

**SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY**  
**Applied Science Department**  
**Report of Assessment Plans**  
**Academic Year 2003-2004**

**Divisions:**           **Agriculture**  
                          **Family and Consumer Sciences**  
                          **Information Systems Applications**

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**Agriculture Assessment Criteria and Activities**

Assessment criteria and activities that are aligned with specific outcomes and objectives are listed below.

1. Students will be required to receive a passing grade of C- or better in all courses applied to program completion based on assessment measures applied to each course. Course embedded activities and co-requisite labs will enable students to demonstrate their competency in applications appropriate to each course.

*Was this assessment criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this assessment criterion/activity achieved* **No**

*What were the results ?* Three students did not receive a grade/grades of C- or better in all courses applied to the program. One of the three was required to withdraw from the university; one is repeating the course(s) for which grades below a C- were achieved; one is in school but not signed up for the course(s) for which the low grades were received.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program ?* Three students not meeting the minimum grade criterion is a low number. Program personnel might look at the number meeting the minimum at the C- level and if that number is also low consider raising the standard to C.

2. (a) Several agriculture classes have laboratories or are lab intensive courses. Labs are corequisites to lectures and involve student projects requiring them to gather data, analyze results, and reach reasonable conclusions in order to satisfy course requirements.

(b) Interested students may engage in independent undergraduate research, directed studies, and/or experiential learning activities, such as internships and practicums.

(c) Several theories, protocols, and standard practices will be applied and reinforced through hands-on applications.

*Was this assessment criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this assessment Criterion/activity achieved ?* **Yes, but not to the extent desired.**

*What were the results ?* All laboratory courses are numbered and graded separately from the co-requisite lecture. Scientific protocols are integrated into some courses and students continue to “grow” independent undergraduate research projects from them. This has increased slightly from 2002 – 2003. Internship involvement has increased greatly from twenty-one in 2002-2003 to thirty six in 2003-2004. A majority of students accepted into veterinary or graduate schools will complete at least one undergraduate research project at SUU. This year a preveterinary student’s project was awarded first place in its class at the annual SUU Student-Faculty Scholarship Day.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program?* In recognition of the crucial role the university farm plays in achieving this criterion, a task force was appointed by the University President to study and make recommendations about the west campus (farm) as related to structured experiential learning. Several recommendations and design changes were made regarding academic programming and facility improvements. Implementation of the task force findings is expected to give a tremendous boost to program goals and objectives that are served by this criterion/activity.

3. (a) At least one course at each level requires a significant writing component.

(b) Several laboratory courses require written and oral reports, and abstracts.

(c) Student directed study projects and undergraduate research projects require an oral presentation before an audience of faculty, staff, and peers.

(d) Students will develop and demonstrate communication and leadership abilities as a structured curricular component.

*Was this assessment criterion/activity implemented?* **Yes**

*Was this assessment criterion activity achieved?* **Yes**

*What were the results* The leadership course has been added to the core requirement for agriculture degrees and certificates. At least one course at each level requires a significant writing element which is a grading component. A preceptorship has been added to the principles of animal science (general education) course which also required students to write an abstract using scientific format. Students are required to present independent scholarly work at one of a number of possible venues.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program?* Students are being made increasingly aware of the benefits of independent scholarly work in gaining admission to a post-graduate program or professional school. Successful completion of the agricultural leadership course requires demonstrated effective communication and directing the activities of others. There is consideration being given to making student presentations a component of senior seminar.

4. (a) The exit survey will indicate that at least 75% of graduating students will agree that the quality, availability and diversity of course and lab offerings were appropriate.
- (b) At least 75% of graduating students will agree that they are well prepared for post-graduation plans.
- (c) Students will rate those courses that (in their opinion) best served their choice of agriculture division goals stated under that section of this document.
- (d) At least 75% of students who actively seek employment in the field will have jobs within 6 months of graduation.
- (e) An active advisory committee will favorably evaluate curriculum, resources and pertinent experiences in preparing students for employment or further study in the field. In addition, the committee will articulate with other agriculture-related planning efforts conducted by the university.

*Was the criterion/activity implemented?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved?* **No (diversity and time of day availability were not satisfied)**

*What were the results?*

- Ninety-one percent agreed or strongly agreed that the quality of course offerings was appropriate. (80% last year)
- Seventy-three percent agreed or strongly agreed that the availability (time of day) of course offerings was appropriate. (73% last year)

- Ninety-one percent agreed or strongly agreed that the availability (not full) of course offerings was appropriate. (100% last year)
- Seventy-three percent agreed or strongly agreed that the diversity of course offerings was appropriate. (67% last year)
- Ninety-one percent agreed or strongly agreed that the lab experiences were appropriate. (93% last year)
- Ninety-one percent agreed or strongly agreed that their degree program well prepared them for their post-graduation plans. (93% last year)
- As of this report, 82% of those who have actively sought jobs in the field are known to have jobs (82% last year). A number of graduates are preparing for advanced degrees and/or receiving additional training in the field.

