

## Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: Philosophy for Ministry, Religious Tracks	Department: Philosophy & Letters
Degree or Certificate Level: BA/BS	College/School: Philosophy & Letters
Date (Month/Year): June 2020	Primary Assessment Contact: William Rehg, S.J.
In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2019-2020	
In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? June 2020	

### 1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

The College of Philosophy & Letters Assessment Plan (revised, June 2019) calls for assessment of Program Learning Outcomes 3 and 4 for the BA/BS (Religious Tracks) in 2020. For the 2020 assessment, the 2019 Plan was revised with amended rubrics for analyzing Outcome 4, in light of feedback from the assessment analyst (instructor of the Capstone Project course) and a new rubric for Outcome 3 (see Appendices, attached).

### 2. Assessment Methods: Student Artifacts

Which student artifacts were used to determine if students achieved this outcome? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

Outcome 4, BA/BS: Data collected from the Dean's interview of the four undergrads who entered the College in Fall 2017, using the revised rubric in Appendix IIIa; additional data was collected by the instructor of the Capstone Project course, based on analysis of the final capstone papers, using the rubric in Appendix IIIb, 2020 Plan for the BA/BS.

Outcome 3, BA/BS, Religious Tracks: the Dean collected data from the Capstone Project course instructor that indicates level of achievement of the specific outcome, following the rubric in Appendix II of the revised 2020 Plans

### 3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the student artifacts, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

See Appendices II, Appendix IIIa and IIIb, from revised 2020 plan, attached.

### 4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcomes? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

Outcome 3: Two of the undergrads in the College took the Capstone course in which this outcome is assessed. Both students exceeded the expectations as defined in Appendix II (attached).

Outcome 4: Performance assessed using two direct methods, as described in Appendices IIIa and IIIb.

- Method 1: The four undergrads in the College with at least two years of coursework were interviewed, using the rubric in Appendix IIIa. Of the 4 students, 2 met or exceeded expectations on all three dimensions (100%); 1 met expectations on two dimensions (67%); 1 met expectations on one dimension (33%). The student with a 33% score, it should be noted, transferred to SLU with all his STEM and Social Science requirements satisfied by transfer.
- Method 2: The performance of two of the undergrads in the capstone course was assessed by applying method (2) to the final capstone paper. Both students exceeded expectations.

## 5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

The data are encouraging, but might show room for improvement in students' appropriation of non-philosophical coursework for capstone reflection. It is noteworthy that the (very bright) student with the 33% score failed to meet expectations on the Humanities dimension. I believe this reflects a failure in the Dean's mentoring, or possibly in the student's preparation for the interview, coupled with the fact that this group of students represent a pilot group for a key introductory course (Capstone Method). The same student exceeded expectations using method (2).

## 6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

Results were discussed with the Capstone instructor who collected the data for these outcomes. Because the College has no full-time faculty, and only hires PT faculty on an ad hoc basis, further discussion will be limited to the pertinent faculty (particularly the instructor of the Method course) and the incoming Dean. In addition, given the small sample size, further data must to gathered before discussions will be helpful.

B. How specifically have you decided to use findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Student artifacts collected
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of the findings.

Changes in 2019 assessment plans: Rubrics for Outcome 4 were revised in light of discussion of data collected by instructor of the Capstone Project course (see Appendices IIIa and IIIb); new rubric developed for assessment of Outcome 3 (Appendix II).

Assessment results for Outcomes 3 and 4 point to the key role played by the Method course, but program assessment findings do not yet support changes in that course. Rather, the Dean has been gathering course evaluation data from instructors of the 2019 and 2020 courses, and has encouraged discussion among those instructors for improving that course. That discussion, though based on course evaluations rather than program assessment, has led to improvements in the Method course.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

Before changes are made on the basis of the 2020 assessment data, it is important to note that the Outcomes 3 and 4 are closely related, as both measure students' appropriation of previous coursework for purposes of the capstone. Outcome 4 is focused largely on appropriation of non-philosophical coursework, Outcome 3 on the full range of relevant knowledge, including philosophical. Consequently, a more reliable assessment requires joint consideration of data for both outcomes.

At this point, no changes in course content or delivery are planned in light the 2020 results:

Outcome 4 data by itself does not yet warrant change, for three reasons:

- the data in this report reflects only the first year of a program change, when the key Method course was merely offered as a pilot
- the undergrad population was too small to provide reliable conclusions (however, changes have already been introduced to that course as the result of course evaluations)
- the two direct methods for Outcome 4 yielded somewhat inconsistent. I suspect this reveals a limitation in collecting data through an interview (method 1), in contrast to using a course artifact (method 2).

