

Proposal to Eliminate Academic Program

Pursuant to UW Regulation 6-43

M.A. Philosophy

Statement of the reasons for elimination of the program:

The M.A. in Philosophy has produced thirteen students in the past five years. This is on par with their 2.5 state-funded GA's per year. The program is competitive, with a 15% acceptance rate. The department is active in Outreach teaching and international collaborations.

The department feels that the M.A. is critical to their high quality B.A. degree. Undergraduate students also have required 4000/5000 level courses in their curricula (three required as the senior capstone experience).

However, the faculty ranks in this department are thin; the College has been unable to invest resources here. Two faculty have split appointments and have moved from other units. There are only four full-time philosophy faculty. This strains the ability to run both a quality B.A. and M.A. The recommendation is to discontinue the M.A. program and concentrate on a restructuring of the B.A. to increase connections with and relevance to other majors.

Description of the program and relevant data:

Describe the mission, curriculum, content and format of the program:

The department of philosophy at the University of Wyoming is a lively, analytically oriented program offering courses in all core areas of contemporary philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, value theory, and logic) as well as the major historical figures.

Students enter the masters program in philosophy at the University of Wyoming for a variety of reasons. Some wish to enrich their understanding of the world in an advanced and intellectually challenging environment. Others find that it provides invaluable preparation for many pre-professional degree programs (such as law or medicine). Most, however, come to us with the goal of preparing for advanced study in a top flight graduate program in philosophy (or cognate discipline).

A broad graduate curriculum gives students a solid philosophical foundation as well as providing a number of courses at the cutting edge of the discipline. The program emphasizes work in the core areas of contemporary analytic philosophy as well as providing students with a strong historical foundation. We have particular strengths in epistemology, the philosophy of mind, and environmental ethics, but our graduates have written successful theses in a broad range of philosophic subject areas.

An extremely favorable faculty to student ratio (effectively 1:1) allows for the opportunity to work very closely with an enthusiastic, research-active faculty mentor.

Our track record promoting the specific goals of our students in each of these areas compares very favorably to those of other nationally recognized M.A. programs. Our success derives from a number of specific characteristics of the department.

M.A. students are required to take 9 three-credit seminars + 9 credit hours of thesis research. They take three seminars in each of the first two semesters, two seminars + 3 thesis credits in their third semester, and one seminar + 6 thesis credits in their fourth and final semester. The seminars vary from year to year, but they cover the subfields of epistemology, ethics, history of philosophy, advanced logic, philosophy of science, metaphysics, and philosophy of language (however, the last two are currently not covered due to understaffing).

PHIL 5000: Philosophical
Issues PHIL 5020: Plato
PHIL 5030: Aristotle
PHIL 5040: Kant
PHIL 5100: Figures in Modern and 19th Century Philosophy
PHIL 5110: Figures in Contemporary Philosophy
PHIL 5120: Philosophy and the Twentieth
Century PHIL 5140: Topics in Philosophy of
Science
PHIL 5190: Philosophy of Language
PHIL 5200: Topics in Contemporary
Philosophy PHIL 5300: Topics in Ethics
PHIL 5340: Issues in Environmental
Ethics PHIL 5420: Advanced Logic
PHIL 5440: Topics in the Philosophy of Mind
PHIL 5510: Theory of Knowledge
PHIL 5560: Metaphysics
PHIL 5960: Thesis
Research

Given the size of our MA program, almost all graduate seminars are cross-listed with advanced (4000) level courses for the philosophy major.

Describe the role of the program within the context of the college and the mission of the University:

It should be noted in the context of the remarks below that the recommendation is the closing of the Philosophy MA degree. The BA degree will continue to be taught.

The M.A. students are mostly involved in teaching our introductory courses (PHIL 1000), which serve the entire campus community. Our emphasis in those courses is on the

development of truly critical reasoning, i.e., the informed assessment of the plausibility of theoretical claims and an evaluation of their argumentative and evidential support, both orally and in written form. Developing such skills relies heavily on repeated discussions of quite abstract concepts, such as the nature of truth, justice, and knowledge, and their role in various argumentative strategies from a variety of perspectives. Our M.A. students are critical for the success of the introductory courses through the discussion sections they lead with small groups. Mere classroom discussion with the entire class of between 60 and 80 students would clearly not be sufficient for achieving the central learning outcomes. On occasion, some of our M.A. students also support the teaching in 2000 level courses (such as *The Greek Mind*, *Social and Political Philosophy*, *Philosophy of Religion*, and *Critical Thinking*), which also draw students from all across the campus and which are essential for gaining expertise in the core of any liberal arts education.

Philosophy is mentioned explicitly twice in the establishing document of the University of Wyoming as a central part of the educational mission of UW:

“21-17-101. Establishment.

There is established in this state, at the city of Laramie, an institution of learning to be known as "The University of Wyoming".

21-17-102. Objects; departments.

(a) The objects of the university are to provide an efficient means of imparting to men and women, without regard to color, on equal terms, a liberal education, together with a thorough knowledge of the various branches connected with the scientific, industrial and professional

pursuits. To this end it shall embrace colleges or departments of letters, of science and of the arts together with such professional or other departments as in course of time may be connected therewith.

The department of letters shall embrace a liberal course of instruction in language, literature and philosophy, together with such courses or parts of courses in the college or department of science as are deemed necessary.

(b) The college, or department of science, shall embrace courses of instruction in the mathematical, physical and natural sciences, together with such courses in language, literature and philosophy as shall constitute a liberal education.”

(Title 21, p. 352f; accessed at legisweb.state.wy.us/statutes/compress/title21.doc, 05/06/2016; department head's emphasis)

Clearly, the establishment document explicitly tasks the University of Wyoming with providing a liberal arts education, for which philosophy is deemed essential. Given the dialectical nature of philosophy and its reliance on discussions, our graduate program contributes greatly to this core mission of UW. Our M.A. students lead discussion sections, during which they facilitate a deepening of the philosophical skills, such as critical reasoning in the technical sense of the term, that we try to instill in our undergraduate students. Through this activity, the M.A. program provides an extremely valuable service to the entire campus

community. Moreover, our M.A. students serve as role models for our majors, who can observe first hand what it means to move from an undergraduate student into the role of a beginning researcher in one of the most fundamental and abstract disciplines offered in the Academy. During the last five years, two of our M.A. students have been awarded an Ellbogen Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Award. In addition, national data show that philosophy majors have consistently the highest composite score on the GRE of all majors. They also score in the very top of the LSAT. The exposure to, and interaction with, the students in a philosophy graduate program is an essential element in the development of such outstanding reasoning skills. No other program on campus, or in the state of Wyoming, is comparable in the above-mentioned respects to the M.A. program in philosophy. It truly provides a unique and irreplaceable service to the central teaching mission of the university. Here are some of the details.

1. Mission, vision, and strategic goals support

“At the center of UW’s mission are our students [and] the task of providing [them] with a strong liberal arts foundation [...]”¹ And at the center of a strong liberal arts foundation is philosophy, as the document establishing UW explicitly recognizes. The A&S UP4 Plan (06/2014) promises to provide, among other things, “critical thinking [and] ethical foundations [...] to allow our students to find solutions to the problems and challenges facing the state, nation, and world in the future.” Critical thinking – the evaluation of arguments in support of claims – has traditionally been the province of philosophy (all extant textbooks in critical thinking have been written by philosophers, and virtually all courses called *Critical Thinking* are housed in philosophy departments all across the country), and developing the required skills is emphasized in all of our courses. Ethics is, of course, one of the core disciplines of philosophy. It is much more than the mere adherence to “ethics codes” – true ethics is grounded in the enlightenment idea of autonomous individuals approaching ethical and moral dilemmas by using reason and argumentation. Such reasoning can at first be quite difficult, and our M.A program is essential, through in-depth discussions between M.A. students and undergraduates, for the success of our students to acquire deep ethical foundations that serves them in their future careers and lives: Simply put, it prepares them for enlightened, and thus “for complete living.”

¹ UW – UP4 Strategic Plan, Draft 10/2014, p.3.

Financial data relevant to the academic program:

Cost data is for ENTIRE department and is not disaggregated by degree.

Ratio of student credit hours per FTE (AY 2014/15): 487.1

Direct instructional expenditures (FY 2015): \$977,917

i) Per student FTE: \$11,215

ii) Per total degrees awarded: \$88,902

iii) Non-personnel expenditures / total academic FTE: \$4,640

Course enrollment (AY 2014/15)

i) Classes falling under university minimums: 2

ii) Lower-division courses falling under university minimums: 1

Research expenditure per tenure-track FTE (FY 2015): \$330.50

Admission, enrollment and graduation data relevant to the program, including the number of students currently enrolled and the status of their progress toward graduation:

COLLEGE/DEPARTMENT Program	Master's Majors					Total
	Fall Semesters					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Philosophy	8	8	8	6	5	35
Status of current graduate students' progress toward graduation is unknown.						

COLLEGE/DEPARTMENT Program	Master's Graduates					Total
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	
Philosophy	2	2	3	3	3	13

Placement data for M.A. graduates during the last five years

PhD program in philosophy: 4
Other doctoral program: 2
Adjunct Faculty in Philosophy: 2
Private Industry: 5

Describe the administration of the program:

The MA in Philosophy is administered by the Department of Philosophy, College of Arts and Sciences, Department Head Franz-Peter Griesmaier

Describe the faculty and academic professionals who serve in the program, including their academic credentials, academic rank and length of service to the University:

Robert Colter (PhD, Northwestern University)

Rank: Assistant Lecturer

Length of Service: 9 Years (2007)

Susanna Goodin (PhD, Rice University)

Rank: Associate Professor

Length of Service: 24 Years (1992)

Franz-Peter Griesmaier (PhD, University of Arizona), Department Head

Rank: Associate Professor

Length of Service: 16 Years (2000)

Harvey Hix (PhD, University of Texas-Austin)

Rank: Professor

Length of Service: 11 Years (2005)

Jeffrey Lockwood (PhD, Louisiana State University)

Rank: Professor

Length of Service: 30 Years (1986)

Ed Sherline (Ph.D. University of Illinois-Chicago)

Rank: Associate Professor

Length of Service: 27 Years (1989)

Describe the program facilities, including classrooms and offices, library and equipment used by or dedicated to the program:

Offices: Ross Hall 7, 8, 9, 124, 127, 129. Since the BA program will continue, no office allocations will change.

Classes are generally taught in general pool classrooms, such as the Classroom Building.

Multiple Libraries and database collections are available to Philosophy students and faculty, including Arts & Humanities Citation Index, JSTOR, Religion & Philosophy Collection via Cengage Learning, Philosopher's Index, and Philosophy Documentation Center Collection . This access would be unaffected.

Evaluations from accrediting bodies or other reviewers of the quality of the program and its faculty and academic professionals

There is no external accreditation body for philosophy. In the last bi-annual report submitted by the department in June of 2015, the department pointed to the extraordinarily high research output of the department over the last two years, much of which is associated with having a thriving M.A. program: 6 books; 4 chapters in books; 12 refereed articles; 3 non-refereed articles; 77 poems; 39 presentations; and 34 interviews.

Comparison of the program with related or similar programs:

Over the last five years, we had 82 applicants for 12.5 funded slots in our M.A. program. This translates to a 15% acceptance rate, which shows that we are a highly selective graduate program. 6 applicants were from UW, 56 from out-of-state, and 20 from abroad.

Application

Origin:

Wyoming: 7%

Out-of-State: 69%

Abroad: 24%

There is no other program at UW, or in the state of Wyoming, that duplicates our M.A. program in philosophy. The program is unique in several ways. First, it constitutes an advanced study of *the* core area of any liberal arts education by systematically investigating the very foundations, not only of the other humanities, but also of the sciences: What exactly is truth? How can theoretical claims that go beyond the empirical evidence be justified? What is a cogent argument? What features determine the moral and ethical status of an action? Why exactly does mathematics, a discipline that is largely independent from empirical questions, apply to the empirical world? What can we learn from earlier attempts to wrestle with such questions about our current concerns? Do those concerns change themselves over time as the result of fundamental conceptual revolutions, or do we find historical stability? Second, philosophy is the go-to discipline for acquiring critical reasoning skills. Our M.A. program is singularly well suited to contribute to UW's institutional goal to foster such skills, as it allows undergraduates to wrestle with abstract concepts required for successful critical reasoning under the guidance of our M.A. students. Finally, the M.A. program contributes to the national and international visibility of UW by being the launching pad for successful academic careers all across the country and also abroad: Several of our former M.A. students eventually moved to teaching positions at universities across the

country (e.g., Bridgewater State University, MA, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Rice University, TX, University of Houston Downtown, University of Nebraska), and one just started a TT position at the first dedicated liberal arts university in India (Ashoka).

Grant/Awards Generation

Project	(Co-)PI	Agency	Amount
Pilot Next Generation Science Standards 2015	Griesmaier Lockwood	Campbell County School District	info pending
“Writing the West” 2015	Lockwood	WY Humanities Council	\$ 6,500
Ucross-Pollination Experiment – 2 2015	Lockwood	Ucross Foundation	\$ 27,600
Pilot Next Generation Science Standards 2014	Griesmaier Lockwood	Campbell County School District	info pending
Premier of Ucross documentary, 2014	Lockwood	WIHR	\$ 1,000
Humanity and Nature 2014	Lockwood	WIHR	\$ 2,000
Humanity and Nature 2014	Lockwood	WY Humanities Council	\$ 5,000
Humanity and Nature 2014	Lockwood	Saturday University Program	\$ 3,000
Humanity and Nature 2014	Lockwood	Ucross Foundation	\$ 27,600
Humanity and Nature 2014	Lockwood	UW, Biodiversity Institute	\$ 5,000
Pilot Next Generation Science Standards 2013	Griesmaier Lockwood	Campbell County School District	info pending
Inaugural Poem 2013	Hix	Public Arts Program UT Austin	\$ 1,000

Describe the anticipated effects of elimination of the program upon the college in which the program is situated, upon other colleges and units of the University, and upon the University as a whole, including:

Effects upon students enrolled in the academic program:

The Philosophy Department has four true philosophers. So few cannot sustain a solid Bachelor's and Master's program. Master's programs are designed to be completed in a two year period. Students currently in the program will be encouraged to complete their degrees by working with advisors to ensure that their committees and degree programs are set up and expectations are understood.

Effects upon faculty and academic professionals who serve in the program, including termination of any existing positions:

Positions for APLs and faculty in the department would not be terminated. Teaching loads for instructional personnel may increase as a result of the need for undergraduate course coverage without MA students to assist in instructional load. Certainly they will be disappointed not to work with graduate students but they may work with students in other degree programs.

Educational and financial effects upon other units of the University:

Minimal effects. Philosophers at UW will remain active participants in the educational activities of related units and will teach 4XXX level courses that can be used for undergraduate and graduate credit. A request for an additional philosophy faculty member has been made. Unfortunately, it cannot be a high priority at this time.

Effects upon faculty, academic professionals, staff, students and alumni of the University:

The loss of the Master's program will lower morale. Fewer 4XXX will be taught. Changes will be made in the curriculum of the Bachelors program to mitigate the loss of GA support.

Effects on the State of Wyoming, including loss of benefits conferred outside the University by the academic program:

The outstanding outreach provided by the department will continue.

Implementation plan to be followed in the event the academic program is eliminated, including:

Procedures for handling current and future applications for admission:

Students who apply for admission will be informed of the situation and not admitted.

Plans for assisting currently enrolled students to complete the course of study:

Current students will be told to complete degrees within a two year period and will be helped by advisors in setting up programs of study and graduate committees that will enable them to do so. Writing the thesis may go beyond the two-year period but the faculty remaining are qualified to help the student complete this work.

Plans for accommodating faculty and academic professionals who will be terminated or otherwise affected by elimination of the academic program:

No faculty or academic professionals will be terminated by elimination of the MA in Philosophy. All will continue in the BA program which has been retained.



UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

College of Arts and Sciences

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16 December 2016

MEMO

TO: Kate Miller
Provost/VPAA

FROM: Paula M. Lutz *Paula M. Lutz*
Dean, Arts and Sciences

RE: Program Review for the M.A. in Philosophy: Dean's Response, 1st
comment period

I am to summarize consultations with faculty, AP's, and students in this program, which occurred during the first comment period. The program review packet submitted by the department contained many supportive from individuals (primarily students and alumni). Since the decision to eliminate this program has continued forward, I collected responses from faculty (tenure-track and AP's), staff, students, alumni, and friends of the program through a Google Survey tool. This was sent to the DH on October 20, with a request to give the survey wide distribution.

For this program, there was one response to the on-line survey from a student. In addition, I received a copy of the rebuttal argument submitted by the DH to Academic Affairs. The student's argument was philosophical—that scientists need more philosophy, not less, and that any change in the department's offerings would undermine that. I agree with the former but disagree with the latter. The department's response made five points. Three defend the program based on its quality (not in question), its role in increasing enrollment (with a plan for a 3+2 M.A.), and its importance for a quality B.A. degree (which is being retained). A '3+2' M.A. plan may add a handful of students, but only a few. I disagree with the assertion that a quality B.A. program must have a graduate program attached. Here in A&S we have several such quality programs—Art, Theatre and Dance, and Religious Studies for example. Another point dealt with 'bad data' which it was feared made the program look as though it had a low graduation rate. The process examined the number of graduates over a 5 year period, not the percentage of successful students. Finally, the argument is made that having virtually all graduate

courses dual-listed with undergraduate courses is not a sign of a struggling program. I stand by my statement that four full-time faculty are stretched too thin to run both a quality B.A. and M.A. The large number of dual-listed courses shows an inability to staff both degrees.

A face-to-face meeting was also held with this department this fall, as is our culture in A&S. Program elimination was a hotly debated topic during that discussion, with these same comments brought forward.

The recommendation of the Dean remains the same—to discontinue the M.A. program and concentrate on a restructuring of the B.A. to create a more contemporary curriculum.

Response to the Proposed Elimination of the M.A. Program in Philosophy at the University of Wyoming

Franz-Peter Griesmaier, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Philosophy

As the head of a department with very successful BA and MA programs, as measured in terms of quality, I was very dismayed to see that the MA program has been recommended for discontinuation. What is particularly disturbing is the fact that the decision to issue this recommendation seems to be based on seriously misleading data and considerations of questionable relevance. It also dramatically underestimates the importance of a graduate program for a thriving undergraduate program in philosophy. Since philosophy majors have a decided advantage over many other majors in both academia and business, discontinuing the M.A. would negatively impact the career opportunities for many students at UW.

1. Bad Data: According to the OIA data, which were added to my original review document by either the Office of the Dean or Academic Affairs, we had 35 graduate students over the last five years and graduated 13. This is simply false. In fact, we had 16 graduate students and graduated 13 (one was dismissed for reasons of academic dishonesty, one left for personal reasons, and one for health reasons). OIA assigns the graduate students to the home department of their advisor, but does not count them as graduating from that department. Since Professors Lockwood and Hix are regularly supervising graduate students in the Creative Writing Program, the number of graduate students in philosophy is seriously over counted by the method the OIA uses. This leads to the impression that our graduation rates are very low (13/35), when in fact they are very good (13/16). (According to OIA, we also had a PhD student for 4 years, despite not having a PhD program; in this case, the student was in the Ecology program and being supervised by Lockwood.)

2. Considerations of Questionable Relevance: I was informed by Dean Lutz that the fact that almost all of our graduate courses are dual-listed with undergraduate courses is seen as a sign of a struggling program. In fact, until about 20 years ago, almost no courses anywhere on campus, including philosophy, were dual-listed, and undergraduates had to petition to be allowed to sign up for graduate courses. The reason for a change in campus-wide policy, and the introduction of dual-listing, was simply a matter of operational efficiency. Apparently, it is easier to track tuition monies when the courses, for which undergraduates can petition, are dual-listed. Thus, considering dual-listing, which is just a bureaucratic convenience, as a sign of program weakness strikes me as irrelevant.

3. High Quality of the MA: A significant contributor to 80% graduation rate is our ability to be highly selective with respect to admissions. Our program is in high demand (15% acceptance rate) nationally and internationally. This selectivity along with a rigorous academic program produces highly competitive graduates. With many PhD programs having an acceptance rate of less than 3%, (for example, my alma mater, the University of Arizona, regularly receives around 300 applications for 6–8 funded assistantships), the fact that we placed, over the last 5 years, 30% (4/13) of our graduates in highly ranked PhD programs with full funding is an indicator of the excellent work we are doing here.

This is something UW should be proud of. Of our MA students over the last 15 years, almost 25% now hold full-time academic appointments, including about 15% in tenure-track positions in philosophy.

4. Importance for the BA: Our undergraduate program aims at teaching students, not merely about philosophy, but how to do philosophy. This aim is best achieved by providing the opportunity to practice the critical engagement with highly abstract ideas, theories, and concepts in small groups, led by a graduate assistant. Discussion sections are to philosophy what lab work is to the various empirical sciences. Knowing how to do philosophy puts UW students at a great advantage, both in academia and in the workplace. As national data show, philosophy majors have the top scores on both the LSAT and the composite GRE, and they score among the top five majors on the GMAT. The mid-career median salary of philosophy majors is the third highest in among majors in the College of Arts & Sciences (behind mathematics and physics), and higher than almost all business degrees. ([http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-Degrees that Pay you Back-sort.html](http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-Degrees%20that%20Pay%20you%20Back-sort.html))

Dean Lutz asked me to find out what the best BA programs in philosophy have in common. The answer is simple: The best BA programs are in departments with a graduate program in philosophy. Discontinuing the MA in philosophy will have a negative impact on the undergraduate experience at UW, leaving Wyoming students with many fewer opportunities to engage in the real work of philosophy. Moreover, 92% of flagship universities in the nation have a graduate program in philosophy. The loss of a cornerstone of modern higher education will diminish UW's academic reputation, which is utterly contrary to the institution's goal of increasing enrollment at all levels. In addition, two of our GAs have received the prestigious, campus-wide, Ellbogen Award for Outstanding Graduate Teaching during the review period, which is a clear indicator of how successful our MA program has been in mentoring beginning teachers, who immediately employ their talent and expertise for the benefit of UW's undergraduate students.

5. Importance for the Enrollment Initiative: The philosophy department has started to design, in addition to the traditional, two-year MA program, an option for a 3+2 M.A. Political Science, which established a similar program one year ago, has already seen dramatic, positive effects in terms of quantity and quality of student enrollment. Philosophy has the potential to be an even bigger contributor with the added 3+2 option, as students intending to go to law school have a distinct competitive advantage, if they apply with an M.A. in philosophy in hand. With the proper advertising and marketing, we have the potential to draw students into our program from the entire region, as we would be the only philosophy program in the Rocky Mountain West with a 3+2 option. Instead of eliminating the M.A. in philosophy, UW should seize a unique opportunity to increase our enrollments.

Stephen L. Bieber

From: Franz-Peter Griesmaier
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 1:47 PM
To: Stephen L. Bieber
Subject: Re: MA information

Hi Steve,

Thanks again for meeting with me over lunch. Here are the two further items of information we talked about.

1. There are several reasons for why graduate assistants are a better choice for running discussion sections than advanced undergraduates:
 1. Graduate students typically have a better grasp of the material; they often have finished a long senior project in their own undergraduate career and are better at writing, developing thoughts clearly, and have a more sophisticated grasp of the context of particular philosophical problems.
 2. Graduate students are more confident in leading discussions; they are credentialed, which promotes confidence.
 3. They interact with the major professor of a course on a daily basis, not only about the course, but also about the relevant research.
 4. Graduate Students are fully immersed in philosophy – they are only taking philosophy seminars and don't try to fulfill any gen. ed. requirements at the same time, which can be the case with undergraduates.
 5. Thus, the learning outcomes for undergraduates are of substantially higher quality if they are being led in discussion by graduate students, rather than by their older peers.

B. Graduate students elevate the quality of the capstone courses for our seniors. They serve as role models, showing the undergraduates what they should aspire to in terms of philosophical rigor and engagement. Thus, they contribute essentially to better learning outcomes in the capstone courses.

Cheers,

F-P

From: "Stephen L. Bieber" <Bieber@uwyo.edu>
Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2017 3:14 PM
To: Franz-Peter Griesmaier <fpg@uwyo.edu>
Subject: RE: MA information

Of course. I will meet you there at 12.

Steve

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Franz-Peter Griesmaier <FPG@uwyo.edu>
Date: 2/15/17 3:06 PM (GMT-07:00)
To: "Stephen L. Bieber" <Bieber@uwyo.edu>

From: Stephen L. Bieber
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 3:44 PM
To: Franz-Peter Griesmaier
Subject: Proposal to Eliminate the MA Degree in Philosophy

Dr. Griesmaier

The Academic Planning Committee is currently reviewing the 12 academic programs which have been recommended for elimination.

In a preliminary discussion of the proposal to eliminate the MA degree in Philosophy, my committee wrestled with the "evidence" presented in favor of the program elimination and in support of its retention. It is unfortunate that the various program elimination proposals seem to have been developed almost entirely from the perspective of UW Regulation 6-43, which is really inadequate to enable a proper review of any program being considered for elimination. As a consequence, we found the "evidence" provided to be insufficient for us to render a decision. Rather than simply making the decision based on our feelings, we decided to solicit the information that we believe is missing.

We would like to provide you an opportunity to provide us with this information and to make the best case for the retention of your program. The questions below will direct you to the information that we would like and hopefully they will not be too difficult to answer. However, regardless of their level of difficulty, the timeframe that has been imposed on us requires a speedy response. We will need your answers no later than Friday February 17.

These questions represent the range of our interests, but should not necessarily be viewed as required or restrictive. We would like this "type" of information. So please feel free to answer any or all of the questions below, or even add information outside the questions asked. Please provide us with what you deem to be most beneficial to you and would be most helpful to us.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Thanks,

Steve Bieber, Chair
Academic Planning Committee

1. Faculty Teaching Loads

For each current faculty member, what courses have they taught, what has been the enrollment in the class, and were MA students used (if so, how many). [It would be nice to have this information for Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, and Spring 2017. But please provide what you can. We could get this information directly from OIA, but their information is often of questionable accuracy. We felt that you would have the most accurate information.]

2. If the MA is deleted,

- then which courses, if any, in the Philosophy curriculum will no longer need to be offered
- how will this specifically affect the activities (teaching, research, load, ...) of the faculty in Philosophy
- how will this specifically affect students in the BA program

- can faculty establish interdisciplinary connections with other units at UW to maintain their involvement in master's level work

3. Can the department offer the BA and MA given its current faculty size?

- Can all of your BA and MA courses be offered in an appropriate and timely manner to enable BA and MA students to graduate within the appropriate timeframe?
- You have a 3+2 plan in preparation. How do you anticipate this plan will affect enrollment in the MA program? Do you anticipate that you will be able to exceed the University's minimum threshold of MA graduates per year on a regular basis?
- Do you have a plan in place or in preparation to increase financial support to graduate students beyond state sponsored assistantships?

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To: "Stephen L. Bieber" <Bieber@uwyo.edu>

critical mass of
graduate students?

Dear Members of the Academic Planning Committee,

I have gathered some further information on the MA program in philosophy that hopefully will be useful for you during your review.

1. Faculty Teaching Loads: please see attached document.

2. If the MA is deleted,

- there are no courses that will no longer need to be offered. The reason is that our seniors have a cap-stone requirement, which they satisfy by taking three graduate seminars at the 4000 level.
- there are effects on *use advanced undergraduates?*
- *faculty teaching:* no discussion sections means that the give-and-take of rational argumentation in real time, central to the practice of philosophy, will be extremely difficult to achieve, because in large classes students will be hesitant to speak up and participate, as many of them are first-generation students from small town Wyoming and can be shy in large groups.
- *research:* graduate seminars are wonderful platforms for integrating research with teaching; while we still will have the senior cap-stone courses, the lack of graduate students might result in fewer opportunities for such integration, which means that research and teaching become essentially independent from each other. Thus, there is a real danger that research might become an extra activity, only to be engaged in after a long day of teaching.
- *load:* the teaching loads would not change.
- there are a number of effects on the BA
- As mentioned, the practice of philosophy consists in a dialectical back-and-forth of thesis, objection, counterargument, etc. Our GAs serve as role models for the undergraduates who are learning this practice by immersion. Without the MA, the learning outcomes for the BA would be in jeopardy.
- The MA program, through the GAs, is a great recruitment tool for our major. Philosophy majors, in turn, have consistently the highest composite score on the GRE, and the highest score on the LSAT. They also score in the top 5 on the GMAT and MCAT. Not having the MA might close off the avenue to such high scores for UW students, or at least make it less attractive to them, thus depriving them of important opportunities.

graduate students involved in research?

above

but not — attracting many now

3. Can the department offer the BA and the MA given its current faculty size?

- The answer is a definite yes, as we have delivered both degrees with great success over the last 15 years with mostly 6 faculty members, which is our current number. While we would make our graduate students even more competitive with one additional hire in metaphysics and ontology, our track record clearly shows that our MA is not only viable, but in fact very strong and nationally competitive (as the letter from Professor Titelbaum for UW-Madison – a top-20 PhD program – eloquently attests to; he characterizes the quality of our MA program as “second to none” in the nation).
- Most of our MA students defend their theses at the end of two years. There were a small number who delayed, for various reasons, their defense until the summer or early fall of year three, for which they receive no funding.
- Our BA time-to-completion is in step with UW’s average, despite the fact that most of our majors are recruited during their second, third, or fourth semester at UW.
- Having an MA in philosophy provides a great competitive advantage for admission to law school. We would be the first 3+2 MA in the region, which makes it likely that such a program would constitute a great recruitment tool for us, aligning our department’s efforts with the President’s plan to increase enrollment from across the region. While difficult to predict with confidence, there are good reasons for believing that the 3+2 MA, together with the traditional MA, supported by GA lines, will allow us to consistently meet the 3 graduates/year threshold. (We currently graduate a little over 2.5/year, or 13/5 years, out of 15 graduate students over the last 5 years.)
- There are hardly any sources of external funding for research in philosophy, and those that exist are almost exclusively targeted towards PhD programs. One of us (Griesmaier) has developed and submitted two NSF proposals together with Jim Caldwell in Computer Science several years ago, which unfortunately were not funded (although the comments were very encouraging, so that we intend to submit another proposal in the near future). If such a grant were to become available, we could possibly fund one or two MA positions in philosophy.

? →
extra 1/2/year

other additional revenue. - online

4. We are in the process of merging with Religious Studies. Should we retain the MA, it would simply be an independent degree program, just as the BA in philosophy and the BA in religious studies will remain independent degree programs.

Colter

CRN Crse Sec Title Act Cross List Act Term

10600	1000	1				0	Fall 14
19479	3560	1				0	Fall 14
19480	4020	1				15	Fall 14
19481	5020	1				15	Fall 14
13392	5940	1				0	Fall 14
12572	5960	1				0	Fall 14
20530	1000	1				0	Spring 15
23037	3120	1				0	Spring 15
21880	5940	1				0	Spring 15
20535	5960	1				0	Spring 15
13470	1000	1				0	Fall 15
17911	3510	1				0	Fall 15
17915	4030	1				19	Fall 15
17916	5030	1				19	Fall 15

Since Fall 2014
 Year 1 X5 34 15
 Year 2 87 X6 21
 Year 3 5 4 22
 15 of the 18 5000 level are dual listed

5

15585	5940	1	Cont Reg: Off Campus	0	0	Fall 15
15028	5960	1	Thesis Research	2	0	Fall 15
20530	1000	1	Intrc			Spring 16
26408	3120	1	Anci			Spring 16
23299	3420	1	Sym			Spring 16
21880	5940	1	Cont			Spring 16
20535	5960	1	Thes			Spring 16
31789	5940	1	Cont Sabb			Summer 16
20530	1000	1	Intrc			Fall 16
26408	3120	1	Anci			Spring 17
27690	4020	1	Platc		10	Spring 17
27691	5020	1	Platc		10	Spring 17
21880	5940	1	Cont			Spring 17
20535	5960	1	Thes			Spring 17

5.35 FTE capacity ~ 27
 Anticipated Load
 Colter
 Goodin
 Griswain
 Hix
 Lockwood
 Sherline

6

3

Goodin

19475	1000	3	Intro to Phil	54	0	Fall 14
19477	3100	1	Hist Modern Phil: Rationalist	27	0	Fall 14
24706	1000	2	Intro to Phil	58	0	Spring 15
24710	5100	1	Figs-Mod & 19th Cent:Descartes	11	0	Spring 15
30205	3000	2	Tp:Philosophy of Sex & Love	6	14	Summer 15
17034	1000	3	Intro to Phil	41	0	Fall 15
18292	3110	1	Hist Modern Phil:Empiricists	22	0	Fall 15
24706	1000	2	Intro to Phil	45		Spring 16

4

load?

