Ohlone College
Program Review Report

Program Description and Scope:
1. Program Review Title: Philosophy
3. Review Type: Instructional Disciplines
4. Program/Departments: Philosophy (15004)
5. Authority Code: 47-Dean, Language and Communication
6. External Regulations: Yes ☒ No ☐
7. Provide a brief narrative that describes the instructional program/discipline.

The philosophy program at Ohlone College is, by large, a traditional philosophy and religious studies program that offers students exposure to new ideas, cultures, value systems, and the means to critique and analyze them. Two courses History of Ancient and History of Modern philosophy, for example, offers students the opportunity to question basic truths as what reality is, how we experience the world, and struggle with enduring questions such as “Do we have free will?” and “What is virtue?” In taking philosophy courses, students broaden their knowledge culturally, as well as intellectually. The courses on religion offer valuable insight on students’ own religious beliefs, as well as other religions such as Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism, all of which lay the ground work for the diversity of cultures and values that exist today. Through an understanding of different cultures and values, genuine acceptance and tolerance can take place within the campus, and the larger community. Practical reasoning and Logic offer the chance for students to rigorously examine their own ability to reason and develop their critical thinking skills. The primary tool of philosophers is argumentation and reasoning, and being such, students will develop their reading comprehension and argumentation skills. The ethics course offers a framework for evaluating ethical issues that society at large and individual students may face in their personal and professional lives.

The philosophy program overall, currently has a dual vision, unified by a common singular value. Firstly, it envisions to create well-educated persons, with the understanding that being well-educated does not mean a person who has accumulated an impressive amount of facts, but rather one who is curious and engaged with the world around him or her, and seeks to broaden his or her understanding through proper reasoning. The traditional philosophy courses such as History of Ancient Philosophy, History of Modern Philosophy, Practical Reasoning, Logic, and Ethics share this vision. The second vision is to broaden the cultural experience of students through an examination of one of the most culture-defining institutions in society, religion. Such examinations will lead to a broadening of cultural understanding, cultural growth, and foster an appreciation for the differences that cultures have. The courses Understanding the Old Testament, Understanding the New Testament,
Introduction to Asian Religions, Introduction to Western Religions, and Introduction to Islam share in this vision. The singular value that unites all of the courses is that of inquiry. The ability to question the beliefs, values, and assumptions of each individual, of societies, and of cultures, and holding them to a rigorous standard of reason allows for the growth of the individual academically, socially, spiritually, and ethically.

8. **Describe how the program specifically serves students, faculty and staff.**

The philosophy program has been and continues to be part of the foundation of a liberal arts education, as well as a means to make students well educated persons. It currently offers 11 different courses in the fields of Philosophy and Religious studies, all of which are transferable for CSU and UC credit. The philosophy program offers courses that meets the General Education requirements for Plan A (Area III, Area IV, and Area VI), Plan B (Area A3 and Area C2), and Plan C (Area 3B). The current offerings are:

100 Introduction to Philosophy  
101 Ancient Philosophy  
102 Modern Philosophy  
104 Logic  
106 Ethics  
107 Practical Reasoning  
109A Introduction to the Old Testament  
109B Introduction to the New Testament  
110 Introduction to Asian Religions  
112 Introduction to Western Religions  
114 Introduction to Islam

9. **Describe how the program addresses current needs and applies current technologies.**

The underlying feature of philosophy as a discipline is that it questions and attempts to justify basic assumptions and values that people hold. Being such, the philosophy program is perfectly situated to directly examine and instill the core values of Ohlone College. Under Ohlone’s Mission statement, Life-Long Learning is emphasized, which philosophy can help contribute to by providing students the critical thinking skills that will help them achieve autonomous learning. Philosophy as a discipline is notorious for never giving a definitive answer to questions. By engaging a student’s curiosity about the fundamentals assumptions and values of the world, the philosophy program can encourage a habit of life-long learning as well. The stated Core values Ohlone seeks to promote are: diversity, inclusiveness, respect, integrity, and stewardship for environmental resources, all of which can be examined philosophically through course offerings such as ethics and courses concerning religion.

10. **Discuss the impact of the program on the college and/or other programs.**

The philosophy program offers many GE courses. Virtually all of the courses qualify for some kind of GE requirement. Currently the philosophy department
has little impact on other programs. For the Business AA, phil 106 is a supporting course, but not a required course. Phil106 is also a required supporting course for the A.A. in Accounting.

11. Discuss the impact of the program on the community and the impact of the community on the program.

The philosophy program aims to help students understand the global community that they are part of in a variety of ways. Understanding the value systems, religious beliefs, and philosophical assumptions of other cultures and their own, will hopefully help students work better in a diverse workplace, as well as give them the critical thinking skills necessary for being responsible members of the global community.

• College Mission
  1. Mission Statement
    The mission of Ohlone College is to serve the community by offering instruction for basic skills, career entry, university transfer, economic development, and personal enrichment for all who can benefit from our instruction in an environment where student learning success is highly valued, supported and continually assessed.

2. Vision Statement
   Ohlone College will be known throughout California for our inclusiveness, innovation and superior rates of student success.

