

Putting Culture back in AgriCulture: An Innovative Leadership Program

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INTRODUCTION

- An innovative leadership initiative to develop diverse leaders who enter the agricultural workforce as culturally aware ambassadors who can engage with and recruit from underserved communities.
- A collaboration course between an 1862 and 1890 land grant institution with 3 instructors who model active community engagement in scholarship, extension, and civil leadership on national and international platforms.
- Consultants of the class apply concepts of emotional and cultural intelligence as they develop through class while engaging with community partners on projects like controlled environment agriculture in Appalachia, Substance Use Disorder in Lexington, and collaborative scholarship of land grant institutions.

HOW IT WORKS

- The partnership between the University of Kentucky and Prairie View A&M University enhances the social, cultural and emotional intelligence among faculty, students, and organizations in both Kentucky and Texas.
- This project strengthens ties between the universities and their agricultural and community leaders providing a strong pipeline for student employment and mentorships.
- This course aligns with strategic initiatives from both universities.
 - Classes are conducted via Zoom to fully engage both learning institutions.
 - The class meets twice a week with one day dedicated to student development and the second dedicated to working closely with community partners to ensure the community engagement efforts are effective in their purposes.
 - The development of students in both emotional and cultural intelligence is necessary to ensure community engagement is done correctly and is not predatorial in nature.

REFERENCES

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RESULTS

- The course serves as an outlet for 1862 and 1890 land grant institutions to collaborate in developing diverse leaders who enter the workforce as culturally aware ambassadors who engage with underserved communities, enhancing their community's well-being.
- The Community and Innovation Lab have been introduced to community partners such as AppHarvest who have promoted fresh food use and increased current knowledge of controlled environment agriculture of college students in Appalachia.
- Consultants have also joined with Andrea James, Special Projects Director at the Mayor's Office, to develop and describe substance use disorder to the City of Lexington. This has encouraged the use of people first language and sensitivity to the impact of stereotypes, thin slicing, and implicit bias as it concerns substance use disorder.
- This collaboration has also produced a total of eight student led presentations at state, national, and international conferences.

FUTURE PLANS

- Continuing the class and including a mentorship program for alumni of the program to provide consistency for community partners and serve as peer mentors to current program students.
- Evaluations conducted by faculty members of both institutions of both the program itself and the agricultural partners will ensure the program is still effective and accomplishing its goals.
- Include an annual symposium to highlight the accomplishments of the program and its community partners.

COST/RESOURCES

Total cost and resources necessary for the program \$3000 annually for introductory face-to-face meetings to build the student cohort across both universities. This money will also be utilized for local travel to the community engagement partners for specific engagement activities. To replicate this idea using only community engagement would require significantly less resources. Those resources would include a classroom space, innovative professors willing to work with students to increase student professionalism and soft skills, collaborative initiations to increase diversity of students and faculty, and community partners for engagement.