Office of Academic Program Assessment, Office of Academic Affairs

The 2012-2013 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT: PHILOSOPHY

The following report is based on the self-assessment procedures adopted by the faculty of Philosophy. The assessment tool s and instruments used are current as of this time. As the reader will note, the department has continued to develop its program assessment methods. This marks the first use of the "Philosophical Analysis" a purpose designed instructional assessment tool used across several key courses in the curriculum. This tool serves a dual purpose – first and principally, for accurate and reliable student assessment in various philosophy courses; and second, for accurate and reliable indicators of student achievement of the Philosophy Program Values, explicated in the Program Values Rubric.

1. As a result of last year's assessment effort, have you implemented **any changes for your assessment including learning outcomes, assessment plan, assessment tools (methods, rubrics, curriculum map, or key assignment etc.), and/or the university baccalaureate learning goals?**
   a. If so, what are those changes? How did you implement those changes?
   b. How do you know if these changes have achieved the desired results?
   c. If no, why not?

Response:

Yes, the Philosophy Department has substantially improved its assessment efforts since the last internal assessment report as part of the campus-wide IPP process. In the first instance, we are now using our Program Values Rubric as the cornerstone of our program assessment. It was constructed from modifications to several of the AAC&U Values Rubrics, notably, creative and critical thinking, integrative learning, written and oral communication, and perhaps most centrally, inquiry and analysis. The Philosophy Values Rubric also seeks to integrate the Baccalaureate Learning Outcomes – the institutional level learning goals. The rubric also stipulated specific learning outcomes which are assessable and measurable. The instrument which allows the measure of the programmatic learning outcomes is our purpose designed "Philosophical Analysis" assignment which is administered in key programmatically relevant courses as both an instrument for student learning achievement in the course and as an indicator of attainment of programmatic learning outcomes. The academic year 2012-13 marks the first year for implementation of this rubric and instrument in conjunction. As such, we do not yet have any data to confirm the efficacy of these changes.

Since our most recent Program Assessment (report dated 2010, review conducted 2008), the department has worked diligently to improve our internal program assessment strategy. A central element of this improvement relied on the completion and success of a significant restructuring of the major and concentrations such that there is a clear and unified core

curriculum across all of our programs. These programmatic changes, and their accompanying curricular development, were implemented effective 2010, and we are now in a position where a significant number of our majors are now following the revised program tracks. These programmatic and curricular changes enabled a level of programmatic assessment not previously possible. Briefly, the program change saw the creation of three new required common courses: PHIL 127 History of Ancient Philosophy, PHIL 128 History of Modern Philosophy, and PHIL 189 Senior Seminar. The former history courses replace a lower division single course requirement. The latter seminar serves as a capstone experience for students in the major and both concentrations, taken in their graduating semester. This latter course is the focus of much of the new and improved assessment, including a senior essay (heavily revised under the tutelage of a faculty member of the student's choice), a final Philosophical Analysis, and an exit assessment quiz.

Given these substantial revisions and modifications to our assessment strategy, we plan to make this the focus of our upcoming program review in 2014-15.

The above noted major change was prompted by it, as was the development of several other additional and complementary instruments for assessing student attainment of the program learning goals. The following is an excerpt from the department's report to the program review committee from April 2013, which details the additional changes and modifications made. It also includes our assessment strategy going forward (pages 7-13):

Updates Pertaining to Assessment

***Recommendation # 9**:   It is imperative that the Philosophy Department work with the university assessment coordinator to develop and implement a workable student learning outcomes assessment plan that satisfies both University and WASC requirements, which include:*

1. ***Identification of a measurable set of student learning outcomes;***
2. ***Methods (including direct measures) for assessing those outcomes;***
3. ***Demonstrated mechanism for using the assessment results in programmatic planning.***

***Response:** Among the most significant developments in the years since this program review are the strides the department has made to put into place the kinds of instruments and tools which will afford us much better means of assessing our program. As described above, the principal innovation here is our development of a senior capstone course. The remainder of this response will detail each of the assessment instruments and tools, explaining how they fit together to provide a complete program assessment. The final portion of this response will identify a 3 year plan for step-wise implementation.*

To begin, the following program assessment instruments are retained from the previous efforts at program assessment.

