

Program Assessment: *Annual Report*

Program(s): Undergraduate

Department: Theological Studies

College/School: Arts & Sciences

Date: June 23, 2018

Primary Assessment Contact: Randall S. Rosenberg and Peter Martens

1. Which program student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

Learning Outcome 2: Students will describe the significance of theological study for the life of faith.

Learning Outcome 3: Students will explain the methodologies that contemporary scholars use in academic theology.

2. What data/artifacts of student learning were collected for each assessed outcome? Were Madrid student artifacts included?

Thesis proposals, Capstone Research Papers, Exit Interviews

3. How did you analyze the assessment data? What was the process? Who was involved?

NOTE: If you used rubrics as part of your analysis, please include them in an appendix.

The capstone instructor, informed by input from each thesis director, graded the capstone presentations and papers. The undergraduate coordinator conducted the exit interviews and assessed the learning outcomes.

4. What did you learn from the data? Summarize the major findings of your analysis for each assessed outcome.

NOTE: If necessary, include any tables, charts, or graphs in an appendix.

Learning Outcome 2: All students who were interviewed articulated a significant connection between theology and faith. The range of sophistication varied. A couple students helpfully cited the famous dictum of St. Anselm: Theology is “faith seeking understanding.” This conveyed a solid grounding in the Christian tradition. Others spoke “from the heart” but their answers could have benefitted from more precision.

Learning Outcome 3: Approximately 80% of the capstone papers included an explicit methodology statement. The department emphasized the importance of articulating a contemporary method in the thesis proposal, the PowerPoint presentation, and the paper itself. The remaining students described a method at least implicitly, but there remained room for growth in explicitly grounded their thesis in a particular method. Certain papers

that explicitly included a methodology statement could use some sharpening. Although students studied contemporary methods in the capstone course, the challenge remains for the department to help students integrate a distinctive methodological approach into their projects.

5. How did your analysis inform meaningful change? How did you *use the analyzed data to make or implement recommendations for change* in pedagogy, curriculum design, or your assessment plan?

*It has been recommended that the capstone class reinforce in a more systematic way the relationship between faith and the academic discipline of theology as mediated in historical and contemporary models.

*It has been recommended that the capstone course, along with thesis directors and “devil’s advocates” specifically guide students in identifying and articulating in a coherent way a specific methodological approach operative in the field today. It is recommended that his language be added to the rubrics and checklists employed in the evaluation of this project. The challenge is to articulate the various frameworks being introduced in the capstone course to the various thesis directors. This could involve the sharing of the course outline with each thesis director and “devil’s advocate” (2nd reader).

6. Did you follow up (“close the loop”) on past assessment work? If so, what did you learn? (*For example, has that curriculum change you made two years ago manifested in improved student learning today, as evidenced in your recent assessment data and analysis?*)

n/a

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