2019-2020 Program Review

CAN Program Review (Instructional) - Philosophy (Odd Year)

Program Review Narratives

2019-2020
Instructional Program Review (IPR)
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Executive Summary
0. Executive Summary: Strengths
The Philosophy Department is a vital part of the college's mission. Philosophy promotes critical thinking and communication skills, while increasing understanding of diverse cultures. The Philosophy Department promotes an active learning community, hosting speaker events with often more than fifty students attending.

The Department has increased the breadth of course offerings since the last program review cycle. As a result, it is possible for a student to complete an AA-T while only completing classes at Cañada College. The Department has continued to offer flexible scheduling: day, evening, face-to-face, DE, and CWA. Since the last program review cycle, it has also added an Honors section and plans to offer its first non-CWA hybrid course in the Spring 2019 semester. The Department also added a summer CWA section for the 2018 and 2019 summer semesters. While increasing the breadth of courses, the Philosophy Department has maintained an above-average faculty load efficiency.

Collaboration with the other nine Social Science disciplines has grown. The "Tea Time" events each semester have provided a new forum for student engagement: they are more intimate than speaker events, while having more community than office hours. Philosophy has participated in "Tea Time" topics ranging from maintaining a professional persona to social justice.

Challenges
The biggest challenge for the Philosophy Department is to consistently offer the breadth of courses necessary for Philosophy majors to complete their AA-T in a timely manner. As detailed below in the Enrollment Trends and Program Planning sections, the Department will continue to explore different scheduling options. With that said, the Department believes that the college should invest more resources for courses with fewer than twenty students. Being able to offer such courses would strengthen the campus learning community and could be a positive differentiator from other community colleges. Greater investment should be especially true when a department such as Philosophy has an overall high faculty efficiency load in spite of one or two smaller sections.

Action Plan
To address its highest priority of consistently offering a breadth of courses, the Philosophy Department plans on the following: 1) exploration of different times and modalities for courses, 2) greater connection to the Honors Transfer Program, 3) continued student cohort activities, such as Philosophy speaker events, Social Sciences events, and GE Pathways events, and 4) request greater investment from the college for Philosophy courses that support breadth requirements.

Its second highest priority is increased tutoring resources for Philosophy students. The Department hopes to further support through a stronger connection with the new Writing Center.

Program Context
1. Mission: The undergraduate major in Philosophy is designed to provide a deep understanding of important philosophical issues and a broad knowledge of philosophy's history. The program emphasizes the critical evaluation of classic texts, from ancient times to the present. Students can expect to develop the following skills: to read and think critically, write and speak

clearly and persuasively, and conduct research effectively. More broadly, students can expect to be better equipped for civic life, including possessing greater sensitivity to human values in their own and other cultural traditions, establishing more informed personal values, as well as better understanding scientific and technological developments and their impact on humankind. The Philosophy major provides excellent preparation for careers that require clear, careful thinking, rigorous analytical skills, and effective written and oral communication.

The Philosophy department is one of nine disciplines in Canada's Social Sciences program. The collective mission of the college's Social Sciences is to educate students in human behavior, in its many past and present cultural forms, in individual, group, national and international contexts, and to empower students as democratic participants in a rapidly changing world. There is an emphasis in engaged learning as we educate students to embody holistic knowledge, inspire critical thinking, possess dynamic oral and written communication skills, and become global citizens. Together, this education and training will equip students to make positive changes in their communities.

2. Articulation: No known changes.

3. Community & Labor Needs: The philosophy directly meets a number of broad community needs as well as general purpose employment needs.

One broad community need is promoting civic engagement among students. There are multiple rapid social and technological changes across society that are creating new and urgent ethical issues. Especially urgent issues include biomedical enhancements, driverless cars, and the online dissemination of political misinformation. The department's core offerings engage urgent issues such as these in order to ensure that the students are better equipped to understand these issues in their civic life in addition to preparing students who enter careers directly related to these and other ethical issues. Philosophy thus provides support in helping students thinking about new technologies from a broader civic perspective.

