

A Follow Up of Alcorn State University
1982-1986 Agricultural Baccalaureate Degree Graduates

by

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
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(ABSTRACT)

This study described the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University (ASU) as perceived by the agricultural baccalaureate degree graduates. Additionally, the study established a biographic and demographic data bank of these graduates for future reference and use by the Department. A descriptive research design was used for the study. The total population for the study was the 160 graduates from all agricultural program areas at ASU from 1982-1986. Data were collected by a questionnaire developed by the researcher with assistance from two review panels. Mailed instruments were returned by 102 graduates representing a 64% response rate. Data were summarized by frequency distributions, percentages, measures of central tendency and measures of variability as appropriate for each variable item. Statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Analysis System computer package at ASU.

The following major conclusions were reached: (1) the graduates perceived the faculty as being effective in the Department of Agriculture at ASU, (2) graduates perceived that certain curricula in the Department were less than adequate, especially that the number of semester hours in communication skills and agricultural engineering

courses needed increasing, (3) the graduates perceived the facilities in the department as insufficient and that additional intern training centers are needed, (4) graduates reported little participation in professional and civic activities, (5) graduates were willing to participate in recruitment for the department, and (6) most graduates were currently employed.

Major recommendations made were: (1) strategies be developed to improve communications with agricultural agencies and industries, (2) the Department of Agriculture closely review the current curriculum to determine how communication, agricultural engineering and computer skills could better be integrated into the undergraduate curriculum, (3) agricultural graduates be contacted to assist in locating appropriate off-campus training centers for student internships, and (4) each program area of the Department needs to further analyze the data collected from the graduates to assist in making programmatic improvement.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

Alcorn State University was founded in 1830 as a church college for young men. The Presbyterian School, Oakland College as it was called, awarded the first baccalaureate degree in the state of Mississippi in 1831. The institution flourished and supplied educational leadership to the state until the 1850s when slavery and secession became disturbing political issues of the period. The college students, faculty and citizens in the communities surrounding the college became adamant in their views regarding politics and other social issues of the time. In 1851 tempers flared, the campus became unsafe, and the college president was killed; shortly thereafter, Oakland College was closed (Dunham 1971).

In 1871, after the Civil War, the abandoned Oakland College was purchased by the Mississippi State Legislature for the education of black males. This action occurred during the tenure of John R. Lynch, the black speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives. James L. Alcorn was governor of Mississippi at that time and the institution was renamed Alcorn University in his honor. Hiram R. Revels, the first black person elected to the United States Senate, was persuaded after some vigorous negotiations to resign his seat in Congress and become the first president of Alcorn University.

Alcorn University then became the second state supported university in Mississippi (Dunham 1971).

In 1874 Alcorn University became the first black institution in the United States to receive funds from the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862 (Andrews 1918). The general curriculum of the university was broadened in 1878 to include agriculture, mechanical trades and home economics. The name was changed to Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College. Research, military training and direct service to the community were not a part of the land-grant function as it applied to Alcorn.

The primary mission of the Agricultural Department at Alcorn was teacher preparation (Parks & Robbins 1985 and Williams & Williamson 1985). Vocational agriculture teachers, county agents and other agricultural professionals providing services to black communities in Mississippi were mostly graduates of Alcorn A & M College. With the assistance of vocational agriculture teachers, assistant county agents, and teachers of veterans, farm practices in Mississippi began to improve; this trend continued until after World War II. Mississippi was recognized as a leader in black farm ownership until the northern migration of the mid-nineteen fifties. The progress of blacks in leadership roles could be attributed to opportunities in farm service programs, farm organizations, farm co-ops and farm partnerships.

During the nineteen sixties, segregation of the races in the South began to disappear. Social change became evident in several ways. New kinds of jobs became available to blacks, and white

students began to enroll in black institutions. Social change resulted in more interaction between black and white students. Consequently, the mission of black colleges and universities changed to meet the additional demands of the student clientele. Alcorn added new degree programs in agronomy, animal science, general agriculture, and agricultural economics. The addition of these programs was helpful to Mississippi, however, a systematic approach to providing the needs of the new department was not being followed. According to Peters and Waterman (1982), "Successful firms (the universities) understand user (the graduates) needs better." If Alcorn or any other university intends to survive as an institution and maintain a leadership role, the institution must become more aware of the needs of the clientele and develop planned programs to meet these needs. Thus, it is imperative for universities to learn as much as possible about their graduates. One primary way to obtain such information is through follow-up studies of graduates.

There are basically two reasons to collect follow-up information on graduates -- a legal or administrative requirement to do so; and a need to know what is, or is not being accomplished in educational programs (Asche and O'Reilly 1979). Both reasons are important for determining future direction of the educational program. The first reason is essentially a measure of compliance or means of knowing the extent to which funds used are producing the results intended. The other reason is the means by which an administrator or educator measures program success, identifies instructional improvements that

need to be made, and/or gathers information describing what agricultural programs do for individuals. Follow-up studies are an essential element in making sound programmatic decisions and the underlying foundation upon which the researcher is conducting this study.

Alcorn State University has completed a number of institutional studies dealing with academic assessment. In 1979, an institutional assessment and evaluation were conducted to determine the eligibility of the institution for membership in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). In 1980-81 an institutional self-study was conducted for the Commission on Colleges of The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), reaffirming the accreditation of the institution by SACS. These self-studies were the latest conducted by the University. Extensive review by the researcher revealed that the University had not conducted a recent follow-up study of graduates from any department or program within the university.

The information obtained from follow-up data can be used to help give direction in areas that need improvement. For example, if graduates indicate the equipment used in their training was out of date compared to equipment found in industry, justification can be made for updating equipment. Follow-up data may also indicate the absence of programs in the University for which a considerable number of graduates are employed and there is no training. Such information helps to assess the job market and explains why such situations exist and what action should be taken. Ascertaining what happens to

students after graduation is an appropriate way of determining what part(s) of the educational program should be changed and what parts of the program should remain intact (Wentling 1980).

The identification of career patterns of graduates from various programs, especially from follow-up studies carried out on one, three, and five year intervals, will provide useful background information. Equipped with an understanding of career patterns of graduates, educators may tailor programs more appropriately to help graduates make job transitions (Wentling 1980). Furthermore, follow-up information may explain why graduates are not entering specific jobs for which they were prepared. A follow-up assessment of graduates will provide administrators and faculty with information needed for improving the overall quality of agricultural programs at Alcorn State University.

Statement of Problem

Institutions of higher education should systematically conduct follow-up studies of graduates. The major purpose of a follow-up study is to provide data for use in making intelligent decisions regarding program improvements and needs. A follow-up study of graduates has not been conducted in the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University during the past ten years. Feedback data from graduates are needed to aid the Department in making evaluation and programmatic decisions critical to maintaining relevant programs for current societal needs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the quality and effectiveness of the faculty, curricula and facilities in the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University as perceived by the 1982-86 graduates. The study establishes a demographic and biographic data bank of these graduates for future reference and use by the Department.

Specific objectives of the study were:

1. To assess the effectiveness of the faculty in the Agricultural Department as perceived by agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.
2. To assess the effectiveness of the curricula in the Department of Agriculture as perceived by agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.
3. To assess the adequacy of the facilities in the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University as perceived by agricultural graduates.
4. To determine the extent to which agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University participate in civic and professional organizations.
5. To determine the extent to which agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University are willing to assist in recruitment for the Department of Agriculture.
6. To describe the current job status and employment history of agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.

Justification for the Study

The traditionally black colleges and universities are continually struggling to meet the academic and social needs of society. Most of these universities have been engaged in an arduous struggle to survive (Williams & Williamson 1985). The task has become increasingly difficult because of funding and decreased general

public support. Alcorn State University (ASU) is an example of an institution experiencing reduced and inadequate funding. In 1986 the Mississippi Board of Higher Learning reduced the operational budget of the university by 28 percent. The institution cannot experience another budget cut of this magnitude without a drastic effect on program quality. Therefore, if ASU is to continue to exist and provide service in a contemporary society, university administrators must have objective data that supports the value of the educational program. According to Williams and Williamson (1985), the institution must have continuous reassessment of the service environment of the agricultural programs to provide critical data and rationale for activities that are jointly carried out by research, teaching and extension professionals.

The financial problems facing the traditionally black universities are grave. According to Williams and Williamson (1985), a substantial portion of the federal budget for traditional black land-grant colleges was soft money; therefore most grant funds appropriated to these universities was for one to five years. Short term funding of this nature limits long range planning. Additionally, the present Federal administration has not provided adequate funds for traditional black colleges. States with traditional black land-grant colleges and universities are losing or have lost their land-grant function, especially agricultural programs. Of the original 17 black colleges and universities that received land-grant funds, only eight exist today, in the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Virginia and Texas.

Agriculture is a remarkably efficient cornerstone of the American economy. Land-grant universities have helped agriculture to meet the food and fiber needs of society. In the past, studies have shown (Higher Education Plan for Virginia Agriculture 1981) that money invested by land-grant institutions has been money well spent; thus, agricultural programs at black land-grant institutions should not be phased out.

In a study completed in Virginia, a special economic analysis of Virginia agriculture revealed that 63 percent of the increase in agricultural production was attributable to past investments in agricultural research, teaching, and extension at Virginia Tech. Each dollar so invested, over a 10-15 year period, has generated \$5 to \$12 increase in farm production. The estimated annual yield on research, teaching and extension investments at land-grant institutions is 48 to 58 percent. This yield is far higher than returns on investments in other sectors of the economy (Higher Education Plan for Virginia Agriculture 1981).

Similar to the importance of agriculture in Virginia, agriculture in Mississippi continues to be the dominant industry with immense growth potential. The progress made in Mississippi agriculture has resulted from the widespread application of science and technology. Progress in agriculture has been made because of the dedication of the land-grant colleges to the generation, dissemination and application of knowledge through research, teaching and extension. Thus, all efforts should be taken to strengthen and improve land-grant educational programs.

Definition of Terms

The terms used in the context of this study are defined as follows:

1. Curriculum quality -- perception of graduates about the worth of the curriculum offered by the Department in preparing students for employment in the agricultural field.
2. Data bank -- a collection of factual biographic and demographic information organized for easy and rapid access for administrative and research purposes.
3. Department of Agriculture -- a university department at Alcorn State University providing baccalaureate degree programs in agricultural economics, agricultural education, agronomy, animal science, and general agriculture.
4. Facility quality -- perception of the graduates concerning the adequacy of the Department facilities in preparing them for employment in agricultural fields.
5. Faculty quality -- perception of graduates regarding the responsiveness of faculty in meeting the academic needs of graduates.
6. Perception -- the graduates mental image or physical sensation interpreted after the experience.

Chapter Summary

Chapter One dealt with the background for this study, which is the follow-up of 1982-1986 graduates of the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University. The purpose of the study was to assess the graduates' perceptions of strengths and needed improvements in the Department. Additionally, the study sought to describe the employment status, history, and selected demographic and biographic characteristics of the graduates.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To achieve the purpose of this research, it was important to establish a frame of reference to help guide the overall study. As the literature was reviewed, four major areas surfaced as being important to the study. These areas were curriculum evaluation and improvement; relevant follow-up studies; designs of alumni surveys; and procedures and results of other follow-up studies. Appropriate literature will be presented for each area.

Section A

Curriculum Evaluation and Improvement

A review of curriculum evaluation can be divided into three time periods. Prior to the 1930s, evaluation was equated almost exclusively with the administration of standardized tests. This approach to evaluation evolved from the preoccupation with content objectives that characterized education in the early part of the nineteenth century and is still of primary concern to many educators today. The second era, 1930-1957, encompassed the period between the Eight Year Study and the beginning of the post-Sputnik era. Curriculum projects in this period were based on increased concern for higher order cognitive skills and affective objectives.

The final period of time, the post-Sputnik era in evaluation, may be characterized by attempts to formalize a paradigm that would be applicable across many educational programs and projects. The post-Sputnik era was marked by the realization that evaluation must be extended beyond the mere measurement of outcomes to the improvement of courses. A chief advocate of the change from standardized tests to a more generalized approach in curriculum evaluation was Cronbach (1963).

The most significant contribution to evaluation reform during the 1930s to 1957 was the model developed by Ralph Tyler (1953) and his associates. The first step was making a periodic check on the effectiveness of an educational program and advising educators where changes should be made. The second step was Tyler's model of validation hypothesis upon which a department operated. Tyler noted that if a school developed a program based upon a pragmatic philosophy, the role of an evaluator would be to validate that philosophy. The third step in the model was to provide information pertinent to the disposition and guidance of individual students. The final step in the Tyler model was to provide, what might be termed, a degree of psychological security to parents, students and departmental staff by supplying evidence of self established goal attainment.

Another evaluation procedure found in the second era was developed by the American Council on General Education under the direction of Paul Dressel and Lewis Mayhew (1954). The authors identified six purposes of evaluation.

