

## Annual Assessment Report

Department: Philosophy

Date: 9/22/2013

Department Chair: Taylor

### I. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

Program Learning Outcome	Who is in Charge	Direct Assessment Method	Indirect Assessment Methods	Major Findings	Closing the Loop Activities
Integrating the Major Discipline	Taylor	Four 1250-word essays assigned to the five graduating senior philosophy majors in Taylor's spring 2013 Senior Seminar course. The topic of the seminar was "The Epistemology of Religious Belief"	None	All five students averaged at least "proficient" in two of the three areas specified in the "Integrating the Major Discipline" GE SLO (thus meeting our benchmark). These were the two areas (Philosophical Knowledge & Faith Integration) that were emphasized in the course. Though the other area (Philosophy & the Other Liberal Arts Disciplines) was not emphasized in the course, the class average in this area was "intermediate." See Appendix C for the four essay prompts, Appendix D for the rubric used to evaluate the essays, and Appendix E for the results of the essay evaluations (the data).	To be discussed at department meetings when David Vander Laan returns from his sabbatical in the fall of 2014

**Discussion:** Our closing of the loop in our assessment of our integrating the major discipline PLO will be delayed because David Vander Laan is on sabbatical during the entire 2013-2014 academic year. So we will not be able to have full department conversations about the results of this assessment until the fall semester of 2014.

## II. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome	Who is in Charge	Major Findings	Closing the Loop Activities
Skills	Vander Laan	Benchmark mostly met (At least 80% were at least proficient in argument understanding and construction, though only 75% were at least proficient in argument evaluation.)	To be discussed at department meetings when David Vander Laan returns from his sabbatical in the fall of 2014
<p><b>Discussion:</b> Our closing of the loop in our assessment of our skills PLO has been delayed because our 2012 annual report was turned in two months late so that by the time we got the PRC's reply memo, the semester was almost over. Then the following semester (spring 2013) Mark Nelson was on sabbatical and we were not able to have any department meetings during the summer. Moreover, (as mentioned above) David Vander Laan is on sabbatical during the entire 2013-2014 academic year. So we have not been able to have full department conversations about the results of this assessment and such conversations will be postponed until the fall semester of 2014.</p>			

## III. Other assessment-related projects

Project	Who is in Charge	Major Findings	Action
Set Skills PLO Benchmark	Taylor	The Skills PLO benchmark is now that at least 80% of our graduating seniors will be at least proficient in argument understanding, construction, and evaluation.	We will use this benchmark in the fall of 2014 when we close the loop on this assessment.
Refine Knowledge & Skills PLOs to make them more assessable	Taylor	<p>The Knowledge PLO is now, "Students will be able to <u>explain</u> important philosophical positions, concepts, arguments, and themes."</p> <p>The Virtues PLO is now, "Students will <u>value</u> rational inquiry and <u>acknowledge</u> the limits of rational inquiry. In other words, they will display both the love of wisdom and Socratic humility."</p>	We will ask our secretary to update the "Major Program Student Learning Outcomes" page on our department website to reflect these changes. We will also use these new formulations (with their <u>underlined</u> more measurable active verbs) to choose our assessment instruments when we assess student learning in these areas.
Update our Curriculum	Taylor	We have updated both of these documents.	We will make a pdf copies of each of these documents and then ask our

