

IDEA SHARING SESSION

Oral Presentations

Effective Recruiting Through Ambassadors Programs

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Agricultural Ambassadors organizations and similar student based recruiting groups have become integral parts of recruitment programs in several agricultural colleges and departments in the United States. The increase in popularity of these programs seems to support the notion that "a satisfied, successful student is a most effective recruiter."

Questionnaires were sent to 66 resident instruction offices of selected member institutions of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. The intent of the survey was to determine the extent of student recruitment groups as well as their purposes, organizational patterns, activities performed, projects sponsored, and operational procedures used. Fifty-two useable responses were returned and 24 (46 percent) indicated use of an agricultural student organization or program where the major objective was to recruit students.

In most cases, "ambassadors" was part of the group's official name and the group was led by officers and a resident instruction staff person who served as adviser. Selection of ambassadors was based on applications and interviews. Selection factors were grade average, extra curricular involvement, knowledge of agriculture, and communications abilities.

Purposes common for ambassador groups were enhancing the image of and interest in agriculture, recruiting high school students, serving as goodwill ambassadors for the college and providing personal and professional growth experiences for the members through the organization's activities.

Activities most often performed are by student recruiters were staffing recruitment exhibits, making presentations to high school and two year college classes, leading campus tours, contacting prospects by telephone and personal notes, hosting recruits for campus and class visitations, and providing a speakers bureau.

Several ambassador groups have also sponsored agricultural career exploration days, open houses, class visitation days, contests, and socials for prospective students.

Ambassador training, goal setting, organizational structure, member performance requirements, reimbursement of member out-of-pocket costs, and official dress contribute to the success and overall effectiveness of the student recruitment organization.

New Recruiting Activities for the Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture

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The Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture (RHSA) offers a two-year certificate granting program in Horticulture and Animal Science. As with many agriculture programs in the country, the RHSA has experienced a declining enrollment from 1981 to 1985. In 1986, a plan was developed to increase recruiting activities and public awareness of the program. This plan included assigning recruiting responsibilities to one full-time faculty member. Included with this assignment was the development of new recruiting materials to provide interested persons with information about the RHSA as well as to present to them information on career opportunities. Career opportunities include both conventional and non-conventional alternatives. A video tape developed by the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, which includes a section on the RHSA, has been distributed to all state high schools. Each high school vocational agriculture center in the state has been given an individual copy of this tape to include in the career section of their curriculum. This tape is also used in conjunction with conventional recruiting materials for promotion of the RHSA through exhibits via the College's recruiting van. The recruiting van is a converted motor home fitted with equipment for outside viewing of the recruiting tape with displays and brochures regarding the RHSA. The van is also used by faculty members to visit high schools, fairs, interest meetings and career days to support the RHSA and answer questions. Counselors at each state high school and vocational agricultural center are also provided with recruitment literature and other materials to encourage student contact and eventual matriculation. The activities are credited, in part, with a 20% increased enrollment for 1986 compared to 1985.

Use of Alumni Survey

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The UMC Department of Horticulture is striving to upgrade the quality of its undergraduate curriculum. As a result, a survey to assess horticultural education experiences and employment since graduation was created. In 1985 the survey was mailed to all of the Department's alumni since 1979. This presentation will discuss the designing, administration, and results of the survey; suggestions for improving undergraduate education, and student retention, will be emphasized.

Program Enrollment Management

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The decision to continue one's formal education into a post secondary institution is a significant decision in a person's life. Final selection of one institution is an exciting and thought-provoking process. Too frequently, however, the physical transition into an institution is accompanied with feelings of career uncertainty, frustration, and confusion.

Due to declining enrollment, the issue of recruiting, retaining, and graduating quality students is crucial. In an effort to understand better the initial transition period into the Agricultural Mechanization program at the University of Minnesota, Waseca, a survey was developed and initiated to gather data during this transition period. The information generated from the survey proved useful to instructors/counselors in identifying and prioritizing factors that students used in the selection of the institution and selecting major. Further data was secured which aided in identifying specific frustrations and concerns. These responses aid in identifying issues which need to be addressed by Instructor/Counselors, Prospective Student Office personnel and Retention Committees. Portions of the data collected from the survey are applicable to only the University of Minnesota, Waseca; however, a majority of the survey questions could be addressed by any institution.

