STANCE:
The Making of a Peer-Reviewed Academic Journal

An Honors Creative Project (HONRS 499)

by

Gina Schouten
Abstract:

My creative project will consist of a peer-reviewed academic journal which publishes papers in philosophy, as well as a personal journal in which I record my thoughts on the project as it progresses during the year and a compilation of helpful materials for future editors-in-chief, as I intend for this publication to become an annual project in the Philosophy Department. The objective of the journal is to encourage philosophical discussion and provide an opportunity for students to have their scholarly achievement recognized by being published in an academic journal. The target audience consists of current philosophy majors, incoming freshmen interested in studying philosophy and knowing what kind of work current students are doing, and graduate programs who will be interested in knowing that applicants have had work published in an academic journal at their undergraduate university. I believe that this thesis project has provided a valuable learning experience for all students involved. I have learned a great deal about philosophy, writing, and the editing process, but, more importantly, I have grown in terms of my leadership skills and ability to work efficiently within a group setting.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank Dr. David W. Concepción for advising me through this project and for his unyielding enthusiasm for any activity which helps students learn. He has been extremely helpful and generous with his time during the entire course of this project.
Pre-professional experiences offer valuable learning opportunities for those involved at all levels, and participation in the peer-reviewed undergraduate academic journal *Stance* has been no different. During the past two years, editorial board members, writers of accepted papers, and all submitters have, through their involvement in the publication, grown as writers and as students of philosophy. As the first editor-in-chief of *Stance*, I have encountered many challenges and have learned a great deal from them including effective means of overcoming problems associated with coordinating many components of a project as well the strengths and weaknesses of my particular leadership style. The leadership skills I have developed during my involvement with *Stance* as well as the experience of assessing the relative philosophical merit of various works will influence my success well beyond my undergraduate education at Ball State.

Perhaps because of their sustained involvement in the process of assessing the philosophical work of their peers, the pre-professional experience of involvement with an academic journal offers the greatest benefit to editorial board members. These students critically evaluate the work of their classmates in terms of its originality, philosophical importance and rigor, depth and clarity of argument, assessment of relative literature, and literary skill. This evaluative exercise is a clear opportunity for editorial board members to improve their own philosophical writing. The simple act of reading the work of peers allows students to identify strengths and weaknesses in their own work; the added investments of explicitly assessing others’ works in terms of their philosophical and literary merits, determining the deservingsness of the works to be included in a publication representing the best papers written in the department, making a case for the conclusions they reach, and discussing their assessments with
other editors who have engaged in the same evaluative process constitute an intensive opportunity for growth. Apart from growing as philosophers and writers, editorial board members, through their collaboration with others in an experience which closely resembles the work of real philosophers, have the opportunity to determine to some extent whether or not the pursuit of philosophy as an academic career is something in which they are genuinely interested. Because philosophy is a discipline which offers few internships or meaningful teaching opportunities to undergraduates, such pre-professional experiences are even more valuable to those contemplating further study than they might be in other disciplines.

Involvement in pre-professional experiences like the publication of *Stance* is likewise valuable from the perspective of those students whose papers are printed in the journal. Once again, from the starting point of the observation that students’ papers are vastly improved when the students enlist the help of their peers in reading and discussing one another’s works, it follows that having papers accepted to a peer reviewed academic journal will provide students with a tremendous opportunity to grow as students of philosophy and writers. In editorial board meetings of *Stance* during which we assessed those papers accepted for publication, we discussed objections which we felt writers should address in order to make their papers stronger, arguments which were unclear and in need of revision, those which were unsuccessful and in need of major re-working, and those which seemed superficial or not philosophically honest. In addition, we discussed stylistic shortcomings and ways in which they could be overcome. Then, the conclusions we reached and the extensive suggestions we developed for improvement were conveyed to the writers. It is a rare opportunity for an undergraduate philosophy student to receive such thorough and well-developed criticism from peers who are simultaneously struggling to improve their own work. Writers of accepted papers have the opportunity to
improve their writing generally as well as to receive extensive feedback on a particular work which may ultimately serve as a writing sample or conference submission.

Even for those students whose submitted papers are not accepted for final publication, *Stance* constitutes a valuable learning opportunity. One of the side-effects of implementing a project like a peer-reviewed journal in a small department like the Philosophy Department at Ball State is that even those students who do not receive official feedback on submissions accepted for publication can discuss their papers with members of the editorial board and learn how their writing can be improved. Along with improving their writing skills, these students improve their chances of having future submissions accepted. Although the policy of *Stance* was to not officially discuss with writers the reasons for which their papers were not accepted for publication, many writers had unofficial discussions with members of the board during which I suspect they learned a great deal. I personally spoke with the writers of two unaccepted papers and encouraged them to continue their work in the department and submit again next year. For those students who submit papers which the editorial board does not accept, the greatest benefit this project offers is the incentive to continue to work. Over the past two years, the majority of the papers which *Stance* has not published have been written by students who will still be Ball State philosophy students next year. Many will submit again and have papers accepted. This year, I have noticed that many of my peers have aspirations to submit work to *Stance* or serve on the editorial board. I am pleased with the role of the journal in motivating students to improve their writing and the depth of their philosophical inquiries.

There are many obstacles to be overcome in the production of a peer reviewed journal. Among them were many which I anticipated and avoided. I avoided, for example, some of the difficulties which I would have otherwise encountered in scheduling meetings of the editorial
board by requesting that those who were applying to be editors fill out an application form which included questions regarding their availability. I avoided the problem of editors coming to meetings unprepared to discuss papers by specifying prior to the meeting which papers would be discussed and requesting that they read and re-read the relevant papers prior to the meeting to better facilitate discussion. Finally, I mitigated the expected problems of missed deadlines which would slow progress on the journal by setting deadlines early and planning for possibilities such as delays in the editing process or writers missing deadlines for revisions. I hope that, through the compilation of my thesis project, which includes a toolkit for future editors-in-chief, I will have helped others involved with the publication in years to come to anticipate and avoid similar difficulties. Adhering as strictly as possible to a calendar and monthly checklist, regardless of how closely they resemble the ones that I developed, will allow the journal to withstand such missed deadlines, and I hope that the suggestions, sample fliers, and other materials will help future editors foresee and avoid potential difficulties.

I do not, however, anticipate the project running completely smoothly, and I feel all the more gratified for having begun this journal because I know that problems will continue to arise and require flexible, creative solutions. I learned more from the problems which did materialize than I did from those which I was able to avoid. By overcoming these problems (or dealing with frustrations regarding my inability to overcome them), I learned more about coordinating various aspects of an elaborate project, leading a group of people with various talents and interests, and ensuring that a pre-professional learning experience be as meaningful as possible for those involved. I came to recognize my particular leadership style, in which I struggle to accommodate my dual roles of peer and leader. In particular, I had tremendous difficulty enforcing deadlines and performing a leadership role within a community of friends and
classmates. Frequently, I was less confident than I should have been and my timidity resulted in confusion and delays in the project. Furthermore, I frequently lacked the assertiveness to make decisions when consensus was unattainable, or to establish policies in the absence of the expressed support of others. I believe that I have learned a great deal about how to lead a group of peers and I noticed that I became a more effective leader by the end of the project, when I made expectations more explicit, concentrated on occupying a different role at editorial board meetings than I did in the classroom or in social settings, and had developed confidence in my ability to make important decisions independently.

