

Instructional Program Review

Program Name: **Philosophy**

Program Contact: **Danielson, David G.**

Academic Year: **2016-2017**

Status: **Submitted for review**

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1. Description of Program

Provide a brief description of the program and how it supports the college's [College Mission and Diversity Statements](#), [CSM Strategic Goals 2013/14 to 2015/16](#), and other [Institutional Program Planning](#) as appropriate. What is the program's vision for sustaining and improving student learning and success over the next three years?

1. **1. The department now offers seven courses which are primarily taken by students who are transferring and /or seeking an AA/AS degree. Until this year we offered four courses; we added three new courses starting this year.**

The original four classes currently meet GE requirements for an Associates' degree and for CSU GE transfer. Three of those, Phil. 100, 244, and 300, also count as IGETC transfer courses.

We believe that the new courses we have added will be articulated soon. Two of the three, Phil. 160: History of Ancient Philosophy and Phil. 175: History of Modern Philosophy will count as additional options in Area C2 for CSUGE and Area 3B for IGETC. Phil. 200: Introduction to Logic will meet GE Area E2c. for an AA/AS degree and will also be transferable to CSU.

With the addition of these new courses we now have a Philosophy major for students to earn an AA-T, thus streamlining the transfer process for students majoring in Philosophy. There are no sequential course offerings in the program.

The courses *Promote Academic Excellence* with their rigorous standards for success, and they address the institutional mission statement by preparing "...students to be informed and engaged citizens in an increasingly global community." The courses also work to *Improve Student Success* by providing rigorous support for students to develop their skills in critical thinking by emphasizing critical reading of college level texts, and critical writing and analysis.

Until this year we maintained a themed learning community program with the Psychology department, "Movie Night", as a means to enhance institutional dialogue, and responded to the '5 in 5 goal' of "Establish "themed" experiences/integrated learning communities." Unfortunately the funding for the program was cut in half and we determined, in consultation with the Psychology Department, that we were unable to operate with 50% funding. (It's a shame since Movie Night brought together a diverse group of students to have a kind of bonding event which enhanced student engagement.)

We plan to continue the same fine work with students – demanding that they read for comprehension and write coherently in order to prepare them for upper division work when they transfer.

2. Student Learning and Program Data

A. Discuss Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

1. Reflect on recent SLO assessment results for courses and degrees and certificates offered by the program. Specify how SLO assessment informs curriculum development and changes to curriculum.

We performed a complete assessment of all SLOs for each of the 4 of our courses in the fall of 2016. The success rate was approximately 70% for each of the SLOS in each course. We determined that a significant majority of students have thus successfully comprehended the information. We used this assessment to determine that we should continue to emphasize our current practices in coming semesters since it is successful, but also look for ways to increase the %.

2. Comment on the success rates in the program SLOs that are aligned with specific course SLOs. What do the program SLO and course data reveal about students completing the program? Identify trends and discuss areas in need of improvement. Is the alignment between course and program SLOs appropriate and informative? Describe any additional methods used to assess program SLOs and reflect on the results of those assessments. See [course-to-program SLO alignment mapping](#).

Until this year Philosophy did not have program SLOs since we didn't develop them until we developed an AA-T. Thus we have not yet assessed Program SLOs and there have been no students completing the program.

The three program SLOs are:



1. **A. *Analyze social science concepts and theories***
2. **B. *Evaluate diverse viewpoints related to the human experience***
3. **C. *Produce evidence-based arguments***

We believe that our new program SLOs align well with the course SLOs.

For example the SLOs for Philosophy 100 are as follows.

1. **1. *Analyze a philosophical position in terms of different cultural/social perspectives.***
2. **2. *Compare and contrast divergent philosophical theories on some issue.***
3. **3. *Formulate a reasoned response to a philosophical position.***
4. **4. *Identify some of the central figures and main issues in the history of philosophy.***
5. **5. *Identify, explicate and evaluate complex arguments.***

Each of the course SLOs correlate with a program SLO. Program SLO A matches with #1, #2 and #3. Program SLO B. correlates with #1 and #4. Finally program SLO C. correlates with #3, #5.

