

**Academic Program Review**  
Report Template  
University of Wyoming  
Office of Academic Affairs  
March 2016

(adapted from SDSU)

Deans and Directors who administer an authorized major or course of study approved by action of the Board of Trustees will be responsible for conducting program reviews. Four key elements should be addressed in each academic program review: (1) Program Demand, (2) Program Quality, (3) Mission Centrality, and (4) Cost.

For each program that is reviewed, a recommendation will be made by the Academic Dean to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

*Instructions: Please provide the following information:*

**Title of Program/Specialization:**

Bachelors of Science in Agricultural Communications

**Indicate whether undergraduate or graduate program/specialization:**

Undergraduate degree only

**Department and College:**

College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR), Office of Academic and Student Programs

**Department Head Name and contact information (phone, email):**

Mark Stayton, Interim Associate Dean for Academic and Student Programs, College of ANR, 307-766-4025, stayton@uwyo.edu

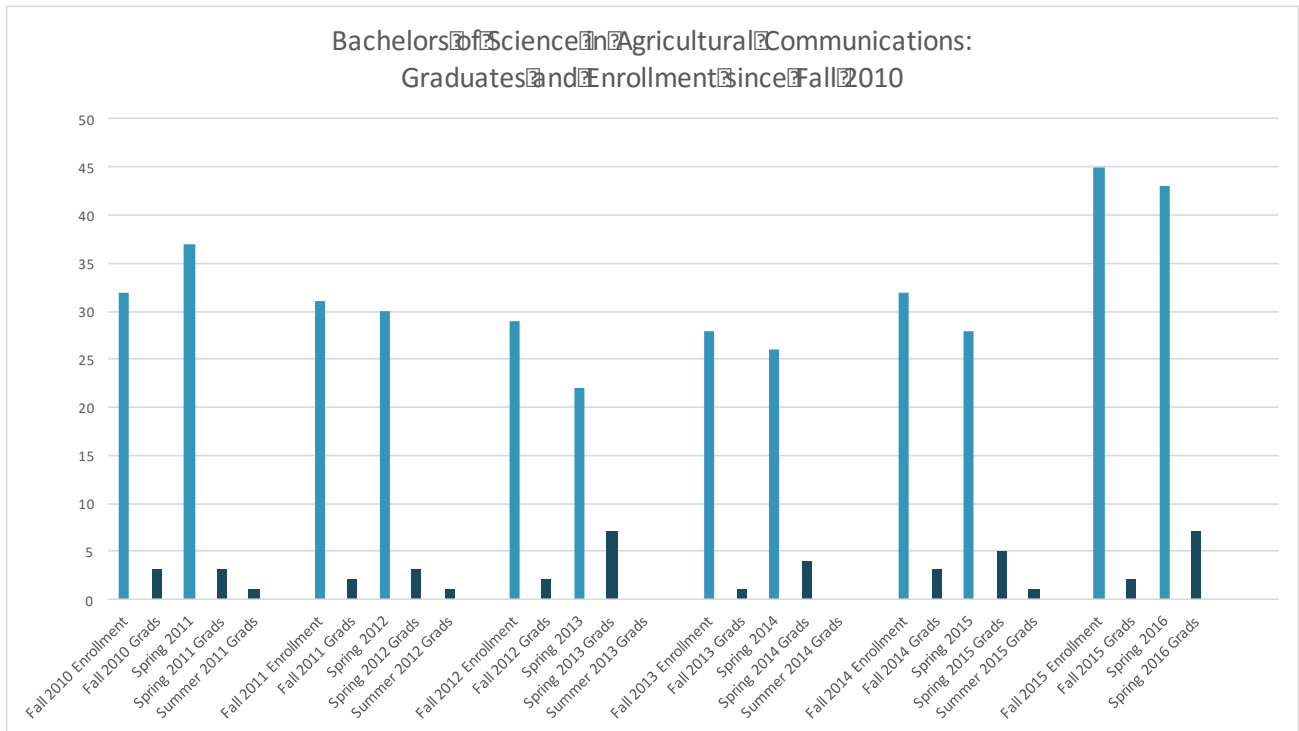
**Part 1 – Program Review**

*Instructions: Please answer each of the following questions. Items listed under each question have been provided to help guide your response. If an item is not applicable, simply indicate “N/A”.*

