Summary of Changes to the Agricultural Communications Curriculum

1. Overall, the curriculum for the major has been adjusted to incorporate four tracks that students may choose to specialize. As this curriculum is presently administered, majors in Agricultural Communications graduate with a strong emphasis in journalism and a science background; however, in recent years, few graduates plan to embark upon a career specifically in Ag Journalism. Therefore, if the curriculum is modified from its current state, we believe we can better meet the needs of students and their prospective employers. The proposed change is reflected by a set of AGCO courses in the major (M – 30 h) required by everyone in the major, sixteen additional required courses and then 28 credit hours in a specialized area where students can choose from radio, television and film, public relations and marketing, communications or journalism. All tracks are designed to require 123 hrs for completion. The proposed journalism track very closely aligns with the current curriculum. The only changes listed are those made to the AGCO classes. Please note that all of the “track specific” supporting courses represent a change.

2. Each track has a required list as well as a menu list of track-specific supporting courses. With this flexibility, students should have an easier time to schedule courses and finish their degree in a timely manner.

3. Chemistry. The Chemistry requirement has been changed from CHEM 1030/1031 and CHEM 1040/1041 to CHEM 1010 and lab. This change reflects the chemistry requirement by other AGCO programs across the country and COMM majors in the CLA. It is believed the current level of CHEM is not needed for AGCO graduates and precedence exists for other majors in our college. However, if students take the CHEM 1030, this should be counted as credit cannot count in both series.

4. Additions of course requirements. COMM 3500, COMM 3600 and RTVF 3300 have been added to give graduates a stronger communication base. While this could offer challenges for students, AGCO students should be able to enroll in these classes over the course of different semesters.

5. AGRI 1080, Agricultural Communications and Leadership, is a proposed new course for AGCO majors (piloted in fall 2007) and will allow students a chance to gain knowledge and exposure specific to the agricultural sector that isn’t presently occurring in the curriculum. It should also serve to orient the students to their major and prepare them for greater success in coursework.

6. AGRI 4920, Internship in Agricultural Communications and Leadership is a proposed new course and will allow students a chance to have an internship in agricultural communications or leadership. Currently students are required to complete JRNL 4920 which is a journalism internship. This change will allow the curriculum coordinators to be more closely involved in networking with prospective internship experiences and provide oversight to the experience, thereby strengthening the experience.

7. In the current curriculum, students have an option of HORT 2020, HORT 2210 or AGRN 1000 and have been required to take AGRN 2040. In order to ensure that students receive broader exposure to other departments in the college, the curriculum has been adapted to provide menu between HORT 2020, HORT 2210,
ENTM 2040, PLPA 2000, AGRN 1000 and AGRN 2040. Students may take more if desired through electives.

8. Computer Competency. The present curriculum provides for AGEC 2100 Microcomputers; however, this course is no longer offered plus students possess computer skills at a high level and gain additional skills through their major courses; therefore, it is suggested students only enroll in COMP 1000 or COMP 1AA0 Competency Test, as a substitute for AGEC 2100 and only if students choose to take AGEC 3010. Students taking AGEC 4000 in lieu of AGEC 3010 would not require COMP 1000 and therefore, could make up the 2 cr hours with Ag electives. Several courses identified in the curriculum infuse computer skills at the level of AGEC 2100 or COMP 2100.

9. This proposed model provides at three to six elective hours (depending on which course they choose in the menu) and students may choose to fill those hours with ROTC credits. The SACS oral communication requirement is filled by COMM 1000.

10. As stated elsewhere, this proposed change in the Agricultural Communications (AGCO) curriculum is essential for the College of Agriculture to be able to compete with other Agricultural Communication programs across the region and country. Ten years ago only 10 universities had a degree program in AGCO. Today, nearly all colleges with an agricultural program have their own Ag Communications degree program. Graduates in AGCO plan to enter a variety of areas in the ag sector. By changing this program to create four specified tracks for students, we will better able to advise and guide students in the curriculum and produce graduates who are better prepared for successful careers in this rapidly growing industry and market.

11. The only additional resource that will be needed is a faculty member to serve as instructor of record for instruction of the Agricultural Communications and Leadership course and to facilitate the AGRI 4920 internship course experiences. This role and responsibility will be assumed by the Coordinator of the AGCO curriculum.