COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW

Philosophy
Moreno Valley College
2011

RCCD | **RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**

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Philosophy

Program Review 2011

A. <u>Mission and Relationship to the College(s)</u>

<u>Riverside Community College Mission Statement:</u>

"Riverside City College provides a high-quality, affordable, education, including comprehensive student services, student activities, and community programs, and empowers and supports a diverse community of learners as they work toward individual achievement and life-long learning. To help students achieve their goals, the College offers learning support services, pre-college and transferable courses, and career and technical programs leading to certificates or associate degrees. Based on a learner-centered philosophy, the College fosters critical thinking, develops information and communication skills, expands the breadth and application of knowledge, and promotes community and global awareness".

<u>Moreno Valley College Mission Statement:</u>

"Responsive to the educational needs of its region, Moreno Valley College offers academic programs and student support services which include baccalaureate transfer, professional, pre-professional, and pre-collegiate curricula for all who can benefit from them. Life-long learning opportunities are provided, especially, in health and public service preparation".

<u>Norco College Mission Statement</u>

"Norco College provides educational programs, services, and learning environments for a diverse community. We equip our students with the knowledge and skills to attain their goals in higher, career/technical, and continuing education; workforce development; and personal enrichment. To meet the evolving community needs, Norco College emphasizes the development of technological programs. As a continuing process we listen to our community and respond to its needs while engaging in self-examination, learning outcomes assessment, ongoing dialogue, planning, and improvement".

<u>Mission Statement Relationship to RCCD</u>

The term philosophy is derived from ancient Greek and transliterates as the love of

wisdom. This etymology reflects philosophy's broad, interdisciplinary interest in the foundational questions that ground all intellectual inquiry, and thus, through the exploration of this discipline, students familiarize themselves with the presuppositions of many of the other fields they study in college. Philosophy meets the needs of students who seek the A.A. or A.S., or who seek to transfer through meeting ICETC or specific UC, CSU, or private institution general education requirements. The RCCD general education outcomes that philosophy courses meet most often are critical thinking, breadth of knowledge, and communication skills. Students learn the proper construction and evaluation of arguments, the ability to appreciate and illustrate the role that reason plays in scientific, civic, and ethical life, and the importance of emphasizing precise understanding and expression of complex thought in their everyday activities.

Hence the discipline mission:

> *"Through the study of seminal philosophical texts and discussion of their relevance to subjects of contemporary concern, the discipline aims to foster students' ability to think, speak, and write both critically and clearly on a wide range of topics".*

Philosophy's commitment to fulfilling its important contribution to liberal education is maintained by a rigorous focus on student learning and the improvement of student learning. This is achieved in part by developing course curriculum aimed at specific learning outcomes, and demonstrated by the development of fully integrated course outlines for each philosophy course.
This integrated curriculum assures that the specific methods of instruction and evaluation employed by instructors address the particular learning outcomes for each class we offer. Philosophy's commitment to learning and improvement is further demonstrated by the ongoing development of well- defined and assessable learning outcomes and a comprehensive, workable, and long-term strategy for assessing these outcomes.

The number of learning outcomes that philosophy courses contribute to the district's "General Education Student Learning Outcomes" (GESLOs) further supports the notion that philosophy plays an important role in general education. In brief, philosophy courses contribute to seventeen out of twenty- five, or more than two thirds, of the district's GESLOs. In having already developed assessable outcomes and presenting them in the discipline's course outlines and syllabi in the context of an integrated curriculum, philosophy is doing its part to help the district reach the goal of 100% implementation of learning outcomes in course outlines. The discipline's present goal is to continue to develop strategies for assessing the outcomes that have already been identified and utilizing the results of these assessment activities in the improvement of instruction.

In revising course outlines to reflect a fully integrated curriculum, the philosophy discipline has re-evaluated and re-defined its student learning outcomes for each particular course. At the same time, certain learning outcomes can be generalized for the discipline as a whole. While specific elements of content vary from course to course, the major outcomes or competencies we expect students to gain from taking philosophy courses are as follows:

a. Identify and analyze arguments from a variety of sources, and critically evaluate their implied assumptions, biases, and the supporting evidence.

b. Recognize and evaluate fundamental questions within the Western philosophical tradition, classify them within their appropriate philosophical subfields, and present philosopher's answers to these questions along with their supporting arguments.

c. Compare, contrast, and assess philosophical arguments within the context of the texts and traditions that inform them and recognize their influence on intellectual history and contemporary thought.

d. Formulate and defend one's own philosophical positions in both oral and written work, integrate philosophical thinking into other facets of life and/or fields of study, and demonstrate an ability to plan, organize, and write an argumentative essay.

B. <u>History</u>

<u>Riverside City College</u>

Since our last review, Moreno Valley, Riverside City, and Norco College have been accredited separately. While much of our planning is now focused to serve the needs of the separate colleges, we continue to maintain a shared core curriculum at all three colleges. This policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees prior to the separation of the colleges and is still a commitment of the district. The faculty members of the discipline have continued to meet regularly (two to three times a semester) and share ideas about course content, pedagogy, and assessment results.

<u>Norco College:</u>

As a result of the separation of the colleges, Norco College philosophy committed to only some of the total courses that had been offered in the catalog. Decisions about which courses to offer were based on frequency of offerings in the past and the likelihood of available, specialized faculty to teach some of these courses. The courses currently
listed in Norco's catalog are listed and discussed below in section D.

<u>Moreno Valley College:</u>

I, Nick Sinigaglia, filled the only full-time philosophy position at the Moreno Valley Campus beginning Spring 2007. Since then, I have worked to expand philosophy's course offerings at the college, including a logic course (Phil 32/Math 32, offered each spring the last four years) and an honors version of our Introduction to Philosophy course (Phil 10H, offered each fall the last four years). I have been active on the Moreno Valley College Academic Senate (MVCAS), serving as Secretary/Treasurer 2007-2009 and Senator-at-Large 2009-present. I have also served as faculty advisor for a variety of student clubs this past four years, including Students for Organ Donation, Students for Animal Welfare, and the Moreno Valley Poker Society. I was also fortunate to be selected to participate in RCCD's inaugural study abroad program in Beijing, China in Spring 2011, which included instruction in philosophical topics relevant to the site. I received tenure in Spring 2010.

Moreno Valley College has been fortunate to maintain with relative ease a pool of well-qualified part-time philosophy instructors. Efforts have been made to include our adjuncts in the discussion of our mission and how we see the discipline fulfilling that mission, especially touching assessment. One current part-time instructor participated in a year-long RCCD mentorship with me during the
2010-11 academic year, an experience that was deeply rewarding for both of us.

Listed below are the long-term goals described in the 2007 CPR for Philosophy, followed by responses:

Goal 1:

Our Introduction to Philosophy (Phil 10) and Critical Thinking (Phil 11) courses are popular, but we need to do a better job communicating to students, counseling, and fellow faculty that all philosophy courses provide students with critical thinking skills and knowledge of the foundational questions that ground inquiry in other disciplines. It is for this reason, after all, that all philosophy courses transfer to four-year institutions as general education requirements.

Response:

Despite the increasing pressure of budget cuts, course offerings have been expanded to include a logic course and an honors course. The logic course (Phil 32/Math 32) took some advertising to get off the ground, but has filled successfully each of the past four years. Introduction to Ethics (Phil 12) is also routinely filled to cap each time it is offered, though this was a less popular class in years past. Students enrolling in philosophy courses are regularly encouraged to take more classes in the discipline in future semesters and I routinely note several familiar faces in the audiences at the beginning of each semester.

