

Comprehensive Program Review Report



Program Review - Philosophy

Program Summary

2023-2024

Prepared by: Timothy Linehan & Tim Houk

What are the strengths of your area?:

INCREASED VISIBILITY

2022-2023 marked the re-emergence of Philosophy Club after many years of dormancy. The Philofficers (as the Philosophy Club Officers call themselves) ran well-attended weekly meetings and hosted two events: Bowling Night and Movie Night.

PUBLIC ONLINE RESOURCES

Both full time faculty members in the department maintain philosophy-themed YouTube channels. Currently, the two channels together have over 5,000 subscribers and more than half a million views.

MAJORS

After a 19% drop in majors in 2021-2022, the trend is now moving back in the right direction with 4% growth in majors last year.

SUCCESS RATES

After a 16% drop in success rates in 2021-2022, the trend is moving back in the right direction with 1% growth in success rates last year.

EQUITY

Given the historical predominance of men in philosophy, we are please to see that men and women succeed at virtually identical rates in COS philosophy classes. The success rates by race/ethnicity are also encouraging: African American 73%, Hispanic 63%, and White 66%. We will continue to monitor these differences but currently none of the disparities demonstrate need for concern.

INSTRUCTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The philosophy department continues to offer classes at all three COS campuses and in a variety of modalities: hybrid, online, and traditional face-to face classes. In particular, the recent addition of hybrid classes at the Hanford and Tulare Centers seems to have been a good choice, as they currently enjoy a historically high success rate of 76%.

What improvements are needed?:

PHIL 20 SUCCESS RATE

The philosophy program's overall success rate continues to be held back by a single course: PHIL 20 Introductory Logic. Whereas the success rates for other philosophy courses range from 65% to 76%, the success rate for PHIL 20 was just 45% (up from the previous year's 44%). This is an ongoing concern and faculty continue to experiment with course structure, assessments, early intervention, and close cooperation with Tutorial Services to improve PHIL 20's success rates.

ONLINE SUCCESS

Perhaps unsurprisingly, our online success rate (60%) lags behind our success rate for other courses (72%).

ENROLLMENT

With an 8% decrease in enrollment from the previous year and FTES at its lowest since 2018-219, we look to turn philosophy

enrollments around and return to a growth trajectory.

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.:

In the post-pandemic era, students are increasingly looking to enroll in online courses. One challenge for online learning is getting students to stay engaged. In general, it is not poor work that hurts online students' grades but rather work that is not done at all; for example, not submitting essays, failing to complete quizzes, or not participating regularly on discussion boards. In an effort to increase online success rates, philosophy faculty will experiment with early intervention, automated emails, direct follow up communication, and other methods of encouraging students to fulfill requirements for success.

Overall SLO Achievement:

Our assessment of SLO's continues to be encouraging:

99% say, "As a result of my learning in this class, I am more likely to try hard to listen to understand the views of those who disagree with me. I try to give them a fair hearing."

97% say "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."

94% say, "As a result of my learning in this class, I try harder to avoid exaggeration, biased and/or false statements when I argue."

Changes Based on SLO Achievement:

Given the year-after-year high ratings on these student self-reports, the department will evaluate new avenues for assessment. In particular, we look to expand our assessment to include writing SLO's.

Overall PLO Achievement:

Our assessment of PLO's indicates that COS philosophy majors tend to think highly of the program:

96% of majors say, "As a result of the philosophy program, I can better articulate complex ideas."

96% of majors say, "As a result of the philosophy program, I can better identify and evaluate arguments."

87% of majors say, "As a result of the philosophy program, I can better recognize logical implications of philosophical claims."

Philosophy majors were asked to provide a brief analysis of a sample argument. Their answers were then rated by philosophy faculty as unsatisfactory, satisfactory, or excellent.

94% scored satisfactory or above (36% excellent, 58% satisfactory)
6% scored unsatisfactory

Changes Based on PLO Achievement:

As we are revisiting our SLO assessment strategy (above), we will also evaluate possible new avenues for PLO assessment. In particular, we need more majors participating in the assessment and fewer non-majors taking the assessment. (On our current assessment tool, it seems that some majors are skipping the argument analysis while some non-majors are choosing to participate, which skews our results.)

Outcome cycle evaluation:

Both faculty members are content with the results of program review; however, we were down this cycle from the previous high of over 90% of philosophy sections being included in the assessment cycle. We look to increase the number of sections assessed next year through better communication with adjunct faculty and less reliance on online measures.

Action: 2023-2024 Explore Ethics Bowl Interest

We hope to capitalize on rising interest in Philosophy Club by pursuing the possibility of forming a team for Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl. Ethics Bowl features regional competitions in which teams compete "to see who has thought most deeply and presented their arguments most clearly on cases based on today's most pressing issues. Students develop ethical understanding of complex,

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ambiguous, and difficult to resolve issues, as well as key virtues associated with democratic deliberation."

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Implementation Timeline: 2023 - 2024

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Identify related course/program outcomes: PHIL 5 Student Learning Outcome: Students will value philosophical conduct such as fair-mindedness, open-mindedness (the attachment to higher things) and nuanced conclusions (capacity to hold more than one significant idea at the same time, even if they conflict).

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Timothy Linehan (Professor of Philosophy) and Tim Houk (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 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: 2023-2024 Further Develop YouTube Channels

Faculty members will continue to build out their established philosophy YouTube channels in order to: (1) increase online student success (particularly in PHIL 20), (2) draw more students to the COS philosophy program, and (3) provide educational and personal enrichment opportunities for the wider community. Our goal is to reach 1 million views by next program review.

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Implementation Timeline: 2023 - 2024

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Identify related course/program outcomes:

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Timothy Linehan (Professor of Philosophy) and Tim Houk (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: 2018-2021

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

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: 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, 2023 - 2024

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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 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: 2023 - 2024

09/25/2023

Status: Continue Action Next Year

We continue to stay up-to-date with current philosophy majors and try to maintain communication with them, including to promote Philosophy Club.

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

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 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

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Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action	
Updates Update Year: 2023 - 2024 Status: Action Completed Several online courses were submitted to the DE Coordinator for review. Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):	10/15/2023

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.

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, 2023 - 2024

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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 Update Year: 2023 - 2024 Status: Continue Action Next Year Our promotional activities in the quad—e.g. philosophy club and promotional cards with QR codes—may have had an impact as the number of majors is on the rise again. We are looking to increase enrollment, so these promotional activities will be continued into next year. Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):	09/25/2023
Update Year: 2022 - 2023	09/07/2022

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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.