Assessment Activity Report Due April 20, 2018
Submit a pdf version at https://sfsu.knack.com/ap#annual-assessment/

Assessment of Program Learning Goal(s) Annual Assessment Report

Department ______ PHILOSOPHY_____________________ College
_________________LCA________________________

Degree Program_________ MA _________________________________

Please see resources about closing the loop and assessing program learning outcomes at the Academic Planning website http://air.sfsu.edu/assessment/resources

Assessment Findings and Analysis Rubric – developed and used by the University Academic Assessment Advisory Committee (UAAAC) to provide feedback to programs about their assessment findings.

Reports should analyze and summarize the results of the assessment: how well did students meet the program’s learning objective(s)? How well did assessment capture that learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEVELOPED</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
<th>NEEDS DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>ABSENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Findings offer evidence that goals were met, partly met, or not met.</td>
<td>Findings are mostly aligned with assessment goals and results</td>
<td>Findings unrelated to assessment results</td>
<td>No findings are given</td>
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<tr>
<td>Findings used to improve student learning and program quality</td>
<td>Findings directed at improving student learning and program outcomes</td>
<td>Findings do not indicate ongoing engagement with student learning</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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The assessment of program learning goals should be on a rotation, so that only one or two are evaluated in any given year, but all would be evaluated on approximately a five year cycle.

SEE BELOW FOR ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING PROMPTS:

1. Please list your program learning goals.
2. Which program learning goal did you choose to assess this semester?
3. How was the assessment completed? What evidence did the faculty consider (e.g. written papers, presentations, portfolios)? How were faculty involved in the process of assessment?

4. What did you find? Is the program learning goal being met?

5. What assessment activities do you plan to undertake next academic year?
   - Will you “close the loop” for this finding and work on steps to improve the student learning outcomes based on these findings (e.g. create signature assignments, change the required courses)?
   - Are there other assessment findings from the assessment of this program learn goal that you will report through another assessment findings report?
   - In light of your assessment work, changes in the field, or other influences, do you want to take the opportunity to revise the program learning goals next year (program learning goal report)?
   - Will you move on to assess a different program learning goal (assessment findings report)?
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
SHORT ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS

We found that our learning objectives (goals) were met by our students.

1. **Please list your program learning goals.**

1. Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the history and current state of the discipline of philosophy
2. Demonstrate a sophisticated grasp of representative philosophical issues and ways of dealing with them
3. Demonstrate a mature capacity to apply philosophical methods to intellectual problems and to engage in philosophical discussions meeting the standards of the discipline
4. Apply advanced analytic skills
5. Apply advanced interpretive skills
6. Demonstrate mastery of the imaginative development of abstract formulations and their concrete applications
7. Demonstrate mastery of the imaginative development of abstract formulations and their concrete applications Ph.D. level
8. Develop the philosophical skills and knowledge necessary to teach philosophy at the community college (lower-division) level
9. Demonstrate the capacity to study philosophy beyond the undergraduate level for the purposes of self-enrichment or to acquire additional expertise related to their professions

In the longer answer to Question 1 below, we first explain the overall structure of our MA program and each one of our nine program learning goals. Then, for each of the goals, we explain (1) how it is introduced to our students, (2) how we guide them to further elevate, refine, and practice the application of these outcomes, (3) how we assess their learning.

2. **Which program learning goal did you choose to assess this semester?**

We assess each learning goal each semester.

3. **How was the assessment completed? What evidence did the faculty consider (e.g. written papers, presentations, portfolios)? How were faculty involved in the process of assessment?**

We assess the learning goals in the following manner:
Goals 1, 2, 7, 8: by evaluating how students do in Phil 896 Qualifying Exam
Goals 1-6, and 9: by the number of completed degrees (Phil 898)

These results are presented below in several following tables (listed here, but presented and discussed in detail below).
In addition, as we explain in our section “Further Assessment,” our program’s strength is assessed nationally (we are in the top 6 MA-only programs in the country), our students regularly receive the impressive Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, and are being placed in the very top PhD programs in Philosophy (including Stanford, UC Berkeley, and UCLA).

Faculty meet several times over the course of the semester (sometimes via email in smaller groups, but always at least once all together at a graduate faculty meeting) and discuss the assessment strategies and results.

TABLE 1: OVERALL PHIL 896 EXAM RESULTS

TABLE 2: INDIVIDUAL PHIL 896 EXAM RESULTS

TABLE 3a: NO. STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED THESIS, ORAL DEFENSE, AND GRADUATED (AY 2013-8)*

TABLE 3b: NO. STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED THESIS, ORAL DEFENSE, AND GRADUATED (AY 2009-13)

TABLE 3c: Top Earned Masters' Degrees from Departments in our College of Liberal & Creative Arts (LCA)

TABLE 3d: Philosophy MA Program Admissions

4. What did you find? Is the program learning goal being met?

Yes, we find that our program learning goals are being met. Please see below for a longer answer to this question.

Below we also present a narrative called “Further Assessment” in which we document ways in which our program has continued to improve. These include our standing on an independent an nationally renowned ranking site for philosophy programs (the Leiter Report), improved development of staff positions, new development in the admissions process, development of new internal documents and our webpage. We also discuss new ways in which we are supporting graduate students with tuition remission, new scholarships, and fellowships; new ways the life of the department is flourishing; and placement of our students at PhD programs.

5. What assessment activities do you plan to undertake next academic year?

- Will you “close the loop” for this finding and work on steps to improve the student learning outcomes based on these findings (e.g. create signature assignments, change the required courses)?
- Are there other assessment findings from the assessment of this program learn goal that you will report through another assessment findings report?
- In light of your assessment work, changes in the field, or other influences, do you want to take the opportunity to revise the program learning goals next year (program learning goal report)?
- Will you move on to assess a different program learning goal (assessment findings report)?

Next year we will continue documenting the material that we documented this year. We will also do an assessment of our participation in the SF Scholars Program (4+1 FastTrack).
.1. Please list your program learning goals.

In what follows, we first explain the overall structure of our MA program and each one of our nine program learning goals. Then, for each of the goals, we explain (1) how it is introduced to our students, (2) how we guide them to further elevate, refine, and practice the application of these outcomes, (3) how we assess their learning.

.1.a. The Basic Structure of the Philosophy M.A. Program

In addition to the graduate seminars and other regular coursework that our students take, there are three required courses that form the backbone of the philosophy department’s MA program and the benchmarks for students’ courses of study. These provide the occasions for the introduction, practice, and final demonstration of mastery of the program’s student learning outcomes:

- Phil 715: Seminar on Philosophical Writing (first semester of graduate work) introduces student learning outcomes and provides a first opportunity to develop and practice the requisite skills.
- Phil 896: Directed Readings in Philosophy (second or third semester of graduate work) is the first point at which outcomes 1, 2, 7, and 8 are assessed. This leads up to a mid-course of study comprehensive exam. The Graduate Coordinators make up and administer the exam, which also is graded by four of the Graduate Faculty (who alternate), with the Chair breaking ties. Thus, each year the entire Graduate faculty participates in making the assessment.
- Phil 898: Culminating Experience, which includes a written thesis and oral defense, is the point at which outcomes 1 through 6 are both assessed twice, and outcome 9 is also assessed.

