

Indiana State University

2005 - 2006 Academic Annual Report

Department of Philosophy

Year in Review

Accomplishments

As you have heard, increasing public awareness of Indiana State University's accomplishments is crucial to building student enrollment, influencing policy makers, and developing a place of pre-eminence in the Midwest. What do you consider to be your department's accomplishments for the 2006-2007 year that will contribute to this effort? [Please list in priority order and limit to no more than 8.]

1. During the 05-06 academic year, we have had 7 publications and 9 presentations from a department of only four. There are also many forthcoming presentations and publications, including Dr. Gennaro's ongoing efforts as guest editor of a special double issue of the Journal of Consciousness Studies and a forthcoming book by Dr. Grcic. 2. Dr. Gennaro has taken over as the "mind/cognitive science" area editor for the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 3. One of our recent graduates was accepted to the Ph.D. philosophy program at Purdue University. 4. Several philosophy students participated in an "ethics bowl" debate in Indianapolis during the Fall 2005. The Philosophy Club also sponsored a debate on gay marriage in conjunction with Human Rights Day in the Spring 2006. 5. The number of our majors has increased, and we expect a steady number of graduations both this year and next. 6. The department sponsored two Philosophy Lectures with invited speakers, including one on the controversial topic of "Intelligent Design Theory," which was followed by a discussion panel on the topic. 7. Our courses, as a whole, continue to get good enrollments, often filling up to about 50 students in our 100-level Intros to Logic and Philosophy. 8. We are proud to be able to continue to offer two religion courses (Intro to Religion; World Religions) despite the dissolution of the Humanities Department and the departure of Marty Mertens (an adjunct who used to offer those course). Our department is also working with several others on a new interdisciplinary World Religious Studies minor. We are also generally proud of our interdisciplinary work and other interdisciplinary course offerings.

Research and Scholarship

What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of research and scholarship that is focused primarily on contributions to practice and discipline-based scholarship? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?

Our department continues to publish well and generally excels in various research related activities. During the 05-06 academic year, we have had 7 publications and 9 presentations from a department of four. There are also many forthcoming presentations and publications, including Dr. Gennaro's ongoing efforts in guest editing a special double issue of the Journal of Consciousness Studies and a forthcoming book by Dr. Grcic. We are satisfied overall, though there is always room for improvement in any given year. More presentations at international conferences would be good.

Grants, Contracts & Off Campus Professional Service

What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of grants, contracts, and off campus professional service? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?

Grants and contracts are not very common in philosophy. However, we have done quite a bit of professional service. Dr. Gennaro is the philosophy of mind/cognitive science editor for the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. He also regularly serves as a referee for a number of journals. Dr. Grcic is a sponsor for "The Humanist Perspective" and is in discussions with Time/Warner to show a video on the Public Access Channel. Dr. Morton is involved on a programming committee at the Unitarian-Universalist Church. There is room for overall improvement here (e.g. service on an APA committee), but opportunities are somewhat limited. So I am reasonably satisfied.

Teaching

We would like to highlight innovative approaches to teaching. Has your department developed any pedagogies or practices you'd like to share with us? Please describe briefly.

We have agreed to include our assessment goals more explicitly into our course syllabi, i.e. under "course objectives." We also continue the practice of isolating questions on these objectives in our department teaching evaluations. Some members of our department occasionally use course readings from respectable philosophy websites.

Course Scheduling/Enrollment Management

What have been your greatest challenges in scheduling courses to meet student needs this year? How were you able to overcome them?

Keeping a proper balance of lower-level and upper-level course offerings across time periods, especially given the uncertainty with adjunct funding. Given the small size of our department, it hasn't been too difficult to achieve this goal, though we have made sure not to offer too many sections of the same course and not to have our upper-level courses overlap at all.

Outreach

What are the outreach opportunities for your discipline? (non-traditional modes of delivery and timing, etc)

We do not yet offer any distance ed. or web-based courses. There may be some interest in the future from one member of the department to do so (especially for our Logic course). Members of the department do, sometimes, use web-based instruction to complement standard classroom instruction.

Strategic Initiatives

Development Activities

What steps have you taken to support development activities in your department? How can your efforts be supported?

Members of the department are encouraged to take advantage of various developmental seminars, both here at ISU and elsewhere. Limited opportunities and funding make this difficult at times.

Community Engagement I

Please summarize your faculty's efforts in community engagement this year.

1. We had two Spring '06 philosophy lectures (one of which was co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of Health, Religion and Spirituality). They were open to the public and well attended. An evening discussion panel was also held on the topic of the "intelligent design controversy." 2. The Philosophy Club sponsored a debate on gay marriage in conjunction with Human Rights Day. It was very well attended and open to the public. Dr. Grcic (and several students) worked with members of the community on both. 3. We continue to explore the promise of an Ethics Internship program with

the help of the Career Center and the Focus Indiana Internship Project. Dr. Barad has taken the lead here and she put together a department brochure. 4. Two members of the department are actively involved with the Center for the Study of Health, Religion and Spirituality. This often involves contact with members of the community and presentations which are open to the public. All of the above can certainly enrich the cultural life of the community.

Experiential Learning

We are interested in hearing about any innovative approaches you might have taken to incorporate experiential learning into your course or departmental work this year.

1. We continue to explore the promise of an Ethics Internship program with the help of the Career Center and the Focus Indiana Internship Project. Dr. Barad has taken the lead and put together a department brochure. 2. Dr. Gennaro arranged a tour by technology faculty and graduate students for his "Minds, Machines, and Cognition" students. Students gained experience in some of the hands-on work done in artificial intelligence research. 3. Dr. Morton took his Intro. to Religion students on a field trip to tour the remnants of two utopian communes at New Harmony IN with grant money originally secured by Marty Mertens.

Future Goals

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The University is highlighting experiential learning, community engagement, and eminent programs as aspects of our campus that will attract students and resources. How is your department planning to contribute to these strategic initiatives in ways that will help ISU be recognized as a Pre-eminent University?

Continued efforts on our department Ethics Internship Program. Continued involvement in Human Rights Day, as well as various Philosophy Club activities. Continued Spring Lecture series. Members of the department will also continue to offer lectures for the Dewey Institute for Lifelong Learning and also be involved in the bi-annual Ethics conference held at the Landsbaum theater. Several of us are also active in various projects sponsored by the Center for the Study of Health, Religion and Spirituality. We also hope to revisit our interdisciplinary proposal for a new World Religious Studies minor.

Feedback

This section is to allow you to share your ideas for enhancing enrollment or dealing with budget and other challenges facing the administration.

More focus on retention is the key to enhancing overall enrollment figures. Let's find out why so many students don't come back to ISU, and then try to do something about it (to the extent we can). This is at least equally as important as trying to attract freshman students to ISU in the first place. Regarding budget challenges, top priority should ALWAYS go to our students/course offerings as well as faculty/adjunct and staff funding. This has certainly not been the case, especially lately, despite some rhetoric to the contrary. Dissatisfaction among faculty and students with some administrative decisions is of course common knowledge and well documented.