

# Chapter Seed Grants for the MAP Mentoring Program

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## Abstract

Although the diversity of philosophy is increasing at the undergraduate level, there is still a significant gap between the percentage of underrepresented students that major in philosophy and the percentage that complete PhDs. In order to bridge this gap, this project plans to create three seed chapters of the Minorities and Philosophy Mentoring Program, an initiative that pairs underrepresented undergraduate students with graduate student mentors for support applying to graduate school. Using our experience developing the MAP Mentoring Program at Florida State University, we will provide the training and resources necessary to help all seed chapters become established student organizations at their universities, providing current and future institutional support for underrepresented philosophy students.

## Basic Information

### Project Coordinator(s)

Lauren Willson, Wes Siscoe

### Steering Committee

- Dr. Andrea Westlund, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Florida State University
- Lisa Jackson, Senior Program Director, Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement, Florida State University

### Funding Amount Requested

\$3,000

### Expected Project Completion Date

May 2023

## Project Description

Philosophy has a “leaky pipeline” problem. According to Eric Schwitzgebel et al. (The Diversity of Philosophy Students and Faculty in the United States), even though the racial and gender diversity of philosophy undergraduates has been increasing, underrepresented students are still far less likely to complete graduate study in philosophy. From 2000 to 2016, the percentage of philosophy majors who identify as Black rose steadily from 3% to 13%, but the percentage of philosophy PhD recipients who identify as Black only rose from 1.5% to 4%. Similarly, during that same time, the percentage of philosophy majors who identify as women rose from 35% to 45%, but the percentage of philosophy PhD recipients who identify as women remained below 35%. Thus, although the number of minority students within undergraduate philosophy programs is improving, this growth

has not shown up to the same degree at the graduate level. There is a leak in the pipeline that runs from undergraduate philosophy to philosophy PhD programs.

In order to combat this leaky pipeline, we propose to create seed chapters of the Minorities and Philosophy Mentoring Program (hereafter the MAP Mentoring Program). During the 2020-2021 academic year, we founded the first chapter of the MAP Mentoring Program at Florida State University. With support from Minorities and Philosophy Club, the Undergraduate Philosophy Club, and the Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement, we were able to serve 16 mentees from underrepresented backgrounds. These mentees were connected with graduate student mentors in the philosophy department, who then provide them with the following:

**Graduate School Application Support:** All mentees were provided with the support necessary to apply to graduate school in philosophy, including advice and proofreading on personal statements, writing samples, and letters of recommendation.

**References for Philosophy Summer Schools:** All mentees were provided with reference letters to apply to opportunities on the APA's list of Diversity Institutes in Philosophy.

**Leadership and Service Opportunities:** All mentees participated in a Research, Service, and Learning experience within their local philosophy departments. Experiences ranged from assisting with meetings of the FSU Undergraduate Philosophy Club to leading small group discussions for intro-level philosophy courses to participating in guided research projects with members of the FSU philosophy department.

To accomplish these goals, the MAP Mentoring Program had 1 Program Director, 1 Director of Research, Leadership, and Service, 3 Head Mentors, and 11 Mentors, bringing the total number of volunteers to 15. The Program Director was responsible for overseeing all elements of the program, including, but not limited to, expanding institutional support for the program, scheduling meetings to inform all members of the team of upcoming responsibilities, and troubleshooting any problems that arose during the implementation of the MAP Mentoring Program. The Director of Research, Service, and Leadership coordinated all leadership and service activities, identifying opportunities for mentees to participate in the life of the philosophy department. Mentors served as the primary point of contact with mentees, meeting with them once a month to walk them through the mentoring program. Mentors were responsible both for creating a relationship with students in which mentees felt comfortable sharing some of the challenges and obstacles they face within philosophy and helping them reflect on and pursue academic and career opportunities. Head Mentors then supported these individual mentors, meeting regularly to provide feedback on their interactions with their mentee as well as advice about what resources might be valuable in the context of their specific mentor/mentee relationship.

The first year results of the mentoring program were promising. The creation of the program was supported by Lisa Jackson, the Senior Director of the Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement at Florida State University. Lisa provided resources on mentoring and guidance on how to help underrepresented students thrive at FSU. The majority of the members of the Minorities and Philosophy Club served as mentors, and mentees reported being very happy with

the MAP mentoring program, and on an end-of-year survey, mentees had all of the following reactions to the program:

“I have to say, the MAP program is the best mentorship program I’ve been a part of in my whole academic career. Thank you for everything you all do!”

“I had a really great experience and I really appreciate all of the program/my mentor's help!”

