

Department of Philosophy and Humanities
Utah Valley State College
Outcomes for Philosophy
Assessment Report
10/1/2003

*Use of
Results
Reported*

I. Degree

1. B.A. in Philosophy
2. B.S. in Philosophy

*Report
02-03*

II. Assessment Period Covered

1. 2002-2003

III. Mission Linkage

1. UVSC Mission Reference: Utah Valley State College is dedicated to providing a broad range of quality academic, vocational, technical, cultural, and social opportunities designed to encourage students in attaining their goals and realizing their talents and potential, personally and professionally. A philosophy degree can help students to attain these goals through training them in the nature of critical and argumentative writing.
2. Academic Master Plan Goals: II.3.7 of the Academic Master plan refers to student outcomes assessment and academic rigor. Philosophical writing demands the highest degree of academic rigor possible.

IV. Intended Educational (Student) Outcome

1. Students should be able to write clear, well-reasoned, and well-argued philosophy papers.

V. Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above

1. A random sample of papers selected from all upper-division philosophy courses will be chosen for evaluation. The criteria for success is that 90% of the students receive an 85% or higher score as determined by an outside evaluator.

VI. Summary of Assessment Data

1. The evaluation shows that the overall quality of papers in these classes is generally very poor. The average score of all evaluated papers was a 78% (out of 100%). Only 27% of the evaluated papers received the target score of 85% or higher. There are problems both in the writing and the content of the papers. The papers consistently had both grammatical errors and difficulty in clearly expressing ideas. Many of the students did not show they could grasp a philosophical issue or argue for a specific thesis.

VII. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program

1. We have made a significant change in our Baccalaureate program based upon the results of our assessment data. Philosophy 1250 (a required course for the degree) has been changed from "Logic and Critical Thinking" to "Logical Thinking and Philosophical Writing." Instructors of this course are required to spend significant class time teaching the fundamentals of writing superior philosophical papers. This includes thesis construction and defense, logical analysis of arguments, construction of well-reasoned arguments, and clear presentation of ideas.
2. All professors in the department will spend some class time covering significant aspects of writing philosophical papers in upper level classes.
3. Professors have been encouraged (but not required) to incorporate a rough draft and revision process into at least one writing assignment for each philosophy class.
4. The department has determined that the single outcome focusing on quality of writing does not adequately reflect the totality of outcomes desired upon the completion of our program. We have expanded and reformulated our outcomes based upon this insight. Please see the 2004-2006 assessment plan for the new outcomes for a B.A. or B.S. degree in philosophy.

Submitted by: _____



Michael M. Shaw

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

Philosophy, B.A.

(Instructional Degree Program)
2002--2003

(Assessment Period Covered)

Baccalaureate

(Degree Level)
Oct. 2002

(Date Submitted)

Mission Linkage:

UVSC Mission Reference: Utah Valley State College is dedicated to providing a broad range of quality academic, vocational, technical, cultural, and social opportunities designed to encourage students in attaining their goals and realizing their talents and potential, personally and professionally. A philosophy degree can help students to attain these goals through training them in the nature of critical and argumentative writing.

Academic Master Plan Goals: II.3.7 of the Academic Master plan refers to student outcomes assessment and academic rigor. Philosophical writing demands the highest degree of academic rigor possible.

Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes:

1. The students should be able to write good philosophy papers.

2.

3.

4.

5.