

**BCCAT 2019 Philosophy Articulation
Annual Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 24, 2019
12:00-5:00 PM**

Host: Alex Boston, Langara College

Guest Speaker: Christina Hendricks, UBC

Attendees

Scott Anderson, University of British Columbia
Alex Boston, Langara College, Chair
Michael Bourke, British Columbia Institute of
Technology
Charles Carroll, University Canada West
Lyle Crawford, Alexander College
Rob-Roy Douglas, Northern Lights College
Nicholas Fillion, Simon Fraser University
Reuben Gabriel, College of New Caledonia
Brian Garret, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

James Gifford, Farleigh Dickenson University
Selman Halabi, Columbia College
Christina Hendricks, University of British
Columbia
Wayne Henry, University of the Frazer Valley &
Langara College
Bruce Howes, Okanagan College
Vance Mattson, College of the Rockies
Jalissa Schmidt, Coquitlam College
Edrie Sobstyl, Douglas College

1) Traditional Musqueam Welcome (Mary Jane Joe)

2) Opening Remarks (Ben Cecil)

3) Approval of May 25, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Brian Garret; **Seconded** Vance Mattson; **Passed** unanimously

4) Approval of May 24, 2019 Agenda

Motion: James Gifford; **Seconded** Vance Mattson; **Passed**

5) Identify 2020 Meeting Chair

The meeting normally alternates between Vancouver and out of town institutions.

Okanagan College will host the meeting next year

Fraser Valley volunteered for 2021

Motion: Bruce Howes; **Seconded** Wayne Henry; **Passed** unanimously

6) Guest Speaker: Christina Hendricks on Open Textbooks

i. Open Educational Resources OER in Philosophy

Slides available at http://is.gd/oer_phil_2019

Christina is a Professor of Teaching, Philosophy at UBC

ii. What are Open Textbooks?

- Free in cost and the ability to customize and revise

iii. **Cost**

- Students are pushing the adoption of Open Textbooks largely due to cost.
- Textbook prices have increased more than tuition or housing in recent years.
- UBC estimates ~2100 per year for each student's textbooks. A student survey indicated that students spend ~\$760 per annum.
- In a student survey at UBC, 66% of students indicated that they have gone without required texts due to cost.
- BC post-secondary students indicate that they (see slides for stats)

iv. **Other Issues Students and Faculty Report with Course Materials**

- New editions eliminating material the instructor wants.
- E-book rentals are also expensive and often expire after one term.
- New editions often do not provide access to auxiliary materials.
- **Discussion:** Studying in print vs. online
 - Students still prefer print, and are printing open textbooks.
- **Discussion:** Open textbooks vs. traditional textbooks
 - Research shows that students using open textbooks perform just as well.
- Open textbooks allow for

v. Definition of OER

- See slide

vi. David Wiley's 5 R's

- 5 kinds of freedom connected with open education resources
 - Reuse
 - Revise
 - Remix
 - Retain
 - Redistribute
- This is done through licenses
 - Public Domain, CC BY, CC BY-NC, etc.
- **Discussion:** Danger of Open Textbooks that are not authenticated or are altered from their original in content to change meaning
 - A solution for this would be a non-derivative license.
 - If you are teaching, ensure that you are familiar enough with the topic to vet the material.

vii. Equity

- Improving access to education
 - Financially
 - See notes
 - Ability to customize for access for disabilities

- viii. Customizability
 - See notes
- ix. E.g. PHYS 100 at UBC
 - 94% of students indicated that readings customized to the course was somewhat or very important. This was slightly higher than cost.
- x. How to work with OER in Philosophy
 - Resources
 - BCcampus Open Textbook library (add link from slides)
 - Open Textbook Library
 - Texts
 - Open Stax
 - Logic
 - Open Logic Project
 - Forall x (UBC Edition)
 - Forall x (Calgary Edition)
 - Nic Fillion is working on a survey textbook
 - Other OER
 - OASIS search engine
 - OER Library Guides (vetted by institution librarians)
 - UBC
 - Kwantlen
- xi. Contribution to OER
 - Introduction to Philosophy Open Textbook Series
 - Has become a series of books, each with an editor.
 - Books are peer-reviewed
 - If you are interested in peer-reviewing or editing, please contact Christina

Alex Boston plugged his Philosopher's Jam talk at Langara Community Day, and asked other attendees to contact him if they are interested in presenting a Jam.

7) Freedom of Expression (Wayne Henry)

- i. Two years ago there was a discussion at this meeting about Jordan Peterson who was shouted down at U of T. The general discussion was about whether or not an institution should be justified to state that a person is not permitted to speak.
- ii. There was a motion put forward for discussion at the 2018 BCCAT PHIL meeting.
- iii. However, Wayne and Grant were unable to attend last year's meeting
- iv. Is there still interest moving forward?
- v. Grant Havers commented that students at Trinity are now given a handbook that defines Freedom of Speech. Specifically, the handbook says that it is tolerating the views of others, not just insisting on your right to assist your own.

