



Program Review Self-Study Template

Academic unit: Philosophy \_\_\_\_\_

College: Liberal Arts and Sciences \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last review May 2010 \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last accreditation report (if relevant) \_\_\_\_\_

List all degrees described in this report (add lines as necessary)

Degree: BA \_\_\_\_\_ CIP\* code: 38.0101 \_\_\_\_\_

Degree: \_\_\_\_\_ CIP code: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree: \_\_\_\_\_ CIP code: \_\_\_\_\_

\*To look up, go to: Classification of Instructional Programs Website, <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/Default.aspx?y=55>

Faculty of the academic unit (add lines as necessary)

Name Signature

Robert Feleppa \_\_\_\_\_

Jeffrey Hershfield \_\_\_\_\_

Xiufen Lu \_\_\_\_\_

Almer Mandt \_\_\_\_\_

Day Radebaugh \_\_\_\_\_

Daniel Russell \_\_\_\_\_

Niall Shanks \_\_\_\_\_

David Soles \_\_\_\_\_

Deborah Soles \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by: David Soles Professor & Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Departmental purpose and relationship to the University mission (refer to instructions in the WSU Program Review document for more information on completing this section).**

a. University Mission:

Wichita State University is committed to providing comprehensive educational opportunities in an urban setting. Through teaching, scholarship and public service the University seeks to equip both students and the larger community with the educational and cultural tools they need to thrive in a complex world, and to achieve both individual responsibility in their own lives and effective citizenship in the local, national and global community.

b. Program Mission (if more than one program, list each mission):

The mission of the Philosophy Department is multi-faceted: (1) to provide a traditional philosophy major; (2) to offer a wide array of courses to serve the needs of other programs; (3) to offer a wide variety of general education courses; (4) to make scholarly contributions to philosophy and allied disciplines; and (5) to make service contributions to the institution, community and profession.

c. The role of the program (s) and relationship to the University mission: Explain in 1-2 concise paragraphs.

The Philosophy Department plays a central role in the achievement of the university's mission. A foundational discipline in the liberal arts and sciences, philosophy promotes intellectual curiosity, fosters examination of the human experience, encourages an understanding of the natural and social world, and develops tools for life-long learning. The Philosophy Department at Wichita State University endorses these disciplinary ideals and has developed courses to meet them. The department emphasizes high quality teaching and learning. All courses in the department emphasize the development of critical, analytical reasoning skills which can be applied to all fields of inquiry or endeavors and the transferability of these skills is a leitmotif of departmental offerings. The department provides a rigorous major in philosophy, one of the core LAS disciplines. Through its courses in bio-ethics, engineering ethics, computer ethics, ethical theory, political philosophy, and moral issues it assists students in developing personal, civic and professional responsibility – as well as providing an essential element in professional programs. The department's logic courses provide students with an intrinsically valuable basic skill with wide applications across the disciplines and in the workplace. The department offers a wide array of general education courses taken by students outside the major to fulfill degree requirements. The department offers courses which are required curricular components in several other programs: nursing, engineering, computer science, business.

The department promotes the university's mission of making original contributions to knowledge. Department faculty are active scholars dedicated to creating, expanding, applying and preserving knowledge through their scholarly activities. Several departmental members enjoy national and international reputations as experts in their fields. The department supports the university's mission of service and is actively involved in institutional, community and professional service. Several members of the department have received the President's Distinguished Service Award in recognition of their contributions in this area.

d. Has the mission of the Program (s) changed since last review?

Yes  No

Provide an overall description of your program (s) including a list of the measurable goals and objectives of the program (s) (both programmatic and learner centered). Have they changed since the last review?

Yes  No

i. If yes, describe in 1-2 concise paragraphs. If no, is there a need to change?

e. If yes, describe the changes in a concise manner.

There is no need to make any changes.

The Philosophy Department offers a traditional major emphasizing epistemology, metaphysics, value theory and the history of philosophy. The program serves three categories of majors: (1) students desiring to pursue post-graduate education, (2) students planning to attend law school, and (3) students seeking a well rounded, broad liberal education. We do not have formal tracks for these three groups and each student's curriculum is individually designed to meet his/her interests and needs. For that reason, a great deal of emphasis is placed on intensive, high quality advising by the faculty. The primary goals of the major program are: (1) providing students with a through grounding in the main issues, traditions and positions in philosophy, (2) developing critical analytical reading, writing, and reasoning skills, (3) preparing students for post-graduate study.

In addition to offering a traditional major, the department has two other major goals: (a) to offer a number of courses required by other programs and (b) to offer a variety of courses to satisfy general education requirements. Several programs in other colleges require our courses as integral components of their programs: nursing requires an introductory philosophy class plus our upper-division bio-ethics course; the bachelor of science in health sciences requires our bio-ethics course; computer science requires introductory logic, formal logic and computer ethics; engineering requires engineering ethics; the college of business requires our introductory logic course of all its majors and has asked us to develop an upper division business ethics course also to be required of all business majors. Furthermore, many of our upper division courses are designed to serve multiple constituents: majors, students majoring in related areas and students seeking to satisfy general education requirements. All of these courses (1) develop critical reading, writing, speaking and research skills (2) introduce students to a wide range of philosophical issues, traditions and positions and (3) develop an ability to address philosophical issues as they arise in other disciplines and professions.

