



College of Agriculture
and Natural Resources
**Agricultural and
Applied Economics**

DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION, FALL 2020

OVERVIEW

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics (AGEC) delivers degree programs, outreach and engagement, and applied research focused in the areas of agri-business management, production economics, environmental and natural resource economics, agricultural and food policy, and regional economic analysis. The department offers one primary undergraduate degree, BS in Agribusiness, with three degree options: Agribusiness, Farm and Ranch Management, and Livestock Business Management. We also offer undergraduate minors, and coordinate with the Haub School on a dual degree option. The department's BS degree program serves approximately 200 majors and 30 minors. The department also offers an MS in Agricultural and Applied Economics, and several graduate minor options. Our MS program serves 10-15 students per AY.

The department has an operating budget of approximately \$200,000/FY, with an additional \$75,000 in Foundation accounts, and approximately \$2 million in faculty-led extramural funding. The department includes 20 full-time academic personnel and staff, including 11 tenured/tenure track faculty, 7 academic professional research scientists (two grant funded), Extension specialists and lecturers, and 2 staff. The department also employs 1-3 part-time lecturers each semester to deliver undergraduate courses.

MISSION

Empower Students and Citizens to Explore, Discover, Learn, Grow and Serve

VISION

The Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics is the partner of choice in the region for education, outreach and engagement related to the economics of agriculture, natural resources, consumer choice, regional economics and public policy.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Proposal to reduce investment in Community Development focus area in undergraduate and graduate programs in Agricultural and Applied Economics

Pre-amble

Community development is a study area that overlaps economics, social science and political science disciplines. It focuses on understanding how local communities and governments organize and deliver services and economic development to citizens. The Agricultural and Applied Economics department has historically had an Extension, research and, to a lesser extent, teaching focus in community development. On the teaching side, we do not have an official stand-alone degree program in Community Development (i.e., not on the master list of degrees); however, we have been marketing a focus in community development to undergraduate and graduate students in our degree programs. The focus has included three currently listed courses:

AGEC 4460/5460 – Agriculture and Economic Development

AGEC 4600/5600 – Community Economic Analysis

AGEC 4660/5660 – Community and Economic Development

We propose to stop marketing and recruiting students for this focus area and to refocus our efforts on regional economic analysis, an area more in line with the University and College strategic goals. Reduction in staffing for Extension and teaching faculty have led the College to reduce its focus on community development, but to maintain capacity in the related area of Regional Economics, which directly serves and is crucial for WY communities. In the short-term, eliminating this focus area will allow us to redirect teaching resources (by eliminating 2 or 3 of the courses listed above) to core programs in accordance with the COANR and University strategic plans, and to programs with the potential for revenue generation. In the long-term, eliminating this focus area will allow us to be more strategic in filling vacancies.

We do not expect this change to have significant negative consequences for our program or our students. There has not been consistent interest in this focus area over the last decade as detailed below.

- i. Number of inquiries for graduate programs
Only two MS student over the last decade have entered the program to focus, in part, in community development. Current and future interest/need is more focused on the quantitative approaches of regional economics, a need that we will be able to continue serving.
- ii. Number of declared majors; degree completions
Since Community Development is not a stand-alone degree program, we do not have declared majors or degree completions. However, few undergraduate students in the last decade have chosen to pursue this focus area by completing at least two of the three courses. These courses have had highly variable enrollment and have had to be cancelled for low enrollment multiple times over the last ten years.

Eliminating this focus area and the associated courses is not expected to negatively impact the other degree options in AGECEC that serve over 200 undergraduate and graduate majors.