General Observations

Sonoma State

Among the distinctive features shared most with me about the Sonoma State campus is its small size and the close-knit relationships this offers for faculty and students. Indeed, during my visit, it felt more like the campus of a small liberal arts colleges than a member of a 23 campus consortium of regional state universities. Among the strengths identified with Sonoma State's location is their relative proximity to the academic and professional hub of the greater Bay Area (a major population center), and the opportunities this affords to their students. That significant numbers of their graduates choose to remain in the region to pursue their professional and work lives fosters opportunities to build on alumni success to enrich the educational experience of their current majors. These very strengths, however, also pose significant challenges including the relatively high cost of living for students and faculty, the high rate of external employment and familial obligations of its students, and the relative difficulty of distinguishing itself from other campuses to attract prospective students and faculty.

It should be noted that Sonoma State's proximity to the Bay Area is not singularly a strength. Though only 50 miles from San Francisco, travelling that distance routinely can be daunting and exhaustive, both negatively affecting the successful recruitment of part-time instructional faculty. Also, this proximity to the Bay Area, with no fewer than 3 other major CSU campuses (SFSU, East Bay, SJSU), two major UC campuses (UCSF, Berkeley), and two internationally recognized elite private universities (SFU, Stanford), the challenge of proximity is more one of being distinctive. As a small CSU campus (fewer than 10,000 students), Sonoma State's challenge generally, and the Philosophy Department's challenge in particular, is being distinctive – constructing an identity which attracts quality students and faculty, in the face of multiples of alternative options.

One important attribute of both the campus and the Philosophy Department is their considerable success in attracting students who are practically oriented and committed, in varying degrees, to progressive causes and applications of their education to solving real world problems. Sonoma State's reputation in the CSU system and more broadly is noteworthy in this regard, especially in the areas of environmental and energy conservation and social justice interests. This reputation and its correspondence with the mission of the campus is a promising source of inspiration and guidance for future curricular or programmatic revision in the Philosophy Department.

Another distinctive feature of CSU Sonoma is the student population it serves, which is largely urban, deeply commitment to community and to remaining in it, and draws from a variety of regional community colleges. Each of these features, however, can be both a challenge and a source of strength. The difficulty is ensuring more of the latter than the former. It seems, by all testament, that the current community college-university relationship is strong and that the transfer students are general of high quality and come increasingly prepared for success. There is reason to be optimistic also about the preparation of first year students from regional high schools. My understanding is that the campus has made significant strides in improving relationships with high schools in the area in order to help support students who seek to pursue a university education by enrolling at Sonoma State.

There have been a series of recent legislative changes which present challenges and promise to each CSU campus, including Sonoma State. These include the passage and implementation of SB1440 and AB386. Both are directives to CSUs to adjust their programs to facilitate recruitment, retention, and timely completion of degrees, the former with regard to transfer students who begin their degree programs at community college and seek to complete them within 4 semesters of transferring to a CSU with a matching degree program, the latter to facilitate student access to required courses (GE, GR and degree) by providing all CSU matriculated students access to all online courses available at any CSU. Several challenges and opportunities result. Among the challenges, regarding SB1440, is ensuring that transfer students can indeed complete their degree requirements in 4 semesters. Among the challenges, regarding AB386, is to find the best way to capitalize on the online curriculum offered at other campuses to supplement that available locally without losing enrolment in local programs and courses as students find suitable alternatives for GE/GR/degree in the online curriculum offered by other campuses.

Trends in Philosophy Nationally

As a discipline and program of study, Philosophy has much to offer students, whether they pursue it as their degree choice or whether they have other degree plans. With the national focus on increasing support for STEM disciplines to produce more graduates, more scholarship, and eventually to sustain and grow the nation's creative and innovative economy, the challenge for ancient disciplines like Philosophy is to demonstrate their relevance and value to today's students, employers, taxpayers, and investors.

Nationally, Philosophy programs have been under pressure, faced with elimination or severe curricular reductions, or demoted from major to minor programs, and have had instructionally faculty cut, reduced, laid off, or otherwise made temporary. This is especially true for smaller institutions, rural or regionally underserved institutions,

regionally over-served communities, and smaller departments/programs regardless of regional features. In this regard, Philosophy programs are not alone, but have Physics, Religious Studies, Humanities, Women's or Gender Studies, and other programs for company.