**2. Describe the quality of the program as assessed by the strengths, productivity, and qualifications of the faculty in terms of SCH, majors, graduates and scholarly productivity (refer to instructions in the WSU Program Review document for more information on completing this section). Complete a separate table for each program if appropriate.**

Last 3 Years	Tenure/Tenure Track Faculty (Number)	Tenure/Tenure Track Faculty with Terminal Degree (Number)	Instructional FTE (#):			Total SCH - Total SCH by FY from Su, Fl, Sp	Total Majors - From fall semester	Total Grads - by FY	
			TTF= Tenure/Tenure Track	GTA=Grad teaching assist	O=Other instructional FTE				
			TTF	GTA	O				
Year 1 →	6.0	6.0			2.4	4,251	30	5	
Year 2 →	7.5	7.5			1.5	4,644	31	4	
Year 3 →	7.5	7.5			1.5	4,884	36	9	
Total Number Instructional (FTE) – TTF+GTA+O						SCH/ FTE	Majors/ FTE	Grads/ FTE	
Year 1 →						8.4	506	3.6	6
Year 2 →						9	516	3.4	4
Year 3 →						9	543	4.3	1

Scholarly Productivity	Number Journal Articles		Number Presentations		Number Conference Proceedings		Performances			Number of Exhibits		Creative Work		No. Books	No. Book Chaps.	No. Grants Awarded or Submitted	\$ Grant Value
	Ref	Non-Ref	Ref	Non-Ref	Ref	Non-Ref	*	**	***	Juried	****	Juried	Non-Juried				
Year 1	8	0	11	14										0			
Year 2	8	0	4	3										2			
Year 3	5	0	6	0										1			

\* Winning by competitive audition. \*\*Professional attainment (e.g., commercial recording). \*\*\*Principal role in a performance. \*\*\*\*Commissioned or included in a collection. KBOR data minima for UG programs: Majors=25; Graduates=10; Faculty=3; KBOR data minima for master programs: Majors=20; Graduates=5; Faculty=3 additional; KBOR data minima for doctoral programs: Majors=5; Graduates=2; Faculty=2 additional.

- a. Provide a brief assessment of the quality of the faculty/staff using the data from the table above as well as any additional relevant data. Programs should comment on details in regard to productivity of the faculty (i.e., some departments may have a few faculty producing the majority of the scholarship), efforts to recruit/retain faculty, departmental succession plans, course evaluation data, etc.

Provide assessment here:

The faculty are excellent. All members of the department have Ph.Ds from highly rated programs. Five members of the department are full professors with national/international reputations, one of whom

holds an endowed, named chair. All members of the department are active scholars and in the last three years the department has published 3 books, 21 journal articles, and made 38 presentations at professional meetings. The stature of the faculty is further underscored by the fact that department members have been elected to offices in regional and national professional organizations, served on national committees and are routinely invited to referee papers for major journals and presses.

All members of the department are excellent teachers. Four members of the department have received the Fairmount College John R. Barrier Distinguished Teaching Award, two have received the university's Excellence in Teaching Award, one has received the university's Leadership in the Advancement of Teaching Award, one has received the George A Lewis Teaching Award and one has received the Mortar Board Educator Appreciation Award. Course evaluation data and review of faculty teaching portfolios confirm that all members of the department are doing a superb job of teaching.

**3. Academic Program: Analyze the quality of the program as assessed by its curriculum and impact on students. Complete this section for each program (if more than one). Attach program assessment plan (s) as an appendix (refer to instructions in the WSU Program Review document for more information).**

a. For undergraduate programs, compare ACT scores of the majors with the University as a whole.

Last 3 Years	Total Majors - From fall semester	ACT – Fall Semester (mean for those reporting)	
		Majors	All University Students – FT
Year 1 →	30	25.2	22.6
Year 2 →	31	25.2	22.7
Year 3 →	36	25.4	22.8

KBOR data minima for UG programs: ACT<20 will trigger program.

b. For graduate programs, compare graduate GPAs of the majors with University graduate GPAs.\*

Last 3 Years	Total Admitted - By FY	Average GPA (Admitted) – Domestic Students Only (60 hr GPA for those with ≥54 hr reported) By FY		
		GPA of those Admitted	College GPA	University GPA
Year 1 →	NA	NA	NA	NA
Year 2 →	NA	NA	NA	NA
Year 3 →	NA	NA	NA	NA

\*If your admission process uses another GPA calculation, revise table to suit program needs and enter your internally collected data.

- c. Identify the principal learner outcomes (i.e., what skills does your Program expect students to graduate with). Provide aggregate data on how students are meeting those outcomes. Data should relate to the goals and objectives of the program as listed in 1e.

Learner Outcomes (most programs will have multiple outcomes)	Measurement (e.g., rubric, portfolios, rubrics, writing samples, exams)	Results
Knowledge of philosophical traditions, issues and positions	Writing samples and exams	<p>Year One: Approximately 20 writing samples and exams were reviewed. All reviewed items demonstrated superior knowledge of philosophical traditions, issues and problems.</p> <p>Year Two: Approximately 20 writing samples and exams were reviewed. All reviewed items demonstrated superior knowledge of philosophical traditions, issues, and problems.</p> <p>Year Three: Approximately 20 writing samples and exams were reviewed. All reviewed items demonstrated superior knowledge of philosophical traditions, issues and problems.</p>
Development of critical reading, writing and analytical reasoning skills	Writing samples and performance in logic course	<p>Year One: Approximately 20 writing samples and exams were reviewed. All reviewed items demonstrated mastery of critical reading, writing and analytical reasoning skills. All majors enrolled in logic passed with a grade of C or better.</p> <p>Year Two: Approximately 20 writing samples and exams were reviewed. All reviewed items demonstrated mastery of critical reading, writing and analytical reasoning skills. All majors in logic passed with a grade of C or better.</p>

		Year Three: Approximately 20 writing samples and exams were reviewed. All reviewed items demonstrated mastery of critical reading writing and analytical reasoning skills. All majors in logic passed with a grade of C or better.
Prepared to pursue post-graduate education	Admission to post-graduate programs	Year One: Two students applied to graduate or law school. Both were accepted.  Year Two. Three students applied to graduate or law school. All three were accepted.  Year Three: Four students applied to graduate or law school. All four were accepted.

- d. Provide aggregate data on student majors satisfaction (e.g., exit surveys), capstone results, licensing or certification examination results, employer surveys or other such data that indicate student satisfaction with the program and whether students are learning the curriculum (for learner outcomes, data should relate to the goals and objectives of the program as listed in 1e).

