

Program Review 2021-2022

Philosophy

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Table of Contents

General Information	1
2021/22 Program Review	2
2021/22 Program Review Form	2
Reference Section	3
Mesa2030 Comprehensive Master Plan	3
Roadmap to Mesa2030: Strategic Plan 2021-2026	3
Mesa Data Dashboards	3
Requests Forms	4
Request Portal	4
Appendix	5

General Information (Program Review 2021-2022)

2021/22 Program Review

2021/22 PROGRAM REVIEW FORM

Form: 2021/2022 Program Review (See appendix)

Reference Section

MESA2030 COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

ROADMAP TO MESA2030: STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026

MESA DATA DASHBOARDS

Requests Forms

REQUEST PORTAL

Appendix

A. **2021/2022 Program Review (Form)**

Form: "2021/2022 Program Review"

Created with : Taskstream

Participating Area: Philosophy

2021/2022 Program Review

(REQUIRED) Name of Lead Writer and Manager/Service Area Supervisor

Lead Writer: Ian Duckles

Manager: Pearl Ly

(REQUIRED) In what ways (if any) did changes to an online/remote modality due to COVID-19 impact student success and equity in your area/program? Please provide evidence.

The move to online/remote modality has had a significant, negative impact on our enrollments and the number of course sections that we offer.

That being said, the move to these modalities did not have a significant impact on our course success rates. Using data from Spring 2020 through Spring 2021, the overall course success rate in Philosophy was 71% with a course retention rate of 85%. Breaking this data down by course modality we can see that online asynchronous courses (1,895 students) have the highest success rate of 74% while online synchronous courses (998) had a success rate of 66% and f2f courses (538) had a success rate of 68% (it is worth noting that these courses would have been converted to online synchronous courses in March of 2020 due to the pandemic). During this same period, the overall success rate at Mesa was 74% with f2f at 72%, online synchronous at 73% and online asynchronous at 76%.

Looking at course retention rates, our overall course retention during the pandemic period was at 85% with f2f at 77%, online synchronous at 85% and online asynchronous at 87%. Comparing this to college wide data, the overall retention rate 86%, with f2f at 80%, online synchronous at 87%, and online asynchronous at 88%. These numbers are all very close.

If we contrast this with pre-Pandemic data (Summer of 2016 through Intersession of 2020) we can see a similar overall course success rate of 72% but with f2f courses having a higher success rate at 75% with online asynchronous courses having a success rate of 67%. This compares favorably with the college-wide numbers showing overall success at 73% with f2f at 75% and online asynchronous at 69%. We see a similar pattern looking at the retention numbers with overall retention during this period at 87% with f2f courses having 89% retention and online asynchronous courses having retention at 82%. This compares quite favorably with the college average during this time frame of 87% retention with 88% in f2f and 85% in online asynchronous.

The likeliest explanation for this difference is the fact that most faculty who taught online synchronous courses did not have much experience with this modality prior to the pandemic. By contrast, faculty teaching online asynchronous courses have all been trained and certified by the college and many of them already had extensive experience teaching in this modality before the onset of the pandemic. In other words, faculty teaching synchronously had a much bigger adjustment than faculty teaching asynchronously.

Turning to equity data, during the pre-pandemic period we had equity gaps among Black/African American (-10.9%) and Latinx (-7%) students. During the pandemic period these gaps persisted, increasing among Black/African American students (to -14.5%) but decreasing among Latinx students (to -5.2%). If we look at course modality, during the pre-pandemic period we had equity gaps in

online asynchronous courses among Black/African American students (-10.1%) and Latinx students (-7.8%). These are almost identical to the equity gaps we see among f2f courses (Black/African American students at -11.2% and Latinx students at -6.9%). During the pandemic period online asynchronous courses had equity gaps among Black/African American students at -9.5% and Latinx students at -6.4%. During the pandemic period for online synchronous courses we see equity gaps for Black/African-American students at -13.6% but a significant reduction among Latinx students at -4.0%.

I don't know what to make of this equity data other than to note that we continue to have persistent equity gaps among African-American and Latinx students. I would hypothesize that without significant curriculum revision such as the creation of new courses in Latinx and Africana philosophy or a significant change in the requirements of our transfer partners, these equity gaps will persist.

(REQUIRED) What practices has your area/program implemented since the last program review cycle that you would like to improve/continue? Identify impacts on student success and equity.

Our department had some ambitious plans outlined in our previous program review (19-20), but most of these were all essentially put on hold as we scrambled to adjust to the demands and stresses of the pandemic.

Despite these challenges we were able to accomplish many of the goals we identified.

- We have increased our offerings of PHIL 205. This course is very successful for us and it enrolls quite well. This is one of the major areas of growth our program has experienced over the past few years. This is primarily due to the fact that students are seeking an alternative to ENGL 205. Providing students more opportunities to satisfy the intermediate writing requirement serves both student success and equity.
- We are on track to complete our CLO and PLO assessment cycle at the end of this academic year. There are several courses that have not been offered or were offered and cancelled, so we were unable to assess these courses, but we are on track to assess all the courses that we have offered.
- Our effort to improve the transferability of PHIL 101 was unsuccessful. We made various efforts through our Articulation officer and counseling, but the UC's and CSU's were unwilling to modify the IGETC and CSUGE-B standards to include this course.

