The Department is pleased to announce that Zack Sadowski is the 2016 Beiswanger Award winner.

We are also thrilled to announce that Kay Craigie (BA ’68) has generously donated $25,000 to endow the Beiswanger Award. The Department is truly grateful for Ms. Craigie’s continuing generosity. Last year, she donated $10,000 to endow the Kay Craigie Scholarship.

After taking Introduction to Philosophy in the summer of 2014, Zack says this course “helped me realize that I truly love the field.” He has plans to attend graduate school to continue studying philosophy.

The Beiswanger Award is named for Dr. George Beiswanger, Professor of Philosophy from 1963 to 1970. This award is given to an undergraduate major on the basis of overall academic excellence including (but not limited to) program GPA, overall GPA, undergraduate research projects, BA thesis work, and participation in academically-oriented departmental activities.

For more information and to find out how you can contribute to the Beiswanger or Craigie awards, visit our website at: www.gsu.edu/philosophy and click on Give to Philosophy.
George Rainbolt, Professor and Chair

GSU has had remarkable success when it comes to helping students graduate. In last fifteen years, GSU has increased its graduation by over 20 percentage points, from below 30% to over 50%. Moreover, we have eliminated the gap in graduation rates between white students and minority students. We did this while dramatically increasing the number of undergraduate students and increasing the mean entering high school GPA from less than 3.0 to more than 3.4. How did GSU achieve this success?

There is a huge higher education literature with daily posts on the internet and reports from think tanks with beautiful graphics. In this literature, one of the mantras is that to increase graduation rates, one must dramatically change the curriculum. Did GSU overhaul its curriculum?

The answer is “no.” When it comes to core curriculum, GSU’s increase in graduation rates has come over a period of curricular stability. The last major change in the core curriculum was in 1998. As far as majors are concerned, there has been a great deal of change. There are some programs in which significant changes in the major were motivated by concerns about graduation rates. However, many more curricular changes were motivated by increases in knowledge. For example, the growth of neuroethics in Philosophy, Neuroscience, Psychology, and Law was driven by advances in these four disciplines. In addition, many curricular changes were motivated by changes in the job market. For example, the curriculum of the College of Education has changed in light of new rules for teachers.

If GSU did not overhaul the curriculum to increase graduation rates, what did we do? One reason that retention to graduation is such a tough problem is that it is not one problem. It is a large set of problems. Everything from parking to police services has an impact on retention. Here is a very partial list of programs that were implemented or revised to improve graduation rates at Georgia State: freshman learning communities, supplemental instruction, financial counseling, the first-year book program, the campus bus routes, student housing, a computer system used to identify at-risk students, academic advising, and the summer success program.

To develop one example, GSU used to rely on faculty to advise students. To be honest, this did not work well. Faculty are not trained to advise students. The requirements for graduation are complex. (I used to have yearly sessions with the philosophy faculty at which I presented the rules for completing GSU’s science requirements. These were not regarded as the most exciting meetings.) GSU moved to professional advisement. We hired over 50 people whose job it is to help student graduate. This has led to better advisement and freed up faculty time so that they can focus on helping students learn.

There is an important reason to be skeptical of the mantra that to increase graduation rates one must dramatically change the curriculum. There is an easy way to increase graduation rates. Lower standards. On the other hand, increasing graduation rates by improving advisement and doing the other things discussed above (none of which change what students are required to learn) means that you are increasing graduation rates by helping students to learn more.

Thus I propose a new mantra for high education. As they work to increase graduation rates, universities should change the curriculum to keep up with advances in knowledge and changes in the society, but, somewhat oddly, they should not change the curriculum in order to increase graduation rates. This new way of viewing the challenge of helping students from all backgrounds succeed in college and life is a useful guard against the temptation to take the easy route of diminishing what we require of our students.

