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:

Two Ph.D. students presented academic-credit seminars (ANSC 7950) for which 11 evaluation instruments were completed in the current reporting period. Mean scores of 4.6 and 4.6 (5=highest, 1=lowest) were recorded in graduate-faculty evaluations of seminar content/organization and presentation techniques, respectively. These values may be compared with those from 2011, which were 4.3 and 4.2, respectively.

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, new Ph.D. 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 preliminary hypothesis(es) that will form the basis of dissertation research completed under ANSC 8990.

Additional comments:

By requiring this additional seminar (not evaluated) in addition to academic-credit (ANSC 7950) and exit seminars (no academic credit), Ph.D. students will gain additional writing and professional speaking experiences that should enable them to more fully develop their written and oral communication skills. The department will continue to evaluate academic-credit (ANSC 7950) and exit seminars for doctoral students whose programs began in and subsequent to 2008 to assess whether implementation of this requirement continues to be successful as evidenced by scores on evaluation instruments. Also, we have 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 the graduate faculty.