Expected Outcomes: Professional Communication Skills

Students will demonstrate the ability to produce news and feature stories, website content, and other written and oral communications and will develop multiple other communication skill sets in areas such as design, broadcasting, public speaking, use of social media and the Web, marketing and project management by their graduation.

Related typical general education outcomes:

1. Information Literacy
2. Analytical and Critical Reading
3. Ability to Critique Arguments
4. Ability to Construct Arguments
5. Written Communication
6. Oral Communication

Assessment methods

Method: Portfolio Evaluation

Students nearing graduation and having completed their internship submitted portfolios containing artifacts and exhibits of published written work as well as examples of Web, design, broadcast and other types experience they acquired. These portfolios were evaluated based on the quality of their writing and the breadth of material (experience) they contained.

Findings:

Many portfolios were well done, though some needed more content and needed to be presented in a more professional “package.” There has improvement of the work from the previous year. In reviewing the portfolios we have realized there is a need to give the students more direction on what is expected in a professional portfolio. We also have discussed the need to work toward having the students do e-portfolios.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Action 1: Will continue to work with upperclassmen to begin developing portfolios based on their classwork and other activities and ensure they know what types of materials/experiences they should collect during their internships. Action 2: Will continue to work with underclassmen as early as possible in their academic careers (preferably as freshmen) to help them begin to develop portfolios that reflect their progress over their entire college experience. Action 3: Will continue to work with students at all levels to ensure the portfolios are polished enough to use as they enter the job market and take advantage of all presentation options (printed portfolios to online and Web-based portfolios). Action 4: Will continue to examine and modify the Introduction to Ag Communications class. Action 5: Will make an effort to discuss the student’s portfolio development during advising appointments.

Additional comments:

Tuesday, February 05, 2013, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
Method: Faculty Input

Interacted with instructors, faculty, and administration of the COMM/JRNL department and College of Agriculture to get feedback on curriculum design.

Findings:

Based on comments from instructors, faculty, and administration it was decided to streamline the curriculum in a way that will also (1) provide a broader exposure to the subject areas in COMM/JRNL and (2) provide greater depth in the agricultural sciences.

How did you use findings for improvement?

The Agricultural Communications curriculum was revised to meet these planned outcomes. This curriculum has been approved by the AU curriculum committee. We are encouraging all students that can change to the new curriculum model.

Additional comments:

None

Method: Exiting Student/Recent Graduate Input

Randomly conducted exit interviews/surveys with graduating or recently graduated students to determine if this degree prepared them for entering the job market or pursuing advanced degrees.

Findings:

Students felt the degree program prepared them well for their futures but they had suggestions about ways to refine the program to be even more effective. They also felt that there needed to be more outlets for professional development to occur to help them prepare for the working world.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Action 1: Will incorporate some of their suggestions in future classes and curriculum changes. Action 2: Will begin surveying current students as they advance through their major to track their progress and see if changes need to be made. Action 3: Will work on the reformation of Ag Communicators of Tomorrow to give the students a source for professional development. Action 4: Will work on doing a more organized exit interview with the students to know what type of jobs our students are getting when they graduate.

Additional comments:

None