.1.b. Assessment Strategies As Related To The Program Structure

A programmatic assessment approach should, we believe, be cost-effective by providing both guidance for individual student outcome improvement and data for improvement of the program as a whole. We have attempted to develop such an assessment strategy. In our report we describe the instruments we use to effect two-fold assessment results. In doing so, we are able to keep individual students’ learning experiences in courses closely aligned with the overall program objectives.

Students’ mastery of these program objectives is assessed in three ways that all work in concert with one another and have significant overlap.

In Phil 715, the required gateway course, students are introduced to and practice each of the learning outcomes through a program consisting of weekly assignments that familiarize students with professional-level philosophical research, writing, and presentation skills, all of which contribute to the students’ semester-long construction of an extended philosophical interpretation and argument. Here learning outcomes are introduced and assessed individually; summarized assessment is undertaken during our Graduate Faculty planning meetings mainly in the form of instructors’ reports on and critiques of the effectiveness of the course in achieving its programmatic aims.

The formal instruments used for summarized assessment are the exam at the conclusion of Phil 896, which occurs about mid-way during the student’s course of study and assesses whether students
generally are making satisfactory progress, and the rubrics we apply to the thesis portion and the oral defense portion of Phil 898, which assess student learning outcomes as manifested in the two-part Culminating Experience (the written Thesis and the public Oral Defense).

Formal summary assessment occurs first as part of Phil 896, a course in which students practice written presentational skills needed for research and teaching, including the ability to recall and present philosophers’ views and their arguments for those views without recourse to notes or texts. The students sit a 3-hour closed-book written exam in which they write three essays in response to prompts given by the faculty. They are required to organize their knowledge of important core topics in the history and for the contemporary state of the discipline and then apply it skillfully in response to questions within a short time frame. For each student unable to execute this work satisfactorily, we investigate why that individual has failed to meet mid-course benchmarks for achieving programmatic student learning outcomes. Any pattern that emerges calls for revision of our advising, course content, or degree requirement program components.

The 896 exam also serves as a means of ensuring that students ought to proceed to the culminating experience, which is a standard use of comprehensive exams in post-baccalaureate education in philosophy. Therefore, additional benchmark criteria beyond those drawn from the specified program objectives are applied to determine passing and failing grades on the exam. Assessment continues with the products of the Culminating Experience, for which graduate students research and write a professional-level philosophical essay and then defend it publicly as one might in discussion at a professional meeting. The Culminating Experience thus includes demonstration of mastery of extended philosophical interpretation and argument made in writing, ability to respond to criticism through several drafts, oral presentation of the material from this essay to the faculty and students who attend their defense, and then response to questions from those attendees on the written work and oral presentation.
c. Student Progress Toward Program Objectives As Related To The Program Structure
Following is a table showing where in the program progress of different sorts toward these outcomes is made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUISITE PHILOSOPHY COURSES</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8*</th>
<th>9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the history and current state of the discipline of philosophy</td>
<td>I, D</td>
<td>I, D</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Demonstrate a sophisticated grasp of representative philosophical issues and ways of dealing with them</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Demonstrate a mature capacity to apply philosophical methods to intellectual problems and to engage in philosophical discussions meeting the standards of the discipline</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Apply advanced analytic skills</td>
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<td>I, D</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Apply advanced interpretive skills</td>
<td>I, D</td>
<td>I, D</td>
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<td>I, D</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Demonstrate mastery of the imaginative development of abstract formulations and their concrete applications</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Demonstrate mastery of the imaginative development of abstract formulations and their concrete applications</td>
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<td>8*</td>
<td>Develop the philosophical skills and knowledge necessary to teach philosophy at the community college (lower-division) level</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Demonstrate the capacity to study philosophy beyond the undergraduate level for the purposes of self-enrichment or to acquire additional expertise related to their professions</td>
<td>I, D</td>
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I = Introduced, D= Developed and Practiced with Feedback, M = Demonstrated at the Mastery Level Appropriate for Graduate Students

*The Learning Outcome referenced here is the mastery of requisite knowledge for teaching the usual Introduction to Philosophy classes and the skill to present the knowledge clearly enough, and without notes, to beginning students. For general teaching skills and strategies, students participate in the Graduate Teaching Associate program.
II. ONE BY ONE: DETAILS OF INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT MECHANISMS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL SUCCESS, FOR EACH PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

1 Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the history and current state of the discipline of philosophy

Introduction to Outcome

Pre-requisites
Students are expected to have taken undergraduate history of philosophy courses in ancient philosophy and modern philosophy before receiving their B.A. Courses that include current states in ethics and in metaphysics/epistemology (broadly construed) also are pre-requisites. Students who enter conditionally classified because they lack one or more pre-requisites must take these undergraduate courses as early as possible in their courses of study.

Introduction at Graduate Level
Students are first introduced to professional-level philosophical practice, which includes engaging in contemporary philosophical debates via engaging the history of these debates, in Phil 715. Among the assignments in that class, the following provide opportunities for students to demonstrate this kind of knowledge:

- Philosophical Research: three possible topics for a philosophical paper, with a list of seven articles, book chapters, etc. relevant to those topics
- Philosophical Research: paragraph-long summaries of the articles, etc. relevant to one of those topics presenting the main thesis and form of argument of each
- Argument Presentation: a reconstruction of the main argument from one of these articles

These assignments require the students to demonstrate the ability to successfully conduct research on the history and current state of the discipline, to accurately report on that research, and to articulate the findings of that research in a form suitable for professional philosophical writing.

Elevation, Refinement, and Practice Application of Outcome
All of the graduate seminars in philosophy provide opportunities for graduate students to elevate and refine their knowledge of the history and current state of the discipline. Modes of assessment used in graduate seminars are written papers and oral presentations. Students must demonstrate the ability to conduct independent philosophical research and to clearly and accurately report the results of that research in a form suitable for professional philosophical engagement.

Department Outcomes assessment
The philosophy department tests the students’ acquisition of the knowledge of the history and current state of the discipline in three separate ways: the written exam at the conclusion of Phil 896, the written thesis portion of Phil 898, and the oral defense portion of Phil 898.

- The material on which the students write for the 896 exam are texts from the philosophical canon. Students are assessed according to their ability to demonstrate that they understand these canonical works and can answer questions about them, in the time allotted, without notes clearly and accurately. The topics on which they write are live topics in the current state of the discipline, and so their essays also demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge of such topics. Students must be able to:
  - articulate the theses at issue,
  - present the philosopher’s arguments in favor and against these theses, and
  - compare and contrast different philosophical approaches to these theses.
The written portion of Phil 898 is a thesis the standard of which is a professional piece of
philosophical writing. Because of the nature of professional philosophical writing, to meet this
standard, students must
  o demonstrate a sophisticated and comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter at hand
    including its historical roots and its relation to contemporary work in the field,
  o demonstrate their ability to execute philosophical research,
  o interpret and articulate philosophical theses and arguments, and
  o draw upon their knowledge of these subject matters in constructing a sustained defense
    of an original thesis.

The oral defense portion of 898 requires the student to present and defend an original thesis,
success in which likewise requires students to demonstrate these kinds of knowledge.

