A newsletter for alumni, alumnae, and friends of the MSU Department of Philosophy

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Please visit the Department of Philosophy online at www.philosophy.msu.edu. Send your news to Joy Franks at franksj@msu.edu.

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GRADUATE NEWS UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

### **SPRING 2011**

# **Greetings from the Chairperson**

Dear Friends of Philosophy at MSU,

It's been another year of fruitful intellectual activity and institutional challenge. We brought several outstanding speakers to campus and ran successful workshops, conferences, and film showings. We welcomed an impressive group of new graduate students and filled nearly all the undergraduate courses we could staff. The faculty had a banner year, publishing seven books in 2010 alone. We instituted a new graduate focus in environmental philosophy, made possible in part by our getting a tenure system position for Kyle Whyte.



Richard Peterson Department Chair

The environmental focus adds to the distinctiveness of our program and may help us secure more external funding, increasingly necessary to maintain our graduate program. And this year saw our first annual undergraduate philosophy conference, which was a smashing success and promises to be a worthy partner with our ongoing annual graduate student conference.

As we absorb the multi-year budget cuts, the theme of revenue remains insistent. Fortunately, our summer program for visiting Chinese students continues to grow, and our effort to develop an online program on ethics issues facing professionals in international development work seems to be bearing fruit. This summer our first offerings — in environmental ethics and ethics and development — have enrolled well. Though the sums are not large, these efforts help us make up some of our losses and may perhaps help replace some cuts to graduate student funding. We proceed cautiously with online teaching, aiming mainly at those who are off campus, though we have found that a heavily online format works well in the PHL 130 format developed by Matt McKeon.

Recognition faculty have received for their work include invitations to distinguished visiting professorships to Hilde Lindemann (University of Santa Clara) and Lisa Schwartzman (University of Waterloo), outside funding grants (Paul Thompson, Kyle Whyte, and Matt Ferkany) as well as University research grants (Kristie Dotson and Todd Hedrick). We are very proud that Rob Pennock was named University Distinguished Professor this year.

Another bit of good news is that we have successfully made use of the College's new Distinguished Affiliated Faculty program by establishing a multi-year arrangement with Sandra Harding (UCLA), the distinguished feminist philosopher of science and technology. She will join us for two weeks in fall and spring semester for at least the next three years and looks forward to working with our students and faculty.

And it is a pleasure to welcome Sean Valles as a new colleague on joint appointment with Lyman Briggs College; Sean's research is in philosophy of medicine.

By way of the inevitable transitions, we wish Peter Asquith the best as he starts his retirement (with plans to spend time in Costa Rica and points south) and thank Matt Ferkany for his recent years in the Department (he begins an appointment next fall in Education). Peter of course played a major role in the Department as chair for ten years and was for many years a stalwart figure in our philosophy of

# **Philosophy Events on Campus**

MSU philosophers hosted an unusual array of events that brought important scholars to campus and involved colleagues and students from other departments and the region.

## PRESENTATIONS BY PHILOSOPHY (AND OTHER MSU) FACULTY

### 2010-2011 SPEAKERS

Date to be

Hilde Lindemann (Michigan State), "Second Nature and the Tragedy of Alzheimer's" (Sept. 3). Harry Van der Linden (Butler University), "Just Military Preparedness: A New Category of Just War Theory" (Sept. 24). Ann Cudd (University of Kansas), "Women's Experience in the Philosophy Profession: A Frank Discussion" (Feb. 11). Ted Toadvine University of Oregon), "The Fundamental Paradox of Eco-phenomenology" (March 4). Nigel Dower (University of Aberdeen), "Ethics and Sustainability - What Makes Sustainability a Good Thing?" (March 28). Baird Callicott (University of North Texas), "The Scale of Global Climate Change and the Limits of Individualistic and Rationalistic Ethics" (April 21). Phyllis Rooney (Oakland University), "What is Distinctive About Feminist Epistemology at 25" (April 8).