“My mentor is the best mentor ever and we clicked very much over the last year. I’m so excited to have them as a life-long professional, academic, and personal connection. Best mentorship program I’ve been a part of in my career to date. So grateful.”

“I think this program was extremely helpful. It has really allowed me to build a connection with others in my field.”

Due to the positive results of the first year of the MAP Mentoring Program, along with continuing to organize the program at Florida State University, we are seeking funding to start chapters of the MAP Mentoring Program at three new universities. The seed chapters of the MAP Mentoring Program will be established during the 2022-2023 academic year, with all necessary preparations occurring during the spring and summer of 2022. Beginning in April of 2022, we will solicit applications from graduate students who are interested in establishing a MAP Mentoring Program at their university. Interested graduate students will submit applications, and while proposals need not be lengthy, but should include the following sections:

- A list of graduate students from the institution who will be involved with the initiative, including who will serve as program director, along with their CVs
- A statement explaining the need for the MAP Mentoring program at their institution, as well as their qualifications for leading a new chapter of the MAP Mentoring Program
- Background of the university and demographic information of philosophy majors
- Resources that the department has earmarked to serve underrepresented philosophy majors
- Any details related to the sustainability of the MAP Mentoring program beyond the seed grant year
- A faculty member who will serve as faculty sponsor of the seed chapter

Program participants will be chosen in June of 2022. Proposals will be evaluated based on how well prepared the applicants are to lead a seed chapter of the MAP mentoring program. Preference will be given to under-resourced institutions, as well as to proposals that can demonstrate the long-term sustainability of their programming.

In July of 2022, selected applicants will be guided through a four session training course in order to prepare them to launch their MAP Mentoring chapter. Due to geographical distance and limited travel funding, all trainings will be conducted via Zoom. Through the training sessions, seed chapter staff will receive guidance and support on all of the following:

- Enrolling as a registered student organization at their university
- Recruiting graduate student mentors and undergraduate mentees
- Matching mentors and mentees
- Best practices for undergraduate philosophy mentoring
- Providing ongoing support to individual and head mentors

At the conclusion of this training, Program Directors will begin the process of recruiting mentees and mentors for the upcoming school year. After training the mentors, seed chapters will conduct six meetings between their mentors and mentees during the 2022-2023 academic years. Full details about these meetings can be found in our Project Timeline section. Institutional support will continue to be provided by Lisa Jackson of the Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement, and Dr. Andrea Westlund, faculty advisor of the Minorities and Philosophy Club at Florida State, will also help guide seed chapter efforts by serving as a member of the Steering Committee.

### **Project Impact**

Our project will create three seed chapters of the MAP Mentoring program to help close the leaky pipeline within philosophy. We will provide these chapters with a training manual on mentoring best practices, a schedule for how to format and conduct their mentor/mentee meetings throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, and an online community to facilitate collaboration and resource sharing with other seed chapters. Not only will we establish these chapters for the 2022-2023 academic year, but we will also help them register for university support so that they might remain successful, student-led organizations in the future. After we establish these three chapters, we will then provide our mentoring manual and meeting overviews to the philosophy community at large, disseminating the results of our work through Minorities and Philosophy International so that other philosophy departments can create their own chapters of the MAP Mentoring Program as well.

### **Project Goals**

- Our overall goal is to increase the support that underrepresented students have when applying to graduate school in philosophy. We have already made progress on this goal by creating the MAP Mentoring Program at Florida State University during the 2020-2021 academic year. Our next step is partnering with three other colleges or universities to create seed chapters of the MAP Mentoring Program.
- Establish chapters of the MAP Mentoring Program at three new institutions. This will be accomplished by accepting applications, selecting partner institutions, training program staff and mentors, and providing support throughout the 2022-2023 academic year.
- Share a mentor training manual, including researched best practices, that incorporates insights from the APA's Mentoring Toolkit and the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring, 4th Edition. We have already begun to create this manual for use at Florida State University, and we will adapt this manual for general use during the Spring of 2022 in preparation for choosing partner institutions.

- Position seed chapters of the MAP Mentoring Program to receive ongoing funding from their home institutions. This will be accomplished by supporting all seed chapters in becoming registered student organizations, allowing them to apply for future funding
- Create an online community for the MAP Mentoring Program in order to facilitate collaboration and the sharing of resources. This will be accomplished by creating a channel on the existing Slack page for Minorities and Philosophy International for chapter

## Project Timeline

By April 2022

-Solicit applications for becoming a MAP Mentoring seed chapter.

By June 2022

-Select three colleges or universities for establishing seed chapters.

-Finalize best practices mentoring guide for training selected participants.

By July 2022

-Hold four training sessions via Zoom for selected applicants, providing training to program staff.

By August 2022

-Seed chapters recruit graduate student mentors and undergraduate mentees.

