Philosophy
Program Review

February 14, 2014
2:00 – 4:00
Sylvania Campus, SS rm.109
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PHILOSOPHY
PROGRAM REVIEW
2013–2014

1. OVERVIEW

A. What are the educational goals or objectives of this program/discipline? How do these compare with national or professional program/discipline trends or guidelines? Have they changed since the last review, or are they expected to change in the next five years?

The role of philosophy, since its inception and as it is incorporated into the offerings at PCC, is precisely the attempt to encourage an attitude of inquisitive reflection that nurtures the conditions for an engaged, responsive, and insightful thinker to emerge. Without the ability to recognize problems, examine possible solutions, implement actions, and assess values (all of which are at the core of a philosophical education), a person is ill-equipped to succeed in his or her current or future environment. It is for this reason that philosophy serves as a cornerstone in the education of community college students and continues to provide the repertoire of skills needed to flourish in the 21st Century. This imperative directs the curriculum development and classroom pedagogy of the Philosophy Department at PCC.

The discipline of philosophy does not have a universally agreed upon canon of subject area content. To have such a consensus would undermine the essence of the discipline itself. However, courses in philosophy tend to explore the same core questions that define our existence. Personal and intellectual growth is embedded in these explorations as the core values that dictate the discipline’s educational goals:

- Competency in the best principles for accurate and effective reasoning.
- The ability to effectively articulate, comprehend, question, and communicate ideas of philosophical significance.
- Possess a familiarity with the historical context and significance of philosophical traditions and concepts.
- The willingness and ability to be morally accountable by means of sound ethical deliberation.

Nationally, philosophy programs tend to have slightly different areas of emphasis. These differences are tolerated and accounted for as being indicative of the diverse possibilities of interpretation that philosophy is traditionally known for inviting. There is no expectation that the aforementioned goals, and those similar to them, will change in the coming years.
**B. Please summarize changes that have been made since the last review.**

During the past 5 years, the Philosophy Department has continued to evolve and adapt to the needs of the students and community at large which PCC serves. The most notable changes are as follows:

- **Increased student demand has led to an increase in course offerings as well as the necessary adjunct faculty to staff those courses.** For the 2008-2009 school year, the Philosophy Department accounted for a student FTE of 226.1. For the 2012-2013 school year, the Philosophy Department accounted for a student FTE of 343.7. This amounts to a total growth of 52%. (See Appendix). This growth is largely attributed to our increased distance learning offerings as well as an increased number of sections being offered at the Rock Creek campus. Adjunct faculty has increased to 16 from 12 at the time of our program review in 2009.

- **Distance Learning course offerings have been significantly expanded to include PHL 191: Analysis & Evaluation of Argument, PHL 201: Being & Knowing, PHL 202: Ethics, PHL 204: Philosophy of Religion, & PHL 221: Symbolic Logic.** For fall term 2008 there were only 2 DL sections of PHL 207: Ethical Issues in Aging. For fall term 2013 there were 14 DL sections offered.

- **In 2012, the Philosophy Department acted as a leader in the formation of the Center for Civic Participation (CCP) at Portland Community College.** Instructors John Farnum and Shirlee Geiger have been instrumental in this process involving the generation of broad support and involvement from PCC and the community at large. The CCP is based on the National Issues Forum that is run by the Kettering Institute. The purpose of these forums is to facilitate events that encourage understanding through constructive discourse and deliberation. The CCP has most recently facilitated forums that are helping shape and empower the efforts toward accountability among students, faculty, administrators, and academic professionals at PCC.

- **The Philosophy SAC approved course title changes to PHL 197 & PHL 201.** PHL 197 was changed from “Electronic Media and the Presentation of Reality” to “Manufacturing Reality: Critical Thinking & the Media”. PHL 201 was changed from “Philosophical Problems” to “Being & Knowing”. These changes were conducted for the sake of improving the marketability of these courses.

- **Adjunct instructors Steve Jolin & Kimberly Haddix developed a new course, PHL 212 Intro to Philosophy of Mind.** After having been taught as an experimental course, it has since been approved and is expected to be offered starting in the spring term of 2014.
• **CCOGs for all philosophy courses were reviewed and modified to meet the standards of the curriculum committee.** Despite these adjustments, there are still numerous errors in the listings provided under the PCC course catalog. We are currently taking another inventory of the needed corrections and will be rectifying the situation shortly.

• **The Philosophy SAC has completed three different efforts to assess student learning in our courses.** These efforts, in and of themselves, have produced relatively minimal pedagogical insights. However, the collective process of questioning, analyzing, and reflecting on the task of assessment has proven insightful in that it has provided a venue for the shared exploration of our various approaches to the discipline.

• **An honors version of PHL 202: Ethics was authorized to be included as a course offering for the Honors College curriculum.** While authorized, the composition and implementation of this course is still being refined.

C. **Were any of the changes made as a result of the last review? If so, please describe the rationale and result.**

The administrative response from the previous program review, written by Scott Huff, was entirely affirming and provided no tangible suggestions or constructive feedback other than validating the work we have done and continue to do. In the previous review, the SAC put forward recommendations for strengthening DL offerings, adding additional FT positions, enriching faculty development, and improving our curriculum. As documented in the prior section, the Philosophy Department has made significant modifications and improvements to our DL and curricular offerings. The improvement of faculty development opportunities and the addition of two more FT faculty positions exist outside of the department’s scope of influence. We will continue to promote a SAC that is inclusive of adjunct faculty and sensitive to the unique challenges that affect their ability to fully commit to the mission of PCC.

2. **OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT**

A. **Course-Level Outcomes:** Identify and give examples of assessment-driven changes made to improve attainment of course-level student learning outcomes. Where key sequences exist, also include information about assessment-driven changes to those sequences.

Please refer to Section C for a summary of our assessment efforts and their subsequent affect on our efforts. The full assessment plans and their accompanying data can be found in the appendix.
B. Addressing College Core Outcomes

i. Describe how each of the College Core Outcomes are addressed in courses, and/or aligned with program and/or course outcomes.

http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/core-outcomes/index.html

Communication: “Communicate effectively by determining the purpose, audience and context of communication, and respond to feedback to improve clarity, coherence and effectiveness in workplace, community and academic pursuits.”

Success in philosophy classes requires competence in a variety of communications styles. Writing essays of some sort is part of the assessment of most of our courses. Additionally, students are encouraged to make in-class presentations, and participate in both small and whole class discussions. Our Critical Thinking and logic courses focus on specific aspects of communication:

- Philosophy 191 (Analysis & Evaluation of Argument) examines argumentative and persuasive discourse
- Philosophy 195 (Science and the Occult) explores scientific reasoning, drawing many of its examples from the popular press, as well as more scholarly journals.
- Philosophy 197 (Manufacturing Reality: Critical Thinking & the Media) focuses on non-print communication
- Philosophy 221 (Symbolic Logic) develops advanced skills for constructing valid and sound arguments and for rigorously evaluating the arguments of others. Because logic cultivates sensitivity for the formal component in language, students expand and refine their skills for clear, effective, and meaningful communication.

Community and Environmental Responsibility: “Apply scientific, cultural and political perspectives to natural and social systems and use an understanding of social change and social action to address the consequences of local and global human activity.”

Our courses address the issues of ethical, social or political responsibility either directly or indirectly. All of our Critical Thinking courses are designed to help and encourage students to exercise their responsibilities as citizens of a democratic society. The examples that are used for analysis and discussion are largely drawn from newspaper editorials, the Voter’s Pamphlet, letters to the editor, popular magazines, television news programs and talk shows, and the like. One of the main issues in an ethics class is the basis, extent and nature of one's obligation to self, others and community. Hence, all of the ethics courses (Introduction to Elementary Ethics, Business Ethics, Biomedical Ethics, and Environmental Ethics) directly contribute to students’ meeting this core outcome. Political Philosophy invites the students to reflect on their role in shaping the political environment.
**Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:** “Identify and investigate problems, evaluate information and its sources, and use appropriate methods of reasoning to develop creative and practical solutions to personal, professional and community issues.”

In the philosophy department we see the term "critical thinking" as applying to a wide range of thinking skills and processes. Life continually demonstrates the importance of making reliable judgments, and most aspects of higher education contribute to this goal. Where philosophy is unique in this endeavor is that the discipline is perpetually engaged in the act of thinking critically about critically thinking. Critical thinking in philosophy courses involves illuminating the epistemological foundations that are relied upon by us and others to address philosophical questions. It is from this position that students are empowered to better consider what the best foundations might be. In addition to the more general conception of critical thinking (organizing, prioritizing, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating) that most disciplines aim to develop, philosophy covers specific types of argument analysis and presentation, as these have evolved from the classical study of forms of logic.

**Cultural Awareness:** “Use an understanding of the variations in human culture, perspectives and forms of expression to constructively address issues that arise out of cultural differences in the workplace and community.”

While most of our offerings in Philosophy engage students in understanding the way humans perceive the world, we offer certain courses that are directly organized to illuminate student understanding of one’s worldview. They are designed to provide students with the conceptual resources to engage the world around them:

- **PHL 201: Being and Knowing** investigates the historical understandings of metaphysics (theory of reality) and epistemology (theory of knowledge) that continue to influence cultural understandings;
- **PHL 202: Ethics** covers philosophical ethics, in an attempt to provide justifications for actions individually and socially;
- **PHL 204: Philosophy of Religion** examines the philosophical nature of religion both in our culture and in other cultures throughout the world;
- **PHL 208: Political Philosophy** discusses the history of political philosophy and the questions that organize discussions about the legitimacy of government institutions and the formation of political societies across cultures and history;
- **PHL 210: Asian Philosophy** introduces the philosophies of India, China, Japan, and South East Asia, which offers a complementary approach to Western traditions in logic, ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics; and
- **PHL 222: Philosophy of Art and Beauty** approaches the philosophy of art in a way that tries to understand the profoundly rich dimensions of aesthetics and its meaning for all cultures.
These course offerings are consciously designed to promote cultural awareness in students and provide a clear path to realizing the significance of intellectual discussions throughout human history.

**Professional Competence:** “Demonstrate and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enter and succeed in a defined profession or advanced academic program.”

Philosophy courses enable people to become more competent in their respective fields. The discipline’s emphasis on communication skills, ethical and social responsibility, critical thinking and problem solving, awareness of the diverse cultural composition in professional fields, and the ability to be self-reflective, all contribute to the success of individuals in the workplaces of the 21st Century. The Philosophy Department has specifically designed courses that fulfill these general competences, but the Department also has contributed some “service courses” that relate to a variety of professional contexts that are important for the individual who is moving directly from PCC into the workplace:

- **PHL 202: Ethics** is used by a variety of other disciplines as a way for their students to gain a competent understanding of the complexities of ethical decision-making in the workplace.
- **PHL 205: Biomedical Ethics** is a suggested and popular course for Nursing students, Gerontology students, and other Allied Health students as an avenue to think ethically and critically about the unique situations that constitute the modern healthcare profession.
- **PHL 209: Business Ethics** is also a requirement for a variety of Business degree-seeking students, and it offers the student a reflective look at the ethical concepts and dilemmas that they will face in their professional careers.
- **PHL 221: Symbolic Logic** has been appreciated by Accounting and Computer Science students because it enables them to think logically about information and data that will be utilized in the workplace.

Overall, the Philosophy courses provide a unique opportunity for students in professional fields to gain important perspectives on their role in professional life.

**Self-Reflection:** “Assess, examine and reflect on one’s own academic skill, professional competence and personal beliefs and how these impact others.”