Those Philosophy programs which have been able to resist these pressures or avoid them entirely tend to be larger, more dynamic, or fully integrated with the university's broader mission. They have been able to balance the competing pressures of retaining their core disciplinary sub-fields, balance their disciplinary with their service commitments, enhance their local or regional profile, foster connections to STEM or other "growth" programs, and embrace the kind of technological advancements that improve their curriculum's accessibility while retaining educational/programmatic quality.

Sometimes, this has come in the form of partnerships with professional and STEM programs – providing their ethics or logic/set theory requirements, enriching their presence in GE/GR, and redesigning their curriculum to support online or hybrid pathways through requirements. At other times, and more generally, it has meant redesigning the curriculum to emphasize the practical elements of the discipline, including more robust offerings in applied and practical ethics, applied and practical epistemology, and applied and practical ontology. This latter strategy typically involves pursuing opportunities specific to the institution they find themselves in, but generally involves working closely with other professional and STEM programs as partners, and to draw on regional opportunities to supplement more specific workforce skills in high regional demand with those skills traditionally under Philosophy's purview – critical thinking and practical reasoning, ethical analysis, and analytic writing and speaking skills.

A yet additional approach has to been to develop a particular disciplinary focus, intentionally making-over the program along a unique dimension. An example might be SUNY Buffalo's nearly singular focus on Applied Ontology, or University of Oregon's focus on Phenomenology and Feminism, or Arizona State University's fully online degree option. However, this sort of approach seems only successful for larger programs which also have at least an MA, preferably, a PhD program. For regional BA programs, this is not a particularly promising approach. Their principal mission is to provide broad basic education in Philosophy, to support the university's undergraduate education mission, and to prepare graduates either for an opportunity to pursue further study at the graduate or professional degree level, or for a rewarding work/career life with a BA in a rewarding and fulfilling discipline.

The expectations for an undergraduate degree program in Philosophy, then, include:

1. Broad preparation in the core disciplines of philosophy – logic, metaphysics, epistemology, value theory (ethics, aesthetics).
2. Enrichment of skills in
   a. critical, creative and evaluative thinking/reasoning,
   b. ethical and aesthetic judgment and reasoning,
   c. analytic, exegetical, and argumentative writing and speaking.
3. Attention to post-graduate opportunity for advancement to graduate or related professional study or placement in a career track with advancement opportunity.
4. Support the needs and interests of university partners in discipline specific ways.
5. Support the needs and interests of regional partners and community in discipline specific ways.

On each of these points, the Philosophy Program at Sonoma State has much to commend it as well as some as yet unrealized opportunity. This will hopefully come clear through the remainder of the report.

Specific Elements of Review and Recommendations

I & II/ Department's Curricular Mission and Curriculum

Is it philosophically coherent?

> Yes, though as yet incompletely developed.

Is it appropriate for a comprehensive undergraduate institution that aspires to provide a strong liberal arts education for all undergraduates and to provide selected graduate programs in response to the professional development needs of the region?

> Yes, though opportunities to enmesh and integrate the program into the broader university mission are as yet under-developed.

Does it uphold the SSU Mission Statement and Diversity Vision Statement in its dedication to perspectives of diversity?

> Yes, though opportunities exist to do so more completely and intestinally.

The curriculum itself:

Is it current?

Yes, especially with the newly developed concentration in Applied Ethics and Pre-Law, but also generally. The curriculum has a rich diversity of courses in applied philosophy, is current, and responsive to developing trends in related disciplines, and campus commitments and initiatives.

Does it have clearly stated goals that are consistent with the department's mission?

Yes, though there are opportunities to define these more clearly and commit to unique and interesting developments in the discipline.

Is it well focused?

For the most part, though this seems more accidental than intention. Opportunities for refinement exist.

Does it reflect an appreciation of the richness of differences among us?

