

## Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

### ***Rural Development, BA***

*College of Rural and Community Development*

**AY 2016-2017 and 2017-2018**

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

- A. Impressionistic Histories: Impressionistic Histories were collected for students in all RD Core courses for AY 2016/2017 and AY 2017/2018. The form collects scores and comments on writing skills, oral skills, cultural communication/human relations skills, and critical thinking abilities.
- B. Rural Development Senior Project Assessment: A committee of two to three faculty reviewed the senior projects produced in RD 475 Rural Development Senior Project and assessed using a common rubric.
- C. Rural Development Internship Assessment: Rural Development students under catalogs prior to AY 2017-2018 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: Impressionistic History forms for AY 2016/2017 and AY 2017/2018 were modified to include descriptions for each score in each category to encourage more standardized reporting, add an "N/A" option, and provide a menu of comments based on common issues and concerns.

One hundred and sixty-nine Impressionistic Histories were submitted by faculty teaching RD Core courses for 61 individual students. Scores: 1 – poorest, 2 – poor, 3 – average, 4 – better, 5 – best, 6 – N/A (removed from calculations).

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Academic Year		Writing Skills	Oral Skills	Cultural Communications/Human Relations Skills	Quality of Work	Critical Thinking Abilities
AY 2015/2016	Average across all students assessed	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.9
AY 2016/2017	(n*=74)	3.4	4.0 (n=72)	4.5	N/A	4.0
AY 2017/2018	(n=88)	3.8 (n=86)	4.3 (n=87)	4.7	N/A	4.4

\* The number of assessments done. May include multiple assessments of the same student.

Ten percent of students had an overall average score of 5 (best). Fifty-six percent of students had an overall score of 4 to 4.9 (better). Twenty-five percent of students had an overall score of 3 to 3.9 (average). And, ten percent of students had an overall average score of 2 to 2.9 (poor). No students had an average score less than 2.25.

### Discussion:

- Consistency: for students who have taken multiple classes (4 or more) over the two year period, scores across classes and instructors are mostly consistent. Where there are divergent assessments, a check of the comments and department records generally show that the students had some sort of external difficulty that affected their work in a particular semester or class.
- Student skills: most students are consistent across the skill sets assessed, but a few students excel in some skills more than others.
- Student growth: there is no clear trend in student growth. This may be a result of not enough time/data for tracking or a faulty assessment tool. Despite the more specific definitions, it is possible that faculty are evaluating students based on “grade level” instead of skill development. However, given the wildly divergent skill students come to the program with, it is common to have a student taking a lower level class with upper level skills.
- Ease of assessment: the Impressionistic History form and Google forms can be difficult to deal with. For this report, for example, the data from fall 2016 was missing from some automatically generated spreadsheets and had to be obtained and manipulated through more labor intensive means.

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- B. Rural Development Senior Project: Nine spring 2017 senior projects/thesis were assessed by a group of two faculty. Seven students were Rural Development students and two students were Alaska Native Studies students (reported in the ANS SLOA Summary report).

Nine spring 2018 senior projects/thesis were assessed by a group of three faculty. All nine were Rural Development students. Three additional students received Incompletes and were not evaluated. Tables for each year and outcome assessed are included at the end of this summary document. In addition, overall evaluations that addressed trends in student work for each year were provided by professor emeritus Jenny Bell Jones.

In addition, evaluators were asked “What overall grade would you give this project?” The interpretation of the question by reviewers was too divergent to be tabulated. However, it did provide some interesting insight for the faculty teaching RD 475 Senior Project.