Syllabus Checklist (Retained, minor Revision)

All instructional faculty must complete the syllabus checklist at the beginning of each semester. This serves two purposes: to remind faculty of the requirements for information included in syllabi for different courses and purposes; and, affords the department the ability to follow up with faculty who are not meeting the minimum requirements for syllabus and course content. This form is available on the department website here http://www.csus.edu/phil/Forms/SyllabusChecklistSpring2013.pdf.

Faculty Visitation Evaluation Form (Retained, Substantially Revised, First Use Fall/12)

All instructional faculty are evaluated by class peer visitation each semester according to the department's ARTP policy (available here http://www.csus.edu/phil/Forms/ARTP%20Policy_Revisions_Approved%20Complete.pdf). This evaluation consists of a peer visiting a class to observe instructional methods. It has been expanded, effective Fall/12, to include not merely a visitation of the class, which provides, at best a snapshot of the instructor's in-class instructional skill, but neglects so much that is relevant to assessing instructional quality. The evaluation was expanded to include a review of the syllabi for the selected course, but also for all courses taught by the instructor in the semester, assessment of the course text and assignments, assessment of the online teaching support components of the course as well. In short, this assessment tool has been dramatically reformed so at the bring a more comprehensive review of each instructors' course – how it is taught, at what level of difficulty, with what sort of course assessment tools, and in light of what set of learning outcomes. The form used for these evaluations, along with the rubric for use in assessment, is found on the department's Website here Faculty Evaluation Form.

Program Values Rubric (New, First Use in Spring 2012)

Over the fall and winter of 2011-12, the department developed a Program Values Rubric (Rubric), modeled on those developed by AAC&U. The Rubric was developed by refining several of the AAC&U rubrics, including critical thinking, ethical reasoning, inquiry and analysis, and these were adapted to suit the focus and goals we have established for our program. The university's development and adoption of the Baccalaureate Learning Goals for the institution inspired a similar undertaking on our part. It is available from the department website at: http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/Philosophy%20Program%20Value%20Rubric.pdf.

This Rubric was designed to serve as the principal tool for program assessment going forward and is the focal point of the department's recent efforts at refining our program assessment plan. It identifies learning goals relevant to the philosophical core of the major and the two concentrations, as well as those specific to the two concentrations. The associated learning

outcomes are then cashed out qualitatively for three levels of proficiency. Ideally, students who are new to philosophy will develop proficiency at the novice level after the first year of instruction. Majors are expected to achieve full proficiency in each area of the core and in their respective concentrations as well, by the time they graduate. Minors are expected to develop competence in each of the area of the philosophy core.

The rubric serves as the tool against which the two principal instruments of assessment are evaluated: the Philosophical Analysis and the Senior Essay. Each spring, a group of 3-5 faculty will request instructors to provide an anonymized and random sample of at least ten Philosophical Analyses submitted by majors during the spring semester. These Philosophical Analyses will be "scored" against the Rubric and assessed according to the level of the course within the major. If the course is a core course for one of the concentrations, then those Analyses will be assessed against the relevant portion of the Rubric. This will allow the concentrations to be assessed along with the general major. The same will be done with all the Philosophical Analyses written in both the prior fall and that spring semester written by seniors in the capstone course (PHIL 189).

Philosophical Analysis (New, First Implemented Spring 2013)

The Philosophical Analysis (PA) is a writing instrument developed by one of our faculty for use in several of his upper division philosophical courses. The structure is transparent, straightforward, but rigorous and highly structured. Once the department had developed the Program Values Rubric, we searched for a suitable means for assessing the program using the Rubric. This assignment seemed perfectly suited to the task and has been voluntarily adopted by several additional faculty in the department. The department is confident that sufficient instructional faculty will adopt the PA for use in their courses, as among the various assignments given for course assessment purposes, such that each of the core courses in the major will be assessable each academic year. The department has not agreed to mandate the use of the PA in all courses, and has not as yet found the need to do so. We are exploring various possibilities here, including the possible creation of a lower-division course in which students develop familiarity and competence with this format to enhance its utility as a mechanism for establishing a baseline for measuring students' total improvement over the program.

The Philosophical Analysis format can be found on the department's website here:
http://www.csus.edu/phil/Guidance/How%20to%20Write%20an%20Analysis.htm

The PA is a writing assignment written in response to an assigned published article – typically a contemporary article written by a well-known scholar in the field. The specific article assigned, and for which students construct a PA, varies with the course, instructor, and sub-field of philosophy. Students are required to provide an introductory paragraph with thesis statement,

an explication or exegesis of the argument, and a critical assessment of the argument offered in the article. Students have a choice of only three critical positions – agreement with the author, in which the critique contributes to the strengths already evidenced in the article; disagreement, in which the critique contains counter-arguments or develops robust objections to the argument in the article; non-commitment, in which the critique identifies the balance of strengths and weaknesses or lack of sufficient evidence to make a determination (students' ignorance of the issue is not a justification for not taking a position, that ignorance is expected to be eliminated through research and consultation with peers and the instructor).

