

Comprehensive Program Review Report



Program Review - Philosophy

Program Summary

2021-2022

Prepared by: Timothy Houk & Timothy Linehan

What are the strengths of your area?: -

MAJORS:

Our total number of philosophy majors has steadily been increasing for years and last year was no exception. We had 32 majors last year compared to 26 in 2019-2020 and 21 in 2018-2019.

SUCCESS RATES

The philosophy department's overall success rate for 2020-2021 was 75.3%, which is 2.6% over 2019-2020 and 8.6% over 2018-2019. This is also higher than the average success rate (71.36%) for community college philosophy departments in the state.

The success rates between genders is comparable with women just 0.8% lower than men. The success rates for men and women both increased over last year—from 72.1% to 74.8% for women and from 72.3% to 75.6% for men.

Previously our Introductory Logic course (PHIL 20) was flagged as an opportunity for improvement given its success rates. And last year we saw improvement in both in-person and online success rates. The overall success rate for this course increased from 48.6% to 59.7%. And the online success rate increased from 39.4% to 51.6%.

Previously our Hanford campus success rate was flagged as an opportunity for improvement. And last year we saw significant improvement from 68.4% to 80.5%. We believe this is partially due to how the course has typically been scheduled and how we were able to offer it online to our Hanford students last year. We will use this information in future scheduling decisions.

We also want to acknowledge that, regarding both strengths and weaknesses, it is difficult to directly compare last year's data with previous years given COVID19 and given the EW option that was available to students last year.

VIDEOS:

Both full-time faculty members have been producing short, high-quality videos online to explain philosophical topics. It is difficult to measure the extent to which this has contributed to our increasing success rates, but the videos have been well-received by students and outsiders alike. Our videos were featured on The Daily Nous—which receives over 6.85 million views per year and is one of the most popular blogs in academic philosophy.

ONLINE COURSES:

We have continued to expand our online course offerings. In 2017 we did not offer any online courses. In 2018 we started offering two courses online: PHIL 20 and PHIL 25. And over the last two years we have added two more courses to that list: PHIL 1 and PHIL 5, which means we now offer 4 out of our 5 courses in an online, asynchronous format.

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What improvements are needed?: -

SUCCESS RATES

There are still differences in success rates along race/ethnicity lines. One significant disparity was between African-American students (43%) and other demographics (between 72%-86%). Although this difference is significant, it is important to note that differences in sample sizes. The number of African-American students was 7, which means 3 out of the 7 passed their course. Furthermore, the prior year we had over twice as many African-American students (17) and their success rate that year was

81.3%, which brings the success rate over those two years to 70%, which is much closer to our overall success rate. However, we still take this number seriously and will pay close attention to whether last year's rates become a trend.

MAJORS

Although the number of philosophy majors is growing and we connect with many of them in our courses, we are not in regular contact with all of our majors and have not fostered a strong philosophical community on campus. This is partially due to the fact that both full-time faculty members are relatively new with one member starting in 2019 right before COVID19, which has prevented us from being on campus. But as things open up, we hope to improve connecting with our majors.

DEPARTMENT GROWTH

Our enrollment is strong, but we believe that there is still room for improvement and more growth given the size of our student body.

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.: The COVID19 pandemic has produced a number of challenges--especially with respect to scheduling and online teaching. All courses were online, but we worked to be flexible with our course schedule and provide a variety of both synchronous and asynchronous courses. And our census enrollment numbers remained constant between 2019-2020 (807 total) and 2020-2021 (802 total). However, given EWs, the number of students receiving a grade dipped from 762 to 688 during that time.

Overall SLO Achievement: As a result of their learning experiences in philosophy, students report that they have come to value and develop philosophical virtues such as fair-mindedness, open-mindedness, and nuanced conclusions. 99% affirm that "as a result of my learning in this class, I am more likely to try hard to listen to and understand the opinions of those who disagree with me. I try to give them a fair hearing." This is the same result as last year.

98% report that "as a result of my learning in this class, I work to reconsider or revise my view when the other person gives me reasons that are stronger than mine." This is a 5% increase from last year.

93% reported that "as a result of my learning in this class, I look to others for criticism of my views, so I can be more confident of my view and so that I can clarify my view." And this is a significant increase (14%) over last year's 79%.

Changes Based on SLO Achievement: We continue to see strong results and do not have plans to make changes to the SLOs at this time.

Overall PLO Achievement: We recently developed new ways to measure PLO achievement. When surveying our students, we ask them whether they are a philosophy major. If they are, they answer three multiple-choice self-assessment questions and one short analysis of an argument.

For the self-assessment, 100% of majors reported that "As a result of the philosophy program, I can better articulate complex ideas" and "As a result of the philosophy program, I can better identify and evaluate arguments" while 85.4% reported "As a result of the philosophy program, I can better recognize logical implications of philosophical claims."

For the argument analysis, we used a rating of unsatisfactory, satisfactory, excellent and had 27 participants. 82% scored satisfactory or above (30% excellent, 52% satisfactory) and 18% scored unsatisfactory.

Changes Based on PLO Achievement: The new PLO measurements were successful. We will continue to use this method, but will also discuss and be open to potential improvements.