(REQUIRED) What practices has your area/program implemented since the last program review cycle that you would like to change/discontinue? Identify impacts on student success and equity.

We would like to actually implement some of the plans we had outlined in the previous program review cycle, but we will need to wait for the pandemic to abate and for us to return to more on-campus, in-person interactions. One set of plans involved efforts to narrow the equity gap in our enrollment of female students (philosophy enrolls more men than women even though there are more women at Mesa than men) These plans include:

- Developing a YouTube channel for Philosophy: In an effort to reach out to students we will create a YouTube channel with short videos introducing faculty,

our courses, and other areas of philosophical interest. This will involve the simple act of setting up a channel and then working with faculty and the Office of Communications to develop high quality videos for uploading.

- Increase Female Enrollment in Philosophy: Philosophy has a reputation (not undeservedly) as a field for the study of dead white men. Therefore, adjusting the perception of philosophy to make it more appealing to women will take an enormous amount of work, and will require us to experiment with novel approaches to marketing our courses and our majors to students. As such, we will explore a variety of approaches to achieving this objective. Some of the approaches are spelled out in other action items under this goal, but as we discuss and explore strategies as a discipline we will develop new ideas and plans.

Another equity gap we identified (discussed above) is a significant equity gap in the enrollment and success of Latinx students. To address this we would like to create a course on Latin American philosophy in order to diversify our curriculum. To this end, I have been in conversation with Soon-Ah Fadness at City College. We are putting together a workgroup to create a course on Mexican or Latin American Philosophy.

(REQUIRED) What college-wide practices implemented since the last program review cycle have affected your area/program positively or negatively? Identify impacts on student success and equity.

There are several college-wide trends that have negatively impacted our program. One of the most significant has been budgetary. Due to a continuing and persistent deficit that was only recently corrected (due mainly to significant infusions of cash from the federal and state governments to address the fallout of the pandemic), enormous pressure was placed on our program to be more "efficient" and "productive." This pressure has resulted in the cancellation of many of our sections and increased pressure to reduce our more "exotic" course offerings. In 2016-17 we offered a total course load of 17.8 FTEF. That went up to 18.2 FTEF in 2017-18, and then declined steadily to 14.8 FTEF in 2020-21. This reduction has significantly impacted our adjuncts, many of whom have lost teaching opportunities as a result of this reduction.

Another major trend that has negatively impacted philosophy (and I think the Humanities generally) is the increased conceptualization of the Community College system as merely a vocational education program. I would like to quote a recent email I received from a colleague that effectively summarizes this issue:

I think that PR for Philosophy probably does fail to capture our program's importance to the school and the students because our program doesn't have a product in the business model sense. We don't have a lot of graduates. Most students who take our courses have to do it for the sake of some other goal.

Rather than fight for more majors (I, personally, like to push the minor or double major if the student isn't dead set on going to law school), I would like for us to focus on keeping our place (or expanding it) in the general education curriculum. I really believe that what we teach better the lives of students and makes the world a better place. We are part of making good citizens in the world. Even if the student is here to get a degree in a CTE degree, I want that dental hygienist to be able to think for themselves. Maybe what they learn in a class on human nature allows them to be more compassionate when cleaning someone's teeth. Or, maybe what they learn in a history of philosophy class is interesting to them and acts as a catalyst to learn more about something contemporary (e.g. learning about Leibniz's monads inspires them to delve deeper into contemporary physics).

In developing this idea further, it is also worthwhile to quote a recent analysis published by Jim Miller who teaches English and Labor Studies at City College:

Thus, the great narratives of traditional religion, law, scientific inquiry, and liberal democracy itself are overwhelmed by information chaos, and in a world filled with incoherent, contextless, and purposeless information we find ourselves terribly adrift, unable to distinguish fact from dangerous fiction. [Neil] Postman's analysis [in *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (1992)] was prophetic in that it was penned before any of the newer forms of social media emerged. His solution is to rethink our education system by rejecting the embrace of job training and our fondness for efficient information delivery systems in favor of critical thinking and the teaching of histories of knowledge, both of which are decisively out of step with the current fetish for the business model.

This is unfortunate because we've never needed intellectual tools to help us filter the barrage of narratives coming our way more. As out of style as Postman's ideas seem, it is becoming clear that our bias in favor of speed over substance, entertainment over analysis, and immediacy rather than context are raising the risk that American democracy will, to paraphrase Postman, amuse itself to death.

As Miller argues, the business approach to the modern university and the values it carries with it, which downplays the importance of the humanities in favor of coursework and programs that lead directly to employment, is a major problem not just for our program, but for society as a whole.