



College of Arts and Sciences

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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 recommendation

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. They comment that the focus on critical thinking is emphasized in this model. Undergraduate students also have required 4000/5000 level courses in their curricula (three required as the senior capstone experience). Because of this, the department feels this is a 'no cost' program, but the cost of the state GA's must be considered as well.

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 of the Dean 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. After development of a more contemporary curriculum, a strong recruitment plan should be created. The strength of the program would also be enhanced by a merger of the department with one or more other units.

May 2016 Review of the M.A. Program in Philosophy

Head: Franz-Peter Griesmaier (6-3231; fpg@uwyo.edu)

(I) Productivity

Over the last five years, we graduated 13 M.A. students. We had 15 enrolled students, two of which left the program early (one for health reasons, another one for academic integrity reasons). Our allotted state funding is for 2.5 students/year, or 12.5 for five years. We were able to secure additional funding for two students from the Women and Minority Fund through Academic Affairs, which used to be restricted to 3 semesters. However, by using the freed up funds from the students who left the program, we were able to provide full support to two female M.A. students. Thus, our graduation rate slightly exceeded the number that should be expected given our standard state support for M.A. students. Our M.A. program is quite productive when evaluated in light of the available resources.

(II) Program Quality

1. Accreditation

There is no external accreditation body for philosophy. I submitted my last bi-annual report in June of 2015. In it, I pointed to the extraordinarily high research output of our 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.

2. Faculty Credentials:

Robert Colter, PhD, Philosophy

Susanna Goodin, PhD, Philosophy

Franz-Peter Griesmaier, PhD, Philosophy

Harvey Hix, PhD, Philosophy

Jeffrey Lockwood, PhD, Entomology

Ed Sherline, PhD, Philosophy

Demographic Breakdown:

Caucasian: 6 Male: 5 Female: 1

Grant/Awards Generation

<u>Project</u>	<u>(Co-)PI</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Amount</u>
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

3. Program Reputation

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%

4. Curriculum

Our 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.

5. Distance Delivery

Given the dialectical nature of advanced philosophical work – making progress through real-time exchanges of reasons and challenges - the M.A. program cannot successfully be delivered as a distance-learning program. Such iterative exchanges of challenges and reasons take place during one-on-one discussions between students and instructor, and also during our seminars in-group discussions that often spill into the hallways of the department even after the seminar has officially ended.

6. Quality of Assessment Plan

The assessment plan for the M.A. program is currently at tier 2, and we are working to move it to tier 1. Of the learning outcomes listed for the M.A. program, the one readily assessable by direct evaluation of student work is the following: “Evidence of developing ability to write professional level papers on philosophical topics.” In further specifying this outcome, we considered two factors. One was Bloom’s taxonomy of learning pertaining to the cognitive domain, focusing on the highest level, which is evaluation; the other was considering our rubric for argumentative philosophy papers, and inputting the evaluative dimensions of this into the outcome. Here are the relevant data from our assessment:

Organization: 4 Proficient; 1 Average.

Argument: Note: all papers were from the history of philosophy, where argumentation is based on the primary sources and scholarship thereof. Given that, all students were proficient.

Originality: 4 Proficient; 1 Average.

Clarity: 3 Proficient; 2 Average.

Conciseness: 4 Proficient; 1 Average.

Precision: 4 Proficient; 1 Average.

Language: 4 Proficient; 1 Average.

Key Findings: At least so far as history of philosophy papers go, the philosophy graduate students are doing a proficient job. The stronger papers were from second year students, the weaker ones from first year students. Moving towards tier 1, we are in the process of developing a plan to gather input assessment data, by looking at the application materials of our incoming students, especially writing samples and strength of undergraduate program. We will also develop a plan to assess data of cumulative research projects, that is, M.A. theses. These steps will enable us to gather diachronic data to more fully inform our programmatic assessment of the M.A. program.

7. Strategic Plan ('PHIL Goal' refers to the strategic plan of the philosophy department)

A&S Goal 1: Our scholarly and creative output has been exceptional in the five most recent years, as mentioned above. However, it will likely be difficult to maintain as we are now down to four full-time faculty members with increasingly broad teaching responsibilities. The graduate program is an integral part of our efforts in this area. The ability to conduct graduate seminars allows faculty to work on the forefront of developments in philosophy, and the presence of highly talented graduate students, who are involved in the daily research conversations among faculty, increases both quality and quantity of our research output.