### **WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES**

- 10/23-Christian Lotz and Kyle Whyte organized the third workshop in social and political thought: 24/10 "Commodification, Technoculture, and the Human. Rethinking Technology." Paul Thompson (Michigan State); Andrew Feenberg (Simon Fraser); Donna Haraway (UCSC). Comments: Tamra Frei and Todd Hedrick (Michigan State) and students from the MSU animal studies program. Around 200 people attended Haraway's talk and discussion.
- 1/21/11 Dan Steel, Paul Thompson, and Kyle Whyte (MSU Philosophy), "The Value and Opportunities for Philosophy in Collaborative and Funded Research."

- 3/17/11 Film Screening and Panel Discussion: "Only God Can Save Us: Heidegger and Nazism." Panelists: Christian Lotz (Philosophy), Benjamin Pollock (Religious Studies), Sean Forner (History), and the film's director Jeffrey van Davis.
- "11th Annual Graduate Philosophy Conference: 3/25-Setting the Stage for Tomorrow's Dialogue: 26/11 Reflections on Our Practice." Keynote Speaker: Douglas Anderson (University of Southern Illinois at Carbondale). Faculty Speaker: Kyle Whyte.
- 4/9/11 "1st Annual Undergraduate **Philosophy** Conference" At right, the audience at the conference.



ENDOWED LECTURES (Generously funded by Steve Holzman, these lectures allow us to continue bringing outstanding contemporary philosophers to campus.)

- 10/7/10 Martin Benjamin Distinguished Guest Lecture: Thomas Pogge (Yale), "Human Rights and Global Justice"
- 10/29/10 Ronald Suter Distinguished Lecture: Karsten Harries (Yale), "The Devil as Philosopher"
- 3/18/11 Charles McCracken Distinguished Guest Lecture: Christine Korsgaard (Harvard), "The Origin of the Good and Our Animal Nature"

### **ACADEMIC YEAR 2011-12 EVENTS**

10/28-29/11 18th Annual Philosophy Born of Struggle Conference: Economic Crisis, Education and the Role of Philosophy for the African American Public. This conference seeks to address the cultural and political dynamics of worldviews, philosophical analysis, education and economic needs within African American communities and the wider society. John McClendon III, Organizer.



"Democracy and the Supreme Court's 'Citizens United' Case." This is part of the College of Arts and Letters "Themed Year" on the Relevance of the Humanities to Society. James Roper, Organizer. Determined:



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# **Developments in the Undergraduate Program**

Fred Rauscher (Director of Undergraduate Studies)

Our undergraduates are a very active group. They organize a weekly club meeting that features discussion facilitated by invited faculty members and graduate students. Sample topics are "Logical Fatalism", "American Indian Philosophy: Debating What It Isn't", and "Rethinking Nonviolence". Each semester is capped with a field trip. In December 2010 the group travelled to the Grand Rapids Art Museum and the Frederick Meijer Sculpture Garden



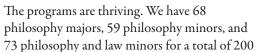
Kim Harris Conference Presenter

for aesthetic appreciation and discussion. In April 2011 the group discussed Buddhism with a monk at the nearby Dhammasala Forest Monastery and, by fortunate timing, were able to witness ceremonies marking the Thai New Year. The department is pleased that we have a large group of students taking philosophy beyond the classroom.

The highlight of the semester was the first annual Philosophy Undergraduate Conference

at MSU. Our students worked very hard in planning this conference

ex nihilo. The program committee chose six papers for presentation at the one-day event. In future years students hope to expand beyond MSU by inviting students from other institutions to submit papers and attend the conference.





Fred Rauscher

students registered in our program, triple the number enrolled five years ago. The philosophy and law minor has grown tremendously in its three years of existence and now enrolls 73 students. Faculty efforts to increase diversity have paid off with a steady increase of women and minority students both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of our majors and minors.

[*Editor's Note:* For more on the Philosophy Undergraduate Program, go to <a href="http://philosophy.msu.edu/">http://philosophy.msu.edu/</a> and click on "Undergraduates" at the top of the web page.]

# UNDERGRADUATE AWARD WINNERS

### ZERBY ESSAY PRIZE WINNER 2011: CHRISTOPHER KLERKX

Chris was awarded the Zerby Essay Prize this year for his essay "Epistemic Closure and Skepticism."

# THE MARTIN BENJAMIN AND BRUCE MILLER AWARD 2011: BENJAMIN MALBURG

This award is presented to the **most promising sophomore major in philosophy**.



