

2021 ANNUAL ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM
(Due October 15 to the dean)**PROGRAM SECTION (Due to the dean on October 15)****Submission date:** 10/15/2021**Submitted by:** Terrence Kelly, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy**Program(s) covered in this report:** Philosophy BA

If you selected "Other" above, please identify. (100 characters or less)

College: College of Arts and Sciences**Campuses where the program(s) is delivered:** ☒ Anchorage ☐ KOD ☐ KPC ☐ MSC ☐ PWSC**Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):** Select Specialized Accrediting Agency or N/A.**If explanation is necessary, such as only some of the certificates and degrees are covered by the specialized accreditation, briefly describe:****INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING CORE COMPETENCIES**

In 2020, UAA launched a consensus-based, deliberative process to identify the key skillsets that help students achieve academic and post-graduation success. After a year-long process that included students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and employers, the UAA community identified four "core competencies" at the heart of a quality UAA education. Students develop mastery of these competencies through curricular (e.g., courses), co-curricular (e.g., internships, conferences), and extra-curricular (e.g., student clubs) learning experiences.

After the stakeholder-based process in AY20, UAA conducted a pilot project focusing on the core competency of Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility (PPCR). This decision was based on input from the 2020 Annual Academic Assessment Retreat.

Question #1 below is designed to engage program faculty in thinking about how they can or already do promote student learning in this core competency.

1. Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility: The knowledge and skills necessary to promote personal flourishing, professional excellence, and community engagement.

- **What would you hope a student would say if asked where in your program or support service they had the opportunity to develop proficiency in this Core Competency? (500 characters or less)**

Philosophical education promotes ethical reasoning, teamwork, deliberation, empathy, respect for diversity, and civic engagement. Specific courses focus on ethics and professional ethics, while learning experiences such as the UAA Ethics Bowl, the Philosophy Club, and Undergraduate Philosophy Conference further develop these skills. Student leadership and volunteer work in these extra-curricular activities help develop leadership, teamwork and organizational skills.

- **Do you have an example that could be a model for the university of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that showcases the student learning in this core competency? ☒ Yes ☐ No**

If yes, please briefly describe. (500 characters or less)

PHIL A400 explores global ethical issues, such as the impact of AI and data analytics on human rights and democracy. Through collaborative research, case study development and service learning projects, students draw connections and integrate content with other disciplines, analyze and critically evaluate diverse ethical perspectives and design a personal e-portfolio communicating original ideas, course content and research materials. Students model moral sensitivity and ethical leadership.

- **Do you have any ideas about where your program or the university might develop other intentionally designed opportunities for students to develop proficiency in this core competency? ☒ Yes ☐ No**

If yes, please briefly describe. (500 characters or less)

Philosophy faculty (like UAA faculty generally) use their specialized training in significant community service. Such service can be an important model for students. Students, however, are often unaware of this work by faculty. Philosophy will spend this year developing ways to highlight and include students in this work to help them see how their philosophical education can be used in community service.

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

2. Please list the Program Student Learning Outcomes your program assessed in AY21. For each outcome, indicate one of the following: Exceeded faculty expectations, Met faculty expectations, or Did not meet faculty expectations.

Example: Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats – Exceeded faculty expectations.

1. Identify, comprehend, analyze and evaluate complex philosophical arguments in oral and

written discourse.

2. Understand, analyze, interpret and apply major works in the areas of the History of Philosophy, Ethics and contemporary topics.

3. Describe your assessment process in AY21 for these program student learning outcomes, including the collection of data, analysis of data, and faculty (and other, e.g., advisory board) conversations around the findings. (750 characters or less)

PSLO's are assessed by evaluating papers from a senior level course, PHIL 490, using a rubric that reflects a program consensus on elements of high-quality work in philosophy such as:

Clearly Stated Thesis

Sustained argument or sustained development of its thesis

Awareness of key concepts

Insightful explanation of complex ideas

Awareness of important points of scholarship

Awareness of and key philosophical issues related to its thesis

Critical thinking skills- raising philosophical objections

Critical thinking skills-- evaluation of reasons and objections

Cohesiveness

Quantitative and qualitative data was gathered from PHIL 490 in Spring 20 and 21 and discussed with the instructors and program faculty.

4. What are the findings and what do they tell the faculty about student learning in your program? (750 characters or less)

Indicator Average (1-5)

Thesis = 3.75

Sustained Arg = 4

Awareness Key Concepts = 4.4

Explanation = 4.25

Awareness Key Points of Scholarship = 4.4

Awareness Key Phil Ideas = 4.4

Raising Phil Objections = 3.8

Evaluation of Reasons/Objections = 3.3

Cohesiveness = 4.2

Based on this data and qualitative discussion with the course instructors, students seem to be generally meeting program expectations. However, students need more work in: (1) self-reflexivity in which they turn and offer/assess objections to their own arguments; and (2) integrating the elements of their research into a sustained argument.

