Community: in and outside the classroom

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Blacksburg, Virginia, USA
What is HIYT?

“More important than the curriculum is the question of the methods of teaching and the spirit in which the teaching is given” - Bertrand Russell
Why is classroom community important?

• Provides a safe learning environment
• Take ownership of own learning
• Sense of belonging during discussion
• Nurtures blossoming friendships and connections among shy or reserved off-campus students
• Provides a lifeline for students
Unintended outcomes from classroom community

- 10th year anniversary running and still many surprises
- Milestones (in 4 years I have been involved)
  - Student “following”
  - Wedding proposal
  - Poultry club formation
- Why poultry club?
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- Why poultry club?
Poultry club activity

- Working groups
  - Farm Tours
  - Heritage hen egg collection & distribution
  - Public education
- Social Events & Networking Opportunities
  - Alberta Poultry AGM
  - Canadian Poultry Research Center Banquet
Club activity

- Fundraising
- Chicken catching
- Research dissections
Survey Objectives

• Determine the motivation for students to join and form a poultry club
  • “Why poultry?”

• Evaluate involvement in the poultry club and future career plans and admirations
Survey Methods and Procedures

- Poultry Club member survey
  - Web based survey administered by Campus Labs
  - 7 Demographical questions
  - 10 Poultry Club activity and career questions
  - Distributed via email to all Poultry Club members (~50)
    - Voluntary participation
    - 66% Response rate
Survey Methods and Procedures

• Majority in animal related degrees
  • Over 95% of members are HIYT Alumni
• Animal Health
  • Companion and Performance Animals
  • Food Animals
  • Food Safety and Quality
• Animal Science
Poultry Background

Which of the following best describes your experience with poultry prior to joining the Poultry Club?

- No Poultry Experience: 39%
- Limited Poultry Experience: 56%
- Extensive Poultry Experience: 5%
- 0%

P = 0.0302

Which of the following best describes your primary Home residence?

- Urban: 55%
- Rural: 45%

P = 0.0104

Which of the following best describes your primary Home residence?
Why did you join the poultry club?

- Source of fun/enjoyment
- Volunteer experience for my resume
- Stay connected with friends
- Involvement with an active student organization
- Meet new people
- Learn about poultry physiology
- Gain experience in the poultry industry
- Work experience to supplement my degree
- Experience working in a research setting
- It's a place where I feel welcome
- To teach people where their food comes from
- Network with poultry people
- Free Food
- Meet with Poultry professionals
- Involvement with the heritage chicken
- Felt Pressured
In which of the following poultry club activities have you taken part?
Future Career Paths

How has your involvement in the poultry club impacted your career plans...

Interest in pursuing employment in a poultry related area

- More interest: 52%
- No change: 41%
- Less interest: 7%

Interest in agriculture advocacy (contributing to a positive message about agriculture)

- More interest: 79%
- No change: 21%
- Less interest: 0%

P=0.0016
What is it really doing?

- Many joined for social reasons however learning opportunities have had a large impact on student career aspirations
- Students are getting engaged taking learning into their own hands
- Increased involvement with industry partners
- Increasing interaction and synergies between the Poultry industry and undergraduate students
So what can we do?

- Positive first year experiences can shape the rest of a student's academic engagement and career

- Provide safe environments conducive to learning

- Set the students free to accommodate opportunities to take charge in their own learning

“Because the only stupid question is the one you didn’t ask” - Unknown
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