Benjamin Malburg

Christopher Klerkx

# **NEW FACULTY MEMBERS**



Kyle Whyte

Kyle Whyte: Kyle became a new tenurestreamed faculty member Spring semester 2011. In 2010 he had five refereed journal articles—two were solo authored. He also had one triple-authored journal article published. He gave six presentations at conferences and meetings across the United States and Canada. He worked on eight grant proposals—five were

awarded. Also see the reference to his work with Christian Lotz on the Conference on "Commodification, Technoculture, and the Human. Rethinking Technology."

**Sean Valles:** Prof. Valles, so far, has taught Introduction to the History, Philosophy and Sociology of Science and the History and Philosophy of Eugenics and Medical Genetics for the Lyman Briggs College, as well as Public Health Ethics for



Sean Valles

the Philosophy Department. He is currently adapting his dissertation, "Explaining the Evolution of Common Genetic Disease," into a book manuscript and preparing a July talk on the epistemic challenges in personalized genomic medicine. In March, he presented "Not All Interdisciplinary Philosophy Helps to Justify Philosophy's Relevance: Lessons

from Philosophy of Biology" at University of North Texas, and is preparing that work for publication. With other Briggs faculty, he has applied for an NSF grant seeking funds to develop a course teaching communication skills to future scientists, and then create a website where other instructors can download course materials, video of lectures, etc. He plans to use that experience in his upcoming role as the Philosophy Department's first external funding officer.

# Matthew W. McKeon will become Chair of Philosophy in August, 2011

Matt joined the Department in 2000, after completing a PhD in Philosophy at the University of Connecticut in 1994. His book *The Concept of Logical Consequence* appeared last year. Matt's teaching and research interests are in logic, philosophy of language, epistemology, and

metaphysics. This past year he developed an innovative use of on-line

technology in reworking our basic logic and reasoning course (PHL 130), which has proven to be very successful judging by the comments and accomplishments of his students. Becoming chair will be a change of pace. But Matt is ready for the challenge: "I look forward to sustaining and advancing philosophy at MSU during the budgetary troubling times and beyond."

# NEWS FROM THE GRADUATE DIRECTOR

Fred Gifford (Associate Chair)



Fred Gifford Associate Chair

John Ouko finished his PhD (and also the Ethics and Development Graduate specialization) this past term, writing his dissertation on "Human Rights as Ideology." Ryan Stringer finished his MA this term as well, with his MA thesis entitled "A Defense of Reasons-Internalism." Lisa Engelstein, who completed her PhD with us in 2009 and has had a post-doctoral research fellowship at Northwestern University School of Medicine, is now beginning a tenure track position at the Alden March Bioethics Institute at Albany Medical College. Congratulations to all of these now former students.

Entering our Ph.D. program in the fall will be: John Dombrowski, who majored in Philosophy at Grand Valley State University; Alex Neitzke, whose BA in Philosophy is from Loyola University in Chicago; Craig Merow, who comes with an MA in Bioethics from the University of Pennsylvania; Nicholas Saarela, with an MA in Philosophy from the

University of Michigan; and Ian Werkheiser, with an MA in Humanities/Philosophy from California State University. A warm welcome to them all.

# GRADUATE STUDENT REPORT

Eric Comerford

This year the graduate students continued their tradition of productive endeavors. Andy Taylor and Alex Valadas, along with the supporting contributions of many of the graduate students, organized the 10th Annual MSU Graduate Philosophy Conference. Paul Thompson gave the featured faculty talk and James Sterba delivered the keynote address, while several of our own grad students provided insightful commentaries.

In addition to several publications,

our graduate students represented the department at many conferences and academic events throughout the year. These include several presentations at the EDGES conference, the International Congress of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics, the bicentennial celebration of Darwin Discovery Day, the American Philosophical Society, the American Society for Bioethics and the Humanities, and many other venues across the globe.

On the lighter side of things, the grad students gathered for their traditional start-of-the-semester party to kick off the year. They also took a trip to the MSU planetarium to watch the debunking of bad astronomy. Rumors are also starting to circulate that the old softball team — Champions in a Possible World — may try to make a comeback this summer in the grad leagues.