Throughout the philosophical tradition, self-reflection has been a hallmark virtue of the discipline and can be seen in Socrates’ admonition to all who follow him to “Know Thyself” (Although many people attribute this statement to Socrates, he is not the source and doesn’t make the statement in any of the dialogues. According to Plutarch (46-120 C), the admonition to “know thyself” {gnothi seauto} comes from the oracle of Apollo, at the temple of Delphi.) What this
statement means might take us beyond the scope of discipline review, but its spirit is continually integrated into the Philosophy course offerings at PCC.

Our Critical Thinking sequence asks students to reflect on the arguments and perspectives that constitute their worldview. The Philosophical Problems course engages students in a critical reflection of our intellectual history. All the Ethics courses provide students with the conceptual tools to deliberate and analyze their own actions and decisions made in the ethical realm. Philosophy of Religion, Political Philosophy, Asian Philosophy, and Philosophy of Art and Beauty all enable students to reflect on various parts of their experience and allow them to produce critical worldviews that integrate the important aspects of a human life: values, beliefs, aesthetics, and culture.

Although one can say much more about the value of philosophy in the reflective process, there is no doubt that a philosophical orientation leads to the fulfillment of the human ability to question one’s given worldview and attempt to continually integrate the reflective process into one’s existence.

ii. **Update the Core Outcomes Mapping Matrix for your SAC as appropriate.**

   [http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/core-outcomes/mapping-index.html](http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/core-outcomes/mapping-index.html)

Students who finish the following courses with a C grade or better are expected to attain the following outcomes. It should be noted however, that some students may attain levels higher than what are stated.
## Mapping Level Indicators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Not Applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Limited demonstration or application of knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Basic demonstration and application of knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Demonstrated comprehension and is able to apply essential knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Demonstrates thorough, effective and/or sophisticated application of knowledge and skills.</td>
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## Core Outcomes:

1. Communication.
2. Community and Environmental Responsibility.
5. Professional Competence.

### Course # | Course Name | CO1 | CO2 | CO3 | CO4 | CO5 | CO6
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---
PHL 185 | Computer Ethics | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3
PHL 191 | Analysis & Evaluation of Argument | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3
PHL 195 | Critical Thinking: Science & the Occult | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3
PHL 197 | Manufacturing Reality: Critical Thinking & the Media | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 4
PHL 201 | Being & Knowing | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3
PHL 202 | Ethics | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4
PHL 204 | Philosophy of Religion | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4
PHL 205 | Biomedical Ethics | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4
PHL 206 | Intro to Environmental Ethics | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4
PHL 207 | Ethical Issues in Aging | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3
PHL 208 | Political Philosophy | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4
PHL 209 | Business Ethics | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4
PHL 210 | Intro to Asian Philosophy | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4
PHL 211 | Existentialism | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4
PHL 212 | Intro to Philosophy of Mind | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHL 221</td>
<td>Symbolic Logic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHL 222</td>
<td>The Philosophy of Art &amp; Beauty</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHL 298</td>
<td>Independent Study: Philosophy</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
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C. **Assessment of College Core Outcomes** (note: Please include the full text of your annual reports as appendices, and summarize them here).

For each of the College Core Outcomes:

i. *Describe the assessment design and processes are used to determine how well students are meeting the College Core Outcomes*

ii. *Summarize the results of assessments of the Core Outcomes*

iii. *Identify and give examples of assessment-driven changes that have been made to improve students’ attainment of the Core Outcomes.*
2010: Critical Thinking and Self-Reflection (appendix A)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Design/Process</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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| Indirect and direct methods of assessment were utilized. Indirect assessment involved asking students scaling questions at the beginning and end of the term to measure any shifts in self-perceptions of growth involving critical thinking and self-reflection. Direct assessment was more instructor focused and involved the direct assessment of student work that was evaluated through the calibrated use of a rubric. | **Indirect Assessment**  
- Students, on average, demonstrated measurable growth in their perceptions of self that reflect an implied improvement of their ability to think critically.  
- Students provided anecdotal feedback confirming an improved ability to recognize their own ignorance as it pertains to their own self-awareness.  
- Students actively reflected on their own learning in the course through this assessment strategy which represents the benefits of formative assessment.  
- Students who had decreases in their responses often explained them as being a result of factors that were extraneous to their perceived benefits of the course. | **Recommendations**  
- The Philosophy SAC should facilitate and encourage intrinsically motivated participation in assessment to make them more meaningful and effective.  
- Efforts at assessment should continue to devise strategies that make integration and compilation more seamless and less time intensive.  
- Rubrics used in the future should be clear, concise, and relatively simple.  
- The topic of assessment should be considered more comprehensively than just consistent grading.  
- “Outcomes” language should be refined to measure student improvement within the designated areas since students already possess a degree of critical thinking prior to enrolling in a philosophy class.  
- Greater emphasis should be given toward enriching the pedagogical efforts of faculty. |
| **Direct Assessment**  
- Faculty learned that the proposed rubric was subject to diverse interpretations that impaired our ability to arrive at a consensus when attempting to calibrate it.  
- The emphasis on using this rubric to measure student proficiency in critical thinking failed to measure student growth in these areas. As a result, the efficacy of an instructor to teach critical thinking remains unknown.  
- There is a need to better quantify “critical thinking” when attempting to construct a rubric that measures a student’s ability to apply it. | |

**Changes**

The primary benefit of this assessment effort was to better familiarize the faculty with the challenges and significance of assessment. There were no direct changes made to the actual instruction of these courses, but the process of assessment yielded some enriching insights about what we do as instructors and the possibilities that exist for us to be more effective educators.
## 2011: Communication & Cultural Awareness (appendix B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Design/Process</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td>For assessing the outcome of Communication, the Philosophy SAC decided to distribute a scenario for students to write a brief response to. These forms were distributed and completed once at the beginning of the term and again at the end of the term. By comparing their responses at the beginning of the term to their responses at the end of the term, it was hypothesized that student learning might be measured by observing improvements in their responses as indicated by shifts in acquired concept integration, empathetic sensitivity, and reasoned support.</td>
<td>• Findings suggest that philosophy continues to be a strong discipline for enriching communication and developing a greater sense of engagement by students toward the world that they live in. The fulfillment of communication and cultural awareness as learning outcomes is essentially insatiable. Within philosophy as a discipline, it is a matter of what degree we can further perpetuate the development of these skills. The findings from this assessment point toward loose support for our work, but do not provide any real quantifiable data to suggest that we are as successful at our instruction as we think we are. • This exercise showed that some of the students were able to demonstrate an improvement in their ability to communicate using complex ethical terms/concepts. The ones who incorporated theoretical concepts into their answers to the dilemma given were able to show a broader linguistic approach when communicating their position than they did at the beginning of the term. • There was some suggestion in the data of an awareness that religious points of view were highly subjective and beyond evaluation and this seemed to necessitate a hands-off/fairness attitude towards religion. This seemed to lead them to their conclusion that the project should go ahead (or, if not, then no religious institutions should build here) and this did seem to reflect our study of the epistemology of religious beliefs (the intended core concern of this course). • Given the small number of relevant surveys, and the fact that the test question did not very well relate to the content of my course (I did not alter the course content to address the test question), Little of substance can be drawn from the test. However, the exercise of developing the test, administering it, and seeing the results was a valuable learning experience for planning future assessment efforts.</td>
<td>• Be explicit and transparent about learning outcomes as they pertain to PCC’s Core Outcomes and course activities. • Provoke reflection in students about the ambiguity of these concepts and what they mean to them. • Facilitate greater classroom interaction between students by not allowing them to regularly group into familiar relationships. • It is clear that students in classes achieve the desired outcomes when they are assessed throughout the term by using a variety of assessment techniques: formative “discussion based” assessment strategies, written summative assessment tools like papers and essay exams, and other informal techniques that are used outside of class time (e.g., office hour conversations and after class conversations). • The most beneficial aspect of the process has been talking to other instructors about their perspectives on assessment, so perhaps a more “best practices” focus and discussion would be more beneficial to improving teaching and learning at PCC. • The tail should not wag the dog. • If you want someone to learn something, you generally have to directly address it in your teaching. Serendipity and the techniques of indirection can take you only so far.</td>
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### Changes

The primary benefit of this assessment effort was to better familiarize the faculty with the challenges and significance of assessment. There were no direct changes made to the actual instruction of these courses, but the process of assessment yielded some enriching insights about what we do as instructors and the possibilities that exist for us to be more effective educators.
### 2012: Critical Thinking & Self-Reflection (appendix C)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Design/Process</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Surveys were constructed separately for each outcome. In each, students were provided with ten statements that each pertained to the outcome in question. Students were then asked to mark the strength of their agreement or disagreement with each statement. The five options were:</td>
<td>The results of the surveys yielded some statistical data consistent with what the Philosophy SAC had expected. Students were answering the questions of the surveys in ways that trended towards more self-reflection and critical thinking. Some answers to specific questions showed marked improvement (see “Self-reflection” #s 2 and 10; “Critical Thinking” #’s 6 and 7), while others showed slight improvements or consistent answers. These results enable us to conclude that we were at least not harming our students’ ability to think critically and engage in the process of self-reflection. We were unable to strongly conclude that specific assignments or teaching styles contributed to these areas of improvement. This led us to reflect on the process and methodology of our assessment work. What follows is our interpretation of the process we engaged in this year.</td>
<td><strong>•</strong> The quantitative survey approach enabled the Philosophy SAC to have a discussion about the results, what they showed and what they didn’t show. We felt that the results showed some small shifts in predictable ways, they showed that students were more self-reflective regarding their own worldviews and tolerant of other people’s positions. <strong>•</strong> The results revealed that students were able to see the value in being critically aware of the process of thinking on an everyday basis. However, it was also concluded that the results could not be expected to show, based on the quantitative “snap shot” that the surveys produced, which specific approaches to teaching philosophy yields the results that are valued in the process of teaching and learning. This insight into the process revealed to us that the main value added in this assessment cycle was the opportunity to come together as a philosophical community of educators and discuss our core values. Unfortunately, the survey design and implementation/interpretation/evaluation process did not maximize our efforts in having assessment dialogues which were seen as having the most value by our faculty.</td>
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#### Changes

The primary benefit of this assessment effort was to better familiarize the faculty with the challenges and significance of assessment. There were no direct changes made to the actual instruction of these courses, but the process of assessment yielded some enriching insights about what we do as instructors and the possibilities that exist for us to be more effective educators.
3. OTHER CURRICULAR ISSUES

A. To what degree are courses offered in a Distance modality (on-line, hybrid, interactive television, etc)? For courses offered both via DL and on-campus, are there differences in student success? (Contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, either Laura Massey or Rob Vergun, for course-level data). If so, how are you, or will you address these differences. What significant revelations, concerns or questions arise in the area of DL delivery?

DL offerings in philosophy have grown exponentially since our last program review. In fall term 2008, we offered two DL sections of PHL 207. For this most recent fall term of 2013, we offered 14 DL sections consisting of PHL 191: Analysis & Evaluation of Argument, PHL 201: Being & Knowing, PHL 202: Ethics, PHL 207: Ethics in Aging, and PHL 221: Symbolic Logic. The comparative success rates for course completion can be found in the following chart:

![Comparison Chart]

DL courses still demonstrate a slightly, but significantly lower completion rate than their campus based alternative. Part of this disparity is likely attributed to the learning curve taking place between students and instructors regarding the best way to satisfy course objectives in an online format. Most educators teach the way in which they were taught as students. Thus, most haven't experienced an online class as a student. This has likely led to some bumps in the implementation of effective online pedagogies. Further, many students are not well suited for online courses in that they are not disciplined enough in their time management skills.
Many members of the Philosophy SAC possess long held reservations about the efficacy of the discipline in a DL setting. The act of doing philosophy well is largely contingent on the intimate human engagement that occurs in a classroom setting. Instructors can do many things online to compensate for this deficiency such as posting audiovisual lectures and feedback. However, because such content is delivered asynchronously it lacks much of the resonance that is achieved in the classroom. An example of an issue that has emerged possibly as a result of the DL environment involves our PHL 207: Ethics of Aging course. This past year had a situation where the student and teacher communication broke down to an extent that the class was impacted detrimentally. Such dysfunctional communication was likely exacerbated by the decontextualization of language in this format. Without the proper environmental and visual cues to establish a secure emotional context, communication was misinterpreted and enflamed in ways that would be much less likely to occur in an actual classroom with human beings present. These are still pedagogically rich learning experiences and we’re working on addressing such instances constructively for the benefit of all involved.

