2012-2013 Annual Program Assessment Report

Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the Associate Dean of your College and the assessment office by Monday, September 30, 2013. You may submit a separate report for each program which conducted assessment activities.

College: Humanities

Department: Philosophy

Program: Major

Assessment liaison: Kristina Meshelski

1. **Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s).** Provide a brief overview of this year's assessment plan and process.
   This year we planned to continue gathering data for all SLOs. We did not have any specific analysis goals for this year because we want to gather enough data for our analysis to be meaningful. We used a new method for assessing SLO 7 this year, which did not require using instructional time.

2. **Assessment Buy-In.** Describe how your chair and faculty were involved in assessment related activities. Did department meetings include discussion of student learning assessment in a manner that included the department faculty as a whole?
   This year our discussion of assessment at department meetings was confined to the chair or assessment liaison reminding faculty to provide data for their classes to the assessment liaison. The chair, assessment liaison, and the current instructors of Phil 200 and Phil 230 discussed in person and over email the new method for assessing SLO 7. Almost every full-time faculty member who was asked to provide data provided it this year, there is only one full-time faculty member that did not provide data (and the relevant data was from only one class). One other full-time faculty member accidentally did not keep copies of the relevant student papers and so was unable to submit data for that class. Seven out of 12 part-time faculty members did not respond to email requests for assessment data from their classes, but these were all instructors of 200 and 230 which have very few, sometimes no, majors enrolled in each section and we are currently only collecting data on philosophy majors. This lack of part-time faculty buy-in only affects our assessment of SLO 7.

3. **Student Learning Outcome Assessment Project.** Answer items a-f for each SLO assessed this year. If you assessed an additional SLO, copy and paste items a-f below, BEFORE you answer them here, to provide additional reporting space.

3a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?

SLO 1- Students will develop a critical understanding of the work of central thinkers in the Western philosophical tradition.

3b. Does this learning outcome align with one or more of the university's Big 5 Competencies? (Delete any which do not apply)

3c. Does this learning outcome align with University's commitment to supporting diversity through the cultivation and exchange of a wide variety of ideas and points of view? In what ways did the assessed SLO incorporate diverse perspectives related to race, ethnic/cultural identity/cultural orientations, religion, sexual orientation, gender/gender identity, disability, socio-economic status, veteran status, national origin, age, language, and employment rank?

3d. What direct and/or indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?

History rubric. See Appendix B for the rubric itself, which provides descriptions of the eight items on which scores are given. See Appendix C for the history rubric data.

3e. Describe the assessment design methodology: For example, was this SLO assessed longitudinally (same students at different points) or was a cross-sectional comparison used (Comparing freshmen with seniors)? If so, describe the assessment points used.

As we develop larger samples over time, we plan on cross-sectional comparison, comparing rubric scores for majors from the 200-level classes to those from the 400-level classes. Many of the same students will be represented in these two groups at different stages in their progress through the program. However, we do not expect to identify students and to cover exactly the same students at the two stages we are comparing. Some students will be represented more than once at one or both of these stages.

3f. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO: Provide a summary of how the results were analyzed and highlight findings from the collected evidence.

We now have collected 6 semesters of data on SLO 1 using the history rubric; we have data on 99 students at the 200 level and 50 students at the 400 level. So far we can see that the average overall score across 200-level classes is 2.5 and the average overall score across 400-level classes is 2.6. The lack of a significant increase in overall average scores can be partly accounted for by one section of Phil 202 from Fall 2010 in which 2 students scored perfect 'exemplary' scores and a few others scored very high scores. Discounting this unusually high performing section of 202, the average score across 200-level classes would be a 2.4. We anticipate a more serious and detailed departmental discussion of this data in the current AY 2013-2014.

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3g. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO: Describe how assessment results were used to improve student learning. Were assessment results from previous years or from this year used to make program changes in this reporting year? (Possible changes include: changes to course content/topics covered, changes to course sequence, additions/deletions of courses in program, changes in pedagogy, changes to student advisement, changes to student support services, revisions to program SLOs, new or revised assessment instruments, other academic programmatic changes, and changes to the assessment plan.)

