



DOUGLASCOLLEGE

**Comprehensive Program Review**  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Associate of Arts in Humanities

Associate of Arts in Philosophy

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Recommendations: Summary and Summary List

Recomm. Number	Related Report Component	Recommendation	Status / Timeline
1a)	1	Survey department members and students to see if there is interest in new courses, especially in the history of philosophy.	Two courses currently being developed. Plan further discussion at dept meetings in 2025 or 2026.
1b)	1	Be more conscientious about keeping curriculum guidelines up to date.	Ongoing. New committee has been formed. Aim to complete by 2026.
1c)	1	Rename HUMS 1171 and HUMS 1172	Aim to complete by 2026.
1d)	1	Select and advertise topics in PHIL 3300 <i>Problems of Philosophy</i> well in advance.	Begin immediately.
1e)	1	Look into whether it is possible to cross list some courses: (e.g. PHIL 3350 with Psychology, PHIL 1190, PHIL 2290 and PHIL 2280 with Science and Tech).	Not yet started. Aim to complete by end of 2025.
1f)	1	Update our directed course in the humanities (HUMS 3399) and create a directed reading course in philosophy.	Not yet started. Aim to complete by 2026.
1g)	1	Review (and consider rewriting) curriculum guidelines to ensure that there is minimal overlap between PHIL 1103, PHIL 1152, PHIL 1170 and PHIL 3300. Adding a course in early modern philosophy and limiting the amount of early modern philosophy that 1103, 1152, 1170, and 3300 can contain will help with this.	Not yet started. Aim to complete by 2026.
1h)	1	Consult with members of other departments to see what might be offered (or at least marketed) as package-courses e.g. <i>Philosophy of Religion</i> and <i>Anthropology of Religion</i> .	Informal discussions have taken place. Begin formal discussions immediately. Aim to complete by 2027.
1i)	1	Find ways to help the <i>Summer Institute</i> realize its potential to build connections with other departments and institutions in the region.	Ongoing.
3a)	3	Investigate further possibilities for experiential learning. The PHIL/HUMS department may want to explore the possibility of co-op programs or internships.	Appoint committee to begin investigation in 2025.

4a)	4	Monitor student success by delivery method in future terms, to determine if it is in fact likely that delivery methods are affecting GPAs.	Begin immediately.
4b)	4	Monitor student demand by delivery method in future terms, to determine if it is likely that delivery methods are affecting student demand.	Begin immediately.
4c)	4	Discuss, as a department, whether we have the ideal mix of modes of delivery for our courses.	Discussion ongoing.
4d)	4	Ensure that the department provides an online forum for faculty members to voluntarily share information about grading standards (e.g. median grades), with no accompanying expectation of shared grading standards.	Create in 2025.
5a)	5	Do more to inform students about career paths. Look into whether it is possible to do more to facilitate connections with industry/potential employers. Consider appointing someone in the department to oversee these things.	Appoint individual or committee in 2026 to oversee the process.
5b)	5	Communicate more clearly with students about the details of the transfer process, and the transfer agreements that the college has with SFU and UBC. Consider appointing someone in the department to oversee this.	Begin immediately. Appoint individual or committee in 2025 to oversee the process.
5c)	5	Be more vigilant about ensuring that a sufficient number of courses and sections are offered at both campuses and at various times.	Begin immediately.
5d)	5	Compile an easily accessible database of the awards (merit-based and need-based) that our students can apply to, along with deadlines and basic requirements.	Appoint committee in 2026.
5e)	5	Consider revising the AA-philosophy diploma. Devote more attention to presenting the AA-philosophy diploma as worth pursuing. Do more to inform students about what the diploma requires, and what students can do with it.	Committee formed in Dec 2024.

