.
- Minor in Healthcare Ethics or Bioethics.
- Cross-disciplinary programming on contemporary health and healthcare issues.

Political Science

- Courses in Political Philosophy, Human Nature, Decision Theory, and Plato.
- Experiential learning courses in prisons.
- Philosophy, Politics, and Economics cross-disciplinary major.

Visual Art and Art History

- Courses in Philosophy of Art, Philosophy of Literature, Philosophy of Film, and Philosophy of Music.
- Experiential learning opportunities, including study-abroad programs, that combine philosophy and art (or philosophy, art, and civic engagement).

Internship Offices

Internships are increasingly an expected part of a student's college experience.

Make the point of meeting with the internship office or advisors regarding internships. Aim to accomplish two things: (1) find out more about internships that would be appropriate for philosophy majors; and (2) advocate for internships that would be appropriate for philosophy majors.

Like admissions and advising offices and career centers, internship offices may benefit from having fliers about all one can do with a philosophy degree. Feel free to use or adapt the fliers presented alongside this toolkit.

See also: **ADMISSIONS, ADVISING, CAREER CENTERS, and MARKETING PHILOSOPHY**

Location on Campus

Students like to have a place to study, talk, run into other students, and perhaps even have a casual conversation with a professor. If it is possible to carve out a philosophy lounge within the allocated space for the department, students will come and will bring friends who just might declare a minor or a major. If the department has the resources, making coffee and snacks available will increase the allure.

Consider the classrooms in which courses are taught. If possible, ask for functional, accessible, bright, attractive, centrally located classrooms that make students want to attend class.

See if the office that allocates classroom space can assign the same classroom for multiple philosophy courses throughout the day so that students will run into each other and perhaps a community will be formed or enhanced.

Make sure signage is present to bring students into the philosophy department office. Signage should comply with [federal ADA Standards for Accessible Design](#) and be informative, readable, and easily understood. Multilingual signage might also be appropriate.

Marketing Philosophy

Philosophers tend not to think much about selling ourselves or our profession. But as with any major and potential profession, students are interested in hearing about who studies philosophy and what that person does with his or her major. Students and departments could both benefit from the marketing of philosophy. Prepare both short (3-minute) and longer (15-minute) pitches that can be adapted for different audiences: students, prospective students, administrators, parents.

The APA designed a [poster](#) that catalogs well known individuals in different fields who were philosophy majors, as well as a [series of smaller posters](#) highlighting particular individuals with philosophy backgrounds. Departments can download and print these posters for display and distribution.

The APA also provides [a webpage with more detailed information on each individual](#) on the poster; this page is regularly updated. Departments could utilize the detailed information to create a document tailored to the interests of the students at their institutions.

The APA also has a [resource page](#) for undergraduates who are interested in philosophy. On this page are examples of how other departments market the philosophy major on their department websites. Interested departments might consider writing a similar document for their own websites.

Finally, departments can track the types of graduate programs and professions into which their graduates enter and keep this data on hand for interested students. This type of data is useful not only to potential students, but also to departments as they assess their own programs. If departments are adept at maintaining relationships with alumni, they will have a pool of individuals to draw from to speak on campus about the value of the philosophy major.

Market philosophy not only to students, but also to other offices on campus.

See also: **ADMISSIONS, ADVISING, CAREER CENTERS, and INTERNSHIP OFFICES**

Merchandise

Selling the discipline and the department with water bottles, t-shirts, coffee mugs, glasses, etc. means that students will live with the word “philosophy,” which might encourage them to think again about the major.

Consider supporting your undergraduate philosophy club in holding a t-shirt design contest each year. Undergraduate philosophy majors tend to be clever and funny. Their winning shirts will provide good press for your department.

Many campuses have exclusive merchandising arrangements through the bookstore; you may need to work with bookstore representatives to create and sell merchandise.

National Involvement

Remember that the APA is a resource for departments. The [APA's website](#) and [blog](#) are full of information for all kinds of philosophy departments. The [APA's grants](#) can provide support for your department if you're planning projects that will benefit the profession. [APA statements and policies](#) may be helpful to departments that are facing threats. The APA leadership can also write letters to university and college leaders (e.g., president, board of trustees) on behalf of a threatened department; contact the executive director (executivedirector@apaonline.org) to request a letter or other support.