**1. Program Demand\*:**

*(Note: If degrees granted exceeds cutoff, delay review until next round.)*

- a. Number of graduates over 5-year period: **38 for AY2011-12 through AY2015-16 (not counting graduates in summer 2016).**
- b. Enrollment in major/specialization over 5-year period: **An average of 33 students have been enrolled each fall semester from Fall 2010 through Fall 2015. The trends are shown in the next figure.**



\* Cutoffs for “Low Demand” Designation -- *Degrees Granted*

- Bachelor’s Programs: Average – 5 per year; 5-year total: 25
- Master’s Programs: Average – 3 per year; 5-year total: 15
- Ph.D. Programs: Average – 1 per year; 5-year total: 5

(See APPENDIX A for the types of programs that will be excluded from review.)

**2. Program Quality: Is the program of high quality?**

a. Program accreditation

i. For all other programs include:

1. Date of most recent Academic Program Review (APR)

N/A

(Note: For first-time reviews, include N/A in response.)

**The Agricultural Communications (Ag Com) BS degree is highly interdepartmental. Ag Com requires 70 credit hours of core courses. Of these credits, 24 are specified within the Department of Communications and Journalism. Statistics 2050 or 2070 (4 credits) is required. The remaining 42 credits are completely flexible within the College of Agriculture with 18 credits of lower division coursework and 24 credits of upper division coursework required (which includes a 1 credit hour required course – AGRI 4975). As a result, students may tailor their degree program to meet their own personal goals. Furthermore, the Ag Com degree is the only general agriculture degree type offered by UW. Recent graduates of the program have accepted positions in production agriculture, agricultural crop consulting, horticulture, agricultural**

**education (Grades 9-12), Extension (including 4-H), agricultural journalism, agricultural marketing, agricultural advocacy and lobbying and politics, as well as attending graduate programs and law school (see 3c. for examples of graduate placement).**

**Several Agricultural Communications students have been recognized as recipients of awards external to UW while students in the program. Examples of such awards include:**

**Several winners of the Wyoming Farm Bureau Collegiate Discussion Meet (represented Wyoming at the National meets)  
Colorado Cattlemen's Association Top Recruiter 2015 Award  
Public Lands Council Scholarship Recipient and Wyoming Representative  
FFA American Degree recipients**

**b. Credentials of faculty**

- i. Include a list of all faculty by name, highest degree and discipline of highest degree:**

**The only faculty member who specifically teaches in the Ag Com curriculum currently is the Interim Associate Dean of Academic and Student Programs, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources: Mark Stayton. The required course for all Ag Com majors is the Ag Com Senior Project (AGRI 4975 1 credit). Additionally, many Ag Com students complete a supervised internship as part of their degree requirements (AGRI 4990 1 – 6 credit hours). Additionally, the Interim Associate Dean advises the majority of the Ag Com majors, though the former Associate Dean continues to advise several Ag Com students. All other courses in the curriculum are offered by the Department of Communications and Journalism and by Departments in the College of ANR.**

- ii. Also, include a breakdown by gender and ethnicity.**
- iii. Grants awarded to academic personnel: Previous 5 years**
- iv. Grants submitted by academic personnel: Previous 5 years**
- v. Publications/presentations by academic personnel**
- vi. National/international awards**
- vii. Other**

**Stayton CV is attached**

**c. Program reputation**

- i. If program is ranked, include rank and by what organization.**

N/A

- ii. Include a brief description of any other indicators of program reputation such as demand (e.g. waiting lists or over enrollment) for admission into program, employer data/feedback, etc.