24710	5100	1	Figs-Modern 19th Century	8		Spring 16
15131	1000	2	Intro to Phil	32		Fall 16
15132	2310	1	Philosophy of Religion	24		Fall 16
15133	3100	1	Hist Modern Phil: Rationalists	16		Fall 16
24706	1000	2	Intro to Phil	30		Spring 17
24710	5100	1	Figs-Modern 19th Century	7		Spring 17

Griesmaier

19484	4510	1	Theory of Knowledge	4	11	Fall 14
19485	5510	1	Theory of Knowledge	7	11	Fall 14
24707	3140	1	Phil of Science	27	0	Spring 15
23299	3420	1	Symbolic Logic	24	0	Spring 15
31462	5920	1	Cont Reg: On Campus	1	0	Summer 15
17913	3000	1	Topics:Advanced Logic	4	0	Fall 15
17040	4510	1	TheoryofKnowledge:Epistemology	4	9	Fall 15
17041	5510	1	TheoryofKnowledge:Epistemology	5	9	Fall 15
26410	3500	1	Hist of Science	12		Spring 16
26413	4440	1	Topics in Philosophy of Mind	4	7	Spring 16
26414	5440	1	Tpcs: Philosophy of Mind	3	7	Spring 16
15134	3140	1	Phil of Science	27		Fall 16
15138	4120	1	Phil and 20th Century	1	9	Fall 16
15139	5120	1	Phil and 20th Century	8	9	Fall 16
12415	5940	1	Cont Reg: Off Campus	1		Fall 16
11896	5960	1	Thesis Research	3		Fall 16
27697	3000	2	Tp: Ideas and Ideology	15		Spring 17
23299	3420	1	Symbolic Logic	17		Spring 17

Hix

Moved to philosophy (75%) in F 2014

23821	4000	1	Phil Issues: Affect Theory	1	9	Spring 15
23822	5000	1	Phil Issues: Affect Theory	8	9	Spring 15
17914	3340	1	Phil In Literature	11	26	Fall 15
15135	3220	1	Existentialism & Phenom	20		Fall 16
15409	3340	1	Phil In Literature	10	30	Fall 16
26411	4000	1	Phil Issues: Wittgenstein	5	10	Spring 17
26412	5000	1	Phil Issues: Wittgenstein	5	10	Spring 17

Lockwood

60% philosophy, 40% Creative Writing

18938	5550	1	Independent Study	1	0	Fall 15
26411	4000	1	Phil Issues: The Sublime	7	14	Spring 16
26412	5000	1	Phil Issues: The Sublime	7	14	Spring 16
15136	4000	1	Tp: Philosophy Writing	5	12	Fall 16
15137	5000	1	Tp: Philosophy Writing	7	12	Fall 16

Sherline							
19478	3300	1	1	Ethical theory	24	0	Fall 14
13112	4300	1	1	Topics in Ethics	9	11	Fall 14
10602	5300	1	1	Topics in Ethics	2	11	Fall 14
				Sabbatical			Spring 15
17912	3250	1	1	Global Justice	30	0	Fall 15
15428	4300	1	1	Topics in Ethics	3	6	Fall 15
13472	5300	1	1	Topics in Ethics	3	6	Fall 15
26403	1000	3		Intro to Phil	16		Spring 16
26406	3000	1		Special Tp: African Philosophy	11		Spring 16
26409	3350	1		History of Moral Philosophy	23		Spring 16
10431	1000	1		Intro to Phil	34		Fall 16
14113	3250	1		Global Justice	25		Fall 16
12282	4300	1	1	Topics in Ethics	3	10	Fall 16
10432	5300	1	1	Topics in Ethics	7	10	Fall 16
27696	2300	1		Ethics in Practice: Bioethics	13		Spring 17
26406	3000	1		Tp: African Philosophy	9	13	Spring 17
27698	3300	1		Ethical theory	28		Spring 17
Purves							
10601	1000	2		Intro to Phil	38	0	Fall 14
17547	2345	1	1	Natural Resource Ethics	12	32	Fall 14
18427	2345	2	1	Natural Resource Ethics	14	31	Fall 14
23298	2345	1		Natural Resource Ethics	15	67	Spring 15
23814	3000	1		Tp: Philosophy of Language	12	0	Spring 15
24711	4560	1	1	Metaphysics	9	12	Spring 15
24712	5560	1	1	Metaphysics	3	12	Spring 15
Temp/Summer Instructors <i>Summer</i>							
Bell							
30203	1000	1		Intro to Phil	7	0	Summer 15
30256	1000	1		Intro to Phil	9		Summer 16
Cantalamesa							
30257	3000	1		Tp: Philosophy, Art & Film	11		Summer 16
Poland							
30206	3000	3		Tp:Phil Through Science Fctn	8	0	Summer 15
30260	3000	4		Tp:Philsphy Through Sci Fction	10		Summer 16

2

5

6

4 1/2

Devlin							
<u>30208</u>	3000	5	Tp:Existential Cinema	24	0	Summer 15	
<u>30209</u>	3320	1	Eastern Thought	18	24	Summer 15	
Shook							
30258	3000	2	Tp: South Park	30		Summer 16	

Lockwood

The proposal to eliminate the MA in philosophy appears to hinge on two assertions: 1) that there is insufficient faculty (“...the faculty ranks in this department are thin...The Philosophy Department has four true philosophers.”) and 2) that the quality of the BA and MA are not acceptable (“This strains the ability to run both a quality B.A. and M.A.”). Let me critically analyze each of these claims. To the credit of the author(s) of the proposal, there is no suggestion that the number of MA graduates is at issue as the productivity is actually slightly greater than the investment of state-funded GAs in the department, so the focus of this analysis will be the qualitative concerns raised in the proposal.

Evaluating the Rationale

Insufficient Faculty

The document effectively dismisses the two presumptive non-philosophers who contribute substantially to the department (Hix and Lockwood). Consider that Hix has a PhD in philosophy from the University of Texas. Does UW’s office of Academic Affairs contend that a doctorate from the University of Texas is not adequate to qualify one as a philosopher? This seems to be a most remarkable contention. Perhaps the notion is that Hix has been working in the field of poetry/poetics for some years and this effort disqualifies him because his publications are not primarily in peer-reviewed philosophy journals or from academic book publishers. But if this is the criterion, then I (Lockwood) am most surely a “true philosopher” having published in both peer-reviewed philosophy journals (e.g., *Environmental Philosophy* and *Axiomathes: International Journal of Ontology and Cognitive Systems*) and university presses (*The Philosophical Foundations for the Practices of Ecology*, Cambridge University Press, 2009). I do not have a PhD in philosophy, however. But if this is the criterion, then by this reasoning Hix is not a “true poet” (having no graduate degree in this field) despite being a finalist for the National Book Award in poetry and having won the T. S. Eliot Prize and the Peregrine Smith Award. Thus, the contention that the department has just four “true philosophers” is incoherent at best and insulting at worst (I have devoted a great number of hours of study to gain the knowledge necessary for the “true” philosophers to endorse my courses and value my contributions, so I resent the implication that I am a pretender or fake philosopher. I am currently collaborating with “true” philosophers on two major projects, a textbook on the philosophy of science and a book titled *Good Questions: The Nature of Value and the Value of Nature*).

One might further ask why the two putative non-philosophers “moved from other units [to philosophy].” The answer is simple. The academic collegiality and intellectual vitality of the Philosophy Department was well known to both of these faculty members. Both are among the universities finest scholars (e.g., Hix having been honored with an NEA Fellowship and the Grolier Prize; Lockwood having been honored with the George Duke Humphry Award and a John Burroughs Award). And both chose to move their academic appointments to the Philosophy Department, constituting explicit endorsement of the functionality and rigor of this unit which is intimately linked to the existence of its MA program.

Insufficient Quality

The proposal for elimination contends that quality BA and MA programs do not and cannot exist with the current (and foreseeable, one presumes) resources in the Philosophy Department. No argument is made to defend this assertion, which is deeply troubling in an institution that touts critical thinking. Being in philosophy, I would expect that the fundamentals of argumentation would be reflected in a document as important as the one concerning program elimination. However, there is no evidence provided to support the thesis (if the proposal were a student's "paper" it would not receive a passing grade in a philosophy course). That said, there is evidence embedded in the document and available elsewhere, but this evidence strongly points toward the opposite conclusion.

According to the proposal, the MA program is highly selective (15% acceptance rate) which is clearly consistent with a national reputation for quality (69% of applicants coming from out of state and 24% being international). The document also reveals a solid placement rate of MA graduates in doctoral programs (ca. 50%). Several of these placements were in extremely competitive, top tier PhD programs, although this further detail is not included in the document.

By way of testimonial evidence, I have served on 190 graduate committees in 30 years at UW, chairing 31 of these. The graduate committees have been in 25 academic programs (American Studies, Anthropology, Botany, Computer Science, Ecology, Economics and Finance, Educational Counseling, English, Entomology, Environment & Natural Resources, Geography, Geology, Interdisciplinary Studies, Creative Writing, Natural Science, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Range Management, Science Education, Social Work, Statistics, Soil Science, Veterinary Science, Zoology) for seven different degrees (PhD, JD-MA, MFA, MPA, MSW, MA and MS). I suspect that relatively few UW faculty have more extensive, first-hand experience with thesis and dissertation committees. And I can say that the MA theses in philosophy are consistently in the top quartile of the institution's graduate programs with respect to intellectual quality and academic rigor. The thesis defense in the Philosophy Department is among the most demanding examinations in which I have participated.

Presumptive Benefit

The proposal implies that the BA will be strengthened if the MA is eliminated. But again, no evidence to support this assertion is provided. The document recommends that a restructured BA would "increase connections with and relevance to other majors." The presumption appears to be that the department's current offerings are disconnected from and irrelevant to non-philosophy majors. But again, the evidence fails to support this thesis. The department offers courses in introductory philosophy (taken primarily by non-majors), history of science, philosophy of science, environmental ethics, global justice, philosophy of literature, and African philosophy among others. The department has strong teaching and research linkages to the STEM disciplines (particularly the Haub School of Environment & Natural Resources and the Computer Science department) as well as other units in the social sciences (particularly Religious Studies and Gender and Women's Studies, along with a new connection to African

American & Diaspora Studies), the arts (particularly the Creative Writing program and the Art Museum), and the humanities (particularly the English department and the Wyoming Institute for Humanities Research).

The elimination of the MA will not create opportunities to invent a slate of new courses, as the faculty will continue to teach the seminars that are currently dual-listed at the 4000/5000-level to assure a high quality capstone experience for the BA students. These seminars provide extremely valuable contact between graduate and advanced undergraduate students. So the elimination of the MA program diminishes—rather than enhances—the quality of the BA in philosophy. And these seminar courses also connect the department to other majors. For example, my recent seminars include such topics as philosophy of wilderness, ecofeminism, philosophy of the sublime, and aesthetics which are subjects of direct relevance to the Program in Ecology, Environment and Natural Resources, Gender & Women's Studies, American Studies, English, Art, and Music.

Thus, the elimination of the MA will not yield the presumed benefits. Indeed, the evidence would suggest that there will be few opportunities for increasing the already extensive linkages to other academic units and that there may well be a decrease in the academic rigor and intellectual opportunities for students in the BA program.

An Alternative

Given that the evidence is inconsistent with the assertions regarding the quality of the faculty and the MA program, it seems reasonable to conjecture that the motivation for the proposal must be based on some other consideration. The proposal states that, “the College has been unable to invest resources [in the department]” and that a “request for additional philosophy faculty...cannot be a high priority at this time.” Of course, the honest expression of the institution's situation is that the College has been unwilling (not unable, as there have been faculty hires in other units) and that additional philosophy faculty is not (rather than cannot be) a priority. That said, it seems that the department should be praised for having cultivated the academic collegiality and intellectual rigor to have built its ranks by becoming attractive to high quality scholars from other units on campus.

Statements in the proposal about the investment of resources leads one to reasonably infer that the motivation for the proposal is linked to funding. The primary (sole?) savings of eliminating the MA in philosophy is the recovery of the monies supporting the graduate assistantships. So how might it be possible to both allow the institution to save these funds and permit the Philosophy department to retain an MA program?

The most innovative and viable solution would be to institute a 5-year (3+2) MA program in philosophy (a detailed outline of such a program has already been developed), modelled after the highly successful 3+2 MA program in Political Science. With this approach, the department could attract talented students from around the region into a novel degree program that might be particularly enticing to pre-law students (for example). The basic idea would be to allow

demonstrably qualified students (based on 3 years of undergraduate work) to transition into a graduate degree program. There would be no assistantships and hence no costs to the University—but this venture would allow the intellectual vitality of the BA and MA programs to continue in a novel formulation. The morale in the department would be sustained or likely improved with the opportunity for some new ideas/approaches stemming from this interesting educational framework. The chance for marketing the novel venture (there are no other such 5-year MA programs in philosophy in our region) would be substantial—and with the demands by the institution to increase enrollment in coming years, this alternative would quite plausibly contribute to the university's goal. And finally, after some period of time to develop and test the 5-year MA, if the program had unexpected costs or failed to attract and graduate quality students, then the university could make an evidence-based argument for eliminating the MA in its entirety.

16 December 2016

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to provide comments on the proposal to eliminate the M.A. program in Philosophy.

I'll begin with a brief review and analysis of the Academic Affairs criteria for program elimination recommendations that apply to the M.A. program in Philosophy. The general criteria are "mission centrality and quality of the program. Quality includes external demand for graduates, internal demand for courses, and the quality of inputs, such as faculty credential and facilities, and quality of outputs, such as attainment of student learning outcomes, placement of graduates, and grants, publications, and scholarly and creative work of faculty." These general criteria are significant in light of the specific rationale for eliminating the Philosophy M.A.: "the faculty ranks in this department are thin; the College has been unable to invest resources here. . . This strains the ability to run both a quality B.A. and M.A." The reason is not that the program is peripheral to the mission of the university (far from it), but its quality. Furthermore, the qualitative problem pertains to "inputs". Note, however, that the quality of input is neither faculty credentials nor facilities. Rather, it is faculty size.

Certainly our faculty size is small. The important point is that *even with our small faculty, we have maintained a very high quality M.A. program (measured in terms of our competitive acceptance rate, our graduation rate, and our success in placing our M.A. students in high quality Ph.D. programs), and a very high quality B.A. program (measured in part through our regularly having one of our graduating seniors receive an A&S Top Twenty Graduating Seniors award).* My key point, then, is that the ultimate reason for program elimination, that the thin faculty ranks strains the ability to run both a quality B.A. and M.A., is patently false. Because of the synergistic relation between our B.A. and M.A., running both programs enhances the quality of the B.A. and **so makes it easier to offer both**, rather than straining our abilities. *

The reason that the college gave (which is not mentioned in the Academic Affairs rationale) for straining the ability to run both a quality B.A. and M.A. is that as a result of the small size of our M.A. program, we must teach dual listed seminars, with advanced undergraduates as well as graduate students in the same classroom, and this provides the graduate students with a substandard learning experience. This is mistaken on a number of fronts. First, it mistakenly assumes the science model of graduate education, with a highly regimented hierarchy of educational levels, and that this model holds for all disciplines. Second, it falsely assumes that our advanced undergraduates are much less developed students than our M.A. students, and that having undergraduates in the same seminar pulls down the level of education for the graduate students. Again, this is completely false. Many of our graduate students have gone on to strong Ph.D. programs in philosophy, and we have feedback from those students and from faculty members at these programs that our M.A. students are extremely well prepared, and are flourishing! It should be evident that having dual-listed seminars does not pull down the quality of education being received by the graduate students in these seminars, though it certainly pulls up the quality of education being received by the undergraduate students in these seminars.

