

**Annual Report to the Provost  
Outcomes Assessment for AY 2016-2017  
Department of Agricultural Business**

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This report documents ongoing efforts to refine assessment of student learning outcomes for the Agricultural Business major. Each year our department carefully considers the comments from the previous year's assessment review and makes adjustments to our assessment process. This document reports assessment activities completed during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Outcomes assessment is being used to: 1) determine baseline measures of performance for appropriate outcome/course combinations; 2) aid in determining our strengths and weaknesses; and 3) update course content and curriculum with new areas of focus. Our ultimate goal is to better prepare graduates for successful professional careers. The Department's current SOAP is posted on the following web site:

<http://fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/assessment/soap/jcastsoaps.html>.

Each year our department carefully considers the comments from the previous year's assessment report review and makes adjustments to our assessment process. The department continues to collect baseline data for each course and the associated student learning outcomes that are identified in the department's SOAP. The remainder of this document highlights assessment activities related to student learning outcome 3.0 and an indirect measure, a graduating senior exit survey.

**1. What learning outcomes did you assess this year?**

Outcome 3.0: Students will demonstrate communication proficiency, oral and written, in relation to the global agribusiness and/or consumer sectors. They will communicate in a knowledgeable, coherent and persuasive manner on an array of topics.

The following courses were assessed for this outcome:

AGBS 140 - International Agricultural Economics (fall 2016)

AGBS 194 - Agricultural Business Internship – Credit/No Credit (AY 2016-2017)

- Notes:*
- 1) AGBS 140 was not assessed in the spring 2017 semester because the instructor was on sabbatical.
  - 2) AGBS 194 is an elective internship course that is taken by approximately 20% of the majors.
  - 3) The explanations and results contained in this report are those of the instructors for each assessed course.

Indirect Measure: Senior Exit Survey: The department also conducted its graduating senior survey towards the end of the spring 2017 semester.

**2. What assignment or survey did you use to assess the outcome and what method (criteria or rubric) did you use to evaluate the assignment?**

*AGBS 140 – fall 2016 (Dr. Srinivasa Konduru)*

The communication proficiency of students was assessed using written reports and oral presentations. Students were required to work in teams to analyze a case study focusing on a topic area of international trade and present their findings to the class; they were also required to submit a written report. A scoring rubric was utilized in assessing the presentation and the written report (see appendix). For outcome 3.0 we expect at least 70% of students to achieve a score of 3.5 (70%) or above out of 5.0.

*AGBS 194 – fall 2016 & spring 2017 (Dr. Annette Levi)*

The internship experience is unique for each student. To receive credit, students are required to write eight periodic reports throughout the semester and then glean from those a final written report regarding their experiential learning in the workplace. An outline of the final report is provided for students. The periodic and final reports should demonstrate use of formal language, concepts of business and economics, and competencies in dealing with career challenges. It is expected that a student will have a well written document that includes a) an introduction to the business, b) tasks and responsibilities while working for the business, c) student observations of the business environment relative to academic learning, and d) a conclusion reflecting upon the benefits and shortcomings of the experience. On outcome 3.0, we expect at least 70% of students to achieve a score of 70% or above on the rubric used to evaluate writing proficiency. The scoring rubric for the written paper appears in the appendix.

*Graduating Senior Survey – spring 2017*

A senior exit survey was administered toward the end of the spring 2017 semester. The instrument was designed to measure students' opinions and level of satisfaction within three major areas:

- General instructional characteristics and course content with respect to career preparation;
- Quality of advising; and
- Demographics, employment and career ambitions.

The instrument is a combination of Likert scale (1–5) and open response questions for the categories mentioned. The department has set a rather lofty goal of a 70% response rate with 75% of our graduates believing they are well prepared for careers. The instrument will require changes before assessment of learning outcomes is possible.

