SELF-STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM 2015

SECTION I: DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAM

1.   Overview of the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department: the Philosophy Program

a.   Mission of the academic unit

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies houses the philosophy program and the religious studies program. In addition to providing majors and minors in the two disciplines, the department offers integrated BA/MLAS degree programs in both disciplines. The philosophy program provides substantial support of general education and First Year Experience (FYE) courses.

The department's curricular obligations are grounded in and derived from the fundamental principles and values of the humanistic tradition. Primary among those principles is the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom as ends in themselves. These are worthy educational values that provide the foundation for academic excellence, a core value of the university. We endeavor to create and sustain a diverse and intellectually-curious learning environment, recognizing that in such a robust environment, academic excellence flourishes.

The philosophy program aims to develop clear and concise thinking in our students so they will be prepared for success in any career they might choose. All philosophy courses are designed to develop foundational intellectual skills including critical thinking, problem solving, analytical reasoning, and the ability to communicate clearly both verbally and in writing. These intellectual skills are emphasized daily in every philosophy class, and provide graduates with the foundation for success and flexibility in the workforce and excellent preparation for graduate school or professional training in law, business, or medicine.

b.   Centrality to the mission of the University

Philosophy as a discipline is the foundation for all other academic pursuits. Universities were born out of the discipline and that is reflected in current universities. Philosophy has always been and continues to be a central discipline for any university or liberal arts college. All state universities in Illinois and total of 30 Illinois colleges offer a BA in philosophy. Nearly every university of significant reputation has a strong philosophy program, ranging from Ivy League schools, to major conference schools, to regional public universities, to small liberal arts schools, to more technical schools like MIT or Cal Tech. The importance of philosophy as a discipline is developed in more detail at 3.c. below.

The mission statement of WIU (from the 2012-2022 Strategic Plan) is "Western Illinois University empowers students, faculty, and staff to lead dynamic and diverse communities. We provide student-centered undergraduate and graduate programs characterized by innovative

teaching, research, and service, grounded in interdisciplinary, regional and global perspectives. We engage our students in educational opportunities guided by a professional and diverse faculty and staff in collaboration with alumni and community partners." The core values of WIU are Academic Excellence, Educational Opportunity, Social Responsibility, and Personal Growth.

The philosophy program directly supports the mission of the university with its student centered undergraduate program and graduate level courses that are grounded in fostering an appreciation of a variety of perspectives on the most important questions in life. This can be expressed in more detail through the core values of WIU.

Academic Excellence: Courses in the philosophy program are focused on engaging students in the fundamentals of a liberal arts education: critical thinking, complex problem solving, and the development of polished oral and written communication skills. It is hard to overstate the value of these skills; they are the top four skills employers wish colleges and universities would emphasize more (see 3.c. for details).

In particular, our faculty members focus on promoting academic excellence in the classroom. Faculty members have recently received awards including the College of Arts and Sciences Excellence in Teaching Award, the Honors College Excellence in Mentoring Award, and the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award from the CITR. In addition to awards, student evaluations are a measure of the success in accomplishing the aims of our courses. The philosophy faculty has an impressive overall mean of 4.52 on student evaluations from the most recent semester (Spring, 2015), while maintaining high standards for success. Over the past five years, the lower division philosophy courses have an average GPA of 2.46 and upper division courses have an average GPA of 2.85, both within very reasonable ranges for courses that require analytical rigor, though below the overall mean of 2.98 for all WIU courses during the same time period.

Educational Opportunity: Our Mary Olive Woods scholarships support high achieving students, with scholarships of $6,000 and $3,000 per year available. For 2015-16, we removed the limit on the $3,000 annual awards available and have already awarded $15,000 in scholarships this year. As we continue to publicize the availability of these scholarships, more high achieving students are attracted to the philosophy program. The addition of an adjunct faculty member and the publicity regarding the changes in scholarships are just beginning to yield results of increased majors (see enrollment information below, Section I.2.b.).

In addition, the MOW funds have brought in some of the greatest living philosophers for our annual MOW Lecture. For example, past lecturers have included Arthur Fine, Martha Nussbaum, Ernan McMullin, Sally Haslanger, and Alvin Plantinga, with another prominent philosopher scheduled for 2016 (Peter van Inwagen).

The Pre-Law option has become a successful recruiting tool both for the Philosophy program and for WIU. A mean of 34% of philosophy majors have enrolled in the Pre-Law option since it was

introduced in the 2010-2011 year, including four incoming freshmen and one transfer student for the Fall, 2015 semester. With the relatively recent development of the option and the small size of the department, graduates have been relatively few, but nevertheless, several alums of the program have been successful in law school and are currently practicing law, and two recent graduates are currently in law school.

Personal Growth: Philosophy courses provide a context for students to explore crucial questions relevant to personal growth, such as: How should I live? What should I value? Is there a God? Is faith rational? How can I know what is true? What is the best way to govern ourselves? What is justice, courage, or wisdom? All of our faculty members have had numerous informal conversations with students about these questions that are initially raised in a class, but then continue to be explored long after the class is over.

On the more practical side of personal growth, our student group (the Student Philosophical Association or SPA) provides additional opportunities for students to present and defend their own philosophical theses, giving them confidence for future presentations in the workforce, graduate school, or professional school. Recognizing that historically, we have done little to assist students in finding employment, we are currently developing a series of workshops designed to help students transition from college to their career, and are creating an internship program.

Social Responsibility: Philosophy develops a keen awareness of and a desire to work against forces undermining freedom and justice, an abiding sense of social responsibility, and an appreciation of the diversity of thought and belief systems.

Experiences students have in the philosophy program have provided the intellectual grounding and inspiration for taking responsibility through social activities such as volunteering for Head Start, serving in the Peace Corp, working for social justice through short term public events and longer term careers, serving in the ministry, and participating in many other activities where students take responsibility for being a positive influence on their world.

c.   Outstanding characteristics of the unit

Classes are taught by excellent professors who promote the acquisition of intellectual skills and lifelong learning. Students are able to take relatively small classes taught by experienced and well-trained faculty with terminal degrees from highly ranked universities and no courses are taught by teaching assistants. These small class sizes provide students the opportunity to gain knowledge and acquire important skills that will help them during their college years and throughout their lives. The department has a staff of four tenured faculty with one serving as chair (a fifth tenured faculty member, Sue Martinelli-Fernandez, is serving as Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and has not taught courses since 2009), and one Unit B instructor who first taught at WIU in FY15. Their educational backgrounds are diverse, with graduate and undergraduate degrees earned from a wide range of reputable colleges and universities

throughout the United States. In addition to enjoying an excellent reputation for teaching, department faculty members are professionally active and participate in service activities in the university, community, and professional associations. All courses emphasize critical reasoning, complex problem solving, critical reading and clear writing.

For FY 14, we developed a $6,000 Mary Olive Woods (MOW) Academic Excellence Award; a $3,000 MOW Academic Achievement Award; and a MOW Academic Award for up to $750/semester. For FY16, we removed the previous limit on the number of Academic Achievement Awards available. The amounts awarded are shown in the table below, with a substantial increase in FY14. We also have sought to publicize more effectively the availability of these scholarships, as well as giving more recognition to student recipients of these awards, as means of recruitment.

	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
MOW Scholarships Awarded	$2,000	$2,600	$4,500	$6,750	$9,000	$15,000 (as of 9/20/15)

The total MOW Scholarships amount awarded to Philosophy majors from FY11-FY16 is $39,850, with the bulk of that in the last three years.

The program provides strong support for General Education through the following courses: PHIL 105, 120, 140, 205, and 220 are general education courses and enroll very well. (See Section I.2.b. for enrollment details) PHIL 120 and 140 fulfill requirements for programs in three different colleges at WIU.

The Student Philosophical Association (SPA) is a vibrant, student-run and organized hub of philosophical activity. The student group meets every other week, typically with a student presenting on a philosophical topic. The discussions are lively and faculty members often participate, modeling philosophical discussions. Over the past year, three different undergraduate research projects were initiated at SPA. One of these projects was further developed and received second place in the podium presentations at the Undergraduate Research Day and one led to a student/faculty member co-authored paper that was accepted at a professional philosophy conference. SPA provides excellent opportunities for students to hone their philosophical skills, to sharpen their verbal communication skills, to learn to present complex ideas to a group, and to develop an ability to accept criticism while defending their positions.

d.   Facilities (overview of space and equipment, maintenance plan if applicable)

The Philosophy and Religious Studies Department is allocated the following rooms: the main office (Morgan 456), which adjoins the office for the department chair (Morgan 458); two two-person shared offices, Morgan 412 and 414, and three one-person offices (Morgan 415A, 415B, 486). The department has two classrooms (Morgan 228 and 230), both recently refurbished and updated with electronic equipment with funding provided by the Mary Olive Woods Foundation account. The department has two small storage rooms in the main office.

e. Budget and planning process

Philosophy and Religious Studies FY2015 Appropriated Budget	
INCOME	
Initial Budget load at 75%	5,583
Secondary Budget load 20%	1,489
Appropriated Total (95% of initial budget)	**7,072**
Provost's Travel Support -Department	1,400
Provost Travel Awards	1,530
CAS Conference Registration Support	400
CITR Excellence Award used for travel	375
Total Travel Support	**3,705**
Total Income	**10,777**
EXPENSES	
Electronics & Software	1,389.91
Office Supplies	1,586.59
Photocopier	1,084.48
Postage	19.60
Promotion and Recruitment	1,042.11
Student Grant for conference participation	30.00
Telecom	1,404.19
Travel	3,705.00
Total Expenses	**10,261.88**

In terms of personnel expenses, from FY14 to FY15, our department saved the university around $70,000 by losing a line in Religious Studies held by a full professor with 15 years of service and using a portion of that salary to hire a Unit B person in Philosophy. Even if we hired a tenure track Unit A position in Philosophy as needed to continue our breadth of courses, especially in

the area of ethics, the savings would still be substantial–approximately $50,000. See Section III. 1. c. for more details.

Planning for FY16:

With a very limited budget, we will continue to use resources to keep the departmental operations running through expenditures on office supplies, the department's photocopier, postage, and the telephone lines. In the upcoming year, we plan to decrease spending on electronics & software to provide more support for promotion and recruitment activities. We make use of available support for travel to professional conferences from sources external to the department, including the Provost's Office, the Dean's Office, and our Mary Olive Woods Foundation account, as no travel is supported directly through the department's appropriated funds.

2.   Overview of the Philosophy B.A. program

a.   Program goals

The primary goal is to foster and develop in students the intellectual skills needed to write logically, analyze divergent viewpoints, to discern the key issue in a dispute, and to give good reasons for their beliefs both orally and in writing.

