

Louisiana Tech Rural Development Certification Program : Progress and Outcomes

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Louisiana Tech Rural Development Graduate Certificate

- USDA Higher Education Challenge grant
- 12-15 credit hours
 - Intro to Rural Development
 - Grant Writing for Rural Development
 - GIS applications for Rural Development
 - International Trade
 - Global Electronic Commerce

Rural Development Education

- Need for graduates who understand the issues facing rural communities and businesses
 - Sustainable development
 - Marketing of local businesses on a global scale
 - Fostering a productive environment for entrepreneurship

Rural Communities and Agriculture

- Sometimes “farm” and “rural” are used interchangeably
- Are they one and the same?
- How closely linked are agriculture and rural communities?

Farm versus Rural

- In 1950
 - 40% of rural population lived on farms
 - 33% of rural workers worked in agriculture
- USDA 2007
 - Less than 10% of rural pop. lives on farms
 - 6.5% of rural workers work in agriculture

Farm and Rural

- 20% of all rural counties are farm dependent
 - Greater than 20% of personal income from farming
- 78% of these had population decline between 2000 and 2005
- 89% of “farm” income comes from off-farm

Farm vs Rural

- Farm dependent counties
 - More remote from metro areas
 - Less population density
 - Lack amenities

The Rural Labor Force

- Population decline in almost all rural areas
 - Particularly high density rural
- Incomes lower, poverty rates higher
- Lower educational attainment
- Higher percentage on disability
- Agricultural productivity has increased
 - Produce more with fewer workers

Rural Federal Spending

- \$390 billion in 2007
 - Mostly for Social Security and Health care
 - Defense and other government
- \$62 billion for infrastructure, agriculture and education
 - \$9 billion for agriculture

President's New Policies

- Recognizes diversified rural economies
- Support for small business
 - USDA coordinate with other agencies
 - Encourage entrepreneurship, clustering
 - Clean energy
 - Rural tourism

President's New Policies

- Strengthening infrastructure
 - Roads, bridges, water projects, broadband internet
- Education and health care
 - Close the gaps between rural and urban attainment
 - Close the gaps between rural and urban level of care

Justification

- Rural development an increasingly important aspect of training in agriculture
 - Transition away from agriculture-dependent to non-agriculture-dependent economies.
- E-commerce techniques and international trade competency provide a way for rural communities to join/understand increasingly globalized market
- GIS increasingly used for planning/zoning
- Grantwriting important for community improvement

Courses

RDEV 510

- Introduction to Rural Development
- Objectives:
 - Basic understanding of growth theories, externalities, market development
- Subjects
 - Space
 - Factor markets
 - Local govt
 - Trade areas, shift-share analysis

RDEV 540

- Grant Writing for Rural Development
- Objectives:
 - Sources of grants
 - Data collection
 - Synthesis and narrative
 - Budgeting and management
- Write a grant

RDEV 415

- Overview of GIS for Rural Development
- Objectives:
 - Working knowledge of GIS, GPS, Remote Sensing
 - Be able to converse with GIS expert

RDEV 545

- Global Electronic Commerce
- Objectives:
 - Revenue models and marketing on the Web
 - Online payment fraud, security issues
 - Ethics and legal issues
 - Technology

RDEV 550

- International Trade and Policy
- Objectives:
 - Apply theory and analysis to understanding economic opportunities in the world
 - Patterns of trade, tariffs, quotas
 - Practical implementation of imports/exports

Goals/Outcomes/Impacts

- Program will provide students with uniquely targeted competencies
- Prepare them to become the leaders and drivers of economic development in rural areas.

Progress

- Courses developed by faculty summer of 2009
- Certificate proposal approved by University of Louisiana Board of Supervisors Feb. 2010
- Certificate approved by Louisiana Board of Regents May 2010

Progress

- Experimental Course proposals Approved May 2010
 - Courses offered Summer Quarter 2010
- Promoted through press releases
- 2 students
 - Real estate agent/former Ag teacher
 - I/O Psychology master's student

Progress

- Interest
 - Former Ag Ed teacher, real estate agent
 - Chamber of Commerce member, Grant Parish
 - Curators, Dixie Center for the Arts
 - Journalism Major
 - LSU extension professional
 - Interest from as far away as Tennessee

Currently

- Courses now appear in University Catalog
- Second offering Summer 2011
- Promote program regionally, nationally, internationally
 - Twitter, facebook, listservs, news releases

Currently

- 6 students enrolled in Summer 2011
- Interest from:
 - Nurses
 - Extension professionals
 - Building contractors
 - Community planners
 - Economic development professionals
 - Louisiana, Texas, Ohio, Arkansas, North Carolina, California

Future

- Enough interest to start a new cycle Fall 2011
- Anticipate 10-12 students
- Need a GIS instructor

Outcomes

- First graduates Summer 2011
- One has already started a grant writing venture
- Another considering political office run
- Service learning
 - Student assisted local agency with a grant proposal