

Continuous Program Improvement Through Outcomes Assessment The Undergraduate Curriculum

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Project Leaders

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Participants

Agronomy Faculty
RISE (Research Institute for Studies in Education)
Mary Huba, Assistant Vice Provost, ISU

Executive Summary

Rigorous and systematic assessment of educational programs is imperative if the department aspires to high standards, excellence in education, and to be a national leader in agronomic education as envisioned by the department's "Path to the Future" document. Outcomes assessment is an important method used nationally to identify and strengthen educational programs and for program accountability. The overall objective of this project is to make the ISU Agronomy Department a leader among Land Grant Institutions and departments at Iowa State University in the use of outcomes assessment for educational program improvement. The operative objective is development and initiation of a systematic approach for outcomes assessment of the Agronomy undergraduate degree program. Subsequent work to this proposal within the Agronomy Department would include expansion of approaches for assessing graduate education and extension programs.

We plan to bring expertise to our department to help train and focus faculty on curricular assessment procedures through a series of seminars/workshops. The department will take advantage of resources provided by the University. Specifically, we will implement a series of faculty seminars on assessment conducted by Dr. Mary Huba, Assistant Vice Provost, and other campus assessment experts. In addition, an Education graduate student working closely with professional staff in RISE (Research Institute for Studies in Education) will be used to assist us in improving the design and implementation of our assessment program for our undergraduate curriculum. The student will work with the agronomy faculty to develop appropriate assessment questionnaires, identify appropriate target audiences for assessment, analyze previously collected data, and prepare reports to provide feedback to the faculty on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the undergraduate curriculum. The time frame for these activities would be two years.