

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Summary

Rural Development, MA *College of Rural and Community Development* **AY 2016/17 and 2017/18**

Submitted by: Jennifer L.L. Carroll
Contact Information: x5405, jlcarroll@alaska.edu
Date: August 25, 2018

1. Assessment information collected

- A. Comprehensive Exams: Five students completed their comprehensive exams in AY 2016/17 and AY 2017/18.

Our previous summary reported that we identified three issues with the comprehensive exams: a lack of topical relevance to their project or thesis, students' tendency to not complete their comprehensive exams in a timely manner, and problems with writing style and consistency. To address these issues, our comprehensive system was revised during this time-period so that the prospectus assignment students complete in RD 650 Community-based Research serves as the basis of student's comprehensive exams. Students complete the prospectus in class and then continue to work with their committee to revise and defend the prospectus. Three students defended their comprehensive exams under the old system of three topic papers and two students defended their comprehensive exams under the new, prospectus-based, system.

- B. Master's Projects and Theses: Three students submitted and defended projects and successfully graduated in AY 2016/17 and AY 2017/18.

In our previous summary we identified the issues of standards, timing, and writing as needing additional attention.

- C. Graduate Survey: Not conducted.

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

- A. Comprehensive Exams: the new system has resulted in some improvements.

Topic: faculty report that the new system improves student preparation for their project.

Timing: it appears that students are moving forward more quickly, but we will not have adequate data until the next summary report.

Writing: Writing has improved due to the efforts of all faculty teaching graduate students to increase and enforce writing standards.

Program Name, Degree

B. Master's Projects and Theses:

Standards have been clarified and improved. However, we are continuing to work on providing better guidelines. Rural Development MA students submit very diverse projects.

Timing has been addressed by the development of two RD MA Step by Step flowcharts, one for full-time students and one for part-time students.

Writing has improved due to the efforts of all faculty teaching graduate students to increase and enforce writing standards.

C. Graduate Survey: Not conducted.

The Department has engaged the services of Schoolhouse Partners to assess the RD MA program and help determine future directions for the program. They are conducting some surveys and their work will be used to revise the program in AY 2019-2020.

3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above

DANSRD faculty met on August 20, 2018 to review this summary report.

A. Comprehensive Exams

No changes will be made at this time.

B. Master's Projects and Theses: Standards for theses are established by the Graduate school. Most curriculum changes are being made for projects.

No changes will be made at this time.

C. Graduate Survey:

No changes will be made at this time. Changes will be made in AY 2019-2020 after the assessment by Schoolhouse Partners is completed and evaluated by the Department.

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
Page 2

Program Name, Degree

Charlene Stern