Yes, insofar as philosophy, as a discipline, can do. Historically, this discipline suffers from lack of diversity, both among its practitioners and in its expected curriculum. But, as this program is considerably out of the norm and tradition for undergrad philosophy programs, there is a solid foundation for increasing its diversity and inclusiveness, especially among new development in the discipline.

What are its greatest strengths?

Small cadre of faculty deeply committed to the success of their students, the quality of their curriculum, and to representing the discipline in its breadth and potential. Excellent and dedicated staff person who is skilled, resourceful, and motivated. Solid experienced scholar-instructors among the lecturer faculty, a small dedicated core of majors passionate about the program and about philosophy. As a group, they have responded to fiscal and institutional challenges creatively and positively, doing excellent work with minimal resources, and less complaint. Department's positive orientation to an expanded and integrated role on the campus as a whole, and with the community.

Its weaknesses?

Small cadre of faculty, stretched to meet both their programmatic and GE commitments, undertaking too many "independent study" courses as a piecemeal solutions to perceived gaps in the curriculum. Incomplete transformation of the major program into a fully Applied Philosophy program – gaps in the curriculum, especially in methodology (logic), and in more overt sequencing of courses to provide an effectively integrated and scaffolded applied

curriculum in which the disciplinary core elements are embedded and distributed across the curriculum (metaphysics, epistemology).

Is the faculty appropriately prepared to deliver it?

Yes, but they are stretched.

Review and Recommendations: Curricular Mission and Curriculum

To a person, everyone I spoke with about the philosophy program – majors, non-majors, faculty, administration, and colleagues on other campuses – confirm that Sonoma State has a high quality Philosophy program whose tenure track and lecturer faculty, and staff, do an outstanding job with limited resources.

While all agree that the recent programmatic shifts were motivated by significant resources retrenchment and loss of faculty, the outcome has been quite a bit more than expected. Too often, faculty in under-resource departments like Philosophy departments around the country, the response to reductions in resources or losses of faculty is simply to get smaller, to do with less, and to fail to be surprised when doing with less results in less overall – lower graduation rates, drop-offs in majors, and the feeling of being beleaguered and under-appreciated. I was pleasantly surprised to find the opposite is the case with Sonoma State's Philosophy Department. The programmatic revision in the face of reduces resources and faculty loss was taken as an opportunity to redesign the program substantially. While some faculty and students note that there are some gaps in the program which resulted – namely in disciplinary history and methods (logic) – the program has a focus and purpose.

The creation of a new concentration in Applied Ethics and Pre-Law is testament to their willingness to create a unified, whole, and relevant program option which appeals not just to more students motivated toward careers in law and public service, but has the potential to partner well with other similarly oriented programs (some of which are impacted, i.e., COMS, CRJ, etc.). If properly administratively supported, this programmatic addition can grow productively, not merely for the sake of growing, but growing in a way which enriches opportunities for students to find post-graduate success, whether in professional degree programs such as law, or in careers and employment in public service and non-profit sectors.

Ideally, building on the success of this program and key faculty interest and commitment, the department might also consider a more intentional programmatic expansion in the very promising area of technology and sciences with a concentration designed to focus student educational experience on the relevant philosophical dimensions of technology and science. A low unit concentration – designed to pair well with higher-unit STEM majors would serve both well. The feasibility of a programmatic expansion in this direction would rest on some intentional changes to the curriculum, and perhaps a temporary or tenure track hire to complement the existing expertise of the faculty. Most importantly, in the area of logic.

As noted above in my review of the national state of the discipline, standard elements of a philosophy degree include logic. Indeed, logic is the methodological basis of the discipline. While the program at Sonoma State has a logic course, it is not part of the overall requirements of the major. This is curious. Students note it as a whole. Faculty acknowledge it is a weakness on their part. Their resources to sustainably offer it as a requirement in the major, are inadequate. It seems logic was a casualty of the retrenchment phase in the department's recent history. However, this means this area of the program is ripe for reinvestment and reconsideration. As part of a programmatic revision into a fully Applied Philosophy Program, perhaps with the additional complement of a concentration in technology/science, a robust logic course, or sequence (including inductive logic, experimental methods in philosophy, etc.), would enrich the program and educational opportunities for majors and students in other related programs.

