**2021 Philosophy Department Undergraduate Major Assessment Plan**:

Authored by Dr. Steven Brence, Director of Undergraduate Studies, in consultation with the Undergraduate Studies Committee and Prof. Colin Koopman, Department Head.

**Learning Goals and Objectives:** (adapted from the Philosophy Major Map)

To enable students to:

1. Reason more insightfully about questions of value, knowledge, and inquiry.
2. Build skills in writing and critical reasoning.
3. Explore fundamental questions about meaning and the nature of human life.

**Assessment Methods:**

Means: Because the chief means by which we assess student achievement in our courses is via evaluation of the expository and evaluative essays that we require students to produce, these essays are also the most appropriate means by which we may assess our own achievement in facilitating student development.

Measure: To render such assessments as useful for this purpose as possible, we will apply a standardized rubric, reflecting the learning goals and objectives indicated above.

Period of assessment: Since the department’s learning goals and objectives are meant to define the cumulative value of philosophy as a *completed* major course of study, assessment of our achievement will be made via comparison of essays written by our students at or near their entrance into the program with essays written by them near to their graduation.

Gathering Data: In order to ensure that work from a representative number of students is available for assessment when it is needed, students will be alerted by the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS) when they first declare Philosophy to be their major that such work may be requested from them when they near graduation.

**Assessment Processes:**

* Every Spring term, a selection of papers (two from each student as described above) will be collected by the DUGS with the assistance of the Undergraduate Program Coordinator from a representative sample of students graduating with a major in philosophy that year. Each paper will be scrubbed of all information pertaining to its author, the course and instructor it was written for, and the grade it was assigned.
* In the Fall term, the DUGS will distribute the pairs of papers collected the previous Spring term and identified now only by numbers among the members of the Undergraduate Studies Committee. Before the end of Fall term, each member will assess each pair of papers provided to them according to a standardized rubric that reflects the learning objectives of the philosophy major.
* At the start of Winter term, these assessments will then be exchanged and reviewed by the members of the Undergraduate Studies Committee who will subsequently meet to organize their findings and to formulate a proposed actionable plan that aims to improve the effectiveness of the major in achieving the learning objectives assigned to it.
* Before the end of Winter term, the DUGS will author a report describing the committee’s findings and proposed actionable plan that will be distributed prior to a faculty meeting near the beginning of Spring term in which the findings and proposals will be discussed by the faculty as a whole.
* The faculty as a whole will be invited to provide feedback toward refining the proposed actionable plan that will be shared with graduate instructors and recommended for implementation across undergraduate courses the next academic year.

**Undergraduate Major Assessment Report:**

The report authored by the DUGS and the recommended actionable plan approved by the faculty as a whole, along with an updated description of the methods through which they were produced, will be submitted as part of an Assessment report to the Dean of CAS before the deadline each Spring term.

**Philosophy Major Assessment Rubric** Essay Pair #\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Assess each pair of essays according to what they demonstrate regarding its author’s increased capacity to:

Reason more insightfully about questions of value, knowledge, and inquiry.

Skillfully write and reason critically.

Explore fundamental questions about meaning and the nature of human life.