SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY.

Program Assessment: *Annual Report*

Program(s): Certificate in Philosophy for Ministry (P&L); BA, Philosophy for Ministry, Religious Tracks

Department: N/A

College/School: College of Philosophy & Letters

Date: June 2019

Primary Assessment Contact: William Rehg, SJ (rehgsp@slu.edu)

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

> The College of Philosophy & Letters Assessment Plan (June 27, 2018) calls for assessment of Program Learning Outcome 1 in spring 2019, for the BA, and Outcome 4 for the Certificate. For the sake of more efficient assessment, the BA and Certificate were assessed for Outcome 1. Both are undergraduate programs, with the same capstone structure, making this approach more efficient. Moreover, the other direct method, using data from the Modern Philosophy course, was also available.

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

> Capstone Preparation ("prep") papers and final Capstone Project papers were collected as the primary artifact for the assessment of Outcome 1. In addition, data from the Modern Philosophy course was also included.
>
> Madrid student artifacts were not included. Although one of the capstone students had spent a semester in Madrid, his coursework in Madrid did not have an obvious connection to this learning outcome. In any case, his performance on the outcome was at a level comparable to that of the other students in the capstone courses.

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.

> (1) Data from the Modern Philosophy course was collected an analyzed using the Philosophy Department Rubric.
>
> (2) The Capstone Prep & Capstone papers were read to identify and assess the quality of student's ability to identify major thinkers and ideas that have shaped the history of Western philosophy.
>
> > For (2), the rubric employed the following questions for analyzing performance: Did the student identify major thinkers and ideas? Did the student describe the thought of those thinkers and ideas accurately? Did the student state accurate the relationship between major thinkers and ideas they deployed? Four outcomes were possible: failure to achieve the outcome, below average (low) achievement, adequate (average) achievement, and high (above average) achievement.

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

> **Program Learning Outcome 1:** *Students can identify connections among major thinkers and ideas that have shaped the history of Western philosophy.*
>
> (1) Results of assessment of Modern Philosophy course: Nine students in the College of Philosophy & Letters took the course. Overall these students showed a strong ability to recall material from other courses pertaining to Ancient or Medieval philosophy, and to relate that material in plausible ways to content from the modern course.
>
> (2) Results of assessment of the capstone artifacts: artifacts were collected from the three students who completed the BA or Certificate. Of the three students assessed, one was pursuing a Certificate in Philosophy for Ministry (along with a non-Philosophy MA), and thus should exhibit adequate achievement along the outcome dimensions above. The two other students were earning a BA in Philosophy for Ministry, and one of those two had to overcome severe cultural obstacles. In light of this context, the achievement record was acceptable:
>
> All three students identified major thinkers and ideas that have shaped the history of Western philosophy. All students described those thinkers and ideas adequately: the description they offered was sufficient for their argument without being superficial or profound. All students moreover discussed these thinkers and ideas with some sense for their relationship: they were able to relate the thinkers and ideas in substantive ways, but were not exemplary in the sophistication with which they did so. Typical of this was their ability to identify a broad or general connection between two thinkers without however identifying difficulties in correlating their thought, e.g., a Kantian "care" ethics" and Aristotle's virtue ethics.

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?

> (1) The analysis of the Modern Philosophy data led to two recommendations: (a) No change in the current curriculum is called for at this point. (b) A more detailed Curriculum Mapping should be conducted to identify points in the curriculum that can support Outcome 1, in addition to the History-of-Philosophy sequence.
>
> (2) The analysis of the capstone artifacts further supports the finding in (1) that the curriculum is helping students meet Outcome 1.

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?)*

> Use of the final capstone papers was found to serve as suitable substitute artifacts for the historical test used for Outcome 1 in previous years. However, if Capstone Prep papers are available, it is not clear that the Capstone Project paper adds any useful additional information for Outcome 1. Thus the Assessment Plan for Outcome 1 in the BA and Certificate has been revised to include assessment of capstone papers, with preference for using the Capstone Prep paper.

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