

# FY2009 DEPARTMENTAL ANNUAL REPORT OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

## Department of Philosophy Fort Hays State University

### I. DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW

#### A. Departmental Mission and Vision Statements

Time, space, and cosmos, the mind, moral ideals, religion, political aspirations, education, professional obligations, love, death, the law, sports, mystical experience, art and creativity, logic, mathematics, freedom, and the meaning of life – philosophy is no less than the pursuit of a deep and systematic understanding of everything. It is the central academic discipline, drawing together questions and knowledge from all the other disciplines and attempting to integrate them with personal experience so that one achieves a greater understanding of oneself and one's place in the order of reality. The Department of Philosophy offers major, minor, and certificate programs at the undergraduate level and four courses that may be taken by graduate students who are seeking advanced degrees in other areas. Courses in philosophy at every level are especially well suited to developing excellence in critical thinking and analysis, a good grasp of intellectual history, tolerance, objectivity, intellectual curiosity, clear and logical expression of ideas in speech and writing, and the habit of thinking things through for oneself.

After college, philosophy majors typically continue their education in graduate school where they earn the professional credentials to pursue vocations in fields such as law, medicine, business, information technology, ministry, and education. Even with just an undergraduate degree in philosophy, students are attractive to employers, especially to employers looking for adaptability, good thinking and writing skills, and the ability to work with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Philosophy majors become particularly adept at examining information and coming to good judgments based on information. Recent graduates of the FHSU major program in philosophy have taken up professions as diverse as teacher, businessman, philosophical counselor, lawyer, minister, doctor, museum educator, data specialist, designer of legal software, tennis pro, and rodeo cowboy.

The mission of the Department of Philosophy is to create the opportunity for student development of the philosopher's knowledge and wisdom, skills and abilities, and attitudes and values.

**B. Departmental Goals, Objectives, and Strategic Priorities**

Our *meta-goal* is to produce graduates who are:

**Knowledgeable** – They know of past and continuing achievements of philosophical inquiry;

**Logical** – They reason in a logical, clear, analytical, and organized fashion;

**Intellectually civilized** – They will counteract intellectual provincialism in both of its two main forms, namely, narrow vocationalism and an uncritical assumption of the limitations of one's time and place;

**Reflective** – They will subject assumptions and behavior – their own and others' – to evaluation and appropriate improvement;

**Wise** – They will understand reality and act in a way appropriate to that understanding.

The list of *specific goals and expected learning outcomes* that follows resulted from departmental discussion and reflection upon both the nature of philosophy and the ideal characteristics of our graduates. The philosophy program is aimed at enabling students to acquire three different types of attributes: knowledge or other cognitive states, skills or abilities, and attitudes or values. These different classes of attributes are reflected in our goals. The first goal focuses on the development of knowledge of the major figures, strands, and eras of philosophy. The second goal focuses on the development and use of skills characteristic of philosophy and intellectual inquiry more generally. The third goal returns to the knowledge category, and it directs our attention toward some of the traditional topics of philosophy. Our fourth and last goal is aimed at encouraging within the student some valued attitudes.

**Goal 1** – To acquire knowledge of the development of metaphysics, value theory, epistemology, and logic. The learner can (1) explain the features, strengths, and weaknesses of a variety of philosophical systems: those of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Kant, and Wittgenstein; (2) identify the primary questions and responses to those questions in metaphysics, value theory, epistemology, and logic; (3) identify the primary questions, responses, and figures of four different periods in philosophical history: the ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary.

**Goal 2** – To recognize and employ logical techniques. The learner (1) analyzes the reasoning of himself or another; (2) identifies the type of inductive or deductive reasoning; (3) displays the structure of the reasoning in a manner understandable to a non-professional; (4) evaluates the validity of the reasoning.

**Goal 3** – To recognize alternative conceptions of man, God, and the universe and the possible relations among them. The learner is able to explain and evaluate (1) the four major arguments for the existence of God, the ontological, the cosmological, the teleological, and the moral arguments; (2) the major argument contesting the existence of God, namely, the problem of evil; (3) four different theories of the nature and proper conduct of human life; (4) four different theories of the ultimate nature of the physical universe; (5) three different theories of the worth or value of the physical universe.

**Goal 4** – To employ their knowledge of different value systems in coming to individual conclusions and in applying these conclusions to their thought. These program goals are not just means of securing, but also important constituents of, the goals of the university as a whole.