As the assessment procedures for this outcome are the 896 exam, and the submission of a written
thesis and oral defense of that thesis, the success of our student population in achieving it is demonstrated by
the data presented earlier in this section concerning success rates of the exam and the number of
students successfully completing the culminating experience. Also relevant are the data on student
success in having their writing accepted for presentation and publication and in gaining admittance to
PhD programs presented farther on, both of which require the exercise of this skill.

2 Demonstrate a sophisticated grasp of representative philosophical issues and ways of dealing with
them

Introduction to Outcome

Pre-requisites
Before receiving their B.A. degrees, students are expected to have taken undergraduate courses that
have introduced them to representative philosophical issues, including both historical encounters with
these issues—ancient and modern—and contemporary ones—in courses in ethics and
metaphysics/epistemology, broadly construed. A course in formal logic, which is an important tool for
dealing with philosophical issues, is also a pre-requisite. Students who enter as conditionally classified
because they lack one or more pre-requisites must take these undergraduate courses as early as
possible in their courses of study.

Introduction at Graduate Level
Students are first introduced to ways of coming to grasp and deal with representative philosophical
issues in Phil 715. Among the assignments in that class, the following provide opportunities for
students to demonstrate this kind of knowledge:
  • Philosophical Research: three possible topics for a philosophical paper, with a list of seven
    articles, book chapters, etc. relevant to those topics
  • Philosophical Research: paragraph-long summaries of the articles, etc. relevant to one of those
    topics presenting the main thesis and form of argument of each
  • Argument Presentation: a reconstruction of the main argument from one of these articles
  • Objecting to an Argument: an objection to one of the premises or form of the argument
    reconstructed
• Responding to Objections: three responses on behalf of the philosopher being engaged to the objection raised, with rebuttals of each

• Original Thesis: an original philosophical thesis stemming from the objection raised

These assignments require students to demonstrate their ability to conduct research on representative philosophical issues and to engage with those issues in ways appropriate to professional philosophical practice.

**Elevation, Refinement, and Practice Application of Outcome**

All of the graduate seminars in philosophy provide opportunities for graduate students to elevate and refine their grasp of representative philosophical issues and ways of dealing with them. Modes of assessment used in graduate seminars are written papers and oral presentations. Students must demonstrate the ability to conduct independent philosophical research and to engage the philosophical content of that research by critiquing and assessing it and presenting original philosophical theses in response to these assessments.

**Department Outcomes Assessment**

The philosophy department tests the students’ sophisticated grasp of representative philosophical issues and ways of dealing with them in three separate ways: the written exam at the conclusion of Phil 896, the written thesis portion of Phil 898, and the oral defense portion of Phil 898.

- In order to pass the written exam at the conclusion of Phil 896 students must
  
  o demonstrate a sophisticated grasp of the representative philosophical issues from the texts, and
  o in comparing the texts to one another, demonstrate an ability to deal with these issues,
  o be able to clearly articulate the theses at hand,
  o present the reasons for and against each view, and
  o compare and contrast these view with each other.

- The written portion of Phil 898 is a thesis the standard of which is a professional piece of philosophical writing. Because of the nature of professional philosophical writing, to meet this standard students must
  
  o demonstrate their grasp of representative philosophical issues in presenting the contemporary literature on their topic,
  o demonstrate the ability to deal with these issues by engaging with this literature (presenting objections, considering responses to these objections, replying with rebuttals to these), and
  o present an original thesis of their own.

- The oral defense portion of 898 requires the student to present and defend an original thesis, success in which likewise requires students to demonstrate a sophisticated grasp of representative philosophical issues and an ability to deal with them (in this context, in response to questions from the audience).
As the assessment procedures for this outcome are the 896 exam, and the submission of a written thesis and oral defense of that thesis, the success of our student population in achieving it is demonstrated by the data presented earlier in this section concerning success rates of the exam and the number of students successfully completing the culminating experience. Also relevant are the data on student success in having their writing accepted for presentation and publication and in gaining admittance to PhD programs presented farther on, both of which require the exercise of this skill.

3 Demonstrate a mature capacity to apply philosophical methods to intellectual problems and to engage in philosophical discussions meeting the standards of the discipline

Pre-requisites
Students are expected to have taken undergraduate courses in which they are introduced to standard philosophical methods, which include. Some representative philosophical methods meeting the standard of the discipline are argument reconstruction, critique of arguments, responding to critiques of arguments, and generally engaging the reasons in favor or against a given philosophical thesis. These methods are used in both written and oral philosophical engagement. Students who enter conditionally classified because they lack one or more pre-requisites must take these undergraduate courses as early as possible in their courses of study.

Introduction at Graduate Level
Students are first introduced to professional-level philosophical methods in Phil 715. Among the assignments in that class, the following provide opportunities for students to demonstrate this kind of knowledge:

- Philosophical Research: three possible topics for a philosophical paper, with a list of seven articles, book chapters, etc. relevant to those topics
- Philosophical Research: paragraph-long summaries of the articles, etc. relevant to one of those topics presenting the main thesis and form of argument of each
- Argument Presentation: a reconstruction of the main argument from one of these articles
- Objecting to an Argument: an objection to one of the premises or form of the argument reconstructed
- Responding to Objections: three responses on behalf of the philosopher being engaged to the objection raised, with rebuttals of each
- Original Thesis: an original philosophical thesis stemming from the objection raised.

Elevation, Refinement, and Practice Application of Outcome
Students are given the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their application of these methods during the course of Phil 715 and in the other graduate seminars that they take. Modes of assessment used in graduate seminars are written papers and oral presentations. Students must demonstrate the ability to apply these methods to the topics of each seminar.

Department Outcomes Assessment
The philosophy department tests the mature capacity to apply philosophical methods to intellectual programs and to engage in philosophical discussions meeting the standards of the discipline in two ways: the written thesis portion of Phil 898 and the oral defense portion of Phil 898.

- The written portion of Phil 898 is a thesis the standard of which is a professional piece of philosophical writing. Students must
o demonstrate the ability to apply a variety of philosophical methods to in a sustained way to a single topic, including
  o presenting research on that topic,
  o reconstructing arguments found in that research,
  o critiquing these arguments,
  o responding to these critiques of arguments, and
  o generally engaging the reasons in favor or against a given philosophical thesis critiquing the views of other philosophers working on the topic,

- The oral defense portion of 898 requires the student to present and defend an original thesis, success in which likewise requires students to demonstrate a mature capacity to apply these methods.

As the assessment procedures for this outcome are the submission of a written thesis and oral defense of that thesis, the success of our student population in achieving it is demonstrated by the data presented earlier in this section concerning the number of students successfully completing the culminating experience. Also relevant are the data on student success in having their writing accepted for presentation and publication and in gaining admittance to PhD programs presented farther on, both of which require the exercise of this skill.

4 Apply advanced analytic skills

Introduction to Outcome

Pre-requisites
Before receiving their B.A. degrees, students are expected to have taken undergraduate courses in which they are introduced to the analytic skills employed in philosophers. Courses in the history of philosophy or contemporary issues provide an introduction to some of these skills, and a course in formal logic, which is a particular analytic skill unto itself, is also a pre-requisite. Students who enter conditionally classified because they lack one or more pre-requisites must take these undergraduate courses as early as possible in their courses of study.