---

4 In The Republic, Plato imagines a group of people chained in a cave so that their only contact with reality is the shadows cast by a fire on a wall. In The Second Sex, Simone de Beauvoir discusses the concept of the Other; those people who are different from the norm. I will use this space for reflections on some issue in philosophy, Georgia State University, or higher education. I will not avoid controversy. If you have thoughts on what I say, shoot me an email!
Georgia State Philosophers continue to define academic excellence.

Andrew I. Cohen is working with colleagues on a grant application on moral injury, working on a book on moral repair, working on two papers on apologies, and sometimes he even sleeps (usually not while teaching a class). His book, *Philosophy, Ethics, and Public Policy* (Routledge) appeared earlier in 2015. With Andrew Jason Cohen he received a grant to support new programming on overcriminalization.

Andrew J. Cohen was a visiting Professor of Ethics at the Georgetown University McDonough School of Business during the Fall 2015 term. You can hear his “Free Thoughts” Podcast about toleration at libertarianism.org. He gave a talk, “Freedom from Harm” at University of Baltimore’s Legal and Ethical Studies Program and “Libertarianism Excludes Corporations” at Georgetown University McDonough School of Business.

Jessica Berry was awarded a Provost’s Faculty Research Fellowship for the Spring 2016 semester, to help advance her book project, *Marx, Nietzsche and Freud: The School of Suspicion*, which went under contract with Routledge in October.

Eddy Nahmias published an article co-authored by three former MA students who graduated in 2013, Morgan Thompson (first author), Toni Adleberg, and Sam Sims. Their article, “Why Do Women Leave Philosophy? Surveying Students at the Introductory Level” is forthcoming in *Philosopher’s Imprint*. It discusses results of a climate survey on GSU students in Introduction to Philosophy (Phil 2010) to explore factors that might explain why women in U.S. universities decide to major or minor in philosophy at a lower rate than men. It’s worth noting that currently 50% of the philosophy majors at GSU are women. Along with Jason Shepard (MA 2011), Dr. Nahmias presented a paper at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) meeting in San Diego in January 2016. His New York Times column, “Is Neuroscience the Death of Free Will?” was republished in *The Stone Reader: Modern Philosophy in 133 Arguments*.

Tim O’Keefe’s chapter on “Hedonistic Theories of Well-Being in Antiquity” was published in the *Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Well-Being*, and he completed “The Stoics on Fate and Freedom” for the forthcoming *Routledge Companion to Free Will*. He was also the discussion leader for a session on Aristotle on shame as part of the Aristotle on the Emotions Workshop, sponsored by the Institute for the History of Philosophy at Emory University.

George Graham continues to work with Professor Robert McCauley of Emory University on a book at the intersection of psychopathology and the cognitive science of religion. During the Fall Term, Graham presented or helped to present themes from the book at Emory’s Center for Mind, Brain and Culture, The American Academy of Religion’s annual meeting in Atlanta, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Graham’s book on religious/spiritual delusion entitled *The Abraham Dilemma: A Divine Delusion* has just been published by Oxford University Press. His paper entitled “Identity and Agency: Conceptual Lessons for the Psychiatric Ethics of Patient Care” has just been published in *The Oxford Handbook of Psychiatric Ethics* (OUP 2015).

Neil Van Leeuwen is in Belgium continuing work on imagination and belief. Dr. Van Leeuwen has an exchange forthcoming in *Philosophical Psychology* with Maarten Boudry and Jerry Coyne, who attempt to critique his 2014 paper “Religious credence is not factual belief,” which appeared in *Cognition*. This past summer he delivered a total of five talks: one in Amsterdam (at the Vrije Universiteit), two in Antwerp (at University of Antwerp), one at the Society for Philosophy and Psychology (held at Duke), and one in Wake Forest at a small conference on science denial. Dr. Van Leeuwen gave a talk in Macau (near Hong Kong) in December.
Join the Friends of Philosophy listserv and get announcements about talks, conferences, and social events in the Department.

