

Agricultural Education, Communications and 4-H Youth Development
Agricultural Communications Option
 Prepared by Shelly Sitton

Degree Program(s) Assessed	Assessment Methods	Number of Individuals Assessed
Agricultural Communications	1. Senior Capstone Course	1. 35
	2. Student Internships	2. 38
Agricultural Communications/ Animal Science Double Major	3. National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow Critique & Contest	3. 39

Analysis and Findings

1. *Senior Capstone Course*

Of the 35 undergraduate students who completed AGCM 4413, 31 earned As, two earned Bs, and two received Cs. Overall, students were able to complete the assigned tasks in writing, layout and design, and photography, most of which required the use of specialized computer software. On individual assignments the lowest scores were earned in writing and editing, and students were most challenged by file management issues. All students performed well as members of a team, although attendance became a problem for a few students. (Outcomes A. and C.) *NOTE: The magazine produced through this class received the second place in the magazine division of the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow Critique and Contest (see item 3).*

2. *Student Internships*

Thirty-eight students completed at least one internship during the period June 2003 through May 2004 (Summer 2003, Fall 2003, and Spring 2004). Supervisor evaluations indicated an improvement in the cooperative spirit category, which changed to an "outstanding" rating (mean was 4.7 on a 5-point scale). All other areas received "excellent" ratings: quality of work in writing, layout and design and/or photography (mean: 4.37); contribution to the organization (mean: 4.37); care and use of equipment (mean: 4.40); reaction to criticism (mean: 4.33); punctuality (mean: 4.35); initiative (mean: 4.33); creativity (mean: 4.23); and ability to meet deadlines (mean: 4.35). Highest marks were in cooperative spirit. The lowest area was "creativity." Faculty also observed students' oral communications skills through their formal presentations and determined that students are adequately prepared to handle oral communications tasks, as well as use presentation software. (Outcomes A., B., and C.)

3. *National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow Critique & Contest*

Thirty-nine students submitted their individual and team products in writing, layout and design, photography, broadcasting, Web design, public relations, multimedia, and advertising in the 2004 National ACT Critique & Contest. Results from the competition will not be available until July 25, 2004. (Outcome D.)

Uses of Assessment Results

Through agricultural communications workgroup meetings, faculty members and graduate teaching assistants discuss results of assessment activities, as well as ways to improve student outcomes. Faculty members have used the results to make changes in several courses, specifically the revision of the design skill courses (AGCM 3213 and AGCM 3223) to address creativity concerns in the internship evaluations. In addition, a new course in agricultural broadcasting was offered in Spring 2004 due to a lack of academic preparation and experience students previously have received in this area. Results have been used by faculty to make improvements to the agricultural communications degree requirements to address areas of concern (such as the lack of broadcasting education in the curriculum). Plans are underway to conduct a longitudinal study of the undergraduate students' learning styles, student outcomes, and retention/graduation rates.