### **NEW GRADUATE FOCUS IN ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY**

With the first annual Distinguished Lecture in Environmental Philosophy by Professor Brad Callicutt, the Department inaugurated a new graduate and research focus in environmental philosophy. Building on our evolving strengths and hoping to extend our collaborations with other units and scholars, this initiative should add to our ability to attract first rate students and outside funding. More to the point, it will enable us to contribute to the discussion of the many difficult questions of principle that underlie conflicting responses to environmental challenges facing the world today, including climate change, the risks of new technologies, and our responsibilities to other species. Colleagues primarily involved in developing this program have been Fred Gifford, Michael Nelson, Daniel Steel, Paul Thompson, Kyle Powys Whyte, Gretel van Wieren (RES), and Richard Peterson. Others with related research interests include Judy Andre, Jim Nelson, James Roper, and Lisa Schwartzman.

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# **News About Faculty** by James E. Roper

**Lisa H. Schwartzman** was a Visiting Humphrey Chair of Feminist Philosophy at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Fall 2010. She has had five presentations at conferences and colloquia this year and will become the Philosophy Graduate Program Director/Associate Chair beginning fall semester 2011.



Kristie Dotson gave eight different presentations at conferences in 2010. "Knowing in Space: Lessons from Reading Black Feminist Social Theory," at the North American Society for Social Philosophy, Central APA, in February, and "Concrete Flowers: Contemplating the Profession of Philosophy" at the Eastern APA, in December, for the Committee on the Status of Women in

Philosophy, were two of these presentations.

Christian Lotz organized with Kyle Whyte the first workshop for Continental Philosophy on technology and memory, as well as the third workshop in social and political thought. Christian received Honorable Mention for the IAH Fintz Teaching Award and published five articles in 2010. He was awarded a visiting professorship by the German Academic Exchange



Christian Lotz

Foundation (DAAD) at the BTU Cottbus in Germany where he will be teaching in 2011.

John H. McClendon III has already given five presentations and addresses in 2011, including keynote addresses for the Central Michigan Heritage Enterprise, the 14th Annual Richard V. Moore Lecture at Bethune Cookman University, where he was also part of a panel on faith and reason, and Cal. State University at Fresno, where his address was entitled "Conversations with my Christian Friends: Is God a White Racist?" He also co-edited two issues of the APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience, Fall 2010 and Spring 2011. He published an article on Angela Davis in the fall issue. His article, with Stephen C. Ferguson II, "African American Philosophy: A Historical Outline" appeared in The Oxford Handbook of World Philosophy. He co-edited the Special Issue of Socialism and Democracy on African American Studies for which he wrote an introduction and an article. In April he did an interview with City Pulse on the recently released Manning Marable biography on Malcolm X.

Fred Rauscher published two lengthy book chapters and gave three presentations—one at the XI International Kant Congress in Pisa, Italy—in 2010. Prof. Rauscher organized a panel on "Same-Sex Marriage: The Role of Tradition" presented in April at the MSU College of Law. He has submitted an application for a Fulbright Lecturing Award, which has been recommended for approval. In January, he assumed the role of Undergraduate Advisor in Philosophy. He is also the recording secretary of the MSU Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

**Paul B. Thompson** teaches two courses a year because of his extensive duties in research as an Endowed Kellogg Chair. Since

the last *LTG*, he published three journal articles, two papers in conference proceedings, nine book chapters, one book review, two newsletter/magazine articles, and two scientific/technical reports. He also gave 31 presentations at international and national conferences, faculty seminars, and professional meetings.



Paul Thompson



James Roper

James E. Roper published the lengthy "Using Private Corporations to Conduct Intelligence Activities for National Security Purposes: An Ethical Appraisal," in the *International Journal of Intelligence Ethics*. He had two other substantial journal articles published in 2010, one op-ed (based on a conference paper), and a conference abstract. He presented five

different scholarly papers at national and international conferences. *Dimensions of Informal Logic*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, was published in January. It was expanded to include additional material on philosophical issues in business, government, public policy, and education.

James Lindemann Nelson published "How Catherine Does Go On: Northanger Abbey and Moral Thought" in *Philosophy and Literature*, 2010, and "Donation by Default?" in the *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics*, 2010. In addition, he had an article reprinted in *Cognitive Disability and Its Challenge to* 

Mor*al Philosophy* and gave three presentations in 2010.

