

We are unable to supply this entire article because the publisher requires payment of a copyright fee. You may be able to obtain a copy from your local library, or from various commercial document delivery services.

From Forest Nursery Notes, Winter 2012

92. © Development of the AG*IDEA alliance's horticulture graduate certificates program and inter-institutional course share. Paparozzi, E. T., Williams, K. A., Geneve, R., and Hatterman-Valenti, H. HortTechnology 21(6):688-691. 2011.

Symposium Proceedings

Development of the AG*IDEA Alliance's Horticulture Graduate Certificates Program and Inter-institutional Course Share

Ellen T. Paparozzi^{1,9}, Kimberly A. Williams², Robert Geneve³, Harlene Hatterman-Valenti⁴, Cynthia Haynes⁵, Helen Kraus⁶, Cynthia McKenney⁷, and Joelle Pitts⁸

ADDITIONAL INDEX WORDS. distance education, online courses, students

As times change, so must education change—particularly its availability. Gone are classes taught solely in a traditional lecture style with the professor pontificating to a group of 18- to 22-year-old students. The advent of the Internet, smart phones, and electronic book readers, coupled with technology-hungry and savvy consumers, has led to a significant change in the ways courses are

delivered. Information—accurate and inaccurate—is available with a few key strokes. These advances in technology, coupled with an economic downturn and a reduction in university teaching resources, have made it clear that the teaching paradigm must shift. To attract students and still deliver a quality education in horticulture, expertise and resources must be shared across institutions. The Agriculture Interactive Distance Education Alliance (2011) (AG*IDEA) provides shared access to undergraduate and graduate level courses in horticulture and related disciplines for students enrolled through the member universities. The alliance also provides the opportunity for students to pursue three graduate certificates in horticulture. In this way, current students as well as industry members and others have the opportunity for lifelong learning in horticulture via distance.

Graduate level distance courses in horticulture have been shared and offered across institutions since the late 1990s (Great Plains Interactive Distance Alliance, 2011; Williams and Paparozzi, 2002). Only recently has demand significantly increased, resulting in the formation of inter-institutional

collaborations. During the last 2 years, representatives from several universities have been meeting monthly to develop horticulture graduate certificates through AG*IDEA.

AG*IDEA is the agricultural arm of the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (GP*IDEA). GP*IDEA was formed by the human sciences colleges located in the Great Plains region of the United States. Later, an alliance for agriculture was initiated by Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa. This alliance joined GP*IDEA, expanded membership beyond the Great Plains region, and chose the moniker of AG*IDEA. Agriculture joined this group because of the belief in the common founding principles. These principles state that all institutions will behave as equals, respect institutional differences, and simplify student navigation to access courses and certificate/degree programs. Institutions pay a one-time fee of \$2000 to belong; these funds support the overall project coordinator. The current composition of AG*IDEA includes 18 universities with full membership from all regions of the United States. Over the monthly conference calls of our horticulture group, attendance has varied in composition, but a core group has arisen from that interaction. This core group includes: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Kansas State University, Texas Tech University, North Carolina State University, Iowa State University, University of Kentucky, and North Dakota State University. The faculty chairperson of the group is drawn from these universities. This individual serves a 1-year rotating term.

Within this group, faculty members had different reasons for participating. For some, it was curiosity, for some coercion. For others, it was the promised monetary reward for teaching distance courses (75% of tuition revenue returns to the home institution) and others sought to supplement undergraduate and graduate courses and curricular offerings. Tuition is set by AG*IDEA and is currently \$440 per credit regardless of which institution the student chooses to enroll in and where the student resides. Today, horticulturists and horticulture programs cannot be all things to all people. So, common among all participants is the belief that the structure of current and future horticulture educational programs needs to change. Literature strongly

This paper was part of the National Floriculture Forum, "Partnerships, Alliances, Brands and Initiatives," held 10–11 Mar. 2011 in Dallas, TX, and hosted by Texas A&M University.

¹Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68583-0724

²Department of Horticulture, Forestry, and Recreation Resources, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506-5506

³Department of Horticulture, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546

⁴Department of Plant Sciences, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND 58108-6050

⁵Department of Horticulture, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011

⁶Department of Horticulture, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695

⁷Department of Plant and Soil Science, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409-2122

⁸Kansas State University Libraries, Manhattan, KS 66506

⁹Corresponding author. E-mail: etp1@unl.edu.