Expected Outcomes: Written and oral communication skills

Graduates will demonstrate professional-level mastery of written and oral communication skills appropriate to their chosen fields.

Assessment methods

**Method:** Faculty evaluation of graduate-level seminars

Students will be evaluated on content, organization and delivery of graduate-level seminars (ANSC 7950), exit seminars and related forums.

**Findings:**

Three M.Ag. and two M.S. students presented exit seminars (no academic credit), and five M.Ag. and four M.S. students presented academic-credit seminars (ANSC 7950) for which a total of 99 evaluation instruments were completed in the current reporting period. Mean scores of 4.2 and 4.3 (5=highest, 1=lowest) were recorded in graduate-faculty evaluations of seminar content/organization and presentation techniques, respectively, unchanged from the 2011 reporting period.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

Since 2008, in addition to the requirement for presenting one academic-credit seminar (ANSC 7950) for each year of a student’s program as well as an exit seminar at program completion, master’s students have been required to present an additional seminar (not evaluated) in the first semester of their program that includes a biographical sketch, draft Plan of Study, and topic that will form the basis of the required scholarly product to be created under Special Problem (ANSC 7960) or thesis under Thesis and Research (ANSC 7990).

**Additional comments:**

By requiring this additional seminar (not evaluated) in addition to academic-credit (ANSC 7950) and exit seminars (no academic credit), master’s students gain additional writing and public-speaking experiences that appear to be of value in enabling them to more fully develop their written and oral communication skills. The department will continue to evaluate academic-credit and exit seminars to assess whether implementation of this requirement continues to be successful as evidenced by scores on evaluation instruments. We have recently implemented a new requirement that students write an abstract of their seminar for distribution at the time of their presentation for assessment of writing skills by graduate faculty. Even though evaluation scores were unchanged from last year, the number of students submitting written abstracts and making presentations at professional-society meetings, especially in award competitions, is at an all-time high.