Outcome cycle evaluation: We are satisfied with the assessment cycle. The philosophy department has two full-time faculty that both coordinated well with each other to ensure we produced relevant data for assessing outcomes.

Action: 2021-2022 Connect with Philosophy Majors

In an effort to foster community, increase success rates, and increase the number of philosophy majors, we will look into getting a list of email address for all of our philosophy majors and personally reach out to them to see how we can assist them in their degree progress.

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Implementation Timeline: 2021 - 2022

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Identify related course/program outcomes: By connecting with majors we aim to increase the number of students achieving the program learning outcomes and achieving their transfer goals.

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Timothy Linehan, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Tim Houk, Associate

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Professor of Philosophy

Rationale (With supporting data): As the number of philosophy majors increases we want to ensure that each student feels connected and is equipped for success.

Priority: Low

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 2025.

District Objective 2.1 - Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and non-CTE) by 5% from 2021-2025.

Action: 2021-2022 Promote the Philosophy Department

In an effort to increase the number of philosophy majors and grow enrollment in philosophy courses, we will complete several tasks to promote the philosophy department on campus. These tasks could include hosting an event or table outside in the quad, redesigning the philosophy board in the Kern building to promote our courses, and growing our YouTube channels by promoting them on campus (including easily accessible QR codes to link to the channels).

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Implementation Timeline: 2021 - 2022

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Identify related course/program outcomes: In drawing more students to the department and helping more students succeed, we increase the number of students developing philosophical virtues such as fair-mindedness, open-mindedness, and acceptance of nuanced conclusions (SLO).

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Timothy Linehan, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Tim Houk, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Rationale (With supporting data): Although enrollment in philosophy courses is still strong, we believe that there is still room for improvement given the size of our student body.

Priority: Low

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 2025.

District Objective 2.1 - Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and non-CTE) by 5% from 2021-2025.

Action: 2021-2022: Assess the need for additional philosophy courses

Additional philosophy courses might provide philosophy majors with expanded options. We propose to investigate interest at COS for additional courses and explore the ways in which they are handled at other community colleges. One course in particular we will investigate is a course on Death and Dying. We believe it would be of interest to many students and we will look into whether it could satisfy degree or transfer requirements beyond philosophy.

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Implementation Timeline: 2021 - 2022

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Identify related course/program outcomes: In drawing more students to the department, we increase the number of students developing philosophical virtues such as fair-mindedness, open-mindedness, and acceptance of nuanced conclusions (PLO).

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Timothy Linehan, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Tim Houk, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Rationale (With supporting data): More options for philosophy students may increase the number of students who earn an associate degree and who transfer to a four-year institution.

Priority: Low

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 2025.

District Objective 2.1 - Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and non-CTE) by 5% from 2021-2025.

Action: 2020-2021: Develop YouTube channels

Faculty members will continue to expand their newly created philosophy YouTube channels in order to (1) help current students succeed and (2) attract more students to the philosophy program. Our goal is to triple the number of combined views from 11,000 to 33,000.

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Implementation Timeline: 2020 - 2021

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Identify related course/program outcomes: In drawing more students to the department and helping more students succeed, we increase the number of students developing philosophical virtues such as fair-mindedness, open-mindedness, and acceptance of nuanced conclusions (SLO).

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Timothy Linehan, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Tim Houk, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Rationale (With supporting data): To help raise our lower online/hybrid success rates as to match our higher face-to-face success rates.

Priority: Low

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2021-2022

09/10/2021

Status: Action Completed

We have continued to produce short, accessible videos explaining philosophical topics. We have used them in our teaching and they have been well-received by students. And we are happy to report that we far exceeded our goal of 33,000 views. Our combined number of views at this time is 108,000.

Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021

District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES by 1.75% over the three years

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District Objective 2.1 - Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and Non-CTE) by 5 percentage points over three years

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who transfer to a four-year institution by 10 percent over three years

Action: 2020-2021: Assess the need for a Philosophy of Science course.

A Philosophy of Science course might serve as a science equivalent for the Science Division as well as providing philosophy majors with expanded options. We propose to investigate interest at COS for such a course and explore the ways in which a Philosophy of Science course is handled at other community colleges.

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Implementation Timeline: 2020 - 2021

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Identify related course/program outcomes: In drawing more students to the department, we increase the number of students developing philosophical virtues such as fair-mindedness, open-mindedness, and acceptance of nuanced conclusions (PLO).

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Timothy Linehan, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Tim Houk, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Rationale (With supporting data): More options for science and philosophy students may increase the number of students who earn an associate degree and who transfer to a four-year institution.

Priority: Low

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2021-2022

09/10/2021

Status: Action Completed

We looked into this course and it does not appear to satisfy AA or AA-T in other majors. And we did not see it offered at other California community colleges as it is typically offered as an upper-division course. We will continue to think of ways to expand course offerings, but we have marked this action as "completed" as there does not appear to be a need for this course offering at this time.

Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021

District Objective 2.1 - Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and Non-CTE) by 5 percentage points over three years

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who transfer to a four-year institution by 10 percent over three years