**C. Department Productivity and Distinctive Accomplishment**

1. FY09 continued to be another year of transition for the department faculty as Drs. Rich Hughen and Steve Tramel continued their phased retirement, each teaching full time for one semester. We added Professor Jason Southworth to teach full-time in the fall semester for our China classes while Professor Ruth Tallman covered for Dr. Rice's classes while on sabbatical in S09. Because the Department of Philosophy has a strong major program, it is able to attract and retain top-quality teacher-scholar-servants. In addition to producing an outstanding level of SCH, the philosophy department faculty remain dedicated and talented teachers across the board, as witnessed by outstanding TEVAL scores and recognition from students. We have had several Mortar Board Top Professor Awards and Pilot Award nominees in recent years. Professor Tallman also won the University of Oklahoma's Kenneth R. Merrill Graduate Teaching Award this past academic year.
2. The philosophy department continues its recent pattern of growth, maintaining 15-20 majors in the program over the last few years. We graduated five majors this spring, including Ms. Katie Edwards who won the Torch Award. The graduates of the major program who chose to go to graduate school in our discipline found themselves well prepared to succeed there and thereafter in their careers. We have four recent graduates attending Ph.D. programs in philosophy and an equal number attending law school. Many of these students earned full scholarships. Several other recent graduates are now successful philosophy professors at excellent schools (for example: University of Kansas, University of Oklahoma, Marquette University, Benedictine College, The University of California at Santa Clara, Cornell University, Syracuse University, the United States Military Academy at West Point).
3. The academic unit continues to be among the most energetic and effective in providing distance education through the Virtual College, especially by supplying core courses for the Master of Liberal Studies program and our China partnerships. This fall we are currently scheduled to teach twenty eight classes in the Virtual College. In addition to teaching these classes, our faculty have also been involved in the revisions of VC classes like IDS401, IDS801, IDS802 and PHIL120 as well as the creation of new VC courses like PHIL100: General Logic and PHIL201: Political Philosophy for the new BA in Political Management .
4. The philosophy department also continues to reach out in service to the local and regional community. For example, faculty and students provide various annual workshops and experiences for the gifted high school students in our Northwest Kansas region as well as for their teachers and facilitators. Our department also hosted the three-day *Mountain Plains Philosophy Conference* in F08. Our faculty have also presented for local audiences like *Times Talk*, *Science Café* and *Democracy Matters*.
5. The weekly pro-seminar meetings at which members of the philosophy faculty work together on their scholarly projects and share their experiences and suggestions for how to be more effective classroom teachers have been a highly productive tool for faculty development. In terms of scholarship, the tenure-track faculty are currently working on at least three book length research projects. We also encourage some of our strongest majors to pursue research papers at juried undergraduate philosophy conferences and mentor their progress. Seven students have presented at such conferences in the last three years.

## II. DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCE METRICS

### A. Department Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
<b>Freshmen</b>	1	1	2	0	0
<b>Transfer Students</b>	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Undergraduate (first majors/second majors)</b>	16/6	15/5	18/4	9/5	7/4
<b>Major Retention</b>	50%	60%	93%	44.44%	25.00%
<b>Undergraduate Student Credit Hours</b>	4101	4454	5446	4955	5317
<b>Graduate Student Credit Hours</b>	959	948	797	891	595
<b>Tenured or Tenure-track Faculty (Headcount)</b>	4	4	4	5	5
<b>Non Tenure-Track Faculty (Headcount)</b>	2	1	1	1	1.5
<b>Other Faculty (Headcount/Sections Taught)</b> [OTHER FACULTY AT 4 SECTIONS = 1 FTE FORMULA; INCLUDE NUMBER OF FTE AND SECTIONS TAUGHT]	4.75 11/41	4.75 11/42	5.0 12/46	4.25 10/34	5.75 8/49
<b>Undergraduate Degrees</b>	2	1	9	3	5
The total SCH listed here for FY2009 is impressive, though not as high as they might be under different ways of formulating our contributions. NOTE: Dr. Murphy was not originally listed as counting under non tenure-track faculty headcount for FY 2008 and FY2009 in the materials supplied from the Provost's office, so I changed it to reflect his presence in both FY2008 and FY2009. Also, Professor Jason Southworth taught full-time, temporary for during the fall semester 2008 only, so I added .5 to our total for FY2009.					
Number of books, book chapters, and <b>refereed</b> articles published	10	10	7	3	2
Percent of faculty publishing <b>refereed</b> books, chapters, or articles	30%	30%	20%	16%	7%
Number of <b>non-refereed</b> articles and presentations	1	1	3	3	8
Percent of faculty publishing <b>non-refereed</b> articles or presentations	30%	20%	20%	30%	38%
Number of scholarly performances and other creative activities	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of faculty in scholarly performances or other creative activities	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of external grant applications submitted/percent of faculty submitting	0	0	1/25%	1/25%	0
Total number of funded external grants/percent of faculty funded	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/25%	0
NOTE: Our non-tenure track faculty (eight) are figured in these figures. Much of our tenure-track faculty research					

