

## Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

### ***Rural Development, BA*** *College of Rural and Community Development* **AY 2015-16**

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#### **1. Assessment information collected**

- A. Impressionistic Histories: Impressionistic Histories (form attached) were collected for students in all RD Core courses for AY 2015/2016. The form collects scores and comments on writing skills, oral skills, cultural communication/human relations skills, quality of work, and critical thinking abilities.
- B. Rural Development Senior Project Assessment: A committee of three faculty reviewed the senior projects produced in RD 475 Rural Development Senior Project and assessed using attached rubric.
- C. Rural Development Internship Assessment: Rural Development students are required to take RD 400 Rural Development Internship. Waivers may be given for students who meet certain criteria for work experience. The Internship includes a Supervisor Evaluation which includes the question: "Using a scale of A-F, what grade do you feel that the student earned for this Practicum? (Describe how you arrived at this rating.)"
- D. Post Graduate Employment survey: Not conducted.

#### **2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above**

- A. Impressionistic Histories: Eighty-three Impressionistic Histories were submitted by faculty teaching RD Core courses for 38 individual students. Scores: 1 – poorest, 2 – poor, 3 – average, 4 – better, 5 – best.

|                                      | Writing Skills | Oral Skills | Cultural Communications/Human Relations Skills | Quality of Work | Critical Thinking Abilities |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|--|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Average across all students assessed | 3.5            | 3.7         | 3.8  | 3.5             | 3.9                         |

Seventy-nine percent of students had an overall average score of 3 (average) or better. Thirty-four percent of students had an overall average score of 4 (better) or better.

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Discussion: This is the first year we have used the Impressionistic History form. While the form was useful for gaining an overall impression of student skills, it was unwieldy and imprecise, as no definition of the scores were provided. While it does not appear that there were large differences in the scales each faculty employed, a new form is being developed that will define each score for each category as well as providing a menu of comment options based on the comments provided this year. For example, some variation of “difficulty following instructions” and “missed deadlines” were common comments for students with low scores. By streamlining the comment process with common problems we will be able to more easily identify areas students need assistance with. We also plan to include an N/A option for use when a class does not cover a particular skill.

- B. Rural Development Senior Project: Thirteen total senior projects/thesis were assessed by a group of three faculty. The faculty member teaching RD 475 did not use the assessment tool, but participated in discussion. Eleven students were Rural Development students. Below is a table of the percentage of Rural Development students scoring in each area (percentage totals are slightly off due to some irregularities in scoring).

| Learning Outcome:   | Poor  | Developing | Acceptable | Good   | Outstanding |
|---|-------|------------|------------|--------|-------------|
| Addresses one or more areas of Rural Development:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic development</li> <li>Social development</li> <li>Health development</li> <li>Educational development</li> <li>Other (please indicate)</li> </ul>   | 0.00% | 6.06%      | 15.15%     | 30.30% | 48.48%      |
| Demonstrates understanding of rural development issues, including broader impacts of local issues   | 3.03% | 3.03%      | 15.15%     | 18.18% | 54.55%      |
| Ability to use the appropriate writing conventions (for the project or thesis submitted)  | 0.00% | 9.09%      | 30.30%     | 30.30% | 30.30%      |
| Demonstrates one or more of the following skills in the context of rural development and/or Indigenous development:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization/Management</li> <li>Planning</li> <li>Research</li> <li>Business development</li> <li>Other (please indicate)</li> </ul> | 0.00% | 15.15%     | 18.18%     | 36.36% | 33.33%      |

Project Option: 5

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| Outcome   | Very low | Reasonable | Yes, within next five years | Yes, within next two years | Project is being implemented |
|---|----------|------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Likelihood of project being applied/implemented | 12.51%   | 12.51%     | 18.76%                      | 37.52%                     | 18.76%                       |

### Paper Option: 6

| Outcome  | Poor | Developing | Acceptable | Good   | Outstanding |
|--|------|------------|------------|--------|-------------|
| Contribution of the paper to the discipline/understanding of the issue |      | 5.88%      | 11.76%     | 52.91% | 29.39%      |