The most direct course offerings related to the above issues are Introduction to Ethics (PHIL 240) and Critical Thinking (PHIL 103). Additionally, the philosophy department invites guest speakers that overlap with the above topics. These talks are open to the public. In Spring 2019, for example, Sarah Wieten presented "Changing Selves: Transformative Experiences and Decision-Making at the End-of-Life." Dr. Wieten is a Clinical Ethics Fellow at Stanford Health Care; her talk discussed some of the ethical complexities of advanced directives. This talk is a good example of how the Philosophy department addresses timely biomedical issues, which many in our community have to grapple with in their personal lives.

The biomedical ethics example also highlights the labor need for ethics professionals. Many professional ethicist positions—such as a clinical ethicist at a hospital—require more than an Associate's degree. In this regard, the philosophy department provides a more indirect benefit: raising student awareness of the professions and aiding students seeking transfer to four-year institutions.

Philosophy's emphasis on persuasive argumentation relates to the broad employment need of strong critical thinking and communication skills. Students in all Philosophy classes are rigorously trained in both analyzing and presenting arguments. As a result, students are better prepared to learn and communicate in all domains of life, including professional ones. General purpose learning and communication skills are increasingly valuable as students more commonly cycle through greater number of careers in their lifetime.

Licensing and accreditation needs do not apply.

Looking Back

4. Curricular Changes: The Philosophy Department's curriculum is up-to-date and complete. In alignment with one of Guided Pathways' key objectives, the department is seeking to establish an effective schedule of course offerings, giving philosophy majors opportunities to meet transfer goals within a two-year window. Progress has been made on this goal with regard to two courses: first, since Fall 2017, the department now offers Introduction to Logic (PHIL 200) each Fall semester. PHIL 200 is a core course in Philosophy. Second, in Spring 2019, we were able to offer one of the List B courses—Introduction to Philosophy of Religion (PHIL 312). Combined, this has made it possible for a student to complete all AA-T requirements for philosophy at Cañada College for the first time in at least five years.

The department is still exploring the best course scheduling to consistently offer the AA-T option, both in terms of modality of course (face-to-face, hybrid, online), joint Honors option, and semester frequency. This challenge is further discussed in the Enrollment Trends and Program Planning sections.

5A. Progress Report - IPC Feedback: Regarding feedback on Item 3: as requested, I clarified employment needs and added more information on community needs. Licensing and accreditation needs do not apply.

Regarding feedback on Item 9B: There is now summary discussion in the SLO Assessment Impact section. The section reviews two broad categories of SLO assessment: understanding diverse cultures and critical thinking skills. With regard to the latter,

there is reflection on a possible improvement.

Regarding feedback on Item 11: there are more detailed plans for program improvement.

5B. Progress Report - Prior Action Plans: With regard to the first three Action Plans noted in Philosophy's previous program review cycle: first, the Department has continued and even increased its collaboration with the other Social Science disciplines. Second, the department has increased the breadth of its course offerings. Third, the department has only one flagged equity gap from the last program review cycle. As discussed in the Access & Completion section below, even this equity gap might be a statistical abberration.

Finally, the Philosophy Department's previous Action Plan also noted increased tutoring options. At this point, the only notable increase has been more one-on-one Zoom sessions with students. The Department hopes to further support through a stronger connection with the new Writing Center.

6A. Impact of Resource Applications: N/A

6B. Impact of Staffing Changes: N/A

Current State of the Program

7. Enrollment Trends: The Philosophy Department has generally positive enrollment trends. Comparing to previous years is complicated by a change in the data. The new Dashboard shows a "Success Count," while previous data packets included an "End-of Term Headcount."

The most positive enrollment trends for philosophy include faculty efficiency and student retention rate. The philosophy department has maintained a total faculty efficiency near 530 for the last four years. In the last two years, the numbers were 533 and 527 respectively. This consistency is despite an overall college decline in faculty load efficiency, which has been 464 and 456 in the last two years. This total efficiency has been maintained despite a dip in the Fall PHIL 100 CWA headcount. This dip stems from offering a summer section of PHIL 100 for CWA students since the Summer 2018 semester.

The student retention rate for Philosophy has been 85% in the last two years. This has been consistent and is above the college average of 82.8%.