Beyond the APA, other professional organizations, including the American Society for Aesthetics, Minorities and Philosophy, the American Association of Philosophy Teachers, the Philosophy of Science Association, the Society for Applied Philosophy, the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, and the Society for Women in Philosophy, among many others, have resources to support more targeted initiatives or programs.

Networking

Philosophers have a reputation for being solitary creatures engaged in their own research, but this reputation is rapidly changing. Departments and individual professors may find benefits to the networking opportunities in the profession.

- Global internet research networks such as Academia.edu and Researchgate.net can forge connections among like-minded scholars.
- Smaller research networks, specific to individual philosophical subfields, can build support for and feedback on one's scholarly work.
- Social media networks alert campus, local, and global communities of events in your department, faculty accomplishments, and student achievements.
- Professional networking within the APA can be a crucial avenue for support should a department come under threat of closure.
- Department members will also benefit from networking *within* their campuses, making sure that other departments know of the philosophy department's institutional contributions and the successes of the department's best majors and minors.

Parents of (Prospective) Students

The APA has a robust and dynamic collection of resources to help communicate the value of philosophy, the success of philosophy majors, the value of humanities, the earning potential of philosophers, etc. Please see the resources link on the [APA website](#). Parents might also be attracted to the fact that students trained in philosophy tend to [earn more](#) by mid-career than their peers trained in business.

Prizes

Award your own internal prizes. Prizes—for students and faculty alike—are a good way to motivate people and draw attention to your department. If your college does not have a semester—or year-end—awards ceremony, you can hand these out at a departmental ceremony. A departmental reception during graduation can serve as a final meeting for majors and minors and as a window for parents into their student’s college experience.

For students, consider awards for best major, minor, paper, senior thesis, community member, etc. For faculty, consider awards for course development, curricular innovation, service to the department, and advising.

Faculty deserve prizes too. Asking undergraduate students (perhaps in the philosophy club or among majors) to determine an Instructor of the Year can make them feel like they have some say in the life of your department. If your institution has all-campus awards for faculty, make sure you consistently nominate deserving department members for those awards. If teaching awards are determined by undergraduate nominations or votes, it is good to make your undergraduates aware of this, if you can do so without creating any conflicts of interest. One way to do this is to add a question to your course evaluations asking whether the instructor deserves a teaching award.

Most crucially, from a marketing perspective, make sure that you let your institution’s marketing/public relations department know when your faculty and students win awards, whether local or national. Posts on your department’s and university’s websites show that your department is thriving.

Programming

Think of the value of programming to the college and university (and even local community)—not just the department.

Programming During New Student Orientation, Parents' Weekend, and Admissions Overnights

- Provide talks on interesting topics open to students or parents during new student orientation, parents' weekends, and admissions overnights.
- Participate in established programs involving faculty at new student orientation, parents' weekends, and admissions overnights.
- Use your department's Twitter account to run an "Ask a Philosopher" conversation on the new student hashtag so that you begin engaging in philosophical dialog with new students.
- Volunteer to offer a class/lecture to parents during parents' weekend or host a program with student presentations (e.g., ethics debate, student paper presentation, philosophical "symposium" in which parents or students may participate) that show off the important work done by philosophers at your institution.

Programming Aimed at Traditional College or University Events

- Offer a lecture—from an internal speaker or an external speaker—in conjunction with an annual college or university event. Demonstrating a public commitment to the traditions of the college or university helps to secure the department's reputation within the institution.
- Offer an event in conjunction with a special event on campus such as an anniversary of the university's founding or the appointment of a new president. Remember to work with the programming staff for the larger event itself to get your department's contribution on the calendar and to avoid any friction that comes from scheduling across purposes.
- Offer a panel or fireside chat organized as part of a college or university's "One Book" program.

Programming in Response to Timely Issues

- Philosophers can be excellent commentators in the public sphere. Timely social and political issues call out for philosophical reflection, and campuses often crave the sort of conversation that a philosophy discussion invites. Panels on climate change, racial injustice, political issues, war, and other timely issues demonstrate the value of philosophy to a wide audience.
- Philosophers might also consider non-traditional programming in response to timely issues. For instance, professors and students might come to understand the value of philosophy through writing op-eds, organizing collective action, and engaging in teach-ins to bring awareness to a topic of global or local concern.

Programming Involving Alumni

- Invite alums back to speak about how philosophy contributes to their profession and their lives.
- Invite alums to teach a class session or serve as a guest speaker in a course.