1. Clarification and possible redefinition of the objectives of general education.
2. Development of more adequate and reliable means of measurement.
3. Appraisal of the development of students.
4. Adaptation of courses and programs to the individual student.
5. Motivation of student learning through continual self-evaluation.
6. Improvement of instruction.

The last important phase in the Dressel and Mayhew model was seen as providing a sound basis for "public relations" by indicating the value of the program to users.

According to Cronbach (1963), evaluation findings can be used to help make three kinds of educational decisions. They are:

1. Course improvement. Determining what instructional materials and methods are satisfactory and where change is needed.
2. Identification of individual needs. Decisions about individuals, identifying the needs of the pupil for the sake of planning their instruction, judging pupil merit for purposes of selection and grouping and acquainting the pupil with his/her own progress and deficiencies.
3. Administrative regulation. Judging how good are individual teachers.

At one time the primary purpose of formal education was to teach each generation all the knowledge accumulated by previous generations. The above concept has been largely superseded by another: to educate pupils so they are better able to satisfy their own needs (Tyler 1953).

With the advent of government-endowed curriculum projects, scholars from many disciplines have become interested in the problem of curriculum development and evaluation. Thus, the third era (post-Sputnik) of curriculum evaluation can be characterized by an expansion of federal funding. A noticeable characteristic of the third era of evaluation is attempted by several writers to formulate a conceptual framework for curriculum evaluation. Stake (1967) lists "description" and "treatment" as two major components of evaluation to be used when conforming to specified standards of excellence. In addition Dyer (1967) contends that one may first need to measure outcomes before deciding what the objectives ought to be. Finch and Crunkilton (1984) noted that quality of any evaluation is closely related to the amount and type of planning that goes into it.

Scriven (1972) developed "The Methodology of Evaluation." The Methodology of Evaluation includes four functions: collecting, organizing, analyzing, and reporting of information. Scriven reported that the criteria used for assessing the adequacy of evaluation included validity (is the information what the decision maker needs?), reliability (is the information reproducible?), timeliness (is the information available when the decision maker needs it?), pervasiveness (does the information reach all decision makers who need it?), and credibility (is the information trusted by the decision maker and those it must serve?).

Stufflebeam (1973) identified four strategies for evaluating educational programs, these were Context, Input, Process, and Product Evaluation (CIPP). Context evaluation would be used when a project is

first being planned. The major objective of context evaluations is to define the environment where change is to occur, the unmet needs of environmental problems underlying those needs, and opportunities for change. Information from context evaluation ultimately leads to establishment of program goals and objectives.

Input evaluation determines how to utilize resources to meet program goals and objectives. The objective of input evaluation is to identify and assess 1) relevant capabilities of the proposing agency, 2) strategies which may be appropriate for meeting program goals and designs which may be appropriate for achieving objectives associated with each program goal. The end product of input evaluation is an analysis of alternative procedural designs in terms of potential costs and benefits. Essentially, input evaluation probes the information to help determine whether outside assistance should be sought for meeting goals and objectives (Stufflebeam 1973).

Once a designed course of action has been approved and implementation of the design has begun, process evaluation is needed to provide periodic feedback to project managers and others responsible for continuous control and refinement of plans and procedures. The objective of process evaluation is to detect or predict defects in the procedural design or its implementation during the implementation stages. The overall strategy is to identify and monitor, on a continuous basis, the potential causes of failure in a project. These include adequacy of resources, physical facilities, staff, and time schedule (Stufflebeam 1973).

Product evaluation is used to determine the effectiveness of the project after it has run full cycle. The objective of product evaluation is to relate outcomes to objectives, context, input, and process evaluation, and to measure and interpret outcomes (Stufflebeam 1974).

According to Worthen (1972) the logical design structure is the same for all types of evaluation. Worthen (1972) breaks evaluation design into six major parts.

A. Focusing the Evaluation

1. Identify the major level(s) of decision-making to be served; local, state, national or international.
2. For each level of decision-making, project the decision situation to be served and describe each one in terms of its locus, focus, timing and composition of alternatives.
3. Define criteria for each decision situation by specifying variables for measurement and standards for use in judging alternatives.
4. Define policies within which the evaluation must operate.

B. Collecting Information

Specify the:

1. source of the information to be collected.
2. instruments and methods for collecting the needed information.
3. sampling procedure to be employed.
4. conditions and schedule for collecting information.

C. Organizing Information

Specify a:

1. format for the information to be collected.
2. means for coding, organizing, storing and retrieving information.

D. Analyzing Information

Specify:

1. the analytical procedures to be employed.
2. a means for performing the analysis.

E. Reporting Information

1. Define the audiences for the evaluation reports.
2. Specify means for providing information to the audience.
3. Specify the format for evaluation reports and/or reporting sessions.
4. Schedule the reporting of information.

F. Administering the Evaluation

1. Summarize the evaluation schedule.
2. Define the staff resource requirements and plans for meeting these requirements.
3. Specify means for meeting policy requirements when conducting the evaluation.
4. Evaluate the design potential of the evaluation to provide information which is valid, reliable, credible, timely, and pervasive.
5. Specify and schedule means for periodic updating of the evaluation design.
6. Provide a budget for the total evaluation program.

Scriven (1974) noted the goal of evaluation is always the same, to judge. But he also noted that the roles of evaluation are enormously varied. A failure to distinguish between roles of evaluation leads to the dilution of what is called evaluation so that it no longer achieves the goal of assessing worth.

With the goal of evaluation being "to judge," Scriven (1974) proceeded to analyze the roles of evaluation. He noted that there are two main evaluation roles: formative to assist in developing curricula; and summative to assess the merit of curricula once developed and placed on the market.

Formative evaluation is part of the curriculum development process. Formative evaluation provides continual feedback to assist in the development of a product, and addresses questions about content validity. Scriven (1974) noted that formative evaluation is internal and serves to improve the product being developed.

Summative evaluation, according to Scriven (1974), "may serve to enable administrators to decide whether the finished curriculum represents a sufficiently significant alternative to justify adoption by an institution." Summative evaluation should be performed by an external evaluator. Overall summative evaluation serves consumers by providing them with independent assessment of the merit of marketed products, Scriven (1974).

Scriven distinguishes between intrinsic and payoff evaluation. Intrinsic evaluation appraises the qualities of a teaching instrument. Payoff evaluation is concerned not with the nature of the teaching instrument, but rather with its effects on students. Intrinsic or payoff evaluation can serve either formative or summative roles.

The Pathway Comparison Model is a checklist type evaluation instrument developed by Scriven, (Stufflebeam 1974). Steps of the Pathway Comparison Model include:

1. Characterizing the nature of the program to be evaluated;
2. Clarifying the nature of the conclusions wanted from the evaluation;
3. Assessing evidence about cause-and-effect relationship(s) between independent and dependent variables in the program;
4. Comprehensively checking for all consequences of the program;
5. Determining and assessing the criteria of merit and the philosophical arguments pertaining to the program;
6. Assessing various kinds of program costs;
7. Identifying and assessing criterial competitors of the program;
8. Identifying the program constituents and performing a needs assessment to determine the program potential impact; and
9. Forming a conclusion about the merit of the program.

The rationale for the Pathway Comparison Model is that evaluation essentially is a data reduction process that obtains and assesses large amounts of data and then synthesizes it into an overall judgement of merit. Scriven suggests that his first six steps characterize a program or product and his last three steps testify as to its validity (Stufflebeam 1974).

The evaluation models just discussed are not blueprints for conducting an evaluation study. Instead, they are decision-making needs to be considered in planning (Airasian 1974). Evaluation models advanced in recent years suggest what decisions need to be made, not how decisions should be made (Airasian 1974). Consequently, evaluation is concerned with judgement of merit or worth and design is concerned with the conditions under which data are gathered. Data

collection is not evaluation. Evaluation occurs only when data are compared to some standard and a judgement of worth is made.

According to Stufflebeam (1973), evaluation is the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives.

Thus, the eight elements of evaluation are.

1. Process. A particular continuing and cyclical activity, with many methods and involving a number of steps.
2. Delineating. Focusing information requirements to be served by evaluation through such steps as specifying, defining and explicating.
3. Obtaining. Making available through such processes as collecting, organizing and analyzing and through such formal means as statistics and measurement.
4. Providing. Fitting together into systems or subsystems that best serve the needs or purposes of the evaluations.
5. Useful. Appropriate to predetermined criteria evolved through the interaction of the evaluator and the client.
6. Information. Descriptive or interpretive data about entities (tangible or intangible) and their relationships.
7. Judging. Assigning weights in accordance with a specified value framework, criteria derived from information which relates criteria to each entity being judged.
8. Decision alternatives. A set of optional responses to a specified decision question.

Section A - Summary

Educational evaluation was traced through three distinct eras of development since the early 1920s. Comparative descriptions of evaluation approaches were highlighted and the way various authors viewed different aspects of the evaluation process.

The review of literature in this section of the chapter provided the researcher with a basis upon which a follow-up study should be conducted. Curriculum improvement can take several approaches and Cronbach, Dressel and Mayhew, Scriven, and Stufflebeam describe various steps in evaluation-type activities. The comparison of these approaches leads one to conclude that all efforts at evaluation are directed at the improvement of something; this study being the improvement of educational programs at A.S.U. The nature of this research study takes on a summative approach through product evaluation for the purpose of program improvement.

Section B

Follow-up Studies

A common procedure to use in determining the effectiveness of on-going educational programs is to conduct a follow-up study of graduates. Graduates of these programs serve as the major source of information regarding program quality.

Chizek, Miller, and Wade (1984) conducted a follow-up of Iowa State University Agricultural Education graduates from 1964-1981. Questionnaires administered to each graduate determined their high school experiences, home backgrounds, employment experiences, and reasons for not entering or for leaving the vocational agriculture teaching profession. The instrument also included reasons for staying in teaching, and value of the student teaching experience as preparation for teaching in skill areas that are relevant to agricultural

educational training. The findings indicated 61 percent of the graduates had entered vocational agriculture teaching directly after graduation and that approximately 70 percent of the graduates had taught vocational agriculture at some point after graduation. By 1982, only 19 percent were teaching vocational agriculture. Farming was the current occupation of about 25 percent of the graduates followed by vocational agriculture teaching, agricultural sales, banking and agribusiness management. Additional information collected on graduates included salaries, hours spent on the job, and membership in professional organizations (requiring dues) related to the occupational area of the graduate.

Birkenholz (1986) conducted a five-year follow-up of bachelor degree graduates in agricultural education at the University of Missouri-Columbia. The purposes of this study were to assess the occupational status of recent graduates, and to identify emerging trends which may contribute to an enhanced program of student recruitment.

Graduates were categorized into three groups according to occupational status: Group 1 never taught vocational agriculture, Group 2 taught vocational agriculture and quit and Group 3 were currently teaching vocational agriculture. Nearly half of the respondents in Group 1 and Group 3 reported personal income in excess of \$20,000 whereas only 17 percent of Group 2 reported an annual income in excess of that level. Three factors were found to be significantly related to personal income levels; the number of FFA offices held, membership in the National Agri-Marketing Association, and membership in a social fraternity.

Preparatory experiences and employment characteristics of program graduates were assessed to identify differences among respondent groups. Respondents in Group 1 with no teaching experience reported holding significantly more 4-H offices. Also the respondent group tended to have been involved in more high school and college activities than the two remaining groups. Graduates who had taught and quit (Group 2) tended to be the least involved in high school and college activities. Respondents in the current teaching group reported being employed for significantly more months during the year and spending more evenings per month away from home on work related activities than the other groups.

Thompson (1981) conducted a study of women entering agriculture. The study examined the educational experiences of female graduates of agricultural programs and compared the experiences with males. The study focused on female and male graduates of agricultural programs at three community colleges and six universities in California between the years 1977 and 1979. Participants were asked to supply various demographic data as well as information pertaining to the agricultural programs from which they graduated, job related experiences, and recommendations to women currently entering agriculture occupations. Thompson (1981) found that women were concentrated in plant science, animal science, and ornamental horticulture programs, and enrolled in more management-oriented programs. Nearly twice as many male students as female students had actual farm backgrounds. While the females perceived little sexism in the educational setting, the situation changed upon their entry or attempted entry into the labor force.

Emerging from the study was evidence of wide discrepancies in wage rates between men and women, disproportional promotions, pay raises and subtle hiring discrimination against women. Recommendations included calls for more internship programs for women and for recruitment of women instructors into all program areas.

Wood (1976) conducted a marketability study of Illinois graduates in agricultural programs of higher education. The study was conducted for the purposes of student and parent advisement, program planning, and program changing. Agricultural graduates in 1979 from both two-year and four-year colleges were used in the study. A mailed questionnaire was sent to graduates. Besides collecting demographic information on the graduates, the data revealed that two-year graduates prefer to specialize in production agriculture while four-year graduates chose more diverse areas of specialization. They chose agricultural education, agribusiness and production agriculture with varying degrees of specialization. A close correlation was shown between academic field of study and subsequent employment. Salaries in the agricultural field appeared to be higher than those in other fields and a need exists for more graduates to pursue careers in agricultural education, agribusiness and production agriculture to meet the demands of the labor market. When this study was compared with previous studies conducted at Illinois, for 1975 and 1976 graduates, more females were entering agriculture; fewer agricultural majors had a farm background; graduates were increasingly entering agricultural- related and non-agricultural areas; and, despite limited employment opportunities in certain fields, students continued to choose agriculture as a major.

