Factors that influence secondary students to join the Collegiate FFA

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FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SECONDARY STUDENTS TO JOIN THE
COLLEGIATE FFA

by

Sara N. Vandenbos

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Agricultural Systems Technology
(Secondary / Postsecondary Agricultural Education)

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Logan, UT
2013
ABSTRACT

Factors That Influence Secondary Students To Join The Collegiate FFA

by

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Utah State University, 2013

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Department: Agricultural Systems, Technology and Education

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence post high school FFA members to join the Collegiate FFA. This study focused on personal factors that relate to individual student beliefs and attitudes towards the Collegiate FFA. The survey-based study was sent to 209 students attending universities in the Intermountain West. A total of 90 students completed the instrument. The theoretical framework for this study included Astin’s theory of student involvement; it is a theory that implies a highly involved student is one who devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and frequently interacts with faculty and other students. The study showed that students who are involved in the National FFA at the secondary level are more likely to join Collegiate FFA while attending a university. These students were actively engaged on campus and were interested in helping others. Collegiate FFA programs, the National FFA, and universities across the country should recruit more from highly involved secondary students while they are still attending high school.  

(112 pages)
PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Factors That Influence Secondary Students to Join the Collegiate FFA

by

Sara N. Vandenbos, Master of Science
Utah State University, 2013

Student involvement on college campuses is important for the professional growth, leadership development and learning of today’s college student. This research sought to determine the factors that influence former high school FFA members’ reasons for joining and participating in the Collegiate FFA.

The study showed that students who are involved in the National FFA at the secondary level are more likely to join Collegiate FFA while attending a university that offers the Collegiate FFA option. These students were actively engaged on campus and were interested in helping others. Collegiate FFA programs, the National FFA, and universities across the country should begin their recruitment efforts with current high school FFA members.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2012, the National FFA Organization reported that its membership had reached over half a million members, aged 12-21, in 7,489 chapters, within all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The national membership consists of active high school and post high school students. The collegiate, alumni, and honorary membership are additional levels of membership in the National FFA Organization. The collegiate membership comprises less than 1% of the National membership numbers (Tatman, 2012). The majority of former FFA members who are seeking higher education are choosing not to participate in Collegiate FFA programs despite prior involvement. Collegiate FFA programs provide service opportunities, recruitment possibilities, and essential leadership training that many students need in today’s workforce. What are the factors that influence students’ decision to become members of the Collegiate FFA? Collegiate FFA programs are offered across the country in many colleges and universities for any student interested in supporting the FFA and developing their leadership skills. However, many students are not taking advantage of the benefits of this membership. Thousands of dollars in scholarships are given to post secondary FFA members and members of Collegiate FFA programs every year (National FFA Organization, 2009). Programs such as the International Collegiate Agricultural Leadership (ICAL) program bring twelve students every
year to foreign countries to learn more about global agriculture and the impact of the U.S. Grains Council and international trade and production. The National Collegiate Agricultural Ambassadors program trains future agriculturalists to give demonstrations to communities and educate the public about agriculture. The FFA “GO: Africa” program allows collegiate members to give of their time and knowledge, while working in an African community for the summer, improving their agricultural practices. In addition to these programs, an online tool “FFA Beyond High School” is utilized to connect past FFA members with FFA opportunities through bi-monthly newsletters. These programs, and many more, are made available to collegiate FFA members yet many of them are not well known or sought after.

Service is a major component of many Collegiate FFA programs. There are opportunities for many students to serve within the Collegiate FFA (Tarpley, 2001). Tarpley (2001) asserted that Collegiate FFA programs move “from an emphasis of ‘what can the FFA do for me?’ to an emphasis of ‘what can I do for the FFA member?’” (p. 22). These service opportunities are different across the nation and include activities such as assembling agriculture literacy packets for Agriculture in the Classroom programs, judging local, area and state Career Development Events (CDE’s) for high school FFA members, assisting with State FFA activities, and volunteering in the community and on college campuses. Collegiate FFA can be a meaningful and positive program for the individual member as well as the National FFA organization (Tarpley, 2001).
The Collegiate FFA has a strong influence in the recruitment of future college of agriculture students. In fact, many students responsible for recruiting new undergraduate students to the university were former FFA members (Park & Dyer, 2005, p. 85). These former FFA members, now Collegiate FFA members, in turn contribute a positive face and recruitment tool for the college or university (Tarpley, 2001). Thus, recruiting done by Collegiate FFA members is valuable to high school agriculture programs and FFA chapters.

Lastly, the Collegiate FFA provides a leadership development organization for students in agriculture. According to the Kellogg Commission on the Future of Land Grant Universities (1997), student organizations are essential programs that provide invaluable lessons for the students and contribute to the overall collegiate experience. Extracurricular experiences that college students participate in greatly contribute to leadership development and workplace necessary skills (Kuh, 1995). Studies have indicated that participation in FFA enhances leadership abilities (Park & Dyer, 2005) so it is assumed that participation in the Collegiate FFA would also help enhance those skills. According to Schumacher and Swan (1993), there must be a leadership development program in agricultural colleges that is available to all students and the Collegiate FFA fits the criteria for such a program (Park & Dyer, 2005).
Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study was to identify factors that influence students’ decision to join Collegiate FFA.

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, research was guided by the following objectives:

1. Identify students’ prior involvement with the FFA Organization (middle school, high school, or collegiate involvement; participation in SAEs, involvement in CDEs, years of membership, leadership events attended, degrees awarded, and offices held).

2. Identify students’ knowledge about Collegiate FFA on their campus (how participants learned about Collegiate FFA, length of time attending the university before joining, and if the Collegiate FFA is housed in the same department or college of the participant’s major).

3. Identify factors that influence students’ attraction to Collegiate FFA (academics, life skills, internship opportunities, agriculture teacher, networking possibilities, leadership office, previous involvement in FFA, professional development opportunities, requirement in a course, resume builder, retention at university, scholarship possibilities, service, social gatherings, help in finding a career, travel opportunities, university professors or lecturers, working with FFA chapters, or friendships with other members).
4. Determine factors that influence student membership in Collegiate FFA (academics, life skills, internship opportunities, agriculture teacher, networking possibilities, leadership office, previous involvement in FFA, professional development opportunities, requirement in a course, resume builder, retention at university, scholarship possibilities, service, social gatherings, help in finding a career, travel opportunities, university professors or lecturers, working with FFA chapters, or friendships with other members).

5. Describe extracurricular campus involvement of Collegiate FFA members (number of organizations outside the Collegiate FFA in which the participant holds membership, leadership roles within the university, and organizations outside the university in which the participant holds membership or leadership roles).

Assumptions

An assumption is a statement intended to be true without evidence.

Several assumptions were made about students’ decisions to join Collegiate FFA:

1. Students have preconceived notions about Collegiate FFA.

2. Students’ prior positive FFA experience can influence their participation in Collegiate FFA.

3. Students do not know the benefits of Collegiate FFA membership.
4. Students are familiar with Collegiate FFA before enrolling in University courses.

5. Students are honestly participating in this research study without falsifying information.

**Limitations of the Study**

Limitations are statements that expose the weakness of the study. The following are limitations to the study:

1. The study was limited to students who were enrolled in Intermountain West Land Grant Universities in the states of Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming in the spring of 2012. Students were Collegiate FFA members identified by their Collegiate FFA Advisors.

2. The time for this study was limited to one year.

3. Students may not have the appropriate technology to complete the internet based survey.

4. Limitations to the study deal with criterion-related validity because observation of students was not made to determine if their response was consistent to their behavior.

5. The study was based upon a small sample population in the Western part of the United States, thus it should not be interpreted at a larger scale without further research.
Definition of Terms

Definitions used in this research were those commonly associated with Agricultural Education as determined by prior research studies.

Agricultural Education: Secondary school instruction available to students in the art of science, business, technology of plant and animal production systems. First introduced to the public schools in 1917, there are more than 800,000 students who participate in courses designed to prepare them for life in an ever changing agriculture industry. Courses not only provide academic instruction, but leadership and personal growth development to aid in their career success (National FFA Organization, 2012).

CDE: National FFA Career Development Events prepare students as they develop the abilities to think critically, communicate clearly, and perform effectively in a competitive job market. With over 25 events, students can compete individually or in teams to enhance their skills (National FFA Organization, 2009).

Collegiate FFA: A continuation of the National FFA high school membership, however, extended for students enrolled in college courses. Collegiate FFA prepares students for a successful career by giving them a jump start in a number of professional development opportunities (National FFA Organization, 2005).
FFA Degree: FFA Members can earn various degrees for their academic achievement, leadership development, and career skills they develop through their agricultural courses. Degrees include Discovery, Greenhand, Chapter, State and American (National FFA Organization, 2009).

Land Grant University: Established by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, these college or university campuses were originally used to teach agriculture, military tactics, mechanical arts, and mining using inquiry based teaching methods. There is at least one Land Grant University in every state with some southern states having two. The United States Department of Agriculture plays a significant role in maintaining the Land Grant University model of high academic achievement which continues to this day (Washington State University Extension, 2009).

Life Skills: Positive behaviors that enable individuals to respond to life’s challenges and demands. Life skills can be grouped into three areas including personal skills, inter-personal skills, and cognitive skills. These skills help people analyze and use information, develop personal ideas for managing oneself properly, and communicate with others effectively (United Nations Children’s Fund, n.d.).

National FFA: The National FFA Organization (formerly Future Farmers of America) envisions a future where all agricultural education students will discover their passion in life and build on that insight to chart the course for their educations, career and personal future. The National FFA
Organization is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education (National FFA Organization, 2012).

**Professional Development:** Practiced skills or expertise in a certain area to advance in a specific career. Programs are conducted through formal education or hands-on opportunities. Professional development is a means to maintain and develop new skills and knowledge (Threeton, 2007).

**Retention:** Universities gauge students’ success in quantities of retention. These are students who stay in good standing at a college or university in order to graduate. Those who leave the academic institution before obtaining a diploma are considered “drop outs.” The goal of academic institutions is to have high retention rates (Aitken, 1982).

**SAE:** Supervised Agricultural Experiences are an integral part of the agricultural education model. Students with an SAE learn by doing by being supervised outside of the classroom by their agricultural science instructor. The SAE gives students the opportunity to take what they have learned inside of the classroom and apply it in a practical way outside the school setting (National FFA Organization, 2012).
Implications

Ideally, former FFA members who are attending a post-secondary institution would be aware of and join the Collegiate FFA. In turn, Collegiate FFA membership would have greater membership and more institutions would begin to offer Collegiate FFA programs. As a result, Collegiate FFA would become the premier leadership organization for students to prepare them for leadership roles in their future professions while aiding in the advancement of the National FFA Organization (Tarpley, 2001).

Identifying factors that influence former FFA members’ intent to join to Collegiate FFA will assist the National FFA and Collegiate FFA programs in their quest to increase membership levels across the country.

