



Urban Neighbors & Neighborhoods: Professional Development for School-Based Agricultural Educators

Bob Williams, Courtney Leftrick, Carolina Garcia,
Jennifer Gonzalez, & Priscilla Pina

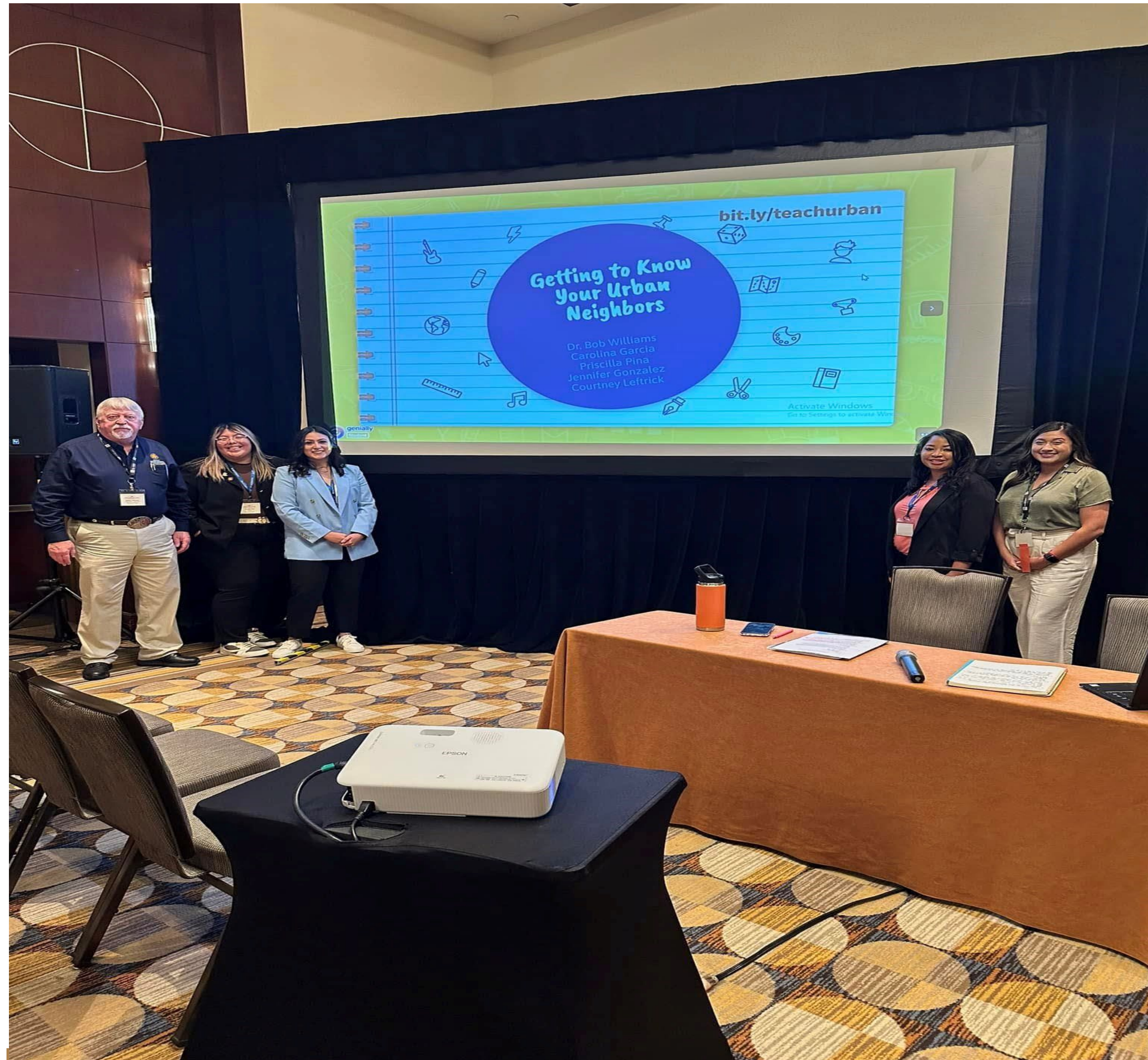
What & Why

A panel of four early-career school-based agricultural educators was organized by a professor from Texas A&M University-Commerce for the purpose of planning, organizing, and presenting this workshop. Each of the panel members taught in large, urban high school with predominantly minority student enrollment in their classes. The panel participated in two planning sessions via Zoom to confirm the style, direction, and content of the workshop. A pre-workshop meeting to finalize plans was held prior to the presentation, and a follow-up/reflection meeting was held the day after the presentation

Where & How

Workshop was held at the 2024 Agriculture Teachers of Texas Summer Conference and consisted of the following phases:

- (1) Welcome and introduction
- (2) Personal introduction and overview of the campus program, student demographics, and neighborhood where each panelist taught along with a short synopsis of engagement opportunities
- (3) The final panelist who had just transitioned to administration also described some district-wide scenarios and opportunities since many urban districts have multiple campuses and programs
- (4) Guiding *turn and talk* prompts for discussion among the audience
- (5) Reporting out of discussion groups to audience, and
- (6) Questions from audience directed to panelists.



Results

Participants in the workshop were introduced to strategies for increasing student, parental, and community engagement in agriculture and FFA activities in urban settings.

A total of 158 participants attended and completed the evaluation questionnaire.

Two questions were asked. Question #1, "Would you attend another workshop conducted by the presenter(s)?" resulted in 99% responding with "Yes."

Question #2, "Would you recommend this workshop to a peer?" resulted in 98% responding with "Yes."

Conclusions

The idea of *getting to know your urban neighbors and neighborhoods* has been integrated into additional informal discussions with inservice and preservice educators. It also served as a key theme in the development of a recently funded grant proposal for a university-public school partnership. We must also prepare our students from rural backgrounds for the possibility of teaching in urban schools. Early field experiences that include observation and participation in urban programs may foster or strengthen consideration of that possibility.