A study reported by Gold (1972) looked at the 1968 Los Angeles City College (LACC) Graduates - Four Years Later. This study reported on a follow-up questionnaire survey of two-year graduates who had responded to an earlier questionnaire. Findings reported in the study showed that: (1) over 80 percent of the respondents pursued additional college work, (2) 50 percent completed a bachelors degree, and (3) about two thirds of the respondents were currently working and one third were in college. About 30 percent were identified as working either in their field or one closely related to their LACC major. In rating various aspects of LACC, respondents rated "LACC staff the highest" and "LACC counseling staff the lowest."

The reference studies cited by Newcomb (1978) related to agricultural programs in the United States. Conclusions were as follows: (1) even though the profession has an abundance of task analysis information and nationally prepared curriculum guides available for all specialty areas, little attempt has been made to evaluate task lists or curriculum guides using actual field observation; (2) even though there appears to be sufficient work completed in identifying the professional competencies needed by vocational agricultural teachers, the profession could benefit from coordinated inquiry into which competencies improve student learning; and (3) even though there is substantial documentation of the shortage of vocational agricultural teachers to date there is no evidence of a recruitment program successful enough to attract the needed attention to the profession.

A survey of agricultural, economics and marketing graduates from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, was reported by Thomson (1985). The Thomson study reported the results for all students graduating between 1976 and 1982 from the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Marketing of the University of Newcastle, Tyne, England. The main objectives of the study were to discover the geographical occupational destinations of graduates whose career paths were unknown to the Department and to inquire into the relevance of degree subject matter to subsequent occupations. The information collected by the survey related to the major job held over the three month period since graduation. The types of data were: (1) occupations; (2) starting salaries; (3) subject relevance; and (4) greater emphasis desired. From the responses to the opinion questions, the graduates felt their agricultural based coursework was relevant in light of later occupational experience.

A study of agricultural and community development specialists in Missouri was made by Lionberger and Cheng (1980). A pseudo Q-Sort format was used to determine the correlation between job expectation and satisfaction. Job entry considerations were predominately humanitarian concerns such as "being able to work with people" and "opportunity to become involved in development work." In contrast to an earlier study by Lionberger and Heifner (1969), idealized views of an occupation (as seen by high school seniors and college freshmen) as "materialistic-doer" types, extension specialists were first "people-oriented." "Helping people with their problems" was the strongest

source of job satisfaction followed by "people with whom associated at work." Dissatisfactions were expressed in the areas of "pay," "lack of security tenure," and "prospects of advancement." Initial expectations and reasons for joining extension service were entirely congruent with resulting job satisfaction; thus students considering extension careers should have a strong desire to work with people in a developmental context.

Section B - Summary

Several institutional follow-up studies tracking graduates and leavers were reported. Mailed questionnaires were used primarily as the instrument for collecting the data. Examples of data collected included preparatory experiences, occupational experiences, income level, organizational participation, continuing education, recruitment, and the value of the college academic programs as perceived by graduates. Much of the data collected in these studies were used for program planning and improvement.

Many of the follow-up studies were conducted with agricultural education graduates, and not for other departments that might typically be offered through a Department or College of Agriculture. This study will not only be an asset to the Department of Agriculture at ASU, but it will also add to the literature of follow-up studies conducted with agricultural graduates from other colleges and universities.

Section C

Designs of Alumni Surveys

In this section of the literature review, designs of college/university alumni surveys are discussed. The importance of alumni follow-ups can be summarized by the following quote, "an unexamined college is not worth loving," (Bartkevicius 1983).

In recent years, both public and private institutions have been escalating their fund-raising activities and goals. Institutions need to be able to enlist powerful and informed constituents as allies in making a more effective case for education and in soliciting funds needed to support that education (Bartkevicius 1983).

Most schools, colleges and universities do not know enough about their alumni to engage them effectively as partners in the continuing development of their institutions (Pendel 1985). Many institutions also fail to realize how productive such a partnership can be. Alumni at the peak of their professional lives may offer valuable services on the institution boards, foundations, advisory committees, or task forces. According to Bartkevicius (1983), the survey of alumni has been useful in improving college programs. Perhaps alumni can counsel academic advisors, deans, and department chairs on how changes in the world of work will affect the undergraduate and graduate programs of their institutions.

Sometimes creative partnerships between alumni and faculty can result in new opportunities and directions for both students and the curriculum. Alumni can serve as advisors on public relations, fund

raisings, admissions, and placements. Alumni alliances are possible only after an institution has matched the interests and expertise of their former students with institutional needs. Such alliances have the ability to create opportunities for volunteers to assist in activities. Alumni sometimes fail to keep the institution informed on their activities. In addition, graduates may be doing great things before the institution bothers to start collecting information about them. This information is useful to the university in determining how graduates may be of assistance in the future.

The following are the types of information that should be asked for in a comprehensive alumni survey (Pendel 1985):

- the career and educational history of the individual;
- actual duties and responsibilities;
- the experience and record of the individual at your school;
- activities with professional community, government, military, or religious organizations;
- board memberships on profit and non-profit organizations;
- honors, achievements, publications, and creative works;
- leisure activities and hobbies;
- career of spouse and educational history, activities, achievements, and awards;
- ages and year(s) in school of children and grandchildren;
- income;
- reflections on the graduate experiences at your institution, his/her evaluation of the education received, and current impressions of the institution;
- ways in which the graduate has or would consider volunteering;
- faculty members who influenced the graduate's life;

- faculty and classmates with whom the graduate keeps in contact;
- willingness to use influence on behalf of the institution; and
- willingness to consider specific assignments.

Procedures to follow in conducting alumni surveys were discussed by Pendel (1985). According to Pendel, eleven steps should be taken in conducting alumni surveys. They are:

1. Contact several institutions that have used comprehensive surveys to collect the same kinds of data you desire.
2. Enlist the assistance of your computer center.
3. Call a meeting of representatives of every campus office that uses or could use alumni data.
4. Ask participants to write down suggestions and additions, deletions and corrections needed in the survey.
5. Compile a revised draft of the questionnaire and circulate it to all relevant offices.
6. Have a second meeting at which representatives of each office will react to the revised draft and discuss precise data needs.
7. Compile a final draft and circulate it.
8. Develop a cover letter for the signature of the President of the University to be sent out with the questionnaire.
9. Mail the questionnaire three times at three week intervals from the office of the President.
10. Begin coding as the first questionnaires are returned.
11. Brief any campus officer who will be in touch with alumni groups of relevant first returns.

Institutions have achieved survey return rates as high as 60 percent and as low as 35 percent after three mailings. According to

Pendel (1985), the pitfalls of alumni surveys are numerous and varied. Some practices to avoid are:

1. Do not try to compile more data than your computer can handle.
2. Do not commit yourself to an extensive questionnaire without involving the relevant campus offices in setting the content and design.
3. Do not settle for the results you turn up in the recommended three mailings of the questionnaire unless your return is adequate.
4. An adequate budget should be provided for the survey.
5. Realize that in this computer age the segmentation of alumni can be narrowed even to the person.

According to Pride (1983), guidelines for constructing a mail survey are:

1. Decide what specific problems you are trying to solve. Decide if a survey is the best way to a solution.
2. State the objectives of your survey -- in writing.
3. Decide which group(s) the survey should cover (your universe).
4. Decide on the size of your sample.
5. Draw your sample using a random method.
6. Construct your questionnaire.
 - Be brief
 - Be specific
 - Pay particular attention to clarity
 - Use structured rather than open-ended questions wherever possible.
7. Pretest your questionnaire. Have friends, colleagues and some representatives of your universe complete the form and suggest improvements.
8. Mail questionnaire.
 - Enclose stamped self-addressed envelope and letter explaining importance of participation.
 - Remember that researchers have found positive correlation between cost of postage and response.

9. Mail reminder post card three or four days after questionnaire.
10. Second mailing of questionnaire should come two to three weeks after first mailing. Again, enclose stamped self-addressed envelope, and letter explaining reason for mailing.
11. Tabulate and analyze returns.
12. Most Important: Apply what you have learned from the survey.

Bartkevicius (1983) offers some advice for developing questionnaires:

1. The shorter the questionnaire the greater the response. Know what you want to find out and balance the length against the percentage of response you desire.
2. Use bait, such as promising to publish the results.
3. Do a pretest, send out a sample questionnaire to make sure it is debugged.
4. Ask only for the amount of information you can process quickly.
5. Remember alumni like to be consulted. You build new friendships and strengthen old ones when you include alumni in decisions.
6. Do not be discouraged if the first try is not a huge success. According to Pride (1983), the most dangerous pitfall in doing a survey may be in placing too much confidence in the method. A major weakness of the scientific method lies in the fact that by trying to measure something, we often change it. What you have in your perfect survey is what opinions people would have if they were asked for their opinion.

Section C - Summary

Numerous designs serve in conducting a comprehensive alumni survey. But the most important factor in an alumni survey design is establishing a pleasant supportive relationship with the alumni. A current data bank should be established on each alumnus reflecting

positive business, educational and civil experiences he/she has encountered since leaving the institution.

Alumni can provide needed service in fund raising, recruitment, advisement, public relations and general support. Conducting successful surveys are possible only after an institution fits the interest and expertise of their alumni with the institutional needs. This study is the first step in providing data on agricultural alumni for Alcorn State University.

Section D

Follow-up Studies at Mississippi Universities

Mississippi State University

Kittrell (1982) conducted a follow-up study of 1974-80 Baccalaureate Degree Graduates in Agricultural and Extension Education at Mississippi State University. The Departments of Agricultural Education and Extension Education were combined to form the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education in 1974. The curriculum in the new Department was revised to accommodate the needs of clientele to be served, including vocational agriculture, the Cooperative Extension Service and agricultural agencies and industry.

Between January 1974 and December 1980, 165 individuals graduated with the Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture with a major in Agricultural and Extension Education (AEE). The purpose of the study was to obtain general employment information and evaluate perceptions

of graduates about the undergraduate curriculum. Data were obtained by mailed questionnaires from 136 (82 percent), of these graduates.

The major findings of the study have been placed in Figure 1.

Major conclusions of the Kittrell study were:

1. The Agricultural and Extension Education (AEE) curriculum has too many general education course requirements (English, Social Science, Math, Fine Arts, Health and Speech).
2. The AEE curriculum has too many professional course requirements (methods, special methods, and educational psychology).
3. The AEE curriculum provided respondents with the appropriate amount of practical experience (student teaching and field experience).
4. The technical subject area courses (such as animal science and horticulture) in the AEE curriculum adequately prepared respondents for needed employment experiences.
5. The AEE allows an appropriate amount of elective credits.
6. The AEE curriculum should stress more communication skills, such as radio, television, telephone, and writing.
7. The AEE curriculum should stress the ability to conduct and use research at the undergraduate level.
8. If the respondents had to select an undergraduate curriculum again, it would be AEE at Mississippi State.
9. The advisement respondents received from their department advisor was very important to them.
10. The Collegiate FFA helped respondents develop needed personal and leadership skills.
11. The instructors in AEE were some of the best teachers the respondents have known.
12. The instructors in AEE were well prepared for class.
13. The instructors in AEE have thorough knowledge of the subject matter.

1. Employment Status	
Gainfully employed (full-time)	93%
Gainfully employed (part-time)	2%
Not gainfully employed	3%
Full-time student	2%
2. Employers of Graduates	
Teaching Vocational Agriculture	30%
Cooperative Extension Service	7%
Agricultural Business	10%
Non-agricultural Business	7%
Government Agricultural Agencies	26%
Other (including farming)	17%
Unemployed	3%
3. Indicated Job Satisfaction	
Very high	21%
High	43%
Average	27%
Low	2%
Very low	2%
No response	5%
4. Gross Annual Income	
Minimum \$4,000 Maximum \$120,000	
Mean: \$18,425	
Median: \$15,000	
Mode: \$15,000	
5. Plan Concerning Present Employment	
Plan to make it a career	27%
Presently no plans for change	40%
Probably change in a few years	14%
Want to change soon	15%
No response	4%
6. Described Preparation for Employment	
Well Prepared	24%
Adequately Prepared	63%
Not Well Prepared	12%
No Response	1%
7. Membership in Professional Organizations	
No Membership	36%
One to Two	42%
Three or More	15%
Five or More	5%
No Response	2%
8. Graduate Credit Completed	
Less than Masters Degree	65%
Masters Degree	14%
Masters Plus Other Hours	8%
Educational Specialist Degree Plus Other Hours	2%
No Response	11%

Figure 1

Follow-up Findings of Graduates

Mississippi Valley State University

Porchia (1986) conducted a self study in the Industrial Technology Department at Mississippi Valley State University, Itta Bena, Mississippi. This study was conducted to determine how the 1985 Industrial Technology graduates were progressing in the world of work. The findings indicated graduates were employed in several major industries. Graduates were employed at General Motors Corporation, Red Stone Arsenal, Corps of Engineer, Boeing Electronics, Inc., and the Government Printing Office. Typical job titles of the graduates were: Printing Specialist; Television Engineer; Architectural Designer; Fabrication Technologist; Industrial Engineer and Management Intern. The salaries of graduates varied from state to state, but the average salary based on one year of experience was approximately \$18,500.