**Enrollment in the Agricultural Communications program averaged 21.5 students between 2000 and 2006. The average enrollment between 2010 and 2015 was 33 students and the high enrollment mark was reached in AY2015-16 with 45 students enrolled.**

- d. Curriculum of major or specialization
  - i. Include a list of courses by prefix, number, title required in the major or specialization (do not include general education course unless required as part of the major requirements.)

**Communications and Journalism Requirements:**

**Communications/journalism core: COJO 1000, 1010, 1040, 2100, 3530 and minimum of 9 hours of communication/journalism electives**

**Agriculture Requirements:**

**Agriculture core requirements: At least 18 hours must be lower division (Ag 1000-2000) elective courses, and at least 23 hours must be upper division (Ag 3000-4000) elective courses and students must all complete the required AGRI 4975 (1 credit) course.**

**Supporting course requirement: STAT 2050 or 2070**

- e. Distance delivery of program/major
  - i. Note if the program is offered online and/or at one of the off-campus attendance centers (e.g., UW-Casper)

N/A

- f. Quality of Assessment Plan/data

Include a brief description of the program assessment plan and how the data are used to inform decisions related to program quality and student learning.

The Ag Communications BS program has been consistently ranked as a Tier 1 program for assessment.

**Student Learning Goals and Objectives<sup>1</sup>**

**The following goals are broad statements that describe the program more than specific student learning outcomes.**

**Goal I. To develop proficiency in written and oral communication for professional and non-professional audiences.**

**Goal II. To gain appreciation and understanding of agriculture and related disciplines.**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.uwyo.edu/agprograms/departments/ag-communications.html>

**Goal III. To acquire lifelong learning skills for engaged citizenship.**

**Suggested Objectives and Assessment Strategies are provided on the Ag Communications web page. Interviews with internship supervisors and with employers have been used to tailor the curriculum. Two additions to this assessment plan will be to assess student's digital media communication skills; and develop a student job placement database as additional tools for estimating student success.**

g. Strategic Plan

- i. Include a brief description of any plans for the program or specialization that appear in the college/department strategic plan (i.e., facilities upgrades, curriculum changes, on-line or off-campus delivery, enrichment learning opportunities, etc.)

**The principal strategic objective is to improve and systematize recruiting for this program. Visibility is low among students in Wyoming whose career goals are coincident with this major. The College is moving to consolidate all of their Communications curricula within the Agricultural Communications degree. Specifically, the Communications Option in Animal and Veterinary Sciences will be eliminated. In addition, the Senior Project and Internship courses are being reformatted to move to a practicum model to ensure a closer linkage between off-campus learning experiences and the academic program. As this program grows in numbers and stature, it is envisioned that a capstone, COM 3 course be developed to help these students synthesize their major and to help facilitate assessment of the program and its student learning outcomes.**

h. Other:

3. **Mission Centrality: Does the program advance the mission of UW including institutional strategy?**

- a. Describe how the program supports the mission, vision and strategic goals of UW.

**This is a program that supports both the natural resources focus in the university as well as professions critical to the region. As outlined below, this degree provides students with unique sets of skills in agriculture, as well as good communication traits. These students have a variety of options for careers and are generally high in demand across the state and region. As a land grant university, this combination of science, social science and communications is very important as we provide the next generation workforce that is able to link the classroom, laboratory, and public.**

- b. Describe how the program contributes to other programs across campus (i.e., general education courses, minor or support courses, interdisciplinary program, etc.)

**This program is interdisciplinary by design. It draws on existing courses across this college and one other.**

- c. Include placement data for graduates and indicate if graduates are working in the field or not.

