What are the strengths of your area?: The mission of the Philosophy Department is to provide foundational critical and ethical thinking skills for all COS students especially through required GE CSU/UC critical thinking courses and required major courses for nursing and engineering. Religious studies courses are relevant to student interests as an introduction to reflective thinking. Some strengths of the Philosophy Department include:

- The average (Fall 2009-Fall 2013) percentage of students who complete a philosophy course with a passing grade at the end of the semester at COS is 63%, comparable to the Statewide average of 65% (Master Plan 2014-15). Critical thinking course gradable students at the end of the course is comparable to other similar COS courses. PHIL 25 = 85% compared to ENG 2 = 89%; PHIL 20 = 92% compared to ENGL 2 =89%, MATH 21 = 80% (Spring 2014 COS Data Warehouse attached). Success rates(Faculty Growth Template attached) show between 42% - 50% of students earned a letter grade of A, B, or C out of all grades issued from 2010-2013. Students are challenged to think differently in a philosophy class and many meet the challenge.

- Philosophy classes consistently fill with wait lists early in the registration process. (In Fall 2014, all philosophy classes were closed by July 31st. On January 8th all but one philosophy classes were closed. On June 25th all Fall 2013 philosophy classes but one were closed.) Over the past three years (2010-2013), the fill rate has been over 90% and as high as 95%. If more classes are offered, they will fill due to the strong demand for these general education courses.

- Since Fall 2005 all philosophy faculty completed outcomes assessment cycles to improve critical thinking and argument writing skills.

- Philosophy has an efficiency rating around 500 WSCH/FTEF which is high given the fact that instructors focus much of the student grades on the writing of argument papers (Faculty Growth Template).

- Philosophy AA-T degree submitted for approval.

What improvements are needed?: There is a need to improve staffing since too many of the classes are taught by adjunct faculty and none have a degree in philosophy although they do have equivalency. An average of 43% of classes are taught by full-time faculty from 2010-2013, well below the state guideline of 75% full-time classes (Faculty Growth Template).

- Philosophy faculty continue to review success and retention rates to make improvements. The retention rates are quite varied depending upon whether it is from the census day or after the drop day based upon instructor practices. In addition, some students realize that they would be better off waiting until later in their college experience to try a philosophy course. For example, for Spring 2014 completion in PHIL 1 is 64% at census but after the drop day the completion is 78%; PHIL 5 is 76% at census and 84% after drop day; PHIL 20 is 66% at census and 92% at drop day; and PHIL 25 is 69% at census and 85% at drop day (COS data reports). Regardless the rates, philosophy faculty work with students to improve success and retention by providing students with tips for success in a philosophy course.

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.: The scarcity of qualified potential faculty in the area presents a significant challenge for meeting day, night, Hanford and Tulare class needs. There are no graduate programs in philosophy at UCM, CSUF nor CSUB. In addition, not one of the adjunct currently has any degree in philosophy although all have past experience teaching philosophy classes thus pass equivalency.

Employers consistently demand employees with critical thinking skills, especially with increased global competition. Philosophy classes are uniquely qualified to teach critical thinking as evidenced by student reports of learning:

"In the beginning of this course, I was very close-minded. I didn't care to listen to other views because I had my own. Now that I have taken this course, I am open-minded. I accept others' views and have learned to respect that we are all different."

"Just a few short months ago I viewed my journey as a battle to be fought and won - I was proudful, stubborn and argumentative in a less than productive way, often tearing others down in order to build myself up...[now I trust] that the one in whose company we sit has something good to share with us."

"I have been wearing a blindfold for the majority of my life but now I am excited about the angles and opportunities that I can take advantage of in my future, just by using my mind."

"I realize that I have my own opinion about things and I sometimes shut down other people's ideas."
"I now know how to argue and win my arguments instead of just getting mad and screaming my head off."

"When both sides of the argument are listening to each other it is easier to come to a more reasonable conclusion....After both sides know each others reasoning, it is still all right for them to disagree with which side is best."

"I have tried to use this skill in talking with my 16 year old son."

**Overall Outcome Achievement:** Program Outcomes are assessed for student development of philosophical thinking (e.g. consider various sides of an argument, suspend judgement to wait for more information if possible and focus on the argument at hand.) An additional outcome is that students write argument papers about important questions, accurately presenting ideas of philosophers or theologians to develop nuanced conclusions. The assessments have been conducted since Fall 2005 during which time the philosophy department works to clearly define the most important outcomes, to refine measurement tools and to increase inter-rater reliability.

Outcome #1: Assessment of critical thinking outcomes in COS philosophy classes are improving from an average of 46% of students reported growth in philosophical thinking in 2010 to 54% in 2012.

Outcome #2: In Spring 2012, a sample of argument papers showed an average of 2.25 points on a 3 points possible rubric with less than one point representing failure. Students ask an important question in philosophy, they accurately present the views of philosophers and they write a nuanced conclusion.