**Debra Nails** presented four papers: February 2010, at the Central APA and the MSU VIPP program at Seoul Science High School; and, in March 2010, at New Mexico State. In August 2010, she presented "Plato's *Republic* in Its Athenian



Debra Nails and Jim Nelson

Context" to the International Plato Society, in Tokyo.

**Hilde Lindemann** was a contributing author of four succinct journal articles in 2010. She also had a chapter from her textbook on feminist ethics published as a book chapter. "Protection of Persons Not Able to Consent: A Feminist View" appeared in *Human Rights and Biomedicine*. She also wrote two book reviews and gave several presentations.

**Dick Peterson** presented "Social Learning and Nonviolence: Thinking Beyond Nationality" to the Korean Academy of Studies (Seoul, September). In the Fall, he read "Nonviolence in an Age of Social Catastrophe" at McGill and "Is Nonviolence a Distinctive Ethical Idea?" at Oregon. "Violence and Historical Learning: Thinking with Robert Pippen's Hegel" recently appeared in *INQUIRY*.

**Todd Hedrick** published his book *Rawls and Habermas: Reason, Pluralism and the Claims of Political Philosophy*, 2010, *and* an article on Rawls and Habermas in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, February

Continued on next page



2010. He was a commentator for "Same Sex Marriage: Legal and Philosophical Issues," MSU College of Law, in April. Finally, he responsed to Andrew Feenberg at the Department's Workshop on "Commodification, Technoculture, and the Human" in October.

Todd Hedrick

**Daniel Steel** used his spring 2010 leave to publish several articles and book reviews, including

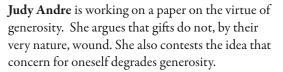
"Epistemic Values and the Argument from Inductive Risk" and "A New Approach to Argument by Analogy: Extrapolation and Chain Graphs" (both in) *Philosophy of Science*. Steel and Francesco Guala co-edited *A Philosophy of Social Science Reader*, in which he published "Social Mechanisms and Causal Inference."

Fred Gifford and Steve Esquith edited Capabilities, Power, and Institution: Towards a More Critical Development Ethics. He had "Biotechnology," reprinted in Life Science Ethics, 2nd Ed. On campus, he presented "Can Anyone Hear Us? Voices of the Poor from 47 Countries," in October, and "Health Care: A Commodity or a Human Right?" with Larry Knight in March.

**Tamra Frei** reviewed the article "Contractualism and Reasons: Agency, Normativity, and Explanatory Adequacy" for *Politics, Philosophy, and Economics.* She was a commentator at the "Commodification, Technoculture, and the Human: Rethinking Technology" Conference at MSU in October. She addressed the Undergraduate Philosophy Club on "Freedom of the Will and Moral Responsibility" in September and spoke at Emily Katz's PHL 200 class on Susan Wolf's article "Sanity and the Metaphsics of Responsibility" in December.

**Michael Nelson** finished the national tour for his book *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril.* He and his co-editor visited over 35 cities. Michael and his co-editor have also published

two other essays on the theme of their book: "The Perfect Moral Storm, When the Life Rafts are on Fire" in *Minding Nature,* in December; and "Toward a Global Consensus for Ethical Action" in *The Leopold Outlook*, Winter 2011.





Michael Nelson

Evelyne Cudel focuses on transdisciplinary studies in environmental and medical ethics. She also writes about Simone de Beauvoir and Gaston Bachelard. Last June Evelyne went to Sardaigna to present "Pour une nouvelle philosophie du théâtre contemporain: l'éthique au cœur de l'argumentation avec pour fondation Les Bouches Inutiles de Simone de Beauvoir" at the Simone de Beauvoir International Society.

Robert T. Pennock received the MSU

Distinguished Faculty Award this year. Among his many activities, he organized, in February, an interactive exhibit for

the MSU Museum's Darwin Discovery Day that demonstrated some of the artificial life research done at the BEACON Center for the Study of Evolution in Action. He gave an invited talk about some of his evolutionary computation work to the MSU Faculty Emeriti Association.



