

Responses to Ralston

#1. Questions from the Staff

Dear Professor Ralston—You begin your study of interdisciplinarity by tracing its lineage back to the ancient Greeks. Yet, after explaining Dewey’s position “against a hierarchy of educational values in favor of a plurality of disciplines” (p. 314), you then relay his vision of the philosopher as “liaison officer” (p. 315). Interestingly, though, this description of the philosopher as liaison officer for the sciences and mediator between experts and laypeople seems to depart from the classical view and thus place philosophy lower in the tree of disciplines than other sciences.

In the classical view, one could say that philosophers are uniquely suited to the role of liaison only insofar as they have made a study of the master science, and because they consequently have a view of the whole over and above the parts. Viewed this way, the philosopher could be understood *indirectly* as a liaison between any given part and another because their view of the whole provides a perspective lacking among individual parts. By contrast, if philosophy is not understood as the master science, it is difficult to understand how philosophy affords one the unique qualifications necessary to be a liaison.

Based on your position, where does philosophy fit into the grand framework of the disciplines? If it is not the master science that it appears to be in the classical view, how does it afford the philosopher with the unique qualifications to be a liaison? And lastly, recalling the aims of interdisciplinarity (p. 309), can philosophy as master science possibly serve to 1) bridge academic disciplines, 2) recruit wide ranging participants, 3) assemble cross-disciplinary approaches, and 4) cross traditional boundaries?

~American Dialectic Staff

#2. Reply from Ralston

First of all, I would like to thank the staff at American Dialectic for posing some very thought-provoking questions. Second, I should clarify the position I take in my paper. My intention in tracing interdisciplinarity back to the Greeks and the notion of consilience was not to diminish philosophy in relation to the sciences. As a liaison officer, philosophy and philosophers have a critical role to play in facilitating dialogue and communication between scholars in separate disciplines as well as between scholars and people outside the Ivory Tower. But I can see why the misunderstanding that I am demoting philosophy relative to the sciences arises, for the Greeks often erected hierarchies (between theory and practice, knowledge and appearance, etcetera) and understood anything that was instrumental to something else as inferior to that something else (for example, Aristotle's discussion of happiness in Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*). Since a mediator or liaison officer serves others, philosophy or philosophers must be inferior to those other objects mediated—in this case, the scientific disciplines or disciplinary experts in the sciences. Dewey argued against such a hierarchical and dualistic view of means-ends relations in *The Quest for Certainty* (1929) and traced the mistaken view back to the Greeks.

My argument is not that philosophy must become the master science. This is the position taken by some proponents of the Unity of Sciences movement in the early twentieth century. They argued that physics is the master science. Philosophy's unique credential, which makes it so well suited to serve as a liaison officer, is that it sits at the source of most if not all disciplinary inquiries, asking basic questions about the core assumptions that guide those inquiries. For instance, if you decide to engage in interdisciplinary teaching or research and you have expertise in only one discipline, the first thing you should do is familiarize yourself with the key assumptions of the other discipline(s). A philosopher is particularly well suited to understand these basic assumptions that motivate inquiries in diverse disciplines. Indeed, it is no accident that there are so many philosophical studies of diverse disciplinary spaces: philosophy of science, philosophy of social science, philosophy of art, etc.

If anything, philosophy is, as a factual matter, the source of other disciplines and, as a normative matter, offers a sound method

for communicating between disciplinary experts as well as between experts and laypeople. In reading the *Chronicle of Higher Education* today I was struck by two articles—one by Lee McIntyre titled “Making Philosophy Matter—Or Else” (December 11, 2011—<http://chronicle.com/article/Making-Philosophy-Matter-or/130029/>) and another by Adam Briggles and Robert Frodeman titled “A New Philosophy for the 21st Century” (December 11, 2011—<http://chronicle.com/article/A-New-Philosophy-for-the-21st/130025/>)—which argue, similar to my article, that philosophy must become more relevant if philosophers are to avoid their own marginalization in the Academy as well as in the wider society. What they are not arguing is that philosophy programs should be turned into the handmaidens of corporate America, such that all philosophical inquiry becomes applied or instrumental to economic success (though this was Bertrand Russell’s view of Dewey’s pragmatism). Neither are they contending that philosophy should be the master discipline and its disciples the final arbiters of what counts as sound scholarly inquiry. Rather, I believe that their point is that at least some of our philosophical energy should be invested in bridging between the academic disciplines, crossing traditional boundaries and making philosophical discourse more inclusive of diverse academic and non-academic voices. In this way, we might save philosophy from its requiem of irrelevance.