The Department of Industrial Technology schedules follow-up studies every three years and goes through a program review every two years. The review is required by The Mississippi State Board of Trustees of Higher Learning.

The majority of graduates indicated that courses taken in the industrial technology program were adequate for their jobs. The only negative reaction from graduates was Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) courses should be offered in the industrial technology curriculum of Architecture majors. The existing equipment in all industrial

technology laboratories was in good condition; however, additional equipment was needed to keep pace with new technological developments.

Section D - Summary

Section D reported follow-up studies in two Mississippi public supported universities. Mississippi State University conducted a study of 1974-1980 baccalaureate degree graduates in agricultural and extension education. The purpose of the study was to obtain general employment information and evaluative perception of graduates about the undergraduate curriculum.

Mississippi Valley State University conducted a study of 1985 Industrial Technology Graduates. The purpose of the study was to determine how they progressed in the world of work. Additionally, the study collected information regarding graduates perceptions of the Industrial Technology curriculum and facility.

This study will add to the literature of the graduates from colleges in Mississippi and specifically at Alcorn State University.

Chapter Summary

The review of literature in Chapter 2 has served to provide a background for the researcher in understanding different beliefs and procedures which could be used in program improvement. Different

evaluation researchers have detailed numerous steps to follow when performing an evaluation. Basically, all writers have stressed the importance of a well planned and organized process to follow in collecting data. Data should be collected only to achieve the objectives of the evaluation activity. Evaluation efforts can focus on the program before it exists, during its development, on its inputs, and/or on the products of the program. Irregardless of the method used, the ultimate purpose of evaluation should be improvement of the program.

One evaluation approach has been through programmatic follow-up studies of graduates, especially in agricultural education. Fewer studies have been conducted of other agricultural graduates. Data collected centered around biographic information as well as occupational experiences and graduate recommendations for program improvement.

Alumni surveys have been a popular method for universities and colleges to gather information from its graduates. Valuable information concerning the present status of graduates can be collected and alumni can also provide worthwhile suggestions for program improvement.

Follow-up studies in Mississippi have been few and have not focused upon graduates from the Agricultural Department at Alcorn State University. A recent study was conducted at Mississippi State and the results of that study provided valuable information as to how the graduates perceived their educational programs.

This study was a summative study that incorporates many of the recommended practices for evaluation of educational programs that lead to program improvement. The study also adds to the body of literature since a void exists in the area of follow-up of agricultural graduates nationwide and particularly in Mississippi.

Chapter 3

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Background of Method Selected

This study was a descriptive research effort. The data collected via this methodology describes and interprets what is (Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh 1985). According to Best (1970), descriptive research is concerned with conditions that exist; practices that prevail; beliefs, points of view, or attitudes that are going on; effects that are being felt; or trends that are developing.

There are several approaches to conducting descriptive research. These approaches may be case studies, surveys, developmental studies, follow-up studies, documentary analyses, trend studies, and correlational studies. The method selected for this investigation was the follow-up study method. The follow-up study method was selected because of the feed-back provision it provides. Feedback data is essential for program improvement at Alcorn State University. Hence, the purpose of this study was to provide self assessment data for the Department of Agriculture of Alcorn State University (ASU) to foster program improvement.

Programmatic decisions facing the Department of Agriculture at ASU are important to keep Departmental programs in agriculture viable and relevant to the current state of technology. It should be noted that the Department has not conducted a follow-up study within the last 10

years. This study was designed to provide recent, relevant, valid and reliable data to aid in making programmatic decisions.

Population

The subjects in the study consisted of all baccalaureate degree graduates in all agricultural programs (Animal Science, Agronomy, Agricultural Education, Agricultural Economics, and General Agriculture) at ASU from May 1982 to August 1986. Graduates were identified using data made available through the Agricultural Department and Office of the Registrar. The initial list of agricultural graduates was generated by using records of the Registrar. Each name generated was then cross-referenced with departmental records to verify that the student had graduated.

One hundred and sixty graduates were identified. Because of the relatively few graduates during the five year period, 1982-86, the entire population was used in the study.

Instrument Used for the Study

A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used as the data collection instrument. The objectives of the study served as a basis for the questionnaire. Items in the questionnaire were grouped according to background information, current information and perceptions toward the Department of Agriculture at ASU. Objectives which guided the study were:

1. To assess the effectiveness of the faculty in the Agricultural Department as perceived by agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.

2. To assess the effectiveness of the curricula in the Department of Agriculture as perceived by agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.
3. To assess the adequacy of the facilities in the Department of agriculture at Alcorn State University as perceived by agricultural graduates.
4. To determine the extent to which agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University participate in civic and professional organizations.
5. To determine the extent to which agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University are willing to participate in recruitment, for the Department of Agriculture.
6. To describe the current job status and employment history of agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.

Data generated from graduates in this follow-up study will be used to help make important evaluative decisions in the Department of Agriculture and within the program areas of the department. Therefore, the quality of data collected was critical to the study. Data quality is related to many factors, of which instrument reliability and validity are most important.

According to Asche and O'Reilly (1979), problems which may reduce reliability and/or validity are:

- use of words or technical terms not in the respondents vocabulary,
- failure to allow for language problems of bilingual populations,
- questions which may be perceived as threatening or too revealing,
- ambiguous questions,
- questions with categorical response options which overlap or are not exhaustive,

- questions which lead the respondent,
- questions which have obviously "socially preferred" responses,
- use of jargon in questions or instructions,
- questionnaires which are so long as to promote careless responding in the latter sections,
- lengthy or complex directions,
- failure to group items logically,
- asking for too much information with one item,
- "double-barreled questions" (these can usually be spotted because they contain the conjunction "and"),
- negative items or double negative items, and
- use of "value-loaded" terms when not necessary.

Factors such as response rate affect data quality, but the actual instrument is of critical importance.

The following steps were used in preparing the final instrument (Appendix H). The initial draft of the questionnaire was made based upon findings in the review of literature and the concerns of the researcher. The expertise of university specialists was utilized in developing the first draft of the instrument. Two panels of experts were utilized in refining and validating the instrument. One panel of experts was from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, which consisted of doctoral students and faculty in the agricultural education program area. The second panel was from ASU and they consisted of selected faculty from the Department of Agriculture. The responsibility of these panels was to determine the appropriateness of

the questions in relation to the research objectives and check for clarity and organizational structure of the instrument. After review by the expert panels the instrument was then refined to incorporate recommended changes.

The final stage of instrument development was a pilot test with a group of four 1981 graduates from the Department of Agriculture at ASU. The purpose of the pilot test was to determine the clarity of directions for completing the questionnaire and to identify ambiguous and confusing statements and/or words. The researcher also assessed the amount of time it took to complete the questionnaire. After the pilot test, appropriate revisions were made in the instrument before use in the study. These steps of instrument development helped establish validity of the questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedures

A notification letter describing the research study (Appendix D) was mailed to the graduates. The letter notified the graduates of their selection to participate in a follow-up study and that they would be receiving the questionnaire within a week for consideration and return. Graduates were asked to check and return a stamped self-addressed card to verify correct mailing address.

Data for this study was collected via a mailed instrument. The instrument was mailed with a first class stamped return addressed envelope as recommended by Dillman (1978). Each survey form was coded to facilitate follow-up identification of non-respondents in compiling data. The instrument was mailed with a cover letter (Appendix E) from

the Office of the President at ASU asking graduates for cooperation and informing them that responses were needed in assessing and improving the agricultural programs at the University. A cover letter (Appendix F) from the researcher was also included in the package.

Two weeks after the initial mailing, a second mailing (Appendix G) was made to non-respondents. For those graduates not responding to the second mailing, an attempt was made to reach the non-respondents by telephone; then, a third mailing was made to the remaining non-respondents.

After three mailings and a telephone follow-up, a return rate of 64% was achieved. The data obtained from these questionnaires were used only in summary form for statistical purposes.

Treatment of Data

The research was a descriptive study where information about graduates of a university program was collected. Data were summarized by descriptive statistics including frequency distributions, percentages, measures of central tendency and measures of variability as appropriate for each instrument item. Statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) computer package at ASU.

Chapter Summary

A descriptive research design was used to follow-up all 1982-86 agricultural graduates from ASU (N=160). A mailed questionnaire was used. The follow-up study provided current, relevant, and reliable data of these graduates (N=102). The data were statistically summarized and analyzed.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The findings presented in this chapter are based on data collected from the 1982 to 1986 agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University. To help in summarizing the data, the findings are presented according to the established objectives of study. The data includes background information on the graduates, current job information and the graduates' perceptions of Alcorn State University (ASU), specifically the Department of Agriculture.

Description of the Population

The population for this study consisted of 160 agricultural baccalaureate degree graduates from a five-year period (1982-86) at Alcorn State University, Lorman, Mississippi. The instruments were completed and returned by 102 graduates, representing a 64 percent return rate. All instruments returned were usable in the research study. The information collected showed that all respondents were Afro-American/Black.

Demographic information was collected to develop a data base on the graduates and to provide a descriptive overview of respondents participating in the study. The demographic information included year

graduated, academic program of study, willingness of graduates to choose the same major at ASU if they were starting their academic program over, marital status, number of children, gender, race, number of full-time positions held since graduation, employment status, and occupational title. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to summarize the demographic information collected.

Year Graduated

Respondents were asked to indicate the year of their graduation. The data indicate that of the 102 respondents, 28 were graduated in 1982, 25 in 1983, 17 in 1984, 17 in 1985 and 15 were graduated in 1986. (Refer to Table 1).

Academic Program

The academic programs of respondents are reported in Table 2. The largest number of respondents was from Agricultural Economics with 37 (80%), while the smallest number was 10 (67%) from General Agriculture. The number and percentage of graduates in other degree areas were as follows; Agricultural Education 28 (62%), Animal Science 16 (62%), and Agronomy 11 (39%).

Table 3 summarizes the number of respondents by major who would or would not choose the same major at ASU if they were starting their academic program over. Eighty-seven graduates (85%) indicated they would have made the same choice and 15 (15%) indicated they would have made different choices of academic programs.

Table 1

Number and Percent of Alcorn State University Agricultural Graduates
Responding by Year

Year of graduation	Total number of graduates	Number of responses	Percent response by year	Percent of total respondents
1982	36	28	78	27
1983	32	25	78	25
1984	32	17	53	17
1985	36	17	47	17
1986	24	15	63	15
Totals	160	102	64	101 ^a

Note. ^aPercentage does not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 2

Number of Alcorn State University Agricultural Graduates Responding
by Academic Program

Academic program	Graduates n	Graduates	
		n	%
Agricultural Economics	46	37	80
Agricultural Education	45	28	62
Animal Science	26	16	62
Agronomy	28	11	39
General Agriculture	15	10	67
Totals	160	102	--

Table 3

Willingness of Graduates to Choose the Same Major

Graduates major	Graduate Responses			
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Agricultural Education (N=28)	25	(89)	3	(11)
Agricultural Economics (N=37)	28	(76)	9	(24)
Agronomy (N=11)	11	(100)	-	(--)
Animal Science (N=16)	15	(94)	1	(6)
General Agriculture (N=10)	8	(80)	2	(20)
Total	87	(85)	15	(15)

Marital Status

The data presented in Table 4 reports the marital status of the graduates by year. Forty-two of the 102 respondents were married while 59 were single. Contrasting marital status by years of graduation, only 36% of the 1982 graduates were single while in the 1986 group, 100% were single.

Number of Children

Table 5 data reflects the number of children reported by the graduates. Of the responses, 56 graduates had no children, 28 had 1 child, 13 had 2 children, and 4 had 3 children.

Gender

The gender distribution among respondents was uneven, see Table 6 data. Of the 102 graduates, 82 were male and 20 were female.

Findings Related to Each Research Objective

Appropriate statistics were used to determine measures of central tendency for the data collected for each objective. The findings relating to the six research objectives follow.

Objective Number 1

To assess the effectiveness of the faculty in the Agricultural Department as perceived by agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.

Table 4

Marital Status of Graduates by Graduation Year

Year of graduation	Marital Status					
	Single		Married		Divorced	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1982	10	36	18	64	-	-
1983	12	48	13	52	-	-
1984	11	65	5	29	1	6
1985	11	65	6	35	-	-
1986	15	100	-	-	-	-
Totals	59	58	42	41	1	1

Table 5

Number of Children Reported by Graduates

Number of children	Number of graduates
No children	56
One child	28
Two children	13
Three children	4
No response	1
Total	102

Table 6

Sex of Graduates by Graduation Year

Year graduated	Sex			
	Male		Female	
	n	%	n	%
1982	22	79	6	21
1983	21	84	4	16
1984	15	88	2	12
1985	13	76	4	24
1986	11	73	4	27
Total	82	80	20	20

Item 26 A-F assessed six statements in the instrument asking graduates their perceptions of the effectiveness of faculty in the Department of Agriculture. The data from these items are found in Table 7.

