

Expanding Outreach and Awareness. (A01-rice103700-Oral)

Authors:

- T.J.Rice* - *Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo*
- R.B.Brown - *Univ. of Florida, Gainesville*

Abstract:

The expansion of outreach and awareness programs in the recruitment of soil science students is vital to the preservation of viable academic programs. At Cal Poly, several approaches have been implemented to recruit potential students. The MESA Ag. Initiative uses a faculty-designed soil science contest for middle school students. The Agricultural Ambassador program enlists students who travel to community colleges and high schools informing potential university students about agricultural majors. A recruitment letter is sent to California high school science teachers informing them about our academic majors and graduate employment options. These efforts have helped Cal Poly to develop into the largest undergraduate soil science program in the United States. In contrast, the University of Florida has few undergraduates in its Soil and Water Science major, despite similar recruiting efforts and continued curricular revisions. Reasons for this lack of success include intense competition for students among a variety of comparable environmental and natural resource programs. Recruitment efforts should focus on the many excellent career opportunities for soil science graduates.

Corresponding Author Information:

Thomas J. Rice
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
Earth and Soil Sciences Department One
Grand Ave.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

phone: 805-756-2420
fax: 805-756-5412
e-mail:
trice@calpoly.edu

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