



Philosophy | 2013-2014 Assessment Report

1. Please give a brief overview of the data you collected. This can be in any form you feel is appropriate, such as a table, a short narrative of results, statistical analysis, highlighting findings that were of particular interest, etc. In short, it doesn't matter how you submit your findings.

We pulled evidence from two sources. First, we compared an early Philosophy writing assignment with an assignment from one of their final courses to roughly gauge how well (or not) our students improved over their time here. Second, we held a group exit interview where we asked outgoing students, reflecting back on their courses, various questions and issues about philosophical history and issues. We filled out forms for each outgoing student to reflect our assessment in these regards.

In terms of our target outcome, we are doing a spectacular job. All of our students demonstrated immense growth in their ability to articulate and defend their own philosophical point of view. Our Exit Interview Q&A was an opportunity for them to verbally defend their arguments. They did well here, but we hope to include more verbal presentations in our upper-level courses.

2. How will you use what you've learned from the data that was collected? Some examples are: a change in assessment plan for the following year because you want to drill down deeper to find more or better information, faculty will discuss the data to decide what to do with it, curricular changes, faculty development, etc.

We discussed our findings at the end of the year. We were largely pleased with the success of our program, at least as much as is indicated by this year's graduating class.

Looking ahead, we plan to better integrate our courses so that students get more overlap in their content. We also plan to investigate the balance between courses that cover a significant number of issues and those that draw largely upon only one or two issues. Because the content coverage is smaller, students typically improve in their writing in more narrowly-focused courses. We plan to emphasize more writing practice in these courses in particular in hopes that the general writing quality will climb even higher.

We also concluded that our current students would benefit from slightly larger Philosophy courses, specifically, more Philosophy Majors and Minors. To achieve this we plan to better market our courses and program each semester – about the time that students are planning their courses for the coming semester.

Finally, the Philosophy Department faculty plan to share our syllabi before each semester begins in hopes of coordinating any topic-overlap and/or assignment similarities.