Summary

This was a positive experience for students. Students were generally pleased with the activity and were nearly unanimous in recommending it for future classes. Most of the negative feedback indicated they would like more time and opportunity to digest the information. Unfortunately, only 70% of the class chose to participate and receive the extra credit. This might suggest that this become a required activity rather than a voluntary one. The coordinated effort between librarian and classroom instructor is an effective way to bring students into the library and bring them up to speed with the new databases and technology available for information acquisition and utilization. Although this paper does not address term paper improvement as there was no control group, the impression of the instructor was that the paper quality improved, and the quality of references and diversity of sources appeared to be much better in the 1996 papers than in those of previous years. To further facilitate student involvement, complete hands-on access to all resources presented would be desirable. Another addition would be the inclusion of Internet searching. However, this would take additional class time to accomplish.

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A Summary of Intercollegiate Judging Activity, Funding and Philosophy

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Abstract

Fifty-one universities with agricultural programs were surveyed to determine the degree of support for intercollegiate judging programs. Thirty-nine surveys were returned for a 76.5 % response rate. Of the respondents, 84.6 % sponsored at least one judging team related to animal agriculture (livestock, dairy, meats, horses, meat animal evaluation, and wool). The average annual expenditure for judging teams, salaries excluded, was $10,950. Annual expenditures ranged from $2,500 to $25,000. Sources of funding were highly variable with departmental funds, on average, comprising the majority (45.4 %). While respondents did not favor increasing the number of team members participating in each contest, a majority was in

favor of including performance data for each contest class. The most frequently mentioned outcomes of judging programs were improved communication ability, logical decision-making, industry knowledge, and teamwork.

Introduction

Judging teams have been a traditional extracurricular activity offered to students at many community and junior colleges, four-year colleges, and universities offering agricultural degrees. Benefits of participation in judging programs have been described as improvement of critical thinking skills; improved organization, delivery, and accuracy of written and oral communication; enhanced self confidence; and development of better team skills (Smith, 1989; McCann and McCann, 1992).

A national survey of 1291 alumni who had participated in intercollegiate judging programs revealed that nearly all of the respondents perceived that judging programs would be of greater (47.4%) or equal (43.8 %) value to students in the future (McCann and McCann, 1992).

Criticisms of judging activities have included concerns about the ability of judging contests to simulate realistic views of the livestock industry, the validity of utilizing visual appraisal as a genetic improvement tool, the cost of supporting judging team activities, and the number of students who are given the opportunity to participate at the intercollegiate level.

Objectives and Methodologies

The objectives of this study were to determine the following:

1. Identify the level of intercollegiate judging team activity at universities with agricultural programs measured as number of teams, number of students participating, and number of contests attended.
2. Determine the level and source of funding for intercollegiate judging team activity.
3. Determine the degree of support for changing the format of intercollegiate contests.

Universities granting agricultural degrees (n = 51) were surveyed via a mailed instrument. Responses (n = 39) yielded a 76.5% return rate.

Results

Thirty-three of the thirty-nine respondents (84.6 %) sponsored at least one animal-related judging team. Table 1 describes the type of teams sponsored by institutions sponsoring at least one team. The average and range of the numbers of students participating in each team and the number of contests participated in by each team are reported in Table 2. Livestock judging teams were most predominant in terms of institutional sponsorship, number of student participants, and number of contests participated in annually. Dairy, horse, and meat judging teams were relatively similar in sponsorship and student participation. Meat animal evaluation and wool judging teams were less likely to be sponsored and were more likely to participate in fewer contests. However, these teams had higher levels of student participation than did all others with the exception of livestock judging.

Judging team coaches held a variety university appointments ranging from volunteer to tenure-track faculty (Table 3). The responses to this survey indicate that institutions placed a high level of value on judging team activities in that faculty members (tenure and non-tenure track combined) were most often identified as judging team coaches. Furthermore, the value of coaching a team was apparently seen as a beneficial experience for graduate students (Table 3).

Institutional expenditures (non-salary) on animal-related judging team activities averaged $10,953.70 per respondent with a range from $2,500 to $25,000 (Table 4). It should be noted that only 28 of the 33 respondents elected to share financial information. The institutional expenditures provided about one-half of the annual non-salary costs of judging programs (Table 5). On average, team members, endowments, and annual giving programs contributed 15.2, 12.2, and 11.2% of the budget, respectively. The remainder of funding originated from team projects or student clubs.

Those surveyed were asked to respond to three potential changes to the format of livestock and dairy judging contests (Table 6). Respondents were not in favor of increasing the number of team members competing per contest. However, they were in favor of including performance data in all livestock and dairy judging contest classes. Respondents were also given the opportunity to make suggestions for improvement of the intercollegiate judging program (Table 7).

Respondents were also asked to identify the characteristics they used to measure success of intercollegiate judging programs. The primary measures of success were identified as skill development and participation of students, success in competition, and enhanced experiences with industry (Table 8).

Respondents were also asked to identify the specific skills enhanced by participation in intercollegiate judging activities. The most frequently mentioned positive outcomes were improved communication ability, decision-making, knowledge of industry, and teamwork/interpersonal skill development (Table 9).

