

University of Guelph
Department of Philosophy
Diversity and Climate Committee (DCC): *The Who, What, and Whys*

Who Are We?

In 2016 the Philosophy Department at the University of Guelph struck a new standing committee, the Diversity and Climate Committee (DCC). This is the 2017-2018 composition of the DCC (see Appendix Two for contact information):

Karyn Freedman (faculty), Chair of the DCC
Michael Furac (graduate student)
Maya Goldenberg (faculty)
Karen Houle (faculty)
Marie-Pier Lemay (graduate student)
Patricia Sheridan (faculty)
John O'Connor (undergraduate student representative)

What Are We?

The Philosophy Department values an inclusive, respectful, and supportive environment for all its students, faculty, staff, and visitors, and we are committed to cultivating and sustaining a departmental 'climate' – e.g. social norms, professional practices, institutional structures, attitudes, beliefs, professional hierarchies, and privileges – that promotes these values. The DCC is particularly concerned with identifying and removing barriers to inclusiveness for members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in philosophy, including racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, women, disabled individuals, and those who are LGBT. We are committed to ensuring that the department is a safe and welcoming place for everyone who works and studies in it.

In its first year, the DCC administered a Climate & Diversity Survey for graduate students in order to help us gauge the current climate in the department. We followed up on the survey by hosting a half-day workshop on the survey results. In addition, we are compiling a list of resources for a DCC webpage that will provide up-to-date information on professional climate and diversity issues (see Appendix One). We are also developing a 'Best Practices' document that will address a broad range of issues, from consensual romantic relationships between faculty and students to departmental social events and course syllabi. We also plan to organize and host a number of events designed to foster respect and inclusiveness. As well, the DCC has appointed two of its committee members to act as department HIPPOs (a term we borrowed from the NYU Philosophy Department), or Helpful Interpersonal Point Person, who will be available to all students with general climate concerns or specific issues (see Appendix Two).

Why Are We?

Academic Philosophy has a diversity problem. More than any other discipline in the humanities, women and minorities are underrepresented at all levels among students and faculty. In recent years there has been a lot written about the climate of academic philosophy and how it contributes to this unhappy state of affairs (see Appendix One). What we know is that climate problems discourage some women and minority students from pursuing philosophy degrees at the undergraduate and graduate level, and from pursuing philosophy as a profession. We also know that they can contribute to an unsupportive professional environment for those who remain (for some examples of this see the blog [What Is It Like to Be a Women in Philosophy](https://beingawomaninphilosophy.wordpress.com/): <https://beingawomaninphilosophy.wordpress.com/>).

Why Is The Problem In Philosophy So Bad?

Academic philosophy has had its share of cases of gross misconduct, like sexual harassment, favouritism, and outright discrimination. Certainly, these cases contribute to the diversity problem in philosophy, but arguably they would not occur in a climate that did not permit them. Some have argued that the adversarial nature of philosophy turns away women and members of visible minorities who, it has been suggested (however problematically, since we have lots of evidence to the contrary) aren't good at or 'cut out' for the rigours of the discipline. Another, more plausible suggestion is that some subjects of study – feminist philosophy, queer theory, philosophy of disability, theory of race – are considered 'unphilosophical', which puts students and philosophers doing this kind of work at a disadvantage from the get-go. Another contributing factor could be the lack of representation of women and minorities on course syllabi (this could be one reason why, as studies show, the proportion of women in philosophy courses and/or majors drops off after introductory courses).

In addition to these obstacles, there are two psychological phenomena that have been identified as key factors to philosophy's diversity problem: **Implicit Bias** and **Stereotype Threat**. Jenny Saul's recent article (2013) sums up these two problems clearly and concisely (see her excellent article for further elaborations of both concepts):

Here I focus on two psychological phenomena: implicit bias and stereotype threat. The implicit biases that we are concerned with here are unconscious biases that affect the way we perceive, evaluate, or interact with people from the groups that our biases "target". Stereotype threat is sometimes consciously felt but also sometimes unconscious, and it concerns ways that a person's (awareness of their) own group membership may negatively affect their performance. So, in the case of women in philosophy, implicit biases will be unconscious biases that affect the way we judge (for instance) the quality of a woman's work, leading us to evaluate it more negatively than it deserves; while stereotype threat may lead a woman to genuinely underperform in philosophy (Saul, 2013, 2-3).

But It's Not All Bad News!

In fact, we've got some very good news to report on this front. Philosophers are taking seriously the problems facing our discipline. They are talking about the various issues, writing about them, and attempting to address them, and these efforts are being supported and encouraged by the discipline's institutions and representative members. As a result of these ongoing efforts to address climate and diversity in philosophy, there is a heightened awareness among philosophers of the various issues at stake.

