Evaluation of an Agriculture and Food Studies Certificate Program: Lessons Learned and Strategies for Improvement

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Purpose and Objectives

• Assist in developing a skilled workforce for agriculture and food related employers.
• Knowledge and skills for advancement of incumbent, underemployed and displaced workers.
• Implement 24 credit certificate in fall 2014.
• Offer agriculture and food related pathways
Needs Analysis

- Forty seven (20.8%) out of 202 businesses.
- Similar response by number of employees or business.
- Hard skills: 1) some knowledge of food and agriculture, 2) food safety and sanitation, and 3) quality assurance.
- Soft skills: 1) writing skills, 2) management, 3) problem solving skills, and 4) applied computer skills.
- Majority (68%) prefer online training but use one-on-one.
# Agriculture & Food Studies Certificate (AG02)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGS 150 General Microbiology for Food and Agriculture (new)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 101- College Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUS 135 - Supervising for the 21st Century</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRC 101- Practical Computer Literacy or Software Applications</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC 141- Interpersonal Speech Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUS 101- Introduction to Sustainability</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGS 101 (Bio 113)- Introduction to Agriculture Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGS 200 - Ag Problem Solving - Applications (new)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CREDITS</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection

- Student and registration records (Spring 2014 – 15)
- Advisement – student interviews
- Workforce Improvement Board interviews
- Student exit interviews
- Employer interviews
Percent of those who register given accepted = 31.25% = (5/16)
Percent of those who accepted and graduate = 18.8% = (.6*.31)
Percent of those who apply and graduate = 7.7% = (.6*.31*.41)

Source: Angel Andreu, MCC Institutional Research
Results

• Thirty-nine (39) applications from Spring 2014 – 15

• Demographics:
  – 51% male, 49% female
  – 41% white, 59% minority
  – 28% over the age of 30

• Applied but not accepted – 59% (23)
Results

- Accepted – 41% (16/39)
  - 56% white, 44% minority
  - 56% male, 44% female
- Accepted but did not register – 69% (11/16)
  - Did not shop schools
  - Financial or academic issues
  - Non response
- Accepted and registered – 31% (5/16)
- Graduate – 60% (3/5)
Results

- Financial aid impacts student certificate/degree status.
- Many traditional and nontraditional students lack academic preparation.
- Traditional students view certificate as emphasis/minor.
- All students interested in career pathway.
Conclusions and Implications

- Family and job issues impact non-traditional students.
- Recruitment, registration and retention.
- Perceptions of agriculture and food related pathways.
- Academic preparation - first time and returning students.
- Financial aid influence.