**Currently there is no systematic database of graduate placement for Agricultural Communications. The following information is based on anecdotal information about recent graduates of the program who have entered fields ranging from Agricultural Education (grades 9 – 12 as well as Extension), commercial agricultural production and consulting, public policy and politics, through to graduate and/or law school. Examples of placement of recent graduates include the following:**

**Legislative Assistant, Senator Barrasso, Washington DC  
Equine Programs Director and Communications Director, Northern  
International Livestock Exposition (NILE)  
Assistant Director of Web Content, National Cattlemen and Beef Assn.  
Crop Adjuster, American Farm Bureau Insurance Services  
Event Marketing Manager, Elite Rodeo Athletes  
Event Marketing Coordinator, RFD-TV, Rural Media Group  
Administrative Assistant, Wyoming Farm Bureau  
Freelance Writer, Tri-State Livestock News  
Assistant Manager, Roland Harvesting  
Owner/Operator, T&T Livestock  
Production/Sales Rep, Torrington Auction  
Communication Publications and Programs Director, Wyoming Stock Growers  
Assn.  
Secondary Agriculture Education, California School System  
University of Idaho Law School  
University College Dublin, MS in Agrosience and Innovation Support  
Colorado State University, MS in Integrated Resource Management  
California Polytechnic University, MS in Ag Education**

**Current and past students have been engaged in internships in the areas of commercial horticulture, agricultural journalism, agricultural marketing, agricultural advocacy and lobbying and politics, including some placed in the following roles:**

**TV/Media intern, Las Vegas Events/Incompass Media  
Media Relations Intern, Cowgirl Imaging  
Marketing Intern, RFD-TV  
Policy Intern, Public Lands Council (Washington D.C.)  
Legislative Intern, U.S. Senate (Washington D.C.)  
Media Intern, US House of Representatives (Lummis in Washington D.C.)  
Media/Public Relations Intern, Wyoming Dept. of Agriculture  
Policy Intern, National Cattlemen's Beef Association (Washington D.C.)**

**Communications interns, Wyoming Stockgrowers' Assn.  
Intern, Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation  
Communications/Public Relations interns, Wyoming Agricultural Experiment  
Station  
Communications/Public Relations Interns, College of Agriculture  
Communications/Public Relations Interns, UW Extension  
UW Extension/4-H Interns, State and County offices  
Executive Intern, Rodeo Austin  
Executive Intern, National Western Stock Show  
Media Intern, Northern International Livestock Exposition (NILE)  
Livestock Intern, NILE  
Horticultural Intern, Windmill Hill Greenhouse**

- d. Describe the uniqueness or duplication of this program across the UW.  
**The Animal and Veterinary Sciences major currently offers a communications option, but that option will be dropped.**
- e. Other:

**4. Cost: Is the program financially viable?**

- a. Ratio of student credit hours per FTE

**It is difficult to calculate with one faculty member coordinating this degree, which is so widely distributed. The single required course and the program being the responsibility of an existing administrator with no additional dedicated faculty.**

- b. Direct instructional expenditures:
  - i. Per student credit hour
  - ii. Per total degrees awarded
  - iii. Non-personnel expenditures per total academic FTE

**Instructional expenditures are difficult to calculate as this is a distributed degree. The main activity is advising and teaching the practicum and the 1-credit Senior Project course, both of which are managed by the interim associate dean.**

- c. Course enrollment
  - i. Number of classes falling under University minimums

**AGRI 4975 Senior Project has been offered every semester including summer. In spring, the course often meets the minimum enrollment of 10 students. Summer and Fall sections are usually under-subscribed. The rotation schedule is being altered to offer the course only one semester per year to ensure the minimum enrollment standard is met in the future.**

- ii. Lower-division courses falling under University minimums

None

- d. Other instructional cost drivers, such as:
  - i. Section fill rates
  - ii. Course completion rates
  - iii. Curricular complexity
  - iv. Faculty course load

