

APA Committee on Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges

Annual Report 2007-2008

Submitted by Gerald Mozur

The Committee on Philosophy sponsored sessions at both the Pacific and Central Divisional meetings. In addition, the Committee saw the publication of its “A Guide to Philosophy in Two-Year Colleges” this fall in the *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy* (vol. 07, #1, Fall 2007). Also, our discussions during the year have suggested a number of projects that we may begin this year. I will describe these in order.

We sponsored two sessions at the Pacific meeting. These were well-attended and deemed a resounding success. We have Geoffrey Frasz to thank for his leadership in organizing these sessions. The first session was addressed job seekers, and was appropriately titled, “So You Want to Apply for a Job at a Community College?” Geoffrey chaired this session and committee member Robert Boyd joined Geoffrey and Chris Kuchuris and Mark Rauls (both of College of Southern Nevada) as speakers. The panel gave information and advice about what not to do, how to present oneself in an interview, and gave insight into the workings of search committees. Geoffrey reported that the discussion was excellent using all the time allotted for the room. Thereafter, a number of people joined Geoffrey for lunch and continued the discussion. I would add here that this lunch was covered by our budget and we feel strongly that this is money well spent in support of our committee’ charge. It is a small incentive to keep our discussions moving and a way for us to meet each other face-to-face. We will continue this practice this year.

The second session at the Pacific was devoted to online teaching, and suitably titled, “The Promise and Perils of Teaching Philosophy Online at Two-Year Schools.” Again, Geoffrey chaired the session and was joined by speakers Melisa McCormick (College of Southern Nevada), again Mark Rauls, and Wendell Stephenson (Fresno City College). This session was “even better” than the first one, according to Geoffrey. Again, the discussion was lively as the audience and speakers were, as Geoffrey reports, “equally divided on the whole notion of online teaching.” Again the discussion spilled over the allotted time and was continued over lunch.

The Central meeting was a little different. We organized a follow-up session to last year’s session on “how to apply for a job at a two-year college.” The 07 session was so well attended and received that we thought a follow-up on teaching demonstrations would be perfect. We sought volunteers to do a short teaching demonstration for which, then, our panel would give feedback. Bill Hartmann

deserves our thanks for his hard work in organizing this session. Bill brought together a group of philosophers who had extensive experience in hiring and who have sat on countless search committees. This session was co-sponsored by the American Association of Philosophy Teachers, with both Betsy Decyk and Donna Englemann slated as speakers. To join these AAPT officers were Colleen Burns (Harper College), Holly Graff (Oakton Community College), David Zacker (Elgin Community College) and Donna Werner (St. Louis Community College-Meramec College). This was a powerful group of speakers. However, due to events beyond our control, our panel was reduced to Colleen and Bill, joined by Gerald Mozur as a last minute addition. We will try again with this group in the future as the topic is very important for job seekers. The session involved a smallish group with new committee member, Thomas Urban, joining us. Our discussion broadened to include other issues besides the teaching demonstration and we ended up helping two job seekers.

At this point in time, the Committee has been concerned with giving information about two-year colleges so that those interested in joining our ranks can make the best application possible. This is a service we will continue in the future as there is a genuine need for it. Future sessions may not all revolve around this, but we will be looking to address these issues where we can. For example, the Pacific had two sessions, one of which was on this topic. This may happen at other divisional meetings.

We are concerned with two additional projects, both at an early stage. One is developing a general policy statement about credentialing instructors at two-year colleges. The topic arises because the view of some administrators at community colleges is that teaching philosophy does not necessarily require an advanced degree in the field. Some of us have had to argue with our Deans about appropriate credentials before hiring. A policy statement from such a leading body as the APA would serve as important support for colleagues faced with this issue. It would be a way for the APA to help philosophers help philosophers get jobs teaching philosophy. Thomas Urban will help move this project along.

The second project is the development of a newsletter specifically devoted to the issues of faculty at two-year colleges. Geoffrey Frasz has been involved with this and has expressed renewed interest in bringing this to fruition. I know we will have others joining him as our discussions unfold.

We would like to thank both Eric Brandon and Robert Boyd who are stepping off the committee this year. Both have made outstanding contributions to the good workings of the Committee and its charge. In addition, we want to welcome Harold

Weiss (who returns to the committee), Donna Werner, and Thomas Urban who join us this year. We look forward to working with them.

Humbly submitted,

Gerald Mozur, Chair

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