Student Satisfaction (e.g., exit survey data on overall program satisfaction). * If available, report by year, for the last 3 years			Learner Outcomes: Percentage of applicants admitted to graduate or professional school			
Year	N	Result (e.g., 4.5 on scale of 1-5, where 5 highest)	Year	Percentage		
1		We have not been collecting this sort of data. However, for the past 20 years every graduate of our program who has applied to a post-graduate program has been admitted. As external reviewer, Nancy Simco, commented, <b>“The placement record of students graduating from the philosophy program in graduate and professional schools is outstanding. This record demonstrates that this program is more than just doing its job; this is the kind of external evaluation that cannot be challenged. I have reviewed other undergraduate programs at state universities over the years, and I know of no similar program which can claim the success of this one in this regard.”</b> (see p. 4 of Nancy Simco’s Evaluation in appendix #1) In this connection external Reviewer Joseph Bien also noted that <b>“the student success rate in getting into top Ph.D. programs and law schools is impressive....These students get into the top</b>	1	100		

		departments and law schools. This success rate is an important external measure of the way top national programs and schools view the WSU philosophy major.” (See page 5 of Joseph Bien’s evaluation in appendix #2)				
2			2	100		
3			3	100		

\*Available for graduate programs from the Graduate School Exit Survey. Undergraduate programs should collect internally. † If available.

- e. Provide aggregate data on how the goals of the *WSU General Education Program* and *KBOR 2020 Foundation Skills* are assessed in undergraduate programs (optional for graduate programs).

Goals/Skills Measurements of:	Results	
	Majors	Non-Majors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Oral and written communication</li> <li>-Numerical literacy</li> <li>-Critical thinking and problem solving</li> <li>-Collaboration and teamwork</li> <li>-Library research skills</li> <li>-Diversity and globalization</li> </ul>		
<p>Except for logic, all philosophy courses have heavy writing components and student papers and essay exams are evaluated on the basis of written communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, library research skills, as well as philosophy-specific knowledge and abilities. The logic courses do not have extensive writing assignments but focus specifically on the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills. Upper division courses in the program typically require a high degree of student participation; this develops oral communication skills. Several courses emphasize collaboration and teamwork (particularly bio-ethics, computer ethics, and engineering ethics) and the majority of our courses address issues of diversity and/or globalization. Several of our courses (Ancient Chinese Philosophy, Contemporary Chinese Philosophy, Asian Philosophy, Topics in Asian Philosophy) explicitly focus on globalization; several others contain modules on global perspectives. As one would expect from philosophy courses, most of them are committed to presenting and examining a diversity of opinions and positions; the logic courses are the exceptions here.</p> <p>The department maintains a file on each course which contains syllabuses, reading assignments, copies of exams, paper assignments, etc. We also maintain a portfolio of representative student work in our courses. These materials are reviewed each spring by the department assessment committee.</p> <p>In reviewing this material, external reviewer Nancy Simco commented “Students in general education courses, service courses and the major are all served very well. The faculty takes very seriously the mission of <b>educating</b> all of the students who come under their tutelage....it was clear that the faculty is</p>	<p>Excellent:</p> <p>Year One: Examination of portfolios of course materials and student work established that the department’s general education courses promote oral and written communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, library research skills, and an appreciation of globalization and diversity.</p> <p>Year Two: Examination of portfolios of course materials and student work established that the department’s general education courses promote oral and written communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, library research skills, and an appreciation of globalization and diversity.</p> <p>Year Three: Examination of portfolios of course materials and student work established that the department’s general education courses promote</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <p>Year One: Examination of portfolios of course materials and student work established that the department’s general education courses promote oral and written communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, library research skills, and an appreciation of globalization and diversity.</p> <p>Year Two: Examination of portfolios of course materials and student work established that the department’s general education courses promote oral and written communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, library research skills, and an appreciation of globalization and diversity.</p> <p>Year Three: Examination of portfolios of course materials and student work established that the department’s general education courses promote oral</p>



dedicated to reaching as many students as possible with a goal of enhancing their critical abilities and long-term quality of life.” (p. 2 of report)	oral and written communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, library research skills and an appreciation of globalization and diversity.  For an external validation of this assessment, see comments by external reviewers	and written communications skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, library research skills and an appreciation of globalization and diversity.  For an external validation of this assessment, see comments by external reviewers.

Note: Not all programs evaluate every goal/skill. Programs may choose to use assessment rubrics for this purpose. Sample forms available at: <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/>

- f. Provide a brief assessment of the overall quality of the academic program using the data from tables in 3a – 3e and other information you may collect, including outstanding student work (e.g., outstanding scholarship, inductions into honor organizations, publications, special awards, academic scholarships, student recruitment and retention). Also indicate whether the program is accredited by a specialty accrediting body including the next review date and concerns from the last review.

Provide assessment here:

The overall quality of the program is excellent. As indicated above, the average ACT score of philosophy majors is significantly higher than the WSU student average, a clear indication that the program is attracting and retaining some of the academically best prepared students on campus. Also as mentioned above, for the past twenty years **EVERY** program graduate who has applied to graduate school, law school or medical school has been accepted. Not only do we have a 100% placement rate but our students have gone on to, and succeeded in, some of the world’s most rigorous graduate programs: Harvard, Cornell, Claremont, Rutgers, Purdue, Washington University (St Louis), St Andrews, University of Texas, Austin, etc.

There is no accrediting body for philosophy programs.

**4. Analyze the student need and employer demand for the program. Complete for each program if appropriate (refer to instructions in the WSU Program Review document for more information on completing this section).**

- a. Utilize the table below to provide data that demonstrates student need and demand for the program.

