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Linking Acquired Skills of College Graduates with Employer Demands

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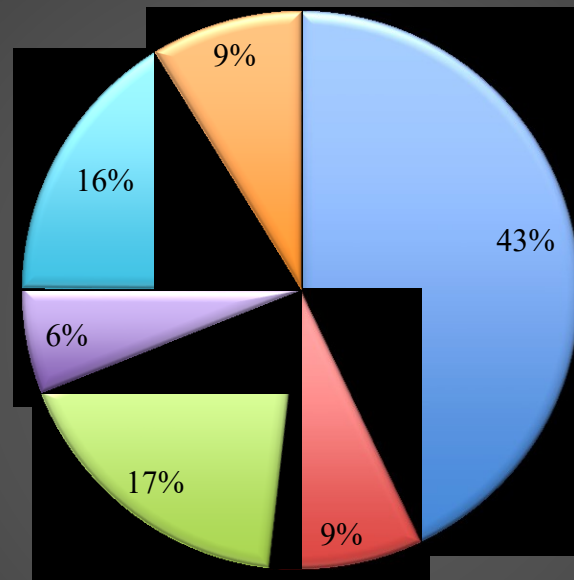
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A Gap To Be Bridged

- What skills and abilities are agricultural employers seeking in college graduates?
- How well are we preparing students for the job market?

Background

Department of Ag Students by Sequence



■ Agribusiness and Food Industry Management

■ Ag Communication & Leadership and Ag Education

■ Agronomy and Crop & Soil Science

■ Horticulture

■ Animal Science and Animal Industry Management

■ Pre-Veterinary Science

Objectives

1. To gain a better understanding of the skills and abilities most sought after by employers in the agricultural industry
2. To identify those skills and abilities agricultural employers find most lacking in college graduates

Methods

	How prepared have you found new college graduates in the following areas/skills?			How important are the following areas/skills to your business?		
	Very Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Not Prepared	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Working with others in teams						
Computer applications						
Oral communication						
Analyzing/statistics						
Written communication						
Critical/analytical thinking						

Surveyed company representatives attending the 2016 ISU Agricultural Career Fair (N=19)



Preliminary Results

- Employers reported college graduates were **most** prepared in
 - Staying current on technology and its application
 - Computer applications
- Employers reported college graduates were **least** prepared in
 - Analyzing/Statistics
 - Critical/Analytical thinking
 - Locating, organizing, evaluating information

Preliminary Results

- Skills employers found **most** important
 - Working with others in teams
 - Oral communication
- Skills employers found **least** important
 - Awareness/experience of diverse cultures
 - Staying current on global developments

Discussion

- How do we ensure students are gaining experience with the skills employers deem most important? Where are students the least prepared?
- Example: Microcomputer Applications in Agriculture course

Next Steps...

- Do student perceptions concerning workplace skills and abilities align with the demand of agricultural employers?
- Do students connect course activities to individual development of skills and abilities beyond course subject matter?



Thank you!

Questions?

How prepared have you found new college graduates in the following areas/skills?

	Very Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Not Prepared
Working with others in teams	6	12	0
Staying current on technology and its application	12	6	0
Computer applications	12	5	0
Locating, organizing, evaluating information	3	13	1
Oral communication	5	11	2
Analyzing/statistics	3	12	2
Written communication	7	8	2
Critical/analytical thinking	3	11	4
Being innovative/creative	8	9	1
Analyzing/solving complex problems	4	13	0
Applying knowledge/skills to the work environment	5	12	1
Awareness/experience of diverse cultures	3	11	2
Staying current on developments in science	3	15	0
Working with people from different backgrounds	9	8	0
Staying current on global developments	7	9	0
Proficient in second language	0	7	8

How important are the following areas/skills to your business?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Working with others in teams	17	1	0
Staying current on technology and its application	10	8	0
Computer applications	9	9	0
Locating, organizing, evaluating information	12	5	0
Oral communication	18	1	0
Analyzing/statistics	4	10	4
Written communication	15	4	0
Critical/analytical thinking	13	6	0
Being innovative/creative	13	6	0
Analyzing/solving complex problems	14	4	1
Applying knowledge/skills to the work environment	16	3	0
Awareness/experience of diverse cultures	4	10	5
Staying current on developments in science	4	10	5
Working with people from different backgrounds	12	6	0
Staying current on global developments	2	11	5
Proficient in second language	6	6	6

What are three to five skills you find recent college graduates to be most lacking?

- Analytical thinking
- Personal communication
- Too reliant on others for direction

What are three to five skills you find the most valuable in recent college graduates?

- Critical thinking
- Works well with others
- Communication
- Computer skills
- Ambition to take on and lead tasks

Employers who attended the 2016 Career Fair:

1st Farm Credit Services	DuPont Crop Protection Rochelle Illinois Field Station	Rain and Hail Crop Insurance
Acres Group	DuPont Pioneer	River Valley Cooperative
Advanced Crop Care, Inc.	Executive Marketing Solutions	Shoup Manufacturing Co., Inc.
Aerial Crop Expert Scouting (ACES)	Farm Credit Illinois	Spectrum Technologies, Inc.
AgReliant Genetics	Farmer Lumpe McClelland (FLM+)	Syngenta
AgriGold Hybrids	Great Plains Management, LLC	Tate & Lyle
AGRI-SEARCH, Inc.	Grieder Sod and Landscaping	Teach Agriculture/FCAE
Archer Daniels Midland Company	Ground Pros Inc	The Equity
Bailey Nurseries	GROWMARK, Inc.	The Maschhoffs LLC
Beck's Hybrids	Helena Chemical Company	Town of Normal
BrightView	Illinois Farm Bureau	United Prairie
Burrus Hybrids	Illinois Farm Business Farm Management (FBFM)	United Suppliers
Career Paths Unlimited	Midwest Groundcovers	University of Illinois Professional Science Master's
CGB Co.	Morris Bixby Group	US Bank
CIT Trucks	Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance	USDA - NASS
Davey Tree	Pfister Seeds llc	USDA-IL Farm Service Agency
Dow AgroSciences/ Mycogen Seeds	Professional Swine Management	Weed Man
DTN	ProPartners Financial	Wyffels Hybrids