~Shane Ralston, Penn State University, Hazelton

#3. Further Thoughts on the Role of the Philosopher

Dear Professor Ralston—In the provocative second half of your article, you claim that philosophers are particularly well equipped to serve as liaisons between traditional fields of inquiry and that such liaising can help them avoid their own marginalization within the academy. These interesting points seem plausible enough. I am curious to hear your views, however, on the following further tasks that philosophers seem well suited to discharge as liaisons in an increasingly interdisciplinary academy. First, they can assess the merit of interdisciplinary study. Second, they can proactively

facilitate interdisciplinary exchange rather than merely translate between the disciplines. Each of these proposed roles would lend philosophers a more distinctive status than they enjoy in the academy today, giving them the greater relevance that you call for in your argument and reply (pp. 319-20; 324).

Assessing the merit of interdisciplinary study—As you point out, if John Dewey were around today, he would likely emphasize several practical advantages of interdisciplinary inquiry (pp. 316-17). Dewey argues, for example, that interdisciplinary study enhances the ability of faculty to examine certain pressing social problems, which I take to be an important practical benefit of such study (p. 316). However, faculty can identify solutions to pressing social problems only if they first possess a sophisticated understanding of the human condition. Without such an understanding, we cannot be sure that what we *take to be* practically advantageous is actually advantageous at all. As I shall argue, developing such an understanding is a task for which philosophers are particularly well suited.

Even if interdisciplinary study boasts certain problem-solving benefits, as you convincingly argue (p. 316), it can be advantageous on the whole if and only if it yields a state of affairs that is preferable to the state of affairs that would have obtained in its absence. Evaluating its merit therefore requires theorizing both about human purposes and goals and about the net value of human states of affairs and states of affairs more generally. In your article, you seem sympathetic to the notion that, among academics, philosophers are best fit to examine the overall value of such goals and whether, in what ways, and to what extent interdisciplinary study can help us achieve them. This holds true, I suggest, because philosophers in particular excel at rigorous analysis of such matters as the good life, human nature, and certain normative aspects of human sociality. Philosophers thus seem particularly well equipped to assess the value of interdisciplinary inquiry. Crucially, if philosophers come to play pivotal roles in overseeing interdisciplinary progress within the academy, philosophy itself may then enjoy a more distinctive status therein. This fact supports your claim that “[p]ushing philosophy in a more interdisciplinary direction could be of inestimable value to philosophers” (p. 319).

Facilitating interdisciplinary dialogue—You also make the provocative suggestion that, by acting as liaisons, philosophers can

avoid their own marginalization within the academy (p. 319). Do you conceive of such philosopher-liaisons as impartial moderators of cross-disciplinary engagement? Here is an alternative view, which some may find more appealing: in addition to serving as moderators, philosopher-liaisons can actively shape the content and character of interdisciplinary dialogue and, therefore, its theoretical results. You suggest that philosophers should come to see themselves as liaison officers charged with the task of “translating *both* between different disciplinary discourses and between academic and popular discourses” (p. 320). This excellent insight can be supplemented by the following view, which I propose for your consideration. If philosopher-liaisons were to serve not only as translators but also as influential developers of many of the ideas that flow between the various, porous disciplines, they would then be much like “epistemic architects” charged with buttressing the structure of human knowledge. The philosopher-liaison would ensure that the relevant “materials” (or ideas) arrive at their proper destinations in accordance with her “design” (or conception) of the relations between the disciplines. On this interdisciplinary model, philosophers would once again enjoy privileged positions as comprehensive builders of the edifice of human knowledge; other academics would, by contrast, typically (but not always) remain within their own, discipline-specific “rooms” therein.

