

# Bakersfield College

## Program Review – Annual Update

Attachments (place a checkmark beside the forms listed below that are attached):

[Faculty Request Form](#) [Classified Request Form](#) [Budget Change Request Form](#)

[ISIT Form](#) [M & O Form](#) [Best Practices Form \(Required\)](#)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### I. Program Information:

#### Program Name:

Philosophy

Program Type:  **Instructional**  Non-Instructional

#### Program Mission Statement:

The mission of BC's Philosophy Department is to promote student learning and success by providing quality instruction and services to majors and general education, transfer and vocational students, emphasizing critical thinking, reading, and writing in the areas of philosophy and religion.

#### Program Description: Describe how the program supports the mission of Bakersfield College

Philosophy has always been and continues to be one of the strongest traditional liberal arts majors in higher education. Some students major in Philosophy as a precursor to graduate work and academic careers, teaching and doing research in Philosophy, Education, and other fields. Philosophy's emphasis on critical thinking, theories of knowledge, value and reality, truth, rational argument and proof make it an excellent pre-professional undergraduate major (e.g., for law, theology, medicine, business, computer science) or minor (e.g., for the natural, physical and social science and humanities majors). Philosophy is consistently among the top three pre-law majors, as indicated by philosophy majors' average performance on the LSAT, which largely determines their placement into Law Schools.

BC's Philosophy Department—its description and mission—are very in line with the mission of our institution as stated: "Bakersfield College is committed to providing excellent learning opportunities in basic skills, career and technical education, and transfer courses for our community so that our students can thrive in a rapidly changing world." With a deliberately diverse and integrated curriculum, the philosophy department is in a unique position to provide opportunities to each prong of the three-pronged institutional mission of basic skills, CTE, and transfer/general education.

While the Philosophy program is primarily focused on building critical thinking, reading, and writing skills that supports general education and promotes transfer to four-year institutions, we also offer opportunities for students to obtain an A.A. in Philosophy. We are currently working on creating an A.A.T philosophy degree, which will align with SB1440 and the more recent SB440 bill to facilitate the rates of student transfers. Not a single course is taught in our

department that is not transferable to both CSUs and UCs. We are committed to upholding the transferability of our course to increase transfer rates from our institution to four-year institutions.

With regard to career and technical education, we have created and supported relationships with and course curriculum for the nursing department. Our Phil B12 is consistently promoted by the nursing department and has become a prerequisite course for nursing students entering into the nursing program. With a view toward student success and student workforce preparedness, we are in the process of establishing dialogues with STEM related disciplines to identify synergistic courses such as a building a writing for engineers course or build said course into one of our existing critical thinking courses. Thus, we believe that creating strategic partnerships between philosophy and other departments is one of the strengths of our department. In particular, the relationships between philosophy and other disciplines would not only create economies of scale but would in effect provide more opportunities for other majors to develop academic writing and critical skills specific to their field of interest.

Finally, with regard to basic skills, none of our courses have prerequisites, save for Phil B9, and, we serve basic students directly in our courses. BC's philosophy department provides explicit, focused, and targeted instruction on the basic skills of reading, writing, and critical thinking. Our advantage is that we provide content that is both accessible but highly critical and, based on student and faculty testimonies, inspires students to discover reasons to write, read and think better. All of our courses are writing and reading intensive courses and many students find the value and motivation in addition to developing the requisite skills needed for collegiate level courses to persist in their academic journey.

**Degrees and Certificates: List the degrees and/or Certificates of Achievement awarded by the program, if applicable.**

While the Philosophy program is primarily focused on building critical thinking skills that supports general education and promoting transfer to four-year institutions, we do offer opportunities for students to obtain an A.A. in Philosophy. We are currently working on creating an A.A.T philosophy degree.

**II. Program Assessment:**

- a. How did your outcomes assessment results inform your program planning?

Given that our department's former chair stepped down mid-term due to medical reasons, a new chair was elected unexpectedly late in the spring semester. As a result, our department did not complete any outcomes assessment last year, or for any year for that matter, which could result in this year's planning process. With a new chair, we have already put into motion outcome assessments for this upcoming year, which may help us in our planning for next year.

- b. How did your outcomes assessment results inform your resource requests this year?