My work on Stance will continue to influence my success beyond my studies at Ball State. Most obviously, my service as editor-in-chief has allowed me to recognize my particular style as a leader who strives to build consensus and foster enthusiasm for a common goal. I have recognized and assessed my weaknesses, and am committed to developing as a leader by not fearing dissent within a group, or group members whose styles of working are not compatible with my own. I have learned to maintain composure in the face of problems and coordinate many independent components of a common project. I expect that the confidence I have developed through my service as editor-in-chief will allow me to infuse my commitment to seeking voluntary and enthusiastic consensus with an assertiveness which I have learned is necessary for the completion of projects like Stance. This confidence in and recognition of my leadership capabilities will prompt me to seek leadership opportunities which previously I may have avoided. As a pre-professional learning opportunity, Stance has served as an opportunity for everyone involved to improve their skills as students of philosophy, as leaders, and as members of groups working to accomplish common goals, and I hope that it will continue to offer students the satisfying opportunity to be involved in a worthwhile publication.
STANCE
Publication Policies

- Faculty advisor appoints editor-in-chief
- Editor-in-chief has final veto in all matters but should strive to build consensus (exception to veto authority: in acceptance/rejection and editing of paper written by editor-in-chief)
- Phi Sigma Tau mailbox may be used for official communication in circumstances which require it but should be kept to a minimum
- Editorial board should have an odd number of members and may include one member who attends all meetings and discusses papers but only votes in the assessment of another editor's paper
- Editor-in-chief should discuss applicants for editorial board with Phi Sigma Tau advisor before making any final decisions
- At the first meeting of the editorial board, the editor-in-chief should discuss policies and scheduling, as well as the journal mission statement, with the board and discuss any proposed changes
- If the paper of a board member is being evaluated for acceptance/rejection, the writer may participate in the discussion but do so in a manner which retains (to the degree possible) anonymity; if a vote should be necessary, that vote of the editor who wrote the paper will not count; the "tie-breaking" member of the board or the editor-in-chief will break any tie
- In the event that a paper by an editor is accepted for publication, that editor is not allowed to speak when the board is discussing editing for that paper, but should take notes
- Editor-in-chief should discuss the advisor's evaluation of the papers in private before the board begins reviewing submissions
- Faculty advisor will attend as many paper-reviewing meetings as her/his schedule allows
- Editor-in-chief should discuss the board's selections with the advisor in private after the reviewing is completed
- Only one paper per author will be published, although individuals may submit more than one
- STANCE should maintain financial self-sufficiency
- STANCE should strive for diversity and breadth of philosophical inquiry but maintain, first and foremost, its commitment to publishing the best papers among those submitted, regardless of topic
- STANCE should strive to publish not only the best-written papers from among those submitted, but also the most philosophically rigorous and advanced papers
STANCE—My Thoughts On...

How to handle a paper or revision that's not turned in on time:

This issue is difficult primarily because the editor-in-chief will be working with and setting deadlines for her/his own peers and friends, and policies and deadlines are difficult to enforce under these circumstances. I suggest, first, that deadlines be specific and well-advertised. Make sure the editorial board or writers know the deadline, and, in my experience, giving times helps. People will wait until the last minute. If you say, “I need this by noon on February 20,” you might not get it by noon, but you'll likely get it sooner than if you said “the week of the 20th” or something equally vague.

Once a paper is late, my suggestion is to attempt to communicate with the person as soon as possible. Because Stance is extra-curricular, people won't make it their first priority, and they may have forgotten a due date, or not appreciated the importance of completing work on time. Try to talk to the person whose work is late in class or club. Like I said, it's difficult to enforce deadlines on your friends, but I think familiarity may become an asset in certain cases—friends and peers (in my experience) will work as efficiently as they can if they understand that you have deadlines of your own.

Finally, send lots of reminders, and, generally, I have found that giving people a month to do work that should take a week is a bad idea. Many people will wait until the last minute regardless of how much time they have. I think quicker deadlines deter people from setting aside work and forgetting about it.

How to handle an editorial board member who isn't doing the work:

This I think, generally won't be a problem as long as the editor-in-chief takes seriously the process of selecting board members. I suspect that, like me, most editors-in-chief will be acquainted with those interested in being board members. I suggest that situations in which editors don't meet deadlines are handled in the same way as those situations in which writers don't meet deadlines (see above). More likely, problems will arise because editorial board members have busy schedules and can't attend meetings. This can be avoided to some degree by asking people to indicate their availability on editorial board applications. Editors-in-chief should also strive to plan meetings when a majority can attend, and make a reasonable effort to arrange meetings so that an editor who is unavailable for one meeting can attend subsequent meetings. If an editor does not attend a reasonable number of meetings, s/he should no longer be on the board, because to ignore the problem would be unfair to those editors who are doing a lot of work and attending all meetings. Having an alternate or “tie-breaking” member is a good way to plan for this possibility.

How to handle papers re-submitted without specified changes having been made:

Because participation in Stance is intended to be a learning experience for everyone involved, writers will (and should) be required to edit their papers beyond simple grammatical changes. I suspect that writers who turn papers back in without having made changes will continue to be a common problem. One possible deterrent is going through two specific rounds of editing. If papers come back without important problems having been addressed, the board should insist, in the second round of editing, that the writers make appropriate changes. Another suggestion, which I regret that we didn't try this year, is to make explicit those changes which are required for publication and those which are merely suggested or requested. Writers have understandably been hesitant to change papers for which they received a good grade and in which they invested a lot of time. Ultimately, the editor-in-chief must decide whether a writer's failure to make changes necessitates her/his paper being excluded from the journal; it is also the responsibility of the editor-in-chief to talk to writers about these issues and resolve them. I think that, in the future, specifying which changes are required for publication and conducting editing in (at least) two distinct “rounds” will make this a less serious issue.

How to handle frustrations as editor-in-chief:

This is a tough one. Reasonable frustrations are to be expected—this is an involved project which requires collaborating with a lot of different people. It requires a lot of waiting for people to finish their work so you can get to your's. For me, the waiting was the most excruciating part. Frustrations which must be dealt with should be discussed with the faculty advisor. As an instructor, the faculty advisor will have more authority than the editor-in-chief and should be used for help in dealing with problems, particularly if they might involve confrontation with other students. In general, frustrations are to be expected, but can be worked through. I suggest setting early due-dates to minimize stress.
Finding a good place to meet:

Generally, this will not be a problem. The editorial board will be a small group (maybe 5 people) and the cantina in North Quad served quite nicely for meetings this year. Admittedly, there are interruptions as people come and go to use vending machines and whatnot, but we had few interruptions and none which created a problem. If meetings are to be held much earlier than 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, however, another spot might need to be found. By 5:00, I found that most people were out of the building and the cantina was pretty quiet. Other options might include MTCup or a room in the library or the Atrium. If all else fails, rooms can be reserved for organizational meetings in SC114 (see useful information sheet).

Making a blind review as anonymous as possible:

This is another extremely difficult issue to deal with. Because the philosophy department is small and we all tend to take the same classes and read each other’s work, many members of the editorial board will know who wrote the papers being reviewed. In my experience, this has not actually created any difficulties. Both years, the members have been mature and evaluated papers objectively based on philosophical merit and other appropriate criteria. In theory, however, it’s a serious problem, particularly since it seems to turn out that papers written by editorial board members often end up being published. What I would do differently if I were to do this project again next year is discuss the importance of the blind review process with the editors and request that they take it very seriously. You won’t be able to get around the fact that some editors know who wrote the papers, but you can deter them from making it into a joke. Make sure they know that they shouldn’t discuss it with one another, and under no circumstances should it be discussed at meetings. Anonymity should be taken very seriously, but when it can’t be obtained completely, I think the illusion of anonymity is still something worth striving for. It can, at least, create an atmosphere of objectivity and discourage editors who know who wrote a particular paper from telling others.

