



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY



MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 11, 2003

TO: Linda Buckley, Director
Assessment, Accreditation, And Curriculum Planning

FROM: Thomas F. Pyne, Chair

SUBJECT: Assessment Report 2002-2003

The Philosophy Department's assessment report will be organized according to its Assessment Plan.

Regular Review

The department decided to make the "regular review" called for in our Assessment Plan an annual review. This review applies the 'specific expected outcomes' for each course to a review of the course material (syllabi, reading assignments, and course requirements). This responsibility extends to philosophy courses in General Education to determine their consistency with GE program goals as well. The Curriculum Committee is responsible for this review.

The 2001-2002 regular review revealed some gaps between the expected outcomes and the explicit content of the course material in individual sections. (It does not follow from this that the expected outcomes *themselves* are not being met, simply that the department cannot be certain – or certify to others – that they are.) The Curriculum Committee indicated such in its report, and the department made two responses: (a) the faculty members were made aware of gaps in their syllabi in time for review during the 2002-2003 academic year; second, and more importantly, the department produced a "syllabus template" for all lower division and multi-section upper division courses, indicating what information and content had to be there.

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The 2002-03 regular review reveals much a better, though still imperfect, match between the expected outcomes and the material submitted. The department will continue to work with faculty to make the explicit course content reflect the expected outcomes.

With regard to GE goals, the syllabus templates incorporated those goals as well. Again, the match between those goals and the submitted material was very much closer this year.

Review of Student Evaluations

Student evaluations in all courses must be reviewed according to the departmental Assessment Plan. This is the responsibility of the Chair.

This year's review of student evaluations was conducted in conjunction with the evaluation of part-time faculty and completed on June 30. For part-time faculty this results in a written evaluation of the faculty member. The review of all faculty yielded no issues needing attention.

Senior Assessment

In the senior year every major submits a paper from a core upper-division required course for evaluation. The Assessment Committee is responsible for this evaluation.

The 2002-2003 evaluation of senior papers revealed, with few exceptions, a satisfactory level of competence both in the mechanics of writing and in the analytical and argumentative abilities of our majors as measured against the departmental "Guidelines for Writing Philosophy Papers" and the "Grading Guidelines for Philosophy Papers." The review resulted in the department's reminding all faculty about these guidelines. The syllabus templates specify that every syllabus should provide a link to them as well.

Basic Computer Literacy/Information Competence

The departmental policy calls for this assessment to take place in PHIL 181: Metaphysics, a course required of all major and minors. The assessment takes the form of a series of tasks to be completed by all students. The competency test was administered to PHIL 181 students this year.

General Education

A common set of questions was administered in all GE courses for the first time during the Spring semester. Performance on these tests will establish a baseline for future evaluations.