A&S Goal 2: We devote significant funds to the support of our graduate students' participation in conferences. We conduct a yearly workshop on how to write for the profession and how to identify suitable venues for the dissemination of one's research. We provide a stimulating research environment for our graduate students by actively involving them in the research projects of the faculty members. Collectively, we served on 66 graduate committees in 9 departments representing 3 colleges during the last two years alone. During those same years, we received the Graduate Recruitment Initiative Award twice, which already resulted in better and more applications. For example, last year we had 26 applicants (for two spots), up from an average of 15 over the last decade (PHIL Goal 1).

A&S Goal 3: We established liaisons with the Munich Center for Mathematical Philosophy in Germany. As a result, two of our MA students, Liz Bell and Elizabeth Cantalamessa, were accepted to a workshop on mathematical philosophy in Munich, Germany, during summer of 2014. Last summer, Amanda Julian, another student in our MA program, also participated in the Munich workshop. In the spring of 2015, Ed Sherline visited, and established liaisons with, two universities in Ethiopia, which will lead to further internationalization opportunities for our students (UW Plan, G1, O3). For the fall of 2016, Robert Colter has been invited to visit Waikato University in Hamilton, New Zealand to collaborate with a faculty member on a book about philosophical pedagogy. Additionally, an early draft of another book manuscript, *Philosophical Problems in the Empirical Sciences* (see below), is also in a test-phase at Waikato University, where colleagues have graciously agreed to use portions of it in their philosophy of science course.

A&S Goal 4: We did not hold regular articulation meetings with Wyoming's community colleges, because philosophy is not offered on a regular basis by any of them. However, we had discussions with Northern Wyoming Community College – Gillette about a course in Business Ethics. Through WIHR, we strongly support the humanities initiative. Many of us gave various lectures and presentations throughout the state. A documentary about Lockwood's Ucross Experiment toured the state last year. Lockwood and Griesmaier conduct yearly workshops on implementing critical thinking as part of the Next Generation Science Standards in Gillette for in-service teachers (UW Plan, G 3). The Stoic Camp, brainchild of Colter, is open to all residents of Wyoming, but also participants from out-of-state, and is growing (PHIL G 4). Graduate students are involved in the planning of the event and the teaching activities taking place during the event. Gaining such experiences outside the classroom is invaluable for their careers. And the philosophy department, and frankly UW as a whole, gains tremendously from this activity by having their national profile raised. For example, last year, two venture capitalists from

NYC participated in the camp and have consequently made the camp and UW known in the Eastern US as a place of great innovation.

A&S Goal 5: We support the science initiative by attempting to provide resources for students useful for exploring the conceptual foundations and historical and social context of the various scientific disciplines. Griesmaier and Lockwood are currently working on a new textbook (tentatively entitled *Philosophical Questions in the Empirical Sciences*) aimed at students in the sciences with no former exposure to philosophy. Early drafts of this textbook have been used in our regular philosophy of science course. Through providing detailed feedback on the drafts of the various chapters, some of our M.A. students are directly involved in this important project.

A&S Goal 6: Through our efforts to offer intellectually challenging and rewarding courses, we did not have any problems with under-enrollment. Our curriculum has no bloat and thus presents no undue burden on the college. In fact, by generating almost 5,000 credit hours over two years, we produced a net gain in resources for the college. 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. The graduate students are also heavily involved with running the philosophy club, which is another recruitment venue for us.

A&S Goal 7: Our assessment efforts have been met with approval, and we are now at tier 2. We are actively working on moving to tier 1. In the fall of 2014, we produced a four-year plan, taking into account the fact that we almost never have freshman majors. Aside from a few exceptions, such as transfer students, all of our majors are recruited during their first or second year at UW, which speaks highly for the intellectual excitement our courses can offer to students.

(III) Mission Centrality

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; my 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

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

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.”

2. Contributions to other programs across campus

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.

3. Placement data for our 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

4. Uniqueness

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).

(IV) Cost

The M.A. program does not generate any costs. All of our majors are required to take three 4000/5000 level courses as their senior capstone experience. This means that no graduate courses are offered solely for the graduate program. The upside of this curricular arrangement is greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Addendum, Philosophy MA Program Review, June 2016

New Initiatives of the Philosophy Department

The MA program in philosophy supports a number of new initiatives started by the department. Here is a quick overview.

