2012-2013 Assessment Report  
Program: Plant Sciences-Agronomy, MS/MAG

College of Agriculture  
Agronomy and Soils  
Plant Sciences-Agronomy, MS/MAG

Expected Outcome 1: Subject Matter Competence

When students complete their degree they will have a thorough understanding of subject matter in their selected career option.

Assessment methods

Method: Final Exams

Survey questions are given to committee members and students after the final exam is completed.

Findings:

Six students completed the MS degree in FY 12/13. Everyone passed the final oral exam. On survey of committee members – results were basically the same as previous year in that members of the advisory committee thought the programs were reasonable and provided the students with good understanding of the subject matter. Information sheets completed by the students supported this assessment.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Not used in 2013

Additional comments:

None

Expected Outcome 2: Professional Competency

When students complete their degree they will be well prepared for entrance into the work force.
Assessment methods

Method: Exit Information

Written and informal information is collected by the department head prior to graduation.

Findings:

For the 6 students completing the MS program, 3 entered the work force with the type positions they had trained for and 3 entered a PhD program with funded assistantship at VPI, Wisconsin, and Arkansas. Some research programs have transitioned away from traditional agronomy towards some of the allied fields. As in previous years, students in these fields indicated that some of our traditional requirements were not necessarily in their best interest. In addition there were some complaints about professors not being up to date on lecture material.

How did you use findings for improvement?

Because of previous year’s findings, the faculty has been discussing traditional requirements and the mold fits all concepts. The Graduate Faculty Curriculum Committee agreed to provide a more detailed assessment of the issue and report back to the entire graduate faculty with more information and recommendations. They reported back to the faculty and faculty agreed to leave all course requirements up to the thesis committee. This will solve the problem of students having to take courses that are not important for their field of study.

Additional comments:

Pending retirements will solve the complaints about some professors not being up-to-date on lecture materials.

Method: Communication Skills

Oral communication skills are accessed from seminars, written skills are accessed from thesis
**Findings**

As in previous years, the thesis committee members were comfortable with the communication skills for most students but there were some concerns with oral presentations especially for one of the international students.

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

Major professors will continue to spend time with students when preparing seminars. This agreement has definitely improved our seminars. We will continue to monitor verbal communication skills for international students and continue to insist on classes for English as a “Second Language” for those who need it.

**Additional comments**

None

**Method: Informal Interactions**

Information from students and employers gained through informal interactions with faculty

**Findings:**

As usual, there were negative comments concerning quality of some lab facilities which will eventually be corrected when Funchess Hall is remodeled.

**How did you use these finding for improvements?**

See additional comments

**Additional comments:**

The CASIS building is completed and some programs are moving to the new lab space. This should provide better lab facilities for the basic plant science program. Funchess Hall renovation or replacement sometime in the near future should solve space quality concerns.