The second goal of the philosophy program is to give students a basic understanding of the significant contributions of philosophers in addressing such topics as the nature and justification of moral values and scientific explanations, the relation of thought and action, the grounds for deciding among alternative accounts of reality, and the nature of reasoning and argumentation.

A third goal is to provide students with a broad-based, liberal education with strong analytical and communication skills to enable them to pursue a variety of career options, such as education, law, counseling, business, and the ministry, and to function as responsible citizens in our democratic society.

A fourth goal is to encourage lifelong learning by modeling our own efforts to continue learning through research, by participating in the intellectual activities on campus, and by encouraging students to take advantage of current and future opportunities to learn both inside and outside the classroom.

These goals of the philosophy program directly relate to the university's goal of achieving academic excellence. The program not only serves the needs of students majoring in philosophy, but through its minor in philosophy and through its general education offerings in the humanities, its reach is extended to the general population of the student body.

b.   Student demand (enrollment history, credit hours generated, course enrollment history)

In our Program Review Self Study completed in the spring of 2013, we stated: "Going forward, we predict a significant reduction in SCH production with the current staffing, a SCH cliff if you will. While there is a consistent demand for philosophy classes on this campus, current staffing will not be able to meet that demand." This was due to known past and future staff reduction at that time. This came to fruition beginning in fall, 2013, as was predicted. As with all discovery majors, when SCH drops due to staffing reductions, the number of majors decline shortly thereafter.

For more complete context to the following figures, it should be noted that comparisons in numbers of majors, SCH, and degrees conferred in recent years are a bit misleading for a variety of reasons. First is the fact that undergraduate enrollment on the WIU Macomb campus has steadily declined from 9,292 in 2010 to 7,628 in 2015 (17.9%), and a reduction in our SCH and majors corresponds with that general student population decrease. In addition, circumstances particular to our small department are relevant, since any change in one individual's teaching load has a significant effect on the program. Since 2009, when she became Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Susan Martinelli-Fernandez no longer teaches courses, but has not been replaced. In 2009, we were able to provide a total of 40 sections of courses. In 2011, one adjunct was not retained due to immigration laws and was not replaced due to university-wide budgetary considerations, reducing the number of sections offered to 32. In the fall of 2012, the remaining adjunct passed away and was not replaced also due to university-wide budgetary concerns, reducing the sections offered to 24. In the fall of 2013, one person was on sabbatical and it was the first year of a decreased teaching load for the current chair. To sum up, in every year from 2009 through 2013, the number of philosophy courses offered decreased, for a total reduction of more than 50% of sections offered. This consistent annual decline in courses was primarily due to the campus-wide budgetary situation and decreasing enrollments at WIU that prompted decisions not to replace faculty. Our philosophy program was disproportionally reduced by attrition. Despite this reduction, we continued to support the FYE program, offering 22 FYE sections from 2010-2014 with enrollments for those sections capped at 22 or lower instead of the typical limit of 45, thus limiting our potential SCH production.

Philosophy is a discovery major with the vast majority of incoming students not knowing what the discipline is. As such, the continued reductions in the number of lower division, general education courses offered and seats available resulted in a steady reduction of majors during the past five years. By 2013 the predictable effects on the program were evident, with an enrollment low of 10 majors plus 3 second majors. In the fall of 2014, the program added an adjunct, Dr. Abraham Graber. Throughout the hiring process we emphasized one's ability to teach and attract students, and the results speak for themselves. The addition of Dr. Graber yielded a large increase in SCH and a corresponding 46.7% increase in the total number of majors since Graber began teaching at WIU (fall, 2014 majors: 15, fall, 2015 majors: 22). Unfortunately, we have a tenured faculty member on sabbatical again this fall, so SCH production will inevitably dip again for 2015-2016.

Despite the consistent reductions in course offerings from 2010-2014, our courses enroll well with an average of 92.8% of seats available filled in our lower division courses and 86.1% of seats available filled in all course during the same time. As our majors continue to increase, we expect the upper division courses to fill at a higher capacity than in recent years, and the number of degrees conferred will eventually increase also. Please see the table below for data regarding enrollments. In order to create consistent tables, the ten day fall count is provided for the year identified, but other data includes the entire year starting that fall. E.g., The number of majors in 2010 is the fall ten day count, but the percent of courses filled includes the fall of 2010 and the spring of 2011.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Mean
Majors	19	16	16	10	12	17	15
Second Majors	3	5	6	3	3	5	4.2
Total Majors	22	21	22	13	15	22	19.2
percent of lower division courses filled	90.8%	94.4%	91.1%	94.2%	89.6%	96.8%	92.8%
Percent of all courses filled	88.3%	91.1%	81.7%	84.3%	83.8%	87.1%	86.1%
SCH	3602	3357	2472	1763	2839	N/A	
SCH/staff year*	781	867	784	649	N/A	N/A	770
Discipline cost/credit hour	134	138	180	220^	N/A	N/A	168
State average cost/credit hour	133	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
*as calculated by IRP							
^one on sabbatical							

Note that from 2012 to 2013, the calculated SCH/Philosophy staff year decreased, but the percentage of seats filled in the classes increased. This apparent discrepancy is due to a faculty member being on sabbatical for the fall semester of 2013.

c.   Profile of majors

Please see above for data on the number of majors and the table below for degrees conferred. Our graduates have gone on to careers in law, academics, information technology, web design, firefighting, agricultural business, health care, union relations, construction management, military service, ministry, and nonprofit work. While there is great variety, the most common career path is in law. Among the law schools our graduates have attended are University of Illinois, Indiana University (Maurer School of Law), John Marshall, and Kent. They have gone on to careers in private practice, as public defenders, and with large firms. Others pursued philosophy in graduate school (e.g., University of Southern California, the University of Illinois, and Northern Illinois University) and are currently teaching.

We often have successful double majors, especially with LEJA, but also currently have one student with a double major in chemistry and philosophy and another double major with physics. We are developing a strategy to attract more double majors. As described above, while we have a fair proportion of transfer students, most of our students major after taking a philosophy course to fulfill a general education requirement. In the past, we have had very few incoming freshmen declaring philosophy as a major (0-2 per year), but in the fall, 2014 we had three, and this fall (2015) we have five. We believe this is partially due to a concerted effort at contacting prospective students and using our department web page, posters, and brochures to provide students with information about our scholarships and the practical advantages of majoring in philosophy, as well as several meetings to educate admissions counselors on the merits of majoring in philosophy (such as those described below at 3.c.).

d.   Degrees conferred

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Average
Primary Major	3	6	6	0	2	3.4
Second Major*	0	2	2	2	1	1.4
Total	3	8	8	2	3	4.8
*specific names available upon request						

Second majors fulfill all requirements for the major and are eligible for our MOW scholarships, with recent second major graduates receiving more than $8,000 in scholarship awards. We currently have one second major who is staying at WIU for an extra year while taking only philosophy courses in order to fulfill the requirements for the major.

e.   Cost study information

	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	Mean
cost/credit hour	147	134	138	180	220^	N/A*	163
state average cost/credit hour	135	133	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
^One faculty member was on sabbatical and one moved to the position of chair, resulting in a 29.2% reduction of courses offered from FY13 and corresponding reduction in SCH. In addition, one faculty member received a promotion, which increased costs. *When it becomes available, FY15 will show a considerable cost reduction due to the addition of our adjunct at a lower salary and an increase in SCH as noted above.							

Another way to compare costs or the effectiveness of a program is to consider how many majors a program has for each teaching faculty member. The table below includes information from 2014, the last data available from IRP for the other Illinois public institutions. No information on the number of faculty members is available for years prior to 2014. For all departments considered, chairs are counted as a full teaching member, but not those holding higher administrative positions. If faculty members were identified as part time, they were not

included. Data from Chicago State, a small program, were not included in the IRP information. The bottom row shows the most recent information for our department, which indicated an increase while other schools have a downward trend.

School	Teaching Faculty Members (2014-15)	Majors (primary only, 2014, the last data available)	Majors/faculty
EIU	9	9	1
ISU	12	44	3.67
NEIU	9	18	2
NIU	14	32	2.29
SIU	12	20	1.67
SIUE	14	19	1.36
UIC	19	32	1.68
UI SPRING	12	26	2.17
U of I	24	60	2.5
WIU (2014 - for comparison)	**5**	**12**	**2.4**
AVE	13	27.2	2.09
WIU in 2015	**5 (2015)**	**15 (2015)**	**3.0 (2015)**

Please note that in 2014 WIU has the third highest majors/teaching faculty member ratio in the state at 2.4, well above the average of 2.09. In 2013 it was 3.33 and in 2015, it is 3.0 during a time when most state institutions are lowing majors.

3.   Relevant contextual information

a.   Description and evaluation of major changes in the program

Our 2012-2013 Program Review revealed the following (quoted from the external reviewer's report): "The design of the curriculum is highly efficient in its flexibility, ensuring that each student is adequately prepared for their chosen career or vocational path, regardless of the path. Despite this efficient flexibility, the degree requirements conform to national best practices within the discipline. . . The [MOW] scholarships set Western apart from its peers." The reviewer noted that although the program has comparatively few majors, it "more than compensates by serving the high demand for philosophy courses from non-majors throughout the university." The reviewer then warned about a need for additional faculty members, since WIU is the smallest program in the state.

The primary need in the department is for a Unit A faculty member whose primary specialization is in ethics. Current faculty members teach the minimal introductory ethics course and the moral theory course, but applied ethics courses have not been in the rotation for several years. As a result of the clear need for additional instructional support, we were granted permission to hire

an adjunct in philosophy for the fall of 2014, with the hope that this position would be converted to Unit A if the person hired was proficient. Our search was successful and we hired Dr. Abraham Graber, an ethicist who teaches applied ethics courses. This resulted in a sustainable philosophy program.

