



An Industry Perspective of Competencies Needed for Agricultural Workforce Development

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Introduction

Need for the Study:

- Industry success depends on prepared graduates
- In-depth curriculum review is recommended every two to five years
- Curriculum evaluations are proven to develop strong academic programs

This Research:

- Examines previous literature to identify agricultural graduate competency needs
- Highlights opportunities for academic program development
- Aligns with priority three of the 2016-2020 American Association of Agricultural Education (AAAE) National Research Agenda

Conceptual Framework

- Involved a content analysis of previous literature published
- Examined articles from three literary outlets:
 - Journal of Agricultural Education (JAE)
 - Journal of Applied Communications (JAC)
 - Association of Public Land-grant University (APLU) series on Employability Skills in Agriculture and Natural Resources

Findings

- Technical skills specific to the agricultural communications discipline remain an important curriculum focus; however, literature leans toward a focus on 21st Century skills.
- Both technical skills and 21st Century skills should be taught with a real-world approach.

Methodology

- Reviewed agricultural communications literature from the past ten years.
- Coded for recurring themes and key ideas within literature.
- Organized key themes into a literature review.
- Recommended direction for further research based on those findings.

Considering APLU's effort to provide an industry-wide profile of graduate needs, the four concern areas listed within the 2020 APLU report exist as the strongest curriculum recommendation focus at this time

Findings

Technical Skills

- 1 Writing
- 2 Editing
- 3 Public Relations
- 4 Advertising
- 5 Photography

21st Century Skills

- 1 Listening Skills
- 2 Conversation Skills
- 3 Team Skills
- 4 Critical Thinking Skills

APLU Findings 2011

- 1 Experience
- 2 Team Skills
- 3 Communication Skills
- 4 Leadership Skills
- 5 Decision Making/ Problem Solving
- 6 Self-management Skills
- 7 Professional Skills

APLU Findings 2020

- 1 A ability to persist in a new job
- 2 Dealing with ambiguity in job tasks & workplace expectations
- 3 Dealing with the pace & content of change in the workplace
- 4 How to manage conflict in the workplace

Conclusions

- Previous research identified competency needs of the industry & evaluated curriculum
- Industry changes & advancements require continual re-evaluation of the discipline
- The 2020 APLU report provided the most up-to-date competency desires of the industry

Recommendations



- Evaluate current curriculum to identify current instruction methods
- Identify current employability skill gaps to identify parallels with most recent research findings
- Provide a targeted curriculum approach to meet the demands of a changing industry