### 3. What did you discover from these data?

*AGBS 140 – fall 2016 (Dr. Srinivasa Konduru)*

Overall, student performance did meet expectations in the assessment of outcome 3.0 in the fall 2016 semester. For two course sections with a total of 84 students, the average score across all criteria for the case study presentation and written report was 3.6 out of 5; *a score of 3.5 out of 5.0 was the benchmark for each evaluation criterion and considered to be satisfactory*. Approximately 85% of the students were successful in achieving the minimum benchmark score for the entirety of the assignment. However, performance by evaluation criterion varied. The vast majority of students met the benchmark for effective writing (3.5) and exceeded the benchmark for analysis of the topic (4.0) but fell short with respect to effectiveness of their presentation (3.3). The inability to effectively communicate key issues and recommendations during an oral presentation is an area that requires more attention in the classroom.

Table 1: Class average by rubric evaluation criterion

Rubric Criterion	Average Scores (out of 5.0)
Analysis of topic	4.0
Effectiveness of writing	3.5
Effectiveness of presentation	3.3

*AGBS 194 – fall 2016 & spring 2017 (Dr. Annette Levi)*

The assessment for outcome 3.0 shows that student performance met expectations for both semesters. An average composite score, across the three rubric criteria, of **3.13** was achieved with 31 students taking the course in fall 2016. Twenty-five students ( $\approx 81\%$ ) exceeded the benchmark score of 2.8 and six students scored less, with one student scoring a low of 2.0. Results improved for the spring 2017 semester to a higher average score of **3.44** for the 21 students taking the course. Nineteen students ( $\approx 91\%$ ) exceeded the benchmark of 2.8 and two students scored 2.7.

Table 2: Class average and proportion of students exceeding benchmark

Semester	Ave. Score	Proportion $\geq$ Benchmark
Fall 2016	3.13	80.6
Spring 2017	3.44	90.5

Performance comparison across semesters, in conjunction with notes taken by the instructor during scoring, provide an indication of the level of student writing proficiency. Instructor notes indicate students excelled in providing details and examples from the internship experience and in organization of the paper. However, some students were not able to effectively communicate their observations. This may be attributed to the need for more thorough articulation of the expectations of the written assignment and that some students are faced with English being their second language.

Of the 21 students enrolled during spring 2016, 16 were offered positions with their internship company or a related firm. This is an indicator for student success in that they are learning the necessary skills in the classroom to be successful in the workforce.

#### *Graduating Senior Survey – spring 2017*

Participation in the exit survey was extremely low; only 20% of the graduating seniors completed the survey. Key quantitative findings are listed below.

- Approximately 70% of respondents commented favorably about curriculum, level of rigor, number of course offerings and course sequencing.
- The proportion of respondents who felt prepared in key knowledge areas is:
  - Economics 91%
  - Management 81%
  - Marketing 90%
  - Finance 81%
  - Oral communication 86%
  - Written communication 75%
- Approximately 85% of respondents felt department advisors were knowledgeable and efficient throughout the advising process.
- Employment statistics:
  - 71% of the students work while enrolled.
  - 84% work at least 21 hours per week, with 39% working more than 31 hours while enrolled.
  - Major areas of career choice include management, finance and sales/marketing.
  - 57% of graduates accepted a fulltime position before graduation.

Student responses to open-ended questions focused on department strengths, weaknesses, resource needs and suggested improvements.

#### **4. What changes did you make as a result of the data?**

##### *AGBS 140 – fall 2016 (Dr. Srinivasa Konduru)*

Current performance findings were compared to those from previous semesters to identify key areas of pedagogical focus. As a result the following changes will be implemented the next time the course is taught and assessed:

- Provide more detailed guidelines and examples illustrating how to analyze a topic and prepare a presentation and a written report.
- Reinforce the importance of oral communication skills in their careers and provide opportunities for them to practice before the final presentation to the class.
- Reinforce the importance of communicating legibly and provide additional feedback to identify grammatical, spelling or format structure errors.
- Provide more guidance connecting and applying the theoretical concepts discussed throughout the course to the real-world applications highlighted in the case studies.

- In addition to the single composite rubric score, collect data regarding student performance on each of the rubric criterion.

*AGBS 194 – fall 2016 & spring 2017 (Dr. Annette Levi)*

For the spring 2017 semester the instructor updated the assignment (relative to fall 2016) by:

- Adding specific prompts for the final written report assignment.
- Adding explicit instructions to the outline to guide students through the final report document. One specific prompt that all students will be required to answer in their final report will be, “Explain how this internship applied your academic training in agricultural business?” This seems to have helped keep students on target.
- Provide redacted examples of written reports on Blackboard from the previous semester to demonstrate expectations for the report.