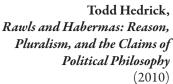
Robert Pennock

# SINGLE-AUTHORED BOOKS BY MEMBERS OF THE PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

(Since the last Language, Truth, and Gossip)



Stephen L. Esquith, The Political Responsibilities of Everyday Bystanders (2010)

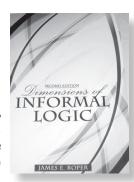




The Concept of
Logical Consequence
An introduction to Princephral Logic
MATTHEW W. MCCEON

Matthew W. McKeon, The Concept of Logical Consequence (2010)

James E. Roper, Dimensions of Informal Logic, 2nd Edition (2011)



# Highlights from the Center for Ethics and Humanities in the Life Sciences

Tom Tomlinson (Director)

Philosophy Faculty in the Center were very active, publishing many important books and articles, making connections with colleagues in other countries, and

receiving funding important projects.

Len Fleck was selected to spend sabbatical time the Brocher Foundation in Geneva, where helped edit a volumn



Leonard Fleck

on ethical issues in bedside rationing.
Fleck also published "Sustainable Health
Reform," "Personalized Medicine's
Ragged Edge," and several other articles.

In September, the Center, the Philosophy Department, and Asian Studies hosted a delegation from **Southeast University**, in Nanjing, PRC. Visitors included Dr. Fan Heping, a well-known leader in Confucian ethics scholarship in China. The Center is especially interested in developing collaborative research projects in comparative bioethics, as well as faculty and student



Ann Mongoven

exchanges. In January, The Center's January 2010 contract with Sparrow Hospital (Lansing) to provide a variety of ethics-related services was renewed for 2011—helping strengthen the hospital's ethics program. Ann Mongoven was a member of a team that received a grant aimed at linking community engagement research to public health biobank practice. This support comes from



Tom Tomlinson Director

the NIH, the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. **Judy Andre** published "Feminist Bioethics" in *Biomedical Law and Ethics*, in March.

# **Peter Asquith Retires**



Peter Asquith

Former Philosophy Chair Peter Asquith will formally retire at the end of the year. A recognized voice in the areas of philosophy of science and logic, Peter spent years as executive secretary of the Philosophy of Science Association—helping "manage" this important area of philosophy. He has been deeply involved with the National

Academy of Sciences, the APA, and other prominent national and international organizations. After completing two terms as

Chair of Philosophy, Peter has spent the last ten years helping the college and university design systems to help manage administrative data. He will continue to work part time on the *Research Administration Project* for the Vice President for Research and Graduate studies and the Vice Provost for Libraries, Computing, and Technology. Peter and his wife Cheryl will spend their winters in Costa Rica where he will continue his relation with the Philosophy Department at the University of Costa Rica.

# **FUNDRAISING**

We thank those who have made contributions to the Hall-Hanna Scholarship Fund, which has now reached the level that allows us to begin next year to make awards to outstanding students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Given the cuts we continue to absorb, we hope to enhance our fundraising and welcome your support. If you are interested in learning more about how you can help, please contact Bridget Paff, Director of Development for the College, at 517-353-4725 or via email at <a href="mailto:paff@msu.edu">paff@msu.edu</a>. To make a gift, please write your check to Michigan State University and mail it to Philosophy, 503 South Kedzie Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1032 and indicate AE07 Dept. of Philosophy or AE076 Hall Hannah Endowment on the memo line.

### **Greetings from the Chairperson** continued from page 1

science and logic teaching and research. Matt has helped develop our environmental offerings and worked on the online certificate program in addition to doing a lot of teaching.

Administrative posts in the Department are in the process of changing hands as well: Fred Rauscher has already taken over from Christian Lotz as undergraduate director. Lisa Schwartzman replaces Fred Gifford as associate chair for graduate studies next fall, when Matt McKeon will become our new chair.

It's been a demanding year, but one in which the Department has

retained its senses of cohesion and humor and intellectual purpose. With best wishes,

Richard Peterson



Jill Perez

The Department is fortunate to have two very able people running the office.

Jill Perez is Department Secretary, overseeing the graduate and undergraduate programs. Jill had a daughter, Alexis Marie Norris, on May 20th, and will be out of the office for six weeks. Joy Franks is completing her first year as Office Manager. Both women have done excellent work for the Department and are considered indispensable to the work of our unit.



Joy Franks

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