There is an implicit, unwritten rationale for eliminating the M.A. program that cuts deeper. This is that the administration of the College wants to redistribute the GAships and other resources currently relied on by the Philosophy M.A. program for other departments, and furthermore, does not consider shoring up or even maintaining the current faculty size as a priority relative to the needs of other departments. Indeed if there are further retirements or resignations of our core faculty, there will be a significant strain on our ability to offer a high quality M.A. program, not because of a diffusion of our teaching efforts but because we will not be able to cover the core courses needed for the program.

Underlying this implicit rationale for eliminating the M.A. program must be the view that philosophy is empty, pointless, a waste of time as a distinctive discipline, and that at best it provides merely another avenue for teaching critical thinking skills to undergraduates. This view seems to be driven by the assumption that for a discipline to be worth keeping, it must either be of practical value or a science.

So it is worth reminding ourselves that philosophy is a cognitive discipline that generates distinctive types of knowledge, that it is an important companion to the sciences, and that it is of great practical value in the largest sense:

- Philosophy encourage and contribute to innovation and creativity;
- Philosophy teaches students to be comfortable with disagreement, with people thinking differently;
- Philosophy develops communication skills, especially written communication;
- Philosophy is essentially cross-disciplinary thinking, something that students, regardless of discipline, need in an academic culture of multi-disciplinary collaborative investigations.
- Philosophy emphasizes the importance of using good judgment to deal with the prevalence of complex information in our society;
- Philosophy teaches students to form their own conclusions on subject matter;
- Philosophy is the discipline of skepticism and doubt, which encourages students to question and challenge.

It is easy to think: "What's the big deal about cutting the Philosophy M.A. program? It is so small, it will have little impact on the undergraduate students, the resources available for other graduate programs, or even on the faculty." This is a reasonable but uninformed view. In cutting the M.A. program, the ultimate harm is to the undergraduate students. Should the university ever see fit to replace any of the many faculty that have been lost due to resignations and retirements, and attempt to bring the faculty size up to a level that can sustain a vibrant undergraduate program, it will be in its best interest to attract the best faculty available. The best and brightest applicants will be reluctant to come to a department that lacks graduate education and to a university that has signaled through this elimination that it regards philosophy as an afterthought. The undergraduate major and a skeleton crew of faculty might continue to exist, but as the faculty continues to dwindle in size, quality and morale, it will no longer be vibrant place of learning.

While granting the need for regular reviews of programs, I also question the values at play. Eliminating small programs simply because they are small is not a worthy rationale, especially given the unique position of the University of Wyoming as the sole university within the state. The programs targeted for elimination might be small, but we need them to provide the broad range of educational opportunities for Wyoming students that other states provide for their students. We shouldn't base program elimination on a comparison of numbers of programs at different institutions, and that UW has so many more than, say, Cal-Berkeley. That is comparing apples and oranges. Furthermore, when we do look to appropriate comparator universities in other states, all of the philosophy departments provide graduate education.

Bertrand Russell has written that the chief value of philosophy is “through the greatness of the objects which it contemplates, and the freedom from narrow and personal aims resulting from this contemplation.” This fosters a great and free soul. This point extends to the university (and to the state at large). A university without a vibrant philosophy department is a university that lacks a great and free soul.

Sincerely,

Edward Sherline
Associate Professor, Philosophy

The philosophy department has developed an environment for a unique and mutually advantageous relationship among its faculty, graduate students, majors, and undergraduate students in our Introduction to Philosophy course (PHIL 1000).

We offer three sections of Intro most fall semesters and two sections in the spring semester. Rarely is there a single major in any of those intro courses. I imagine this is quite unusual for most departments but it is a commonplace for us. Students do not come from high school knowing enough about philosophy to plan on majoring in it. What happens instead is that students take a philosophy course to meet a USP requirement or because they are exposed to philosophical issues in another of their courses and their curiosity is piqued. Once they take a philosophy course, they decide to take more and then become a major. The fact is that the overwhelming percentage of students become philosophy majors in their sophomore or junior year. This phenomena explains why so many of the philosophy majors are double majors. Philosophy is added on to the major students had as freshmen. In my 24 years at UW, only one student entered as a philosophy major and graduated four years later as a philosophy major.

Recruitment for our majors occurs during our Intro courses. In order for the recruitment to be successful we must be able to engage the students in philosophical discourse. Students must "do" philosophy, not just learn what the various philosophers have said or what the various philosophical theories are. The Intro courses are labor intensive, with most of the time being spent in dialectical discussions, learning how to recognize, evaluate, and develop arguments – doing philosophy.

In order to teach as many students as we teach and to teach in the way we do which has been shown to be very successful, we

must engage the students in a discourse. A survey of the course evaluations performed by the A&S Dean's Office every semester will show that the philosophy department outperforms the college mean on every question. This level of performance for the philosophy department holds year after year. Our majors have a high rate of acceptance into graduate schools and law school. Our graduate students have a high placement rate in highly ranked Ph.D. programs. We are a successful department.

The only way to teach the number of students we currently teach in the way that philosophy needs to be taught is to make a very specific use of our graduate students. The graduate students are not mere graders or lab proctors. Graduate students hold weekly discussion sections, give lectures, design and grade exams, and, perhaps most importantly, have the students come to their offices and spend time discussing philosophy and joining in with the hallway discussions between the faculty and the grad students. This is when the recruitment for majors happens – the undergrads get to hang out and see what it is to spend time with philosophers in a free-wheeling but logically rigorous exploration of exciting and challenging ideas.

What the philosophy department at UW has developed is an environment where all four elements of the department (faculty, graduate students, majors, and students in our intro courses) come together and do philosophy for hours on end, hanging out in the hallways, arguing, scrawling arguments in logical notation over the dry erase boards hanging on both sides of the hallways.

Our faculty model philosophical research via the spirited and rigorous discussions in the hallways with the graduate

students and the grad students are the bridge to the undergraduates who took a philosophy course, loved it and want to do more, i.e., the students who become our majors. Grad students are the ones that students from the intro courses come to for office hours and so end up in the offices, hearing the intense discussions, eventually joining in. Those students then become our majors and are comfortable hanging out with the faculty and grad students in the hallway discussions because the undergrads had gotten to know the grad students when the grad students for the Graduate Assistants in the Intro courses.

The degree of engagement between faculty, grad students, majors, and students in intro courses is unusual. Our majors who go on to graduate programs elsewhere and our graduate students who go on to PhD programs report back to us that they miss our challenging and collegial “hallway” ethos. Graduate students who come here tell us that they didn’t have such a cohesive departmental experience where they were before.

We have created a wonderful and successful intellectual community that benefits the faculty, the graduate students, the majors, and the students who take the introductory course.

Without our graduate students being in their offices all day, engaging in discussions with the faculty and each other, our majors will not have a reason to drop by the department and engage in such discussions. Faculty will still talk with each other and will still be in the hallways, scrawling arguments on the boards in the hallways, but without the grad students in their offices, spilling out into the hall to join in, the majors will not have a place to be, a reason to be, and an easement into the discussions. The link between the majors and the faculty that

makes our seminars so challenging and satisfying depends on the graduate students providing bridge between the two groups.

Requirements for the philosophy major include a capstone experience composed of three 4000/5000 level seminars. Those courses will need to be taught regardless of whether the MA program exists, but the success of those courses currently is due to the interplay between our graduate students and majors being in those seminars together. Our graduate students work hard to be better than our junior/senior level majors. Our majors are challenged to stay up with the pace and intensity while the graduate students model for the majors what it is to engage in philosophical on the next level of intellectual skill. This has proven to be successful given by the placement of our majors into good MA programs and law schools. Our majors are very well prepared and we believe that a large reason for this success is due to the degree to which there is interaction between the graduate students and the majors.

Learning how to explore abstract lines of argument about questions of language, reference, truth, knowledge, metaphysics, logic, ethics, aesthetics, and existential issues is a skill learned only by engaging in it.

Dean Lutz has expressed concern that the department has too few faculty members to maintain both a BA and an MA. The fact is quite the opposite. The MA is what allows us to recruit majors, foster an environment where undergrad majors thrive and become competitive for graduate programs and law school, and have a department where the faculty members are intellectually fulfilled. Far from being strained by having both

the MA and the BA, it is the presence of the MA that makes our BA program as successful as it is.

It should be noted that Dean Lutz considers the philosophy department to have four full-time faculty and two part-time faculty. This is somewhat misleading. The two faculty who she views as part-time are 75% philosophy and 25% in the MFA in Creative Writing. Harvey Hix and Jeff Lockwood are full professors with international reputations, extremely high research productivity, and numerous awards for both research and teaching. They teach a number of courses in the philosophy department, at all levels (lower division, upper division, and graduate). They serve on numerous thesis committees. They participate in all department activities.

It is worth noting that both of these highly successful professors asked to have their lines moved to the philosophy department because they wanted a collegial, intellectually challenging environment in which they would thrive. Two of the highest achieving humanities scholars actively sought out the philosophy department. Clearly we are doing something right and we all believe, quite strongly, that the interplay among the faculty, grad students, and majors is a highly significant factor in the department being as good as it is.

The faculty will continue to have successful BA even if the MA is dissolved. A number of colleges and universities have successful philosophy BA programs without an MA program. But the philosophy department here at UW has managed to create a unique and highly successful environment for both the majors and the graduate students. To think that dissolving the MA will ease the strain on the faculty is simply to miss just how unique and successful the current interplay between our MA

and BA programs is, and how much that interplay contributes to the faculty's satisfaction with their colleagues and careers.

Subject: Response to Proposal to Eliminate MA in Philosophy
Date: Saturday, November 19, 2016 at 11:56:05 AM Mountain Standard Time
From: Richard Howey
To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office

From: Richard L. Howey, Professor Emeritus

SUBJECT:
Response to Proposal to Eliminate
the M.A. program in Philosophy

I strongly oppose the proposal to eliminate the M.A. program in Philosophy.

1) While I understand the need to approach such issues quantitatively, in part, the level of the number of degrees awarded set at 15 over a period of 5 years is, in the end, arbitrary. The Philosophy program awarded 13 M.A. degrees over that period and the quality is quite impressive (I will give some examples a bit later.)

2) It took many years of hard work to develop a department which has demonstrated excellence at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and it would be most unfortunate to begin dismantling it now. When I arrived in 1966, there were only 3 faculty members, no adjunct faculty, and no graduate assistants, but with persistence, the department grew and made significant contributions to the College of Arts and Sciences and the university as a whole. Various studies have shown that Philosophy is an excellent preparation for a variety of professions and certainly not only exclusively for a Ph.D. in the discipline. We have had students go on to highly successful careers in other fields, such as, one M.A. student who got a law degree at the University of Chicago and is now at a firm where he deals with copyright infringement.

3) Four full time faculty is not ideal, however; the additional contributions of Professor Hix and Professor Lockwood are substantial and added a very desirable breadth to the program. It should also be

pointed out that Dr. Goodin and Dr. Griesmaier both have exceptionally fine reputations as teachers. Furthermore, Graduate Assistants help sustain the program in terms of teaching loads, but also in terms of graduate/undergraduate interaction. Sometimes, a Graduate Assistant can provide valuable insights into problems that undergraduates may be having in understanding difficult concepts.

4) The report suggests that having 4000 level courses in which both undergraduates and graduates are enrolled is not desirable. In my opinion, such an arrangement is highly desirable and was quite consciously cultivated particularly for undergraduate majors. I will give 4 examples--2 undergraduate majors and 2 graduate M.A. students--which I think make the point that such dialogue can be exceptionally beneficial.

Taylor Carman was an undergraduate major. He won a Mellon fellowship to Stanford University where he completed his Ph.D. He is now Full Professor at Barnard College. Professor Carman is the author of Heidegger's Analytic (2003) and Merleau-Ponty (2008; 2nd ed. forthcoming) and has co-edited The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty (2005). He has achieved international recognition and taught a course this past summer at the Sorbonne. He has published articles on topics in phenomenology and is currently writing a book on Heidegger. He was an energetic and lively student who made major contributions in seminar discussions and was well-respected by both undergraduate and graduate students.

William Devlin was a graduate student. He received a scholarship to study at Boston University where he completed his Ph.D. He is now an Associate Professor at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts. He has returned to UW a number of summers to teach in the Philosophy program and has earned outstanding teaching evaluations both here and at Bridgewater. He edited a book The Philosophy of David Lynch published by the University Press of Kentucky. He is the co-editor of the book Kuhn's Structure of Scientific Revolutions - 50 Years On and had a grant to review unpublished papers of Kuhn housed at M.I.T. As a graduate assistant, he made a special effort to offer individual help to undergraduates who were having difficulty with

philosophical ideas and methods.

Mark Jenkins was an undergraduate major in philosophy. He went on to do an M.A. in Geography here at UW. He was a member of my graduate seminar on Martin Heidegger's Being and Time and his enthusiasm and energy were infectious and when in the course of the semester we were only able to finish an analysis of half of this central work of Heidegger, Mark mobilized the other students (mostly graduates) to petition me to continue the seminar for an another semester. All agreed and we had a highly productive and stimulating second semester. Mark is now a contributing writer to National Geographic Magazine and writer-in-residence in the Creative Writing program here at UW. He has written several books including Off the Map: Bicycling Across Siberia which is a remarkable account of his harrowing journey from Vladivostok to Moscow.

Luke Glowacki was a graduate student in the program. He was awarded a fellowship at Harvard where he earned his Ph.D. and pursued work in philosophical anthropology and is, at present, based at the Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse, France. Last year, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Human Evolutionary Biology and Program for Evolutionary Dynamics at Harvard. He has spent a number of months on several occasions doing ethnographic fieldwork in southwest Ethiopia. He has written media publications for the Washington Post, New York Times, and the Los Angeles Times, among others and his been interviewed by the New York times, Washington Post, and Scientific American.

All of these students found the seminar courses with a mixture of graduate and undergraduate students to be especially valuable and certainly their records show that their time spent at UW was of considerable benefit for their careers. I think that it would be most unfortunate to eliminate the M.A. program in Philosophy when it has such a fine record of achievements. Were the financial future of UW to change significantly in 5 or 10 years, it would be very unlikely that such a viable and vital program could be restored in less than a decade thereafter, thus making the elimination of the program very short-

sighted in my view.

A Few Concluding Remarks regarding the larger context of Budget Crisis:

1) I am saddened and disappointed that the UW administration has taken a course of passive acceptance. The evaluation process is likely a desirable activity to identify areas within the university that can be positively modified, restructured, or eliminated, but that must be done in a very careful realistic manner. In my view, the administration should take this occasion to act—act as an educational institution—and make the people of the State concretely aware of the possibly painful and/or drastic consequences which communities and agencies will likely suffer when a supplemental budget is hacked down from \$16 million to \$450,000! Governor Mead has at least twice expressed disappointment that the legislature refused to consider using some funds from the “rainy day” account and has refused to accept Medicaid, which will have not only a direct effect upon citizens of the State, but likely effects on programs at the university which train students to provide health services—Nursing and Pharmacy to mention just 2 examples.

2) Most people in Wyoming are proud of the university and many have ties to it and/or use its services. Wyoming has a long tradition of individualism that goes beyond narrow partisanship. We have had good Republican and good Democratic governors as well as other State and local officials and at the time of this budget crisis, I think that the people will recognize that their best interests are served by continuing to support the university as the only 4 year and graduate institution in the State.

