

# **Program Review Executive Summary**

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## **Western Oregon University: Philosophy Department (Humanities Division)**

### **Majors Reviewed:**

- Philosophy

### **Minors Reviewed:**

- Philosophy

Dates of Program Review: Academic Year 2018-19

Report Submitted: March 2019

External Review Conducted: October 2019

Date of Executive Summary: July 2021

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:  
PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT (HUMANITIES DIVISION)**

The Philosophy Department conducted a formal program review during the 2018-19 academic year, submitting its self-study report in August 2019. An external review was conducted by Dr. Michael Bishop in October 2019. The Dean met in person several times with the Philosophy faculty, both during and after Dr. Bishop's visit. The self-study and external review both identified a number of programmatic strengths, as well as challenges—most significantly, the small number of majors and small typical course means for upper-division courses) As a result, the faculty developed a number of recommendations for programmatic improvement, and had begun to implement many of these recommendations during the 2019-20 academic year.

Unfortunately, 2020 brought the twin crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and a budget crisis at WOU that resulted in retrenchment. As a result of these events, both the Philosophy major and minor were discontinued, with two faculty members being laid off.

Under the circumstances, it would be somewhat redundant to develop a full executive summary of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, or to prepare a matrix demonstrating the status of various initiatives recommended as a result of program review. The focus now must be on teaching out existing students, and rebuilding the existing Philosophy coursework (along with the new, interdisciplinary Social Justice minor) in a manner that makes best use of Philosophy's remaining resources and supports WOU's General Education, Honors, and Interdisciplinary Studies program.

While this is a difficult circumstance indeed, I commend the Philosophy faculty for the outstanding work they had commenced prior to the crises. These initiatives include revising their curriculum from 3-credit courses to 4-credit; reducing the number of major requirements and required prerequisites; developing an interdisciplinary Social Justice minor (which is still positioned to go forward); and developing more intentional career pathways, enhancing interdisciplinary engagement, diversifying the curriculum, and creating new coursework to serve the Gen Ed program.

It is regrettable that this work did not have an opportunity to come to fruition in time to "turn around the ship." Nevertheless, I want to acknowledge and express appreciation for the outstanding work the Philosophy faculty have done throughout their years at WOU. I would like to assure each of them that despite the discontinuation of the Philosophy major and minor, their work here at WOU has been important, appreciated and valued. They have made a positive difference in the lives of many students, and the ripple effects of their contributions will continue to make a meaningful impact.