Those concerns withstanding, there are also many advantages to instructing philosophy online. Content is able to be delivered in a diverse variety of formats that can appeal to different learning styles. Students have the ability to better interact with one another in ways that might have been socially awkward in the classroom. The instructor is able to provide feedback while students are in the process of completing their assignments. The emerging consensus seems to be that some courses, students, and instructors and better suited for DL courses than others. The Philosophy SAC intends to continue refining those philosophy courses that we believe are capable of being taught well online and preparing all of our instructors to adapt their pedagogies to these environments.

**B. Has the SAC made any curricular changes as a result of exploring/adopting educational initiatives (e.g., Service Learning, Internationalization of the Curriculum, Inquiry-Based Learning, Honors, etc.)? If so, please describe.**

In conjunction with the creation of the Center for Civic Participation, John Farnum & Shirlee Geiger developed the courses Philosophy of Democracy and Practice of Democracy to help introduce and educate students about the traditions, values, and principles involved in creating a meaningful and effective democracy. At present, these courses have been only offered once during the 2012/2013 school year as experimental courses. The Practice of Democracy course unfortunately did not have a high enough enrollment to go during fall term. The Philosophy of Democracy is scheduled to be offered again during spring term 2014.

Another curricular change that has been made in response to new initiatives is the development and offering of PHL 202: Ethics as an honors course. This was primarily done by Martha Bailey at the Cascade campus and is scheduled to be offered for the first time in the coming terms.
C. Are there any courses in the program that are offered as Dual Credit at area High Schools? If so, describe how does the SAC develops and maintains relationships with the HS faculty in support of quality instruction. Please note any best practices you have found, or ideas about how to strengthen this interaction.

Philosophy as a subject does not tend to be a vital part of contemporary high school curriculums. For this reason, we do not currently have any courses that are offered as Dual Credit. However, it should be noted that it is not uncommon for high school students to take Philosophy courses at PCC as a means for getting a head start on their college education.

D. Does the SAC plan to develop any additional Dual Credit agreements with area high schools? If so please describe. If not, what does the SAC see as barriers to developing further dual credit agreements?

No, at present the Philosophy SAC does not plan to develop any Dual Credit agreements with area high schools. If there was a demand to do so, the SAC would be willing to work toward satisfying it.

E. Identify and explain any other significant curricular changes that have been made since the last review.

No other significant curricular changes not already noted have been made since the last review.

4. NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

A. How is instruction informed by student demographics?

The role and nature of community colleges among state educational institutions has evolved greatly over time, yet community colleges still incur a variety of misperceptions about their mission. The traditional social perception of community colleges has been that of a second rate institution, but an affordable option to more expensive and competitive four year public and private universities. For those of us working within the community college system, we are well aware of the irony in these assumptions. By providing educational access to all who seek to improve their future, community colleges attract a rich diversity of both traditional and non-traditional students who are exploring a variety of academic and vocational interests. Perhaps the biggest advantage of this open access is that it creates learning environments comprised of students who have accrued a wealth of unique life experiences that, when properly utilized by the instructor, generate what might be considered a superior learning experience when juxtaposed with many similar courses offered through larger and more recognized colleges. This collection of diverse perspectives can be seen as emblematic of the various ways in which philosophy becomes manifest in the human experience. Subsequently, the benefits of studying philosophy thrive under these conditions such that they fully embody each of the core learning outcomes put forth by Portland Community College.
Educators at PCC tend to embrace a learner-centered approach to the instruction of philosophy. This approach is significant in that it empowers students to capitalize on their classroom experiences at PCC and further apply themselves to their endeavors beyond the classroom. The presence of diversity drives social change and the failure to adequately prepare students for its inevitable challenges diserves us all. The nature of philosophy is one that will regularly align itself against conventional thought and the status quo. This endeavor is pursued not out of a desire for instability but out of a desire for personal transformation and social justice. The diversity of our student body demonstrates a wide array of inequities experienced by different people and their respective dispositions. Philosophy, if done well, will inspire them to act with courage in response to social oppression as well as to act on behalf of those who lack a voice. By integrating the diverse life experiences and perspectives that are present within our student body, an instructor is better able to direct the classroom experience toward mutual acceptance, respect, and collaboration in matters of social and personal change.

B. Have there been any notable changes in instruction due to changes in demographics since the last review?

Student demographics have remained relatively stable since the last program review. The gender distribution is well balanced (49.3% Female, 50.7% Male) with the majority of our students falling between 18-25 years of age. There remains a racial & ethnic imbalance with roughly 75% of students being white/non-Hispanic. There has been no significant change in the enrollment patterns from other ethnicities. This is an issue that remains important to us and we will continue to bridge these gaps. It appears that there is an opportunity for us to investigate whether or not more of our courses might be eligible for the cultural literacy designation. We intend to do so in the near future.

C. Describe current and projected demand and enrollment patterns. Include discussion of any impact this will have on the program/discipline.

Enrollment and demand for Philosophy courses have increased significantly since 2008 with the department serving an additional 1,200+ students annually. For the 2008-2009 school year, the Philosophy Department accounted for a student FTE of 226.1. For the 2012-2013 school year, the Philosophy Department accounted for a student FTE of 343.7. This amounts to a total growth of 52%. ([http://www.pcc.edu/ir/program_profiles/201213/Productiontables/PHL.pdf](http://www.pcc.edu/ir/program_profiles/201213/Productiontables/PHL.pdf)). This growth is largely attributed to our increased distance learning offerings as well as an increased number of sections being offered at the Rock Creek campus. As a result, we have had to increase our adjunct faculty staffing from 12 to 16 in order to accommodate this demand. It should be noted that the number of full time faculty members has remained unchanged with two positions at Sylvania and one at Rock Creek. In addition to the increased administrative workload this places on the full-time faculty, the insufficiency of this staffing ratio has contributed to a degree of imbalance and tension within the SAC. In both cases, the instruction of students is being unduly affected. Full-timers are being burdened with greater administrative responsibilities that take time from their course prep, grading, and research. And adjuncts are being put into positions where they are reluctant to fully commit to an institution that is
essentially underpaying them. The SAC argues that the designation of 2-3 more full-time positions will go a long way toward enriching the quality of Philosophy being taught at PCC. Ideally, this would hopefully include one additional FT position at Rock Creek and another at Cascade where no FT position currently exists.
D. **What strategies are used within the program/discipline to facilitate access and diversity?**

In matters of facilitating access and embracing diversity it should first be noted that the act of learning is built upon having access to purposively structured opportunities for cognitive conflict and reflection. The essence of philosophy is not embedded in a stable system of thought that can be easily quantified and shared with students. Rather, philosophy as an act of learning represents a perpetual process of rigorous cognitive exploration, conflict, and construction. The philosophical basis for all learning transcends what happens within our classrooms, but these points reinforce the fundamental values of access and diversity that enrich the instruction of philosophy. As a result, the educators that constitute the Philosophy SAC strive to create classroom environments where students feel respected and valued as a product of their differences. Through this acknowledgment, they are more apt to fully invest themselves toward personal growth and social engagement.

An instructor is bestowed with a great deal of power and authority that can be used to empower or disempower students in the classroom. In response to this responsibility, there is often a conscious effort made to allocate that power back to the students while attempting to simultaneously maintain a position of leadership. By embracing a learner-centered approach to the instruction of philosophy it is believed that students are better equipped to capitalize on their classroom experience at PCC. The presence of diversity drives social change and the failure to adequately prepare students for its inevitable challenges diserves us all. The nature of philosophy is one that will regularly align itself against conventional thought and the status quo. This endeavor is pursued not out of a desire for instability but out of a desire for personal transformation and social justice. The diversity of our student body demonstrates a wide array of inequities experienced by different people and their respective dispositions. Philosophy, if done well, will inspire them to act with courage in response to social oppression as well as to act on behalf of those who lack a voice. By integrating the diverse life experiences and perspectives that are present within our student body, an instructor is better able to direct the classroom experience toward mutual acceptance, respect, and collaboration in matters of social and personal change.

E. **Describe the methods used to ensure faculty are working with Disability Services to implement approved academic accommodations?**

In order to empower students in philosophy courses, faculty works to be responsive to the unique needs and challenges presented by students working through Disability Services as well as those who don’t. Student requests for academic accommodations are assessed and arranged on a case by case basis. This responsive approach has largely been adequate judging from an absence of significant issues or complaints from students. In DL courses, instructors work to preempt these possible occurrences by enhancing their courses to be fully compliant with the online standards put forward by Disability Services. While instructors are improving at this, the SAC believes there remains a need for better institutional support including the providing of captioning services for audio and video lectures. Without such
services, many instructors choose not to provide these educational components since they lack the time, skill, and funding to do so well.

**F. Has feedback from students, community groups, transfer institutions, business, industry or government been used to make curriculum or instructional changes (if this has not been addressed elsewhere in this document)? If so, describe.**

In the past, we have created new courses such as PHL 205: Biomedical Ethics and PHL 207: Ethics in Aging to meet the demands of the Nursing and Gerontology Departments. These particular courses have continued to evolve with those changing needs. Most recently, student feedback has led to a revision of the PHL 207 text that remains in the process of reevaluation. Another example is the development and implementation of a Philosophy of Democracy course to complement the efforts of the Center for Civic Participation.

**5. FACULTY**

**A. Provide information on:**

  **i. Quantity and quality of the faculty needed to meet the needs of the program/discipline.**

In meeting the task of this component, we believe it is helpful to provide a brief historical synopsis of the philosophy department at Portland Community College in order to better contextualize recent evolutions.

**History of the Department**

Because the Philosophy Department today is a result of what it has been in the past, we would like to begin with a quick review of the history of the department. The Philosophy Department got its start during the academic year 1960-61, when Portland Community College (PCC) first opened its doors. Paul Hagensick, now retired, was hired to be the first philosophy instructor. Four courses were offered at that time: Philosophical Problems, Introduction to Ethics, Introduction to Logic, and Philosophy of Religion. These were chosen because they were the basic courses offered at other colleges.

As the school grew quickly in those first years, so did the Philosophy Department. Valerie Simmons was hired as a full-time instructor in 1963. The two full-time instructors staffed the philosophy offerings for the next nine years. Along the way an aesthetics class and a symbolic logic class were added to the curriculum. Again, both were typical of the philosophy courses being offered at other colleges at the time. Paul Hagensick retired in 1972 and was replaced by Steve Rathman. At the same time two part-time instructors, Steve Carey and Steve Jolin were added to the department. Then in 1974 Steve Carey replaced Valerie Simmons, who retired as a full-time instructor.

