

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT USING NEWLY DEVELOPED PROGRAM  
STANDARDS FOR AGRICULTURAL TEACHER EDUCATION

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Assessment is justifiable and warranted in those cases where the needs of the population served are not being met, a developmental problem has arisen, or the staff feels that it is necessary to upgrade the quality of the curriculum through introspection and objective outside criticisms.

The Oregon State University Agricultural Education (AEd) faculty felt this need for assessment. It was felt that many of the courses taken in the Schools of Education and Agriculture were not totally meeting the needs of agricultural education students. Additionally, both staff members on the AEd staff were new to their respective positions and both were eager to improve the program; therefore, program assessment was viewed as a positive rather than a negative force.

*The Assessment at OSU*

An important consideration in making a decision to assess a program is the availability of an assessment instrument which would standardize the assessment process and add to the thoroughness of the assessment.

Such an assessment instrument was formulated by Harold Crawford and his staff at Iowa State University following national and regional seminars which generated acceptable standards for Agricultural Teacher Education Programs. It was developed as part of the nationally validated "*Standards for Quality Vocational Programs in Agriculture/Agribusiness Education.*" Given that the above standards were developed by a group representing the national scope of agricultural education, that the standards were validated nationally, that a nation-wide advisory committee was used for final screening of the standards, and that dissemination was done nationally through three regional conferences, it was determined that this instrument would add credence to the assessment process and the findings of the assessment team.

The assessment instrument included the following factors: recruitment, enrollment, counseling, instructional program,

graduate M.S. level, graduate Ph.D. level, inservice education, certification, placement, staffing, support staff, professional development, research, professional leadership service, administrative organization, financing, facilities and equipment, and evaluation.

### *The Assessment Process*

In the process of assessment, one of the early steps was to select an assessment team. The two "outside" members of the team were Irving Cross, Head of the Department of Agricultural Education at Colorado State University and James Clouse, Professor of Agricultural Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. These team members were selected by the Oregon State University Agricultural Education Advisory Committee (OSU-AEd Advisory Committee). The Oregon Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association (OVATA) selected Wright Noel, a vocational agriculture teacher from Madras, Oregon, to represent practicing professionals in the state.

After the assessment team was selected, an itinerary was developed with input from the OSU Agricultural Education staff, the State Department of Education (SDE) staff, the OSU-AEd Advisory Committee, and the assessment team. The four-day itinerary which was followed by the assessment team included the following representative activities.

On Monday evening all assessment team members reported, and a seminar was held by the AEd staff to distribute materials, review the assessment instrument, review the itinerary, and state the purpose for the assessment.

Tuesday's activities included an assessment-planning strategy plus visits with the President of the University, Deans of the Schools of Agriculture and Education, the Director of the Vocational-Technical Division, and recent graduates of the AEd program.

On Wednesday, the assessment team traveled to the SDE and visited with the Vocational Division personnel plus members of the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission. Upon their return to campus, they telephoned principals with agricultural programs in their schools and met with OVATA officers, AEd Advisory Committee members, and former directors of the AEd department of OSU.

Thursday, current undergraduate and graduate students were interviewed and time was allotted for formulation of a preliminary oral report.

The Iowa State University assessment instrument was divided into logical sections by the assessment team. Each member was then responsible for gathering pertinent information concerning his sections as well as writing the final report on the sections assigned.

A preliminary oral report of findings was given by Cross, assessment team chairman, late Thursday afternoon. Since attendance at this report by all parties was of critical importance, if a university staff administrator could not attend the session, it was determined to either postpone the session or secure assurance of a substitute who would report to that administrator missing the session.

The final written report by the assessment team was duplicated by the OSU Agricultural Education Department and forwarded to the President of the University; the Dean of the School of Education; the Dean of the School of Agriculture; the Director and State Supervisor at the SDE; the Division Director; and the OSU-AEd Advisory Committee. The final report was presented orally to the OVATA at the annual Vo-Ag Teachers Summer Conference.

### *Findings*

Concern identified by the assessment as needing attention included:

1. Hands-on technical agriculture course work.
2. Humanities and Social Science courses.
3. Education course requirements.
4. Teacher certification requirements.
5. Administrative responsibilities.
6. Student teacher supervision.
7. Staffing.
8. Recruitment.

The assessment team commended the current program for the following:

1. Consultative services to first and second year teachers.
2. Conducting a systematic evaluation process.
3. Conducting follow-up studies on graduates.
4. Maintaining a positive image of the department among practicing professionals.

### *After the Assessment at OSU*

After completing the assessment at OSU, a preliminary long-range plan was developed incorporating the input of the assessment

and the response to the assessment as received from the School of Education, the School of Agriculture, the President of the University, the OVATA, and the OSU-AEd Advisory Committee. Proposals have been written to facilitate those changes recommended by the assessment team and are currently in the evaluation process.

The School of Education has received a directive from the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission to institute specific changes within the total school curriculum. The results of the assessment have been extremely beneficial to the AEd staff in establishing program direction through this required change period.

A final long-range plan will be developed with consideration given to recommendations from the report. Prioritized program goals as identified through the assessment process will be used in the development of this final long-range plan.

### *The Challenge to Others*

The assessment of the Agricultural Education Department at Oregon State University has been a very valuable experience. We now feel we have a clear path to follow as we move into the future. We see this effort as a substantial step toward the formulation of a long-range plan for which we can be accountable. It also moves the department toward the funding necessary to achieve an accountable program. We encourage you to accept the challenge of a total program assessment using outside professionals. It will strengthen your program and lend impetus to those areas of need which are worthy of concern.

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(Lindhahl and Crawford, continued from page 52)

Kovach, Robert V. *A Study of Michigan Community College Administrator Attitudes Regarding the Desired Formal Qualifications of Community College Faculty Members*. Ph. D. Thesis. 1972. 209 pp.

Lindhahl, Donald G. *A Factor Analysis of Professional Education Competencies and Selected Community College Instructors*. Ed. D. Thesis. Oregon State University. 1971. 102 pp.

Miller, Aaron J. *Research and Development Priorities in Technical Education*, A report of a national research planning conference in technical education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. 1967.

Persons, Edgar and George Copa. *Research in Agricultural Education Beyond High School*. Report of the regional research conference on agricultural education, Department of Agricultural Education, University of Minnesota. 1970.