Western
UNIVERSITY·CANADA

Huron Philosophy
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan
May 2023

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Arts and Social Science, Huron University College
Degrees Offered	B.A.
Date of Last Review	2014-2015
Modules Reviewed	Honours Specialization (Philosophy) Specialization (Philosophy) Major (Philosophy) Minor (Philosophy) Honours Specialization (Reasoning and Ethics) Specialization (Reasoning and Ethics) Major (Philosophy in Commerce) Minor (Religious Studies and Philosophy) Minor (Ethics)
External Reviewers	Dr. Kathryn Norlock, Department of Philosophy Trent University Dr. Louis Groarke, Department of Philosophy St. Francis Xavier University
Internal Reviewer	Dr. Mark Yenson, Associate Academic Dean, King's University College
Date of Site Visit	March 6 & 7, 2023
Date Review Report Received	March 27, 2023
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program: April 25, 2023 Faculty: April 28, 2023
Evaluation	Good Quality
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: May 24, 2023 ACA: May 31, 2023 Senate (for information): June 9, 2023
Year of Next Review	2030-2031
Progress Report	June 2026

Overview of Western's Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process

In accordance with Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the Huron Philosophy Program delivered by the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Huron University College.

This FAR considers the following documents:
-   the program's self-study brief;
-   the external reviewers' report;
-   the response from the Program; and
-   the response from the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Huron.

This FAR identifies the strengths of the program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Senate Undergraduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-U) and ACA, then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance. Subsequently, it is publicly accessible on Western's IQAP website. The FAR is the only document from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Program, Faculty of Arts and Social Science (Huron), and SUPR-U.

Executive Summary

Across nine modules, the program curriculum covers several core areas of philosophical inquiry, including: ethics, political and social philosophy, epistemology, logic, aesthetics, and the history of philosophy. Total enrolment in the program modules in 2021 was at 88 students with 1342 Huron students (and an additional 157 non-Huron students) enrolled in philosophy courses overall in 2021-22.

The self-study was informed by surveys administered to current students enrolled in program modules and program alumni, with respective response rates of 20 and 13. Equally, a series of dedicated meetings in spring/summer of 2022 hosted discussions about program's objectives, structure, curriculum, and future goals. Lastly, the program was supported by the Centre for Teaching and Learning in the completion of a curriculum mapping exercise.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of Huron's Philosophy Program indicating that "*Huron's philosophy department is doing a heroic job teaching large numbers of students and serving the wider community. Students seem to be very well-supported in a smaller, person-to-person setting with collegial traditions and also increasing diversity.*" The reviewers offer ten recommendations for further enhancement.

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- An interdisciplinary approach that enhances teaching/learning and research.
- Experiential Learning is interwoven into course delivery and paid internships that are accessible to all Huron students.
- Active student engagement fostered by the Huron Philosophy Society and by research opportunities provided by the Liberated Arts Journal and the Centre for Undergraduate Research Learning.
- The Faculty Speaker Series and the Undergraduate Philosophy Colloquium expose students to contemporary research and conventions that promote respectful and productive intellectual exchange.
- Interest in the Philosophy in Commerce Major has increased since its inception in 2018.
- Most frequently emerging program strengths, as identified in the student surveys, were: 1) small class sizes; and 2) approachable, enthusiastic, and engaging instructors.

Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program

- Enrollment data from the Registrar's Office reveal that there is a pronounced imbalance between modular enrollments and FCEs (full-course equivalents) and slow growth in modular enrollments.
- Most frequently emerging areas of improvement, as identified in the student surveys, were: 1) a need for more upper-year courses; and 2) the program has too little racial and gender diversity among its faculty and course content.

Review Process

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers and an internal reviewer, were provided with Volume I and II of the self-study brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met virtually over two days with the:

- Vice-Provost (Academic Programs)
- Associate Vice-Provost (Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty Relations)
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- President, Huron University College
- Registrar, Huron University College
- Interim Director, Library and Learning Services
- Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science
- Chair, Department of Philosophy
- Administrative Staff
- Program Faculty
- Program Students

Following the virtual site visit, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Program and Dean for review and response. Formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Program and Decanal responses form the basis of this Final Assessment Report (FAR) of Huron's Philosophy Program. The FAR is collated and submitted to SUPR-U by the Internal Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

Summative Assessment – External Reviewers' Report

External reviewers shared that "*Philosophy at Huron University College offers programs of high quality and provides excellent instruction to students who respond appreciatively and who commended to us all of the instructors. The deep areas of specialization on the part of the faculty complement allow them to offer a full-service program as well as*

unusual strengths in political philosophy, ethics, and philosophy of law, with a social-justice orientation […] Faculty members have demonstrated notable success in responding to institutional needs to increase enrollments across the board."