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The first major change in the philosophy curriculum came in 1975 when the Introduction to Logic class was replaced with three critical thinking classes:
• Philosophy 191 (Critical Thinking: Language and the Layout of Argument): focusing on the basics of argumentation
• Philosophy 193 (Critical Thinking: The Evaluation of Practical Argument): on fallacious reasoning
• Philosophy 195 (Critical Thinking: Science and the Occult): on the application of critical thinking to scientific and pseudo-scientific reasoning

In the early to mid-seventies the critical thinking movement was just beginning to develop. It grew out of an effort to make logic more applicable to everyday life and, thus, more accessible. Steve Carey’s background was in formal logic and the practical applications of logic, so he was particularly well suited for the development of these courses, for which there existed very little curricular materials; Steve Carey and Steve Rathman worked together to develop their own.

In 1976 Steve Rathman retired as a full-time instructor and became the dean of the Social Science Division at the Sylvania campus. As dean, he encouraged the philosophy department to grow. Andy Simon filled the vacated instructor position. He contributed to the development of the critical thinking curriculum with the addition of Philosophy 197 (Critical Thinking: Television and the Presentation of Reality), focusing on critical thinking in application to the media. Since the development of these courses, the critical thinking sequence has been consistently popular among students. Many students consider them to be among the most valuable courses offered at the school, in terms of practical knowledge. The ability to think critically is even one of the core outcomes that have been identified by the school.

PCC has always recognized the value of philosophy and supported its development. After 1975 course offerings in philosophy continued to expand. First, the Asian philosophy sequence was added. Then came what might be considered the second major curriculum change, career and service oriented courses, such as Political Philosophy, Environmental Ethics, Business Ethics, Biomedical Ethics.

During that same period the Rock Creek and Cascade campuses were developing and more philosophy instructors were hired on a part-time basis. In 1997 another full-time philosophy position was opened up at the Rock Creek Campus and Michael Warwick joined the Department. John Farnum was hired to replace retiring Steve Carey in 2000 and reintroduced the Political Philosophy course while also creating new courses in environmental ethics and existentialism. Andy Simon retired in 2009 and was replaced by long-time PCC adjunct Matt Stockton. In 2013, Hannah Love was hired to replace Mike Warwick at Rock Creek as he retired to live in the English countryside.

Today the philosophy department at PCC offers students a broader selection of courses than most community colleges. Our courses remain very popular. The career oriented philosophy courses such as Biomedical Ethics for the students of the Nursing Department and Business Ethics for business students were created in response to similar courses being offered at other colleges, but also in response to requests from the Nursing and Business Departments.

The Philosophy Department currently consists of three full-time and sixteen part-time faculty:
The Philosophy faculty has made and continues to make important contributions to the school and the larger community. (See response to 5C).

**ii. Extent of faculty turnover and changes anticipated in the next five years.**

With the recent hiring of Hannah Love at Rock Creek, there are no expected full-time vacancies being anticipated in the next five years unless the College chooses to invest further in our discipline and create 1-3 new full-time positions campus wide. Without those institutional changes, the College will continue to disproportionately rely upon its employment of adjunct faculty.

**iii. Extent of the reliance upon part-time faculty and how they compare with full-time faculty in terms of educational and experiential backgrounds.**

As previously mentioned, the SAC believes there is a significant imbalance in the full-time/part-time staffing ratio with three full-time staff and sixteen adjunct staff. This disparity is particularly exacerbated by the fact that there is virtually no significant disparity between their educational and experiential backgrounds. We are fortunate to have such bright, passionate, and committed instructors at our institution.

**iv. How the faculty composition reflects the diversity and cultural competency goals of the institution.**
Academic philosophy has long been justifiably accused as being primarily representative of men of European descent with an infatuation directed toward analytic philosophy. Such accusations are made with the force of statistics behind them (http://philpapers.org/surveys/demographics.pl). The debates and theories regarding the cause of these imbalances are numerous and perhaps better reserved for another discussion. The reason that they are worth noting here is to reinforce the Philosophy SACs commitment toward creating a curriculum and staff of educators that are better representative of the broad spectrum of philosophical possibilities and the diverse populations that are subject to them. Ideally, our staffing ratios will be able to one day mirror the student demographics that we serve. At present, we are still significantly understaffed by women and those of non-white ethnicities. Without, increased opportunities for hiring our ability to rectify these imbalances is undermined.

B. Report any changes the SAC has made to instructor qualifications since the last review and the reason for the changes.

http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/instructor-qualifications.pdf

No changes to instructor qualifications have been made or deemed necessary.

C. How have professional development activities of the faculty contributed to the strength of the program/discipline? If such activities have resulted in instructional or curricular changes, please describe.

John Farnum (FT Sylvania) shared the following account of his professional development activities: “Since the last Program Review, I have been involved in a couple of significant projects:

1) I helped to found and direct the newly established Center for Civic Participation at Portland Community College (CCP at PCC). I participated in a year-long “Centers for Democracy” development training at the Kettering Institute in Dayton, Ohio during 2012-2013. This training with cohort members from around the United States led to the development of the CCP at PCC in 2012. We had our first “PCC Discusses” forum in the Spring Term of 2013, as well as forums on “Accountability” at three PCC campuses during the Fall Term of 2013.

2) I had the opportunity to travel to South Africa and Botswana as part of a seminar on Healthcare Ethics in Sub-Saharan Africa. The trip was in association with CIEE’s International Faculty Development Seminars and I participated in a two week intensive program where I learned about cross cultural approaches to healthcare. The cohort attending was made up of educators from North America and we exchanged perspectives with government officials, NGO directors, and professors from Botswana and South Africa. I incorporated my experiences in developing more cross cultural elements into my teaching of Biomedical Ethics.”
Hannah Love (FT Rock Creek) was recently hired at Rock Creek campus beginning in the 2013-14 school year. She completed PCC’s New Faculty Institute in the summer of 2013.

Matthew Stockton (FT Sylvania) has participated in and helped facilitate the Critical Friends Group (CFG) for educators at PCC. This has since evolved into the Professional Learning Community (PLC) which meets about twice a term and provides a venue for colleagues to rigorously evaluate and improve their pedagogy. This growth was facilitated in the summer of 2012 he attended CFG training at Lewis & Clark College. In October of 2012, he attended the Singularity Summit in San Francisco to enrich his comprehension of the figures, initiatives, and philosophical ramifications emerging from technological advances and our social exploration of possible futures. He is also an active member in the Center for Civic Participation (CCP).

Martha Bailey (PT Cascade & Sylvania) shared the following account of her professional development activities: “I have both had opportunities to develop as a faculty member in the last five years and to work on building professional development opportunities for other faculty as the Cascade Campus Teaching Learning Center Coordinator.

For my personal development, I have attended a variety of conferences: specifically on philosophy, such as several of the Northwest Philosophy Conferences and the Pacific University Undergraduate Philosophy Conferences; on the humanities, including presenting at two regional and one national conference of the Community College Humanities Association; on Asia, including the Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast Conference and a presentation at the Asian Studies Development Programs annual conference; and on broader issues in higher education, such as one Annual Fellows Meeting, Society for Values in Higher Education, a one-day workshop at the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication and the Annual Conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council.

I have had two opportunities for more extensive development around specific cultures. I have been a member of the faculty cohort participating in a Title VI Grant for infusing Chinese language and culture into the curriculum. This has included three on-campus intensive seminars, a two-week residential seminar at the East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, and on-going cross-discipline planning around the Chinese language program. I was also selected to participate in the Council on International Educational Exchange program for faculty, and attended a seminar in Amman, Jordan on Middle Eastern Women. I have served on the PCC Asian Studies committee for a number of years.

In the area of curriculum development, I helped develop the curriculum for the Honors 101, Introduction to Scholarly Inquiry course for the Honors program. I also developed Honors versions of PHL 201 and 202. I took all three courses through the entire curriculum process. These came about through my involvement on the Honors Program Council.

In conjunction with my coordinator position for the Cascade TLC, I have been involved in a number of activities. Specifically at Cascade, I have led in planning and organizing the Part-time Faculty Institutes, Part-time Faculty In-services, and TLC sessions on a wide variety of topics, many of which have enhanced my own teaching practice as a side benefit. I also served on the search committee for the Dean of Instruction, and on a planning committee related to the beginning of the Middle College Program. At the college-wide level, I have been involved in the revision of the New Faculty Institute, have helped plan and carry out the annual Anderson

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Conference for faculty, and currently participate in the EAC taskforces on Part-time Faculty issues and on Academic Integrity. I have twice co-taught, with Shirlee Geiger and Gabe Hunter-Bernstein, the faculty continuing education course on philosophy of education."

**Stephen Carey (PT Sylvania)** shared the following account of his professional development activities: “I continue to read a lot of philosophy, particularly in the philosophy of mind and philosophy of science. I’ve recently completed two papers on the hard problem of consciousness and am thinking about reading the shorter of the two at next Fall’s regional APA conference. I’m working on a revise of a short textbook I’ve written on science and scientific method. I’m also beginning to work on a brief textbook that will, if successful, introduce students to basic methods of statistical inference, with an emphasis on Bayesian analysis, and the ways statistical thinking applies both in science and daily life.”

**Christopher Cayton (PT Sylvania)** completed the following professional development activities:
- 2010 to present- I continue, whenever possible, to take advantage of the training opportunities offered at PCC, particularly with the distance-learning dept.: D2L rollout training, D2L accessibility training, “collaborate” training.
- 2010- I revised the distance-learning PHL. 207 - Ethical Issues in Aging course. I adopted a more recent text for the course and put a greater emphasis on case-study methodology.
- 2012- I began developing a distance-learning Philosophy of Religion course. That course is being offered for the first time during the current winter term.
- 2013- I joined the steering committee of the Center For Civic Participation (CCP), here at PCC. The CCP is a revival of the National Issues Forum (NIF), through which I had received training years earlier. The methodology used in framing issues and creating effective discussion around difficult issues has had a great influence on how I teach.

**Joseph Corrado (PT Sylvania)** completed the following professional development activities:
- 2010 | Wrote the ACTS Protocol Development Report for the PCC Philosophy SAC’s Assessment Sub-Committee.
- 2011 | Based on the ACTS Protocol Development Report, designed and developed the ACE-Online Prototype for standardized assessment of critical-thinking skills and dispositions (http://www.centroidcafe.com/ACE/)
- 2011 | Reactivation of the PHL 221 (Symbolic Logic) course after several years of no scheduled classes.
- 2011 | Presentation at the 63rd Annual Northwest Philosophy Conference, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon: "The Perversity of Virtual Violence According to Albert Borgmann"
- 2012 | Presentation at the 64th Annual Northwest Philosophy Conference, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon: "Responsibility and Imagination in the 21st Century"
- 2012 | PCC Online Instructor Orientation - D2L Training
- 2012 | Design and development for two online courses: PHL 221 (Symbolic Logic) and PHL 191 (Analysis and Evaluation of Argument-12-week version)
Shirlee Geiger (PT Cascade & Sylvania) shared the following account of her professional development activities: “The time since the last Philosophy Program Review has been a period of intense change for me, set in motion initially by my involvement in the Learning Assessment Council. I was actively involved from the inception of the Council, under Sylvia Gray’s leadership. But I took over as chair in Fall 2010, just as we received a letter from NWCCU (our accrediting agency) stating that PCC was not in compliance with the standards regarding assessment of student learning outcomes. Believing in the basic outlines of the assessment process the Council had recommended to PCC’s administration, we decided to “hasten our progress” by accelerating the time line we had proposed. It was a time of rapid learning and change. In Spring 2012, NWCCU called out assessment for a commendation. (Whew!!)

I) As part of my involvement in PCC’s assessment process, I have had the following experiences.

- I attended the AACC annual conventions in 2009 (Seattle), 2011 (New Orleans) and 2013 (San Francisco). These conferences provided me with a “big picture” view of the changing political and economic context of Higher Education, as well as a sense of the amazing array of often-conflicting pressures and expectations buffeting community colleges in a newly “flattened” world.

