

**Senate Committee on University Planning
Academic Unit Review Summary:
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

Site Visit	November 6-7, 2014
Informal Response to Planning	January 23, 2015
Formal Response to Planning	March 6, 2015
Implementation Update	(pending Senate approval of Policy 5900)
Midterm Review	

Summary of Departmental Self-Study: The Department of Philosophy is a small department in Mount Allison University's Faculty of Arts. The department offers major, honours, and minor programs, and is part of the Politics, Philosophy and Economics program.

The department has a strong commitment to providing students with a foundation in the core of the philosophical traditions, and in helping students to understand and critically examine their beliefs and understandings of the world in which they live. Courses cover a range of areas within Western and non-Western philosophy, and include electives in areas such as the philosophy of science, the philosophy of law, logic, epistemology, moral philosophy, feminist philosophy, philosophy of disability, among many others. In addition to philosophy majors, the department's course offerings attract a significant number of students majoring in other disciplines. Enrolments in the department remain healthy, having stabilized with the addition of a fourth faculty member in 2011.

Faculty members in the department balance a strong commitment to undergraduate teaching with active engagement in their research programs. Faculty members in the department have been recognized for their teaching excellence, and have received research grants from the university's internal grants programs.

Graduates of the Philosophy department's programs have enjoyed considerable success in graduate and professional programs, and several Mount Allison Philosophy graduates are counted amongst the professoriate in Canadian universities.

Summary of Program Review Report: The reviewers offered strong praise for the department. In particular, they point out that the department is a cohesive unit that offers students an exceptional education in the core areas of the discipline.

The review team made recommendations in a number of areas, including:

- A review of course rotations with a view to streamlining delivery of the curriculum on Western philosophy, and balancing 18th and 19th century continental philosophy and 20th and 21st century continental philosophy;

- Reflection on the efficacy of offering 6 credit courses;
- Consideration of how best to integrate experiential learning in Philosophy courses; and
- Ways to institutionalize professional development (e.g., seminar presentations) for students in upper-year courses.

In addition, the review team offered suggestions on the utilization of endowment funds, visiting speakers, diversity within the department, and retention of the current faculty complement.

Summary of Departmental Response: The department reflected on each of the areas of the review report, and expressed its commitment to review its practices in each of the areas identified by the reviewers. The department has identified a number of actions that it plans to take that relate to curriculum, including a continuing dialogue amongst department members on course rotations and the desirability of breaking up 6 credit courses; identifying cognates (particularly in political theory and religious studies) that students may use in fulfilling the requirements for their philosophy degrees; and identifying ways for students to engage in “hands-on philosophy” through the integration of experiential learning in courses, summer research opportunities, and research assistantships associated with faculty research grants. The department endorsed the recommendations for retention of the current faculty complement, and noted its commitment to increasing diversity amongst the teaching faculty when part-time and sessional faculty are hired. Finally, the department commits to being more systematic in using its endowment funds to bring speakers to Mount Allison whose research aligns with the interests of members of the department.

Planning Committee and Provost Response:

The Planning Committee and the Provost regarded the review of the Department of Philosophy in very positive terms. The strengths of the department were acknowledged throughout the Planning Committee’s discussions. There was an extensive discussion of the merits of retaining 6 credit courses, but it was acknowledged that this is an issue not limited to the Department of Philosophy.