Strengths of the Program

- Faculty demonstrate notable strengths in offering, in all programs, courses engaging with multiple perspectives, especially the perspectives of marginalized peoples in courses such as Feminist Philosophy, Cultures, Values and Human Rights, and Nationalism and Political Morality.
- Strong sense that small classes and robust student-teacher interaction promote a sense of engagement in students.
- Students are engaged through extracurricular and co-curricular opportunities, such as, a journal, a dedicated student association, and a lecture series.
- Recent proposal to enable Indigenous, student-led research and to develop a course on Reconciliation as a second-year Philosophy course.
- Development of non-canonical and counter-canonical courses that attend to the presence (and past absence) of marginalized peoples and perspectives in Western philosophy.
- High enrollment in individual courses indicates a successful teaching department.

Areas of Concern or Prospective Improvement

- Consider reflecting on a clearer description of the program's identity and distinctiveness.
- The program needs a dedicated physical space which would offer improved student experience as a cohort.
- Discrepancies in the 3rd and 4th year course requirements of the Major in Philosophy and the Major in Philosophy in Commerce should be resolved.
- Make the history of philosophy a required course or a course that builds new traditions rather than focusing on past traditions.
- Need for a yearly retreat, as suggested by the Chair, to foster reflection, increase dialogue, and encourage the spirit of continuous program improvement. For instance, to address the need for a clear sense of program standards and shared practices regarding methods of grading.
- Heavy teaching loads result in limited resources being allocated to new innovations.
- To avoid the burnout of nontraditional faculty in particular, it would be safer to have more than one person regularly teach feminism, indigeneity, and embodiment/disability on top of traditional core courses.
- Some students indicated the need for more mentoring from regular faculty regarding graduate applications and career advice.

Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses

The following are the reviewers' recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers. Recommendations requiring implementation have been marked with an asterisk (*).

Reviewers' Recommendation	Program/Faculty Response
Recommendation #1* **Consider increasing the number of upper-level credits for the Philosophy of Commerce major.** Align the Major in Philosophy and the Major in Philosophy in Commerce in terms of rigor and degree-level outcomes, by considering the following: i) raising the requirements for the major in Philosophy in Commerce program to the same level as the major in Philosophy, or ii) develop a set of justifications for the difference that support differing degree-level outcomes for the two programs.	**Program:** The program plans to increase the number of required courses on line 3 of the modular requirements for the Major in Philosophy in Commerce from 0.5 to 1.0 and to increase the number of required courses on line 4 of the modular requirements from 1.5 to 2. This will raise the number of required courses at the 3000+ level from 2.0 to 3.0, thus making it consistent with the requirements for the Major in Philosophy, as per the reviewers' suggestion. To give students more choice, the program will move Philosophy 3810F/G: Justice and Philosophy 3820F/G: Globalization and Theories of Justice from line 3 to line 4, thereby increasing the number of courses from 4 to 6. In addition, the program will introduce two new 3000-level courses, tentatively titled Corporate Freedom and the Public Good and Corporations, Legal Persons, and Limited Liability to be included on line 4, thus keeping the number of courses at 6. **Faculty:** The faculty is supportive of the program's plan to equate the Major in Philosophy and the Major in Philosophy in Commerce as per the reviewers' suggestion.
Recommendation #2* **Revitalize student participation in the Huron Philosophy Society and the undergraduate journal Liberated Arts.** Launching a department-specific essay competition is another way of bolstering students' participation.	**Program:** Many students in attendance at the Huron Philosophy Society's March 2023 meeting, the first since the pandemic, expressed interest in leadership roles in 2023-2024 academic year. The HPS will meet in September of 2023 to vote on leadership positions and organize events for the academic year. In accordance with the reviewers' other suggestions, the program will: • Introduce an essay prize for philosophy students. • The Chair will enhance efforts to publicize submission dates to Huron's undergraduate journal. • Faculty members will explicitly recommend that particularly good work be submitted to the journal in their feedback to students. **Faculty:** The faculty is supportive of the program's plans. Both Liberated Arts and student societies enjoy strong support from the Dean's Office and Students' Council.