The graduates were asked to use the following scale in indicating the effectiveness of the faculty, where 1 = excellent, 2 = good, 3 = fair and 4 = poor. The mean ratings ranged from 1.62 to 2.04, indicating that the graduates perceived the effectiveness of faculty as good when considering all statements. The highest perception that graduates held for faculty was "the faculty was concerned about student learning and development" with a mean rating of 1.62. The lowest perception, with a mean of 2.04, but still a good rating, was for the statement "the working relationship of agricultural faculty members with agricultural agencies and industries."

Objective Number 2

To assess the effectiveness of the curricula in the Department of Agriculture as perceived by agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.

The data pertaining to this objective were obtained through questionnaire items 22, 23, 28A-E, and 30. In item 22, the graduates were asked to rate the job related training and technical knowledge received while at ASU. The data are contained in Table 8. Seventy-seven percent of the graduates gave the item an excellent to good rating while 17 percent of the graduates gave the item a fair to poor rating. Agronomy graduates gave the Department the highest rating (91%),

Table 7

Perception of Graduates Regarding Effectiveness of Faculty in the
Department of Agriculture

Perception item	N	Mean	SD
The agricultural faculty members were concerned about student learning and development	102	1.62	0.70
Assistance provided by academic advisor to me while a student at ASU	102	1.65	0.71
The quality of the teaching in agricultural classes	102	1.78	0.75
Agricultural faculty members were current on the theoretical and technical developments in their fields	102	1.87	0.69
The opportunities of students to interact with faculty on an informal basis	102	1.90	0.76
The working relationship of agricultural agencies and industries	102	2.04	0.72

NOTE. Excellent = 1, Good = 2, Fair = 3, Poor = 4

Table 8

Perception of Graduates by Major Regarding Technical Knowledge Received in the Department of Agriculture

Rating	Major											
	Agricultural Education (N=28)		Agricultural Economics (N=37)		Agronomy (N=11)		Animal Science (N=16)		General Agriculture (N=10)		All Majors (N=102)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Excellent	4	(14)	2	(5)	3	(27)	5	(31)	1	(10)	15	(15)
Good	16	(57)	25	(68)	7	(64)	9	(56)	6	(60)	63	(62)
Fair	5	(18)	6	(16)	1	(9)	-	-	3	(30)	15	(15)
Poor	1	(4)	1	(3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	(2)
No Response	2	(7)	3	(8)	-	-	2	(13)	-	-	7	(7)
Total	28	(100)	37	(100)	11	(100)	16	(100)	10	(100)	102	(101) ^a

NOTE. ^aPercentage does not equal 100 due to rounding.

general agriculture received the lowest rating (70%). Eighty-two percent of the graduates indicated the Agricultural Department provided them with good to excellent preparation for additional education and training. Eighteen percent of the graduates reported only a fair preparation for additional education and training. Data for this finding are displayed in Table 9.

Item 28 in the questionnaire assessed the opinion of the graduates on the semester hours of work required and the adequacy of training received in each of the following major areas: communication skills; natural sciences; social sciences; mathematics; and required agricultural courses (agricultural economics, agricultural engineering, agronomy, and animal science). Two scales were used to analyze these data. The first scale determined whether the semester hours of work required by graduates should be increased, not changed or should they be decreased. More than half of the graduates felt the number of semester hours required in communication skills, mathematics, and agriculture should be increased. Specifically, 71 of the graduates expressed belief that the number of hours in communication skills and agricultural engineering should be increased. The number of other recommendations for credit increases were: Animal Science 56; Agronomy 52; and Agricultural Economics 52. Table 10 summarizes these findings.

The second part of item 28 on the questionnaire asked graduates to rate the adequacy of training received in each of the major course areas. A 1-4 scale, where 1 = excellent, and 4 = poor, was used to

Table 9

Perception of Graduates Regarding Preparation for Additional
Education and Training Received in the Department of Agriculture

Rating	N	%
Excellent	21	21
Good	63	62
Fair	18	18
Poor	--	--
Total	102	101 ^a

NOTE: ^aPercentage does not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 10

Perception of Graduates Regarding the Number of Semester Hours of Work
Required (N = 102)

Course	Semester hours of work required							
	Should be increased		No change		Should be decreased		No response	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mathematics	55	(54)	39	(38)	2	(2)	6	(6)
Natural Sciences (Chemistry, Botany, etc.)	48	(47)	46	(45)	6	(6)	2	(2)
Social Sciences (Economics, Government, etc.)	43	(42)	49	(48)	7	(7)	3	(2)
Communication skills (English, Speech, etc.)	71	(70)	29	(28)	-		2	(2)
Required Agricultural Courses								
a. Agricultural Engineering	71	(70)	23	(23)	-		8	(8)
b. Agricultural Economics	52	(51)	45	(44)	1	(1)	4	(4)
c. Agronomy	52	(51)	42	(41)	2	(2)	6	(6)
d. Animal Science	56	(55)	38	(37)	3	(3)	5	(5)

compute the mean and standard deviation. The perceived adequacy of training in these courses ranged from 2.00 to 3.02, or between the good and fair ratings as shown in Table 11. The lowest mean rating of 3.02, which was in agricultural engineering, indicated that graduates felt their training was fair in this subject area.

The third item relating to Objective 2 was an open ended question to indicate course(s) or subject(s) which should be added to the agricultural curriculum. Courses or subjects in computers were mentioned the most times (38), the second highest was oral communication with 10, and engineering was third with 7. A complete listing of recommended courses or subjects is shown in Table 12.

Objective Number 3

To assess the adequacy of the facilities in the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University as perceived by agricultural graduates.

This objective was addressed by items 27A-F on the questionnaire. A 1-4 scale, where 1 indicated strongly agree, 2 indicated agree, 3 indicated disagree, and 4 indicated strongly disagree, was used to assess the perceptions of graduates on the adequacy of facilities. All statements reflecting the perception of graduates about adequacy of the Department of Agriculture facilities received mean ratings from 1.93 to 2.95. The data for these findings are presented in Table 13. Those statements where the graduates agreed were: (1) "equipment used in laboratories and classrooms at ASU was kept in good repair" 1.93; (2) "appropriate safety equipment at ASU was similar to that used in

Table 11

Perception of Graduates Regarding the Adequacy of Training Received
in Required Coursework (N = 102)

Course	Adequacy of education received		
	n	Mean	SD
Natural Sciences (Chemistry, Botany, etc.)	98	2.17	0.77
Mathematics	96	2.40	0.76
Social Sciences (Economics, Government, etc.)	98	2.45	0.73
Communications Skills (English, Speech, etc.)	99	2.26	0.64
Agricultural Courses			
a. Agricultural Economics	96	2.00	0.73
b. Agricultural Engineering	96	3.02	1.18
c. Agronomy	96	2.53	1.08
d. Animal Science	97	2.43	1.03

NOTE. Excellent = 1, Good = 2, Fair = 3, Poor = 4

Table 12

Courses and Subjects Graduates Recommended Being Added to the
Agricultural Curriculum

Recommended course or subject	Number of times mentioned
Computers	38
Oral communication	10
Engineering	7
Statistics	3
Cooperative on-job training	3
Poultry marketing	3
Food Science	3
Horticulture	3
Weed identification	2
Marketing	2
Crop production (additional courses)	2
Chemistry (additional courses)	2
Animal husbandry (additional courses)	2
Mathematical science	2
Forestry	2
Writing skills	2
Agricultural Education (additional courses)	2
Agricultural Economics (additional courses)	2
Research	1
Plant Pathology	1
Economics	1
Extension	1
Adult education	1
Analytical courses	1
International trade policy	1
Law	1
Fire arm safety	1
Dairy management	1
Animal anatomy	1
Floriculture	1
Agronomy (additional courses)	1
Livestock slaughtering	1
Catfish farming	1
Hydraulics	1
Public relations	1
Diesel and electrical engines	1
Drafting	1
Sprayer calibration	1
Calculus	1
Accounting	1
Career training	1
Veterinary Science	1

Table 13

Perception of Graduates Regarding Department of Agriculture
Facilities

Perception items	N	Mean	SD
Equipment used in laboratories and classrooms at ASU was kept in good repair	102	1.93	0.70
Appropriate safety equipment at ASU was similar to that used in industry	102	2.17	0.65
A sufficient quantity of instructional supplies were available in all agricultural classrooms and laboratory areas at ASU	102	2.43	0.75
A sufficient quantity of instructional equipment was available in all classroom and laboratory areas at ASU	102	2.45	0.75
Laboratory equipment used at ASU was similar to that used in industry	102	2.56	0.83
Enough off-campus training centers were available to students for internships	102	2.95	0.86

NOTE. 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree

industry," 2.17; (3) a sufficient quantity of instructional supplies were available in all agricultural classrooms and laboratory areas at ASU," 2.43; and (4) "a sufficient quantity of instructional equipment was available in all classrooms and laboratory areas at ASU," 2.45. Those statements where the graduates disagreed were: (1) "laboratory equipment used at ASU was similar to that used in industry," 2.56, and (2) "enough off-campus training centers were available to students for internships," 2.95.

Objective Number 4

To determine the extent to which agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University participate in civic and professional organizations.

Objective 4 was addressed by asking graduates to react to items (9A-P, 33) on the questionnaire. A series of statements relating to civic and professional activities were listed and the graduates were asked to indicate their degree of participation in these activities on a 1-3 rank scale where 1 = active participation, 2 = some participation and 3 = no participation. Data for Objective 4 is summarized in Table 14. Of the 102 graduates, 65 actively participated by "voting in local elections" and 54 "assisted in youth organizations such as the FFA or 4H." The types of activities in which most graduates did not participate were: Kiwanis or Chamber of Commerce, (81); "volunteer work such as fire and/or rescue teams" (80); political parties (73); "city, town council or county commission meetings" (73); literary,

Table 14

Extent to Which Graduates Have Participated in Civic and Professional Activities (N = 102)

Civic and professional activity	Participation						No response	
	Active		Some		None		n	%
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Voting in local elections	65	(64)	31	(30)	4	(4)	2	(2)
Assisting youth organizations such as FFA or 4-H	54	(53)	20	(20)	26	(25)	2	(2)
Being a member of a sports team or club	46	(45)	35	(34)	19	(19)	2	(2)
Voting when you are pretty sure your party will not win	45	(44)	44	(43)	10	(10)	3	(3)
Participating in trade or professional associations	44	(43)	34	(33)	22	(22)	2	(2)
Serving as a member of an educational organization	42	(41)	27	(26)	29	(28)	4	(4)
Assisting community centers neighborhood improvement and/or social actions groups	29	(28)	45	(44)	26	(25)	2	(2)
Participating in a literary, art, music or student group	14	(14)	19	(19)	65	(64)	4	(4)
Performing organized volunteer work such as fire and/or rescue teams	9	(9)	10	(10)	80	(78)	3	(3)
Writing or talking to your representatives in government	7	(7)	39	(38)	52	(51)	4	(4)
Attending city, town council or county commission meetings	7	(7)	19	(19)	73	(72)	3	(3)
Working to register new voters	6	(6)	32	(31)	60	(59)	4	(4)
Becoming an active member of a political party	3	(5)	20	(20)	73	(72)	4	(4)
Participating in service organizations such as Kiwanis or Junior Chamber of Commerce	3	(3)	15	(15)	81	(79)	3	(3)
Others	7	(7)	2	(2)			93	(91)

art, music or student groups (65); "registering new voters" (60); and "writing or talking to representatives in government" (52).

Table 15 contains the list of honors and awards, both civic and professional received by the graduates. Twenty-nine different awards were listed and the awards most often mentioned were the Dean's List Award (7), and Job Performance Award (3).

Objective Number 5

To determine the extent to which agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University are willing to assist in recruitment for the Department of Agriculture.

To achieve this objective, five items (16, 23, 24, 31, and 32), were included on the questionnaire. Table 16 displays the data collected for question 16. Forty-eight percent of the graduates were employed in the agricultural field while 42 percent were employed in other fields.

Item 23 asked the graduates if they would encourage their children, relatives and friends to attend Alcorn State University. A review of the data in Table 17 indicates that eighty-four graduates (82%) would encourage others to attend ASU while 17 (17%) indicated they would not.

The willingness of graduates to assist the Department of Agriculture at ASU in recruiting prospective students is reported in Table 18. Ninety-four graduates (92%) indicated they would be willing to assist in recruiting activities.