Majors						Employment of Majors*						No. pursuing graduate or professional education	Projected growth from BLS**						
Last 3 FYs— Su, FI, and Sp	No. new applicants or declared majors	No. who enter or are admitted in the major	No. enrolled one year later	1 Year Attrition %	Total no. of grads	Average Salary	Employment % In state	Employment % in the field	Employment % related to the field	Employment % outside the field									
Year 1→					6						2	Current year only ↓							
Year 2→					4						3								
Year 3→					9						4								
Race/Ethnicity by Major***											Race/Ethnicity by Graduate***						We have race/ethnicity data only on (a) first majors and (b) juniors and seniors. Consequently, these figures do not tally exactly with the number of majors data in section 2.		
	NRA	H	AI/AN	A	B	NH/PI	C	M	UNK	NRA	H	AI/AN	A	B	NH/PI	C		MR	UNK
Year 1→	0	3				1	15		2		1					4			
Year 2→		1				2	15	1	2							4			
Year 3→		3		2	2		24	1	4				1			6		2	

\* May not be collected every year

\*\* Go to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Website: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/> and view job outlook data and salary information (if the Program has information available from professional associations or alumni surveys, enter that data)

\*\*\* NRA=Non-resident alien; H=Hispanic; AI/AN=American Indian/ Alaskan Native; A=Asian; B=Black; NH/PI=Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; C=Caucasian; MR=Multi-race; UNK=Unknown

KBOR data minima for UG programs: Majors=25; Graduates=10; Faculty=3; KBOR data minima for master programs: Majors=20; Graduates=5; Faculty=3 additional; KBOR data minima for doctoral programs: Majors=5; Graduates=2; Faculty=2 additional.

Provide a brief assessment of student need and demand using the data from the table above. Include the most common types of positions, in terms of employment, graduates can expect to find.

Provide assessment here:

About 50% of our graduates attend post-graduate programs, mostly philosophy graduate school or law school, and pursue careers in education or the legal profession.

The graduates who do not go on to post graduate school are employed in a variety of fields; wherever critical thinking, research, communication, and writing skills are valued philosophy graduates will be in demand. WSU philosophy graduates who completed their education with the bachelor's degree are employed in business, journalism, publishing, law enforcement, public relations, the computer industry and the military – to mention just a few.

5. Analyze the cost of the program and service the Program provides to the discipline, other programs at the University, and beyond. Complete for each program if appropriate (refer to instructions in the WSU Program Review document for more information on completing this section).

Fall Semester	Percentage of SCH Taken By (last 3 years)		
	Year 1 - 2007	Year 2 - 2008	Year 3 – 2009
UG Majors	4.4	3.7	4.9
Gr Majors			
Non-Majors	95.6	96.3	95.1

- a. Provide a brief assessment of the cost and service the Program provides. Comment on percentage of SCH taken by majors and non-majors, nature of Program in terms of the service it provides to other University programs, faculty service to the institution, and beyond.

Provide assessment here:

The Philosophy Department is very cost effective, averaging around 250 student credit hours per faculty member; when one factors in the fact that salaries in the humanities are significantly lower than those in the sciences or professional schools the philosophy department certainly is a revenue generator.

The department provides important service teaching to the institution. The College of Health Professions, the Business College and the College of Engineering all require specific philosophy courses: introductory logic, formal logic, ethics and computers, engineering ethics, and bio-ethics. The business college is considering requiring all business majors to take a business ethics course taught by the philosophy department. The department also is heavily involved in providing a wide range of general education courses taken by students in other disciplines to satisfy distribution requirements.

The faculty is heavily involved in service to the institution. During the review period three people served on the Faculty Senate simultaneously – one as President-Elect and President and one as Secretary, two served on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, one served on the Faculty Senate Planning and Budget Committee, one served on the LAS Tenure and Promotion Committee, one served on the University Tenure and Promotion Committee, two served on the LAS College Council – one as Chair, one served on the Academic Affairs Committee, one served on the General Education Committee, one served on the General Education Ad Hoc Committee, one served on the Foundations of Excellence Task Force, one served on the Graduate School Assessment Committee, one serves as the LAS election commissioner, one serves on the Faculty Senate Library Committee, etc. As mentioned above, four members of the department have received the President's Distinguished Service Award in recognition of their service contributions.

**6. Report on the Program's goal (s) from the last review. List the goal (s), data that may have been collected to support the goal, and the outcome. Complete for each program if appropriate (refer to instructions in the WSU Program Review document for more information on completing this section).**

(For Last 3 FYs)	Goal (s)	Assessment Data Analyzed	Outcome
	(1) By June of 2012, recruit 15 new majors at the freshman and sophomore level	Enrollment statistics	We enrolled 18 freshman and sophomore majors during academic year 2010-2011.
	(2) By June of 2012, increase the number of juniors and seniors to greater than 25 and maintain this number thereafter.	Enrollment statistics	During the 2010-2011 AY, we had 32 junior and senior philosophy majors enrolled in our classes.
	(3) By June of 2012, increase the number of graduates to 10 a year and maintain this average thereafter.	Enrollment statistics.	We graduated nine majors during FY 2010.

**7. Summary and Recommendations**

- a. Set forth a summary of the report including an overview evaluating the strengths and concerns. List recommendations for improvement of each Program (for departments with multiple programs) that have resulted from this report (relate recommendations back to information provided in any of the categories and to the goals and objectives of the program as listed in 1e). Identify three year goal (s) for the Program to be accomplished in time for the next review.

Provide assessment here:

The Philosophy Department is academically very strong. It has excellent faculty who teach rigorous, demanding courses which attract some of the best students on campus. It has an extraordinary record of placing its graduates in premiere PH.D programs and law schools. It also offers a wide array of courses required by other departments and colleges and provides numerous courses to satisfy general education requirements. Faculty in the department are active scholars and significantly contribute to service activities.

The only concern is the number of majors and graduates. We have begun to work on this issue and the number of majors and graduates is increasing significantly. Among other things, we:

1. have redesigned our web page making it much more attractive to prospective students. We are averaging around 300 hits a month and several students have contacted us about majoring as a result of finding us on the web page.
2. have founded a pre-law society with which we are working very closely. This provides us with an opportunity to better inform pre-law students of the benefits of a philosophy degree.