-Seed chapters train graduate student mentors using the provided best practices mentoring guide.

-Program Directors begin process to become a registered student organization.

By September 2022

-Individual Mentor Session 1: Mentors become familiar with students and their goals for their philosophy education. Mentees identify how they want to grow as students throughout the academic year and any graduate school applications they would like to submit in the coming year(s) and begin making a plan to achieve these goals.

-Head Mentor Session 1: Head mentors meet with individual mentors, providing targeted resources and support for identified mentee goals.

By October 2022

-Individual Mentor Session 2: Mentors check in with students about progress on their academic goals and provide further information about philosophy graduate school applications, including information on obtaining recommendation letters, writing a statement of purpose, and editing a writing sample. Mentees make a plan for preparing these documents if they plan on applying to philosophy PhD programs in the coming year(s).

By November 2022

-Individual Mentoring Session 3: Mentors check in with students on application materials, including reading and providing feedback on student application materials. Mentees volunteer for research, leadership, and service opportunities for the spring semester of the academic year.

-Head Mentor Session 2: Head mentors check in with individual mentors, providing application support including reading student application materials.

By December 2022

-Individual Mentoring Session 4: All application materials are finalized. Mentees make a plan for meeting all of their application deadlines.

-Care packages sent to all mentees in preparation for finals week and PhD applications.

By February 2023

-Individual Mentoring Session 5: Mentees receive their research, leadership, or service assignment and identify and philosophy summer school opportunities that they would like to apply for, making a plan for completing those applications.

By March 2023

-Individual Mentoring Session 6: Mentors check in on how research, leadership, or service assignment is proceeding and summer school application progress. Mentees send any application documents that they would like reviewed to their individual mentor and head mentor.

By April 2023

-MAP Mentoring Program Graduation: All mentors, mentees, and staff will meet for mentee graduation. Students who have completed the mentoring program will then be eligible to become MAP mentors themselves, and will be informed about the next application cycle for the MAP Mentoring Program, providing insightful feedback for the mentoring program and further transforming the culture within philosophy at their institution.

-Program Evaluation: Program Directors and mentors will complete surveys evaluating the project as described in our evaluation plan.

## **Project Outreach**

If the MAP Mentoring Program is successful at shrinking the leaky pipeline that exists for underrepresented students, all philosophy departments stand to benefit from greater diversity within philosophy. Our plan to share the project will begin with publicizing the project for departments that might be interested in applying for a seed grant. We will share a call for applications to become a seed chapter through all of the following forums:

-Minorities and Philosophy International Slack page

- Minorities and Philosophy International Facebook page
- Minorities and Philosophy International Listserv
- The Philos-L Listserv
- Teaching Philosophy Facebook Group
- Philosophy Graduate Student Network Facebook Group
- PhilEvents page

After the three seed chapters are established and ready to share the results of the project, we plan to do the following in order to disseminate these results and provide other schools the opportunity to establish mentoring chapters of their own:

**Minorities and Philosophy International:** Through the Minorities and Philosophy chapter at Florida State University, Lauren Willson and Wes Siscoe will share the results of the project along with training materials and resources for those who might want to start their own chapters of the MAP Mentoring Program.

**Popular Philosophy Contributions:** Wes Siscoe is a pedagogy contributor at the Blog of the American Philosophical Association, the Daily Nous, the Philosopher’s Cocoon, and Philosophy, Ethics, and Academia. We will use these popular venues to share the results of the MAP Mentoring Program, writing guest posts that both share the results of the Seed Grant project as well as providing resources for anyone who wants to start their own chapter of the MAP Mentoring Program.

**Philosophy as a Way of Life Network:** As the Mellon Course Design Coordinator for the Philosophy as a Way of Life Project at the University of Notre Dame, Wes Siscoe will share the results of the project with the wider Philosophy as a Way of Life Network. This will be accomplished via two different mediums. First, the Philosophy as a Way of Life project maintains an Instructor Community page on Facebook with over 350 members who are either graduate students or faculty members in a philosophy department. Secondly, The Philosophy as a Way of Life project maintains an email listserv for all members of the PWOL network. Wes will share the results of the project in both forums, providing a summary of the results of the project as well as resources for anyone who wants to start their own chapter of the MAP Mentoring Program.

### **Accessibility Plan**

Our proposal does not include public lectures, performances, presentations, or films, but there are two areas of our project that require accommodations. At Florida State, the university provides guidelines and best practices for accommodations through the Department of Student Support, guidelines that we will supplement with further guidance from the Web Accessibility Initiative:

(1) **Zoom Training Sessions:** Due to geographical constraints and limited travel budgets, all of our staff and mentor trainings will be held via Zoom. In order to provide the necessary accommodations, all Zoom sessions will be equipped with subtitles.