Significance of Study

While the topic of college student involvement has been widely studied, fewer studies have been conducted on Collegiate FFA membership. It is essential that Collegiate FFA programs, high school FFA programs, and the National FFA organization utilize the factors that have been identified and promote Collegiate FFA membership (Kuh, 1995; Park & Dyer, 2005; Tarpley, 2001; Urbanski & Foubert, 2006). The National FFA should make an apparent effort to reach out to post-secondary academic institutions that house agriculture majors and encourage them to start Collegiate FFA chapters. In turn, the National FFA Organization
should provide outreach examples to institutions and high school FFA programs so they can attract future members.

Current programs have tended to be housed within departments that offer degrees in Agricultural Education (Tarpley, 2001). They recruit their membership from a small base of students located within the department but traditionally do not reach out to FFA members still in high school. Utilizing the factors that students have identified as to why they joined the Collegiate FFA, programs can recruit members from a wider base and continue with the leadership development opportunities that the National FFA Organization gives to its members.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section serves as a review of available literature on college student involvement and the National FFA’s Collegiate FFA programs. The following research sections served as guidelines for the literature review: (a) theoretical framework, (b) importance of collegiate involvement, (c) the National FFA Organization and (d) student perception of the National FFA Organization.

Research of this topic included manual searches of The Journal of Agricultural Education, Journal of Career and Technical Education, and Educational Research. Additional research included internet-based searches through Google Scholar and via Utah State University library access to EBSCO host education collections. Searches were completed using the following terms, or a combination thereof: agricultural education, Collegiate FFA, student involvement, collegiate level leadership programs, National FFA, university retention programs, collegiate volunteer programs, and academic achievement.

Theoretical Framework

The overarching framework that serves as a foundation for this study is Astin’s theory of student involvement (Astin, 1984; Astin & Sax, 1998). Student involvement is considered the amount of physical and psychological energy that students devote to the academic experience in college. According to Astin, student involvement takes the form of participation in academically related
activities and interactions with faculty, staff, and peers, outside of class time. Thus, a highly involved student is one who devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and frequently interacts with faculty and other students (Ball, Garton, & Dyer, 2001). For student growth to take place, students need to be actively engaged in their environment.

Astin’s Theory of Involvement aligns with contextual learning and student involvement in Career Technology Student Organizations (CTSO) such as the National FFA (Threeton & Pellock, 2010). Astin (1984) emphasized the importance of the students’ involvement on campus and that when they are engaged in activities they develop into successful members of society. Activities that promote student development include National FFA and Collegiate FFA programs. Within Astin’s (1984) theory, there are five fundamental objectives that are important to note:

(a) Involvement requires investment of psychological and physical energy in objects (for example, tasks, people, activities), (b) involvement is a continuous concept – different students will invest varying amounts of energy in different objects, (c) involvement has both quantitative and qualitative features, (d) the amount of learning or development is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of involvement, and (e) educational effectiveness of any policy or practice is related to its capacity to induce student involvement (p. 306).
For the purpose of this study, Astin’s Theory of Involvement has been used as a foundation (see Figure 1).

*Figure 1. Astin’s Theory of Involvement: Contextual Learning through the Collegiate FFA (Astin, 1984)*
Importance of Collegiate Involvement

In a large-scale survey assessment project by Urbanski and Foubert in 2006, 407 incoming freshman participated in a study to determine psychosocial development on students participating in student organizations. Students were asked to complete the surveys after the end of their freshman and senior years. Areas such as educational involvement, career planning, lifestyle planning, lifestyle management, cultural participation, academic autonomy, and establishing and clarifying purpose were dependent variables that were measured. In all the mentioned areas, “students who were involved in student organizations by attending a meeting, joining, or leading an organization were more highly developed than those who were not involved at all in student organizations” (Urbanski & Foubert, 2006, p. 174). Urbanski concluded that there were no significant differences between joining and leading a student organization. However, the implication for active participation, beyond merely sitting in a meeting, was significant to students who completed the survey after their senior year.

Identifying the activities and events that are attributed to student intellectual, social, and emotional development; Kuh (1995) found through the use of the involvement model the more time spent in educational activities the more beneficial they will be for participants. Students attributed peers and academic-related activities as areas which required them “to perform such tasks as planning, organizing, managing, decision making, and so on” (Kuh, 1995, p. 129).
Growth in leadership experiences while serving in some capacity in a student organization occurred by students within the study. Students showing growth in leadership stated they had more skills like decision making and time management than if they did not participate. “Colleges cannot force students to participate in organized campus activities or perform leadership roles. However, they can and should be accountable for creating the conditions that promote such behavior” (Kuh, 1995, p. 150).

Continuing with the leadership model, Dugan (2006) conducted a study examining the leadership development of college students. Participants included 859 undergraduate students at a western United States institution in ten different colleges. They were given a survey with a Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) comprised of eight separate areas that are measured for social change. This SRLS contained 103 questions which participants answered using a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Students who were involved in student organizations held a stronger group purpose, were more committed individuals, collaborated with others, held a stronger sense of citizenship, and participated in controversy with greater civility. Those who held leadership positions held even greater citizenship beliefs and the ability to collaborate with others. “Positional leadership roles contributed to differences with involved students demonstrating significantly higher scores on scales associated with the group and societal levels” (Dugan, 2006, pp. 341–342).
Student organizations also have a service orientated aspect that is important to student development. Astin and Sax (1998) asked the question, “How will the student’s educational and personal development be affected?” (p. 251) as it related to service at the collegiate level. The study surveyed 3,450 students who were freshman at universities across the United States. It was found that those who volunteered did so half of the time in relation to the college of university that they attended. Seventy percent of the participants stated that they performed their service as part of some collegiate sponsored activity with the average time period of 6 months. The three most important reasons that students volunteer is to help other people, to feel personal satisfaction, and to improve the community. Additionally, service which was performed through the collegiate organizations added to the student’s satisfaction with collegiate opportunities for leadership development (Astin & Sax, 1998). This service “result lends proof that the area of student affairs is a fertile ground for the development of student leadership abilities” (Astin & Sax, 1998, p. 260). Furthermore, it was concluded that participating in service activities, while involved with student organizations, “substantially enhances the student’s academic development, life skill development, and sense of civic responsibility” (Astin & Sax, 1998, p. 262).

**Importance of the National FFA Organization**

Understanding the importance of student organizations, especially the Collegiate FFA for students with agricultural majors, is the first step in recruiting
students to join. Park and Dyer (2005) found, nearly half of all student leaders within a College of Agriculture were in FFA or 4-H, and involved in multiple organizations. The authors stated that “Agricultural youth organizations focus on developing leadership in members” (p. 84) and at the conclusion of the study, they found that leadership development and participation in organizations translated into continued involvement while in college. Park and Dyer argued that if a similar pattern would continue into professional careers, some of the undergraduate student organization leaders may develop into local and state leaders.

Additionally, Ball and colleagues (2001) studied the influence of involvement in agricultural youth organizations (e.g., 4-H and FFA) as related to academic performance and the retention of students in a College of Agriculture. The student’s academic performance was measured by his/her grade point average at the completion of the freshman year and the retention was calculated using the enrollment status at the beginning of what would be the sophomore year. Ball et al, found that the mean of GPA scores among students who were not enrolled in agricultural youth organizations was 2.6, whereas the cumulative GPA of those who were enrolled in agricultural youth organizations was 3.1. These findings also translated to the students’ ACT scores as well. The data for retention was found to have a significant association with participation in agricultural youth organizations. Those involved with agricultural youth organizations had a 94.3% retention rate compared with 83.8% retention rate by those who were not
involved. “Colleges of agriculture should continue to train quality individuals in the fields of agricultural and extension education in order to maintain a quality pool of FFA chapters and 4-H clubs from where future college of agriculture students may be selected” (Ball et al., 2001, pp. 21–22).

Student Perceptions of the National FFA Organization

After realizing the importance of the National FFA organization in many arenas, Talbert and Balschweid (2004) studied the factors affecting student participation within the organization and agricultural education courses. For this descriptive comparative study, two separate questionnaires were mailed to participants currently enrolled in agricultural courses who did not join the FFA and those who did join the FFA. Within each area, there were 220 useable responses to analyze. Two thirds of FFA members reported they had a parent and/or sibling involved in agricultural education, FFA, or 4-H compared with one third of those who were not members. Likewise, those who lived on a farm were more likely to join the FFA than those who lived in the city. Members of the FFA were in greater agreement than nonmembers that their agriculture classes were preparing them for the future, were challenging, interesting, exciting, and accepting of open discussion. Non-members disagreed that their agriculture classes were challenging (Talbert & Balschweid, 2004, p. 35). The “Agriculture Teacher” was selected as the biggest factor as to why students did join the FFA while “Not Interested” was the biggest factor as to why students did not join the
Talbert and Balschweid recommended that efforts should be made to diversify FFA membership to attract more participants while still maintaining the traditional aspects that core members want. Since the agricultural teacher is the biggest factor in joining the FFA organization, teachers need to market the program to more students at the chapter level as well as persuade students of the importance of agricultural education and the FFA.

In a study to determine the perceptions of the National FFA and relationships that may exist between varying factors, Croom and Flowers (2001) sought to uncover some of these beliefs. First year students in agricultural classrooms across North Carolina were identified for this descriptive questionnaire featuring the five point Likert type scale. A total of 308 males and 96 females participated with 41.5% indicating that they were FFA members while 58.5% were non-members. Croom and Flowers found that “FFA members participated in clubs and athletic activities more often than non-members” (2001, p. 31). FFA members’ decision to join the organization was more positive than the response of the non-member. Gender and ethnicity showed no influence on the organization’s perception. Enrollment choice did not play a difference in the students’ choice to join the FFA nor did block scheduling. There was no relationship between the grade level and the FFA membership status of the students. Also, there was no significant difference in opinions about the FFA by those who were active in other student organizations and those who were not active. Croom and Flowers recommend that the National FFA scale back some of
the traditional approaches to membership, such as the FFA jacket which students’
held a less than favorable opinion about. Moreover, it was proposed that another
study be conducted to determine the need for the official jacket. Agriculture
teachers were again identified as the biggest factor for students joining the FFA as
they recruit from the classroom. “Modern recruiting methods should be
developed that capitalize on the favorable impression created by the FFA
organization’s image. For non-members, the value of FFA membership must not
only be worth the cost of FFA membership dues, it should probably significantly
exceed the cost of dues” (Croom & Flowers, 2001, p. 35).

**Summary**

In order to understand why former FFA members are not joining
Collegiate FFA, it is crucial to identify the importance of student organizations,
the importance of the National FFA, and perceptions held by those within the
organization. Collegiate FFA enhances leadership abilities (Park & Dyer, 2005),
assists colleges in recruiting future students to their programs (Ball et al., 2001),
and can be a conductor of meaningful service opportunities (Astin & Sax, 1998).
Students who are enrolled in the FFA are aware of the benefits and, if given
another choice to join, would definitely do so (Croom & Flowers, 2001).

