CONNECTING STUDENTS AND DAIRY PRODUCERS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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OVERVIEW

• Introduction
• Purpose & Objectives
• Course Framework
• Evaluation of Student Work
• Results = Course Evaluation
• Conclusions
• Implications
INTRODUCTION

Course Development
• Objectives based upon survey results and observations
  • Alumni and Industry surveys in 2011

Needs:
• Skill development/proficiencies
  • Technology, communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, leadership, team work
• On-farm Experience
• Application and Analysis
  • Dairy cattle biology, industry standards, management practices, financial principals
PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

Purpose: Prepare career-ready students with experience in applied dairy business management, analysis of farm operations, and interaction with dairy producers.

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

• Apply knowledge obtained from previous coursework
• Understand and utilize the SWOT analysis method
• Access, interpret, and analyze computerized dairy records
• Analyze various aspects of a dairy farm operation independently and as a team member
• Perform and analyze basic financial calculations
• Effectively present findings and recommendations to dairy producers
• Understand the benefits of professional networking
COURSE FRAMEWORK

Week 1 – Review

Week 2 – SWOT analysis and case studies

Week 3 – Campus dairy

Week 4, 7, 9 – Farm visits/analysis

Week 11 – Final farm visit/analysis

Week 14 – Final presentations
MEASURING STUDENT SUCCESS

Exams – Midterm and Final
Quizzes
Assignments
  • SWOT Analyses, Case Studies, Financial Calculations
Attendance/Participation

Final Project & Presentation – Rubric
  • Instructor, Producer, and Peer Evaluation
    • Farm business analysis
    • Area of interest
    • Future projections
    • Conclusions
Assessment of Learning Outcomes (n = 6)

Quantitative
• Midterm Exam average = 74%
• Final Exam Average = 87%
• Final Project Average = 88%

Observed
• Communication skills
• Critical Thinking, Problem-solving & Analytical skills
• Confidence
• Team work
RESULTS

Qualitative Assessment – student feedback

• Themes
  1. Analytical Skill Development – knowledge + confidence
  2. Real-world Experience – farms are all different
  3. Professional Networking – communication is key
  4. Comfort Zone - scary but necessary
  5. Want for More – farm visits, producer interactions, case studies, assignments, discussions
## RESULTS

**Student Evaluations (n = 6)**

- Rating Scale: 1 = Outstanding, 2 = Very Good, 3 = Average, 4 = Passable, 5 = Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major objectives of the course were made clear</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>The purposes of projects were clearly defined</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments are challenging; thought provoking</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.41</td>
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<tr>
<td>The course enhanced your understanding of the subject</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course was a valuable learning experience</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.41</td>
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CONCLUSIONS

Successes

• Skills developed and/or improved
  • Communication, Application, critical thinking, problem solving, analytical, math?
• Exposure to new facilities, technologies, & practices
• Professional networking & career exploration
• Inquiry & self-motivation
• Producer feedback and participation

Improvements for Next Year

• More farm visits & case studies
• Diverse farms
• Mock presentations and/or instructor examples
IMPLICATIONS

• Model for many agricultural programs/majors
  • Livestock science, food science, plant science

• Participation in North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge

• Career exploration

• Recruitment
QUESTIONS??