5f)	5	Return to the project of creating an AA-applied ethics diploma.	Committee formed in Dec 2024.
6a)	6	Discuss, as a department, ways to increase enrollments in courses that tend to experience softer enrollments, either by advertising more or experimenting with different times or modes of delivery. Devote special attention to the department's drift (over the past decade) towards 3 x 1 courses and away from 2 x 2 courses, and discuss the effect that this may be having on enrollment numbers. Consult with the dean about the possibility of running courses with softer enrollments for the next few years.	Discuss as a department in 2025 – 2026.
6b)	6	Amend student surveys to include questions about whether students have experienced a canceled class, and if so, how that has affected them.	Do so before next dept comprehensive review.
7a)	7	Make a case for equivalency between Douglas's PHIL 2201 and UBC's PHIL 220.	Do so in 2025.
7b)	7	Look into creating a block transfer agreement with UBC's philosophy department. If the AA in applied ethics runs, attempt to create a block transfer to UBC's Ethics Institute as well.	Aim to complete by 2027.
7c)	7	Look into getting appropriate transfers for PHIL 3350 at Simon Fraser. Look into whether PHIL 1170 at Douglas would be considered as equivalent to Phil 240 at SFU if 1170 were changed into a second-year course. Look into a Block Transfer with Simon Fraser as well.	Aim to complete by 2026.
7d)	7	Seek transfer credit recognition at UBC for HUMS 1171 and 1172 (including, possibly, specific recognition of the equivalency of HUMS 1171 with UBC's ASIA 110).	Aim to complete by 2026.
7e)	7	Do more to maintain contact with alumni who transfer to a different post-secondary institution, especially alumni who participated in our Summer Institute. Check in with them to see how well they think Douglas prepared them for post-secondary education at another institution. Consider asking some of those students if they would serve as contacts for current students who are themselves planning to transfer.	Consider appointing individual or committee to oversee this process beginning in 2026.

9a)	9	Do more to keep track of relevant facts about our sessional instructors, e.g. seniority, QTT lists, seniority, courses turned down, etc.	This process has begun and will continue into 2025.
9b)	9	Discuss, as a department, what our future hiring needs are likely to be, and more broadly what direction we want the department to go in. Discuss whether we should look for somebody who specializes in philosophy of race, for example. We may also want to consider bringing in another faculty member who specializes in continental philosophy.	Some discussions have taken place, though this issue may be moot depending on future course demand. Return to this discussion when we need to hire again.
10a)	10	Look into the possibility of placing chalkboards in some classrooms and in offices on request, and do what's possible to ensure that instructor safety and functioning AV equipment are given attention once we move to 808 Royal.	Address these issues before we move into 808 Royal in 2026.
10b)	10	Ensure that the plan for a logic lab at 808 Royal is proceeding according to schedule.	Address before we move into 808 Royal in 2026.
10c)	10	Provide the Career Centre and business development teams with information about our department members.	Begin this process in 2025.
10d)	10	Forge a better relationship with MCO, where it is clear what the boundary between their duties and our duties are.	Meet with MCO (perhaps invite a representative to a dept meeting) in 2025 or 2026.

[ ... ]

**External Review Report**  
**Douglas College Philosophy and Humanities Program**  
**April 23, 2025**

External Reviewers:

Dr. Dai Heide  
Senior Lecturer, Philosophy Dept.  
Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Alan Richardson  
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University of British Columbia

## Introduction

We were invited by Carla Hotel, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at Douglas College, to administer a program review of the Douglas College Philosophy and Humanities Program. We were provided with the Program's self-study document and we arranged a site visit at the main New Westminster campus, which we completed on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025. We met with nearly every faculty member in the Program, the Dean, and two separate groups of students. We met with one faculty member later that week by Zoom.

This report will go into (sometimes granular) detail about a range subjects, most of which are raised by the self-study document. But we will share our central conclusions at the outset.

