

2019 UBC Food System Project Workshop Summary

Held July 17th, 2019 at Michael Smith Labs 101

“UBC is committed to a just and sustainable food system, inspiring collaborative action in all that we do to catalyze global change.”

2019 Food System Project vision statement (see appendix 1 for changes)

Overview

The [UBC Food System Project \(UBCFSP\)](#) engages students, academics and key food system staff across the Vancouver Campus in applied research and collaborations aimed at increasing the sustainability of UBC’s food system. Initiated in 2001, the UBCFSP is a multi-stakeholder collaboration comprised of stakeholders representing various facets of UBC’s food system. Applying a community-based and systems approach, the UBCFSP works with food system representatives to assess sustainability overall, identify gaps and opportunities, while leveraging the campus as a living laboratory to foster research and actions to accelerate the UBC’s transition towards greater food system sustainability.

Each year, the UBCFSP convenes at a workshop to review the previous year’s priority areas, set new priorities, and engage in collaborative project planning for the following year. This document provides a summary of the 2019 workshop, which saw 31 attendees from across UBC’s departments.

Workshop Objectives

- To agree on a vision of Sustainable and Just Campus Food System
- To convene food system stakeholders to share progress, challenges, emerging priorities and collaborative initiatives
- To identify shared priorities for policy, research, and action
- To create processes and collaborations for achieving the vision and advancing shared priorities

Workshop Format & Activities

Activity 1 - Visioning Session: By imagining what headlines in the *New York Times* might read for a 2030 just and sustainable campus food system, attendees drafted the headlines and came up with three accompanying features. The responses were used to inform a new UBCFSP vision and shared back with the group. The features were used to reframe existing priority areas and identify new ones.

Activity 2 – Action Identification: Using laptops and a shared spreadsheet that all can access, attendees were asked to spend 7 minutes listing all existing activities taken within each priority area. After 7 minutes, attendees rotated to a new priority area, reviewed what is pre-populated, and added any missing ones and were able to work on 2 different priority areas.

Activity 3 – Prioritization and Strategic Planning: Attendees were asked to pick two priority areas and spend 20 minutes at each to complete the rest of the spreadsheet. This included identifying opportunities to enhance for existing initiatives and brainstorming new ideas. For all the initiatives, participants were asked to list key actors and whether it was a short-, medium-, or long-term goal.

If you would like to see what we have come up with during the workshop, please visit:

tiny.cc/ubcfsp

2019-2020 Priority Areas and Summary of Discussion

This year, we identified seven priority areas: Five are carried over from the previous year, and two new priority areas were identified. The below summary details the new ideas, for a complete list please click [here](#).

1 - Climate-Friendly Food Systems

Key ideas include sourcing more seasonally and locally, having more student-led urban gardens and to make more plant-based food and snacks in house. There is a desire to have more labeling on menu and packaging on the carbon and nitrogen emissions of the food product. There is a need to increase awareness, knowledge, and education of the importance and validity of a plant-based sustainable diet.

2 - Zero-Waste and Circular Economy

Among the ongoing zero-waste initiatives and the Zero-waste food ware strategy, attendees highlighted some new ideas. To address food waste, there is a desire to optimize food reclamation, to procure salvaged foods and repurpose them into new meals that are affordable. Other ideas include shifting a to-go culture to a sit-down culture so that people use re-usable cutlery and cups. There is an opportunity for Food System stakeholders to advocate for upstream waste reduction as well, this could look like asking industry partners to employ zero-waste practices for procurement or seeking new partners that align with UBC's sustainability values and support sustainable solutions.

3 and 4 - Systemic Food Security, including Food Knowledge & Skills

Much of the work on food skills and food literacy is led by the Wellness Centre. Other areas of income-based food insecurity work is taken on by UBC's Food and Nutrition working group. Systemically, there is a move for all food providers on campus to have no-cost or low-cost food offerings, ideas range from \$5 entrees/cafes, to leveraging salvaged ingredients for affordable eats. There is an opportunity to expand the foodbank or student-run affordable eats locations to a food hub model that includes grocery operations, bulk purchasing, and continue to offer volunteering opportunities. Food infrastructure was highlighted as another key area: creating more community kitchen spaces that are available to all students beyond Collegia.

5 - Biodiverse Food Systems

There is a desire to create menu development guidelines and garden growing guidelines that prioritize biodiversity and climate impacts at the forefront for a UBC context. For food production, there is a desire to test crops for climate resilient gardens that also promote growth of pollinators. For food biodiversity, there are creative ideas on introducing insect proteins, insectivores, and crop wild relatives into diets. There is also a need to look at the public realm and landscapes to explore opportunities for producing soil sequestration in a closed loop system and producing heathy soils for local use, as well as opportunities for edible landscapes.