In Fall 2010 we adopted the current history rubric to assess SLO 1. We only now have enough data using this rubric to begin any serious analysis. We anticipate department wide discussion of how to interpret this data in the coming AY 2013-2014.

3a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?

In addition to collecting history rubric data for SLO1, we collected data from the standard rubric for assessment of SLOs 2-6:
[2] Students will read and comprehend philosophical texts.
[3] Students will respond critically and analytically to philosophical positions, arguments and methodologies, including positions, arguments and methodologies involved in the investigation of significant issues in epistemology, metaphysics, and value theory.
[4] Students will defend their own philosophical positions and arguments.
[5] Students will write well-organized philosophical essays in which they clearly articulate philosophical positions and arguments.
[6] Students will write well-organized philosophical essays in which they clearly and effectively present and defend their own philosophical positions and arguments.

3b. Does this learning outcome align with one or more of the university's Big 5 Competencies? (Delete any which do not apply)

- Critical Thinking
- Written Communication

3c. Does this learning outcome align with University's commitment to supporting diversity through the cultivation and exchange of a wide variety of ideas and points of view? In what ways did the assessed SLO incorporate diverse perspectives related to race, ethnic/cultural identity/cultural orientations, religion, sexual orientation, gender/gender identity, disability, socio-economic status, veteran status, national origin, age, language, and employment rank?

3d. What direct and/or indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?

Standard departmental rubric. See Appendix D for the rubric itself, which describes 18 items on which scores are given. The first five, in the 'Argumentation' section, align most directly with the Critical Thinking Competency. The remaining items align directly with the Written Communication competency. See Appendix E for the standard rubric data.

3e. Describe the assessment design methodology: For example, was this SLO assessed longitudinally (same students at different points) or was a cross-sectional comparison used (Comparing freshmen with seniors)? If so, describe the assessment points used. As we develop larger samples over time, we plan on cross-sectional comparison, comparing rubric scores for majors in courses at three different stages in the program: the 300-level gateway courses, 400-level other than the senior seminar (PHIL 497) but also catering primarily to our majors, and finally the senior seminar. Many students will be represented at all three stages in their progress through the program. However, we do not expect to identify students and compare the performance of the same student or the same group of students at the various stages. Some students will be represented more than once in the gateway courses and/or the 400-level courses other than 497.

3f. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO: Provide a summary of how the results were analyzed and highlight findings from the collected evidence.
We have been using current rubric since Fall 2010, which precludes comparison to earlier years. Only now do we have enough data with this rubric to attempt a serious analysis (133 students from 300-level, 130 students from 400-level), which we plan to do in the coming AY 2013-2014. Initially we can note that average overall score across 300-level classes is 2.7 and the average overall score across 400-level classes is 3.2.

3g. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO: Describe how assessment results were used to improve student learning. Were assessment results from previous years or from this year used to make program changes in this reporting year? (Possible changes include: changes to course content/topics covered, changes to course sequence, additions/deletions of courses in program, changes in pedagogy, changes to student advisement, changes to student support services, revisions to program SLOs, new or revised assessment instruments, other academic programmatic changes, and changes to the assessment plan.)
We adopted the current version of our standard rubric in Fall 2012. We only now have enough data using this rubric to begin any serious analysis. We anticipate department wide discussion of how to interpret this data in the coming AY 2013-2014.

3a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?
SLO 7

3b. Does this learning outcome align with one or more of the university's Big 5 Competencies? (Delete any which do not apply)

- Critical Thinking

3c. Does this learning outcome align with University's commitment to supporting diversity through the cultivation and exchange of a wide variety of ideas and points of view? In what ways did the assessed SLO incorporate diverse perspectives related to race, ethnic/cultural identity/cultural orientations, religion, sexual orientation, gender/gender identity, disability, socio-economic status, veteran status, national origin, age, language, and employment rank?

