

Connecting Agricultural Information with Learning and Teaching of Students and the Community

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A Collaborative Effort

- Ag Ambassadors
Faculty Advisor
 - Ben Burgoa
- College of Agriculture,
Food and
Environmental
Sciences (CAFES)
Librarian
 - Katherine O'Clair
- Non-traditional
Approach to Library
Instruction



Photo by Jennifer Ray

Ag Ambassadors

- Undergraduate and Graduate Students in CAFES
 - 50 Students from all Departments and Majors in the College
 - Average length of service is 2 years
- Started at Cal Poly in 1988.
- Faculty Advisors
 - Ben Burgoa
 - Bob Cummings
- A service organization sponsored by and working for CAFES.



Ag Ambassadors

- Mission of the Ag Ambassadors at Cal Poly
 - Encouraging high school and junior college students to pursue higher education
 - Cultivating individuals in their pursuit of agriculture as a career and lifestyle
 - Sharing the multitude of opportunities Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences offers



Ag Ambassador Activities

- Give tours of campus agricultural facilities to prospective students and the public.
- Engage in education and outreach efforts by visiting schools and agriculture shows and events.
- Serve as the Public Relations Branch of the College



Our Goals

- Faculty Advisor
 - Help students stay current on agriculture issues in California and the Nation
 - Help students develop strategies for lifelong learning in support of Cal Poly's University Learning Objectives
- CAFES Librarian
 - Increase awareness of resources available
 - Provide resources for outreach and education activities that could be used to pass on information within the community
 - Build relationships with CAFES Students

What We Did

- CAFES Librarian created and developed [Ag Ambassadors Info Portal](#)
 - Used Springshare's LibGuides platform
- Held one of the regular weekly meetings in the Library Computer Lab
 - 23 students attended at 7am in the morning
- Library paid for continental breakfast
- Surveyed students about their information needs and information seeking strategies
- Introduced students to the Info Portal

Survey Results

- Information Seeking Strategies and Needs (n=21)
 - Generally talk to others (students, faculty, staff) or look for information on the Internet as they prepare for their Ag Ambassador activities.
 - Generally go to the Departments and/or their Web sites, as well as Internet, to look for information.
 - Most (86%) said they would use resources provided by the library.

Survey Results

- Post-Session Evaluation (n=9)
 - All respondents said the web resources would be useful. Those specifically mentioned include:
 - National Agricultural Statistics Service
 - National Agricultural Library
 - Ag in the Classroom
 - All but one respondent indicated they would use the Info Portal.
 - Comments:
 - “This is a fascinating site! I love all the information you have put together. It will be helpful not only as an Ag Ambassador, but also as a CAFES student! Thanks so much!”
 - “I learned there is so much information out there on the Internet that will be helpful to me as an Ag Ambassador. And now in a tight neat package I’d be very willing to use it.”

Outcomes of Our Efforts

- Measureable Evidence
 - Limited use of Info Portal
 - Usage statistics
- Anecdotal Evidence
 - Increased awareness of the Library
 - Student Assistant
 - Increased interaction with the CAFES Librarian
 - Office Hours in Department
 - Facebook
 - Invitations to Student Activities

Strategies for the Future

- Integrate Ag Ambassador information and materials into the Info Portal
 - Post Ag Ambassadors schedule and documents on the Portal
 - Increase exposure to quality information resources and materials
- Offer Information Sessions at the regular meetings each fall at the beginning of the academic year and as needed throughout the year
- Recruit Ag Ambassadors to share information about the Portal with others

Conclusions

- Investing in the future
 - We're planting seeds
 - Students may not use information immediately, but might remember it in a moment of need
 - Continue to offer sessions, encourage use and employ word of mouth marketing - never quit trying



Photo by Jennifer Ray

Questions or Comments?

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