3. For any courses in the program that satisfy a GE requirement, which GE SLOs are supported or reinforced by the course SLOs? What do assessment results for the course SLOs (and for the GE SLOs, if available) reveal about student attainment of the GE SLOs? See [GE SLO Alignment Summary Report](#)  or [All Courses GE SLO Alignment Data](#) .

Philosophy courses map very well with GE SLOs, with the notable exception of the GE SLO Quantitative skills. We have added Philosophy 200, Introduction to Logic, which comes closer to discussing quantitative skills since it is teaching the same kind of reasoning skills as in Mathematics using

The GE SLOs are as follows.

1. **1. *Effective Communication***
2. **2. *Quantitative Skills***
3. **3. *Critical Thinking***
4. **4. *Social Awareness and Diversity***
5. **5. *Ethical Responsibility/Effective Citizenship***

In each of our courses there is an SLO which refers to some element of critical thinking since it is the essence of any philosophical work. For example, in Philosophy 160: History of Ancient Philosophy, we have the SLO: *Evaluate the fundamental tenets of the philosophical theories of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle and their respective epistemological, ethical, and metaphysical positions.* In order to do so the students need to apply critical thinking in the analysis.

In order to demonstrate that a student can *evaluate the fundamental tenets* of a philosophical theory, the student must be able to effectively communicate, #1, not only the ideas of the philosophers in question, they must also be able to formulate their assessment of the ideas.

Philosophy 244: Introduction to Ethics directly addresses GE SLO #5 as well as #4 since the course not only covers many diverse ethical theories, it covers topics of social and ethical concern, Abortion, Euthanasia, etc. which often requires an awareness of the cultural context of the situation.

B. Student Success Indicators

1. Review [Student Success and Core Program Indicators](#) and discuss any differences in student success indicators across demographic variables. Also refer to the [College Index](#) and other relevant sections of the [Educational Master Plan: Update, 2012](#), e.g., Student Outcomes and Student Outcomes: Transfer. Basic Skills programs should also refer to [ARCC](#) data.

There is an 8% difference between male and female success rates: females are more successful. As the students age, they succeed at higher rates and are retained at higher rates. Two ethnic groups, Black and Pacific Islander students, stand out as succeeding at lower than the average: each group is at 40% compared to the overall average which is 55.6%. But both groups show, however, an increase from lower success rates in previous years. Because these groups are also the 1st and 2nd smallest in terms of the number of students, it makes each individual student weigh more as reflected in the percentages. It is hard to draw meaningful conclusions from such a small sample since the numbers are statistically insignificant.

2. Discuss any differences in student success indicators across modes of delivery (on-campus versus distance education). Refer to [Delivery Mode Course Comparison](#).

The students in the online Phil 100 class show a lower level of success and retention. Success in the on line class, for the 3-year average, shows an 8% lower level while there is a 15% lower retention rate for the on line classes. This discrepancy is the same as it has been for several years. This is most likely due to factors which are relevant for all on line courses:

students must motivate themselves to complete the work and so on. Philosophy is a difficult subject to learn and the lack of face to face contact makes it a challenge for many students to grasp the concepts without the opportunity to engage with the instructor in a classroom.

C. Program Efficiency Indicators. Do we deliver programs efficiently given our resources?

Summarize trends in program efficiency as indicated in the [Student Success and Core Program Indicators](#) (LOAD, Full-time and Part-time FTEF, etc.)

