Curriculum Committee Assessment Report

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Overview

For the 2019-20 academic year, we focused on assessing the VA learning domain. At the end of the Fall 2019 semester, nine instructors completed direct assessment reports of 16 course sections with VA coding. Total enrollment across the assessed sections was 255 students. The following sections were included:

Department	Course	Title	Instructor
History	HIST 201	Doing History	Shutt
Philosophy	PHIL 112	What is Beauty?	Dow
Philosophy	PHIL 200 K1	Mark Twain	Campolo
Philosophy	PHIL 200 O1	Persons Over Time	Ablondi
Philosophy	PHIL 225	Ethics and Medicine	Campolo
Philosophy	PHIL 250	Philosophies of India	Schmidt
Philosophy	PHIL 330	Ethical Theory	Campolo
Philosophy	PHIL 350	Philosophy of Science	Schmidt
Philosophy	PHIL 390	Philosophy of Mind	Dow
Politics	POLI 203	Philosophy of Political Inquiry	Maslin
Politics	POLI 240	Western Political Thought	Whelan
Religious Studies	RELI 109-1	Religion and Contemporary Culture	Gorvine
Religious Studies	RELI 109-2	Religion and Contemporary Culture	Gorvine
Religious Studies	RELI 110	The World's Religions: An Intro	Sanders
Religious Studies	RELI 223	Introduction to Hinduism	Gorvine
Religious Studies	RELI 332	Concepts of God	Sanders

Data Summary

The learning goals for the VA domain are as follows:

1. Articulate an understanding of different value and belief systems that follows upon critical exploration of those systems.
2. Express the commonalities discovered in value and belief systems that follows upon critical exploration of those systems.
3. Express the commonalities discovered in value and belief systems across historical, philosophical, religious, and/or cultural boundaries.
4. Demonstrate familiarity with ways of making reasoned value judgements.

For each learning goal, each instructor filled out a rubric counting the number of students whose performance was:

Code	Description	Points
STR	Strong	4
SAT	Satisfactory	3
NG	Needs Growth	2
UNSAT	Unsatisfactory	1
NA	Not applicable to the course	n/a

Using the above rating scheme, we calculated the following average scores for each learning goal:

Goal	Average	# STR/SAT	% STR/SAT	# Students Not Applicable	# Sections Not Applicable
1	3.42	229	89.8	0	0
2	3.40	230	90.2	0	0
3	3.43	232	90.6	0	0
4	3.38	143	57.0	89	5

To determine the degree to which instructors assess the learning goals using distinct metrics, we enumerate below the sections in which the reported counts for all goals were identical. This occurred in seven out of the 16 assessed sections:

- PHIL 112
- PHIL 200-K1
- PHIL 350
- PHIL 390
- RELI 109-1
- RELI 109-2
- RELI 223

Analysis

The VA sections in the assessed group are successful in meeting Learning Goals 1-3, according to the instructor direct assessment, with about 90% of all students achieving Satisfactory or Strong performance.

With five VA sections not considering Learning Goal 4 to be applicable, and several of those sections having rather large enrollments, only 57% of students achieved Satisfactory or Strong performance on that goal. We observe that four out of five of these sections were in the Religious Studies department. Three of them were 100-level RELI courses. A different subset of three represent all the courses taught by that specific instructor in Fall 2019.

<u>Recommendations</u>

1. A discussion with the Religious Studies department about Learning Goal 4 seems to be warranted by the above data. The goals of this discussion would be:
   - To determine why this goal is not applicable in those courses.
   - To investigate whether alterations to those courses to achieve Learning Goal 4 would be feasible.
2. The identical scoring of all the learning goals in 7/16 courses suggests that direct assessment of these goals is too aggregated. It is suggested that creating a professional development opportunity for instructors to better differentiate among their direct assessments would be worthwhile.
3. This analysis is crippled by a lack of indirect assessment data. Adding questions to the student feedback forms for each VA course with respect to these goals could help ameliorate this problem.
4. Items 1 and 3 might be superseded by an anticipated review of the Learning Domains as a whole.