3. are contacting freshmen and sophomores with a pre-law interest informing them of our pre-law focus and success in placing our students in law schools. During registration we send out letters and brochures to all WSU students who have declared a pre-law interest informing them of our pre-law focus and success in placing our graduates in law school.
4. are working closely with the pre-law advisors in the LAS Advising Center so that they can better advise students about the benefits of a philosophy degree.
5. have developed materials emphasizing the career and personal relevance of studying philosophy. We have been disseminating these in our introductory classes and much of this material has been incorporated into our revised web page.

Goals to be accomplished before the next review in 2014:

1. Recruit 15 new majors at the freshmen and sophomore level each year. We recruited 18 this year.
2. Increase to and maintain the number of junior and seniors at greater than 25. There were 29 junior and senior philosophy majors registered during the spring 2011 semester.
3. By 2013, increase to and maintain the number of graduates at 10 a year. We have 8 students scheduled to graduate this spring and, thus, are approaching our target.
4. Utilize the results of the new university exit survey to evaluate student satisfaction and other perceptions students have about philosophy.
5. Utilize the results of the new university alumni survey to evaluate student percepts about their experiences as philosophy majors and how those experiences have been useful.

**External Peer Review for Philosophy Program, Wichita State University**

**May 3-4, 2004**

**Reviewer: Nancy D. Simco, Professor & Chair, Department of Philosophy, University of Memphis**

**Curriculum:**

The philosophy curriculum at Wichita State University is more extensive and includes much more variety than one would expect to find in a seven-person department. There are no topics within the discipline which are excluded from coverage within the course offerings. The entire history of philosophy from the pre-Socratics to the present day is well-covered.

In addition, there is an impressive array of 'Philosophy of . . . . . ' courses: Economics, Health Care, Law, Religion, Science, and the Social Sciences. Further there are courses which offer students the opportunity to study the linkages between philosophy and other disciplines: 'Artificial Intelligence and Philosophy,' 'Bioethics,' 'Engineering Ethics,' 'Ethics and Computers,' and 'Philosophy and the Arts.'

David Soles' interest in Chinese philosophy has developed into more than the passing acquaintance held by most American philosophers. He has published two articles in the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* and two in *Asian Philosophy*, with another forthcoming in the *Journal of Chinese Studies*. Bob Feleppa has also developed an interest in Japanese studies, having given several papers at professional conferences within this area. This expertise, along with the hiring of Xiufen Lu in a Part-Time Faculty position, has made the study of Asian philosophies a serious possibility in this program. More often than not, if this area of study appears in a program at all, it is relegated to a weak after-thought. Students at Wichita State are truly in a rare position in having two areas within Asian studies available to them.

Xiufen Lu also adds the dimension of Feminist Theory to the curriculum. In spite of the contemporary political climate many programs still lack this element.

The Department lists an upper division/graduate course in 'Contemporary European Philosophy,' however, with the possible exception of Xiufen Lu, whose role commits her in other directions, there does not appear to be any faculty with training in this area. By contrast the analytic and history sides of the curriculum are so strong that it

accentuates this omission. *I recommend that in future hires the Department seek to find a person with at least an AOC in this area regardless of the AOS sought.*

I reviewed sample syllabi from courses at every level and found the curriculum in very good shape indeed. Students in general education courses, service courses, and the major are all served very well. The faculty takes very seriously the mission of truly educating all of the students who come under their tutelage. When I explored ways various curriculum options could be combined, it was clear that the faculty is dedicated to reaching as many students as possible with a goal of enhancing their critical abilities and long-term quality of life.

*Given the overall strength and variety of the existing curriculum, it seems highly appropriate to consider adding a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy.* There is a vacant niche for a masters' program in this region of the United States, which sets as its goal to bring students with weak backgrounds up to competition for entering the top doctoral programs in philosophy and other professional programs. The successful placement record of this program ideally suits it for this role (see the section on Students below). Weak student backgrounds may be the result of either lack of exposure to the discipline or of courses taught at levels which are too low to prepare the students for graduate education. The present curriculum of the WSU program is well-suited for preparing students from these situations. A program with the goal of preparing students to continue their studies would also serve returning students who wish to receive advanced training in philosophy for their personal enhancement. A few universities in this geographical region have been encouraged to develop such a masters' program, but none have chosen to pursue this route.

### **Faculty:**

This is indeed an unusually strong faculty for a department which does not offer a post baccalaureate degree. They thrive in a congenial, collegial atmosphere. Each person holds the others in high regard and treats each of them with respect. The Department has been extraordinarily fortunate to have had the benefit of the participation and leadership of Debby and David Soles and Bob Feleppa for more than two decades, and the same level of commitment on the part of Ben Rogers before them. Beginning in fall, 2004, the Soles and Feleppa will be the senior faculty in the Department, with Bob just having been promoted to this rank. All three of these people are outstanding role models for both junior faculty and students. Each of them has taught an amazing variety of courses, all have received distinguished teaching awards, all have served as department chair, all have good publication records, and all were highly praised by everyone with whom I spoke during the time of my visit.

Recent hires at the junior level have been particularly outstanding. Dan Russell (hired in 2000) works in the area of ancient philosophy, which in my opinion is the hardest area within our discipline in which to publish. Dan is clearly on the fast track. In fact, I have never seen anyone establish a comparable record in such a short amount of

time. I understand that Jeff Hershfield (1999) has been recognized for his record by promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure effective this fall. Bill Vanderburgh (2001) has a very strong background in the history and philosophy of science, and has already produced significant, nationally recognized research in this area. Bill's excellence in his research area benefits the curriculum in the corollary areas of logic, modern philosophy, epistemology, and metaphysics.