To join, send an email to:

listserv@listserv.gsu.edu

In the body of the message, include only two words:

subscribe philfriends
The Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics has had a great fall. It cosponsored the 2015 GSU ethics bowl team, which made a strong showing in Florida, placing in the top half of a frightfully strong field of teams. The Center sponsored a talk by Adam Minter in September on the global trade in trash and its impact on the world’s worst off. The Center also arranged a symposium on the decriminalization of sex work, featuring panelists Jessica Flanigan (Jepson School of Leadership, University of Richmond) and Lori Watson (philosophy, University of San Diego). The Center is gearing up for a spring term, where we’ll feature a visit by Jacob Levy (political theory, McGill), the annual student philosophy symposium (featuring keynote Bill Lycan from UNC), and a major interdisciplinary symposium on social mobility, featuring Derrick Darby (philosophy, Univ. Michigan). In May, we sponsor a major conference to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the publication of John Rawls’s *Political Liberalism*. The conference will feature several leading ethicists and political philosophers, and is in collaboration with the journal Ethics. In August of 2016, we will also workshop a book manuscript on immigration by Sarah Song (philosophy, law, UC Berkeley). Center affiliates will spend two days discussing the manuscript with the author and guests Margaret Moore (Queens University), Michael Blake (Univ. Washington) and Madeline Zavodny (Agnes Scott College). 

-Dr. Andrew I. Cohen
Associate Professor, Philosophy
Director, Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics
Expand your career options

LAWYER
HEALTH PROFESSIONAL
CEO
TECHNOLOGY
HEDGE FUND MANAGER
PROFESSOR
BUSINESS
SCIENTIST

MAJOR IN PHILOSOPHY
## Spring 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRI - 15th</strong></td>
<td>**Pizza Friday</td>
<td>12 pm** Computer lab Room 1646</td>
<td><strong>THURS - 3rd</strong> Philosophers’ Guild Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRI - 22nd</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phi Sigma Tau Conference</strong></td>
<td><strong>FRI - 11th</strong> Pizza Friday</td>
<td>12 pm  Computer lab Room 1646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRI - 15th</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>14th - 18th</strong>  SPRING BREAK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUES - 16th</strong></td>
<td>**Jacob Levy</td>
<td>3pm** Professor of Political Science Associate Member of Dept. of Philosophy, McGill University Conference room 1618</td>
<td><strong>FRI - 25th</strong>  David Pizzaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRI - 26th</strong></td>
<td>**Derrick Darby</td>
<td>3pm** Professor of Philosophy, University of Michigan  “The Fair Value of Voting Rights” Conference room 1618</td>
<td><strong>THURS - 7th</strong> Philosophers’ Guild Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRI - 1st</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>FRI - 15th</strong> Pizza Friday</td>
<td>12 pm  Computer lab Room 1646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRI - 3rd</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>THURS - 7th</strong> Philosophers’ Guild Meeting</td>
<td>4pm-6pm Conference room 1618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRI - 11th</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>FRI - 22nd</strong> Phi Sigma Tau Conference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRI - 14th</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>FRI - 26th</strong> Pizza Friday</td>
<td>12 pm  Computer lab Room 1646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRI - 15th</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>THURS - 7th</strong> Philosophers’ Guild Meeting</td>
<td>4pm-6pm Conference room 1618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRI - 1st</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>FRI - 15th</strong> Pizza Friday</td>
<td>12 pm  Computer lab Room 1646</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAJORS
Travis Clark*
Kiava Garnett
Sarah Murphy*
Alex Varnett*

MA RECIPIENTS
Maria Mejia

Writing Excellence
Graduate student, Jason Byas’s paper, “Assessing Abolition,” was accepted for presentation at the 2016 meeting of the Association of Private Enterprise Education. For more information, go to apee.org.

* denotes graduate with distinction
Nathan Houck (MA ’15) has been accepted into the M.S. in Clinical and Counseling Psychology program at Chestnut Hill College.

Andrei Marasoiu (MA ’13) is at University of Virginia, where he is in the philosophy PhD program. In early September 2015, he gave his paper, “Why Believe There Are Infinite Sets?” at the 15th Congress for Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science in Helsinki, Finland.