3) The governor has asked the university to help in identifying potential sources of revenue beyond the energy sectors and that would certainly be a reasonable request were it not for the fact that cutting of faculty, the increases in student costs which will decrease enrollments, and the sense of diminishing support which will lead more and more good faculty to consider seeking positions at other institutions creates conditions such that asking the university to help to seek new sources

of revenue becomes a very unlikely consequence. A further consideration is that the university is already heavily invested in energy research and new methods and discoveries are possible that could be of benefit to energy companies, the university, and the State. Energy companies should be strongly encouraged to help support new avenues of research and development rather than retreating at this crucial time. This is a time when a certain amount of risk-taking is desirable and essential and overly cautious fiscal policies which are derived from corporate models will not be productive. Genuine educational institutions do not function as businesses; they are inherently sprawling and messy in all sorts of ways that in the end make them exciting and productive ventures. Strict fiscal policies are possible for diploma mills, but not for genuine academic institutions.

4) The university administration and the Trustees should encourage the people in an extensive and large-scale effort to support urging the legislators to open up the “rainy-day” fund and reconsider the issue of Medicaid. Procrastination on these issues will have consequences that it will take decades to repair and enormous amounts of money. In the meantime, the university will not be an attractive institution to faculty, students, and, in the end, not to the citizens of the State.

5) Finally, I reiterate that I think that the elimination of the Philosophy M.A. program would be a serious mistake. Philosophy has been at the core of Western education since the time of the Ancients and the development of skills in critical thinking, the ability to analyze arguments, and weigh courses of action according to principles that are compatible with the advancement of civilized societies are essential needs now more than ever. As a footnote, I would add that I think the elimination of language programs is also a serious mistake in an age that is moving inevitably towards globalization. Rather than cutting programs at the university, it would seem much more productive to encourage grade schools, high schools, and junior colleges to develop language programs that could then be augmented when students reached university. Wyoming has unique opportunities and shouldn't model itself on what other States and academic institutions have done which is why there should not be a rush to trim and cut, but rather a lengthy, transparent, messy debate about how to grow in the best

possible ways.

Subject: Re: Comment on MA Elimination in Philosophy
Date: Friday, December 16, 2016 at 8:37:02 AM Mountain Standard Time
From: Jeffrey Alan Lockwood
To: Susanna L. Goodin, Program Review - Academic Affairs Office
CC: Franz-Peter Griesmaier, Harvey L. Hix, Robert S. Colter, Edward D. Sherline

Nicely done! And my favorite, incisive paragraph is:

Dean Lutz has expressed concern that the department has too few faculty members to maintain both a BA and an MA. The fact is quite the opposite. The MA is what allows us to recruit majors, foster an environment where undergrad majors thrive and become competitive for graduate programs and law school, and have a department where the faculty members are intellectually fulfilled. Far from being strained by having both the MA and the BA, it is the presence of the MA that makes our BA program as successful as it is.

I had a mentor in the sciences who said that if you were wrong it was best to be off by 180 degrees, so that you knew that your hypothesis was completely mistaken (what sucks is when the results are off by 48 degrees). So, the good news is that Lutz is dead wrong, but perhaps this observation isn't appropriate to include in an email to the administration.

Jeff

Jeffrey A. Lockwood
Professor of Natural Sciences & Humanities
Director of Creative Writing

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(307) 766-4260
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*"I may be on the side of the angels,
but never think for one second that I am one of them."
--Sherlock Holmes to Professor Moriarty*

From: Susanna L. Goodin
Sent: Friday, December 16, 2016 4:05:34 AM
To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office
Cc: Franz-Peter Griesmaier; Jeffrey Alan Lockwood; Harvey L. Hix; Robert S. Colter; Edward D. Sherline
Subject: Comment on MA Elimination in Philosophy

Please accept the attached file as comment on the proposed elimination of the MA program in philosophy.

Thank you.

Susanna Goodin, Associate Professor

Subject: proposed elimination of Philosophy M.A.

Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2016 at 9:50:04 AM Mountain Daylight Time

From: Karen Bartsch Estes

To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to comment on the proposed elimination of the Philosophy M.A. degree program.

Although I now work at UW in Psychology, I was an undergraduate Philosophy major for six years (first at Colorado State, then at Oxford University). I have since served on a number of philosophy graduate committees. In addition, as a parent, I have observed the experiences of my two sons in philosophy courses at several other universities (with and without philosophy graduate programs).

I have great respect for the discipline of philosophy and regard it as essential in any university undergraduate curriculum. Based on my various experiences, I am concerned about the proposed elimination of the Philosophy M.A. degree. Although there are few Philosophy graduate students at UW, I am in sympathy with the argument that the quality of the undergraduate degree program is contingent on the existence of the graduate program. I believe that the quality of faculty and, consequently, undergraduate teaching will be adversely affected by the elimination of the M.A. degree. From my experience with the current Philosophy program at UW, I believe that the quality of the 4000/5000-level courses provided—in order to accommodate both undergraduate and graduate students—indeed raises the quality of education for our undergraduates (as opposed to lowering the bar for graduate students). I suspect that the potential savings in energy, focus, and money that might be achieved through this elimination is not, in this case, a good trade-off for the likely reduction in faculty and undergraduate program quality.

Thank you for considering my comment in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Karen Bartsch Estes, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
Psychology Department
University of Wyoming
1000 E. University Ave.
Laramie, WY 82071
307-766-2942

copy from?

Program Review/Academic Affairs

I am taking this opportunity to respond to the program review proposals, especially regarding languages and Philosophy.

I will comment on the languages department first, and then move to Philosophy. I have cited passages or comments under proposal headings, and then I respond to them.

Context and background:

The proposed cuts/eliminations and modifications in languages must be put in the context of the last few years, where the A&S requirements for a language were eliminated. I note that this requirement was supported by around 80% of the faculty when Oliver Walter was Dean. The new Dean moved to eliminate the requirement, and supported the elimination.

Faculty pointed out at the time that enrolments would drop: some departments, such as mine, still require 3 semesters of a language, but not all do. The provost, David Jones, said at a Faculty Senate meeting, in reply to a question from Professor Tolo, that any reviews would take the drops in College requirements into account, as well as the new USP changes. That does not appear to have happened.

At the February 2016 Senate, the provost, David Jones, briefly outlined the reviews, and acknowledged that the system was not "firm." "Computer Science lecturer Kim Buckner asked for any firm review criteria, but Jones explained nothing was finalized as of yet." "Kevin Inouye, assistant professor of theater and dance, wanted to ensure any criteria were not a rigid, unchanging set of rules.

"I just want to be another voice in encouraging the consideration of context," he said. "For example, credit hours took a hit for a number of (faculty members) when the Arts and Sciences (University Studies Program) requirements changed, or they cut funding to a robotics program in the public schools, so are they going to look at that and say, 'What happened to your engagement?' The larger context is important to consider." "Laramie Boomerang Feb 27, 2016.

In the preamble paragraphs to each language proposal, the Dean notes that

A language requirement for all students is no longer a part of the A&S Core, but more than half of our departments have included a language requirement in their four year plans. That language requirement has increased in a subset of our departments. Discussion of an international certificate for our undergraduates—perhaps even a required international experience for all undergraduates—can only expand the need for the B.A.

Many A&S degrees have a foreign language requirement such as History, Anthropology, Global & Area Studies, African American & Diaspora Studies, American Indian Studies, Art, Art History, Communication, Criminal Justice, English, Geography, Humanities/Fine Arts, Journalism, Music, Music Performance, Political Science, Religious Studies, Theater & Dance. As the languages department points out, an analysis of costs can be misleading,

As the UP4 states, “an injudicious choice of metrics – as well as any blind focus on metrics instead of the attributes for which they act as surrogates – can distort institutional self-awareness and fail to serve the purpose for which the metrics were created.” MCL produces the fourth largest student credit hours on campus.

I want to stress that there has been no external review of the languages concerned, nor of Philosophy, as required in the UniReg 6 -43, (iv) (h), which states that there will be “Evaluations from accrediting bodies or other reviewers of the quality of the program and its faculty and academic personnel.” There will also be in (i) of that regulation, “Comparison of the program with related or similar programs.” The Dean’s proposal announces for each of these programs:

“Evaluations from accrediting bodies or other reviewers of the quality of the program and its faculty and academic professionals:

Not applicable.”

I raised this matter at Faculty Senate at the October meeting, where the provost said that AA had decided that the external reviews were not necessary. That is clearly ignoring the UniReg, and flaws the process: with external reviews, some departments might have received suggestions on how to improve enrolment, a frequently invoked desideratum of AA in early 2016. For languages, the comparisons with “related or similar programs,” are all with other programs in the same department. This is disingenuous at best, and does not recognize that enrolment has dropped in all these programs in languages, that GA-ships have been cut severely, and that staffing in all these programs has been reduced through deaths and retirements. The Dean suggests, in her discussion of the BA in Philosophy, that “A comparator study of other philosophy B.A. degrees from universities with highly ranked philosophy departments should be instructive.” I think the comparator studies should be done for all the programs reviewed.

Russian BA Major:

The Dean’s proposal stresses the cuts in available staff “At one time, it had three people who served as instructors and thus was sustainable. It now has one ET APL.”

If the university cuts staff, then the lack of sustainability of the program might sensibly be laid with the College’s decisions over the past years to refuse to sustain it.

The proposal dismisses the department’s observations on the availability of Russian.

“Uniqueness. There are no feeder schools teaching the Russian language in Wyoming.”

It is unique in the proper sense of the word, as the department’s carefully written submission notes. There is no other program in Russian in the state, and CSU is much more expensive. The “no other feeder schools” comment does not recognize that many of the subjects and majors students undertake at a University are not available in schools.

Effects upon students enrolled in the academic program:

“Students will be informed about the discontinuation. They will have two years to complete the Bachelor’s degree. If they do not manage it, their advisor will help them find other universities here or abroad to assist them. An international experience is the best solution for these students. It is possible that the WICHE program is another option.”

This contradicts the statement from the Provost on the AA Program Review page *Please note that if a program/major is recommended for elimination, students in those programs will be accommodated pursuant to UW Regulation 6-43. There will be no adverse impact on students.”

Effects upon faculty and academic professionals who serve in the program, including termination of any existing positions:

“The Russian minor will be retained, and coursework at the upper division level will be provided for the proposed World Languages MA that includes Russian. The instructor of the Russian language program will therefore be retained.”

The elimination of the major would likely mean that students with only a minor would have curriculum difficulties in entering that MA., or any other.

I draw your attention to the following discussion from the dept: “The Saratov Program adds no extra expense to the delivery of UW courses, and its existence attracts international students from the Saratov region to UW. Essentially, the UW Russian language program is the anchor that continues to secure UW’s relationship with Saratov University. And as on-campus Russian courses are diminished it is even more vital to maintain this long-standing connection to Saratov University, so that UW students will have a viable path towards completing major/minor requirements.”

There is no discussion in the proposal of the need to keep exchange programs (in this case, the oldest on campus). The proposal notes that students pursuing a minor may still enroll in international study. This is an exchange program that works for the major, but may reasonably be expected to be in jeopardy if Saratov students cannot come here to study in a reciprocal system.

Educational and financial effects upon other units of the University:

“There should have been some financial benefit for the university since the number of instructional personnel is so minimal, but in spite of UW’s low tuition, students have NOT flocked to UW to study Russian.”

At the time these reviews were initiated, faculty were told that they were a matter of the educational quality of programs. The proposal appears to announce that financial criteria are the impelling rationale for eliminating the BA as a major.

“Effects on the State of Wyoming, including loss of benefits conferred outside the University by the academic program:

Minimal. The state appears to be focused on China (and therefore the Chinese language) as a potential market. UW must consider that there are Chinese immersion schools in Wyoming, and these public school graduates will wish to continue in that language when they arrive at UW. Future student demand must be considered as investment is made in language instruction.”

Politics changes: the emphasis on China may shift to Russia. Further, the needs of the current market should not determine what languages should be taught at a University.

An external review would have noticed all these points. I believe that eliminating the major is a grave error, which will diminish possible courses available to students to the point eventually that even fewer students will enroll. There is currently one lone faculty position. I doubt the University will replace him when retirement occurs. That will close off studying one language altogether, and reap about \$45,000 (the Senior Lecturer’s salary).

French MA: Many of my points above apply to the French MA.

The proposal for the elimination of the French MA points out that the World Languages MA is not yet decided /funded or supported. “If and when a new program in World Languages comes into being, students who may have applied to the former program will be contacted in a recruitment effort.” That delay and lack of certainty cannot help enrolments in any language.

Plans for accommodating faculty and academic professionals who will be terminated or otherwise affected by elimination of the academic program:

“The minimal number of instructional personnel (2-3) will be utilized in the Bachelor’s degree program, which is to be retained.”

If a University is aiming at achieving “the minimal number of instructional personnel,” who will only teach in the BA, and possibly teach in an as yet only possible World Languages MA, it seems inevitable that the program will never grow. Retirement and death have diminished faculty numbers. In spite of this, the program provides strong service at undergrad level to multiple majors across campus. Further, an email from Academic Affairs indicates that APLs without terminal degrees should not be teaching 5000-level courses. This eliminates the ability of Mark Person and Bénédicte Sohier to teach the 5000-level courses that they had been teaching for the MA programs (German and French respectively). That removes staff from courses: the World Languages program would begin and remain understaffed (as in there would be no-one at all to teach the courses).

Again, an external review might have suggested ways this program might flourish. The MA costs little extra to the University, and courses are cross-listed as 4000/5000. There is little to be gained in eliminating the degree.

German MA;

“The M.A. has produced four graduates in the past five years. Recruitment for the graduate program is almost exclusively from within (B.A. majors) which does not make for a strong program. At present,

there are no GA's assigned to the German program." Without support, a dept will find it understandably difficult to attract graduate students.

"The Department of MCL has indicated a possible new degree—a unified World Languages M.A. for Wyoming teachers. The Dean recommends this as the path forward, with a very reduced number of graduate course offerings in German to complement that degree."

As I noted above, if Mark Person may not be allowed to teach any of these "very reduced number of graduate course offerings," there may be none at all.

Philosophy: Many of the points I made earlier regarding language programs apply.

This proposal seems to fly in the face of the evidence the department accumulated in its submission.

The Philosophy Department cannot cover courses in metaphysics and philosophy of language. If the University cuts faculty positions and GAs, and does not replace faculty, the programs' enrolments and available courses will decrease.

The department has 2.5 Gas per year, and is still competitive, with an acceptance rate of 15% over 5 years for the total of 12.5 GAs. It achieves excellent research, as noted in "the last bi-annual report submitted by the department in June of 2015, the department pointed to the extraordinarily high research output of the department over the last two years, much of which is associated with having a thriving M.A. program: 6 books; 4 chapters in books; 12 refereed articles; 3 non-refereed articles; 77 poems; 39 presentations; and 34 interviews."

The Dept has significant plans for developing the MA: "5-year MA (or 3+2). This should help us recruit talented students to the major, given the possibility of getting an MA with one extra year of course work. This will be an attractive option for students on a pre-law track, because an MA in philosophy significantly increases their chances of being admitted to a top law school. It comes at no cost and is in fact a new revenue stream."

As the dept notes, "The nature of philosophy is dialectical, and its iterative exchanges of challenges and reasons," take place one-on-one." BA enrolments are good, "This is due to the fact that we are successful in recruiting students to our major through introductory courses, which rely heavily on intensive interactions between undergraduates and our MA students: discussion sections, one-on-one tutoring, and conducting review sessions. Our graduate students are also heavily involved with running the philosophy club, which is another recruitment venue for us. Last year, the club was instrumental, together with other RSOs, in bringing the Veritas program and Sam Newlands from the University of Notre Dame to campus for a discussion of the problem of evil (featuring Susanna Goodin), which drew an audience of about 500. Cutting the MA program will therefore negatively impact the quality of our BA and be detrimental to A&S goal 6."

Effects upon faculty and academic professionals who serve in the program, including termination of any existing positions:

“Positions for APLs and faculty in the department would not be terminated. Teaching loads for instructional personnel may increase as a result of the need for undergraduate course coverage without MA students to assist in instructional load. Certainly they will be disappointed not to work with graduate students but they may work with students in other degree programs.”

This blithely suggests that teaching loads can be increased at will. There is no discussion of what effect that might have on research. The suggested “work with students in other degree programs,” should also take notice of the fact that the dept already does this .