- I created and co-taught a course on assessment with faculty from PCC’s education department – Kay Peterson and Gabe Hunter-Bernstein. Preparing for the class required extensive reading in Education literature. As a result, I am now a firm believer that we can no longer expect Community College educators to be “content experts” only. It is long past time that faculty at the institutions with the doors open wide (as part of the traditional “access” agenda) be expected to have learned something about their students as learners. We need to expect instructors to know about effective instruction. My work co-teaching with Gabe has transformed my expectations of myself as a teacher. (He is so good that I feel I simply lack words adequate to convey my respect for him and gratitude at the chance to work with him.)

- With Gabe and Martha Bailey I created a class in the Philosophy of Education aimed at PCC instructors. We have now offered it twice, with large and enthusiastic participation.

- Due to the generous support of the office of the Vice President for Academic and Student Services, I co-presented two assessment workshops with Sylvia Gray at CCHA (Community College Humanities Association). Our second presentation was written up in summary form at the request of the editor of the CCHA newsletter. We presented similar content at a session of the AAWCC.

- I co-presented a session on assessment with Michele Marden and Wayne Hooke in Lexington, Ky, in June 2013 at the annual conferences of the AALHE (Association for Assessment of Learning in Higher Education), and attended other sessions along with the plenary meetings.

II. Meanwhile, I joined PCC’s Completion Investment Council in Fall 2012, as the liaison to the Learning Assessment Council. We had a year of monthly meetings in 2012-13 intended to help members educate ourselves on the issues around completion. As with the initial year of the Learning Assessment Council, I ended the year of study with markedly different beliefs and attitudes than when I began. Our primary focus for the initial year was on DE Math and Reading/Writing, but I listened always with the lens of the philosophical approach to teaching Critical Thinking. I am eager to focus some attention (when I find some time!!) on current research using the CLA and CCLA as measures of critical thinking learning, hoping to find
more effective ways to teach these skills and help inculcate reflection habits. I started teaching at PCC – and remain most deeply rooted here -- due to my belief that a democracy MUST have thinking citizens able to pool resources of experiences and points of view, in order to make collective decisions well.

III. The third major influence on my development as an educator since the last Program Review has been a year-long mentor program with the Kettering Foundation, along with John Farnum and Neal Naigus. Kettering is a research organization studying effective support for democratic process. They created a conversation model – the National Issues Forum – that has been in use since the 1990s. As an extension of what they learned implementing NIF conversations, they are now helping nurture the creation of Civic Centers. They pair people from existing, successful centers with those starting Centers. Some of the centers are housed in colleges and universities, and some are outside academics. We were the second cohort to go through this new process with Kettering. With the help and support of Loretta Goldy, as Division Dean, and with the encouragement of outgoing District President Preston Pulliums, we created a steering committee, and kicked off our work within the college with what we hope will be an annual event, PCC Discusses.

I envision the Kettering work as an extension of Critical Thinking – an application of good thinking skills to questions of collective responsibility. Learning the steps to the Kettering process to help set up for productive conversations across significant ideological, religious, and cultural divides has been transformative for me. The field of philosophy is, in some ways, just a collection of issues, and ongoing conversations about those issues. However, the standard western philosophical approach has been adversarial in many ways, with the vocabulary of “attacking” weak reasoning and “defending” positions. I am thrilled to be part of a movement conceiving differences among humans as a resource to better collective deliberation, instead of an impediment. I prefer not to “demolish” weak thinking, but rather to try to see what is appealing about it to the person whose thinking it is.... And the Kettering process provides researched tools for sharing these skills with students!

In Fall 2012, supported in part by monies from PCC’s Professional and Organizational Development Office, I attended a convention of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, where I was a presenter with other members of the Kettering Cohort on lessons learned in creating a Civic Center. I hope to continue to build on some of the connections made there as PCC’s Center for Civic Participation continues to grow.

IV) An additional piece of professional development dates to an Anderson Conference session offered by an instructor in Chemistry (Stacy Fiddler) to demonstrate POGIL techniques. (POGIL = Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning.) As mentioned in our last program review, I worked to turn all my classes in hybrids with signification content and activities online. Once this project was done (in 2010), I began to experiment with ways to “flip” the use of face-to-face time. When discussions, formative assessments, quizzes and exams all online, what were we supposed to do when we got together? POGIL gave me the answer. With encouragement and inspiration from Monica Schneider (CA /PSY), I first converted PHL 202, Ethics. Each unit now has a POGIL activity. Some work better than others, but I have gotten familiar with the process of reverse-engineering an activity, starting with the desired learning outcomes. I am slowly retro-fitting (as it were) all the rest of my classes using this technique. Student response has been enthusiastic, and the final exam scores (averaged) of sections since I introduced the POGIL process have been consistently higher.
V) Finally, I have had the good fortune to participate in several of the intentional conversations about race at the Cascade Campus. Under the leadership of Ricci Elizabeth – adjunct instructor in Sociology – and with the participation of many conversation facilitators, Cascade staff and students have come together to practice spotting conversational “detours” and to practice respectful ways to help get communications back on a productive track. In my experience, there are lots and lots of ways for well meaning people to NOT talk productively about race. These sessions, however, have been beautifully conceived and executed, and I have learned approximately a ton of new and better ways to engage in exploring race in classes and with co-workers.

Kimberly Haddix (PT Sylvania & Rock Creek) shared the following account of her professional development activities: “As a part-time faculty member of the philosophy department, I’ve had many opportunities to participate in professional development. In the winter of 2013 I took the course “Assessing Core Outcomes at PCC”. My interest in the topics and issues covered in this course led to my becoming peer reviewer in the summer of 2013 and I am currently a LAC assessment coach. In addition, in developing my online course offerings I participated in the training for Desire to Learn platform, and my interest in the rubric used for this training inspired me to apply for funds to attend the Quality Matters regional conference in the spring of 2013. I also attended the Anderson Conference on diversity in the winter of 2013, and plan on attending this year’s conference as well. Lastly, I am a member of the Steering Committee for the Center for Civic Participation at PCC.”

Stephen Jolin (PT Sylvania) shared the following account of his professional development activities: “Since the most recent program review, I have continued to teach traditional classes in Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, Critical Thinking, Existentialism, and Being and Knowing. With a colleague I developed, and myself twice taught, a new traditional course in the Philosophy curriculum—Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind. I have also taken training in designing online courses, and have developed an online version of Being and Knowing, which I am currently teaching for the second time. In addition, I’ve designed an online version of the Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind course, which I am scheduled to teach in the Spring term of 2014. Alongside my pedagogical work, I have enjoyed participating in the new Center for Civic Participation, both as a Steering Committee member and as a minor facilitator at CCP forums.”

Brandolin Parisi (PT Sylvania & Rock Creek) gave a presentation at Oregon State University in February of 2012 titled, “Sublimity: Kant, Beethoven and Buddhism.” In Fall 2013 she completed a PCC CE course on “Teaching, Philosophy and Practice.”
6. FACILITIES AND SUPPORT
A. Describe how classroom space, classroom technology, laboratory space and equipment impact student success.

The Philosophy SAC is fortunate and grateful to have well equipped classrooms that contribute to rich dialogues where students are able to have concepts illuminated through an exposure to diverse media sources of relevant information.

B. Describe how students are using the library or other outside-the-classroom information resources.

Usage of the library and outside information sources differs from student to student. Further, the degree of encouragement to do so differs from instructor to instructor. In all matters, students are encouraged to become independent thinkers and collaborative learners.

C. Provide information on clerical, technical, administrative and/or tutoring support.

Clerical, technical, administrative, and/or tutoring support is sought after on a case-by-case basis within the Philosophy Department.

D. Provide information on how Advising, Counseling, Disability Services and other student services impact students.

Because of our institutional emphasis on access to everyone, PCC tends to serve a diverse variety of students representing unique needs, abilities, and goals. To compensate for these challenges we strive to reach out to students in need on a personal and institutional level. Within the classroom, we are able to establish meaningful relationships as mentors. Outside of it, we are able to direct students in need to the appropriate campus resources.

E. Describe current patterns of scheduling (such as modality, class size, duration, times, location, or other), address the pedagogy of the program/discipline and the needs of students.

The most recent scheduling patterns have reflected increased demand for DL courses that have come at a diminished demand for odd hour classes such as those offered in the evenings or on the weekends.
7. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Identify recommendations related to teaching and learning that derive from results of the assessment of student learning outcomes (course, degree, certificate and/or College Core Outcomes).

The Philosophy SAC has thus far struggled at finding meaningful insights that have been derived as a result of recent assessment efforts. While that is indicative of the numerous ambiguities and conflicting agendas associated with assessment, it also represents an opportunity for SAC members to propose recommendations that might contribute to a more meaningful experience that would enrich the relationship between teaching and learning. Collective deliberation has produced the following recommendations which the Philosophy SAC believes would make this process more worthwhile:

• Increased support and opportunity to convene for the sole purpose of discussing pedagogy and reflecting on our classroom practices. The moments where SAC members have been able to have these experiences have been limited, but meaningful. They provide opportunities for exposure and deliberation regarding the different texts, content, and assignments that are utilized by each instructor. At present, most of these opportunities come from allocating a small section of in-service meeting time or attending informal off-campus events. The recommendation is that more of these opportunities should be scheduled and made available. This would ideally be supported with more institutional support to compensate adjunct faculty for their attendance and participation.

• Further investigate the degree in which the fulfillment of student outcome is affected by instructional modality. As a discipline, philosophy demands a sense of presence and human interaction that becomes compromised when delivered through a distance learning modality. Continued monitoring of student experiences and success rates in DL courses will be significant in helping the SAC better determine what courses should be offered online as well as helping current and future DL instructors improve their teaching efficacy.

• Grounding the college core outcomes within the discipline of philosophy. Assessments have largely languished as a result of the broad, ambiguous, and aspirational nature of the existing college core outcomes. By re-examining and contextualizing them within the SAC it is hoped that a more constructive and pedagogically reflective experience might emerge from our assessment efforts.

B. Identify recommendations relevant to areas such as maintaining a current curriculum, professional development, access and success for students, obtaining needed resources, and being responsive to community needs. For recommendations that require additional funding, present them in priority order.
The Philosophy SAC argues that the fulfillment of the following recommendations would be instrumental toward the enrichment of student learning at PCC:

- **Greater institutional investment in student learning by balancing the FT/PT faculty ratio by adding 2-3 new FT faculty positions.** The current 3 FT/16 PT ratio is unacceptably imbalanced and not proportionate to the number of courses we offer across the college. In addition to placing a heavy burden on the existing FT faculty to fulfill the growing administrative responsibilities that come with a growing department, the existing ratio has contributed to the diminishment of adjunct engagement with SAC activities. This has primarily undermined efforts with assessment and pedagogical enrichment. Courses are only as good as the instructors who teach them and it makes logical sense that an institution that invests in a faculty culture which attracts and rewards instructors with the respect of employment security will be rewarded with the passion and commitment necessary to succeed at empowering the very students it exists to serve. Adding 2-3 new FT positions would contribute greatly to solidifying the culture and efforts of the Philosophy SAC. The increased course offerings at Rock Creek certainly justify the addition of a new FT position at that campus. It could also be argued that adding a FT position at Cascade or SE Center campuses would be instrumental to broadening the reach of philosophy to those students are most likely to benefit from the empowerment its engagement provides.

- **Working with the SE Center campus to expand their Philosophy course offerings.** As the SE campus grows there is an opportunity to expand the scope of Philosophy courses being offered across the College.

- **Increased access to professional development funds for adjunct faculty to attend external conferences and professional training events.** In the absence of having the professional development resources associated with FT positions, adjunct faculty deserve greater access and incentives to enrich their professional development so that they may better serve students at PCC. This request is also inclusive of improved compensation for adjunct faculty to participate in departmental assessment activities.