See also: **ALUMNI** and **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Public Engagement

Public engagement is important for all departments, but especially for those at risk. Departments that have some recognition from outside the college or university can become more rooted in the community and harder to shut down. Public engagement raises the profile of philosophy: community members who might not even have known that their local university had a philosophy department can learn about what it does. Public engagement showcases our ability to rigorously engage with topics of interest to the general public; it corrects misconceptions about who can be a philosopher and what exactly it is that we do; and it lets us showcase the benefits of philosophy for individual students and for the broader community.

Departments looking to increase their public engagement should keep in mind the audiences to whom they are trying to appeal. For at-risk departments, the ultimate audience may be university administrators. Departments should keep track of their public engagement and consider how to use their resources in ways that will fit with the priorities, resources, and strengths of their university. Appealing to other audiences can help to accomplish this. Involving community professionals—lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers, and so on—can integrate a philosophy department into the community and lead to networking opportunities for majors, reassuring a university administration that a philosophy major can be a good choice for students. Public engagement can reassure parents that their children are learning skills that will be useful, whatever their future career choice. And public engagement at the pre-college level can lead a wider range of prospective students to consider philosophy as a major.

A variety of events can count as effective public engagement—what they are for your department depends on your size, resources, and strengths, as well as on your community’s needs. Some kinds of public engagement might take place on campus, such as talks that are oriented toward the public (and advertised in newspapers, local discussion boards, and so on). Fielding a team for the [Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl](#) or the Bioethics Bowl (or getting your students to coach a team for the [National High School Ethics Bowl](#)) can help to raise the profile of your department. Make sure to let your university know about your Ethics Bowl participation—especially if you do well!

There are even more opportunities for public engagement off campus. You could get a group of your students together to do a presentation about philosophy at an elementary school, a high school, a museum, a nursing home, or a prison. Consider seeing whether a local coffee shop or bar will let you give short talks or set up an “Ask-a-Philosopher” booth. Public engagement can also take place in the wider community. If you have recently done some work that might be of interest to non-philosophers, consider submitting an accessible version of it to a website that publishes public work by philosophers: *The Huffington Post*, the *New York Times* blog “The Stone,” and *Aeon* are a few sample venues. Your local newspaper could also be a good choice, especially if there are local issues that could benefit from philosophical analysis. Even a Twitter account can show that you are interested in reaching a wider audience.

Finally, look for partners both at your university and in the wider community. Ethics centers and campus religious organizations may be interested in jointly sponsoring events. Other disciplines and schools at your university can also make great partners. This is especially important if your department is at risk. The engineering, biology, and psychology departments may not be facing similar risks. Partnering with

prominent departments such as these can help to show your administration that philosophy has something distinctive and important to contribute to your university's intellectual life.

Finally, be sure that university administrators are aware of your department's public engagement, for example, by mentioning events in emails to them or forwarding them a link to a recent op-ed.

Recruiting

The response from students to individual invitations to major in philosophy is powerful. Seek opportunities to recruit students, participate in recruitment events on campus, and encourage all instructors of philosophy to recruit. All faculty should recruit for the major.

Recruiting for Upper-Division Courses

- Students with nascent knowledge of philosophy or budding interest in it may not know where to turn to learn more. Consider creating a video or presentation that briefly presents the upper-division course offerings. Make sure the presentation highlights not only the intrinsic value of the course but also the instrumental value, e.g., bioethics in philosophy is of interest to pre-med students not only because the topic is interesting, relevant, and useful, but also because medical schools are increasingly interested in students who display some knowledge of or interest in ethics. Show this presentation before or during registration, not at the end of the term.

Recruiting for the Major

- Ask all instructors to contact their promising students personally, encouraging them to consider majoring. Students need to know they have what it takes to succeed in a major. Helping them to see that in themselves can not only boost a student's self-esteem but also increase the prospects that the student will take a second, third, or fourth course.
- *See also:* **ADVISING**

Recruiting for the Double Major

- Philosophy is a very attractive major to pair with another field of study: Political Science, Computer Science, Psychology, Biology, Economics, Physics, and many other fields share some common interests with subfields of philosophy. Marketing courses to those majors can help to boost enrollments.
- Consider making the double major, or philosophy as a second major, more attractive by allowing one or two courses from the other major to count toward philosophy, or consider waiving the capstone course for the second major. Making the pursuit of the major just a bit easier can entice students to give it a try.
- *See also:* **ADVISING** and **DOUBLE MAJOR**