The Philosophy and Humanities Program at Douglas is a *very* high-quality college department staffed by a cohort of obviously dedicated, collegial and talented faculty. We were immediately and continuously struck by the extraordinary good will faculty have toward one another, and the remarkable collegiality that clearly infuses everyday life in the department. We were also impressed by the obvious care that Program faculty have for their students, and this was confirmed by all of the students with whom we spoke. Also of note is the research strength of the Program faculty. While research is not required of faculty members, and each has an exceptionally high teaching load of eight courses per academic year, many Program faculty publish frequently and often in high-quality peer-refereed venues. Not only is this essentially *pro bono* work, but it also no doubt informs and improves the quality of their teaching, which is, by all counts, of very high quality. Finally, we took special note of frequent strategic thinking by Program faculty: many faculty members are seeking – and have concrete ideas about – ways in which the Program might change or grow to best serve its students. This is a sign of dedication and leadership, and it cannot be taken for granted.

While we have a number of strategic suggestions for the Program – and we will detail them below – we discovered no major problems or issues that threaten, impair, or constrain the Program. This is a healthy and robust Program of which Douglas College should be proud.

Nevertheless, we believe that there are several ways in which the Program could take better strategic advantage of its enviable situation and its existing strengths so as to make students' education in the Program even more robust and streamlined. We'll discuss the most important of these now.

First, many Program students have the ambition of completing a B.A. at a university – often at UBC or SFU. It would serve the Program well to engage in a review of its existing transfer credit arrangements with the universities to which its students most frequently transfer. We heard from many faculty and several students that it is often unclear which, and how much, of a student's Douglas coursework will count toward a B.A. at UBC or SFU. By reviewing existing transfer credit arrangements, the Program could seek to ensure that its curriculum is sufficient to offer students a clear pathway into B.A. programs at local universities.

Second, and relatedly, the Program should consider offering the option of a more structured curriculum to its students. This could be in the form of a clearer transfer pathway to universities, which would appeal

especially to those students with university ambitions. But it could at the same time, or additionally, come in the form of a credential. The Program has discussed reviving its A.A. credential. But Program faculty also have other interesting ideas about how to do this. For example, the Program has entertained the idea of a new A.A. in Applied Ethics. Dr. Rossiter mentioned an idea about an experiential credential connecting coursework in philosophy with urban engagement. The Program could also consider offering a Certificate in an area of strength. The underlying point is that offering students a concrete goal, and structuring the curriculum in a way that allows them to transparently pursue that goal, is likely to offer students a specific reason to continue taking courses. We think the Program is well-equipped to do this, and ought to.

Third, the Program has significant expertise in the history of philosophy, and yet the Program offers a single course dedicated to the history of philosophy (PHIL 3310: Ancient Philosophy). With multiple talented and accomplished historians of philosophy already in the Program, this is a missed opportunity to enrich the Program's curriculum by exploiting an existing area of strength.

Finally, the Program is clearly strapped for physical space. Faculty members share offices, and both faculty and students report that there is little available room for students to study and socialize. As an institution, Douglas has largely resisted online instruction, which we applaud. But if it values in-person education, then it must ensure that students have places on campus to be and to study when they are not in the classroom. The Program faculty have requested space in the new campus building for a Logic Lab. We wholeheartedly endorse this request.

The remainder of this report copies the structure of the self-study document: we have individuated the sections of this report in keeping with the Program's division of its recommendations into distinct categories. We will not make specific comment on every recommendation in the self-study, but we will have much to say about many of them.

## 1. Program Content

Program recommendations:

- 1a) Survey department members and students to see if there is interest in new courses, especially in the history of philosophy.**
- 1b) Be more conscientious about keeping curriculum guidelines up to date.**
- 1c) Rename HUMS 1171 and HUMS 1172**
- 1d) Select and advertise topics in PHIL 3300: *Problems of Philosophy* well in advance.**
- 1e) Look into whether it is possible to cross list some courses: (e.g. PHIL 3350 with Psychology, PHIL 1190, PHIL 2290 and PHIL 2280 with Science and Tech).**
- 1f) Update our directed course in the humanities (HUMS 3399) and create a directed reading course in philosophy.**
- 1g) Review (and consider rewriting) curriculum guidelines to ensure that there is minimal overlap between PHIL 1103, PHIL 1152, PHIL 1170 and PHIL 3300. Adding a course in early modern philosophy and limiting the amount of early modern philosophy that 1103, 1152, 1170, and 3300 can contain will help with this.**
- 1h) Consult with members of other departments to see what might be offered (or at least marketed) as package-courses e.g. *Philosophy of Religion* and *Anthropology of Religion*.**
- 1i) Find ways to help the *Summer Institute* realize its potential to build connections with other departments and institutions in the region.**

Comments:

We find all of the Program's recommendations to be apt and worth pursuing. However, we find recommendations 1a, 1g and 1i to be of special importance.

