E-1-A for Boston College Undergraduate Programs

Program:  Philosophy Department

1. State the formal learning outcomes for the undergraduate major program: what the department expects the student to know or be able to do upon completion of the program.

We believe that when students complete the undergraduate major in philosophy they should be able to:

1. Intelligently discuss the original works and central ideas from a broad spectrum of ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophers.
2. Closely read, interpret, and explain ideas in philosophical texts.
3. Understand and evaluate arguments.
4. Write clear, well-reasoned essays on philosophical topics expressing, defending, and critically evaluating ideas.

2. State the location(s) where these learning outcomes are published and accessible to students interested in the major or program: e.g., web site, catalog, departmental handouts.

These goals are stated and articulated more extensively in the “Mission Statement of the Philosophy Department” as part of our 2010 self-study. The Mission Statement is available on the Philosophy Department Website.

3. Other than the GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates of the program have achieved the stated outcomes?

A sample of student papers is collected and carefully evaluated. In May 2012 these papers were drawn from a 400-level elective and a Capstone elective.

4. Who collects and interprets the evidence and what process do they use to make recommendations for improvement? When does this occur?

To assure objectivity, the assessment is conducted by faculty who are not teaching courses from which the student papers are drawn. The identities of students and professors are removed in order to separate the assessment process from any evaluation of individuals. The evaluation took place in the second half of May 2012. The evaluators were Professors Marina McCoy, Daniel McKaughan, and Arthur Madigan. Their recommendations will be transmitted to the full faculty in June 2012.