Table 15

Honors and Awards Received by Graduates: Both Civic and Professional

Honor and award	Number of times mentioned
Dean's List award	7
Job performance award	3
Meritorious Service Medal	2
Outstanding Young Men of America	2
Army Achievement Medal	2
Hunter Safety Instructor award	2
National Dean's List award	2
Music award	1
4-H Club award	1
AKM Honor Society award	1
Lay Speaker's award	1
Good Conduct award	1
Who's Who Among Black Colleges award	1
Second Most Outstanding Student in Agricultural Economics award	1
Outstanding Service to the Black Community of Walthall County award	1
NRA (National Rifleman's Association) Certification award	1
Good Apple award	1
Outstanding Young Women's award	1
Correctional Scrutiny	1
Boat and Water Instructor award	1
Mississippi Conservation officer award	1
Mississippi Law Enforcement Officer's award	1
Miss Belzoni award	1
Humanitarian award	1
President List award	1
Who's Who Among College Student's award	1
Ralston Purina Scholarship award	1
Teacher of the Month award	1
DeKalb Outstanding Agricultural Student award	1

Table 16

Description of the Agricultural Graduates Field of Employment

Employment description	N	%	% Total employment
Employed full-time in the field of agriculture	46	45	48 ^a
Employed part-time in the field of agriculture	3	3	
Employed full-time outside the field of agriculture	40	39	42 ^b
Employed part-time outside the field of agriculture	3	3	
No response	10	10	
Total	102	100	

Note. ^aIn Agriculture
^bOutside Agriculture

Table 17

Number of Graduates Who Would Encourage Son, Daughter or Close Relative/Friend to Attend Alcorn State University and Major in Agriculture

Encourage individuals to attend ASU	N	%
Yes	84	82
No	17	17
No response	1	1
Total	102	100

Table 18

Number of Graduates Willing to Assist the Department of Agriculture
in Recruiting Prospective Students

Willing to assist	N	%
Yes	94	92
No	7	7
No response	1	1
Total	102	100

Table 19 lists 16 major strengths of the Department of Agriculture as perceived by the graduates. These strengths were collected through an open-ended question (31) on the instrument. The concern of the agricultural faculty regarding college life of the student was mentioned most frequently (38).

The major improvements needed in the Department of Agriculture as perceived by graduates were determined with an open-ended question (32) and are reported in Table 20. Twenty-three suggestions were reported; the frequencies of the most common suggestions were: "Department of Agriculture needs to provide additional field and laboratory experiences", N=12; "Department needs additional training centers for intern students," N=11; and "Department needs additional laboratory equipment," N=10.

Objective Number 6

To describe the current job status and employment history of agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.

This objective was addressed by questionnaire items 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21 and 29. For item 8, eight choices were listed to identify how the graduates located their first job. Thirty-five (34%) obtained employment through direct application to employers, 14 (14%) located jobs with faculty assistance, 11 (11%) through cooperative programs and 10 (10%) from college placement. The data are summarized in Table 21.

According to the data in Table 22, most graduates have held one or two jobs since graduation. Of the 102 respondents, 48 (47%) have held

Table 19

Major Strengths of the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University as Perceived by Graduates

Major strength	Number of times mentioned
General concern of the agricultural faculty regarding the college life of students	38
Agricultural research	6
Faculty knowledge of the courses studied in agriculture	4
Agricultural education	3
Faculty assisting students in finding jobs	2
Working relationship between faculty members	2
Teaching abilities	2
Collegiate FFA	1
Agricultural economics	1
Faculty encouraging students to study for advance degrees	1
Facilities and equipment	1
Animal science program	1
Agricultural mechanics area	1
Teacher educators	1
Quality of instruction	1
Faculty dedication	1

Table 20

Recommendations of Graduates for Major Improvements Needed in the
Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University

Needed improvement	Number of times mentioned
Department of Agriculture needs to provide additional field and laboratory experiences	12
Department needs additional training centers for intern students	11
Department needs additional laboratory equipment	10
Department needs a placement service for graduates	8
Better relationship is needed between students and faculty	5
Department needs additional teachers	5
Department should accelerate its recruitment activities, including junior college graduates	4
Research areas need additional equipment and supplies	3
Provide more student advisement in the Department, including off campus students	3
Coordinate coursework with research when possible	2
Department of Agriculture should provide guest lectures from USDA	2
Department needs a computer	1
Internships should be required in all agricultural programs	1
Change Farm Power and Machinery to a full semester (non-block) course	1
Assign students to do more writing	1
Keep current in agricultural technology	1
Include more agricultural engineering courses in the agricultural education curriculum	1
Find more good faculty members	1
Students in the Department of Agriculture need a more complex course of study	1
Agronomy needs improving	1
Animal Science needs improving	1
Department should have written guidelines for substituting courses	1
Update instructional materials	1

Table 21

Procedures Used by Graduates to Secure First Job After Graduation

Procedure	N	%
Direct application to employer	35	34
Faculty assistance	14	14
Cooperative program	11	11
College placement	10	10
Relative	9	9
Friend	6	6
Civil service application	3	3
Others	7	7
No response	7	7
Totals	102	101 ^a

Note. ^aPercentage does not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 22

Number of Full-Time Positions Held by Graduates Since Graduation

Number of full-time positions held	N	%
0	6	6
1	48	47
2	34	33
3	9	9
4 or more	4	4
No response	1	1
Total	102	100

one job and 34 (33%) have held two jobs. Present employment status, shown in Table 23, shows that 90 (88%) of the graduates were employed.

In questionnaire item 13, sixteen different occupational titles of graduates were identified. Twelve were salespersons, 11 were Cooperative Extension Agents and nine were employed in the Soil Conservation Service. The other 13 occupational titles were reported by eight or less graduates and these data are shown in Table 24.

For question 14, the data in Table 25 indicate that graduates have served in their current positions from 1-6 years. Thirty-two graduates (31%) have served one year in their positions and twenty (20%) have served two years in their current positions.

According to the data collected for item 15 and reported in Table 26, 7 (7%) of the graduates had entry level incomes less than \$10,000, 38 (37%) had entry level salaries between \$10,000-\$14,999, and 29 (28%) had starting salaries between \$15,000-19,999. Five graduates reported starting salaries in excess of \$25,000.

Table 27 reports the feeling of graduates regarding their present job. Fifty graduates (49%) like their job very much; 28 (27%) like their job some, and only 3 (3%) disliked their job.

Data in Table 28 reflects the graduates' 1986 gross income. Thirty-five graduates (34%) reported income in the range of \$10,000-\$14,999 and 32 (31%) of the graduates total income was in the \$15,000-\$19,999 range.

The number of promotion(s) received by graduates on the job is indicated in Table 29. Forty graduates (39%) have received no promotions and 33 (32%) have received one promotion since accepting their current position.

Table 23

Number of Graduates by Current Employment Status

Employment status	N	%
Employed	90	88
Unemployed (looking)	4	4
Military	4	4
Further education	3	3
No response	1	
Total	102	100

Table 24

Number of Graduates by Occupational Title

Occupational title	N
Salesperson	12
Cooperative Extension Agent	11
Soil Conservation Service	9
4-H agent	8
Factory worker	8
Vocational-Agriculture Teacher	5
U.S. military	4
Research technician	4
Record specialist	3
Security officer	3
Service clerk	2
Personnel person	2
Meat grader	2
Medical service	2
Sale representative	2
Federal inspector	2
Others	14
No response	9
Total	102

Table 25

Number of Years Graduates Have Served in Their Current Positions

Years served in current position	N	%
1	32	31
2	20	20
3	19	19
4	18	18
5	3	3
6	1	1
No response	9	9
Total	102	101 ^a

NOTE. ^aPercentage does not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 26

Number and Percentage of Graduates by Annual Entry Level Salary

Annual entry level salary	N	%
Less than 10,000	7	7
\$10,000 - 14,999	38	37
\$15,000 - 19,999	29	28
\$20,000 - 24,999	10	10
\$25,000 or more	5	5
No response	13	13
Total	102	100

Table 27

Feelings Held by Graduates About Their Present Jobs

Feeling about present job	N	%
Like it very much	50	49
Like it somewhat	28	27
Neither like it or dislike it	11	11
Dislike it somewhat	3	3
No response	10	10
Total	102	100

Table 28

1986 Income Levels of Graduates Before Taxes

1986 Income before taxes	N	%
\$10,000 - 14,999	35	34
\$15,000 - 19,999	32	31
\$20,000 - 24,999	15	15
\$25,000 - 29,999	6	6
\$30,000 or more	5	5
No response	9	9
Total	102	100

Table 29

Promotions Received by Graduates Since Graduation

Number of promotions	N	%
0	40	39
1	33	32
2	14	14
3	5	5
4	1	1
No response	9	9
Total	102	100

Plans of the graduates to change jobs in the next 12 months are reported in Table 30. Fifty-six (55%) of the graduates indicated they do not plan to change jobs while 22 (22%) indicated they do plan to change jobs.

Table 31 indicates that a majority of the graduates were seeking advanced training; 28 graduates (27%) indicated they had earned partial requirements for the masters degree, 12 graduates (12%) reported they had participated in non-degree programs and 11 (11%) had earned masters or equivalent degrees.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the follow-up study as perceived by the graduates in the Department of Agriculture at ASU. The study also established a biographic and demographic data bank of the graduates. Selected findings were reported: (1) the faculty was effective, (2) selected courses were less than adequate, (3) internship opportunities were inadequate, (4) graduates showed weak participation in civic and professional activities, (5) graduates were willing to participate in recruitment activities, (6) graduates were currently employed and they like their jobs, and (7) more off-campus internship programs were encouraged.

Table 30

Planned Job Changes By Graduates

Plan to change job	N	%
No	56	55
Yes	22	22
Undecided	16	16
No response	8	8
Total	102	101 ^a

NOTE. ^aPercentage does not equal 100 due to rounding

Table 31.

Number of Graduates Participating in Advanced Training

Advanced training	N	%
Have earned partial requirement for masters degree	28	27
Have participated in non-degree academic program	12	12
Have earned masters or equivalent degree	11	11
Partial requirement completed for specialist degree	3	3
Have not participated in a collegiate graduate program	41	40
Others	5	5
No Response	2	2
Total	102	100

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study, including the problem, objectives, research methodology, and findings. The summary of the study is followed by conclusions and recommendations.

Summary of the Study

The Problem

Institutions of higher education should systematically and regularly conduct follow-up studies of graduates. The major purpose of a follow-up study is to provide evaluative data for use in making intelligent decisions regarding program improvements. A follow-up study of graduates has not been conducted in the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University within the past ten years. Data from graduates are needed to aid the Department in making sound programmatic decisions critical to maintaining relevant programs for current societal needs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the quality and effectiveness of the faculty, curricula and facilities in the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University as perceived by

1982-86 graduates. The study established a demographic and biographic data bank of these graduates for future reference and use by the Department.

Specific objectives of the study were:

1. To assess the effectiveness of the faculty in the Agricultural Department as perceived by agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.
2. To assess the effectiveness of curricula in the Department of Agriculture as perceived by agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.
3. To assess the adequacy of facilities used by the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University as perceived by agricultural graduates.
4. To determine the extent to which agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University participate in civic and professional organizations.
5. To determine the extent to which agricultural graduates are willing to participate in recruitment, specifically for the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University.
6. To describe the current job status and employment history of agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.

Research Methodology

The study utilized a descriptive research design. Several approaches for conducting descriptive research were possible and the method selected for this investigation was the follow-up study. An important characteristic of the follow-up study method is the feedback provision which is essential for program self assessment.

The study population consisted of the baccalaureate degree graduates in all agricultural programs (animal science, agronomy, agricultural education, agricultural economics and general

agriculture) at Alcorn State University from May 1982 to August 1986. One hundred and sixty graduates were identified. Because of the relatively few graduates during the five year period, the entire population was used. Of the 160 graduates contacted, 102 (64 percent) completed and returned usable instruments.

Data were collected by using a structured questionnaire divided into three parts. Parts One and Two were used to collect demographic information to provide a data base and descriptive overview of the graduates and Part Three was used to assess the perception of graduates toward the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University. A Likert-type scale was used to assess the graduates' perception of faculty, curricula and facilities. Additional open-ended items were used to seek graduates' comments regarding strengths and needed improvements of the Department.

Several steps were followed in developing the questionnaire for this study. First, the initial draft of the instrument was reviewed by a panel of faculty and doctoral students in Agricultural Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The responsibility of the expert panel was to determine the appropriateness of the questions in relation to the research objectives. The panel was also asked to review the instrument for clarity and organizational structure. The second stage was to submit the instrument to a panel of faculty members at Alcorn State University for a similar review. The final stage of developing the instrument was a pilot test with a group of 1981 agricultural graduates of ASU. The instrument was refined, as appropriate, after each step of the process.

Baccalaureate degree graduates, who were to participate in the study, were mailed a letter notifying them of the planned survey. A week later, a survey package containing the instrument and two cover letters was sent to each graduate. One cover letter was from the President of ASU and one from the researcher explaining the purpose and importance of the study. Graduates were assured of strict confidentiality of information. A second survey package was sent to all non-respondents two weeks after the first mailing. A week later, an attempt was made to contact non-respondents by telephone. One week later, all non-respondents were mailed a third instrument.