The new position was not a new budget line, but came from the Religious Studies budget after a Full Professor, John Simmons, retired and the Religious Studies program received no replacement. The cost savings was dramatic (approximately $70,000 per year—about 9% of our department's overall budget) and the results of adding an adjunct for philosophy were extremely positive. Our majors have increased from 15 in the fall of 2014 to 22 for the fall of 2015. Despite the extensive positive effects of adding an adjunct to the faculty, the philosophy program still remains very small compared to the other Illinois public universities that average 13 with a median of 12 teaching faculty. Our benchmark institutions average 9.33 with a median of 9 teaching faculty, compared to our 5. Dr. Graber has filled the deficit in the department as an ethicist and is teaching two specialized ethics courses this year (PHIL 333 Environmental Ethics and PHIL 220 Feminism and Ethics), however, without having a tenure track position, he is on the job market. Since he is on a non-tenured Unit B contract, he knows that this is a precarious position to be in with the budget challenges facing WIU. We have had recent discussions with LEJA about creating a cyber-ethics course for a potential Cyber Security program at WIU, but that would clearly be impossible without someone focusing on ethics.

b.   Description and evaluation of changes in the discipline or field

Philosophy is a discipline that is understandably slow to adopt major changes in areas of study. The only notable and recent development in philosophy is the rise of experimental philosophy, X-Phi as it is called. Only departments with a graduate program and cross over connections with psychology and cognitive science are likely to have X-phi in their programs. Since the department at WIU has no plans to develop a graduate program, we do not envision hiring someone with X-phi specialties.

c.   Societal need

Philosophy is a training ground for democratic citizenship, providing the skills and habits necessary for thoughtful decision making and responsible self-government. To fully participate in a democratic society, one must have the sort of critical thinking, reading, and communication skills that are enhanced by studying philosophy. The sheer volume of information in today's world requires an ability to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources of information. Because many beliefs and opinions are expressed in a free and open society, it is important to be able to analyze and evaluate viewpoints other than one's own. This requires being able to identify central issues in the debates that arise and an ability to discriminate between views that are supported by good reasons and those that are not. The capacity for self-reflection and a willingness to subject one's own beliefs and values to critical scrutiny are essential to social

progress. Democratic and pluralistic societies thus depend on citizens who exhibit the habits of mind instilled by the study of philosophy.

Many of the most pressing questions in today's global society are philosophical in nature. Scientists can tell us how to clone human beings, but not whether we ought to do so. Scientists can provide guidelines for the effective torture of suspected terrorists, but they cannot adequately speak to the justness of such practices. Scientists can show us evidence for global climate change, but both the question of a just response to the evidence and a defense of science's privileged epistemological position lie beyond the disciplines of the empirical sciences.

Contrary to popular stereotypes, philosophy is one of the most pragmatic majors in the university. Those outside the field of philosophy and the realm of academics recognize the discipline's importance. In a recent study it was found that more than 80% of employers desired that colleges and universities had a greater emphasis on critical thinking, analytical reasoning, complex problem solving, and effective communication both orally and in writing.[1] These skills are the top priorities identified by employers and precisely the skills developed in all philosophy courses on a nearly daily basis. A degree in philosophy provides the critical thinking skills and analytical reasoning skills needed for the typical graduate who will change careers five or six times after graduation. While 67% of employers believe most college graduates have the skills/knowledge to succeed in entry-level positions, only 44% believe that graduates have the skills to advance.[2] Philosophy majors develop those skills, and the rapid increase in salaries of philosophy graduates provide clear evidence that philosophy majors have precisely the skills needed to advance in their career or to change careers as needed. By mid-career philosophy majors are one of only three majors nationwide to double their (median) starting salary and are in the top 25% of all majors offered nationwide.[3] While earning a very respectable salary is not the aim of most students majoring in philosophy, the salaries earned by graduates are a reflection of the pragmatic value of the skills acquired by majoring in philosophy.

Major corporations understand the value of training in the humanities. Edward B. Rust Jr., chairman and CEO of State Farm Insurance Companies, states that "at State Farm, our employment exam does not test applicants on their knowledge of finance or the insurance business, but it does require them to demonstrate critical thinking skills" and "the ability to read for information, to communicate and write effectively, and to have an understanding of global integration."[4] These are skills consistently emphasized and developed in all philosophy courses.

---

[1] Hart Research Associates, "It Takes More than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success, p. 8.
[2] *Ibid*., p. 6.
[3] From Payscale.com, a highly regarded and continually updated source for salaries by major. See http://www.payscale.com/college-salary-report/majors-that-pay-you-back/bachelors for current salaries comparisons. (Accessed July 15, 2015)
[4] Paul Jay and Gerald Graff , "Fear of Being Useful," *Inside Higher Ed*, January 5, 2012.

The value of philosophy was extolled in a recent *Business Week* article, "Bernanke to Economists: More Philosophy, Please." The piece reported on a speech given by Federal Reserve Chair, Ben Bernanke, in which he spoke of the value of philosophy for the field of economics. Even more than traditional major corporations, tech companies recognize the value of philosophy. Linkedin, Flickr, PayPal, Overstock.com, and Slack Technologies were all founded by philosophy majors, and these corporations seek employees with philosophy majors. Stewart Butterfield, Slack's cofounder and CEO, is one example. In an interview with *Forbes* magazine, he stated "Studying philosophy taught me two things. I learned how to write really clearly. I learned how to follow an argument all the way down, which is invaluable in running meetings."[5] These skills honed by earning a philosophy degree are extremely practical and valuable in the daily routines of businesses, no matter how small or large.

Philosophy is arguably the best major for those planning to pursue a graduate or professional degree. Among the 25 most common majors of those taking the LSAT, students who major in philosophy consistently have the highest or second highest average scores.[6] Philosophy majors have the highest mean GRE scores of all majors, with the highest verbal and analytical reasoning scores of all majors.[7] They have higher average GMAT scores than any business major,[8] and even have the highest acceptance rate into medical school than any other major, significantly better than biology or chemistry.[9]

To sum up, those who study philosophy cultivate an appreciation of learning for its own sake, become better informed citizens, develop a wide array of intellectual skills, and are in a position to earn very good salaries.

Unfortunately, philosophy has a broad cultural stigma that denies these facts and depicts the discipline as a useless subject without any practical benefits at all. This is shown in movies, television, and especially unfortunate, by politicians and parents of prospective students who have laughed out loud at the idea of their son or daughter majoring in philosophy. We are working hard to dispel these mythical representations of philosophy. (See I.1.c. above and III.a. below)

d.   National trends in recruiting faculty

Faculty recruitment nationally has been hampered by the economic collapse of 2008, and subsequent reduction in positions. Philosophers of traditionally under-represented groups are highly sought after, but very difficult to find. In our 2014 search for a one year position, we

---

[5] "That 'Useless' Liberal Arts Degree Has Become Tech's Hottest Ticket," *Forbes*, August 17, 2015.
[6] Michael Nieswiadomy, "LSAT® Scores of Economics Majors: The 2012–13 Class Update," *The Journal of Economic Education*, Volume 45, Issue 1, 2014, pp. 71-74.
[7] http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/2010-11_gre_guide.pdf Accessed July 15, 2015.
[8] "Profile of GMAT Candidates, 2006–07 to 2010–11," the Graduate Management Admission Council.
[9] http://www.amsa.org/AMSA/Homepage/Publications/TheNewPhysician/2000/tnp275.aspx Accessed July 15, 2015.

received 80 applications, with most having their PhD in hand. Less than 15% of applicants were from underrepresented groups and many had not yet completed their degree.

4.   Curriculum

a.   Rationale for curriculum (major/minor, general education, service courses)

The major in philosophy requires four specific courses: Logic and Reasoning, Ancient Philosophy, Modern Philosophy, and the Writing in the Disciplines course, each of which is taught annually. This assures the student has a background in the foundational philosophical areas (e.g., logic, ancient and modern philosophy, moral philosophy, metaphysics and epistemology—the latter three being included in the history courses). These core courses provide the philosophical skills and background to succeed in other upper division courses. Along with the 10 semester hours in the core, majors are required to have an additional 24 semester hours with at least 15 hours at the 300-400 level. There is also a Pre-Law option that that requires 15 hours of directed electives related to moral, legal, or political theory. During the past academic year, we created an integrated BA/MLAS degree program that allows a student to earn a BA in philosophy and an MLAS in five years, instead of the typical six year schedule. This initiative will reduce costs and motivate some students to remain at WIU for an additional year. Along with the creation of the integrated program, we added graduate level status for all of our 400-level courses.   In addition to the MLAS students, this will provide the opportunity for graduate students from a wide variety of programs to take courses in philosophy. (Specific courses are listed toward the end of Section I. 4. c. below.)

The minor in philosophy requires six courses, three of which must be at the 300-400 level. The student taking a minor gains either a good overview of the broad areas of philosophy or a more specialized set of courses that fit his or her specific areas of concern. One of the main advantages of the flexibility is that students can take courses that fit their interests, but still acquire some of the primary intellectual skills that are emphasized in every philosophy course – critical thinking, complex problem solving, and communication skills.

A significant majority of students taking philosophy courses are non-philosophy majors fulfilling their general education requirements. But the philosophy program is also integral to other programs on campus, including two signature programs. The nursing major requires PHIL 120 (Contemporary Moral Problems). The Agricultural Business major requires either PHIL120 or PHIL 140 (Logic and Reasoning), and the Social Work major requires one lower division philosophy course. The Pre-Law Honors minor requires both PHIL 120 and PHIL 140. The History, Pre-Law option requires PHIL 205 (Philosophy, Law, and Society) and includes PHIL 420 (Philosophy of Law) as a directed elective. The Economics Pre-Law emphasis (within the directed electives) includes PHIL 120 and PHIL 140. We have been very supportive of the First Year Experience program, averaging more than four FYE courses per year from 2010-2014.

b.   Desired student learning outcomes

Our higher order assessment learning objectives are

1)"The student will improve analytical, formal, and critical reasoning skills by developing an understanding of the elementary principles of deductive and inductive logic and learning to apply that understanding in a variety of contexts."

2) "The student will develop an ability to understand and identify strengths and weakness of conflicting views and arguments about important and complex issues, and provide arguments that clearly defend a position against objections."

3) "The student will develop an ability to understand and identify strengths and weakness of conflicting views and arguments about important and complex issues of ancient philosophy, and provide arguments that clearly defend a position against objections." This includes demonstrating an understanding of the writings of the Pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle.

4)"The student will develop an ability to understand and identify strengths and weakness of conflicting views and arguments about important and complex issue in modern philosophy, and provide arguments that clearly defend a position against objections." This includes demonstrating an understanding of the writings of Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant.

5) "The student will gain an understanding of various human values and norms, what kind of rationale and argumentation might be provided for those values, and an ability to critically evaluate normative theories."

6) "In writing, the student will be able to articulate, defend, and critically evaluate views and arguments concerning a complex and controversial philosophical topic in an effective manner. The student will demonstrate an ability to conduct independent research on a topic chosen by the student."

Please see Appendices 1-3 for complete Assessment information.

c.   Coherence and overall design of curriculum and course offerings

One measure of coherence for an undergraduate program in philosophy is whether there are regular offerings in foundational philosophical areas (e.g., logic, ancient and modern philosophy, moral philosophy, metaphysics and epistemology). Having courses available in these areas is essential for any student going on to graduate school in philosophy and for any student to have a good understanding of philosophy. Courses in logic, ancient philosophy, and modern philosophy are taught annually, and are required for the major. As noted above, our adjunct whose primary specialization is in Ethics is on the job market seeking a tenure track position. We will need to maintain that position or preferably a tenure track Unit A position, in order to be able to offer our three applied ethics courses (business, medical, environmental), feminist ethics, or develop a cyber-ethics course.

