SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY.

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: Doctoral	Department: Philosophy
Degree or Certificate Level: PhD	College/School: CAS
Date (Month/Year): 9/22	Primary Assessment Contact: Scott Ragland
In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? AY 21-22	
In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2015	

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

The ones in the far left column of the below rubric:

Learning Outcome	Fails to Meet Expectations (0 pts)	Meets Expectations 1 pt	Exceeds Expectations 2 pts
1. Assess relevant literature or scholarly contributions in philosophy.	Student fails to address essential relevant literature or fails to assess such literature.	Student addresses all essential relevant literature and assesses it.	Student's assessment of relevant literature is unusually illuminating.
2. Apply the major practices, theories, or research methodologies in philosophy.	Dissertation exhibits a lack of mastery of relevant theories, methods, or argumentative practices.	Dissertation shows mastery of some standard methods, theories, or argumentative practices.	Dissertation employs groundbreaking methods or synthesizes existing practices or theories in a novel way.
3. Apply knowledge from the field(s) of study to address problems in broader contexts [e.g., use knowledge of specific topic to advance broader disciplinary discussions]	The dissertation does not advance the state of the discussion on the chosen topic and shows little promise of developing into an early-career research program.	Student synthesizes information uncovered in extensive research to generate a novel thesis that advances the state of the discussion on the chosen topic. The dissertation has strong potential to be mined for future publications, whether articles or books.	The thesis of the dissertation is a "game changer" likely to be highly influential in the field.
4. Articulate arguments or explanations to a disciplinary or professional audience in both oral and written forms.	The dissertation does not clearly articulate arguments in a professional manner, or the student cannot defend such arguments in conversation at the defense.	The dissertation professionally articulates arguments and the student can further defend his or her position at the oral defense.	The dissertation's arguments are unusually powerful or novel, or the student's oral defense of them is unusually strong.
5. Evidence scholarly and/or professional integrity in the field of study.	Dissertation contains plagiarism or shoddy citation methods, and/or the student cannot properly defend it orally.	Dissertation is entirely the student's own work and all sources are clearly cited.	Citation and bibliography are unusually thorough, so as to be especially helpful in understanding the relevant field.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

Doctoral Dissertations and their oral defenses. These "courses" were dissertation hours, not offered by way of (a)-(c) above.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

Dissertation committee members completed a google form version of the above rubric for each defended dissertation.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

12 Doctoral Students completed the program and some feedback was received for each of them (see the attached results). Here is a summary of the average scores for the current year as compared to the prior year:

	20/21 Academic Year	21/22 Academic Year
LOC 1: Assesses Relevant Literature	1.6	1.67
LOC 2: Apply philosophical methods	1.48	1.67
LOC 3: Address broader problems	1.48	1.58
LOC 4: Articulate argument oral/written	1.74	1.5
LOC 5: Integrity	1.6	1.58

An average score of 1 means that overall the students met expectations. These scores show that many students were exceeding expectations, and none were failing to meet expectations. The summary data are attached at the bottom of this report.

These students were all at an advanced stage in the PhD program when the pandemic hit, a stage when dissertation writers are typically working on their projects mostly on their own time but with some one-on-one meetings with their supervisors. These one-one-one meetings transitioned from in-person to zoom, but clearly were still effective at enabling these students to achieve a strong finished product. One student also completed the dissertation while figuring out treatment plans for a serious health problem.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

What we learned about student learning: the students who complete the program are achieving all the learning goals. Given that the highest possible score is 2, these average scores are exceedingly high.

What we learned about the assessment process: In past years, too many faculty failed to complete the assessment surveys, so that our data were less robust than they could be. In the previous two cycles, participation rates by faculty examiners were 50% and then 62%. But this year, we had 100% participation! This is a milestone. It indicates

that the process changes made last year (in which the assessment survey was attached to the forms committees complete at the time of defense) are effective.

6. **Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of <u>Current</u> Assessment Findings**

   A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

   The philosophy department discussed this report at a faculty meeting on Sept 9, 2021.