Indeed, in addition to the promise of developing a concentration in Philosophy and Technology to partner with the new concentration in Applied Ethics and Pre-Law, the department should seriously entertain converting their general BA program into a program in Applied and Practical Philosophy. They are already well on their way to doing so. I must admit, one of my challenges as an external reviewer of a program like theirs was to get my own head around what kind of program they have. When viewed against the typical or standard philosophy undergraduate program, theirs in non-standard, but in a way which highlights what is missing: dedicated courses or sequences in Metaphysics, in Epistemology, in the History of Philosophy, and in Logic. These are traditionally taken together to be the disciplinary core of any course of study in philosophy. Programs which lack one or more of these are taken to be lacking, deficient, and under-serving their majors. One of my first questions to the faculty was "why are you not offering these courses?" they were understandably defensive, and gave answers which touched on their having suffered significant budget cuts and faculty losses. But, they finally brought themselves around to real heart of the matter – they do offer these central disciplinary elements of philosophy, but embedded within the other courses in the curriculum. This is a significant departure from the norm. While it might

have been motivated by budgetary realities, I strongly suggest the faculty more fully embrace this direction and make their program unique among the rest.

One of the interesting new developments in Philosophy internationally, is to make it more relevant by embracing its traditional foundation in critical self and social reflection by returning to its experimental roots. From Aristotle to Heidegger to Dennett, Churchland, and an increasing number of impressive up and coming philosophers who are working at the intersections of philosophy with other knowledge-generating disciplines, philosophy is becoming relevant in more ways than merely serving as an opportunity for thoughtful engagement with the world. Sonoma State's Philosophy Department has existing faculty who are already doing much of this in their series of "Philosophy of..." courses, in their embedding of the disciplinary core into a variety of courses, and in their development of a very practically oriented concentration. To complete the transition would not take much. But it would take a concerted intentional effort and some administrative commitment of resources to be more than just a rebranding or repackaging. Adding faculty whose expertise is logic (deductive and inductive, practical reasoning with risk and uncertainty), with interests in experimental methods, and some combination of philosophy of technology or mind or social ontology (or in Bioethics, Environmental Philosophy, or Public Policy, to support the ethics concentration and Center), then developing the curriculum to make the most of this expertise, would be a promising direction to the benefit of the entire campus. It would also offer students who develop a love of philosophy, but are averse to things legal and corporate, a viable and practical alternative.

Embracing such an approach, and advertising the program effectively, will have the added benefit of attracting majors (frosh and transfers) who come to Sonoma for this express purpose. The program will stand-out against the others in the CSU and in the Bay Area. This would go some lengths toward easing both the faculty's and the student's concerns that they are leaving something out or are missing something important in their undergraduate experience. Indeed, the majors already seem to be oriented in a very practical direction. In conversation with current majors, even their descriptions of the courses they thought they were missing were put in very practical terms. For example, several expressed concern that they are lacking preparation in History of Philosophy. But even how they explained what they wanted in such a course is very practically focused – what are the main historically important ideas, how did they relate to other ideas of the time, what made some ideas successful and others not, how does philosophy relate to the human experience as humanity and societies change and transform? These are very practical issues – again, non-traditional. Most History of Philosophy courses focus on the more esoteric and theoretical. Majors speak to a desire for a history of their discipline that enriches their already existing interested in the world and how to make it better. The programmatic foundations are there, it is already

attracting very practically oriented students. These are under-utilized, perhaps because under-recognized, resources on which the department and the university can build.

Recommendation 1: Complete the current transformation of the Philosophy Program.

    A. Further minor redesign of the program into a program in Applied and Practical Philosophy (i.e., BA in Applied Philosophy).

    B. Add a concentration in Philosophy of Technology and Sciences to complement the existing new concentration in Applied Ethics and Pre-Law, to capitalize on existing faculty strengths and enrich the potential for partnership with STEM, perhaps including a pathway through the GE for STEM majors with a robust curricular offering for philosophy majors and related disciplines.

    C. Build out the existing curriculum with an appropriate course or sequence of courses in methods (logic, see above) required for all majors.

    D. Hire faculty appropriate to support this intentional programmatic redesign and curricular addition (see suggestions below under faculty).

