

REQUEST FOR CONTINUING SUPPORT OF PIKSI

June 2007

Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute (PIKSI), first initiated by members of the Association of Feminist Ethics and Social Theory (FEAST) and supported by the APA Inclusiveness Committee, furthers FEAST's commitment to offer support to emerging scholars from diverse and underrepresented populations and the profession's interest in diversifying its professoriate. In order to achieve that diversity, the pipeline to graduate study in philosophy has to be opened, welcoming undergraduates who have fallen in love with philosophy, but are hesitant to enter a field they believe is inhospitable to them. PIKSI was conceived and developed as means to this end.

Recruitment for PIKSI has been directed at students from many different underrepresented groups; and we have in fact populated both the first and second year classes with a wonderful, richly diverse group of students, all very bright, very eager and very engaged.

Before embarking on this project, we studied the successful summer program at Rutgers, but gave PIKSI a different focus, in part to help increase the number of women from otherwise underrepresented groups and in part to emphasize current philosophical work in areas that bear directly on issues of diversity, something that the Rutgers program only touches upon. The two programs, we believe, complement each other well. They cover different ground and are not redundant.

Objectives

The objectives of PIKSI are multiple and intertwined. In particular, we had both *student-centered* and *discipline-centered* objectives. The student-centered objectives were to "encourage students from groups currently underrepresented in philosophy—such as women, people of color, LGBT individuals, individuals with disabilities, and people from economically disadvantaged communities—to pursue their philosophical interests and participate in the philosophical world." The discipline-centered objectives were to present philosophy as a "living enterprise," whose "fundamental nature . . . is, and always has been, dynamic and constantly changing." (The passages are quoted from the original proposal we presented to the Board). The two aims are clearly intertwined: the objective of diversifying the demographics of the philosophy professoriate (and of other fields in which people bring disciplined philosophical thinking to their work) is motivated both by concerns of educational and vocational equity and by awareness of the necessity to transform the discipline by broadening the range of human experiences that inform it.

Those intertwined objectives are deeply compatible: it has been the experience of many members of under-represented groups that even apparently abstract theorizing is transformed by an infusion of different ways of experiencing such fundamental categories as "the nature of the self, of human knowledge, of minds and bodies, of our relationships to each other and to the rest of the natural world." But on the way toward compatibility there are apparent contradictions: helping students to feel welcome in a

discipline that we acknowledge has failed to be informed by experiences like theirs, and helping them to become adept at a practice and familiar with texts that we expect them to find significantly alienating. The PIKSI curriculum addresses these conflicts by casting them not as contradictions, but as tensions, and by attempting to do justice to the pulls in both directions: to fan the spark of interest in philosophy by making connections—and urging students to make their own—between the discipline, their own lives, and the wider world, and to frame the mastery of texts and methods as tools of empowerment for entering the conversation and transforming it—as philosophers before them have done.

Advertising the Institute

For the first year, we began advertising the Institute in February of 2006. We advertised by circulating a cover letter and poster (See Appendices A and B) to

- the APA diversity committees via the Committee on Inclusiveness in the Profession
- the APA Board of Officers
- various individual philosophers known to us to be associated with diversity efforts
- Philosophy faculty at Gallaudet University
- listservs of the Association for Feminist Ethics and Social Theory (FEAST), Society for Women in Philosophy (SWIP), U.S. National Women's Studies Association, Philosophy and Disability Collective, International Network on Feminist Approaches to Bioethics, Feminist Jurisprudence, North American Society for Social Philosophy, Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy (SAAP)
- roughly 120 contacts at Historically Black colleges and universities and at colleges and universities with known American Indian programs / student populations

As we were quite successful in garnering applications, we repeated this process for the 2007 Institute, but began advertising PIKSI at the Eastern APA in December with a large poster set on an easel near the APA Registration Desk and by including a folded page in the program volume that announced the 2007 Institute and included comments from students in PIKSI 2006.