   B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies	• Course content • Teaching techniques • Improvements in technology • Prerequisites	• Course sequence • New courses • Deletion of courses • Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings
Changes to the Assessment Plan	• Student learning outcomes • Artifacts of student learning • Evaluation process	• Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics) • Data collection methods • Frequency of data collection

   Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

   If no changes are being made, please explain why.

   Given the success of both the student learning and the assessment process for the PhD program, we will keep doing the same things. We will try to really form good habits around the assessment process so we can continue to have 100% participation! It takes repetition to build habits, so we need to repeat this success under the same conditions before trying anything new.

7. **Closing the Loop: Review of <u>Previous</u> Assessment Findings and Changes**

   A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

   No curricular changes have been made because data suggest that students are achieving the learning goals, and in fact are (on average) significantly exceeding expectations. However, at the end of the last two cycles, the following changes were proposed for assessment procedures:

   - "To increase faculty participation in the assessment process, the chair and department admin will ask each dissertation supervisor to direct the committee to complete the google survey as they are completing the other dissertation dissertation defense paperwork as a group, right after the defense has been completed."

   - "The return of in-person dissertation defenses creates an opportunity increase faculty participation in the assessment process as follows. At each defense, the examination committee has a discussion about whether to assign a grade of "fail," "pass," or "pass with distinction." The department office will write up instructions for dissertation chairs asking them to distribute a paper copy of the rubric to each committee member. Each examiner will be asked to complete the rubric on their own in preparation for the group grading discussion. This procedure change will connect the data-gathering instrument to an evaluative process that is occurring anyway at the time, and should lead to 100% faculty participation. Should we have to pivot back to zoom defenses, the google form version of the rubrics can be offered to examiners as an alternative way to inform their deliberations around the grading."

   I do not believe paper rubrics were ever distributed, but the department admin started emailing the survey to each committee member *prior* to a dissertation defense, and this seems to have produced the desired result.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

These changes were assessed through tracking the faculty participation rate via the google surveys during 21-22.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

They worked. We achieved the goal of 100% participation, but it was a small group of graduating PhD students, so we should keep trying these same processes to really get them engrained in our culture.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

We will continue to distribute the surveys at the same time as the examination ballots. We will continue to encourage committees to fill out the google survey at the defense, as part of the deliberation process for whether the student should fail, pass, or pass with distinction.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.
Pasted in From Spreadsheet generated by Google Forms Attached

Student Name	Professor Name (You)	Did the student assess relevant literature or scholarly contributions in philosophy?	Did the student apply the major practices, theories, or research methodologies in philosophy?	Did the student apply knowledge from the field(s) of study to address problems in broader contexts [e.g., use knowledge of specific topic to advance broader disciplinary discussions]?	Did the student articulate arguments or explanations to a disciplinary or professional audience in both oral and written forms?	Did the student evidence scholarly and/or professional integrity in the field of study?	Do you have any further comments regarding the student's dissertation?
Luke Kallberg	William Dunaway	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	
Luke Kallberg	Helen De Cruz	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	
Luke Kallberg	Kent Staley	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Luke tackled a difficult interdisciplinary problem and worked very hard to familiarize himself with a large body of relevant literature.
Luke Kallberg	John Greco	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	
Katherine Sweet	Eleonore Stump	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	It was an outstanding dissertation and defense.
Katherine Sweet	John Greco	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	
Katherine Sweet	Helen De Cruz	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	
Katherine Sweet	Joseph Salerno	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Among the best dissertations i've read. The defense was also excellent.
Danny Simpson	Scott Ragland	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	
Daniel J Simpson	John Heil	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	This was a terrific thesis. Reading it taught me a lot.
Danny Simpson	Susan Brower-Toland	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Danny's dissertation reflects years of hard, careful work and, I believe, turned out to be an exemplary piece of scholarship.
Danny Simpson	Jonathan D Jacobs	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	