### Discussion:

1. Writing: It is difficult to assess trends in writing quality as the mix of students continues to have very diverse writing levels. Continual feedback and revision is used to help students improve their writing. As the past SLOA Summary indicated, those students who take the time to meet all project/paper checkpoints through the semester received higher scores in the assessment. However, skill level is not necessarily driving this. It also appears that on campus students with more extracurricular activities struggle with completing their projects/theses and putting time into their writing, whereas many off-campus students put more time and effort into their project/thesis. The faculty teaching RD 475 intends to survey prior students on this and other questions related to the senior project.
  2. Subject areas: Social and community development subjects remain more popular than economic development projects. In 2017 five out of the seven senior projects included some aspect of economic development, although only two were predominately economic development. In 2018 only one out of the nine was related to economic development. While social and community development are valuable and important issues the department needs to continue to ask why students are not interested in projects that will bring wages and revenue into their communities.
  3. Mathematics: Dealing with financials continues to be a challenge for those who chose business related projects as well as those considering how to fund social and community development.
- C. Rural Development Internship Assessment:  
Seven students took RD 400 Rural Development Internship in spring 2017. One student took an Incomplete (that subsequently rolled to an F) and supervisor evaluations were not available for

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two students. Of the four who received supervisor evaluations, supervisors answered the question “Using a scale of A-F, what grade do you feel that the student earned for this Practicum?” with four As.

Seven students took RD 400 Rural Development Internship in spring 2018. One of those students received an Incomplete and does not yet have supervisor evaluations. Of the six 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 one A+, four A, and one B. **Supervisors who provided reports were very satisfied with their intern’s performance.**

RD 400 is no longer a part of the Core and will not be assessed in the future.

- D. Post Graduate Employment survey: Not conducted. This will be removed from the SLOA Plan.

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

DANSRD faculty met on August 20, 2018 to review this summary report. No specific curricular changes are expected due to this report. The Department completed a major overhaul of the Rural Development curriculum for catalog year 2017/2018, in part due to the change in the way the university is addressing communications learning outcomes. There are some curriculum changes that are still in process and may result in changes as they are assessed in the future. A subcommittee of DANSRD faculty has formed to revise the SLOA Plan to reflect the communications plan as well as respond to issues identified in this report.

In addition, we have formed a subcommittee of faculty to revise the SLOA plan based on this report.

- A. Impressionistic Histories: No curricular changes are planned based on the Impressionistic Histories. However, we plan to slightly revise the IH to assess critical thinking in both oral and written work.
- B. Rural Development Senior Project:
  - a. Comments provided by the faculty evaluators are very insightful and would be very useful to students. The faculty teaching RD 475 would like to find a way to incorporate more faculty input into senior projects before they are completed, if possible. The department will discuss this issue in fall 2018.
  - b. RD 475 – change to prerequisites/sequence of courses:
    - i. RD 350 Community Based Research in Indigenous Contexts – this course has been replaced by two new courses (RD 340 Community Research Toolbox and RD 474 Applied Community Research) starting in AY 2017/2018, however, they

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will not be taught until there are enough students in that and subsequent catalog years. We believe that this will improve the implantation of senior projects.

- c. Writing – we have introduced a new RD core communications course, RD 225 Communicating for Rural Development, offered for the first time spring 2018.
  - d. Mathematics/Financial literacy – A “Little Book of Finance” has been developed by emeritus professor Bell-Jones for use in RD courses and to be distributed in general to RD and ANS students. It includes a focus on financial issues common for rural and Alaska Native students.
- C. Rural Development Internship Assessment: The class has been removed from the RD Core class list and become an elective. It will no longer be assessed for the SLOA.
- D. Post Graduate Employment survey: Not conducted. The Graduate survey will be removed from the SLOA Plan.