Recommendation #3* **Institute and publicize scholarships and prizes available to philosophy students.** Allocate funds and faculty resources to scholarships and prizes. The criteria for awarding prizes should not be limited to GPAs, and graduating students.	**Program:** As mentioned above, the program plans on instituting an annual essay prize for philosophy students; which will be covered by the departmental budget and adjudicated by a committee of faculty members. In addition, faculty members will publicize all departmental prizes and their recipients. **Faculty:** The faculty supports the program's plans and underscores that Huron routinely celebrates students through the Annual Faculty Scholarships and Awards Night and that Philosophy students are well-represented among the award and scholarship winners.
Recommendation #4* **Take steps to keep in touch with or renew acquaintance with alumni, both recent and long-standing.** Alumni can be an excellent source of funding which can be contributed to prize funds/scholarships, and a resource for student engagement.	**Program:** The Chair will continue working with Advancement to keep an updated contact list of philosophy alumni. The department will use this list to invite alumni to events hosted by the Huron Philosophy Society, including the Undergraduate Philosophy Colloquium and Faculty Speaker Series. In addition, the department will continue to support ongoing efforts to establish a mentoring network for senior students and recent graduates, which may include organizing and hosting annual meetings. **Faculty:** The Advancement office has made great strides towards this end in recent years but there is work still to be done.
Recommendation #5* **More regularly offer career-oriented and postgraduate-oriented events.** Students expressed the need for philosophy-specific advice, for example, an annual club event or department panel on how to apply to graduate programs. Additionally, alumni and guest speakers can address nonacademic careers. Relationship-networks with Western University's philosophy faculty could help in the planning of such events.	**Program:** The department plans to do the following: - Host an annual faculty panel and Q&A event in October on applying to graduate programs and careers in academia; - Invite alumni enrolled in graduate programs and those enrolled in law school to discuss their experiences; and - Utilize the department's experiential learning budget to facilitate students' attendance of the annual meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association which will enable students to experience academic conferences. **Faculty:** Huron has a premier network of supports in place through its community partnerships and careers office which offers: 1) Every student a guaranteed opportunity to a paid internship before they graduate; 2) Curricular internships; 3) One-on-one career advice to help them throughout the recruitment process; and 4) Access to five academic advisers who effectively direct students to career counselling and professional development opportunities they request.

Recommendation #6* **Create some sort of link or overlapping relationship with the Global Great Books program.** This area of interdisciplinarity could promote an openness to the increasing internationalization of the student body. Some international students have also indicated an interest in the Global Great Books program.	**Program:** The department will continue its recent trend of cross-listing courses with the GGB program, where appropriate. In addition, the department will: • Review GGB course listings to identify possible prerequisites to philosophy courses, thereby encouraging GGB students to take higher-level philosophy courses. • Invite GGB students to become members of the Huron Philosophy Society. **Faculty:** Faculty supports the department's plans and noted that Global Great Books is a program with relatively modest enrolments.
Recommendation #7 **Create a physical hub or shared space.** Students would benefit from a shared space where they can interact with faculty outside the classroom, study after hours, and host student events.	**Program:** While the department recognizes the possible benefits of a shared lounge for students, at present, accessing better office space for faculty who teach full course loads is a higher priority. It is expected that additional office space for faculty will be allocated in the new residence building. **Faculty:** This space issue will be substantially addressed in the near future. Six new faculty offices will become available in Fall 2023; 14 additional offices will be available in Fall 2024. The new residence and dining hall will contain two large lecture halls and three smaller seminar rooms. The seminar rooms can be allocated to students. The existing Dining Hall, following the opening of the new Dining Hall, will be repurposed.
Recommendation #8* **Consider instituting a Capstone Project, Fourth-Year Experience, Thesis, or other Course for philosophy majors, particularly for those pursuing further graduate work**.	**Program:** The Department is committed to creating a capstone course/project for senior philosophy students which should be flexible enough to accommodate the varied interests and strengths of students. **Faculty:** Faculty supports the Department's plan.

Recommendation #9* **Devote some time and resources to defining and enhancing the identity of the philosophy program, particularly the Honours Specialization, Specialization, and Major modules**. Identify the program's distinguishing features in terms of purpose, content, and clarify a shared sense of core faculty members' goals for the modules and the students which would enhance consistency of requirements and standards.	**Program:** The department commits to having high-level conversations about the program's purpose and content. The relatively small size of the department makes any particular specialization difficult. While a disproportionate number of course offerings fall within applied moral and political philosophy, e.g., legal philosophy, the department would rather its identity be tied to students' experiences, skills, attitudes, opportunities, and relationships. **Faculty:** While it is quite difficult for a full-service undergraduate program at a small liberal arts university college to develop a strong area of specialization, it is important for programs to distinguish themselves. The Faculty encourages the program to reflect on its distinguishing features.
Recommendation #10* **Require a course in the history of philosophy for the general degree Major in Philosophy.** The program should consider requiring a course in the history of philosophy as the Major in Philosophy can be satisfied by taking courses other than those in the history of philosophy.	**Program:** The program would benefit from additional emphasis on the history of philosophy; however, a single required course introduces several potential difficulties, most obvious is deciding what periods, authors, and topics to cover in a single course. Two possible courses of action are proposed: - Make a subset of existing courses in the history of philosophy required for Majors, Specializations and Honors Specializations - Philosophy 2200F/G: Ancient Philosophy and 2202F/G: Early Modern Philosophy are two obvious candidates. These courses would need to be revised to include works by traditionally underrepresented groups. This may require making them 1.0 courses, rather than 0.5 courses. - Re-configure the pick-lists of required courses for Philosophy majors since Philosophy majors can meet their programmatic requirements without taking any courses in the history of philosophy. This can be remedied by including more courses in the history of philosophy in these pick-lists. This approach would give students more flexibility when deciding what aspects of the history of philosophy they would like to study, rather than being required to study particular periods and authors. **Faculty:** The Faculty supports the Department's plans.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Program Chair, and the Dean of the Faculty is responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan.

