

Comprehensive Program Review Report



Program Review - Philosophy

Program Summary

2022-2023

Prepared by: Timothy Houk & Timothy Linehan

What are the strengths of your area?: COURSE OFFERINGS

Over the last few years the philosophy department has improved our course schedule to provide more flexibility and opportunities for students. We offer courses on all 3 campuses (Visalia, Tulare, and Hanford). Additionally, we have expanded our online course offerings so that PHIL 1, PHIL 5, PHIL 20, and PHIL 25 can all be taken online. This means that students can complete the required philosophy courses for the Philosophy AA-T entirely online.

INCREASED VISIBILITY

Last year we began to take actions to increase the department's visibility on campus in an effort to grow the department. We hosted a philosophy table in the quad during "Giant Days" and "Club Rush," we created postcards advertising our classes and including a QR code to our YouTube channels, and we redesigned the philosophy bulletin board in the Kern building.

DEVELOPING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Additionally, both full time faculty members have educational YouTube channels offering concise videos on topics in philosophy and logic. These channels have seen great success and in 2 years the videos have been viewed almost 300,000 times. Both faculty members use these videos in their courses and have received positive feedback about their quality and effectiveness.

MAJORS

We have worked to connect directly with our philosophy majors so that we can foster connections and offer more academic guidance. We made a research request for an updated list of philosophy majors and their email addresses. And we contacted them to gauge interest in holding in person events and developing a philosophy club. There has been significant interest in this, so we look forward to developing it further this coming year.

SUCCESS RATES

Although some of our success rates are lower than usual this year, we disaggregated some data and found that for some disproportionately impacted groups are seeing greater success rates within philosophy than the college average. For example, LGB+ students success rate in philosophy was 67%, which is 5% higher than the college average. And although the sample size is small, the success rates for student veterans in philosophy was 100%, which is 21% higher than the college average.

What improvements are needed?: SUCCESS RATES

The philosophy department's overall success rate for 2021-22 was 63.4%. This is a significant drop from the previous year's high of 75.3%. However, this is a college-wide and state-wide trend. At COS, the average success rate dropped by about 10% (79.1% to 69.4%). In CA community colleges, the average success rate for philosophy courses fell by about 4%.

When broken down by instructional method, it appears students struggled to complete the online courses (a drop from 73% to 59%) more than the face-to-face or hybrid courses (81% to 74%). However, if we look at the larger trend over the last 4 years ('18-'19, '19-'20, '20-'21, and '21-'22), we see that we are still doing relatively well compared to the previous years. During that period, face-to-face success rates were 66%, 71%, 75%, and 73% respectively. And online success rates were 53%, 59%, 72%, and 59% respectively. So although success rates dropped during the 2021-2022 year, they had been increasing during the prior 3 year period.

Men's success rates (70.7%) are only slightly higher than women's success rates (68.2%) over the last three years. However, the gap appears to be rising. Women's success rates fell by 18% over last year as compared to men's decrease by 14%. We will continue to monitor these trends carefully.

When examining the particular courses, the course with the lowest success rate is PHIL 20 (Introductory Logic). This course is difficult and typically has a lower than average success rate across the state. However, many students take this course online and the success rate for online PHIL 20 was 36%. We are looking into ways to improve this.

MAJORS

After several years of steady growth, we experienced a 19% drop in majors:

2018-2019: 21 majors

2019-2020: 26 majors

2020-2021: 32 majors

2021-2022: 26 majors

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.: As noted above, our success rates went down, but this is a trend throughout the college. It is reasonable to suppose that the COVID19 pandemic continued to impact students' lives during the 2021-2022 school year.

Overall SLO Achievement: Student learning outcomes in philosophy continue to be encouraging. As a result of their experiences in philosophy:

76% report they try harder to only hold views that are supported by good reasons.

98% report they try harder to avoid exaggeration, biased and/or false statements when they argue.

100% report they are more likely to try hard to listen to understand the views of those who disagree with them.

Changes Based on SLO Achievement: We have no plans to make changes to the SLOs at this time.

Overall PLO Achievement: In the previous assessment cycle we developed a new way 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:

80% reported that "As a result of the philosophy program, I can better recognize logical implications of philosophical claims."

100% reported that "As a result of the philosophy program, I can better articulate complex ideas."

100% reported that "As a result of the philosophy program, I can better identify and evaluate arguments."

For the argument analysis, we used a rating of unsatisfactory, satisfactory, or excellent.

77% scored satisfactory or above (31% excellent, 46% satisfactory)

23% scored unsatisfactory

Changes Based on PLO Achievement: As this is a relatively new PLO measurement, we will continue to monitor whether these numbers trend upward in years to come.

Outcome cycle evaluation: Over 90% of philosophy classes were included in the assessment cycle and both full-time faculty members participated in assessment activities and review. No changes planned at this time.

Action: 2022-2023 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, 2022 - 2023

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Identify related course/program outcomes: By connecting with majors we aim to increase the number of students achieving the

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program learning outcomes and achieving their transfer goals.

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

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2022 - 2023

09/07/2022

Status: Continue Action Next Year

We completed a research request for a list of philosophy majors. We have emailed them to introduce ourselves and inquire about their interest philosophy club.

We will continue this action and plan times to meet with the philosophy majors about their educational goals.

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

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: 2022-2023 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, 2022 - 2023

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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:

Update on Action

Updates

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Update Year: 2022 - 2023

09/07/2022

Status: Continue Action Next Year

We implemented several of these ideas including (1) hosting a philosophy table in the quad during "Giant Days" and "Club Rush," (2) creating postcards advertising our classes and including a QR code to our YouTube channels, (3) redesigning the philosophy bulletin board in the Kern building.

We would like to continue this action into next year by promoting the department via COS's social media platforms. We've already met with Lauren Fishback to discuss this plan. We will then work on a specific strategy for this promotion.

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

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:

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2022 - 2023

09/17/2022

Status: Action Completed

Informal discussions took place with various nursing students and faculty. The overall impression was that a philosophy course on Death and Dying would not enjoy strong demand from students, given the daunting list of requirements nursing students already face.

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

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

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

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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: 2022-2023 Distance Education Research

In an effort to increase success rates in our online course offerings, we will schedule a meeting with the Distance Education Coordinator to discuss where students are struggling in these courses and investigate ways to help them succeed.

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Implementation Timeline: 2022 - 2023

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

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

Rationale (With supporting data):

Priority: Low

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

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.

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who are transfer-ready by 15% and students who transfer to four-year institutions by 10% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 3.2 - Increase the course success rate by 10% for each disproportionately impacted student group in their transfer level Quantitative Reasoning and English courses by the end of their first year from 2021-2025.