

Developing a Pipeline of Agriculture Students: Starting & Nurturing a Two-Year Agribusiness Program

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NACTA

June 26, 2013



**SOUTHSIDE VIRGINIA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Starting & nurturing a 2-year program

- Who we are
- About SVCC agribusiness
- How it all started
- Increasing recognition
- Where we are now
- Tools for increasing enrollment
- The pipeline



Who We Are

- Who represents a four-year institution?
- Who is from a two-year school?
- For the four-year schools, how many of your states have colleges that offer a two-year agriculture degree that can be a pipeline for you?



Who I am

- Lunenburg County Virginia farm girl
- Virginia Tech and Southside Virginia Community College
- My life's work....agriculture

About SVCC Agribusiness

- 20-credit Career Studies Certificate
- Technical Associates
- Associates of Arts and Sciences (transfer degree)
- Animal Science, plant science, soils, management, finance, human resources, marketing, professional selling, ag policy, alternative energy, ...



How It All Started

- Consortium of colleges in the “tobacco footprint”
- SVCC joined in 2010
- My chance to go home!
- Started in August 2010
with 1 student majoring
in agribusiness and 2
courses with 4 and 5
students



Increasing Recognition

- Telling the agribusiness story to anyone who would listen
- What do most people think when they hear 'agriculture'?



Increasing Recognition

- Agribusiness is farming...and so much more!
- Meetings with high school CTE directors and teachers, class visits, FFA events, Rotary, Ruritans, Chambers of Commerce, career fairs, county fairs, news articles, posters, brochures, Facebook



Where We Are Now

- Starting our 4th year this fall
- 35 students who have declared agribusiness as their major
- 4 have graduated with their certificate
 - 2 work on their family farms
 - 1 employed as a farm manager
 - 1 research technician at a VT research center
- 3 have received their associates
- 7 who have taken AGR coursework have transferred to Virginia Tech and 1 to Virginia State, with more in the pipeline

Tools for Increasing Enrollment

- Talk to anyone who will listen!
- Be sure your colleagues are knowledgeable about opportunities
- Educate both parents and students about opportunities in agribusiness
- Develop relationships with high school counselors and teachers
- Make personal contacts via mail, email, phone
 - Email yesterday: “You’ve been very helpful. Can’t remember this type of personal response when I initially went to college. Thank you so much.”

Tools for Increasing Enrollment

- Utilize students as ambassadors for your program
 - Take students with you to meetings, conferences, college/career fairs, etc.



- Keep the program in the local news

The Pipeline

- Students have enrolled in Virginia Tech's departments of Agricultural & Applied Economics, Crop & Soil Environmental Science, Wood Science & Forest Products, Forestry
- More to come!



- Don't we have the best jobs? Thomas Jefferson thought so.

**"Agriculture is our wisest pursuit,
because it will in the end contribute most
to real wealth, good morals, and happiness."**

- Letter from Thomas Jefferson to George Washington (1787)



I am proud to lead SVCC's agribusiness program, and proud to be training the next generation of agriculturalists!

- Agribusiness is the country's #1 industry
- Agribusiness is Virginia's #1 industry
- Agribusiness is Southside's #1 industry
- Agribusiness at SVCC allowed me to come home!



And there's no place like home!



And there's nothing like family





I am proud to be a part of agriculture,
and I am proud to be in Southside.

And I'm proud to be creating a pipeline of agriculture students for our four-year schools.

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