Running an efficient and productive editorial board meeting:

I think that planning and flexibility are the keys to productive meetings. Usually I had a good idea of how I wanted meetings to run, but I tried nonetheless be willing to change plans or spend more time on things I had hoped would be relatively quick. One of the most difficult aspects for me was balancing the fact that the members of the editorial board were friends and wanted to chat and have a good time with my own tendency to err on the side of efficiency. I think meetings should start no later than five minutes after the time they are scheduled for. I also suggest that editors-in-chief have detailed plans of the topics to be covered during the meetings and set reasonable goals regarding the amount of work to be completed. In my experience, it is helpful to let editors know in advance what will be accomplished during the meeting so they can plan accordingly. Also, if editors know what needs to be accomplished during the meeting they seem more inclined to stay focused on the work to be done. If they aren’t aware ahead of time, I find that it’s more difficult to stay focused. For editors-in-chief who, like me, tend to strive for efficiency at all costs, I found it helpful to remind myself that I was also supposed to be having a good time. Generally, I wanted to take my cues (regarding pacing meetings) from the members of the board (to a certain extent). If they were having fun, there was no need to concentrate so much on being efficient. If they seemed restless or bored, I tried to work quickly and make meetings more consistently productive.

Pie-ing a philosopher:

I’m in favor of it. The Ask a Philosopher fundraiser was a huge success this year, largely as a result of the flexibility and creativity of all the people involved. As asking questions in exchange for a tip developed into post-it note cartoon purchases and throwing pies at philosophers, the afternoon became more interesting and more financially lucrative. This fundraiser could go in a lot of directions and be successful, but here are some suggestions I have. Have whipped cream and paper plates on hand for pies. It’s cheap and a lot of fun. Ask some popular professors in the department if they would be willing to have pies thrown at them. I suspect that this will really bring out the philosophy majors and minors. Even if the professors don’t want to get pied, they’ll likely be willing to sit at the booth for an hour during the day and fraternize with passers-by. I think we made a lot of money this year when professors were at the booth. Maybe have students volunteer in advance to have pies thrown at them and definitely have them sign up in advance to work the booth and encourage them to invite their friends to stop by during those times. Finally, have fun and be as conspicuous as possible.
SAMPLE LETTERS

Accept with revisions (with sample list of revisions)

Thank you for your submission to *Stance*. We are happy to inform you that we would like to publish your paper, pending the following revisions:

*Include a title.*
*Use fewer pronouns.*
*Make your use of tense consistent throughout the paper.*
*Make subjects and verbs agree.*
*Single space and offset long quotes.*
*Use fewer introductory clauses and unnecessary words.*
*Use fewer conclusion words, like “hence,” “therefore,” “so” “thus,” etc.*
*Define the term “authentic education” when you use it.*
*Fix footnote 7 (says 7 twice). Change footnote format (will give you sample).*
*Restate your thesis, or goal (Hoping to give us pause to reflect on…) in your conclusion.*

Please email your edited paper to rlschouten@bsu.edu by February 20, 2006. Also include a 50 word abstract of your paper. Thanks again for your submission.

Gina Schouten
On behalf of *Stance* editorial board

Reject with invitation to resubmit

Thank you for your submission to *Stance*. We regret that we are not currently planning to publish your paper in this year’s journal. We would, however, like to invite you to resubmit your paper for review for this year’s publication pending the following serious revision:

...
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...

Please email your edited paper to rlschouten@bsu.edu by February 20, 2006. Also include a 50 word abstract of your paper. Thanks again for your submission.

Gina Schouten
On behalf of *Stance* editorial board

Reject

Thank you for your submission to *Stance*. We regret that, due to space constraints, we will not be able to publish your paper in this year’s journal. We encourage you to submit again in the future.

Gina Schouten
on behalf of *Stance* editorial board
HOW TO...

...format the final proof for printing:
The 2005 issue was formatted using Word, but the 2006 journal (which looked much better) was formatted in Adobe InDesign, which is a program for laying out booklets. Bob (2006/2007 editor-in-chief) has this program and knows how to use it. Pages should be half-letter sized, with default margins, and two columns of justified text. Endnotes were used in the 2006 journal because the program could not accommodate footnotes, and because other journals use endnotes instead of footnotes.

...deposit and withdraw money from the Phi Sigma Tau account:
Money can be deposited with the assistance of Linda Bilbrey in the Philosophy Department office, NQ 210. Simply give the money to Linda and she will prepare the paperwork and deposit it at the cashier’s office. To withdraw money, bring a check request to Linda and ask her to fill out the paperwork for a withdraw. You will need either quotes or actual receipts to do this. In the past, I have paid for the journals and then requested reimbursement.

...reserve the scramble light (or any other space) for Ask a Philosopher or other events:
You will need to fill out an “On-Campus Space Requisition Form” (copies included in folder) in room 114 of the Student Center. The contact person for reserving space is Charles Scofield (Facilities Coordinator). His phone number is 285-1850 and his email address is cscofiel@bsu.edu. (Business card in folder) Most simply, you can drop off the Requisition form in SC 114.

...have the journal printed:
Although I suggest that editors-in-chief continue to request price estimates from Hiatt as well as University Printing Services, I have chosen University Printing services because their quotes have been lower both years. Simply take a hard copy of the document as well as a floppy disk containing the document to Ryan Absher at the Cardinal Copy Center in the AJ Bookstore. You will pay for the journal when you pick it up.
Phone: 285-4771
Email: rtabsher@bsu.edu
STANCE
Monthly Checklist

Early September
_____ email members of Phi Sigma Tau to plan meeting for any members interested in being involved in activities
_____ meet with Dave to discuss activities and plan initial meeting

Mid to Late September
_____ hold first meeting of Phi Sigma Tau; plan activities for year
_____ post fliers for editorial board member applications, send out applications via email, leave them in mailbox for applicants to pick up, bring to philosophy classes and club

Early October
_____ select and notify editorial board
_____ plan and begin advertising Ask a Philosopher fundraiser

Mid October
_____ conduct Ask a Philosopher fundraiser
_____ plan and conduct meeting of editorial board prior to opening call for papers

Early November
_____ open call for papers (post fliers, ask professors to mention journal during class, email all majors and minors)

Mid December
_____ possibly extend deadline for paper submissions

Late December
_____ email all submissions (without distinguishing marks) to editorial board

Early, Mid, and Late January
_____ conduct (bi-)weekly meetings of editorial board to select accepted papers and edit
_____ get cost estimates from Hiatt and University Printing Services based on estimated number of accepted papers

Early February
_____ return edited papers to writers for revisions

Late February
_____ deadline for papers to be returned from writers; meet with editorial board for second-round editing

Early to Mid March
_____ continue editorial board meetings for second-round editing
_____ return papers to writers for final revisions

Late March
_____ journal formatting complete and document to printer
### STANCE Tentative Calendar

#### September

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* bring flier encouraging students to apply for editorial board and application form for editorial board members
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*send out project timeline, solicit help with fundraising*
**STANCE Tentative Calendar**

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*approve mission statement
* bring call for paper flier to be approved
### STANCE Tentative Calendar

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PHI SIGMA TAU

Is now accepting applications for members of the editorial board of

STANCE

A student-produced, undergraduate academic journal in philosophy.

Please pick up an application form from Gina Schouten or in the Phi Sigma Tau Mailbox in NQ 211.

Return completed applications to the Phi Sigma Tau mailbox by 10/4/05.
PHI SIGMA TAU

APPLICATION FOR EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS OF

STANCE

NAME ___________________________

YEAR IN SCHOOL __________________

AVAILABILITY FOR MEETINGS

   Monday: _______________________
   Tuesday: _____________________
   Wednesday: __________________
   Thursday: ____________________

COURSES TAKEN IN PHILOSOPHY

   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

PHILOSOPHY GPA ______

ARE YOU A PHILOSOPHY MAJOR OR MINOR? ________________________

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF PHI SIGMA TAU? ____________________________

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF PHILOSOPHY CLUB? _________________________

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING A MEMBER OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD FOR

STANCE? ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
Is now accepting submissions for its 2006 publication!

Papers should be 1000 - 3000 words in length. Please email submissions as a word attachment to rlschouten@bsu.edu.