The number of recommendations prioritized for implementation has been reduced as some are outside the purview of the program or are in the process of being actioned (#7), as described in the program and faculty responses above. As a result, the recommendations appearing in the implementation table are recommendations #1 – #6, & #8 – #10.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Recommendations About Curriculum (#1, #6, #8, #10)			
Recommendation #1 Increase the number of upper-level credits for the Philosophy of Commerce major.	• Increase the number of required courses on line 3 of the modular requirements for the Major in Philosophy in Commerce from 0.5 to 1.0 and to increase the number of required courses on line 4 of the modular requirements from 1.5 to 2. This will raise the number of required courses at the 3000+ level from 2.0 to 3.0, equating it with the requirements for the Major in Philosophy. • Move Philosophy 3810F/G: Justice and Philosophy 3820F/G: Globalization and Theories of Justice from line 3 to line 4, thereby increasing the number of courses from 4 to 6. • Introduce two new 3000-level courses, tentatively titled Corporate Freedom and the Public Good and Corporations, Legal Persons, and Limited Liability to be included on line 4, thus keeping the number of courses at 6.	• Chair	By June 2024
Recommendation #6 Collaborate with the Global Great Books program.	• Cross-list courses with GGB, where appropriate. • Review GGB course listings to identify possible prerequisites to philosophy courses, thereby encouraging GGB students to take higher-level philosophy courses. • Invite GGB students to become members of the Huron Philosophy Society.	• Chair	By December 2023
Recommendation #8 Institute a Capstone Project/Fourth-Year Experience/Thesis Course for philosophy majors.	• Create a capstone course/project for senior philosophy students with enough flexibility to accommodate the varied interests and strengths of students. • Draft the SOC proposals needed to introduce the course(s) and make the necessary adjustments to the requirements for the Honors Specialization.	• Chair	By September 2024

144

Recommendation #10 Require a course in the history of philosophy for the general degree Major in Philosophy.	• Make a subset of existing courses in the history of philosophy required courses for Majors, Specializations and Honors Specializations - Philosophy 2200F/G: Ancient Philosophy and 2202F/G: Early Modern Philosophy. Prior to creating a subset, revise courses to include works by traditionally underrepresented groups. This may require making them 1.0 courses, rather than 0.5 courses. • Re-configure the picklists of required courses for philosophy majors; thereby giving students more flexibility when deciding what aspects of the history of philosophy they would like to study.	• Chair	By September 2024
Recommendation About Program Identity (#9)			
Recommendation #9 Define and enhance the identity of the philosophy program, particularly the Honours Specialization, Specialization, and Major modules.	• Engage in high-level conversations with members of the department regarding the program's purpose and content. Consider folding this topic into upcoming departmental retreats.	• Chair • Dean	By September 2025
Recommendations About Student and Alumni Engagement (#2, #3, #4, #5)			
Recommendation #2 Consider ways of revitalizing student participation in the Huron Philosophy Society and the undergraduate journal Liberated Arts.	• Introduce an essay prize for philosophy students. • Publicize important submission dates to Huron's undergraduate journal. • Faculty members encouraged to recommend (as part of their feedback) that students submit work to the journal.	• Chair	By December 2023
Recommendation #3 Institute and publicize scholarships and prizes available to philosophy students.	• Institute an annual essay prize for philosophy students. • Allocate budgetary resources for prizes which will be adjudicated by a committee of faculty members. • Publicize all departmental prizes and their recipients.	• Chair • Dean	By December 2023
Recommendation #4 Take steps to maintain contact with alumni.	• Work with Advancement to keep an updated contact list of philosophy alumni. • Use updated list to invite alumni to events hosted by the Huron Philosophy Society. • Build on the ongoing efforts to establish a mentoring network for senior students and recent graduates via the possible organization of annual meetings.	• Chair • AVP Advancement	By September 2024

Recommendation #5 Offer additional career-oriented and postgraduate-oriented events.	• Host an annual faculty panel and Q&A event in October on applying to graduate programs and careers in academia. Invite alumni enrolled in graduate programs and law school, through the mentoring network, to discuss their experiences. • Facilitate student attendance to the annual meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association using funds from the department's experiential learning budget.	• Chair • AVP Community Partnerships and Careers	By June 2024