1. Two years ago, Professor Griesmaier began talks with Professor James Caldwell (Computer Science) about a new interdisciplinary minor in *Computational Epistemology*, designed to create synergetic effects for student learning through a collaboration between computer scientists and philosophers who work on the foundations of knowledge acquisition, storage, and transformation. Such work is well underway in many European countries, heavily funded by the EU, and several similar programs have been developed in the U.S., notably at the University of Pennsylvania, at Carnegie-Mellon, and at UCLA. In addition, Stanford recently announced the start of a campus-wide program, called *computer science + X*, where X stands for various disciplines in the humanities. Our minor would be the first such program in the Rocky Mountain region and promises to increase UW's visibility and draw more students to the university. Griesmaier already developed and taught a new course in Advanced Logic, open to philosophy and CS majors. The graduate program is important for this endeavor in that we were able to place three of our graduate students in the prestigious *Munich Summer School for Mathematical Philosophy for Female Students* in the summers of 2014 and 2015. This intensive, two-week workshop prepared our students as mentors for our undergraduates who are interested in applying formal methods, such as those developed in the computational sciences and logic, to traditional philosophical problems, and to bring philosophical reasoning to solving problems in the computational sciences. We hope to continue our cooperation with the Munich Center on the graduate level.

2. The philosophy department is in the lucky position to have two nationally renowned writers on its faculty, Harvey Hix (Poetry) and Jeff Lockwood (Creative Non-Fiction). With this in mind, we have decided to create a new seminar for graduate students on *Philosophy Writing*. The guiding idea is to prepare students to write about abstract concepts - such as truth, justice, belief revision, and moral goodness, discussions of which are too often relegated to specialized journals - for a broader audience. There is already a recognized discipline of science writing, spearheaded by such famous authors as Stephen Hawking, Brian Greene, and Leonard Susskind. Our developing emphasis on philosophy writing will be the first in the nation and aim to produce writers that can raise the level of public discourse by producing exemplars of critical reasoning about abstract issues in an accessible form. It promises to allow us to recruit more graduate students to UW from out of state.

3. Robert Colter founded the Wyoming Stoic Camp in 2013. It is a five-day intensive immersion experience in how to live like a Stoic for students and the public alike. The audience has grown over the last three years, with participants coming from as far away as NYC. The camp's activities - reading philosophical texts, discussing

them, and working on diaries about one's experience – receives support from our MA program in the form of teaching assistants to allow those activities to be carried out in small groups. The Stoic camp is designed as *public philosophy*, and Professor Colter has just applied for a small grant from the American Philosophical Association, which supports initiatives in the area of public philosophy. In addition, the Stoic camp is also a great recruiting tool for our undergraduate program, as it is open to advanced high school students. Recently, Professor Colter started a conversation with Alec Muthig (a former MA student in our program) about a possible extension of the Stoic program for segments of the prison population in Wyoming. The Wyoming Department of Corrections recently started an initiative to try to bring instruction in critical reasoning to the prisons in an effort to reduce recidivism rates. The Stoic immersion experience is a natural extension of this approach. Critical reasoning skills are also taught by Lockwood and Griesmaier in yearly workshops in Gillette, WY, in the context of a pilot project for implementing the Next Generation Science Standards in the Campbell County School District.

4. The philosophy department has contracted with UWTV to produce five-minute long videos covering the research projects of our graduate students in the form of mini “TED” talks. These videos will be linked to from our website and our Facebook page as a recruitment tool for our graduate program. As part of this new initiative, UWTV is also producing “testimonials” by former graduate students. Two such testimonials have already been shot. We intend to expand the use of web-based media for recruitment purposes also to our undergraduate program.

5. Our MA program not only has a great placement record in PhD programs, but we have recently graduated an MA student, Sam Shook, who has been hired by both the Synergy program and Veterans' Services for teaching transitional courses to prepare students for college life. Shook, himself a veteran, is singularly well suited to deliver such courses. The courses involve a strong emphasis on developing critical reasoning skills, which are central learning outcomes of both the undergraduate and the graduate degree in philosophy. The philosophy department is supporting both Synergy and the Veterans' Services by providing office space for lecturer Shook.

Academic Program Review: **Philosophy MA**

Section 8 – Cost

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

b) 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**

c) Course enrollment (AY 2014/15)

i) Classes falling under university minimums: **2**

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

e) Research expenditure per tenure-track FTE (FY 2015): **\$330**