

5-2017

# The regional impact of equine youth activities held at the Southern Illinois University Carbondale College of Agricultural Science

Michael Y. Halpin

*Southern Illinois University Carbondale*, myhalpin@siu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp\\_theses](http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp_theses)

---

## Recommended Citation

Halpin, Michael Y., "The regional impact of equine youth activities held at the Southern Illinois University Carbondale College of Agricultural Science" (2017). *Honors Theses*. 423.

[http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp\\_theses/423](http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp_theses/423)

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact [opensiuc@lib.siu.edu](mailto:opensiuc@lib.siu.edu).

**THE REGIONAL IMPACT OF EQUINE YOUTH ACTIVITIES HELD  
AT THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CARBONDALE  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE**

**Michael Halpin**

A thesis submitted to the University Honors Program

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Honors Diploma

Southern Illinois University

11 April 2017

### Relevant Literature:

Understanding the impact universities have on the community and region in which they are located can immensely aid in understanding the relationship between universities and the public. Many universities, particularly those located in rural areas, (Crigler & Piercy, 2014; Attila et al., 2014) have a huge impact both academically and economically on the families within the region. In a 2014 study conducted by Crigler and Piercy, when a rural university becomes involved in the surrounding region, looking at the demographic and needs of those individuals most likely to attend, community members are statistically more likely to pursue degrees in higher education and make more money (Einstein, 2011). Ways in which universities can cater to the interests of community members include: offering clinics, training sessions, courses on relevant information for common jobs, and youth programs. The effect of youth programs including support groups, tutoring and athletics are significant and greatly increase the likelihood of youth to attend higher education. Students involved in extra-curricular activities are statistically less likely to participate in damaging activities and earn higher grades than those who are not (Goodwin, et al., 2005). Of extra-curricular activities, 4-H and FFA are two common groups which have a large impact on the members and increase the likelihood involvement and higher education (Collins, 2012).

4-H clubs can be found across the country in both rural and city environments. Regardless of the location, 4-H, like universities, has an impact on the surrounding area and those involved in the program. Communities with a large 4-H presence benefit from not only the community service and leadership of current 4-H members but also 4-H alums (Merten, 2014). A recent study found students involved in 4-H have a higher success rate when compared to those involved in other extra-curricular activities (Lerner & Lerner, 2013 & Goodwin et al., 2005). In

addition, the majority of past 4-H members are involved in community leadership positions or public service and attribute their involvement to 4-H (Merten, 2014).

Similar to 4-H, Future Farmers of America (FFA) greatly effects those students involved in the program. In a recent study conducted by Collins (2012), students involved in FFA receive, on average, higher grade point averages, (GPA's) than those not involved in the program (Rose, et.al., 2016). Statistically, past FFA members are extremely likely to become community leaders, especially within the same community their FFA chapter was located (Rose et al., 2016). This illustrates the long-lasting positive effect FFA has on involved members, particularly those partaking in Career Development Events often referred to as CDE's (Rose et al., 2016). FFA focus on teaching leadership, public speaking, preparation, and many more life-long skills which contribute to shaping leaders of the future (Dormody, 1994). It is the expertise FFA endows on members that best effects the surrounding community, offering potential for trained leaders, dedicated to their positions. In a recent study, host communities for region benefits monetarily when Career Development Events are held. Each FFA chapter spends up to \$649 a trip for CDE's (Hanagriff et al., 2012). This can greatly impact a community's economic situation in addition to the benefits gained through building future community leaders.

Significance:

The survey and literary analysis will offer a new insight into the impact of the SIU College of Agricultural Science on the regional agricultural-related youth organizations. The feedback received will indicate whether such events as the 4-Hippology and Horse Bowl contest and the FFA Horse Judging CDE have a significant impact on youth decision concerning higher education or career path. In addition, results will reveal if hosting youth activities is an effective means to bring new students to Southern Illinois University Carbondale. As expressed

in the relevant literature, 4-H and FFA students are statistically more likely to be successful than students not involved in these organizations. Therefore, events targeted towards 4-H and FFA members could potentially not only bring more students to SIU but also higher quality students. With an increased number of higher caliber students, SIU could become more recognized thus further increasing enrollment. The advisor survey will reveal areas SIU needs to improve on such events and other areas of student interest SIU could potentially offer. These additional workshops would be one-day events where students would come to SIU and learn about specific topics in the equine industry.

#### Implications:

The past studies conducted on the relationship of universities, 4-H, and FFA illustrates a potential equation for success for both involved members and the surrounding communities (Collins, 2012). It can be reasonably derived from recent publications that a collaboration between universities, communities, and programs such as 4-H and FFA will offer an opportunity for exceptional success and involvement for all concerned. With increased interaction between universities and students most likely to succeed statistically, there is an elevated likelihood of universities obtaining successful students who will give back to the university.