In this response, I have suggested that philosophers ought to (1) serve as the primary judges of the value of interdisciplinary study and (2) take on a special, influential role in facilitating interdisciplinary exchange. I am curious to hear your views, Professor Ralston, on these ideas and my response more generally. The foregoing arguments do not, of course, entail that philosophers should function primarily as liaisons, nor that all philosophers should be liaisons, nor even that non-philosophers cannot constructively serve as liaisons. Yet, those philosophers who are willing to serve as liaisons in the intended sense of the term would no doubt find themselves engaged in a dignified academic pursuit. As assessors, enablers, and overseers of the progress of interdisciplinary inquiry throughout the academy, they would be bringing philosophy a step closer towards regaining its classical status as the “master science” (see “Questions from the Staff”).

~Gregory J. Robson

#4. Reply from Ralston

Dear Mr. Robson—Thank you very much for the thoughtful response to my “Interdisciplinarity: Some Lessons from John Dewey.” Overall, I agree with your comments in “Further Thoughts on the Role of the Philosopher.” I admire the spirit of your argument for an even more expansive place for philosophers in interdisciplinary studies. You claim that philosophers should become “the primary judges of the value of interdisciplinary study” by assuming a “special, influential role” as facilitators of “interdisciplinary exchange” (p. 326). This is a much more daring position than the one I originally proposed (namely, that philosophers should be mere liaison officers). You invoke an inspiring image of philosophers as designers or “architects” of “the structure of human knowledge” (p. 326). It struck me as a beautiful, almost Cartesian, vision of the philosophical enterprise. To play devil’s advocate though (without demolishing my own argument, which will be a bit of a tight-rope act), I would ask: what makes philosophers sufficiently qualified to be “epistemic architects”? If they are not qualified, then how would they become so? Is the claim that philosophers have a “special, influential role” to play in the interdisciplinary enterprise too hubristic? I set this last question aside in my original essay because I thought that it required a highly self-critical perspective, a peculiar ability to look from the outside in at what it means to be a philosopher (which is perhaps made more difficult if you are a philosopher).

Having attended interdisciplinary seminars, workshops and conferences, I am often struck by how scholars in other disciplines view philosophy and philosophers. We are an oddity, to say the least. Similar to scholars in other disciplines, we have our own specialized linguistic conventions, yet unlike many other disciplinary communities we lack a clear consensus about what our method is. Perhaps *the* philosophical method is conceptual analysis, but philosophers offer many competing accounts of what the analysis of concepts involves. So, it is possible that scholars in other disciplines would view the philosopher who claims that she is an “epistemic architect” and the sole adjudicator “of the value of interdisciplinary study” as prideful and immodest. This makes the philosopher someone scholars in other disciplines might not wish to partner with

in an interdisciplinary project. My own approach to being a philosopher and an interdisciplinary scholar has been more tentative and humble, slowly pushing my studies beyond philosophy to other disciplines (for example, political science, public administration, international relations, education, environmental science, human resources) in the hope of building bridges to scholars outside philosophy through an emphasis on shared problems. For instance, a recent project of mine involved examining the political and educational activities of community gardeners, something few philosophers but many cultural geographers have taken an interest in (see my “Educating Future Generations of Community Gardeners: A Deweyan Challenge,” *Critical Education*, vol. 3, no. 3, spring 2012, available at: <http://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/criticaled/article/view/182349/182462>) However, I do not want to confidently claim that this is the right or only way to go about doing philosophy and interdisciplinary studies. I will say, though, that learning about other disciplines, rather than claiming that yours is the “master science” or ultimate discipline, is a much more effective (even pragmatic) approach to earning the trust and respect of scholars outside philosophy.

While I hope that I do not go too far afield, I would like to make one major modification to the views expressed in my original piece. Since it was published I have become more skeptical about the possibility of a philosopher serving as a liaison between the Academy and the larger society. In many instances, institutional forces (for example, executive academic leadership, educational administration, tenure and promotion committees) prevent philosophers from transforming into outspoken public intellectuals. As an employee of Penn State, I have witnessed the institutional fallout of the Sandusky scandal from the inside. This past spring I was scheduled to give talks about my recent book (*John Dewey’s Great Debates—Reconstructed*, Information Age Publishing, 2011), and was warned to avoid speaking publicly about the scandal. Representatives of Penn State’s Rock Ethics Institute have proposed a procedural approach for addressing the Sandusky scandal (namely, deliberative forums for Penn State employees and members of the community wishing to discuss the matter), but have yet to take a substantive position on the issue. It would be fair to say that the reaction of Penn State’s philosophers to the Sandusky scandal, a fundamentally ethical issue, has been one of deafening