Goal 2:

Explore the possibility of offering a philosophy major.

Response:

The discipline does not currently see the need for offering a philosophy major, as the college offers a sufficient, relevant area of emphasis for the A.A. degree.

Goal 3:

Expand the part-time faculty pool, especially involving faculty with expertise in non-western philosophy, culture, and religions.

Response:

Though we have maintained a very qualified pool of part-time faculty, we are still in need of faculty members with expertise outside of traditional western philosophy. Still, with so few classes currently available in philosophy for part-timers at Moreno Valley (1 to 2 courses per semester), we simply do not have the resources to offer courses in non-western philosophy (though CORs do exist for some such classes.

C. <u>Data Analysis and Environmental Scan</u>

<u>**Moreno Valley College:**</u>

In order to think more clearly about where the philosophy discipline currently fits in relation to the programs at RCCD, and Moreno Valley College specifically, I have examined information provided by Institutional Research.

First, there do not appear to be any major, novel trends in employment opportunities that will be relevant to our discipline in the next four years. Employers continue to seek employees with strong communication and analytical skills, skills which philosophy emphasizes. Philosophy is universally regarded as a key component of general education, necessary for transfer students and those seeking terminal degrees alike, as well as those who are seeking more generalized self-improvement.

What follows are some observations about the provided internal data tracking the enrollment of students and their general performance in the discipline at Moreno Valley College:

Total enrollments in philosophy have increased steadily over the past four years, despite fewer sections being available. This is to be expected given the increasing overall enrollments at our college and the negative effect budget cuts have had on the ability of recent high school graduates to enroll as first-year students at four-year colleges and universities in the state. As is the case with virtually all other courses at our college over the past two academic years, philosophy classes have become extremely impacted. I routinely over-enroll my courses, sometimes by as many as 15-20 students, and am aware of part-time faculty members in the discipline who do the same. Though I would of course prefer to have class sizes in the range of 20-30 students, I do not experience any significant struggles teaching courses with ~60 students relative to classes with ~45 students. Since restricting enrollment to 20-30 students is not feasible at present, I plan to continue to over-enroll my courses as long as there is sufficient student demand and the administration condones it. With this increase in overall enrollment and decrease in section offerings, philosophy's efficiency has skyrocketed the last two years to the mid to high 700s.

Overall retention and success rates in philosophy at Moreno Valley have held steady the last two years, at a small increase relative to the two years prior. Overall retention remains in the high 80s and overall success in the low 70s. These rates are comparable to those of the discipline at the other colleges in the district, as recorded in their latest annual Program Reviews, and both rates meet or exceed stated district goals for 2010 (at least 87.5% retention and 70% success). The discipline is thus pleased with its recent performance, but of course sees the need for continued improvement. The increase in these rates the last two years is likely due to alterations in course content delivery made in light of assessment results, along with the overall improved preparedness of our student body for college work, something that
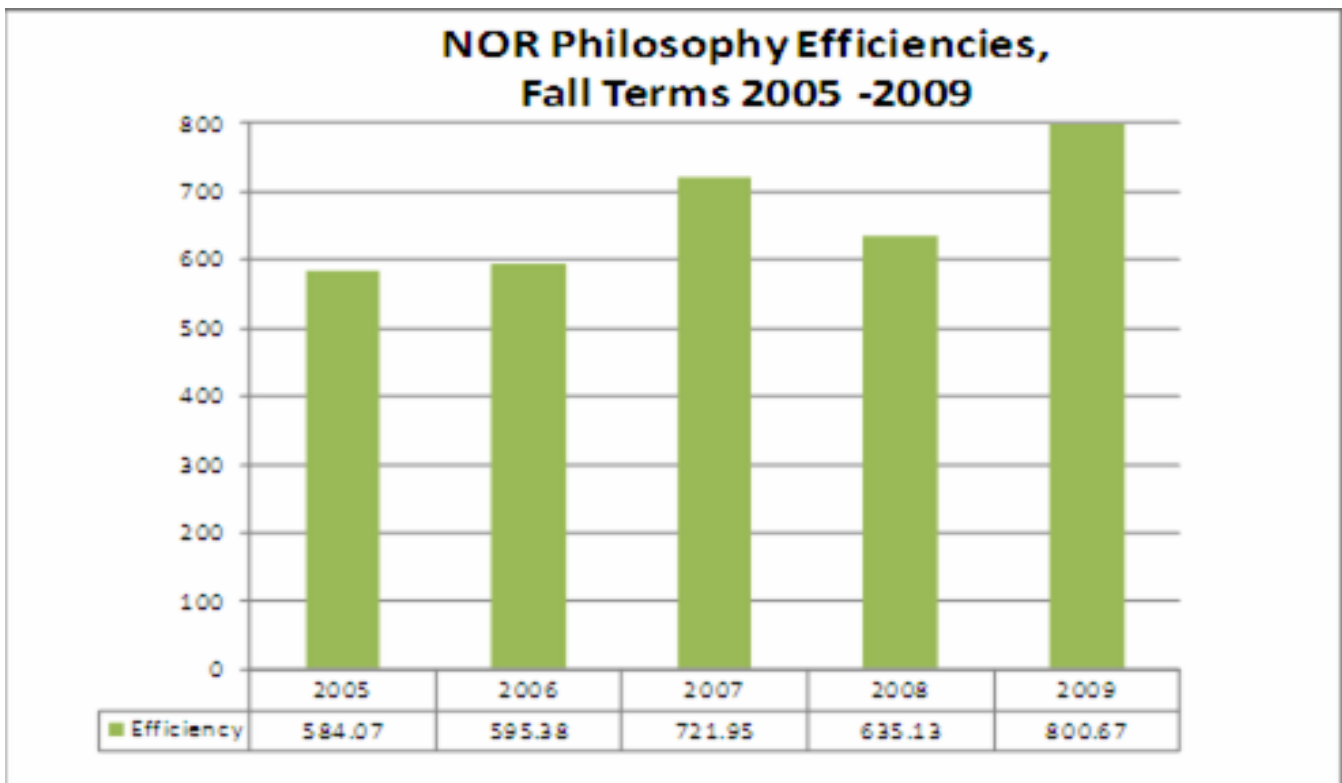
has come with the enrollment of recent high school graduates who would likely have enrolled at four-year institutions in happier economic times.
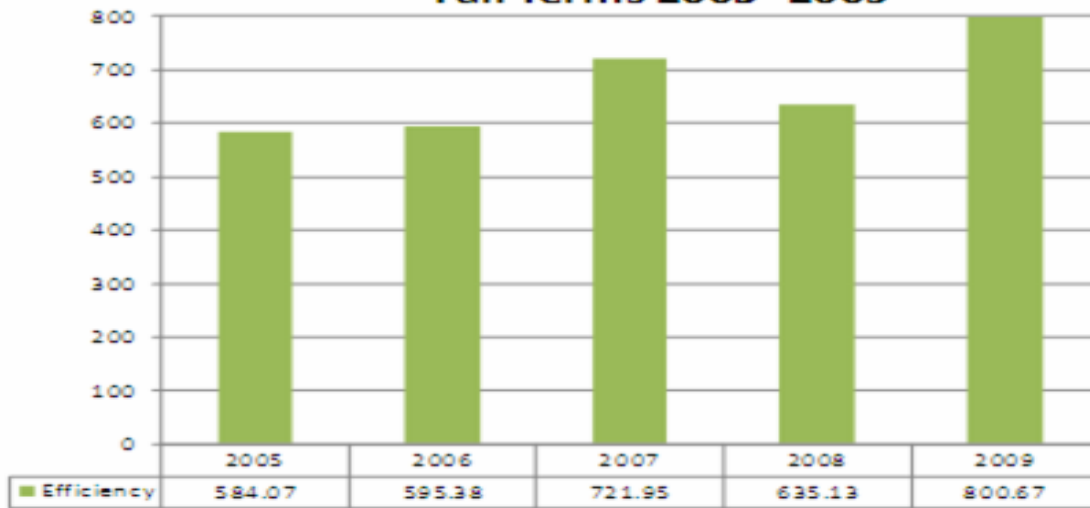
Norco College

Starting with the 2007 philosophy program review as a baseline, in Fall 2007 Norco offered 10 sections of philosophy. In Fall 2010, Norco offered 11 sections of philosophy (though that has dropped in Fall 2011 to 9 sections). The enrollment in Fall 2007 was 377 (up from the previous year of 305) and 374 Fall 2009, so seemed to hold steady.

