

Report of the Task Force on Development
American Philosophical Association
July 2012

Although the APA currently has a modest endowment that funds various prizes and awards, the organization has not, to our knowledge, ever undertaken any serious and sustained development initiatives. As the APA reconfigures itself for the future, the time may have come to change that. Certainly, if such efforts were to be successful, the organization could better serve both its membership and the profession at large. We are aware that should the APA decide to launch various development initiatives, success is not guaranteed. There are many reasons why such efforts may fail. Unlike many other learned societies, the APA lacks any professional staff dedicated to development. Nor does the membership of the APA have a widespread culture of charitable giving to the APA. There are also inherent challenges associated with development that seeks to raise funds from potential third party sources in support of philosophy and philosophers. We readily admit that none of these potential obstacles to success will be easily overcome. But we believe that the benefits to be gained from a sustained, systematic and successful development campaign on behalf of the APA and its membership are potentially great enough that it is worth serious exploration of whether and how such a campaign might be carried out.

The recommendations that follow are not intended as detailed action plan. Such an action plan would be both radically premature and beyond the competence of our task force. Our focus is rather on broader goals and principles. The intent of this document is to initiate a continuing conversation among the stakeholders of the APA that we hope and expect will bear fruit in the medium to longer term.

Since the prospects for success in the kinds of endeavors we recommend are not certain, the Board may wish to implement our recommendations on a pilot basis. For example, it may choose to authorize the hiring of dedicated development staff and the undertaking of new development initiatives for a period of perhaps five to seven years, with renewal subject to the level of success in the Association's development initiatives.

Recommendations

1. The APA should regularly and systematically seek charitable donations, small and large, above and beyond annual membership dues, from both its dues paying members and from others who benefit from its programs and services.
2. The APA should systematically and aggressively cultivate relationships with potential major donors, who may be friends of philosophy and the philosophy

profession. It should construct, maintain, and regularly update a database of such potential donors.

3. The APA should seek funds that will enable it to become the provider of competitively awarded grants in support of both philosophical research and the teaching of philosophy.
4. The APA should add professional development staff to its National Office, sufficient to enable it to effectively carry out and oversee whatever development initiatives are undertaken
5. The Board should empower a standing Advisory Board for Development, with membership from both the Board itself, the broader membership of the Association, and perhaps from the Association's targeted donor community.

Rationale For these Recommendations:

1. Increased Charitable Contributions from Membership and others.

To the extent that the APA is in need of additional funds, above and beyond those generated by dues, conference fees, exhibitor fees, advertising fees, and the like, we believe that the membership itself, and those non-members who may regularly benefit from the services and programs of the APA, represent the most natural potential donor base for the APA. Unfortunately, there is not currently a widespread culture of giving to the APA among this population. And one cannot reasonably expect a change in that culture without a perceived change in the fundamental relationship between the APA and its potential donor population. However, since the APA is rethinking many different facets of its operations, including its relationship with its membership, the present moment represents an opportune time, unique in the history of the association, to begin the work of setting in place a culture of giving among the APA membership. We believe that as part of the process of cultural change, the APA must begin to actively and explicitly court and steward its membership in the way that, for example, a university cultivates and stewards its alumni base or in the way that a professional symphony orchestra cultivates and stewards the members of its audience, or in the way that residential scholarly centers and granting agencies cultivate and steward their former fellows or recipients.

We note that some small first steps in this direction may be relatively easy to implement. At the very least, there should be an easy way to make charitable donations through the APA webpage. And there should be some easy way to "round up" one's dues with the understanding that the extra amount would go towards various attractive projects.

Cultivating dues paying members to also become charitable donors will take focus, time, energy and a great deal of creativity. In order to do this job competently, the National Office will no doubt require additional full time staff. In the short term, hiring such staff should be highest development related priority for the APA.

2. Cultivating Potential Friends of Philosophy and the Philosophy Profession.

Many professionally trained philosophers end up not finding employment as professional philosophers. Some not insignificant number of them may feel a sense of loss upon leaving behind a path to which they will have devoted a considerable chunk of their lives. Moreover, a non-negligible number of professionally trained philosophers go on to be quite successful in their subsequently chosen careers in law, the software industry, consulting and more. And many may regard their training as philosophers as important contributors to their success. Here are some examples of the kind of folks we have in mind. The founder and CEO of Overstock.com holds a degree from Stanford, as does the co-founder of Aardvark -- an internet company recently sold to Google for a reported 55 million dollars. Another Stanford PhD alumnus was an early employee of Yahoo and retired at a still young age, when Yahoo's stock was selling at over \$500.00/share.

