Developing an Instrument to Measure Students’ Attitudes about Agriculture, Colleges of Agriculture, and Careers in Agriculture: A Pilot Study

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Abstract
Faced with the challenge of supplying well-qualified graduates for the agriculture sector, agriculture educators must continue to identify barriers to recruiting and retaining talented and diverse students into colleges of agriculture. The purpose of this study was to develop an instrument and assess students’ attitude about, and familiarity with, agriculture, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences of the University of Georgia, and agriculture-related careers. A better understanding of these constructs is important to ensure appropriate and effective recruitment and retention initiatives in colleges of agriculture. For this pilot study, respondents were sampled among students enrolled in college of agriculture courses or participating in agriculture-related student organizations. The authors present the results of the pilot regarding respondent attitudes and perceptions, include a discussion on the validity and reliability of the new instrument, and propose modifications necessary to the instrument so it can be used at a larger scale and with a more diverse group of students.

Keywords: College of Agriculture, Attitude, Careers in Agriculture, Recruitment