Recruiting for the Minor

- Offering a minor will attract new populations of students to your philosophy courses. Review your department's requirements for the minor and your course prerequisites. Students are less likely to pursue minors that take longer than two years to complete and courses that have too many prerequisites.
- Students view minors as added credentials. Marketing the minor as a credential that will enhance another degree can be very attractive. Philosophy teaches the critical thinking, writing, close reading, oral communication, and problem-solving skills that every profession requires. A philosophy minor on the transcript indicates that the student has these skills, and faculty should

also coach students in how to write a few lines about the value of their philosophy minor in their applications to graduate schools and jobs.

- A minor that can be completed entirely online serves nontraditional students as well as traditional students and enhances the department profile in some branches of the administration.

Research and Publishing

Faculty need to be visible beyond their home institutions. Presenting research at scholarly conferences and publishing in scholarly venues helps to build a network. This network might serve as a base of support if departments come under threat. More instrumentally, publishing by faculty helps to secure the department's reputation and standing within the institution. Administrators are measuring outcomes of all sorts.

Consider opportunities to bring students in on research and publishing. One of the many ways that administrators measure the learning outcomes and success of departments is through undergraduate research. Many institutions have large summer research programs for undergraduate science students, who receive a stipend, free room, and free board to work with a professor for a few months on an independent research project. These science programs have led to the creation of parallel programs for humanities students. Encourage your institution to offer summer research funding for philosophy students, if it does not do so already. Tie summer research projects to a concrete outcome: your state's annual philosophy conference, a philosophy blog post, or a publication call. When your students present their work, be sure to publicize the accomplishments in your department newsletter, social media profiles, and website.

Encourage students to submit their work to one of the many undergraduate journals in philosophy. The STEM fields often leverage the research of their students to obtain additional support for their programs and attract incoming students. Philosophy can learn a lot from following this strategy. The following is a non-exhaustive list of undergraduate journals:

- [*Aporia*](#)
- [*Dialectic*](#)
- [*Dialogue*](#)
- [*Dualist*](#)
- [*Ephemeris*](#)
- [*Episteme*](#)
- [*Geist*](#)
- [*GNOSIS*](#)
- [*Janua Sophia*](#)
- [*Logos*](#)
- [*The Midwest Journal of Undergraduate Research*](#)
- [*The Princeton Journal of Bioethics*](#)
- [*Prometheus*](#)
- [*The Reed*](#)
- [*Stance*](#)
- [*The Twin Cities Review of Political Philosophy*](#)
- [*The Vassar College Journal of Philosophy*](#)

See also: **RESEARCH ASSISTANTS AND TUTORS**

Skills and Competencies

Colleges and universities create learning goals and assess outcomes as a way to measure success in their general education or core curriculum programs. An increasing trend in the field of outcomes assessment is to articulate the specific skills, competencies, and dispositions expected from a curricular program. Philosophy departments must find ways to articulate the value of philosophy and its contributions to the educational mission of an institution.

There are a number of different ways in which philosophy departments might articulate what students learn from taking a philosophy course, and individual courses offer different skills and competencies. No single course in philosophy accomplishes all things. In addition, philosophy departments might want to think both about the skills and competencies of individual courses as well as the skills and competencies inculcated in a program of study.

Faculty in departments and programs are encouraged to think carefully about the unique mission of their institutions, as well as their departmental place in that mission, in order to discern some of the ways the courses offered contribute to the institutional mission. Departmental or disciplinary learning objectives should be connected in some clear way to broader institutional learning objectives. And departments should think carefully about how the skills and competencies they articulate will be received by others (e.g., general education or core curriculum committees, outcomes assessment officers, and administrators) at their own institutions.

The list below, organized by general topic, gathers contributions from skills and competencies lists from a variety of different institution types in various stages of the assessment process. The list is intended as a starting point for deeper deliberation and conversation around skills and competencies in philosophy. Thus, the list simply reports the various ways in which a collection of departments have articulated their learning goals, in hopes that the diversity of content and style within this list might be helpful. We would like to encourage departments to submit their own additions so that the APA might maintain a repository for departments beginning or revisiting the assessment process.