The student success percent for Philosophy has been consistently near 70% (69.4% and 71.2% in the last two years). This meets the college-wide success goal of 70%. But it is slightly below the college average of 72.7% and 72.9% for the last two years. The lowest success rate of any philosophy course is Introduction to Logic (PHIL 200) at 57.8%. Logic is a challenging course in general and the department continues to build out support resources for this online course. If the success rate continues to be significantly lower than the other courses, the philosophy department will consider trialing a hybrid version of the course to provide more direct support.

8-A. Access & Completion: In the Department's previous program review, there were three equity gaps noted with regard to Philosophy course completion: 1) Hispanic/Latinx students had been 9% less likely to successfully complete, 2) Filipinos had been 16% less likely to successfully complete, and 3) Pacific Islanders had been 26% less likely to complete. As noted in the previous program review, the equity gaps for Filipinos and especially Pacific Islanders were based on small sample sizes and so were ambiguous as indicators of equity gaps.

There have been generally positive trends in the current review cycle. The equity gap of Hispanic students has gone down to 4.5% and 2) the equity gap for Filipino students has gone down to 9.8%. No self-identified Pacific Islanders have taken a Philosophy course during the current review cycle. Given that there are only 96 self-identified Pacific Islander students at Cañada, the absence of that demographic in philosophy course does not represent a significant access gap (-0.9%).

There is one flagged student group for philosophy courses: Filipino males. Filipino males were 23.1% less likely to successfully complete philosophy courses. This number is based on only nineteen students. Given the small sample size, it is ambiguous whether there is an equity gap or if it was more specific to the ten Filipino males who did not successfully complete their courses. The philosophy department will monitor this group in the next program review cycle to see if there is any continuance of this apparent equity gap.

8-B. Completion - Success Online: There is a gap between distance education and non-distance education success rates. This gap is, however, complicated by the greater variance in success rates among the distance education courses, which possess both the highest and lowest rates. This statistic is due to two particular courses: PHIL 200 during the fall semesters and the hybrid CWA section of PHIL 100.

The Fall semester success rates for distance education courses are lower because of Introduction to Logic (PHIL 200). In Fall 2017 the success rate for PHIL 200 was 52.8%, while in Fall 2018 semester it was a 56.4% rate. Logic courses in general have a bimodal distribution of student grades—this statistical pattern is due to the nature of formal reasoning. Formal reasoning skills have a

steep learning curve, so it is more difficult for students to achieve competence in the course skills. As noted in the Enrollment trends section: if the success rate continues to be significantly lower than the other courses, the philosophy department will consider trialing a hybrid version of the course to provide more direct support. In the next program review cycle, philosophy department will monitor for an improved trend for PHIL 200 success rate.

The hybrid CWA section of PHIL 100 tends to have the smallest headcount of any philosophy courses. As a result, it has some of the highest variances in success rate: ranging from 91% in Fall 2018 to 60% in Spring 2019.

Given the above factors, I think the most useful comparison of teaching modalities is to focus on non-CWA PHIL 100. Face-to-face success rates in PHIL 100 were as follows: Fall 2018 had a 77% success rate, Spring 2019 had an 82% success rate. Online success rates were as follows: Fall 2018 had a 54% success rate and Spring 2019 had a 75% success rate. I am not certain what is the cause because the lower Fall success rate for PHIL 100 online. The lower rate in Fall semester tracks back to the Fall 2017 and Fall 2016 semesters. It may be due to a greater proportion of first-semester college students. Given the pattern, the philosophy department will explore this possibility in greater detail and possible countermeasures, such as pro-active messaging. The Fall 2018 numbers semester may have been especially impacted from the Bay Area wildfires, which created logistical difficulties for many of our students.

Setting aside the Fall semesters, there is a much closer success rate between distance education and non-distance education. Face-to-face classes have approximately a 10% greater success rate than fully online courses: 80% vs 70%. The philosophy department is committed to continually exploring new pedagogies in order to reduce this gap as much as is possible.

