FFA Members' Perceived Benefits and Barriers to a Secondary Agricultural Education Career

Ethan A. Igo, Dr. Dustin K. Perry, Dr. Carl G. Igo

Introduction & Literature Review

- In 2015-2016, the nation was short 287 qualified agricultural educators.
- During the 2015-2016 academic year in Montana, five agricultural education positions went unfilled.
- There is a continued need for recruiting high school students into agricultural education teacher preparation programs.
- Representing 93 local programs in Montana, there were approximately 4,500 FFA members.
- Montana State University yields an average of four Agricultural Education teaching graduates per year.

Cost/Resources

The cost for the innovative idea workshop was minimal, although it could increase depending on a variety of factors. Mileage, materials, and promotional items were the primary costs.

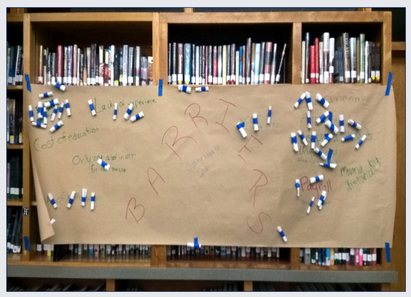
- **Mileage**: 1,800 miles traveled by 3 Montana State University Agricultural Education faculty members
  - Cost: Using Montana mileage rate of $.575 cents per mile, total cost was $1,035.
- **Materials**: Markers, craft paper, tape, and index cards.
  - Cost: Negligible
- **Promotional Items**: Montana State University Division of Agricultural Education branded items including Frisbees, pens, flash drives, bookmarks.
  - Cost: Approximately $500
- **Total Cost**: Approximately $1,500

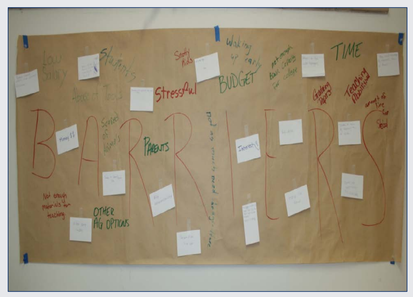
Methods

Three distinct goals of workshop:
1. Introduce MSU faculty members to students;
2. Collect contact cards from interested students;
3. Record student-perceived barriers and benefits.

Steps

Three distinct steps of workshop:
1. Brief introductions
2. Divide students into two groups, one for barriers and the other for benefits
3. Regroup, and address benefits and barriers





Future Plans

Future program plans include:
- Maintaining contact with workshop participants who indicated interest in declaring Agricultural Education at Montana State University.
- Faculty will track student enrollment using contact cards.
- Students will be referred to their agriculture teacher for continuous follow-up.
- Faculty will split-up to reach more students at future DLC's.

Results to Date/Implications

- Faculty presented to approximately 350 high school juniors and seniors.
- Collected 330 perceived benefits to becoming an agriculture teacher .
  - Perceived benefits were teaching others (*n*=110; 33.3%) and being involved in the agriculture industry (*n*=62; 18.8%).
- Collected 107 perceived barriers to becoming an agriculture teacher.
  - Perceived barriers were mostly economic issues (*n*=32; 30.0%) and the image of teaching as a profession (*n*=32; 30.0%).
- New freshmen enrollment for Fall 2016 is **300%** of Fall 2015 freshmen enrollment.

Coded Perceived Benefits/Barriers

Responses	n	%
Benefits	330	-
Teaching	110	33.3
Agriculture Connection	62	1808
Travel	51	15.5
Barriers	107	-
Economic	32	30.0
Image	32	30.0
Time	20	18.7