

# A Framework for Leadership Development Curricula for Ag Advocates in the College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State University

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# Introduction

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- Ag Advocates – What/Who are they?
  - Select group of undergraduate students coming from all majors within the College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State
  - Work with the Office for Undergraduate Education
  - Competitive application and interview process



# Introduction

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- Ag Advocates – What/Who are they?
  - Create an awareness of the academic programs and career opportunities in or related to food, agriculture and the natural resource sciences
  - Help with family and student visits; recruitment activities; special events for the college.
  - Honor to serve



# Introduction

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- Development of future leaders starts with youth involved in school-based and extracurricular activities.
- Student clubs and organizations help develop leadership skills through educational and experiential practices (Astin, 1993).



# Introduction

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- ❑ More learning and personal development occurs when students devote more time and energy to being involved (Astin, 1999)
- ❑ Astin (1993) found that participation in student organizations leads to higher growth in leadership skills.



# Introduction

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- Programs, such as Ag Advocates, exist in colleges of agriculture and develop leaders.
- Structured leadership training is important in developing the skills necessary to work as a team, and communicate effectively.



# Purpose and Objectives

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- Curriculum development – guided by the Tyler Model
  - Important to decide what the participants should learn during the curriculum, since there are a variety of different topics that can be covered.
  - The learners, contemporary life outside of the school, and the subject matter help to define the goals for the program.



# Methods

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- Two important groups were asked for input into content of the curriculum.
  - Former Ag Advocates - recent alumni that were currently in the workforce or pursuing advanced degrees.
  - Current Ag Advocates – the current team for the 2011/2012 academic year





# Methods

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- Current Ag Advocate's input
  - Ag Advocates were given an opportunity to provide feedback on questions
    - Increased the value and the active participation from this group.
    - Helped describe a base of their knowledge and experiences in leadership development.



# Methods

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- Unit topics were selected (based on input and research findings).
- Unit topics were broken by time constraints of the Ag Advocate meetings, typically 50 minutes for a lesson.
- Balanced amount of material and activities.



# Methods

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## □ Data Collection

- Developed two lessons, *Introduction to Leadership?* and *Listening*; these two were tested with the group.
- Guided changes for the other ten lessons.
  - Narrowing down the information (not just another lecture).
  - Adjustment to not using technology in the lessons, due to changes in meeting locations.



# Results

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- **A leadership curriculum**
  - Six topic areas (1 unit)
  - 12 lessons (approximately 50 minutes each)
  - A framework for exploring essential topic areas to be addressed



# Results

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- **Team Building - 2 Sessions**
  - **Team Building Scavenger Hunt**
  - **Personality**
  
- **What is Leadership? – 2 Sessions**
  - **Introduction to Leadership**
  - **Personal Leadership Philosophy**
  
- **Conflict Management - 2 Sessions**
  - **What is Conflict?**
  - **How to Manage Conflict**



# Results

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- **Communication - 3 Sessions**
  - Verbal Communication
  - Nonverbal Communication
  - Listening
- **Dealing With Change - 2 Sessions**
  - What is Change?
  - How to Deal With Change
- **Leading a Group- 1 Session**
  - How To Lead A Group



# Lesson Plan Outline

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- Program title/Unit title
- Notes/Prior Preparation
- Lesson objectives (1 – 3 per session)
- Equipment and Materials
- Interest approach
- Lesson content
- Summary/Reflection/Opportunity to Learn



# Conclusions

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- Good to have a formalized program for Ag Advocate training.
  - Provides structure for subsequent years
  - Officer/committee training for clubs/organizations
  
- Need to continue getting input from past, and current, Ag Advocates to modify the “base” program.
  - Must consider 2-year+ members/officers





# Conclusions/Recommendations

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- ❑ Conduct a complete pilot test of the materials (not just 2 lessons), prior to full implementation.
- ❑ Further research – what impact has the Ag Advocate experience/training had on participants (i.e. career search/preparation).
- ❑ Materials should be reviewed and changed to fit the needs of other groups that may use the curriculum.