

Agriculture Faculty Academy: Addressing Complex Problems

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Introduction

Water has been identified as the world's most precious resource, as well as the most pressing challenge that needs to be addressed within the natural resource category.

The Irrigation Association recognizes the issues related to water and strongly promotes efficient irrigation practices.

The IA has developed agriculture Faculty Academy to help secondary and post-secondary instructors learn more about irrigation and using it efficiently through hands-on curriculum that can be incorporated into their classrooms.



Purpose

Agriculture Faculty Academy provides educators with the opportunity to gain new ideas for the classroom, network with fellow academics and get hands-on experience with irrigation-related curriculum.

The event is an annual two-day conference that is open to instructors at high schools and two- and four-year institutions. The two days are filled with lectures, labs, tours and a group dinner to encourage networking.

The IA's goal is to keep instructors up to date on the latest and most efficient irrigation techniques so that they are able to teach the next generation of irrigators using the most current information available.

Cost & Resources Needed

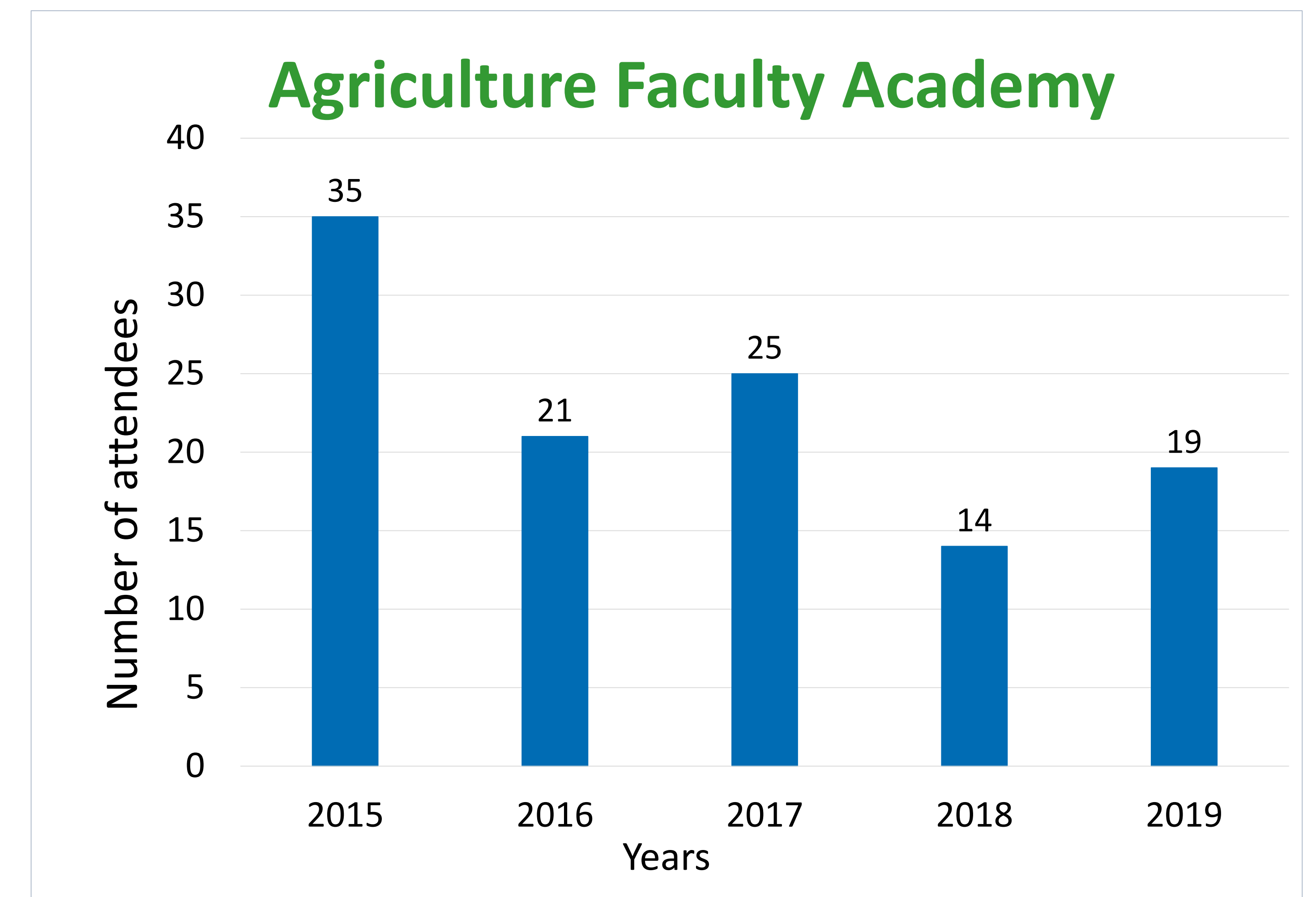
Agriculture Faculty Academy is free to attend, and the IA offers travel grant assistance to qualifying attendees on a first-come, first-served basis. Preference is given to those whose institutions can contribute partially to expenses.

The IA awards the travel grants prior to the event in order to reduce financial burdens associated with travel. Participants also typically receive several teaching aids and curriculum binders.

Future Plans & Advice

Agriculture Faculty Academy is held each June. The location and date for the 2020 event will be announced late fall of this year. Registration and the travel grant request are expected to open in February 2020.

Water is a critical resource. Educators of students at all levels need to have up-to-date information to enthusiastically train their students on the use of efficient irrigation.



Results

Since the program's inception in 2015, agriculture Faculty Academy has hosted over 100 attendees. The attendance from year to year includes repeat attendees as well as first-time attendees.

In 2019, the IA hosted 19 attendees at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Of the 19 attendees, there were three high school, 10 community college and six four-year university instructors. The event had two sponsors, Irrrometer Company and Rain Bird Corporation.

When asked to comment on their overall experience, 2019 attendee Shane Souza said, "This has been a great experience to broaden my knowledge on irrigation."