Information collected from the survey instrument was transferred to a code sheet and analyzed via the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) program at the Alcorn State University Computer Center. The statistical analysis used in analyzing the data included frequency distributions percentages, measures of central tendency and measures of variability. Six research objectives were used as a guide for conducting the study and reporting the data.

Summary of Findings

The findings for this study are summarized based on analysis of data collected from the survey instrument. One hundred percent of the graduates were Afro-American/Blacks. Agricultural Economics was the program area with the largest number of graduates (46); 37 (80%) of the Agricultural Economics graduates responded to the questionnaire.

General Agriculture was the smallest program area with 15 graduates; only 10 (67%) of the General Agriculture graduates responded to the questionnaire. The marital status of the 102 respondents was: 42 married, 59 single and one divorced. Contrasting marital status by year of graduation, of the 1982 respondents only 36 percent were single while in the 1986 respondent group, 100 percent were single. The number of children reported by graduates showed that 26 individuals had one child and 56 had no children. The gender distribution among respondents was uneven with 80 percent being male and 20 percent being female.

Specific findings relating to the six research objectives developed for this study are presented in the following section.

Objective Number 1

To assess the effectiveness of the faculty in the Agricultural Department as perceived by agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.

Six statements were used to ascertain perceptions of faculty effectiveness. The scale used to measure effectiveness was 1-4, where 1 = excellent, 2 = good, 3 = fair, and 4 = poor. The mean ratings for the six items ranged from 1.62 to 2.04 which indicated that graduates perceived the effectiveness of faculty as good. The highest perception that graduates held for the faculty was "about student learning and development." The lowest perception was "the working relationship of agricultural faculty members with agricultural agencies and industries."

Objective Number 2

To assess the effectiveness of the curricula in the Department of Agriculture as perceived by agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.

Four items on the instrument were used to reflect upon this objective. The graduates were asked to rate job related training and technical knowledge received while at ASU. Seventy-seven percent of the graduates gave the item an excellent to good rating while 17 percent of the graduates gave the item a fair to poor rating. Eighty-two percent of the graduates indicated the Agricultural Department provided them with excellent to good preparation for additional education and training while only 18 percent gave the department a fair rating. Graduates assessed the semester hours of work required and the adequacy of training received in each of the following areas: communication skills; natural sciences; social sciences; mathematics; and required agricultural courses (agricultural economics, agricultural engineering, agronomy, and animal science). More than half of the graduates felt that the number of semester hours required in the areas of communication skills, mathematics, and agriculture should be increased. The adequacy of training received in each major area was rated by the graduates on a 1-4 scale with 1 = excellent, 2 = good, 3 = fair, and 4 = poor. The perceived adequacy of training received in these courses ranged from fair to good. Two statements did receive a fair rating by the graduates. The lowest mean ratings of 3.02 and 2.53 were in agricultural engineering and agronomy, respectively.

Graduates were also asked to indicate course(s) or subject(s) which should be added to the agricultural curriculum. Courses or subjects on computers were mentioned most frequently (38), the second highest was oral communication (10), and engineering was third (7).

Objective Number 3

To assess the adequacy of the facilities in the Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University as perceived by agricultural graduates.

The perception of graduates on adequacy of facilities was determined with a 1-4 scale, where 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree and 4 = strongly disagree. The mean ratings ranged from 1.93 to 2.95, which reflects that graduates agreed with some statements and disagreed with others. Those statements with which the graduates agreed were: "equipment used in laboratory and classroom at ASU was kept in good repair" (1.93); "appropriate safety equipment at ASU was similar to that used in industry" (2.17); "a sufficient quantity of instructional supplies were available in all agricultural classrooms and laboratory areas at ASU" (2.43); and "a sufficient quantity of instructional equipment was available in all classrooms and laboratory areas at ASU" (2.45). Those statements where the graduates disagreed were: "laboratory equipment used at ASU was similar to that used in industry" (2.56), and "enough off-campus training centers were available to students for internships" (2.95).

Objective Number 4

To determine the extent to which agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University participate in civic and professional organizations.

A series of statements related to civic and professional activities were listed and the graduates were asked to indicate their degree of participation on a 1-3 rank scale where 1 = active participation, 2 = some participation, and 3 = no participation. Of the 102 graduates, 65 actively participated by "voting in local elections" and 54 "assisted in youth organizations such as FFA or 4-H." There was a wide variation in the attitudes shown by graduates regarding non-participation. Few graduates participated in civic organizations (18%) such as Kiwanis or Chamber of Commerce or in volunteer work (19%). Only 25% of respondents were active members of a political party and only 26% of ASU graduates participated in city, town council or county commission meetings. Thirty-three percent of graduates reported being active in literary, art, music or study groups. Thirty-seven percent of respondents indicated activity in registering voters and 45% reported writing or talking to elected representatives in government. A list of honors and awards, both civic and professional received by graduates were reported. Twenty-nine different awards were listed. The most frequently listed honors or awards were the Dean's List (7) and Job Performance Award (3).

Objective Number 5

To determine the extent to which agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University are willing to assist in recruitment for the Department of Agriculture.

In selecting a major, 87 graduates (85%) indicated they would make the same choice again while 15 respondents (15%) indicated they would not make the same choice. Eighty-four graduates (82%) indicated they would encourage others to attend ASU while 17 (17%) indicated they would not. Ninety-four graduates (92%) indicated they would be willing to assist in recruitment.

There were 16 major strengths of the Agricultural Department as reported by graduates through an open-ended question. The strength most frequently reported, was the general concern of the agricultural faculty regarding the student's college life (n=38).

The data related major improvements needed in the Department of Agriculture as perceived by the graduates. Twenty-four improvements were reported; the improvements most frequently listed were: 1) additional need for field and laboratory experiences (N=12), 2) departmental needs for additional intern training centers (N=11) and, 3) additional needs for laboratory equipment (N=10).

Objective Number 6

To describe the current job status and employment history of agricultural graduates of Alcorn State University.

This objective was addressed with 12 items. Accordingly, thirty-five graduates (34%) located their first job through direct applications to employers, 14 (14%) located jobs with faculty assistance, 11 (11%) through cooperative programs and 10 (10%) from college placement. Most graduates have held one or two jobs since graduation. Forty-eight (47%) have held one job and 34 (33%) have held two jobs and 90 (88%) were currently employed. Sixteen different occupational titles of graduates were identified. Twelve were salespersons, 11 were Cooperative Extension Agents, and nine were employed in the Soil Conservation Service. The remaining occupational titles were reported by eight or fewer graduates.

Questionnaire item 14 addressed the tenure of graduates in their current positions. Thirty-two graduates (31%) have served one year in a full time position and 20 (20%) have served two years in a full time position. Seven (7%) of the graduates reported entry level annual salaries under \$10,000. Thirty-eight graduates (37%) indicated entry level income between \$10,000-\$14,999 and 29 (28%) reported beginning salaries from \$15,000 to \$19,999. Five graduates indicated beginning salaries over \$25,000. Fifty graduates (49%) like their job very much; 28 (27%) like their job some and only 3 (3%) dislike their present position.

The graduates' 1986 incomes before taxes were \$10,000-\$14,999 for 32 percent of the graduates and \$15,000-\$19,999 for 31 percent of them. Forty graduates (39%) have not received job promotions and 33 (32%) have received only one job promotion in their current position. Fifty-six (55%) graduates indicated they do not plan to change jobs in

the next 12 months while 22 (22%) indicated they do plan to change jobs. The graduates were about evenly split on their employment in and out of the field of agriculture, 46 (45%) were employed full-time in the field of agriculture while 40 (39%) were employed full time outside the field of agriculture. Fifty-three percent of the graduates had advanced training since graduation.

Conclusions

Based upon the findings of this study, the following conclusions are made:

1. The effectiveness of the agricultural faculty was good, but there is opportunity for improvement in the quality of their work with students.
2. The curriculum offered by the Department of Agriculture did relate to the technical knowledge requirements of graduates in jobs.
3. The curriculum of the Department of Agriculture prepared graduates for additional education and training.
4. Graduates feel they lack adequate preparation in communication skills, agricultural engineering, and computers.
5. The facilities at ASU were in good repair, the safety equipment was similar to that found in industry and sufficient supplies were available for instruction.
6. The number of off-campus training centers was not adequate for student internships.
7. Graduates in agriculture from ASU do not actively participate in civic and professional activities.
8. Graduates are willing to participate in recruitment of students for the Department of Agriculture.
9. The Department has neither attracted white students nor a proportional share of females into its program.

10. Graduates of the Department of Agriculture are employable.
11. Graduates of the Department of Agriculture are satisfied with their current jobs.
12. Graduates from the Department of Agriculture are employed in many different types of jobs; some agricultural related and some non-agricultural related.

Recommendations

The findings and conclusions of this study support the following recommendations:

1. Strategies be developed to make better use of the Cluster Consortium (a cooperative effort between industries and ASU designed to assist the university) by the Department of Agriculture for improving the curricula, facilities, availability of internship locations, and placement of graduates in agricultural occupations.
2. Representatives from agricultural agencies and industries be used as resource persons for classes and other academic activities in the department.
3. Strategies be developed to form improved communications with agricultural agencies and industries.
4. Professional development activities be developed by the Department of Agriculture for faculty improvement.
5. The Department of Agriculture closely review the current curriculum to determine how communication skills, agricultural engineering skills and computer skills could better be integrated into the undergraduate curriculum.
6. The Department of Agriculture develop additional off-campus training centers for student internships in all programs.
7. Agricultural graduates be contacted to assist in locating appropriate off-campus training centers for student internships.
8. Student organizations and faculty of the Department emphasize participation in civic and professional activities as citizenship building skills.
9. The Department of Agriculture develop strategies to attract white and female students into the programs.

10. The Department of Agriculture organize a systematic plan to involve graduates in recruitment activities.
11. The Department of Agriculture make special efforts to place graduates in the industry of agriculture.
12. Each program area of the Department further analyze the data collected from the graduates to assist in making programmatic improvements.
13. Further study be made to determine whether graduates are underemployed.
14. A follow-up study of graduates of all the Department of Agriculture graduates be made every 5 to 10 years.

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APPENDIX A

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Panel Members' Memorandums

VIRGINIA TECH

Division of Vocational &
Technical Education

College of Education
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. John Hillison, Dr. Patrick O'Reilly, Regina Smick and
Brad Jeffreys

FROM: P.L. Fluker

SUBJECT: Preliminary Draft of a Follow-up Study Instrument

DATE: May 29, 1987

I am developing an instrument for collecting data from baccalureate degree graduates in agriculture at Alcorn State University. The draft copy of this instrument is divided into two parts, Part I - Background Information and Part II - Perceptions of Graduates Toward the Agricultural Department.

Please take a few minutes and read the instrument. Check each item carefully for content validity and word clarity. Make the necessary corrections and/or comments on this draft copy attached. I will pick up the document tomorrow or when it is convenient for you. Thank you for your assistance.

ds

Enclosure

APPENDIX B
Alcorn State University
Panel Members' Memorandums

VIRGINIA TECH

Division of Vocational &
Technical Education

College of Education
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Elver Elliott
Dr. Harold Grier
Dr. Charles Tillman
Dr. Suresh Tiwari

FROM: P.L. Fluker

SUBJECT: Preliminary Draft of a Follow-Up Study Instrument

DATE: May 30, 1987

I am developing an instrument for collecting data from baccalureate degree graduates in agriculture at Alcorn State University. The draft copy of this instrument is divided into three parts, Part I - Background Information, Part II - Current Job Information, and Part III - Perceptions of Graduates Toward the Agricultural Department.

Please take a few minutes and read the instrument. Check each item carefully for content validity and word clarity. Make the necessary corrections and/or comments on the draft copy attached. Mr. Elliott will pick up the document this afternoon or when it is convenient for you. Thank you for your assistance.

sh

Enclosure

APPENDIX C
Pilot Study Members

Pilot Study Members
1980-81 Alcorn State University Agriculture Graduates

Henry Guice

Dwayne Hosey

Jesse Jackson

Larry Russell

APPENDIX D
Notification Letter
and Corrected Address Card



Alcorn State University

PHONE: AREA CODE 601-877-3523

Lorman, Mississippi 39096

June 4, 1987

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. Dale Williams
115 West Bee Bee Street
Hollandale, MS 38748

Mr. Williams:

The Department of Agriculture at Alcorn State University will start collecting data from selected graduates regarding their perception of the quality of the Department as they remembered it as a student.

Additional demographic data will be requested in the study, but the data will be used for research and planning purposes only. Confidentiality of the participant will be strictly observed.

You have been chosen to participate in this Department's follow-up study. In approximately one week, you will receive a questionnaire with a self-addressed envelope. Will you take a few minutes and fill in the information and return the questionnaire promptly?

In addition, check the mailing address we used in this letter. If it is incorrect, please make the necessary corrections and return the enclosed card to our office immediately.