Introduction at Graduate Level
Students are first introduced to the application of advanced analytic skills in Phil 715. Among the assignments in that class, the following provide opportunities for students to demonstrate this kind of knowledge:
  - Philosophical Research: three possible topics for a philosophical paper, with a list of seven articles, book chapters, etc. relevant to those topics
  - Philosophical Research: paragraph-long summaries of the articles, etc. relevant to one of those topics presenting the main thesis and form of argument of each
  - Argument Presentation: a reconstruction of the main argument from one of these articles
  - Objecting to an Argument: an objection to one of the premises or form of the argument reconstructed
• Responding to Objections: three responses on behalf of the philosopher being engaged to the objection raised, with rebuttals of each

• Original Thesis: an original philosophical thesis stemming from the objection raised.

Elevation, Refinement, and Practice Application of Outcome
Students are given the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their application of these methods during the course of Phil 715 and in the other graduate seminars that they take. Modes of assessment used in graduate seminars are written papers and oral presentations. Students must demonstrate the ability to apply these skills to the topics of each seminar.

Department Outcomes Assessment
The philosophy department tests advanced analytic skills in two ways: the written thesis portion of Phil 898 and the oral defense portion of Phil 898.

• The written portion of Phil 898 is a thesis the standard of which is a professional piece of philosophical writing. Because of the nature of professional philosophical writing, to meet this standard, students must demonstrate advanced analytic skills in:
  - the interpretation and presentation of arguments,
  - the formulation of objections,
  - the formulation of responses to these objections and rebuttals to these, and
  - arguing for an original philosophical thesis.

• The oral defense portion of 898 requires the student to present and defend an original thesis, success in which likewise requires students to apply advanced analytic skills. (in this context, in response to questions from the audience).

As the assessment procedures for this outcome are the submission of a written thesis and oral defense of that thesis, the success of our student population in achieving it is demonstrated by the data presented earlier in this section concerning the number of students successfully completing the culminating experience. Also relevant are the data on student success in having their writing accepted for presentation and publication and in gaining admittance to PhD programs presented farther on, both of which require the exercise of this skill.

5 Apply advanced interpretive skills

Introduction to Outcome

Pre-requisites
Before receiving their B.A. degree, students are expected to have taken undergraduate courses in the history of philosophy, ancient and modern, in which they are introduced to the interpretive skills employed in historical scholarship in philosophy. Courses on contemporary issues in ethics and metaphysics/epistemology (broadly construed) are also pre-requisites and introduce the student to the skill of interpreting contemporary work in philosophy. A course in formal logic is also a pre-requisite and introduces students to a valuable tool in philosophical interpretation.
Introduction at Graduate Level

Students are first introduced to professional-level philosophical interpretation in Phil 715. Among the assignments in that class, the following provide opportunities for students to demonstrate this skill:

- Philosophical Research: three possible topics for a philosophical paper, with a list of seven articles, book chapters, etc. relevant to those topics
- Philosophical Research: paragraph-long summaries of the articles, etc. relevant to one of those topics presenting the main thesis and form of argument of each
- Argument Presentation: a reconstruction of the main argument from one of these articles
- Responding to Objections: three responses on behalf of the philosopher being engaged to the objection raised, with rebuttals of each

Elevation, Refinement, and Practice Application of Outcome

Students are given the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their application of these skills during the course of Phil 715 and in the other graduate seminars that they take. Modes of assessment used in graduate seminars are written papers and oral presentations. Students must demonstrate the ability to apply these skills to the topics of each seminar.

Department Outcomes Assessment

The philosophy department tests advanced interpretive skills in two ways: the written thesis portion of Phil 898 and the oral defense portion of Phil 898.

- The written portion of Phil 898 is a thesis the standard of which is a professional piece of philosophical writing. Because of the nature of professional philosophical writing, to meet this standard students must demonstrate advanced interpretive skills in:
  - the research and presentation of the material that must be included and engaged in any such paper, and
  - the consideration of objections to this material, and responses to these objections.

- The oral defense portion of 898 requires the student to present and defend an original thesis, success in which likewise requires students to apply advanced interpretive skills. Students must:
  - situate this thesis for their audience within the broader dialectic to which it is a contribution, and
  - interpret philosophical questions from the audience about their thesis and formulate responses to these.

As the assessment procedures for this outcome are the submission of a written thesis and oral defense of that thesis, the success of our student population in achieving it is demonstrated by the data presented earlier in this section concerning the number of students successfully completing the culminating experience. Also relevant are the data on student success in having their writing accepted for presentation and publication and in gaining admittance to PhD programs presented farther on, both of which require the exercise of this skill.
Demonstrate mastery of the imaginative development of abstract formulations and their concrete applications

Introduction to Outcome

Pre-requisites
Before receiving their B.A. degree, students are expected to have taken undergraduate courses on contemporary issues in ethics and metaphysics/epistemology (broadly construed) in which they are introduced to the imaginative development of abstract formulations and their concrete applications.

Introduction at Graduate Level
Students are first introduced to professional-level philosophical originality in Phil 715. Among the assignments in that class, the following provide opportunities for students to demonstrate this skill:

- Objecting to an Argument: an objection to one of the premises or form of the argument reconstructed
- Responding to Objections: three responses on behalf of the philosopher being engaged to the objection raised, with rebuttals of each
- Original Thesis: an original philosophical thesis stemming from the objection raised.

Elevation, Refinement, and Practice Application of Outcome
Students are given the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their application of these skills during the course of Phil 715 and in the other graduate seminars that they take. Modes of assessment used in graduate seminars are written papers and oral presentations. Students must demonstrate the ability to apply these skills to the topics of each seminar.

Department Outcomes Assessment
The philosophy department tests the imaginative development of abstract formulations and their concrete applications in two ways: the written thesis portion of Phil 898 and the oral defense portion of Phil 898.

- The written portion of Phil 898 is a thesis the standard of which is a professional piece of philosophical writing. Because of the nature of professional philosophical writing, to meet this standard students must:
  - present and defend an original thesis,
  - consider consequences and/or applications of this thesis, and
  - consider possible objections to this thesis.

- The oral defense portion of 898 requires the student to present and defend an original thesis, success in which likewise requires students to demonstrate this skill. Students must:
  - respond to questions from the audience with novel philosophical content over and above that presented in their thesis.

As the assessment procedures for this outcome are the submission of a written thesis and oral defense of that thesis, the success of our student population in achieving it is demonstrated by the data presented earlier in this section concerning the number of students successfully completing the culminating experience. Also relevant are the data on student success in having their writing accepted...
for presentation and publication and in gaining admittance to PhD programs presented farther on, both of which require the exercise of this skill.

7 Develop the philosophical skills and knowledge necessary to do graduate work at the Ph.D. level

Introduction at Graduate Level
Students are first introduced to the philosophical skills necessary to do graduate work at the Ph.D. level in Phil 715. Among the assignments in that class, the following provide opportunities for students to demonstrate this kind of knowledge:

- Philosophical Research: three possible topics for a philosophical paper, with a list of seven articles, book chapters, etc. relevant to those topics
- Philosophical Research: paragraph-long summaries of the articles, etc. relevant to one of those topics presenting the main thesis and form of argument of each
- Argument Presentation: a reconstruction of the main argument from one of these articles
- Objecting to an Argument: an objection to one of the premises or form of the argument reconstructed
- Responding to Objections: three responses on behalf of the philosopher being engaged to the objection raised, with rebuttals of each
- Original Thesis: an original philosophical thesis stemming from the objection raised
- Incorporating Feedback: second draft of a paper revised in light of instructor’s comments
- Oral Presentation: oral presentation of paper to course participants

These assignments require the students to demonstrate the ability to successfully conduct research in philosophy and to exercise the skills necessary for doing graduate work at the Ph.D. level including those involved in philosophical research, writing, and oral presentation.