III/ Programmatic Effectiveness

How effective does the department seem to be in preparing its students (both majors and GE students) as it wishes?

> Well, within current resource and curricular constraints. However, as noted in their self-study, and confirmed in discussion with faculty and students, there is concern that students are missing important basic elements of a traditional philosophy program. The department has made major strides is increasing its number of majors, and the diversity of those majors. This is no small feat for a discipline which remains 75-80% white and male despite concerted efforts in the profession to diversity. They have also made significant strides and should be commended for developing a curriculum and streamlines program which complements existing related programs across the campus and which expands the educational opportunities for all students.

Does the department have an assessment strategy adequate to reveal what is working very well and what is not?

> It has the beginnings of one, but seems too ambitious to be carried out effectively or to draw adequate data from in order to guide program and curricular revision.

Is there evidence that the department has used assessment findings to guide program change?

In part, but more could be done with a streamlined set of program learning outcomes, the development of a curriculum map, more effective dissemination of the learning outcomes to students, and linking specific course learning outcomes to program learning outcomes (which is facilitated by creating a curriculum map).

Review and Recommendations: Program Effectiveness and Assessment

As evidenced in the self-study and supporting material, the Philosophy Department has made significant strides in developing a robust program assessment regime. It is a very fine start and has provided them with useful information about program quality. In its current form, however, there are several limitations, which have impeded their progress in effective program assessment and improvement.

From the self-study, it is clear that the faculty are committed to providing their majors and GE students with a quality and rich curriculum. However, they have identified no fewer than six (6) program learning outcomes, several of which are multipart learning outcomes. In addition, the concentration in Applied Ethics and Pre-Law has these same six with an additional three (3) multipart learning outcomes. For a small department, it seems an onerous task to assess six to nine learning outcomes over two programs each year, or to develop an assessment strategy which allows them to evaluate the program's attainment of each over a reasonable period. Even with a robust embedded assessment design, assessing student learning across this many learning outcomes is onerous. As a result, the data is less specific than would be helpful to close the loop and provide insight into how to revise and refine the curriculum or offerings. Given the challenges noted in the self-study regarding the faculty's ability to offer the required courses in a consistent and systematic way from one semester to the next, the data gathered from annual program assessment seems unlikely to provide the desired feedback.

Further, the department's rationale for these learning outcomes seems somewhat disconnected from their program mission and justification for their program redesign. They claim correctly that the redesign of their general program was intended to build on faculty strengths and interests and that this shifted them away from offering a more traditional philosophy curriculum. Yet the rationale for the six core learning begins by noting that the first five are common to traditional philosophy programs. To adopt rather traditional learning outcomes for a rather untraditional program seems counter-productive and at cross purposes. More effective would be to identify the four or five core elements of a more applied and interdisciplinary program in philosophy, de-emphasize the traditional metaphysics-epistemology-history triad, certainly to de-

emphasize the logic and methodology-related outcomes. For a department which does not require its logic course for all their majors, it seems unusual to have two program learning outcomes (4, 6).

Finally, the department expresses concern in its self-study for the loss of administrative support which has hampered their efforts at implementing their assessment program. While administrative support is crucial to the effective operation of any department, the assessment program is properly the domain of the faculty. The legitimate concerns about diminished administrative staffing, simultaneous with rapid growth in the number of majors should not be expressed in terms of its effect on the department's ability to carry out its program assessment strategy. However, the appearance of their connection seems more likely a result of the department faculty, especially the chair, having to assume more administrative functions to compensate for the inadequate level of staffing. Even the most dedicated and motivated and competent administrative staff, which theirs seems entirely to be, cannot compensate for insufficient time and resources. The faculty, already stretched thin, and compensating for perceived gaps in the curriculum by offering independent study courses, are simply unable to carry out the ambitious and commendable assessment plan they have created.

Recommendation 2: Continue the expand and experiment with embedded assessment and programmatic redesign, including more intentional "closing the loop" using program and course assessment to guide program design, requirements, and curricular offerings.

A. Continue to develop their already excellent assessment model focused on the proseminar and senior seminar course combination. This bookending of courses and the assessment this makes possible, can provide valuable insight into the skills and capacities development their program offers to majors.