Deadline for submissions: Friday, December 9

*Stance* is a project of the Ball State University chapter of Phi Sigma Tau, an international undergraduate honor society for philosophy. Our mission is to encourage philosophical discussion and provide an opportunity for students to have their scholarly achievement recognized by being published in an academic journal. *Stance* publishes original papers in any field of philosophy written by Ball State University undergraduate students.
Rubric for Assessment of Paper Submissions

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In general, papers Accepted for Publication in Stance should:
~ Be interesting, with some element of originality
~ Address a topic of philosophical importance
~ Rigorously support a thesis and engage the debate
~ Express clear and careful argumentation
~ Reflect a suitable understanding of relevant literature
~ Be clearly and skillfully written

Editors of Stance should bear in mind that the journal is intended to reflect all areas of philosophy, but should not strive to represent all sub-disciplines at the expense of publishing those papers which reflect the best work in the department.

Briefly describe additions, deletions, or changes that will improve the paper either on the reverse side of this sheet or on the paper itself.

Overall, the paper is
____ Acceptable with minor revisions
____ Acceptable pending another review following significant revisions
____ Unacceptable
The event will take place on Monday, October 17 at the stone bench at the scramble light. If you cannot work that day but still want to be involved, let me know!
ASK A PHILOSOPHER

IS COMING

COME TO NQ210 TUES. @ 5:00PM TO FIND OUT MORE!!!

OR

WATCH FOR MORE FLYERS
ASK A PHILOSOPHER IS COMING

Descartes, eat your heart out ...

I think, therefore I yam what I yam!

Panel Hollywood
© 2001 Rick London and Rich Diesslin

COME SUPPORT PHI SIGMA TAU
AT THE SCRAMBLE LIGHT
MONDAY THE 13TH
ALL DAY!
This week I did my first serious work on Stance. Last week I emailed everyone in Phi Sigma Tau to find out what their availability for this week was so I could plan a meeting. As expected, what little response I got indicated that scheduling times when all interested parties could be available would be a major difficulty. I arranged to meet with those members who were available on Thursday, 9/22/05 at 4:00. I also made an appointment to talk to Dave, my thesis advisor and the advisor of Phi Sigma Tau, on Tuesday during his office hours. Even though we met several times last year and over the summer to make abstract plans for Stance, I wanted to go over some more concrete details with him prior to the meeting. One of my main concerns was how to balance my responsibilities as Phi Sigma Tau president with the work I’m doing on Stance for my thesis. For instance, I made applications for members of the editorial board, but because I thought of the idea for the journal and because I’m doing it for my thesis, I was starting with the assumption that I would be editor in chief, which seemed like it may be an unfair and undemocratic assumption. Dave suggested that we officially make the editor-in-chief a position which is appointed by the faculty advisor of Stance for the purposes of establishing a procedure for future years. I feel better knowing that there is some procedural basis for my authority. Also, Dave talked to me about the traditionally hierarchical nature of academic journals. The implications of this are that I can choose members of the editorial board based on the applications I get without calling another meeting of Phi Sigma Tau and going through the unwieldy process of doing an anonymous review (since I anticipate most applicants being members of the organization).

I also discussed the financial outlook for Stance with Dave. Last year I spent about $20 at Hiatt Printing making copies and doing other miscellaneous things for editors and the journal cost roughly $40 to publish. We had seven submissions and we accepted two. This year, I hope for at least twice as many submissions with at least twice as many good enough for publication. Also, I hope for a much higher quality of journal in terms of paper quality and publishing quality. Even if miscellaneous costs are eliminated, I expect the journal to cost at least $100 and Phi Sigma Tau has no budget. Dave said there may be some money in the department that can be used for this purpose; I will arrange a meeting with the department chair, Julie Efflin, to find out. Also, I plan to talk to her about setting up a university account for Phi Sigma Tau so it will be easier for future groups to manage the publication.

Even if we can get some money from the department, Phi Sigma Tau will have to have a fundraiser (its first ever, as far as I know) to pull this off. To keep the fundraiser relevant to what we’re doing, I had the idea of an “Ask A Philosopher” booth by the scramble light, where we will have philosophy students (two at a time) sitting (probably wearing tweed jackets and fake beards, maybe smoking pipes) and answering questions or offering bits of “wisdom” in exchange for a tip. Although I don’t anticipate earning much money, I think the fundraiser will be funny and hopefully people will want to participate, since we obviously will not charge much for our answers. Dave thought the fundraiser sounded good, especially since it would be a visible way to promote the organization and the department. I still have reservations, but we decided to try it, and if it’s a huge failure, hopefully we’ll have time to do another more orthodox fundraiser later this year.

Another issue was arranging a place where students could pick up applications for editorial board members, drop them off once completed, submit papers, etc. We decided that it will be okay to use the Phi Sigma Tau mailbox in the philosophy department office for most of this, and I will just have to check it frequently. Finally, Dave and I discussed how the meeting
on Thursday should run, and I told him that I planned to first discuss other Phi Sigma Tau business and then get into our main project and my main priority, Stance. We talked a little bit about how to successfully run a meeting, particularly among peers. His main piece of advice was to not cut off casual conversation at the beginning of the meeting, but to make sure to get started by five minutes past the starting time, no matter who is or isn’t there, and to be as efficient as possible.

The meeting Thursday went okay, even though the only people there besides Dave and I were Bob (the co-president) and Tim (the secretary). I also knew of two other people who had class and couldn’t make it, but who had requested to be kept abreast of decisions made so they could be involved. I will email them to let them know what was decided. The people in attendance approved both the application form for members of the editorial board and the flier announcing the application process and encouraging people to apply to become editors. After making a few changes (including changing the due date), I will hang the fliers on Monday morning (9/26/05) and put the blank application forms in the PST mailbox. I will also keep some with me so people can pick them up directly from me. They will be due about a week and a half later (10/4/05). After the deadline for applications, I will choose four people to be editors. In total (including me) there will be five members of the editorial board. This seems like a good number because it is uneven (thus precluding the possibility of a tie in making decisions) and it is large enough to avoid bias but small enough that it will not be too unwieldy. At the meeting we also discussed my fundraising idea and decided to try it. Tim is filling out a space acquisition form to reserve the area by the scramble light and will let me know for sure what date he is able to get. We chose three possible dates in October, so hopefully one of them will be available.

Finally, the people at the meeting approved a VERY rough timeline that I wrote for the project:

**Week of October 3:** editorial board applications due, I select editorial board  
**Week of October 10:** first preliminary meeting of editorial board  
**Rest of October:** fundraising (Ask a Philosopher and something else if Ask a Philosopher is a failure)  
**November 1:** open call for papers begins  
**End of semester:** deadline for paper submissions  
**Over semester break:** papers sent to editors as email attachments with editing instructions  
**Week of January 9** (first week of second semester): editorial board meets with papers read; continues to meet once or twice a week to edit and discuss submissions until February 6  
**February 6:** notify writers of the status of their submissions (accept, reject, or accept pending revisions) and return accepted papers to writers with editing comments; a member of the editorial board should meet with each writer of an accepted paper to discuss revisions  
**February 20:** accepted papers due back to editorial board with revisions  
**February 27:** journal formatting complete and document taken to university Printing Services (Hiatt?)  
**Early March:** journal finished and distributed
After the journal is complete, I will write my reflection paper. During the process outlined above, I will continue to keep this journal and collect resources for future editors-in-chief. I anticipate finishing my thesis project by the beginning of April.