Elevation, Refinement, and Practice Application of Outcome
Students are given the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their application of these skills and knowledge during the course of Phil 715 and in the other graduate seminars that they take. Modes of assessment used in graduate seminars are written papers and oral presentations. Students must demonstrate the ability to apply these skills to the topics of each seminar.

Department Outcomes Assessment
The philosophy department tests the students’ development of philosophical skills and knowledge necessary to do graduate work at the Ph.D. level using the written exam at the conclusion of Phil 896.

- In order to pass this exam students must
  - demonstrate the ability to draw on their knowledge of representative philosophical topics from the history of philosophy, and
  - write articulately about these topics.

By way of measuring our success in achieving this outcome and exceeding the standard set by it, it is worth nothing the long list of doctoral programs to which our recent graduates have been accepted (see section 7.5).
8 Develop the philosophical skills and knowledge necessary to teach philosophy at the community college (lower-division) level

Introduction at Graduate Level
Students are first introduced to the philosophical skills and knowledge that are necessary to teach philosophy at the community college (lower-division) level in Phil 715. Among the assignments in that class, the following provide opportunities for students to demonstrate this kind of skill and knowledge:

- Philosophical Research: three possible topics for a philosophical paper, with a list of seven articles, book chapters, etc. relevant to those topics
- Philosophical Research: paragraph-long summaries of the articles, etc. relevant to one of those topics presenting the main thesis and form of argument of each
- Argument Presentation: a reconstruction of the main argument from one of these articles
- Objecting to an Argument: an objection to one of the premises or form of the argument reconstructed
- Responding to Objections: three responses on behalf of the philosopher being engaged to the objection raised, with rebuttals of each
- Oral Presentation: oral presentation of paper to course participants

Elevation, Refinement, and Practice Application of Outcome
Students are given the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their application of these skills and knowledge during the course of Phil 715 and in the other graduate seminars that they take. Modes of assessment used in graduate seminars are written papers and oral presentations. Students must demonstrate the ability to apply these skills to the topics of each seminar. Additionally, we offer two courses on teaching philosophy—Phil 717 and Phil 718—in which students can hone their teaching craft. We also provide opportunities for students to teach for remuneration.

Department Outcomes Assessment
The philosophy department tests the students’ development of philosophical skills and knowledge necessary to teach philosophy at the community college (lower-division) level using the written exam at the conclusion of Phil 896.

- In order to pass this exam students must:
  - demonstrate knowledge of historical texts that would be appropriate to teach at the community college (lower-division) level,
  - demonstrate the ability to answer questions about these texts that would be expected to arise in teaching at that level,
  - clearly articulate the main theses and positions found in those texts,
  - compare and contrast these theses and positions with one another.
By way of measurement, the below is a list of the schools at which our students have earned teaching positions. Recent graduates have been hired at CSU, Sacramento (3 recent grads hired), Sacramento City College, San Francisco State University, Santa Barbara City College, Green River Community College (Washington), De Anza College, Madison Technical College (Wisconsin), College of the Canyons, and Diablo Valley College.

9 Demonstrate the capacity to study philosophy beyond the undergraduate level for the purposes of self-enrichment or to acquire additional expertise related to their professions

Introduction at Graduate Level
Students are first introduced to the capacities that are necessary to study philosophy independently in Phil 715. Among the assignments in that class, the following provide opportunities for students to demonstrate this kind of skill and knowledge are:

- Philosophical Research: three possible topics for a philosophical paper, with a list of seven articles, book chapters, etc. relevant to those topics
- Philosophical Research: paragraph-long summaries of the articles, etc. relevant to one of those topics presenting the main thesis and form of argument of each
- Argument Presentation: a reconstruction of the main argument from one of these articles
- Objecting to an Argument: an objection to one of the premises or form of the argument reconstructed
- Responding to Objections: three responses on behalf of the philosopher being engaged to the objection raised, with rebuttals of each
- Abstracts/Proposals: three abstracts of the paper being constructed of 200, 350, and 500 words
- Oral Presentation: oral presentation of paper to course participants

Elevation, Refinement, and Practice Application of Outcome
Students are given the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their application of these skills and knowledge during the course of Phil 715 and in the other graduate seminars that they take. Modes of assessment used in graduate seminars are written papers and oral presentations. Students must demonstrate the ability to apply these skills to the topics of each seminar.

Department Outcomes Assessment
The philosophy department tests the students’ capacity to study philosophy beyond the undergraduate level for the purposes of self-enrichment or to acquire additional expertise related to their professions using in two ways: the proposal for culminating experience and the oral defense portion of Phil 898. For the proposal students must:
- demonstrate their ability to identify interesting and important topics, and pursue them.

For the oral defense students must:
- demonstrate an ability to conduct philosophical research,
- formulate an original thesis,
and discuss this thesis with the audience.

As the assessment procedures for this outcome are the submission of a proposal for the thesis and the oral defense of that thesis, the success of our student population in achieving it is demonstrated by the data presented earlier in this section concerning the number of students successfully completing the culminating experience.
2. Which program learning goal did you choose to assess this semester?

We assess each and every learning goal every semester.

3. How was the assessment completed? What evidence did the faculty consider (e.g. written papers, presentations, portfolios)? How were faculty involved in the process of assessment?

4. What did you find? Is the program learning goal being met?

We assess the learning goals by evaluating how students do in Phil 896 Qualifying Exam and Phil 898 Thesis courses. These results are presented below in the following tables and narrative.

Below we also present a narrative called “Further Assessment” in which we document ways in which our program has continued to improve. These include our standing on an independent an nationally renowned ranking site for philosophy programs (the Leiter Report), improved development of staff positions, new development in the admissions process, development of new internal documents and our webpage. We also discuss new ways in which we are supporting graduate students with tuition remission, new scholarships, and fellowships; new ways the life of the department is flourishing; and placement of our students at PhD programs.