There is no substantial literature on perceptions of students toward
Collegiate FFA or in relation to the factors of why students participate in the
organization. Much of the literature is based towards the high school affiliate or
towards collegiate organizations in general. For future studies, it would be beneficial to conduct a descriptive survey to current Collegiate FFA members to gather the benefits of the organization.
CHAPTER III
PROCEDURES

This study was designed to identify the factors that influence students’ decisions to join Collegiate FFA.

Objectives

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, research was guided by the following objectives:

1. Identify students’ prior involvement with the FFA Organization (middle school, high school, or collegiate involvement; participation in SAEs, involvement in CDEs, years of membership, leadership events attended, degrees awarded, and offices held).

2. Identify students’ knowledge about Collegiate FFA on their campus (how participants learned about Collegiate FFA, length of time attending the university before joining, and if the Collegiate FFA is housed in the same department or college of the participant’s major).

3. Identify factors that influence students’ attraction to Collegiate FFA (academics, life skills, internship opportunities, agriculture teacher, networking possibilities, leadership office, previous involvement in FFA, professional development opportunities, requirement in a course, resume builder, retention at university, scholarship possibilities, service, social gatherings, help in finding a career, travel opportunities,
university professors or lecturers, working with FFA chapters, or friendships with other members).

4. Determine factors that influence student membership in Collegiate FFA (academics, life skills, internship opportunities, agriculture teacher, networking possibilities, leadership office, previous involvement in FFA, professional development opportunities, requirement in a course, resume builder, retention at university, scholarship possibilities, service, social gatherings, help in finding a career, travel opportunities, university professors or lecturers, working with FFA chapters, or friendships with other members).

5. Describe extracurricular campus involvement of Collegiate FFA members (number of organizations outside the Collegiate FFA in which the participant holds membership, leadership roles within the university, and organizations outside the university in which the participant holds membership or leadership roles).

Research Design

This study utilized a researcher designed descriptive questionnaire to address factors that influence post high school FFA members to join Collegiate FFA. This research used questionnaires to collect data from small to large populations (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorenson, 2009). This study was designed after previous research that supports the use of internet based questionnaires (Coomber,
Once the questionnaire was designed, and prior to submitting the survey for collection, the researcher submitted the details and objectives of the instrument to Utah State University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once approval was granted, the instrument was pilot tested with students from South Dakota State University. It was then opened to the survey population for data collection.

Correlation research was used to identify if certain factors had a relationship with why members decided to join the Collegiate FFA. Correlation research was chosen because it is used to identify the strength of relationships among selected variables (Ary et al., 2009). This study was designed to seek out the predictors and explanation behind students’ beliefs, attitudes and intent to join. Demographics were also used to explain if their agricultural education background, FFA participation, or leadership experience played a role in their decision to join the Collegiate FFA.

**Population**

This descriptive study measured the factors that influence current collegiate students’ decision to join the Collegiate FFA student organization. The population for this study was current Collegiate FFA members who were students attending a Land Grant Universities in Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Utah, or Wyoming, during the spring of 2012. The framework included 205 students from the five institutions. The population size was located in the Intermountain
West for accessibility of the researcher and the timeframe needed to complete the study. The size of the population could be considered a representation of future populations of students (Oliver & Hinkle, 1982). There was no preference given to race, age, or religion in this study.

The frame for the population was obtained by contacting the Collegiate FFA advisors at each of the Universities (see Appendix A). Advisors were asked to send membership rosters that included email addresses and participant names to the researcher. The researcher provided the university advisors with a copy of the signed IRB and a Letter of Information that described the potential risks associated with taking the survey (see Appendix B). Once access was granted to use current student names and email addresses, the research began.

**Limitations**

This study was limited to college students in the Intermountain West during spring semester. Recommendations for continued studies include:

1. Repeat the study with a larger population. Including more students in the study would allow for greater numbers in statistical analysis and could even lower the statistical error. Having more participants in the study would also increase the diversity of students and would increase the ability to generalize results for all Collegiate FFA members. Currently, the Intermountain West contains a very specific group of students in regards to racial demographics.
2. Include students who were not in Collegiate FFA in a similar study.

Including students who were not in Collegiate FFA would increase the potential to generalize the results and to interpret reasons as to why students did not join Collegiate FFA. These results could then be compared to the factors listed by those who chose to join to see if there was a correlation to specific factors. This group could be identified by high school agricultural educators at the state or local level who could provide membership information.

3. Ethnic diversity was only used in regards to demographic purposes. It would be helpful to complete a national study that focuses on factors that influence students’ decisions to join Collegiate FFA by ethnicity. This study had a very limited amount of ethnic diversity in regards to participants. It would be beneficial to identify if this is a national trend or solely geographic.

4. The large disparity between female and male participants in this study has been noted; it is recommended that a future study be completed to determine why there is a large gender disproportion between the National FFA and Collegiate FFA.

5. Respondent majors and specific departmental housing of Collegiate FFA should be identified in future studies. This study did not ask what major the participants had or where Collegiate FFA was housed. This information would be useful to understand where the majority of
Collegiate FFA chapters are located in correlation to the students’ degree major.

**Instrumentation**

A researcher designed questionnaire served as the data collection instrument for this study and was administered through an internet survey database (www.surveymonkey.com). Questions were related to the objectives and tied to the problem statement (Schleyer & Forrest, 2000). As the population included current college students, it was assumed they were busy with other activities. Thus the survey was designed to be completed within three minutes. The survey included a maximum of 30 questions. Questions were slightly different for those who were already members versus those who were not Collegiate FFA members. This meant that skip logic was used to change the length of the survey based on the participants’ information given by the participants.

The majority of the questions were close ended. Close ended questions included statements such as “Did you have a Supervised Agricultural Experience?” or “Are you a current Collegiate FFA Member?” Some questions required participants to check boxes that correspond to their answer. For example, “How did you hear about the Collegiate FFA at your campus before attending?” or “When were you involved in the National FFA Organization?”
Please check all that apply.” These sorts of questions, paired with skip logic, aided in retrieving valuable information from each student.

Questions in a Likert format that required participants to choose the most correct option were also used to gather perceptions and level of involvement. The survey was modified to include two different questions that utilized Likert style questions. The question of prior involvement with middle and high school FFA programs included the following choices: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree or Agree, Agree, or Strongly Agree. The question asking the influences on the Collegiate FFA member to join Collegiate FFA included the following five point choices: Not important, Little Importance, Somewhat Important, Important, and Very Important.

Participants were emailed a link to take the survey (see Appendix C). While taking the survey, questions were limited to the viewable screen area so there was no scrolling required. Questions were required to be answered to prevent students from skipping certain questions accidently or intentionally. When one page was completed, students continued to the next page. The student’s completion percentage was viewable at the bottom of the screen so they knew how many more questions remained (Pfleeger & Kitchenham, 2001). The instrument included five sections and each section contained specific directions for answering each item (see Appendix D).

Section one of the instrument included nine questions that related to prior involvement of the participants in middle or high school FFA programs (see
Appendix E). Questions included topics concerning when they were FFA members, how long they were FFA members, the highest FFA degree earned, if they had an SAE, the number of CDEs participated in, which leadership conferences they attended, officer positions held, and finally their attitude toward their FFA program. The final question in the section was a Likert type scale and included the following choices: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree or Agree, Agree, or Strongly Agree.

Section two of the instrument measured the knowledge of the Collegiate FFA on the university campus the participants attended and included four questions. Questions included how they learned about Collegiate FFA, how long before they heard about Collegiate FFA, and where the Collegiate FFA was housed in their university (Department and College).

Section three of the instrument was designed to determine the influences to join Collegiate FFA and included two questions. One of the questions was Likert scale based. Students were given a list of possible factors that may have influenced them to join the Collegiate FFA and then had Likert based choices to include the following: Not important, Little Importance, Somewhat Important, Important, and Very Important. The other question included the same factors that may have influenced the participants to join but they were asked to select only the top three influences.

Section four of the instrument focused on involvement in other student organizations and included four questions. Questions included how many
organizations outside of the Collegiate FFA participants held membership within, the positions of leadership they held, membership outside the university, and leadership roles held in those organizations that were outside the university.

Section five of the instrument was designed to determine the demographic information of the participants and included 11 questions. Demographic information included whether they were male or female, the participants race, what year they were born, if they were married, if they had children, how many hours they worked each week, the area they grew up, what their class standing was, which college their major was house in, and if they had any family members that were in the FFA. Once the questionnaire was completed, the data were downloaded from the survey site, collected and analyzed.

**Measurement Error**

Two primary concerns that must be addressed with descriptive research are internal and external validity issues. Internal validity of a study establishes that the data or the findings are true or measures what is purported to be measured (Borg & Gall, 1989). To ensure internal validity, measurement error must be minimized and the instrument for data collection must be trusted. External validity is influenced by factors such as sampling error, selection error, frame error, and nonresponse error. Validity, as described by Gay, Mills, and Airasian, (2005), is the most important characteristic a test or measure can have. “Validity in quantitative research is dependent upon careful instrument construction to
ensure that the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure” (Patton, 2002, p. 14). Three specific types of evidence were used to determine the validity of the questionnaire.

A panel of experts was utilized to review the instrument and address face, construct, and content validity. The panel of experts consisted of 6 university faculty members representing higher education institutions from across the United States, and one representative from The National FFA Organization. Face validity is simply whether or not the instrument appears valid for the intended purpose and is especially important to determine because respondents are more likely to complete an instrument that appears to be meaningful and appropriate (Ary et al., 2009).

Construct validity was determined by indentifying the underlying constructs from the literature, the research objectives, and consulting the members of the thesis committee to determine relevancy. Items were then placed into relevant constructs. Gay et al., 2005 identified construct validity as the most important form of validity as it often asks the question, “What is the test really measuring?” (p. 167). A test has content validity if it measures the content that it was designed to measure. Members of the thesis committee reviewed the instrument for content validity before participants were given the questionnaire.
Validity and Reliability

Reliability is defined as the “stability of the measuring device over time” (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 257). Efforts must be made to determine the reliability of a measure and increase the reliability, if possible. In order to accomplish this, a pilot test was conducted.

Ary et al. (2009) supported pilot testing in order to help clarify or eliminate items and provide the following to address any issues:

1. Do the respondents seem comfortable with the questionnaire and motivated to complete it?
2. Are certain items confusing?
3. Could some items result in hostility or embarrassment on the part of the respondents?
4. Are the instructions clear?
5. How long will it take a respondent to complete the questionnaire?
6. Do all respondents interpret the items in the same way? (p. 402)

A pilot study was conducted in March 2012 with Survey Monkey (n = 31) through South Dakota State University’s Collegiate FFA membership. This group of students was selected because of its similarity in interests to the target population.

