

State of the Graduate Program
September 10, 2003
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The objective of our MA program is to be a terminal MA program with national and international visibility that contributes to the land-grant mission of CSU. The land-grant mission has two parts: one is to focus on the practical dimensions of human learning. This is an important part of the mission, but it is not all there is to the Morrill Act that defines the land-grant mission. The second equally important part is to offer the “industrial classes” “scientific and classical studies.” This means that the industrial classes have an opportunity to look-up from the practical dimensions of human life -- look-up from the production of food, fibre and widgets and even look-up from the theory thereof -- and to pursue a classical education, including philosophical theory, and study figures such as Aristotle, Kant or Wittgenstein at the highest levels.

Accordingly, we offer a graduate education that combines the practical with the theoretical, and we are committed in our graduate requirements, hirings, and so on, to the proposition that theory without practice is empty, but practice without theory is blind. Over the past 30 years the department has developed a national and international reputation in applied philosophy, particularly Bioethics and Environmental Ethics. For about ten years we have been working on strengthening the reputation of the theoretical side of our program, and recently we have embarked on a mission to globalize and internationalize our curriculum, including the graduate program.

I want to emphasize that the fact that we offer a terminal MA degree is not a weakness, but a strength of our program. There is an important market niche for such programs: there are many mediocre Ph.D. programs across the country, but very few outstanding MA only programs. Given the choice between a mediocre Ph.D. program or an excellent MA program, there is a demand for the latter. It allows them to get ready for a better doctoral program, or it allows them to carefully test the waters of a good graduate education, or it gives them exactly what they want. Terminal MA programs have a reputation for being kinder and gentler than Ph.D. programs, offering greater individual support and attention, etc. and many students coming out of undergraduate programs are looking for this kind of attention. (Just think about the choice a typical Colorado undergraduate faces who is interested in doing graduate work in philosophy: consider the choice between the best MA program in the state and any of the alternative Ph.D. programs in philosophy available in this state.)

We have had great success with this formula in attracting students and preparing them for a wide variety of pursuits after our program. A large number of our students have gone on to doctoral programs and ended-up as colleagues at other colleges and universities. CSU MA students are professors at San Jose State University, The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, West Chester University in Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh State University, The College of William and Mary, University of North Carolina, University of South Carolina, University of West Virginia, University of Lancaster (UK), or at the University of Lisbon. At the same time, our MA students are successful without further graduate study. Some have gone on to teach at 2-year colleges, for example the chair of the humanities program at Front Range Community College. Some go to

work for various state and federal agencies, for example, working on environmental policy for the US Bureau of Reclamation or being a disputes resolution officer for the State of Montana. Some become professional activists: for instance the Director of the Noise Pollution Clearing House -- Dr. Decibel -- our own Les Blomberg -- or the host Randy Larsen of Eco-Talk, a syndicated talk show distributed by the Pacifica Radio Network. (Randy also teaches at Chico State College.)

Now it is easy to cull successes if you are looking at a 12 or 15 year period, as I have just done, but a narrower slice is just as good. Since 2001, including 2001, we have awarded 14 Master of Arts degrees in Philosophy. Seven of these students are now pursuing doctoral degrees. One in Religion, one in Anthropology, one in Public Affairs and the rest in Philosophy. I want to highlight two of these students, Bryce Huebner, who is now at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, one of the premier Ph.D. programs in philosophy in the US. The other Ketil Rogn who is working on a Ph.D. at the University of Oslo in Norway on the role of local knowledge in environmental ethics.

Two of these graduate students since 2001 received full-time teaching jobs at 2-year institutions right out of our program: at the U. of South Florida in Fort Lauderdale and at Utah Valley State College.

Two have important government jobs: One is part of the Strategic Analysis Team of the National Ethics Committee in the Ministry of Health in New Zealand, while the other is an Environmental Protection Specialist with the Central Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration,

That impressive list accounts for 11 out of the 14 graduates (79%). Of the remaining 3, one is a substitute teacher in Missoula, Montana, one is working for a landscape business in Durango, and the third is a part-time adjunct for us.