

## Part I. General Information

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| Program(s) Discussed:                  | Philosophy Department Major and Minor  |
| Current Semester:                      | Spring 2017  |
| Date of Assessment Meeting(s):         | February 9, 2017   |
| Participants in Assessment Meeting(s): | Sharon Kaye, Tamba Nlandu, Simon Fitzpatrick,<br>Dianna Taylor, Patrick Mooney |

All Annual Assessment Reports are available to the appropriate Associate Dean, Dean, and the Provost, as well as to other administrators for institutional effectiveness and accreditation purposes. Please indicate the degree to which your program would like this information more widely shared.

### On-Campus Users

- Freely available
- Available upon request
- Unavailable

### Off-Campus Users

- X Freely available
- Available upon request
- Unavailable

## Part II. Assessment Process

*Prompt:* In one or two paragraphs, describe your assessment process. Did you gather data on all of your program's student learning goals? If not, which student learning goals did you measure in this assessment cycle? What tools did you use to attempt to measure student learning? Where and how were they administered? Who scored them?

This year we gathered data from both seminars that were taught concerning our four departmental learning goals. We created an aggregate graph showing four levels of achievement. The assessments were administered and scored by the two instructors of the courses.

## Part III. Findings

*Prompt:* Along with this report, please submit the data charts the program used during the assessment meeting. Describe, in words, what your program learned about student learning during this assessment cycle. What were your strengths? In what ways did students fail to meet the goals you set for them?

**Strengths:** The percentage of students not meeting expectations is quite low. The seminar students seem to be performing well overall. By the time they get to the seminar, most majors and minors are quite good at most skills—especially understanding an argument and assimilating information.

**Weaknesses:**

-Critical evaluation of arguments is the hardest for most students. They still tend to be passive consumers of the text.

-Some students still have trouble writing well (basic writing skills).

-We get students in the minor who don't really want to be minors, but are cajoled into it by virtue of having enough philosophy credits. They are just fulfilling the requirements without any real interest. These students have retained very little of the history of philosophy needed for seminar learning.

The students who are in the seminar course “to get the minor” skip class and drag down the quality of the course. They are not invested. They haven’t ever had a course with just minor and majors. They don’t have a sense of themselves as a group.

*Name(s) of file(s) containing data charts:* Fall 2016 Seminars.png

#### **Part IV. Planned Changes to the Assessment System**

*Prompt:* What changes, if any, do you need to make to your assessment system? (Questions to consider include: 1) Do your measures and processes provide useful data with a reasonable amount of effort? and 2) Are your measures reliable, valid, and sufficient?) On which student learning goals do you plan to focus your attention during the next assessment cycle? Do you need to implement additional formative assessment tools to better understand some of your findings? If so, describe those here.

This was an insightful and productive meeting.

We found it was hard to contextualize the data without the instructors of the assessed courses being present. In the future, if the instructors who assessed are not able to be present, they should submit a paragraph describing their overall judgement of the course.

We need to start looking at overall trends from our core data. We will determine in the fall when we have enough data to have a meaningful departmental discussion about it.

#### **Part V. Planned Changes to the Program in Response to Data**

*Prompt:* What changes, if any, do you need to make to your program in response to what you now know about student learning? (Possibilities include changes to learning goals, pedagogy, assignments in particular classes, activities, and curricular requirements and/or structure.) What is your anticipated timeline for both implementation and assessment of the planned changes?

The problem is not with the seminar. The problem is to find a way to be sure that all students who take the seminar are well prepared for it and motivated to do well.

As per our APR we need to cultivate a cohort of students. Let us cease to encourage students to major or minor in philosophy because they are “only a few credits away.” Only encourage students who have an intrinsic interest.

Serious philosophy students need a space where they can gather with “fellow travelers.” Such a course wouldn’t turn poor students into good students, but it might engage the ones in the middle. We need to pick a course to advertise as: “For majors and minors only or by special permission”. We will get permission from the deans to try this experiment in the fall. Such a course may have low enrollment, at least at first. But it will likely increase majors and minors over time.

We need to restructure the major. We need majors to take some history courses before they take the topical classes. And we need more majors/minors-only courses. The next bulletin is 2020. We would like to have the new major in place and ready to publish in this document.