Key Performance Indicator	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
has been devoted to book length work, though nothing was published this past year. In addition, Dr. Rice was on a sabbatical in S09. The department hosted the Mountain Plains Philosophy Conference in F08 and many of our younger faculty are also becoming involved in presenting papers or research expertise to the local and regional communities. See the attached bibliography for a more detailed accounting of our research activities.					
Direct Outcome 1 [SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME MEASURE]	PHIL499; Senior Thesis	PHIL499; Senior Thesis Grade B or above 1/1: 100%	PHIL499; Senior Thesis Grade B or above 7/8: 78%	PHIL499; Senior Thesis Grade B or above 3/5: 60%	PHIL499; Senior Thesis Grade B or above 3/4: 75%
Direct Outcome 2 [SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME MEASURE]				High Quality Senior Portfolio (incomplete)	High Quality Senior Portfolio (incomplete)
Indirect Indicator 1 [SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME INDICATOR]				TEVALs Q1 Dept. Summary: F07/4.25 S08/4.30	TEVALs Q1 Dept. Summary: F08/4..23 S09/4.34
Indirect Indicator 2 [SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOME INDICATOR]			Senior Survey & Interview	Senior Survey & Interview	Senior Survey & Interview
Senior students' Level of Academic Challenge			64.11	58.39	70.27
Senior students' Active and Collaborative Learning			49.21	54.76	50.79
Senior students' Student-Faculty Interaction			60.00	53.33	60.00
Senior students' Enriching Educational Experiences			22.49	56.35	40.21
Senior students' Supportive Campus Environment			64.81	61.11	72.22
We continue to learn from and improve PHIL499: Senior Thesis which is our primary direct learning outcome. Although we had hoped to implement a portfolio project for select majors this past year, the chair's absence for sabbatical hampered those efforts. We also investigated implementing a standardized logic test from an outside institute, but decided against it.					
[NOTE: Departments may pick up to three key performance indicators they currently measure but are not captured above. These measures could be used to track departmental results on specific yearly goals. Examples might include: number of SRPs attended, number of new freshmen contacted. (These will vary by department based on goals.)]					
Outcome/Indicator 1 [SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE MEASURE 1]	none	none	none	none	none
Outcome/Indicator 2 [SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE MEASURE 2]					

Key Performance Indicator	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
Outcome/Indicator 3 [SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE MEASURE 3]					
Briefly note 2-3 improvements over the last year prompted from the above indicators.					

**C. Department Quality Initiatives and Results**

FY2009 Quality Initiatives	Results
To redevelop some of our older and most important virtual college classes, especially: (1) IDS401: Ethics in the Professions and Business, (2) IDS 801 Introduction to Graduate Liberal Studies and (3) IDS 802 Ways of Knowing in Comparative Perspective as well as possible others. We plan to have these first three ready for rollout between F08 and S10 for various constituencies, both domestic and international.	Revisions for IDS401 are complete, Professor Tj Reilley doing the lion’s share of the work, with Dr. Rice contributing four video lectures and some oversight. Dr. Timothy Murphy has worked with the MLS Director and the department of philosophy to outline needed changes to IDS801& IDS802. He has submitted revision proposals to the VC and has also secured Track I reassigned time to work on the revisions in F09. Dr. Rice also created a new VC course in U08, PHIL201: Political Philosophy for the new BA in political management arranged with our China partners. Two sections of this class will be added to the F09 schedule for the first time. Professor Ruth Tallman completed revisions to PHIL120: Introduction to Philosophy in S09 and is awaiting final VC approval with hopes to teach it this fall.
Create a “Philosophy Major Handbook” that would help clarify the assessment and advising procedures as well as research resources to help our students succeed.	The bulk of the handbook is complete, and is being circulated among faculty for final revisions, additions, etc. We hope to have the handbook ready for the fall 2009 semester.

FY2010 Quality Initiatives	Responsible Party, Resources, and Plan
The department will continue its work in revising and adding to its virtual college classes, including IDS801 & 802 as well as IDS400. We will also try to add another new course before F10, giving us a minor in philosophy available through the VC.	Responsible Party: Gene Rice, with various course developers Resources Needed: Track I Reassigned time for IDS801/802, CTELT assistance and VC funding/approval for all new and revised courses.
Continuing Review of Affinity Diagram	Responsible Party: Gene Rice in consultation with department Resources Needed: Proseminar time Plan: We hope to finish our previous work in revising the first two columns of the affinity diagram “Characterisitcs” and Expected Learner Outcomes” by summer 2010, then moving on to mesh this with some curricular changes and assessment issues in the following year.