silence. A recent editorial in an area newspaper posed the following question: has the scandal affected student enrollments at Penn State Hazleton (a satellite campus)? Our chancellor declined to comment because lawyers and administrators at Penn State's main campus demanded absolute secrecy. Of course, the unintended effect of this silence is to affirm the public perception that the Penn State organization encourages a culture of secrecy and deference to authority. Due to this experience, I have become far less optimistic that philosophers would, under similarly dire circumstances, be sufficiently motivated to assume the role of public intellectuals. In the face of daunting (and sometimes repressive) institutional forces, the activity of "speaking truth to power," reframing public issues and challenging the status quo and doing so with the intellectual rigor made possible by years of philosophical training, often poses an attendant risk of losing too much.

~Shane Ralston, Penn State University, Hazelton

#5. Translating Across Contested Disciplinarity

Professor Ralston, in "Interdisciplinarity: Some Lessons from Dewey," has offered John Dewey's suggestion that the philosopher serve as a liaison officer across and between disciplines as a re-energized potential for academic philosophy today. The philosopher *qua* translator across disciplines, according to Ralston, can both foster interdisciplinary teaching and research within the academy and promote meaningful public engagement between academics and those outside the academy. I understand philosophy in a similar manner as that discipline which operates at the intersection of otherwise dichotomous modes of inquiry (such as art and nature, science and religion) and thus I am a charitable reader of Ralston's central thesis. However, I have a reservation to advance. The degree to which disciplinarity is contested within a discipline both undermines the possibility for the interdisciplinarity Ralston defends and calls for a more radical reconstruction of academic departments in higher education.

The idea of a philosopher translating between disciplines seems to rely on those disciplines' agreement on norms, modes of inquiry, and canonical texts. But this is precisely what many disciplines lack. Louis Menand, in *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Reaction in the American University* (New York: W.W Norton and Company, 2010), emphasized this point in his chapter, "Interdisciplinarity and Anxiety." Menand offers several insights with regard to Ralston's call for interdisciplinarity. First, whether or not departments, especially in the humanities, view their inquiries to be primarily empirical or hermeneutic, is contested. Second, modes of inquiry, say between new criticism and formalism in an English department or between Continental and Analytic lines of study in a philosophy department, are equally disputed. Third, the more rigidly an academic discipline defines itself, the more it becomes subject to a counter-disciplinary approach. Fourth, what counts as canonical within a given discipline is not fixed and the contestation of the canon has partly been absorbed into the discipline itself. In the United States, we could raise the question, in what departments do students read Sigmund Freud, Jacques Derrida, or Ralph Waldo Emerson? Psychology, Philosophy, and English are themselves highly unstable, if not rigidly divided on what should be taught. The problem with the concept of interdisciplinarity, according to Menand, is that it fails to view each discipline as mired in an ongoing search for its own self-understanding, as if a philosopher could refer to what anthropologists, conceived as a univocal entity, have found.

The idea of calling into question the stability and fixity of the notion of a discipline coincides with Ralston's reference to Colin Koopman's preference for "counter-disciplinarity" approaches to inquiry, those which "disintegrate the notion of a discipline altogether" (Ralston, p. 310, footnote 1). The counterdisciplinary approach, for instance in Women's Studies, might serve as an alternative to Ralston's call for interdisciplinarity. Women's Studies departments, as Menand points out, are composed of academics trained in a wide variety of traditional disciplines: film, philosophy, literature, and more. Postprofessional modes of study, as well as Cultural Studies or Popular Culture Studies, potentially provide models that embody the virtue of Ralston's call without the need for the premise I suggest it lacks. Topical or problem-based lines of study (including poverty studies, environmental studies, and more)

can include various modes of inquiry within them without the need for a movement between departments. With Ralston's suggestion that philosophy is an important dimension in such an endeavor, I wholly agree.

Philosophers anxious about their role in the future of the academy will be highly skeptical of my suggestion. If one were to suggest the idea of offering a rigorous degree in the liberal arts whose course of study is composed of the various liberal arts departments, the skeptics might fear that this would signal the disintegration of their departments and thus of their standing within the university, its budget, and potentially its faculty appointments. They might fear it would signal a retraction, not an expansion, of philosophy itself.

