

## Minutes

Saturday, 4/8/17 Meeting

### BOR Philosophy and Religion Advisory Committee

#### **Attendance**

Committee members:

- Banas, Mark (Religion, Georgia State University / Perimeter College)
- Downing, Fred (Religion, Valdosta State University)
- Fry, Karin, (Philosophy and Religion, Georgia Southern University)
- Hoffman, Michael (Philosophy, Georgia Institute of Technology)
- Matussek, Ed (Philosophy Religion, Atlanta Metropolitan College)
- Peck, Larry (Philosophy, Georgia State University / Perimeter College)
- Rouse, Susan (Philosophy, Kennesaw State University)
- Santas, Ari (Philosophy, Valdosta State University)
- Simmons, Jack (Philosophy, Armstrong Atlantic State University)
- Waskey, Jack (Philosophy, Dalton State College)
- Winchester, Jim (Philosophy, Georgia College and State University)
- Yount, Lisa (Philosophy, Savannah State University)

Guest: Sanjay Lal (Philosophy, Clayton State University)

**I) Approval of Minutes.** Minutes from our last meeting, on 11/12/16, were approved.

**II) Philosophy course prefixes and numbers.** In spring, 2017, the committee's ongoing effort to implement the BOR directive to have course prefixes and numbers aligned throughout the USG system had been completed except for Atlanta Metropolitan College and Kennesaw State University. At this meeting:

Ed Matussek of AMC reported that his institution had now completed the directive.

Susan Rouse of KSU explained that their PHIL 2200 Ways of Knowing course had generally the same content as a standard PHIL 2010 Introduction to Philosophy, but that it also had an international component to it. George Rainbolt (Georgia State University, and a committee member) had explained that other PHIL 2010 courses in the system had similar components and were nevertheless still properly categorized as PHIL 2010 courses. Dr. Rouse then explained that the chair of her department and some of the philosophers in it still believed that the prefix and number of their course ought not to be changed. Larry Peck then said that he would talk to Felita Williams at the USG Central Office regarding what to do next about this.

#### **III) Committee Documents**

Mark Banas and Ed Matusek had been working on the “Value of a Religious Studies Graduate” document, and they summarized their progress so far. Karin Fry will now take the draft to her Religious Studies colleagues at Georgia Southern for further work on it.

George Rainbolt, Walter Rikker, and Jack Waskey had been working on revising the “Value of a Philosophy Graduate” document, which Prof. Waskey summarized at the meeting. Some suggestions were made by other committee members at the meeting and he said he would revise it further.

**IV) eCore.** Last meeting contained a discussion with eCore administrators. This meeting featured one with faculty who teach the eCore philosophy course, PHIL 2010: guest Sanjay Lal and committee members Jack Simmons, Lisa Yount, and Jack Waskey, with other members joining in.

Committee members recalled that eCore has a mission connected to student access and success. A lot of USG institutions cannot offer all of the courses in eCore, even in their own non-eCore, online courses; thus, ecore allows their students access to a broader range of courses. eCore is also often more affordable than courses at individual USG institutions.

Jack Simmons said that a college or university can offer eCore courses but not affiliate with eCore. If you affiliate, you receive part of the money from the tuition of the courses; otherwise not. If you affiliate, you are not allowed to recommend to students that they not take eCore courses. At Armstrong Atlantic, where faculty approval is required for affiliation in eCore, the eCore philosophy course is offered but the university is not affiliated with eCore. Although the college president favored affiliation, the faculty have been so concerned about the perceived lack of rigor in eCore courses that they have voted affiliation down five years in a row. But all of this may be moot due to the merger with Georgia Southern, where they are affiliated with ecore.

Susan Rouse said that at Kennesaw State the president has the last word and the university has affiliated with eCore. She said the eCore courses now appear on the top of the list of KSU courses, and as a result students tend to sign up for ecore. The non-ecore online courses have suffered as a result.

Lisa Yount recalled that she had worked with another eCore philosopher, Christine James, on a restructuring of the course. She thought the two of them had maintained the intellectual rigor of the course, but that then an eCore course designer who was not a philosopher started replacing text readings with video clips.

Having now talked to eCore instructors, the committee resolved to go back to the eCore administration with the following:

The committee will urge the eCore administrators to have philosophers involved in all revisions to the PHIL 2010 course. The committee will also ask to be advised when eCore is developing a new philosophy or religion course or revising the existing one, as a BOR committee member might possibly participate in the revision process.

At many USG institutions, the individual institution's courses are scheduled earlier than the eCore ones. However, since the adjunct salary at individual institutions is often less per credit hour than that paid by eCore, adjunct instructors sometimes "bolt" to eCore after having signed up to teach other courses, causing headaches for department chairs. The BOR committee will look into whether anything can be done to change this.

Committee members thought that the assessment data collected by eCore might be useful to the committee and to the individual USG institutions. The committee will find out if there is a way that the data can be shared.