

On behalf of the Philosophy and Classics Department:

We are grateful to the reviewers for their time and effort, and accept with thanks their insightful report. As outlined below, we are for the most part in agreement with the observations and recommendations made in the report, and are generally happy to act on its recommendations, insofar as it lies within our power to do so.

We were, of course, pleased with the reviewers' opinion that "The Department of Philosophy in our judgement is doing a very good job under difficult circumstances" (p.2). Their further descriptions of us as "collegial and, despite a complex administrative environment, highly cooperative" (p.2), as having "a good record of research achievement" (p.3) and as "performing very well in providing undergraduate education, both to philosophy students and to students studying other fields" (p.3) were also gratifying, as were their findings that our students "spoke enthusiastically of the instruction and mentoring that they received" (p.3). We were also pleased by the reviewers' endorsement of our actions in developing innovative interdisciplinary programs, praising the success of our SOPT program (p.3) and saying, with regard to our PPE program, that "The innovation of this program is excellent" (p.6).

The reviewers made a number of recommendations, both for the department, and for others in regard to the department. We generally accept these recommendations. In what follows, we will provide a brief response to each, beginning with the ones that are wholly within our power to address.

The reviewers recommended that we improve our web page, including providing clearer information about what programs exist and what the requirements are for each. We are all agreed that this is a good idea, and have begun discussions about what other improvements to the web page we might be able to build in (e.g. augmenting our links to other sources), and how to go about making these improvements.

The reviewers also recommended that we extend a "courtesy appointment in Philosophy" to Dr. David Malloy on the basis of his expertise in ethics, and we are happy to do so. At a recent Department meeting we voted unanimously to make Dr. Malloy a member of our department, and it is now merely a matter of figuring out what paperwork is required to make this a reality.

The reviewers made a number of recommendations concerning our logic offerings, which we are again generally happy to act upon. Specifically: 1) we intend to renumber our PHIL 352 (Symbolic Logic) as a 200-level course, and pitch it accordingly, as suggested (p.6). 2) As noted by the reviewers, changing how the symbolic logic course is offered may involve some adjustments to the way in which we teach PHIL 150 (Critical Thinking) as well, and we should seek to ensure it is "more squarely located in Informal Logic" (p.6). We are not convinced the changes should take exactly the form the reviewers suggested (e.g. excluding all symbolic logic content altogether), but we accept the idea that we should revise the content of PHIL 150, and have begun discussions about exactly what form these revisions should take. 3) The reviewers also recommended that we consider increasing the enrolment limit for our critical thinking courses (p.5). There are various constraints on this of which the reviewers might have been unaware (e.g. room sizes available at the colleges for their sections), but in general we are open to this suggestion, and will be exploring it in our next scheduling cycle. 4) The reviewers also recommended that

we make greater efforts to attract students from other programs (e.g. Engineering, Math, and Computer Science) into our critical thinking and logic courses (see p.5 and p.6), and we are happy to act on this suggestion as well.

Similarly, the reviewers recommended that we increase our efforts to attract students from Nursing, Engineering, and KHS into our 200-level ethics courses (p.5). We think the reviewers may have misunderstood the extent to which we have already pursued these options, and perhaps failed to realize that we already have an arrangement with KHS whereby their BKIN students are required to take a course from a set of five courses, four of which are ethics courses taught by philosophy. Be this as it may, we will happily redouble our efforts to attract students from these disciplines into our courses, and pursue formal arrangements with these faculties to include philosophy courses in their programs.

The only other recommendation which seems directed specifically to the members of this Department is the recommendation that we apply for more scholarly grants (p.5). This is a difficult recommendation to act on at an institutional level, because it is an individual decision for each faculty member whether to apply for a grant or not. The reviewers appear not to have been fully aware of the several grants members of this Department have received in the recent past along with the extent of application to the Federal research granting agencies (contained in our original submission for the Unit Review) that received 4A status, but in any case the Department as a whole can still encourage individual members to apply for an increased number of grants, in keeping with this recommendation.

The external review of our Department also includes a number of recommendations which require action by people outside the Department for their implementation. In general, we enthusiastically endorse these recommendations, and want to express our willingness to do whatever does fall within our power to assist in bringing about the suggested changes.

Some of these recommendations are relatively minor suggestions, that simply require the allocation of small amounts of funds. For example, the reviewers recommend that the University Library should subscribe to PhilPapers (p.4). This would indeed be a significant benefit for us in pursuing our scholarly work, and we enthusiastically support this recommendation. (NB: the reviewers recommend further increases to library acquisitions as well, and we support that as well, but do not view that as being as much of a priority at this time).