Norco philosophy success rates dropped in conjunction with enrollment rising in 2007 and returned to their norm in 2008 and 2009. Actually, the pattern success rates seems to correlate most strongly with efficiency, a better indication of class size – higher efficiency years having lower success rates, with the best year for success being 2006 and 2007 being a low.

Philosophy success rates at Norco, while lower than many other disciplines, are slightly higher than success rates at Riverside and Moreno Valley. Philosophy is a difficult discipline that has very few affinities with other disciplines. The lower success rate, while something that we are not sanguine about, is not surprising.

NOR Philosophy Efficiencies, Fall Terms 2005 -2009

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Efficiency	584.07	595.38	721.95	635.13	800.67

NOR Philosophy Efficiencies, Fall Terms 2005 - 2009

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Efficiency	584.07	595.38	721.95	635.13	800.67

NOR Philosophy Enrollments, Retention and Success Rates, Fall 2000 - 2009

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Enrollments	378	388	491	456	452	320	305	377	365	374
Retention	86.8%	91.0%	89.2%	87.1%	84.3%	88.4%	93.4%	88.3%	89.9%	86.9%
Success	63.5%	67.0%	66.8%	71.5%	65.3%	73.8%	77.0%	65.0%	75.1%	73.0%
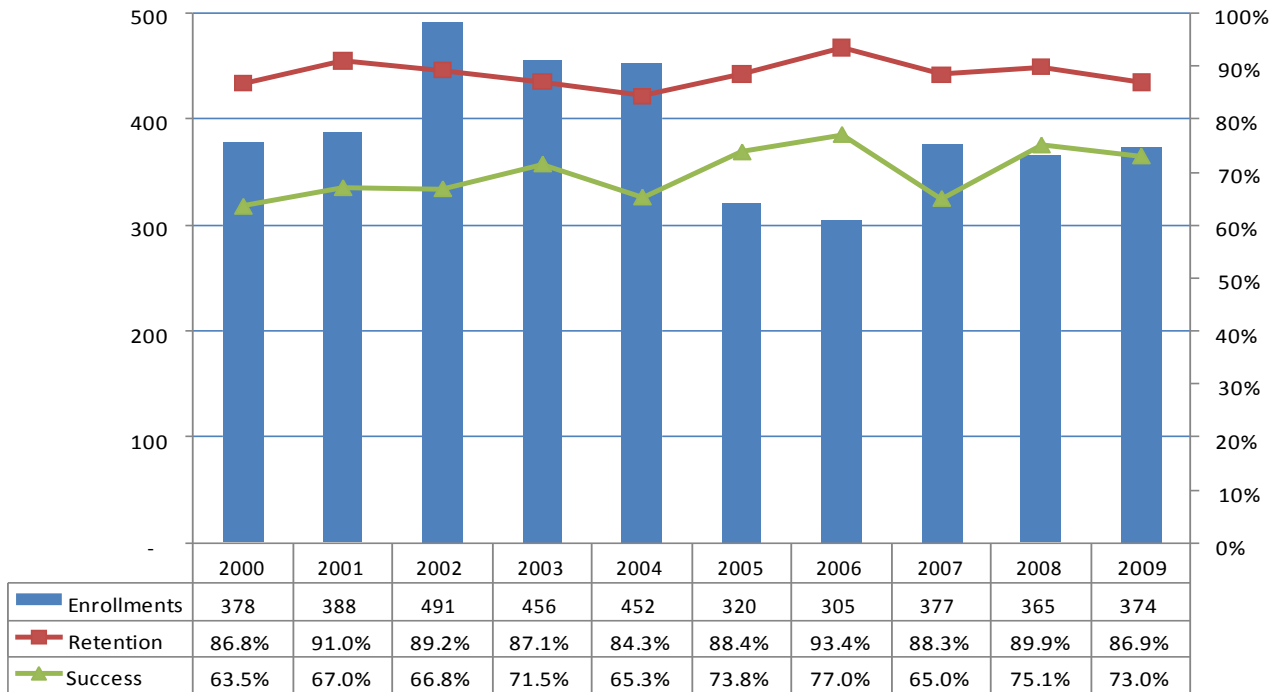
Riverside City College:

Retention rates for the discipline have steadily increased since 2006 and currently are on par with the Riverside City College baseline.

Success rates for the discipline are about 10% lower than the Riverside City College baseline but also show a continual increase since 2006.

Efficiency rates for the discipline considerably exceed the Riverside City College baseline.

RCCD Philosophy Environmental Scan

Enrollment data from 2005-2009 for the entire discipline of Philosophy, across all three colleges, indicate the following:

Retention rates fall within the same ranges as the RCCD baseline. Success rates for the discipline fall below the RCCD baseline by a few percentage points. A gradual increase in success rates can be seen from 2007 to 2009. Efficiency rates for the discipline considerably exceed the RCCD baseline.

D. Programs and Curriculum

Norco College:

Norco College currently lists the following philosophy courses in our catalog:

- ➢ PHI Introduction to Philosophy

- ➢ PHI 10H Introduction to Philosophy (Honors)

- ➢ PHI 11 Introduction to Critical Thinking

- ➢ PHI 12 Contemporary Moral Issues

- ➢ PHI 15 Biomedical Ethics

- ➢ PHI 32/MAT32 Introduction to Symbolic Logic

- ➢ PHI 33 Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy

- ➢ PHI 35/HUM 35 Philosophy of Religion

The roles that Norco's philosophy courses serve are detailed below:

Norco College AA, AS degree requirements:

All philosophy courses except PHI 11 and 32 meet the Humanities Gen Ed requirements. PHI 11 and 32 meet the Language and Rationality requirement. For the Humanities, Philosophy, and Arts Area of Emphasis all philosophy courses count for the 18 required units of study across three disciplines (with 9 in one discipline required).

CSU Transferability

All philosophy courses except PHI 11 and 32 are CSU transferable meeting the Humanities Gen Ed requirement. PHI 11 and 32 meet the Critical Thinking requirement.

UC Transferability

All philosophy courses except PHI 11 and 32 are UC transferable meeting the Humanities Gen Ed requirement.

IGETC

All philosophy courses except PHI 11 and 32 meet the Humanities requirement.

Major Transferability (local universities)

- ➢ CSU Fullerton

- ➢ Choose two: Philosophy 10, 11, 32 – Fullerton also asks for Philosophy 20 which is not offered at Norco.

- ➢ CSU Long Beach

- ➢ Philosophy 32 and 10 or 12

- ➢ UC Riverside

- ➢ Philosophy 11, 32

Major prep transferability to other UCs and CSUs varies considerably. While the exact number of major transfers to Norco College is not known, the full-time faculty member writing this report is aware of only one major in the last four years.