The Program has several faculty members who are experts in various periods of the history of philosophy. Dr. Elliot Rossiter is an accomplished early modernist with multiple publications on John Locke in prominent venues. Dr. Sarah Hogarth Rossiter is an accomplished medievalist and publishes frequently in the area. Dr. Charlotte Sabourin's work is on Kant and early modern philosophy. And multiple other faculty members have interests in these and other periods of the history of philosophy. And yet, the Program offers no courses dedicated to these areas of the history of philosophy. Indeed, the Program's only course in the history of philosophy is a course in Ancient Philosophy.

We think the Program's students would be well-served if the Program took better advantage of the significant strength in its faculty expertise. At our own institutions, undergraduate courses in the history of philosophy are enduringly popular; they are also required or, at minimum, highly recommended for a philosophy major. The Program would likely find eager students for dedicated courses in both early modern philosophy and medieval philosophy. Instituting these courses would allow students to gain a much better understanding of the history of philosophy, which will undoubtedly inform their comprehension of contemporary philosophical issues. **We especially recommend that the Program develop two courses, one each in early modern philosophy and medieval philosophy.**

The Program's Summer Institute is a unique and extraordinary opportunity in the Lower Mainland. We wholeheartedly agree that the Program should seek to bolster the Summer Institute by advertising it more widely and, potentially, seeking the participation of other departments in the Lower Mainland. The Summer Institute would likely be attractive to students at other institutions, many of whom will be unable to learn as much continental philosophy in their home departments as they would like. If the Program has the capacity to enrol students from other institutions, the Program could seek to set up transfer credit agreements with several other institutions so its students could readily benefit from the Institute. This would help attract further attention to the Summer Institute. Likewise, the Program could consider doing more to include faculty from other institutions in the Lower Mainland, perhaps by inviting visitors to give occasional guest lectures as part of the seminar, or perhaps through an eventual team-teaching situation. This is one area where increased communication across BC philosophy departments would be helpful; many colleges and universities in BC have students who are underserved by the European philosophy offerings at their home institutions; the Summer Institute should have a greater profile.

These suggestions may conflict with the Program's own vision for the Institute in certain ways. Nevertheless, because the Institute is unique and valuable, we agree that the **Program should experiment with new opportunities to help the Summer Institute reach its full potential, in ways that are consistent with the Program's own vision.**

### 3. Experiential Learning Opportunities

Program Recommendations:

**3a) Investigate further possibilities for experiential learning. The PHIL/HUMS department may want to explore the possibility of co-op programs or internships.**

Comments:

We concur with this recommendation. Indeed, we note that at least a few of the department's faculty members—for example, E Rossiter's project on housing insecurity, Cutler's work on Indigenous technologies, and Fellows's podcasting—have public-facing projects that could eventuate in co-op or internship possibilities.

Experiential learning is of increasing significance and importance in higher education and the Program's innovative ideas about connecting students with non-traditional subject matters is intriguing and worthwhile. These ideas can certainly be implemented into the content of courses, and such an effort would be laudable. We are less certain whether they can find happy partners in co-op or internship programs, but if they can, then we concur that this is very much a worthwhile opportunity.