Students were invited, through personal contact with their Collegiate FFA Advisor, to complete the instrument and share any concerns or suggestions for improvement. As a result of the pilot test, some modifications were made to the
final instrument including clarification of questions and minor formatting issues. Special efforts were made to enhance the visual appearance of the instrument.

Some changes made as a result of the pilot test included a brief explanation of the purpose of the instrument to the students. It was also suggested that an indication of how many questions were included and how much time it would take the students to complete. The demographic section was moved from the beginning of the survey to the end to keep interest in the main focus of the survey. It was required to answer some questions in the survey while others were not required. This was an error in designing the online survey and was fixed before the instrument was given to the surveyed population. Some questions were eliminated by rewording questions or combining them into one question. For example: “Do you have children?” “YES” or “NO.” These were eliminated by asking: “How many children do you have?” and giving “NONE” as an option. Similarly, “How many hours do you work?” with an “I DON’T WORK” option was provided. Many of these modifications were made to improve the face validity and readability of the instrument.

Cronbach’s alpha was used as an estimate of internal consistency to establish reliability of the questionnaire from the data collected during the pilot test ($n = 31$). Cronbach’s alpha is the most common form of internal consistency as an estimate for reliability (Ary et al., 2009). Generally .70 and above is an acceptable alpha level. The resulting Cronbach’s alpha was .84 for the first construct. The first construct included the section about past perceptions of FFA.
membership. The second construct resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha of .94 and included the section that determined the student’s perception of Collegiate FFA and the personal reasons as to why they joined (Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of secondary FFA membership</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Collegiate FFA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

Dillman’s (2007) Tailored Design Method (TDM) suggested five points of contact to guide the data collection process when using mailed questionnaires. These include: first contact (pre-notice letter), second contact (mailed instrument), third contact (thank you/reminder postcard), fourth contact (first replacement instrument), and fifth (invoking special responses). Because of the unique characteristics of the sample, a modified version of the TDM method was used.

In April 2012, faculty members at the University of Idaho, Utah State University, University of Wyoming, Montana State University, Washington State University, Oregon State University, University of Arizona, and Eastern Oregon University were contacted to determine if they had a Collegiate FFA program and would be willing to participate in the research survey. Washington State University did not have an active Collegiate FFA program but were working on
getting one started. University of Arizona did not have a Collegiate FFA program and thus could not participate. Eastern Oregon University had a Collegiate FFA program, but they chose not to participate in the study. Thus, five universities were identified to participate. The University of Wyoming had strict rules about providing student contact information even though it was for research. Thus, the faculty member responsible for the Collegiate FFA at the University of Wyoming forwarded emails from the researcher to the participants. Faculty members were encouraged to talk to members about participating in the research survey that would take place in April and May 2012. This contact made by the faculty was assumed to be the initial contact and was used to give the students information regarding the study.

Students were sent a letter via email to inform them of their selection to participate in this study (see Appendix C). The initial letter sent specifically from the researcher outlined the purpose of the study, importance of the responses to the study, limited time for action, the assured confidentiality, and the promise of results if the student so wished. Within this initial email, there was a link to the survey. This initial email was sent out April 16, 2012. The week after the second email, on April 23, 2012, another email was sent out including the link to the survey. Before the email was sent out, 31% of the population had responded. A fourth reminder email was sent out to participants on April 30, 2012. This email invited them to participate and reminded them of the upcoming deadline. Prior to the fourth email, there was a response rate of 41%. A fifth reminder email was
sent out to participants on the last day of the survey, May 4. At the sending of this fifth contact, there was a response rate of 44%. This final email also thanked participants for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate in this worthwhile survey.

Of the 205 students invited to participate, completed questionnaires were received from 90 students yielding a response rate of 44%.

**Nonresponse Error**

Due to the nature of this study, non-response was a concern. As nonrespondents are similar to late respondents, there was a comparison of late respondents to early respondents for apparent differences. A late respondent is one who completed the survey during the last wave (response generated by a stimulus such as an email). If the early and late respondents differ substantially, then the nonrespondents were to be assumed to have the same response as the late respondents. However, if there is no clear distinction made between early and late respondents, then the surveys completed were only to be used and thus noted in the research findings (Lindner, Murphy, & Briers, 2001).

Lindner et al (2001) recommend using 30 or more responses in the last wave to generate a meaningful statistical response. Because the last wave did not include 30 responses, it was suggested to back up to the next wave or apparent break in response time. When a test was run for quality of means, there was no significant difference between early and late responders ($t = -1.516, p = .133$).
Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS® 18 for Windows. Data analysis methods were selected as a result of determining the scales of measurement for the variables. Research objective one, two, and five were analyzed with frequencies and percentages from the individual items. Objective three was analyzed by frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations. Mean scores were reported for the individual interests. Objective four reported descriptive statistics responses that utilized mean scores, standard deviations, and variances to report sub answers from the main question.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to identify factors that influence a student’s decision to join the Collegiate FFA.

Objectives

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, research was guided by the following objectives:

1. Identify students’ prior involvement with the FFA Organization (middle school, high school, or collegiate involvement; participation in SAEs, involvement in CDEs, years of membership, leadership events attended, degrees awarded, and offices held).

2. Identify students’ knowledge about Collegiate FFA on their campus (how participants learned about Collegiate FFA, length of time attending the university before joining, and if the Collegiate FFA is housed in the same department or college of the participant’s major).

3. Identify factors that influence students’ attraction to Collegiate FFA (academics, life skills, internship opportunities, agriculture teacher, networking possibilities, leadership office, previous involvement in FFA, professional development opportunities, requirement in a course, resume builder, retention at university, scholarship possibilities, service, social gatherings, help in finding a career, travel opportunities,
university professors or lecturers, working with FFA chapters, or friendships with other members).

4. Determine factors that influence student membership in Collegiate FFA (academics, life skills, internship opportunities, agriculture teacher, networking possibilities, leadership office, previous involvement in FFA, professional development opportunities, requirement in a course, resume builder, retention at university, scholarship possibilities, service, social gatherings, help in finding a career, travel opportunities, university professors or lecturers, working with FFA chapters, or friendships with other members).

5. Describe extracurricular campus involvement of Collegiate FFA members (number of organizations outside the Collegiate FFA in which the participant holds membership, leadership roles within the university, and organizations outside the university in which the participant holds membership or leadership roles).

Prior FFA involvement

Of the 90 participants attending Intermountain West universities, 16.7% (n = 15) reported they were previously involved in middle school FFA programs, 96.7% (n = 97) were involved in high school programs, while 92.2% (n = 83) reported they were involved in Collegiate FFA programs (Table 2).
Table 2

*Collegiate FFA Membership History (n = 97)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When were you a FFA Member?</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding past FFA participation, participants were asked how long they had been involved in a FFA program. Of Participants, 1.1% (n = 1) were members for one year, 1.1% (n = 1) were members for two years, 5.6% (n = 5) were members for three years, 10% (n = 9) were members for four years, 23.3% (n = 22) were members for five years, 33.3% (n = 30) were members for six years, 10% (n = 9) were members for seven years, and 15.6% (n = 14) were members for eight years or more (Table 3).
Table 3

*Length in Time of FFA Membership (n = 97)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long were you a FFA Member?</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Years</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Years or More</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

*Highest FFA Degree Awarded (n = 97)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What was the highest FFA Degree you obtained?</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State FFA Degree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American FFA Degree</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter FFA Degree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhand FFA Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked the highest FFA Degree that was obtained, 3.3% (n = 3) reported they obtained the Discovery Degree, 3.3% (n = 3) Greenhand Degree,
8.9% \( (n = 8) \) Chapter Degree, 50% \( (n = 45) \) State Degree, 34.4% \( (n = 31) \) achieving the American Degree as the highest rank that they obtained. The State FFA Degree was the highest ranking degree that the participants chose as their highest degree (see Table 4).

Regarding participants who had a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), 82 (91.1%) reported that they had an SAE while involved in FFA, yet eight (8.9%) stated they did not have an SAE. Eighty-five percent of the 90 respondents stated they participated in Career Development Events (CDE) while members of the National FFA with five participating in one event, two (2.2%) participating in two events, seven (7.8%) in three events, ten (11.1%) in four events, and 61 (67.8%) participating in five or more events.

Regarding conferences that students attended while involved with the National FFA (see Table 5), 66 (73.3%) students responded they had participated in Chapter Leadership Retreat/Conferences, 48 (53.3%) in a District Leadership Retreat, 50 (55.6%) in a State Leadership Conference, 83 (92.2%) in a State FFA Convention, 77 (85.6%) in a National FFA Convention, 10 (11.1%) in 212 Degrees, 14 (15.6%) in 360 Degrees, 21 (23.3%) in Washington Leadership Conference (WLC), 17 (18.9%) in Building Leaders and Strong Teams of Officers (BLAST OFF), 12 (13.3%) in Made for Excellence (MFE), 14 (15.6%) in National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO), nine (10%) in State President’s Conference (SPC), and six (6.6%) in Other.
Table 5

Leadership Conferences Attended by Former FFA Members (n = 89)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conferences</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State FFA Convention</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National FFA Convention</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>85.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Leadership Retreat/Conferences</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Leadership Conference</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Leadership Retreat</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Leadership Conference</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Leaders and Strong Teams of Officers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360 Degrees</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Leadership Conference for State Officers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made for Excellence</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212 Degrees</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Presidents’ Conference</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, regarding leadership offices held while active members in the National FFA, participants were first asked if they were elected to any local, state and/or national office. Seventy-eight (87.6%) of the participants was at some point elected to a leadership position. Those 78 were then asked which leadership position they held (see Table 6). Of the participants who held the office President, 39 were at the Chapter level, four were at the District Level, three at the Area...
Level, four at the State Level, and none at the National Level. Those holding the Vice Presidential office held included 39 at the Chapter Level, two at the District Level, two at the Area Level, four at the State Level and none at the National Level. This office was the most widely held office. The Secretary position was held by 23 at the Chapter Level, four at the District Level, none at the Area Level, one at the State Level, and none at the National Level. The office of Treasurer was held by 17 at the Chapter Level, four at the District Level, one at the Area Level, two at the State Level, and none at the National Level. The Reporter position was held by 22 people at the Chapter level, three at the District Level, one at the Area Level, two at the State Level and none at the National Level. The Sentinel position was held by 14 people at the Chapter Level, two at the District Level, one at the Area Level, one at the State Level, and none at the National Level. The Historian position was held by four at the Chapter level, none at the District Level, none at the Area Level, none at the State Level, and none at the National Level. The Parliamentarian position was held by seven at the Chapter Level, one at the District Level, none at the Area Level, five at the State Level, and none at the National Level. “Other” was another option for the participants to choose. “Other” was selected at the Chapter Level 13 times, one time at the District Level, twice at the Area Level, three times at the State Level, and twice at the National Level.
Table 6

Offices Held by FFA Members at the Various Levels (n = 79)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Chapter Level</th>
<th>District Level</th>
<th>Area Level</th>
<th>State Level</th>
<th>National Level</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporter</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentinel</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentarian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge of the Collegiate FFA Organization on Campus

Students were asked questions regarding their knowledge about Collegiate FFA on their campus and their experiences with Collegiate FFA. Sixty-four (n = 57) of these students knew about the Collegiate FFA chapter on their campus before the first semester. Relating to how long students attended their university before they were introduced to the Collegiate FFA; respondents who heard about it Before First Semester were 64.4% (n = 57), during First Semester included 31.3% (n = 28), Second Semester respondents were 3.3% (n = 3), during the
Third Semester were 2.2% (n = 2), Fourth Semester was 1.1% (n = 1), and Fifth Semester was 1.1% (n = 1) of respondents (see Table 7).

