PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYERS OF GRADUATES OF THE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM REGARDING SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES NEEDED FOR SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT

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ABSTRACT

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).

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," and "application of skills associated with mathematics,". 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.