The program review process has underscored the strength of the Department of Philosophy and its many contributions to the University. The department’s graduate program in applied philosophy recruits good students, is successful in placing its graduates, and enjoys a strong reputation in the discipline. Indeed, it exemplifies what Bowling Green State University seeks in doctoral education: a focused program that is nationally recognized within the niche it has identified for itself. Many department faculty are highly productive researchers who contribute to the department’s reputation and sustain its graduate program. The department also makes significant contributions to general education, plays an important role in the Bowling Green Experience, and offers service courses for several majors. In addition, it has contributed to the intellectual life of the campus through sponsoring high quality conferences and a stimulating “Great Debates” series.

Program review has also indicated a number of challenges the department faces. Most notable is a paucity of undergraduate majors and minors, which makes it difficult to support a curriculum and regular class offerings that meet the needs of majors and minors. In addition, the undergraduate curriculum needs attention, and the department’s assessment efforts have not paid sufficient attention to learning outcomes for the major. While the graduate program is strong, there are several issues that need attention: the length of the doctoral program, the centrality of the internship program, and the balance between applied philosophy and normative theory. There is also considerable unevenness in research productivity among faculty. Moreover, since the program review process concluded, a retirement and several resignations have occurred, compromising the department’s ability to maintain the strength of its graduate program and sustain its contributions to undergraduate education.

In consultation with the new department chair, Dr. David Sobel, and other colleagues, Dr. Lou Katzner, as acting chair, prepared the department’s response to the PRC report. While accepting the PRC’s recommendations and pledging to work to address them, Dr. Katzner’s response called attention to resource issues that are critical to the department’s future, especially in light of recent retirements and resignations.

I accept the recommendations contained in the PRC’s report with the following specifications:

I agree with Dr. Katzner that faculty resources are a critical issue facing the department. The College will work with the department to rebuild its depleted ranks as it addresses the PRC’s recommendations. While the current hiring freeze will undoubtedly slow this process, the department will be able to continue its search for a senior scholar, a position that it did not fill last year. As the freeze thaws, additional positions will become available. In
preparation for future hiring, I ask the department to establish priorities that address its most critical needs and articulate how its plan will maintain the department’s core strength in applied ethics—a concern raised by PRC. The department’s plan should accompany the request for new positions it will submit to the College in March 2004.

With respect to the department’s assessment plan, I shall ask Dr. Elizabeth Cole, Associate Dean for College Advancement, to meet with Dr. Sobel and the chair of the department’s undergraduate committee, to discuss options the department might consider to develop a plan that assesses learning outcomes for the major. Dr. Cole’s has a wealth of experience with assessment that will be useful in helping the department devise an appropriate plan.

Given finite resources for graduate assistantships, the department’s request for six new assistantships over the coming years will be difficult to meet. Any additional resources from the College of Arts & Sciences or the Graduate College will be contingent on the department’s success in addressing the PRC’s concerns about the length of the doctoral program and the duration of funding the department provides doctoral students. To address these issues, I will convene a meeting of the chair, graduate coordinator, and the graduate dean early in the fall semester. I hope this meeting will result in a plan that will address department needs in an environment of limited resources.

Dr. Katzner’s response addresses the department’s need for technical assistance in maintaining its web page and publishing its electronic newsletter. Although the College cannot provide this technical assistance, I shall meet with Dr. Sobel early in the fall semester to discuss ways that the department may be able to meet this need.

While the department faces a number of significant challenges, it approaches them from a position of fundamental strength. I look forward to working with Dr. Sobel and his colleagues to address these challenges and assure that the department not only retains its luster but adds to it during the coming years.

______________________________________  ___________________
Donald G. Nieman, Dean                  Date

Concurred:

______________________________________  ___________________
John W. Folkins, Provost                 Date