Courses Using the Philosophical Analysis
Fall/12
PHIL 122 Political Philosophy – Required in EPL Concentration
PHIL 189 Senior Seminar – Required Core in all programs

Spring/13
PHIL 128 History of Modern Philosophy – Required Core in all programs
PHIL 180 Knowledge and Understanding – Required Core in all programs
PHIL 181 Metaphysics – Required Core in all programs
PHIL 152 Recent Ethical Theory – Required in EPL Concentration
PHIL 153 Philosophy of Mind – Required in LPS Concentration
PHIL 189 Senior Seminar – Required Core in all programs

Fall/13
PHIL 127 History of Ancient Philosophy – Required Core in all programs
PHIL 180 Knowledge and Understanding – Required Core in all programs
PHIL 181 Metaphysics – Required Core in all programs
PHIL 192N Seminar in Naturalism – all program require a 190/192
PHIL 117 Existentialism – Elective for all programs
PHIL 189 Senior Seminar – Required Core in all programs

Spring/14
PHIL 128 History of Modern Philosophy – Required Core in all programs
PHIL 180 Knowledge and Understanding – Required Core in all programs
PHIL 181 Metaphysics – Required Core in all programs
PHIL 152 Recent Ethical Theory – Required in EPL Concentration
PHIL 153 Philosophy of Mind – Required in LPS Concentration
PHIL 189 Senior Seminar – Required Core in all programs

Senior Philosophical Essay (Substantially Revised, First Implemented Fall 2012)

The Senior Philosophical Essay was a part of the old assessment program, which required majors to submit their best essay to the department at the beginning of their final semester. The department agreed that this was difficult to enforce, since it was not tied to any course requirements and compliance was not tied to any consequences for students. The quality of the submissions was also spotty and did not reliably reflect what the students' best efforts. It was agreed that this needed to be replaced with a more rigorous system for both the students and the department. The department crafted the senior seminar capstone course, largely in response to the failure of the old system.

The principal undertaking during the senior seminar is typically the substantive revision of an essay either written for a previous philosophy course with an eye toward the student producing, under the guidance of a faculty mentor, a demonstration of their philosophical acumen. As such, the senior philosophical essay has become an opportunity for our graduating majors to work with a faculty member of their choice (with the agreement of the faculty), on a topic of their interest, to develop a sustained comprehensive argument regarding a philosophical problem in the topic area. This allows students to refine their skills at creative and critical analysis, sustained inquiry, analytic problem solving, conceptual analysis, and perhaps less philosophically specific, their skills at writing, revision, literature research and review, and self-critique. The senior essay is assessed using the Rubric and the expectation is that they will indicate the students have developed a high degree of proficiency in these skills across the depth and breadth of their major, as these are not the kind of skills that can be developed in one semester, but require sustained effort and practice.

Exit Survey (New, First Implemented Fall 2012)

Developed over Fall/12, and first implemented in the PHIL 189 senior capstone course in Fall/12, this exit survey is designed to provide student feedback on several aspects of the program, including everything from course availability to quality of instruction, and from what brought them to philosophy as a major to their assessment of the value the program provided to their overall education. All students enrolled in PHIL 189 in each semester will complete the survey. Each academic year, the Assessment Committee will review the results of the surveys and include the analysis in our annual assessment report. The results will also be shared with the department curriculum committee where appropriate to jointly work on areas of improvement.

The exit survey is available here
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?rm=full&formkey=dFRDSzlYVmhmdDg1S0hqb2FHUVFfeEE6MQ#gid=0

Assessment Survey (New, First Implemented Fall 2011)

This is a supplemental assessment survey is attached to the principal student course and instructor evaluation form and distributed to all students in all philosophy courses for which student evaluations are collected. Initially, it was implemented in Fall/11 in courses which were using online student evaluations. Effective spring/13, the department has instituted a requirement that student evaluations be conducted online. Hence, beginning Spring/13, all philosophy courses for which student evaluations are collected will also be assessed according to the assessment survey. This is a ten question multiple choice and short answer assessment of the course which, the department believes, gives perspective on the reliability of the instructor's assessment methods. See attached document.

