

MSU Departmental Assessment Report

Fall 2009

AG ED Outcomes and Assessment report '09

Division: Agricultural Education

Division Head: Bob Gough

Date: September 2009

Degrees/Majors/Options Offered by the Division

B.S. in Agricultural Education

Broadfield Teaching Option

Agricultural Relations Option

M.S. in Agricultural Education

Assessments

Our Ag Education faculty and staff continuously assess the effectiveness of our programs by asking the following questions of students and stakeholders:

- 1) What sort of student complaints/praise have you heard about the dept. in general? How might we address the complaints?

Faculty and staff gather information about how well the department functions from formal and informal sources. Freshman and transfer orientation participants and parents commented on how welcoming and personal division staff and faculty were, while existing students thanked us for our advising and our email reminders to them regarding university deadlines and requirements. Our GTA appreciate our efforts to include them in regular lunches and research conferences. Ag teachers and county extension staff comment positively on our students' involvement in pre-professional activities (FFA & 4-H activities, internships, student teaching, etc.)

We are addressing complaints from some undergraduates regarding a lack of teaching space and other facilities and we have fielded other complaints from undergraduates regarding degree requirement changes and course changes imposed upon us by EHHD, as well as the 128 credits (leaving no room for electives) needed for graduation. Needless to say, these changes are beyond our control. However, we work closely with EHHD and especially the Dept. of Education to communicate to students the reasons behind our inability to make their recommended changes.

The need for a new course was based on evaluations of past study-abroad programs organized by our Ag Education faculty, an expressed need from MSU Extension Administrators for such a course, and focus group interviews conducted with students in the Fall of 2008. **International Extension Systems** is a new course intended to be a multi-disciplinary experience for seniors and graduate students who are majoring in related fields, including agricultural education, animal science, plant science, biology, land resources and environmental sciences, agricultural business, and economics. It is also designed to serve graduate students in those departments who seek a career in serving clientele associated with their disciplines (from bench science to end users). Students and faculty in the College of Agriculture will be made aware of the course offering prior to advising during the Fall 2009 semester. This course will also be our lead offering in the distance-delivered AG IDEAS program

- 2) Is our departmental student advising up to par? If not, how can it be improved?

Students were frustrated about NOT having someone available to help them with DA-1s, graduation paperwork, student teaching paperwork, internship paperwork, etc., during the time we were without an administrative assistant but are very happy with the entire advising component now that we have a part time assistant to provide exemplary customer service, including a bi-monthly email newsletter with upcoming events and important dates mailed to all our majors.

To better serve our students and improve efficiency we have re-arranged advising responsibilities. Dr. Arnold now advises the Relations option students; Dr. Frick advises students in the Relations option who are more interested in business/industry and advises all graduate students; Dr. Igo advises all Teaching option students.

- 3) What realistic changes in the curriculum might we make to improve our offerings and better prepare our students to become teachers or extension personnel?

Adding at least two graduate courses would significantly increase the quality of our graduate program. Unfortunately, our present faculty are already overloaded with undergraduate teaching assignments and the present fiscal climate will not allow for the hire of additional FTEs. Students ask for greater flexibility in designing their curriculum but this is not possible due to CORE and other requirements imposed by the university. Overall, students in our Teaching option have been very successful in securing employment. We are investigating why students in our Relations option have been somewhat less successful.

Our initial efforts with AG IDEAS hopefully will address these course shortfalls. The lead-off course for this new program is AGED 507, described below.

AGED 507- Program Development and Evaluation is a new online course taught every Spring designed for students who are interested in the development and evaluation of agricultural and extension education programs. The course is designed to meet students' needs in the following areas:

- a) Acquire an understanding of program development from theory to practice
- b) Strengthen their skills in planning, designing, implementing, evaluating, and accounting for educational programs of targeted audiences.
- c) Provide application of program planning and evaluation concepts through experiential learning and class projects.

This is a required AGED course for graduate students. Needs are assessed during the first weeks of class and the assessment is continued during discussions throughout the semester. A summative assessment of how the class met student needs is accomplished from the Knapp evaluations.

- 4) Assess the effectiveness of the internship program? What recommendations would you make in how to improve the internship program?

The internship program is becoming more organized and structured. In summer 2009, we had 6 students interning in extension offices. These were all paid internships which was not previously common. Dr. Arnold worked with MSU Extension to compile guidelines, announcements, and a manual for the interns specifically for extension. Dr. Arnold continues to work with MSU Extension to provide more structure to the program and to continue the paid positions which motivate students. Students are assessed through a variety of means: completion of an Intern manual that I created that contains various activities that must be completed over the summer; development, implementation, and evaluation of an educational program in the county; bi-weekly journal of activities reports submitted to

me; final evaluations from the supervising agent and myself as the advisor; and a final internship seminar completed in the Fall where students present their internship experiences to the public. If budgets allow, Dr. Arnold visits the students when they conduct their programs and complete a teaching assessment on the students. Since Dr. Arnold arrived all students have completed their internship in the summer. It is scheduled this way in their program of study as AGED 476 credit. They can take from 4-12 credits depending on need. For every 40 hours of work that is completed, students receive one credit. They report hours bi-weekly. Recommendations to improve the program are to offer separate funding to support the internship program- these would include summer salary for the advisor and funding for travel to visit all the interns.

In addition to continual assessments on both ad hoc and formal bases, outcomes are discussed annually at regularly scheduled faculty meetings.

Ag Ed Faculty Meeting

21 November 2008

Present: Gough, Arnold, Igo, Frick

Agenda

- 1) Bayard Taylor Graduate funds
- 2) Annual Productivity Report
- 3) Administrative Assistant position
- 4) Schedule of Spring Classes
- 5) Outcomes and Assessment progress
- 6) Ag Days
- 7) Medical Leave