10/8/05

I feel like things are very hectic right now in terms of working on Stance, but in reality I think everything is going reasonably well and that we are still more or less on schedule. In fact, I’m kind of frustrated by the thought that I’ve done so much work for this project and it’s barely even underway. On 9/26/05 I hung fliers in North Quad inviting people to apply for editorial board. I also sent an email to Dave with an application as an attachment, which he sent to all philosophy majors. I put additional application forms in the PST mailbox for interested people to pick up. Over the course of the rest of the week and the first part of the week of October 3, I got four written applications (Ryan Gessler, Bob Miller, Matt Thomas, Mike Reynolds). I discussed the applicants with Dave and, while I have reservations about one applicant, I decided that I prefer to have a group that expressed interest in contributing to the project, rather than trying to convince someone else to apply and risking the possibility that that person wouldn’t really be committed to the work. I emailed the editorial board this afternoon, and I think I was able to relay all the information I need to at this point via email, so we will skip that first meeting on the schedule, although we will meet sometime at the end of October or beginning of November before we open the call for papers. The email I sent them asked them to help with the Ask a Philosopher fundraiser and also included a copy of the tentative project timeline.

This past week, Tim told me that he had successfully reserved the scramble light booth for Monday, October 17, for our Ask A Philosopher fundraiser. Tim also volunteered to be in charge of making signs and hanging them up in North Quad to advertise the event. I found out on Tuesday afternoon that we had gotten the booth reserved, so I made a sign-up sheet to pass around at the philosophy club meeting that night. At first I wanted people to sign up to work in groups of two, but it appears that there is enough interest to have three people at the booth at all times. I also sent an email to all Phi Sigma Tau members last week explaining the fundraiser. I have copied and pasted it below:

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Hey Phi Sigma Tau members!
For those of you who couldn't make it to the meeting (and as a reminder for those of you who were there), our main project this year will be the publication of Stance, an undergraduate philosophy journal. I hope a lot of you will submit papers...but in the meantime, we need money to do this! We are having a fundraiser on Monday, October 17th at the scramble light. We will be setting up a booth called "Ask A Philosopher" where (hopefully) people will ask us questions and (in exchange for a small tip) we will answer in some philosophical fashion--perhaps you will want to play the role of a favorite philosopher, or give a stereotypical philosophical answer, or use bits of wisdom you've learned in your classes. Maybe you want to try to engage innocent passers-by in debate. Or pose philosophical questions to people and try to get them to come talk to you about them. The most important thing is to be creative! Hopefully people will see the fun and humor in this. Here's what I need help with: First off, we need people to work at the booth. Please email me with a couple of hours on the 17th that you are available to work. We will have at least two people working at all times. Also, it would probably be a good idea to advertise just a little bit around north quad. Would anyone (perhaps a secretary) want to be in charge of that? We will also need to make signs for our booth (vice presidents?). If nothing else, make sure you encourage your friends to stop by the scramble light on the 17th and get enlightened. :)
Please let me know ASAP what you can do to help!
Gina
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One noteworthy occurrence is that, during the philosophy club meeting, Dr. Schulman signed up to work the 12:00 hour at the booth, and Dr. Eflin responded to the email above by expressing her interest in working if there were still open slots. I asked her if she would also work at 12:00 and she agreed. I then emailed Dave to find out if he would want to work then as well and am waiting to hear back from him. I think having three philosophy professors working at the booth at the same time will be a huge attraction and hopefully many majors and students who have had classes with them will show up to ask them questions! I am still hoping someone will volunteer to help me decorate the booth or at least meet me the week before to make signs for it to get ready for the event. Also, I’m hoping people will have accessories to make this more fun. A lot of people seem excited about this fundraiser, and I’m getting excited also, but mainly I’m nervous about it. I worry that people won’t think it’s fun and will just ignore the people working. I don’t want everyone who has generously volunteered to work to be disappointed when other students at Ball State don’t get excited about Ask A Philosopher, which I’m afraid they won’t. I hope they have some idea going into this that it may not work well.

10/18/05
Yesterday was Ask A Philosopher and it was a HUGE success. I was around the intersection for a lot of the day and, while we had very few “legitimate” questions about philosophy, we somehow made a lot of money, and got a lot of publicity for the department. People certainly noticed the strange kids wearing masks and fake beards and yelling at them to ask questions about the meaning of life. And so, contrary to the cynical expectations of those who said that money can’t buy enlightenment, we sold it for a grand total of over seventy bucks. The scramble light was a great place for our fundraiser, and we were doing pretty well even before someone had the great idea that maybe people would spend more money to throw a pie at a philosopher than to ask one a question. So I walked to the gas station and bought whipped cream, and then to the department of Modern Languages and Classics (where I work) and borrowed a couple of paper plates...for future reference, “Pie a Philosopher” may be an even more lucrative business venture than “Ask a Philosopher.” The exciting part is that now, Stance will be able to accept about twice as many papers as we did last year, and hopefully be a lot higher quality publication. Also, I think everyone involved had a pretty good time. Some key points:

1. Dave talked to all the professors over the course of the day to tell them we were at the scramble light. A lot of our money came from professors who were (I think) just happy to see philosophy students doing something high-profile. So advertising to professors is huge.

2. Tim put up signs in NQ the week before the fundraiser and the day of the fundraiser.

3. Being flexible (maybe because this was the first time?) was a huge asset. We didn’t answer too many questions, but we made a lot of money. Bob sold funny philosophy cartoons he drew on post-it notes. We acted goofy and made a nuisance of ourselves. We let people throw pies at Ryan. I think most of the money we made came from peripheral activities.

4. If I did this again, I would make a bigger deal out of having three professors work the fundraiser for an hour in the middle of the day. We could have made more money if we’d advertised more to these professors’ students, I think. This is something to think about next year.
I don’t know exactly how much money we made but it’s more than $70.00. We’re starting a university account for Phi Sigma Tau this year. I’ve talked to Linda (the administrative coordinator for the philosophy department) so we can do the necessary paperwork. The next step will be to meet with the editorial board about requirements for paper submissions and some other items, and then to advertise our call for papers sometime around the beginning of November.

10/30/05
Today I arranged for the editorial board to meet next Tuesday in the cantina in North Quad.

11/8/05
Today the editorial board (Matt Thomas, Mike Reynolds, Bob Miller, Ryan Gessler, and me, along with faculty advisor Dave Concepcion) met in the cantina in North Quad (where we will likely hold all subsequent meetings as well). The first thing I wanted to do was have the editorial board approve the mission statement we wrote for the journal last year. The mission statement is (along with some instructions for people who are interested in being involved with the journal):

Stance is a project of the Ball State University chapter of Phi Sigma Tau, an international undergraduate honor society for philosophy. Our mission is to encourage philosophical discussion and provide an opportunity for students to have their scholarly achievement recognized by being published in an academic journal. Stance publishes original papers in any field of philosophy written by Ball State University undergraduate students. If you have any questions or are interested in submitting papers for future publications or working on the editorial board, please email Gina Schouten at rlschouten@bsu.edu. Thank you.

It was suggested that we get in touch with someone in the student affairs office to find out about getting an email address for Phi Sigma Tau, so that we don’t have to change the email address and name every year depending on who is the current editor in chief. Also, I will likely rewrite some parts of the paragraph so they are less awkward. Other than these changes, the mission statement was approved.

The next issue we discussed was requirements for paper submissions. We decided that we should require a minimum of 1000 words and a maximum of 3000. These parameters will accommodate most papers written for our department with a minimal amount of editing. The deadline we set for paper submissions is Friday, December 9. Although some members of the editorial board suggested that we allow papers to be submitted until the beginning of second semester, we ultimately decided that December 9 will work better since it gives students time to turn in anything they wrote for their classes this semester, and allows me to send out the papers to all the members of the editorial board over semester break so they can read them and we can meet to discuss them immediately after second semester begins. Also, December 9 is the Friday before finals week, which means that we can postpone the deadline until the following Friday, or even a couple of days into winter break, if we don’t have as many papers as we would like by December 9. We chose December 20 as a final (but secret) due date, because it will give students a few days after their last finals to make final revisions and submit papers. Since students will email papers directly to me (so I can email them to the editors and we can avoid spending money making lots of copies), it will not be a problem if students are out of town or if I am out of town during the submission deadline. We decided that other formatting requirements, such as font size and footnote style, will not be specified until after we select papers to accept for the journal. This way, students won’t be deterred from submitting papers because of additional
requirements, such as reformating their footnotes. Once we select papers, we can require only those whose papers we choose to make the required changes so everything is uniform.