Again, we are seeing significant efforts made to shift the current climate of academic philosophy, including initiatives from the American Philosophical Association and the British Philosophical Association, as well as singular efforts by philosophy departments across North American and Europe (see Appendix One). Philosophy has an image problem, to be sure, but it wants to change its image (e.g. see the blog: What We are Doing about What it's Like: <https://whatweredoingaboutwhatitslike.wordpress.com/>). There is also the Gendered Conference Campaign, which aims to raise awareness of the prevalence of all-male conferences and the harm that they do in perpetuating stereotypes of philosophy as male (<https://feministphilosophers.wordpress.com/gendered-conference-campaign/>).

How do we at Guelph measure up? The answer is, good on some fronts, not so good on others. The Philosophy Department has 15 full-time tenured faculty members, 6 of whom are women, which is *higher* than the national average, according to a 2013 study by the Canadian Philosophical Association (http://www.acpcpa.ca/documents/Equity_survey_summary_report-draft2.pdf). That said, we still have a ways to go with respect to other underrepresented groups. Out of 15 faculty, only one is a person of colour.

The Value And Importance Of Our Work:

We believe that there is tremendous value in *naming* and *identifying* a set of problems – within the discipline and reflected within our department – and making clear our intention to address them head-on. The DCC is doing just that, and it requires making explicit a particular set of commitments, in this case, that of creating and sustaining a social climate that is safe and inclusive.

We are proud to be able to add our name the list of philosophy departments who are attempting to identify and rectify both formal and informal obstacles to equality of representation in philosophy.

The DCC has work to do, to be sure, but we are eager to do it.

Appendix One: Resources on Climate & Diversity in Philosophy

What Are 'Climate' Issues?

Susser, Daniel. 2014. "Philosophy's Climate Problem: A Primer". *APA Newsletter Feminism and Philosophy*. Vol 13, no. 2.

<http://www.danielsusser.com/docs/Susser-Philosophy%27s-Climate-Problem.pdf>

Underrepresentation of Women in Philosophy:

Antony, Louise. 2012. "Different Voices or Perfect Storm: Why Are There So Few Women in Philosophy?" *Journal Social Phil* 43 (3), 227-255.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9833.2012.01567.x/pdf>

Haslanger, Sally. 2016. "Presentation to the AAAS on discrimination of women and racialized minority philosophers, diversity problem."

http://philosophycommons.typepad.com/disability_and_disadvanta/2016/02/sally-haslangers-presentation-to-the-american-academy-of-art-sciences-october-2015.html

Paxton, Molly, Figdor, Carrie, and Tiberius, Valerie. 2012. "Quantifying the Gender Gap: An Empirical Study of the Underrepresentation of Women in Philosophy," *Hypatia*, Vol 27. No. 4, 949-957.

Saul, Jennifer. 2013. "Implicit Bias, Stereotype Threat, and Women in Philosophy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchinson and Fiona Jenkins, 71–102. New York: Oxford University Press.

Thompson, Morgan, Adleberg, Toni, Sims, Sam, and Nahmiaz, Eddy. 2016. "Why Do Women Leave Philosophy? Surveying Students At The Introductory Level." *Philosophers' Imprint*. Vol. 16. No.6, 1-36.

5 posts from the New York Times Opinionator blog on 'Women in Philosophy' in 2013:

Haslanger, Sally. "Women in Philosophy? Do the Math."

http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/09/02/women-in-philosophy-do-the-math/?_r=0

Alcoff, Linda Martin. "What's Wrong With Philosophy?"

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/09/03/whats-wrong-with-philosophy/>

Langton, Rae. "The Disappearing Women"

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/09/04/the-disappearing-women/>

Antony, Louise. "Academia's Fog of Male Anxiety"
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/09/05/in-academia-a-fog-of-male-anxiety/?_r=0

O'Connor, Peg. "The Double Bind"
<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/09/04/the-disappearing-women/>

Underrepresentation of Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Minorities, Disabled Individuals, and LGBTQ: Note, some of the obstacles that exist for women in philosophy are equally obstacles for other underrepresented groups, but some challenges are unique to particular groups.

Racial Underrepresentation in Philosophy:

Botts, Tina Fernandes, Bright, Liam Kofi, Cherry, Myisha, Mullarangeng, Guntur, and Spencer, Quayshawn. 2014. "What Is The State of Blacks in Philosophy?" *Critical Philosophy of Race*, Vol. 2. No. 224-242.