Assessment data AY 13-17

The following tables include data about the three ways in which assessment takes place: the exam at the conclusion of Phil 896, the written thesis portion of Phil 898, and the oral defense portion of 898.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: OVERALL PHIL 896 EXAM RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrolled in Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 14</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>S 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>S 16</td>
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<td>F 16</td>
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<td>S 17</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Grade Rosters, Department of Philosophy Records
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>TOOK EXAM</th>
<th>PASSED</th>
<th>NOT PASSED AND ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>M.L., the student who failed, was advised regarding his writing. He re-took 896 the next semester, Spring 2014, and passed. This student has since completed his MA degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>A.P., the student who failed, had been experiencing a personal crisis during the semester. She was advised to take additional seminars and wait a year before retaking the exam. In Spring 2015, she passed the exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>M.C., the student who failed, has been suffering from various illnesses and, after meeting with the Graduate Coordinator, realizes that she also qualifies for DPRC. She was scheduled to take the exam through the DPRC in Spring 2015, but withdrew due to medical reasons. She still needs to pass 896 exam and write her thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>J.R., one student who failed, took the exam again in Spring 16 and passed. J.W. experienced an employment crisis shortly before the exam that prevented her from adequately preparing for it. She enrolled in 896 again in Fall 2016, but again had to withdraw due to family medical emergencies. She plans to take the exam again in Fall 2017. W.C., the third student who failed, is an English-as-second-language speaker. He is currently taking additional courses in order to work on his writing. He sat for the exam again in Spring 2017 and passed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>M.B., the student who failed, had (for the first time while at SFSU) taken on a full-time job and commuted from LA while taking two graduate courses. Three members of the committee met with him in person and advised him about the following: the pitfalls of overscheduling; the importance of carefully reading the exam questions and responding to entire questions; that he should take a refresher course on Hume and Kant, preferably one that goes deeply into the standard issues in these figures. It is currently not known which semester he will re-enroll in the course and take the exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>No students failed the exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>One student, K.T.D, failed. He took on a new, demanding job which severely impacted his ability to study properly for this exam and his other seminars. Additionally, he has close to a 4-hour round-trip commute on the days he comes to campus. He has been counseled by Dr. Landy about how to better prepare for the exam next semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>P.T. withdrew shortly before the exam for personal and familial reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 18</td>
<td>Data cannot be gathered at this time, as the exam has not yet been completed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>93.7% Pass rate for those who took the 896 Exam during the four AYs Fall 2013 – Fall 17.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources: Grade Rosters, Department of Philosophy Records

During the period covered in the four years after the Sixth Cycle Review, 119 of 127 students passed the exam, demonstrating mastery of the skills and knowledge stated in program objectives 1, 2, 7 and 8.

Regarding the eight who did not pass in AY 13-17: this was the first try for all of these students, and no student in this period has failed the exam twice. Five of these students have since passed the exam, after receiving individualized guidance from the Graduate Coordinators.

Of these five students that have since passed the exam, there were a number of reasons why they did not pass on their first try: one student, A.P., was undergoing extreme personal problems during the semester she sat for the exam. Another student, M.L., needed work on his writing and was given pointers for improving his philosophical writing skills. Two other students, M.B. and K.T.D, had taken too many life responsibilities during the semester they sat for the exam. Another, W.C. is a ESL speaker and writer, and needed more practice and tutoring which he obtained.

Four students who failed in previous semesters have received individualized guidance from the Graduate Coordinators:

--J.W. had enrolled again in Fall 2016, but had to withdraw due to a family medical emergency. She is currently deciding whether she will take the exam again in Fall 2018 or will pursue other goals.
--M.B. has not yet sat again for the exam. He has decided to pursue other goals.
--K.T.D., who failed the exam in Spring 17, has received guidance from the graduate coordinators. Some of this guidance has been around why it important to use words with literal (not just metaphorical) meanings when presenting a philosopher’s views. He is doing quite well in his seminars, and has been advised to take the exam again in Fall 2018.
--W.C. has had medical problems. He has taken time to complete his incompletes, but is now concentrating on his health.

The Graduate Coordinators, Department Chair, and the Graduate Faculty as a whole discuss cases of failure to determine causes. These discussions have been extremely helpful in guiding advisors in being better able to judge, based on the student’s record in our program, when the student has mastered, and therefore is ready to demonstrate, the expected mid-course of study skills.

During this 5-year period since the Sixth Cycle Review, however, no students have failed twice and thus none were dropped from the program because of their inability to pass Phil 896. This marks progress in the four years since the Sixth Cycle Review. In the 12 semesters covered by the Sixth Cycle Self-Study, 174 students took the exam, 23 (13.2 %) did not pass on the first try, and six (3.4%) students failed twice and were dropped from the program. In the eight semesters since the Sixth Cycle, eight did not pass on their first try, and 0% failed twice and were dropped from the program.

The 896 exam is one of three ways in which our student learning outcomes are assessed. This exam is a means of mid-course of study assessment. It enables us to be sure the individual student is well prepared to cut free of seminar-directed research and organize a major study project on her/his own. The collective results provide important data on the effectiveness of our seminar instruction and advising during students’ initial semesters in the program.
The other two assessment instruments are the two parts of the culminating experience: the written thesis and oral defense. With these, we assess learning goals 1-6 and 9.

Below are quantitative data on the completion of the culminating experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3a: NO. STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED THESIS, ORAL DEFENSE, AND GRADUATED (AY 2013-7)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2013-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2014-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2015-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2016-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2017-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Philosophy Department Records and Graduate Studies Graduation Lists

*These numbers are based on the amount of students that successfully defended their thesis each semester. Almost all of the time, the students also graduate that semester, but very occasionally students officially graduate the semester following their thesis completion (due to administrative issues, etc.).

The projected numbers are offered here for Spring 2018 because the assessment is being conducted mid-April, which is during the time of the semester when students are defending their theses.
(Projected data was generated by consulting the list of students who have scheduled their defenses.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3b: NO. STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED THESIS, ORAL DEFENSE, AND GRADUATED (AY 2009-13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averages AY 09-13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Sixth Cycle Self-Study, Department of Philosophy

Our new graduation average is 27.8 students per year, which is up significantly from the average number of students graduated during four years (AYs 09-13) of the Sixth Cycle Review, which was 19.25 students per year.
In addition, as of the completion of AY 2016/7 we have the top rate of graduation, “earned degrees,” in our College of Liberal & Creative Arts! Out of 32 M.A. programs in our college, we have the highest average earned degrees from the past. Our earned degree average is 28.5 graduations per year, with the next highest departments averaging 27.5 and then 22.5 graduations per year. See table 3c below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department:</th>
<th>AY 13-14</th>
<th>14-15</th>
<th>15-16</th>
<th>16-17</th>
<th>4-Year Total</th>
<th>3-Year Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Writing (MFA)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (TESOL)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum Studies</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SFSU Graduate Division “earned degrees” data.

As Table 3a shows, this most recent AY, 2016-17, we had a drop in the number of MA degrees earned compared to the three previous years. This is not due to any significant changes in our program, but can be explained by the admissions data, shown in Table 3d. Starting in AY 2007-08, and peaking in AY 2010-11, we hosted a massive influx of MA applicants and newly enrolled students. This is likely due to the worldwide recession that began at the end of 2007. Our decline in degrees earned is similar to the declines in other SFSU MA program listed in Table 3c.
In Table 3d, we list admissions data going back well beyond this cycle’s assessment years in order to let the admissions trends clarify our rates of earned degrees. Though we hesitate to make any predictions, we note that our numbers suggest our MA program should stabilize with around 25-30 new enrollments each AY and 15-20 degrees earned each AY, over the coming years. This remains impressive in light of the extraordinarily high cost-of-living in the Bay Area and the absence of graduate stipends for students in SFSU Master’s programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each AY includes both Fall and Spring admissions:</th>
<th>Total MA applications</th>
<th>Total New Students Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AY 2005-06</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2006-07</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2007-08</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>33 (53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2008-09</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>44 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2009-10</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>35 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2010-11</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>74 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2011-12</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>67 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2012-13</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>39 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2013-14</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>37 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2014-15</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>34 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2015-16</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>36 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2016-17</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>30 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2017-18</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>38 (50%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SFSU Graduate Division Admissions data; WebAdmit for AY 2017/8)

NOTE: As of Fall 2017, SFSU is using a new system for students to apply to the MA program, Cal State Apply (WebAdmit). The numbers posted above as “applied” track students who completed applications (the number of incomplete applications is considerably higher: 61 for Fall 17, 55 for Spring 18).