#### 4. Program/Course Delivery

Program Recommendations:

**4a) Monitor student success by delivery method in future terms, to determine if it is in fact likely that delivery methods are affecting GPAs.**

**4b) Monitor student demand by delivery method in future terms, to determine if it is likely that delivery methods are affecting student demand.**

**4c) Discuss, as a department, whether we have the ideal mix of modes of delivery for our courses.**

**4d) Ensure that the department provides an online forum for faculty members to voluntarily share information about grading standards (e.g. median grades), with no accompanying expectation of shared grading standards.**

Comments:

We find all of these recommendations quite sensible. More importantly, the self-study indicates that the department has access to the relevant data to act on these recommendations. The wording of 4d) and the discussion of it in the self-study are both sensitive to the need to balance fairness to students with instructor autonomy. The evident collegiality and concern for student success in the department speak to the likelihood that any such information sharing and resulting conversations will be done with both factors firmly in mind.

## 5. Student Outcomes

### Program Recommendations:

**5a) Do more to inform students about career paths. Look into whether it is possible to do more to facilitate connections with industry/potential employers. Consider appointing someone in the department to oversee these things.**

**5b) Communicate more clearly with students about the details of the transfer process, and the transfer agreements that the college has with SFU and UBC.**

**5c) Be more vigilant about ensuring that a sufficient number of courses and sections are offered at both campuses and at various times.**

**5d) Compile an easily accessible database of the awards (merit-based and need-based) that our students can apply to, along with deadlines and basic requirements.**

**5e) Consider revising the AA-philosophy diploma. Devote more attention to presenting the AA-philosophy diploma as worth pursuing. Do more to inform students about what the diploma requires, and what students can do with it.**

**5f) Return to the project of creating an AA-applied ethics diploma.**

### Comments:

Some of these recommendations are among the most important in the self-study. We have already discussed some of them in our preamble.

5b) is a key recommendation and we recommend not just clearer communication but (in line with recommendations elsewhere in the self-study) updating the transfer agreements. This is a mutually beneficial project—Douglas students will have a more ready set of options to consider as they plan their course work; the SFU and UBC philosophy departments will increase the pool of students who they can appeal to in their own degree programs. We recommend, if possible, that Douglas have in place transfer agreements such that a student leaving Douglas will have completed the required lower division credit for the UBC and SFU philosophy majors.

We sense that the question of the revivifying of the AA diploma and the possible revision of it, as recommended in 5e), to make it more attractive is a matter of some contention in the department. If the department wants to do this, it should be in accord with their own understanding of what a person with an AA should be educated in. It might well be more important from the point of view of the student who wishes to go on to study philosophy that the route into existing BA programs be both efficient and transparent.

Similar remarks pertain to the AA in Applied Ethics as in 5f). Our understanding is that this project had gone a long way toward completion until it was stalled by both a renewed strategic planning exercise by a higher office at Douglas and the pandemic. One thing that is different about an applied ethics AA compared to a straight philosophy AA is that the applied ethics AA might have more direct benefit for a student not transferring to a university but a student entering the workplace. It might thus be a more important diploma course to develop. (We also wish to mention that the history of the AA in applied ethics suggests that repeatedly renewed strategic planning exercises by higher offices can do as much as stymy departmental initiative as to foster it.)

We recommend that the department think about other curricular opportunities, especially those offer by certificate programs. For example, a certificate that builds on department strength is a field like Technology and Society might draw in students from other programs at Douglas while also appealing to both students going on to four-year degrees (for example, in UBC's History and Philosophy of Science major) as well as those entering our highly technological workplace.

The other recommendations in this group are worthwhile in making student success more likely by increasing opportunities to study on both campuses, offering students more information on aid, and speaking to career paths after studying philosophy. On the last point, while it is true that there really is not a "philosophy industry" for students to enter, it is certainly true that many workplaces can benefit from employees who can read complicated documents with nuanced comprehension and can express themselves clearly, skills that philosophy and other humanities disciplines foster.