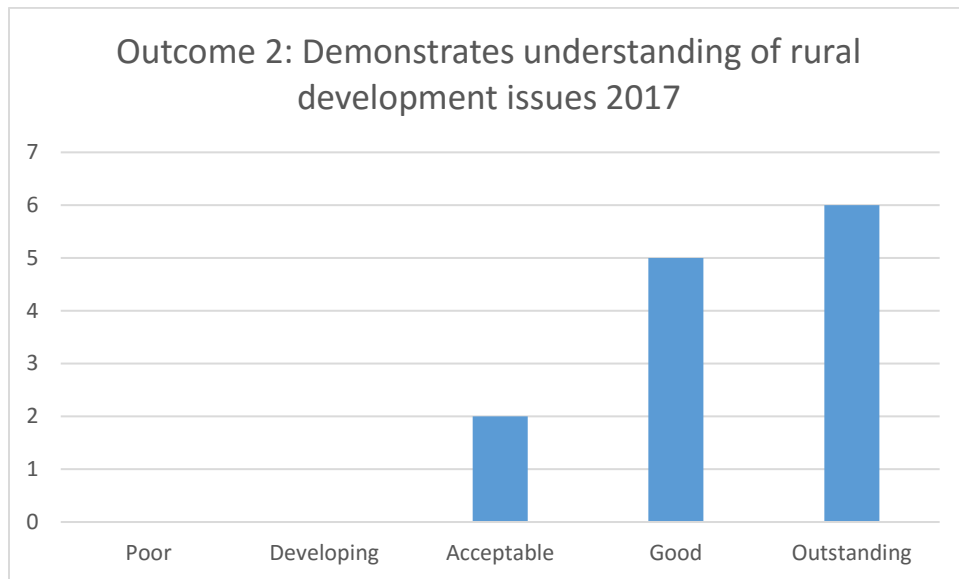
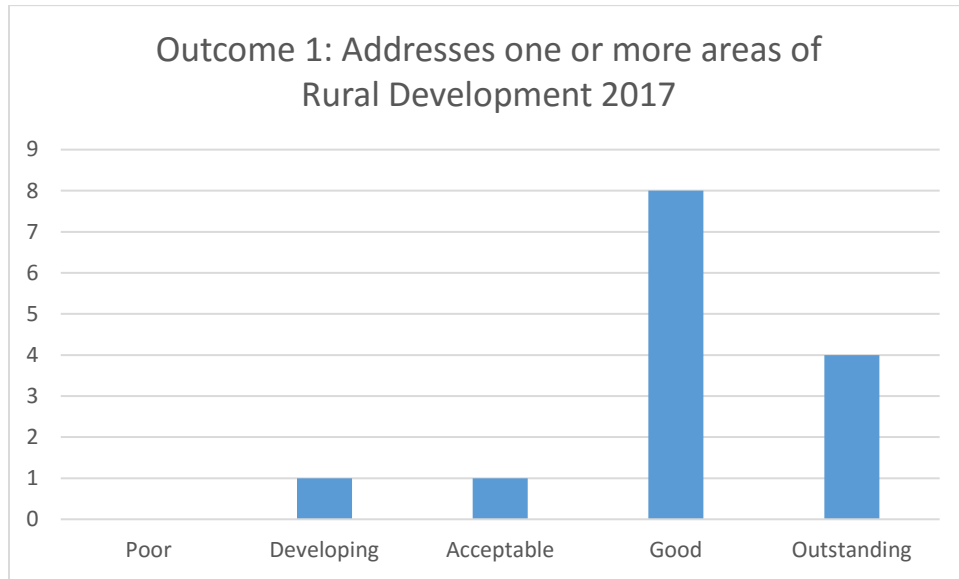
### **4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting**

Jennifer L.L. Carroll  
Catherine Brooks  
Jenny Bell Jones  
Patricia Sekaquaptewa  
Charlene Stern

