

Administrative Response to Program Review Philosophy March 2019

On March 1, 2019, the Philosophy SAC presented their Program Review findings to an audience of PCC administrators and others with an interest in the discipline. The presentation was informative and thought provoking. It provided an opportunity for engagement with those in attendance through an informative and interactive dialogue.

This Administrative Response will: A) note particular highlights of the Philosophy Program and Program Review; B) provide observations and recommendations; and C) provide the administrative response to the SAC recommendations/resource requests.

Noteworthy Efforts or Achievements

- The Philosophy SAC program review presentation was engaging and thought provoking. Some of the questions discussed during the presentation included experience, both positive and negative, in a philosophy classroom; what is the essence of Philosophy at PCC; and How do you view students as being successful in Philosophy.
- The new practice created in the Philosophy SAC to dedicate the first hour of the meetings to discuss issues of philosophical and pedagogical importance. The changes noted from this practice include a “greater sense of inclusivity and respect among faculty within the SAC.”
- Continued development of online courses to meet student demand.
- The research into the demographics of students currently taking Philosophy courses was researched and analyzed with helpful supporting graphs and charts.
- The section in the program review about how faculty have adapted to the changes in the students taking Philosophy courses was thought provoking. It would be interesting to continue to monitor student outcomes based on these different teaching models.

Observations and Recommendations

- **Assessment of Student Learning:** The description of SAC-level assessment of Critical Thinking was clear and demonstrated attention and consistent efforts. It highlighted some of the challenges of obtaining reliable assessment information, and the tension between moving in the direction of more standardized assignments vs. instructional autonomy. We appreciate your recognition of the importance of assignment design, and encourage continued development in this area. However, the responses about course-level assessment were not very helpful. Although it is true that the SAC projects have been focused on Core Outcome attainment, you are still expected to assess and make changes at the course level, and anticipate that individual instructors are indeed assessing and making changes to improve student attainment of outcomes, and that question is the

only evidence we have to argue that course level assessment is done and used to improve teaching and learning.

- YESS: During the presentation, you invited discussion about how Philosophy might support the college YESS work. One of the instructors mentioned a college (Keene State?) that had infused some existential Philosophy into an initial course (“who am I, and why am I here?”). That, along with the idea that knowing what you don’t know is the ultimate wisdom would be content to include in the kind of First Year Experience curriculum that is being developed via the YESS initiative. We encourage you to stay connected to these efforts (noting that Hannah Love is a member of the PCC Guided Pathways team).

Administrative Response to Recommendations

SAC Related Recommendations:

- Attempt to create a stronger, clearer, and more efficient administrative structure to support our teaching in philosophy. For this reason, we are advocating for a district-wide Faculty Department Chair in Philosophy that exclusively represents the Philosophy Department.

Since the SAC related recommendations are the same as the ones under “Administrative Support” recommendations, this will be addressed in the next section.

- Increase part-time faculty participation in workgroups devoted to helping students achieve success through their philosophy studies. To this end we are seeking more available stipends to support teacher workgroup participation.

Since the SAC related recommendations are the same as the ones under “Administrative Support” recommendations, this will be addressed in the next section.

- Update and modernize the Philosophy Department homepage to better acquaint students with how the study of philosophy can help them succeed--academically, professionally, and in the pursuit of a life well-lived.

Since the SAC related recommendations are the same as the ones under “Administrative Support” recommendations, this will be addressed in the next section.

Administrative Support Related Recommendations:

- The Philosophy SAC formally requests that the Deans authorize a district-wide Faculty Department Chair position that exclusively represents the Philosophy Department.

Thank you for the robust discussion about this recommendation during the program review presentation. This recommendation is part of a larger study. When the results

of the Organizational Study are released, we may be in a position to revisit this request. In addition, there is currently the work of the Roles & Responsibilities Workgroup that is being chaired by Jeremy Estrella. These types of conversations are taking place in that workgroup and we recommend you consider sharing your input with this group. The Roles & Responsibilities Workgroup is comprised mostly of faculty and have broached this topic many times (both the pros and cons) and will be making recommendations to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

- Increase part-time faculty participation in workgroups devoted to helping students achieve success through their philosophy studies. To this end we are seeking more available stipends to support teacher workgroup participation.

We appreciate and support your goal to increase part-time faculty participation in workgroups to help achieve student success. We recommend you apply for funding through the Professional and Organizational Development Office for funding to support part-time faculty participation in a teacher workgroup.

- Update and modernize the Philosophy Department homepage to better acquaint students with how the study of philosophy can help them succeed--academically, professionally, and in the pursuit of a life well-lived.

We support your goal to update and modernize the Philosophy Department homepage. We recommend you contact the Marketing Department. They will be launching a partnership with IT to redo our program pages and there may be an opportunity to meet some of your goals in this project.

Closing

In closing, we want to again thank the Philosophy faculty for sharing the results of your program review with us. We enjoyed learning more about the discipline, your successes and plans for the future. We look forward to supporting your ongoing work on continuous program improvement.

Administrative Response submitted by Cheryl L. Scott, with input from and on behalf of the Deans of Instruction and Dean of Academic Affairs.

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