Survey Form for Dairy Internship Program

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A six-page dairy survey form, "Dairy Analysis Worksheets," was developed for students working as interns on dairy farms and for students to use to analyze their home dairies. The worksheets include 68 questions in six categories: general dairy information, herd health and environment, feeds and feeding, reproduction, genetics and calf management.

Generally, the internship period lasts 10 to 12 weeks during which a student works on a selected dairy or, in some cases, may work on his home dairy. The worksheets are mailed to the student during his third week on the job with instructions to mail the completed forms back within two weeks. After the forms are returned, an on-farm visit is generally arranged to take place within a week. Prior to my visit, I'll analyze the completed worksheets for the dairy's strengths and weaknesses. Problem areas are noted and possible solutions are outlined. If possible, extension fact sheets, magazine or textbook articles are xeroxed to reinforce the solutions. During the on-farm visit, I'll first have the student show me around the dairy, paying particular attention to areas that were identified as possible problem areas. Next, the student and I will sit

down and thoroughly go through the worksheets. Finally, the employer is invited in to share the student's and my conclusions and recommendations. I have found that employers and students have been very open to this type of approach.

Besides providing a basis for the on-farm visit, the worksheets fulfill other objectives:

1. Classroom learning and on-the-job experience are combined.
2. A basis for employer-student interaction is provided.
3. Students learn problem solving techniques.
4. The employer's dairy or student's home farm is improved.
5. They have lead to follow-up projects when a student returns to school, (for example, balancing the ration, designing a herd health program or a breeding program).
6. Students are helped to appreciate the type of records needed on a dairy farm.
7. The worksheets have also been used independent of the internship program to analyze dairies.

The worksheets are designed to provide technical information as well as ask questions. A sample question follows:

- How many cases of calving difficulty occurred in this past year? This should be less than 10%. Difficult calving is commonly associated with fat cows, undersized or fat heifers. It may be beneficial to breed heifers to calving ease bulls.

While these analysis worksheets were written specifically for a dairy enterprise, this type of approach could be applied to any agricultural or business enterprise with beneficial results.

Expanding the Knowledge of Adults with Computers

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As a professional educator, I take great pride in seeing my students learn and eventually apply the things that they have learned in class to their every day lives. Teaching day students is and will always be challenging, but whenever you expand your teaching to working with adults, it becomes an altogether new challenge.

For the last seven years, I have had the opportunity to work with adults. In 1980, the Cloud County Community College instituted a program called Farm Business Analysis, which is assisting young farmers with farm management problems and preparing a set of farm records which can be totally analyzed. In this program all areas of farm management are explored with the emphasis being to assist the young farmer improve his farming operation.

Each year I have approximately 35 to 40 young farmers enrolled. In the seven years since the program started, many young farmers have purchased a computer after completing the three year course. These classes are for credit and each student receives a "Farm Management Certificate."

Another avenue, which I was asked to add in last fall, was to teach evening classes to adults. The class I was asked to teach was "Microcomputers in Farm and Ranch Management." In the fall semester I had ten students enrolled, and in the spring semester I had two classes with 15 in one class and 16 in the other. The students are all adults and most of them are women.

The college had purchased 14 OSBORNE 1 Computers for my use within the previous five year period. Last fall they purchased an additional 6 OSBORNE EXECUTIVE Computers. However, since I live in Clay Center, and the Cloud County Community College is in Concordia, Kansas, I teach all off-campus classes as I am also a faculty member of the Agri-Business Department. Because it was difficult to find a place to teach the computer classes in Clay Center, I decided to hold the classes in my basement. My recreation room has, consequently, been transformed into a computer classroom.

This computer class is organized to teach the operating system of the computer, which is CPM, Supercalc-the electronic spread sheet, and word processing. The overall emphasis is to prepare adults to upgrade their present employment or to assist them in securing employment. The students must prepare a spreadsheet example that could be used at home, and also an up-to-date resume. They also learn how to create a resume that will assist them with securing employment.

It is especially rewarding to see these adults secure employment after they have been enrolled in this class. If you want to seek a new challenge, take the time to teach adults. These students really take pride in learning to use a computer.

Cloud County Community College takes pride in the number of computers they have and also the number of students that have learned to use the computer.