Outcome #3: Overall student symbolized ordinary language correctly 57% of the time and 30% of the time they were able to both symbolize and accurately determine validity. Of the students who symbolized correctly, 59% were able to correctly determine validity.

**Changes based on outcome achievement:**
Outcome #1 changes: Faculty will frequently describe intellectual traits in addition to providing students an opportunity to practice in assignments.

Outcome #2 changes: Faculty will continue to discuss philosophical approaches to thinking as evidenced in argument papers so all teaching the classes can increase student learning.

Outcome #3 changes: The faculty member is working with a Supplemental Instructor so students have individualized assistance in class and outside of class. Changes in the textbook make it difficult to focus on better teaching techniques but the addition of a SI seems effective.

**Outcome cycle evaluation:**
Outcome #1: Every-other year, the philosophy department measures and analyzes data regarding student reports on use of critical thinking. Since the department is staffed with only a single full-time faculty member, the cycle for assessment will need to be reduced to once every three years.

Outcome #2: Outcomes pertaining to writing are assessed every year with respect to inter-rater reliability and student achievement since writing is a major activity for philosophers.

Outcome #3 is assessed every three years and the course has only been taught for two years.

**Action: New Philosophy Position**
1. Increase the full-time/part-time faculty ratio in philosophy from 43% to 70% full-time.
2. Diversify the critical thinking course mix from 15 ENGL sections and 2 PHIL sections to 12 ENGL sections and 5 PHIL sections.
3. Increase the number of philosophy faculty with degree-specific education from one to two.

**Implementation Timeline:** 2014 - 2015
- **Start Date:** 08/29/2014
- **Completion Date:** 08/17/2015
- **Status:** New Action

**Identify related course/program outcomes:**
1. Increase student report of using critical thinking skills.
2. Students will accurately articulate, interpret and analyze philosophical ideas consistently and relevant to a philosophical issue in order to find better answers.
3. Students will analyze ordinary language claims to determine whether conclusions are valid or strong.

These outcomes match the Philosophy transfer degree expectations.

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):**
- Carol Enns, Philosophy Professor

**Rationale (With supporting data):** In 2013, 43% of philosophy were full-time thus unable to meet state guidelines for 75% of sections taught by full-time faculty according to the Faculty Growth data: Template. Counseling has asked that the philosophy department add critical thinking classes but there are no adjuncts available to meet the demand.

- Philosophy classes consistently fill with wait lists early in the registration process. Over the past three years (2010-2013), the fill rate has been over 90% and as high as 95%. There is a strong demand for philosophy classes.
Like History/Political Science (5-1/2 full-time professors) campus-wide requirements, philosophy courses (currently 1 full-time professor) meet the campus-wide critical thinking requirement. Philosophy courses are required as essential to education for the AA/AS and transfer general education patterns. In addition, ethics is required for many BSN degrees which Kaweah Delta now hires as a "Magnet" hospital. Finally engineering students are required to take introductory philosophy and mechanical engineers take ethics. Philosophy teaches students to question their assumptions and to accurately follow the steps in an argument.

There is a need to improve the degree-specific background of philosophy faculty since none of the current adjunct have philosophy degrees (they do have teaching experience in philosophy) and there are no graduate degree programs in the area where adjunct might be recruited. The current adjunct include one with a BA in history and a Ph.D. in theology; one with BA and MA in anthropology; and one with BA, MA and Ph.D. in political theory. Fresno City College professors report that they only hire full-time faculty to teach philosophy courses due to the extreme lack of available qualified adjunct instructors. Porterville College uses an adjunct instructor from the Bay Area for online only.

The philosophy department should be teaching more Logic (PHIL 20) and Critical Thinking (PHIL 25) classes at COS since that is the foundation for many disciplines. Many of those classes are taught in the Language Arts division with a "Logic and Composition" course. In Fall 2014, 15 English critical thinking classes were offered compared to 2 philosophy critical thinking classes. There is one full-time philosophy professor and some 28 English full-time faculty.

Bakersfield College has some 7 full-time philosophy positions (15,000 full-time equivalent students) due to the demands for critical thinking and ethics classes; Fresno City College has 4 full-time professors (16,000 FTES); Merced College has 3 full-time professors (10,000 FTES) and other smaller nearby colleges have one full-time position each. COS (10,000 FTES) should invite students to higher order thinking through the philosophy courses including ethics, critical thinking and logic. Philosophy is the field of wonder from which other disciplines emanate.

Employers consistently demand employees with critical thinking skills. Philosophy courses (logic, critical thinking, ethics and introduction to philosophy) are uniquely focused upon those skills.

**Priority:** High
**Safety Issue:** No
**External Mandate:** No

### Add Resource Request for Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Description</th>
<th>Why is this resource required for this action?</th>
<th>Notes (optional)</th>
<th>Active</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New philosophy tenure track position.</td>
<td>Resource required in order to meet department and institutional goals for student learning and degree completion.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resource Type:** Faculty- New/Replacement