9A. SLO Assessment - Compliance: The Philosophy Department is current in its Student Learning Outcome assessments. Our assessment plan on file with the college has changed twice due to some courses not having been offered: for example, PHIL 175 was not offered during this program review cycle.

The Philosophy department has reviewed a Student Learning Outcome for all courses listed in our 3 year Assessment Plan covered during the current Program Review cycle: PHIL 100, PHIL 300, PHIL 200, and PHIL 312. As listed on the plan: in Spring 2018, PHIL 100 and PHIL 300 were reviewed; in Spring 2019, PHIL 200 and PHIL 312 were reviewed.

9B. SLO Assessment - Impact: In the previous Philosophy program review cycle, one SLO criterion was not met: the multicultural traditions SLO in PHIL 240. While PHIL 240 was not reviewed during this assessment cycle—since it will be reviewed in Spring 2020—there was a similar SLO reviewed in PHIL 300.

During the Spring 2018 assessment period, SLO #3 from PHIL 300 was reviewed. The SLO relates to the multicultural criterion above. The SLO is as follows: "Students will be able to evaluate the contributions of different religious beliefs and demonstrate how they may enhance their own intellectual and religious growth within our culturally diverse society." This outcome was measured by journal entry assignments in the course: students were required to write six different journal entries on six different major religions. Of 25 students, 21 students averaged a C or higher on the total of six journal entries. This translates to 84% of students earning a passing on journals, thus meeting the goal of 70% of students earning a C or higher grade. The SLO data thus suggest that Philosophy is supporting its multicultural-related goals.

A point of emphasis in all philosophy courses is critical thinking skills, especially argument analysis. This emphasis can be seen in the SLOs that were reviewed for PHIL 100 and PHIL 312. For PHIL 100, the SLO reviewed was "students will be able to develop critical thinking skills." For PHIL 312, the SLO reviewed was "Evaluate claims and arguments in the philosophy of religion (concerning the existence of God, the occurrence of miracles, the possibility of an afterlife, etc.) using the rigorous deductive and inductive techniques of critical thinking." Both criteria were met. However, a common limiting factor for students in both cases was expressing a clear judgment on a topic. To this end, review sessions for exams and papers prioritize forming judgments/working hypothesis as one of the earliest review steps. In the next review cycle, Philosophy will monitor whether there is a noticeable improvement in the SLOs related to critical thinking.

10. PLO Assessment: The Social Sciences consists of nine departments: anthropology, communication studies, economics, geography, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology, and have three PLOs. Mostly these are one full-time person departments. In order to assess the PLOs efficiently, the Social Science faculty have created a general analytic rubric to be used across the departments to directly measure student writing assignments as a program (note: an analytic rubric is a rubric that provides descriptive feedback along several dimensions or parts, and a general rubric is one that can be used across assignments and/or disciplines). Each department brought 5 ungraded student writing samples selected by lot from one assignment administered during the semester to create a pool of assignments to draw from (the writing prompt was also attached to each of the samples). The rubric was then used to score a random sample of student writing assignments from the program as a whole. All faculty scored student writing assignments outside of their disciplines.

Rubric scoring. The rubric was organized into three rows, one row for each PLO, and into three columns that included descriptive feedback for each level of competency: "Incomplete", "Acceptable", and "Accomplished." During the 2018-2019 assessment period the Social Science faculty examined the PLO "Produce evidence-based arguments." When evaluating the student writing assignments, the faculty selected one of the five scoring options (0, 0.5, 1, 1.5, or 2) to indicate the students' level of competency ("incomplete" was represented by the scores 0 and 0.5, "acceptable" by 1 or 1.5, and accomplished by a 2). An average score of 1.0 ("acceptable") was desired.

