

To: Academic Review Committee
From: Douglas Kneale, Dean, Faculty of Humanities
Date: 12 April 2013
Subject: Dean's Report Regarding the Implementation of Recommendations in the Final Assessment Report on the Program in PHIL

Senate approved the FAR report on PHIL on May 9, 2012. The one-year progress report to ARC is due. The 20 recommendations are addressed in order of ARC priority below.

First Priority (4 Recommendations in total)

5. introducing a required course in Logic for Majors (it should be noted that many graduate programs routinely reject applications from Brock philosophy students because they have not completed a course in Logic)

This recommendation will be implemented in the upcoming UPC cycle.

6. introducing a required course in Ethics for Majors (may not be necessary)

The Ethics course is offered on a regular basis by the Department. However, because of staffing issues this is not something we can implement in the immediate future. Additionally, the trend of requiring Ethics courses as a part of an undergraduate Philosophy curriculum resulted from the expectation that there would be employment opportunities in the field of Applied Ethics. Since these employment prospects have not materialized, it is safe to predict that this trend will be slowly reversed.

7. introducing prerequisites for fourth year courses (another student request. Apparently some 400 level courses are open to non-philosophers and students felt this can compromise both the philosophical method and the content of these courses)

This will be rectified in the upcoming UPC cycle.

11. rethinking the design and delivery of the required courses on Modern philosophy (Kant, Hegel)

This is something that the Department continues to discuss. However, staffing issues, a factor beyond our control, is the key factor here.

Second Priority (6 Recommendations in total)

8. cross-listing (i.e. teaching as one) as many 400 and 500 level courses as possible

This has been done to level permitted by OCGS. Additionally, 3P90 and higher course offerings have been increased for the benefit of majors.

16. that the department be allowed to replace the position vacated by [Professor A] as soon as possible

17. that if [Professor B] continues to be on or returns to long-term disability assurances are given that the resources will be returned to the department so they can hire a full-time temporary replacement for her

18. that a new tenure-track position be made available to the department as soon as possible to make up for previous withholding of hiring opportunities due to internal conflicts as well as the reduced service of [Professor C], to enable the program to fulfill its project of renewal and offer its full range of required and elective courses in future in a regular and timely fashion

19. that future hires be in areas of expertise other than Continental and Eastern philosophy and preferably someone who is not a Brock alumni (there seems to be consensus among the professors we interviewed that the department is well resourced in its two areas of expertise and lacking in others, and that the department would benefit from the challenge of fresh faces and new ideas)

Recommendations 16-19 are the responsibility of the Dean, to be reported on at the end of the 2013-14 academic year.

The Department has responded to say that Philosophy delivers programs in the areas of Continental and Eastern Philosophy. It is in these areas that the Department has a staffing shortage. However, the Department agrees that new hires, if any, should normally not be Brock alumni.

20. [Suggested changes will] give the department an opportunity to work on developing a sense of community among the students, which was identified as a problem by both students and faculty in the self-study and in the campus interviews.

Some of the initiatives that proved successful in generating a sense of community for students in Philosophy at Carleton and which Brock might consider are the following...:

- appointing an Undergraduate Supervisor (for a term of 2 or 3 years) who, in addition to academic advising, is also responsible for promoting 'community spirit' among the students, for example by:
- holding a welcome-to-philosophy social and information session over a pizza lunch to which all newly registered students are individually invited at the beginning of each academic year preferably within the department's home space (to which a few senior students are invited to set the agenda and pass on their own experience and advice)
- arranging philosophy 'parties' in a local bar at the beginning and end of each semester to which all undergraduate and graduate students are invited (by individual emails and announcements by professors in class)
- organizing informal (i.e. not for credit) 'reading groups' led by enthusiastic professors (as initiations to topics and texts not covered in the curriculum)
- starting a Philosophy Club (run by undergraduates)
- instituting a departmental speaker series
- Inaugurating and sustaining these initiatives takes a lot of determination, effort, trial-and-error and commitment and the Undergraduate Supervisor responsible for them as well as for academic advising should be granted a half-course teaching release in recognition of that fact.

The Philosophy Department faculty has collaborated closely with the undergraduate Philosophy Club. This has included faculty presentations and other forms of participation. This Club has proved to be a success and is a thriving community.

Implemented Recommendations (2 in total)

Recommendations 1, 9

Recommendations that Will Not be Implemented (8 in total)

Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15.