**Annual Assessment Update**

### Program/department name:\_\_Philosophy\_\_\_\_\_Academic year: \_\_\_2011-12\_\_\_\_\_

This form is to be used by programs with previously completed assessment plans. Please address the following areas. You may answer on this form by expanding the space between the steps or on an attachment.

Note: You should fill in steps 1-4 ONLY if you have made changes to your assessment plan. You must fill in steps 5 and 6.

# **Step 1: Mission**

Were any changes in your mission adopted during the past year?

\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (Please describe the process used to approve these changes below or on an attachment and attach a copy of the new mission.)

# **Step 2: Learning outcomes**

Were any changes in your learning outcomes adopted during the past year?

\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (Please describe the process used to approve these changes below or on an attachment and attach a copy of the new learning outcomes.)

**Step 3: Program components**

Did you change the program components in which you carry out assessment in any way?

\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (Please describe below or on an attachment.)

**Step 4: Data collection methods**

Did you change your data collection methods in any way?

\_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Yes (Please describe below or on an attachment.)

**Step 5: Summary and analysis of data collected during the past year**

Please describe and interpret the indirect and direct data you collected during this academic year.

*Summary of Data Collected in Spring, 2012 [Number of graduating senior* ***majors*** *= 12; Number of responses = 4]:*

**Student Outcome 1: Students will be able to analyze the complexity of an issue by identifying possible multiple viewpoints inherent in the issue.**

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Analytical Essay 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Problem Analysis 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Assessment Questions 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Self-Assessment Questions 40

**Student Outcome 2: Students will be able to construct arguments inherent in each of these viewpoints – i.e., identify implicit or explicit premises and generate conclusions from these premises.**

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Analytical Essay 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Problem Analysis 31

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Assessment Questions 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Self-Assessment Questions 40

**Student Outcome 3: Students will be able to examine merits and demerits of these arguments and viewpoints by examining amongst other things their validity, soundness, etc.**

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Analytical Essay 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Problem Analysis 31

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Assessment Questions 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Self-Assessment Questions 40

**Student Outcome 4: Students will be able to clearly and precisely express their views in writing.**

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Analytical Essay 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Problem Analysis 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Assessment Questions 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

**Self-Assessment Questions** 4 0

**Student Outcome 5: Students will be able to gain familiarity with major philosophers and their contributions to the field.**

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Analytical Essay 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Problem Analysis 40

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

Assessment Questions 13

**Assessment Procedure Passing [70% or above] Failing [below 70%]**

**Self-Assessment Questions** 4 0

*Analysis of the data*

The Philosophy Department wishes to know whether its students learn to approach a problem philosophically. Our graduating majors’ portfolios have demonstrated that desired student outcomes have been achieved in relation to general assessment instruments and students’ analytical essays.

General assessment instruments demonstrate that our graduating majors have achieved proficiency in relation to all 5 student outcomes listed above. In addition to the above assessment instruments, there is, to our minds, no substitute for an analytical essay in which a wide spectrum of skills are deployed *in an appropriate way*, given the problem at hand. By the time our majors are seniors, there is ample evidence that our approach is productive. Our graduating senior majors’ portfolios exhibit the reflective, critical perspective we hope to convey. The five student outcomes identified above are demonstrated in a wide variety of ways: Our students deploy distinctions demonstrating an appreciation of precision; they routinely consider the arguments presented by a text, distinguishing the logical properties from the rhetorical components of these arguments; they attempt to provide counter-examples, advance their own positive arguments, and even consider counter-examples to their own arguments – this demonstrates skill in philosophical analysis and also shows that they are properly reflective and critical, even of their own assumptions and beliefs, which sets them apart from those who approach problems ideologically. This is distinctively philosophical and especially important to the Department. Their analytical essays also consider historical approaches to the problem they are working on and demonstrate a sense of intellectual heritage.

**Step 6: Use of the data**

Please describe how you used assessment data in this academic year, including any changes you have made or plan to make to your program as a result of assessment.

At present, no curricular changes are being considered by the Department as a result of the above analysis. Even though we are a much smaller department compared to other schools in the GLCA and ACM, we are doing an excellent job of training our students philosophically and have a long record of placing them in top-notch graduate and professional programs. A recent loss of a tenure-track departmental faculty position due to attrition has necessitated our looking for ways to meet the evolving needs and interests of our student body through offering new and innovative courses despite our limited resources. We are also keeping better track of our majors and will continue to gather evidence of our effectiveness via their post-graduate performance.