Alumni Survey (In Development)

During Fall/13, the department proposes to develop an alumni survey. In large part, we have been on hold with this until we are able to collect data from the graduating seniors' exist survey (first implemented in Fall/12) in order to see what sorts of questions might bring the most useful information for programmatic assessment purposes. The plan is to refine the survey for implementation in the Spring/14.

Assessment Plan for Implementation (Revised, Starting Spring 2013)

1. *This Spring semester, the Assessment Committee will assemble three to five faculty who will assess **ten anonymized, randomly selected Philosophical Analyses** submitted by majors from each of the following classes:*
    a. *Both the Fall/12 and Spr/13 sections of the **capstone course (189).** These will be assessed against the Program Values Rubric. Ideally, these graduating majors will indicate proficient achievement of the Philosophy Core learning goals.*
    b. ***PHIL 180**, which is in the newly created core coursework and is typically taken by majors in their junior and senior years. These will be assessed against the Program Values Rubric for the Philosophy Core learning goals. The expectation is that these students will reveal proficiency in the range from competent to proficient.*
    c. ***PHIL 152**, which is an ethics course in the newly created core coursework and is required in the Ethics Politics and Law Concentration. It is typically taken by majors in their junior and senior year. Though students in the major and LPS concentrations may take this course as one of two ethics courses required, it will be used to assess the EPL concentration by narrowing the selection of sample Pas to those submitted by EPL majors. The committee will assess these Analyses using the Program Values Rubric. Ideally, students will indicate achievement of the Concentration Specific learning goals in the range between competent and proficient.*

d. **PHIL 153**, *which is a required course in the Logic and Philosophy of Science concentration. It is typically taken by majors in their junior or senior year. Though students in the major and EPS concentrations may take this course as one of four LPS courses required, it will be used to assess the LPS concentration by narrowing the selection of sample PAs to those submitted by LPS majors. The committee will assess these PAs using the Program Values Rubric. Ideally, students will indicate achievement of the Concentration Specific learning goals in the range between competent and proficient.*

2. *This spring semester, the assessment committee will* **review a sample of ten senior essays, submitted in 189 during the 2012-13 academic year**. *A sample of ten essays will be assessed against the Program Values Rubric for proficiency in the Philosophy Core.*

The purpose of assessing the senior essays in addition to the PA from the same students is to allow for the possibility that students may reveal different abilities in a studied and revised essay, which requires a sustained, independent argument, developed on a specific topic through a series of revisions under faculty guidance, than is apparent through a highly structured and timed assignment as the PA in this class. The latter tests a student's ability to demonstrate philosophical acumen in regard to providing a structured critical analysis of an article, which they must read and comprehend in the scope of the timed exam. Although philosophical acumen and reflection is not typically associated with rapidity, the department still regards the ability to apply the skills learned under a time constraint as a measure of the degree to which they have been acquired and effectively internalized. This should be an indication that the students have been cultivated and have internalized the philosophical core over the length and breadth of their time in the program. The senior essay, it is the department's belief, will reveal the degree to which our majors have acquired the skills of patient deliberation, collaborative editing (with their faculty mentor), and creative inquiry in the development and support an argument on a topic of their choice. This will demonstrate the degree to which the program has been successful in fostering the kind of creative and critical inquiry that sustains a lifelong philosophical orientation.

3. *This spring semester, the Assessment Committee will collect and review the results of the* **graduating seniors' exit survey**. *This exit survey was finalized and implemented in the Fall/12. Patterns in student responses, especially to key questions, will be examined for feedback on the program to be used to assess whether the program is succeeding from the students point of view. Crucial will be indicators that students perceive the program to be value-adding to their lives. Where problems, limitations or weaknesses in the program are revealed, the Assessment Committee will join with the Curriculum Committee to determine whether and what actions might be taken to improve the program.*

4. *This spring will make the first semester for which we will be able to* **collect data from the Assessment Survey for a subset of philosophy courses on a three year rotation**. *Over the summer, the Assessment Committee will review the results of this assessment instrument to ensure that courses are being taught with the same eye toward quality and reliability. Any patterns found in the results which are indicative of a problem with the reliability of student assessment in courses will be brought to the curriculum committee for consultation and further action.*

5. *Early Fall/13 the department will hold a meeting specifically devoted to reviewing the assessment report for AY 2012-13. The department has committed to holding such an annual assessment meeting to ensure everyone in the department is aware of the results of the report from the previous year's program assessment and to determine when and where improvement can be made. All members of the department will be encouraged to participate and contribute, as all are stake-holders in the quality of the program and in assessing our good works.*

2. As a result of last year's assessment effort, have you implemented **any other changes at the department, the college or the university, including advising, co-curriculum, budgeting and planning?**
    a. If so, what are those changes? How did you implement those changes?
    b. How do you know if these changes have achieved the desired results?
    c. If no, why not?

