

Integrating High-Impact Learning Experiences: Teaching Agricultural Leadership to Inmates at a Local Federal Prison

Robert Strong Jr.
Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

Some institutions are experiencing an increased demand of the benefits they provide to the local community. Agricultural leadership education is available for those outside of college campuses and for incarcerated individuals. Students participate in a leading and training adults course in the college of agriculture designed to teach students how to teach adults. The final project serves as an opportunity for the students to teach women that were incarcerated at a local federal prison. Undergraduate students have developed a lesson plan, delivered the lesson, and evaluated the lesson at a minimum security federal prison over the past five years. The topic students chose was approved by the instructor but covered areas within agricultural leadership education. Over 200 students have taught approximately 2,500 inmates as a result of this collaborative effort in the past five years. Participants (inmates) submit an evaluation of each presenter at the conclusion of the agricultural leadership training sessions. Students submit a pre and post evaluation of their experience to the instructor, and the evaluation data is used to enhance the topics each year. Students' perceptions of prisons and inmates change throughout the process of developing and delivering their lesson plan. These high-impact learning experiences have influenced their perspective of teaching agricultural leadership topics to individuals not directly involved in agriculture. A sustained symbiotic collaboration between the university and the local women's prison has resulted from these experiences. Students gain by putting knowledge into practice while developing an awareness regarding a societal aspect that affects us all.

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