

Date: February 28, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Terrence Kelly, Chairperson, Philosophy Program Review Committee

Cc: John Petraitis, Dean, CAS
Stephanie Bauer, Philosophy Program Review Committee

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review: Optional Program Response to Dean's Recommendation

Program/s in this review:

Philosophy

Program response to dean's findings:

Provost Stalvey:

The Philosophy Program Review Committee extends its appreciation for Dean Petraitis' careful review done under difficult circumstances. This committee is in general agreement with that review, but requests reconsideration of his conclusion that the program should be reviewed again in Spring 2021. The diversified nature of the program's service makes it most unlikely that demand for philosophy courses will decrease. In fact, it is more likely that demand for its courses with UAA's health programs.

Program Productivity

Dean Petraitis found that the program was extremely economically productive and efficient, but the case is perhaps understated. The Philosophy program is the most efficient program at UAA and 8th most profitable. Whereas numerous, and perhaps even most, programs at UAA lose money, the philosophy department is a breadwinner for UAA.

- In Fall 2019 alone, the program produced \$193,000 in tuition revenue beyond total faculty pay—5th highest for bachelors programs at UAA and 8th highest of any program.
- Tuition Return for total faculty pay was 174%-- *the best rate of return for any program at UAA.* Even discounting GER courses, the program had a 129% return of tuition for total costs.

The program is able to do this through large class sizes (50% larger than the UAA average), high course demand, low facilities costs, and relatively low faculty salaries (philosophers are relatively inexpensive academics, philosophy lab equipment— the mind— is free, and the department is relatively young.)

High course demand is fueled by the program's commitment to supporting "ethics across the curriculum."

- The program plays a key supporting role for flagship programs at UAA such as nursing, civil engineering, electrical engineering, and computer science.
- The program also plays a key supporting role in the General Education program by offering courses in logic and ethics.
- No other program in the University of Alaska system, including our colleagues at UAF, is poised to replace the expertise offered by the Philosophy program in biomedical ethics, professional ethics, and logic.
- The program has been a pioneer in developing a "strategic pathway" with our philosophy colleagues at UAF. Expertise and even some courses are shared and a formal MOA has been developed outlining course equivalencies.

Dean Petraitis rightly points out that the program does not award many degrees. Recruiting majors is a key priority for the program.

Continued Review?

Dean Petraitis concludes his review by finding the program should be reviewed again in Spring 2021 because:

it is possible that programs that rely on Philosophy courses might be discontinued, thereby impacting the role and necessary size of the Philosophy Department.

While this concern was understandable when Dean Petraitis wrote his review, now that all of the College Deans' recommendations have been submitted, it appears most unlikely that a substantial number of programs served by Philosophy will be deleted. You, Provost Stalvey, will of course have an even better understanding of the extent of program cuts at UAA. However, philosophy program demand is highly diversified, serving at least 20 different programs across campus, only two of which have been recommended for deletion at this time.

- The only relevant programs recommended for deletion are Sociology (which requires PHIL 301: Ethics or 305: Professional Ethics) and Environment and Society (which requires PHIL 303: Environmental Ethics). While it is heartbreaking to see these high

quality programs eliminated, that loss has a negligible quantitative impact on the Philosophy program.

Negligible Impact of Proposed Sociology Deletion on Philosophy

- In SP 20, there is a total of 1 Sociology student between two sections of PHIL 305.
- In FA 19, there were only 3 Sociology students in PHIL 301 (class size 27).

Negligible Impact of Proposed Environment and Society Deletion on Philosophy

- PHIL 303 accounted for only 2 of the 48 (~4%) course sections offered by the Philosophy this year (Summer, Fall, Spring).
- There would still be demand for at least one section of this course (ES student made up only ~50% of enrolled students). In the short term, Philosophy would need to offer *more* sections of 303 if ES is in “teach out.”

Unless significant further program cuts are proposed, there is little reason at this point to think that the Philosophy program will have diminished service demand this time next year and into the future. Indeed, the demand for ethics courses will likely grow in the near future as UAA prioritizes its health programs.

Further review is not only unnecessary, it is costly. Aside from the lost work hours preparing (and assessing) such a review, continued review in Spring 2021 creates instability in the program. The perception that the program may yet be eliminated or dramatically diminished makes it more difficult to keep and attract majors—a central goal of the program. It also makes it more difficult to develop partnerships across campus, which undermines the goal of bringing “ethics across the curriculum.”

Thank you for your consideration of this response.