For details, the following catalog portion describes the curriculum:

Degree Programs Bachelor of Arts—Philosophy All students seeking the Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy must complete I, II, and III.A or III.B below, and the foreign language/global issues requirement for the major#. The minimum semester hour requirement for the baccalaureate degree is 120 s.h.

I. University General Education and College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Requirements (p. 84)..60 s.h.

II. Core Courses...10 s.h.
PHIL 140, 300, 310, 312†

III. Options of Study (select A or B)

A. Philosophy

1. Directed Electives: 24 s.h. in Philosophy, with at least 15 s.h. at the 300 or 400 level...24 s.h.
2. Open Electives...6–10 s.h.
3. Any Minor...16–20 s.h.

B. Pre-Law

1. Directed Electives
a.Select three courses from: PHIL 205, 330, 400, 420, 440................................9 s.h.
b. Select two courses from: ECON 310; HIST 303; POLS 319, 410, 411, 448; SOC 355...6 s.h.
c. 9 s.h. in Philosophy, with at least 6 s.h.at the 300 or 400 level....................9 s.h.

2. Open Electives...6–10 s.h.

3. Any Minor...16–20 s.h.

#The foreign language/global issues graduation requirement may be fulfilled by successfully completing one of the following: 1) an intermediate foreign language requirement; 2) a General Education global issues course; 3) any major's discipline-specific global issues course; or 4) an approved study abroad program.

†PHIL 312 fulfills the Writing Instruction in the Disciplines (WID) graduation requirement.

The B.A. Philosophy/MLAS integrated program may use up to 9 s.h. of the following bridge courses in both the undergraduate degree in Philosophy and the Masters of Liberal Arts and Sciences degree: PHIL 400G/B Social and Political Philosophy, PHIL 405G/B Philosophy of

Religion, PHIL 415G/B Philosophy of Science, PHIL 420G/B Philosophy of Law, PHIL 425G/B Philosophy of Mind, and PHIL 440G/B Legal Reasoning.

d.   Methods of course delivery

As philosophy is best learned through dialogue and interaction, it thrives in a face to face environment and that is our primary method of offering courses. However, recognizing the needs of some students for more flexibility, especially in the summer session, we offer three of our most demanded courses online, with all three having a very successful enrollment record. The courses offered online are PHIL 120, Contemporary Moral Problems; PHIL 140, Logic and Reasoning; and PHIL 330, Moral Philosophy. At this time, we offer no hybrid courses, but our face to face offerings all make extensive use of Western Online for student resources.

e.   Measures used for assessment of student learning and assessment

Please see Appendices 1-3 for complete assessment information.

f.   Measures of program effectiveness (student/employer satisfaction, results of national certification tests, placement results, etc.)

Our majors end up in diverse careers, with many of them changing careers several times, except those who work in education or as attorneys. Students value the skills and flexibility afforded by the philosophy major. Some patterns were apparent among alumni. Several students who graduated from the program have been accepted at high quality graduate schools, including the University of Southern California, Ohio State University, University of Illinois, and Purdue University. Some of these pursued academic careers, and are teaching at universities and community colleges. Others pursued graduate degrees in philosophy, but did not continue in an academic career. More graduates are either in law school or in their careers as attorneys. Graduates have been accepted at law schools such as the Mauer School of Law (Indiana University), the University of Illinois, the University of Minnesota, SMU, John Marshall, Hamline Law School, and Kent. Of these, some attorneys are in private practice, one is a public defender, others work in larger firms. Other alumni work in religious institutions, as ministers, or religious educators.

We include a sample of quotes by current students and graduates:

"I have received wonderful support from the WIU philosophy department and its professors. My philosophy education is an invaluable resource and if you plan to have a career in law, I can think of no finer discipline to pursue." Joshua Smith, Assistant Public Defender and 2003 WIU Philosophy Graduate

 "My education in Philosophy feels like an inexhaustible treasure to me. I certainly got the better end of the deal; I received a meaningful education of a lifetime and all you got was money. . . I can confidently say that my study of philosophy improved my performance in EVERY other

class I was taking. . . you guys are really stinking good." - Tristan Honn, 2013 WIU Philosophy graduate

"My philosophical education at WIU is the foundation for my success in law school thus far, and will be the basis for my success as lawyer." - LaQuenta Rudison, WIU Philosophy graduate, student at John Marshal Law School in 2015

"I adamantly maintain the position that having a fully functional and supported Philosophy and Religious Studies Department at WIU is vital to this University's success and for its student's success." - Riley Devin Addington, Philosophy Major (Pre-Law) and Vice President to the SGA, 2015

"Every single philosophy class that I have taken at WIU has taught me something useful; this is not restricted to the material covered in class, but philosophy has improved my skills in argumentation on any issue." -Brett Furmanski, 2014 WIU Philosophy graduate and second year student at The Mauer School of Law, Indiana University, 2015.

"I have to say the philosophy department at WIU was top notch and my favorite thing about the university."- Tom Hobein, philosophy major, 2006

"I am a philosophy minor because philosophy teaches me to think. It teaches me to evaluate the many arguments presented each day and to decipher complex papers, lectures and books to better understand my world." - Hannah Drake, 2015 Philosophy Minor and Forensic Chemistry Major, honorable mention in the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Program

"Studying philosophy forces rational adaptation; teaches time proven skills; and develops the mind not in how to replicate a specific task but, instead, in how to think in various ways." -Kyle Cabrera, IT Professional and 2008 WIU Philosophy Graduate

"A philosophy degree can be applied to nearly any field. A businessperson who can come across in conversation and on paper as being intelligent and more importantly, correct, is a great asset to any company." - Cody Stults, 2013 WIU Philosophy Graduate

"Like any tool, knowing what its capabilities and attributes are allow us to use it to its fullest potential. When we realize that science is a knowledge-acquiring tool governed by and entangled with philosophy, we can do better science." - Dallas Boswell, WIU Chemistry and Philosophy double major, 2015

In addition to student testimonies, we recently instituted a quantitative exit survey for graduates. Please see the survey below, with the numbers on the left indicating the mean response.

> For Sections I - III, please use the following scale in responding to each statement below.

5 = Strongly Agree

4 = Agree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly Disagree

NA = Not applicable

	I. My education in the philosophy B.A. program helped me . . .
5	improve my analytical, formal, and critical reasoning skills.
5	develop an ability to understand and identify strengths and weakness of conflicting arguments about important and complex issues.
5	gain an understanding of major figures and themes in the history of philosophy.
4.33	understand reasons and arguments for holding various human values and norms.
5	learn to describe, critically evaluate, and defend views and arguments concerning complex and controversial topics.
4.67	improve my writing skills
4.67	reflect clearly on topics that are important in my personal life.
3.5	improve the skills that will be valuable for me in my career. _
	II. The philosophy faculty members . . .
5	were available and helpful outside of regular class time.
4.33	provided advice, guidance, and information regarding opportunities after graduation (law school, graduate school, etc.).
	III. Quality of the Program
4.67	The quality of instruction in lower-level courses was very high.
5	The quality of instruction in upper-level courses was very high
5	The overall quality of the B.A. program was very high.

In addition to the quantitative feedback, all respondents indicated that they would choose the philosophy major again.

One weakness identified from exit surveys is the preparation for the workforce. Often students do not realize the value of their training in the humanities until later in their career, but there is a need for our program to do more both to show how the intellectual skills acquired will be beneficial for a career and to help students prepare for the job market. One way we are addressing these needs is to create an internship. In addition we are planning job workshops this year to help students prepare for the job market after graduation.

5.   **Faculty**

a.   Profile of faculty

Currently there are four tenured Philosophy faculty members teaching in the department and one more, Susan Martinelli-Fernandez, who is serving as Dean and has not taught a course for more

than six years. There is one adjunct (Unit B) faculty member. All faculty members have PhDs from highly regarded programs.

The five teaching faculty members are

David Haugen, Professor, (PhD, University of Washington), Area of Specialization: Epistemology, Analytic Philosophy;

Gordon Pettit, Professor, (PhD, University of Notre Dame), Area of Specialization: Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion;

Christopher Pynes, Professor, (PhD, Florida State University), Area of Specialization: Logic, Philosophy of Science;

Brian Powell, Associate Professor, (PhD, University of Virginia), Area of Specialization: Social and Political Philosophy, Existentialism;

Abraham Graber, Instructor, (PhD from the University of Iowa), Area of Specialization: Moral Theory, Applied Ethics.

b.   Indicators of faculty quality inherent to the discipline/field of study

The indicators of faculty quality for philosophy include where they received their degrees, publications, national presentations, international presentations, and regional presentations. For undergraduate programs such as ours, another indicator of program quality is the placement of students in graduate and professional programs.   See section c. below for details. Indicators of teaching quality include peer reviews and student evaluations. All tenured faculty members have excellent peer reviews and consistently have mean student evaluations scores above 4 on a 5 point scale (with 5 being the highest rating), with an excellent overall mean of 4.52 in the most recent semester.

c.   National reputation of the program faculty

Faculty members in the program have published in highly respected journals (e.g., the *American Philosophical Quarterly, Philosophical Studies, Teaching Philosophy, Synthese,* and *Journal of Medical Ethics*, among others), presented papers at the American Philosophical Association meetings, international, regional, and state professional conferences, co-edited books, been sought out for encyclopedia entries, published book reviews, and often respond to requests for book reviews and proposal evaluations by various publishers (see the following section for details).

d.   Scholarly/creative and service activities of program faculty

The faculty members are actively involved in research and service to the professional community. In just the timeframe from 2014-2015, the philosophy faculty members produced

one co-edited book, one book chapter, five peer reviewed journal articles, two peer reviewed presentations, seven invited presentations, and two encyclopedia entries. In addition, faculty members co-authored three works with undergraduate students with one submitted to a journal, one accepted for presentation at a regional philosophy conference, and the third presented as an invited talk. Professional service by faculty includes serving as the Vice President of the Illinois Philosophical Association, serving on the Status and Future of the Profession Committee for the American Philosophical Association, and several of the faculty members serve by referring for multiple journals.

At the university and college level, philosophy faculty members have served in the Faculty Senate (including the current year Chair and previously another faculty member served as Secretary), on CCPI, on CAGAS, and on the Search Committee for the University President. At the college level, members have served on the Search Committee for the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, and have chaired the College Curriculum Committee.

6.   **Quality Measures**

a.   Indicators of quality in the discipline/field and justification for these as the best measures of quality

The American Philosophical Association's "Statement on Major" is intended to provide information and guidance to students, faculty, administrators, and others who must arrive at decisions regarding philosophy programs. Since the APA is one of the largest philosophical societies in the world and is the primary professional organization for philosophers in the United States, its recommendations regarding the structure and content of the philosophy major and philosophy programs reflect the "best practices" of philosophy instruction in higher education.