While our outcome assessment results were not available for reasons stated above, our resource requests this year are consistent with department needs expressed by the faculty members over several years, save for the our new requests for technology. Our department has deliberately foregone any technology requests over the last few years due to the fiscal constraints imposed on us from the state budget. Now that some of these fiscal constraints have been slightly minimized, while not being evaporated by any stretch of the imagination, our long-term interest in technology is being resurrected.

- c. Note any significant changes in your program's strengths since last year.

We are still very strong in productivity, student success, especially regarding student transfer and course/program completion, faculty involvement on campus, and diversity. That being said, what was not mentioned is our strong relationship with some of the career and technical education departments. I see this getting stronger in the years ahead.

- d. Note any significant changes in your program's weaknesses since last year.

There are two areas of weaknesses identified in last year's review that are still weakness this year, namely the number of A.A. degrees awarded and assessment, but there is one weakness that has improved, namely the total number of students served—not to be confused with productivity, numbers of students per section). One weakness that can be added this year is the lack of qualified and available adjuncts in our area.

Explanations: Our program still does not offer a high number of A.A. degrees, but we expect this will modestly change once we implement the new A.A.T. Philosophy degree. We haven't completed any assessment yet, but with a new energy we are confident we can start completing some of these assessments. As for the adjunct issue, this is a tricky one, because with no four-year institutions offering a master degree in our surrounding area, adjuncts are few far between, which is why we typically have to hire full-time instructors in order to attract talent.

- e. If applicable, describe any unplanned events that impacted your program.

There was one unplanned event that negatively impacted our program. That unplanned event involved the stepping down of our former chair due to medical reasons.

### **III. Technology and Facilities Analysis**

- a. Has your program received new or repurposed technology in this cycle?** No.

- i. If yes, how have you assessed the outcome of the use of that technology and its effectiveness as it relates to student outcomes?**

N.A.

**ii. If no, what technology could play a contributing factor in future student success and outcomes for your program? How would you evaluate the use of this technology?**

1. *Providing the chair with a laptop* is of critical importance to increase efficiency and communication on campus. As it works now, personal laptops are used. This argument can be applied to the Deans as well, who work very hard and have to use their own laptops in order to complete everyday job-related tasks. Meetings between chairs and Deans could become work meetings, where both are using laptops to complete important paperwork. The laptop would transfer from the outgoing to the incoming chairs and, possibly, only to those who need to work closely with the chairs. This would improve the outcomes and efficiency of our program, which also would positively impact the effectiveness of our institution. *This is an essential technology for chairs in order that they can be as productive, helpful, and constructive as they possibly can.* Evaluating this technology could come from both qualitative and quantitative sources. Qualitative data can be obtained from interviews of chairs and administrators. Quantitative data can be obtained from an objective survey distributed to chairs and administrators after a semester's time. If laptops do in fact increase communication, efficiency, and productivity, then this option should be strongly adopted campus-wide.
2. *Installing a smartboard or brightlink in one of our classrooms* would provide the department with an opportunity to create lectures that could be saved and uploaded to Moodle for student review, to produce compelling visuals in our religion courses, and, most importantly, to generate interactive lectures for our logic and critical thinking courses. More importantly than that, however, might be that our students are coming to us with an experience of digital technology that is not replicated by our current technology options in our department's classrooms. We are not meeting our students' needs or expectations, which in effect could certainly correlate with student success. We would evaluate such technology based on both qualitative data obtained from student interviews and quantitative data pulled from our department scorecard of retention and success rates.

**iii. How might other areas use this technology?**

1. While a laptop would be individually distributed to the chairs, they could easily be given to the educational administrators to improve meetings, communications, and work-related activities on campus. Meetings could be setup to work on creating documents instead of talking about what needs to be done.
2. Once a room contains a smartboard/brightlink board, the board could benefit any other instructor, staff, or administrator from any other program that would need to enhance their presentations. Thus, the impact is campus-wide.

(NOTE: Technology requests can be made by filling out the [ISIT Request form](#).)

**b. Has your area received any facilities maintenance, repair or updating in this cycle? If yes, how has the outcome contributed to student success?**

No. Our rooms in the Humanities building, namely 104 and 105, still have crumbling walls and

falling ceiling tiles. The Humanities building still has an ineffective and unreliable elevator. These points negatively impact student's success in two ways: it shows the students that the campus does not care about the student environment, which may be correlated with an increase in student motivation to be successful—leading to lower retention rates. Also, by not having a functional elevator, the second floor classes have had change rooms mid-semester because a student with a disability couldn't access their classroom. Without a functional and reliable elevator, this negatively impacts a small, but nevertheless significant, student population who need such an accommodation.

