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### Using Outcomes Assessment to Improve the Agronomy Undergraduate Curriculum

The purposes of this project are twofold: to develop measures to assess the relevancy of the learner outcomes developed in 1992 and to evaluate success in achieving the learner outcomes through the new curriculum developed in 1995. The end result of this project will be to finalize a template for undergraduate curricular assessment and integrate assessment for curricular improvement. Data are being collected from the following stakeholder groups: students, faculty, alumni, and employers.

Through structured individual interviews with all Agronomy teaching faculty in fall 2002, faculty reported a mid- to high emphasis placed on technical knowledge, professional skills, and perspective; little emphasis on ethics/values; and a negligible emphasis on diversity. Through pilot structured individual interviews with a random sample of graduating seniors (n=4). Compared to faculty, students reported similar emphases being placed on each of the learner outcomes in required courses. However, they felt a greater emphasis was placed on diversity than did faculty. Additional information on specific assignments or experiences to help achieve the outcomes was collected from both samples. This information is being used for curriculum mapping to identify where specific outcomes are being addressed within the curriculum. In fall 2002, a revised course evaluation focusing on outcomes assessment and learning was administered in two sections of a 300-level course. Further work will focus on developing an instrument that can provide useful information at both the course and program level and administering the evaluation to a larger sample of courses.

This spring and summer, outcomes assessment activities include developing and administering senior, alumni, and employer surveys; mapping the curriculum by identifying where and how specific learner outcomes are being addressed within the curriculum and identifying potential gaps; collecting data on course embedded assignments to assess departmental outcomes; revising and administering the course evaluations to a larger sample of courses; and developing an outcomes assessment website. Future activities include developing measures to assess the leadership and internship programs, sharing results and insights at the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) annual meeting and with other campus and national audiences, developing workshops and training for Agronomy faculty, identifying ways to involve undergraduate students in outcomes assessment, finalizing a template for undergraduate curricular assessment, and integrating assessment for curricular improvement.