It is recommended program assessment results be used to celebrate achievements of student learning as well as to identify potential areas for future curriculum improvement.

Please email this completed form as an attachment to thatcherk@slu.edu
CAS PROGRAMS: Please email this completed form by July 1 to Donna LaVoie lavoiedj@slu.edu

1. Degree Program(s) included in this report: Philosophy Major (B.A), Philosophy Ph.D.
2. Department: Philosophy
3. School/Center/College: College of Arts and Sciences
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Instructions: Please answer the following five questions to the best of your ability for each degree program offered within your department.

1. Summarize your assessment activities during the past year for each degree program and how this work relates to the established assessment plan (e.g. what program outcomes were assessed, faculty discussions, new survey design, data collection, revised assessment plans or learning outcomes, etc.). Please include how Madrid courses/program were involved.

   This fall we developed a new multi-year assessment plan, including development of many new rubrics for assessment purposes. In the spring the assessment plan for the PhD was discussed with graduate students, and they suggested a few revisions which will be implemented over the summer.

   Our multi-year OA plan called for us to assess two learning outcomes this year. The first, assessed in the fall, was the following learning outcome for the philosophy major: “Students will synthesize knowledge of two different periods of Western philosophy.” This outcome was assessed by gathering and examining philosophy majors’ answers to a question on the final exam for Philosophy 4600 (History of Modern Philosophy). The question read: “Choose one modern philosopher we studied and compare or contrast his position on some philosophical question to an earlier (ancient or medieval) philosopher’s position on the same (or a similar) issue.” Students were also asked to indicate on the exam whether or not they were philosophy majors. The answers provided by majors were collected by the OA coordinator and scored against the “Historical Synthesis Rubric” (attached).

   The second outcome was for the PhD program: “Students will teach philosophy effectively.” As called for by our OA plan, all fourth-year graduate students teaching in Spring term had their teaching observed. The observing faculty member scored the student’s teaching against the “rubric for review of graduate student teachers.” Completed rubrics were compiled by the OA coordinator.
2. Describe specific **assessment findings** related to the **learning outcomes** assessed for each degree program, including any pertinent context surrounding the findings. Please include the **learning outcomes themselves**. (e.g. Our goal was that 75% of students performed at the “proficient” level of competency in problem solving, using a new scoring rubric. 81% of students performed at the “proficient” level in problem solving, exceeding our expectations.) Do not include student-level data. Data included in this report should be in aggregate. Please include how Madrid courses/program were involved.

With respect to the philosophy major outcome “Students will synthesize knowledge of two different periods of Western philosophy,” our goal was that all majors would score at least 6 points overall on the relevant rubric. In the fall, three philosophy majors took the exam, and all three scored 6 points on the rubric.

With respect to the PhD outcome “Students will teach philosophy effectively,” our goal was that all students would meet expectations on all dimensions of the rubric. In fact, only one 4th-year student was teaching in the spring term, and this student met expectations in all dimension and actually exceeded them in many dimensions.

*Please attach any tables, graphics, or charts to the end of this report.*

3. Describe how assessment **feedback** has been provided to students, faculty, and staff. (e.g. report for faculty, executive summary for the dean, web page for students, alumni newsletter, discussion with students in class or club event, etc.)

In the case of the PhD program, a copy of the rubric report with substantive comments was placed in the student’s file, and also sent to the department’s director of the orientation for graduate student teachers. An observed problems with the student’s teaching would have been addressed either by the faculty member, the chair, or the teacher-orientation director, but there were no problems found.

In the case of both the PhD program and the undergraduate program, a copy of this report will be shared with the philosophy faculty. The information has not been shared with students at this point.

4. In what ways have you **used assessment findings** to celebrate student achievements and/or to improve the curriculum this past year? (e.g. prizes to students, hosting student parties, changes to curriculum, student projects, learning goals, assessment strategies, etc.)

Although results were satisfactory, our sample sizes were very small. Therefore it would seem premature to celebrate. We need to see how these outcomes look again the next time we come around to them (in the case of the graduate teaching, that will be next year).

5. Describe any changes to your assessment plans, or any challenges or educational experiences with the **assessment process** this past year that you would like to share.

The assessment process had some bumps in the road. While the examiner asked a question in the correct spirit, it was not the exact question posed on the rubric. Also the OA director accidentally
sent to the observing faculty member a draft version of the rubric for assessing graduate student teaching; followup about the last three question on the rubric (regarding the student’s syllabus) was required after the fact. These missteps highlighted the importance of organization on the part of the OA director. The director will create a folder of final forms, which should fix those problems. Also, the OA plan should be discussed with the whole department at the beginning of each year.

Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.

The graduate students suggested that instead of assessing the teaching of all 4th-year students each year, we should have a more time-flexible requirement for teaching observation. The trouble is that not every graduate student teaches in the 4th year, and so some could fall through the cracks with our current system. The students suggested a revision to the “BINGO sheet” which lists all the academic requirements of the graduate program. The student’s use this checklist to keep track of what they have completed and what they still need to do. They suggested adding to this checklist “get your teaching observed by a faculty member (by the end of your 4th year).” Over the summer, the OA director will consult with the office manager about the feasibility of this change.