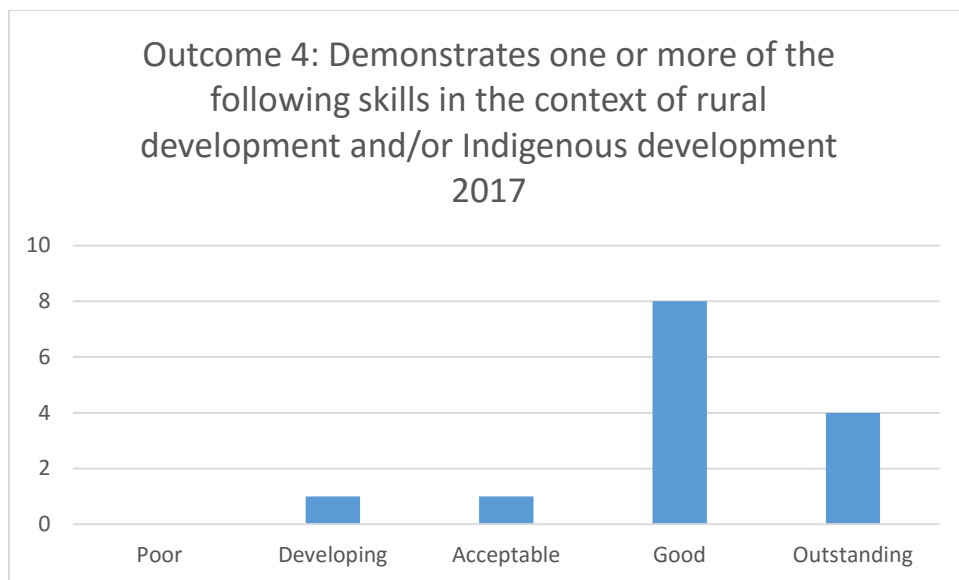
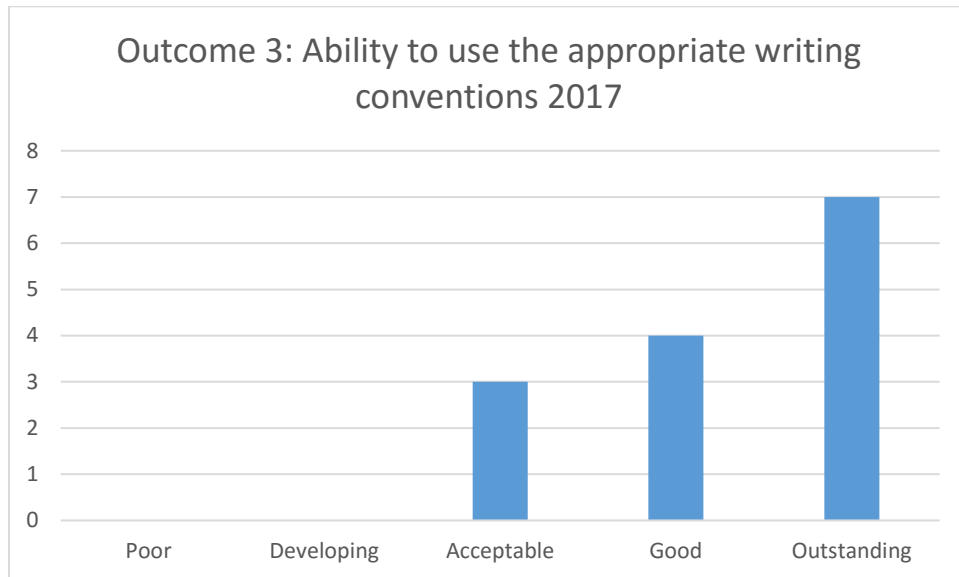
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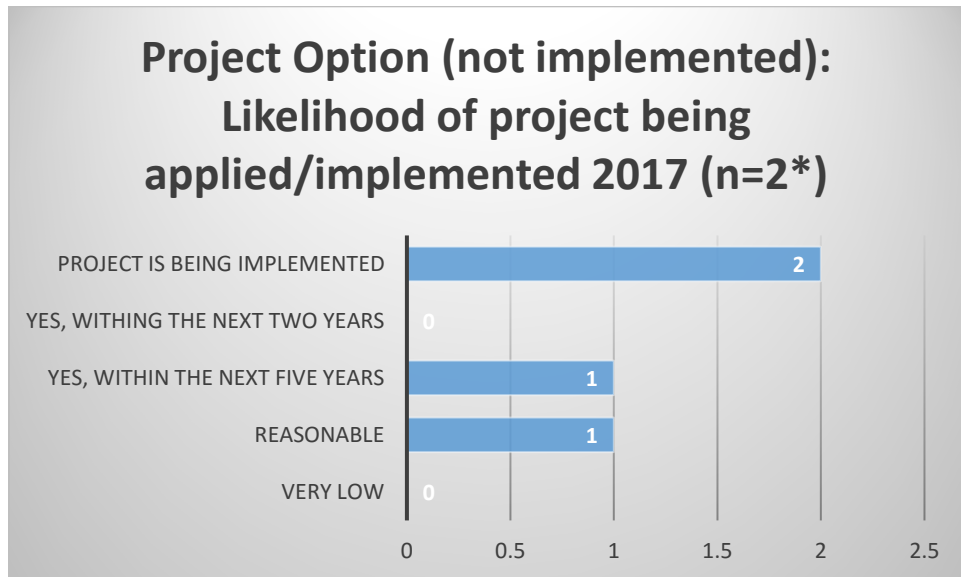
RD Senior Project Assessment (bars indicate the number of total responses by faculty in each category and may vary from outcome to outcome)