The increase in scores during spring 2017, when compared to the previous semester, can be attributed to the corrective actions that were taken as a result of the fall assessment discoveries (reinforcement of fundamental concepts and additional guidance through example problems). To obtain more information about student writing proficiency, data will be explicitly recorded for each of the rubric criterion rather than solely an overall score. This added detail will allow a more thorough understanding of student learning outcome attainment.

*Graduating Senior Survey – spring 2017*

The opinions of our students with regard to the Agricultural Business program are valuable to the department and have initiated discussions during faculty meetings and retreats. However, the current form of the exit survey does not assess progress toward achieving the student learning outcomes. The department will seek help in modifying the survey to better measure progress toward this goal.

## **5. What assessment activities will be conducted in the 2017-2018 AY?**

The two student learning outcomes listed below will be assessed during the 2016-17 academic year. Student performance on instruments such as examinations, homework assignments, and/or course projects will be evaluated based on faculty determination of appropriateness. The department will also conduct two indirect measures of assessment: 1) the senior exit survey; and 2) an industry survey or focus group. Such information, when combined with results obtained from direct methods of assessment, will help to more fully evaluate success in obtaining our student learning outcomes.

Outcome 1.1: Students will apply economic concepts, as well as statistical and quantitative analyses, to agribusiness and/or consumer issues and interpret the results.

Outcome 2.0: Students will integrate fundamental agribusiness principles and/or analytical techniques to identify benefit-cost decisions at all levels of agribusiness and/or consumer activity, and make recommendations based on an understanding of policy and the regulatory environment.

### **Looking forward to AY 2017/18**

The department will continue to educate faculty regarding the assessment process and its importance; each time the process is completed, our students and stakeholders benefit. The assessment of student learning outcomes will continue to be conducted on a rotational basis because faculty believe that assessing fewer outcomes each academic year results in more useful, quality information. Faculty discussions of the results presented in this report, and previous ones, indicate the need for common scoring rubrics for oral presentations, project papers and quantitative analysis. These rubrics will be developed and utilized within the department to provide consistency and comparability when evaluating attainment of learning outcomes across courses. The faculty also recognize the importance of collecting data for each rubric criterion, rather than a composite rubric score, to more clearly identify students' areas of strength and where improvement is warranted. Additional courses of action will be identified and implemented when warranted by evaluation of future assessment results.

#### **6. What progress have you made on items from your last program review action plan?**

##### **Program Review of BS in Agricultural Business in May 2011:**

##### **Areas of Improvement/Recommendations Made by External Committee**

- 1) *Increase involvement in outcomes assessment and the use of assessment result for curricular changes and program improvement.*
- 2) *Increase involvement in research and scholarly activity.*
- 3) *Reactivate or create a new industry advisory committee.*
- 4) *Continue to develop a more cohesive nature among departmental faculty.*
- 5) *Development of a long-term plan and a vision focusing on the program's comparative advantages.*
- 6) *Capitalize on location within the Peters Building to collaborate with the Department of Economics and the Craig School of Business.*

Please note: The Department of Agricultural Business is undergoing a Program Review during fall 2017.

##### **Changes Made by Department of AGBS since May 2011**

- 1) ***Increase involvement in outcomes assessment*** - Prior to May 2011 the Agricultural Business Department had an assessment plan with 75 student learner outcomes (SLOs). Since then our department has a fully engaged Assessment Coordinator. Most faculty contribute to the ongoing process of assessment. Outcomes are discussed at faculty meetings and retreats. In January 2017 we updated and posted our new SOAP that reflects the departments learning objectives. We are now focusing on adopting department-level rubrics that will be used across our courses. An ongoing area of improvement is helping some of our faculty, especially our newly hired ones, understand the importance of assessment and how to incorporate it into their courses.