6 - Food Justice and Sovereignty

Food justice and sovereignty is a new priority area identified this year. Discussions centred on the social aspect of sustainability. Given the recognition that Canadian food systems and the campus food system is reliant on external systems of food production that may be reliant on migrant labourers subject to suboptimal working conditions, there is both a need and strong desire to further examine UBC's food system procurement pathways and to explore more certifications beyond fair trade, and ocean wise.

Specific ideas look like developing ethical purchasing guidelines for local products to inform UBC's policies and other regional/national policies. There is a strong need to examine indigenous food systems and explore how indigeneity can be prioritized. From an educational perspective, there is a desire to host food justice and food sovereignty events, and to celebrate indigenous food and culture.

7 - Urban Food Production for Community Resilience

There is demand for more urban food gardens, and latent demand for patio food production. Ideas include examining opportunities for green roofs and vertical gardening on patios, roofs, walls, on-campus residential developments. There is a need for a community-based definition and purpose of urban food production, and to further explore ways to maximize garden plots. There is a strong demand to examine the development model and policies on community gardens to proactively support and promote urban food production in new amenities and developments, and to retrofit existing buildings with urban food production spaces.

Next Steps and Additional Resources:

SEEDS Team:

- SEEDS to set up the first sub-group meetings for each of the priority areas to discuss chairs, frequency of meeting, and shortlist priority areas/actions/research that will be circulated to the wider group to determine top priorities for the year.
- To follow up with Food System Project Committee members to plan research projects for 2019-2020, and other workshop outcomes.
- To share resources and opportunities presented at the workshop (please see below).

Food System Project Committee Members:

- Please review the workshop summary and propose any revisions or additions where applicable.
- Please reach out to David Gill (david.gill@ubc.ca) with any project ideas for 2019-2020 academic year. Projects and ideas not identified above are welcomed.

Presentation Information:

- [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT-Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems](#)
 - [Summary Report here.](#)
- [Characterization and Management of Food Loss and Waste](#), Commission for Economic Cooperation (2018): report, and [what Canada is doing about it](#).
- ["Canada to ban harmful single-use plastics and hold companies responsible for plastic waste"](#)
- [Innovation Supercluster – Protein Industries Canada](#)
- [Food as a medium for information, representing local data in food – Data-Cuisine](#)
- City of Vancouver – [Zero Waste 2040](#)

Appendix 1: 2019-2020 Vision Update

The UBC Food System Project's vision and guiding principles were updated in 2013. 2013 version can be found [here](#) and below:

A sustainable food system meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, whereby:

1. Food is produced in a way that upholds the integrity and health of ecosystems (including aquatic ecosystems) and does not disrupt or destroy ecosystems
2. Animals raised for food are treated humanely and are integrated into ecologically friendly farming models
3. Food is locally grown, produced and processed in support of local people, infrastructure and economies
4. Food is culturally and ethnically appropriate, affordable, safe, nutritious and minimally processed
5. Providers and educators promote awareness among consumers about cultivation, processing, ingredients, and nutrition of food products in the food system
6. Food and the food environment enhance community through opportunities for community members to interact and support one another to meet common interests and goals
7. Food is produced in a socially responsible manner, such that providers and growers pay and receive fair prices for their products and have safe and humane working conditions
8. There is zero waste produced by the system, in that waste is reduced to the greatest extent possible and what waste is produced is composted or recycled locally
9. The system is emission and energy neutral
10. On-campus food system actors work toward food sovereignty and agency, within the context of the wider food system
11. On-campus food providers use their influence to transition the wider food system towards sustainability
12. Students, staff, and faculty have access to opportunities to learn about the food system and to gain food production and preparation skills.

Through visioning exercise at the 2019 workshop, and subsequent input, the Vision statement was updated as follows:

1. Vision statement proposed at 2019 workshop, based on visioning exercise:

"UBC embeds food system sustainability in all the work that we do, inspiring and catalyzing local solutions to global imperatives"

2. Updated vision:

"UBC is committed to a just and sustainable food system, inspiring collaborative action in all that we do to catalyze global change"

Feedback received at workshop, and in follow-up comments. While all comments could not be included as originally worded, the vision was updated most notably to include concept of food justice, speak to collaboration, while maintaining high-level tone and global aspiration. The feedback provided was as follows:

- * UBC embeds just food system sustainability...
- * Inclusion of climate change considerations in all policies (mitigation, adaptation, & targets)
- * Localized food production
- * Work on: Operations, research + teaching, infrastructure, buildings, community
- * F+S, students all brought together to work on vision
- * Innovative solutions (not just inspiring)
- * Change "imperatives" to "action"
- * "in all the work that we do" --> could leave out
- * UBC "prioritizes food system sustainability in the work that we do"
- * Local action to catalyze global change
- * food systems and sustainability and FOOD JUSTICE
- * in all that we do" instead of "in all the work that we do"