

Assessment and Action Plan—Academic Degree Programs

(This is a sample—not actual example from Syracuse University)

School/College: College of Agriculture


Degree Awarded: B.S.

Academic Degree Program Title:
Agricultural Sciences

Web Address: Sample_AgricultureDepartment.syr.edu

Mission Statement: The Agricultural Sciences B.S. degree prepares students to be leaders in the agricultural industry.

Description of Academic Degree Program: Agricultural Sciences program provides both breadth and depth of knowledge needed to solve agriculture and farming problems that are relevant in the State of NY and comparable areas elsewhere. Through a multidisciplinary approach to the study of agriculture, including coursework in animal science, crop production and management, sustainable agriculture, agricultural business, education and communication, students will actively engage in experiential learning opportunities.

PHASE 1			PHASE 2		PHASE 3	
Learning Outcomes	Measures	Criteria	Results	Interpretation	Action	Follow-up
1. Students will demonstrate knowledge in key soil science concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AGR 490 Capstone project: written component demonstrating student knowledge of key soil science concepts. Senior thesis project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AGR 490: Using a rubric with a scale of 1-5, 90% of the students achieve ratings of 4 (good) on items related to this outcome. Senior thesis project: Using a rubric with a scale of 1-5, 90% of the students achieve ratings of 4 (good) on items related to this outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratings from Fall 2014 Capstone Project: 90% students 54 out of 60) met the standard. Ratings from Fall 2014 Senior Thesis: 85% students met the standard. Those who failed to meet the criteria were most often deficient in soil aeration concepts. 	Fundamental soil science concepts (ex. soil/water relationships and aeration) may be inadequately covered in prerequisite course AGR 230. A review of the course syllabus showed that aeration was being addressed early on with soil/water relationships later; faculty determined that introduction of aeration later on, following soil/water relationships might lead to better retention of these concepts.	The sequence of topics in AGR 230 will be revised, putting aeration later in the course. In addition, faculty will review how key concepts in soil/water relationships and aeration are revisited later in the curriculum.	90% of the students will achieve ratings of good or better in all dimensions.

Within the context of academic degree program assessment and action plan, "Students" refers to those students in the academic degree program.

<p>2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of effective farm business management strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGR 430: Performance on final exam in Farm Business Management • Alumni Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of students will score at least 80% on AGR 430 Exam. • On a scale of Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, 1-5, 90% of alumni indicate Agree or Strongly Agree on items related to this outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 72 students scored 80% or above on AGR 430 Exam. • 92% of alumni indicate Agree or Strongly Agree on related items; 86% indicate Agree with 4% indicating Strongly Agree on same outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The criteria has been met for three consecutive years; faculty has determined that criteria need to be revised and raised • Criteria has been met, with only 4% indicating Strongly Agree; faculty have determined, as a first step, to review and discuss survey questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria raised to 90%, curricular revision also to include experiential learning component that will allow students to participate in authentic application of farm business strategies application • Survey questions revised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of students will score 90% or better on AGR 430 Exam. • Increased % of alumni who Strongly Agree with related outcomes
<p>3. Students will demonstrate the ability to clearly and concisely communicate agricultural concepts, in writing, to both skilled and non-skilled readers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGR 205 Project: Assessed for skill in communicating agricultural concepts to non-skilled readers. • AGR 320 (Public Policy for Agriculture and Food): Policy Project is assessed for skill in communicating agricultural concepts to skilled readers • Senior thesis project • Alumni survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGR 205: On a scale of 1-5, each student is expected to perform at rating of Satisfactory (3) or better on items related to this outcome. • AGR 320: On a scale of 1-5, each student is expected to perform at rating of Good (4) or better on items related to this outcome. • Senior Thesis: On a scale of 1-5, each student is expected have a rating of Good (4) or better on items related to this outcome. • On a scale of 1-5, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, 90% of alumni indicate Agree or Strongly Agree on items related to this outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36 out of 90 students (40%) met the criteria in AGR 205. • 37 out of 60 students (just over 60%) met the criteria for AGR 320. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% meeting criteria for AGR 205 is a bit low for dept. expectations, so a review of the course rubric has been suggested to determine balance of rigor with communication of expectations. • 60% meeting criteria for AGR 320 is an acceptable rate of success. Course requirements and rubric has recently been revised. Success rates will be revisited and reviewed in future semesters. 	<p>Course rubric will be revised and success rate will be revisited in future semesters.</p>	<p>Success rates will be reviewed again next year.</p>

<p>4. Students will demonstrate the proper care of established plants in the field.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGR 482 Capstone Project • Field placement evaluation • Employer survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGR 482: On instructor assessment checklist, all students will demonstrate proficiency in all checklist items. • Field placement: Placement supervisor will rate students. On a scale of 1-5, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, 90% of alumni indicate Agree or Strongly Agree on items related to this outcome. • On a scale of 1-5, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, 90% of alumni indicate Agree or Strongly Agree on items related to this outcome. 	<p>All students met criteria for capstone projects.</p>	<p>Students participating in a capstone project are assigned a faculty advisor to serve as a mentor through the project. Projects are individualized and evaluation results are shared with student.</p>	<p>One thing that came from the process this year is that timing of some delivery of evaluation results was too late in the semester. Students may benefit from a scheduled date of evaluation review with mentors. In this way, all students receive feedback consistently in a timely manner.</p>	<p>The date for the capstone evaluation review will be set at the first faculty meeting in the new academic year and posted to department calendar as well as to website. Faculty mentors will be asked to include the date of evaluation in their course syllabus.</p>
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Recommendations for improving departmental assessment processes:

We've determined the need to review criteria for the degree program curricula with consideration for where and how criteria might be raised in assessment plans as well as clarified and revised overall. We are particularly interested in reviewing Sustainable Agriculture and Agriculture in Education courses, as well as continuing to develop the newly designed farm business apprenticeship experience.