Summary

Intercollegiate judging teams continue to be a part of the educational experience offered by agricultural universities. The financial and staff resources allocated to various judging team activities is relatively significant. However, the level of student participation and the benefits accrued in terms of improved communication skills, decision-making, and industry knowledge appears to warrant continued sponsorship of these activities. There is strong support for improving the utilization of performance data and production scenarios to enhance the benefits of livestock and dairy judging programs. In light of these findings, it would be appropriate to alter the format of competitive intercollegiate judging to include performance and economic data into each contest class.

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Table 1. Sponsorship of various livestock-related intercollegiate judging teams.

TYPE OF TEAM	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS SPONSORING AT LEAST ONE TEAM (N/33)	PERCENT OF ALL RESPONDENTS (N/39)
Livestock	96.6	82.0
Dairy	72.7	61.5
Meats	60.6	51.3
Horse	66.6	56.4
Meat animal evaluation	42.4	35.9
Wool	15.1	12.8

Table 2. Number of students participating and the number of contests competed in annually by team.

TEAM	NUMBER OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING AVERAGE (RANGE)	NUMBER OF CONTESTS AVERAGE (RANGE)
Livestock	12.2 (5 - 35)	5.4 (1 - 10)
Dairy	8.3 (4 - 15)	2.8 (1 - 5)
Meats	7.4 (4 - 18)	4.4 (1 - 7)
Horse	8.7 (4 - 25)	3.3 (1 - 7)
Meat animal evaluation	10.4 (7 - 16)	1.6 (1 - 4)
Wool	9.8 (5 - 12)	2.3 (2 - 3)

Table 3. Positions held by judging team coaches (pooled over teams).

TYPE OF POSITION	N
Faculty member (tenure-track)	20
Instructor (non-tenure track)	17
Graduate student	18
Non-academic employee (herdsman, etc.)	8
Volunteer	1

Table 4. Institutional dollars (pooled over teams) spent annually on intercollegiate judging team activities (non-salary).

RANGE ($)	N	(%)[Z]
< 5000	8	28.6
5001-10,000	4	14.3
10,001 - 15,000	7	25.0
15,001 - 20,000	4	14.3
20,001 - 25,000	5	17.9

[Z]Does not total to100 due to rounding.

Table 5. Sources of funds for intercollegiate judging teams.

FUNDING SOURCE	AVERAGE (%)[Z]	RANGE (%)
Departmental	45.0	10 - 100
Endowment	12.2	5 - 56
Team Project	7.9	2 - 30
Team Members	15.2	4 - 60
Student Clubs	8.4	1 - 50
Annual Donations	11.2	2 -70

[Z]Does not total to 100 due to rounding.

Table 6. Support for changing format of intercollegiate judging contests.

PROPOSED CHANGE	YES (%)	NO (%)
Increase size of teams per contest	17.2	82.8
Include performance data in all livestock contest classes	62.5[Z]	25.0
Include performance data in all dairy contest classes	67.9[Y]	25.0

[Z] An additional 6.3 % favored incorporation of more data than is currently used and an additional 6.3 % favored data for all breeding classes.

[Y] An additional 7.14 % favored incorporation of more data than is currently used.

Table 7. Suggested changes to improve intercollegiate judging programs.

SUGGESTION	TIMES MENTIONED
Include more economic emphasis/scenarios	6
Eliminate the use of show animals in contests	3
Include more cull/keep classes	2
Divide senior college contests into novice and advanced divisions	1
Fewer classes per contest but reasons on all classes	1
Reduce the number of contests	1
Increase the amount of financial support	1
Don't allow senior colleges to use junior colleges as a "farm system" of recruitment.	1

Table 8. Measures of success of intercollegiate judging programs.

CHARACTERISTIC IDENTIFIED AS MEASURE OF SUCCESS	NUMBER OF TIMES MENTIONED
Development of skills and participation of students	21
Interaction with and exposure to industry	12
Success in competition	12
Student recruitment and outreach	3

Table 9. Skills enhanced by participation in intercollegiate judging programs.

IMPROVED SKILLS AND/OR OUTCOMES	TIMES MENTIONED
Communication ability	30
Logical decision-making	24
Industry knowledge	15
Teamwork/interpersonal ability	12
Product and livestock evaluation	9
Professional networking	8
Problem solving ability	7
Leadership	5
Time management	5
Commitment	3

A Case Study of Distance Education Programming in a College of Agriculture

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Abstract

With the incorporation of new communication technologies, distance education is being used by an increasing number of schools, colleges and universities. Many colleges of agriculture already have strong distance education programs, but other colleges are just starting their own programs. Therefore, with this continuing emphasis on teaching at a distance, colleges are learning or relearning how to deliver education programming. The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) was one such organization that had to evaluate its distance education effort. This article examines how IFAS has developed its distance education effort, through a strategic planning process, to better meet the needs of students and faculty. The lessons learned and resulting actions will assist colleges of agriculture — both those with long-standing and new distance education efforts — as they determine how best to implement or reform distance education to accomplish their goals.

Introduction

American higher education's history always has been characterized by great change. In the nation's early years, higher education was comprised of small, elite colleges for the wealthy. Over time, higher education's focus shifted from providing education to the wealthy to providing education to

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