- **Institutional funding for the Center for Civic Participation (CCP).** This funding could be used to help possibly pay for a director, office space, and sponsored events. The role and influence of the CCP is representative of one of the Philosophy Department’s core goals which is to make the skills and concepts addressed in the classroom become manifest in the lives and actions of people trying to enrich our society. The Center for Civic Participation has helped advance this objective, but its influence is largely capped by limited resources.

- **College support for DL transcription services.** At present, the College provides these services but largely encourages and coerces DL instructors into believing that it is their sole responsibility to make sure their classes are ADA accessible. As a result,
many instructors have refrained from including audiovisual content, such as lectures, in their course modules because they don’t have the time, energy, and/or training to include the required transcripts and subtitles. Because the instruction of philosophy is largely contingent on the ability to draw others into meaningful human conversations it seems logical that the institution should be willing to provide adequate resources when barriers to these conversations arise as they do online. When students with disabilities attend campus classes, the College provides transcription and signing services with no burden being placed on the instructor. Fairness would seem to dictate that comparable services are granted to online instructors as well. This investment benefits ALL students at PCC, not just those who need these services because of their condition.

- **Investigate the possible establishment of a cultural literacy designation for PHL 204: Philosophy of Religion and PHL 222: Philosophy of Art & Beauty.** Attaining this designation might possibly be helpful for broadening the demographics of students taking philosophy courses at PCC.
ASSESSMENT PLAN AND SUMMARY FOR THE 2009/2010 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Philosophy Department at Portland Community College addresses the efficacy of promoting critical thinking in its courses through a comprehensive approach that accounts for the challenges that arise when trying to assess a component to thinking that is difficult to quantify. In essence, it is a matter of attempting to measure the unmeasurable. It should also be noted that while courses across the curriculum attempt to promote critical thinking, the Philosophy Department is unique in that it offers a series of courses specific to the practice of critical thinking in relation to the analysis and evaluation of argument.

As it is defined in PCC’s Core Outcomes, critical thinking is defined as the ability to “identify and investigate problems, evaluate information and its sources, and use appropriate methods of reasoning to develop creative and practical solutions to personal, professional and community issues.” This outcome is, to a degree problematic, because it fails to acknowledge the prior existing skills associated with critical thinking that students already possess prior to their enrollment at PCC. Thus, the assessment of a critical thinking outcome is a matter of assessing how effective a course and instructor are at improving a student’s ability to think critically. For this reason we have attempted to develop an assessment plan that assesses both the growth of a student’s critical thinking as well as their mastery of it.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

To account for these distinctions the Philosophy SAC has chosen to utilize both a student centered indirect method and a teacher centered direct method of assessment which can be pedagogically incorporated to benefit the student, the instructor, and the College.
STUDENT CENTERED - INDIRECT ASSESSMENT

Critical thinking is defined as the ability to “identify and investigate problems, evaluate information and its sources, and use appropriate methods of reasoning to develop creative and practical solutions to personal, professional and community issues.”

ASSUMPTIONS:

1) Students already utilize existing critical thinking skills prior to their enrollment in a course. Subsequently, the assessment of efficacy in instructing critical thinking must measure the improvement of a student’s ability to think critically.

2) The student is in a position that is inherently, but not exclusively, superior to that of the instructor to assess whether or not their critical thinking has improved as a result of their participation in a course.

3) Growth in critical thinking can be indirectly assessed through an assessment of improvement in the benefits it provides for an individual.

4) Assessment strategies must be easily adopted and beneficial for both the instructor and the students.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROTOCOL:

1) Students are provided with the “Student Survey” the first day of class prior to any instructional input pertaining to the course. This should take no more than 3-5 minutes and the completed surveys are immediately collected by the instructor with no additional information provided to the students.

2) These results are recorded via excel.

3) At the second to last class, students are again asked to complete the same “Student Survey” which is then collected and recorded once again. The instructor will then fill out a “Student Survey Reflection” form for each participating student. This form will document their initial and most recent responses to the “Student Survey” as well as the +/- differential of their answers.

4) At the last class, students are provided with their “Student Survey Reflection” form which they are expected to provide comments that reflect on the course’s possible influence on any shift in their prior responses.

5) This information is then collected and shared within the SAC as a basis for pedagogical improvement.
APPLICATION:

Assessment strategy was used in Matt Stockton’s spring 2010 sections of PHL 197: TV and the Presentation of Reality, PHL 204: Philosophy of Religion and two sections of PHL 205: Biomedical Ethics. Resulting data is provided in the accompanying attachment.
STUDENT SURVEY

NAME: ______________________

PHILOSOPHY

Please select a number between 1 and 100 that best represents your present state of agreement with each of the following statements. Be as honest as possible. Your participation will be used to help improve the course.

I feel comfortable having a discussion with others who express ideas that differ from my own including those whom I strongly disagree with.

(Strongly Disagree) 1 ← ____________ → 100 (Strongly Agree)
(Write your number here)

I think about my thinking often.

(Strongly Disagree) 1 ← ____________ → 100 (Strongly Agree)
(Write your number here)

I am informed about the moral, social, and political issues that affect my life.

(Strongly Disagree) 1 ← ____________ → 100 (Strongly Agree)
(Write your number here)

When I share my ideas with other people they usually understand what I am talking about.

(Strongly Disagree) 1 ← ____________ → 100 (Strongly Agree)
(Write your number here)

I feel that I will be able achieve most of my goals in life.

(Strongly Disagree) 1 ← ____________ → 100 (Strongly Agree)
(Write your number here)
I feel comfortable having a discussion with others who express ideas that differ from my own including those whom I strongly disagree with.

(Strongly Disagree)  1  →  100 (Strongly Agree)

Initial Response: _____  Most Recent Response: _____  +/- Difference: _____

Comments:

I think about my thinking often.

(Strongly Disagree)  1  →  100 (Strongly Agree)

Initial Response: _____  Most Recent Response: _____  +/- Difference: _____

Comments:

I am informed about the moral, social, and political issues that affect my life.

(Strongly Disagree)  1  →  100 (Strongly Agree)

Initial Response: _____  Most Recent Response: _____  +/- Difference: _____

Comments:
When I share my ideas with other people they usually understand what I am talking about.

(Strongly Disagree) 1 ← → 100 (Strongly Agree)

Initial Response: _____  Most Recent Response: _____  +/- Difference: _____

Comments:

I feel that I will be able achieve most of my goals in life.

(Strongly Disagree) 1 ← → 100 (Strongly Agree)

Initial Response: _____  Most Recent Response: _____  +/- Difference: _____

Comments:
INSTRUCTOR CENTERED - DIRECT ASSESSMENT

“Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion”

ASSUMPTIONS:

1) Critical thinking is a defined skill set that must be instilled and cultivated within students.

2) Student success in critical thinking must be directly assessed based on their ability to reflectively apply reason and logic in their comprehension, evaluation, and construction of arguments.

3) The instructor is the best arbiter of a student’s ability to think critically.

4) Assessment must be utilized in a manner that is uniform among instructors within the discipline.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROTOCOL:

1) Instructors of various philosophy courses will be self-selected to collect student artifacts that are obtained with the student’s written permission.

2) Collected artifacts will be individually assessed by all participating instructors according to their application of the provided rubric.

3) Once completed, participating instructors will convene and share their ratings according to their interpretation of the rubric with the intent of identifying any discrepancies.

4) Instructors will discuss any discrepancies in an attempt to calibrate their application of the rubric.

5) This information and the shared experiences of the participating instructors are then collected and shared within the SAC as a basis for pedagogical improvement.

APPLICATION:

Rubric was applied and calibrated at the Cascade TLC in July 2010 with artifacts provided by students who were enrolled in Martha Bailey’s the previous term. Martha Bailey, Shirlee Geiger, Chris Cayton, and Matt Stockton were in attendance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric for assessing critical thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation of issue to be considered critically</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Issue** | - stated clearly  
- described comprehensively (deliver all relevant information for full understanding) | **Issue** | - stated  
- described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions | **Issue** | - stated  
- leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, backgrounds unknown |
| **Argument(s) made about the issue by the student** | **Argument(s)** | **Argument(s)** | **Arguments(s)** | **Arguments(s)** |
| - plausible foundational premises  
- are complete and fair  
- commit no fallacies | - plausible foundational premises  
- missing pieces do not compromise fairness  
- commit no fallacies | - foundational premises given  
- some unfairness due to missing or inaccurate premises  
- commits no fatal fallacies | - stated  
- foundational premises and/or conclusions missing  
- fatal fallacies committed |
| **Evidence* chosen or used to support each argument** | **Information** | **Information** | **Information** | **Information** |
| - taken from source(s) with enough information/evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis  
- viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly | - taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis  
- viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning | - taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis  
- viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning. | - taken from source(s) without any interpretation or evaluation - viewpoint of experts is taken as fact, without question. |
| **Influence of context and assumptions for each argument** | - thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others’ assumptions  
- carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position. | - identifies own and others’ assumptions  
- identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. | - questions some assumptions  
- identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position  
- may be more aware of others’ assumptions than one’s own (or vice versa). | - shows emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels premises or assertions as assumptions)  
- begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s position on the issue</th>
<th>Specific position</th>
<th>Specific position</th>
<th>Specific position</th>
<th>Specific position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue&lt;br&gt;-limits of the position are acknowledged -others’ points of view are synthesized with the position.</td>
<td>-takes into account the complexities of an issue&lt;br&gt;-others’ points of view are acknowledged within the position.</td>
<td>-stated&lt;br&gt;-acknowledges different sides of an issue.</td>
<td>-stated&lt;br&gt;-simpistic and obvious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusions, implications and consequences of the student’s position</th>
<th>Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications)</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-logical&lt;br&gt;-reflect student’s informed evaluation&lt;br&gt;-student shows ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order</td>
<td>-logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints&lt;br&gt;-related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly</td>
<td>-logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion)&lt;br&gt;-some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.</td>
<td>-inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed&lt;br&gt;-related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not all assignments may call for gathering of outside evidence. Based on rubric at www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/criticalthinking.pdf*
INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Indirect Assessment (Results can be viewed in the accompanying document)

- Students, on average, demonstrated measurable growth in their perceptions of self that reflect an implied improvement of their ability to think critically.
- Students provided anecdotal feedback confirming an improved ability to recognize their own ignorance as it pertains to their own self-awareness.
- Students actively reflected on their own learning in the course through this assessment strategy which represents the benefits of formative assessment.
- Students who had decreases in their responses often explained them as being a result of factors that were extraneous to their perceived benefits of the course.

Direct Assessment

- Faculty learned that the proposed rubric was subject to diverse interpretations that impaired our ability to arrive at a consensus when attempting to calibrate it.
- The emphasis on using this rubric to measure student proficiency in critical thinking failed to measure student growth in these areas. As a result, the efficacy of an instructor to teach critical thinking remains unknown.
- There is a need to better quantify “critical thinking” when attempting to construct a rubric that measures a student’s ability to apply it.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The Philosophy SAC should facilitate and encourage intrinsically motivated participation in assessment to make them more meaningful and effective.
- Efforts at assessment should continue to devise strategies that make integration and compilation more seamless and less time intensive.
- Rubrics used in the future should be clear, concise, and relatively simple.
- The topic of assessment should be considered more comprehensively than just consistent grading.
- “Outcomes” language should be refined to measure student improvement within the designated areas since students already possess a degree of critical thinking prior to enrolling in a philosophy class.
- Greater emphasis should be given toward enriching the pedagogical efforts of faculty.
B. Student Assessment 2011: Communication & Cultural Awareness

PHILOSOPHY ASSESSMENT SUMMARY 2010/2011

INTRODUCTION

For the 2010/2011 school year at PCC, the Philosophy Department was tasked with assessing its ability to promote student learning as it pertains to the fulfillment of the College’s Core Outcomes for Communication and Cultural Awareness.

