

Pathway to Agricultural Education: Recruitment, Preparation, and Careers



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Priorities/Mission

NIFA Priority 1: Global Food Security and Hunger

This project addresses the overall program goals of the HSI Education Grants Program by increasing the number of underrepresented students graduating with associates and baccalaureate degrees in agriculture (Goal 1) as well as increasing the quality of the instructional programs at two HSI institutions (Goal 2). Participants in the project will benefit from the development of new skills and competencies (Goal 3) and will be exposed to the various career opportunities that exist for them within the USDA (Goal 4)



Objectives

During this three year project, the following steps will be taken to accomplish the four project objectives:

Objective 1: Provide an Agricultural Education Orientation (AEO) course at Modesto Junior College (MJC) and Fresno State that incorporates lecture, discussion, field experience, experiential learning, and online learning activities.

Objective 2: Assist and facilitate community college students' transition from community college to the four-year university by utilizing mentors and related field experience.

Objective 3: Recruit and enroll at least 20 students each year in the AEO course, with at least 10 being enrolled in the course at MJC.

Objective 4: Ensure the retention of Agricultural Education Orientation course completers and assist with the completion of their Bachelor's degree through continual academic planning and advising each semester and provide at least two transfer students with financial assistance each year.

Beneficiaries

- 15+ community college classes will benefit from a presentation about higher education and career opportunities related to agricultural education
- 30+ community college students will complete the AEO program receiving academic planning, course credit and a stipend
- 30+ community college students will have an Ag Teacher mentor who will help guide them on their career path
- 60+ community college students will successfully create academic and career plans

Project Activities

- **Curriculum will be modified and course offered at MJC in spring 2014 to include lecture, discussion, field experience, experiential learning and online learning activities.**
- **Project website created at <http://www.fresnostate.edu/jcast/ag-edweb/aeo/> for dissemination of course materials and communication between faculty and students**
- **Assist students' transition from MJC to Fresno State by utilizing Ag Teacher mentors and field experience**
- **Recruit and enroll at least 10 MJC students in the AEO course each year.**
- **JCAST Ambassadors will conduct at least 5 outreach/recruitment presentations at MJC annually.**
- **Provide financial assistance to underrepresented Ag Education students completing the AEO program.**

Funding

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United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

USDA Collaborators

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Evaluation

The process evaluation will begin as soon as the project period begins. The evaluation plan will be presented to the Project Director and subsequent feedback provided to the evaluation team will be used to modify the evaluation plan, if necessary, due to changes in the project implementation and outcome plan.

Quarterly meetings will be held with the Project Director, the MJC Site Coordinator, and other stakeholders as needed. These meetings will be used to review the implementation progress, identify potential problems, discuss solutions, and document the implementation process. Recommendations to improve the implementation process and data collection, when appropriate, will be made in writing to the Project Director and Site Coordinator after each meeting.

The outcome evaluation will be based on the stated objectives and measurable outcomes of this project. Questions will be developed to evaluate achievement of these objectives. Implementation of the activities, including their effectiveness towards reaching the stated objectives, will serve as the basis for evaluation. Recommendations will be provided quarterly during the formative phase of the evaluation with subsequent meetings to review the recommendations and modify them, if necessary. The summative report will contain recommendations on project continuation based on the viability of continuing the program with alternative funding or through integration of the project into existing programs at the participating institutions.



Expected Impacts

- Creation of a model curriculum for Ag Education Orientation/Early Field Experience courses.
- Increased number of underrepresented students in the university's Ag Education program.
- Increased retention rate of Ag Education students through vital financial support provided by project.
- Greater student awareness of careers in Ag Education.
- Students will be empowered to follow their developed academic plan towards a career in Ag Education.
- Increased number of qualified Ag Teachers entering the profession.
- Additional Ag Teachers available for jobs in high need rural areas.