During the 2018-2019 assessment period 76 papers and exams were assessed. 92% (70/76) of the papers/exams received at least a 1 "acceptable" score. The average score for the PLO "Produce evidence-based arguments" was 1.43 which is similar to the previous program review assessment period. The criterion was met. During the first 2 years using the current assessment method major areas of concern that were discussed during the scoring of the samples included: difficulty identifying the social science theories that the writing assignments were targeting (although faculty attached the writing prompt) and confusion with sampling methods. Discussion from the above assessment period demonstrated continued improvement in random sampling. During the previous assessment period faculty discussed difficulty in identifying social science theories that the writing assignments were targeting. This concern was not addressed during the 2018-2019 assessment period as that PLO was not examined. Faculty will address this specific concern during the next assessment period. Also, faculty discussed a benefit to using the rubric as a way to improve instruction. The general analytic rubric was viewed as a tool to share and learn from each other, which was viewed as refreshing given the diversity of the social sciences program.

Looking Ahead

11. Program Planning: The highest priority for the Philosophy Department is to consistently offer a rotation of courses that will allow Philosophy majors to complete an AA-T within two years. The biggest challenge to this goal is sufficient enrollment for face-to-face sections. The Department highly values having face-to-face sections, especially for the List A and List C courses: for example, PHIL 190 Contemporary Philosophy from List A and PHIL 312 Introduction to Philosophy of Religion from List C. The Department continues to explore different scheduling options and modalities. This includes offering split CRN classes with an Honors section and Hybrid classes. The Honors section enabled the department to offer PHIL 312 in Spring 2019 semester. The Department will continue to monitor its current offerings and other options in order to maximize the breadth of regular Philosophy course offerings.

The Philosophy Department also plans to continually improve its instruction. The full-time faculty member, David Eck, has been an active participant in the Faculty Learning Program since the Fall 2018 semester. The Department has benefited from the gradual implementation of new pedagogies and, more broadly, greater feedback and much greater sharing of teaching resources from many other faculty. Perhaps more than other disciplines, greater levels of individualized learning promotes more student interest.

The Philosophy Department also has a strong connection to the Guided Pathways project at Cañada. Professor Eck has been part of the Guided Pathways team since the Spring 2019 semester. One direct result of this work has been an appreciation for the importance of student cohorting. Access to student emails who are designated as PHIL majors would improve the program. Additionally, strengthening the resources of the Social Sciences Program would help cohorting of PHIL students.

There are a number of objectives related to supporting the Social Sciences that would help support PHIL students and the Philosophy Department. This is especially important for one-person Departments, like Philosophy. Needed resources include:
 • continued access to the Social Sciences Hub space for students to congregate and study as well as the regular Social Sciences-focused events,
 • continued release time for the Social Sciences Coordinator position (minimum of 0.2 FTE release time),
 • increased marketing support for our programs,
 • improved technology for Social Science Students and events,
    • functioning computers in the Social Sciences Hub,
    • SAMSUNG 75" 4K UHD LED TOUCH DISP, Salamander – cart, Media Presentation System 200 (which enables a Wi-Fi connection).

Finally, a well-supported Writing Center is also very beneficial for the Philosophy Department.

Program Review Narrative Status: Complete

Objective: Functional technology in student space

To replace outdated equipment with functional technology in the Social Science HUB, which is a student space.

Objective Status: 1 - New (PR)
Estimated Start Date: 01/15/2020
Estimated Completion Date: 01/16/2020
Please select the college goals with which this objective aligns.: Student Completion/Success - Provide educational and student services programs that highlight inclusivity, diversity, and equity in their mission to help students meet their unique educational goals and minimize logistical and financial barriers to success.
Please select the district goals with which this objective aligns.: District Goal #3 - Increase Program Delivery Options, Including the Expanded Use of Instructional Technology, to Support Student Learning and Success

Resource Requests

Dell desktop OptiPlex 7070 i7

Dell UltraSharp 24 Monitor-U2415

Dell Stereo Soundbar- AC511M - This is a request shared by the Social Sciences Disciplines.

The computers in the Social Science HUB are outdated and at times do not function adequately to use programs such as word or the internet. Further they do not easily connect with the projector. The Social Sciences students would benefit from having all computers in the Social Sciences HUB kept up to date and functional. The cost below only includes the computer that connects to the projector but it would be beneficial to replace all the computers in the Social Sciences HUB.

Status: New Request - Active
Type of Resource: Information Technology
Cost: 1646.13
One-Time or Recurring Cost?: One-Time Cost
Division/Department Priority: High Priority