

# Implementation Plan

## 1. Cover memo

*Department of* Philosophy *Year of appraisal* 2014

To: Vice-Provost, Innovation in Teaching and Learning  
From: Faculty Dean  
Faculty of : Arts and Science  
Date: 19 September 2017

Please find enclosed the finalized Implementation Plan for the Department cited above as part of the academic program appraisals process. This Plan was duly discussed with:

- The Department Chair
- The Dean of Graduate Studies (if applicable)

As mentioned in the Concordia University Academic Program Appraisals Manual, 5<sup>th</sup> edition revised, the Faculty and Department will follow-up on this Plan in two years, when prompted by your office.

Sincerely,

Faculty Dean's name Dr. André Roy

Faculty Dean's signature 

## Implementation Plan: Department of Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy offers undergraduate (BA Honours or Major or Minor in Philosophy), and graduate (MA in Philosophy) options for students. The Department of Philosophy “teaches methods for analyzing and understand[ing] the complex, persistent problems we face”. This is summed up effectively in the banner on the department’s home page, “Thinking and teaching for tomorrow and beyond.” The Department strives “to contribute to the development of critical, informed and open minds” by giving “students an understanding of the aims, methods, and content of a range of major philosophical periods and traditions”. To meet these objectives, the research and teaching in the department reflects expertise in areas as diverse as the philosophy of the body, mind and nature in relation to current biology and cognitive science, 20th century continental philosophy, philosophy of science, philosophy of psychology, applied ethics and value theory, and history of the philosophy of science, philosophy of mind and science, Aristotle’s philosophy of nature, ethics and social and political philosophy, philosophy of language, and the philosophy of mathematics, metaethics, political theory and normative ethics. This approach “brings the philosophy of values, philosophy of the sciences, and the philosophy of human identity and difference into a dynamic intersection”.

When this appraisal was initiated, the complement of faculty and staff responsible for delivering the Department’s academic and research programs included nine full-time tenure-track faculty members and one half-time faculty member, a department assistant, and an assistant to the Chair and Graduate Programs. The Department had office and meeting space in the PR annex on the Sir George Williams Campus.

Research success within the Department is evidenced over the period of review both by the individual research funding from provincial and federal sources awarded to faculty members and by the success of multiple researchers as members of team grants. Moreover, this success is reflected in the number of publications that have been presented in leading presses and major international peer-reviewed journals. This includes multiple single-authored books, book translations, book reviews and extensive reference articles as well as more than 100 articles in journals and edited volumes. The quality of the ongoing research is manifest by the prestigious research fellowships (including two Humboldt Foundation Fellowships, an HLA Hart Fellowship at the University of Oxford, a Laurance S. Rockefeller Fellowship and two Fellowships to Princeton’s Institute of Advanced Studies) awarded to faculty members.

While the Department maintains a strong research profile, faculty members also show a deep commitment to teaching. This is evident in the initiatives and improvements both in curriculum and in approaches to course delivery undertaken by the Department. Moreover, these approaches (particularly to teaching critical thinking across disciplines and in teaching ethical issues that focus on sustainability) have been recognized both within Concordia (Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, President’s Excellence in Teaching Award) and beyond (through a commission by the Oregon Institute of Technology to develop a critical thinking curriculum for implementation across all departments at their institution). While the Department appreciates the place of (and offers) online courses, they also acknowledge the “immense benefits of an education in philosophy ... uniquely achieved through real-time interpersonal dialogue and

active learning.” They also appreciate the important place of Philosophy in interdisciplinarity, where students can learn “the critical thinking skills and insights desperately needed for successfully confronting global and local problems”.

To advance and improve the Department of Philosophy, a number of suggestions have been put forward as part of this appraisal process. With this in mind, the Faculty of Arts and Science has reviewed the DAC, External Evaluators’ and UAC Reports and our comments on the recommendations from the reports follow.

Recommendations	Prioritized timeline for completion	Responsibility	Dean's comments and resource implications
1) To continue to define a strategic hiring plan that includes hires in areas of need and makes hiring of female faculty a priority.	Ongoing, updated hiring plan Spring 2018. Some hires already made.	Department, Dean	The Department needs to continue to craft its hiring needs in the context of its strategic plan and of those of the Faculty and University. Particular importance should be given to attracting female applicants to tenure-track positions. The Department's requests for new hires will be considered along with those of all other units.
2) To optimize and improve MA student support.	Ongoing	Department, Faculty of Arts and Science, School of Graduate Studies	The Department should continue to work with the Faculty of Arts and Science and the School of Graduate Studies to provide assistance in developing attractive funding packages for students.
3) To refine its strategic vision and develop a narrative that expresses its identity more effectively. As part of this exercise, the department needs to consider its place in the Faculty of Arts and Science and the University. This will include exploring opportunities for collaboration and engagement with other units within the University as well as an analysis of course offerings within and between departments.	Ongoing	Department, Associate Dean, Academic Programs, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Arts and Science	The Department needs to explore possible interactions with other Departments within the University both in terms of courses and research opportunities. By reaching out, the Department can more actively educate the community about which collaborations with Philosophy will enhance Concordia.
4) To perform a curriculum review and a detailed analysis of enrolments and program capacity.	Program assessment should be ongoing and some changes already have been made. A detailed assessment of current enrolments and program capacity should be initiated immediately and completed in the Fall of 2018.	Department, Associate Dean, Academic Programs, Associate Dean, Student Academic Services, Faculty of Arts and Science, School of Graduate Studies	The external examiners suggested that program offerings should be assessed both at the graduate and undergraduate levels. The Department must decide where online courses, fewer courses or new courses in specific areas fit into the course sections that the department has available. Particular attention should be directed to increasing the attractiveness of the Honours and MA programs (for example, by streamlining times to completion).

5) To move to new facilities.	The Department of Philosophy was relocated from the PR annex (2100 rue Mackay) to newly renovated space in the combined M and S annexes (2145 rue Mackay) in December 2015.	Department, Faculty of Arts and Science, Associate Dean, Planning and Academic Facilities, Facilities Management	The Department will continue to work with the University to ensure that issues of security and accessibility are addressed.
6) To continue to improve communications between all stake-holders within the Department.	Ongoing.	Department Chair, faculty, staff and students	The Department already has initiated annual “retreats” to discuss issues of importance. This process should be continued with specific items highlighted for discussion. Also, other opportunities for conversation between faculty, students and staff ( <i>e.g.</i> , lunches, coffee breaks, etc.) should be encouraged. In addition, the Department should work to establish standards and procedures to decrease the chances of miscommunication. This may include developing or updating documentation to define job profiles or procedures manuals.