Discussion: Three themes stood out in the assessment of senior projects:

1. Writing: While the majority of students wrote quite well, many of them do not take the time to edit and proof-read their work. RD 475 was restructured Spring 2015 to include a series of checkpoints as well as more rigorous writing requirements and, anecdotally, it appears that the senior projects were overall of a higher quality this year. The faculty responsible for RD 475 can confirm that students who took the time to meet all project/paper checkpoints through the semester received higher scores in the assessment.
  2. Subject areas: Economic and/or business development does not seem to be a primary interest for our students. Social and community development subjects were more popular. Only four of the senior projects were specific to economic and business development. For the others economic or business development issues were secondary or non-existent. While social and community development are valuable and important issues the department needs to ask why students are not interested in projects that will bring wages and revenue into their communities.
  3. Mathematics: Dealing with financials seemed to be a challenge for those who chose business related projects. The department has been concerned for some time that students are not properly prepared for the kind of arithmetic they need to use for business development.
- C. Rural Development Internship Assessment: Seven students took RD 400 Rural Development Internship. Three of those students received Incompletes and do not yet have supervisor evaluations. Of the four students who completed their internships, supervisors answered the question "Using a scale of A-F, what grade do you feel that the student earned for this Practicum?" with two A+, one A, and one A-. Supervisors who provided reports were very satisfied with their intern's performance.

- D. Post Graduate Employment survey: Not conducted.

### **3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above**

The Department is in the process of a major overhaul of the curriculum, in part due to the change in the way the university is addressing communications learning outcomes. These curriculum changes are in development now. A revised SLOA Plan will be developed along with these curricular changes and will be submitted in the fall of 2016. Below are some of the planned changes related to the SLOA Plan data collection and analysis in this report.

- A. Impressionistic Histories: No curricular changes are planned based on the Impressionistic Histories. We will revise the Impressionistic History forms to make them more useful for learning outcomes evaluation.
- B. Rural Development Senior Project:
  - a. RD 475 – change to prerequisites/sequence of courses:
    - i. RD 350 Community Based Research in Indigenous Contexts – two years ago this course was redesigned to encourage students to develop their project or research plan prior to taking RD 475. For students who were able to take these courses in order this worked well. In order to continue to support students and the departments commitment to community based projects and activities a new sequence of required courses is being developed to continue to improve Rural Development senior project.
      - 1. RD 350 will be renamed to “Community Research Toolbox” and be revised to focus on clearly on **skills acquisition** for project based and academic based research.
      - 2. The project/research planning and development component will be moved to a new course and become a pre-requisite for RD 475. This course will allow students to more fully develop their plan so that senior projects are more community based and in depth.
  - b. Writing – while writing skills are clearly improving, the Rural Development faculty are working to create a new Communications Plan that includes courses specifically designed to introduce students to the writing and oral communications skills needed in rural development. This work is intended to be submitted in the fall of 2016 and implemented in the spring of 2017.
  - c. Mathematics/Financial literacy – the department has not decided on the approach needed to solve this issue. Current RD business planning courses were revised in the last two years to increase emphasis on financials. Students who have the benefit of these revised courses may do better in future senior projects. Another option is to

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create a course specifically focused on the type of mathematics needed or to require ABUS 155 Business Math.

- C. Rural Development Internship Assessment: While the internship program appears to satisfy internship supervisors, there is a high number of RD students opting to substitute documented work experience for the internship class. The class will be removed from the RD Core class list and become an elective.
- A. Post Graduate Employment survey: Not conducted. The Graduate survey will be removed from the SLOA Plan. Instead, DANSRD will conduct alumni surveys every three years. This survey will be utilized for program review to demonstrate how the RD BA graduates are using their degrees, but will not be used to assess student learning outcomes.

### **4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting**

Jennifer L.L. Carroll, DANSRD Co-Chair

Catherine Brooks, DANSRD Co-Chair

Jenny Bell Jones, DANSRD Faculty

Patricia Sekaquaptewa, DANSRD Faculty