(NOTE: Facilities and M&O requests can be submitted by completing the [M&O request form](#))

#### **IV. Trend Data Analysis:**

Discuss any significant changes in data trends over the last year using data provided by Institutional Research. Metrics may include the following:

a. Changes in student demographics (gender, age and ethnicity)

With regard to gender and age, there have been no significant changes (f/m: 60/40; 20-29 still our highest age served at 57%). That being said, there has been a significant switch over the four years between Hispanic/Latino and White ethnicities. In 2008-09, the ratio was 44%/35%, whereas last year, the ratio of Hispanic to White was 57%/28%. We now serve the prominent ethnicity of Hispanics. We have seen a 50% drop in the African American group (6% in 2008-09 to 3% in 2012-13). We could benefit by creating outreach opportunities to this group.

b. Changes in enrollment (headcount, sections, course enrollment and productivity)

In comparing 2008-09 headcount, sections, and student/section to 2012-13 years, one recognizes that while the number of sections decreased by 6 sections, the ratios of headcount and student/section numbers went up (headcount of 08/09 to 12/13: 87 sections/3359 students vs. 81 sections/3369 students). Our department remains committed to ensuring that students find our courses accessible. That being said, our productivity has always remained significantly higher than the collegewide productivity numbers with a ratio of 20.1 for philosophy to 17.9 for the campus.

What is noteworthy is that our 2012-13 year saw an increase in students/section that matched our f-t-f courses (N= 42 for both f-t-f and online). This is seriously misleading for reasons explained under metric c.

c. Success and retention for face-to-face, as well as online/distance courses

Given the degree of critical thinking, reading, and writing involved in our courses, we would expect that we would be slightly below collegewide retention and success rates. As it turns out, we are very close when comparing F-t-F numbers. In our subject area, we have 83.8% retention rates compared to the collegewide 85.9% rates for F-t-F courses. Our 65.4% success rates are comparable to the 69.1% success rates for F-t-F

collegewide.

While online courses increased from 28 students per course to 42 students per course in one year, this phenomenon needs an explanation, even if it's a bit speculative. Last year, that is, 2012-13, the minimum number of students was increased from 40 to 64. So, while we ensured more productivity per online course, we also witnessed a significant decrease in both online retention and success rates. Online retention and success rates in 2009-10 were 81.8% and 56%, while in 2012-13, these rates were respectively 51.4% and 35.6%. Also, I believe either 2010-11 or 2011-12, the campus moved from supporting Etudes and Moodle to supporting only Moodle. The institution provided a one-person team to help faculty members in this transition. This too could have contributed to the lower retention and success rates. All that being said, our 2012-13 online retention rates of 51.4% and our 35% success rates are way down from our 2009-10 years. Our current online retention and success rates are unacceptable.

d. Degrees and certificates awarded (five-year trend data for each degree and/or certificate awarded)

The number of A.A. degrees in philosophy awarded (N=4) remains consistent with the last three years of degrees awarded. This is up by 3 from 2008-09 years.

e. Other program-specific data (*please specify or attach*)

#### **V. Progress on Program Goals:**

List the program's goals from the previous Program Review. For each goal, please discuss progress and changes. If the program is addressing more than two (2) goals, please duplicate this section.

#### **Previously Established Goal 1: (*state goal*)**

To survive the College's and District's current budget difficulties and to continue to serve our students, our mission, and the College and District despite the hard.

Progress on Goal: Accomplished!

Completed: May 2013 (Date)                      Revised: \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Comments on Goal 1: Despite course cutbacks, the department, with such a small department of 7 faculty members (8 faculty members including all adjunct), not only maintained our historically high number of students in 2012-13, but the numbers exceeded our anticipations with an increase of 14% unduplicated students served (N = 3007). N.B., when the compared to the collegewide decrease of 4% (-4%), this is quite a feat! Our department stepped up to help ensure we provided the access that our students so desperately needed during these challenging last few years.

**Previously Established Goal 2: (state goal)**

To finish updating its courses outlines in CurricUNET (from 2011-12 PR).

Progress on Goal: This has not been completed. We have two courses remaining to be entered.

Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Revised: Sept 9, 2013 (Date)

Comments on Goal 2: This will be completed this year.