Table 7

Student Knowledge of the Collegiate FFA on Their Campus (n = 89)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of Collegiate FFA on Campus</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before First Semester</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Semester</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Semester</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Semester</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Semester</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Semester</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate FFA in same college as major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate FFA in same department as major</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about the college that housed the Collegiate FFA and if it was housed within the participants own college, 83.3% (n = 75) responded Yes and 15.6% (n = 14) No. Additionally, respondents were asked if Collegiate FFA was housed within their department. Fifty-eight percent (n = 53) answered Yes while 40% (n = 36) answered No.
Finally, when asked about how participants heard about the Collegiate FFA on their campus; students were given the option to select all that applied; *FFA Website* was selected 7.8% (*n* = 7) times, *Flier* 7.8% (*n* = 7), *High School FFA Advisor* was selected 32.2% (*n* = 29), *In Class Announcements* 22.2% (*n* = 20), *Information Booth* 23.3% (*n* = 21), *Social Media* 6.7% (*n* = 6), *Other* 5.5% (*n* = 5), and *Friend/Acquaintance* 58.9% (*n* = 53) times for the most selected reason students heard about Collegiate FFA on their campus (see Table 8).

Table 8  
*Ways in which students discovered Collegiate FFA (n = 89)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did you hear about Collegiate FFA?</th>
<th><em>f</em></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend/Acquaintance</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School FFA Advisor</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Booth</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Class Announcement</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFA Website</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flier</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interest in the Collegiate FFA Organization**

Students identified the factors they perceived to have influenced their decisions to join Collegiate FFA. Means and Standard Deviations were reported
for each of the areas that related to those factors. A 5-point Likert type scale comprised of 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither disagree or agree*, 4 = *agree* and 5 = *strongly agree* was used to measure the data. To report the data in a readable format, each question was treated as a subset of the entire question and was listed in Table 9.

Table 9

**Student Perceptions of the FFA Organization (n = 89)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What influenced your decision to join the Collegiate FFA?</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FFA was interesting</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFA was exciting</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFA helped prepare me for my future</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFA was challenging</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note*. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree or agree, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree

**Factors that Influence Students to Join the Collegiate FFA**

Factors were measured using a mean and standard deviation for each area. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated to describe the level of importance of each item investigated as perceived by students. When describing the levels of importance, the following limits served as a guide to aid in data analysis (see Table 10) and were then tabulated in the results section.

Regarding influences that played a part in the decision making process of participants to join Collegiate FFA, questions were assembled relating to the
extent of which respondents agreed or disagreed with various statements. Possible factors included, but were not limited to academics, retention at university, and scholarship opportunities (see Table 11).

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Anchor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00 – 1.50</td>
<td>Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.60 – 2.50</td>
<td>Little Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.60 – 3.50</td>
<td>Somewhat Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.60 – 4.50</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.60 – 5.00</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were asked to identify the three most influential factors that impacted their personal decision to join Collegiate FFA; frequency and percentages are reported below (see Table 12).
Table 11

*Factors that Influence Students’ Decisions to Join Collegiate FFA*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possibility of Leadership Office</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking Possibilities</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Involvement with FFA</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Gatherings</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Opportunities</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with High School FFA Chapters</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Life Skills</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement of Agricultural Teacher</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship Possibilities</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be Involved on campus</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required to Join</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your friends were members</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship Opportunities</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Opportunities</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Help Find a Career</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement of University Professors or Lectures</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume Builder</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Retention at University Level</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Opportunities</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12

*Most Influential Factors to Join Collegiate FFA (n = 87)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous Involvement with FFA</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with High School FFA Chapters</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Life Skills</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends Were Members</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking Possibilities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be Involved on Campus</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship Possibilities</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Opportunities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Opportunities</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Gatherings</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume Builder</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility of Leadership Office</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle or High School Agriculture Teacher</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Help Find a Career</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Opportunities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Professors or Lecturers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship Opportunities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required to Join</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Involvement in Other Organizations

Regarding student involvement with organizations on and off of campus, responses were measured under each question using frequency and percentages of the question subsets for Objective Five. Questions measuring the number of organizations on campus, positions of leadership held on those organizations on campus, organizations with membership held outside of campus, and positions of leadership in those organizations outside of campus were the four primary areas used to measure the objective (see Table 13).

Table 13

*Collegiate FFA Student Involvement (n = 86)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership in other campus orgs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than Six</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other leadership positions</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than Five</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other off campus organizations</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than Six</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other off campus leadership positions</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>72.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or More</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographics

Of the 90 participants attending institutions in the Intermountain West, 60% \((n = 54)\) were female and 35.6% \((n = 32)\) were male. Four \(4.4\%\) participants chose not to answer the question regarding sex (see Table 14). Ninety-two percent \((n = 83)\) were white, one \(1.1\%\) was Hispanic, 1 \(1.1\%\) answered “other” and included they didn’t want to answer the question because it caused perceived “bias”. The remaining 7.8% \((n = 7)\) chose not to answer the question. Participants were asked their year of birth and it ranged from 1983 to 1994 meaning participants were 18 to 29 years of age (see Table 14). Of the 90 participants, 7.8% \((n = 7)\) were married and 87.8% \((n = 79)\) were unmarried. Only 1.1% \((n = 1)\) participant reported that he/she had a child.

Table 14

**Demographics \((n = 86)\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>(f)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 21</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 - 23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 - 25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>98.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not work</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10 hours</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 hours</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-24 hours</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30 hours</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 hours</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 or more</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Residence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm/Ranch/Dairy</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Standing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members in FFA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specify family member in the FFA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle or Aunt</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousin</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding the workload of the participants 33.7% \((n = 29)\) did not work, 17.4% \((n = 15)\) worked 1-10 hours a week, 14% \((n = 12)\) worked 11-15 hours per week, 14% \((n = 12)\) worked 16-24 hours per week, 5.8% \((n = 5)\) worked 25-30 hours per week, 4.7% \((n = 5)\) worked 31-40 hours per week and 10.5% \((n = 9)\) worked 40 or more hours per week.

When asked about the area where participants grew up, 54% \((n = 46)\) reported they lived on a farm/ranch/dairy, 54.7% \((n = 47)\) reported a rural area, 11.6% \((n = 10)\) were in a suburban (area with subdivisions, stoplights, lots of stores), while 3.5% \((n = 3)\) reported living in an urban (area with little open space except for parks and shopping malls, is one of most populated areas of the state).

Class standing of participants reported 20% \((n = 18)\) as Freshman, 23.3% \((n = 20)\) as Sophomore, 31.4% \((n = 27)\) as Juniors, 23.3% \((n = 20)\) as Seniors, and 1.2% \((n = 1)\) as Graduate Level.

When asked if participants had relatives who were members of the National FFA, 67.4% \((n = 58)\) answered Yes and 32.6% \((n = 29)\) reported No. Of those who had relatives who were members of the National FFA in some capacity, 23.1% \((n = 12)\) selected Mother, 53.8% \((n = 28)\) selected Father, 65.4% \((n = 34)\) selected a Sibling, 40.4% \((n = 21)\) selected a Grandparent, 48.1% \((n = 25)\) selected an Uncle or Aunt, and 48.1% \((n = 25)\) selected Cousin.

Regarding the college that the participants’ major is housed within, 1.1% \((n = 1)\) of respondents Business college, 3.3% \((n = 3)\) reported Arts & Science college, 4.4% \((n = 4)\) reported Education, 1.1% \((n = 1)\) reported Engineering,
2.2% (n = 2) reported Health, and 88.9% (n = 80) stated their major was housed in an Agricultural college (see Table 15).

Table 15

*College Where Participant’s Major is Housed (n = 87)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Arts &amp; Sciences</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
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</tbody>
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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents an overview of the study, including the purpose and research objectives, a summary of the findings for each of the research objectives and conclusions based on the findings and existing literature. Finally, recommendations for further research are offered.

The purpose of the study was to identify factors that influence a student’s decision to join Collegiate FFA. This study was done using a sample population internet based survey.

Objectives

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, research was guided by the following objectives:

1. Identify students’ prior involvement with the FFA Organization (middle school, high school, or collegiate involvement; participation in SAEs, involvement in CDEs, years of membership, leadership events attended, degrees awarded, and offices held).

2. Identify students’ knowledge about Collegiate FFA on their campus (how participants learned about Collegiate FFA, length of time attending the university before joining, and if the Collegiate FFA is housed in the same department or college of the participant’s major).
3. Identify factors that influence students’ attraction to Collegiate FFA (academics, life skills, internship opportunities, agriculture teacher, networking possibilities, leadership office, previous involvement in FFA, professional development opportunities, requirement in a course, resume builder, retention at university, scholarship possibilities, service, social gatherings, help in finding a career, travel opportunities, university professors or lecturers, working with FFA chapters, or friendships with other members).

4. Determine factors that influence student membership in Collegiate FFA (academics, life skills, internship opportunities, agriculture teacher, networking possibilities, leadership office, previous involvement in FFA, professional development opportunities, requirement in a course, resume builder, retention at university, scholarship possibilities, service, social gatherings, help in finding a career, travel opportunities, university professors or lecturers, working with FFA chapters, or friendships with other members).

5. Describe extracurricular campus involvement of Collegiate FFA members (number of organizations outside the Collegiate FFA in which the participant holds membership, leadership roles within the university, and organizations outside the university in which the participant holds membership or leadership roles).
Prior involvement with the FFA

Of the 90 participants attending Intermountain West universities, the majority held FFA membership while in high school, were FFA members for six years, obtained their State FFA Degree, had a Supervised Agricultural Experience, were involved in five or more Career Development Events, attended State FFA Convention, and held an elected office of Vice President. Other options that were selected frequently by participants included membership at five years, obtaining the American FFA Degree, attending Chapter Leadership Retreats/Conferences and National FFA Convention, and holding the President and Secretary office.