Critical-Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills and Qualities

- Ability to think critically and solve complex problems
- Ability to identify a number of possible solutions to problems
- Ability to discern the structure of arguments, to represent them fairly and clearly, and to evaluate them for cogency
- Ability to formulate original arguments, anticipate objections, and respond in a conscientious fashion
- Ability to fairly evaluate opposing arguments
- Ability to develop one's own views and support them with cogent reasons
- Ability to recognize alternatives that are useful in the problem-solving process
- Ability to identify important questions
- Ability to integrate ideas from interdisciplinary frameworks
- Ability to identify a number of possible solutions to problems
- Strong analytical skills
- Intellectual curiosity

- Openness to new ideas

Quantitative Skills

- Ability to employ the fundamental tools of formal logic, including the propositional and predicate calculus
- Ability to use systems of logic to solve and analyze problems

Oral and Written Communication Skills and Qualities

- Ability to speak and write clearly and persuasively about abstract and conceptually elusive matters
- Ability to engage in sustained and productive conversation
- Ability to make oral proposal and arguments
- Ability to communicate to a diverse audience
- Ability to comprehend and respond to objections
- Ability to speak and write clearly and persuasively about abstract and conceptually elusive matters
- Ability to identify, describe, and explain the major questions addressed, the range of answers offered, and the methods employed in the history of Western philosophy
- Ability to identify, describe, and explain the major arguments and options in core areas of contemporary philosophy, such as ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics
- Ability to read and discuss complex philosophical texts from both historical sources and contemporary works
- Detail-oriented approach to written and verbal communication
- Intellectual rigor in reading and writing
- Strong written communication skills
- Experience presenting research

Close-Reading Skills

- Ability to read and understand challenging texts
- Ability to carefully interpret written texts

Global and Intercultural Fluency Skills

- Ability to use diverse methodological approaches
- Systemic understanding of societies and of human institutions
- Awareness of cultural and social group differences
- Appreciation for a variety of perspectives in problem-solving
- Empathetic understanding of others
- Ability to fairly consider multiple perspectives

Teamwork, Collaboration, and Leadership Skills

- Ability to work independently or as part of a team
- Ability to recognize alternatives that are useful in the creative process
- Ability to take on responsibilities
- Ability to understand the progression of creative achievement
- Ability to engage in the creative process of innovators and agents of change

Digital Technology Skills

- Ability to use technology to present research

- Competency with a variety common software packages
- Ability to understand and consider ethical uses of technology

Professional and Career Management Skills

- Ability to meet deadlines in fast-paced environments
- Ability to discern areas where more growth is needed
- Ability to identify and articulate one's skills

Additional resources on this topic include the following:

- [Association of American Colleges & Universities](#)' VALUE Rubric Development Project
- Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. 2005. *Understanding by Design*, 2nd edition. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development publications.
- *Higher Ed Jobs' Core Competencies for Success*
- [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#)
- John Clanchy and Bridget Ballard. "[Generic Skills in Higher Education.](#)" *Higher Education Research and Development* 14, no. 2 (1995): 155–66.

See also the APA [Resources on Teaching](#).

Research Assistants and Tutors

Although the availability of research and teaching assistants usually marks a department as flush with funds, there could be opportunities to advocate for a research assistant program within any department. This might be a good project for internal and external grants. Individual faculty might also include funding for research assistants in their budgets for grants. Students, parents, and administrators take note of the opportunities available for student research. Working directly with faculty on research draws students to programs and colleges. Be sure to alert the admissions office of the research opportunities within your department—they might add that fact into their campus tours, thereby attracting students who wish to study philosophy (and hence increase the number of majors in your department).

Some colleges or universities have programs to support independent undergraduate research opportunities, conference participation, or research assistantships that pair a student with a professor. Encouraging students and faculty in the philosophy department to participate in these programs helps to build the department profile while also contributing to the research development of both the student and the faculty member. Highly motivated students embrace opportunities to pursue research on topics that interest them. If the department has a formal awards ceremony or regular honor society meeting, undergraduate research assistants might also benefit from presenting their work at such events.

External undergraduate research opportunities and summer study programs advertised to students and posted in an accessible location demonstrate to students the unique and interesting possibilities of studying philosophy. The APA has attractive posters for the many diversity institutes.