The first version of the proposal claims that “The Philosophy Department has four true philosophers. So few cannot sustain a solid Bachelor’s and Master’s program. Master’s programs are designed to be completed in a two year period. “

The suggestion that some of the faculty are not “true philosophers” attacks the credentials of those faculty, for no apparent reason. One of them obtained his Ph.D in Greek philosophy. That there are only 4 “true philosophers” explains the unavailability of some elements of the philosophy curriculum. It cannot come as a surprise that refusing replacements leads to understaffing. This is a choice not to invest resources in a successful, competitive program; eliminating it reduces the University.

Effects on faculty...Fewer 4XXX will be taught. Changes will be made in the curriculum of the Bachelors program to mitigate the loss of GA support.

This reduction in 4000 level courses, and loss of even minimal GA support will also change a successful undergraduate program; in eliminating the MA, the university will not only destroy the MA, but it will also change the deliberative nature of introductory courses for undergrads. The department notes that

“Given the dialectical nature of philosophy and its reliance on discussions, our graduate program contributes greatly to this core mission of UW. Our M.A. students lead discussion sections, during which they facilitate a deepening of the philosophical skills, such as critical reasoning in the technical sense of the term, that we try to instill in our undergraduate students. Through this activity, the M.A. program provides an extremely valuable service to the entire campus.”

Overall, I completely disagree with the proposals to eliminate these programs. As one of the writers supporting languages remarks, “Language learning and language acquisition are one of the first steps in any serious internationalization curriculum, for language opens the door to cultural study and thus to crosscultural communication. Without this, the internationalization effort is a fraud. “

Many departments have written to support the continuation of the programs recommended for elimination and reduction, specifying in some cases that 2-3 semesters of a foreign language is a national curricular norm. Advanced study at the graduate level should be possible in more than one language: if these cuts are made, only Spanish will have an MA. Many of the courses in these proposals teach grad classes as crosslisted 4000/5000 courses. The courses may be taught, but they will have

fewer enrolments. As one supporter noted, "Teaching and research at advanced levels in major world languages, such as French, German, and Russian is part of what it means to be a first rate University: a policy of retreating from world class status will have negative ramifications on our graduates and all disciplines. "

I firmly believe that these programs should be supported; my experience here at UW has been enriched by faculty in both departments: as a trained classicist, I once taught the Latin intro course; I discuss Plato and other philosophers in all my Honors and English medieval courses. A strong languages program helps my students engage critically with myriad medieval texts, and even when I teach some of those texts in translation, knowledge of how the original works is essential.

Lastly, given UW's plans to increase enrolments, and the focus on the effects of any decreases in student numbers, it seems self-defeating to make majors and MA's unavailable to students, who, like any other student, also pay tuition and fees. Were we not told that UW must focus on retention?

Little will be gained, and much will be destroyed. Much of the process seems driven and already decided by administration: Both the President and the Provost have stated in public that savings will arise and different programs taught. That assumes that faculty comments will not be effective. I hope they will be.

Q

December 4, 2016

Dear President Nichols, Provost Miller, Dean Lutz, et al:

I wish to express my concerns regarding the proposed elimination of the University of Wyoming Department of Philosophy master's program as well as any other potential reductions to this department's important role in university education and service to the state of Wyoming.

As a graduate of the UW Department of Philosophy master's program (1997), I could spend some time explaining the general value of philosophical study to a well-rounded civic education as well as how the master's program in particular has led to many of my personal and professional successes. While those are important, I would rather spend my limited space in this letter explaining how reductions to the Department of Philosophy's capacity has a much more concrete and immediate negative impact to an important state collaborative project.

Over the past year, Wyoming Pathways from Prison (WPfP), a trans-disciplinary and trans-professional statewide collaborative that aspires to support currently and formerly incarcerated people in navigating the waters of higher education and life more generally, has developed a strong working relationship with the Wyoming Department of Corrections (DOC). The coordinators of WPfP, including Dr. Susan Dewey (UW Gender and Women's Studies), Kathleen Brock (UW Secondary Education), and myself (UW Information Technology), have spent considerable time working with DOC administrators in determining educational programming that will positively impact the lives of the incarcerated, as well as their families and communities upon release.

Correctional Education Programs Manager, Betty Abbott, has related to us that there are two primary educational areas that the DOC has identified as most beneficial: skills-related training that will allow the incarcerated to more readily find employment upon release, and educational programming in the humanities that assists with the development of critical thinking skills. Specifically, the DOC identified education in philosophy as being of noteworthy value for its ability to impart critical thinking, reading, and writing skills, and apply these skills directly to daily life in prison and post release.

In addition to the immediate positive effects of such education on inmates, studies by the RAND Corporation, the Vera Institute of Justice, and others suggest that educational programming similar to what is being developed by Wyoming Pathways from Prison has a measureable effect on lowering rates of recidivism, which enhances community safety and reduces state expenditures in corrections.

Because of this, WPfP has approached Drs. Franz-Peter Griesmaier and Robert Colter of the UW Department of Philosophy to begin a review of how the department can become a collaborative partner with Wyoming Pathways from Prison and the Department of Corrections. While discussions are ongoing, a number of opportunities have been identified, and we are hoping to develop these throughout 2017. Some of these opportunities, such as remotely instructed critical thinking sessions and a "stoicism intensive" taught on-site within selected correctional facilities, will best be accomplished by involving both the department's faculty and graduate students. WPfP is working to acquire funding for this educational programming.

While we are excited by these prospects, potential reduction of the Department of Philosophy's capacity, including the loss of the graduate program, will reduce their ability to collaborate with WPfP and provide state service through the Department of Corrections. For this reason and others, I urge you to reconsider Department of Philosophy reductions, allowing us to form a more effective collaboration that promises to transform the lives of many Wyoming inmates and the communities which they will re-enter.

If you would like to discuss the mission of Wyoming Pathways from Prison, as well as the collaboration that is forming between WPfP, the Wyoming Department of Corrections, and the UW Department of Philosophy, please feel free to contact me. I wish you luck in making these difficult decisions.

Sincerely,

Alec J. Muthig, M.A.
Co-Coordinator, Wyoming Pathways from Prison
UWIT Trainer/Program Manager
AMuthig@uwyo.edu
(307) 766-2826



Q
M

John Bengson
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of Philosophy
Helen C. White Hall
Madison, WI 53706

Harvard University
Department of Philosophy
Emerson Hall
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dean Paula M. Lutz
Provost Kate Miller
President Laurie Nichols
University of Wyoming
Laramie, WY 82071

December 14, 2016

Dear Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols,

I am writing to express my support for the M.A. in Philosophy at the University of Wyoming, and respectfully to urge you to reject the proposal for its elimination.

I am an alumnus of UW's M.A. program: I entered in 2002 after receiving my B.A. from Boston University, and went on to receive my Ph.D. in philosophy from UT-Austin in 2010. Since then, I have held academic positions at the Australian National University, Yale University, Harvard University (where I am teaching this year), and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (where I have been promoted to Associate Professor of Philosophy, effective fall 2017). I have also been the recipient of several prestigious professional awards, including a \$100k grant from the Templeton Foundation for my research in epistemology.

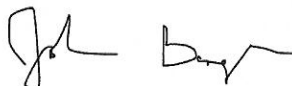
The point of this is not to boast, but rather to convey what an M.A. in Philosophy from UW has made possible for me. There is no doubt in my mind that my flourishing academic career is due in large measure to the excellent education and professional training I received in the M.A. program at UW. It is not an exaggeration to say that I would not be where I am today if not for it and, in particular, its incredibly dedicated faculty. When I arrived, there were just four tenure-stream faculty members: Susanna Goodin, Franz-Peter Griesmaier, Ed Sherline, and Jim Forrester (who retired shortly thereafter, as Marc Moffett was arriving). They helped me find and hone my passion, and through their seminars and mentoring, they pushed and guided me to develop the skills required for academic and professional success—for all this and more, I remain deeply grateful. I also benefited enormously from the company of other students in the program, who, like me, were drawn to its excellent reputation and uniquely intimate character, as well as the teaching experience it afforded. At UW, I learned many important lessons about pedagogy while planning and leading discussion sections (the small, intellectually vibrant meetings, headed by TAs, designed to supplement lectures and enhance students' understanding of the material). And I am inclined to think, based on student feedback, that the undergraduates in these sections benefitted enormously from having me and other M.A. students support faculty's instruction.

The M.A. program in Philosophy at UW has produced many excellent philosophers; its success continues to this day. For example, there are currently two alumni from the program pursuing the Ph.D. in Philosophy at my home institution in Wisconsin. Both have greatly impressed their advisors at Madison (who, believe me, are not easy to impress), and I am confident that this has a lot to do with the first-class education and professional training they received while M.A. students at UW.

I know that I am not alone in viewing my time in Laramie and at UW as one of the most productive and rewarding in my life. Many of my peers in the M.A. program have gone on to have thriving careers in academia, law, business, and other fields. I hope that you will take these successes to heart as you consider the value of the M.A. in Philosophy at UW.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this letter (512-627-2492).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bengson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John Bengson

Q

Subject: Philosophy MA

Date: Thursday, December 15, 2016 at 5:22:25 PM Mountain Standard Time

From: ELIZABETH JANE BELL

To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office

Dear Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols,

It is unfortunate that I never had the pleasure of meeting you while earning my degree at the University of Wyoming. First, I would like to thank you for your hard work. I know that many students benefited greatly from the effort and time you have given to the University of Wyoming.

I am writing to you to express how disappointed I am to hear that the M.A. program in philosophy is under review to be eliminated and I implore you to take whatever measures are necessary to prevent this from happening. While I understand the pressure to make cuts, I wholeheartedly believe that it would be a disservice to the students of the University of Wyoming to eliminate the M.A. program in philosophy. Considering the stated criteria that triggers a program review, I was surprised that it is being considered at all. Having been a part of the program only two years ago, I can attest to the programs excellence.

First, it is stated that the trigger for a review is low demand/graduation numbers. However, according to the elimination proposal report, the philosophy M.A. program has a competitive 15% acceptance rate. I am sure many of the other programs that are not under review cannot boast that percentage of demand. Further, considering the competitive nature of Ph.D. admissions in philosophy, I can guarantee that the demand for good quality M.A. programs—like the University of Wyoming's—is only going to continue to rise. I have heard reports that over half of those admitted into a Ph.D. in philosophy have earned their M.A. before applying. This means that Wyoming is strategically placed to become a highly-sought after program.

As for the graduation numbers, I believe there must be some sort of error in the report. It states that between 2011 and 2015 there have been a total of 35 students in the MA program. This is not accurate. On average the program admits three students a semester—so the number should be around 15. Because of this, the actual graduation rate for the program (13 out of 15) is very high.

That being said, it is unclear to me why this program was “triggered” for review. It has neither a low demand nor a low graduation rate.

Further, it seems unlikely that the program is under review for one of the other reasons listed. First, it is apparent that philosophy is central to Wyoming's mission (having been listed several times in the mission statement). Yet while having a B.A. Program in philosophy will at least keep Wyoming on mission, it cannot be denied that having a graduate program is essential for successfully achieving this mission. In other words, the M.A. program enhances the quality of undergraduate education. Since philosophy is a discipline that requires extensive discussion to grasp the abstract and often difficult subjects, the M.A. students who lead discussion sections are essential to a quality undergraduate education in philosophy.

As for the attainment of student learning outcomes, it cannot be denied that the M.A. program excels at this. In fact, of each of the students who wished to continue onto doctoral work, every one that I know of has been accepted to their chosen schools. Personally, I was accepted to several top Ph.D. programs in philosophy. I attribute my success to the quality of mentorship and education I received while at

Wyoming. This program has helped me become a competitive applicant, an effective teacher, and a successful Ph.D student. I currently boast a 4.0 in my graduate classes and have been accepted at four peer reviewed conferences. This would not be possible without the quality education I received in the M.A. program. I am sure the same can be said of the other students who have continued their education.

Finally, the list of grants, publications, and scholarly and creative work of faculty that is reported is extensive and incredibly impressive. Since the M.A. program excels in all cited aspects used to assess quality of the program, it is unclear why it is even under review. The M.A. program in philosophy excels in each of the criteria that is stated as cause for a program review. Since this is obvious, it would be a grave injustice for the program to be cut.

The recorded excellence of the M.A. program in philosophy at the University of Wyoming is clear. Because of this, I implore you to do whatever is in your power to stop this program from being eliminated. Allowing this program to be cut would be a great disservice, not only to the students who attend the university of Wyoming, but to the wider philosophical community. Please do everything in your power to keep this program from being cut.

Kindest regards,

Elizabeth Bell
Ph.D. Student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Subject: SDM program elimination

Date: Wednesday, November 30, 2016 at 4:40:35 PM Mountain Standard Time

From: Edward D. Sherline

To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office

Dear Relevant Administrators,

I'm writing to comment on the proposal to eliminate the SDM. This is yet another example of the upper administration and trustee agenda of tidying things up at the expense of eliminating valuable academic opportunities. Granted very few students pursue this option, it is one that those few students greatly value. Double majors and major/minor combinations just cannot substitute for the SDM. For example, I advised a very bright and talented student a few years ago who was interested in pursuing a degree in videography/filmmaking. He attempted to cobble together something through the HUFA major and a minor, but found that this was too constricting, since relevant courses ranged across departments in different divisions of the college of A&S, as well as in other colleges. I encouraged him to pursue the SDM, which he did, and is now very grateful and relieved that this option is still available.

One of the rationales for eliminating this program (well, it doesn't really hurt any students since so few students pursue this major) is analogous to the common rationale for restricting freedom of expression (well, it doesn't really hurt our society if we restrict expression to respectable and conventional opinions since so few want to express fringe views anyway). Neither one is at all credible. Both cave in to mass appeal at the expense of providing opportunities for the independent few.

There also seems to be an inconsistency in the rationale for eliminating this program. On the one hand, there is the veiled argument that it takes up too much time to administer. On the other hand, there is the argument that eliminating the program will be painless because there are hardly any students in it. These two don't add up. If there are very few students--one here, another there--then it shouldn't take that much time to advise those students. The inconsistency suggests that the real reason for wanting to eliminate this program is that it is just so messy to have these pesky programs with small numbers of students. That is the rationale of small minds.

Sincerely,

Edward Sherline
Associate Professor, Philosophy

Christopher Gaffney
christopher.t.gaffney@drexel.edu
(775)354-6205 (Cell)
(215)571-4615 (Office)

Department of Decision Sciences & MIS
LeBow College of Business
Drexel University
Philadelphia, PA 19104

December 16, 2016

Dr. Paula Lutz, Dean College of Arts and Sciences
Dr. Kate Miller, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Laurie Nichols, President University of Wyoming
University of Wyoming
1000 E University Avenue
Laramie, WY 50311

Dear Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols;

I am writing in support of the MA program in Philosophy at the University of Wyoming. According to <http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/program-review/> and documents contained therein, the degree is being proposed for elimination. I am a 2005 graduate of the program and a former teaching assistant. I have since completed my PhD in Operations Research, and am currently a faculty member in the LeBow College of Business at Drexel University.

The MA degree program serves as an important pipeline to quality PhD programs and academia. Moreover, Philosophy is a classical discipline, and active research in it is a clear asset to any university. The presence of a graduate program provides a vehicle for this research among both faculty and students. The program offers a clear benefit to undergraduate students as well. Advanced students have the opportunity to take cross-listed courses with graduate students, allowing for a more challenging and intellectually stimulating environment for undergraduates. With respect to introductory students, graduate students allow for an immersive experience in courses like Introduction to Philosophy by leading discussion sessions where students can discuss and better engage with the material.

My experience at Wyoming was invaluable to my professional and intellectual development, and I believe that the removal of the graduate program would leave a clear deficit at both the university and the state of Wyoming. I offer my strongest support for the program, and hope that the decision to remove it is reversed.

Sincerely,

Christopher Gaffney, PhD
Assistant Clinical Professor
Department of Decision Sciences
Drexel University
Philadelphia, PA
(775)354-6206
christopher.t.gaffney@drexel.edu

Subject: Philosophy M.A. program

Date: Friday, December 16, 2016 at 10:59:21 AM Mountain Standard Time

From: John Poland

To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office

To whom it may concern,

My name is John Poland and I am a graduate of the M.A. program in philosophy. I'm writing to provide input to the decision making process regarding the proposed elimination of the M.A. philosophy program. Specifically, I hope to bring the high quality and importance of the program more fully into the light through a brief synopsis of how completion of the program has impacted my life.