The APA's "Statement on the Major" suggests that while the rich diversity of philosophical traditions and orientations precludes the imposition of a rigid structure on the philosophy major, some meaningful generalizations can be made regarding the study of philosophy and the philosophy major. Given the value of the Statement, we quote it at length:

> The study of philosophy serves to develop intellectual abilities important for life as a whole, beyond the knowledge and skills required for any particular profession. Properly pursued, it enhances analytical, critical and communicative capacities that are applicable to any subject-matter, and in any human context. It cultivates the capacity and appetite for self-expression and reflection, for exchange and debate of ideas, for life-long learning, and for dealing with problems for which there are no easy answers. In doing this, a good philosophical education also strengthens the ability to participate responsibly and intelligently in public life and the tasks of citizenship.

While some philosophy majors will go on to study philosophy at the graduate level, philosophy majors should not be designed for the primary purpose of preparing students for graduate school. The major should rather be designed to introduce interested students to philosophy in such a way that they will be intellectually prepared for whatever they may do after graduation, including graduate school in philosophy. Achieving both purposes means that students majoring in philosophy should develop some knowledge of the history and current state of the discipline, a grasp of representative philosophical issues and ways of dealing with them, a capacity to apply philosophical methods to intellectual problems, and a sense of how philosophy bears on other disciplines and on human life more generally. Studies leading to a philosophy major should also develop a critical mind, a balance of analytic and interpretive abilities, and a capacity for the imaginative development of abstract formulations and their concrete applications.

The APA identifies four models for philosophy structuring philosophy programs: the historical model (which emphasizes the history of philosophy); the field model (which stresses coverage of the fields or branches of philosophical inquiry); the problems approach (which focuses on philosophical problems and questions); and the activity model (which emphasizes the process of "doing philosophy").

Most philosophy programs will contain elements of all four of these models. But whatever the details of a program, all programs should provide a means of discourse and communication that provide for shared points of reference with philosophers of other traditions and orientations.

These points of shared reference include the writings of certain philosophers whose historical importance is beyond dispute, such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume and Kant. They also include various problems central to the major areas of philosophical inquiry, pertaining to the world's and our own nature and existence (metaphysics), the knowledge we may have of them (epistemology), sound reasoning (logic), and human conduct (ethics).

Other desirable features of philosophy program mentioned by the APA Statement include: the opportunity to take electives in both philosophy and other disciplines; seminars and other types of courses that allow for working closely with faculty; honors and special tracks; professional advising; and the opportunity to participate in a philosophical community.

As is common, the structure and content of our philosophy major is a blend of the four models described by the APA Statement. In terms of the major's core and electives, the historical model and the field model are the most visible, but the problems model and the activity model are imbedded in every course. The program is designed so that philosophy majors will have the

"shared reference" which provides a means of discourse and communication with philosophers of other traditions and orientations. The five philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, and Kant) who are mentioned as examples of philosophers whose historical importance is beyond dispute are covered in our two required history of philosophy courses. We also have a required logic course and in fulfilling the elective requirement, students will have ample opportunity to take courses in the core areas of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. Our program also has some of the other features the APA identifies as desirable. Philosophy majors can take electives in both philosophy and other disciplines. While we have not been able to offer seminars lately due to limited teaching faculty available, our philosophical writing course and directed readings courses give students the opportunity to work closely with a faculty member on a project of mutual interest. Our Pre-Law option provides students with the opportunity to take a special track other than the general philosophy option and majors who qualify can be admitted to the Honors College. We have a professional advisor. Among the ways students can participate in the philosophical community at Western are attending Student Philosophical Association meetings and attending the annual Mary Olive Woods lecture. Thus our program meets the quality measures articulated by the American Philosophical Association.

b.   Peer comparisons for each of these measures from established University benchmark institutions or other appropriate institutions based on specific programmatic uniqueness.

The WIU Macomb Campus Benchmark Institutions and their Philosophy program web addresses are as follows:

1) Appalachian State University – http://philrel.appstate.edu/
2) California State University-Chico– http://www.csuchico.edu/phil/
3) Central Washington University– http://www.cwu.edu/philosophy/
4) College of Charleston –http://philosophy.cofc.edu/
5) Eastern Illinois University –http://www.eiu.edu/philos/
6) James Madison University http://www.jmu.edu/philrel/
7) Missouri State University –http://www.missouristate.edu/phi/
8) Montclair State University –http://www.montclair.edu/chss/philosophy/
9) Sam Houston State University – http://www.shsu.edu/academics/psychology-and-philosophy/
10) Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville – http://www.siue.edu/artsandsciences/philosophy/
11) University of North Carolina-Wilmington– http://www.uncw.edu/par/
12) University of Northern Iowa –http://www.uni.edu/philrel/
13) University of Wisconsin-Whitewater – http://www.uww.edu/cls/philosophy-and-religious-studies
14) Western Kentucky University –http://www.wku.edu/philosophy-religion/philosophy.php
15) Western Washington University –https://chss.wwu.edu/philosophy

Of the 15 benchmark institutions, 12 offer a BA in philosophy, 2 offer a BA in Philosophy and Religion with a Concentration in Philosophy, and one offers a BA in in Liberal Studies with a minor in Philosophy. The average number of teaching faculty at the benchmark institutions is about twice that of WIU at 9.33 with a median of 9, compared to 5 in our department.

The programs are very similar to ours in courses offered and required courses, and this is not surprising, given the widespread professional agreement regarding quality measures for philosophy programs. But there are differences worth noting. Due to staffing limitations we have not been able to offer seminars, Honors courses, interdisciplinary courses, or team-taught courses in the recent past while most of the benchmark institutions offer their students these opportunities. A similar point has to do with the breadth of course offerings. Most of our benchmark institutions are able to offer wider and more diverse course offerings. To take just a few examples, our benchmark institutions commonly offer courses in Medieval Philosophy, Nineteenth Century Philosophy, Continental Philosophy, Feminism, American Philosophy, Non-Western Philosophy, Philosophy and Film, Applied Ethics courses (e.g., medical, business, and environmental) among others, but due to our limitations we have not been able to offer any of these courses for several years. With our current Unit B position, for the first time in several years, we are offering PHIL 333, Environmental Ethics this fall and will offer PHIL 220, Feminist Ethics in the spring of 2016. We have adequate staffing to deliver general education courses, the courses constituting the core of the major, and the most basic courses such as metaphysics, epistemology, moral philosophy, social & political philosophy, philosophy of religion, and symbolic logic, but when we had only four teaching faculty members, we have not been able to offer much beyond that. The department believes that the flexibility to offer seminars, Honors courses, special topic courses, and courses that go beyond the core of the philosophy major would strengthen our program. Doing this would require maintaining our current faculty members at five.

SECTION II: MAJOR FINDINGS

1.   Strengths identified from the review process

The philosophy program supports the university's educational mission and promotes Western's Core Values: academic excellence, educational opportunity, personal growth and social responsibility. (Section I. 1.b.)

The quality of the philosophy program resonates with Best Practices models for philosophy programs as found in the American Philosophical Association's "Statement on the Major." (Section I.6.a)

Philosophy courses enhance General Education, provide required courses for three programs outside the department (in three different colleges), and support the First Year Experience Program. (Sections 1.2.b. and I.4.a.).

Students are able to take relatively small classes taught by experienced and well-trained faculty, in which they have the opportunity to gain knowledge and acquire important skills that will help them during their college years and throughout their lives. (Sections I.1.a -c.; I.2.a.; I.3.c.; and I.4.a.-b.

The department faculty members have a reputation for excellent teaching; are professionally active; and participate in service activities in the university, community, and professional associations. (Sections I.1.b.-c.)

The department offers sizeable scholarships for majors funded through the Mary Olive Woods Trust and has recently increased the funding available for scholarships. (Section I.1.b.-c.)

The Student Philosophical Association (SPA) is a vibrant, student-run and organized hub of philosophical activity. (Section I.1.b.–c.)

With funds from the Mary Olive Woods Trust, the department hosts internationally-famous philosophers as Mary Olive Woods Lecturers. (Section I.1.b.)

The Pre-Law option has been successful, and currently, 8 of 22 students are in the Pre-Law option, which is consistent with the past average of 34%.

Lower division courses enroll on average above 92% of capacity. (See the table in Section I.2.b.)

We hired a new adjunct in 2014, who is invested in recruiting and retaining students. The result has been a robust increase in SCH and more majors (22), than we have had since the fall of 2012. We expect that degrees conferred will also increase in the next few years, if we are able to keep the person and/or create a tenure track Unit A position for someone whose primary specialization is in ethics.

Our graduates have success entering graduate school and law school. (Section I.2.c.)

2.   **Weaknesses identified from the review process**

As predicted in the 2012-2013 Program Review, our loss of faculty in 2010 and 2011 was followed by a decrease in courses offered, a subsequent decrease in SCH, a decrease in majors by 2013, and then decreases in degrees conferred in 2014 and 2015. The recent years of fewer degrees conferred will stay in our "five year window" for four to five more years, so a rapid improvement in this average is unlikely. (Section I.2.b.-d.)

A second weakness is the relative lack of teaching faculty members that limits our capacity to provide a breadth of courses. Compared to the benchmark institutions' average of 9.33 and median of 9, we have significantly fewer teaching faculty members in our department with 5.

We compare even less favorably in size with other Illinois public universities that average 13 with a median of 12 (the average size is 11.5 if Chicago State is included). Our curricular focus remains first, on offering general education courses and second, on courses foundational to the discipline so that majors and minors have the opportunity to take these courses within their time in the department, as recommended by the "Statement on the Major" by the American Philosophical Association. As shown in the use of funds (I.1.e.), the percent of courses filled (rows 4 & 5 of table in 1.2.b.) and the ratio of majors per faculty members (last table in I.2.e.), we are extremely efficient and able to provide a program consistent with professional standards (I.6.a.). But we are limited in our ability to provide Honors courses, more specialized courses and seminars, and courses that involve collaboration with other disciplines. This in turn limits our ability to recruit and retain students. This second weakness is directly related to the third weakness.

A third weakness is the lack of a tenure track, Unit A faculty member whose primary specialization is in ethics, a position that is central to a successful program. (We do have one Unit A faculty member—Susan Martinelli-Fernandez—who has a primary specialization in ethics, but she has been unable to teach any courses for more than six years due to her responsibilities as Dean, and had a significantly reduced teaching load for several years prior to that.) Current faculty members teach the minimal lower division introductory ethics course and the moral theory course, but applied ethics courses have not been in the rotation for several years. On the positive side, our new Unit B faculty member, Dr. Graber, (who specializes in meta-ethics/moral theory and applied ethics) is teaching PHIL 333, Environmental Ethics this fall and PHIL 220, Feminist Ethics in the spring of 2016, the first time in nearly ten years that either of those courses has been available. But unfortunately, he recognizes the instability of his non-tenured position due to the financial challenges facing the university and public statements about making cuts, so he is actively seeking a new position elsewhere. If we were to lose the Unit B position, we would lose our ability to continue offering the applied ethics courses we are offering this academic year and it will be very difficult to continue the improvements in the number of majors that we have had in the past two years. Ultimately, in order to maintain the continuity of the program and continue to offer applied ethics courses, a tenure track, Unit A position is needed for someone whose primary specialization is in ethics.