As can be seen here, our yield for AY 17/18 is quite high, at 50%. This is a testimony to the strength of our program and our growing reputation due to both student and faculty success.
Further Assessment
During our Graduate Faculty Planning Meetings, which occur twice a year, we continue to review each student’s progress in the program. A component of the Graduate Coordinators’ discussion of individual graduate students’ progress is a report on the most recent findings from graduate assessment. Graduate assessment occurs at the end of every semester, when the comprehensive exam is given and oral defenses of theses are held.

These reports not only enable us to determine objectively whether each of our students individually has achieved the program’s learning outcomes. They also invite conversations among faculty about general demonstrations of students’ learning.

General conclusions about the effectiveness of our instructional program are reached based on assessment reports and on the comments we ask each member of the Graduate Faculty to make, in turn as we go around the room, about means for improving standards in our program.

Our MA program has also continued to improve in various manners:

Change in standing on Leiter Report
The SFSU M.A. program is in a four-way tie for sixth place in the 15/16 Philosophical Gourmet Ranking (PGR) of stand-alone philosophy M.A. programs. The PGR rankings are based on peer assessments of the program faculty’s strengths. SFSU has been in the PGR’s top ten list since 2009. SF State is the only public comprehensive university to crack the top nine; all the others are at national research institutions.

New Staff Position: Graduate Program Administrative/Assistant Coordinator (GPAC)
Dennis Browe (MA SFSU, Sexuality Studies, 2011), was the first staff member to be hired to help administratively coordinate our Graduate Program. He was half-time in Philosophy for AY 14/15 (he was also half-time in Communications); a full-time position in Philosophy was created for him as of Summer 2015 (he had additional duties unrelated to the MA program for the department as well). With this full-time position we are able to provide more comprehensive programmatic and student support, assisting the Graduate Coordinators who are more limited on time.

The GPAC helps clarify and communicate department and university policies to current students; organizes all M.A. program application files; helps students in one-on-one meetings and in small group workshops to fill out their important university forms such as Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) forms and Proposal for Culminating Experience (PCE) forms; coordinates and prepares all paperwork for student travel funding applications; provides administrative support for thesis defenses; and ensures a smooth graduation process for all students defending their thesis in their final semester.

In Fall 2017, Mr. Browe entered the PhD program in Sociology at University of California, Santa Cruz. His departure was bittersweet, but we are thrilled he will develop his career and we will sorely miss his incredible administrative skills!

We subsequently hired a new GPAC for Fall 2017, Linda Leonard, who has been with SF State for 17 years, starting her career here as the Graduate Program Administrative Office Coordinator (AOC) in the School of Nursing, followed by 10 years supporting the Dean of Graduate Studies

Electronic MA Admissions
In Summer 2016, we began construction on a new electronic admissions page. This page brought our program’s admissions process into the twenty-first century by allowing students to submit paperless applications to the Department of Philosophy.

Now, in Fall 2017, SFSU Graduate Studies has switched their application software from CSU Mentor to Cal State Apply. Cal State Apply went live for late Fall 2017 applicants through a special exceptions process, and became fully functional for Spring 2018 applications. Cal State Apply will handle all aspects and documents pertaining to the graduate admissions process. Philosophy quickly adapted to the new admissions process, and finds it a great success!

**Philosophy Graduate Student Handbook**
We have expanded an existing document—Philosophy Graduate Student Timeline Packet—that Drs. Sowaal and Landy have modified and updated each year, to create the Philosophy Graduate Student Handbook. This handbook is more user-friendly and contains more comprehensive information about relevant aspects of our graduate program. This is intended to serve as a helpful reference guide for students at all stages of the program.

**Revised Webpage**
In Summer 2014 we undertook a project to update the graduate program portion of our website. We updated the webpages and added more helpful and current information. The overall goal was two-fold: to be useful for our current students, and to market/sell our program to potential students through highlighting the strengths of our faculty and the many activities and happenings around the department. We continue to update and improve the site on a continual basis.

**Tuition Remission**
The Department is thrilled to learn that it will be part of a pilot program of giving tuition remission to students who are teaching at least 6 units as Graduate Teaching Associates in a given semester. As we understand it, we have been chosen because of our high-quality GTA program. GTAs in Philosophy receive extensive training and supervision both prior to and concurrent with their teaching assignments.

**SF State Scholars (FastTrack 4+1)**
The department is thrilled to learn that it is one of the five departments at SFSU chosen to be part of a pilot program in which students are able to receive their BA and MA at an accelerated rate. The students also receive priority registration, are eligible for reduced fees for their graduate education, and can apply for paid teaching positions (including TA-ships and Graduate Teaching Associateships).

Conservatively, we anticipate that we will have at least five additional students a year entering our MA program because of this new program, and that we will strengthen both our undergraduate and graduate programs.

**New Scholarships**
In Spring 2015 our department instituted a new scholarship: the Philosophy Graduate Student Tuition Scholarship (informally called the Corbenic Scholarship). We are proud to offer this scholarship, which was made possible through a generous endowment donation from a former student in our program. This scholarship assists our students with tuition so that they can concentrate on their philosophical studies. This scholarship awards $2,000 each to four incoming and new philosophy.
graduate students that have a successful track record and show dedication and potential toward excelling as professional philosophers. As of April 2018, we have awarded this scholarship to 15 recipients! As of April 2018, we are still not able to recruit many of the most promising incoming graduate students, because MA students must pay full tuition and are unable to find affordable housing on campus or in the Bay Area.

In Spring 2016 our department instituted another scholarship: the Jason Louis Zarri Memorial Scholarship, which was set up to honor the memory and reflect the philosophical interests of one of our former M.A. students.

- Our first Zarri winner, Jacob Zellmer, was awarded his $1000 disbursement in Fall 2016. He graduated in Spring 2017 and is going on for a Philosophy PhD at UC San Diego. We awarded a second winner, Michelle Thomas, this scholarship for Fall 2017. She is a very promising student who is at the beginning stages of our program, and she is very excited about working hard to earn her MA.

Third and finally, we are in the early stages of instituting another scholarship: the Silvers 50th Scholarship, named in honor of our chair, Professor Anita Silvers (who stepped down from chair-ship in Fall 2017 and has been a full-time Philosophy faculty member here for 50 years!). This scholarship, which we plan to award soon (perhaps in Fall 2018), will support both undergraduate and graduate students, especially those who are immigrants or come from a family of immigrants.

**Fellowships**

With our professors' support and guidance, our graduate students continue to secure and win highly competitive state fellowships, especially the Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Fellowship. We have had four Casanova recipients over the past four AYs, including two who applied in AY 16-17 and are enjoying their fellowships in AY 17-18!

