

IN THIS ISSUE

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Higher education and food systems: A tentative but growing relationship

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Recently I was a guest lecturer on food systems in a new seminar in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University. This was the beginning of the semester and only the second class. The department had never offered a course devoted to food systems before, and it was a bit of an experiment. My assignment as an alum of this department who had a specialty in food systems was to help introduce the topic. I had heard there was a lot of interest across the campus and the class might be a little full, but I was not prepared for the standing-room-only crowd in the classroom. I had to ask students to step aside so I could write on the blackboard.

This had nothing to do with me, of course; the students from both the public and private colleges of Cornell University are part of the enormous wave of interest in the interdisciplinary field of food systems across the country. I should have seen this coming, since my colleague (and JAFSCD advisor) Gil Gillespie, who taught his final *Agriculture, Food, and Society* class in the Department of Development Sociology at Cornell this spring, has been seeing the numbers of students signing up for this course steadily rise over the last five years.

Integrating environmental, social, and economic spheres, food systems has an intrinsic appeal to students, and it offers a powerful lens through which to understand communities, evaluate the human condition, unite behind a common cause — and generally make the world a better place. It is also attractive to a growing cadre of young faculty who are equipped with the art and skill of interdisciplinary work. In this issue we feature a substantial collection of papers highlighting some of the cutting edge work of leading educators and researchers across North America.

The Sustainable Agriculture Education Association (SAEA) was very quick to respond to this call for papers. A group of its members gathered last year to take stock of the state of the art at land-grant universities, and they captured the key themes of this workshop in a set of four papers. In their introductory piece, *Sustainable Agriculture Undergraduate Degree Programs: A Land-Grant University Mission*, **Krista Jacobsen, Kim Niewolny,**

Michelle Schroeder-Moreno, Mark Van Horn, Alison Harmon, Yolanda Chen Fanslow, Mark Williams, and Damian Parr provide an overview to the emergence of sustainable agriculture education and the current opportunities and challenges SA education programs face. In *Sustainable Agriculture Education and Civic Engagement: The Significance of Community-University Partnerships in the New Agricultural Paradigm*, **Kim Niewolny, Julie Grossman, Carmen Byker, Jennifer Helms, Susan Clark, Julie Cotton, and Krista Jacobsen** draw upon five LGU-based SA education programs to highlight civic engagement strategies. Next, **Ryan Galt, Susan Clark, and Damian Parr** encourage new ways of teaching and learning through a values-based curriculum in *Engaging Values in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Education: Toward an Explicitly Values-Based Pedagogical Approach*. Rounding out the SASE collection is *Internationalizing Sustainable Agriculture Education*, in which **Michelle Schroeder-Moreno, Susan Clark, Carmen Byker, and Xin Zhao** explore the benefits and approaches to integrating international learning experiences into SA education.

In *The Learning Gardens Laboratory: Teaching Sustainability and Developing Sustainable Food Systems Through Unique Partnerships*, **Heather Burns and Weston Miller** describe the pedagogical principles of the innovative Learning Gardens Laboratory, a collaboration of two Oregon-based public universities. In their reflective essay *Building a Food Studies Program: On-the-Ground Reflections from Syracuse University*, **Evan Weissman, Leigh Gantner, and Lutchmie Narine** describe their experiences in establishing a food studies program at a leading private university. **Nevin Cohen and Radhika Subramaniam** offer a liberal arts view of integrating food and agriculture into city life in *Living Concrete/Carrot City: An Exhibition Platform as a Growing Medium*. In *Building Sustainable Food Systems in a Single Bottom-Line Context: Lessons from SEED Wayne, Wayne State University*, **Kami Pothukuchi** takes a candid look at the success and challenges of one of the country's most innovative town-gown programs. **Shari Miller, Jung Sun Lee, and David Berle** describe their efforts to develop a service-learning garden program in one of the country's most impoverished counties in *Community Engagement from the Ground Up: An Interdisciplinary Service-Learning After-School Garden Program*. Describing Santa Clara University's forays into experiential learning around food justice programming in communities of color, **Leslie Gray, Joanna Johnson, Nicole Latham, Michelle Tang, and Ann Thomas** describe the Bronco Urban Gardens (BUG) in *Critical Reflections on Experiential Learning for Food Justice*. Our final special topic call paper is *Walking the Talk of Food Systems at a Small Land-Grant University: Overcoming Process Barriers to a Transdisciplinary Approach* by **Jane Kolodinsky, Naomi Fukagawa, Erin Roche, Cynthia Belliveau, and Hayley Johnson**, who describe the experiences of the University of Vermont in taking food systems research and education to the next level.

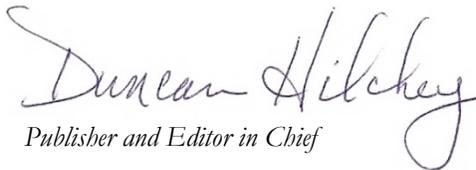
Among our open call papers, **Sarah Martin and Peter Andrée** provide an in-depth look at the evolution of institutional food service and reveal the formidable challenges of supplying local food universities and hospitals in *The "Buy Local" Challenge to Institutional Foodservice Corporations in Historical Context*. In *The Food Policy Audit: A New Tool for Community Food System Planning*, **Jennifer O'Brien and Tanya Denckla Cobb** describe the development and trial of the food policy audit, a tool communities can use of inventory and identify gaps in local food policies. In *Access to Sustainably Produced Food: An Investigation of Organic Food Availability in Manhattan, New York*, **Laura Mirsch and Carolyn Dimitri** explore the availability of sustainably produced food through the use of geographic information systems to examine organic food access among African Americans in this highly stratified urban market.

JAFSCD columnists also addressed food systems and higher education. **John Ikerd** deftly suggests that higher education mimic regenerative living systems whose semipermeable boundaries offer dynamic interaction such as co-learning between student and instructor.

Likewise, **Ken Meter** looks at two contrasting models of knowledge building. One extracts resources from communities. Another, often practiced by extension educators, builds capacity both at the university and in the community by convening people to learn together. And **Joseph McIntyre** recognizes the positive changes taking place in academia but laments its “tight system” — loaded with creativity and talent, but often shackled by rules and protocols that prevent it from engaging in cutting edge “citizen science.”

Finally, **Ken Meter** reviews Michael Shuman’s *Local Dollars, Local Sense: How to Shift Your Money from Wall Street to Main Street and Achieve Real Prosperity*, in-depth stories showing how local investment options have been created over the past 35 years. Examples include Coastal Enterprises in Maine, Boston’s Wainwright Bank (now Eastern Bank), La Montanita Co-op in New Mexico, and the Organic Valley co-op of Wisconsin.

This was a particularly large issue, with 11 papers in response to the special topic call, and I would like to express my deep gratitude to all of our peer reviewers, including a number of ad hoc reviewers called upon to assist in handling the load. Thank you one and all for your contribution to JAFSCD and the growing field of food systems!


Publisher and Editor in Chief