

## Altmaier, Ralph

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**Sent:** Tuesday, January 17, 2023 12:51 PM  
**To:** ALIVE-WELL-UPDATES@LIST.UIOWA.EDU  
**Subject:** [ALIVE-WELL-UPDATES] Youth Engagement

Hello, everyone!

Welcome to 2023. I hope that your year has been off to a good start. This month's Updates from the Field focuses on youth engagement, ranging from studies on students' decisions to pursue a degree in agriculture to rural libraries exercising creativity in cultivating a strong sense of community. Please reach out if you would like to access the full text version of any of the articles listed below.

Best,  
Maddie McCabe  
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Toward a Holistic Agricultural Student Recruitment Model: A National Analysis of the Factors Affecting Students' Decision to Pursue an Agricultural Related Degree

Alston, A. J., Roberts, R., & English, C. W. (2020). Toward a Holistic Agricultural Student Recruitment Model: A National Analysis of the Factors Affecting Students' Decision to Pursue an Agricultural Related Degree. *Journal of Research in Technical Careers*, 4 (1). <https://doi.org/10.9741/2578-2118.1071>

Currently, the agricultural industry struggles to fill positions with qualified agricultural workers. Therefore, it is critical to attract high caliber individuals to agricultural degree programs that are prepared to enter the workforce with the skills needed to navigate complex issues and problems. The purpose of this national study was to identify key factors that influence the recruitment of agriculture students at land-grant and non-land-grant universities. Using Chapman's model of student success as our conceptual lens, we tested 66 factors identified in the literature as successful recruitment strategies for colleges of agriculture based on students' personal characteristics as well as key external influences. We discovered statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) differences existed based on students' gender and race/ethnicity. To better operationalize the findings from this study for U.S. colleges of agriculture, we developed the agricultural student recruitment model (ASRM). The model visually represents the distinct but intersecting factors that most profoundly influence students' academic degree decisions. Moving forward, we recommend colleges of agriculture use the ASRM as a tool to better resonate with populations that may lack representation in their degree programs and the state's agricultural industry.

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Cooperative Extension as a Force for Healthy, Rural Communities: Historical Perspectives and Future Directions

Buy, D. R., & Rennekamp, R. (2020). Cooperative Extension as a Force for Healthy, Rural Communities: Historical Perspectives and Future Directions. *American Journal of Public Health*, 110(9), 1300–1303.  
<https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2020.305767>

Cooperative Extension (Extension), part of the land-grant university system, has been engaged in rural communities for more than a century. While the focus of Extension's efforts has largely centered on agriculture, there is an important thread of work that has similarities to public health.

As Extension settles into its second century, we are working to be even more engaged in efforts that improve the health and well-being of rural communities in particular. Extension faculty and staff are accomplishing this through direct-to-the-population education and through partnerships with more classically oriented public health organizations able to leverage Extension's networks and positive reputation in communities to engage them and improve their health. A component of these partnerships includes Extension faculty and staff increasingly engaging in policy, systems, and environment work and other initiatives that help ensure longer-term, systemic changes more likely to improve health outcomes. In short, Extension clearly changed the agricultural system of the United States, and because of its reach into rural communities, it has the capacity to do for health in rural communities in this second century what it did for agriculture in the first century.

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#### Does Purpose Grow Here? Exploring 4-H as a Context for Cultivating Youth Purpose

Burrow, A. L., Ratner, K., Porcelli, S., & Sumner, R. (2020). Does Purpose Grow Here? Exploring 4-H as a Context for Cultivating Youth Purpose. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 37(4), 471–500. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558420942477>

Most youth development programs strive to promote thriving, but scientific inquiry into how they achieve this aim is rare and often complicated by nuanced program structures and delivery. Across two studies, we explored how one thriving indicator, having a sense of purpose in life, may be cultivated by a statewide 4-H program. In Study 1, an inductive text mining approach called latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) was used to content analyze 63 4-H practitioners' definitions of purpose and focus group conversations about how the program fosters this sense in youth. In Study 2, 113 4-H participants (aged 12–18 years, Mage = 14.77; 66% female) reported their purpose exploration and commitment and the extent to which they have engaged with particular program experiences. The LDA suggested educators believe 4-H fosters purpose by offering diverse and transformative activities that equip youth with key resources. Youth reports largely corroborated these beliefs: Correlational analyses revealed youth who felt they acquired life skills in 4-H reported greater purpose commitment, whereas youth who felt they had access to older youth with long-term aspirations reported greater purpose exploration. Implications for how 4-H and other programs might scaffold activities to promote youth purpose are discussed.

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#### Agriculture-based community engagement in rural libraries

Singh, V., Mehra, B., & Sikes, E. S. (2021). Agriculture-based community engagement in rural libraries. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 54(3), 404–414. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006211015788>

Community engagement in rural libraries receives little focus and is an overlooked area of research. In this article, we report exemplars of agriculture-based community engagement in rural and Southern and Central Appalachian region of the United States. An online survey of rural library professionals demonstrates the positive impact of agriculture-based engagement activities on the overall community-engagement initiatives in this region. This article synthesizes eight distinct agriculture-based initiatives with many subprojects, lists an inventory of stakeholders involved in agriculture-based community-engagement initiatives, and highlights the challenges faced by the rural libraries. Three successful examples, namely, seed library, community gardens, and farmers' market initiatives, are presented with details to help other libraries adopt these successful community-engagement initiatives. The results show that rural libraries are very creative with their limited resources and they hit many areas of impact in the community through their community-engagement activities.