

## **2021-2022 Philosophy Assessment**

### ***Two years of big changes***

In the middle of spring semester 2020, classes at USU went online due to the COVID pandemic. Classes continued online over the 2020-2021 academic year and for the most part over fall semester 2021. In-person classes resumed in spring semester 2022.

In addition to the changes required by pandemic public health measures, the program experienced significant changes in staff. Two faculty members retired, one postdoc taught with us for a year before accepting a position elsewhere, three new postdocs were hired, and one of them was offered a tenure-track position in our department.

### ***Result: little by way of meaningful assessment***

All of these changes have given our program an opportunity to revise and reorient itself. We have been planning and implementing a new curriculum that we believe will provide a more valuable undergraduate experience for our students while also being sustainable and predictable in terms of what courses we are offering each semester. The changes in our program's orientation will require a change in our assessment measurements.

As a result of these changes and the implementation of a new curriculum, we have not been able to conduct detailed assessment measures over the years 2021 and 2022. We are now at a point that our staff and our curriculum are stable enough that we will be able to resume assessment over the 2022-23 academic year.

Our sole measure over this time period has been the responses to an online survey offered to our recent graduates in the spring of 2022. Their responses on a 5-point scale indicate they believe our program has done well in meeting at least 5 of the 6 goals we set for ourselves:

#### Objective 1:

Students will be able to write and speak clearly about challenging philosophical texts, demonstrating an ability to grasp the central claim of a text, and showing awareness of different interpretations. **4.8**

#### Objective 2:

Students will be able to provide fair assessments of arguments, with thoughtful consideration of objections and counterexamples. **4.5**

#### Objective 3:

Students will be able to demonstrate thoughtful engagement with different approaches or perspectives on moral questions, both orally and in writing **4.8**

#### Objective 4:

Students will demonstrate in their essays knowledge of ideas and theories from influential historical philosophers, and will be able to bring those ideas and theories to bear on philosophical questions. **4.5**

Objective 5:

Students will be able to raise thoughtful and interesting questions and objections that further and enrich philosophical discussions, both orally and in writing. **4.5**

Objective 6:

Students will be successful in gaining admission to graduate programs and professional schools. **3.75**

The lower score on Objective 6 is not especially troubling, since our students typically have varied plans after graduation that may not include admission to graduate programs or professional schools. We should revise that question so that we can gain more meaningful feedback.

***Plans for the future***

In the fall semester of 2022 we will have achieved some core changes in our curriculum and our staff will include four permanent faculty members and two postdocs. From this stable basis we can revisit our assessment plan and make changes to it as required by our new orientation. Assessment measures will be carried out again in fall and spring semesters over the academic year 2022-2023.