

Philosophy B.A.

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose

Institutional Mission Reference

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies carries out the College of Arts and Letters' special commitment to the ideals of the liberal arts by offering courses and hosting lectures and other activities which engage students in the critical study of Western and Eastern cultures, classics of philosophical literature, and contemporary critical discussions of societal issues. We emphasize close personal contact between students and faculty (Old Dominion University Catalog 2000-2002, p. 65).

Institutional Goal(s) Supported

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies supports the University's goals of offering quality liberal arts programs and providing extracurricular activities that challenge students to develop a personal system of values, to think and act autonomously, and to establish a sense of their own identity (Old Dominion University Catalog 2000-2002, pp. 2-3).

Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes, Methods for Assessment, Criteria for Success, Assessment Results, and Use of Results

Intended Outcome 1

An improvement in the philosophical writing skills of students majoring in Philosophy.

Method for Assessing Outcome 1 and Criterion for Success:

Each semester the Department requires each major to submit a paper written for a Philosophy course in the final year of the B.A. program. These papers, unmarked, ungraded, and stripped of authors' names, are assessed numerically by a faculty committee on five factors: Philosophical Understanding, Philosophical Exposition, Critical Reasoning, Composition, and Scholarly Use of Resource Materials. A criterion for success is a 3% improvement in the average score attained by these papers over a 1-year period, or a 10% improvement over a 5-year period.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 1:

Three papers from graduating seniors were assessed in Summer 2001 by three faculty members. The faculty average overall scores for the 3 papers were 83, 81, 83. The breakdown of the five categories we score averages as follows: 1) Philosophical understanding = 81; 2) Philosophical exposition = 78; 3) Critical reasoning = 79; 4) Composition = 85; 5) Scholarly use of materials = 90. We find the scores in categories 4 and 5 to be positive, while 1, 2, and 3 show that more work needs to be done in improving our students' philosophical skills. There were no signs of serious trouble, however.

Intended Outcome 2

An improvement in the satisfaction that majors report with special lectures, discussions, and social activities hosted by the Department.

Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success:

In an annual survey sent to graduating majors, we ask students to assess their satisfaction with activities hosted by the Department outside of class on a 5-point scale. The criterion for success is an average score of 4 or better.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 2:

Due to the departure of our Chair and inadequate communications, the survey is still being composed. It will be ready to distribute in May 2002.

Intended Outcome 3

An improvement in the satisfaction that majors report with advising within the Department.

Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success:

In an annual survey sent to graduating majors, we ask students to assess their satisfaction with advising in the Department on a 5-point scale. The criterion for success is an average score of 4 or better.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 3:

Due to the departure of our Chair and inadequate communications, the survey is still being composed. It will be ready to distribute in May 2002.