- 5. Based on the findings, did the faculty make any recommendations for changes to improve student achievement of the program student learning outcomes? Please describe the recommended action, what improvement in student learning the program hopes to see with this change, the proposed timeline, and how the program will know if the change has worked. If no recommendations for changes were made, please explain that decision. (750 Characters or less)**

Program faculty agreed to focus on the student skills of self-critique and integration of research into sustained argumentation. More assignments focusing on these skills would be useful throughout the program, but especially so at the 200-300 level. Upcoming faculty meetings will focus on useful pedagogy in these areas. The program will also revise its assessment plan to: (1) better reflect the variety of SLO's aimed at in philosophical education (such as PPCR); (2) gauge student learning at more points in the program; and (3) make assessment a learning experience for students. The program plans to develop assessment tools to assess student progress in PSLO's at the 200 and 300 level and explore the use of e-Portfolios.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS AND ASSESSING IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING

- 6. In the past academic year, how did your program use the results of previous assessment cycles to make changes intended to improve student achievement of the program student learning outcomes? Please check all that apply.**

- ☒ Course curriculum changes
- ☒ Course prerequisite changes
- ☒ Changes in teaching methods
- ☐ Changes in advising
- ☐ Degree requirement changes
- ☐ Degree course sequencing
- ☐ Course enrollment changes (e.g., course capacity, grading structure [pass/fail, A-F])
- ☐ Changes in program policies/procedures
- ☐ Changes to Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)
- ☒ College-wide initiatives (e.g., High Impact Practices)
- ☒ Faculty, staff, student development
- ☐ Other
- ☐ No changes were implemented in AY21.

If you checked "Other" above, please describe. (100 characters or less)

- 7. Do you have any information about how well these or other past improvements are working? Are they achieving their intended goals? Please include any data or assessment results that help you demonstrate this. (750 characters or less)**

Other program faculty have adopted the assessment rubric for their courses and devoted more time to explicit instruction on the process of developing argumentation, including conducting one-on-one zoom sessions with students at points in the writing process. A number of students have successfully applied to graduate school and this may in part be due to pedagogical changes that instill better writing skills. Students have also presented their work at our conference, students showcase, and for publication. 34% graduate with Honors (CAS=30%; UAA=27%).

STUDENT SUCCESS AND THE CLOSING OF EQUITY GAPS

- 8. Programs are not required to respond to question #8 below for their report due on October 15, 2021. Question #8 will be required for the next round and moving forward.**
- 9. Do you have any examples of post-graduate success you want to highlight? For example, major scholarships, the percent of students who pass licensure examinations, the percent of students accepted to graduate programs, the percent in post-graduation employment in the field or a related field. (750 characters or less)**

Examples of recent post-graduate success include:

Student 1 (BA 2019) Full-scholarship Duke University Law School.

Student 2 (BA 2019) Gonzaga Law School. Awarded CESA tuition scholarship through UAA's CCEL to support her research and community engagement in public deliberation. Honor for essay at UAA's Student Showcase.

Student 3 (BA 2019) T.A. award, English MA at UAF.

Student 4 (BA 2017) Fellowship, PhD Philosophy program, University of Rochester.

Student 5 (BA 2017) Student Regent for UA Board of Regents from 2015-17. Program assistant for CIRI Foundation for three years. Currently advocates for indigenous rights and awareness in Alaska, works as a consultant, and is a member of the UAA Alumni Association Board of Directors

DEAN SECTION (Due to the program on January 15)

- 1. Based on the program's responses above, what guidance and support do you have for the program moving forward? Is there a particular area the program should focus on?**

The program is encouraged to pursue the changes mentioned in their report, namely to undergo revision of PSLOs to make them relevant and current, to explore the use of the e-portfolios in their courses, and to introduce argumentation in their 200 level courses.

It is recommended that all programs review their Program Assessment Plan to ensure clear inclusion of the new UAA Core Competencies and in particular to address the closing of any equity gaps in the program.

- 2. Is there something the program is doing particularly well in terms of its processes for the assessment and improvement of student learning, including the closing of equity gaps, that might serve as a model for other programs? If yes, please explain. You may skip this question.**

The course topics are timely and relevant - and appeal to students across the University. The Departments ability to provides relevant coursework to many majors is a model that could serve other departments.

Dean's signature: *Jenny McNulty*

Date: December 14, 2021