Outcome 3 results only include two undergrads, but these students took the capstone with other post-bac students. The performance results were very strong, with 6 of 7 students in the course (and both undergrads) exceeding expectations. These results show that the program is succeeding on that outcome.

## 7. Closing the Loop: Review of [Previous Assessment Findings and Changes](#)

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

The Capstone Preparation course— offered in the Fall semester before the final Capstone Project course—was initially piloted as a one-credit course. In response to student feedback and evaluation of papers, this course was changed to a two-credit course, and course expectations were clarified

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

The changes were assessed in the 2018 report on the assessment of Outcome 2, which was based on analysis of final papers for Capstone Preparation course.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

The assessment findings indicated that those changes contributed to greatly improved papers for that course.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

This information is communicated to instructors assigned to teach this course, as part of syllabus development.

**IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.— see next page**

## **APPENDIX II: KNOWLEDGE OF REVELANT SOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING A CONTEXT OF MINISTRY**

*Rubric for Outcome 3, Direct Method: The instructor of the Capstone course will assess the student's ability to identify relevant resources in philosophy and other disciplines for the capstone, by assessing the final capstone paper with the rubric below:*

Fails to meet expectations weakening the resulting paper	student was alerted to relevant material for his or her capstone paper, but ignored it,
Meets expectations feedback	student does a decent job of bringing in relevant knowledge as discussed in class and
Exceeds expectations mastering new information	student goes beyond what the instructor would expect, showing impressive initiative in

## APPENDIX IIIa: KNOWLEDGE OF DISCIPLINARY SOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S WORLD

*Rubric for Outcome 4, Method 1, Dean's interview with students.*

PROMPT QUESTION: *Given your context of ministry, identify courses you have taken in humanities, social sciences, and STEM disciplines, or courses in other areas that reflected on science and technology, illuminate that context, and explain how they illuminate it. You may also refer to other experiences and sources of knowledge besides coursework.*

**For each area (humanities, social sciences, STEM), a score of 1 point indicates student meets expectations in that area.**

Learning Outcome Component	Fails to Meet Expectations (0 pts)	Meets Expectations (1 pt)	Exceeds Expectations (2 pts)
Demonstrated Knowledge of Sources from the Humanities	Student fails to explain how any previous coursework in the humanities or direct experience of humanities illuminates today's world as a context of ministry.	Student demonstrates an introductory-level ability to explain how previous courses in humanities, or direct experiences of the humanities illuminates today's world as a context of ministry.	Student demonstrates a graduate-level ability to explain how previous courses in humanities, or direct experiences of the humanities illuminates today's world as a context of ministry.
Demonstrated Knowledge of Sources from the Social Sciences	Student fails to explain how any previous coursework in the social sciences or other acquired knowledge of social science illuminates today's world as a context of ministry.	Student demonstrates an introductory-level ability to explain how previous courses in social science, or other acquired knowledge of social science illuminates today's world as a context of ministry.	Student demonstrates a graduate-level ability to explain how previous courses in social science, or other acquired knowledge of social science illuminates today's world as a context of ministry.
Demonstrated Knowledge of Sources from STEM disciplines	Student fails to explain how any previous coursework with a STEM component, or other acquired knowledge of STEM, illuminates today's world as a context of ministry.	Student demonstrates an introductory-level ability to explain how previous coursework with a STEM component, or other acquired knowledge of STEM, illuminates today's world as a context of ministry.	Student demonstrates a graduate-level ability to explain how previous coursework with a STEM component, or other acquired knowledge of STEM, illuminates today's world as a context of ministry.

### Notes:

1. A "direct experience of" humanities refers to previous reading, study, or other engagement (e.g., play attendance) with the humanities outside a formal classroom setting.
2. "Other acquired knowledge of social science" refers to knowledge acquired by self-study, previous work experience, and the like.
3. "Introductory-level ability" is the ability a student should have after successful completion of core courses outside the student's major.
4. "Coursework with a STEM component" includes both STEM courses and courses in other fields that focus on STEM (e.g., a course in environmental ethics, or in theology and science).
5. "Graduate-level ability" refers to the ability one would expect of a student with a bachelor's degree in the area, and thus would be able to draw on a wide range of sources in the area.

## **APPENDIX IIIb: KNOWLEDGE OF REVELANT SOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING A CONTEXT OF MINISTRY**

*Rubric for Outcome 4, Method 2: The instructor of the Capstone course will assess the student's ability to identify relevant non-philosophical resources for the capstone, using the rubric in Appendix III*

Fails to meet expectations weakening the resulting paper	student was alerted to relevant material for his or her capstone paper, but ignored it,
Meets expectations feedback	student does a decent job of bringing in relevant knowledge as discussed in class and
Exceeds expectations mastering new information	student goes beyond what the instructor would expect, showing impressive initiative in