Departments can honor and employ good students by hiring them as tutors or teaching assistants. Campus writing centers are always looking for students who can serve as effective writing tutors for both students who use English as a second language and for native English speakers who struggle with their writing. Some philosophy departments establish logic labs in which advanced logic students make themselves available to beginning logic students in the evenings for extra assistance. And some institutions allow not only graduate but upper-level undergraduate students to serve as teaching assistants for intro-level courses. These opportunities bring good students closer to the philosophy department and its faculty. Moreover, placing advanced students in visible departmental roles also creates role models for younger students—a collection of smart, helpful, and cool older majors the younger students can aspire to become.

See also: **RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING**

Social Gatherings

Social gatherings help to create community among students and faculty. Holiday parties, graduation week receptions, coffees, and other special events demonstrate that philosophy departments care about their students.

- Social gatherings can be venues to advertise courses for subsequent terms and offer philosophy department merchandise.
- Departments might consider inviting general education or first-year advisors to social gatherings of philosophy faculty and philosophy students. When they are advising students about elective courses, a recollection of meeting friendly, welcoming philosophy professors and talking with engaged philosophy students may influence their suggestion of courses to take.
- [World Philosophy Day](#) is the third Thursday in November each year. Departments can join in the celebration by hosting a potluck, lecture, open house, or other events on that day. This brings attention not only to the department but also to the discipline. The [World Philosophy Day](#) webpage also includes useful information about the value of philosophy.
- Some departments hold a weekly philosophy table (on the model of weekly language tables) at which all members of the campus community are invited to join in to a casual, hour-long conversation over lunch of some timely philosophical topic. Such tables generate visibility for their host departments because they are held in busy cafeterias, and the tables are prominently flagged.
- At smaller colleges, departments sometimes organize competitive events against other departments. Students and faculty from the philosophy department might bowl or play softball against students and faculty from the history department, for example. The social events offer an opportunity to engage younger students and attract them to the major.
- Make sure that your social gatherings, especially if they take place off campus, are inviting, accessible events for students of a wide variety of ages and backgrounds.

Social Media

- Maintain profiles for the department on major social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Post announcements about upcoming events or student accomplishments on the department's social media profiles.
- Connect the department's social media to other social media using hashtags and subscribing to accounts in the college or university so that, for instance, the English department and the president's office both know about news from the philosophy department.
- Social media can also be used to create online discussions and virtual philosophy clubs to reach a wider audience.
- If your department's philosophy club has social media profiles, make sure the two reinforce one another's messages. Retweet the philosophy club's announcements from the department account, and ask the person managing the philosophy club's accounts to do the same for the department's posts.

Standardized Tests

Numerous studies have shown that the study of philosophy and other humanities yields positive outcomes on standardized tests. Philosophers score higher on the [LSAT](#) and the [GRE](#) compared with other majors, and are within the top five disciplines on the GMAT. These data appear in a series of charts on the [APA website](#) and at the [Daily Nous](#).

Further, numerous [studies](#) indicate that non-science undergraduate majors perform just as well as science majors in medical school. Students who [major in the humanities](#) also perform better in problem solving and clinical situations with patients. They also display more [caring responses](#) to patients and families.

Students as Ambassadors

Philosophy students can engage others in philosophical exploration and in doing so strengthen their own appreciation for the field. Engagement takes various forms:

Students Engaging Other Students

Peers are a terrific source of information and encouragement. Philosophy majors can be encouraged to create a philosophy club or regular reading groups (with or without graduate student or faculty guidance). Under the aegis of a club, students can develop a greater sense of autonomy and adventure within their department, for example, by producing a philosophy publication, or inviting their own speakers, or holding informal meetings with colloquium speakers outside the regular talk schedule.

Students Engaging Family and Friends

Philosophy has something for everyone, and sharing brings new appreciation for its relevance and importance. Students can listen to *Philosophy Talk* together with family or non-philosopher friends or start a book club to discuss philosophical ideas in literature.

Students Engaging the Public

Publicly identifiable forms of achievement and knowledge convey the value of philosophy. Students can help organize and participate in an Ethics Bowl, or help to organize debates for the public on topics of wide interest (on privacy, euthanasia, the idea of equality, etc.).

