

# **Student Recruitment and Retention in Contemporary Agronomic Programs. (A01-smith160156-Oral)**

## **Authors:**

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## **Abstract:**

Student enrollments in agronomic sciences at 4 year universities continue to evolve. Some demographic characteristics include predominance of students coming from urban and non agricultural backgrounds, more students interested in environmental aspects rather than traditional crop and soil sciences, tremendous growth in turfgrass and urban agriculture, and gender shifts, with females providing most of the leadership in student programs. Over the past five years, Section A 1 has focused on ways to reach K to 12 teachers by hosting workshops, sharing demonstrations for classroom, and highlight earth and plant sciences, using agronomic examples. The 2002 A 1 program focused on new approaches for campus and community college linkages to strengthen enrollments in agronomy. Most agronomy students today enter into this major by transferring from a community college or from another major on the campus. Many of these students are more settled in their new major but have less time to get involved in departmental and campus activities. Further, turf and urban ag students have swelled agronomic enrollments, which have presented a challenge for many faculty who feel a strong alliance to traditional crops. While summer internship opportunities have remained strong for crop oriented students, the post-graduate market has been weak. In contrast, students with turf experience have not had difficulty in finding jobs in their major after the B.S. degree. The A 1 symposium (speakers and papers that follow) focus on conceptual and practical aspects of attracting students to agronomy and retaining their interest through the B.S. degree program.

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## **Presentation Information:**

Presentation Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2002

Presentation Time: 2:00 pm

**Keywords:**

student recruitment, retention, curriculum revision