

Public Abstract

First Name:Shannon

Middle Name:Christian

Last Name:Snyder

Adviser's First Name:Robert

Adviser's Last Name:Terry, Jr.

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

Graduation Term:SP 2008

Department:Agricultural Education

Degree:MS

Title:Perceptions of Employers of Graduates of the Agricultural Systems Management Program Regarding Skills and Competencies Needed for Successful Employment

The need for the Agricultural Systems Management (ASM) program at the University of Missouri is based on agricultural industry demands for qualified personnel to supervise technological processes and the employees who perform associated tasks. Technological advancements in this area require continual monitoring of the subjects taught by ASM academic programs. Curriculum is evaluated with regard to usefulness to students as future employees. This study was modeled after a similar evaluation conducted at Purdue University (Ess, & Strickland, 2001). The study sought to simply describe employers of ASM graduates based on demographic data as well as their perceptions of the mastery level by MU ASM graduates of skills gathered while enrolled in the MU ASM program and importance of these skills to their company.

Competencies associated with irrigation and surface water management defined the lower portion of the moderate score (2.51-3.50). Competencies evaluated as holding the highest level of mastery and importance by respondents included: demonstration of professional ethical responsibilities, development of solutions to problems by locating relevant information, demonstration of effective computer skills, application of skills associated with mathematics, demonstration of a willingness to adapt to new concepts, development of solutions to problems by analyzing possible alternatives and effective use of financial skills. Competencies denoted of moderately high importance by respondents but of lesser demonstrable effectiveness by MU ASM graduates included: incorporation of safety into the workplace, demonstration of effective written communication skills, demonstration of proficiency in using electronics technology, and effective demonstration of human resource skills.

Implementation into the MU ASM curriculum of competencies that are not well demonstrated by MU ASM graduates but are of importance to employers of these graduates is advisable. In addition, competencies that are already well demonstrated by MU ASM graduates and are of significant importance to employers of these graduates should continue to be included in the curriculum.