



Aggie Next Step Career Exploration Academy

2022

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4-H and Youth Development

SITUATION

Early career exploration in middle and high school is key in reducing dropout rates and increasing college persistence and completion. Research suggests middle and early high school students are prime for developing employability skills and gaining sense of their interests through career exploration. Research also shows students become more motivated and self-directed learners when they understand the relationship between academics, career, and education planning.



NMSU EXTENSION RESPONSE

Recognizing the value of career exploration in middle and high school aged youth, Aggie Next Step Career Exploration Academy (ANS-CEA) focuses on providing a day of career exploration through hands-on activities and interactive presentations. ANS-CEA invites 8th-12th grade youth to NMSU to spend a full day actively exploring career paths. Two ANS-CEA camps were held in 2022. Students were introduced to careers in government; criminal justice; kinesiology; nursing; chemical and materials engineering; range science; media development; soil, plant and environmental sciences; ag business and economics; hospitality; and fashion merchandising and design. Twelve university departments provided 72 hours of experiential learning to 63 youth and nine adults from eight counties.

IMPACT

- **24%** of participants had not previously been on a university campus
- **33%** visited NMSU for the first time during the Career Exploration Academy
- **27%** of participants indicated they would pursue a degree at NMSU prior to attending the academy
- **32%** of participants indicated they would pursue a degree at NMSU after attending the academy
- Over **50%** of "Top 3" career choices prior to attending the Career Exploration Academy changed to favor the presented careers during Career Exploration Academy
- **84%** of students would encourage other students to participate in ANS Career Exploration Academy

"It (NMSU) is a very healthy environment, very friendly and receiving and good programs, campus is amazing."

"I would encourage others because it's a very good thing to see what you like, any interests and to experience how college is."

"This was a very thought-out event. Presenters from different colleges gave out good information. Helped to make you feel comfortable."

DEMOGRAPHICS

Female: 58%

Male: 42%

• Hispanic: 68%

Native American: 1%

White: 31%



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