## 6. Admissions, Enrolments and FTE

### Program Recommendations:

**6a) Discuss, as a department, ways to increase enrollments in courses that tend to experience softer enrollments, either by advertising more or experimenting with different times or modes of delivery. Devote special attention to the department's drift (over the past decade) towards 3 x 1 courses and away from 2 x 2 courses, and discuss the effect that this may be having on enrollment numbers. Consult with the dean about the possibility of running courses with softer enrollments for the next few years.**

**6b) Amend student surveys to include questions about whether students have experienced a canceled class, and if so, how that has affected them.**

### Comments:

These are sensible recommendations. We note especially the suggestion that moving to meeting once a week in many courses might have a negative effect on enrolment. We would encourage investigation of this matter, insofar as that is possible. As course scheduling becomes more automated, there is a tendency to think of any distribution of instructional hours as equally valuable. This seems false, however. For example, 80 pp of difficult reading and a single three hour meeting can be a very different intellectual experience from 40 pp of reading and a shorter class time twice a week.

Further to this point, it is worth considering whether a single three-hour meeting over the course of a week is pedagogically ideal for a great many undergraduate students. While students may, in some instances, seem to prefer this kind of block scheduling, it may not be for reasons that correlate with academic success: many students work while studying and find that block scheduling of courses allows them to construct a more suitable work schedule. But such scheduling may also have an adverse effect on academic achievement. As we have already noted, being prepared to discuss a great deal of reading in a single setting may be beyond what is reasonable for students just beginning their academic studies. Furthermore, students likely benefit from repeated exposure to the same topics over the course of a week. It is not difficult to imagine that with an entire week between classes for a particular course, students have lost some of what they gained in the previous class. So we urge the department to think about course scheduling not merely through the lens of maximizing enrolment, but also in terms of what is pedagogically and academically best for its students – which may, in the long run, positively impact enrolments anyway.

This section also touched on issues in courses scheduling that did not make it into the recommendations but that touch in a genuine sore spot in the department. We heard several times that there has been an upward creep of enrolment needed by a certain date before classes begin in order not to trigger course cancellation and a cascading series of knock-on effects for both faculty and students. We have heard that enrolments now need to be in the mid-20s in a section for its to be cleared to run. We urge Douglas to be as forgiving as possible in these policies. In particular, we heard that these course cancellation policies

negatively affect the enthusiasm of faculty to create new courses, which can be expected to have a harder time achieving full enrolment that first couple of times that they run.

## 7. Pathways

### Program Recommendations:

**7a) Make a case for equivalency between Douglas's PHIL 2201 and UBC's PHIL 220.**

**7b) Look into creating a block transfer agreement with UBC's philosophy department. If the AA in applied ethics runs, attempt to create a block transfer to UBC's Ethics Institute as well.**

**7c) Look into getting appropriate transfers for PHIL 3350 at Simon Fraser. Look into whether PHIL 1170 at Douglas would be considered as equivalent to Phil 240 at SFU if 1170 were changed into a second- year course. Look into a Block Transfer with Simon Fraser as well.**

**7d) Seek transfer credit recognition at UBC for HUMS 1171 and 1172 (including, possibly, specific recognition of the equivalency of HUMS 1171 with UBC's ASIA 110).**

**7e) Do more to maintain contact with alumni who transfer to a different post-secondary institution, especially alumni who participated in our Summer Institute. Check in with them to see how well they think Douglas prepared them for post-secondary education at another institution. Consider asking some of those students if they would serve as contacts for current students who are themselves planning to transfer.**

### Comments:

We find nothing to disagree with in this set of recommendations, but we will note at the outset that we believe they are not ambitious enough. These recommendations by and large identify very specific instances in which a better, or new, transfer agreement ought to be in place. Indeed, the Program should do this. But it should be embedded in a larger project of facilitating clear, achievable transfer pathways for its students. This has already arisen earlier in this report.

Given how many Program students aim at completing a B.A., the Program should seek to arrange with both UBC and SFU transfer credit agreements that allow Douglas students to complete all of the lower division requirements of those universities' Philosophy major requirements while at Douglas. This would provide Douglas alumni with a clear advantage upon transfer: they will immediately be able to begin working on upper division major requirements. This is currently not possible because most Douglas Philosophy courses, if they transfer to SFU or UBC at all, transfer as unarticulated elective credit. This is, of course, helpful to students: they will receive credit toward their B.A. for their Douglas coursework. But the current arrangement leaves transfer students with very little work completed toward the specific B.A. major requirements at either institution. We heard from several students that this impacted their degree work at a university.