PHI 10, 11, and 12 are core courses in the sense that they represent the philosophy's key contributions to General Education and they are transferable to all CSUs and UCs as general education courses. As core courses they are offered every semester and, when feasible, at least one section of PHI 10 and 11 is offered in winter and summer.

In the fall of 2010, in conjunction with AWHL (the department housing philosophy at Norco) the philosophy faculty developed a rotation for the above courses. This is discussed below:

The courses considered to be core by the discipline include: PHI 10, PHI 10H, PHI 11, and PHI 12, all of which are offered each semester. PHI 32/MAT 32 is offered once a year, PHI 10H is offered every other year, and the remaining courses are rotated on a three year schedule. The exact mix of courses may change depending on the availability of instructors and the needs of the students.

The philosophy discipline is currently examining the feasibility of offering a philosophy AA transfer degree in line with AB 1440. The transfer model curriculum is currently being developed by faculty at the CSUs and CCCs throughout the state. The full-time philosophy faculty member from Norco College has been involved in the process. Should we decide to develop such a degree, it may involve some curriculum changes, though not necessarily the addition of new courses. While we have very few philosophy majors (see above), we would not be doing anything very different with our offerings and so offering such a major would not be difficult. We are waiting for the final version of the TMC prior to making the determination. It should be available in spring 2012.

Another possible change would be the development of an Environmental Ethics course,

currently under consideration to be part of an Environmental Science certificate. The full-time philosophy faculty member is working with biology faculty to explore the feasibility of inclusion of the course in such a certificate.

Philosophy has offered and intends to continue to offer PHI 10 as a fully online course. Over the last four years, the course has shifted from a 16 week format to an 8 week format. This shift was the result of review of data comparing success rates over winter with success rates during the regular term. The shorter term classes had higher success rates and this is consistent with other research that shows that shorter length classes have higher success rates. This evidence supported the change. While the first 8 week classes have decent success rates, this has not been so of the second 8 week classes and the instructor is currently reviewing the data to decide whether to keep this format.

During disciplinary meetings the past four years, philosophy faculty have reviewed SLOs for all our courses. We have updated CORs in Curricunet so that all CORs reflect the alignment of philosophy SLOs with GESLOs (Appendix A). The alignment has been available since 2006 but because fixing it on Curricunet required using the process for a major change, the members of the discipline have only now changed the courses in Curricunet. The should have made their way through the process by Spring 2012. All CORs were updated with sample assignments in Spring of 2011, however, these have yet to appear in Curricunet because of a glitch in the program. They should also be available in Spring 2012. We have reviewed and updated all CORs including SLOs.

Moreno Valley College

Compared to many other disciplines, especially the sciences, philosophy can develop at a glacial pace. Nonetheless, recent trends can be discerned. Of these, some will have an effect on community college curriculum.

First, there seems to be a very gradual shift from an exclusive focus on the Western European tradition. More and more, the study of philosophy includes a broader consideration of the development of philosophical thought worldwide, and the context of contemporary issues and technological developments. While this shift most obviously signals a growth in diversity of philosophical thought, it might also entail a change from an interest in particular traditions to an appreciation for what these traditions all share: philosophical curiosity and inquiry.

The result of this slow evolution toward a more global and contemporary philosophical outlook is that students have a greater need to put philosophical questions and problems into an international and contemporary context. At the same time, a wider range of traditions will dilute some of the knowledge base that has provided a rich foundation for many discussions in Western philosophy. It makes sense that such a diversification and thinning out of the Western philosophical tradition will lead to a renewed focus on the skills taught through the study of any philosophy.

No matter which philosophy they study, students will learn to identify and respond to foundational questions, and develop the skills necessary to sort out and defend the various answers to these questions. In other words, philosophy in general teaches critical thinking. Hence, all of our   philosophy courses provide students with the opportunity to exercise their ability to identify questions, evaluate answers, and defend new ideas.

A second trend is the increasing emphasis on both formal and informal assessment. Discipline faculty members have explored a number of instructional methods and worked on the development of relevant assessment techniques. In aligning these methods to our specific learning outcomes, we have begun a process that will no doubt continue to suggest new methods for achieving these outcomes, and probably also suggest new outcomes at which our teaching should aim. The following section, (E): Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, briefly discusses some of the specific ways our methods are evolving through the context of the Program Review process and assessment procedures, but specifics should be sought in recent Annual Program Review (APR) documents filed by the discipline and available on the District website.

As of Fall 2011, all Course Outlines of Record (CORs) for courses available at Moreno Valley College are up to date, with new, more focused and assessable learning outcomes. In addition, many course descriptions, titles, recommended texts, sample assignments, and content listings have been reexamined and rewritten to more accurately reflect the actual course content, and to better inform students of course content.

In line with the administrative directive to list in the Moreno Valley College catalog only those courses likely to be taught at least once every two years, the curriculum in philosophy at our college currently consists of 7 courses. Each course articulates as a "liberal arts" or "humanities" general educational requirement for the University of California, the California State University, and most private colleges and universities (except for Phil 32/Mat 32, which counts as a general math course for majors, but does not fulfill any specific requirement in a sequence of study). It should also be noted that Critical Thinking (Phil 11) articulates to California State Universities as fulfilling a specific Critical Thinking requirement, and that Philosophy 10 and Philosophy 10H (honors) are currently considered the same course for general educational requirements.

The following courses are taught face-to-face every 16-week semester (we do not currently offer any on-line or hybrid courses in philosophy at Moreno Valley College):

☐ Philosophy 10—Introduction to Philosophy

☐ Philosophy 11—Critical Thinking

☐ Philosophy 12—Ethics: Contemporary Moral Issues

In addition, the following courses are taught at least once a year:

☐ Philosophy 10H—Introduction to Philosophy (Honors)

☐ Philosophy 32/Math 32—Introduction to Symbolic Logic

The following course was taught as part of RCCD's study abroad program in Beijing, China Spring 2011, and I would like to see it become an additional, once-a-year offering beginning Fall 2012:

☐ Philosophy 35—Philosophy of Religion

I also have a continuing interest in developing a course in Biomedical Ethics (Phil 15) as a course to be team-taught with a colleague in the biology discipline. This course is listed in our catalog but has never been offered at our college. Though the relevant COR is updated, the specifics of course content and instructional methods are currently under development and expected to be completed by Fall 2012. Once ready, this course will likely be taught once every two years, and, hopefully, will be included as part of the new Biomedical Technology Program curriculum currently under development in the Math and Sciences department.

Finally, I have an interest in initiating the offering of two courses in the history of philosophy, Phil 20 (ancient-medieval) and Phil 21 (modern-contemporary), one course per year, alternating between the two. This seems imperative as it has come to the discipline's attention that many four-year institutions in our state, including UCLA, consider such coursework necessary prerequisites for any community college student intending to transfer as a third-year philosophy major. Interest in these classes is likely present among the student body, as Philosophy 10 is routinely our most strongly enrolled philosophy course and already has a heavy historical emphasis.

Riverside City College

Philosophy course offerings have been reduced in accordance with District and College mandates. Philosophy 10 (Introduction to Philosophy) and Philosophy 11 (Introduction to Critical Thinking) continue to be taught the most frequently. Despite the reductions we have managed to continue to teach Philosophy 13 (Philosophy of Art), Philosophy 14 (Survey of Black Thought), Philosophy 19 (Native American Thought), and Philosophy 32 (Introduction to Symbolic Logic) on a regular, rotating basis. This is significant since two courses (Philosophy 14 and Philosophy 19) are central to the College's Ethnic Studies offerings and one course (Philosophy 32) is cross-listed with the Math Department. In this way our courses contribute to our student's experience beyond the philosophy discipline itself. One new course has been created, Philosophy 16 (Moral Reasoning in Business), but it has not been offered as yet due to course reductions.

