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March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To: Robert Stacey, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
George Lovell, Divisional Dean of Social Sciences

From: Joy Williamson-Lott, Dean  
Kima Cargill, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joy Williamson-Lott".

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kima Cargill, Ph.D.".

RE: Review of the Department of Philosophy (2018 – 2019)

This memorandum outlines the Graduate School's final recommendations from the Department of Philosophy academic program review. Detailed comments on the review can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018)
- Self-Study (January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019)
- Site visit (February 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2019)
- Review committee report (March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019)
- Department of Philosophy response to the report (August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019)

The review committee consisted of:

**Ron Irving, Professor**, UW Department of Mathematics (Committee Chair)

**Shirley Yee**, Professor and Chair, UW Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies

**Leslie Francis**, Alfred C. Emery Professor of law and Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy and School of Law, University of Utah

**Laura Ruetsche**, Louis E. Loeb Collegiate Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, University of Michigan

The Department of Philosophy at the University of Washington (UW) offers the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Doctor of Philosophy, and Graduate Certificate in Ethics. The Department of Philosophy is located in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington.

Members of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. A summary of this report, composed by Graduate School Council Members, is attached to this document.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

The Graduate School Council commends Department of Philosophy on the strength of its programs, faculty, and students. After discussion, the Council recommended the following:

- Full academic program review in 10 years (2028-2029)

We concur with the Council's recommendations.

cc: Mark Richards, Provost and Executive Vice President  
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Provost  
Andrea Woody, Chair, Department of Philosophy  
Becky Corriell, Director, Academic Affairs & Planning, the Graduate School  
Academic unit Review Committee Members  
Members of the Graduate School Council  
GPSS President

## **Attachment**

**University of Washington | Graduate Council**

### **Summary of the review of Department of Philosophy**

**Academic Unit Name:** Department of Philosophy

#### **Degrees/Certificates included in the Review:**

- BA in Philosophy
- BA in History and Philosophy of Science
- PhD in Philosophy
- PhD in Philosophy and Classics
- Graduate Certificate in Ethics

#### **Program Strengths**

- The overall review was positive and laudatory. The Review Committee was “impressed with the way in which their vision of engaged philosophy informs their efforts in research, education, and outreach. It noted that were additional resources, notably faculty and graduate student support resources, invested in the program, it could become even more successful as an academic philosophy department.
- The two graduate programs are both PhD programs, one in Philosophy and one in Philosophy and Classics. The Philosophy Department emphasizes three research areas: applied ethics, history of philosophy, and philosophy of science. The Review Committee urged the department to continue to build collaborations across campus and to enhance research interplay within, such as between philosophy of science and the Program on Ethics.
- The Review first addressed the two undergraduate programs, the BA in Philosophy and the BA in History and Philosophy of Science. The Review Committee was particularly impressed with the Department’s adoption of the Evidence-Based teaching program. In its response to the Review, the Department concurred in these points, but highlighted the ongoing shortage of faculty and TA Resources that appear unlikely to abate.
- The Philosophy Department also offers a Graduate Certificate in Ethics, through the Program on Ethics, which is primarily served by four core faculty members in the department and several associate faculty members from across campus. This program was very favorably reviewed by the Committee. It was impressed with the high profile and successful grant funded research as well as the growing interest by undergraduates in its courses. It also noted many other public discussions on ethical issues of interest to the broader community sponsored by the Department and its faculty.
- The Review Committee favorably reviewed the research profiles of department faculty. Faculty in the Program on Ethics are all publishing high impact research and the program has gained impressive notice both nationally and internationally. Areas of particular impact include global ethics, climate ethics, neuro-ethics, and ethics and public health. Likewise, all four faculty in philosophy of science are highly research active with increasing visibility. Faculty in history of philosophy were also found highly productive.
- The Review Committee noted the Philosophy Department’s “spectacular” contributions to the intellectual life of the campus and beyond through symposia and speakers on race and medicine, geoenvironment, and

environmental ethics, caregiving, foundations of physics, and other critical issues.

- With respect to Diversity, the Review Committee noted that Philosophy is historically a field that has been dominated by white males. Even now, the number of Underrepresented Minorities in Philosophy is small in all degree programs. It is noted that the department has made consistent and concerted efforts to request hiring faculty that would bring greater diversity to the unit along the lines of gender, race, and sexuality. However, in terms of URM, Philosophy graduate and undergraduate students are more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, U.S. and non-U.S, and veteran status, demonstrating the Department's curricular appeal to students across the UW.

### **Challenges & Risks**

- The primary challenge for the Philosophy Department's programs is the need for additional resources, notably faculty and graduate student support resources. The Review Committee stated that were sufficient resources invested in the program, it could become even more successful as an academic philosophy department. The Review Committee urged the University to support the Philosophy Department with enough faculty members to continue and enhance its trajectory of teaching and research.
- The Committee noted that there is a need to expand enrollment in courses at the 100 level, both to better meet existing demand and to entice more students to major in Philosophy. It also urged the Department to offer upper division courses more frequently.
- The Review Committee highlighted the need for more graduate student funding, noting that funding in these subject matter areas is particularly challenging and unpredictable. The Department was urged to offer a richer array of graduate-level seminars and to consider establishing internship programs to enhance application of philosophy in diverse subject matter arenas.
- The Committee noted a need for a greater range of faculty to advise graduate students, and encouraged an expansion of the connections the faculty are making with programs across the University and with the community. It urged the hiring of faculty with interdisciplinary and collaborative focus with continued attention to diversity.
- The Review Committee also noted a need for additional staff support for grant preparation and administration.

### **Areas of Concurrence**

- The Department concurred in most of these concerns and noted that despite a desire to offer more seminars and graduate offerings, they are constrained by the downsizing of the faculty. The Department is committed to more fully develop the "engaged philosophy" approach that was heralded by the Review Committee.
- With respect to additional staff support for research, the department acknowledges that it has a growing need for staff support of grant applications and administration. Hiring a new administrator significantly enhances staff capacity to support faculty grant work.
- Notably in the Department's response, the department just this year implemented a course buy-out policy to allow faculty some possibility to reduce teaching obligations when obtaining grant funding for research projects.

- The Department fully concurred with the Review Committee's comment on diversity and pledged to continue its efforts to ensure diversity across all programs and among the faculty.
- The Department Response affirmed the findings of the review, clarified a few points and documented progress that has already been made in actualizing some of the Review Committee's suggestions.

**Graduate School Council Recommendations**

- The Review Committee had no critical questions about the continuing status of any of the academic programs within the Philosophy Department. The Graduate School should renew the Department of Philosophy's programs for 10 Years.