

2022 ANNUAL ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM
(Due October 15 to the dean)**PROGRAM SECTION (Due to the dean on October 15)****Submission date:** 10/17/2022**Submitted by:** Terry Kelly, Associate Professor of Philosophy, tmkelly2@alaska.edu**Program(s) covered in this report:** BA Philosophy

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

College: College of Arts and Sciences**Campuses where the program(s) is delivered:** ☒ Anchorage ☐ KOD ☐ KPC ☐ MSC ☐ PWSC**Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):** 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 is phasing in the integration of the core competencies into ongoing processes, including program student learning outcomes assessment. Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility (PPCR) was integrated into the AY21 Annual Academic Assessment Report. The AY22 Annual Academic Assessment Report now also integrates Effective Communication.

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



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

- **If last year you provided your program's current or planned example of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that develops and showcases the student learning in this core competency, please discuss that implementation and any observations you have regarding how well it is working. (500 characters or less)**

PHIL A400 assessment instruments: weekly oral and written synopses and discussions, argumentative essay, research presentation and mid-term. Students excelled in conveying complex ideas, composing thesis driven arguments, integrating ethics with science and society content, critically evaluating diverse ethical perspectives and modeling moral sensitivity. Modest awareness of important points of scholarship and growth communicating original ideas.

- **If last year you *did not* identify a current or planned example of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that provides students the opportunity to develop and showcase this core competency, please identify one now. (500 characters or less)**

B. ***Effective Communication: The knowledge and skills necessary to engage in effective communication in diverse contexts and formats.***

- **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 aims to promote the student's ability to dialogue effectively in a variety of context and present arguments and ideas in a way that is logical and persuasive. Critical and creative reasoning work hand in hand with effective communication, and philosophical education helps students logically structure their oral and written communications and sharpens their skills at extemporaneous, critical dialogue.

- **Provide your program's current or planned example(s) of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that showcases the student learning in this core competency. (500 characters or less)**

UAA's annual ethics debate competition—the UAA Ethics Bowl—provides students with a learning experience in critical and effective communication in a team-based environment. Students learn to structure their presentations logically and persuasively and to extemporaneously present objections to the arguments of others.

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

2. Please list the Program Student Learning Outcomes your program assessed in AY22. 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.

- Philosophical Knowledge and Understanding: Understand, analyze, and interpret claims and arguments in the context of diverse schools of thought and major works from the history of philosophy and its contemporary subfields (e.g. metaphysics, epistemology, logic, ethics).

Met Expectations

- Philosophical Argumentation: Critically and creatively assess and develop arguments using sound reasoning, sustained thesis development, and reflexive consideration of objections and diverse perspectives.

Met Expectations

- Philosophical Communication: Effectively present clear, coherent, and sustained philosophical ideas, analysis, and argumentation in oral and written forms using constructive listening and response to the presentations of others.

Met Expectations

- Philosophical and Ethical Mindset: Display curiosity, creativity, critical discernment, and a commitment to integrity and personal and social responsibility.

Met Expectations

3. Describe your assessment process in AY22 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
Original and Advanced Reasoning
Cohesiveness

Quantitative and qualitative data was gathered from PHIL 490 in Spring 22.

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) n=6 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Clearly Stated Thesis | 3.2 |
| Sustained arg/dev of thesis | 2.8 |
| Awareness key concepts | 3.7 |
| Insightful expl. complex ideas | 2.2 |
| Awareness imp. pts scholarship | 2.2 |
| Awareness of key phil. Issues | 2.7 |
| Raising phil. Objections | 2.5 |
| Evaluation reasons/objections | 2.5 |
| Org./Ad. Reasoning | 2.4 |
| Cohesiveness | 4.0 |

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)

Students struggled most with their explanations of complex ideas, their awareness of important points of scholarship, and their ability to raise and assess objections. Program faculty are working to emphasize these elements of philosophical writing in earlier courses (200-300), including using the assessment rubric as a guide for course expectations. Program faculty are also curating resources for students to help improve their writing in these areas. More broadly, program faculty are working to create earlier assessment of student learning (perhaps through e-portfolios) so the program can intervene earlier when students are struggling and better measure student progress towards PSLO's.

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 AY22.

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)**

The 2021-22 UAA Ethics Bowl team placed 2nd in the Regional Ethics Bowl competition and 8th at the National Competition. Philosophy majors also successfully presented and defended their work at the 2022 UAA Undergraduate Philosophy Conference. In both cases, students demonstrated significant communication, philosophical reasoning, and critical thinking skills. Students also demonstrated a strong philosophical mindset marked by intellectual curiosity.

- 8. PROGRAMS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO RESPOND TO QUESTION #8 FOR THEIR REPORT DUE ON OCTOBER 15, 2022. IT IS HERE JUST FOR THEIR REFERENCE.**

- 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)**

Recent alumni achievements include:

Student #1: earned JD and has returned to practice to Alaska to practice law.

Student #2: ran for state legislature

Student #3: earned JD and practices law in Alaska.

Student #4: is now a high school teacher in Alaska.

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? (750 characters or less)**

The program's assessment involves multiple instruments in the senior-level course, PHIL 490. This analysis shows a need to strengthen writing components in earlier courses. The program is encouraged to do so, and to consider assessing writing at various points in the curriculum.

- 2. What is the program doing particularly well in terms of its processes for the assessment and improvement of student learning, for example, the achievement of the Program Student Learning Outcomes, the closing of equity gaps, or addressing the core competencies? (750 characters or less)**

This assessment report includes a reflective portion on ways to improve the assessment process; this type of analysis is appreciated. The program does a good job in providing co-curricular activities (Ethics Bowl, Philosophy conference) for students that augment and enhance classroom learning.

Dean's signature:

Jenny McNulty

Date: 1/9/2023