Updating COR's is an ongoing process hindered by the complexity of Curricunet, the lack of training for faculty members, the slow or absent response to updates, and a general confusion regarding how the system works. For example, many changes were submitted to Curricunet in 2010 and 2011, but none of have them have worked their way through the system.

E. <u>Student Learning Outcomes Assessment</u>

<u>Norco College</u>

The philosophy disciplines assessment plan from the 2007 program review included the following:

a. Development of focused and assessable student learning outcomes for all of our courses that can be achieved through a variety of teaching styles.

<u>Accomplished:</u> All courses now have SLOs that meet these requirements.

b. Completion of a second "full-cycle" of assessment for a few important outcomes in our popular Critical Thinking course.

<u>Accomplished:</u> See the full assessment for four years below.

c. Developing a writing-rubric for assessing the important essay-writing outcome for Philosophy 10, 12, 13, and 33.

<u>Accomplished:</u> The rubric has been adopted, normed, and used in several rounds of PHI 10 and in one round of PHI 33 (see below). An alternative assessment has been developed at Norco for PHI 12 – the first round of use in Fall 2012. (PHI 13 is not offered at Norco and so is not relevant for this program review.)

d. Continuing an open dialogue regarding updating and rewriting existing learning outcomes, as well as adding a few new outcomes to some of our courses.

Our discipline minutes show that over the past four years we have engaged in ongoing dialog about assessment, assessment results and discussion of changes pedagogy.

f. Aligning our learning outcomes with the District's General Education Learning Outcomes.

Addressed above.

Details of assessment for the past four years are included below:

Fall 2008

PHI 10

Outcome: "Plan, organize, and write an argumentative essay that defends a position on a philosophical question or problem." In May 2008 the philosophy discipline conducted a norming session for a grading rubric, then used that rubric as an analytical rubric to assess the specific strengths and weaknesses of students near the end of the course. We concluded at the time that even students who were receiving A's and B's in the course were weaker in two specific areas from the rubric: they had difficulty presenting a clear thesis and they had difficulty giving good support for their thesis. As a result we implemented several changes in our approach to the essay.

☐ Share the rubric with students prior to writing assignments

☐ Offer students an opportunity to use the rubric themselves, either through the grading of a composite example essay or through peer review

Redesign prompts to more clearly elicit the presentation of and support for the thesis as an integral part of the paper. This last suggestion resulted from examining our prompts and recognizing that some of us were "tacking on" the request for a thesis with support rather than making it fully part of the writing of the essay.

The results that follow are subsequent to those changes.

In addition, a closer examination of the rubric and our outcomes revealed that the left side of the rubric section titled, "Essay is well informed", allows us to assess another SLO as well: "Identify, restate, and explain philosophers' answers to fundamental questions, along with their supporting arguments."

1. For "Identify, restate, and explain philosophers' answers to fundamental questions, along with their supporting arguments", a score of 2 indicates that the student was successful in achieving the outcome. 1 indicates that though the student achieved the outcome, he or she needs to improve. 0 indicates the student did not achieve the outcome. We distinguished between 2 and 1 because though we agreed that a score of 1 would be minimally successful, we wanted to not be the percentage of students at that level in hopes of improving their performance. 0 is unsuccessful in the indicated area.

30 student papers were assessed: 70% of students were successful; 26% need improvement; 3% were unsuccessful.

2. For "Plan, organize, and write an argumentative essay that defends a position on a philosophical question or problem", the same scoring system was used. The results were 30

student papers were assessed: 60% were successful; 36% need improvement; and 3% were unsuccessful.

Overall these success rates are good, though again the same comparative weakness in formulating and defending a thesis can be seen.

A goal would be to improve this success rate to 70% over the next year.

A series of smaller papers that emphasize thesis and support for the thesis were designed for use in the course for the next year. Each of these is being assigned earlier in the course and graded with a rubric that the student has prior to writing the paper.

PHI 11

The discipline had developed an assessment of argument identification and evaluation that we had used several times over the last few years. The results each time indicated that while students were able to identify and analyze arguments fairly regularly, they were not good at evaluating them. After the first round of assessment, the instructors in the discipline had implemented changes that emphasized evaluation but the results of the next assignment were not significantly different. I introduced a series of short essays that build skills for evaluation of arguments in Fall 2008 and assessed these essays for the skills that were being assessed in by the other methods. I used a pre and post-test method in the sense that the first essay is written early in the course prior to learning many of the tools that the critical thinking course provides. The post-test essay should show an improvement as students have learned to use the skills taught in the course.

Assessment of the SLO for PHI 11: Apply an assortment of rules and principles to analyze, evaluate, and compose arguments, distinguishing them from other forms of persuasive message.

First assignment assessment: Essay 1

SLO: Apply an assortment of rules and principles to analyze, evaluate, and compose arguments, distinguishing them from other forms of persuasive message.

As part of the evaluation of the student's achievement of the above SLO, students are asked to write three essays in the course. The goal is that each essay will improve on previous essays thus showing an improvement in their ability to compose arguments which is one portion of this SLO.

The essays are graded using a rubric which is a variant of the rubric used for PHI 10. The individual essays were reviewed for their attainment of the objectives on the assessment rubric and scored out of 2 possible points for each of the four objectives. The following is a report on the achievement of those outcomes for the first essay. The student needed to receive at least a 1 to count as achieving that outcome.

For the first assignment, the students were given an essay to read and asked to write their own essay either in support of or rejecting the thesis of the essay that they were given to read. The results are below:

N=30 essays

A clearly stated and appropriate thesis: 65%

The thesis is well-supported: 50%

The argument is developed well: 40%

The paper is well-organized: 60%

Overall, a score of 4 or better relative to the assessment rubric is considered achieving the outcomes for this assignment.

63% of students achieved this assessment score.

Between the first assignment and the third assignment students were given the grading rubric. They were given a second writing assignment and told that the rubric would be used to grade it. When the writing assignment was due, students peer graded using the rubric. Each student graded several papers and the grading and papers were all turned into me. We discussed the use of the rubric after the grading and again after the papers were returned to the students.

Third assignment assessment: Essay 3

This assignment was similar to the first. The students were given an essay to read, but instead of being asked to write in support of or against a chosen thesis they were asked to list a series of possible issues that the essay brought to mind and choose one of those to determine a thesis. They were then asked to write on the thesis that they had chosen.

Once again the essays were graded using Rubric A and then assessed using Rubric B. For each of the individual categories a score of 4 or better was once again considered achieving the outcome for this assignment. This again meant achieving at least a one on the assessment rubric. The results follow:

N=20 essays

A clearly stated and appropriate thesis: 65%

The thesis is well-supported: 85%

The argument is developed well: 65%

The paper is well-organized: 75%

The results for all of the skills are increased with the exception of the first (a clearly stated thesis). In the first essay the students were told that what thesis they were supposed to defend or reject and even under those circumstances they did not do particularly well in their statement of the thesis. In this case, the students had to come up with their own thesis. It is worth noting that

though they were able to construct fairly coherent arguments, they were not able to clearly state what it was that they were arguing in support of, though I could see how to clearly state what conclusion they had supported in most cases. Though I would still take this as an indication that students are not able to state what their thesis is to the extent that I believe that they should be able to, I do not feel comfortable using that first parameter to measure improvement (or lack of improvement) given the difference in the assignments.