A fourth weakness is a challenge faced by many philosophy programs: a lack of understanding by current students at the university, prospective students, and the parents of prospective students, of the practical value of a degree in philosophy. We are addressing this weakness by a) creating an internship and job workshops for students in the program, b) being more cognizant in our classrooms of the need to connect the intellectual skills acquired with the practical application of those skills, c) increasing promotional material online and with posters and brochures, and d) continuing to educate admissions counselors and advisers.

3.   **Evidence of students meeting desired learning outcomes**

Please see data from Section I, 4.f. above for alumni feedback. Please see Appendix 3 for the 2014-2015 Assessment Report.

SECTION III: RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

1.   Initiatives and action plans for the program for the next three to five years to meet recommendations

a.   Tangible strategies for program improvement

As noted in Section II.2 above, one strategy that would be extremely helpful is outside of our direct control: to create a tenure track, Unit A position for someone whose primary specialization is in ethics.

Here, we will focus on things under our control. The Self-Study made evident the need to broaden our appeal to students in order to improve our recruitment, retention, and to reach the standard of averaging six degrees conferred per year. One possibility is to combine the majors in our department to create a single "Philosophy and Religion" major. Two of our benchmark institutions offer a Philosophy and Religion major, though the vast majority of philosophy programs offer the BA in philosophy without a combined major. A move in this direction is appealing because it would attract more majors who have a strong interest in religion. However, there are two serious flaws in this approach, one based on academic principles and one based on practical matters related to retention and recruitment. An academic concern is that a combined major detracts from some of the most valued aspects of the philosophy major—a uniform methodology and emphasis on critical reasoning and argumentative analysis in all courses. In contrast, Religious Studies as a discipline makes use of a variety of methodologies from the social sciences and the humanities, and places less emphasis on analytical rigor. Practically, when considering how to attract students, most of the positive data regarding philosophy majors (as described above in Section I, 3.c.) are not applicable for combined majors. These two concerns outweigh possible benefits of a combined major.

Our goal is to maintain the quality of the philosophy major by allowing students the option of completing a major focused on philosophy courses, while providing more breadth of opportunities for students. To this end, over the next year, we plan to create an option in religious studies within the philosophy major. There are numerous goals both disciplines share, including emphasizing the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, improving an understanding of the human condition, and helping students become better informed citizens in a democratic society, while also developing practical skills such as improving one's abilities to solve complex problems and to communicate more clearly. Creating the option in religious studies will help us achieve our curricular goals and will also provide more breadth for those who otherwise might major in religious studies. Coinciding with the creation of the option and with some heartfelt regret, we plan to eliminate the Religious Studies major in the department. The Religious Studies major was created in 2008, and while it has produced many excellent graduates, it has

not attracted the expected number of majors and graduates. (See the Religious Studies self-study and the table below.) We seek to continue to provide students interested in religious studies an opportunity for broader exposure to the discipline than they would have with simply a minor. We also want to provide students whose primary focus is on philosophy with a high quality philosophy major. Having religious studies as an option in philosophy accomplishes those goals. (Please see the Religious Studies Self-Study for more details on the structure of the new option.) The chart below shows the unlikelihood of Religious Studies meeting the standards set by the IBHE for degrees conferred and the expectation of having 25 majors.

Religious Studies Majors and Degrees Conferred

RELIGIOUS STUDIES	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Mean
Majors	11	5	3	4	5	5.6
Second Majors	2	1	0	1	1	1
Total Majors	13	6	3	5	6	6.6
Degrees Conferred	5	5	2	1	0	2.6
Second Majors Degrees Conferred	0	2	0	0	0	0.4
Total Degrees Conferred	5	7	2	1	0	3.0

The chart below provides the same information for Philosophy.

PHILOSOPHY	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Mean
Majors	16	16	10	12	17	14.2
Second Majors	5	6	3	3	5	4.4
Total Majors	21	22	13	15	22	18.6
Degrees Conferred	3	6	6	0	2	3.4
Second Major Degrees conferred	0	2	2	2	1	1.4
Total Degrees Conferred	3	8	8	2	3	4.8

If we include Religious Studies majors and degrees conferred combined with Philosophy majors and degrees conferred we have the following:

Philosophy & Religious Studies combined	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Mean
Majors	27	21	13	16	22	19.8
Second Majors	7	7	3	4	6	5.4
Total Majors	34	28	16	20	28	25.2
Degrees Conferred	8	11	8	1	2	6
Second Majors Degrees Conferred	0	4	2	2	1	1.8
Total Degrees Conferred	8	15	10	3	3	7.8

The plan is to create the option in Religious Studies this year and to implement the changes in 2016, with the final version (that includes additional curricular changes to Religious Studies courses) in place by 2017. The creation of a Religious Studies option does not guarantee that we will continue with these numbers, but given the averages over the past five years and the increasing trend in philosophy majors through the fall of 2015, it shows that there is a strong potential to continue the average number of degrees conferred at six for the Philosophy major with three options: the general (traditional) Philosophy option, the Pre-Law option, and the Religious Studies option. Our goal is to confer six degrees in 2016 and 2017.

Another curriculum change is to create an internship in order to connect the skills acquired in philosophy courses to their practical application in the workforce. This will be implemented as soon as possible, so that it will be available in the fall of 2016. In addition to internships at local and regional workplaces, we plan to encourage participation in the WIU in D.C. Internship Program, a recent initiative of the Provost's Office. Our exit survey showed a lack of understanding (for those who did not go into law or academics) of the relationships of skills developed in the classroom with skills needed for a successful career. An internship provides an opportunity to experience and reflect on these connections.

In addition, our faculty members are working on the creation of a new lower division course that might have broader appeal to the student population at WIU. A few minor changes are planned, such as renaming our "Philosophical Explorations" course to the more apt "Introduction to Philosophy," and renumbering that course from 105 to 100.

b.   Strategies for improvement in recruitment/retention

In the past two years, we have initiated several strategies for improvement in recruitment and retention and these are ongoing and still developing. The most significant improvement, as shown in the data above, is our expansion of faculty through a new adjunct hired for FY15 and retained in a Unit B position for FY16. It is not merely having more sections taught, but Dr. Graber in particular is excited about recruiting students and has a strong presence both in and out of the classroom. He teaches in the needed area of applied ethics, has been involved in our student group, has created workshops on study skills, has been involved in undergraduate research, and is currently developing a series of workshops on the job market. Our faculty members have done these or similar things in the past, but a new face and energy is clearly beneficial and has resulted in increased majors. Continuing this position or ideally, creating a Unit A position in ethics is vital to the success of the program.

The second most significant recruiting and retention tool is our expansion of the Mary Olive Woods Scholarships, which as inaugurated in 2013. Formerly the cap was $1,000 per semester, with an average award of less than $500 per semester. With the change, we introduced a $6,000 per year scholarship and a $3,000 per year award. Starting in the fall of 2015, we expanded the scholarships again by eliminating our limit on the number of $3,000 scholarships available. We

have been publicizing the new scholarships through direct emails, flyers, posters, announcements, conversations, and of course, our department web page. We work with University Relations to publicize the student recipients once selected. In discussions with students, these scholarships are already attracting increased attention and interest, with two seniors who have a minor in philosophy recently stating that if they had those opportunities earlier, they would have majored in philosophy.

We are in the midst of the creation of a Living Learning Community (LLC) in cooperation with other humanities departments and Student Services. The purpose of the community is threefold. First, to introduce students to a community based on ideals of intellectual curiosity, diversity of thought and perspective, and applications of theory to the real world. Second, to help students see the connection between democratic ideals of freedom, equality, fairness, and the liberal arts which are the foundation of a university education. Third, to improve the visibility of Philosophy as an academic discipline among other Liberal Arts areas. The hope is that the floor may be used for recruitment of new students as well as retention of current students.

Several other recruitment and retention projects are ongoing. The department chair has frequently met with admissions counselors and academic advisors to keep them informed of the value of the philosophy major and the scholarships we have available. We have made a concerted effort to use our department web page, posters, and brochures to provide students with information about the major and the practical advantages of majoring in philosophy. We are developing flyers to attract more minors and possibly double majors to the program, specifically for two target audiences: those who major in math or the natural sciences and those who have a business major or major in LEJA. The former emphasizes logic and analytical courses; the latter emphasizes courses in ethics and political theory.

Other recruitment and retention projects are planned. As both philosophy and religious studies are much better known to students in a Catholic school system, we plan to send letters to Catholic High Schools in Illinois and Eastern Iowa to let them know of our programs and the scholarships we have available. We plan to extend our letters to more prospective students by working with the Admissions Office to have routinely updated lists of prospects to contact and provide them with information about the program, the scholarships available, and an invitation to visit.

c.   Efficiency measures to lower costs

In FY13, the department's appropriated budget was $11,600. That budget was cut by 35% for FY14, and then again by another 5% in FY15. There is simply no room left to lower costs from the department's appropriated budget (see details at Section I.1.e.). In terms of personnel expenses, from FY14 to FY15, our department saved the university around $70,000—approximately 9% of the department's personal services budget—by losing a line in Religious Studies held by a full professor with 15 years of service and using a portion of that salary to hire

a Unit B person in Philosophy. Even if we hired a Unit A position with a primary specialization in ethics, the savings would still be substantial: approximately $50,000 or about 7% of the department's personnel budget compared to FY14. The current Unit B position held by Dr. Graber is the most cost effective instructor position we have with the lowest salary and the greatest SCH per instructor in the department. Over three semesters, his courses have filled at greater than 95% of capacity overall, so it would clearly not be cost effective to cut his position. All other faculty members are tenured. We have made use of the Mary Olive Woods Foundation when possible. In terms of scheduling, we enroll at more than 92% in our lower division courses and have sometimes reduced the number of upper division courses offered while still allowing majors to progress through their requirements and graduate on schedule.

The department has gone without an Office Manager for nearly four months due to the current person being on disability, and thus that salary is not being expended from our budget. This situation, however, is unworkable in the long term as it is not possible for the department to function without office support (at this pace, the current chair may soon be on disability). We are currently working with the African American Studies Department to hire someone in a shared position, which will save at least 50% on the office staff salary and possibly more if the person is on a ten or eleven month contract. The total saved will be from $14,000 to $18,000, which is more than 2% of the departmental budget.

d.   Timeline

Timeline and goals:
2014-15: This was the first year of having an adjunct to offer additionally needed sections of PHIL 120 and PHIL 105 and to assist in recruitment and retention. We increased publicity for the new MOW scholarships and developed some promotional materials emphasizing the practical advantages of majoring in philosophy, both in print and on our department web page. The goal was to increase our total number of majors to 20.