#### Materials and Methods:

Two surveys, an advisor survey and a senior team member survey, were created using modified questions obtained from SurveyMonkey. The advisor survey consisted of ten questions including overall quality of the contest and interest level in possible workshops offered at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. The senior team member survey consisted of five questions. This survey included questions concerning the impact university hosted events has on

career paths of high-school aged students, using the Horse Bowl and Hippology contest as a model.

Population: Senior team members of Horse Bowl and Hippology teams and 4-H coaches present at the 2017 Southern Region Horse Bowl and Hippology Contest held at Southern Illinois University Carbondale were surveyed. Senior team members are those individuals between ages fourteen and eighteen. These particular students were selected to survey as the questions asked were most likely to pertain to students preparing to enter higher education or the work force. Three counties are represented in the returned surveys, Saline County, Monroe County, and Randolph County.

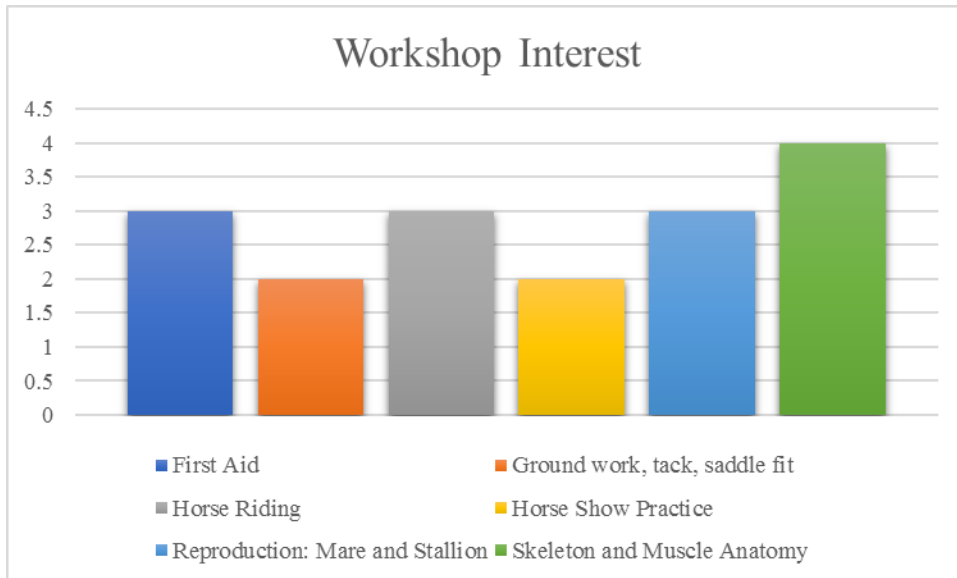
Distribution: Each coach and senior competitor present at the annual Horse Bowl and Hippology contest was asked to voluntarily answer and return an anonymous survey. Surveys were made available at the contest to be answered over the course of the competition. A total of six coaches were present at the contest. Four coaches returned surveys. Twenty-one senior members competed in the contest. Thirteen returned surveys.

### Results:

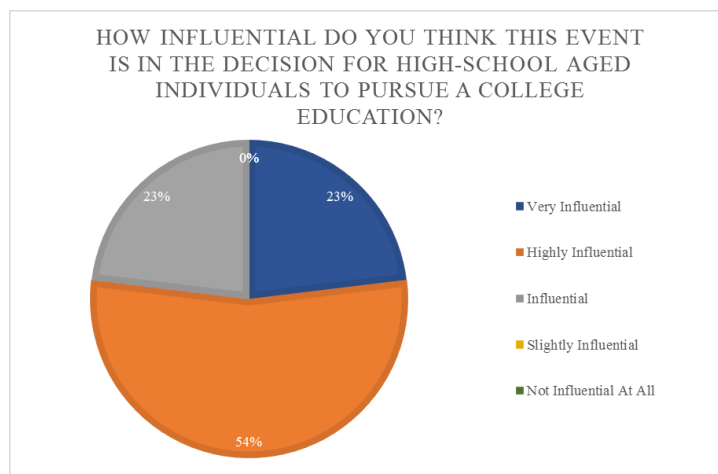
The advisor survey responses concluded that one hundred percent of the advisors believed the contest was of very high quality and are very or extremely likely to attend this competition in the future. Of the teams polled, seventy-five percent have proceeded onto the state competition. Of this percentage, sixty-seven percent answered the SIU contest was extremely effective in preparing the teams for the state Horse Bowl and Hippology contest. The remaining thirty-three percent responded that the competition was very effective in preparation for state. The last question asked on the advisor survey was concerning the interest level in various

workshops. All advisors selected interest in at least one of the suggested categories. The highest interest level selected was for a skeleton and muscle anatomy workshop.

