PHD PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

Philosophy Program Professional Development Goals:

At the completion of their PhD program, students should:

Be prepared for and have experience of classroom teaching, including knowledge of how to prepare a syllabus and other class materials. They should have developed the professional skills necessary for classroom management, effective communication of material, and elucidation of critical thinking.

Be able to prepare and present papers at professional conferences. They should be able to write effective proposals and abstracts and to present philosophical talks or papers.

Be able to construct and submit philosophical papers to journals appropriate to their philosophical specialties, and understand the publication process.

Be ready to enter the job market, including knowledge of how to prepare a letter of application, CV and supporting materials. They should have developed skills in presenting a job talk and interviewing for an academic position.

Should have knowledge about grant-awarding agencies and be able to prepare proposals for grants and fellowships.

Should have knowledge of the norms of ethical practice within the profession.

Evaluation

Although we engaged in a formal evaluation of our professional developmental activities this academic year, it represented only one moment in our ongoing process of development, evaluation and revision in the light of new initiatives, and faculty and student feedback.

As part of our formal evaluation process:

Professor Greenwood, the Acting Executive Officer, met with Jennifer Furlong, Director of Career Planning and Professional Development, and described our current procedures. She advised him that we were doing all that we ought to be doing, but offered support through the new center for teaching and workshops on grant writing.

Professor Greenwood convened a Professional Development Committee, comprising himself, Professors Prinz and Gould, and the members of the Student Steering
Committee. As a result of feedback from the meetings of this committee, various modifications and additions were made to our existing program, indicated in italics below.

A questionnaire was distributed to faculty and students soliciting suggestions for developing and improving our existing program, which are also indicated in italics below.

Path to Degree

We currently post on our program website a recommended path to degree for students in the PhD program. This includes recommended number of courses per year, milestones, schedules for qualifying papers, and for prospectus and dissertation defense. We will add this to our new Professional Development Website, which will include portals for Funding, Publishing, Job Talks, Applications, Dissertation Samples, Dissertation Fellowships, Placement, Timelines, Sample Syllabi, and Sample Prospectuses.

Student Evaluation

During our last external evaluation, students requested that the program create a system to provide students with frank and confidential feedback about their progress in their class work, beyond grades and comments on their written work. At the end of every semester, teaching faculty fill out evaluation forms for each student, commenting on their verbal and written analytic skills, identifying any potential problems and providing an overall evaluation of their contribution to the class. These evaluations are sent to the Director of Graduate Studies (currently Professor Greenwood), who collates them and meets once a year with Level I and Level II students to provide them with confidential feedback on their progress based upon the collated reports (preserving the anonymity of the individual faculty evaluators).

Placement

Professor Carroll is normally in charge of placement; Professor Prinz has taken over this year while Prof Carroll is on leave. We now have a placement meeting at the end of spring semester the year before students go on the job market, to encourage them to begin preparing their writing samples and (especially) job talks well in advance of preparing their job applications. We have meetings in the fall semester to prepare students for the job market, and to provide advice and feedback on writing applications, CVs, etc. We will post sample application letters and CVs from successful job applicants on our new professional development website, along with other relevant materials.

Job talks

Professors Prinz and Greenwood hold a workshop on job talks in the fall semester, and working with the CUNY colleges, encourage students to start giving mock job talks early
Handouts for the job talks will be posted on the professional development website.

Talks at CUNY campuses

We have been working with colleagues at the various CUNY colleges to provide our students with the opportunity to give mock job talks to faculty and students, in the hope of providing a close approximation of the types of social groups that our students are likely to encounter in the wild. Feedback from student experience of these job talks will be posted on our professional development website. Since opportunities for giving job talks at CUNY campuses are limited within their regular colloquium schedules, we have decided to supplement this with ad hoc job talks presented before a mixed audience of faculty and students (at the CUNY campuses or the GC), including a volunteer group of a dozen new junior faculty at the campuses.

Mock Interviews

We schedule mock interviews in December and on an ad hoc basis for students who request then, and provide critical and constructive feedback on their performance. We will in future offer students the option of having their mock interview recorded on film and audio.

Professional Paper Writing and Qualifying Papers

Professors Carroll and Pappas hold a workshop on professional paper writing (journal articles and contributions to edited collections etc.) and qualifying paper writing (which is ideally a preparation for professional paper writing) in the early spring semester. They are joined by other faculty and students who pool their advice on getting published. Handouts and sample materials presented at the workshop will also be posted on our professional development website.

Teaching at the CUNY Colleges

Professors Pappas and Greenwood hold a workshop on teaching at the CUNY colleges in the early spring semester, in conjunction with other faculty and seasoned student teachers. They provide both nuts and bolts administrative info and practical advice on syllabi, student evaluations, attendance and plagiarism issues, use of power-point etc. Handouts and sample materials presented at the workshop will be posted on our professional development website, along with copies of sample syllabi for introductory and advanced courses.

Assignment of Teaching Mentors

In the early spring semester, GCF Fellowship students are assigned to seasoned student teachers at one of the colleges, who provide general advice on teaching at their assigned
college, and invite them to sample and participate in classes, to give students advance experience of CUNY undergraduates.

**Prospectus and Dissertation**

In either the fall or spring semester, Professors Prinz and Schwarzenbach conduct a workshop on prospectus and dissertation, along with other faculty and students. *Sample prospectuses will be made available on our professional development website. We will also add samples of successful dissertation fellowship applications.* We now run a prospectus and dissertation seminar in the fall semester, conducted by Professor Prinz last semester, and by Professor Neale next semester. This has been judged to be a great success, although it has also been suggested that we should consider running separate prospectus and dissertation seminars.

**Grant Writing**

In past years we have had presentations on grant writing by external speakers such as Saul Fisher (an alumnus who has worked for ACLS and NEH) and Frederick Kronz, Director of the Science, Technology and Society section of the National Science Foundation. We will continue to do so but will also add an additional seminar by our own faculty and students who have been successful in securing grants and fellowship awards.

**Ethics**

Most of our ethics contribution is worked into our placement, publishing and teaching seminars, but we will devote a workshop next year to the American Philosophical Association’s (hopefully) forthcoming Code of Ethics.

**Efficacy of Practices**

It is difficult at this stage to gauge the efficacy of our practices, given our limited empirical data. We receive uniformly good feedback on our workshops and mock job talks and interviews, and have noticed a significant increase in conference presentations, publications and success in the job market over the past few years. Unfortunately our attempts to quantify these improvements to date have been stymied by student underreporting, although we hope to improve upon this in future years by trying to systematize reporting of presentations, publications and placements.