

Department of Philosophy FY22 Annual Report

Part 1. Accomplishments and Productivity for FY22

A. CAS Specific Bullet Points

- Student Success: The department designed a Student Success Survey we distributed to all our majors. The central purpose of the survey is to help us identify barriers to student success. We also changed our departmental committee structure to create a new Departmental Teaching and Student Success Committee (DTSSC). The new DTSSC reviewed the results of the Student Success Survey in November 2021 and drafted a summary and set of recommendations to the faculty. The recommendations based on these survey results will figure prominently in our department specific objectives for next year. We plan to administer this survey again next year.
- Academic Program Development: We revised both of our major governance documents, our ASPT Policy and our Bylaws, to make our commitment to department, college, and university Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion goals more explicit and visible in our policies and practices.
- EDI focused Curriculum Review: Under the leadership of the Chair and the Departmental Curriculum Committee, we began the process of reviewing all our course offerings to identify opportunities to expand syllabi and course materials to be more diverse and inclusive. We also reviewed our course catalog descriptions and promotional materials with an eye toward revising these materials to be more “student-friendly” and to highlight courses where changes have been made to make the course more inclusive. We have completed our review of all our 100-level courses and submitted the necessary requests for revision through the university curriculum process. We will continue the process with our 200 and 300-level course this spring.

B. Department Specific Goals

- All our department specific goals and accomplishments are included in D-F below.

C. Major Accomplishments for Each Goal

- All our department specific goals and accomplishments are included in D-F below.

D. Accomplishments Related to Academic Program Development

- Curriculum Review Project: Under the leadership of the Chair and the Departmental Curriculum Committee, we began the process of reviewing all our course offerings to identify opportunities to expand syllabi and course materials to be more diverse and inclusive. We also reviewed our course catalog descriptions and promotional materials with an eye toward revising these materials to be more “student-friendly” and to highlight courses where changes have been made to make the course more inclusive. We have completed our review of all our 100-level courses and submitted the necessary requests for revision through the university curriculum process. We will continue the process with our 200 and 300-level course this spring.

- Expanding the Diversity and Inclusiveness of our Curriculum with New Courses: We proposed two new courses this year: Dr. Daniel Breyer proposed PHI 289.39, Classical Chinese Philosophy, as a temporary course. The course was offered Spring 2022 and has an enrollment of 13 students. We intend to propose a version of this course as a permanent addition to our curriculum before the end of the academic year. Dr. David Sanson developed a new course, PHI 258 Philosophy in the Islamic World, which was approved by the URC in November 2021. We will offer this course for the first time in Spring 2023.

E. Accomplishments Related to EDI

- ASPT Revision: One of our administrative objectives for AY21-22 was to revise our ASPT Policy to explicitly value work that is in line with the department's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Over the summer of 2021, the Chair drafted changes to the portions of the policy covering teaching and service. The proposed changes encourage faculty to report any work they've done that advances department, college, or university EDI efforts. The proposed language also makes clear that the DFSC will recognize such efforts and award appropriate credit in the annual performance review process as well as in the review of promotion and tenure applications. The DFSC approved the proposed language after making some changes in early Fall 2021 and recommended that the department approve the revised ASPT Policy. The department voted unanimously in favor of the revisions in October 2021. They were approved by the CFSC in December 2021.
- Departmental Bylaws Revision: Beginning in June 2021, we began drafting proposed revisions to our departmental bylaws to make our commitment to department, college, and university Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion goals more explicit and visible in our policies and practices. We wanted our bylaws to make clear that the work of ALL our departmental committees includes advancing department, college, and university EDI goals. The revised bylaws were approved by the department and the college in November 2021.
- Interdisciplinary Joint Appointment Hiring Request: Philosophy worked with the African American Studies Program to create a TT hiring request under the Provost's Interdisciplinary Joint Appointment Program for FY23 to search for an Assistant or Associate Professor of Philosophy with a specialization in the Philosophy of Race. Hiring in this area will build on an already existing strength in the department and allow us to expand the diversity of our course offerings in this area.
- See also Curriculum Review Project under D above.
- See also Scholarship Procedure Revision under G below

F. Accomplishments Related to Faculty Success

- 2.4 pubs/FTE
 - Includes one monograph.
 - Includes one 10-lecture audio series for *The Great Courses*
 - The pandemic continues to delay publication and interfere with academic conferences. Faculty presented their work at 4 international conferences held virtually by professional organizations based in the US and 3 international conferences held virtually by professional organizations based abroad.

