

August 30, 2010

Dear Alumni,

Before too much time rolls by, I am taking advantage of the final weeks of the "academic" summer to write you again. Please bear with me if the letter at times reads more like a newsletter but I wanted to keep you apprised of all that has happened in the Department of Philosophy since my last letter.

FACULTY AND STAFF: COMINGS AND GOINGS

After many years of valuable service to the profession, the Department, and the University, Professor **Klaus Brinkmann** announced he would retire on August 31, 2010. At a dinner party in April with Klaus' wife, Sabine, the Department and former students feted Klaus for his countless and gracious contributions over the years.

During the past two years, the Department has had the good fortune to hire three new professors: **David Bronstein**, an ancient philosophy specialist with a Ph. D. from the University of Toronto (2008); **Paul Katsafanas**, a specialist in the history of nineteenth century thought, with a Ph.D. from Harvard (2008), who has been teaching at the University of New Mexico; and **David Liebesman**, a specialist in the philosophy of language with a Ph.D. from Cornell (2009). This coming fall, the Department will have a complement of seven assistant professors, all hired in the last six years, as it launches yet another search for an assistant professor this fall.

As far as administrative matters are concerned, the Department continues to be in the good hands of **Matt Roselli**. Last summer **Lesley Moreau** replaced **Kerri French** as Senior Program Coordinator. Kerri resigned for personal reasons and we wish her the best in her new position across the Atlantic in England.

The Department has hosted premier Visiting Findlay Professors: **Mitch Miller** (Vassar) in the Spring and **Roger Crisp** (Oxford) in the Fall of 2010.

COLLOQUIA, CONFERENCES, READING GROUPS

In addition to the *Center for the Philosophy and History of Science (CPHS)* and the *Institute for Philosophy and Religion (IPR)*, the Department supports the Benedict Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy, the Boston Area Colloquium for Ancient Philosophy (BACAP), the BU Ethics Reading Group, Faculty Colloquia, the Karbank Symposium in Environmental Philosophy, Neuphi (an initiative of the graduate students), the Graduate Student Presentation Series, and the Undergraduate Philosophy Association.

In the wake of the yearlong 2009 Darwin Celebration, the Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science is celebrating its jubilee. This past spring, the Director of the CPHS, Professor **Fred Tauber**, led a three-day conference on the theme "Philosophy of Science: Then and Now." Following two days of talks by such luminaries as **Hilary Putnam** (Harvard), **Alasdair MacIntyre** (Notre Dame), and **Sahotra Sarkar** (Texas), Professor **Robert Cohen** and Professor Tauber brought the conference to a close with reflections on

the past and the future of the philosophy of science. The Jubilee celebration continues in the fall as the CPHS's new director, Professor **Alisa Bokulich**, takes over the reigns from Professor Tauber.

The Boston University Ethics Reading Group, typically meeting midday on Fridays, continues to be a major success under the direction of Assistant Professor **Daniel Star**. This past year there were fourteen meetings with such scholars as **Laura Biron** (Cambridge), **Errol Lour**d (Princeton), **Stephen Darwall** (Yale), and **Frances Kamm** (Harvard).

With the continued, generous support of alumnus **Steven Karbank** ('79), the Department hosted The Karbank Symposium on Environmental Philosophy in 2009 and again in 2010 (the latter on the theme "Weighing Moral Demands for Environmental Protection, Ecosystem Management, and Poverty Eradication"). At the 2010 Symposium, **Carolyn Suchy-Dicey** received the **Abner Shimony** Prize for her paper "It Takes Two: Ethical Dualism in the Vegetative State," published in *Neuroethics* (May, 2009). The Department remains deeply grateful to Steve for his support of these symposia and other endeavors in the Department – not least the *Undergraduate Philosophy Association's* regular meetings and the very popular concerts of "Baroque Music, Scottish Music, and Cape Breton Fiddling" conducted by the group Vortex 3 in September, 2008 and again in December, 2009.

In January **Danielle Allen** (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton) gave the Benedict Lectures, a three-day Series of talks on *Why Plato Wrote, What Plato Wrote, What Plato Did*.

Under **Allen Speight's** direction, the IPR celebrated its Fortieth Anniversary in March with a Conference on "Philosophical & Intellectual Biography," as part of its 2009/2010 series of lectures on "Narrative Wisdom-Narrative Meaning." Speakers included **Desmond Clarke** (Cork) on Descartes, **Ray Monk** (Southampton) on Wittgenstein, **Steven Nadler** (Wisconsin) on Spinoza, as well as our colleagues: **Amelie Rorty** on Sartre, **Aaron Garrett** on Hume, and **Manfred Kuehn** on Fichte.

In March the Department joined the Law School to host "Rights, Equality, and Justice: A Conference Inspired by the Moral and Legal Theory of David Lyons," including such speakers as **A. John Simmons** (Virginia), **Gerald Postema** (UNC), **Jules Coleman** (Yale), **Richard Miller**, **Nicholas Sturgeon**, **Richard Boyd** (all Cornell), **David Copp** (UCal Davis), **David Brink** (UCal San Diego), and the Department's own **Candice Delmas**, **Jim Fleming** (Law), **Aaron Garrett**, **David Lyons**, **Kenneth Simons** (Law), and **Susanne Sreedhar**.

Also in March, the Department hosted the Metaphysical Society of America's 61st Annual Meeting on the topic "Being and Negation," with keynote speaker and former member of the Department **Lawrence Cahoon**e (Holy Cross).