**Communication:** Communicate effectively by determining the purpose, audience and context of communication, and respond to feedback to improve clarity, coherence and effectiveness in workplace, community and academic pursuits.

**Cultural Awareness:** Use an understanding of the variations in human culture, perspectives and forms of expression to constructively address issues that arise out of cultural differences in the workplace and community.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

For assessing the outcome of Communication, the Philosophy SAC decided to distribute a scenario for students to write a brief response to. These forms were distributed and completed once at the beginning of the term and again at the end of the term. By comparing their responses at the beginning of the term to their responses at the end of the term, it was hypothesized that student learning might be measured by observing improvements in their responses as indicated by shifts in acquired concept integration, empathetic sensitivity, and reasoned support.

*Communication* was assessed only in sections of Philosophy 205: Biomedical Ethics. The form distributed to students on the first day of class and close to the last day was as follows:

**INITIALS:**

**Directions for Students:** Please take five minutes to write a response to the following ethical dilemma. Try to incorporate ethical concepts and principles in your justification of the action you would take in the dilemma.

**Ethical Dilemma**

A friend of yours is struggling to keep up on all of his schoolwork and asks you to complete an assignment in a course you have already taken. He is busy working overtime at his job and needs to complete the coursework for this class by the end of the week or face suspension of his financial aid, which helps him, as a single parent, support his children.
What would you do in this situation? What ethical justification would you use to support your actions?

*Cultural Awareness* was assessed only in sections of Philosophy 204: Philosophy of Religion. The form distributed to students on the first day of class and close to the last day was as follows:

**INITIALS: __________**

*Directions for Students:* Please take five minutes to write a response to the following current issue. Try to incorporate cultural assumptions and viewpoints in your recommendation of what actions should be taken in this event.

**Current Issue**

There is a proposal to build an Islamic Cultural Center and Mosque within a few blocks of Ground Zero in New York City (site of the 9/11 terrorist attacks). Should religious points of view be taken into consideration when evaluating building proposals near Ground Zero? If so, should all religious organizations be prohibited from building a facility there, or just Islamic ones?

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Full-time faculty members John Farnum, Matt Stockton, and Mike Warwick participated as did adjunct faculty Steve Jolin.

**Stockton**

*Communication* – PHL 205: Biomedical Ethics W 6:00-9:50

The pre-survey was distributed on January 5, 2011. The post-survey was distributed on March 9, 2011. 16 students completed both the pre and post-surveys for analysis.

**Cultural Awareness** - PHL 204: Philosophy of Religion TR 3:00-4:50

The pre-survey was distributed on January 4, 2011. The post-survey was distributed on March 8, 2011. 18 students completed both the pre and post-surveys for analysis.

**Farnum**

I distributed the survey to all the students in both of my PHL 205: Biomedical Ethics classes on the first day of the Winter term, 2011, and then repeated the survey on the last day of the term prior to the scheduled day for the final exam. In my Monday/Wednesday class 9 students filled out the survey on the first day and the last day. In my Tuesday/Thursday class 13 people filled it out on the first day and the last day. The rest of the answers collected were people who were present on either the first or the last day, but not both. Therefore, I am just going to report on those surveys that will show progress from the beginning to the end of the term.
Jolin
I distributed the survey to all the students in my 6-8:50pm Philosophy of Religion class on the first day of the Winter term, 2011, and then repeated the survey on the last day of the term prior to the scheduled day for the final exam. 22 students filled out the survey on the first day. 15 filled it out on the final day. However, only 8 of the surveys filled out on the last day were done by students who had taken it on the first day. This is apparently accounted for by patterns of class drops, class adds and absences.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Stockton
The majority of students (12 out of 16) enrolled in Biomedical Ethics completed the post survey demonstrating improved communication by utilizing ethical concepts they learned in class to more clearly articulate their own moral position. The remaining four students had positions that were virtually indistinguishable from their responses on the pre-survey.

The majority of students (10 out of 18) enrolled in Philosophy of Religion completed the post-survey demonstrating cultural awareness that was similar to their responses on the pre-survey. Seven students had responses that were deemed improvement and one student had a response that was deemed inferior. Responses were judged on their depth of consideration, moral nuance, and empathetic sensitivity.

Farnum
In the M/W class, I saw that 3 out of 9 surveys showed a change in the way they approached the ethical dilemma by using terms and concepts from the ethical theories we discussed in class. In my T/TH class, I saw that 6 out of 13 surveys showed a change in the way they approached the ethical dilemma by using terms and concepts from the ethical theories we discussed in class. The rest of the surveys didn’t incorporate directly any ethical theory terms/concepts into their answers, but it did appear that some of the answers were a bit longer and more thought out. The remaining answers (about one third) were pretty much the same.

Warwick
Inconclusive. But there’s evidence of increasing awareness of the subjective nature of religious positions and that some more “objective” standard, i.e. the law and its insistence on fairness, should prevail in this decision. Since I interpreted the idea of ‘culture’ here to be represented by the religious community and its ideas, and the secular community and its largely scientific perspective (contrast a theocracy and a
secular democracy) I think that epistemological distinction, emphasized throughout my course, is arguably evident in the students’ responses and is argued more forcefully in their second response.

**Jolin**
On the basis of comparing the 8 relevant surveys: Four students appeared to have gained in one way or another in the ability to manifest cultural awareness in the sense assumed in the test question. Three showed no real change during the term. One student seemed to do worse.

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Stockton**
These findings suggest that philosophy continues to be a strong discipline for enriching communication and developing a greater sense of engagement by students toward the world that they live in. The fulfillment of communication and cultural awareness as learning outcomes is essentially insatiable. Within philosophy as a discipline, it is a matter of what degree we can further perpetuate the development of these skills. The findings from this assessment point toward loose support for our work, but do not provide any real quantifiable data to suggest that we are as successful at our instruction as we think we are. For this reason, we should continue to take strides attempting to better measure these outcomes as a basis for pedagogical enrichment.

**Farnum**
I think this exercise showed that some of the students were able to demonstrate an improvement in their ability to communicate using complex ethical terms/concepts. The ones who incorporated theoretical concepts into their answers to the dilemma given were able to show a broader linguistic approach when communicating their position than they did at the beginning of the term. I did not prompt the students to incorporate the theories in their answers, so the ones that did integrate the ethical theory concepts did so on their own (based on the written directions alone).

**Warwick**
There was some suggestion in the data of an awareness that religious points of view were highly subjective and beyond evaluation and this seemed to necessitate a hands-off/fairness attitude towards religion. This seemed to lead them to their conclusion that the project should go ahead (or, if not, then no religious institutions should build here) and this did seem to reflect our study of the epistemology of religious beliefs (the intended core concern of this course).

**Jolin**
Given the small number of relevant surveys, and the fact that the test question did not very well relate to the content of my course (I did not alter the course content to address the test question), I believe that little of substance can be drawn from the test. However, the exercise of developing the test, administering it, and seeing the results was a valuable learning experience for planning future assessment efforts. I’ve listed some of the main things I learned, in my response to the question below.
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING ASSESSMENT

Stockton
- The concept of measuring cultural awareness needs to be collectively revisited and more clearly defined.
- The possibility of giving instructors flexibility on how to assess has been discussed. If this is done, there should be some degree of connectivity between parallel efforts that is expressly agreed upon.
- Consider using some formative assessment strategies that allow for students to self-assess and report on their own observations.

Farnum
I think that next time, if we were to use this technique, I would verbally prompt the students to use ethical theories and their concepts in the answers they give. That way, I can assess not only the quantity of those who included these concepts into their answers, but then I can start to think about quality as well. However, once I go in that direction, perhaps evaluating artifacts from the summative assessment techniques I already give my students could serve that purpose. All in all, I think the process of assessing for specific outcomes might be a difficult process if separated from the context of the course, so some further refinement of the assessment tools would be warranted. I think that the very fact that multiple instructors have done the same procedure is beneficial for the Philosophy SAC and will lead to further discussion among colleagues which is always positive, in my experience.

Warwick
I think that instructors should devise their own questions that reflect the particular core concerns of their courses. I certainly felt that this question did not, without a stretch (i.e., interpreting cultural awareness in terms of distinguishing religious cultures from secular and science based cultures), offer much opportunity to draw out relevant concepts we encountered through my course, despite my attempts to direct the students to particular aspects of the question (e.g. How should a secular law-based society react to the needs of faith-based communities?) that might have connected with epistemological concerns. I agree with Steve that we should delay setting the first assessment until week 2 to allow for drops etc.

Jolin
For next time, I would consider doing the following:

1. Continue with the brief pre- and post-test design for the assessment. In itself, that seems manageable, acceptable to the students, and potentially informative.
2. If possible, wait for a class period or two to administer the pre-test. This would ensure a higher level of completed tests from students likely to be in the class at the end. Likewise, try to administer the post-test on a day close to the end of the class when attendance is likely to be high. The aim of these arrangements would be to maximize the number of relevant surveys for comparison at the end.
3. Perhaps the most important change indicated would be to design the test question to reflect some legitimate sense of the PCC goal in question (e.g., cultural awareness) that would actually be addressed in the particular course content of the class as taught, or intended to be taught, by
the instructor administering the test. If some department oversight were desired, to ensure reasonable department-wide consistency, a review of test questions proposed by individual instructors could be made part of a SAC meeting discussion prior to the administration of the assessment test.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING

Stockton

- Be explicit and transparent about learning outcomes as they pertain to PCC’s Core Outcomes and course activities.
- Provoke reflection in students about the ambiguity of these concepts and what they mean to them.
- Facilitate greater classroom interaction between students by not allowing them to regularly group into familiar relationships.

Farnum

There were not a lot of changes to the way I think about teaching ethics to non-philosophers by participating in this exercise. It is a difficult process to test the changes in the student’s ability to incorporate ethical theory into their way of communicating answers to ethical dilemmas. I still think that I can observe significant changes in the class discussion from the first day of class to the end of the term. However, I am still not sure how to best capture this change on paper. It is definitely clear to me that students in my classes achieve the desired outcomes when I assess each class’s progress throughout the term by using a variety of assessment techniques: formative “discussion based” assessment strategies (e.g., asking students questions, listening to their answers, having them ask me and other classmates questions, etc.), written summative assessment tools like papers and essay exams, and other informal techniques that I use outside of class time (e.g., office hour conversations and after class conversations). The most beneficial aspect of the process has been talking to other instructors about their perspectives on assessment, so perhaps a more “best practices” focus and discussion would be more beneficial to improving teaching and learning at PCC.

Warwick

Just as I believe individual instructors should devise their own questions, we should also, without undue influence, arrange to emphasize those aspects of the course that we thought important enough to construct our questions to test. But we probably all do that anyhow already. The tail should not wag the dog.

Jolin

With respect to student learning, what I took from this first experiment is perhaps nothing more than a reminder of an old lesson: if you want someone to learn something, you generally have to directly address it in your teaching. Serendipity and the techniques of indirection can take you only so far. As a teacher, I did take from this experiment some encouragement to think seriously about the way that my courses relate to both personal and institutional learning goals, and about how adjustments in either the courses or in the interpretation and articulation of those goals might be called for.
C. Student Assessment 2012: Critical Thinking & Self-Reflection

Annual Report for Assessment of Outcomes 2012-13

Subject Area Committee Name: Philosophy
Contact person: Matt Stockton
For LDC/DE: Core outcome(s) assessed: Critical Thinking & Self-Reflection
For CTE: Degree or certificate* assessed: 
*please attach a table showing the alignment of the degree or certificate outcomes with the College Core Outcomes

Please address the questions below and send to learningassessment@pcc.edu by June 21, 2013 with Annual Report in the subject line

Note: Information provided in this report may be inserted into or summarized in Section 2C Program Review Outline.