**The distributed nature of this degree is such that courses being taken are almost entirely taken from existing courses from across the college and in Communications and Journalism. The Senior Project (AGRI 4975) and the practicum/internship (AGRI 4990) courses are often just at or below minimum. These are being adjusted to offer these courses/practical experiences only once per year each starting in the Fall of 2017.**

- e. Research expenditures per tenured/tenure-track FTE (and other academic personnel, where appropriate)
- f. Compare your data to national benchmarks (Delaware data)

**Agricultural Communications is not on the Delaware list. This is definitely an emerging field. Anecdotally, there are about 8 similar programs across the nation and all are robust and growing. There is also a growing national trend of new graduate programs in the discipline.**

- g. Other:

## **Part II - Recommendations**

*Instructions: After the review is completed, the Dean in consultation with the Department Head will select one of the following recommendations. In the justification, address each of the items associated with the recommendation.*

### **1) Retain with Further Review Required**

- a) A college may request that a program be retained for further review for those degree programs that serve a specific function central to the mission of the college or university.

**The College of ANR is recommending that the Agricultural Communications BS degree program be retained with a further review in three years.**

- b) Justification for retain due to further review must include:
  - i) Explanation for how the program is central to the university's mission and the



benefit to the system;

**The Agricultural Communications degree represents the only general agriculture degree on this campus. Its flexibility along with its focus on communications serves a need in the industry and among students as outlined above.**

**The Agricultural Communications degree program has enjoyed an increase in enrolled students and graduates over the last five years. The Ag Com program, during AY 2015/16, reached an all-time high of 45 enrolled students with 9 graduates (not counting graduates in summer 2016). In comparison, the average number of enrolled Ag Com students each fall semester since 2010 was 33 students. From 2000-2006, Ag Com enrollment ranged from 15 – 29 (mean 21.5) students.**

**Most academic advising in this program is handled by the Interim Associate Dean for Academic and Student Programs in the College of ANR, with continuing support from the previous Associate Dean. The Interim Associate Dean directs the Ag Com internships and the Ag Com Senior Project, subject to the re-organization of these activities as described under Strategic Plan. Students in Ag Com have had little difficulty finding seats in the relevant COJO courses. However, with the recent reductions in Communications and Journalism, this may change. Generally, ANR courses are readily available for Ag Com students, with a few occasional exceptions.**

**As a result, the incremental cost of offering this program is small.**

- ii) Description of specific steps (already taken and/or planned) to increase enrollment and graduate production;

**Last spring, the College hired a student recruiter. Her mission is to market the college programs across the region. The “low-hanging-fruit” in this marketing campaign will be programs with high job potential, and low visibility. Ag Communications falls into this class along with other programs such as Food Science. Also, as previously indicated, the other communication option within the college will be eliminated.**

- iii) Preliminary outcomes of steps taken.

**Enrollment in the program is increasing, which reflects improved visibility and success in meeting student needs. A review of Agricultural Communications in 3 years would be important to ensure continued progress.**

## APPENDIX A

### “Low Productivity” Programs Excluded from Review Process

- 1) **Major Program Modifications**
  - a) Degree programs that have undergone recent program modifications that adversely impact graduate production for a college.
  - b) Modifications traditionally include programs that have undergone recent name changes during the reporting window that result in two equivalent degree programs.
- 2) **Program/Major Specializations**
  - a) Degree programs that have one or more specializations which reduce the total number of graduates.
  - b) The exclusion may apply only for those specializations where the combination results in graduate production that meets the established threshold for the degree.
- 3) **Terminated Programs**
  - a) Degree programs that have been inactivated during the reporting period, but still depict graduates that fall below the established thresholds.
  - b) Terminated programs will remain on the Program Productivity Report until inactive programs have completely cycled through the established reporting period.
- 4) **New Programs**
  - a) Degree programs that have been activated within the past 7 years resulting in limited graduate production due to program implementation.
  - b) Institutional review may be requested prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> year if graduate production is not scaling to the required thresholds for the degree level.