The board approved the flier I had made soliciting paper submissions after a few changes were proposed and length parameters and a deadline for submissions were agreed upon. I will make the changes and make copies of the flier to hang in North Quad around the philosophy classrooms and in the stairwells. We decided to limit our advertising to North Quad since we are seeking papers specifically from philosophy students, who will be sure to notice the fliers there. I will email an electronic version of the flier to all members of Phi Sigma Tau, and Dave will forward it to all philosophy majors and minors. In addition, Dave will speak to specific professors about encouraging students to submit particularly good papers turned in for their classes.

Once again, we decided to allow members of the editorial board to submit papers. We developed a specific procedure in case there is a tie with regards to whether or not the journal will accept a paper written by a member of the board. We will invite Tim Pierz, a Phi Sigma Tau member who expressed interest in being on the editorial board after the deadline for board member applications was over, to be a member of the board who votes only in the case of a tie or when another editor's paper is being considered. Tim has accepted the position.

Finally, we decided that submissions will be emailed to me by students and I will remove the names of the authors and email all the papers to each member of the editorial board. By the week of January 9, when second semester begins, each member of the board will have read each paper and be prepared to make a case for each one in terms of whether it should be accepted, rejected, or accepted with revisions. In addition, each member should have some idea of what changes need to be made to papers they think should be accepted pending revisions.

December 20, 2005

Today I sent out emails to all the members of the editorial board and to Dave with the Stance submissions attached. Most of the papers we received came during the last week (after the original due date) and two came today (after the extended due date). I'm not sure if it was effective to plan on extending the due date or if it just happened to be the case that this past week (finals week) was a time when many people finally got around to submitting papers. In any event, I am pleased with the number of submissions. Eleven papers were submitted. Of the eleven, two were written by the same person and five were submitted by four members of the editorial board (Bob Miller submitted two papers). This will raise the issue of establishing some protocol for students who submit more than one paper. I anticipate that most of the members of the editorial board will agree with me that we shouldn’t accept multiple works from one student, particularly this year since we have many entries. I am very pleased with the turnout, since we only had six submissions last year and three were from the same person; this year we were able to reach the right people (largely junior and senior philosophy majors in advanced classes). One issue that has come up is how much we should try to get a good variety of papers. Most of our submissions are ethics papers (only two are not) and many deal with environmental issues (since that was the upper level ethics class offered during Fall semester). Dave reassures me that it is okay for the papers to reflect the classes taught during the semester in which submissions were requested. Is it reasonable not to tell the editorial board about the possibility of postponing the submission deadline in the future? I think everyone knew it would be postponed, which is fine, since we have plenty of submissions, but I was very nervous a few weeks ago when we only had one.
January 4, 2005

Today I realized a BIG mistake I made. When I was sending out papers to the editorial board, I saved the papers as I received them in a folder on my desktop and then I went through and removed all the names and saved the anonymous papers in another folder on my desktop numbered with the same numbers as the first folder with the writers’ names. Even though the flier requesting submissions asked students to submit papers with their names on the first page only, many came with headers with the writers’ names. I removed everything I saw and sent the papers to Dave first to have him check me to make sure I hadn’t missed anything. I also sent him a key so he’d know who wrote what (in case something happened to my computer?). I then sent out the numbered but nameless versions of the papers to each editor. Today I printed the papers at the library and realized that Bob’s papers had a header that said “Miller” that had not shown up on my computer. I thought a lot about what to do and I couldn’t talk to Dave (because it’s over break) but since I haven’t heard from any of the editors, I figured they had not yet printed the papers. I removed the header from the two papers and sent them out again with the following message:

There are slightly different versions of papers 1 and 6—the versions attached to this email are the ones that we will use. When you print the papers, please print these versions, NOT THE ONES I SENT YOU EARLIER. If you already printed the papers, please get rid of 1 and 6 and print these to use instead. This is very important so that we’re all reading and evaluating the exact same works. I’m sorry for the confusion!

Gina

I hope that everyone will pay attention and not print out the other versions. I’m nervous about this. The anonymity of the review process is really important to me, particularly since the person whose papers were sent out with his name on them is one of the editors. I didn’t know whether or not to just tell the editorial board what had happened and trust them not to read the name of the writer on the first versions of the papers, but ultimately I think I would have been tempted to read it just out of curiosity, and so likely others would have been as well. Hopefully this way they won’t. I’m also glad now that we have an extra editor (Tim) so hopefully if anyone saw the names he will talk to me and he can just sort of sit out if there are any voting issues on Bob’s papers.

I sent out two emails over break requesting the editors to let me know what their schedules are like during the first week of classes so we can plan the first meeting but I haven’t heard back from anyone. I really want to get this process started as soon as possible. I suspect that most editors haven’t started reading these papers yet and there is a lot of reading, but they all agreed to do it over break so I guess I just have to trust that they will. I read the papers today and I’m very excited. We have several very good ones. There are at least five that I think should obviously be accepted. Here are some concerns I have:

1. How do I act when my paper is being reviewed? If I don’t say anything, I think it will be obvious that it is my paper, since I have things to say about all the others. And if they hate it and don’t accept it, will that bother me? I know this is a stupid concern but it’s on my mind nonetheless.

2. How much should I be concerned about comments made about other editors’ papers? Last year the only editor who submitted was Bob and his paper was obviously good enough to be published. This year there are four editors with submissions and many friends of editors. I know
I will be much more conscious of how diplomatic I am and whether or not others are also for fear of hurting feelings.

3. What's the best way to run the meeting? Analyze one paper at a time? How much discussion should I allow before voting when there's not much consensus. I think there will be a lot of consensus but I remember being surprised last year that there wasn't more.

4. There is at least one paper that is exceptional for the level of the student (it's an intro ethics paper) but it's not very deep or original. How strictly should we maintain the mission of publishing the best work of the department? Should we change that to a representative sample? I don't think so, but should we think of including the best work at various levels, or the best and most advanced work? I think the paper is very good, but too formulaic to really be considered the best. In these cases, if the board doesn't accept the work, should I talk to the writers about why and encourage them to submit during their junior and senior years?

5. How much money do we have? How many of these papers can we take? Last year we spent roughly $40.00 to publish two papers and this year we'll have at least five. How much more will the glossy cover cost? I need to go by printing services to get a rough idea and talk to Dave about how much money we have.

1/13/06

Yesterday evening the editorial board of Stance met to discuss the papers submitted. Only one member could not make the meeting. Everyone else had read all the papers and had great things to say about them. In general, I was very pleased with the meeting. I think the papers that were chosen by the board (6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) were very good papers and the level of discussion that went on was quite high. In short, I think the criteria the board used to select papers was good, and the criteria that I had hoped they would use. Although Matt (and Dave) could not be there, both had emailed me comments on the papers before the meeting and I discussed Matt's ideas explicitly with the board and tried to represent Dave's comments as well. The decisions of the board were not entirely in line with Dave's thoughts or mine, but I think they were good and am happy with the five papers selected. I have told the board that the selections are still tentative, since Dave is out of town, and I think he should have some input before we officially notify people of the status of their submissions.