   Response:
   No, since the bulk of the expressed concern pertained to our assessment methods, we focused our attention on addressing those. We were successful, after a long period without, to attain a tenure track faculty position, which should improve both our ability to advise students and to meet our programmatic learning goals in the years to come.

3. What **PROGRAM** (not course) learning outcome(s) have you assessed this academic year?
   Response:
   We are assessing all the programmatic learning outcomes specified in our Program Value Rubric. We will be using the following four courses and associated assessment instruments to do so:
    a. PHIL 189 – Philosophy Core Leaning Goals, with attendant learning outcomes;
    b. PHIL 180 – Philosophy Core Leaning Goals, with attendant learning outcomes;
    c. PHIL 153 – As a required course in the Logic and Philosophy of Science Concentration, this will be used to assess the concentration specific learning goals and their attendant outcomes.
    d. PHIL 152 – As a required course in the Ethics, Politics and Law concentration, this will be used to assess the concentration specific learning goals and their attendant outcomes.
    e. The senior essay will be used to assess the Philosophy Core Learning goals and their attendant outcomes.

     f. Finally, please note that the department opted not to include the results of the exit survey for this year. We received only 7 completed surveys and find that the sample size is inadequate from which to make any generalizations about the program. We plan to use this instrument next year, and include this year's data, which should allow more representative sample size compared to the cohort.

Please see the attached Program Values Rubric for detailed learning goals and attendant learning outcomes.

4. What method(s)/measure(s) have you used to collect the data?

Response:

Please see the attached documents for details and guidance:
- ➢ Program Values Rubric
- ➢ Abbreviated Scoring Rubric
- ➢ Philosophical Analysis Instructions
- ➢ Program Assessment Survey

     a. Philosophical Analysis + Program Values Rubric: Random selection of ten Philosophical Analyses from each of PHIL 189 (Fall/12 and Spr/13), PHIL 180, PHIL 153, PHIL 152, scored by faculty assessment reviewers against the Program Values Rubric for the Philosophy Core and Concentration specific learning outcomes.

     b. Senior Essay + Program Values Rubric: Nine senior essays taken from PHIL 189 and four non-189 senior essays from Fall/12 and Spr/13 combined, scored against the Program Values Rubric for the Philosophy Core.

     c. Student evaluation scores for each course used this year for program assessment purposes. The idea here is to compare the course grade distribution to the student instructor and course evaluations. Low grades often correlate with low student evaluations, and vice versa. However, we have at least one instance in this sample which is the inverse, that is, where the majority of grades issued were repeatable grades, but the instructor and course scored very high on the student evaluations.

     d. Program Assessment Survey – this is a 10 question survey we began issuing to students along with the regular instructor/course evaluations last year. This is the first year we have been able to do so for all courses in which students complete a course evaluation. These ten questions are designed to reflect, for the students' point of view, the rigor, difficulty, and quality of the course as delivered, and to provide some reliability measure for the resulting course grades. The idea is that if students believe they didn't have to work hard, but the course registered many very high grades, we would ask whether it was easy to cheat or whether they were not being challenged appropriate to the grade level or nature of the course. This survey is attached.

     e. Exit Survey was not used this year due to inadequate sample size. We anticipate higher completion rates next year and will include this data at that time.

5. What are the criteria and/or standards of performance for the program learning outcome?

Response:
Please see the attached Program Values Rubric and the Abbreviated Scoring Rubric for details. The department has an expectation that at least 70% of our graduating seniors will score in the proficient range of the values rubric.

6. What data have you collected? What are the results and findings, including the percentage of students?
    a. Who meet each standard?
    b. In what areas are students doing well and achieving the expectations?
    c. In what areas do students need improvement?