B. **Reduce and refine the number and complexity of the Program Learning Objectives** from 6 (or and 9) to a number and complexity which is both more manageable to assess on an annual program assessment schedule and which accurately captures the strengths of your unique program. ,

C. For each Program Learning Objective, create a **competency rubric which will allow assessment of the degree of students' attainment of the specific learning outcome**. Along with a competency rubric, identify **a baseline expectation rate for "capstone" competency**. This would provide faculty with much more useful and finer grained data with each annual program assessment.

D. Build into the assessment toolkit a single instrument by which faculty can assess each learning outcome in any class in which it is part of the regular course

assessment plan, something like **a signature assignment which encompasses the PLOs** from which faculty can draw a random sample from any course in the curriculum. This can be administered in the proseminar to establish a baseline of student ability, and again in the senior seminar, to determine student improvement in the intervening course of study. This would streamline the assessment burden as well as provide reliable comparative data along an intervention model – where the curricular offering between the two seminars counts as the intervention. This would provide year on year comparisons as well as comparisons between courses and levels in the programs, for any one or more of the PLOs.

E. **Examine the program curriculum more systematically by generating a curriculum map using the existing PLOs along with expected competencies (presumes a competencies rubric)**. The faculty have developed an informative matrix which identifies the current curriculum with the identified PLOs. This an excellent start and more than most philosophy departments have produced. However, this could shed some more effective and constructive light on the program as a whole and in its particular to combine this matrix with a program competencies rubric to develop a more robust curriculum map. This will allow the faculty to clarify for themselves where students should be learning and developing which of the PLOs and to what level of competency. Too often we assume students will learn X or develop Y capacity in course A or B, but absent an adequate and robust curriculum map, we are often blind to where gaps in the curriculum truly arise and where the curriculum could be refined to more effectively close those gaps. This would also have the added benefit of assisting the faculty to identify, and possible reduce and refine, the PLOs to better capture their unique curriculum and program mission.

IV/ Department's Resource Use

Are existing program resources being used to the greatest effect?

Yes.

However, the department's resources are insufficient to meet both the existing mission and the expanded role the department seeks and is encouraged by administration to play in university curriculum and student success.

The department's curricular innovation in the concentration in Applied Ethics and Pre-Law, as well as the development of the Center for Ethics, Law, and Society, require additional investment of university resources to support adequate growth and sustainability.

Resources should be understood in terms of personnel, OE and various fiscal resources, material resources (including equipment, classroom spaces, and office facilities), and university resources (library, student services, professional development).

Review and Recommendations: Resources

General Resources

By all accounts, departments at Sonoma State generally do not manage their own budgets, though the Dean confirmed a recent shift to allow department's to manage their own OE budgets. While institutions vary in how they budget, there appears to be a disconnect between the message at the upper administration and practices on the ground at the level of the dean and department chair. In conversation, the Provost expressed the desire that departments not focus on or concern themselves with meeting FTES targets, indicating they should rather focus on developing and offering the best curriculum and schedule they can and let the Deans worry ab out FTES targets, as these are college-based, not departmental. However, in both conversation and professional experience, whenever a college (or any unit) has a target, its subsidiary units will also find themselves with the expectation to meet a share of that target. This disconnect is no doubt suboptimal for all parties, as they seem to be talking and acting at cross-purposes.

R*ecommendation 3: Clarify and institutionalize the relation of the department to the university's and college's FTES targets*, and provide adequate curricular resources to meet the dual purposes of serving the major and serving the GE.

As a medium-sized department in the college, the Philosophy Department is expected to plan and schedule to serve sufficient students to meet its share of the college's FTES target. Until recently, by acknowledgement of both the Dean and the faculty, this largest portion of the department's FTES was dedicated to providing sufficient scheduling to meet the campus' Critical thinking (GE A3) obligations. Recent modifications to their curriculum, along with relinquishing sole responsibility for delivering the campus' A3 curriculum has eased the burden on the department. The Dean is to be commended for not taking the usual subsequent step of reducing the department's FTES allocation proportionally, but has allowed and supported the department's curricular revision to move other courses into other areas of the GE in support of the development of the concentration in Applied Ethics and Pre-Law, the support of the balance of the program's smaller upper division and major specific curriculum, and to the benefit of students in other majors who have meaningful and relevant ethics and social justice courses with which to satisfy their GE requirements.