2015-16: We are developing the curricular changes for the option, the internship and the introductory course. This is the first year of elimination of the limit on our $3,000 MOW scholarships, which resulted in awarding three of these scholarships to philosophy majors, instead of one as previously limited. We are expanding our promotional efforts regarding the practical values of majoring in philosophy. We are in the planning stages for the Liberal Arts LLC, in coordination with the Dean and Chairs of other humanities departments. We plan to increase letters to prospective students, including those attending Catholic High Schools. We plan to create "job workshops" for our majors to help prepare them for the job market upon graduation. Our goal is to confer 5 degrees in philosophy and increase the number of majors to 22

2016-17: If curricular changes proposed are approved, this will be the first year of the Philosophy major with an option in Religious Studies available. If they are not yet approved, we

will continue to revise and process the proposals. We will develop specialized minor plans for students who major in business, math, the natural sciences, or LEJA. We will revise other initiatives from 2015-16 in order to emphasize the most effective measures implemented and focus on those efforts. Hire someone whose primary specialization is in ethics for a tenure track, Unit A position. Our goal is to confer 6 degrees in philosophy and increase the number of majors to 25.

2017-18: The new options and curricular changes should be in place. If granted approval, the tenure track, Unit A person should be teaching ethics courses routinely and involved in recruitment and retention efforts. Our goal is to confer 7 degrees in philosophy and increase the number of majors to 30.

2018-19: Continue to revise initiatives as needed. Our goal is to confer 8 degrees and increase the number of majors to 34.

APPENDIX 1 – Student Learning Objectives and Evaluation Tools

Assessment worksheet for higher level outcome 1: "The student will improve analytical, formal, and critical reasoning skills by developing an understanding of the elementary principles of deductive and inductive logic and learning to apply that understanding in a variety of contexts." Courses 140 and 340 are assessed.

Values:
0 = does not meet learning objectives
1 = minimally meets learning objectives
2 = meets learning objectives
3 = an above average performance in meeting learning objectives
4 = excels in meeting learning objectives

Sub-objectives: The student will be able to

	0	1	2	3	4	N/A
A) distinguish an argument from a causal claim or other types of claims						
B) identify the premises and conclusion of an argument						
C) demonstrate understanding of the difference between inductive and deductive arguments by definitions and by identifying particular arguments as inductive or deductive						
D) identify formal and informal fallacies in reasoning						
E) evaluate the strength of an inductive argument						
F) symbolize the formal structure of deductive arguments						
G) distinguish between a propositional deductive argument that relies on the connection of ideas among sentences for its validity and an existential deductive argument that relies on the connection of ideas involving quantities within the sentence.						
H) evaluate the strength of a propositional deductive argument by using truth tables to determine the validity						
I) evaluate the strength of an existential deductive argument by using Venn diagrams to determine validity						
J) demonstrate the validity of a propositional deductive argument by making use of a formal proof system						

Assessment worksheet for higher level objective #2: "The student will develop an ability to understand and identify strengths and weakness of conflicting views and arguments about important and complex issues, and provide arguments that clearly defend a position against objections." Courses: 105, 305, 320, 325, 333, 335, 345, 405, 415, 420, 425, & 440 are assessed.

Values:
0 = does not meet learning objectives
1 = minimally meets learning objectives
2 = meets learning objectives
3 = an above average performance in meeting learning objectives
4 = excels in meeting learning objectives

Sub-objectives: The student will be able to

	0	1	2	3	4	N/A
A) summarize a dense argumentative passage in a clear and succinct manner						
B) express clearly a criticism of a well-developed argument						
C) compare and contrast two high order theories, identifying both strengths and weaknesses of each						
D) make a clear and well-defended judgment identifying which thesis among competing theses is most plausible						

Assessment worksheet for higher level objective #3: "The student will develop an ability to understand and identify strengths and weakness of conflicting views and arguments about important and complex issues of ancient philosophy, and provide arguments that clearly defend a position against objections."

Values:

0 = does not meet learning objectives

1 = minimally meets learning objectives

2 = meets learning objectives

3 = an above average performance in meeting learning objectives

4 = excels in meeting learning objectives

Sub-objectives: The student will be able to

	0	1	2	3	4	N/A
A) summarize a dense argumentative passage in a clear and succinct manner						
B) express clearly a criticism of a well-developed argument						
C) compare and contrast two high order theories, identifying both strengths and weaknesses of each						
D) make a clear and well-defended judgment identifying which thesis among competing theses is most plausible						
E) explain the various significant contributions of Pre-Socratic philosophers to the development of Western Philosophy						
F) describe how Plato's metaphysical views were influenced by the Pre-Socratics						
G) explain Plato's view of the soul and why he believed that to suffer injustice is better than to commit an injustice						
H) describe the significance of Plato's allegory of the cave						
I) compare and contrast Aristotle's metaphysics with Plato's views						
J) describe Aristotle's view of happiness and virtue						

Assessment worksheet for higher level objective #4: "The student will develop an ability to understand and identify strengths and weakness of conflicting views and arguments about important and complex issue in modern philosophy, and provide arguments that clearly defend a position against objections."

Values:

0 = does not meet learning objectives

1 = minimally meets learning objectives

2 = meets learning objectives

3 = an above average performance in meeting learning objectives

4 = excels in meeting learning objectives

Sub-objectives: The student will be able to

	0	1	2	3	4	N/A
A) summarize a dense argumentative passage in a clear and succinct manner						
B) express clearly a criticism of a well-developed argument						
C) compare and contrast two high order theories, identifying both strengths and weaknesses of each						
D) make a clear and well-defended judgment identifying which thesis among competing theses is most plausible						
E) explain Descartes's views on skepticism, God, substance, and the relation between mind and body						
F) compare and contrast rationalism and empiricism						
G) explain the central epistemological and metaphysical doctrines of the British empiricists						
H) describe the development of empiricism from Locke to Hume						
I) explain Kant's Copernican Revolution and compare his view to rationalism and empiricism						
J) explain Kant's views on synthetic a priori knowledge, knowledge of the external world, and the possibility of metaphysics						

Assessment worksheet for higher level objective #5: "The student will gain an understanding of various human values and norms, what kind of rationale and argumentation might be provided for those values, and an ability to critically evaluate normative theories." Courses: 120, 205, 330, and 400

Values:
0 = does not meet learning objectives
1 = minimally meets learning objectives
2 = meets learning objectives
3 = an above average performance in meeting learning objectives
4 = excels in meeting learning objectives

Sub-objectives: The student will be able to

	0	1	2	3	4	N/A
A) distinguish between descriptive and normative claims						
B) understand and explain various normative theories						
C) articulate the arguments both for and against various normative principles						
D) apply normative theories to particular cases						
E) criticize a normative theory by identifying inconsistencies or otherwise problematic implications						

Assessment worksheet for higher level objective #6: "In writing, the student will be able to articulate, defend, and critically evaluate views and arguments concerning a complex and controversial philosophical topic in an effective manner. The student will demonstrate an ability to conduct independent research on a topic chosen by the student." Courses 312 and 499 are evaluated.

Values:
0 = does not meet learning objectives
1 = minimally meets learning objectives
2 = meets learning objectives
3 = an above average performance in meeting learning objectives
4 = excels in meeting learning objectives

Sub-objectives: The student will be able to

	0	1	2	3	4	N/A
A) demonstrate an ability to clearly organize a written project with the sentences and paragraphs expressed in clear writing that contributes to the goal of the project						
B) write clearly by expressing both the exposition of ideas and the analysis of those ideas						
C) explain complex concepts in an illuminating way, using the student's own words and descriptions						
D) explain complex arguments in an illuminating way, using the student's own words and descriptions to make the structure of the argument clear, identifying how the premises give reason to accept the conclusion						
E) write an original, well-organized argument in response to a complex problem						
F) anticipate and clearly describe potential objections to one's own argument(s)						
G) respond to objections to a presented argument by showing how the objections ultimately fail to refute the argument						

APPENDIX 2

Assessment Plan for the Philosophy Major May, 2015

Higher-Level Learning Outcome A): improve analytical, formal, and critical reasoning skills by developing an understanding of the elementary principles of deductive and inductive logic and learning to apply that understanding in a variety of contexts.

1a. Sub-level Learning Outcome A1): To demonstrate critical reasoning skills by describing the difference between inductive and deductive arguments and by identifying particular arguments as inductive or deductive.

1b. Direct Measure A1): Quizzes in Philosophy 140. The evaluation for this measure, and all subsequent evaluations, employs the following Learning Outcome Evaluation Rubric, henceforth, the "Standard Rubric":

0 = does not meet learning outcome expectations
1 = minimally meets learning outcome expectations
2 = meets learning outcome expectations
3 = an above average performance in meeting learning outcome expectations
4 = excels in meeting learning outcome expectations

2a. Sub-level Learning Outcome A2): To improve analytical and formal reasoning skills by learning to symbolize the structure of deductive arguments.

2b. Direct Measure A2): worksheet exercises in Philosophy 140. The Standard Rubric, as described in 1b, will be used

3a. Sub-level Learning Outcome A3): To demonstrate formal reasoning skills by evaluating the strength of a propositional deductive argument by using truth tables to determine the validity.

3b. Direct Measure A3): Quizzes and Exams in Philosophy 140. The Standard Rubric, as described in 1b, will be used

Higher Level Learning Outcome B): To gain an understanding of various human values and norms, what kind of rationale and argumentation might be provided for those values, and an ability to critically evaluate normative theories.

4a. Sub-level Learning Outcome B1): To understand and explain various normative theories.

4b. Direct Measure B1: Writing assignments in PHIL 120 (Contemporary Moral Problems), PHIL 205 (Philosophy, Law, and Society), and PHIL 330 (Moral Philosophy). The Standard Rubric, as described in 1b, will be used

5a. Sub-level Learning Outcome B2): To articulate the arguments both for and against various normative principles.

5b. Direct Measure B2): Essay questions on exams in PHIL 120 (Contemporary Moral Problems), PHIL 205 (Philosophy, Law, and Society), and PHIL 330 (Moral Philosophy). The Standard Rubric, as described in 1b, will be used

6a. Sub-level Learning Outcome B3): To demonstrate an ability to criticize a normative theory by identifying inconsistencies or otherwise problematic implications.

6b. Direct Measure B3): Essay questions on exams or writing assignments in PHIL 120 (Contemporary Moral Problems), PHIL 205 (Philosophy, Law, and Society), and PHIL 330 (Moral Philosophy). The Standard Rubric, as described in 1b, will be used

APPENDIX 3

Western Illinois University
B.A., Philosophy

2014-2015 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING REPORT

For 2014-2015, we are reporting on two higher-level learning outcomes (**A** and **B**) and their corresponding sub-level outcomes, measures, results and impacts in order to identify particular areas that need improvement.