<p><b>Map &amp; Multi-Year Assessment Plan</b></p>		<p>In our Curriculum Map, we have been more specific about our PLO assessment tools and we have added benchmarks for each of our three PLOs.</p> <p>In our Multi-Year Assessment Plan, we have added more specific information to the “Means of Assessment/Benchmark” section, changed who is in charge of the Abstract Reasoning assessment, and added more specific information to the “Closing the Loop” section. We have also provided an explanation in the comment section of the circumstances that have led to our closing of the loop in the Skills and Integrating the Major Discipline assessments to be delayed. Finally, we have switched two of our planned assessments (see below in section IV).</p>	<p>secretary to post them on our departmental website.</p>
<p><b>Continue assessment of student learning in PHI-195 and close the loop.</b></p>	<p>Taylor, Nelson, &amp; Vander Laan</p>	<p>See the discussion in section II above for explanation.</p>	<p>We will close the loop on our Skills PLO assessment in the fall of 2014 (after David returns from sabbatical). According to our Multi-Year Assessment Plan, Taylor will be assessing our Virtues PLO in his PHI-195 course in the spring of 2016 and Nelson will be assessing our Knowledge PLO in his PHI-195 course in the spring of 2017. We will be sure to close the loop as soon as possible after each of those assessments – especially after the second, since our six-year report is due in the fall semester of 2017.</p>
<p><b>Identify which data</b></p>	<p>Taylor, Nelson, &amp; Vander Laan</p>	<p>The assessments we will need to do before our next six-year report is due include Reasoning</p>	<p>We will devote department meetings to conversations about what kind of data we</p>

we will need for assessing student learning in the future and begin the data collection.		Abstractly (Taylor), Philosophical Perspectives (All), Virtues (Taylor), and Knowledge (Nelson).	need and what sorts of assessment tools will work best to collect this data.
Discuss curricular changes identified in section IV B of our 2012 annual report.	Taylor, Nelson, Vander Laan	We have been discussing the possibility of dividing our Critical Reasoning and Logic course into two courses (“Critical Reasoning” and “Logic”). We have also been talking about dividing “Ancient & Medieval Philosophy” into two courses (“Ancient Philosophy” and “Medieval Philosophy”) and “Modern & Contemporary Philosophy” into two courses (“Modern Philosophy” and “Contemporary Philosophy”).	Vander Laan will work on dividing the Critical Reasoning & Logic (when he returns from his year-long sabbatical), Taylor will work on dividing Ancient & Medieval Philosophy, and Nelson will work on dividing Modern & Contemporary Philosophy.
<p><b>Discussion:</b> The projects discussed in this section are the tasks that the PRC (in its reply to our 2012 annual report) asked our department to focus on during the 2012-2013 academic year. Because of the lateness of that report, Mark’s spring 2013 sabbatical, our inability to have a department meeting during the summer of 2013, and David Vander Laan’s sabbatical this whole academic year, we have only been able to accomplish some of these tasks. We will do what we can this year to accomplish some of the others. But we will need to wait until the fall of 2014 to accomplish those tasks that require all three of us to be together to do them.</p>			

**IV. Adjustments to the Multi-year Action Plan**

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timeline	Expected Outcome
We have switched the assessment years for our Knowledge PLO and our Abstract Reasoning SLO assessment. We were going	We made the switch because the Abstract Reasoning SLO is so similar to Westmont’s Critical Thinking ILO, we wanted to assess student	We now plan to assess the Abstract Reasoning GE SLO this year and our Knowledge PLO in the spring of 2017 during our Senior Seminar (which will be taught by Mark	We hope the assessment of abstract reasoning in PHI 012 this spring will contribute some helpful data to the college’s assessment of critical thinking.

to assess the former this year and the latter during the 2016-2017 academic year.	learning in one of our Abstract Reasoning courses this year (our spring Critical Reasoning & Logic course – PHI 012) to contribute to the Critical Thinking assessment.	Nelson).	
The other changes to our Multi-Year Plan were discussed above in section III.			
<b>Discussion: If our Abstract Reasoning courses all have to be assessed in the same year when the Abstract Reasoning courses offered by the Mathematics &amp; Computer Science department are assessed, then we will switch our Multi-Year Plan back to the way it was.</b>			

**V. Appendices**

- A. Revised Philosophy Department Curriculum Map
- B. Revised Philosophy Department Multi-Year Plan
- C. Essay prompts from spring 2013 PHI-195 course in which the “Integrating the Major Discipline” SLO was assessed
- D. New Philosophy Department “Integrating the Major Discipline” rubric
- E. Essay Assessment Results (Data)