

2020 Philosophy Assessment

Because of the COVID-19 quarantine we did not formally meet as a section to discuss assessment. But the following observations are relevant.

1. The philosophy section has faced drastic changes and uncertainty with regard to ongoing staffing. In the spring of 2019 we had five tenured or tenure-track faculty, a lecturer, and two postdocs (so a total of 8). By the spring of 2020, one senior faculty member retired, one post-doc was placed into a tenure-track position, the other postdoc went to another university, a tenure-track faculty member was denied tenure and left the university, as did the lecturer, and two new post-docs were hired for the fall term of 2020. Overall, we went from 8 faculty to 6 faculty, and two of those faculty are post-docs.

On the one hand, in a climate of budget cuts and program closures, we are exceedingly grateful to have filled a vacant position and not to have lost more lines. On the other hand, such drastic changes in personnel make it difficult to maintain a steady and predictable program in terms of course offerings and program cohesiveness. While the changes occurring over 2019 and 2020 were remarkably dramatic, each year over the last five years has seen substantive changes in personnel. It seems every year we must scramble to match new people to courses.

Even with these changes, the program teaches a very high number of students per faculty member; it has one of the highest student-faculty ratios in the university.

2. We have articulated a vision for our program, once we achieve a tolerable level of stability in personnel. The vision is to emphasize **public engagement** in our undergraduate major. While very few of our students go on to graduate school in philosophy, all of them go on to be professionals, workers, and citizens. They should be taught to use their training and knowledge in philosophy to enhance their post-graduate lives, and so the courses we offer should prepare them for that.