Program Assessment Report (PAR)

Philosophy (PHL) Baccalaureate Degree

REPORT PREPARED by: [PreparedBy]

ACADEMIC YEAR COVERED BY THIS REPORT: 2020-2021

I. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

2020-2021 is year one of the program's assessment cycle. The learning outcome for year one is: LO: Graduates of the program will be able to write effectively. In year one, effective writing is assessed using two measures: (1) the ability to clearly state a thesis; (2) the ability to effectively develop the thesis in the body of the paper.

II. PROCEDURES USED FOR ASSESSMENT

A. Direct Assessment

Assessment of student artifacts. At the beginning of the year, the chair of the assessment committee explained to the department the LO to be assessed in that year, and the measures that will be used. All three component departments (Religion, Philosophy, and Classics) participate jointly in the assessment of this LO in year one of the assessment process. To assess this learning outcome, we collected student artifacts. We collected a representative sampling of student papers from courses taught across all three component disciplines and at all levels of instruction. All the student papers from courses deemed by the instructors to have produced papers suitable for this assessment were collected on a departmental assessment page on PILOT. From this list of courses, nine were selected on the basis of number of papers produced, and in an attempt to represent a diversity of instructors, course levels, semesters taught, and at least one course from each component department. • PHL 2050 (spring & fall) • PHL 3030 • PHL 3310 • CLS 3500 • REL 2320 (spring & fall) • REL 3410 • REL 3470

B. Scoring of Student Work

Committee members read every third or fourth paper from each of these classes for a total of 78 papers; each member read different papers. Scores were assigned to each paper indicating the degree to which it achieved the measure: • Measure (1): Does the paper have a clearly stated thesis? • Measure (2): If the paper meets the first measure, it is then scored to assess the degree to which the stated thesis is developed effectively in the body of the paper. Each measure was scored according to a scale of 1-4 (1 = poor or none, 2 = weak, 3 = good/ average, 4 = excellent).

C. Indirect Assessment

Indirect assessment was not done for this academic year.

III. ASSESSMENT RESULTS/INFORMATION:

Measure (1): Does the paper have a clearly stated thesis? Scores: • 1 (poor, none): 0 • 2 (weak): 4 (5%) • 3 (good/average): 32 (41%) • 4 (excellent): 42 (54%) Measure (2): Does the paper effectively develop the thesis in the body of the paper? Scores: • 1 (poor): 0 • 2 (weak): 1 • 3 (good/average): 41 (53%) • 4 (excellent): 36 (43%)

These findings indicate that students in the Departments of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics are learning to be effective writers. The percentage of papers found to contain a clear thesis was 95 percent, with over half receiving the highest rating. The overall average across all of the papers was 3.5, or above average. Moreover, 100% of these papers were found to have at least adequate argumentation, with 99% having good or excellent argumentation. The overall average score across all of the papers on argumentation was also 3.5.

Based on these ratings, the department is effectively teaching critical thinking (LO1), while also effectively promoting the ability to analyze complex arguments (LO2).

IV. ACTIONS TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

Actions Taken to Improve Student Learning In Fall 2022 this report will be circulated to all department faculty, and the results will be discussed at a department meeting devoted to assessment. At this meeting we will discuss the following: • The findings of the 2020-2021 assessment report • Should any action be taken in response to these findings? What actions should be taken to improve student performance in relation to this LO? • The assessment process for 2022, the LO for year 2 of the assessment cycle, the method of collecting artifacts,

etc. • The development of indirect measures. The assessment coordinator has recommended that we integrate indirect assessment measures into our assessment plan, and has suggested we develop an exit questionnaire for graduating students.

V. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Additional documentation, when provided, is stored in the internal Academic Program Assessment of Student Learning SharePoint site.