

# **Program Review Committee Report**

## **Department of Philosophy**

### **Spring 2009**

#### **Mission**

The mission statement for the Department of Philosophy is consistent with the mission statement of Washburn University. The statement expresses the department's commitment to instruction, research, and service, prioritizing excellence in teaching undergraduate students.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

The department has six goals with objectives and assessments for each. The goals focus on teaching, scholarly activity, service, curriculum adjustment, professional development, and cost-effectiveness. They are clearly connected to the department's mission. The goals and objectives of the department remain consistent to the previous program review with two additions, curriculum adjustment and professional development for faculty and staff.

#### **Statistical Information**

Adjusted for sabbatical leave, the department's student credit hours have followed the general trend of university enrollments. The Statistical Overview for Program Review indicates that there has been some loss in the number of lower division credit hours from 2,295 to 1,920 and a gain in the department's upper division credit hours from 76 to 202. The department taught one graduate course in the five year period. There have been six majors graduate in the past five years.

The department's FTEs have remained consistent with four full-time, tenured faculty (4 FTE); one support staff member (.75 FTE); and one adjunct faculty (.250 to .375 FTE) over the past five years. The number of sections taught per year by full-time faculty range from 27 to 30 in regular load and 4 to 9 consent courses each year.

The department suffered a significant loss in enrollment when its regular faculty were on sabbatical or reassigned to other duties; and it offers a large number of special studies and/or senior thesis courses for which the faculty members are not compensated. During the last five years, the department averaged 1.48% of the University's student credit hours; it consumed an average of only 1.38% of the University's instructional budget.

#### **Outcome Measures**

Assessment methods for non-majors in general education courses are restricted to course-time measurements, such as examinations and papers. During the last five years, student performance has gradually declined. The department has adjusted to meet the needs of students by adopting less rigorous textbooks, increasing course prerequisites, and changing method of instruction.

Assessment methods for outcome goals for philosophy majors are identical with the assessment methods for the religious studies majors and include individual student course grades, an outcome assessment form, a capstone course evaluation form, and an alumni questionnaire.

The department's assessments of objectives for philosophy majors and for religious studies majors indicate the department is satisfied, the objectives are being realized and recognizes no cause for changes in either the philosophy or the religious studies major. Both of these majors are limited in their enrollments.

### **Unit Strengths**

The department identified the following strengths: (1) majors are successful in achieving their post-baccalaureate goals; (2) department maintains a substantial student-teacher ratio while also offering upper-division major courses; (3) all full-time faculty hold the Ph.D. and have more than 30 years full-time teaching experience; (4) all members of the faculty are active scholars; (5) the faculty maintains high grading standards; (6) faculty make substantial service contributions; (7) small, upper division classes and individual instruction in special studies classes; and (8) cost effectiveness.

### **Unit Weaknesses**

The department identified one weakness: (1) only one full-time professor in religion who must teach the full range of major courses within the discipline.

### **Changes for the Future**

The department recommends adding one tenure-track faculty member whose specialization is world religions or eastern religions. Enrollment patterns in religion continue to suggest sufficient student interest to sustain such a position.

### **Rating**

Operating at an acceptable level.

### **Recommended Action**

Continue at current level of activity and resources.

The department has identified one weakness: only one full-time professor in religion who must teach a full range of major courses within the discipline. The committee recognizes there may be a need to have a faculty member whose specialization is world religions or eastern religions.

Over the next five years, the department should consider tracking and documenting the need for new course development and consider alternative course delivery methods.