However, if Ralston's gesture toward interdisciplinarity is warranted, and I think it is, philosophers who proceed in a Deweyan spirit should not fear the flux and evolution of academic departments. These departments emerged as tools to serve our needs, and if they have become as limiting as Ralston suggests, then perhaps we should move beyond them, not simply move between them, as the concept of interdisciplinarity suggests.

~Seth Vannatta, Morgan State University

#6. Reply from Ralston

Professor Vannatta—Thank you for reading my essay and thoughtfully responding to it. Before replying I wanted to first carefully read the chapter you cite in Louis Menand's *The Marketplace of Ideas* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), titled "Interdisciplinarity and Anxiety." I am generally sympathetic to the reservation you express: that because academic disciplines are fraught with internal disagreement concerning their purpose, subject-matter and methods, realizing a Deweyan vision of interdisciplinarity is not as progressive or revolutionary as might be imagined. Your point is similar to Menand's: "Interdisciplinarity is not, as a thing in itself, subversive or transgressive or

transformational or even new” (96). I wholly agree with this general claim. Nothing is novel or earth-shattering about interdisciplinarity in itself. If the idea is novel, it is so because of what interdisciplinarity is valuable *for* or, stated differently, because it helps address apparently intractable problems or problem sets—for instance, what are sometimes described as “wicked problems,” or difficulties so complex and interdependent that no single disciplinary approach proves adequate.

I’m skeptical, however, of Menand’s claim that interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship are a byproduct of the “displaced anxiety” academic professionals feel (123). (It’s doesn’t appear that you make this claim yourself, although it might be an assumption in your argument.) One source of their anxiety, according to Menand, is the privileged place of academic culture relative to popular culture. The second part of Dewey’s liaison officer claim is apropos here. The philosopher may perform as an intermediary or translator between those standing within the Ivory Tower and the public outside, or in the capacity of public intellectual. Although a public intellectual might assume the additional role of an interdisciplinary scholar (those being the twin functions I identified in Dewey’s liaison officer claim), the one role is not identical to the other. An interdisciplinary scholar’s research and research products can be just as esoteric and inaccessible to the layperson as the scholar working within a single disciplinary space. A public intellectual’s work, on the other hand, should be more accessible, at least when directed towards a lay audience. If teacher-scholars do suffer from displaced anxiety, as Menand claims, then public intellectualism, not interdisciplinarity, would seem to be the better antidote.

In the same chapter of *The Marketplace of Ideas*, Menand claims that the trend in the “softer” disciplines (especially the Arts and Humanities) is for scholar-teachers to adopt the more rigorous methods of the “harder” disciplines (the Social and Behavioral Sciences), as well as for those working in the “softer” and “harder” disciplines to seek help from the “hardest” of disciplines (the Physical and Biological Sciences). He argues that this trend represents a backlash against increasing disciplinary professionalization (for instance, more demanding internal credentialing requirements and pressure for greater disciplinary specialization). While borrowing more rigorous methods from other

disciplines certainly involves interdisciplinarity (sometimes called *transdisciplinarity* when the explicit goal is methodological development), the connection with disciplinary professionalization is nevertheless highly speculative. The trend towards increased methodological borrowing and interdisciplinarity (or transdisciplinarity) could, for example, be explained by the multiplication of wicked problems, such as global climate change, the AIDs epidemic and nuclear proliferation.

Since, according to you, working between the disciplines requires a high degree of consensus within adjacent disciplines, and intradisciplinary consensus is for the most part lacking, a “counterdisciplinarity” (an approach that wholly rejects disciplinary divisions, similar to what we see in Women’s Studies departments) would bring about “a more radical reconstruction of academic departments in higher education.” I agree with you and Menand that some disciplines display a high degree of internal dissent. For instance, Philosophy, English, and History lack an operative set of assumptions or a dominant approach, bedeviled to their core by disagreements concerning the proper objectives, problems and methods that should guide scholarly inquiry. On the other end of the spectrum, disciplines such as Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry fare much better. They operate under, to borrow Thomas Kuhn’s language, clear “paradigms” that make revolutionary shifts in their operative theories, problems and methods a rarity, while periods of “normal science” or inquiry guided by a standard framework are common. Political Science is a discipline falling somewhere between these two extremes. At its core are scholars who believe that political concepts can be operationalized, phenomena measured and relations between facts and theories modeled in ways that permit valid generalizations (and sometimes, though rarely, reliable predictions). At the periphery of the discipline are normative political theorists championing various hermeneutic/philosophical approaches to political inquiry. Some of them roundly criticize the core group for clinging to scientism, the belief that the methods of social inquiry should be modeled after those found in the hard sciences. The core group often criticizes the subfield of political theory for lacking sufficient methodological rigor. Political theorists might be considered prophets of counterdisciplinarity, but in fact most see themselves as coexisting with their more positivist-minded colleagues under an expansive