3. Core Values, Goals & Objectives:
   College Core Values
   • We provide life-long learning opportunities for students, college personnel and the community.
   • We promote diversity and inclusiveness.
   • We maintain high standards in our constant pursuit of excellence.
   • We value trust, respect and integrity.
   • We demonstrate stewardship for our human, financial, physical and environmental resources.

College Goals/Objectives
  1. Through innovative programs and services, improve student learning and achievement.
     1. By 2013, have in place an ongoing system for identifying and assessing student learning outcomes at the program and course levels, which includes faculty dialogue and appropriate improvement plans.
     5. By spring 2013, increase to 600 the number of students transferring to UC and CSU.

6. Enhance college-wide interaction with, and acceptance of, diverse peoples, cultures, arts, and perspectives.
   1. By 2015, increase the number of course offerings which meet the General Education Plan A Intercultural/International Studies requirement.

4. Briefly describe how the program supports the college mission, vision selected college values.
The underlying feature of philosophy as a discipline is that it questions and attempts to justify basic assumptions and values that people hold. Being such, the philosophy program is perfectly situated to directly examine and instill the core values of Ohlone College. Under Ohlone’s Mission statement, Life-Long Learning is emphasized, which philosophy can help contribute to by providing students the critical thinking skills that will help them achieve autonomous learning. Philosophy as a discipline is notorious for never giving a definitive answer to questions. By engaging a student’s curiosity about the fundamentals assumptions and values of the world, the philosophy program can encourage a habit of life-long learning as well. The stated Core values Ohlone seeks to promote are: diversity, inclusiveness, respect, integrity, and stewardship for environmental resources, all of which can be examined philosophically through course offerings such as ethics, and courses concerning religion.

5. *Briefly describe how the program supports selected college goals.*

The philosophy department is currently developing a method of evaluating and assessing SLOs in its program. Currently we are attempting to evaluate two courses, phil 107 Practical Reasoning and Phil 100 Introduction to Philosophy.

6. *Briefly describe how the program supports selected college objectives.*

The philosophy department offers many courses on religions that help students understand their own, as well as other's religious beliefs. Unfortunately, one of our adjuncts who taught Latin American philosophy left Ohlone in pursuit of a Ph.D. We have not found an adjunct who can teach this course yet, and it is questionable whether or not the course will be offered in the future in light of tightening budget constraints.

- **Program SLOs & Assessment**
  1. **Program SLO -**

     **Distinguish different areas of philosophy and philosophical methodology**

     a. *Indicate program assessment strategies used.*
        i. Other

        Exams within courses.

     b. *Describe the criteria and standards used to appraise student work.*

        Proper usage and identification of terms, problems, and approaches to philosophical problems within the context of exams, and papers.

     c. *Enter assessment results and analyze student success in achieving this program SLO.*

        None yet
d. Describe revisions in curriculum or teaching strategies implemented to promote student success.

none yet

e. Future Action (Improvements)

2. Program SLO -

Understand and communicate abstract ideas.

a. Indicate program assessment strategies used.
   i. Other

   Exams and research papers

b. Describe the criteria and standards used to appraise student work.

   Exams should determine student's comprehension of complex ideas.
   Research papers evaluate a student's ability to communicate complex ideas.

c. Enter assessment results and analyze student success in achieving this program SLO.

   See Course assessment in a box phil 107 attachment. Specifically SLO 5.

d. Describe revisions in curriculum or teaching strategies implemented to promote student success.

   See Course assessment in a box phil 107 attachment. Specifically SLO 5.

e. Future Action (Improvements)

   Maintain current student learning plan

3. Program SLO -

Develop critical thinking skills necessary to critically assess real world issues, and the various perspectives on them.

a. Indicate program assessment strategies used.
   i. Other

   Argumentative essays

b. Describe the criteria and standards used to appraise student work.

   Evaluating argumentative essays that include an evaluation of both sides of a single issue, and arguments for supporting their thesis.

c. Enter assessment results and analyze student success in achieving this program SLO.

   none yet

d. Describe revisions in curriculum or teaching strategies implemented to promote student success.

   none yet
e. Future Action (Improvements)

4. Program SLO -

**Understand some of the diverse assumptions and values that shape our experience and/or attitude of the world.**

a. *Indicate program assessment strategies used.*
   i. Other

   Exams and Papers

b. *Describe the criteria and standards used to appraise student work.*

   Examining essays written at the course level to determine mastery of information. Exams on specific philosophies of different cultures, like Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin America.

c. *Enter assessment results and analyze student success in achieving this program SLO.*

   none yet

d. *Describe revisions in curriculum or teaching strategies implemented to promote student success.*

   none yet

e. Future Action (Improvements)

- **SLO Matrix**

  *Key: I-Introduced, P-Practiced with Feedback, M-Demonstrated at the Mastery Level*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>SLO-1</th>
<th>SLO-2</th>
<th>SLO-3</th>
<th>SLO-4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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• SLO Matrix Comments