Collegiate FFA members were more likely to be involved in FFA while they were in High School than middle school programs. Collegiate FFA should focus more on recruiting from high school programs since they are the major contributors to future members. National and state staff should develop resources to help reach out to high school programs to prepare students to join Collegiate FFA upon graduation since the majority of Collegiate FFA members were once involved in the high school affiliates.

Those who were members in the FFA for five or more years were more likely to join Collegiate FFA. Previous involvement with the FFA Organization serves as a major factor in their decision to join Collegiate FFA. Those participants that had achieved the State and American FFA degree were much more likely to join Collegiate FFA than those that received lower chapter level
degrees. State and National staff should focus their attention on reaching out to State Degree recipients and encourage them to join Collegiate FFA. It may even beneficial for Collegiate FFA recruiters to attend the above named ceremonies and speak directly with degree recipients about continuing on in their success by joining Collegiate FFA. The number of participants who were active in their Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE) and Career Development Events (CDE) suggest that those members were very active while in FFA. Those who continue to Collegiate FFA were involved with the FFA in SAEs, CDEs, leadership offices, leadership conferences, and their degree programs. This can be interpreted that members were active in all areas of the FFA program. They worked on FFA inside and outside of the classroom to better themselves and their communities. These members were in attendance at State and National conventions more than any other conference. Should Collegiate FFA primarily recruit from these venues? Does attendance at these conferences play a major role in the decision to join Collegiate FFA? Since a major factor identified was that members joined because of friends or acquaintances, is it at these conferences that these friendships are formed?

The majority of Collegiate FFA members, who responded to this study, have been elected to some leadership office within the National FFA organization at one time or another. The majority of these offices were held at the chapter level. Should recruitment be done at the chapter level since most of those in Collegiate FFA membership have served in that capacity? Should Collegiate FFA
members start leadership training events for local high school chapters? It is suggested that Collegiate FFA should not play an agricultural education club role, however, is there a more distinct purpose for Collegiate FFA members to serve in the local chapter level (Tarpley, 2001)?

Knowledge of the Collegiate FFA Organization on Campus

Students’ were asked questions regarding their knowledge about Collegiate FFA on their campus and their experiences. The majority of the participants responded that they learned about the Collegiate FFA on their campus from a Friend/Acquaintance, heard about it Before First Semester, and stated Collegiate FFA was housed within their major’s department. Other responses that were significant included learning about Collegiate FFA from a High School FFA Advisor, In Class Announcement and Information Booth. The second most answered question regarding when participants heard about Collegiate FFA on their campus included the First Semester. When asked how Collegiate FFA members first heard about the organization, the majority of respondents indicated a friend/acquaintance.

The National FFA is a student led organization so it should come as no surprise that future members heard about Collegiate FFA from a friend/acquaintance. It would be interesting to find out who these friends/acquaintances are since the study does not ask any further questions. Are these student peers or current Collegiate FFA members? Since the majority of
Collegiate FFA members heard about the organization before or during the first semester of attendance at their university, it would be interesting to learn in a future study that these friends/acquaintances are and how they are influencing membership. Although the FFA Advisor is not the top factor for how the student learned about Collegiate FFA, it is interesting to note that over 32% of respondents heard about the organization from this source. Since the majority of Collegiate FFA members hear about the organization before and during the first semester of their university attendance, it would be beneficial to the National FFA organization to invest in recruiting high school advisors to advance Collegiate FFA membership.

Does the location of Collegiate FFA organization within the department or college of the university play an influence in the decision to join? Although the study did not specifically ask which college Collegiate FFA was housed in, one can deduce that is most likely in a College of Agriculture since respondents reported that 84% of them were housed in the same college as their major and 88% of the respondents are students within the College of Agriculture. The majority of respondents selected that the department their major was held within was also the department where Collegiate FFA was housed. It would be beneficial to ask respondents which major they hold and exactly where Collegiate FFA is housed within the university. Since most of Collegiate FFA members are being recruited by friends and acquaintances, and most of the respondents are a College of Agriculture major, does the respondents’ major play a larger role in
their decision to join Collegiate FFA? The National FFA is an agriculturally 
student focused group, however, many members do not continue in an agricultural 
related major after high school. Could this be a factor in their decision not to join 
Collegiate FFA? If the National FFA would like to increase the membership 
numbers, it is suggested that they initiate more Collegiate chapters at more 
universities in addition to creating a broad based purpose for students involved in 
Collegiate FFA. In the Intermountain West, Collegiate FFA chapters are located 
at Land Grant Universities as this is typically where agriculture majors are 
located. Because of FFA’s diverse student career choices, it may be beneficial to 
start chapters in universities that are not specifically designated as a Land Grant 
University. Further, it is vital for National Collegiate FFA to provide leadership 
to the chapters across the country and develop the program for former students to 
continue to support and be involved in the FFA.

Interest in the Collegiate FFA Organization

Students identified the factors they perceived to have influenced their 
decisions to join Collegiate FFA. A 5-point Likert scale comprised of 1 = 
*strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neither disagree nor agree*, 4 = *agree* and 5 = 
*strongly agree* was used to measure the data. The majority of participants 
responded that they strongly agreed in every statement given to them in the 
questionnaire. The statements that received the highest response rates included “I
would recommend High School students join the FFA”, “FFA was interesting”, “FFA was exciting”, and “FFA helped prepare me for my future”.

**Factors that influence students to join the Collegiate FFA**

Regarding influences that played a part in the decision making process of participants to join Collegiate FFA, questions relating to the extent of which respondents agreed or disagreed with various statements. No factor scored in the 4.6-5.0 Mean Score range. Development of Life Skills, middle or High School Agricultural Teacher, Networking Possibilities, Possibility of Leadership Office, Service Opportunities, Social Gatherings, Required Joining, Your Friends were Members, Scholarship Possibilities, Opportunity to be Involved on Campus, and Working with High School FFA Chapters scored a Mean in the range of 3.6-4.5. Academics, Internship Opportunities, Resume Builder, Retention at University, Help Finding a Career, Travel Opportunities, University Professor or Lecturers, and scored a Mean in the range of 2.6-3.5. Professional Development Opportunities was the only factor that scored a Mean Score in the 1.6 - 2.5 range. Finally, there were no factors that scored in the 0-1.5 range.

When presented with the same factors, but then asked to check the three most influential on their personal decision to join Collegiate FFA; student responses were measured by frequency and percentages. The biggest influence, with 77% (n = 67) of the population choosing it, was Previous Involvement with FFA. Working with High School FFA Chapters was the next largest chosen
influence with 33.3% \((n = 29)\) of the population choosing it. The third largest was the Development of Life Skills with 29.9% \((n = 26)\) of the population choosing the factor. Other factors receiving more than 20% of the population choice were Your Friends were Members with 25.3% \((n = 22)\), Networking Possibilities with 23% \((n = 20)\), Opportunity to be Involved on Campus with 21.8% \((n = 19)\), Scholarship Opportunities with 21.8% \((n = 19)\), and Professional Development Opportunities with 20.7% \((n = 18)\) of the time. Factors that received between 10 and 19.5% of the vote included Service Opportunities with 19.5%, Social Gatherings with 16.1%, Resume Builder with 14.9%, Possibility of Leadership Office with 12.6%, Middle or High School Agriculture Teacher with 11.5%, and To Help Find a Career with 11.5%. The factors that only received zero to nine percent of the vote included Travel Opportunities with 9.2%, University Professors or Lecturers with 6.9%, Academics with 5.7%, Internship Opportunities with 5.7%, Required to Join with 4.6%, Other with 1.1%, and Retention at University with no selection.

The majority of participants responded that “Previous Involvement with FFA” was Very Important to them. This selection was much higher than any other response and was clearly the most important factor with respondents’ decisions to join Collegiate FFA. Students were given a set of statements and were then asked to give their attitudes towards them. In every statement, the Strongly Agree response was the most selected. All the statements were very positive towards FFA. The statement that received the highest agreement was “I
would recommend High School students join the FFA” with 92% stating *Strongly Agree*. Participants had a positive outlook towards their FFA experience; is this why they would recommend that others join? Those who join Collegiate FFA are genuinely impressed with their previous experience and see the benefits of the organization. Do students who do not join Collegiate FFA have a different outlook on FFA? If students are not impressed with their FFA experience, are they less willing to enroll in Collegiate FFA programs?

Collegiate FFA members most likely have a positive outlook on the FFA organization because of their involvement. If they participated in events, held chapter offices, and attended leadership conferences; they invested a lot of time and energy into the program. They understand and appreciate the benefits that the organization has to offer. These students more than likely have received some award or scholarship and are staying involved as much as possible. This also corresponds with the response that participants gave about their influence to join Collegiate FFA and their prior involvement with the FFA. Over 77% reported that their prior involvement was the largest factor as to why they joined Collegiate FFA.

**Factors that Influence Students’ to Join the Collegiate FFA**

Previous involvement with FFA is the most influential reason as to why participants joined Collegiate FFA (77%). The next biggest influence was the Development of Life Skills with almost 30% followed by Networking capabilities
of 23%. It is apparent that previous involvement plays a major role in students’
decisions to join Collegiate FFA. If students have a good experience from their
involvement while in middle or high school, they are more likely to join
Collegiate FFA. It should be noted by Collegiate FFA organizational members,
National FFA staff, and local FFA Advisors that students’ involvement in their
organization corresponds with their post high school involvement. Students are
able to experience the benefits of life skills and most likely join Collegiate FFA
thinking that they will develop more of those skills. These respondents identify
the networking capabilities that are available to them and that also plays a part in
their decision to join. Since 90% of the respondents have grown up in a rural or
farm/ranch/dairy setting, their networking is a priority since they do not live in a
densely populated area.

The National FFA and FFA Advisors should take advantage of these
factors and recruit heavily from students who are heavily involved in the high
school FFA organization. Since most respondents stated they had held a chapter
leadership office and had attended a leadership conference, these are the areas that
should be focused on to recruit. These members know they have gained skills,
have networked with others from across the state, and see the potential for their
future betterment. Someone (a friend/acquaintance) told them about Collegiate
FFA and they decided to join. It seems that the local grass root efforts are the
most important in reaching these future members.
Involvement in Other Organizations

Regarding student involvement with organizations on and off of campus, responses were measured under each question using frequency and percentages of the question subsets for Objective Five.

Participants responded the most frequently that they held membership in two organizations outside of Collegiate FFA on campus. The number of leadership positions held by participants on campus that was selected most frequently was none. When asked how many organization outside the university that participants held membership in, the most selected answer was one organization. The majority of respondents did not hold leadership positions in the organizations outside of campus. Students, who were involved in two organizations on campus, but outside of Collegiate FFA, reported the highest percentage of student involvement with 32.6%. Those involved in one organization (22%) were the next highest followed by three organizations (15%). Of these organizations, 43% of students reported they had no leadership position. The percentage of students involved in leadership positions went down with the more leadership positions held. It is interesting to note that only 10% of Collegiate FFA members do not hold membership in another university organization. Students who are joining Collegiate FFA apparently see the importance of university involvement and are taking advantage of many of the opportunities available to them (Astin & Sax, 1998). It would be beneficial to
determine if these other organizations are professional, academic, or social. Do students join these other organizations after joining Collegiate FFA? Do these students feel they can be leaders of other organizations because of the skills they have developed in FFA (Park & Dyer, 2005)?