The load for the program has dropped from 547 in 14-15 to 476 in 2015-16. We are not exactly certain as to the drop. It may be due, in part, to our decision in previous years to add extra students when there was an overall college need to include as many students as we could take. This decision was seen as part of an overall desire to aid the college in tough economic times, weathering the “academic storm”. Now that funding is more secure, we have discontinued the practice of taking a “substantial overload” number of students to focus more effectively on student retention and success given the amount of rigorous writing that our courses require to meet proper academic standards. By comparison to the overall load numbers for Creative Arts/Social Science which was 541 in 15-16, the department has a lower number. We think that perhaps our reputation for having high standards regarding the work we require may explain some of the drop.

3. Additional Factors

Discuss additional factors as applicable that impact the program, including changes in student populations, state-wide initiatives, transfer requirements, advisory committee recommendations, legal mandates, workforce development and employment opportunities, community needs. See [Institutional Research](#) as needed.

Due to the creation of the AA-T and AS-T programs state wide, we now offer such a degree to make the opportunities available to students. We are responding to the needs of the institution demonstrating that we recognize the value of students earning Associates degrees.

Most of the items listed above do not apply directly to Philosophy. Philosophy has always been a more purely academic pursuit since there is not a direct pipeline into a profession with, perhaps, the exception of Law. The major associated with the highest scores on the LSAT perennially is Philosophy.

4. Planning

A. Results of Program Plans and Actions

Describe results, including measurable outcomes, from plans and actions in recent program reviews.

Due to recent enrollment trends, we no longer have any adjunct sections being taught. This means that although the

department successfully offered a second section of the Philosophy 300 class, we have cut it back to one section.

B. Future Program Plans and Actions

Prioritize the plans to be carried out to sustain and improve student success. Briefly describe each plan and how it supports the [CSM Strategic Goals 2013/14 to 2015/16](#). For each plan, list actions and measurable outcomes. Plans may extend beyond a single year. Describe the professional activities and institutional collaborations that would be most effective in carrying out the program's vision to improve student learning and success.

We have increased our use of the learning center beyond merely having philosophy tutors. We ran a pilot project for the Supplemental Instruction model which connects with the 5 in 5 plan to “coordinate all learning support services offered in the Learning center.” Our classes offer a level of rigor which challenges students to develop intellectual skills which improve students’ success as they transfer (as we have found anecdotally from former students who have matriculated) and which promotes academic excellence. The content of philosophy classes prepares students to become informed citizens in a world which is becoming more integrated. We are also working with the learning center to develop assessment models to determine how learning center services contribute to student success in our philosophy classes.

We are hopeful that the new communication features in Canvas will translate to greater student retention in the Phil 100 online course. Additionally, we plan to include a video section at the beginning of the class better informing interested students about the time commitments and rigor of the Phil 100 online course in hopes that they go at the course with more attention and effort to increase the chance of successful completion. As one more measure, the instructor is planning to add a printable course calendar that students can print and put on the fridge (or some other similar object) to better remember when assignments are due.

5. Program Maintenance

A. Course Outline Updates

Review the [course outline update record](#). List the courses that will be updated in the next academic year. For each course that will be updated, provide a faculty contact and the planned submission month. See the [Committee on Instruction](#) website for [course submission instructions](#). Contact your division's [COI representatives](#) if you have questions about submission deadlines. **Career and Technical Education courses must be updated every two years.**

Courses to be updated	Faculty contact	Submission month

B. Website Review

Review the program's website(s) annually and update as needed.

Faculty contact(s)	Date of next review/update
David Danielson	4/17

C. SLO Assessment Contacts

Faculty contact(s)	Date of next review/update
Dave Danielson	Fall 2017
Jeremy Ball	Fall 2017

6. Dominant Themes Summary for IPC

Briefly summarize the dominant, most important themes or trends contained in this program review, for division deans to collect and forward to the Institutional Planning Committee. What are the key program issues that matter most? (Brief paragraph or bullet points acceptable).

Now that we have an AA-T, we will need to monitor how well we serve the needs of philosophy students. We will need to assess program SLOs.

We will compare the retention rate for the online classes after the new strategies are implemented.