Nine core courses were rated on a 1-5 scale with 1=poor and 5=excellent. The average rating was 4.25 (85%) = Above Average. This is a slight increase from 4.18 (83.6%) last year.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or the pedagogy of the program?* Due to limited numbers, few years of assessment (2 yrs) and drift, small changes (+ or -) in numeric rankings may not be particularly significant. Diversity of course offerings may be limited in students' minds to simply having more courses. In the face of trends to streamline programs, this may not improve greatly. Hiring opportunities, when they arise, should take program diversity into consideration. Because space/time utilization is being addressed by institutional mandate, this sub-criterion (73% agree or strongly agree) should be observed this year to see if there is greater student satisfaction. Program enhancement toward more diverse program offerings was part of the Educational and Community Involvement of the President's Task force. The degree to which these will be realized lies somewhat with the level of support received.

### **Family and Consumer Sciences Assessment Criteria and Activities**

1. FCS students will pass their FCS classes with a minimum grade of C, as evaluated by assessment measures within each course. FCS courses will include activities that enable students to demonstrate a reasonable level of proficiency in the skills they have learned.

*Was this assessment criterion/activity implemented?* **Yes**

*Was this assessment criterion achieved?* **No**

*What were the results ?* **Fall semester, 2003, sixteen students did not receive a grade of C or higher in their FCS division course offerings.** Three who did not meet the criterion have repeated the course(s) and improved their grade; two are continuing at SUU but have not yet signed up for the course(s) not meeting the standard; four have been required to withdraw from the university; six do not show that they are yet registered for classes next year (F 04); one student record could not be found on the SIS system.

**Spring semester, 2004, nine students did not meet the criterion.**

Of the nine, two have no record of registering for courses for F 04; three are continuing but have not yet signed up for the courses for which they did not meet the standard; two are on academic probation; one actually withdrew and is appealing the grades entered for S 04; and, one was required to withdraw from the university. There was no double counting.

That is, any student not meeting the requirement in more than one course was, by definition of the criterion, counted one time only.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program?* Considering the size of the program, there doesn't seem to be an inordinately high number of students not meeting this criterion and there is no notable trend tying failure to meet the standard to any one course. Once posted, faculty in the division will be encouraged to read the report. As part of the SUU Institutional Research record, the information will also be available to the appropriate academic advisors.

2. (a) At least 80% of graduating students will agree with the statement, "The quality, availability, and diversity of course offerings and lab experiences in my degree program were appropriate," **OR** at least 80% of FCS majors enrolled in FCS 3400\* will agree with the statement, "The quality, availability, and diversity of course offerings and lab experiences I have already completed is appropriate."

*Was this criterion/activity implemented?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved ?* **Partially**

*What were the results ?*

- Eighty percent on the exit survey agreed or strongly agreed that the **quality** was appropriate.
- Sixty-two percent on the exit survey indicated that the **availability (time of day)** was appropriate.
- Fifty-nine percent on the exit survey agreed or strongly agreed that the **availability (not full)**.
- Eighty-three percent on the exit survey agreed or strongly agreed that the **diversity** of course offerings was appropriate.

- Eighty-six percent on the exit survey agreed or strongly agreed to the appropriateness of the **lab experiences**.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum or pedagogy of the program?* On the exit survey, the division met the standard on the pedagogical questions (quality, diversity, and lab experiences).

For both the exit and formative surveys, the questions of availability (time of day and not closed) must be [is being] addressed institutionally as part of space/time utilization. Of note is that the information on the formative surveys may be affected by nature of being formative.

Even though the formative surveys included a response on courses “already taken,” on some of the questions, there remains a high level of “neutral” or “unable to evaluate” indicating that they may still be new enough in the program that they are not secure in making an informed decision. It is recommended that the division consider the new time of day/space distribution implemented for next year to see if scores on availability do improve. It is also recommended that the division continue good work already started on an appropriate formative assessment.

(b) At least 70% of graduating students will give a rating of “Above Average” or “Excellent” to a selection of key FCS courses, **OR** at least 70% of FCS majors enrolled in FCS 3400\* will give a rating of “Above Average” or “Excellent” to a selection of key FCS courses they have already taken.

*Was this criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved ?* **No**

*What were the results ?* At least 70% of graduating students gave a rating of “Above Average” or “Excellent” to **seven out of ten** key FCS courses. In calculating the percentage of “Above Average” or “Excellent” ratings, “NA” responses were deducted from the denominator to prevent them from acting as negatives and inaccurately forcing the satisfaction percentages down. It will be noted that two of the courses not meeting this standard this year are repeats of last year. The three courses not meeting the criterion are not requirements in all emphases and, as a consequence, had a high non-response “NA” rating.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program ?* The specific courses not meeting the criterion will be brought to the attention of the division head. Also, it is recommended that the student comments in the evaluations for those courses be studied in an effort to provide possible insight into the reason(s) for three courses not meeting the criterion.