**D. Institutional Quality Results**

FY2009 University Initiatives	Department Activities/Results
Increase access and retention for Hispanic students	
Increase the quantity and quality of K-12 teachers educated	
Improve undergraduate students' foundational skills	<p>Philosophy, by its nature, involves intensive work in both critical thinking and writing skills. Our majors excel in such skills as suggested in the NSSE scores listed above. Our department regularly offers multiple sections of PHIL100: General Logic, both on campus and now in VC sections. We also integrate these skills in most of our other classes. We continue to employ and improve our capstone course PHIL499: Senior Thesis, which includes a research paper and public defense.</p>
Enhance physical wellness of students, faculty, and staff	
Internationalize the campus and curriculum	<p>The philosophy department continues to be heavily involved in our international partnerships, including providing a newly revised IDS401:Ethics in the Professions &amp; Business hybrid class for Tak Ming, and SNU. This fall we are teaching seven sections of IDS401 in China. In addition, we have developed a new VC class, PHIL201: Political Philosophy, for the BA program in political management at SNU. We are offering two sections this fall. We also regularly teach on campus courses like PHIL160: Philosophy of Eastern Religions as well as an on campus section of IDS801/802 for Chinese graduate students studying at FHSU. We also co-developed Introduction to Islam and hosted a Fulbright Scholar visit. Finally, we earned a College of Arts and Sciences Diversity Awareness Grant (F08).</p>

### III. FY2009 STRATEGY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

#### A. Departmental Reflection of Strengths, Needs, Opportunities, and Threats

Current Strengths	Current Needs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Faculty: both on campus and adjunct faculty work extremely hard. They are committed to their roles as teachers, servants and scholars.</li> <li>2) Strong major program: we graduated 19 students over the past three, and averaged 20 majors over the past several years, roughly triple the number of majors in 2002.</li> <li>3) Administrative Support: our assistant consistently does an excellent job administering the many aspects of our Virtual, International and MLS courses with all of our faculty (in addition to the usual departmental responsibilities).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Tenure-track for the MLS core position</li> <li>2) Full-time year around position for International Partnerships</li> <li>3) Continuing need for more applied ethics: IDS400, IDS401 and PHIL340 as requested by other departments (Nursing, Leadership, Justice Studies, Sociology, etc.)</li> <li>4) Continuing to build in assessment at all levels</li> </ol>
Future Opportunities	Future Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) We have the opportunity to create a minor in philosophy available entirely on-line.</li> <li>2) We have the opportunity to re-invigorate and continue to help build a solid MLS program by helping revise the core courses.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Budget cuts may imperil our attempts to replace retiring faculty members in the coming years.</li> <li>2) A problem of inadequate support: efforts to replace reliance on adjuncts with staffing by full-time, tenure track faculty members seem never to go anywhere in the end. This is especially problematic in staffing classes for our International partners.</li> <li>3) Lack of administrative time to ensure quality of VC classes, oversee VC class revisions or new courses and handle problems with our international offerings.</li> </ol>

#### B. Opportunities for Improvement

Long-Term Strategic Initiatives	Resources Required	Expected Result
Finish creating an on-line minor program by adding at least one more new philosophy course, and revising IDS400.	For each created course, the standard Virtual College pay for creating a new on-line course, and a substantial commitment of time by faculty to create these needed courses for us.	An on-line minor program that will serve many people well.
Add two, full-time, tenure-track faculty members to teach sections of IDS 400 and IDS 401, where we continue to see high demand, on-	The allocation of two, full-time, tenure-track positions at the Assistant Professor level, and the appropriate financial resources to	Dependably solid, long-term, stability in the teaching of IDS 400 and IDS 401 from faculty members who will contribute as well to departmental

campus and virtually, domestic and internationally. This would also free up time for faculty to develop virtual classes in load.	fund these positions.	service, strategic planning, and scholarly development.

#### IV. SUPPORTING MATERIALS

##### A. Department Degree Program Affinity Diagram(s)

See attachment

##### B. Department Staffing Plan

See attachment

##### C. Bibliography of Departmental Scholarly Activity

See attachment

##### D. Department Program Assessment Results

Copies of all assessment documents and reports are available upon request.

##### E. Other Departmental Information

None

**General Parameters**

1. No more than 20 pages, excluding appendix information.
2. Report submitted electronically to Dean, Assistant Provost for Quality Management, and Provost.
3. Note deadlines attached below.

**Annual Timeline for Department Annual Report**

March 1	Draft template distributed to Deans.
April 15	Final template and Directions distributed to Department Chairs. Selected enrollment data (fall 20 <sup>th</sup> day counts) distributed to Chairs and Deans in the departmental template.
June 1	Student system information (graduates, SCH) delivered to Chairs.
June 1	Final cutoff date for elements to be considered in the Department's Annual Report.
June 30	Complete Department Annual Report due to Deans, Assistant Provost for Quality Management, and Provost. Submit electronically.
August 15	Completed College Annual Report due to Assistant Provost for Quality Management and Provost.