Overall, a score of 4 or better relative to the assessment rubric is considered achieving the outcomes for this assignment.

65% of students achieved this assessment score (13 out of 20).

Most students are finishing the course able to organize a short argumentative essay, organize support for a thesis, and to develop the argument (providing support for premises when needed) relatively successfully but they have a hard time stating clearly what the main conclusion of their argument is (the thesis). This suggests that further work needs to be done in this area, and subsequent assignments were given.

Fall 2009

PHI 10 (Indirect Assessment self-reported gains - all sections)

84.9% of the assessed students for all sections of PHI 10 at Norco report between adequate and high achievement for: "Recognize and evaluate fundamental questions within the Western philosophical tradition and classify them within their appropriate subfields".

87.1 % report between adequate and high achievement for, "Examine, formulate, and compose philosophical questions that address fundamental problems in the tradition and in everyday life".

81.2 % report between adequate and high achievement for: "Identify, restate, and explain philosophers' answers to fundamental questions, along with their supporting arguments".

82.6% report between adequate and high achievement for: "Compare, contrast and assess these arguments within the context of the texts and traditions that inform them".

86.2% report between adequate and high achievement for: "Plan, organize, and write an argumentative essay that defends a position on a philosophical question or problem".

87.9% report between adequate and high achievement for: "Apply philosophical thinking to other facets of life and/or fields of study".

While all results are encouraging, students appear to feel less confident about their ability to: "Identify, restate, and explain, philosophers' answers to fundamental questions than the other SLOs". The next lowest score (82.6% of the next SLO) is also an outcome that involves

understanding philosophical arguments. These results taken together suggest closer scrutiny of the work designed to aid in student achievement of this SLO.

PHI 10 Direct Assessment:

In Fall 2009, the three papers with rubric (see above) were added. An additional requirement was introduced. In addition to writing three papers, the students were required to respond to specifics on their first two papers and they were given credit for their responses. The goal was to increase the success rate by the final paper. Fall 2008 data were used as the baseline, with a goal of 70% success (see above).

SLO Measurement Criteria: The same criteria were used as for the previous year's assessment: a score of 2 indicates that the student was successful in achieving the outcome. 1 indicates that though the student achieved the outcome, he or she needs to improve. 0 indicates the student did not achieve the outcome. Results of paper 1 were compared with paper 3 for Fall 2009 and then again for Spring 2010. The rates of success are determined using only students who completed both assignments. Results are the combined data from two 8 week sections of the course for each semester.

Fall 2009

First paper: 47% received a rating of 2; 45% received a rating of 1; 3% received a rating of 0.

Third paper: 57% received a rating of 2; 35% received a rating of 1; 3% received a rating of 0.

Spring 2010

First paper: 51% received a rating of 2; 45% received a rating of 1; 4% received a rating of 0.

Third paper: 66% received a rating of 2; 30% received a rating of 1; 4% received a rating of 0.

2 and 1 are both considered successful. Ratings of 1 indicate that though the overall essay was successful, the student needed to improve in one or more of the categories. (Average scores for all four areas of the rubric.)

While the absolute rate for each of the papers is not all together good and appears to need further analysis, the comparison of the first paper with the third paper does show some marginal improvement, particularly in the second semester of this change in course assignments. This is particularly encouraging because the topic for the third paper is markedly more difficult than for the first paper.

The results seem to indicate that requiring students to respond to the comment on their early papers does have some effect on their success in achieving this SLO. However, the absolute scores indicate that the areas of improvement need to be identified.

Ongoing concerns about these absolute scores will be addressed with the introduction of a lesson on writing philosophical essays. While the goal was to introduce this lesson in Spring 2011, it has been delayed till Spring 2012.

PHI 11 Indirect Assessment (self-reported gains – all sections)

99.2% of students assessed report between an adequate and high achievement of: "Explain what critical thinking is, how it can improve one's ability to communicate both orally and in writing, as well as help build problem-solving skills".

96.1% of students assessed report between an adequate and high achievement of: "Apply an assortment of rules and principles to analyze, evaluate, and compose arguments, distinguishing them from other forms of persuasive message".

88.3% of students assessed report between an adequate and high achievement of: "Critically assess textbook passages, newspaper articles, moral arguments, and mass media through an analysis of the various methodologies employed".

94.5% of students assessed report between an adequate and high achievement of: "Identify and evaluate evidence from a variety of sources".

96.1% of students assessed report between an adequate and high achievement of: "Analyze the implications of one's own and others' assumptions and biases".

While all of these results are very high, the weakest is in the achievement of assessing textbook passages, newspaper articles, moral argument, and mass media using the methodologies taught. Since this is an important application, it would be desirable for students to leave the course feeling as confident of this SLO as of the others.

Other indirect assessment results were attained for PHI 12, 15, and 32. They appear in the annual assessment report and are available on request, but given that these courses are not discussed in other direct assessment results, they have not been included here.

Fall 2010

PHI 33: Direct Assessment

For PHI 33, Social and Political Philosophy, the full-time instructor carried out two kinds of assessment. The first was in anticipation of changes in Title 5 that will allow for pre-requisites for non-sequential courses based on content review. The instructor collected information from students at the beginning of the Fall 2010, PHI 33 on students in the course who qualified for or had completed ENG 1A.

After midterm, success on the midterm was correlated with readiness/completion of ENG

1A. 60% of students who had qualified for or completed English 1A had a B or better.

0% of the remaining students were passing/40% of students who had taken or qualified for English 1A were failing.

Of the student who had not taken 1A only 29% had an A or a B at the midterm. 70.5% were under a C and .5% had a C.

So while taking 1A seems not to be a good predictor of success, not taking 1A
seems to be a good predictor of poor performance.
The second sort of assessment the instructor carried out was for the SLO "Interpret primary texts from philosophy and demonstrate how they respond to the political problems faced by the societies which produced them". The final paper for the course offered several topics from which the student could choose all of which address this SLO (see assignment attached). The papers were scored using the coding of 2 for success (rows 1 or 2 on the grading rubric), 1 for progressing towards achievement (row 3) and 0 for all other rows. Only columns 1 and 2 were used for this assessment (Essay Was Well-Informed).

The results are as follows (copies of the rubrics available from the instructor):

Of 21 students, 12 achieved a score of 2 for each section of the competency. Of the remaining students, 4 received a score of 2 on one section and the remaining 5 showed some levels of achievement but did not satisfy all aspects of the SLO. 0 students who completed the assignment failed to meet at least some of the criteria for a well-informed essay (correct interpretation of the text and development of the ideas).

57% percent of the students showed full competency for the expected outcome;
76% of the students showed competency in at least one aspect of the SLO (as interpreted through the rubric), and all students showed progress towards competency.

This course is taught about every three years (see rotation) and so while this information can be used as a baseline, there are no immediate plans for reassessment. However, responses to this information include discussing with the discipline the need for a pre-requisite for the course based on the preliminary findings that correlate readiness for ENG 1A with success.

Spring 2010

PHI 10H - Direct Assessment

Using the standard rubric for philosophy papers adopted by the discipline, (see Appendix A), an assessment was conducted in the Spring 2010 Introduction to Philosophy-Honors (PHI 10H) for the first writing assignment. The rubric was used to assess the successful achievement of the outcome: "Identify, restate, and explain philosophers' answers to fundamental questions, along with their supporting arguments". The first three columns of the rubric address that outcome and

papers were scored 2 for achieving rows one or two (competent performance of the outcome); 1 for row three (able to achieve at least two of the three elements-identity, restate, and explain); and 0 for any other row. The overall scores for the class are as follows:

1.7 Average for the class (7 students assessed)
The papers were returned to the students with extensive comments and the rubric. Students were invited to rewrite but not required to do so. 4 students chose to re-write. Of those 4 students, 3 improved in at least 1 column.