- vi. Discussion: Are we a large enough entity to have an impact on this debate?
- We may not be able to come to agreement about what constitutes freedom of speech.
 - There is also likelihood of variation between different institutions even if we come to agreement at this meeting.
 - Opportunities for exercising these points of view are diminishing, and we may be wise to take advantage of our platform. In this context, a discussion on this topic this afternoon would be worthwhile.
 - What are the risks of sticking out our necks in terms of consequences from our institutions.
 - An attendee commented that he did not feel comfortable representing his institution, but bring a position back for discussion.
 - The original thing was about yet another restriction on our freedom of expression.
 - Academic freedom is not the same thing as accessing our institutions for public lectures.
 - There is a faculty member at an institution in New Brunswick who is a white supremacist, but does not include those views in his curriculum. What do you do with someone like that.
 - There are institutional policies to deal with these issues. It is not the role of this committee to take this on.
 - An attendee suggested drafting a statement of mission and values that could be voted on.
 - What is the outcome that we are trying to achieve? This should be answered before we draft any mission or statement.
 - The BCCAT representative commented that this committee is a provincial body and is the only one of its kind in the province. Articulation committees do take positions.
 - There could be a three step process. Motion here. Vote at home institution, and vote back at the meeting.
 - This is a propaganda exercise to express our concern about free speech. If we define free speech, no officials will sign-off on it. It needs to be as vague as "We like free speech."
 - This sounds like the work of a bub committee. Differentiate between academic freedom and free speech and how it differs between public and private institutions.
 - The statement should be related to courses or curriculum.
 - Should course syllabi be required to represent both sides of a debate.
 - Where there are two legitimate sides, then yes. However "balance bias" is a problem. We can end up creating the appearance of equivalence

when it is not justified. In the case of climate change and the anti-vax movement, creating balance produces bias.

- Hate speech vs. other kinds of speech was brought up earlier.
- If we agree to make a public statement, who do we express that to.
- BCCAT rep: It's up to the committee to decide what to do with the statement. It could be a statement on public record, sent to the Minister of Education.
- Boston: 2 issues. The things under attack are not the things we are talking about. Insisting on representation from both sides can be said to restrict freedom of speech.
- Is there an avenue into the original point through the idea of discussing freedom of speech in the classroom.
- Classes of international students may have little experience with western philosophy and may come from places that do not have freedom of speech.
- The American Philosophical Association drafted principals. If anyone is interested in looking at these documents, they are available on the APA website.
- The committee agreed that while the discussion was interesting, no further action was necessary at this time.

8) Moodle (Vance Mattson) – send him the new agenda

At the 2018 meeting committee decided to set up a Moodle Account for the Philosophy Articulation Committee.

We need to decide if we would like to adopt it.

Vance Mattson distributed an information sheet and demonstrated the Moodle account to the committee.

- i. Announcements
- ii. Links to the BCCAT Philosophy website
- iii. PDFs of main BCCAT Philosophy documents
- iv. Institutional reports
- v. Templates (minutes, agenda, institutional reports, responsibilities and reminders for host)
- vi. 2019 Meeting
 - a. Agenda
 - b. Hotel Info

Vance will have admin privileges in addition to next year's chair (Bruce), and BCCAT.

- i. Discussion forums are supported.

- For example, sub committees could communicate through forums.
- ii. If you will not be here next year, be sure to pass this document on to your next representative.
 - Ruth can manage the membership list.
- iii. Vance asked members to suggest other features.
- iv. A committee member suggested a forum to discuss articulation matters in advance of the meeting.
- v. KPU offered to pay to host the Moodle.

Motion: To add BCCAT Philosophy Articulation Committee to Moodle.

Edrie; Michael Bourke; Passed unanimously

Motion to nominate Vance as Moodle administrator.

Edrie; Michael, Passed unanimously

You can select an option in Moodle to receive weekly updates, rather than receiving each notification.

ACTION each institution should mention the account at their department meeting, so people are aware that the Moodle account exists.

ACTION: Committee members should follow the Adding Members instructions on the sheet distributed at the beginning of the presentation.

9) Philosophy as a teachable major for students applying to become secondary school teachers (Nicholas Fillion)

Nicholas Fillion presented a report he helped to develop.

- i. **The idea was to produce well-trained teachers to teach critical thinking in public schools**
 - The proposal will also create jobs for Philosophy graduates.
 - The report presented a solution to deepening the talent pool for teacher recruitment in BC in the context of the current shortage of teachers.
- ii. **Challenges to making philosophy as a teaching major**
 - Recently, Philosophy 12 was introduced to the BC high school curriculum.
 - The learning standards developed in 2017, and posted on the Ministry of Education website are very vague.
 - The learning standards presents sample topics that are vague enough that almost any topic would be acceptable.