- 2) ***Increase involvement in research and scholarly activity*** - Since 2011 our department has increased scholarly activity. This is due to: 1) hiring new tenure-track faculty, 2) having visiting scholars with an interest in research collaboration, and 3) collaboration with the Institute of Food and Agriculture (formerly the Center for Agricultural Business). Overall the department has become more engaged since 2011 when the program review was completed. Since the previous review, our department faculty have:
- Received over \$1.6 million in research grants
  - Published 41 refereed research articles
  - Published 28 additional research and scholarly papers
  - Given over 75 presentations regarding research and scholarly work
- 3) ***Reactivate or create a new industry advisory committee*** - We have a university recognized Agricultural Business Advisory Board which started in August 2013. The Board meets two times per year and has twelve industry stakeholders from different sectors. They have established an annual “Agricultural Business Associates” fundraising program with industry stakeholders, along with a speaker’s bureau and they provide assistance with faculty and student field trip site recommendations. We are very excited about the level of involvement of our Board and, thanks to their assistance, department faculty are connecting with these stakeholders. They have also started initiatives to raise funds for extra-curricular activities (e.g., field trips) and scholarships. Additionally, they meet with potential faculty candidates, provide input on departmental goals and objectives, and have begun a mentoring program where they match up with current students to discuss careers in agricultural business. We believe the current board to be very well suited for our department.
- 4) ***Continue to develop a more cohesive nature among departmental faculty*** - Our department has seven full-time tenured, tenure-track faculty who are all agricultural economists. We have weekly meetings regarding our curriculum, student success, and resource needs, and we have retreats every semester. Starting in fall 2016, we began to take local faculty field trips to tour facilities of our stakeholders to learn more about their industry, their challenges and their needs.
- 5) ***Development of a long-term plan and a vision focusing on the program’s comparative advantages*** - The department has developed a strategic plan. Our current focus is on three objectives: 1) student success with regard to high graduation rates (FTFTF and transfers), 2) transferable skills to the workplace, and 3) opportunities to study abroad in the major. This is an ongoing process and will be adapted as deemed necessary.
- 6) ***Capitalize on location within the Peters Building to collaborate with the Department of Economics and the Craig School of Business*** - We have worked with the Department of Economics on some curricular issues. We held a joint Agricultural Appraisal Conference with the Gazarian Real Estate Program in the Craig School of Business in 2013. Our department was invited and took part in the Craig School of Business’ “Down the 99” Career Fair. The Craig School has worked with us to ensure our transfer students can enroll in DS 71 during Dog Days in 2015 and 2016. In spring 2017 the departments of Economics and Agricultural Business met to introduce ourselves and to explore areas where we could work together more effectively.

**Appendix**  
**Scoring Rubrics for Select Courses**

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**Outcome 3.0 – Scoring Rubric for presentation and written report (AGBS 140)**

Criteria	Grading Scale				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>1. Analysis of the topic.</b>	Presents an incomplete analysis of the topic identified.	Presents superficial analysis of topic.	Presents thorough analysis of the topic.	Presents thorough analysis of the topic, identifying and focusing on the main issue.	Presents insightful and thorough analysis of topic identified, focusing on the main issues.
<b>2. Effectiveness of writing.</b>	Writing skills are poor.	Writing lacked overall effectiveness.	Writing described the issue in the case study and the analysis.	Writing was effective in describing the issue in the case study and the analysis.	Writing was highly effective in describing the issue in the case study and the analysis.
<b>3. Effectiveness of presentation.</b>	Student mumbles, speaks too quietly for others to hear, and exhibits little confidence.	Student's voice is low, audience has difficulty hearing, and exhibits low confidence.	Student's voice is clear, most of audience can hear, and enough confidence is shown.	Student's voice is clear, all of audience can hear, and good confidence is shown.	Student's voice is clear, all of audience can hear, good confidence is shown, and eye contact is shown.

**Outcome 3.0 - Scoring Rubric for Written Communication (AGBS 194)**

Grading Criteria	Excellent 4 points	Good 3 points	Fair 2 points	Inadequate 1 point
<b>Organization and Contents</b>	Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings.	Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs.	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well constructed.	The information is disorganized.
<b>Quality of Information</b>	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.
<b>Style and Effectiveness of Content</b>	Writing was highly effective in describing the business and its operations.	Writing was effective in describing the business and its operations.	Writing described the business and its operations.	Writing lacked overall effectiveness.