In addition, we established a website where faculty and students could find more details about the program. (Please visit <http://rockethics.psu.edu/piksi/index.htm>). This website has been maintained and revised for PIKSI 2007.

Demographics

The application process (See Appendix C for the Application) for the twelve PIKSI participant positions has been very competitive. For PIKSI 2006, we received 45 applications, and for PIKSI 2007 we received 48. Every application we have received in the two years was from a well-qualified student whose interests and abilities were well-suited to the Institute. The applications were overwhelmingly from students in non-elite and non-PhD granting departments. We stress this point because students in elite

colleges or colleges with PhD granting departments have, on the whole, more access to mentors who are well-informed about graduate school possibilities and to information about applying to graduate school. The applicants came from all regions of the country, and from a wide variety of underrepresented populations (including African Americans, Latinas and Latinos, LGBT's, the economically disadvantaged, and people with disabilities.

Each application was reviewed by two members of the PIKSI board. They made recommendations to the Director, who selected the final twelve.

For PIKSI 2006, the demographic make-up of the twelve finalists was as follows:

Women: 10

Men: 2

White students: 5

Students of color: 7

LGBT students: 4

Students with a disability: 2

Geographical distribution: Eastern: 3 Central: 5 Pacific: 4

Eleven finalists accepted our invitation; a male student of color declined because PIKSI overlapped with another summer institute to which he had been accepted. Because the first alternate was a white woman, the final number of students of color was six, and the final number of women was eleven. The data in the other demographic categories did not change with the replacement.

For PIKSI 2007, the demographic make-up of the twelve finalists was as follows:

Women: 8

Men: 4

White students: 3

Students of color: 9

LGBT students: 5

Students with a disability: 1

Geographical distribution: Eastern: 4 Central: 5 Pacific: 3

Again eleven finalists accepted our invitation. A female student of color declined because PIKSI overlapped with another summer institute to which she had been accepted. Because the first alternate was a white woman, the final number of students of color is eight and the final number of white students is four. The data in the other demographic categories did not change with the replacement.

The Structure of the Institute

For PIKSI 2006, the basic structure for each day of the 10-day Institute was a three-hour morning seminar, followed by lunch together as a group, and then various presentations, panels, and/or meetings in the afternoon. Each morning seminar paired a canonical figure in philosophy, such as Plato, Locke, or Dewey, with contemporary commentary on and criticism of that figure by feminist, disability, and critical race philosophers. For each morning seminar, participants wrote a one-page informal response paper to the reading. Occasionally a portion of the seminar time was dedicated to reading these papers out loud for discussion, and midway through the Institute, students turned in one of their more polished papers for comments and feedback from the graduate assistants. (For more details please see <http://rockethics.psu.edu/piksi/piksi2006/schedule.htm>).

Afternoon sessions varied between one-on-one meetings with the Director, Shannon Sullivan (See Appendix D for Professor Sullivan's Curriculum Vita) a special panel on how to apply to graduate school, and paper presentations by outside speakers. In 2006, those speakers were Linda Martin Alcoff (Syracuse University) and Lucius T. Outlaw (Vanderbilt University), both of whom are former chairs of APA committees. Alcoff and Outlaw also led two of the morning seminar sessions during their visits. Students had further opportunity to talk with the visitors at lunch and at a dinner reception for each visitor at the Director's home. In addition to these two receptions, the Institute opened with a dinner reception at the Director's home and closed with a final dinner reception at the home of Nancy Tuana, Director of the Rock Ethics Institute.