3d. What direct and/or indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?
This year we used the final exams of philosophy majors enrolled in Phil 200 and Phil 230 to measure SLO 7. Each instructor evaluated the exams according to the SLO itself on a scale of 0-4: 4 = Exemplary; 3 = Accomplished; 2 = Competent; 1 = Marginal; 0 = Unsatisfactory.

3e. Describe the assessment design methodology: For example, was this SLO assessed longitudinally (same students at different points) or was a cross-sectional comparison used (Comparing freshmen with seniors)? If so, describe the assessment points used.
Every philosophy major is required to take either Phil 200 or Phil 230, these courses focus on teaching the skills described in SLO 7. Previously, we had assessed SLO 7 longitudinally, using specially designed pre- and post-tests in Phil 230. Giving out these tests took up instructional time but yielded very little data for each class (because so few majors are enrolled in any given section). Thus the use of instructional time was not justified. So this year we experimented with assessing SLO 7 in a way that does not involve any comparison, we merely evaluate each student once at the end of the relevant class. In this case, we believe such data can be valuable because the skills described in SLO 7 (differentiating an argument's validity from an argument's soundness) are so specialized that very few students possess them before taking the relevant courses. The method can be understood as longitudinal if we assume our students start at 0 with respect to SLO 7.

3f. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO: Provide a summary of how the results were analyzed and highlight findings from the collected evidence.
After adopting this method for assessing SLO 7 in Fall 2012, we now have data on only 13 students, too few for any kind of analysis.

3g. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO: Describe how assessment results were used to improve student learning. Were assessment results from previous years or from this year used to make program changes in this reporting year? (Possible changes include: changes to course content/topics covered, changes to course sequence, additions/deletions of courses in program, changes

in pedagogy, changes to student advisement, changes to student support services, revisions to program SLOs, new or revised assessment instruments, other academic programmatic changes, and changes to the assessment plan.)

Previous methods of assessing SLO 7 have been found unsatisfactory and unnecessarily disruptive to the relevant courses. We prefer the current method, but only time will tell if it yields useful data. We plan to continue using the current method for another year with the hope that more data will allow a meaningful analysis.

4. Assessment of Previous Changes: Present documentation that demonstrates how the previous changes in the program resulted in improved student learning.

No program changes were made this year.

5. Changes to SLOs? Please attach an updated course alignment matrix if any changes were made. (Refer to the Curriculum Alignment Matrix Template, http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms_guides.html.)

No changes to SLOs were made this year.

6. Assessment Plan: Evaluate the effectiveness of your 5 year assessment plan. How well did it inform and guide your assessment work this academic year? What process is used to develop/update the 5 year assessment plan? Please attach an updated 5 year assessment plan for 2013-2018. (Refer to Five Year Planning Template, plan B or C, http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms_guides.html.)

No changes were made to our current 5-year assessment plan; we continue to gather data on all SLOs. This year we merely changed the method of assessment for SLO 7, as noted earlier.

7. Has someone in your program completed, submitted or published a manuscript which uses or describes assessment activities in your program? Please provide citation or discuss.

8. **Other information, assessment or reflective activities or processes not captured above.**

Our department continued a brown bag series focused on sharing strategies for improving student writing. We had 3 sessions in AY 2012-13, which were well attended by department faculty.

We should also note that a change was made to our program in 2011, which was not noted in previous assessment reports. We now require majors to take at least one course focused on underrepresented perspectives in Anglo-American philosophy. The choices are American Indian Philosophy, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, Existentialism, Indian Philosophy, Chinese Philosophy, or Philosophy and Feminism. This change was not the result of formal assessment activities but rather the result of informal discussion. The change does indicate however that we have thereby developed another SLO related to diverse perspectives, which has yet to be adopted by the department as an "official" SLO. We will discuss the possibility of revising our program's SLOs to reflect this change at a future department meeting.