Maria Mejia (MA ’15) successfully defended her thesis, “Why Does Kant Believe that Moral Requirements are Categorical Imperative?”. Dr. Eric Wilson (thesis committee director), Dr. Tim O’Keefe, and Dr. Sebastian Rand were her committee members.

Maria Montello (MA ’11) is at the Royal University of Phnom Penhm, in Cambodia, as a philosophy instructor teaching critical thinking. She is in Cambodia working for the Maryknoll Lay Missioners (MKLM). MKLM is a Catholic organization in which its members live and work with poor communities in Africa, Asia, and the Americas to assist with basic needs. Maria contributes to the MKLM blog to update all on her time in Cambodia. You can check out her latest post by visiting, [http://www.mklm.org/category/blog/](http://www.mklm.org/category/blog/).

Keep Us Posted!

Have news that you would like to share with GSU faculty, students, and fellow alumni? New job? Published a book or article? Traveled? Send your submission via email to Felicia Thomas, fthomas@gsu.edu.
What is the Philosopher’s Guild?

We are Georgia State’s undergrad philosophy club. Membership is FREE and OPEN TO ALL MAJORS!

What does the Guild do?

We debate, discuss, watch movies and question the meaning of life. Oh, and we provide FREE PIZZA AND DRINKS!

Why should you join?

Philosophy generally teaches you how to slow down and think about what you’re thinking, and to promote this, the Philosophers’ Guild helps you by allowing you to participate in discussions among your fellow peers. It is, essentially, a strengthening practice to sharpen your analytical and comprehension skills. With that said, having the Guild on your résumé (even if you don’t major or minor in philosophy) demonstrates an engagement with critical thinking and abstract reasoning—skills that are highly valued by many employers.

How can you get involved?

- Login to OrgSync, search ‘philosopher’ to find our page, and click the GREEN JOIN NOW button. [http://gsu.orgsync.com/show_profile/23812-philosophy-forum]
- Come to our meetings. Every 1st Thursday in the Philosophy Department.
- Email us with questions: Sanam (President) - mchaudhary1@student.gsu.edu, Barry - bswitay1@student.gsu.edu.

Phi Sigma Tau

Phi Sigma Tau is the student-run philosophy honors organization at Georgia State University. The annual Phi Sigma Tau conference showcases not only the work of graduate students, but also invites a well-regarded professional philosopher. Additionally, PST hopes to host other activities this year including a stress management group for the Department, as well as a “meet your professors night.” We are always open to suggestions from members and non-members alike. If you would like to know more you can contact PST president Rob Boudreau at rboudreau3@student.gsu.edu.

Center for Ethics Student Forum

The Center for Ethics Student Forum is a student organization affiliated with the Department of Philosophy and the Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics. Our mission is to nurture conversation on campus and in the community about pertinent ethical matters facing people today. We do this by providing an interactive learning environment for professors, staff and students from all departments. We host events based around ethical themes that are open to all students and faculty, as well as to members of the broader Atlanta community. The Forum’s student leadership council and advisor arrange activities, contact speakers, and publicize events. Any student is welcome to make suggestions regarding the Forum’s activities and to participate in the planning process. For more information, contact the Forum’s president Bobby Bingle at rbingle1@student.gsu.edu.
THE PHILOSOPHER’S GUILD
MONEY MATTERS

Interested in lending your support? You can!
Our faculty are receiving national recognition for the quality of their research and the excellence of their teaching. Our students are taking their place on the national stage – presenting papers at national conference, receiving prestigious scholarships, and finding new ways to connect their learning with the world around them.

Your generosity makes this vital work possible. Alumni and friends support every aspect of Department life, making it possible for us to deal with present needs, and to plan for the future. You can help us: build our program; attract and retain outstanding students and faculty; enhance quality teaching and research; and bring distinguished speakers to campus.

If you would like to give to Philosophy, visit our website at www.gsu.edu/philosophy and click Connections, then Give to Philosophy.