### 2017 (evaluated by two faculty)

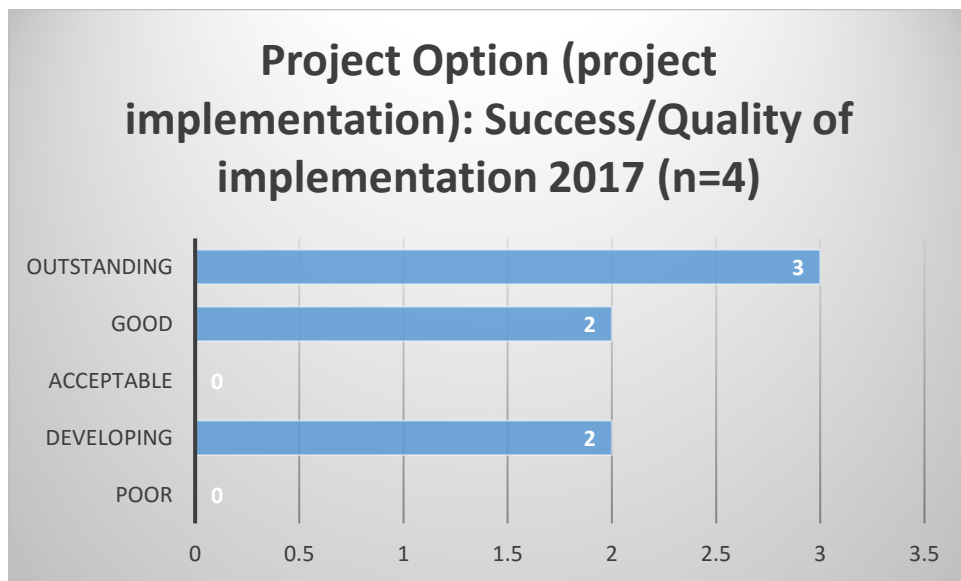


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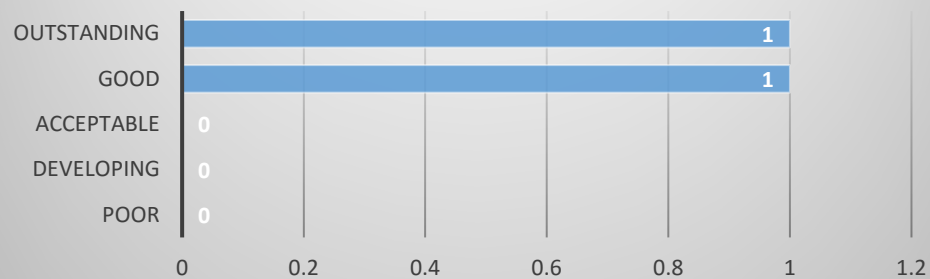


\* Interpretation of what is a project, what is a paper, and what it means to be “implemented” is not standardized, so actual evaluations may overlap.