2017: Spencer Beaudette, Hilda Loury  
2015: Kathleen O’Neal  
2014: Delicia Kamins, Sigmund Werndorf  
2013: Jen White  
2012: Nick Alvarez, Sarah Braash, Brian Tibbetts  
2011: Sylvia Kocieda, Victor Ma

(Data is found here: [https://fellowships.sfsu.edu/predoc/meet-scholars](https://fellowships.sfsu.edu/predoc/meet-scholars) and here: [http://www.calstate.edu/predoc/scholars/1617.shtml](http://www.calstate.edu/predoc/scholars/1617.shtml))

**Ethics Bowl**

In the 2013-2014 school year, San Francisco State University's Philosophy Department was proud to begin their participation in the National High School Ethics Bowl (NHSEB) program, sponsored by UNC Chapel Hill. Several of our graduate students in philosophy volunteered their time to coach local high school students in preparation for the regional championship which took place at UC Santa Cruz. In our first year participating, we successfully coached a team into the final round of the regional championship. Over the past few years we have expanded our program to include even more high schools.

In 2015-16 we had one team from Ruth Asawa School of the Arts (SOTA) compete – and do well – in
the regional competition. Last year, our MA student and Ethics Bowl coordinator, Dorian Lok, assisted a team from Philip and Sala Burton High School in an ethics bowl invitational at UC Santa Cruz in May 2017. This invitational was created by UCSC for the purpose of getting more students from under-represented communities into the Ethics Bowl. Dorian is hoping to lead these students into forming a team for the regional competition this upcoming AY.

This academic year, starting in Fall 2017 and with the assistance of Associate Dean Troi Carleon, SFSU sponsored its first college-level Ethics Bowl team, supervised by Associate Professor Carlos Montemayor and coached by Dorian Lok. The team spent all of fall semester training and participated in the statewide competition in December.

Our involvement in the Ethics Bowl has caught the attention of our new applicants, many of whom have had prior experience in the group. One difficulty in organizing this group is that student turnover is high due to our two-year program. We are currently working on recruiting more leaders for this outreach program. Dorian gave a short presentation at our MA student orientation in August 2017 to recruit new coaches. Our involvement in Ethics Bowl has both provided valuable classroom experience to graduate students and helped SF State to recruit students from area high schools.

**Journals: Hypatia and Hume Studies**

Professor Shelley Wilcox, served as the Book Review Editor for *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* July 1, 2013, to July 1, 2017. This allowed for one graduate student a year to serve as the Editorial Assistant, which gave them paid employment while gaining valuable philosophy publishing experience. The student worked in depth on all book reviews, helping to edit their content, as well as corresponds regularly with numerous professors in the discipline. Altogether three MA students have held the Editorial Assistant position. One of the students, Lily Simmons, after graduating, went on to take an editorial intern position at Oxford University Press, and is now currently a full-time Assistant Editor at Springer. Another, Maja, is currently working as Managing Editor, being paid directly by the journal (her term will be completed on July 1, 2018). This has been a fantastic academic and professional opportunity for our graduate students.

San Francisco State University is also pleased to be co-housing the journal Hume Studies. Associate Professor of Philosophy David Landy is the Book Review Editor for this journal and he is conducting his work with assistance from Linda Leonard, our GPAC.

**Recruitment Visits from UCLA Professor**

In Fall 2014 and 2015, Professor John Carriero (Professor of Philosophy, UCLA) visited our department for one-day recruitment visits. During this time, he met with students one-on-one and in small groups, and he also held a workshop on applying to PhD programs for all interested undergraduate and graduate majors end.

**Placement**

Admission to doctoral programs depends to an important extent on the doctoral admissions committees’ judgment of the applicants’ writing samples. Our MA students who seek admission to doctoral programs have been very successful. Recent degree recipients have been admitted (most with generous financial support) to many philosophy doctoral programs. We find that this placement is one of the best ways of assessing whether our program objectives are being met is through the judgments
made by professional peers of our program’s products. We believe that, during the last four years, we have continued to make good progress in improving student learning outcome quality, which is the test of achieving our program objectives, as judged by professional peers.

Here we list those doctoral programs in philosophy in which students have not been previously admitted, and thus which mark new achievements for our students and our program:

To departments of philosophy: Carnegie Mellon University, Monash University, Purdue University, Rutgers University, Stanford University, SUNY Binghamton, Temple University, Texas A&M University, The New School, Tulane University, UC Berkeley, UC Los Angeles, UC Riverside, University of Arizona, University of Cincinnati, University of Memphis, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, University of New South Wales, University of Pennsylvania, University of South Florida, University of Wisconsin—Madison, Yale University.

Our list of acceptances in non-philosophy programs has also extended: students have been admitted:
To the J.D. at UC Hastings; a Doctorate in Comparative Religion at the Graduate Theological Union; Marine Biology at Florida Atlantic University; J.D. at McGeorge Law School; the M.S. in Accounting at the University of Southern California;

To the M.A. in East Asian Studies Program at Stanford University;
To the DBA (Doctor of Business Administration): Golden Gate University;
To and the Program of Clinical Psychology: at the Wright Institute;
To joint doctoral programs in classics and philosophy at: Bryn Mawr College, Duke University, Rutgers University, University of Chicago, UC Los Angeles, UC Santa Barbara, UC Irvine, University of Washington, at Seattle;

And to an interdisciplinary program: California Institute of Integral Studies.
(Note that these lists are of all program acceptances our students have received, which is more comprehensive than the list of where our students have accepted and are attending.)

In addition, students continue to be admitted to many of the PhD programs that were listed in Sixth-Cycle Self-Study:

Admission to Departments of Philosophy: Brown University, Boston University, City University of New York (CUNY), Claremont Graduate University, Columbia University, Duke University, Georgetown University, Marquette University, Ohio State University, SUNY Albany, SUNY Stony Brook, UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara, UC Irvine, UC Santa Cruz, UC San Diego, University of Chicago, University of Colorado (Boulder), University of Illinois at Champagne-Urbana, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts (Amherst), University of Miami, University of Missouri, University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill), University of Texas, University of Utah, University of Virginia, University of Washington, Vanderbilt University, University of British Columbia, (Canada), Western Ontario University (Canada), and Edinburgh University (UK).

Admission to doctoral programs in religious studies, theology, and interdisciplinary area studies include: University of Chicago, Boston University, Indiana University, Masaryk University (Czech Republic), University of Virginia, University of Washington, Graduate Theological Union, and Rice University. Law schools include Pittsburgh, Lewis and Clark, and William and Mary, as well as many
in California. Other recent graduates are studying for doctorates in Sociology at the University of Sydney, Human Development at UC Berkeley, and Clinical Psychology at Palo Alto University (affiliated with Stanford University), and for an MS in Environmental Studies at Kingston University in London.
5. What assessment activities do you plan to undertake next academic year?
   - Will you “close the loop” for this finding and work on steps to improve the student learning outcomes based on these findings (e.g. create signature assignments, change the required courses)?
   - Are there other assessment findings from the assessment of this program learn goal that you will report through another assessment findings report?
   - In light of your assessment work, changes in the field, or other influences, do you want to take the opportunity to revise the program learning goals next year (program learning goal report)?
   - Will you move on to assess a different program learning goal (assessment findings report)?

Next year we will continue documenting the material that we documented this year. We will also do an assessment of our participation in the SF Scholars Program (4+1 FastTrack).