Engaging in this sort of reform of transfer credit agreement and opportunities is a big project and it will certainly require the cooperation of both UBC and SFU Philosophy Departments (which they ought to be happy to engage in, given the degree to which they rely on Douglas students transferring into their programs). It may require making significant changes to some existing courses in order to make them suitable for transfer agreement. It could even require adding a course or two. But given the dissatisfaction with the current arrangement that we heard from both faculty and students, we believe it is a worthwhile enterprise. Furthermore, by doing this, the Program could give itself a major strategic advantage over its peer departments: if it is known by students that Douglas, and only Douglas, offers clear pathways to a university B.A., then students will respond to this by choosing Douglas.

To add to this, the Program could package these degree pathways in innovative and appealing ways. For example, the Program could develop a Certificate credential that included, e.g., courses that facilitate eventual transfer to a B.A. program. Students interested in transferring would then not merely be extremely well-positioned to complete a B.A. upon transfer, but they would also have earned a credential in doing so, which is something that many students would value.

The Program need not limit its repackaging of its curriculum to transfer pathways (though it ought at least to do that). The Program might also consider other ways (some discussed above) of adding structure to its curriculum in order to offer new credentials, or otherwise offer students a kind of partial academic identity. Even a minimal prerequisite structure for some popular courses could help fuel enrolments in other courses, and it would give students the sense that their coursework is interrelated and that their courses build upon one another. Departments often believe that the key to student recruitment and retention is to make course access as easy as possible for students. But we have found that the programs most successful at student retention at our universities are those that have among the most demanding curricular structures. How to explain this is an interesting question – perhaps what students claim to want is not what their behaviour demonstrates that they in fact want – but even absent an explanation, it is an interesting data point and one that should provide some solace to departments considering increasing the structure inside of their curricula.

It is important that we acknowledge that Douglas's primary concern cannot be what happens to students after they leave Douglas and enrol at another institution. But given that many Douglas students are interested in earning a B.A., helping to smooth their path ought to be a significant concern: helping that subset of students achieve what they want to achieve after their time at Douglas just is to serve them well while they are at Douglas. We understood this sentiment to be lurking behind the feedback many Program faculty members gave us about their dissatisfaction with the state of existing transfer credit agreements and pathways.

One point re 7b): The UBC Applied Ethics Centre is a graduate centre and so we do not see any possibility of a major transfer agreement there. The undergraduate applied ethics courses, including the ones for professional degree programs are run through the philosophy department.

## 9. Faculty and Faculty Development

Program Recommendations:

**9a) Do more to keep track of relevant facts about our sessional instructors, e.g. seniority, QTT lists, seniority, courses turned down, etc.**

**9b) Discuss, as a department, what our future hiring needs are likely to be, and more broadly what direction we want the department to go in. discuss whether we should look for somebody who specializes in philosophy of race, for example. We may also want to consider bringing in another faculty member who specializes in continental philosophy.**

Comments:

We find nothing objectionable in this pair of recommendations – indeed, they seem like sensible practices for any department to engage in.

We would add, however, that the Program's future hiring discussions and strategy should be developed in light of some of the above recommendations. It is common in academic departments to request positions simply on the basis of the appeal of a course that the department currently lacks the expertise to offer, or simply on the basis of someone's retirement or departure. While these are perfectly valid reasons for articulating a hiring preference, it is at least as important to consider long term, big picture factors. So, for example, were the Program interested in reviving its AA, or developing a new one, or introducing new pathways or credentials, then it would be wise to consider future hiring needs in light of these interests.