For 2007, we maintained the theme and general structure and plan to do so for PIKSI 2008. However, a few changes have been made to reflect the needs of the students and the evolution of our objectives. As the students felt they gained so much from visiting scholars, we invited three philosophers this year, Charles Mills, Anita Silvers*, and Ofelia Schutte. We also have invited three graduate students to serve as TAs and we selected these students on a competitive basis. To help reduce the budgetary demands, we requested that the departments from which the graduate students came to support the costs of the student. In return, the departments are listed as sponsors. As this was a trial effort to raise additional funds, we circulated a call for TAs to participate in the program only to the electronic lists of FEAST and SWIP. In addition, PIKSI 2006 students requested more time spent together in seminars, and so more sessions were scheduled in the afternoons. Time for these additional group seminars was carved out by moving students' one-on-one meetings with the Director to informal individual meetings during the 1½ hour lunch breaks. Finally, we shortened the number of days of the Institute in response to student suggestions and the Director's suggestion. Thus we could do the program in a single week more efficiently in terms of time and cost.

It is clear from the responses of the students, the visitors and the Director that the ten-day 2006 Institute was intellectually stimulating and lively. This was in no small part due to the participants themselves and their hunger for an experience such as this. Discussion of the day's issues and readings often spilled over to lunch, and the participants set up

* As a PIKSI Board member, Anita Silvers will not be accepting an Honorarium.

evening study groups on their own, which sometimes continued into the wee hours of the morning. Because of all the time spent together, participants bonded with each other early and well, which was apparent in the comfortable and forthright ways that they engaged each other on philosophical issues in the classroom. The participants have continued to engage each other in philosophical dialogue on a yahoo.com PIKSI listserv that they set up.

Fundraising

We initially requested financial help from the APA to start the Institute. We are searching for possible grants that will allow us to continue and to help place the Institute on a permanent footing. The Rock Institute has identified a few possible funding sources and we are pursuing these. We will, however, need more time, another year or two, to secure funding sources. Thus we will be seeking a continuation of support from the APA. Pennsylvania State University has generously contributed more than half the costs of both the 2006 and 2007 Institutes. The APA provided almost all of the remainder, under an initial funding arrangement for Summer 2006 that provided for reapplying for support for Summer 2007 and 2008. (Some additional funds have been raised, noted below).

Initially, the Penn State Development Office identified possible foundation support and we sent letters of inquiry to these foundations. There was no interest from these foundations, however, possibly because they were of a sort more interested in regional projects than in a national need of a scholarly discipline.

Subsequently, we developed the Iris Marion Young Diversity Scholars Fund, whose initial private donor pledged \$5000 a year for three years of the institute (2008-10). We have received some modest contributions thus far, but we plan to advertise the Fund more vigorously during the next round of APA Meetings.
(See <http://rockethics.psu.edu/piksi/gift.htm>)

Additionally, we attempted to create a subscription system for the 2007 Institute whereby doctoral departments could help to subsidize the PIKSI pipeline. PIKSI Board members approached nearly two dozen departments where they had personal contacts. Some of these expressed interest but must put the request through a faculty discussion process. We are hopeful that we will successfully acquire subscriptions for the 2008 Institute.
(See http://rockethics.psu.edu/piksi/inst_cosponsor.htm)

As described above, some departments already are contributing by subsidizing graduate students to serve as assistants during the Institute.

Operating independently and in isolation, we have not been successful in finding sufficient funding to continue this project. Recently, the APA Executive Director indicated that he might be able to help with this effort. We think that chances of success probably are greater with such guidance from the APA National Office.

As to prospects for Summer 2008, Penn State has committed to continuing support if the remaining funding from other sources can be secured. Thus we will be seeking a continuation of support from the APA.

Outcomes

The overwhelmingly positive evaluations (See Appendix E) by the PIKSI 2006 students give evidence of the unease these students have experienced in their previous encounters with philosophy and of the success of PIKSI in fostering a more productive form of engagement. By validating the experiences of alienation and loneliness that many of them had felt in philosophy classes, while demonstrating the possibilities of engaging critically and creatively with canonical texts and methods, as well as the excitement of taking philosophy into their own hands, the Institute allowed the students both to reconnect with their enthusiasm about the field and to imagine changing it. One student, for example, says s/he came to PIKSI “sick of philosophical discourse,” but also that “a PhD has always seemed more an ephemeral dream than a possible reality.” The juxtaposition is poignant: undergraduate study of philosophy—which ought to serve to make a PhD seem less out of reach—instead added to the problem by making the dream seem not only unattainable but soured. After attending PIKSI, this student is considering a philosophical career: “. . . by being here and actually *experiencing* a taste of that dream becoming a reality. . . I have to say that many options in the world are *feeling* a lot more plausible/possible.”