Cherry, Myisha, Eric Schwitzgebel,. 2016. Like the Oscars, #PhilosophySoWhite. *LA Times*, Mar 3 2016. <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-0306-schwitzgebel-cherry-philosophy-so-white-20160306-story.html>

Gines, Kathryn T. 2011. "Being a Black Woman Philosopher: Reflections on Founding the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers." *Hypatia*, 26, no. 2, 429-37.

McPherson, Lionel. 2012. On Black Underrepresentation and Progress in the Profession. <http://www.newappsblog.com/2011/12/new-apps-on-black-underrepresentation-and-progress-in-the-profession.html#more>

APA. Resources on Diversity and Inclusiveness.
http://www.apaonline.org/?page=diversity_resources

Disability Underrepresentation in Philosophy:

Silvers, Anita. 2000. "Philosophy & Disability: an overview". *Philosophy Now*.
https://philosophynow.org/issues/30/Philosophy_and_Disability_an_overview

The Society for Philosophy and Disability:
<http://societyforphilosophyanddisability.org/>

Discrimination and Disadvantage Blog (where you can find, among other things, Shelley Tremain's excellent series *Dialogues on Disability*):
http://philosophycommons.typepad.com/disability_and_disadvanta/dialogues-on-disability/

LGBTQ Underrepresentation in Philosophy:

McKinnon, Rachel. 2012. "On the Job Market as a Transgender Candidate." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, http://www.chronicle.com/article/On-the-Job-Market-as-a/133958/?cid=ja&utm_source=ja&utm_medium=en

American Philosophical Association Committee, LGBTQ People in the Profession: <http://www.apaonline.org/members/group.aspx?id=110434>

The LGBTQ People in the Profession Newsletter (archives): http://www.apaonline.org/?page=lgbtq_newsletter&hhSearchTerms=%22lgbt%22

Sexual Harassment:

Kingkade, Tyler. 2016. "Why it's harder for grad students to report sexual harassment" *Huffington Post*. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/grad-students-sexual-harassment_us_57714bc6e4b0dbb1bbbb37c7?ir=Education§ion=us_education&utm_hp_ref=education

University of Guelph policy on sexual harassment and other non-academic misconduct: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/secretariat/office-services-student-judicial-services-non-academic-appeals/policy-non-academic-misconduct>

APA Report on Sexual Harassment: <http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.apaonline.org/resource/resmgr/sexualharassmentreport.pdf>

Faculty-Student Non-Romantic Relationships:

Dixon, Nicholas. 1996. "The Morality of Intimate Faculty-Student Relationships." *The Monist*, Vol. 79, 519-535.

Golash, Deirdre. 2008. "Power, Sex, and Friendship," in Alan Soble and Nicholas Power, eds. *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*. Rowman and Littlefield. 449-458.

Grove, Jack. 2015. "Should You Be Friends With Your PhD Students?" *Times Higher Education*, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/should-you-be-friends-with-your-phd-students>

Kelly, Nina. 2016. "Should Academics Avoid Friendships With Students?" *Times Higher Education*, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/should-academics-avoid-friendships-with-students>

Maintaining Professional Relationships (via Dalhousie University):
<https://www.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/dalrespect/brochures/Instructor-Student%20Relationships.pdf>

U of T Conflict of Interest Policy: <http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/policy/relations.htm>

Faculty-Student Romantic Relationships:

Dakashana Bascaramurty. 2010. "On-campus sex ban: Hands off the student body, Prof" *Globe and Mail* Apr 8 2010. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/on-campus-sex-ban-hands-off-the-student-body-prof/article4314128/>

Kingkade, Tyler. 2013. "UConn Bans Student-Faculty Sexual Relationships, Hookups And Sexting," *Huffington Post*,
http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2016/04/ban_the_independent_study.html

Mercier-Dalphone, Genevieve. 2016. The vicious circle of professor-student relationships: A follow-up investigation of McGill's policies on sexual harassment. <http://www.mcgilldaily.com/2016/03/the-vicious-circle-of-professor-student-relationships/>

Pryal, Katie Rose Guest. 2016. The Consequences of Resisting a Professor's Advances. <http://the-toast.net/2016/03/23/the-consequences-of-resisting-a-professors-advances/>

Schuman, Rebecca. 2014. "Hands Off Your Grad Students! Yes, you're consenting adults. But you're harming your department, your discipline, and mentors everywhere." *Slate* http://www.slate.com/articles/life/education/2014/07/professors_and_advisers_having_sexual_relationships_with_grad_students_hurts.html

<https://dankprofessor.wordpress.com/2009/04/05/student-professor-intimate-relationship-attacked/>