Live Video in Teaching Labs

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One of the difficulties in teaching plant or animal anatomy is establishing the relationship of labeled points on illustrations to corresponding locations on tissue samples. At Fort Hays State University, instructors use live video displays of tissue dissections to improve student's visualization of plant anatomy. Live video displays allow students to see how plant parts relate to each other and how plants can be dissected.

Teaching Sheep Production with Telecommunications

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As the number of non-traditional students increase, we need to look at methods to maximize our educational outreach with tools such as telecommunications. The use of telecommunications is becoming increasingly important in disseminating information for off campus mini-courses, adult education and extension activities. At UMW, a sheep production course was taught in four, three hour sessions, once per week through telecommunications media at five different locations in the area.

It is important to have interactive environment in all courses; however, a class delivered through a telecommunicative mode demands even greater emphasis on the androgogical style of learning and the interactive environment to maintain the student's attention. Course content design needs to be flexible enough to develop what the students want to learn. To help stimulate the student's discussion and the course content the use of five minute videotapes, slides and overheads were used in short bursts. Shorter time usage of the video material demonstrated a much greater response to discussion rather than showing the film for 20 minutes or more. The students had a tendency to go much deeper into a subject once just a few ideas were presented rather than a mass of information at once.

A live demonstration of tail docking, shots, and young lamb management techniques was found to be much more cumbersome and lost student interest more than the same thing did on videotape. One mode that was not tried in the set-up was the use of computers. Student evaluations of the course were positive and showed students would like to see more courses in the future.

An Exploratory Study of How Extension Directors from Four Midwestern States Use Their Administrative Time

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In this study Mintzberg's classification structure was used to describe the administrative duties of Extension Directors. Specifically, based on the total administrative time, directors were asked (1) to give their allocation of administration time in terms of interpersonal, informational, and decisional duties as well as to describe specific roles that they play under each of these duties, (2) to give their time allocation spent using particular communication media (e.g., telephone calls, scheduled meetings, unscheduled meetings), e.g., and (3) to determine areas of interest for potential staff development.

Importance of FFA Judging Contests in College Major Selection

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One of the most common methods used by agricultural colleges in the hopes of contacting high school students is sponsoring FFA judging contests. However, recent reports have suggested that few institutions feel contests are very effective student recruitment techniques. Only 13% of agronomy departments (1) and 17% of poultry and/or animal science departments (2) rated judging contests as effective recruiting tools. In a survey of agriculture students, contest participation was ranked fairly low among reasons for choosing a college or major (3).

At Oklahoma State University, FFA contests are conducted in 17 academic areas plus leadership and speech, and the results of these contests seem more promising. A survey of agriculture students enrolled in the introductory crop production course revealed that 60% were in FFA in high school and over 75% of those participated in judging contests. When those active in contests were asked what effect participation had on their decision to study agriculture, 46% said a very great effect, 40% some effect, and 14% little or no effect. For choosing a major, 17% felt judging was the primary reason they were majoring in their field, 33% said it had some effect, 6% said it had no effect even though they were majoring in a related field, and the remaining 44% were not majoring in an area which they judged.

Of all national undergraduate students currently majoring in agronomy at Oklahoma State, 25% have participated in agronomic contests (crops, land, or pasture and range) in high school. However, most of those who have not participated have transferred into agronomy from other colleges or majors. Over half of the entering freshmen agronomy majors the past three years have participated, and 7 of 14 entering freshman scholarship winners for fall 1987 have been involved.

The success of the OSU judging contest program as a recruitment tool is perhaps due to the many additional efforts that are incorporated by both the College of Agriculture and academic departments. Some of these include sponsoring training workshops for teachers and students, providing video tapes or practice materials to teachers, offering scholarships to state winners, writing personal letters to participants with career information, including career information in contest promotional material and at the contest itself, maintaining strong awards programs both on campus and at the state FFA convention, assisting at district contests throughout the state, involving current agriculture students in promoting and conducting the contests, and supporting a strong collegiate judging program for continued development of judging skills.

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He took his BSA ('43) from Colorado State,
Where his scholarship was of such high rate.
He continued his MSA ('45) and PhD ('49) degree,
On the campus of Iowa State University.

His teaching career is truly a gem;
It began in '47 at Texas A and M.
He teaches courses in genetics and biometry,
He awards course grades from "A to E."

In 1960 he worked for DeKalb AgResearch,
And thus left college teaching in a lurch.
In 1966 he staffed with the University of Tennessee,
Where he teaches animal sciences and biometry.