A major theme in the evaluations speaks both to the long-term objective of transforming the discipline and the more immediate objective of inspiring and empowering the students to participate in that endeavor. One student reports that the Institute “has solidified/clarified the question of whether or not the discipline wanted me in it.” The answer is that “apparently some people in the discipline do,” and that’s enough to motivate the pursuit: becoming a philosopher is “now an option, and a probable possibility.” Another participant reports that “after feeling ‘whipped’ by my undergrad Institute because of my gender, I feel re-invigorated and hopeful that there is a place in philosophy for women. I feel a sense of dedicated resolve to forge ahead to graduate school, thereby not only developing my own person, but transforming, in one small way, the discipline I have come to love.”

Comments such as these reinforce the convictions that ground the objectives of PIKSI: that students from under-represented groups will be drawn to philosophy and motivated to acquire the knowledge and skills to succeed in it when they are shown that philosophy has a place, and a need, for them—for the particular people that they are, shaped by their particular families, communities, and life experiences.

As the evaluations attest, the experience was, without exception, extremely valuable to the participants. As this section demonstrates, the students’ comments match the objectives we set forth to a remarkable degree.

Conclusion

Now that the program has begun, it is gaining momentum of its own. We have the names of the Faculty Sponsor of each of the participants and pledges from them to continue to work with the students. We plan to stay in touch with these mentors and track the progress of the students. We are securing travel grants from FEAST to invite one or more students to the FEAST conference in September 2007. We would like to encourage other organizations to do the same and to inform the students of such opportunities.

The overwhelmingly enthusiastic response to this program shows the importance of maintaining the momentum created this year. Most of the students who attended PIKSI have indicated that they will be pursuing graduate studies in philosophy, and many would not have done so prior to their summer experience.

Given the June deadline, which precedes the Summer 2007 Institute, we cannot describe this year's outcomes here. We will submit a report to the APA directly after the Institute. The Summer 2007 outcomes will be found in that report, which we understand will be made available to the APA Board prior to its annual meeting.

Philosophy is an ever-changing discourse linked to a rich history. The Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute has sought to encourage breadth and diversity in philosophy's enterprise. We believe that with our initial success we can further our goal of diversifying our profession. We hope that the Board will feel as we do that a program that so precisely achieved its worthy goals deserves continued support to become a fixture. Since it is primarily philosophers who are most invested in the diversity and vibrancy of the profession and who will benefit most from institutes such as PIKSI, we believe that philosophy organizations such as the APA ought to be among the primary funding units for them.

Submitted by Eva Feder Kittay, Chair of PIKSI Board, on behalf of the PIKSI Board

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Budget Item	Cost to PSU	Cost to APA
PERSONNEL	Cost Sharing	Salary & Benefits
Director of PIKSI (Sullivan)	\$5,100.00	\$6,000.00
Director of REI (Tuana)	\$3,700.00	
Graduate Assistant		\$2,300.00
Visiting Faculty (2)		\$1,000.00
Staff Support (2)	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00
PARTICIPANTS		
Student stipends (12)		\$4,200.00
TRANSPORTATION		
Students (12)	\$2,000.00	\$5,000.00
Visiting Faculty (2)		\$1,000.00
LODGING		
Students (12)	\$3,600.00	
Visiting Faculty (2)	\$700.00	
FOOD & RECEPTIONS	\$3,500.00	
ADVERTISING		\$185.00
MATERIALS		
Books for Students	\$1,000.00	
Supplies	\$100.00	
Student PSU email accts		\$15.00
<u>TOTAL</u>	\$21,000.00	\$21,000.00