disciplinary tent. Even Political Science's core group cross into the disciplinary space of Economics in search of more rigorous methods for modeling complex systems of political behavior, a move that presupposes the existence of disciplines and, in Menand's words, "is not an escape from disciplinarity" (96)—though it is, for all intent and purposes, interdisciplinary (or more accurately, transdisciplinary).

I am not claiming that indisciplinarity is a denial of disciplinarity or precludes the internal contestation associated with many disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences; and while interdisciplinarity presumes the existence of disciplines to move between, its proponents need not deny intradisciplinary disagreement about methods, problems and objectives. The primary challenge of performing as an interdisciplinary scholar is resisting the urge to merely "dabble" in another discipline as a way of exploring the overlap between it and their primary discipline. Instead, interdisciplinary studies should involve a serious investment of time and energy towards mastering the other discipline (which might even require further graduate-level training), so as to appreciate the basic assumptions, subtle conceptual nuances, deep disagreements and methodological difficulties faced by scholars in that adjacent disciplinary space.

What I admire about your suggestion is how radical its implications are for the future of educational institutions. Dissolving rather than simply blurring the boundaries between academic departments and disciplines has an undeniably antiinstitutional spirit to it. Anyone inspired to be an eclectic and reformist thinker—as many of us academicians are—has at some point felt their creativity and idealism sapped by repressive institutional forces. A counter-disciplinary approach disrupts the institutional status quo. It might be objected that this account is fallacious, for the move from counterdisciplinarity to anti-institutionalism is a slippery-slope. However, it strikes me as a logical next step in any revolutionary and "radical reconstruction" of the educational enterprise (to borrow your words). More radical educational theorists such as Ivan Illich, Paolo Freire, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren (perhaps even Saul Alinsky) might prove better partners than Dewey in such a radically reconstructive, antiinstitutionalist project. Dewey's recommendation that philosophy and philosophers function as "liaison officers" is,

comparatively speaking, a much more restrained and institutionally-oriented project. It involves preserving the traditional structure of disciplines and departments across colleges and universities, all the while empowering scholar-teachers to move between disciplinary spaces to enrich traditional teaching and research. As classical pragmatists (such as John Dewey and William James) remind us, we always start in the middle of things. In *media res*, we must work within a given set of constraints—for instance, the norms, traditions and policies of academic institutions with demarcated disciplinary spaces—even if we wish to eventually overcome them, and even though it might be preferable to, as you eloquently state, “move beyond them, not simply move between them.”

Ideally, if we were no longer bound by institutional constraints and demarcated disciplinary spaces, we would raze and reconstruct the whole edifice of higher education, eradicating not only disciplines, but also departments and the place-based institutions that house them (for an interesting proposal along these lines, see the work of members of the Free University Network, <http://sustainingalternatives.wordpress.com/>). Counterdisciplinary research and teaching might flourish outside of traditional academic institutions, where open educational resources (such as MOOCs) replace brick-and-mortar classrooms and electronic fora (such as blogs and online prepublication networks) displace geographically-situated conferences and colloquia. While I see the attraction of taking the antiinstitutional, counterdisciplinary plunge, I am to be honest a bit intimidated by it. It would be a daunting task, to say the least, if we were to undertake such a radical project to reconstruct higher education. Some (such as the Free University Network folk) believe it is already underway. Personally, I find it challenging enough to survive as an institutionally-constrained, interdisciplinary scholar in a system where measures of research productivity, academic reputation and potential for achieving tenure are tied so closely to success exclusively within one’s primary academic discipline. But perhaps the courage to take this plunge is just what Philosophy and philosophers need.

~Shane Ralston, Penn State University, Hazelton