

Dear President Casamento and Members of the Utica University Board of Trustees,

We write to you as philosophy instructors and members of the Central New York community to express our deep disappointment that you have made the preliminary decision to eliminate the philosophy major at Utica University. We urge you to reconsider this decision. Philosophy is a discipline of central intellectual and practical importance, both historically and today. **The Philosophy Department at Utica University comprises excellent teacher-scholars who have created a community for students to pursue life's enduring questions while also preparing them with the expertise and skills to succeed in the workforce.**

The Philosophy Department at Utica University is remarkably strong. We know the faculty as excellent, award-winning researchers and integral members of the philosophical community. They also are dedicated teachers who have grown the philosophy program over the past decade into a thriving one. They have created a community of interested philosophy students at Utica. It is shortsighted to eliminate the philosophy major as this group of faculty and students is growing and flourishing.

Philosophy teaches skills – sound reasoning, critical reading, and clear, persuasive writing – that help students succeed in further study and employment. Studies have shown that philosophy majors perform at or near the top of rankings of majors on the GRE, LSAT, and GMAT, and that their career earnings are competitive with majors that are often viewed as more 'practical' (source: <https://tinyurl.com/25jp57mp>). It would be a shame for Utica students to lose the opportunity to major in philosophy and access the sorts of skill-training it provides.

Philosophy is part of the best practical training for many fields. Questions about values infuse professional life, and philosophy helps future workers thoughtfully approach them. The future healthcare professional needs to know what they owe to persons addicted to opioids. The future information scientist must consider how to design computer and AI systems that balance technological innovation with the rights and welfare of humans. The future engineer should reflect on the impact of their projects on our changing environments and, in doing so, consider what we owe to other species and to future generations of humans. Since Utica University is concerned with equipping its students to succeed in their future employment, it should encourage the serious study of philosophy.

Training students for employment is an important goal for today's universities, but it is also important to help students become flourishing people, not just effective workers. **For centuries, philosophy has been the discipline that probes life's most important questions:** What makes for a good life? What can we know and how do we know it? How should we organize ourselves to live best with others? Is there a God? The opportunity to major in philosophy – to ask questions like these – is something that Utica students deserve.

Since we are neighbors - Central New Yorkers - as well as philosophers, we are particularly distressed by the plan to eliminate Utica's philosophy major. Because Utica serves many students from this region, we think it especially important that they have the opportunity to study and major in philosophy. Utica students may be our current neighbors and friends, who we want to grow into flourishing people. They are also likely to be the future nurses, criminal justice officers, and critical infrastructure specialists in our local community. So, it is important to us that they can study and major in philosophy to acquire the skills needed to excel in their jobs and to gain perspective on the questions of value that will inevitably arise as they work with us, our families, and our friends.

Again, we wish to express our disappointment at the preliminary decision to eliminate Utica University's philosophy major. **As members of the philosophical, academic, and Central New York communities, we urge you to reconsider your decision.**

Sincerely,

Martín Abreu Zavaleta, Assistant Professor, Syracuse University

Marcus Adams, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University at Albany, SUNY

Steven G Affeldt, Associate McDevitt Chair in Religious Philosophy, Le Moyne College

Joshua Alexander, Professor and Chair, Philosophy Department, Siena College

Paul Audi, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Rochester

Robert Baker, William D. Williams, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Union College, Founding Director (Emeritus) Clarkson University-Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Bioethics Program

R. Eric Barnes, Professor and Chair of Philosophy, Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Nora Mills Boyd, Assistant Professor, Philosophy Department, Siena College

Ben Bradley, Allan and Anita Sutton Professor of Philosophy, Syracuse University

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Justin Clark, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Hamilton College

Earl Conee, Professor of Philosophy, University of Rochester

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Jason D'Cruz, Associate Professor, Philosophy, University at Albany, SUNY

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Katheryn Doran, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Hamilton College

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David Dudrick, George Carleton Jr. Professor of Philosophy, Colgate University
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David Friedell, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Union College
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Marianna B. Ganapini, Assistant Professor, Philosophy Department, Union College
Carl Ginet, Professor of Philosophy Emeritus, Cornell University
Samuel Gorovitz, Professor of Philosophy and Former Dean of Arts and Sciences, Syracuse University
Jonathan Herington, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy & Department of Health Humanities and Bioethics, University of Rochester
Harold T. Hodes, Associate Professor of Philosophy, The Sage School of Philosophy, Cornell University
Marianne Janack, John Stewart Kennedy Professor of Philosophy, Hamilton College (and Colgate University and Syracuse University alumna)
Rachana Kamtekar, Professor of Philosophy and Classics, Cornell University
Jason Kawall, Carl Benton Straub '58 Endowed Chair in Culture and Environment; Professor of Philosophy and Environmental Studies, Colgate University
Patrick Kenny, Professor of Philosophy, Onondaga Community College
Jens Kipper, Assistant Professor, University of Rochester
Alexander Kocurek, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Cornell University
David Lambie, Adjunct Professor of Philosophy, SUNY-Oswego
James Lee, Visiting Assistant Professor, SUNY Oswego
Benjamin Lennertz, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Colgate University
Irene Liu, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Le Moyne College
Karmen MacKendrick, Professor, Department of Philosophy, Le Moyne College
P.D. Magnus, Professor of Philosophy, University at Albany, SUNY
Tony Manela, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Siena College
Russell Marcus, Professor and Chair of Philosophy, Hamilton College
David McCabe, Richard J. and Joan Head Chair in Philosophy, Colgate University
Jennifer McErlean, Professor of Philosophy, Siena College
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Mario Sáenz Rovner, Professor of Philosophy, Le Moyne College
Krisanna M Scheiter, Associate Professor and Chair of Philosophy, Union College
Erica Shumener, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Syracuse University
David Sobel, Guttag Professor of Ethics and Political Philosophy, Syracuse University
Zeynep Soysal, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Rochester
Joseph Spino, McNeil Assistant Professor of Applied Ethics, Le Moyne College
Joseph Stenberg, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Colgate University
Dr. Rosa Terlazzo, Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Rochester
Maura Tumulty, Professor of Philosophy, Colgate University
Ludger Viefhues-Bailey, Chair of the Philosophy Department, Distinguished Professor of
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Edward Witherspoon, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Colgate University
Aaron Wolf, Senior Lecturer, Colgate University
Benjamin S. Yost, Professor of Philosophy, Adjunct, Cornell University