Organizational membership held outside the university reported only 26.7% of participants not joining. The majority of respondents (38%) reported being involved in one organization. The remaining respondents reported gradually lower levels of involvement with the more organizations they held membership in until they reached six organizations of membership. There were a few participants who held membership in six or more outside organizations. Of those, 28% held leadership positions in outside organizations. Nearly 72% of respondents did not hold any positions of leadership. Almost 21% of participants held one position of leadership. Although members are involved in outside organizations, they are not holding leadership positions at the same levels that they are on campus. This may be due to the location of the educational institution and the area where they grew up. Since 90% of students come from rural or farm/ranch/dairy areas, these members are most likely in locations that are larger, due to the university. If participants were not involved in organizations before they left home for college, are they not as likely to find other organizations when they are on campus?
Demographics

Of the 90 participants attending institutions in the Intermountain West, the majority of respondents were white females that were nineteen years old. The majority of respondents were not married and did not have children. Participants primarily did not work but if they did, they worked part time jobs. Farm/Ranch/Dairy and Rural areas categorized the locations where respondents primarily were raised. Respondents’ class standing was spread out across freshman, sophomores, and seniors. However, the junior class standing was slightly reported more than any other. The College of Agriculture was the most selected college where participants’ major was housed. The majority of respondents had relatives that were members of the National FFA. These relatives were primarily Siblings and Fathers, however, Uncle or Aunt and Cousin were also selected closely behind Sibling and Father. With almost 44% of the population participating in this study, it is generalized that Collegiate FFA members are interested in the factors that influence members to join Collegiate FFA.

It is interesting to note that there was a difference in female versus male respondents. Were the respondents more likely to complete the study based on gender? Because of the study’s participant security, the gender of participants was not known except for those who completed the survey. The National FFA organization has more males who hold membership (54%). Within the study,
respondents were mostly female (60%). Can this be generalized to the entire Collegiate FFA population? Is there a specific reason there are more Collegiate FFA members who are female? Will there be a need to recruit more male Collegiate FFA members and change recruitment strategies? Educators, National FFA staff, and Collegiate FFA programs need to be aware of these factors so they can in turn create programs specifically designed for both males and females.

Almost 98% of the respondents reported their ethnicity was white. Is this because of the geographic location of the study? This cannot be generalized to the entire population of Collegiate FFA members since the National FFA reports much lower percentages of white students at 76% (National FFA Organization, 2012). Regarding class standing, only one percent of respondents reported that their class standing was in the graduate level. The remainder of participants varied equally between freshman and seniors at the university level.

In regards to marital status, almost 92% reported they were single. This might suggest that those who are not married have more time to invest in student organizations. Almost 99% of respondents stated they did not have any children. This is another area in a member’s life that would take more time than those who had no children. Nearly 34% of respondents reported that they did not work while 45% reported they worked less than 24 hours in a week. This means only 20% of participants work more than 25 hours in a week. This data might suggest there is a relationship with time available for students in the week and their membership levels. It should be noted that the age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 29
with the majority being under 23 years of age. Since many of these students are young, they are not married and have no children. Their responsibility requirements are much different than those who are married, have children, and are working more than 25 hours in a week.

It is interesting to note that almost 90% of participants stated they grew up in a farm/ranch/dairy or rural area. This data is much different than the National FFA’s statistics that 70% live in those farm/ranch/dairy or rural areas (National FFA Organization, 2012). Does this suggest that Collegiate FFA members are predestined to end up in Collegiate FFA depending on the area in which they grew up? What is the reason more suburban or urban members are not joining Collegiate FFA? This factor would benefit, once again, from the students’ major being identified. The students’ majors were mainly housed within the College of Agriculture (88%). This data suggests that members are more willing to join Collegiate FFA because their major is housed within the same college as the organization.

Over 60% reported they had some family member who was also an FFA member at one time. Of those respondents who did have family members as FFA members, the majority reported a sibling as the family member (65%). It is interesting to note that less than 24% of FFA family members were their mothers. Does this relate to the fact that women were not allowed membership into the FFA until 1969 (National FFA Organization, 2012). Would these family members count as friends/acquaintances in the study when it inquired about who
they heard about Collegiate FFA? It would be interesting to find out if the majority of Collegiate FFA members have, or did have, a family member who was also involved in Collegiate FFA and gave them information about it.

This study has identified factors that influence students’ choice to join Collegiate FFA. The National FFA Organization and Collegiate FFA chapters across the country should identify the variety of factors that influence students’ choice to join the Collegiate FFA and use them to recruit future members. This will assist in increasing membership numbers thus allowing more students the opportunity for students involved to develop lifelong leadership skills and network with others.
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APPENDICES
Appendix A Initial Email Correspondence to University Faculty
Collegiate FFA Research - Participant Information

Sara Vandenbos  sara.vandenbos@usu.edu


Mar 26  

Hi! 

Thank you for showing interest in having your Collegiate FFA members participate in my graduate research. I have received IRB approval and am attaching the documentation to this email for your use. 

I am hoping to have students complete this survey before the end of the semester so I would appreciate your help collecting the members’ names and emails. If you could send me a file with their name and corresponding email, I am going to in turn send out an email asking them to participate in the survey. Inside the email is a link to complete the survey using SurveyMonkey. The survey will last approximately five minutes and meets IRB specifications. If you could have their information to me before April 2 it would be much appreciated. 

Once again, thank you so much for helping with my graduate research. I hope the results can be of some use for Collegiate FFA programs across the country.

Please let me know what questions you have! 

-- 

Sara Vandenbos  
USU Graduate Student

"If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people."

3 attachments — Download all attachments

- Approval.pdf  79K  View  Download
- IRB Informed Consent.doc  85K  View  Download
- Signed Last Page IRB Consent Letter.pdf  31K  View  Download
Appendix B Institutional Review Board Letter of Information
LETTER OF INFORMATION

Factors Influencing Students' Decisions to Join the Collegiate FFA

Introduction/Purpose Dr. Rebecca Lawver and Graduate Student Sara Vandenbos, in the Department of Agricultural Systems Technology at Utah State University, are conducting a research study to find out more about influences that effect student decisions to join the Collegiate FFA. You have been asked to take part because you have been identified as a member of a Collegiate FFA Organization in the Western Region. There will be approximately 57 participants at this site. There will be approximately 400 total participants in this research study spanning seven universities.

Procedures If you agree to be in this research study, the following will happen to you.

In the next few days, you will be receiving an email for a study entitled Factors Influencing Students’ Decisions to Join the Collegiate FFA. This is your official invitation to participate in this study.

You will receive a link to an online questionnaire that needs to be completed within the specific time frame listed. This will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Risks Participation in this research study may involve some added risks or discomforts. This includes a risk that outsiders may view your screen while you are completing your survey online. There is also a small risk of loss of confidentiality but we will take steps to reduce that risk as described below.

Benefits There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from participating in this study. The investigator, however, may learn more about factors that influence students’ decisions to join the Collegiate FFA. This in turn will be a benefit to Collegiate FFA organizations throughout the country as they recruit new members.

Explanation & offer to answer questions Through this letter, Dr. Becki Lawver and Sara Vandenbos have explained this research study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may reach Dr. Rebecca Lawver at (435) 797-1254 or Rebecca.lawver@usu.edu and Sara Vandenbos at (208) 697-8551 or sara.vandenbos@usu.edu.

Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw without consequence Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. All information will be stored in a secure database accessible only by Sara Vandenbos, and Dr. Rebecca Lawver. No other individuals will have access to the data. Responses to questionnaires not be linked to your personal identifying information. Additionally, because IP addresses will be invisible, it will be impossible to identify a participant’s computer. If the results of this study are published, no names will be used that will reveal the identity of the participants.

V7 06/15/2011
LETTER OF INFORMATION
Factors Influencing Students’ Decisions to Join the Collegiate FFA

IRB Approval Statement The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human participants at Utah State University has approved this research study. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights or a research-related injury and would like to contact someone other than the research team, you may contact the IRB Administrator at (435) 797-0567 or email irb@usu.edu to obtain information or to offer input.

Investigator Statement I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. Any questions that have been raised have been answered.”

Signatures of Researchers

Dr. Rebecca G. Lawver
Principal Investigator
435-797-1254
Rebecca.lawver@usu.edu

Sara N. Vandenbos
Student Researcher
208-697-8551
sara.vandenbos@usu.edu
Appendix C Email Correspondence to Participants
Sara Vandenbos saravbos@gmail.com

Hello Collegiate FFA Member:

If you have already completed the Collegiate FFA survey online, I would like to thank you for your participation. By taking five minutes out of your hectic schedule to answer these questions, you are aiding in improving Collegiate FFA programs. Again, thank you.

If you have yet to complete the survey, I encourage you to do so soon. You are being asked to complete this short anonymous online survey, which takes about five minutes, in order to help improve Collegiate FFA programs across the country. Along with aiding in my graduate level research, this data will be shared with the National FFA organization for future program planning.

Please use the link provided which will open up the survey in a new window and complete the survey no later than 4 May 2012.

Complete Collegiate FFA Survey here:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KF9SGRW

Thank you for your participation!

Sara Vandenbos
Graduate Student
Utah State University

"If you are planning for a year, sow rice;
if you are planning for a decade, plant trees;
if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people."
Hello Colleague FFA Member:

If you have already completed the Collegiate FFA survey online, I would like to thank you for your participation. By taking five minutes out of your hectic schedule to answer these questions, you are aiding in improving Collegiate FFA programs. Again, thank you.

If you have yet to complete the survey, I encourage you to do so soon. You are being asked to complete this short anonymous online survey, which takes about five minutes, in order to help improve Collegiate FFA programs across the country. Along with aiding in my graduate level research, this data will be shared with the National FFA organization for future program planning.

Please use the link provided which will open up the survey in a new window and complete the survey no later than Friday 4 May 2012.

**Complete Collegiate FFA Survey here:**
[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XF9SGRW](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XF9SGRW)

Thank you for your participation!

---

Sara Vandenbos  
Graduate Student  
Utah State University

"If you are planning for a year, sow rice;  
If you are planning for a decade, plant trees;  
If you are planning for a lifetime, educate people."
Collegiate FFA Survey Ends Today!

Sara Vandenbos saravbos@gmail.com

to bcc: a.a.lupra, bcc: alysssa.cham, bcc: amy.prechter, bcc: annie.dundon, bcc: aoi3136, bcc: 

Hello Collegiate FFA Member:

If you have already completed the Collegiate FFA survey online, I would like to thank you for your participation. By taking five minutes out of your hectic schedule to answer these questions, you are aiding in improving Collegiate FFA programs. Again, thank you.