Overall, however, since the department does not manage its own curricular budget to determine how it meets its FTES obligations to the college and university, there is little incentive toward improving curricular efficiencies, nor is there the ability for the department to capture or retain any budgetary savings from the efficiencies they have

developed. This lack of fiscal responsibility constrains the department in its own endeavors to support what it values and to direct resources toward its mission or to experiment with how better and more effectively to achieve that mission. Given this situation, the department is dependent upon the college and university to support its efforts by competing in the load and cacophonous refrain for more resources. Given this institutional constraint, however, the department manages it resources well. Indeed, where there are inadequacies – in instructional staffing or in curricular offerings from semester to semester – the department faculty go beyond what is required to ensure their students have what they need to succeed.

Recommendation 4: Experiment with departmental responsibility for curricular budget. By affording the department flexibility and some discretion in how the department meets its FTES target it could move toward internally supporting its initiative and experiments in meeting its mission. This will allow the department to effectively tax themselves to support programmatic priorities by capitalizing on their curricular strengths and efficiencies to support initiatives or other currently under-funded commitments such as support for the ethics center.

Faculty Recruitment and Leadership

The Philosophy faculty (both tenure track and lecturers) have expressed concern regarding the loss of tenure line positions as senior faculty have retired and as promising junior faculty have been hired away, all without replacement. This has led over the recent years to the need to reduce and streamline curricular offerings as instructional capacity dropped. Indeed, students (majors and non-major interested students) expressed a similar concern, and worried that it might be detrimentally affecting their preparation and the adequacy of the program as a whole. While these concerns are also addressed above in recommendations regarding the curriculum and program, these concerns are only unwisely ignored. Students' experience of their educational is directly connected with their experience of the university's commitment of recourses to ensure that education is the highest possible quality. All the students with whom I met had expressed the same sentiment – the department is a home, with sincere and committed faculty, but who are (to their eyes) overworked and stretched, trying to ensure their student have the best opportunity to pursue a productive and meaningful future, whether in a career, in graduate study, or in a professional program.

Of course, as is true in every program/department, there is a desire for more tenure track faculty. They are the foundation of the program – committed to the long term sustainability and excellence of the program, vested in the curriculum, are committed to or invested in a significant scholarship/research plan, and are available for broader service work, such as advising, assessment, curriculum development, and program

planning, among other things. However, as their self-study notes, and as my visit with faculty and administrators noted, it is possible to find non-tenure track faculty who are as committed to the program and as invested in quality teaching and scholarship, as many tenure-track faculty. The lecture faculty with whom I met are truly impressive; one for the wealth of experience and solid scholarly pursuits they bring to the classroom setting, the other for their enthusiasm and fresh perspective and their promise of developing into a skilled scholar and instructor. I have heard from several sources on campus that recruitment of temporary faculty is not difficult in itself for the proximity to the Bay Area, retaining excellent instructor-scholars is among the most pressing challenges for the campus as a whole, not surprisingly also for Philosophy.

The Philosophy faculty are not unaware of the concerns of administration which commitment to new tenure-track lines entails. However, being willing to experiment to find alternative solutions, other than hold to a singular focus on more tenure-track faculty, can be taken as indicative of their concern for the vitality of the entire campus not merely for their own program. It would serve everyone well – administrators, who have to make prudent decisions for the long term vitality of the entire curriculum, and the Philosophy faculty, in who's care the vitality of the Philosophy program and everything it touches is entrusted. This can also make more creative use of the appeal of the campus to junior scholars who might only be able to stay for a year or two, but who in that time could bring special talent, enthusiasm, and breadth to the program. This means of experimental and dynamic programmatic enrichment has been pursued successfully by more than a few campuses, including SFSU, which now has annual visiting Assistant Professor positions which bring in exciting young scholars for a year or two to enrich their degree offerings before moving on to more permanent positions elsewhere – with their experience at SFSU to build upon. The opportunity for students to meet budding scholars from around the country, to experience something not regularly in the curriculum, and to look forward to the next year and what diversity it might bring, is enriching in several ways: the core curriculum is sustained in the ordinary operations and interests of the permanent faculty, the curriculum features new and interesting courses, seminars, and lectures from young vibrant scholars who bring enthusiasm and diversity to the curriculum, the students see first-hand the potential of graduate study, and begin to build networks with scholars not much their seniors.

