

BASIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Review is a self-study of your discipline. It is about documenting the plans you have for improving student success in your program and sharing that information with the college community. Through the review of and reflection on key program elements, program review and planning identifies program strengths as well as strategies necessary to improve the academic discipline, program, or service to support student success. With that in mind, please answer the following questions:

Discipline Name: Philosophy

Department Name: Behavioral Sciences

Division Name: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Please list all participants in this Program Review :

Name	Position
Lee Kerckhove	Professor of Philosophy
Michael Lockett	Professor of Philosophy
Dillon Emerick	Professor of Philosophy
Jeff Epstein	Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Number of Full Time Faculty: 4

Number of Part Time Faculty: 10

Please list the Classified positions (and their FTE) that support this discipline:

1 ADA (that ADA serves Philosophy, Religious Studies, Anthropology, and Archeology)

What additional hourly staff support this discipline and/or department:

none

Discipline mission statement: [Link to "How to Build a Mission Statement"](#)

The mission of the philosophy discipline is to help students develop into independent and critical thinkers enthusiastic for civil debate, able to express ideas with clarity and grace, equipped with ethical and civic values, who will be prepared for, and positively impact, an interdependent and ever-changing world. We strive to do this by teaching them to write and to think clearly, to read carefully and critically, to reason effectively, systematically, and charitably, and to reflect on major questions concerning moral values and the good life, on the nature of knowledge and belief, on the nature of persons and minds, and on existential questions concerning the physical, social, and environmental reality of the world in which we live.

List any new degrees and certificates offered within this discipline since your last comprehensive review:

AA-T in Philosophy

Discipline Level Data: <https://sharepoint2.palomar.edu/sites/IRPA/SitePages/PRP%20Summary%20Source.aspx>

SECTION 1: PROGRAM REFLECTION

1A. Program Analysis: Reflect upon and provide an analysis of your summary data.

In reflecting on the summary data, it appears we are consistent with the standards of the college in both success and retention, despite the fact that we teach courses rich with critical analysis and which are assessed by means of rigorous writing assignments. We are still recovering from low student enrollment and from the repercussions of reorganizing and renumbering courses in order to implement the AA-T degree. A hopeful sign is that in the Fall of 2015 the downward trend reversed. We went from 883 students to 1,012. We did have one student take advantage of the AA-T degree in its first year of implementation.

In the Fall of 2015 our Part Time/Full Time FTEF % dropped from 73.17 (in Fall of 2014) to 62.16%. This likely because of our new hire and courses cut because of low enrollments.

Our Distance Education success rate is 7.7% higher than the college. On the face of it, this is worth celebrating. There is strong anecdotal evidence pointing to the quality of our online instruction as the explanation for this disparity. However, there may be other institutional and social factors that play a large part in the explanation too. (For instance, PHIL 200 is a required course for IGETC. Students taking this course are typically seeking transfer to the UC system and are thus a slightly different student population.)

1B. Standards: ACCJC requires that colleges establish institutional and program level standards in the area of course success rates. These standards represent the lowest success rate (% A, B, C, or Credit) deemed acceptable by the College. In other words, if you were to notice a drop below the rate, you would seek further information to examine why the drop occurred and strategies to address the rate.

Discipline Level Course Success Rate:

- The College's institutional standard for course success rate is **70%**.
- Review your discipline's course success rates over the past five years.
- Identify the minimum acceptable course success rate for your discipline. When setting this rate, consider the level of curriculum (e.g., basic skills, AA, Transfer) and other factors that influence success rates within your area. If you set your discipline standard below the College's standard, please explain why.

Standard for Discipline Course Success Rate: 67.5

Why?

Given the writing and critical thinking requirements of our courses, and given the assessed college-readiness of our students (in Math and English placement exams), we feel a 5% lower standard for course success would be reasonable. Reaching the college standard consistently would be a sign of remarkable instructional efforts on the part of our faculty members.

1C. Program Update: Describe your proudest moments or achievements related to student success and outcome.

Our instructors continue to provide a small, liberal-arts college education in Philosophy at the community college level. We have started collaboration with CSUSM's Philosophy department which is instituting a Philosophy major in the Fall. Currently, many of our courses would satisfy equivalency or be substituted for CSUSM courses in an informal manner (though waiver forms). It would be ideal to formalize that process. This would allow us to be more transparent with our students and they would be assured that their lower division Philosophy courses would count at Palomar. Moreover, it would be nice too if CSUSM would accept the AA-T in Philosophy. Finally, a group at Palomar is working on a Pathways to Law School. This pathway may link nicely with CSUSM's Philosophy Major (as there will be a Law and Society track). Further collaboration and conversation will likely yield these results.