Response:
Please see the attached document: *Program Assessment Report_Philosophy_Learning Outcomes Attainment_2012-13.*

The data indicate the emergence of three distinct camps of students. First, those who are still fairly early in their upper division philosophy experience, who take PHIL 180 shortly after having completed their lower division requirements and some 100 major courses. These students were struggling still with achieving proficiency in attaining the programmatic learning outcomes. Second, the group of students who are those majors who are further along in their studies, having likely taken the bulk of the core required coursework and are now expanding on the required electives in their concentrations (PHIL 152 and 153). These students are large very competent and many are proficient in their attainment of the programmatic learning outcomes. Finally, the group of graduating seniors whose work in the capstone seminar PHIL 189 represents their highest and best ability to attain the programmatic learning outcomes. In review of their Philosophical Analyses, they met the department expectation that at least 70% of students would attain Proficiency in their graduating year. This expectation was exceeding in review of the sample of Senior Essays submitted in PHIL 189, where 100% were scored as having attained proficiency. Notably, there was a small subset of senior papers, submitted by students who were not programmatically required to take the capstone seminar PHIL 189. Their essays were appreciably lower in demonstrated attainment of the programmatic learning outcomes where none were scored as proficient and 25% were scored as novice. This is striking, though the sample size is small. When scored against the programmatic learning outcomes, these students demonstrated noticeably fewer of the learning outcomes than their capstone seminar taking peers.

The department interprets this data, especially the difference between senior essays, as confirming the programmatic value and the value to students of adding the capstone seminar as a requirement for all majors. It also lends some support to the idea we have been deliberating about adding an introductory seminar PHIL 89, for native students when they are sophomores and for transfer students in their first semester, which would introduce students to the rigors of the program and begin a more intentional and organized enculturation of them to faculty expectations for their achievement as they proceed through the program. This would also allow

an opportunity for establishing an entry level benchmark regarding the programmatic learning outcomes against which assessment sin mid-stream and in graduating semester can be taken. This would be a decisive way to assess the program for its educational quality.

7. As a result of this year's assessment effort, do you anticipate or propose any changes for your program (e.g. structures, content, or learning outcomes)?
    a. If so, what changes do you anticipate? How do you plan to implement those changes?
    b. How do you know if these changes will achieve the desired results?

Response:
In general, we are very confident in the strength and quality of our recently implemented program changes. As students come increasingly to follow this new track, we are confident that the assessment data will begin to support our confidence. Also, as student encounter the key assessment instrument (Philosophical Analysis) more frequently across the breadth of the courses they take for the major, then we are confident that the unfamiliarity with which many of our majors still confront it will dissipate and be replaced with a comfort and familiarity that will allow them to demonstrate their mastery of both the formal logical constraints of the instrument as well as the creative opportunities to demonstrate their comprehension of the course content.

There is one possible programmatic change which we have be deliberating and which the data this year might support: the development of a one unit PHIL 89, Introductory Seminar in which majors would be exposed to the Philosophical Analysis, learning more explicitly how it related to their developing philosophical skills, especially in terms of providing structural support for their fledgling skills in logical analysis, philosophical creativity, and philosophical expression, both written and oral. However, before modifying the program again, after only so recently implementing major revisions, might be neither prudent nor supported by this first round of assessment data. This is definitely an item for consideration during our next program review in 2014-15.

8. Which program learning outcome(s) do you plan to assess next year? How?
    Response:
    Next year we plan to assess all the learning outcomes for the core and the two concentrations, but we will seek to include a broader swath of the department's core courses, including the two courses which form the historical and conceptual core of curriculum, PHIL 127 and 128.

    We will also assess the core programmatic learning outcomes using the exit survey for the first time. This was postponed this year for insufficient sample size. But as it is a required element of the capstone Senior Seminar, as students increasingly take this course, we will come to have a large and more representative sample size.

We recognize that it is ambitious to assess all the programmatic leaning outcomes in each year, but given that this is a very new process for us, we wanted to have a couple of years of benchmark data before moving to an assessment plan which involves the rotation of learning outcomes over an extended set of years. Once we have this baseline data, and once we have established the use of the key assessment instrument (the Philosophical Analysis), then we can begin to focus our assessment on cohorts of students – from the start of their major to their graduation. At that juncture, we will be able to identify one or two learning outcomes to asses on a three to five year rotation using data from three to five years of majors.

On behalf of the Philosophy Department, thank you for your attentive review. We look forward to your feedback.

Christina Bellon, Chair
Philosophy
26 June, 2013