First, the program brought me to Laramie where I still continue to live and work as a member of a wonderful community. So, in the literal sense, I would not be where I am were it not for the existence of the M.A. program.

More importantly, the education that I received and the work that I did in the M.A. program prepared me to be an involved, productive member of the local community. I currently work in a professional position for Ark Regional Services, a local non-profit organization that provides services to the adults in Laramie with intellectual and developmental disabilities and/or acquired brain injuries. Prior to working this position I had no experience in this field or in a supervisory/leadership role outside of the Academy. I can say without hyperbole that my experience in the M.A. program played a deciding role in my getting the job. My experience organizing classes and leading discussions and lectures prepared me well for organizing and leading the staff I currently oversee.. My personal philosophy made me a strong candidate for the position I have and completing the M.A. program gave me the conceptual tools to effectively and efficiently communicate my philosophy during my job interview and these tools continue to be of daily use in my day-to-day life.

Through my position at Ark, I had the opportunity to join the Laramie Advisory Commission on Disabilities. This commission serves as an advising body to the Laramie City Council. It is a role I am proud to have and one I would not have without my experience in the M.A. program.

Additionally, I am able to serve the community as an educator as well. The M.A. program provided me not only with the credentials required for teaching college-level classes at both Laramie County Community College and the University of Wyoming, but with the skills and knowledge to be effective in this role as well.

Finally, while my participation in the academy is not as involved as some other graduates of the program, I continue to work on professional level philosophical projects. Post graduation, I have participated in professional conferences including the New Mexico/Texas philosophical association conference and the Eastern Division conference of the American Society of Aesthetics. Where I present both original work and comments on the work of others.

My continued participation in both teaching and presenting philosophy on a professional level while not being in the Academy full-time is also evidence of the quality of the M.A. program.

Thank you very much for taking the time to hear my input. I genuinely hope the University can find a way to retain the M.A. program in some form or another.

Sincerely,

John Poland

Ark Regional Services



ETHICS CENTER

Robert J. Kutak Center
for the Teaching & Study of Applied Ethics

Dean Paula M. Lutz
College of Arts and Sciences
Department 3254, 1000 East University Ave
Laramie, WY 82070

Provost, Vice President Kate Miller
Office of Academic Affairs
Dept. 3302, 1000 E. University Ave
Laramie, WY 82071

President Laurie Nichols
Office of Academic Affairs
Dept. 3302, 1000 E. University Ave
Laramie, WY 82071

Dear Dean Lutz, Provost Miller, and President Nichols,

I am writing in support of retaining the Philosophy M.A. program at the University of Wyoming.

By way of brief introduction, I am Adam R. Thompson, Assistant Director of the Kutak Center for the Teaching and Study of Applied Ethics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. After earning my M.A. in philosophy at the University of Wyoming, I went on to earn my Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Generally, M.A. degrees are a gateway. They offer a key point of access to life-changing and life-affirming opportunities to those with B.A. degrees. And, they do not involve the long-term commitment that Ph.D. programs do. True, one can earn an M.A. in a Ph.D. program and discontinue that program. But, that can reflect poorly on the individual as an indication that they quit before they were finished. Thus, terminal M.A. programs serve an awesome function in a world where B.A./B.S. degrees are not as prestigious as they used to be and where doctoral degrees are simply impractical or undesired. Hence, for those with an interest in honing their true critical thinking skills and enriching their philosophical know-how without a hardcore commitment to becoming an expert in some arcane area of philosophical thought or praxis, philosophy M.A. programs are the best choice.

In my own case, many paths to a meaningful career were foreclosed due to certain socio-economic realities. Based on my skill set and interests, a mentor advised me to apply for terminal philosophy M.A. programs. Given their value and scarcity, gaining entrance was extremely competitive. Of the two to which I was accepted, I chose the University of Wyoming. By all accounts I made the right choice. The combined quality of the faculty, courses, atmosphere and funding is nearly unmatched by similar programs at state universities. The excellent education I received in the philosophy M.A. program at the University of Wyoming opened and continues to open doors that would have

remained otherwise closed to a kid from Indiana like me. No doubt my story is the rule not the exception.

In addition, the main argument offered for closing the Philosophy M.A. program at the University of Wyoming is flawed. The main argument runs as follows:

- P1: There are only four full-time faculty and two have split appointments.
- P2: If there are only four full-time faculty and two have split appointments, then the ability to run both a quality B.A. and M.A. is strained.
- P3: If the ability to run both a quality B.A. and M.A. is strained, then the M.A. should be dropped.
- C1: Therefore, UW should discontinue the M.A. program.

First, (P2) seems like a fair judgment at first blush. However, it is an empirical question whether any particular department composed of four full-time faculty, two of which have split appointments finds their ability to run quality B.A. and M.A. programs strained. The report offered no evidence that this is the case. Hence, it remains to be seen whether the philosophy department at the University of Wyoming is strained in its ability to run quality B.A. and M.A. programs.

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that (P2) is false. The department has graduated 13 out of 15 M.A. students in philosophy most of whom used their degree from the University of Wyoming's M.A. program in philosophy as proof that they should be admitted into other programs or careers requiring academic work beyond a B.S./B.A. If the M.A. program was of poor quality, it is unlikely that they would've successfully graduated such high caliber students. It is more likely that most of these students would have transferred out of the program. If the M.A. program were of poor quality, it is unlikely that those institutions would've taken the fact that they earned an M.A. at the University of Wyoming's M.A. program in philosophy as a reason to take them on board. Further still, the fact that the M.A. program can boast faculty members who are also qualified to oversee students from other fields is an indication of excellence and it is highly attractive to students who are faced with having to fit into a department that has little variety in terms of courses of study or potential colleagues.

Second, (P3) needs further support as well. That the task of running a quality B.A. and M.A. program is difficult does not entail that the M.A. program should be dropped. For one, a department might successfully combine aspects of their M.A. program to help enrich the quality of their B.A. program. And, this happens to be the case at the University of Wyoming. For example, the department uses graduate teaching assistants to assist with teaching workloads in undergraduate courses. Using graduate teaching assistants helps free faculty time so that they can advise/mentor/teach/etc. more undergraduate students one-on-one, plan for other courses, develop extra-curricular programming, and other things of benefit to students and the university more broadly.

Third, the argument does not take seriously the damage that will likely be done to the undergraduate program as a result of dropping the graduate program. The report only considers the low morale that might result. To that it essentially offers a shoulder shrug. But, morale is deeply, important especially when it comes to working at an institution as isolated as the University of Wyoming is. To offset the difficulty of living in such a remote location, it is important that morale be kept high for faculty, staff, and students. For instance, with no graduate program it is unlikely that the department will be able to attract quality scholars to present research or take leave at the university. Hence, dropping the program further hinders faculty from interacting with top researchers in their field.

Additionally, even if the faculty can handle the loss, the undergraduate population likely won't. Many undergraduates work with graduate students and enjoy the fact that they have the opportunity to take difficult graduate courses from top-notch faculty. Furthermore, the university already has trouble attracting new, quality faculty members to the department. Without the added bonus of working with graduate students and top, outside researchers, it is likely that this will compound the problem.

Finally, closing academic programs on the basis of faulty arguments sends the message that, at least when it comes to university administration, it does not matter whether one is skilled at critical thinking. Indeed, it reinforces what I would've thought is a myth—namely, that the job can be done through paper work and domination alone. Surely, universities should do all they can to ensure that they never send that message explicitly or implicitly. If the administration at the University of Wyoming is truly committed to its academic mission, it will either offer non-faulty arguments in favor of a particular action or reverse course on closing the Philosophy M.A. program. I strongly suggest that they reverse course. There is just no good reason to close the philosophy M.A. program and lots of good reason to retain, if not expand it.¹

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Adam R. Thompson, PhD

Assistant Director

Kutak Center for the Teaching and Study of Applied Ethics

College of Law

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

art@unl.edu

317.446.5991

¹ Citing funding issues is really a non-starter. We all know the cost of maintaining the unnecessarily high-cost salaries and perks of many staff members and the, often low return on that investment. The investment is good perhaps insofar as the individuals in those positions do a lot for the university and their field. But, the question is whether they do enough on a daily, monthly, yearly, etc. basis to justify that expense. It seems that the expense is more of an honorarium than an appropriate resource-payback-for-output.

Subject: philosophy MA program review

Date: Friday, December 16, 2016 at 12:57:18 PM Mountain Standard Time

From: Michael Titelbaum

To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office

To Whom It May Concern,

I write in reaction to the alarming news that the philosophy M.A. program at the University of Wyoming is under review for elimination. I should emphasize that I am not writing in any official capacity as a representative of my employer, the Philosophy Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. However, as an Associate Professor of Philosophy at UW-Madison I have gained a unique perspective on the quality of the Wyoming philosophy M.A. program, and in particular the extremely high quality of such outputs as its attainment of student learning outcomes and placement of graduates. To the extent that these are considerations in reviewing the program for elimination, it seems to me that elimination would be a grave error.

I am currently colleagues with a graduate of Wyoming's program, and am also the philosophy PhD thesis advisor of two Wyoming graduates. As I said, this puts me in a unique position to comment on the philosophical and professional qualities of Wyoming Philosophy M.A. graduates. Let me begin with my colleague Professor John Bengson, who earned his Wyoming Philosophy M.A. in 2004 and then completed a PhD in philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin in 2010 before joining our faculty. John Bengson is a superstar in his chosen field of epistemology. He recently received the Philosopher's Annual award for having written one of the ten best articles published *in all of philosophy* in 2015. He was also runner-up in 2014 for the prestigious Sanders Prize, a biannual, \$8,000 award for the best essay in epistemology. He has published in the best philosophy journals, has co-edited a book and has another book under contract with Oxford University Press, and has held visiting positions in Australia and Scotland, and at Yale and Harvard Universities. When he came up for tenure in our department this fall, his tenure letters were uniformly excellent; one highly-regarded epistemologist wrote that "John Bengson is currently the most important theorist of *a priori* knowledge under the age of 70". Both our department and the university's divisional committee unanimously endorsed his promotion to tenure. This spring he will also receive the Vilas Award, our university's most coveted grant for younger scholars, worth over \$80,000. This follows on the backs of a Templeton Fund project grant in 2014-2015 for \$100,000.

In short, any philosophy department in the world would be proud to claim John Bengson as one of its graduates. When I asked him about his time in Wyoming, he wrote to me that "The whole experience in Wyoming's MA program —courses, teaching, writing a thesis, mentoring, etc.—was invaluable for me, as it has been for many others (some of whom went on in philosophy, but also many who have had successful careers in law, business, etc.)."

I am also currently the PhD advisor for two University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate students who earned their Masters in Wyoming's philosophy program: Casey Hart and Elizabeth Bell. Casey completed Wyoming's program in 2011, then came immediately to Madison. I taught Casey in his first year in the program (before becoming his advisor), and immediately noticed his high level of philosophical and professional preparation. He already understood how to do graduate-level professional research and how to present it to an audience of his peers. He has subsequently given professional talks at the Wisconsin Philosophical Association, the Society for Exact Philosophy, and the American Philosophical Association. This last venue is the major professional meeting for philosophers, and surviving the refereeing process to have a paper accepted is a major accomplishment for a graduate student. Casey has also published a paper and has two more under submission at quality journals, while at the same time finishing his dissertation and navigating the academic job market this fall. In our department Casey is not only one of our most

Subject: FW: UW philosophy graduate program
Date: Friday, December 16, 2016 at 2:55:15 PM Mountain Standard Time
From: Maria Owen
To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office

From: Ben Whiting [mailto:ben.whiting@bartlit-beck.com]
Sent: Friday, December 16, 2016 2:51 PM
To: Maria Owen <mowen1@uwyo.edu>
Subject: FW: UW philosophy graduate program

Maria,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me this afternoon. The message I sent below bounced back, and I understand you will be forwarding this to the program review.

Thanks again. Best,

Ben

Benjamin J. Whiting | [Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP](#)
54 West Hubbard Street | Suite 300
Chicago, IL 60654
312-494-4418 (office) | 312-218-7353 (mobile)

This message may contain confidential and privileged information. If it has been sent to you in error, please reply to advise the sender of the error and then immediately delete this message.

From: Ben Whiting
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2016 8:56 PM
To: 'progrevw@uwyo.edu.' <progrevw@uwyo.edu>
Subject: UW philosophy graduate program

President Nichols, Provost Miller, and Dean Lutz:

I write regarding the University of Wyoming's current program review, specifically its evaluation of the philosophy department's Masters of Arts program.

I earned my degree from this program in 2003 and taught in the department as I applied to PhD programs in the 2003-2004 school year. Though I left the program intending for a career in philosophy, I have since changed careers. I am currently a partner at Bartlit Beck in Chicago, one of the most elite boutique litigation firms in the country.

My fellow 2003 graduate Luke Glowacki recently received his PhD in human evolutionary biology from Harvard University and will begin a tenure track job at the best department in his field after he completes a multi-year post-doc in Europe. I write on his behalf as well.

Subject: MA program in Philosophy at Wyoming
Date: Thursday, December 1, 2016 at 9:18:16 PM Mountain Standard Time
From: Robert Cummins
To: progrevw@uwyo.edu
CC: Franz-Peter Griesmaier

Dear Program Review Committee:

I am writing to you to recommend that you support retention of the MA program in Philosophy at the University of Wyoming.

I visited the department recently to give a colloquium, and spend considerable time talking to faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate majors. Moreover, the best PhD student I directed here at the University of Illinois was Dr. Ian Harmon, who came to us from the MA program in Philosophy at UW.

Over the years, I have directed dozens of PhD dissertations at several campuses, including Johns Hopkins, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Colorado-Boulder, University of Arizona, and University of California-Davis. I was director of graduate studies at Davis and Illinois, and Chair at Illinois. I was also a full professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which had a MA program, but not a PhD program I mention this because I have considerable and varied experience with graduate programs at the MA and PhD level at a variety of campuses. Here are the main things I have learned about MA programs in Philosophy:

1. The good ones—e.g., UW-Milwaukee, Northern Illinois, UW-Laramie—provide the very best PhD candidates, candidates who consistently outperform those who come straight from even top-ranked undergraduate programs.
2. MA students in programs like those mentioned in #1 are, in many ways, the most important mentors of undergraduates in large philosophy courses that have TAs. Undergraduates in Philosophy—a subject they didn't have in high school—have a much easier time talking to and working with TAs than they do with faculty, at least initially. They are diplomats for the subject, and are often responsible for getting the students involved with the faculty and departmental events.

The Chair of Philosophy at UW, Franz-Peter Griesmaier, is a former PhD student of mine. I trust his judgment implicitly. I strongly recommend that you pay close attention to, and give serious weight to, the points he makes in defense of his program. He is careful, dedicated, and serious. You can take what he says about his program to the bank.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Cummins, PhD—Retired.
Credentials at <https://sites.google.com/site/robertcumminsphilosophy/home>



December 16, 2016

Dear President Laurie Nichols, Provost Kate Miller, and Dean Paula Lutz,

My name is William Devlin, Associate Professor at Bridgewater State University (BSU), and I am writing to you all to address the open Proposal to Eliminate Academic Program Pursuant to UW Regulation 6-43: M.A. Philosophy. In this letter, I hope I can convey to you reasons why I strongly encourage you and the University of Wyoming to maintain the M.A. in philosophy, as I discuss (1) my **personal experience** in the M.A. program, (2) the **faculty** in the Department of Philosophy, and (3) the **strengths of the program**.