**Previously Established Goal 3: (state goal)**

Refine and establish all Program level SLOs that are measurable and informative (from 2011-12 PR).

Progress on Goal: These were not completed.

Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Revised: Sept 9, 2013 (Date)

Comments on Goal 3: These will be completed this year.

**Previously Established Goal 4: (state goal)**

To get caught up and beyond assessment.

Progress on Goal: Assessment of Phil B37 was initiated at the start of this semester.

Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Revised: Sept 9, 2013 (Date)

Comments on Goal 4: Given that our department's former chair stepped down mid-term due to medical reasons, the current chair was elected unexpectedly late in the spring semester. As a result, our department did not complete any outcomes assessment last year, or for any previous year for that matter. With a new chair, we have already put into motion outcome assessments for this upcoming year. We will have at least two completed by the conclusion of the 2013-2014 year.

We would like to officially revise the language of last year's goal with the following newly revised Goal 4:

*To initiate and build into the norms of the department an on-going process of assessment with a view to be comprehensive in our assessment activities.*

**Previously Established Goal 5: (state goal)**

Expand its online offerings by adding a second course in addition to our existing Phil B7: Introduction to Logic (from 2011-12 PR).

Progress on Goal: This was not completed.

Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Revised: Sept 9, 2013 (Date)

Comments on Goal 5: While we are concerned about the limited institutional support for online instruction in general, we do recognize the palpable need to increase access for our students in

alternative ways to traditional methods of instruction. Online offerings provide our department opportunities to expand our curriculum without having to concern the institution with providing very expensive and already impacted facilities. Available room space has become a serious problem to be solved institutionally, especially since the campus has hired new faculty (not replacements) without a serious examination or campus-wide discussion of the actual available number of facilities or classrooms that would be used by these new faculty members. A recommendation here would be to include facility availability as a component to all subsequent program review discussions and reports. For now, online instruction affords us ways to circumvent this problem temporarily while ensuring we are providing the access that is critical to the mission of community colleges.

We want to revise the language of this previous goal in the following way to provide a more comprehensive perspective:

*To adopt an on-going process of program development to help identify any gaps in our program offerings, services, and professional activities.*

Comments on newly revised goal: Online instruction certainly applies to this revised goal. Moreover, we view this goal as encompassing our outreach efforts to create partnerships with other departments, such as with our continued relationship with the nursing program and suggested interested in generating discussions with STEM related disciplines.

**Previously Established Goal 6: (state goal)**

To develop a Transfer degree in philosophy.

Progress on Goal: This was neither initiated nor completed.

Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) Revised: Sept 9, 2013 (Date)

Comments on Goal 6: This must be set in motion with the goal of having our A.A.T accepted by the state by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**IV. Curricular Review (Instructional Programs only)**

- a. List each of the courses offered within the discipline's academic program in the first column, using one row per course. Place an **X** in the appropriate column to indicate when the course is scheduled for review.

Course	2013-2014 (2019-2020)	2014-2015 (2020-2021)	2015-2016 (2021-2022)	2016-2017 (2022-2023)	2017-2018 (2023-2024)	2018-2019 (2024-2025)
Phil B6a		X				X
Phil B7		X				X
Phil B9			X			
Phil B10			X			
Phil B12				X		
Phil B32	X				X	
Phil B33	X				X	
Phil B37	X				X	

b. List courses that are proposed for *addition*.

None.

c. List courses that are proposed for *deletion*.

None.

d. List any changes the program has made to online/hybrid/distance education courses.

None.

e. Provide an update on the program's transition to adopting a [Transfer Model Curriculum](#) (AA-T or AS-T), if applicable.

We are currently working on creating an A.A.T philosophy degree, which will align with SB1440 and the more recent SB440 bill to facilitate the rates of student transfers. Not a single course is taught in our department that is not transferable to both CSUs and UCs. We are committed to upholding the transferability of our course to increase transfer rates from our institution to four-year institutions. We view the development of an AA-T for transfer in philosophy as an opportunity to generate more pathways for our students.

## VII. Conclusions and Findings:

Present any conclusions and findings about the program.

To date, the philosophy department continues to meet the needs of the institution and our students. We are among the most productive departments on campus (productivity score of 20.1 to campuswide score of 17.9) notwithstanding our small size of 8 part-time and full-time faculty members combined. We are a department of faculty members who are among the most participatory faculty members on campus and among the most who are committed to student success.