Second paper: The second paper average for class on the same outcome using the first three columns of the standard rubric for philosophy papers was:

1.8 Average for the class (7 students assessed).

While the sample is too small to really draw any conclusions, there is at least the suggestion that rewriting is worthwhile to improve outcomes and that the feedback on the first paper does slightly improve performance on the second paper.

The instructor had intended to build on this assessment in Spring 2012, but PHI 10H has been put on rotation to be offered every two years and so this will have to wait till Spring 2013.

Assessment Plan 2011-2015

PHI 10 and 11 are on a fairly regular assessment rotation and will continue to be assessed. In Spring 2011, associate faculty were contacted about developing common questions for the PHI 10 and PHI 11 final. Course reductions have limited the availability of associate faculty to meet, but a tentative meeting is now set for Spring 2012.

PHI 12 was assessed in Fall 2011, but the results are not yet available. It will be assessed each fall (as a regularly scheduled course). PHI 33 has not been taught since the last assessment but will be taught in 2012-2013. Discussions about introducing the prerequisite are scheduled for the Spring 2012 Flex day meeting but the change will not be able to go into effect till the next time the course is taught which would be 2014-2015.

PHI 32/MAT 32 has assessment results for Fall 2011 that are yet to be analyzed, but PHI 32 will be assessed yearly as well. PHI 15 may not be taught for some time, due to the retirement of the associate faculty member most qualified to teach the course. PHI 10H will be assessed in Spring 2013. PHI
32/HUM 35 may not be taught for some time either for the same reason.

Summary of assessment schedule:

Annual (fall):
PHI 10, 11, 12, 32

Biennial (fall or spring depending upon offering): PHI 10H

Every three years or whenever offered: PHI
15, 33, 35

Summary of Changes in courses due to assessment results:

PHI 10 – Changes in writing assignments – 1) After the development of a rubric for assessing papers in PHI 10, (which assess most of the SLOs in the course)
1) short focused writing assignments were given;
2) assignment specific rubric were developed and given to students prior to writing their assignments; and
3) comments on papers required responses.

PHI 11 – Graduated writing assignments with focus on a supporting thesis

Moreno Valley College

Details of our adopted assessment methodologies and their application to philosophy courses at Moreno Valley the past four years can be found in the relevant APR documents on the district website. Details of the results of these activities and the changes to course content delivery methods they precipitated can be found there as well. Let the following general comments suffice for the purposes of the CPR:

Philosophy assessment activities the past four years can be divided into five distinct areas:
a) Development of focused and assessable student learning outcomes for all of our courses as reflected in our updated CORs;
b) Completing a full-cycle of assessment for at least a few important outcomes in each of the philosophy courses regularly taught at our college;
c) Developing a rubric for assessing the essay writing outcomes for Philosophy 10, 10H, 12, & 35;
d) Continuing an open dialogue regarding updating and rewriting existing
learning outcomes, as well as developing new outcomes for some of our courses; and
e) aligning our learning outcomes with the District General Education Learning
Outcomes.

Riverside City College

Assessment continues in Philosophy 10 and 11. Updates are captured as part of the Annual Program Review for the Department of History, Philosophy, Humanities, and Ethnic Studies.

F. Collaboration with Other Units Including Instructional, Student Services or Administrative Units (Internal)

Norco College

Philosophy has been collaborating with English in offering workshops on Critical Thinking across the curriculum. The goal is to develop assessment of critical thinking for the general education SLO.

Plans are in the works for an Environmental Science certificate that would include an environmental ethics course. This involves collaboration between philosophy and biology.

Philosophy has been active in the Norco Honors Program, including mentoring students who participated in the RCCD honors conference (Fall) and the HTCC conference at Irvine in the Spring.

Philosophy continues to cross list PHI 32/MAT 32 and collaborates with math to do so. Philosophy hopes to continue to offer PHI/HUM 35 and will work with Humanities to do so.

Riverside City College

Collaboration with other units continues with the offering of the Philosophy 10 Honors course. In addition, both members of the discipline have participated in the District's Study Abroad Program (as have the other two members of the Philosophy discipline!). Both members have additionally taught courses in the Humanities discipline. One faculty member has consistently taught online courses through the District's Open Campus program.

Moreno Valley

One continuing collaboration that has taken place since the last comprehensive program review is philosophy's involvement with the Honors Program. The program is an interdisciplinary project involving General Humanities, English, Political Science, Philosophy, History, and, recently, Chemistry and Biology. An honors version of our Introduction to Philosophy course has been offered every Fall semester the past four years, and has proved popular and successful. Many students enrolled in this class go on to take further courses in philosophy and several have taken advantage of the opportunity to present some of their philosophical work at student conferences organized by our district and the state-wide Honors Program. In sum, the philosophy discipline has had a central role in helping some of our hardest working students gain access to and succeed in the intense academic environment offered by our honors courses.

As mentioned in the previous section, there is also a team-taught version of Biomedical Ethics (Phil 15) under development, a collaborative effort with a fellow faculty member in Biology.

I have become involved in the district's study abroad program, participating as one of two faculty members sent to Beijing, China in Spring 2011, along with 20 of our students, some from Moreno Valley. The trip was a success, and forms the basis of one of our Chancellor's favorite talking points: that this program is the first to China offered by any community college in the country. I have since been involved with recruitment efforts for future programs, as well as committees for the selection of participant faculty members.

Regarding involvement in Basic Skills Programs, the philosophy discipline has watched as more and more resources are shifted from broad, college level course offerings to courses and programs that specifically address under- prepared students. While we believe that all faculty need to be involved in the discussion about basic skills, it has not been easy for us as a discipline to find a way to participate beyond continuing with our individual commitments to try to teach every student in the classroom. I, for one, simply do not feel equipped to teach BSI courses (if I were even allowed to do this), nor does philosophy, as an area of study, seem to lend itself well to course content appropriate for a course in basic skills development.

Finally, as mentioned above, I continue to be active in MVCAS and to work with students on extracurricular activities, including student clubs and student government. Some of my student club activities, in particular Students for Organ Donation and Students for Animal Welfare, are directly related to the content of my courses, ethics especially.

G. <u>Outreach Activities</u>

<u>Moreno Valley</u>

The philosophy discipline at Moreno Valley offers transfer and A.A. required courses at a variety of times in the day, evenings, and weekends, including an accelerated 8-week course at Ben Clark Training Center in the Fall semester. We do not currently offer any on-line or hybrid courses in philosophy, though such courses are available for our students at Riverside City and Norco Colleges. And as our student population has traditionally shown less interest in such courses relative to other student populations in the district, this seems an acceptable situation for the present.

Our course offerings are continually updated in terms of articulation and community needs through ongoing coordination with the department chair. This coordination includes the hiring and placement of adjunct faculty, the scheduling and planning for philosophy courses, and regular observation of the full-time faculty member and adjunct faculty.

<u>Norco College</u>

Nothing undertaken

<u>Riverside City College</u>

Nothing undertaken**.**

H. Long Term Major Resource Planning

Norco College

The primary long term major resource planning revolves around the one full time faculty member. She is likely to retire within 3 -5 years at which time it would be very desirable that she be replaced in order to maintain stability for the philosophy discipline at Norco. Other concerns are the diminishing Associate faculty pool. We anticipate one retirement this fall. Fortunately, working with the department chair a new associate hire was made and so we are maintaining the status quo. However, the full-time faculty member has had considerable reassigned time over the past four years and has also foregone overload work, which frees up classes for associate faculty. When she returns to the classroom full time in Fall 2013, assuming that the new standard of 9 section offering is maintained, only four sections will be available for associate faculty.