1D. Program Improvement: What areas or activities are you working on this year to improve your program? Please respond to new data as well as feedback from last year's program review.

Our enrollment numbers continue to decline. We are concerned that the harm done to our enrollments when we rolled out our new AA-T degree remains despite our efforts to fix the problem at an institutional level. Also, we strongly suspect that our program is negatively effected by fixed, though false, belief among our classroom gatekeepers about the benefits of Philosophical study. We are also concerned about an instrumental view of education by this same population (and indeed in educational policy makers in the state). Despite the fact that empirical evidence shows that those who study Philosophy earn more than those who study accounting and business (and indeed are more successful in finding employment), the falsehood that "you cannot get work with a Philosophy degree" continues to be imparted to our students. Moreover, the push towards "pathways" at the community college level enforces the idea that education's goal is to get placed higher on the pyramid of jobs, as opposed to cultivating "individuals and global citizens living responsibly, effectively, and creatively in an interdependent and ever-changing world" as is articulated in

our mission statement.

We are working on changing the belief in Philosophy's relevance and importance by increasing our student outreach. Under the guidance of Jeff Epstein, our Philosophy Club is doing remarkably well. Also, Philosophy instructors continue to participate in campus events.

1E. Unanticipated Factors: Have there been any unanticipated factors that have affected the progress of your previous plan?

1F. SLOACs: Describe your course and program SLO activities this past year. How have you used the results of your assessments to improve your courses and programs? [Refer to the SLO/PRP report – https://outcomes.palomar.edu:8443/tracdat/](https://outcomes.palomar.edu:8443/tracdat/)

SLOs have been developed, implemented, and assessed at least once in each course offered in Philosophy since SLOs have been a mandated meta-assessment tool. We originally articulated a roughly 3-year assessment cycle. Several years later, we were asked by administration to create a new AA-T degree, which required a massive curriculum re-shuffling with new philosophy courses being developed and some old courses being phased out. Because of this new curriculum, we re-set the clock on that SLO assessment cycle.

Two years ago we developed SLOs and assessment methods for each new and updated course in our curriculum. As always, and when possible, our primary focus is assessment through student writing. We continue to look for ways to make these assessments yield something of value.

Since last year's PRP report we have "cleaned up" our SLOs and developed clearer timelines in TracDat. Though there is work still to be done, and we anticipate that our TracDat presence will be spotless by the end of the academic year. This past Fall assessed the SLOs for the courses in which we articulated SLOs last year (PHIL 111, 116, 121, and 122).

As we promised last year, we articulated three Program SLOs and developed accompanying methods of assessment. However, we only served one AA-T student last year. This number does not warrant assessing program SLOs.

Our general concerns about the validity of SLO assessments remain. Some of those concerns are adumbrated in our 2013-2014 PRP

SECTION 2: PROGRAM GOALS

2A. Progress on Previous Year's Goals: Please list discipline goals from the previous year's reviews and provide an update by checking the appropriate status box .

Goal	Completed	Ongoing	No Longer a Goal
To promote excellence in teaching philosophy and in student learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To implement the new AA-T degree in Philosophy	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To recoup enrollment loss	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To maintain a schedule that will allow students to meet all their degree requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To hire additional full-time faculty	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2B. New Discipline Goals: Please list all discipline goals for this three-year planning cycle (including those continued from previous planning cycle):

GOAL #1	
Program or discipline goal	To promote excellence in teaching philosophy and in student learning
Strategies for implementation	Attend professional conferences to remain current in the field
Timeline for Implementation	Ongoing
Outcome(s) expected (qualitative/quantitative)	more effective advising for our students, new teaching strategies and new content for courses
GOAL #2	
Program or discipline goal	To recoup enrollment loss / Increase enrollments
Strategies for implementation	Increase student outreach, have a more visible Philosophy presence of campus
Timeline for Implementation	ongoing
Outcome(s) expected (qualitative/quantitative)	Increased enrollments
GOAL #3	
Program or discipline goal	To maintain a schedule that will allow students to meet all their degree requirements
Strategies for implementation	Work with the dean for a more diverse schedule, where appropriate
Timeline for Implementation	ongoing
Outcome(s) expected (qualitative/quantitative)	A greater diversity in course offerings

**Department Chair/
Designee Signature:** _____

Date: 03/31/2017 _____

Division Dean Signature: _____

Date: _____

Vice President Signature: _____

Date: _____