The board seems motivated and dedicated to the project. So far I am happy with the selections I made for members of the editorial board. Everyone has agreed to attend weekly meetings (the next will be next Thursday at 7:30 p.m.) to work on an extensive editing process. Next week we plan to work on papers 9 and 10, the two which I expect will require the most editing, and the two which were written by people not on the editorial board. Here are a few of the issues that have come up so far:

-The mission statement of Stance states that we will publish the best papers in the department. One paper that was submitted was quite good in terms of writing, style, factual correctness, argumentation, etc. However, the position argued for was very broad and not controversial, and the paper was a formulaic paper arguing for a position that is supported in class with similar argumentation by the instructor of an introductory ethics class. While the paper was exceptional for the student's level in philosophy, it was not deep or challenging or interesting. The board (with surprising consensus) decided that Stance should not only accept the best papers, but the most advanced or interesting papers as well. The paper was not accepted, though I will likely
talk to the person who wrote it and explain that it is very good and we hope she will submit again. Most importantly, I think a precedent was set and I am glad that Stance can afford to be selective and really publish the best papers in the department.

-We will only accept one paper from each person, although they may submit more than one.

-We will plan on editing two papers per week. I planned on returning the papers to the people who wrote them by February 6, which gives us three weeks for editing. Will it be enough time if we meet only once a week? We’ll see how next week goes. Also, three of the papers are written by editorial board members, so those will require less time for editing since we can sort of make changes as we go. We’re starting with the papers that I suspect will take the longest, 9 and 10 (also the ones by non-editorial board members) next week.

-We will plan on arranging times for the writers of the papers we accepted to meet with a member of the editorial board to discuss the changes required for publication.

-We need to decide on some standard formatting for citations, etc., and note it for future use so all editions of the journal are uniform.

-After Dave has approved the selections, I need to send emails notifying people of the status of their submissions.

Tentative rejection letter:
We regret to inform you that, because of space considerations, we are unable to accept your submission for this year’s edition of Stance. We had many excellent submissions. We encourage you to continue working on this paper or others and submit again in the future. Thank you for your submission.
Stance editorial board

Tentative acceptance letter:
Thank you for your interest in Stance. We are pleased to inform you that your submission has been accepted, pending revisions. A member of our editorial board will be in touch with you shortly to discuss the editing process.
Thank you for your submission.
Stance editorial board

-There is a serious problem with anonymity. Ball State’s philosophy department is pretty small and there are few upper division classes taught each semester. We all edit each other’s papers and know each others’ interests. Many editors knew who had written the papers submitted for these reasons. I think the blind review process is really important but I’m not sure how to make sure it really is blind. Also, when does the anonymity stop? After the selections have been made or after editing is complete?

1/20/05

Earlier this week I met with Dave and he approved the decisions made by the editorial board regarding acceptance/rejection of papers. He also plans to attend the next few meetings,
particularly the one where my paper will be edited, since I won’t be there (we decided that members of the editorial board shouldn’t be in the room when their own papers are being edited). Also, Dave suggested that we not arrange meetings with individual submitters to go over editing, mainly in the interest of time. We will email a list of the changes we want made and then, if individual editors want to meet with people who wrote papers, they can do that, but not as representatives of the editorial board. I’m somewhat relieved about this decision because this project is turning out to be extremely time-consuming and I’m worried about making the deadline to get the journal to the publisher. Also, I discussed with Dave my concern about three of the five papers published being by members of the editorial board. He assured me (again) that it was not inappropriate for there to be much overlap because of the blind review process and because it’s not surprising that the students whose papers were the best are the same students who chose to be (and were selected as) members of the editorial board.

We met last night, Thursday, January 19, at 7:30 in the cantina, and now there are only 4 officially-accepted papers, because the board (at Dave’s urging) decided that a paper that had been accepted with some serious reservations should be reconsidered. The board agreed and we ultimately decided to create a new category: rejected with the invitation to resubmit. In other words, the revisions necessary for us to publish the paper are substantial enough that we cannot accept it at this time, but if the writer puts in a significant amount of time and resubmits it (we chose the deadline of January 31 so we could re-review and re-edit the paper if he does choose to re-submit) we will consider it again. At that point, we may accept it, accept it pending further revisions, or reject it unconditionally. I expect that the writer will not resubmit because the work we’re asking him to do is pretty substantial. This is unfortunate since his paper was one of only two which we had decided to accept that weren’t written by members of the board. Other than that, we edited the other paper we’d scheduled for this week and plan to meet again next Wednesday, January 25 at 5:00. Matt could come then and he hasn’t been able to attend the past two meetings. This raises some concern about attendance requirements for members of the board; it seems unfair to those who have attended every meeting that another editor will only have come to one or two. Next week we plan to edit the remaining three papers, written by members of the board. We will start with Bob’s (I’ve asked him to come late), then work on Matt’s (during which time he’ll leave the room) and then I’ll leave (I have night class anyway) and the editorial board (and Dave) will edit my paper.

We also decided that we will ask for a 50 word abstract to be turned in at the same time as the finished paper (February 20). Between now and then, I will need to take pictures of each of the writers to include in the journal on the page with their abstracts. Also, the board approved the following emails to be sent to those whose papers were not accepted and those whose were, respectively.

Rejection letter:

Thank you for your submission to Stance. We regret that, due to space constraints, we will not be able to publish your paper in this year’s journal. We encourage you to submit again in the future.

Gina Schouten
on behalf of Stance editorial board

Acceptance letter (with sample list of revisions):

Thank you for your submission to Stance. We regret that, due to space constraints, we will not be able to publish your paper in this year’s journal. We encourage you to submit again in the future.

Gina Schouten
on behalf of Stance editorial board
Thank you for your submission to *Stance*. We are happy to inform you that we would like to publish your paper pending the following revisions:

*Include a title.*

*Use fewer pronouns.*

*Make your use of tense consistent throughout the paper.*

*Make subjects and verbs agree.*

*Single space and offset long quotes.*

*Use fewer introductory clauses and unnecessary words.*

*Use fewer conclusion words, like “hence,” “therefore,” “so” “thus,” etc.*

*Define the term “authentic education” when you use it.*

*Fix footnote 7 (says 7 twice). Change footnote format (will give you sample).*

*Restate your thesis, or goal (Hoping to give us pause to reflect on...) in your conclusion.*

Please email your edited paper to rlschouten@bsu.edu by February 20, 2006. Also include a 50 word abstract of your paper. Thanks again for your submission.

Gina Schouten
On behalf of *Stance* editorial board

I did not have a letter for “reject with invitation to resubmit” since I didn’t know there would be any papers in that category, but I will include it in this journal after it has been composed and approved. Earlier this afternoon, I sent out the emails (individually) to those whose papers were not accepted. I also sent a personal email to the person whose paper was good but lacked depth and originality asking her to talk to me sometime. I also sent an email to the writer of the accepted paper we edited last night, giving him general requirements. In addition, I sent him a personal email offering to show him my copy of his paper on which I’d marked more specific problems. For example, the email I sent him said, “use fewer introductory clauses.” On my copy of his paper, I have some specific places marked where there are introductory clauses which the board found unnecessary. As soon as I have a letter for the reject with invitation to resubmit paper, I will send that out as well. One more thing worth noting: We were doing line-editing and Dave told us we should not. Rather, the job of an editorial board is to give general editing requirements and discuss content, style, etc.

Dave wants me to develop my own version of the following rubric for assessing papers so future editorial boards can use it:
Potentially Helpful Guidelines

(From the external reviewer rubric of The Journal of Value Inquiry)

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>See Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Are the interpretations and conclusions justified by the arguments?</td>
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<td>Is the contribution new and original?</td>
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<td>Does the title clearly and sufficiently reflect its content?</td>
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<td>Are the presentation, organization, and length satisfactory?</td>
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<td>Is the quality of the English satisfactory?</td>
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<td>Are the references adequate and necessary?</td>
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Generally, among important criteria for acceptance are
• originality, intrinsic interest, and importance of the main theses
• rigor, inventiveness and exactitude of argumentation and analysis
• depth of philosophical insight
• mastery of the relevant philosophical literature
• lucidity of style

(From the “Submissions Guidelines” page of American Philosophical Quarterly <http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/tennant9/apq.html>)

From Dr. Concepción’s course packet:

An “A” paper has all of the following virtues:
• It has a well-defined thesis and a logical organization
• It shows good sense, intellectual honesty, and struggle. It attempts to defend a defensible position by taking seriously objection to that position
• It is well informed. If there are passages in the assigned readings for the course or material from class lecture or discussion that are relevant to matters discussed in the essay, these passages or materials are cited and discussed. The paper shows an awareness of conceptual distinctions and clarifications developed in the course
• It is intelligent, logical, and careful. The argument is carefully articulated and developed. Obvious difficulties are anticipated and answered
• It is significant. The issues discussed, although typically matters of detail, are of some importance and their importance is made clear within the essay
• It is written in a lucid and grammatical style. It is ABC (Accurate, Brief, and Complete)

Also, bear in mind that the range of papers published should be as truly inter-sub-disciplinary as possible.