Study Abroad

Study abroad is increasingly a part of a student's college experience. Philosophy stands to gain quite a lot from this reality. Department representatives might make a point of meeting with study-abroad offices and coordinators to ensure that they encourage pursuing study-abroad courses in philosophy. Students returning from studying abroad bring energy and excitement—as well as new ideas—to department courses and events. Some examples are as follows:

- A student who studied abroad in Ghana could offer insights about African philosophy and perhaps even guest lecture in an introductory course.
- A student who spends a term in Germany may offer insights about German culture to a course reading German philosophy.
- A student who traveled to China or India to study Buddhism or Hinduism could provide interesting programming and suggest readings for courses in comparative philosophy or introductory surveys. Such a student would also be a valuable participant or teaching assistant to a course in Buddhism or Hinduism offered in an American college or university.
- A student who participates in a philosophical society in London might bring that tradition back to her institution and revitalize the philosophy club.
- Students studying in Brazil may take courses in and thus have important contributions to make to discussions in postcolonial, decolonial philosophy, or liberation philosophy.

Study abroad provides endless opportunities for faculty and students to learn from one another and expand the network of philosophers and philosophical resources in a home department.

Moreover, study-abroad programs may help some students discover philosophy in the first place—a study-abroad program in Italy with a focus on art might include a Philosophy of Art course, for example. Building connections with the study-abroad office can help to facilitate these opportunities.

Undergraduate Community Support

Lunches and Teas

Some departments have found success offering events such as “Philosophy Tea,” “Philosophy for Lunch,” or even “Philosophy on Tap.” These casual gatherings aim to capture curious individuals who might respond to an invitation to explore a question, topic, or thinker that intrigues them. These events can also include a handout that the group reads together and explore a planned topic while also providing a “take-away” that will help participants remember their experience in philosophy.

“Ask a Philosopher”

Charlie Brown’s “Lucy” offered psychiatric help for a nickel. In that same tradition, campus events might welcome a booth staffed by a philosopher (major or faculty member) to dish out pithy philosophical wisdom (for free!). It is worth noting that many people shy away from philosophy because they are afraid of it or they think philosophers are too serious. Showing that we have a sense of humor and a sense of fun is an important aspect of marketing our discipline.

Philosophy Paper-Writing Jam Sessions

Invite the students in all sections of philosophy to make progress on that paper they have been putting off! A paper-writing jam session is a late-night session where students write in the company of others. The idea is to make progress on a paper. In a way, it plays on the very idea that writing philosophy is challenging.

Study Halls in Philosophy

A philosophy study hall held one or two nights a semester/term—with or without food—creates a space where students can write their papers or read their philosophy in the company of others doing the same. There are multiple benefits: students interested in philosophy might find one another (creating a stronger departmental community), students seeking additional help in philosophy will get the support they need, and students seeking a place to just talk about ideas—or seeking others who also like to talk about ideas—will find a place to do so. Study halls are low cost but might require dedicated majors or faculty members to be present in a common space or a dedicated classroom for the event.

T-Shirts, Water Bottles, and Other “Swag”

T-shirts are the currency of college students. Your majors can be your best marketing tool. Give them a t-shirt that advertises philosophy and ask them to be your walking billboard! Similarly, nearly every student carries a water bottle. Custom-printed bottles that have the department name, a catchy phrase, or an attractive design help to get the word out about philosophy as a major. There are lots of other options too—hats, buttons, highlighters, etc.

Tutoring in Philosophy

Not every student will embrace the invitation to philosophize or even find the material compelling. Some students may struggle. If the philosophy department is seen as a supportive resource, those students may find a conducive home for further study and, perhaps even more importantly, serve as spokespeople for the department. Providing tutoring, faculty office hours, drop-in help with philosophy papers, etc. can help to make the philosophy department a valuable resource for students and a model for other programs.

Value of Philosophy

Communicate the value of philosophy at every opportunity. Lecture introductions, study halls, department social events, and every course the department offers are opportunities to speak to not only the willing audience of existing majors, but also new students and other faculty who may attend. Communicating the value of philosophy to your own majors may seem futile, but remember that they represent the department in large and small ways in their courses and social encounters. They need to hear the language and resources about the value of philosophy frequently so that they repeat it often.

Courses

- Talk about the benefits of studying philosophy and the direct relation of philosophical skills and knowledge to daily life. Helping students to connect philosophical ideas in the abstract with their daily reality encourages them to learn more. This engagement has the added benefit of prompting the students to strive for more in their philosophy courses as well. Don't forget that students themselves often have the most interesting connections to make between ideas and their life.
- Advertise more advanced courses in introductory classes. Invite students to continue to ask deeper questions or explore topics in greater breadth by taking another course in philosophy. To this end, introductory courses that include a relatively large percentage of material that can be studied further in advanced courses serve to channel students into the major or the minor.