The APA should strive to be significantly more welcoming to such philosophers. While we believe opening up the Association to professionally trained philosophers who are not professionally employed as philosophers is an intrinsically good thing, worth attempting to do independently of its impact on development, our focus in these recommendations is on the potential development pay-offs of such an undertaking. We suspect that many well-known, well-off, former philosophy students would respond to, and perhaps even welcome, an approach from the APA. In making such approaches, the Association will no doubt need to rely heavily on the membership at large to help identify and cultivate such potential donors. Once such individuals are brought to the attention of the National Office, it is important that it regularly reach out to such individuals and that it keep track of their giving potential and interests.

In order to facilitate such identification and cultivation, the APA should more openly embrace professionally trained philosophers who are not employed as professional philosophers, independently of their potential as possible donors. We can imagine many ways in which the Association might do so. It might sponsor special sessions at APA meetings. It might give out various prizes or awards to such philosophers. It might include one or more such philosophers on one or more of its standing committees. It might even include such a philosopher on the board. We leave sorting through the wisdom or practicality of any particular such initiatives to others, however.

3. The APA should strive to become a granting agency

Grants specifically intended to support philosophical teaching and research are rare in the extreme. Moreover, there is a wide spread perception that philosophers as a group do not compete well for grants intended to support the humanities and social sciences more broadly. We believe that an APA that is able to provide grants specifically intended to support research and teaching in philosophy, with those proposals being evaluated by the philosophical community, would be a tremendously good thing for both the membership of the APA and for the profession at large. It would also help to promote a deeper sense of connection between the Association and its membership. This deeper sense of connection would, in turn, make it easier to build the culture of charitable giving referred to in our first recommendation.

We take no stand here on the kinds and number of grants the APA should seek to fund. There are clearly many possibilities: grants in support of younger philosophers at either the pre-doctoral or post-doctoral level; grants in support of underrepresented populations; grants designed to facilitate highly promising research, regardless of the career stage of the recipient; grants designed to support innovative teaching initiatives. No doubt there will be real world limits to what can be achieved. But we have no doubt that something can be achieved. Indeed with the help of the National Office, our task force has become aware that many learned societies already award grants for research in their fields. Such granting giving depends on ongoing charitable contributions from members, donations from individual benefactors, and on cooperative endeavors with granting agencies like the Mellon Foundation. There is no reason to believe that the APA could not achieve some level of success in developing grants specifically designed to support philosophical research, teaching, and training. Indeed, we see at least some potential for the APA to evolve into the granting agency of first resort for small to medium sized grants in support of philosophical research and teaching.

4. Additional Professional Development Staff

Unlike a number of learned societies, the APA currently has no professional staff specifically tasked with overseeing and coordinating development efforts of the APA. If the Board chooses to implement our recommendations, necessarily the National Office will need to have some professional development staff. The size of the staff will depend on the extent of the development initiatives the Board chooses to undertake. Staff will be needed to oversee and develop annual giving campaigns, to coordinate grant-giving activity, to aid in the tracking and cultivation of potential benefactors, and to coordinate with outside granting agencies.

5. Standing Advisory Board for Development

The work of development cannot be the sole responsibility of the Executive Director and the professional staff of the APA. The membership at large must be committed to and regularly take part in all development related activities of the Association. To that end, we urge that the Board empower a standing Advisory Committee on Development. This committee would meet with representatives of the development staff and the Executive Director and consult with them on all matters related to development. The chair of the Committee on Development, in consultation with the Executive Director, should regularly issue reports and recommendations to the Board and through the Board to the membership at large. It would be a good idea include on such a board, some people who themselves have substantial giving capacity.

Respectfully Submitted

Ken Taylor, Chair
Geoff Sayre McCord
Dick Foley
Peter Ludlow
Stephanie Lewis
Peter Markie
Rebecca Kukla