COMMENCEMENTS

At our commencements during the past two years, 154 students received Philosophy diplomas and the following graduates were honored with awards:

The Robert S. Cohen Award in Interdisciplinary Studies:

Matt Bokhari, **Christine Heyboer** (2009), **Ryan Stelzer** (2010)

The John N. Findlay Award: **Ted Stinson** (2009), **Aaron DeMay** (2010)
The Peter A. Bertocci Award for Philosophical Excellence: **Kimberly Winnubst, Lauren Pearl** (2009), **Caitlin Malone, Rebecca Gordon** (2010)
The Peter A. Bertocci Award for Humanitarian Service: **Haley Ott, Ashish Premkumar** (2009), **Alex Taubes, Jacqueline Lapsley** (2010)
The Matchette Prize for Excellence in Philosophy: **Peter Moore** (2009), **Casey Berger** (2010)
The College Prize for Excellence in Philosophy: **Peter Moore** (2009), **Ethan Rubin** (2010)
The Peter M. Nelson Memorial Award for Distinguished Work by a Junior: **Ethan Rubin** (2009), **James Quilty-Dunn, Jenna Kreyche** (2010)

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Well over 5,500 students have enrolled in classes offered by members of the department during the past two years. With an average of 175 majors and 42 minors during that time, our undergraduate program continues to thrive. Undergraduates meet regularly in the framework of the *Undergraduate Philosophy Association* and publish *Arche*, a blindly reviewed, undergraduate journal (once again, with the generous support of **Steven Karbank**). Our graduate program includes some sixty plus graduate students and we have a remarkable placement record over the past decade: 95% of our Ph.D.'s have found employment in the profession. During the past academic year, **Karolina Lewestam** and **Irina Meketa** organized fourteen talks as part of the Graduate Student Speaker series, **Maren Behrens** and **Ian Blaustein** served as this past year's co-presidents of the Graduate Student Association, and **Carolyn Suchy-Dicey** and **Sean Lorenz** organized a series of successful meetings of *Neuphi*, the monthly workshop of scientists and philosophers on conceptual issues in the philosophy of neuroscience (<http://www.neuphi.com>). In the past two years, 11 graduate students received the Ph.D. I list their names followed by the titles of their dissertations to give you an idea of the range of what students manage to accomplish in our program:

Martin Black, Plato's Depiction of the Socratic Turn in the *Phaedo*,
Parmenides, and *Symposium*

Iskra Fileva, Behind Action

Lauren Freeman, Ethical Dimensions in Martin Heidegger's Early Thinking

Luciana Garbayo, Empathy Revisited: Game Theory, Evolution,
 Dialogue and Morality

Keren Gorodeisky, The Romantic Structure of Kant's Conception of the
 Judgment of Beauty

Gal Kober, Biology Without Species: A Solution to the Species Problem

Mahon O'Brien, Authenticity: From Resoluteness to Releasement

Anthony Reeves, Adjudication, Interpretation, and Morality:
 Outline for a Conception of Judicial Responsibility

Orla Richardson, Success and Reliability:
 Methodological Issues in Scientific Inquiry

Christopher Surprenant, Kantian Virtue and Civil Society

Alessandro Torza, Models for Counterparts:

A Revisionary Study of the Ontology and Semantics of Modal Logic

FACULTY AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The members of the faculty continued to receive public acclaim through a significant number of publications and invited talks. What follows is a partial list of the awards and recognition received by members of the faculty.

In July, 2009 **Tian Yu Cao** gave the opening keynote addresses at the First International Symposium on Structural Realism and the Philosophy of Quantum Physics (Wuhan, China) and at the Third International Symposium on Culture and Social Transformations in China (Hangzhou, China).

During the past two years **Juliet Floyd** was an Invited Visiting Professor at the Department of Philosophy at the Université de Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne and a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study, Lichtenberg-Kolleg, Göttingen.

Charles Griswold, whose work *Forgiveness* (Cambridge, 2008) continues to be the centerpiece of conferences across the globe, received a prestigious American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Fellowship.

A special issue of *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* was dedicated to the work of **Jaakko Hintikka**.

During the past school year, **Aaron Garrett** gave the keynote address on the Thomas Reid Tricentenary at Princeton; **Walter Hopp** spoke to the California Phenomenology Circle (UC Irvine), the Philosophical Psychology Lab (Harvard), and at the Workshop in Phenomenological Philosophy (Seattle); **David Roochnik** spoke on Aristotle's *Politics*, Book V to the Society of Ancient Philosophy; **Amelie Rorty** gave the Irving Thalberg Lecture at the University of Illinois-Chicago; and, at the Pacific Division of the APA, **Daniel Star** gave an invited response to a critic of a paper recently published in *Ethics*.

Major publications by faculty members during this period include the following: **Alisa Bokulich** co-edited *Philosophy of Quantum Information and Entanglement* (Cambridge); **Manfred Kuehn** co-edited the multi-volume *Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century German Philosophers* (Continuum); **Allen Speight** published *The Philosophy of Hegel* (Acumen), and **Fred Tauber** published two well-received books: *Science and the Quest for Meaning* (Baylor) and *Freud, the Reluctant Philosopher* (Princeton).

I encourage you to make full use of our website (again: www.bu.edu/philo) to keep abreast of the Department's – *your* Department's – activities and direction. Please do not hesitate to contact us (me or any of my colleagues) in the Department of Philosophy. Because philosophical questions are stubborn and stubbornly interesting, majoring in philosophy is never merely a stepping-stone to the next thing. We would be delighted to hear how you're doing and, indeed, how you've managed through the years to grapple with philosophy's haunting questions.

With best wishes,



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