

College of Agriculture Curriculum Forum  
February 15, 2006

*Notes on Roger Underwood presentation and Q&A*

Roger Underwood:

- The college outcomes assessments are too warm and fuzzy; they need more muscle on the skeleton. The world is lot rougher place today. We need to tell graduates to get a helmet. Our outcomes need more of that.
- Our students need to be more entrepreneurial in their thinking. That doesn't mean training to start a business, but to think differently and not be afraid to take actions on their thoughts. Do we have to train the people who do the training? In the college entrepreneurship initiative, we're considering that.
- I'd like to see a theme of entrepreneurial thinking in every class. I'd like to see graduates who don't think they have to go to to work for someone. Maybe they take that entrepreneurial spirit into a job with a big company and can get it done because they're good leaders.
- How do we psyche them up, like football players coming onto a field, so they hit the ground running. Get them excited as they leave the university.
- Students need to understand risk and reward. Are they taught that? I wasn't. It's more evident in any job. Examples: take a risk and start a business, you might get rewarded. Don't take a risk and you might get pigeon-holed working for someone else. Maybe the riskiest thing you

might do is working for a large corporation at the mercy of someone else.

- The study of agriculture is about global markets. It's not debatable. Graduates have to understand that as they cross the stage. The world is flat; that's the reality. I'd strongly encourage at least a semester of international study.
- Do students understand production agriculture without government subsidies? (Lasley: 40-45% of farm income in Iowa is subsidies.) It's completely unsustainable. They need to make economic decisions based on that. If it takes a subsidy to produce, it's not worth producing.
- The college needs much more involvement of students in the outside world. I speak in Dermot Hayes' course. These kids are hungry for the real world to come into the classroom. You need people like Randy Stacker, Stine, Sukup, Peg Armstrong-Gustafson, Ryan Pellet, to come in and light these kids up. You need more of an Ivy League seminar approach.
- Are professors engaged in the real world? Some students think the world of Nick Christians because he's so engaged in the real world. His students are so far out in front, they're managing the best golf courses and stadiums at half the age of graduates from other schools. It's back to training the trainers.
- Can our graduates go forth and lead or do they barely get jobs? The outcomes assessment says nothing about leadership. You'll be roadkill if you're not a leader. In classes, they need to learn leadership.