- Daniel Breyer was awarded an Impact Award for AY20-21.
- Dr. Todd Stewart is completing his third year on the Academic Senate. In AY21-22 he served as Chair of the Rules Committee. Stewart also serves as the Chair of the CAS Curriculum Committee.
- Philosophy generated 6,276 credit hours in AY20-21 (598/FTE).
 - Of those hours, 4,287 (68%) were in courses in the university's General Education Program in either the Humanities or Individuals and Civic Life categories. (PERPA data)

G. Accomplishments Related to Student Success

- Student Success Survey: The department designed a Student Success Survey and distributed it to all our majors via email in October 2021. The central purpose of the survey is to help us identify barriers to student success. We anticipated that some of these barriers would have to do with curricular and/or pedagogical practices within the department. We also anticipated that others of these barriers would be caused by family, financial, and mental health difficulties largely outside of the department's control. The department's new Teaching and Student Success Committee (see just below) reviewed the results of the Student Success Survey in November 2021 and drafted a summary and set of recommendations to the faculty. The recommendations based on these survey results figure prominently in our department specific objectives for next year.
- Create Department Teaching and Student Success Committee: Over the summer of 2021, we began drafting revisions to our departmental bylaws to transform the Department of Philosophy Teaching Committee into the Department of Philosophy Teaching and Student Success Committee. The point of the re-organization of our committee structure was to expand the charge of the committee to explicitly include issues related to student *recruitment, retention, and degree completion* along with their existing duties to advise the Chair regarding department-wide pedagogical concerns. The DTSSC also advises the Chair regarding classroom technology, classroom allocation and furnishings, and procedures for the evaluation of teaching. The department voted to approve the changes in November 2021. The College also approved the change in late November 2021.
- Revise Student Scholarship Awards Procedures: We revised our scholarship award procedures as part of a more comprehensive revision of our department bylaws. Among other changes, we included an annual formal review process to ensure that our scholarships are being awarded in a way that is consistent with our EDI goals.
- Expand Access to Academic Advising: The department's academic advisor, Dr. Derek O'Connell is on a 11-month contract leaving the department without an advisor from July 15th to August 15th every year. This means that we have no advisor to attend the last session of Preview or to participate in the July Open House. There are other tasks that should be handled by our advisor during these four weeks including: assisting students who have applied to graduate in August; advising transfer students who are admitted to the program in late July, assisting students during the weeks before fall semester with late registration and override requests. During FY22, the department used RERIP funds to keep Dr. O'Connell on contract for this important and busy time of the academic year.

- Our Fall-to-Fall transfer student retention rate for Fall 2020 was 80% (PRPA data)

Part II. Internal Reallocations and Reorganizations in FY22

A. Describe any reallocations or reorganizations.

- None

B. Additional Funds from the Provost Office

- Instructional Capacity Funds:
 - Philosophy received \$36,593.91 in IC Funds. We used those funds to pay part of the salary of one of our full-time NTT faculty members.
- Summer Salary:
 - Philosophy received \$6,500 in summer salary funds in FY22. These funds paid for one half of two different courses taught in Summer 2021. The other two halves were paid for with funds received in FY21.
- Winter Salary:
 - Philosophy received \$6,500 in winter salary funds. These funds paid for one Winter Session course.

C. Additional Funds from College and Department

- Administrative Buyout:
 - Philosophy received \$36,000 in “buyout funds” from CAS associated with Dr. Alison Bailey’s appointment as Director of the WGSS Program. This money was used to pay the partial salary of one full-time NTT faculty member.
- Foundation Funds:
 - So far in FY22, Philosophy has spent \$465 from the Scott Elliot Endowment in Philosophy. These funds were used to support faculty research by paying for conference fees and professional society dues.
 - We anticipate spending an additional \$4,000 from the Elliot Endowment in May 2022 to fund 2 department scholarships and our Outstanding Philosophy Essay Award.
 - We anticipate spending \$1,000 combined from the Kenneth and Marilyn Kennard Philosophy Fund and the Department of Philosophy Excellence Fund in May 2022 for our Outstanding Graduating Senior Award.

Part III. Major Objectives for FY23

Our major objectives for FY23 include requesting two new tenure-track appointments:

1. Philosophy is committed to the interconnected goals of increasing the inclusiveness of our curriculum and increasing the diversity of our faculty. Under the Provost’s Strategic Interdisciplinary Hiring Initiative, we would like to search for a TT faculty member with an area of specialization in Philosophy of Race. Hiring a Philosopher of Race would also allow us to build on our existing research strength in this area. Dr. Alison Bailey is an internationally

recognized expert in the Philosophy of Race, Epistemic Injustice and Ignorance, and Critical Whiteness Studies. Given Dr. Bailey's full-time appointment as the Director of the WGSS Program, she can only teach philosophy courses occasionally. She has also spoken about her eventual retirement in the next 5-10 years. We would like to bring a scholar nearer to the beginning of their academic career into the department to grow our course offerings in Philosophy of Race and related topics and to build on the outstanding reputation Dr. Bailey has established in anticipation of her eventual retirement. The African American Studies Program has agreed to partner with us for this search.