- Almost every degree qualifies graduates to teach social studies, with Philosophy being a notable exception.
- iii. Advocating to the TRB
 - TRB and Curriculum branch do not talk to each other very much
 - There is a class where the most qualified people to teach are unable to obtain certification.
 - iv. Presentation at the Teacher's Council (TRB)
 - Presented by Dale Martelli to show that teachers are working with academics to come up with solutions.
 - v. Ontario
 - Philosophy became part of curriculum in 1994, but did not become a teachable subject until 2007.
 - For 13 years, there was no one teaching Philosophy with real expertise in the subject.
 - vi. The presentation pitched philosophers as exceptionally strong critical thinkers who score well on LSATs, etc.
 - vii. Recommendations
 - See slides
 - viii. If we have a large group of institutions like BCCAT supporting the initiative
 - ix. At SFU, they have created a pre-law program and are hoping to develop a stream for Philosophy majors pursuing careers in teaching.
 - x. Nicholas will attend the TRB meeting in June to provide an update.
 - He would like to make two recommendation to amend teacher certification rules to:
 - add Philosophy to a list of subjects taught in BC secondary schools.
 - Philosophy be added to the qualifying Social Studies list.

Motion that BCCAT Philosophy supports the recommendations (Nicholas will send language)

Moved Brian Garret; **Seconded** Lyle Crawford; **Passed** (Mike Winseman and Christina Hendricks abstained from voting)

Discussion:

Teacher's are required to apply for PDP programs to teach a cluster of courses. Currently, a Philosophy degree qualifies graduates to teach nothing. We would like to get Philosophy included in the Social Studies cluster.

This will present an additional career path in addition to graduate school.

10) Articulation Matters

- i. **New Classes at Langara**
 - **Philosophy 1110**
 - **Philosophy 2222**
- ii. **BCCAT Initiative**
 - **Pilot project with UBC**
 - Transfer tables imported and made public for the first time.
 - Internal transfer tables contain equivalencies for institutions across Canada and beyond.
 - Previously, the information was not available to anyone except officials at UBC.
 - UBC now has a web portal that allows students to look up courses from various institutions to see how they transfer to UBC.
 - BCCAT is now expanding this project to include other institutions and is encouraging other institutions to get involved.
 - This will increase transparency, accountability and the knowledge available.
- iii. **Farleigh Dickenson**
 - Philosophy courses are typically articulated as humanities courses.
 - He would like to know if they should also be articulated as Philosophy courses.
 - There was general agreement that this would be valuable.

11) Other Matters

- i. **International Student Issues**
 - A committee member asked for experience from other departments with issues affecting international students.
 - Langara is developing a University Success Strategies course.
 - Supports must be put in place for faculty and students
 - Another committee member introduced academic dishonesty into the course curriculum as a philosophical question.
 - BCIT has recently instituted a policy of saving a certain number of seats for domestic students. They also started checking prerequisites more rigorously. In particular, when students are submitting IELTS scores they should have writing scores of a minimum of 7. BCIT also no longer accepts transfer for courses that do not have invigilated final exams.
 - At least two committee members commented that some departments are now requiring invigilated exams with a minimum required score on the final exam.

- Douglas College has made changes to their student orientation content and international outreach to address a rise in academic integrity issues in correlation with shifting demographics.
- Another committee member commented anecdotally that the more he talks about plagiarism, the more plagiarism he is seeing.
- A committee member reported that he takes a photo of students to see who they are sitting next to.
- Another committee member noted that his institution presents its honesty policy multiple times, and includes a copy of it in each classroom. The assumption then is that if students plagiarize, they are knowledgeable and choosing to do it.
- Another suggestion was to let students know that if they informally appeal their mark, they may end up with a lower grade, since the submission will be more rigorously marked.
- A committee member commented that research does not necessarily support the idea that the increase in international students is linked to the increase in academic dishonesty.
- Committee members discussed that there is now an industry providing papers to students.
- There are also “shadow schools” building data bases of assignments and exams, sometimes based on photos taken of exams by students. Instructors should consider this when reusing exams.
- There should be institutional support to deal with this.
- A committee members commented that if you do not take attendance, professional tutors may attend courses to sell notes to other students.
- Another committee mentioned a colleague who saw herself being webcast during a lecture.
- In-class essays and open-book exams where students are given the questions in advance, require students to complete graded content in person.
- Exams where four questions are given out ahead of time, with only two on the exam, eliminate the option for students to hire someone to write a paper and then memorize it.
- 24 plagiarism charges in one term of 3 sections at Columbia College.
- Discussion regarding racial bias in discussions of plagiarism.

- We do not want to make consequences so threatening that students will no longer talk to each other. It is important to balance cracking down on cheaters with permitting collaboration between students.
- A committee member is considering introducing paraphrasing exercises into his coursework.
- Committee members commented that students are often not prepared for academic writing.
- There are also international cultural differences that lead to students not understanding critical writing.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:32 PM

- Wayne Henry

I have a request for only one small change. I was there in the first instance to represent University of the Fraser Valley, and in a supporting role to Alex representing Langara. So, if you could change it, please, to University of the Fraser Valley & Langara.

- Edrie Sobstyl (Douglas College)

thanks for sending these around. I notice that my name is omitted from the list of attendees so please add it.