

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES STUDENT AWARDS FUND: THE BACKGROUND STORY

At the beginning of the 2010/11 academic year, each department in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at NC State was assigned a small sum of once-off money from alumni annual giving to devote to some worthy purpose. It is expected (but not guaranteed) that this practice will continue.

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies decided to use its \$1,000 for a \$500 award to the best senior in Philosophy and a \$500 award to the best senior in Religious Studies – because it had no scholarships or awards of its own other than the Logic and Cognitive Science Initiative Award. That award, which was introduced in 2009 with funding from GlaxoSmithKline's Semantic Technologies Group, goes to the best senior in the BS in Philosophy with a Concentration in Logic, Representation and Reasoning, who is not eligible for the new philosophy award.

We also decided to use the new awards to honor two emeritus faculty members for their contributions to building up the Department and giving it the standing that it still enjoys. We therefore designated the new awards as the Philosophy Prize in Honor of Professor Robert S. Bryan and the Religious Studies Prize in Honor of Professor W. Curtis Fitzgerald.

To kill three birds with one stone, we decided to use the new awards as an opportunity to launch a student awards fund that will eventually grow big enough to be converted into an endowment that will support these awards – and possibly others – in perpetuity.

These three aspects of the Department's use of its funds from alumni annual giving were made public at our Student Awards Reception on March 16, 2011, at which we presented our three student awards, celebrated the contributions of Professors Bryan and Fitzgerald to the Department, and publicly launched the Philosophy and Religious Studies Student Awards Fund.

The fund was launched with solid foundations. Led by current faculty members who had overlapped with Professors Bryan and Fitzgerald, over 75% of the Department's tenured and tenure-track faculty had made donations or pledges to the fund, which had also received generous donations from several former faculty members who had moved on to other institutions. However, the fund still has a long way to go before reaching the sum of \$25,000 required to convert it into an endowment.

We now appeal more broadly to friends of the Department to contribute to our Student Awards Fund. Your donations will not only support our student awards and honor Professors Bryan and Fitzgerald, but will also help those who control the purse strings to recognize that the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies has the full support of people who are best placed to appreciate the value of its work. During times of drastic budget-cutting, this is an important message to convey.

For information on how to make a donation, please see the Department's web page on Giving: <http://www.ncsu.edu/chass/philo/giving.html>

For general information on Philosophy and Religious Studies at North Carolina State University, please explore the Department's website, starting at its Homepage: <http://www.ncsu.edu/chass/philo/index.html>