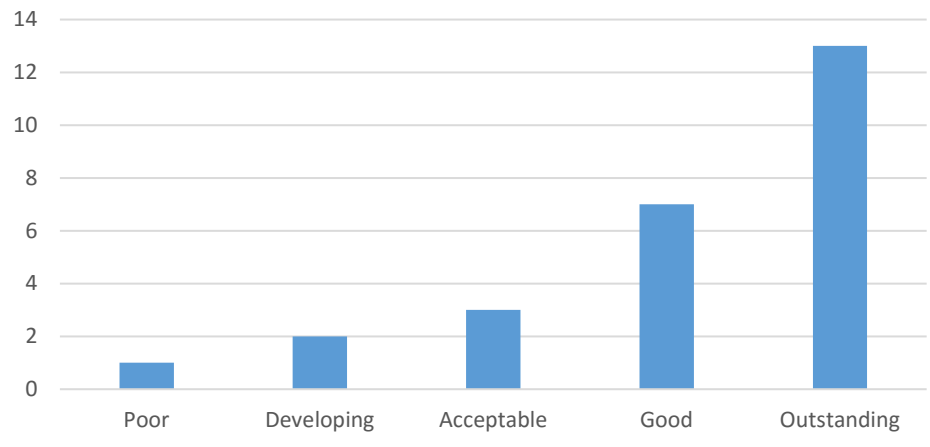


**Paper Option: Contribution of the  
paper to the  
discipline/understanding of the issue  
2017 (n=1)**

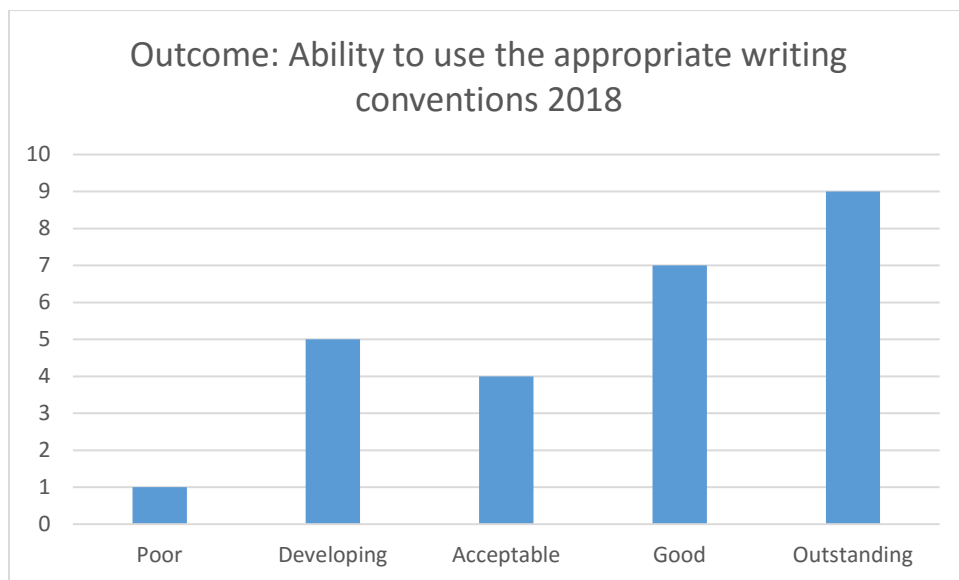
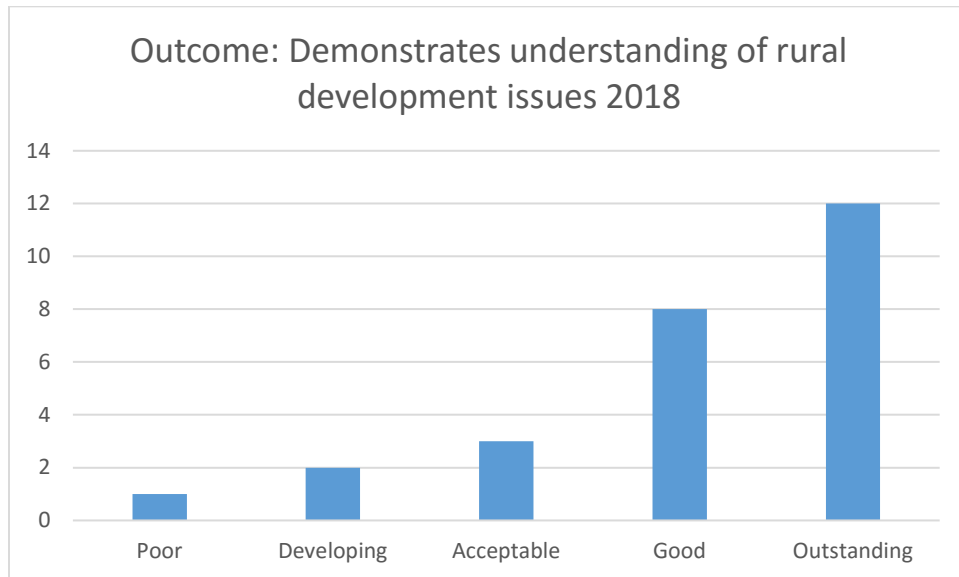