## 10. DDP Operations

### Program Recommendations:

**10a) Look into the possibility of placing chalkboards in some classrooms and in offices on request, and do what's possible to ensure that instructor safety and functioning AV equipment are given attention once we move to 808 Royal.**

**10b) Ensure that the plan for a logic lab at 808 Royal is proceeding according to schedule.**

**10c) Provide the Career Centre and business development teams with information about our department members.**

**10d) Forge a better relationship with MCO, where it is clear what the boundary between their duties and our duties are.**

### Comments:

We also agree with all of these recommendations, but will place special emphasis on 10b. It was extraordinarily clear from our engagement with the Program that it is a warm, nurturing environment full of eager and ambitious students. The Program sorely needs more space for its students, which would repay the Program and the College handsomely, in our opinion. It's our understanding that a Logic Lab is in the plans for the new building at 808 Royal. The need for this space was emphasized to us by a number of faculty members; we sensed that there was some worry that plans could change. We are not in a position to assess whether this worry is justified, so we will simply affirm here that it is our belief that a Logic Lab would be an important investment in a very successful department.

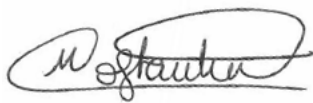


**DOUGLAS COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW (CR)  
 RESPONSE FROM THE  
 OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST**

Douglas College Administration policy A38: Program Review requires a follow-up plan be developed by the Vice President, Academic and Provost, in response to the Self-Study and External Report.

<b>FACULTY (Lead Dean/Associate Dean)</b>	<b>Humanities and Social Sciences</b>	
<b>Department / Program</b>	Philosophy and Humanities Department	
<b>Date Submitted</b>	December 2024	
<b>External Review Panel (ERP) [List all]</b>	Dr. Dai Heide, Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, SFU.	Dr. Alan Richardson, Professor, Philosophy Department, UBC.
<b>Reason for Timing of Comprehensive Review</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Schedule (routine) or <input type="checkbox"/> Off-cycle, due to emergent concerns (specify below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Changes in discipline/field/licensing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> New program development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Demand/enrolment/budget concerns</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)</li> </ul>	
<b>Date of last Comprehensive Review</b>	<i>Click or tap to enter a date.</i>	
<b>RESPONSE/RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		
<b>SUMMARY RESPONSE AND VPA RECOMMENDATIONS</b> In particular, DDP name should focus on the following:	<p>The external reviewers praised the high quality of the Philosophy and Humanities Department’s work and the faculty’s talent and dedication to their students’ education and well-being.</p> <p>The external reviewers recognized the validity of the recommendations identified in the self-study report and specifically emphasized the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement and clarification of transfer pathways/opportunities for students</li> <li>• Structured course offerings to help guide students through effective pathways and maximize enrolment</li> </ul> <p>I support prioritizing these two recommendations to ensure that students’ progression through the Philosophy and Humanities curriculum is seamless. These recommendations can be achieved through many of the suggestions outlined in the self-study report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• revising and/or optimizing transfer agreements,</li> <li>• revising curriculum to avoid excessive overlap,</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring fair and consistent assessment practices across sections of the same courses,</li> <li>• incorporating more experiential learning components where relevant,</li> <li>• scheduling strategically to guide students’ educational progression through the lower-division requirements of a bachelor’s degree in philosophy,</li> <li>• and preparing student-centered information packages or “study” maps to help them select relevant/required courses to meet their educational goals.</li> </ul> <p>I also support the recommendation to focus on “Applied Ethics,” not to develop a new credential, but to connect more directly to the College’s strategic goal to integrate applied, experiential learning activities in educational programming.</p> <p>As per the College’s routine follow-up to comprehensive program reviews, the Department is to submit its <u>Implementation and Action Plan (IAP)</u> to the Dean within 45 days of receipt of this Report, and to report back to the Dean one year after submission of the IAP to account for progress made.</p>
All Self-Study recommendations accepted?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No [If no, brief explanation.]
All External Report recommendations accepted?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No [If no, brief explanation.]
<b>Next scheduled PR (5 – 7 years):</b>	2032



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Vice-President, Academic and Provost

May 15, 2026

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Date