Higher-Level Learning Outcome A): improve analytical, formal, and critical reasoning skills by developing an understanding of the elementary principles of deductive and inductive logic and learning to apply that understanding in a variety of contexts.

1a. Sub-level Learning Outcome: To demonstrate critical reasoning skills by describing the difference between inductive and deductive arguments and by identifying particular arguments as inductive or deductive.

1b. Direct Measure: Quizzes in Philosophy 140. The evaluation for this measure, and all subsequent evaluations, employs the following Learning Outcome Evaluation Rubric:

0 = does not meet learning outcome expectations
1 = minimally meets learning outcome expectations
2 = meets learning outcome expectations
3 = an above average performance in meeting learning outcome expectations
4 = excels in meeting learning outcome expectations

1c. Results:

Fall, 2014:	Spring, 2015
0: 0	0: 0
1: 2	1: 0
2: 0	2: 0
3: 0	3: 0
4: 0	4: 4
Average: 1	Average: 4

1d. Impact:

     a. Short-term (2014-2015) impact of assessment results on student learning of what has been done to improve student learning in response to assessment data: From the assessment measurements we learn that two out of four philosophy majors assessed are above the minimal

standard for these skills. In this case, the students who just met the minimum standard frequently failed to attend class, and the lack of participation was indicated in the direct method, i.e. quizzes. We continue to emphasize the importance of attending consistently so that performance on quizzes is not negatively impacted.

   b. How assessment data is used to improve student learning to help students persist and complete in their program: Due to the fact that we have some low scores in this area, we are including review of these skills in other courses besides PHIL 140.

   c. Long-term (2010-2015) impact of assessment results on student learning: In recent years, we have increased use of worksheets in class that are designed to develop the skills needed to succeed on the quizzes. As this Sub-level Learning Outcome is a skill that requires practice, more worksheets are being provided for students to complete outside of class.   It is the students' responsibility to get the worksheet if they missed class. As noted in our 2013-2014 report, we modified our assessment techniques so that they can be seen as a way to highlight the skills — acquired in philosophy, but not applicable only in philosophy — that graduates leave with; these are skills that make them more employable. As a result, we substantially revised our assessment methods in our efforts to make assessment more relevant to potential employers and prospective students. We expanded our previous learning outcomes to include both higher-level and corresponding sub-level learning outcomes. Many of the sub-level learning outcomes are directly related to skills that are desired by potential employers.

2a. Sub-level Learning Outcome: To demonstrate formal reasoning skills by evaluating the strength of a propositional deductive argument by using truth tables to determine the validity.

2b. Direct Measure: Quizzes and Exams in Philosophy 140. As with the previous measure, and all subsequent evaluations, we employed the following Learning Outcome Evaluation Rubric:

0 = does not meet learning outcome expectations
1 = minimally meets learning outcome expectations
2 = meets learning outcome expectations
3 = an above average performance in meeting learning outcome expectations
4 = excels in meeting learning outcome expectations

2c. Results:

Fall, 2014:	Spring, 2015
0: 0	0: 0
1: 2	1: 0
2: 0	2: 0
3: 0	3: 2
4: 0	4: 0
Average: 1	Average: 3

2d. Impact:

a. Short-term (2014-2015): From the assessment measurements we learn that two out of four philosophy majors assessed are above the minimal standard for these skills. The students who just met the minimum standard frequently failed to attend class, and the lack of participation was indicated in the direct method, i.e. quizzes and exams. In addition, the measurement is repeated, since it is similar on homework, quizzes and exams – in each case, we provided arguments and ask the student to assess the validity of the arguments using truth tables. The quizzes and exams will also include other tasks, but we are only assessing the questions related to truth tables.

b. How assessment data is used to improve student learning to help students persist and complete in their program: We continue to emphasize the importance of attending consistently so that performance on quizzes and exams is not negatively impacted. Our repeated assessment of these skills is intended to allow time of the students to develop the skills needed to succeed.

c. Long-term (2010-2015) impact of assessment results on student learning: In recent years, we have increased use of worksheets in class that are designed to develop the skills needed to succeed. As this sub-level learning outcome is also a skill that requires practice, more worksheets are being provided for students to complete outside of class. See also notes in 1.d.c.

3a. Sub-level Learning Outcome: To demonstrate formal reasoning skills by evaluating the strength of a propositional deductive argument by making use of a formal proof system.

3b. Direct Measure: Quizzes and Exams in Philosophy 340.

3c. Results:

Fall, 2014: (Course not taught)	Spring, 2015
0:	0: 2
1:	1: 2
2:	2: 1
3:	3: 0
4:	4: 1
Average:	Average: 1.33

3d. Impact:

a. Short-term (2014-2015): From the assessment measurements we learn that four out of the six philosophy majors assessed are at or above the minimal standard for these skills. One of

the students who failed to meet the minimum standard also frequently failed to attend class, and the lack of participation was reflected in the direct method, i.e. quizzes and exams. The measurement is repeated, since it is similar on homework, quizzes and exams – in each case, we provided arguments and ask the student to provide a proof of validity of the arguments using a formal proof system. One of the students who failed to meet the minimum standard attended regularly and was given frequent out of classroom assistance, but seemed to lack the aptitude for this particularly challenging task. However, this is a task that we expect majors to be able to accomplish.

b. How assessment data is used to improve student learning to help students persist and complete in their program: Continued assistance outside of classes will be made available. We emphasize the importance of attending consistently so that performance on quizzes and exams is not negatively impacted. Our repeated assessment of these skills is intended to allow time for the students to develop the skills needed to succeed.

c. Long-term (2010-2015) impact of assessment results on student learning: The data show a continued need to emphasize the basic principles of logic and reasoning in all of our courses. We have recently (in the past two years) increased our efforts in doing this. Our goal is for the steady work on the more rudimentary principles in all courses will better prepare students for success in the upper level Symbolic Logic course, PHIL 340, where this skill is required. See also notes in 1.d.c.

Higher Level Learning Outcome B): To gain an understanding of various human values and norms, what kind of rationale and argumentation might be provided for those values, and an ability to critically evaluate normative theories.

1a. Sub-level Learning Outcome: To understand and explain various normative theories.

1b. Direct Measure: Writing assignments in PHIL 120 (Contemporary Moral Problems), PHIL 205 (Philosophy, Law, and Society), and PHIL 330 (Moral Philosophy). The evaluation for this measure and all subsequent evaluations employ the following Learning Outcome Evaluation Rubric:

0 = does not meet learning outcome expectations
1 = minimally meets learning outcome expectations
2 = meets learning outcome expectations
3 = an above average performance in meeting learning outcome expectations
4 = excels in meeting learning outcome expectations

1c. Results:

Fall, 2014: (PHIL 120)	Spring, 2015 (PHIL 205 and PHIL 330)
0: 0	0: 0
1: 0	1: 0
2: 0	2: 0
3: 0	3: 2
4: 2	4: 2
Average: 4	Average: 3.5

1d. Impact:

a. Short-term (2014-2015): The assessment measurements show that all six students are above average in meeting the learning outcome expectations. This is a fundamental philosophical task and we have seen success by providing feedback on their writing and allowing students to rewrite their work.

b. How assessment data is used to improve student learning to help students persist and complete in their program: Opportunities to rewrite work has allowed students some success that motivates continuing in the program.

c. Long-term (2010-2015) impact of assessment results on student learning: We have more consistently provided face to face feedback on student writing in the past year, and this seems to be quite helpful for these basic tasks. As noted above (Higher Level Learning Outcome A. 1. d. c.), we recently modified our assessment techniques so that they can be seen as a way to highlight the skills — acquired in philosophy, but not applicable only in philosophy — that graduates leave with; these are skills that make them more employable. As a result, we significantly revised our assessment methods in our efforts to make assessment more relevant to potential employers and prospective students. We expanded our previous learning outcomes to include both higher-level and corresponding sub-level learning outcomes. Many of the sub-level learning outcomes are directly related to skills that are desired by potential employers; in this case, to have a good understanding of foundational moral concepts and the ability to describe and apply them in various circumstances.

2a. Sub-level Learning Outcome: To articulate the arguments both for and against various normative principles.

2b. Direct Measure: Exams in PHIL 120 (Contemporary Moral Problems), PHIL 205 (Philosophy, Law, and Society), and PHIL 330 (Moral Philosophy).

2c. Results:

Fall, 2014: (PHIL 120)	Spring, 2015 (PHIL 205 and PHIL 330)
0: 0	0: 0
1: 0	1: 0
2: 0	2: 0
3: 2	3: 2
4: 0	4: 2
Average: 3	Average: 3.5

2d. Impact:

 a. Short-term (2014-2015): The assessment measurements show that all six students are above average in meeting the learning outcome expectations. The ability to articulate the arguments both for and against various principles is a common philosophical task and we have seen success applying this skill to normative principles by providing feedback on their writing and allowing students to rewrite their work.

 b. How assessment data is used to improve student learning to help students persist and complete in their program: Opportunities to rewrite work has allowed students some success that motivates continuing in the program.

 c. Long-term (2010-2015) impact of assessment results on student learning: We have more consistently provided face to face feedback on student writing in the past year, and this seems to be quite helpful for these basic tasks. Please see B. 1. d. c. for notes on overall changes.

3a. Sub-level Learning Outcome: To demonstrate an ability to criticize a normative theory by identifying inconsistencies or otherwise problematic implications.

3b. Direct Measure: Essay questions on exams and paper assignments in PHIL 120 (Contemporary Moral Problems), PHIL 205 (Philosophy, Law, and Society), and PHIL 330 (Moral Philosophy).

3c. Results:

Fall, 2013: (PHIL 120 was not offered)	Spring, 2014 (PHIL 205 and PHIL 330)
0: 0	0: 0
1: 0	1: 0
2: 0	2: 0
3: 0	3: 0
4: 2	4: 4

Average: 4	Average: 4

3d. Impact:

a. Short-term (2014-2015): The assessment measurements show that all six students are excelling at meeting the learning outcome expectations. This is a more complex philosophical task and we have seen success by providing feedback on their writing and allowing students to rewrite their work, as well as reinforcing attendance, which helps in preparation for exams.

b. How assessment data is used to improve student learning to help students persist and complete in their program: Reinforcing attendance with in-class and short writing assignments and providing opportunities to rewrite papers have allowed students some success that motivates continuing in the program.

c. Long-term (2010-2015) impact of assessment results on student learning: We have more consistently provided both written and face to face feedback on student writing in the past year, and this seems to be quite helpful for these more complex writing tasks. Please see B. 1. d. c. for notes on overall changes.