The remaining member of the full-time faculty, Anne Tarver (1999), is somewhat of a mystery to this reviewer. She has taught many courses and the anecdotal evidence from students indicates that she has done a good job. I reviewed sample student evaluations, but it just happened that none were from her courses. Syllabi from her courses were just what one would expect. I spoke with her only very briefly. Her vita does not give one as much information as one would like, but no publications are listed and there are only seven program presentations since 1998. I checked the WSU website for tenure and promotion criteria but did not find them (which could well mean that I just didn't know where to look), but the ordinary expectation would be that she should have come up either this year or next. It seems clear that she is not ready for promotion to Associate Professor, so, unless WSU allows separation of tenure and promotion to Associate, it appears that this is a position which the Department may need to fill in the near future. In any case, *I recommend that she expand her curriculum vita in a manner which better reflects her performance.*

The two part-time faculty members are held in high regard by their colleagues. As noted under Curriculum, Xiufen Lu contributes both feminist theory and Chinese thought as well as the more traditional areas of social and political philosophy and ethics. If her position could be expanded to full-time, she would make even more of a positive impact on the program. It would be desirable for her to spend more time teaching her own specialties in addition to the feminist and Chinese courses. Her vita lists "Post Kant Continental Philosophy" as an AOC, and it would be extremely desirable for her to offer courses in this area. *For these reasons, I recommend that Xiufen Lu be moved into a full-time position.*

The other part-time faculty member, Day Radebaugh, has superb credentials for teaching the ethics and computers courses. Students at WSU are very fortunate to have access to someone with his background. His computer science career, together with his formal training in philosophy, makes him a resource that could be used in a wide variety of ways within the curriculum. *I recommend that his talents be utilized as much as possible. The Department should be encouraged to find creative ways to use these talents.*

Given the intensive, hands-on nature of this program, one should be concerned with potential faculty burn-out. The normal teaching load is 3/3. *I recommend that for faculty who are producing a high level of research this be reduced to a 3/2 or 2/3.* If a masters' program were added, graduate student teaching assistants could make this a viable option without loss of credit hour production or coverage of curricular areas.



Teaching loads could be altered within the present situation by working out a system of rotation of teaching schedules, which would yield the same result.

The Department as a whole has been very supportive of the Southwestern Philosophical Society. Both Debby Soles and Bob Feleppa have served as president of this organization. This is, in my opinion, one of the best regional associations in our field. It offers excellent opportunities for junior faculty and advanced graduate students to present their research in a nurturing environment, as opposed to the more critical atmosphere of some of the national and specialty organizations. This group of faculty has been instrumental in maintaining the quality and congeniality of this society in spite of a national trend away from regional organizations.

### **Students:**

I was able to spend some time talking with three over-lapping groups of students—some philosophy majors, some just enrolled in philosophy courses. Their praise for the faculty was uniformly of the highest order! They love their courses, but, above that, they adore the faculty. They are extremely appreciative of the time the faculty devotes to them, and the quality of the education they are receiving. They made frequent, and surprisingly detailed, comparisons between courses in the Philosophy Department and in other departments within the University. These were intelligent, reflective students. I asked the different groups with which I talked, 'if you were reviewing this program, on what would you focus?' It was difficult to get them to consider topics other than praise for the faculty. Faculty everywhere should be fortunate enough to have students who appreciate them this much!

I was given a number of student papers from courses from each level within the program. While some of them were the pedestrian sort one expects from undergraduates at most institutions, several showed real philosophical acumen and the clear benefit of the time faculty had spent with them.

When I asked students questions about the scope of the curriculum, several volunteered the lack I mentioned in the section on curriculum—the contemporary continental course is out in the cold at the moment. The students' response seemed to me to reflect that the faculty had told them they were not getting this course rather than their being anxious about its being unavailable.

The placement record of students graduating from the philosophy program in graduate and professional schools is outstanding. This record demonstrates that this program is more than just doing its job; this is the kind of external evaluation which cannot be challenged. I have reviewed other undergraduate programs at state universities over the years, and I know of no similar program which can claim the success of this one in this regard.

## **Budget:**

Faculty salaries in the Department are somewhat lower than would be expected given the credentials of the individual faculty members. However, it appears that the University has done a reasonably good job of keeping pace with salaries in generally poor economic times for higher education.

The surprising feature of the budget is that only \$5,000 is allocated for operating expenses. Given all of the things these faculty members do for their students, it is surely the case that they are using personal resources for quite a lot. There really are no discretionary funds here. *I recommend at least a 33% increase in this allocation.*

## **Facilities:**

Fiske Hall offers fine accommodations for this Department. There is good light, no faculty are required to share office space, and the building is clean and appears to be quite well-maintained given its age. This is unusual in these days in which "deferred maintenance" seems to be the norm.

Of particular note is the fact that there is a room off the main office which has been designated as a lounge, and furnished by a gift from a former student. This is a comfortable area where there appears to be almost constant conversation among faculty and students. It is difficult to estimate the value of this as an asset to the program. It is a huge contributing factor to the congenial atmosphere and the level of student achievement. This on-going interaction surely accounts for a significant amount of the success of these students in the WSU program and in the graduate programs they ultimately enter. One of the main concerns of universities which are largely commuter campuses is always how to develop this kind of interaction, and this program can serve as a great example of doing it right!

Although many students seem to study in the lounge, I believe that *it would be good if a separate area were designated as a study area and furnished with a few computer work stations.* There appears to be space for this in the building, and it seems to me that it would only enhance the function of the lounge to have a separate area that still has the advantage of being near the faculty (and the lounge itself), while giving the commuter students a quieter place to work.

## **Website:**

As is the case in many other programs, it appears that a website for this program started on the right track, then has not continued to be developed at the same level. *Because websites are among our best recruiting tools for both students and faculty, I recommend that the Department continue to pursue development of the website.* Every

faculty member should have a webpage, and the site should always have the appearance of being current. It is an excellent place to advertise the strengths of the program, particularly the placement of graduates. (I should confess that I preach this at my own institution with only limited success!)

### **Future of the Program:**

The dominant worry about the future of the program which emerged during my visit was the future leadership of the Department in the office of the Chair. Since each of the senior faculty have done their “turn,” and none of the junior faculty want the job, what will happen? This doesn’t appear to me to be a very grim situation. I believe there is much wisdom in having someone in the chair who doesn’t want the job. This doesn’t mean that someone should take on the job who absolutely abhors every minute of it and dreads coming to the office every morning because of it! But, most people are quite capable of making the adjustment to committing to a virtually 100% service role for a limited period of time. To preserve this program at its current level, the adjustment would be worth it—maybe even rewarding!

