

Going the Distance: Reaching First-Year Agriscience Students and Their Teachers through the Virtual Greenhand Leadership Conference

Meredith Hall, Auburn University; Kelly Holler, Auburn University; Brooke Spann; Auburn University; Dr. Jason McKibben, Auburn University

Introduction/need

- COVID-19 has interrupted daily living; education as no exception
- The Auburn University (AU) Greenhand Leadership Conference is designed to prepare first-year middle/secondary agriscience education students to earn the Greenhand Degree
- AU restrictions prevented on-campus events during the fall of 2020
- The Greenhand Leadership conference continued with unprecedented reach



Results

- Previous attendance: 130-160 students from 12-15 schools
- 2020 attendance: >1,300 students from 11 schools
- Previous conference fees ranged from \$25-\$35 per student and included lunch, t-shirt, and a swag bag
- 2020 conference fee was \$50 per school
- Costs were greatly reduced to develop and participate in the virtual conference
- Eliminating the need to travel and the per-person registration fee expanded access to schools and students who otherwise may not have the resources to come to campus

How it works

- Undergraduate ambassadors in the AU Agriscience Education program worked in teams to develop videos, activities, and interactive materials to enhance the four workshops included in previous Greenhand conferences
- Workshops included Ag Careers, Career Development Events, Supervised Agricultural Experiences, and FFA 101
- All materials were delivered to teachers via Box, a file sharing service



Future plans

- Feedback surveys from previous on-campus conferences indicate teachers find value in bringing students to campus
- Offering both an on-campus and virtual conference experience may offer valuable fluidity to teachers