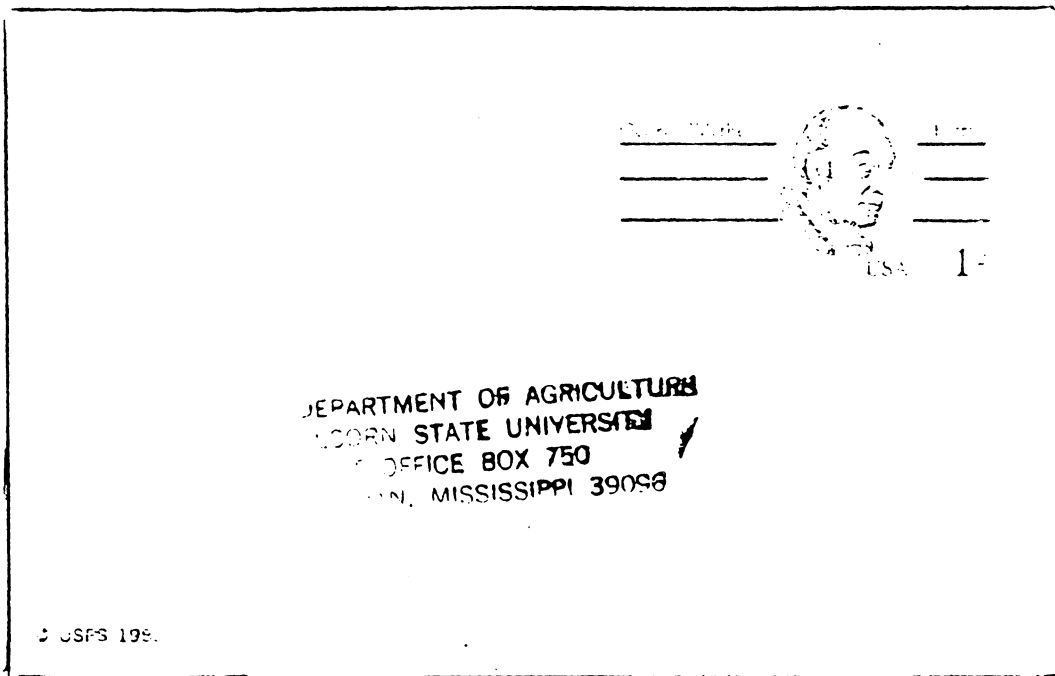
Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

P. L. Fluker

/s

Enclosures



CORRECTED ADDRESS CARD

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____

BUSINESS PHONE _____

A PERSON WHO ALWAYS KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE
PHONE NUMBER _____

APPENDIX E

Cover Letter of
Alcorn State University President



ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY
LORMAN, MISSISSIPPI 39096

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

June 19, 1987

Dear Alcornite:

I write first to thank you for being an "Alcornite" and second to ask you to assist Mr. P. L. Fluker in his research and graduate studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University by completing and returning in a timely manner the enclosed survey. Mr. Fluker is doing a great service for the institution and I invite you to take part. The information you provide will help us to measure our strengths and make them stronger and to identify our weaknesses and correct them.

We need to hear from you in order to serve you better and to plan for the years ahead. We would like to let you know where your classmates are and what they are doing, to keep you informed about the many activities and changes that are occurring on the campus, and to ask for your advice.

Please take the time to complete the enclosed survey and return it to Mr. Fluker (see address on the form) as soon as possible. Please accept my personal thanks for your assistance and support.

Sincerely,

Walter Washington
President

Enclosure

APPENDIX F

First Cover Letter of Researcher

June 19, 1987

Mr. Jimmie Garth
P.O. Box 3142
Jackson, MS 39207

Mr. Garth:

In order to update our records and determine the impact that the Department has had upon its graduates, the Department of Agriculture has developed the 1982-1986 graduate follow-up study.

The study will assist in compiling an accurate picture of our graduates. It will also aid the Department in evaluating its current programs, in order to provide better services for both graduates and students. Moreover, it will enhance the Department's capabilities in the areas of planning, assessing programs and career advising. You will notice that the questionnaire contains a number of personal inquiries about your family, career, resources, and opinions. Your response to these questions will be of great help in evaluating programs for the Department. I assure you that the information you provide will be held in the strictest confidence and will be published only in general statistical form.

Please take the few minutes it will require to read and complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed stamped envelope within five days. Your cooperation will be deeply appreciated and most valuable to the Department of Agriculture.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

P. L. Fluker

Enclosure

APPENDIX G

Second Cover Letter of Researcher

Second Letter

Dear Alcornite:

About two weeks ago you were mailed a survey asking for your cooperation in completing the information requested. I hope that this form was delivered to you.

To this date we have not received your completed questionnaire. It is especially important that we have your opinion and responses.

Please take just a few moments and complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelop. If you have any reservations or questions about the questionnaire please give us a call at .

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

P.L. Fluker

Enclosure

P.S. This is very important information, so please send it back as soon as possible.

E. N. Elliott

APPENDIX H
Data Collection Instrument

Alcorn State University Agricultural Department
Follow-Up Study of Baccalaureate Degree Graduates

PART I - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Directions: Please circle the single letter that corresponds to your choice of response.

1. In which year did you receive your BS degree in agriculture from Alcorn State University (ASU)?
 - A. 1982
 - B. 1983
 - C. 1984
 - D. 1985
 - E. 1986

2. In which program did you receive your BS degree in agriculture from ASU?
 - A. Agricultural Education
 - B. Agricultural Economics
 - C. Agronomy
 - D. Animal Science
 - E. General Agriculture

3. If you could start over again would you choose the same major in the Department of Agriculture?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No

4. Are you presently:
 - A. Single (never married)
 - B. Married
 - C. Divorced or Separated
 - D. Widowed

5. How many children do you have?
 - A. 0
 - B. 1
 - C. 2
 - D. 3
 - E. 4 or more

6. What is your sex?
 - A. Male
 - B. Female

7. What is your race?
 - A. Afro-American/Black
 - B. Caucasian American/White
 - C. Other (specify) _____

8. How did you locate your first job after graduation?
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A. College placement service | E. Cooperative program arrangement |
| B. Faculty assistance | F. Relatives |
| C. Civil service application | G. Friends |
| D. Direct application to employer | H. Other (specify) _____ |
-

9. To what extent have you participated in the following activities: (rank each item that applies to you according to the following scale).

- 1 = Active participation
 2 = Some participation
 3 = No participation

- _____ A. Voting in local elections
 - _____ B. Writing or talking to your representatives in government
 - _____ C. Voting when you are pretty sure your party will not win
 - _____ D. Attending city council or county commission meetings
 - _____ E. Working to register new voters
 - _____ F. Becoming an active member of a political party
 - _____ G. Assisting youth organizations such as FFA or 4-H clubs
 - _____ H. Participating in trade or professional associations
 - _____ I. Assisting community centers, neighborhood improvement, and/or social action groups
 - _____ J. Performing organized volunteer work such as fire and/or rescue teams
 - _____ K. Carrying on a hobby, cooking, or other leisure activity
 - _____ L. Being a member of a sports team or club
 - _____ M. Participating in a literary, art, music, or study group
 - _____ N. Serving as a member of an educational organization
 - _____ O. Participating in a service organization such as Kiwanis or Junior Chamber of Commerce
 - _____ P. Other (specify) _____
-

10. Have you ever held an elected or appointed office (non-civil service) in federal, state or local government? Describe the most recent below.

- A. If elected office, check here _____
- B. Title _____ (Please list)
- C. Local _____ D. State _____ E. Federal _____
- F. If appointive office, check here _____
- G. Title _____ (Please list)
- H. Local _____ I. State _____ J. Federal _____

11. How many full-time positions have you had since receiving your degree?
- A. 0
B. 1
C. 2
D. 3
E. 4 or more
12. What is your present employment status?
- A. Employed
B. Unemployed (looking for a job)
C. Unavailable for employment because of: (you cannot accept a job for one of the following reasons - circle the appropriate number)
1. Military
 2. Furthering my education
 3. Illness
 4. Housewife/Househusband
 5. Not interested in employment at this time
 6. Other (specify) _____

PART II - CURRENT JOB INFORMATION

Directions: If you are currently unemployed, please skip to part III.

13. What is your occupational title? _____
14. How long have you served in your current position?
_____ (years)
15. What was your annual entry level salary? _____
16. Which of the following best describes you? (Circle one letter)
- A. Employed full time in the field of agriculture
 - B. Employed part time in the field of agriculture
 - C. Employed full time outside the field of agriculture
 - D. Employed part time outside the field of agriculture
17. Which of the following best describes your 1986 income before taxes.
- A. \$10,000-14,999
 - B. \$15,000-19,999
 - C. \$20,000-24,999
 - D. \$25,000-29,999
 - E. \$30,000 and over

18. Which of the following best describes the 1986 income of your spouse before taxes?
- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| A. Unemployed | D. \$20,000 - 24,999 |
| B. \$10,000 - 14,999 | E. \$25,000 - 29,999 |
| C. \$15,000 - 19,999 | F. \$30,000 and over |
19. How many promotion(s) have you received on your job since graduation?
- | | |
|---------|--------------|
| A. None | C. 2 |
| B. 1 | D. 3 or more |
20. How do you feel about your present job? (circle one)
- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Like it very much | D. Dislike it somewhat |
| B. Like it somewhat | E. Dislike it very much |
| C. Neither like it or dislike it | |
21. Do you plan a job change in the next 12 months?
- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| A. Yes _____ | B. No _____ |
| C. Undecided _____ | |
22. How would you rate the job related training and technical knowledge you received in the Department of Agriculture?
- | | |
|--------------|---------|
| A. Excellent | C. Fair |
| B. Good | D. Poor |

**PART III: PERCEPTIONS TOWARD THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AT
ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY (ASU)**

Directions: Circle the single letter that corresponds to your choice of response.

23. Would you encourage your son, daughter, or close relative/friend to attend Alcorn State University and major in agriculture?
- | | |
|--------|-------|
| A. Yes | B. No |
|--------|-------|
24. If asked, would you be willing to assist the Department of Agriculture at ASU in recruiting prospective students?
- | | |
|--------|-------|
| A. Yes | B. No |
|--------|-------|
25. How would you rate the total Agricultural department at ASU in preparing you for additional education and training?
- | | |
|--------------|---------|
| A. Excellent | C. Fair |
| B. Good | D. Poor |

26. Directions: Rate items A-F:

1 = Excellent

2 = Good

3 = Fair

4 = Poor

- A. The working relationship of agricultural faculty members with agricultural agencies and industry
- B. Assistance provided by academic advisor to me while a student at ASU
- C. The quality of the teaching in agricultural classes
- D. The opportunities for students to interact with faculty on an informal basis
- E. Agricultural faculty members were current on the theoretical and technological developments in their field
- F. The agricultural faculty members were concerned about student learning and development

27. Directions: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with statements A-F using the following scale:

1 = Strongly agree

2 = Agree

3 = Disagree

4 = Strongly disagree

- A. A sufficient quantity of instructional equipment was available in all classroom and laboratory areas at ASU
- B. A sufficient quantity of instructional supplies were available in all agricultural classroom and laboratory areas at ASU
- C. Enough off-campus training centers were available to students for internships
- D. Appropriate safety equipment was provided in all agricultural laboratory and study areas
- E. Laboratory equipment used at ASU was similar to that used in industry
- F. Equipment used in laboratories and classrooms at ASU was kept in good repair

28. In view of your college experiences and present occupation, what changes would you recommend in your undergraduate program in the following subject areas?

Directions: Please circle the numbers that indicate your opinion of the credit hours required and the adequacy of training in each major area

	Semester Hours of Work Required			Adequacy of Training You Received				
	Should be Increased	No Change	Should be Decreased	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Does Not Apply
A. Communication skills (English, Speech, etc.)	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5
B. Natural Sciences (Chemistry, Botany, etc.)	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5
C. Social Sciences (Economics, Government, etc.)	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5
D. Mathematical Science	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5
E. Agricultural Courses								
a. Agricultural Economics	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5
b. Agricultural Engineering	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5
c. Agronomy	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5
d. Animal Science	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5

29. What advanced degree or educational training have you received or have in progress since completing your undergraduate degree program? (Circle only one)

- A. Have not participated in a collegiate graduate program
- B. Have participated in non-degree academic program
- C. Have earned partial requirement for master's degree
- D. Have earned Master's or equivalent degree
- E. Partial requirements completed for a specialists degree
- F. Specialist or equivalent received
- G. Partial requirements completed for the Ed.D. or Ph.D.
- H. Ph.D. or Ed.D. completed
- I. Other (specify) _____

30. What course(s) or subject(s) would you recommend to be added to the agricultural curriculum?

31. Please list what you believe to be the major strengths of the Department of Agriculture at ASU?

32. Please list what you believe to be major improvements needed in the Department of Agriculture.

33. Please list your honors and awards, both civic and professional.

34. Comments: How do you feel the agricultural programs at ASU could better serve their students?

Thank you for your assistance!

Please return to:

P.L. Fluker
P.O. Box 78 ASU
Lorman, MS 39096

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