

## Departmental Assessment Meeting: Report

Please fill out this report based on your department's conversation and return via e-mail to Megan Leonard or Sasha Pfau by March 31, 2017.

### Summary of past decisions

Please summarize up to three departmental changes made since the last HLC visit (08-09) the impetus for those changes and any changes to information gathering about student development.

- A. We changed the major to require logic or critical reasoning and an ethics course in addition to the three required history courses. We increased the number of required courses to 11. This change was motivated through discussions, external review of the department, and the requirements of Phi Sigma Tau.
- B. We removed the 100 level Introducing Philosophical Questions courses and tried to get Freshers into the 200 level courses. However, it appeared that advisors were reluctant in some cases. We have now introduced four new 100 level courses where the content of the course will be clear to the student, which was not the case with IPQ. This resulted from department conversations and reports of some students and advisors.
- C. We have also introduced a new possibility of the philosophy capstone. At one point everyone wrote thesis papers. Some were not very good and students suffered. Later, we changed to all in a senior seminar. However, some majors did want to work on a substantial thesis project. So, for the last years we offer students a choice of either the seminar or a thesis project. This change was motivated by departmental discussions and communications with our seniors.

### Looking forward

Please summarize your department's focus for student development and your evaluation methods.

We plan to critically develop our senior survey, to work on discovering and improving our assessment tools, and consider and coordinate writing in the courses we offer.

### Achieving departmental goals for students

Please explain how your departmental curriculum achieves your student learning goals, being sure to include the Capstone. Feel free to attach a curricular map or other supporting documents. Summarize the ways your department provides guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

In general all of the courses offered by the philosophy department contribute to the four philosophy learning goals with the following exceptions: PHIL 245 Logic primarily just goal #3 and PHIL 205 Critical Reasoning primarily goals #3 and #4.

The four learning goals for philosophy are:

1. Students will study the thought of major figures in the history of philosophy and thereby to educate themselves regarding the ideas, values, and philosophical perspectives that shape our civilization, and to a significant degree, provide the context in which the front-line debates of our time occur.

2. Students will investigate the traditional philosophical areas of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and/or social & political thought and to see how these issues stand behind concerns or interests they may have in science and religion, or regarding social issues from abortion to economic justice, or simply in pursuing the nature and meaning of a well-lived life.
3. Students will develop their abilities to read closely, analyze carefully, reason critically, evaluate responsibly, and think creatively.
4. Students will develop their ability to give both oral and written expression to their ideas, arguments and reasoning.

**Your department's role in achieving the college's shared goals for students**

Please explain how your departmental learning goals contribute to the Vision for Student Learning Goals. Feel free to attach a map or other supporting documents.

**See below**

Goal #1      Goal #2      Goal #3      Goal #4

Our students engage in rigorous inquiry and informed deliberation by:

I1	· investigating and researching underlying causes and connections	x	x		
I2	· synthesizing evidence from multiple sources	x	x		
I3	· designing ways to answer their questions	x	x		
I4	· acquiring the skills to evaluate arguments and evidence critically			x	
I5	· developing independent, nuanced, and thoughtful analyses			x	
I6	· making connections among different bodies of knowledge	x	x	x	
I7	· communicating their findings effectively and persuasively through written, oral, experiential, visual, or other appropriate methods				x
I8	· reflecting on their studies and being prepared to engage with the world based on their inquiry and deliberation	x	x	x	x

Hendrix College students actively and reflectively engage with multiple communities by:

MC1	· understanding the past, present, and future needs of the earth and of humanity, and of the challenges of our interdependence		x		
MC2	· considering ethical conundrums from conflicting perspectives	x	x		
MC3	· bringing their experiences in the wider community back to the classroom to enhance their course of study	x	x	x	x

The Hendrix College community supports these goals by:

C1	· fostering an awareness of different cultures through a commitment to diversity and inclusion	x	x		
C2	· providing opportunities for students to confront the diverse challenges and needs of our shared communities in order to inspire them to lead lives of service		x		
The college community provides opportunities for students to develop as whole persons in their personal and professional lives by:					
WP1	· guiding students in examining their abilities and strengths			x	
WP2	· helping them recognize how their skills can work for them and for the good of others, both now and in the future	x	x		
WP3	· providing tools and opportunities to prepare our students for their prospective professional lives			x	x
WP4	· striving to inspire students to lead lives of accomplishment as both leaders and team members	x	x	x	x
WP5	· encouraging their development into individuals who are independent, responsible, and attentive to their own mental and physical well-being		x	x	
WP6	· nurturing their life-long love of learning, both about themselves and about the world as curious, creative, and active participants in life and in their communities.	x	x	x	x