Another worry which was voiced was faculty turn-over. Programs should not, and cannot, remain static. Some time in the future there will undoubtedly be replacement hires for faculty members who choose to retire or move on to other jobs. In making these replacements I believe that it will be important to keep in mind those qualities which make this program what it is now. New people brought in should have the same dedication to high quality teaching and interaction with students and the same commitment to excellence in their own research programs—whatever their area—as the present faculty. Finding those people should not be viewed as a time of despair; rebuilding should be just as challenging and exciting as building, especially given the excellent foundation.

## 2000 Assessment of the Teaching Aspect of the Department of Philosophy at Wichita State University.

**The Assessor:** The assessment was done by Joseph Bien a long time professor and often chair of the philosophy department (B.A. through Ph.D.) at the University of Missouri-Columbia. My areas of research and teaching include aspects of the history of philosophy, political and social philosophy and continental thought.

I already have a certain knowledge of the department: 1) twice having been the outside member of promotion committees, 2) having written for a third promotion and 3) having been the lecturer for one of the department's interdisciplinary seminars. In addition I have worked with three of the faculty on the executive committee of a major regional society.

**Formal Assessment:** The assessment took place on November second and third of this year. I was provided with my own office space and was given secretarial assistance as needed. Faculty and the chair were there to assist me in every conceivable way. Materials provided included 1) curriculum vitae of all faculty, 2) student evaluations of teaching, 3) copies of student exams with instructors grades and comments, 4) copies of students' papers with instructors' grades and comments, 5) copies of syllabi, hand outs, exams, writing assignments, etc. 6) a short history of the department including placement of graduates in leading programs, 4) the role of teaching in the department and college and 5) a list of the various teaching awards given to faculty members.

I attended two lunches one with junior faculty and the other with both junior and senior faculty, and two dinners with senior and junior faculty. I had called 1) a meeting with a group of philosophy majors (no faculty or staff present), 2) a meeting with the college dean, and 3) I visited two classes one lower level taught by David Soles and a second upper level taught by Jeffrey Hershfield. I also spoke informally with a variety of faculty and students. I was able to interview all department faculty except for Professor Rogers who was attending a professional meeting abroad. I informally chatted with students before and after the classes visited and before and after my talk.

In addition I presented a paper on Rousseau to the Philosophy Society. This provided another opportunity to interact with the students as well as being able to observe the interaction among the faculty and students and to assess the level of sophistication of the students.

**A Few Remarks:** From past visits and general knowledge of faculty publication records I can say with confidence and admiration that the quality of the tenured faculty is exceptionally high for an undergraduate department in a comprehensive university. Having sat on promotion committees for the department I would favorably compare the department standards with those of several midwestern doctoral programs when it comes to research. The only possible weakness here might be in number of papers presented at national and international meetings. Even this should be considered good when one knows the department's extremely limited travel resources. I mention the above because I believe that strong research and good teaching most often go hand in hand. They certainly do in the case of this department.

Other assets the department has include an extremely good department chair and the support of the dean's office. The department faculty work together and with the students. The end result is an extremely high level of instruction. This is also seen by the many times faculty have been recognized for teaching excellence. The list includes two Barrier Awards for Teaching Excellence, a George A. Lewis Teaching Award and twelve selections for Emory Lindquist Honors Society Mentors in just the last fifteen years and finally a Mortar Board's Educator Appreciation Award. All departments get teaching awards but not many small departments (seven faculty) get so many in so short a time. They are doing better than my department at Missouri.

**Comments on the Program:** In the following I will comment on seven areas: 1) the quality of the faculty and their expertise, 2) the appropriateness of the courses being offered, 3) the soundness and coherency of the curriculum as a whole, 4) the level and quality of instruction, 5) the philosophy major and the general level and quality of student performance, 6) student/faculty rapport and interaction and 7) student success in getting into top level Ph.D. programs and Law Schools.

1. I have already spoken to the high quality of the senior (tenured) faculty. Let me here add that the three junior faculty all have exceptionally strong

backgrounds and in some cases already have good publication and presentation records. Keeping with its tradition the department has made three fine hires. In this way the department continues to renew itself. One should look for nothing but continued quality work in the future.

2. This is an analytic group of philosophers and they reflect the best traditions of the dominant philosophical tendency in the English speaking world. But WSU is not as one often finds with strictly analytic departments, closed to the rest of the philosophical world. As a continental philosopher who has lectured in the department I personally can attest to this openness of spirit. In large part I believe this to be the case because of very serious scholarship (reflected in teaching) of a number of philosophers in the department. For that matter several faculty are interested in various aspects of Asian philosophy. At least one faculty member already has a solid reputation in this area stemming from his publications. There is also an ongoing ACCU grant to the university to develop a Japanese studies program at WSU. A department member helped write the grant proposal and another department member is actively involved in the project. In addition the faculty have had two non analytic philosophers come for short term courses. With the present composition of the department one has the best possible arrangement. The strong analytic emphasis allows for a centered program for the students but one that is also able to be understood in terms of the field's history and a variety of other ongoing philosophical endeavors. This is certainly the best of all possible worlds. Students cannot but profit from it.

3. Without additional faculty the soundness and coherency of the overall curriculum appears quite good. My only concern here is that the faculty may be stretched a bit thin. Nonetheless they do a very good job at 1) offering a traditional major in philosophy, 2) providing a variety of general education courses (except for philosophy 325 in formal logic all the department's courses fulfill general education requirements), and 3) providing a variety of service courses targeted to the other departments and colleges such as philosophy of health care, computer ethics, business ethics, and philosophical issues in feminism.