Table 1



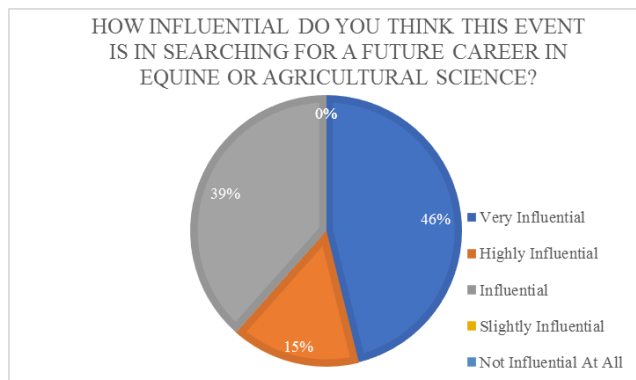
Thirteen of twenty-one senior team contestants, approximately sixty-two percent, answered the survey questions. The results obtained from the returned surveys strongly support the related literature. All senior team members who responded answered they perceive events such as the Horse Bowl and Hippology contest as influential in the decision to pursue higher education.



Graph 1

One hundred percent of the received surveys stated the event is influential in the determining a future field of study in agriculture or equine sciences.

Graph 2



Of the returned surveys, fifty-four percent of the senior team competitors had previously attend the Southern Region Horse Bowl and Hippology Contest held at SIU. From these results, we were able to obtain a more inclusive, unbiased opinion of the competition and the impact it has on incoming college-aged individuals.

Of the senior team members polled, fifteen percent thought the contest was of moderate quality, thirty-nine percent believed it was of high quality, and the remaining forty-six percent thought it was of very high quality.

#### Discussion:

The purpose of this survey was to understand the impact of university hosted events on students' decisions to pursue higher education and the career path selected. The results yielded illustrated the importance of university hosted events on students considering higher education and future career path. Utilizing this data and the information provided form past studies, it is logical to conclude Southern Illinois University Carbondale should not only continue to offer the 4-H Horse Bowl and Hippology Contest and FFA Horse Judging CDE, but should plan additional events catering to a wider range of students. If additional activities/workshops are added, it is



important they be of the same high quality as the 4-H Horse Bowl and Hippology to ensure a similar positive experience resulting in increased students interest in SIU. From the Advisor Survey, SIU College of Agricultural Sciences has determined which workshops would be most likely to have high attendance and will begin planning those on-day events, see Table 1. With this increased exposure, there is an elevated likelihood of students later applying and enrolling in various programs offered at SIU.

## Literature Cited

- Attila, K., Davison, T., Rock, J., & Wood, K. (2014). *Rural University Influences on Rural Society*. Evaluating the Impact of Rural Universities on Local Communities, (2015) 4-16.
- Collins, L. D. (2012). *Descriptive Analysis Study of the Impact that Student Leadership, Youth Organizations, and Positive Self-Motivation has upon Students' Grade Point Average and Academic Attitude*. Doctoral dissertation, Northwest Missouri State University.
- Crigler, L. & Piercy, J. (2014). *Educational Impact on Local School Systems that a Rural University Has on the Region*. Evaluating the Impact of Rural Universities on Local Communities, (2015) 17-33.
- Dormody, T. J., & Seevers, B. S. (1994). *Participation of FFA Members in Leadership Development Activities: A Tri-State Study*. Journal of Agricultural Education, 35(4), 42-48.
- Einstein, A. (2011). *The Impact of Youth Development Programs On Student Academic Achievement*. Child Development, 64(4), 729-724.
- Goodwin, J., Barnett, C., Pike, M., Peutz, J., Lanting, R., & Ward, A. (2005). *Idaho 4-H Impact Study*. Journal of Extension 43(4).
- Hanagriff, R., Rayfield, J., Pavelock, D., & Ulrich, D. (2012). "Measuring Community Economic Impacts Derived from FFA Career Development Event Participant Spending". Executive Summary, Western ECO CDE Poster, Texas A&M & Sam Houston University.
- Lerner, R. M., & Lerner, J. V. (2013). *The Positive Development of Youth: Comprehensive Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*. Chevy Chase, MD: National 4-H Council.

Merten, K., Locke, D., Williams, M., Carter, M., & Lehman, K. (2014). *Impact of 4-H on Alumni's Community Involvement*. *Journal of Extension*, 52(5).

Rose, C., Stephens, C. A., Stripling, C., Cross, T., Sanok, D. E., & Brawner, S. (2016). *The Benefits of FFA Membership as Part of Agricultural Education*. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 57(2), 33-45.