Similarly, the reviewers recommend the establishment of a fund for bringing in visiting speakers (p.4 and p.9). Since exposing one's arguments and perspectives to as many other views as possible is the lifeblood of philosophy, we agree this would mark a significant improvement for philosophy at the U of R. We are also mindful of the recommendation that, if there were such a fund, "guest lecturers ought at least occasionally to be of interest to classicists" (p.9), and we would certainly endeavour to find speakers whose topics would be of interest to both sides of the Department, if we were able to bring in any speakers at all.

We also heartily endorse the recommendation that "a stable source of funding be identified for students entering the SOPT program" (p.9). We are quite willing to do our part to support this interdisciplinary graduate program, but would appreciate action on this matter by others within the

University as well. We have also already started to work with others to advertise the PPE program (p.6) including work with the Faculty of Arts (in creating posters, powerpoint presentations, and a social media campaign), Luther College (in developing the semester course listings for advisors on Campus along with each participating department), and in-person presentations to high school guidance counsellors. We will continue to seek ways, in conjunction with others within the University, to recruit students into this program and note the opportunities the Unit Review identified for international recruitment (the PPE program in Oxford is its largest undergraduate degree program and has a longstanding global reputation so there may be an opportunity to work with University of Regina's international recruiters and UR International to recruit into the Faculty of Arts via PPE).

The external review contains two other important recommendations that we very enthusiastically support, but that involve the cooperation of bodies outside our Department. One of these is the recommendation that the Department be given permission to appoint an additional philosophy faculty member (p.8). The reviewers observe that "The Department is seriously understaffed for an institution the size and ambitions of the University of Regina" (p.3), and that "the number of faculty available to teach students at a university of this size is...scarcely adequate to the task" (p.7). They assert that "The consensus opinion within the philosophical profession is that the minimum number of faculty members required to offer a philosophy undergraduate degree at a major Canadian university is about eight or nine" (p.8), which clearly suggests that our present 6.5 philosophy faculty members is significantly below the minimum. They also note that recent reductions in numbers of faculty members within the Department "have had an adverse effect on morale" (p.3), and have led to a situation in which "students experience difficulty completing their degrees in a timely manner because required courses are not offered more frequently" (p.3). At the very least, the reviewers recommend that senior administration provide assurances that the faculty complement in both Philosophy and Classics will not drop *below* its current levels (p.8), but they also assert that "the Department has a strong case for an additional member" (p.8), and we enthusiastically endorse their recommendation that the Department be given permission to appoint one. We will endeavour to make use of the directions from the Faculty of Arts *Vision and Priorities Committee* final report to further plan our course offerings to enable the range needed by those majoring in philosophy at the undergraduate level (whether B.A. Hons, B.A., or PPE).

There is one other recommendation we would like to address, that we again heartily support, but that in fact applies most directly to others. The reviewers recommend that "all courses in ethics and logic/critical thinking be taught by professors with specialised training in these areas" (p.6). For the most part, we believe that the "professors with specialised training in these areas" are concentrated within the Department of Philosophy and Classics. Thus, this recommendation would suggest that, if any other program within the University wants its students to study ethics, for example, they should have their students take a course from our Department, rather than, say, having people in-house teach their students ethics courses, in addition to their other contributions to their disciplines. This institution's practice of allocating resources on the basis of numbers of students taught in house has encouraged various other units to create and teach ethics courses within their own disciplines, and keep their students in them rather than in Philosophy courses, but we take the external reviewers to be suggesting

this is not the optimal way to structure things. We are quite willing to make our expertise, particularly in ethics, available for the benefit of students from many disciplines outside of philosophy, and urge the University to think seriously about how best to move things in that direction. Similarly, although it is popular to claim that all disciplines, at least within the Faculty of Arts, teach critical thinking, the fact of the matter is that that term has a specific meaning within Philosophy, and, like many other universities, we have a course within philosophy (PHIL 150) specifically called “Critical Thinking”. So far as we know, this is the only course within the university that has as its primary focus the ability to identify the structure of arguments, distinguish strong arguments from weak arguments, and learn how to use objective standards of reasoning to ground decision-making. Accordingly, although we certainly do not think other courses should avoid fostering these abilities (quite the contrary!), and thus do not think that developing these skills should fall completely within our purview, we do think the reviewers’ recommendation along these lines should be taken as a basis for allocating a more central role to the Critical Thinking courses we offer, and for being less sanguine about the belief that students will acquire the necessary skills *en passant* (as it were), while studying other subjects.

In closing, we would like to thank the University of Regina for the opportunity to participate in the Unit Review process. We found it very valuable to have an independent, peer review of the full range of activities our department engages along with its resourcing. The “360 degree review” process has certainly benefited our own self-understanding as a Department and hopefully is valuable to the University of Regina as a whole including its federated partners that provide considerable support to our scholarly activities.