3. (a) At least 80% of graduating students will agree with the statement, “I feel that my program has well prepared me for post-graduation plans.”

*Was this criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved ?* **No**

*What were the results ?* Seventy-four percent agreed with the statement, “I feel that my program has well prepared me for post-graduation plans.” While this was a yes/no question, some students did not respond either way. Only those responding were counted in calculating the percentage.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program ?* It is recommended that division faculty explore why this is lower than last year’s exit survey. The FCS division should consider that a number of FCS majors indicate personal enrichment, parenting, and improved life skills as a reason for choosing the major, and perhaps the wording of the question may be misunderstood to have vocational only overtones. In purview with other survey questions, while 86% indicated they plan to work after graduation, 31% indicate that if they do not work after graduation the reason is to be a “stay-at-home” parent.

- (b) Acting advisory committee members will favorably evaluate relevant FCS courses and corresponding curriculum as it prepares students for post-graduation employment in their field. The advisory committee will endorse the programs and/or make specific recommendations.

*Was this assessment criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved ?* **Yes**

*What were the results ?* Appropriate advisory committees have been formed and have met during the 2003 – 2004 academic year. Minutes of the meetings have been submitted and are on file in the dean’s office.

### **Information Systems Applications Assessment Criteria and Activities**

1. At least 75 percent of the graduating students will agree with the statement: “I believe that my program has well prepared me for career or baccalaureate plans.”

*Was this criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved ?* **Yes**

*What were the results ?* While the numbers surveyed were rather small, 100 percent reported that their degree program well prepared them for their future plans.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum or pedagogy of the program ?* The division is to be applauded for these results. As ISA is integrated into a new academic unit at SUU, it will be very valuable to continue this and other assessment activities as the number of majors grow.

2(a) ISA students will pass each of their courses with a minimum grade of C-, as assessed by testing measures within each course. ISA courses will include activities that will enable students to demonstrate a reasonable level of proficiency in the skills they have learned.

*Was this criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved ?* **No**

*What were the results ?* **Fall semester, 2003, three students did not pass their courses with a minimum grade of a C-.** Two of the students have not made up the classes for which they failed to meet the criterion and have not signed up for classes for the F04 semester; the academic record of the other student ended after F03 semester. **Spring semester, 2004, two students did not meet this criterion.** One of the students is on academic probation (as of S04) and has not signed up for classes for F04; the other student's academic record ended S04 with no indication of having signed up for classes F04.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum or pedagogy of the program ?* As the number of majors increases, if those failing to meet the criterion remains small, it is recommended that the division raise the minimum grade level from C- to C. It was recommended that this be considered in the 2002 – 2003 assessment report.

(b) ISA students will be involved in completing secondary research, summarizing findings, and giving oral presentations.

*Was this criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved ?* **Yes**

*What were the results ?* Six course syllabi indicate a requirement for secondary research. Examples of that research can be found in the Applied Science Department Accreditation binders.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum or pedagogy of the program ?* As the program evolves in a new department, the value of secondary research in an information technology atmosphere should be brought to the departmental forum.

(c) Networking students will achieve certification in at least one industry certification exam such as A+, CNA, MCP, Network+, Server+, etc. and will be encouraged to complete the CNE or MCSE.

(d) User Support students will achieve industry certification (Microsoft Office Specialist [MOS]) in at least one software application such as Word, Excel, Access, etc.

*Was this criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved ?* **Yes**

*What were the results ?* **Appropriate certifications are catalog stated graduation requirements under the purview of the ISA division.**

3. At least 75 percent of the graduating students will agree with the statement: “The quality, availability, and diversity of course offerings within the ISA Division were appropriate.”

*Was this criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved ?* **Partially**

*What were the results ?*

- Eighty six percent of graduating students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the **quality** of course offerings was appropriate.
- Forty three percent reported that the **availability** (times) was appropriate.
- Fifty seven percent reported that the **availability** (number of sections) was appropriate.
- Eighty six percent of graduating students reported that the **diversity** of course offerings was appropriate.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum or pedagogy of the program?* While the number of students surveyed is modest, the division, nevertheless, very well satisfied the pedagogical criteria (quality and diversity). Availability (times and numbers of sections) is a university space/time scheduling concern. While it will take some time for substantive results of the time-of-day distribution implemented by the university for 2004 -2005, there is reasonable expectation that that students will be better satisfied with the availability of courses in the future.

4. An advisory committee will favorably evaluate the ISA curriculum and resources.

*Was this criterion/activity implemented ?* **Yes**

*Was this criterion/activity achieved ?* **Yes**

*What were the results ?* On December 11, 2003 the ISA Advisory Committee met and reviewed curriculum. The minutes are on file in the division head office and current department chair.

*How will the results be used to improve the curriculum or pedagogy of the program ?* In a rapidly evolving discipline such as information science and technology where students are skills and career oriented, it is strongly recommended that the new academic unit maintain a “fresh” active advisory committee.