(2) Web Posting: As part of the project, we will be posting in a number of online forums. In order to make sure these posts are accessible, our image content on social media will be enabled to provide image descriptions.

## Evaluation Plan

This grant will be evaluated according to how well it accomplishes the five goals outlined in our Project Goals section. Some of the goals are straightforward to assess, and will be reported as either complete or incomplete. These goals include:

- Establish chapters of the MAP Mentoring Program at three new institutions. This will be accomplished by accepting applications, selecting partner institutions, and training program staff and mentors.
- All seed chapters will become registered student organizations, allowing them to apply for future funding from their universities.
- Create a mentor training manual, including researched best practices, that incorporates insights from the APA's Mentoring Toolkit and the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring, 4th Edition.
- Create an online community for the MAP Mentoring Program in order to facilitate collaboration, the sharing of resources. This will be accomplished by creating a channel on the existing Slack page for Minorities and Philosophy International for chapter members and by sharing general information through the Minorities and Philosophy International Facebook page.

With other goals, however, it is more difficult to determine how well they have been accomplished. Below, we have indicated how we will evaluate whether or not we have met each of these goals:

Increase the support that underrepresented students have when applying to graduate school in philosophy.

- In order to evaluate how effectively this goal has been accomplished, we will administer a survey to all undergraduate mentees who participate in the program. Survey participants will be asked about their future academic and career goals in philosophy as well as how effective the program was in helping them accomplish these goals. There will also be further questions about particular aspects of the program along with how they can be improved.

Provide ongoing support to seed chapters throughout the 2022-2023 academic year.

- In order to evaluate how effectively this goal has been accomplished, all Program Directors will complete a survey providing feedback on how effective we were, as Project Coordinators, in supporting them throughout the 2022-2023 academic year. Questions will ask Program Directors to rate different aspects of our performance as well as ask what areas might be improved when planting future chapters of the MAP Mentoring Program.

## Online Presence

In order to facilitate seed chapter collaboration and support, we will create a forum for collaboration for MAP Mentoring Program officers through the existing Slack page for Minorities and Philosophy International and share calls for applications and general information about the program through the Minorities and Philosophy International Facebook page. We also plan to disseminate results through the Minorities and Philosophy International mailing list, The Philos-L Listserv, the Teaching Philosophy Facebook Group, the Philosophy Graduate Student Network Facebook Group, the PhilEvents page, popular philosophy blogs, and the Philosophy as a Way of Life Facebook Instructor Community and mailing list.

## Budget Narrative

Even though graduate students perform a large amount of service work within philosophy departments, they are rarely compensated. Using data gathered for the MAP Report on Service Work Distribution Among Graduate Students, a 2019 post at the Daily Nous outlined that only around 25% of philosophy departments recognize or compensate graduate student service work, leaving most service work to graduate student volunteers. Making matters worse, underrepresented students were reported as doing more than their fair share of service work, leaving the burden of uncompensated labor to fall primarily on those from minority populations.

Because the Program Directors for our seed chapters will all be graduate students, with many of them coming from underrepresented groups as many of them might already be involved in MAP chapters at their own universities, each Program Director will receive a \$1000 honorarium, with \$500 disbursed at the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester and the other \$500 disbursed at the beginning of the Spring 2023 semester. We plan to grant these honoraria for a couple of reasons. First, there are the obvious ethical concerns. Program Director's will do the majority of the work in starting up the seed chapter, including recruiting mentees, mentors, and a Director of Research, Leadership, and Service, training all mentors and staff, and establishing the chapter as a registered student organization. Expecting minority philosophers to shoulder an outsize portion of this work without compensation is unjust, and compensating Program Directors will go some of the way towards removing this injustice. Secondly, service work, especially work with underrepresented populations, is valuable to the philosophy community at large. By compensating our Program Directors, we are communicating the value of the work that they do and highlighting the importance of their service contributions.

## Other Funding Sources

All recipient Program Directors will apply for additional funding as registered student organizations through their universities. As previously outlined in the project description, impact, and goals, the intention of this grant is to provide seed funding for three chapters of the MAP Mentoring Program. After they are established, the chapters will then be able to provide their own funding moving forward by becoming registered student organizations. Beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year, the model MAP Mentoring Program at Florida State University will be a registered student organization, allowing the program to apply for university funding for mentor and mentee resources and events. As outlined in our project timeline, recipients of seed grants will

also apply to become registered student organizations at their own universities at the beginning of the 2022-2023 academic years, with the Project Coordinators providing support to recipient chapters throughout this process.