My Experience in the Program

Regarding my **personal experience**, from 1999-2001, I was a student in the Philosophy M.A. Program at UW, earning an M.A. degree in philosophy. In 2001, I was accepted into the Ph.D. Program for Philosophy at Boston University, earning a Ph.D. in philosophy in 2007. In 2007, I was offered (and accepted) a tenure track position (Assistant Professor) at Bridgewater State University. In 2013, I was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor. Since my completion of the M.A. program in 2001, I have returned over many summers to UW to serve as a summer instructor for the philosophy department. Meanwhile, since 2006, I have achieved many other academic accomplishments: I've published two edited volumes in philosophy (one volume in philosophy of science through Springer; one volume in philosophy of film through University of Kentucky Press); I've published twenty chapters or articles in books or journals of philosophy; and I've received several research grants, teacher-scholar grants, and awards for academic excellence through my work at BSU.

The purpose of listing my important academic accomplishments is not for boasting, but rather to share with you the fact that the M.A. program, the UW department of philosophy, and the University in its entirety, all played an essential role in contributing to my successes throughout my academic career. I credit my time at UW as my most formative academic years. Through the M.A. program, faculty members were able to accept me—then a young, passionate, but unpolished, student—and offer me a formal, rigid, and organized structure to strengthen and develop my philosophical skills in academia. The broad graduate curriculum indeed gave me a solid philosophical foundation in the history of philosophy and contemporary issues in philosophy (especially analytic philosophy, philosophy of science and continental philosophy). Likewise, the program gave me the opportunity to serve as teaching fellow for introductory courses (PHIL 1000) at the University. My four semesters serving in a teaching capacity were invaluable not only in developing my pedagogical skills as an instructor (and later professor), but

also in allowing me to serve, and relate to, the broader community at UW. Further, through various one-on-one relationships, many professors played pivotal roles in sharpening my research and writing skills at a professional level in the field. The M.A. program enabled me to achieve immediate success, as I was accepted into several high ranking Ph.D. programs in philosophy throughout the country.

The Faculty

An integral part of my development as a professor and scholar throughout my career is due to the **faculty** in the UW department of philosophy. At the time, there were four to five full-time active members of the department (depending on the semester and the retirement of one professor). Despite the small number of faculty, the department was not significantly strained in running both quality B.A. and M.A. programs. On the contrary, the faculty demonstrated a seamless and effortless transition from teaching undergraduate classes to graduate seminars. I contend that one of the primary reasons for the faculty's ability to run both programs successfully is the synergistic relationship they created among the faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. First, as mentioned above, my teaching fellowship allowed me to assist faculty for introductory level courses. This allows the graduate student to gain experience in philosophical instruction, philosophical discussion, and broader abilities as a professor. Furthermore, the service helps to alleviate part of faculty's time in the undergraduate program, allowing them to focus on the graduate program.

Second, the department's graduate seminars are also cross-listed with upper-level undergraduate courses (4000 and 5000 course designations). These cross-listings are beneficial for both graduate and undergraduate students. On the one hand, graduate students are able to have a larger sophisticated audience to discuss philosophical theories, arguments, and ideas. On the other hand, undergraduate students are able to experience, and partake in, an advanced level of philosophy. This experience is shaped not only by the professor who leads the seminar, but also the graduate students who serve as role models as they actively lead and exemplify graduate-level discussions in and out of seminars. As such, undergraduate students learn from their graduate student classmates by watching, interacting with, and ultimately replicating the general methodologies graduate students offer. Further, just as the faculty treats both graduate and undergraduate students with genuine respect and care towards developing their understanding of philosophy, so too, the graduate students learn to show the same respect and care towards undergraduate students. From my experience, graduate students open up their philosophical discussions to undergraduate majors. Such inclusiveness helps to elevate the undergraduate student's performance in, and understanding, of academic philosophy. This, in turn, helps improve future studies for undergraduates. For example, one undergraduate major who graduated with me in 2001 (and worked with me and my fellow graduate students), was accepted to the M.A. program in philosophy at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, which is one of the top M.A. programs for philosophy in the country. As I make my summer returns to UW and remain in correspondence with the faculty, I know that these undergraduate success stories continue, as students have successfully moved on to graduate programs in philosophy (or other fields), or have even been accepted to UW's own M.A. programs. Likewise, it is clear to me that the faculty is not strained by serving both the undergraduate and graduate programs. On the contrary, they thrive on continuing the community of students and on enriching their students' lives through their philosophical development. And so, the department is able to run both

programs at a very high quality. With this in mind, it comes as no surprise to me that the faculty as a whole has received a plethora of teaching awards over the years, including:

Dr. Robert Colter: College of Arts and Sciences' Extraordinary Merit in Teaching Award: 2012, 2016

Dr. Susanna Goodin: College of Arts and Sciences' Extraordinary Merit in Teaching Award: 2000, 2012; Promoting Intellectual Engagement Award: 2012, 2013, 2015

Dr. Franz-Peter Griesmaier: College of Arts and Sciences' Extraordinary Merit in Teaching Award: 2003, 2010

Dr. Harvey Hix: College of Arts and Sciences' Extraordinary Merit in Teaching Award: 2010

Dr. Ed Sherline: College of Arts and Sciences' 2012 Top Ten Teacher; College of Arts and Sciences Extraordinary Merit in Advising Award: 1996, 2000.

In short, the synergy the faculty creates is perhaps best described as an “academic family”. From my experience in the M.A. program, faculty members were able to offer an inclusive and integrated environment in such a way so as to build an academic philosophical community, consisting of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. From graduate seminars, to the philosophy club, to Labor Day barbecues in Undine Park, to the more recently developed *Stoic Camp*—the faculty has marvelously created a family-like community for students of philosophy at all levels. From my own experience, this unity continues today, as nearly every summer, I meet new enthusiastic graduate students working with faculty on developing a thesis, or upper-level majors who have elevated their work in philosophy as they emulate the advanced level of philosophy in which the graduate level students are involved. I have served in various teaching capacities at BSU, Boston University, and the University of Maine. Despite my own attempts to replicate it, I have never experienced the synergistic relationship, and ‘academic family’, that the department of philosophy at UW has created.

Strengths of the Program

Finally, the M.A. program in philosophy at UW demonstrates a vast number of **strengths** that helps to make it a valuable and competitive program for students in philosophy around the country. While the program was originally created well over thirty years ago by Dr. Richard L. Howey (emeritus) and others, the program has evolved immensely to become a prominent graduate program in philosophy. As great as it was for me from 1999-2001 (and essential in all of my academic achievements), it has only become even greater and more integral for young, passionate, and intelligent graduate students of philosophy. Today, the program offers everything it offered me: a philosophical foundation in philosophy through a broad graduate curriculum; teaching experience in the form of graduate assistantships; focused one-on-one professor-student relationships; development in research and writing towards the professional level. But it has expanded to include other components for the student, making it more competitive in the contemporary world of academic philosophy. First, students learn how to develop current seminar papers into papers for publication. While I did not publish my first chapter until I was in

the Ph.D. program (through skills I attribute to the M.A. program), the philosophy faculty at UW makes more efficient use of the program so that it steadily assists students in their publishing their work. Second, students are more consistently encouraged to attend, and present their papers in, conferences around the world. Third, the program has supported several graduate students to attend the Munich Summer School in Mathematical Philosophy, a prestigious honor for students in philosophy. In short, the program has evolved so that, today, students gain the experience of becoming active participants in the international community of philosophy. Such participation at such an early start of their academic careers is invaluable, as it offers students an opportunity to build a network of relationships with fellow graduate students and professors in philosophy and other academic disciplines.

Having been a student of the program and having observed its growth over the past fifteen years, it comes as no surprise to me, as I review the proposal for the program's elimination, that the program is as competitive as it is today, with only a 15% acceptance rate. This rate should help indicate what I already see from within the academic field of philosophy—that the M.A. program in philosophy at UW is touted as a strong, respectable program for students who aim to (a) sharpen their academic skills as they prepare for advanced studies in top Ph.D. programs for philosophy; (b) receive a strong foundation of analytic, logical, and critical reasoning as a preparation for advanced programs in other fields (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., M.B.A.); or (c) enrich their understanding of the world through an intellectually stimulating environment. As such, the high caliber of students in the program today continues to excel. These students are becoming more prepared for advanced studies or careers, thanks to the M.A. program.

Furthermore, the program has an exceptionally high completion rate. Over the past five years, 13 out of 15 students graduated through the program (it appears the Office for Institutional Analysis made a categorical error in suggesting the number as 13 out of 35 students in the philosophy M.A. program. 20 of those students in the larger total are not students in the M.A. program in philosophy, but instead students in other programs from other departments who were supervised by some faculty in philosophy).

It is not only significant that the program graduated nearly 87% of their students over the past five years, but also that many of these graduates successfully moved on to highly ranked Ph.D. programs in philosophy (University of Wisconsin, University of Illinois) or to positions as instructors at various universities. The same is true when one looks at the history of graduates from at least my time as a student. The majority of graduates moved on to advanced programs (Ph.D., Ed.D, M.B.A.) in various disciplines (philosophy, psychology, education, business, law, mathematics) at prestigious universities (Harvard University, Rutgers University, Ohio State University, University of North Carolina, University of California, University of Chicago, University of Texas, Boston University, University of Nevada, University of Nebraska, University of Illinois, University of Utah, University of Wisconsin, University of Wyoming, and Wake Forest).

Altogether, the strengths of the M.A. program have motivated me to develop my own department's undergraduate program at BSU. There have been several occasions where I've recommended my top students to the M.A. program at UW. And while they were accepted to (less prestigious) M.A. programs at other Universities, they were not strong enough candidates

for the caliber of UW's program. Recognizing these limitations, I've learned from the faculty at UW about the criteria for graduate school and implemented pedagogical tools for my students such as writing for (undergraduate) publication, attending undergraduate conferences, and offering non-credit graduate school application seminars. In this sense, the M.A. program at UW has further helped me to advance my undergraduate program.

Conclusion

For the reasons mentioned above, I contend that the M.A. program of philosophy at UW should not be eliminated. The removal of the program would negatively affect the synergistic relationship and overall morale of the department of philosophy. It would eliminate its graduate student body, entailing the loss of role models for undergraduate students, teaching fellows for the department, and the opportunity for faculty to work in-depth, one-on-one or through seminars, with advanced students concerning prominent contemporary and historical philosophical issues. Likewise, it would be a disservice to the University as a whole, both in terms of losing advanced students in philosophy offering services (in and out of the classroom) to the larger campus community, and in terms of eliminating the opportunity to help advance the careers (both graduate and beyond) of gifted students who need a program like UW. to help sharpen their skills, prepare for upper-level graduate programs, and enhance their intellectually stimulating environments. Finally, it would be a significant loss to the community of academic philosophy, and undergraduate philosophy programs, who are working with excellent students that are either not yet ready for, or not yet sure of, a Ph.D. program in philosophy. It would be detrimental to lose such a strong M.A. program with such a dedicated, passionate, caring, and intellectually stimulating and engaging faculty.

In short, I strongly recommend and support keeping the M.A. program in philosophy at UW. I thank you all kindly for your time and your consideration. If there is any other information I can provide, I would be more than happy to oblige. Please feel free to contact me by telephone or email anytime.

Sincerely Yours,



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Subject: Comments Re: M.A. in Philosophy
Date: Friday, October 14, 2016 at 2:30:36 PM Mountain Daylight Time
From: Sarah Lynn Zlatkovic
To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office
Attachments: image001.jpg, image002.png

To whom it may concern,

When my husband and I chose to accept UWyo's offers of employment (he as tenure-track in civil engineering, and myself within the WIND department) I had a plan to return to school after we settled, which factored into our decision to move from another state and settle here in Laramie and at UWyo. I had a plan to pursue a master's in Philosophy and a Ph.D. in Neuroscience. While I am glad to hear the Neuroscience Ph.D. program is not in jeopardy, I am disheartened to hear that the Philosophy master's program may not be around.

I have been working toward a career researching the human brain, mind, consciousness, and perception, and the relationship between philosophy and neuroscience plays heavily into this research. So, when my husband and I were considering which university he would join as faculty, we took into consideration these two degree programs. We thought, "This is perfect! This gives both of us the opportunities we want!" Now I see that perhaps UWyo is not the school I should attend because it can't promise me that I will be able to pursue **both** of these fields.

I can't be the only one. I can't be the only one who was depending on this school and who made big decisions based on what this school had to offer. *Had* – past tense now, possibly.

Taken from page 7 of the elimination proposal: "***There is no other program at UW, or in the state of Wyoming, that duplicates our M.A. program in philosophy.***" You can see my dilemma – if I wish to pursue the education I need in order to achieve my career goals, I cannot do it here in Wyoming. Another school in another state will receive my tuition.

Personal reasons aside, I'm failing to see how the elimination of a program does this university any good in any respect. I've read the elimination proposal several times, and I'm failing to see a legitimate reason to eliminate the program. I know the list of other factors that went into this elimination proposal as they have been posted online. What I don't see are criteria for these factors. Where was the line drawn? Where exactly did this program not meet expectations, besides low-enrollment? This isn't explained in the elimination proposal. I am hoping that more has been said to the department and faculty.

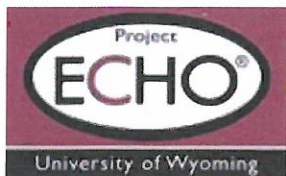
From what I read in the proposal, this department is impressive in spite of its size. The research output alone is remarkable, and, as indicated in the proposal, was due much in part to the M.A. program. The program is competitive, and produces exceptional graduates. And perhaps this department produces such exceptional graduates because of the better student-to-faculty ratio which allows for more personalized instruction. I'm not so convinced that a low-enrollment is a negative factor and that it justifies the elimination of a program that is otherwise superb.

I attended a philosophy colloquium on Sept. 30th after work, and Dr. Robert Cummins, who was giving the lecture that night, said something that I think is worth noting. He was talking to the faculty in the audience, and he said, "If you want students to think broadly, you have to teach broadly. You can't be narrow in what you offer; you will end up creating narrow minds." Obviously, he was speaking about the potential elimination of programs here at UWyo, and he wanted to give the faculty some support. I looked around and saw that students in the room were moved by his show of support, and it dawned on me that perhaps they were also feeling hurt/angry/betrayed/anxious/worried over the possibility of eliminating this program. I thought, "Of course. Of course this is affecting them. They are students in the very program this university is proposing to do away with." Can you imagine what it must feel like to them to hear that their university doesn't think it's worth investing in their chosen program, and that perhaps it was a mistake to invest in them and other students like them? I know they will be able to finish their degrees, but still to be told by their university, even indirectly, that perhaps the field they've chosen isn't worth keeping. Can you imagine the damage to their morale?

Thank you for hearing me out. I'll keep a watchful eye on the news and continue to follow along with the process.

Sarah Zlatkovic

Project Coordinator Assistant
UW ECHO Networks | Telehealth
Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND)
Dept. 4298, 1000 E. University Ave.
Laramie, WY 82071



Subject: Program elimination

Date: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 7:18:03 PM Mountain Daylight Time

From: Haley Royko

To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office

I think eliminating the Philosophy programs would be a huge mistake. I wanted to double major but didnt have enough time. The classes I took were extremely beneficial to my education overall and while there may be low enrollment, those who do go through of it are some of the most intelligent people I have ever met. Eliminating not only the bachelors but also the PhD programs would be a huge disservice to the school as a whole but the people of the academic community. I would be extremely disappointed to continue associating myself with the university if those programs were eliminated.

Haley Royko

Subject: Philosophy and Sociology MA Programs

Date: Saturday, October 1, 2016 at 9:11:18 PM Mountain Daylight Time

From: Collin Michael Kosiba

To: Program Review - Academic Affairs Office

Hello,

I'm emailing with regards to both the Philosophy and Sociology MA programs, since both are under review.

Straightforwardly, it would be a mistake if either program were to be cut. Sociology is the foundational social science discipline, and Philosophy is also a foundational, analytical discipline--both create better thinkers and better citizens, which fall in line with UW's mission statement. It doesn't seem like cutting these two programs would get the university to where it needs to go financially, and cutting these programs definitely wouldn't help the university with its goals and mission, especially since it's not clear savings would be generated by termination; UW would have the "distinction" of being one of two states where no public university offers an advanced degree in Sociology. As our state's only university--and a great one at that--we can't let that happen. Please reconsider.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

V/R,

Collin Kosiba