Anonymous. 2013. <http://thoughtcatalog.com/anonymous/2013/09/i-am-a-professor-at-a-prestigious-university-and-i-am-sleeping-with-one-of-my-freshman-students/>

Policies on Romantic Relationships between Faculty, Staff and Students (a random sample):

Northwestern
http://policies.northwestern.edu/docs/Consensual_Relations_011314.pdf

Stanford
<https://harass.stanford.edu/be-informed/guidelines-consensual-relationships>

Harvard

<http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/.../632072/Faculty-Handbook.pdf>

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/06/education/new-harvard-policy-bans-teacher-student-relations.html?_r=0

Yale

<http://catalog.yale.edu/dus/university-policy-statements/teacher-student-consensual-relations/>

William and Mary College

https://www.wm.edu/about/administration/provost/documents/consensual_relations.pdf

University of Connecticut

http://policy.uconn.edu/2015/12/29/policy-against-discrimination-harassment-and-related-interpersonal-violence/#_Toc435614466

UBC: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/ubc-to-consider-banning-romantic-relationships-between-faculty-students/article29704116/>

The University of Guelph has no policy on consensual amorous relations. Relevant policy includes Conflicts of Interest: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/staff-faculty-hr-policies-all-employees/317-conflict-interest>

See also Article 8 of the Faculty Collective Agreement:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/vpacademic/facultyrelations/pdf/CA-UGFA.pdf>

Best Practices:

APA Newsletter: Feminism & Philosophy vol 13, no 2 (Spring 2014). Theme: Diversity and Inclusiveness in Philosophy.

<http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.apaonline.org/resource/collection/D03EBDAB-82D7-4B28-B897-C050FDC1ACB4/FeminismV13n2.pdf>

British Philosophical Association's/UK SWIP "Good Practices Policy" (for ensuring welcoming and equitable departments and professional settings)

<https://feministphilosophers.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/good-practice-guidance-on-women-in-philosophy/>

Schuman, Rebecca. 2016. "There's No Good Reason for Independent Study,"

http://www.slate.com/articles/double_x/doublex/2016/04/ban_the_independent_study.html

Schwitzgebel, Eric. 2016. "How To Diversify Philosophy: Two Thoughts and a Plea for More Suggestions," Blog post on The Splintered Mind:

<http://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.ca/2016/08/how-to-diversify-philosophy-two.html>

Wilson, Robin. 2016. "To Avoid More Scandals, Cautious Departments Swap Drinking for Hiking." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, <http://www.chronicle.com/subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/article/To-Avoid-More-Scandals/237008>

<http://www.diversityreadinglist.org/>

<http://diversifyingsyllabi.weebly.com/>

www.apaonlinecsw.org/resources

What Other Departments are Doing About Climate & Diversity (a random sample):

NYU: <http://philosophy.fas.nyu.edu/page/climate>

Rutgers: <http://www.philosophy.rutgers.edu/graduate-program/climate>

University of Washington: <https://phil.washington.edu/climate-and-diversity>

Stanford: <https://philosophy.stanford.edu/about/diversity-and-climate>

Western Ontario: <http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/about/diversity.html>

Colorado: <http://www.colorado.edu/philosophy/climate>

University of Bristol: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/philosophy/about/equality-and-diversity/>

University of Southampton: <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/philosophy/about/equality-and-diversity.page>

Appendix Two: Diversity and Climate Contacts

- DCC Chair and HIPPO #1: Karyn Freedman, MacKinnon 354, Ext. 53232, karynf@uoguelph.ca
- DCC member and HIPPO #2: Maya Goldenberg, MacKinnon 334, Ext. 56367, mgolden@uoguelph.ca
- Philosophy Department Chair: Mark McCullagh, MacKinnon 347, Ext. 53221, mmcculla@uoguelph.ca
- Philosophy Department Graduate Coordinator: Karen Houle, MacKinnon 337, Ext. 53680, khoule@uoguelph.ca
- Philosophy Department Undergraduate Advisor: Stefan Linquist, MacKinnon 358, Ext. 56672, linquist@uoguelph.ca
- U of G Counselling services, University Centre Level 3 South, Ext. 53244, <https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/counselling/>
- U of G Office of Diversity & Human Rights, Fielding House, Ext. 53000, <https://www.uoguelph.ca/diversity-human-rights/>
- U of G Student Wellness Centre, J. T. Powell Building 2nd Floor, Ext. 53327. <https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/education/>
- U of G Sexual Assault Support & Information, <https://www.uoguelph.ca/sexualassault/panel/home>
- U of G Campus Community Police, Trent Lane, Ext. 52245, Ext. 2000, <https://www.uoguelph.ca/police/>