

The Arizona Agriscience Program Review

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Need for the Idea

The Arizona Agriscience Program Review is a set of guidelines that is utilized, through a review process, to ensure the existence of quality agriscience programs within Arizona for secondary level students interested in agriculture. The review process is designed to be community based and combines the expertise of community members, industry leaders, educators (including Agricultural Education Instructors, counselors or general education instructors, administrators and support service personnel), and state staff from the State Department of Education.

Methodology

The actual review process includes a comprehensive review of the agriscience program, by the community based evaluation committee, along with the development of an action plan based upon the findings/recommendations of the evaluation committee.

Specific review objectives within the review guide include:

- Providing information to local personnel for redirection of the program to meet the present and future needs of agriscience students.
- Serve as a model for reviewing all existing programs and a guide for new or expanding programs.
- Review the six major program components categorized as:
 - Community
 - Instructional Program
 - Instructional Staff
 - Facility
 - Accountability
 - Finance
- Provide direction for program enhancement.
- Provide direction for financial support.

Results

The results for the agriscience program review have directly benefited the programs within the state along with the students enrolled in the agriscience programs. The program was started in the spring of 2005 and since then a total of 63 programs have initiated the review process and of those eight programs have completed the entire process. Benefits realized while undergoing the process include: the development of a long range programmatic plan, increases in extended contracts, department vehicles and program continuity through administrative and instructional changes.

Future Plans

The action plan developed as the product of the review process will serve as the basis upon which future program evaluations will be based. The action plan and the steps taken to meet the items addressed within the action plan will serve as a baseline for future program assessment, improvement and ultimately program funding from various sources within the state's government.

Conclusion

Since its inception in 2005, the Arizona Agriscience Program Review has successfully established a standard upon which programs can be measured. The community based evaluation committee has enriched community ties to the local programs and has taken programs in Arizona back to their roots as a community based experiential learning program. The program review process is aiding in program planning and longevity and to this point has been a catalyst for the improvement of agriscience in Arizona.

References

The University of Arizona Department of Agricultural Education. (2005). Arizona Agriscience Program Review Guide. Tucson, AZ.: Elliot, J. & Molina, Q.