2. The department would like to expand and reinforce its existing strength in the Philosophy of Science without duplicating our existing expertise. Thus, we would like to search for a Philosopher of Science with an expertise in a science other than Biology. Examples of other areas in which we are interested include, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and all of the human behavioral sciences. The department's current expert in Philosophy of Science, Dr. Christopher Horvath, is a Philosopher of Biology whose work focuses on Evolutionary Theory. Dr. Horvath is also the chair of the department which limits his teaching to one course every year. He also has a joint appointment in the School of Biological Sciences where he is asked to teach BSC 305 Biological Evolution every other Fall semester. This obligation further limits his ability to teach Philosophy of Science courses. The Department of Philosophy does not offer either MA or PhD degrees. We are an undergraduate program only. Thus, for our students, the research focus of individual faculty members matters most in their ability to offer up-to-date, creative, and interesting courses in their areas of expertise. Adding someone to the department with a new research specialization would allow us to increase our course offerings and to diversify those offerings. It would certainly add to our existing strengths to be able to offer a 300-level Philosophy of Physics course for example.
3. Before Spring 2020, the Department had made good progress in establishing a vibrant and exciting Annual Philosophy Colloquium Series. Some of our momentum was lost during the Coronavirus pandemic. We plan to re-engage with our efforts to host at least 2 colloquia per semester with a combination of invited speakers and department faculty presenting their philosophical scholarship. At least one event will be planned in conjunction with the leadership of the ISU Philosophical Society, the RSO associated with our program, each year.
4. The following objectives are a result of the Student Success Survey we conducted at the end of the Fall 2021 semester.

The Departmental Teaching and Student Success Committee noted the following findings from the survey:

- The **definition of student success** generated by our majors focuses on academic performance. The top responses were centered on developing better critical thinking and information processing skills that can be applied in all aspects of their lives, gaining more knowledge about philosophy, and performing well academically.
- The **barriers to success** identified by our majors are all things that are mostly or completely beyond the control of our department. Identified barriers included: difficulty with time

management, mental health concerns and challenges, general self-doubt about preparedness for college, and feeling a lack of belonging at ISU.

- Students were asked to help identify various activities, policies, and practices that they believe would help them to succeed as Philosophy majors. The top four things identified were: more assistance with post-graduation preparation, greater focus on developing foundational philosophical skills, more opportunities for interacting with faculty and fellow Philosophy majors, and more flexible course scheduling.

In light of these findings, the Department would like to accomplish at least the following in AY22-23

- It is clear our students feel disconnected and isolated from each other, both within our program and within the larger ISU community. Such feelings are a significant and widespread phenomenon that has only been heightened by the COVID pandemic. Nevertheless, providing students with the opportunity to make connections with their peers and with faculty is important to their success. Our students' self-generated definition of success focused on academic achievement suggests that students might be served best by opportunities to interact where the activities involved have an academic purpose. If that academic purpose focused on helping students develop philosophical skills, these activities might be even more appealing to students.

One concrete suggestion we plan to pursue is to establish a set of "Writing Support Sessions". Our tentative plans are to schedule a classroom for 2 hours every other week (or once a month) and invite students to come sit together and work on their philosophy papers. We will seek volunteers from among the faculty to "proctor" these events. The idea would be for the faculty member to bring their own work (to model good philosophical writing practices) and be available to students who have questions about their papers or about writing philosophy papers in general. Students with course content specific questions would be encouraged to attend regular office hours.

- It is unclear what specific kinds of assistance students are seeking with respect to post-graduation preparation. Future versions of this survey should revise this question to allow students to provide additional information. In the meantime, we will arrange additional information sessions and workshops in conjunction with both Career Services and the College of Arts and Sciences.
- It is also unclear what students meant when they said that "more flexible course scheduling" would help them succeed. We suspect what students want is for multiple sections of all required major courses to be scheduled each semester. This is impossible for a department our size. In the next version of the survey, we should revise this question in a way that results in more useful information. Nevertheless, we recognize that our course schedule is a concern to students. Going forward, we will increase efforts to maintain a consistent and predictable schedule from year to year and to minimize intra-departmental scheduling conflicts especially among courses required for the major.

Part IV. Tentative SBC Plans

Professional Travel: We currently have \$19,254 in our travel budget. We are unlikely to spend much of this money in FY22 due to ongoing COVID-related difficulties with international travel and the rescheduling and re-formatting of academic conferences. We plan to SBC whatever funds are left in our travel budget into FY23 and use them for the same purpose.

Total expected SBC request = approximately \$19,254