Dear Friend of Philosophy,

It is a great honor for me, as the new Chair of the Department of Philosophy, to write to our Friends to tell you about the exciting developments in our Department and to ask for your help in supporting the continued growth of our programs.

I am grateful to Dr. G.A. Spangler for his outstanding leadership of our Department for the past six years. He is a difficult act to follow, but I hope to build on the very solid foundations he left for continued growth and success in our department.

Among the many exciting developments in our Department, these might be of special interest to you:

* We have hired three outstanding junior faculty, bringing new energy and ideas for important programs in the Department. Dr. Charles Wallis (Ph.D., University of Minnesota) joined us this fall and is developing courses and other programs in cognitive science. Dr. Sara Goering (Ph.D., University of Colorado-Boulder), now in her second year with us, has established a Center for Applied Ethics to provide a locus for speakers, conferences, new courses, and research in medical ethics, environmental ethics, business ethics, and other important applications of philosophical insight. Dr. Lawrence Nolan (Ph.D., University of California, Irvine) developed a new graduate seminar on Teaching Philosophy and a new Interdisciplinary course on Medieval philosophy, and he works extensively with students on independent research.

* We are this year recruiting a new tenure-track faculty member in philosophy of religion, to join us next fall. We hope to recruit two more tenure-track faculty members next year. These new faculty members are helping us revitalize and expand the department, especially after several recent retirements (Dr. Steven Davis and Ms. Cheryl Clark in the past year).

* Our new Center for the Advancement of Philosophy in the Schools (CAPS), established this year by Dr. Goering, has conducted training and in-school pairings of advanced philosophy students and teachers in several public schools in Long Beach. We are grateful to the Mattell Foundation for a generous grant to help start this program.

* We have developed a new undergraduate program for Honors in Philosophy, which will begin operation next fall. Independent honors research and an honors seminar will provide exciting opportunities for serious research by outstanding undergraduates, working with our faculty.

* Our Philosophy Pre-Law Program, established in 1994, continues to thrive, with special courses for pre-law students, a philosophy pre-law internship, and invited speakers from the local community of practicing attorneys with philosophy backgrounds. Our pre-law graduates are attending outstanding law schools around the country, including the University of Southern California, Cardozo School of Law, Boston University, and Harvard University.

* Our Master of Arts program is thriving, with 35 students actively enrolled in courses this fall. Our
placement record continues to be outstanding, with recent graduates receiving admission to doctoral programs, with full assistantships, at Boston College; the University of California, Riverside; University of Minnesota; University of Ottawa; University of Southern California; and Washington University. In recent years, two of our MA students have had papers accepted after double-blind review for the programs of the American Philosophical Association-Pacific meetings, and our students have had papers accepted for many other professional meetings as well. We continue to develop opportunities for graduate assistantships for our MA students, both as discussion leaders in some of our introductory courses and as graders and writing tutors in other campus departments, and we hope to further expand the financial support available to our MA students.

*Earlier this fall, we organized and hosted the Fifth Annual Southern California Philosophy Conference on our campus, with over 250 philosophy faculty and students participating in a wide range of sessions. This was a wonderful opportunity for us to showcase our beautiful campus and the work of our department for visitors from as far away as San Diego, Riverside, and Santa Barbara.  

*Next spring, on Saturday, April 21, we will hold an important conference on our campus on the Ethics of the Human Genome Project. We will keep you informed about the major speakers who will join us for this event, which you are welcome to attend. This is one of the inaugural events of our Center for Applied Ethics, and an indicator of the important work we can expect from the Center in the future.

If you have access to the World Wide Web, please visit our department site regularly. It is the best source of information about upcoming events you might wish to attend, and it will give you more information about the many projects and activities we have underway: http://www.csulb.edu/~philos/

Although our College deans and other administrators are very supportive of our activities, the costs of speakers, conferences, and other activities that benefit our students and our community can never be covered completely through state funding. It is only with the help of loyal supporters, such as yourself, that we are able to carry out so many activities far beyond the traditional classroom.

Our Friends are very important to us, and you will remain a valued friend, whether or not you are able to assist us financially in the work of the Department. You are always welcome at our department events, especially speakers and conferences throughout the year. But we also hope you will seriously consider a contribution to the Friends of Philosophy. Your generosity is enormously helpful to us as we expand our faculty, our student body, and the activities of the Department. Among our many priorities which will benefit from your contributions are the following:

* **Scholarships for students:** We currently award three $500 scholarships each year, and we would like to greatly expand these opportunities to better meet the needs of our 73 undergraduate majors and 35 graduate students. The annual Whittington Scholarship is funded by a generous Endowment fund from the Whittington family. The other two are supported from Department funds, with one scholarship designated for undergraduates and one for graduate students. We plan to pool your contributions to award Friends of Philosophy Scholarships next year. We understand that many of our Friends have limited incomes and are paying off student loans. Even a small contribution from you will be enormously helpful to today’s generation of students when we pool your funds with other contributions to award additional scholarships.

* **Conferences and speakers:** Although we receive some campus funding for conferences and speakers, major events, such as the Human Genome Conference, require substantial additional funding for nationally recognized speakers. Your contributions help us conduct events of benefit to our students and the community, and which highlight our department and campus.

* **Student travel to philosophical conferences:** Although our students are eligible for some travel support from the Associated Students and the College of Liberal Arts, this is inadequate to meet the needs of students presenting papers at important professional meetings. Your assistance will enable us to supplement these funds with Friends of Philosophy Student Travel Grants.

* **Philosophy in the Schools:** Continuation and expansion of our program to place outstanding
philosophy students in area schools will depend on substantial funding to provide the high-quality training and placement essential to a successful program.

These are just a few of the important Department activities that your support for the Friends of Philosophy helps us provide. In addition, we welcome in-kind contributions for various needs. For example, if your company is upgrading its furniture or technology, we welcome tax-deductible donations of office furniture and older Pentium computers to improve the working conditions for our faculty, especially our loyal part-time lecturers, who provide much of the General Education in our department. We also have several naming opportunities in the Department, for those of you able to make a major gift. For a suitable Endowment gift, the Center for Applied Ethics can be named in your honor. For a one-time gift of $5,000, our refurbished Department Conference/Seminar room can be named in your honor. For a one-time gift of $3,000, a refurbished faculty office can be named in your honor. Please let me know if you would like to pursue these additional ways of supporting the department.

Enclosed is a form for you to provide your contribution to the Department. All donors will be listed in future Department Newsletters and on our Department Web site. My thanks to you on behalf of my colleagues and our students. I look forward to seeing you at department events and hearing from you about your own activities and accomplishments.

Sincerely,

Julie Van Camp
Professor and Chair
Department of Philosophy