4. I attended two classes. If these two sessions in any way represent the level of undergraduate teaching of the department, the faculty are not only to be congratulated on doing such an outstanding job but the philosophy faculty might well serve as a models for other departments at WSU and

our national philosophy association. Certainly this department is well beyond our undergraduate offerings average at UMC. That I learned a few new tricks from a senior philosopher such as Soles is not surprising but that I also did so from a near beginner (Hershfield) is a surprise for someone who has received a few teaching awards himself. The department should be encouraged to do whatever is necessary to keep its teaching level at this exceptionally high level.

5. In speaking of the level and quality of students, I take into account both my past visits and the current one. Right off the bat I make the following statement: UMC will be happy to accept and will probably give serious financial assistance to any WSU philosophy major who wishes to pursue M.A. and Ph.D. work in my department. This is one of the best majors groups that I have ever seen. Each major has a program tailored to his or her needs by his or her personal faculty advisor. Although not often encountered because of the extra work it involves, this way of doing things makes good sense. For someone who wishes to go forward in philosophy of science at a top institution there is one type of program, for another who wishes to pursue a law degree at a top institution there is another, and for someone who wants a more traditional liberal education there is a third. All majors, nonetheless, have the stamp of a WSU philosophy major because almost certainly they also will share upper level courses in logic, epistemology, history of philosophy, value theory, metaphysics and either philosophy of science or philosophy of language. This program of courses is very close to the one suggested by the American Philosophical Association a few years back.

The general level of student performance and the quality of the students (both majors and non majors) was gleaned from the paper topics and tests read and my discussions with students before and after the classes visited as well as the quality of answers, questions and objections raised in these two courses. While I did not think to ask to visit an evening class and therefore cannot speak to those students, I do believe I can speak seriously to the daytime students. The students in Soles' introduction class were at the level of one of our very top introduction classes at UMC. The students in Hershfield's philosophy of religion class were exceptionally well prepared and asked important questions and raised serious objections. In this course the student performance was a full step above the equivalent at UMC and most other major state universities where I have observed classes. From past observations I know that

students in Deborah Soles philosophy of logic course are also well prepared, work hard and are strongly motivated. While this last course is not one taken by many non majors I do believe that it fits a pattern when it comes to student accomplishment and quality of instruction.

6. The interaction between students and faculty is truly of the highest order. I have observed this over my different visits to the department. The coffee room in the department always has students and most often faculty there speaking of anything philosophical from courses, to preparation for graduate school, to hot philosophical issues, to an upcoming event on campus that might have special interest for the department members. Students feel free to speak about faculty while obviously respecting them. Faculty enjoy the discussions, arguments, etc. This is about as close to a family of scholars and students as one can hope for. I congratulate the department. By all means keep this room just as is.

7. The student success rate getting into top Ph.D. programs and leading law schools is impressive. A few paragraphs ago I made a statement about offers for WSU philosophy graduates. It was easy for me to make because I am sorry to say my department is not likely to get WSU philosophy majors for our doctoral program because they can all do better than UMC. These students get into the top departments and law schools. This success rate is an important external measure of the way top national programs and schools view the WSU philosophy major.

***Some Recommendations:*** I make four recommendations. They are 1) the creation of a graduate program, 2) the creation of a proper laboratory with computers for student use, 3) more money for faculty travel to make presentations at major meetings and to bring in more outside speakers for the benefit of both the faculty and students, and 4) more student support in the way of scholarships and travel.

1. With such a high quality undergraduate major program, I recommend the creation of an M.A. program in the department. This would allow students to pursue their studies in a recognized program before transferring to a Ph.D. Program. In this regard it should be noted that many top flight Ph.D. Programs now are looking almost exclusively to the Ph.D. programs at the expense of their M.A. programs. WSU could fill an important gap here. It



would also allow quality students who do not plan to continue their work beyond the M.A. level to do it with the direction of a first-rate faculty. I have never before made this recommendation. I do so because I have nothing but the highest regard for the quality of the faculty as both researchers and instructors.

To succeed at the same high level as their undergraduate majors program, the new M.A. program would need two things. 1) In an already overworked-faculty B.A. program, the addition of at least two positions, ideally one at the senior level and another at the junior level would be required. Anything less would not be possible if one wishes a quality program. 2) Competitive financial assistance for graduate students. If there is not the proper assistance there is little hope of getting quality students.

2. I recommend the creation of a proper laboratory with computers for student use. Formal logic is now computer taught and it might be possible for one or more other courses if not in full to at least in part be taught in this manner. I am not recommending that most courses be taught in such a manner for this is in my opinion to abandon the true meaning of education. Nonetheless courses in logic and related areas do lend themselves to such instruction as long as there are competent faculty overseeing the work. A laboratory would also allow access to data bases and the like.

3. I was very surprised to see how little financial support there is for faculty to present papers at various meetings. The department does well with very little university money. (I suspect most travel is personally financed) but this must be improved. WSU has a good group of philosophy scholars. For very little money they can be shown to the region, the nation, and in some cases, the world. This can only reflect well on Wichita State University. I recommend an increase in this budget.

Also very surprising is the extremely limited budget the department has for presentations by outside philosophers. A bit of an increase in the department budget would profit both the faculty and the students and would help to nurture the undergraduate and new M.A. program, allowing local faculty and students to see out and outside philosophers to become more knowledgeable of the WSU department. I recommend an increase in this budget.

4. Just as faculty need stronger financial assistance to attend professional meetings so students need further assistance. I recommend more student support in the way of scholarships and travel monies.

**Overall Assessment:** The department has a top-flight undergraduate program at all levels: philosophy major, general education requirements, and service courses. When one considers that there are only seven faculty in the department it becomes almost amazing. The department has wisely decided to go for a limited number of very high quality majors while more than adequately fulfilling all its other obligations. In matters of quality I would compare the department at WSU with the undergraduate department at Iowa State University, a department that is regionally well thought of in terms of both research and instruction.

I congratulate the faculty and administration on the high level of achievement one finds in the Department of Philosophy. I sincerely hope that the administration will carefully consider the modest recommendations that are made concerning the near future of the department. If I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me.