A. Program Student Learning Outcomes

1) Philosophy majors will be able to write clear, academically rigorous, argumentative essays.

2) Philosophy majors will be able to read complex texts, create original arguments, analyze the arguments of others, and express these criticisms orally and in writing.

3) Philosophy majors will demonstrate knowledge of philosophical and/or religious traditions, their relevant concepts, theories, methods, and historical contexts.

4) Philosophy majors will develop their capacities for ethical decision-making, Socratic humility, openness to the ideas of others, reflective self-awareness, and a life-long curiosity about big questions.

5) Philosophy majors will cultivate an appreciation for a diversity of ideas and values across time and for human difference in areas such as: religion, culture, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, and gender.

B. Program Student Learning Outcome(s) Assessed

PLO# 2) Philosophy majors will be able to read complex texts, create original arguments, analyze the arguments of others, and express these criticisms orally and in writing.

C. Summary of Assessment Process

This year the Philosophy faculty developed a rubric for evaluating critical thinking in the major (SLO #2). Our intention was to use this rubric to evaluate selected papers in the major paper portfolios.

Attempting to use Blackboard's portfolio system was very challenging. Dr. Eagan developed a sample portfolio to share with students, which took her quite sometime, and as majors attempted to develop their own, they had a lot of trouble with the program. After hearing of the difficulty that students were having with the portfolio program, we instead asked student to send a set of three papers from major classes to Dr. Eagan by email. Being late in the Spring quarter, only two majors complied with this request. Around the same time, Roger Wen sent an email saying that they were taking down the Blackboard portfolio function and erasing all existing portfolios.
developed in the system, so others must have had similar problems using the system as we did.

I think that what we learned from this process is that 1) Blackboard’s portfolio feature as we had it was unworkable, 2) if we want to collect papers from students, we should do it within the context of a class, as we did previously using PHIL 4606 as a Writing Seminar or perhaps have the faculty create the collection of papers from majors by collecting the papers directly from classes. Asking students to do extra work outside of the context of a class is a questionable practice, and apparently it doesn’t work.

We reiterate our request for a portfolio system that works and can be portable for students applying for work and graduate school. I know that the CLASS FACT faculty members have been requesting this for a longtime. Clearly, this is not what Blackboard is made for, and there are other programs out there.

We will revisit our assessment plan as we develop the new semester based major, taking this lesson about collecting work from students into account.

D. Summary of Assessment Results

We do not have results to report this year due to our problems with collecting data, as outlined above. However, we are posed with a rubric and will attempt to capture major papers next year and apply the rubric to them. In terms of closing the loop for our process, if not our results, we will work next year to find a satisfactory and workable way to collect and store student papers from major classes.

E. Suggestions and Recommendations for the CLASS FACT Project in the Future

Next year, I would like for us to find a portfolio tool that works and maybe get some specific training and time to work with folks in MATS to develop our portfolio database. This is my same suggestion from last year, and the Bb portfolio function was almost un-useable, which I why I suppose that it was being taken down during Spring quarter.