

Climate Committee Meeting Sept 8 and Sept 15, 2014

The climate committee had its initial meeting of the 2014-15 academic year on Sept 8 and Sept 15, 2014.

Members present:

Blanchette, Christy, Cross, Franks, Rea, Schmitt, Solomon, Sterba.

- I. The committee reviewed some of the climate-related issues and events from 2013-14. In particular:
 - a. See January 2014 document for events during fall term 2013.
 - b. The dept used a new procedure in the evaluation of job applications, focusing especially on members of under-represented groups.
 - c. May 1, 2014 climate meeting for all interested graduate students, chaired by Blanchette; see below.
 - d. Summer reading group: The group met several times during the summer, discussing chapters from: *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?* (Hutchinson and Jenkins, eds; Oxford University Press 2013).
 - e. *Good news*: Number of job offers to women up substantially; one woman has accepted an offer; number of women in incoming graduate class up substantially.
 - f. *Bad news*: Lost three female graduate students.

- II. The committee next discussed some of the issues raised at the May 1 meeting. In particular:
 - a. The issue of transparency and communication to the department of what the climate committee is doing. *Response*: It was decided that we would post minutes of our meetings on the Climate website.
 - b. The issue of more systematic faculty advising for first- and second-year students. *Solution*: Curtis Franks has implemented a new system for matching students and mentor professors.
 - c. There was a good deal of interest in getting another lecture on climate issues, of the kind given last year by Jenny Saul. *Results so far*: Blanchette has confirmed with Sally Haslanger that she will come give a talk, but has no space on her schedule until next academic year (2015-16). We have not yet found a speaker for this year. *Update as of October 8, 2014*: Alison Jagger will speak on February 13, 2015; Sally Haslanger will speak on November 6, 2015; Elizabeth Barnes will speak in Spring 2016, tentatively scheduled for March 18, 2016.
 - d. The May 1 meeting included a good deal of discussion about who graduate students might turn to for confidential advice regarding how to respond to possible instances of discrimination or harassment. After that meeting, Blanchette followed up with Anita Kelly, University Ombudsperson, who confirmed that she and her colleague Dwight King, also a University Ombudsperson, were the right people to play that role. Kelly's area is Sexual Harassment, while King's is Discriminatory Harassment. The contact information for Kelly and King is now posted on the department website.

- e. The committee discussed the question, raised in the May 1 meeting, of how department members (especially faculty members, but possibly also graduate-student instructors) might best obtain information from students about the climate in their classrooms, especially with respect to the treatment of women and members of other under-represented groups. The discussion of this point was lengthy, continuing until the second half of the meeting (Sep 15). Under consideration were various ways in which the department might encourage or implement the obtaining of such information in a systematic way. The issues were discovered to be complex, and it was determined that the discussion of this topic will be continued at a future meeting. As one means of obtaining information, Curtis Franks plans to solicit feedback from graduate students on various matters, including climate in classrooms and relationships with advisors.
- f. The brown-bag series: students asked at the May 1 meeting whether it would be continued, with a good deal of support for its continuation. Curtis Franks took up this issue between the two halves of our meeting, and confirmed at the 9/15 half that Sam Newlands has agreed to organize a brown-bag series again, to take place in Spring term.

III. Other issues discussed:

- a. The committee discussed the issue of advising, especially with respect to third-year students. The focus of discussion was the question of whether students receive sufficient guidance about preparation for orals. Curtis Franks was glad to be informed, and will take up the issue.

IV. So Far this Year: Blanchette reported that:

- a. A meeting about climate, chaired by Blanchette, was held for the incoming first-year students during their orientation. Topics discussed included: data on women and minorities in the profession, implicit bias, problematic behavior inside and outside of the classroom, ways to be an ally, how to maintain an environment of mutual respect, etc.
- b. MAP: A student group, initiated by Matteo Bianchetti, and led by Emily Spencer, is pursuing the project of getting a chapter of MAP (Minorities and Philosophy) set up at Notre Dame.

IV. Plans:

- a. Survey: Blanchette reported the plan, settled on by last year's climate committee and discussed in some detail at the May 1 meeting, to do another climate survey this year, early in the spring term. In response to issues raised at the May meeting, the plan is to use an outside contractor for administering the survey, and also to gather student input on the questions to be included in the survey.
- b. Student-Driven Community Issues: Also discussed at the May 1 meeting was the possibility of implementing, this year, some student-organized initiatives to help foster a sense of community within the department, and to offer

- support to those students who need it. The climate committee discussed ways to implement such possibilities; preliminary ideas are to have a website linked to the dept climate page on which volunteer mentors, and also social/cultural events and reading groups might be listed. The precise form of such a site, the question of who will run it and how to manage the password-protected aspect of it are still to be determined.
- c. Workshops: The possibility of implementing practicum workshops, typically run by and for students, on the topics of: Comprehensive Exams, Orals, Proposal, and Qualifying Papers, in addition to the current TA Practicum, was discussed. Curtis Franks volunteered to organize these, perhaps two per semester.
 - d. Title IX Workshop: The committee discussed, at the first half of the meeting, the possibility of having Anita Kelly give us a presentation on Title IX law, especially as this relates to issues of discrimination; related university policies; and reporting requirements under the law. In the period between the two halves of the meeting, Blanchette confirmed with Kelly that she would be willing to give us such a presentation. Details TBA.
 - e. Videos The question of whether we should organize workshops around videos about bias, harassment, and related issues was raised. This topic will be discussed at a future meeting.