• Course SLO & Assessment

PHIL 107 Practical Reasoning
1. Recognize arguments and identify the basic parts of arguments.
2. Identify informal fallacies, and rhetorical devices used to persuade without reason.
3. Identify both inductive and deductive forms of reasoning as they appear in everyday communication: conversation, class discussion, newspapers, television, advertising, etc.
4. Evaluate logically inductive to be strong or weak, in an everyday context.
5. Know how to write an argumentative paper that relies on rational argumentation and a minimum of rhetoric to support a thesis.
6. Evaluate formal syllogistic reasoning for fallacies and validity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicate planned course assessment strategies</th>
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<td>Rubrics</td>
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<td>Skills Assessment</td>
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<th>Describe the criteria and/or performance standards used to appraise student work.</th>
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<td>See attachment course assessment in a box phil 107.</td>
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• Student Achievement: A series of measures including course completion, course retention, persistence, program completion, and others.

1. List expected student achievement outcomes:

   ...

2. Analyze changes in data, identify trends, and provide possible contextual explanations for each measure used. (Example measures include: course completion, course retention, persistence, program completion).

   Examining success by ethnicity, African American student success rates lag behind most other ethnicities, by a significant margin. This may reflect a disconnect between teaching strategies and learning by the culture of students, or a culturally biased approach to teaching African American students.

3. Analyze program budget trends and expenditures. Comment on how the program can best use budget resources.

4. Analyze the program's current use of staff, equipment, technology, facilities, and/or other resources. Comment on how the program can best use these resources.

5. Describe any additional notable program achievements (optional).

6. Additional Program Table Data

7. Future Action
Current levels of student achievement indicators maintained.

- **Program Analysis**
  After assessing student learning outcomes/impacts, student/program achievement, and the status of previous program improvement objectives (PIOs), analyze the data and any identified trends, and summarize your findings. Use these data and trends to prioritize, revise, or develop new PIOs

  1. Describe program achievements and successes.

    Currently, since the program has no degree or certificate, success can only be viewed through student success in individual courses. I can anecdotally address that there are a handful of students who enjoy taking philosophy courses repeatedly. Anecdotally, my courses have been described as difficult, but fair.

    Student success, however cannot be measured solely on passing or failing a particular course. Anecdotally, students who have failed my course have also told me that they have learned more in my course, than many other courses as well.

    By keeping course standards high, I believe students are better prepared for the CSU and UC systems.

  2. According to the evidence, what are the areas needing improvement?

    Re-evaluation of SLOs on the program and course level seems to be in order, as they not all do not quite match up GE goals. But this is purely administrative, not pedagogical.

    Offering an AA degree in philosophy is under consideration.

- **Program Improvement Objectives:**
  1. **Objective:**

      Increasing the variety of perspectives that students are exposed to in the philosophy department in order to reduce any individual biases.

      a. **Action Plan**

         **Year 1:**

         Evaluate the fiscal feasibility of offering more courses, and the possibility of hiring more part-time or possibly full-time instructors.

         **Year 2:**

         ...

         **Year 3:**

         ...
b. Staffing
   Year 1:
   More Part-time or Full-time faculty.

   Year 2:
   ...

   Year 3:
   ...

c. Equipment (Include items that fit under department budget codes)
   Year 1:
   none

   Year 2:
   ...

   Year 3:
   ...

d. Technology (Include items that fit under IT budget codes)
   Year 1:
   none

   Year 2:
   ...

   Year 3:
   ...

e. Facilities (Include items that fit under the Facilities budget codes)
   Year 1:
   none

   Year 2:
... 

Year 3: 
...

f. Other (Include other resources needed) 
Year 1: 
none 

Year 2: 
...

Year 3: 
...

g. Assessment Plan: List Assessment Strategies 
Year 1: 
FTES WSCH ratios and comparing them to similar sized departments. Surveying students to see what kinds of courses/subject areas within philosophy appeal to their interests.

Year 2: 
...

Year 3: 
...

h. Which college goal(s) does this program improvement objective work to achieve? Clearly describe how your PIO will help achieve one or more of the college goals and objectives, has impact beyond the particular department, and contributes to student learning/success. 
1. Through innovative programs and services, improve student learning and achievement. 
Rationale: 
Student learning in philosophy is improved through exposure of a variety of ideas. When most of the philosophy courses are taught by a singular individual, only a limited perspective is given, in a field with many different
6. Enhance college-wide interaction with, and acceptance of, diverse peoples, cultures, arts, and perspectives.

Rationale:

Students taking courses from not necessarily liked-minded professors within the discipline would help give students a wider perspective on the field, and the world.

2. PIO Assessment
   a. Enter assessment results with analysis.

   ...

   b. Describe how PIO achieved one or more of the college goals and objectives, had an impact beyond the particular department, and contributed to student success/learning.

   ...

   c. Analyze the impact of reallocation or addition of resources. If money or resource was not used, give rationale.

   ...

   d. Future Action

• Outside Review Results
  1. List each team members name and title.
     None.
  2. Discuss key feedback provided by team and how it was incorporated into the report.
     None.

• Attached Files
  1. Course Assessment in a Box Phil 1071.docx