Finally, in the process of losing, but not replacing departing faculty, the department's remaining tenure track faculty are torn between their passion and commitment to providing their majors with an excellent and rich curriculum each semester, and undertaking the necessary roles and functions of administering a growing program with inadequate resources. This is not uncommon, and affects more than just the Philosophy Department, but the college and university as a whole. The department would benefit from investment in and commitment to developing the leadership capacity of its faculty.

Indeed, this should be part of the larger discussion of leadership and professional development in the College and campus. The development and implementation of the new Ethics Center shows promising directions in professional leadership on the part of the department for the university as a whole. It would benefit from enriching the administrative leadership skills of the director, as well as of the faculty generally. Of course, this requires an investment of resources, not least in support for developing grant funding, donor relations, and community professional and corporate partnerships. Planning for the eventual longer term hiring of tenure-track faculty should take place openly and robustly with an eye toward recruiting new faculty and building the leadership capacities of existing junior faculty.

Recommendation 5: Recruitment of Temporary and Tenure Track Faculty.

A. **In the near term (coming 0-3 years) consider offering one-year full-time temporary faculty positions in Philosophy using the collective Bargaining Agreement Article 12.** This would encourage qualified individuals to apply for the position, understanding that it is not permanent, but that it is full-time and possibly renewable for one or two years. While this is not ideal, it is not uncommon in Philosophy as a discipline. Every year there are advertisements for sabbatical replacement positions, visiting faculty positions, leave- replacement positions, all of one full year, many which are renewable for a set period of time. The benefit to the department is that they can attract quality young scholars to the program, offering them sufficient course work to make the move to the Sonoma area appealing, and they bring in vital new energy to the program, which directly benefits the majors, as well. The benefit to the administration is some degree of flexibility and planning with regard to instructional staffing while not requiring the open-ended commitment of resources to a small program. Investing in this way in the recruitment of faculty can serve as a viable near-term remedy to the challenge the program faces ensuring its program is viable, majors and GE/GR are served, and existing faculty are not over-burdened, as well as bringing diversity to the program in terms of curriculum and personnel.

B. **In the longer term (2-5 years), the Philosophy faculty and leadership of the university should craft a 5 year plan to replace valuable senior tenure-track faculty.** The administration and faculty must plan for eventual retirement and complete administrative shifts of several key faculty. While the likelihood of the return of the department to its apex of several years past is slim, it is imperative to properly support a growing and inventive program with committed long-term tenure track faculty, on whose shoulders curriculum design and assessment rest. The intentional rebuilding of the faculty side of the program would benefit the entire campus, as the Philosophy Department

builds on recent successful modifications to its program and, therewith, its reach and service to the broader campus community. Building on the success of the new applied ethics and pre-law concentration, on the new ethics center, and on a more complete and intentional embrace of practical/applied philosophy will benefit the entire campus, enriching opportunities for all majors. This should be supported administratively, not least with strategic investment in new faculty.

Recommendation 6: Enhance the leadership capacity of existing junior faculty.
The department and administration should work jointly to create a multi-year plan to support faculty professional development, especially the development of administrative leadership capacity in the junior faculty.

Submitted

This marks the end of my report on both the Self-Study and my visit to the Sonoma State Philosophy faculty and program. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to meet so many wonderful students, to engage with respected faculty colleagues, and deliberate with committed and supportive administrative leaders on the campus. The Philosophy program at Sonoma State is a wonderful example of a small program doing amazing and wonderful things. It also shows the challenges of a small program trying to be relevant to the campus and regional community and supportive of the university mission.

I submit this report with the hope that it will provide guidance where guidance was sought, and to stimulate deliberation and partnership where these are needed.