**2018 (evaluated by 3 faculty)**

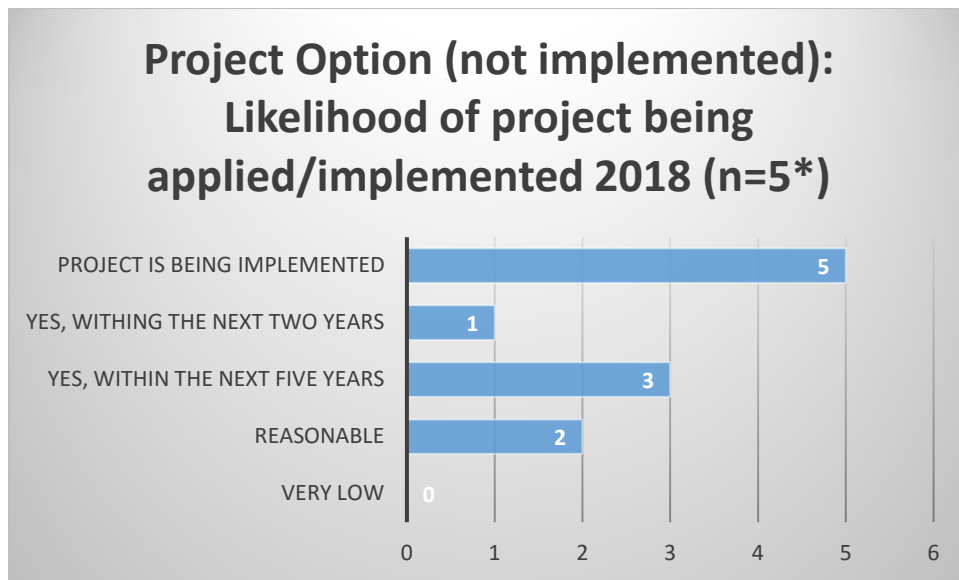
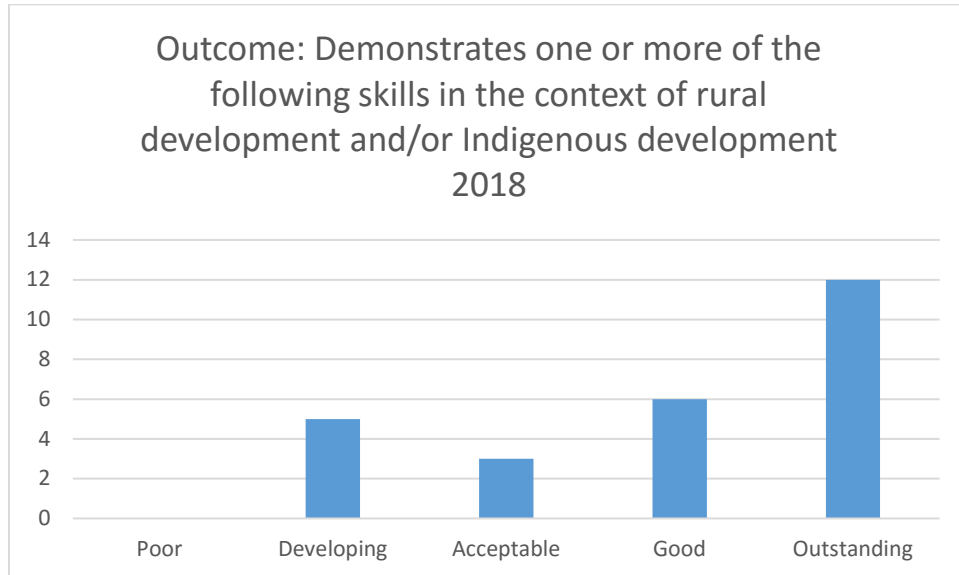
**Outcome: Addresses one or more areas of Rural  
Development 2018**



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