

Internal Academic Review 2009-2010

Department of Philosophy Internal Academic Review Committee Report to Senate

The Internal Academic Review (IAR) of the Department of Philosophy is now complete. The Internal Academic Review Committee (IARC) has taken into consideration all of the submissions related to the IAR of the Department of Philosophy and respectfully submits the following report. The IARC Report to Senate is intended to supplement the findings of the attached Review Team Report and to provide a mechanism for the Head of the Department of Philosophy and the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science to jointly report on the progress in addressing the Review Team recommendations (please see the “Outcomes” section of this report).

Summary of the Internal Academic Review of the Department of Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy is to be congratulated on its excellent undergraduate program, a flourishing MA program and a good PhD program. The Department should also be recognized for its very high quality research and scholarship. The IARC congratulates the Department for its ability to successfully fulfill its academic mission during the current period of fiscal constraints.

The IARC agreed wholeheartedly with the External Consultants’ concern about potential instability caused by the Department’s reliance on adjunct and emeriti instructors to deliver a number of undergraduate courses. Since the review, however, the Head of the Department has reported to the IARC that the situation has recently changed considerably as Philosophy now has three faculty members with continuing adjunct status who will take over many of these responsibilities. In addition, the Department has identified resources that allow for some teaching fellowships which will augment the overall teaching complement. The Head also clarified that teaching by emeritus professors is done to enhance course offerings rather than for budget planning purposes.

Since the IAR, the Department of Philosophy has also begun to address the reviewers’ concern about the degree of overlap among undergraduate courses. The Head has communicated to the IARC that the Department’s Board of Undergraduate Studies has made several recommendations on how to restructure the Department’s first-year

course offerings to reduce undesirable overlap between first-year and higher-level courses.

As noted in both the External Consultants and Review Team Reports, the present space allocation for graduate students continues to be unsatisfactory and is perceived as a hindrance in recruitment of highly qualified students. The IARC was encouraged to learn that the Faculty of Arts and Science is exploring the availability of additional space for graduate students in Mackintosh-Corry Hall and strongly supports this initiative.

The IARC recognizes the Department of Philosophy as a strong department despite the lack of adequate space for its graduate students and the current climate of fiscal constraints. The IARC fully supports and commends the Department's efforts, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and Science and the School of Graduate Studies, to sustain both national and international prominence.

**Outcomes of the Internal Academic Review of the
Department of Philosophy**

*Joint response submitted by the
Dean of Arts & Science and the Head of the Department of Philosophy*

The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Head of the Department of Philosophy welcome the very positive assessments of the Department of Philosophy by the IARC, and are happy to provide the following in relation to specific points raised by the IARC.

Increased Involvement of regular faculty in the management and teaching of the undergraduate program

We agree that this is a desirable goal, and the reliance on term adjunct and emeritus instructors to deliver a number of undergraduate courses has been mitigated recently as the Department now has three faculty members with continuing adjunct status who contribute significantly to the Department's permanent teaching resources. The Department has also been able to commit resources to allow for some doctoral students to gain experience as teaching fellows, thereby augmenting the overall teaching complement.

A proactive approach to address the overlap among undergraduate courses

The Department of Philosophy is presently in the process of considering how to restructure first-year course offerings to reduce the overlap between first-year and higher-level courses. This should address the overlap issue, as well as providing for a more efficient, overall undergraduate curriculum.

Space Issues for Graduate Students

The Faculty of Arts and Science is currently working with the Department to ensure that the graduate student space in Watson Hall is adequate from all angles, including security and environment. The Faculty of Arts and Science is in the process of refurbishing graduate student space in Mackintosh-Corry, and the Department of Philosophy may wish to use this space for some of its graduate students. Funds were also secured by the Department to improve the existing space in the basement of Watson Hall until a move to more satisfactory facilities becomes possible.

Strengths of the Department

Finally, it is encouraging to note that both the external IAR consultants and the Internal IAR Review Team recognize a number of the unique strengths of the Department, including many aspects of its undergraduate and graduate programs, its impressive research productivity, and its longstanding colloquium series, among others. The Faculty of Arts and Science and the Department are committed to working together to ensure that the Department's excellent national and international reputation continues.