

Agriculture Worker Outreach Model

There is a need in the State of Washington to grow the agricultural workforce and provide training for current agriculture workers. Innovative outreach programs are being designed to meet this need.

Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) developed and implemented such a program in the Hispanic Orchard Employee Education Program (HOEEP). The HOEEP program provides Latino agricultural workers the opportunity to acquire technical agricultural education in Spanish, as well as increase their management and communication skills. These benefits extend to employers, as the program yields a knowledgeable, skilled, and dedicated workforce.

HOEEP grew out of WVC's Agriculture Department. WVC's HOEEP courses consist of six courses related to Tree Fruit Production, Vineyard Production, and Horticulture. The HOEEP courses yield a 19 credit endorsement and provide students an opportunity to continue their education at WVC, if so desired.

The Agriculture Worker Outreach Model is built upon WVC's HOEEP success. There are three critical elements to the success of an outreach program: flexibility in delivery, instructor compatibility, and curriculum integration. The model promotes recruitment of underserved populations, an increase in skilled workers, and unique integration of degree programs.

Three Essentials for an Agriculture Worker Outreach Program

Flexibility

Due to the nature of the outreach program, instructors must travel and convene classes in the community which students reside/work. The time of day, day of the week, and number of days a week on which classes are held must be flexible for each group of students. Flexibility must be permitted to allow students and their employers the ability to participate during off-peak production periods.

Compatibility

Identifying a dynamic instructor who can perform all the required outreach activities is essential to the success of the program. The instructor must recruit students, develop curriculum, provide instruction, identify available class locations, and encourage registered students. Therefore, the instructor must be bilingual, familiar with the student's culture and viewed by prospective students as a role model.

Curriculum

Curriculum integration must occur between the outreach program and the parent Agriculture Department. Courses must be provided in a manner that promotes basic education skills, including verbal and written communication. The combination of technical coursework and English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or Adult Basic Education (ABE) provides valuable educational and ultimately career pathways for students.



Applying the Outreach Model

WVC's outreach program is composed of six courses stemming from curriculum offered within the parent Agriculture Department. HOEEP students work toward an endorsement that is composed of 19 credits. Following completion of the six courses, if students wish to continue their education on-campus, approximately 30 credits will be waved toward certificate and/or degree completion. Offering dual credit for these courses provides the initial step into an innovative educational pathway for English as a Second Language (ESL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) students.

WVC's Outreach Program Courses

- HOEEP I – Basic Horticulture
- HOEEP II – Advanced Horticulture
- HOEEP III – Integrated Pest Management for Orchardists
- HOEEP IV – Farm Management
- HOEEP V – Viticulture
- HOEEP VI – Advanced Viticulture

HOEEP Courses and the Courses they Replace

HOEEP I – Basic Horticulture
In place of
AGRI 264 – Tree Fruit Production

HOEEP III – Integrated Pest Management
In place of
AGRI 254 – Integrated Pest Management
&
AGRI 255 – Orchard Integrated Pest Management

Time on the job
In place of
AGRI 196 & 296 – Work Experience

Sustainable Ag and Resource Systems Pathways

Tree Fruit Production transfer pathway
Tree Fruit Production non-transfer pathway

General Agriculture transfer pathway
General Agriculture non-transfer pathway
Tree Fruit Production transfer pathway
Tree Fruit Production non-transfer pathway
Sustainable & Organic Agriculture transfer pathway
Sustainable & Organic Agriculture non-transfer pathway
Horticulture non-transfer pathway
Agribusiness non-transfer pathway

General Agriculture non-transfer pathway
Tree Fruit Production transfer pathway
Tree Fruit Production non-transfer pathway
Sustainable & Organic Agriculture transfer pathway
Sustainable & Organic Agriculture non-transfer pathway
Horticulture non-transfer pathway

Model Implementation

Interested in constructing a Agriculture Worker Outreach Program from an existing Community & Technical College agriculture and/or agriculture-related program?

Contact the Agriculture Center of Excellence at www.agcenterofexcellence.com.