If you have yet to complete the survey, I encourage you to do so soon. You are being asked to complete this short anonymous online survey, which takes about five minutes, in order to help improve Collegiate FFA programs across the country. Along with aiding in my graduate level research, this data will be shared with the National FFA organization for future program planning.

Please use the link provided which will open up the survey in a new window and complete the survey no later TODAY Friday 4 May 2012.

Complete Collegiate FFA Survey here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KF9SGRW

Thank you for your participation!

...-

Sara Vandenbos
Graduate Student
Utah State University

"If you are planning for a year, sow rice;
if you are planning for a decade, plant trees;
if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people."
Appendix D Institutional Review Board Approval Letter
Institutional Review Board

USU Assurance: FWA#00003308

Exemption #2

Certificate of Exemption

FROM: Richard D. Gordin, Acting IRB Chair
True M. Rubal, IRB Administrator

To: Rebecca Lawver, Sara Vandenbos
Date: March 20, 2012
Protocol #: 4253
Title: Factors Influencing Decisions To Join The Collegiate Fn

The Institutional Review Board has determined that the above-referenced study is exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2:

Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through the identifiers linked to the subjects: and (b) any disclosure of human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

This exemption is valid for three years from the date of this correspondence, after which the study will be closed. If the research will extend beyond three years, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to notify the IRB before the study’s expiration date and submit a new application to continue the research. Research activities that continue beyond the expiration date without new certification of exempt status will be in violation of those federal guidelines which permit the exempt status.

As part of the IRB’s quality assurance procedures, this research may be randomly selected for continuing review during the three year period of exemption. If so, you will receive a request for completion of a Protocol Status Report during the month of the anniversary date of this certification.

In all cases, it is your responsibility to notify the IRB prior to making any changes to the study by submitting an Amendment/Modification request. This will document whether or not the study still meets the requirements for exempt status under federal regulations.

Upon receipt of this memo, you may begin your research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at (435) 797-1821 or email to irb@usu.edu

The IRB wishes you success with your research.

4460 Old Main Hill Logan, UT 84322-4460 PH: (435) 797-1821 Fax: (435) 797-3769 WEB: irb.usu.edu EMAIL: irb@usu.edu
Appendix E Survey Instrument
Thank you for taking five minutes out of your day to complete a survey about your Collegiate FFA involvement. This survey has approximately thirty questions.

The purpose of the study is to identify factors that influence students' decision to join the Collegiate FFA.

Objectives of this study are to:
1. Identify students' prior involvement with the FFA Organization.
2. Identify students' knowledge about the Collegiate FFA organization on their campus.
3. Identify students' interest in the Collegiate FFA organization.
4. Determine influences for students' to join Collegiate FFA.
5. Describe involvement by Collegiate FFA members in leadership, college major and service activities.

If at anytime you have questions or concerns regarding this survey, please contact Sara Vandenbos at sara.vandenbos@usu.edu or 208-697-8551.

Once again, thank you for your time in helping further the National FFA Organization's Collegiate FFA.
Factors Influencing Collegiate FFA Membership Decisions

2. Involvement with the FFA as a Middle or High School Member

These questions relate to your experience in the National FFA Organization while still in Middle or High School. The objective it meets is to identify students’ prior involvement with the National FFA Organization.

1. When were you a FFA member? Please check all that apply.
   - Middle School
   - High School
   - College

2. How long were you an FFA Member?
   - 1 Year
   - 2 Years
   - 3 Years
   - 4 Years
   - 5 Years
   - 6 Years
   - 7 Years
   - 8 or more Years

3. What was the highest FFA Degree you obtained?
   - Discovery Degree
   - Greenhand FFA Degree
   - Chapter FFA Degree
   - State FFA Degree
   - American FFA Degree

4. Did you have a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE)?
   - Yes
   - No

5. How many Career Development Events (CDE) did you participate in?
   - None
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5 or more
Factors Influencing Collegiate FFA Membership Decisions

3. Involvement with the FFA as a Middle or High School Member

These questions relate to your experience in the National FFA Organization in Middle or High School. The objective is to identify students' prior involvement with the National FFA Organization.

6. Which of the following leadership conferences did you attend? Please specify all that apply.

- [ ] None
- [ ] Chapter Leadership Retreat/Conference
- [ ] District Leadership Retreat
- [ ] State Leadership Conference
- [ ] State FFA Convention
- [ ] National FFA Convention
- [ ] 212 Degrees
- [ ] 360 Degrees
- [ ] Washington Leadership Conference (WLC)
- [ ] Building Leaders and Strong Teams of Officers (BLAST OFF)
- [ ] Made For Excellence (MFE)
- [ ] New Century Farmer
- [ ] National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO)
- [ ] State Presidents' Conference (SPC)
- [ ] Other (please specify):

7. Were you elected to a local, state, and/or national leadership office in the FFA?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
### 8. Which office(s) did you hold as a FFA Member?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Chapter Level</th>
<th>District Level</th>
<th>Area Level</th>
<th>State Level</th>
<th>National Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
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<td>Reporter</td>
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<td>Sentinel</td>
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<td>Historian</td>
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<td>Parliamentarian</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 6. Prior Involvement with Middle and High School FFA Programs

These questions relate to your experience in the National FFA Organization in Middle or High School. The objective is to identify students’ prior involvement with the National FFA Organization.

9. Read the following statements regarding your attitude towards your FFA Program, then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

- FFA was interesting
- FFA was exciting
- FFA helped prepare me for my future
- FFA was challenging
- I would recommend Middle School students join the FFA
- I would recommend High School students join the FFA
- I participated as much as I could in my FFA program
6. Knowledge of Collegiate FFA on the University Campus

Please indicate how you gained knowledge of the Collegiate FFA chapter that resides on your University's campus.

10. How did you learn about your Collegiate FFA?
- [ ] FFA Website
- [ ] Friend/Contact
- [ ] High School FFA Advisor
- [ ] In-Class Announcement
- [ ] Information Booth
- [ ] Social Media
- [ ] Other (please specify) ____________

11. How long were you attending your University before you heard about the Collegiate FFA?
- [ ] Before First Semester
- [ ] First Semester
- [ ] Second Semester
- [ ] Third Semester
- [ ] Fourth Semester
- [ ] Fifth Semester
- [ ] Sixth or more semesters
- [ ] Other (please specify) ____________

12. Is the Collegiate FFA housed in the same college as your major?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

13. Is the Collegiate FFA housed in the same department as your major?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
### Factors Influencing Collegiate FFA Membership Decisions

**7. Influences to Join the Collegiate FFA**

These questions will help determine the influence on students to join the Collegiate FFA.

**14. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each influence on your decision to join the Collegiate FFA.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Little Importance</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of Life Skills: Planning, Organizing, Decision Making, Managing, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internship Opportunities</td>
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<td>Middle or High School Agriculture Teacher</td>
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<td>Networking Possibilities</td>
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<td>Opportunity to be Involved on Campus</td>
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<td>Possibility of Leadership Office</td>
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<td>Previous Involvement with FFA</td>
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<td>Professional Development Opportunities</td>
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<td>Required to Join</td>
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<td>Resume Builder</td>
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<td>Retention at University</td>
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<td>Scholarship Possibilities</td>
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<td>Service Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Gatherings</td>
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<tr>
<td>To Help Find a Career</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>University Professors or Lecturers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with High School FFA Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your Friends Were Members</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
16. What were the three biggest influences on you to join the Collegiate FFA?

- Academics
- Development of Life Skills (i.e. Planning, Organizing, Decision Making, Managing, etc.)
- Internship Opportunities
- Middle or High School Agriculture Teacher
- Networking Possibilities
  - Opportunity to be involved on campus
  - Possibility of Leadership Office
  - Previous involvement with FFA
  - Professional Development Opportunities
  - Required to join
  - Resume Builder
  - Retention at University
  - Scholarship Possibilities
  - Service Opportunities
  - Social Gatherings
  - To help find a career
  - Travel Opportunities
  - University Professors or Lecturers
  - Working with High School FFA Chapters
  - Your Friends Were Members

Other (please specify):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors Influencing Collegiate FFA Membership Decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Involvement in Other Student Organizations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The following questions will be used to assess the involvement of Collegiate FFA Students in other organizations besides the Collegiate FFA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16. How many organizations, outside of the Collegiate FFA, do you hold membership in?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- None</td>
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<tr>
<td>- One</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Two</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Three</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Four</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Five</td>
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<tr>
<td>- More than Six</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>17. How many positions of leadership, beside those in the Collegiate FFA, do you hold in the organizations on campus?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- None</td>
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<tr>
<td>- One</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Two</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Three</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Four</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Five</td>
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<tr>
<td>- More than Five</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>18. How many organizations outside the university do you hold membership in?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- None</td>
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<tr>
<td>- One</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Two</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Three</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Four</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Five</td>
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<tr>
<td>- More than Six</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>19. How many positions of leadership do you hold in organizations outside of the university?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- None</td>
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<tr>
<td>- One</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Two</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Three</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Four</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Five or More</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next
Factors Influencing Collegiate FFA Membership Decisions

9. Demographic Information

This data is kept confidential and is for research/demographic purposes only.

20. Are you male or female?
   - Female
   - Male

21. Are you White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or other?
   - American Indian or Alaskan Native
   - Asian
   - Black or African-American
   - From multiple races
   - Hispanic
   - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   - White
   - Other (please specify):

22. In what year were you born? (enter 4-digit birth year; for example, 1976)

23. Are you married?
   - No
   - Yes

24. How many children do you have?
   - None
   - One
   - Two
   - Three
   - Four or more
Factors Influencing Collegiate FFA Membership Decisions

25. How many hours do you work in an average work week?
   - I do not work
   - 1-10
   - 11-15
   - 16-24
   - 25-50
   - 51-60
   - 60 or more

20. Which of the following characterizes where you grew up?
   - Farm/Ranch/ Dairy
   - Rural
   - Suburban (area with subdivisions, straight, lots of stores)
   - Urban (area with lots of open space except for parks, shopping malls, is zone populated areas of the state)

27. What is your class standing?
   - Freshman
   - Sophomore
   - Junior
   - Senior
   - Graduate Level

26. Which college is your major housed in?

26. Do you have any relatives who were members of the National FFA?
   - Yes
   - No

30. Which relatives were members of the National FFA? Select all that apply.
   - Mother
   - Father
   - Brother
   - Grandparent
   - Uncle or Aunt
   - Cousin
   - Other (please specify)

Factors Influencing Collegiate FFA Membership Decisions

11. Completion of Survey

Thank you for taking time out of your schedule to complete this survey!

Please let me know what questions or concerns you have in regards to this survey, or if you would like additional information including the results of the study.

Sara Vandenbos
sara.vandenbos@usu.edu