

2018–2019 BOARD OF OFFICERS

Association Officers

Cheshire Calhoun, *Chair*
Richard Bett, *Vice Chair*
Matthew O'Brien, *Treasurer*
Amy Ferrer, *Executive Director*

Central Division

Jennifer Nagel
President
Julia Driver
Vice President
Charles Mills
Past President
Elizabeth Purcell
Secretary-Treasurer
Mark van Roojen
Representative

Eastern Division

Anita L. Allen
President
Christia Mercer
Vice President
Nancy Fraser
Past President
Jeffrey Dunn
Secretary-Treasurer
Jennifer Whiting
Representative

Pacific Division

Richard Arneson
President
Penelope Maddy
Vice President
Kwong-Loi Shun
Past President
Rebecca Copenhaver
Secretary-Treasurer
Janet Stenwedel
Representative

Committee Chairs

David K. Chan
Academic Career Opportunities
Kenneth Taylor
Inclusiveness in the Profession
Peter J. Graham
International Cooperation
Sven Bernecker
Lectures, Publications, and Research
Jennifer Lackey
Status and Future of the Profession
David Concepción
Teaching of Philosophy

Members-at-Large

R. Lanier Anderson
James Dreier
Marina Oshana

May 22, 2019

Dr. Gerard Clancy, President (gerard-clancy@utulsa.edu)

Dr. Janet Levit, Provost (janet-levit@utulsa.edu)

Dr. Kalpana Misra, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences (kalpana-misra@utulsa.edu)

University of Tulsa

Tulsa, OK

Dear President Clancy, Provost Levit, and Dean Misra:

We write as the chair of the board of officers and the executive director of the American Philosophical Association, the largest scholarly society of philosophers in North America, representing more than 8,000 members. We urge you and all those involved in making vital decisions about the future of the University of Tulsa to reverse TU's proposal to eliminate the philosophy major, the Department of Philosophy and Religion, and the Honors Program in which all five TU philosophers teach as part of the recently announced "restructuring" plan.

We appreciate the difficult financial position that many colleges and universities are now facing. Many are choosing to reorient toward job-focused curricula in hopes of attracting more students. An education in philosophy serves—rather than detracts from—students' future employability, earning power, and success in professional graduate programs:

- According to the Payscale.com 2017–2018 college salary report, early and mid-career salaries of those with a BA in philosophy outrank those of profession-oriented majors such as information technology, nursing, health care administration, marketing, and business administration.
[http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-Degrees that Pay you Back-sort.html](http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/info-Degrees%20that%20Pay%20you%20Back-sort.html)
- Philosophy teaches skills that are highly valued by employers and that are transferrable as the kinds of jobs available to workers change over time: critical thinking, creative problem solving, written and oral communication, and logical analysis. Renowned investor William H. Miller recently invested \$75 million in Johns Hopkins University's philosophy program, saying, "I attribute much of my business success to the analytical training and habits of mind that were developed when I was a graduate student at Johns Hopkins."
<https://hub.jhu.edu/2018/01/16/bill-miller-hopkins-philosophy-gift/>
- Many students planning for a law career major in philosophy. Philosophy majors routinely outperform nearly all other majors on the LSAT. They also outperform other majors on the GRE and GMAT.

Philosophy also prepares students for a future in which they are likely to change careers several times and thus need skills that are highly transferrable, such as the critical and analytical thinking, problem-solving, and clear, logical writing skills that are central to a philosophy education. Philosophy also prepares students to be well-rounded citizens, not just employees. As President Clancy writes in the University of Tulsa Strategic Plan, “Higher education prepares a person for a meaningful life. ... We focus on guiding our students on how to think, how to solve complex problems and how to communicate with others at many levels.” TU’s mission states that the institution educates its students to “become literate in the sciences, humanities and arts; think critically and write and speak clearly; succeed in their professions and careers; behave ethically in all aspects of their lives; welcome the responsibility of citizenship, service and leadership in a changing world; [and] acquire the skills and appetite for lifelong learning.”

More than perhaps any other discipline, philosophy prepares students to be engaged, well-rounded citizens and leaders; a statement describing the role of philosophy in higher education is available on the APA’s website (http://www.apaonline.org/role_of_phil). It would be hard for the University of Tulsa to argue that it is living up to its mission if it were to eliminate its degree program in philosophy, an absolutely core discipline in the humanities and one that explicitly teaches students skills including critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and clear communication and argumentation.

The University of Tulsa philosophy program offers significant value to your campus community. Philosophy plays a pivotal role not only for majors but also for students across the institution. Courses such as Ethics and the Problems of Society, Philosophy of Art, Philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Law, Liberalism and Democracy, and Philosophy, and Politics, and Economics serve students across the University of Tulsa community pursuing a wide variety of degrees and career paths. Further, the deep cuts to the Honors Program, for which the Department of Philosophy and Religion provides half of the total credit hours taught, do a disservice to a great many of TU’s students.

We are particularly troubled by the way in which the “restructuring” plan at Tulsa University is being pursued. We understand that the Provost’s Program Review Committee did not include representation from the humanities and natural sciences. We understand that the PPRC was to take into account comprehensive internal academic reviews of departments, but that the proposal to cut the philosophy major was presented before the review of the Department of Philosophy and Religion was complete, meaning that the PPRC based its decision on incomplete and, in some cases, inaccurate information. And we understand that faculty and students were not given the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed “restructuring” before its announcement.

Finally, we point you to the words of two of TU’s own graduates, as shared with Professor Jacob Howland:

I could have gone anywhere to get a mechanical engineering degree, I could not have gone anywhere and be welcomed as an engineering student into all the programs the liberal arts has to offer.

I directly credit the Philosophy and Honors programs at the University of Tulsa with equipping me to get my current job and succeed in it.

We strongly urge you and all the leaders at the University of Tulsa to reconsider whether your students and your mission are well served by the decision to eliminate the philosophy major and the Department of Philosophy and Religion.

Most sincerely,



Cheshire Calhoun, Chair, Board of Officers



Amy Ferrer, Executive Director

cc: Dr. Matthew Drever, Chair, Department of Philosophy and Religion (matthew-drever@utulsa.edu)