1. Describe changes that have been implemented towards improving students' attainment of outcomes that resulted from recent outcome assessments. These may include but are not limited to changes to content, materials, instruction, pedagogy etc. Please be sure to describe the connection between the assessment results and the changes made.

Minimal changes have been implemented toward improving student’s attainment of outcomes as a result of our recent outcome assessments. This is largely due to the fact that we are still in the process of trying to construct a meaningful way to assess students in a fashion that will satisfy the specific demands of the LAC while simultaneously managing to enrich our own pedagogies. In philosophy, almost every exercise we utilize in our courses involves an assessment of student growth in critical thinking and self-reflection. The expectation that they will have achieved a degree of mastery from these exercises which can be then measured in a single assessment tool is problematic in a variety of ways. One fundamental challenge is that our students arrive at our classes already possessing a capacity for each of these proclaimed outcomes. Some students possess a very mature capacity for critical thought and self-reflection while others might possess very underdeveloped ones. The idea that students can leave our classes with a comparable level of expertise that can then be measured in a single assessment is as unrealistic as expecting all students in a weight lifting class to be able to bench press 200 pounds upon its conclusion. In short, the language of “outcomes” is built upon faulty assumptions and arbitrary semantics. We could always define these “outcomes” at such a minimal level of “mastery” that we show a statistical level of student growth, but that would seem to be creating an illusion of success that doesn’t fully encapsulate the real student growth that does occur in our classes. The substantial growth and learning that occurs in our courses is relative to each student and is best articulated by their own qualitative self-reflective feedback. The diminishment of this evidence for self-reported growth in preference of quantifiable data seems to be in deference to the expectations of accreditors more than it is to the educators.
While we cannot cite any direct changes as a result of our assessment efforts, we can cite a collective passion for teaching and student success that is brought into focus through the discussions these exercises provoke. These discussions are the most beneficial for us as they allow each of us to assert and re-evaluate our own methodologies and pedagogical philosophies.

For each outcome assessed this year:

2. Describe the assessment design (tool and processes) used. Include relevant information about:

   • The nature of the assessment (e.g., written work, project, portfolio, exam, survey, performance etc.) and if it is direct (assesses evidence mastery of outcomes) or indirect (student’s perception of mastery). Please give rationale for indirect assessments (direct assessments are preferable).

   • The student sample assessed (including sample size relative to the targeted student population for the assessment activity) process and rationale for selection of the student sample. Why was this group of students and/or courses chosen?

   • Any rubrics, checklists, surveys or other tools that were used to evaluate the student work. (Please include with your report – OK to include in appendix). Where appropriate, identify benchmarks.

   • How you analyzed results, including steps taken to ensure that results are reliable (consistent from one evaluator to another).

METHODOLOGY: Surveys were constructed separately for each outcome. In each, students were provided with ten statements that each pertained to the outcome in question. Students were then asked to mark the strength of their agreement or disagreement with each statement. The five options were:

Strongly Disagree ← Disagree ← Undecided ← Agree ← Strongly Agree

Students were administered these surveys twice: once on the first day of class and again on the last day of class. The underlying premise being utilized was that a shift in student responses between the beginning of the term and the end of the term would signify their growth in the comprehension and application of the outcomes in question.

To tabulate the results, only responses from students who completed both the pre and post class surveys were accounted for. A numerical value was attributed to each response with “Strongly Disagree” being represented as a “1” and “Strongly Agree” being represented as a “5”. The values of these numbers are regarded as neutral (ex. 5 is not greater or worse than 1) and are only used for purposes of quantification. Totals for each question were averaged out and juxtaposed for pedagogical consideration by the SAC.

RESULTS:
OUTCOME: Self-Reflection

COURSE: PHL 201 Being & Knowing

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SURVEYED: 67

1) I am good at identifying and clearly explaining problems in people’s arguments, including my own.

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<th>Average</th>
<th>Approx. Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>Agree -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Agree +</td>
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2) When I disagree with someone, I mostly focus on what’s wrong with their view rather than reflecting on my own view.

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<th>Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>Undecided -</td>
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<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>Disagree +</td>
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3) I think about my thinking frequently.

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<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>Agree +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>Agree +</td>
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4) I am confident in my ability to find common ground to serve as the basis for fruitful discussion with others.

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<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>Agree +</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>Agree +</td>
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5) Disagreements and doubt are weaknesses that impair our ability to learn.

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<th>Average</th>
<th>Approx. Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>Disagree +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>Disagree +</td>
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6) The purpose of argumentation is to point out why someone else is wrong.

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<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>Disagree -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>Disagree -</td>
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7) The primary function of education is to train you to get a job.

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<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>Disagree +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Disagree -</td>
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8) All ideas are subjectively true, and therefore we can’t analyze another person’s beliefs.
9) I don’t like to explore my reasons for believing something is true.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>Disagree -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>Disagree -</td>
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10) Dictionaries determine what words mean.

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<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>Undecided -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>Disagree +</td>
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OUTCOME: Critical Thinking

COURSE: PHL 191 Analysis & Evaluation of Argument

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SURVEYED: 80

1) I realize that some of my beliefs may not fully correspond to what is true and factual about the world.

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<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>Agree +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>Agree +</td>
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2) Oscar says “people who change their minds about an issue or idea are generally confused intellectual wimps —it’s a sign of weakness to change your opinion after you have held it for a long time.” Do you agree with Oscar?

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<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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3) The following is an example of critical thinking: “Andrew position on Medicare reform is flat out wrong. He doesn’t know what he’s talking about. Plus, he’s always saying ridiculous things that are self-serving”

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>Disagree -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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4) Sincerity and authenticity are the hallmarks of sound beliefs.

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<tr>
<td>Pre-Course:</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>Undecided +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Course:</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>Undecided +</td>
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5) The following reasoning is sound: “Absolutely, ghosts exist. I’ve personally seen one and experiences like mine are very common. Why else would so many people believe in them?”
6) In its television advertising, the Burger Czar fast-food chain claims that “The bigger the burger, the better the burger.”

The ad ends with a shot of an attractive, smiling young woman who assures: “The burgers are bigger at Burger Czar.”

If you agreed with these claims, you might reasonably conclude that the burgers are better at Burger Czar.

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<tr>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>Disagree +</td>
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<td>2.09</td>
<td>Disagree +</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>Undecided +</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>Agree</td>
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7) Fairness alone is enough justification for giving everyone’s opinions equal weight.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>Undecided -</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>Undecided +</td>
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8) Seeing is believing.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>Undecided -</td>
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9) Whenever well-established science and one’s own beliefs conflict it is most important to remain true to one’s own beliefs.

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<tr>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>Disagree +</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>Disagree +</td>
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10) Ophelia tells her friend Oprah: “The Culinary Arts department at PCC is taking over the food service in the student cafeteria—I guess we can’t afford to eat there anymore” Oprah responds: “I suppose you are assuming that the Culinary Arts department will charge more for food services than the current food service does.”

In this exchange, Oprah is providing an acceptable supposition.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>Agree +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>Agree +</td>
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3. Provide information about the results (i.e., what did you learn about how well students are meeting the outcomes)?

- If scored (e.g., if a rubric or other scaled tool is used), please report the data, and relate to any appropriate benchmarks.
- Results should be broken down in a way that is meaningful and useful for making improvements to teaching/learning. Please show those specific results.
**EVALUATION:** We as a Philosophy SAC discussed the specific assessment results as well as the process. We thought that the results of the surveys yielded some statistical data consistent with what we had expected. Students were answering the questions of the surveys in ways that trended towards more self-reflection and critical thinking. Some answers to specific questions showed marked improvement (see “Self-reflection” #’s 2 and 10; “Critical Thinking” #’s 6 and 7), while others showed slight improvements or consistent answers. These results enable us to conclude that we were at least not harming our students’ ability to think critically and engage in the process of self-reflection. We were unable to strongly conclude that specific assignments or teaching styles contributed to these areas of improvement. This led us to reflect on the process and methodology of our assessment work. What follows is our interpretation of the process we engaged in this year.

4. **Identify any changes that should, as a result of this assessment, be implemented to help improve students’ attainment of outcomes. (These may include, but are not limited to, changes in curriculum, content, materials, instruction, pedagogy etc).**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The quantitative survey approach enabled the Philosophy SAC to have a discussion about the results, what they showed and what they didn’t show. We felt that the results showed some small shifts in predictable ways, they showed that students were more self-reflective regarding their own worldviews and tolerant of other people’s positions. Also, the results revealed that students were able to see the value in being critically aware of the process of thinking on an everyday basis. However, it was also concluded that the results could not be expected to show, based on the quantitative “snap shot” that the surveys produced, which specific approaches to teaching philosophy yields the results that are valued in the process of teaching and learning. This insight into the process revealed to us that the main value added in this assessment cycle was the opportunity to come together as a philosophical community of educators and discuss our core values. Unfortunately, the survey design and implementation/interpretation/evaluation process did not maximize our efforts in having assessment dialogues which were seen as having the most value by our faculty.

The quantitative process of assessment is detrimentally affected by a limited number of FT staff, no release time, and a lack of statistical training. Further, our general assessment is that its current format does not provide a productive reflective avenue for assessment improvement. The Philosophy SAC would prefer to find a process next year that would afford us the time and space to conduct such dialogues where we could share teaching and learning “best practices” when attempting to assess each of our strengths/areas of improvements regarding next year’s core outcomes. Given that much of what we find practically beneficial is not in conformity with the expectations of the LAC, the Philosophy SAC will continue to reassess the assessment process again in the next academic cycle.
5. **Reflect on the effectiveness of this assessment tool and assessment process. Please describe any changes to assessment methodology that would lead to more meaningful results if this assessment were to be repeated (or adapted to another outcome). Is there a different kind of assessment tool or process that the SAC would like to use for this outcome in the future? If the assessment tool and processes does not need to be revised, please indicate this.**

**REFLECTION:** During the assessment planning and implementation process this year, the Philosophy SAC had some productive conversations regarding the methodology of assessment and the value we can ascribe to taking the quantitative approach that was recommended by the Assessment Council. At the beginning of the year, we discussed last year’s assessment process and any improvements we could make. It was decided that we should move towards assigning numerical value to answers, instead of the qualitative approach we used last year. We had a spirited conversation concerning the core value of doing assessment (what is the value of the valuation system we were using?) and decided that the best approach we could think of (dialogical teaching/learning assessment) would not meet the demands of the assessors of our assessment process. Subsequently, we concluded that we would try to find a system that could be quantifiable, since that seemed to be the direction we were told is the best practice.

We then spent time constructing the survey forms to best select the questions for students to answer. We solicited questions from members of the SAC and then narrowed them down to the top ten for each outcome. The questions we chose for “self-reflection” and “critical thinking” were deemed to be the best to elicit some common themes found in the curriculum of each instructor teaching these subjects. This approach, while providing consistency, was also recognized as too general since we, as a SAC, value diversity in teaching pedagogy and content, which then meant we had to find general questions that might overlap best between the varieties of teaching approaches. At the end of the assessment cycle, we realized that this approach would not yield relevant information to help individual instructors assess the core values that should be at the forefront of this process: how can each of us improve the teaching and learning environment when educating others on difficult topics in critical thinking and self-reflection?