

Administrative Response to Discipline Review

Philosophy

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Draft 07 September 2009

The Philosophy Discipline Review was presented in the Spring of 2009 and began with student testimonials. They spoke to what philosophy meant to them or read from a paper prepared for a class, providing excellent context for the review. The focus on students was a fine way to set the stage for the remains of the meeting. There was also thoughtful background on Philosophy instruction at PCC, back to its start in 1960-61. It is always good to be reminded of what came before us and we appreciated the near half century of history of Philosophy at PCC.

There was written and spoken coverage of four items under "SAC Response to Identified Areas for Improvement from the 2004 Program Review." Reflecting on past goals and the degree to which they were achieved informs future goal setting, so this review was much appreciated. We make the following *comments and observations*.

1. Need to improve intra-department communication among instructors who teach the same course. *We are pleased that you believe an environment of greater transparency and collaboration exists now than in the past. There will be challenges to maintaining both, but your efforts will hopefully be worth the result.*
2. Need for the Critical Thinking sequence to be reviewed to address content and consistency. *Your review of two courses and the resulting combination thereof demonstrates further collaboration and you are thanked for your efforts.*
3. Need for informal dialogue among instructors regarding pedagogical techniques and resources concerning student success and assessment. *We appreciate that you have devoted time to this effort, which should improve student achievement.*
4. Need to encourage and support great student and faculty involvement in the Portland area philosophical community. *Involvement with philosophy faculty*

*members at other educational institutions and with philosophical organizations is encouraged. You mention funding, so we'll remind you of funding available through staff development, although you probably need no reminding.*

This was followed by "New Initiatives Adopted by the SAC," for which we make the following *comments and observations*.

1. To critically evaluate and enhance the role of distance learning courses offered by the philosophy department. *This is a topic, worthy of much discussion, just as your discussion of Critical Thinking was over the last several years. Sharing of successes, and missteps, in past and coming classes will aid that discussion and we encourage you to find the right balance between on-campus and on-line offerings. For those concerned about the jump, perhaps a hybrid approach with some on-campus and some on-line time would aid in the evaluation.*
2. To improve intercampus communication in matters of course scheduling and faculty hiring including the pronounced need to improve the full-time to part-time staffing ratio. *District-wide discussion of scheduling of all offerings, including on-line offerings as they grow in number, is critical to avoiding competition that leads to cancellation of lowly enrolled classes. We encourage you to do so, engaging Faculty Department Chairs and Division Deans in the conversation to ensure that all campuses are represented. We, too, wish to improve the full-time to part-time ratio and to have full-time instructors in each discipline at each campus, but struggle with limited funds, even in good times.*
3. To generate and foster further opportunities for the professional and personal development of philosophy faculty. *Interactions, formal and informal, will be appreciated. While some actions don't require a lot of money, many do, so we encourage you to look to the Staff Development office for funding along with your local division/campus.*
4. To scrutinize the current course offerings and assess whether they are sufficiently meeting the needs of students in a fashion that is consistent with the

mission of PCC as well as the philosophical cannon. *Your willingness to look at a variety of means for accomplishing this is appreciated, especially the desire to build on philosophy's role in civic involvement.*

Thank you for efforts to create and maintain high quality Philosophy courses for PCC to offer across the district. Thanks also for considering other actions “consistent with the philosophical cannon”, which can only strengthen the college. You serve the community well and we thank you for your continued efforts to make the discipline one about which we can take great pride.