Riverside City College

Once the current environment of section cuts has reversed itself, the Riverside City College discipline of Philosophy would request a new hire as part of the History, Philosophy, Humanities, and Ethnic Studies Department.

Moreno Valley College

As I have no FSA's outside of philosophy, I am completely dedicated to teaching in the discipline at our campus. While part-time contributions are currently adequate, I will continue to work with the department chair to make sure we have quality instructors in reserve as needed.

Regarding classroom technology, I, along with virtually every other faculty member at Moreno Valley, have noted the continuing deterioration of electronic equipment on campus, both inside the classroom and in the student computer workrooms. The equipment is showing its age in a variety of ways, and support services are so overworked that malfunctioning equipment usually cannot be restored to working order in a timely manner. This has required sudden alterations in lesson plans on multiple - and more and more frequent – occasions. The discipline hopes this issue can be addressed satisfactorily despite the budget cuts.

I. Summary

Norco College

Over the next four years, philosophy has the following objective:

☐Maintain adequate section offerings to ensure that students have options for their general education requirements for the AA and AS.

☐To explore the question of whether it serves students to offer a transfer degree following the AB 1440 Transfer Degree pattern.

☐Work with biology to explore the develop of and role for an Environmental Ethics course.

Review data on success and retention for online offerings to begin a discussion about how best to serve students in this medium.

Moreno Valley College

Philosophy will continue to play a central role in providing both critical thinking and communication skills for an increasingly diverse work force, and solid general education skills for students transferring to four-year institutions. Our courses are particularly relevant to a diverse population because philosophical inquiry exercises critical thinking skills that can be applied across cultures and job descriptions. Furthermore, students pursuing degrees at four-year institutions in rapidly changing fields will find that foundational questions in philosophy address more stable aspects of their chosen discipline. These more theoretical aspects of a knowledge base are less likely to be influenced by rapidly changing circumstances, which are more about how we apply our knowledge.

It is abundantly clear that the trend over the next four years will be a steadily growing population of college-bound students ages 18 to 24, and an increasing number of Latino and Asian students. Philosophy will need to find the right balance between teaching the specific philosophical traditions that are foundational for American institutions and practices, and addressing the traditions that inform our increasingly diverse community.

Specifically, the philosophy discipline at Moreno Valley hopes to expand the variety of classes available in philosophy (as described in section D above) and, once the budget situation improves, so will the total number of sections available.

Assessment activities have proved useful in generating ideas about the improvement of instruction, and will continue to be enthusiastically pursued over the next four years.

A major worry in the last CPR, low enrollment in some of our courses, has evaporated as a

concern over the last two years. The major difficulty facing us now is instead our increasing inability to meet student demand for courses – something continuing budget cuts are likely to exacerbate for the foreseeable future. Classes can be filled over cap, but even now this suboptimal solution is becoming insufficient to meet student demands. We are failing our mission as a community college to educate those Californians who want to be affordably educated, and this is as true of the philosophy discipline as it is of many others. This, of course, is not a problem that can be fixed within the philosophy discipline itself, but it is something that should be registered here.

Riverside City College

Please see the Moreno Valley and Norco reviews.

J. Recommendations to the Program Review Committee

Moreno Valley College

The discipline appreciates the more accessible data that was provided this year by Institutional Research and hopes this trend will continue. Specifically, accessible data on the relative success and retention rates among minority groups particular to each course would be helpful, as would accessible data concerning transfer rates among students who take 2 or more philosophy courses with us.

Stipends to support part-time faculty member participation in program review and assessment processes would be helpful as well, should the budget permit it.

Norco College

I think that clarifying the need for program review to be more college based, even though when comprehensive review does help.

Grading Rubric for Philosophy Essays

	Essay is Well Informed (50%)		Essay is Well Argued (50%)			Essay is Well Written
	Conceptual Knowledge (20%)	**Development and Support (20%)**	**Structure and Organization (20%)**	**Thesis or Evaluative Claim (20%)**	**Support for Claim and Application of Theory (20%)**	**Plus:** Essay uses clear, direct, grammatical prose; language is simple but not simplistic; diction makes meaning plain; essay is proof-read carefully. **Neutral:** Diction may be either too complicated or too simplistic; meaning is occasionally unclear; needs some proof reading.
A	Student demonstrates command of the important concepts, explaining them clearly in own words.	Students presents, explains, and interprets the central arguments, illustrating key points with quotations if appropriate, generally demonstrating a command of the author's arguments and the development of her thought.	Essay is highly responsive to each part of the prompt, and organizes its points around a clear thesis. The intent of each paragraph and its relation to other essay sections is explicit, making the essay easy to follow.	Student goes beyond the mere presentation of philosophical theory, offering an original evaluative thesis of the appropriate breadth and depth.	Student's evaluative thesis is convincingly argued, through sound reasoning, consideration of appropriate examples. Student applies theory to everyday situations and anticipates objections to her claims.	
B	Student demonstrates a good understanding of key concepts, with one or two minor conceptual inconsistencies or ambiguities.	Student shows some minor misunderstandings of the central arguments and the development of the author's thought; use of quotations could be improved.	Essay uses distinct units of thought, organized into paragraphs with specific and detailed topic sentences; but relation between paragraphs is too often left implicit, making the essay somewhat hard to follow.	Student presents a fairly clear and defensible evaluative claim or thesis, though it could be improved in terms of originality, breadth or depth.	Student offers an argument in defense of their view, though support, reasoning, and the use of examples may be somewhat incomplete or unconvincing.	
C	Student demonstrates a basic grasp of some key concepts, but omits others and/or borrows wording from lecture and assigned texts.	Student only partially develops the overall argument; some basic points left unsupported or unexplained; poor selection or integration of quotations.	Essay has some awkward transitions, poorly organized paragraphs, and some extraneous information; parts of prompt or thesis left unaddressed.	Student offers an evaluative claim or thesis, but it is either unclear, difficult to defend, unoriginal (obvious) or of unreasonable scope.	Student's support for her claim(s) is generally unconvincing. Examples are either inappropriate, absent, or overused without adequate explanation.	**Minus:** Student tries too hard to be "academic," or often uses colloquialisms; poor grammar and style frequently results in vague, unclear sentences. **Worse:** Meaning is frequently obscured by diction; many grammatical or stylistic errors; needs serious proof reading.
D	Student demonstrates inadequate grasp of key concepts; serious omissions and/or does not use own words to explain concepts.	Student digresses often without proper development; serious omissions.	Essay offers an illogical arrangement of ideas; entire sections of prompt or thesis left unaddressed.	Student's evaluative claim or thesis is indefensible, trivial, or entirely vague; student may merely offer a list of unsubstantiated likes and dislikes.	Student merely offers quick opinion in place of evaluation, without adequate support; reasoning may be non-existent, dogmatic, or obviously unsound.	
F	Student shows almost no critical understanding of central concepts; many important concepts not discussed at all.	Little or no development; reads like a list of disjointed facts or misinformation; shows no familiarity with text(s).	Essay offers incoherent paragraph organization; suggests poor planning or no serious attempt at revision.	Student offers no real critical evaluation or thesis; student's critical thoughts are either non-existent or in "rant" form.	Student offers no real argument in support of their evaluative claim(s) or thesis.	