Briefly describe additions, deletions, or changes that will improve the paper?

Overall, the paper is
____ Acceptable with minor revisions
____ Acceptable pending another review following significant revisions
____ Unacceptable
On Wednesday we finished editing the remaining three accepted papers. I decided at the last minute (partly because Bob forgot to show up late) that the editors whose papers were being reviewed should stay in the room during editing. Matt was talking to me about a creative writing workshop the English department does where they discuss papers with the person who wrote them, but the author isn’t allowed to talk during the process. He just takes notes. So, since that would eliminate wasted time due to people explaining themselves, and would also eliminate the problem of explaining to the authors the changes the board wants made, Bob and Matt stayed in the room when we edited their papers. I think it went pretty well. I still left when mine was being edited because I had to go to class. I got my paper with comments on it from a member of the board I have class with the next day. With that, I think the editing process is more or less finished. Looking ahead to February, I had planned to notify the writers of papers of their status by the 6th, but this has already been taken care of, especially since so many writers were on the editorial board. We have set the deadline for writers to give us their finished, edited work, along with their abstracts at February 20. By February 27, I hope to have all formatting done and the journal submitted to the publisher. Bob has offered to help me with formatting. We need to decide what specifications to make regarding formats we want the writers to submit their final works in (for example, does it matter margin size, font, single-space, etc.). I think having all the final papers look exactly the same will expedite putting together the final product. I also need to send the writers a copy of the footnote style used in last year’s journal. In terms of publishing cost, I got an estimate from Hiatt of $100.00. This looks like it will be cheaper than using University Printing Services. Likely we will not have the journal to the publisher by February 27 since the board will need to read the papers again and meet once more to make sure they’re all ready for publishing.

By Wednesday I think we were doing pretty well at the editing process. When we were editing line-by-line, things were moving slowly and I didn’t feel like we were working at a very high level. It seemed like we should be talking about things like theme, argumentation, objections, and style, rather than subject-verb agreement. But I still thought the grammatical aspects were important. I’m worried that those problems won’t be entirely fixed when we get the papers back, but they won’t take long to fix at that point. I’m glad Dave redirected our attention to bigger issues that will need time to work out. For instance, in Bob’s paper we discussed an objection that we want him to address and answer. In Matt’s we talked a lot about cohesiveness and what aspects of his writing were indispensable, in contrast with those that could be shortened significantly. During the second meeting for editing, I felt like we were being much more productive and learning more than we were at the first one. We were focusing on drastically different things. On a personal note, I think I learned a lot about my leadership style, but what stays out in my head the most is that I learned how much you have to adapt your leadership style to fit the group you’re working with. I think that I could have done much better, but I feel like I improved a lot during the editing process. At the very least, I feel much more comfortable last Wednesday than I did during the first meeting of Phi Sigma Tau this year.

Things I still need to do:

- Re-write mission statement to make it clearer
- Get email address for Stance or PST
- Make rubric for next year’s editorial board
2/27/06

Everything is going badly and this project is really starting to stress me out. Two of the papers were not turned back in with revisions until several days after they were due; one was a week and a half late. This is very hard because the people I'm working with are my peers and my friends and so I don't handle it very well when things don't go according to plan because all I can do is ask them to please get their stuff done on time. I have re-sent the revised papers to the members of the editorial board and they are supposed to have comments to me by tomorrow. Dave and one editor have already sent me comments, many of which are substantive and will require a significant amount of work to fix. The writers of these papers aren't making Stance their first priority, obviously, and I worry that they'll just keep submitting their papers without making the changes we're asking them to make. I've sent the comments I have back out to the writers so they can start working, and I've told them that I need their papers back with all the revisions done by Monday, March 13 (which is the Monday after Spring Break, unfortunately) at 12:00 p.m. I'm starting to get really worried about this being done in time for Honors Day. Once I get the papers back, I'll go ahead and format the journal (hopefully all on Monday if I get the papers on time) and send it to the editors that night for final approval (which I probably won't get). If everything goes reasonably well (which it won't), then I'll be able to take the journal to the publisher by the end of that week.

3/13/06

It is 11:00 p.m. and I have still not received one of the papers from the writer. I have spent a lot of time today getting the rest into the journal ready and hopefully when I get the one remaining paper, it won't take long to finish. Among the completed papers I've received, it appears that pretty good revisions have been made. It is worth mentioning that Dave pointed out a serious problem with one of the papers and I discussed the objection with the person who wrote it. He argued that he answers the objection in the paper (which I think is actually a different but related and much less severe objection) and said that he will not make the revision. I re-wrote the mission statement to make it clearer. I also adapted the rubric for paper assessment which Dave sent me earlier this semester to reflect my own ideas regarding what qualities Stance papers should have. My rubric is quite similar to the sample one Dave sent me. I printed copies of the fliers I posted throughout the year as well as the application form for members of the editorial board, a blank sign-up sheet for the Ask a Philosopher fundraiser, and the tentative calendar. I'll keep these hard copies in a folder (which I'll give to Bob or leave with Dave to give to next year's editorial board?) along with a floppy disk with all the materials saved on it. I've emailed Tim requesting that he send me copies of the fliers he posted advertising the Ask a Philosopher fundraiser. Even if the board next year decides to make new materials, the work I did this year might help them get started. I'm meeting with Dave tomorrow morning to discuss the final stages of this project and whether or not I've overlooked any little things I need to do. As far as I can tell, I need to wait until I have the final paper and then put it in the journal. I will then email the completed journal to the editorial board members and give them a deadline for comments. I'll check it very carefully for errors and then take it to the printer. I anticipate difficulties because there were several last year but my goal is to have it to the printer in a format they can use with no extra charges by March 24. From that point, the printer will have a little less than a month to do the printing. As I recall, it took only a couple of weeks last year, but since the quality of the finished journal will be a little bit nicer this year, I wanted to allow for
more time. After I take the document to the printer, I will write a final summative journal entry and reflect on the project more generally. The rubric I made follows:
# Stance

**Rubric for Assessment of Paper Submissions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(From the external reviewer rubric of The Journal of Value Inquiry)</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>See Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the interpretations and conclusions justified by the arguments?</td>
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<td>Is the contribution new and original?</td>
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<td>Does the title clearly and sufficiently reflect its content?</td>
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<td>Are the presentation, organization, and length satisfactory?</td>
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<td>Is the quality of the English satisfactory?</td>
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<td>Are the references adequate and necessary?</td>
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In general, papers Accepted for Publication in Stance should:
- Be interesting, with some element of originality
- Address a topic of philosophical importance
- Rigorously support a thesis and engage the debate
- Express clear and careful argumentation
- Reflect a suitable understanding of relevant literature
- Be clearly and skillfully written

Editors of Stance should bear in mind that the journal is intended to reflect all areas of philosophy, but should not strive to represent all sub-disciplines at the expense of publishing those papers which reflect the best work in the department.

Briefly describe additions, deletions, or changes that will improve the paper either on the reverse side of this sheet or on the paper itself.

Overall, the paper is
- [ ] Acceptable with minor revisions
- [ ] Acceptable pending another review following significant revisions
- [ ] Unacceptable