

UBC Food Systems Project

ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT

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Background

Since 2001, the UBC Food System Project (UBCFSP) has operated as a collaborative, cross-campus initiative that brings together partners in academics, operations, and research to further advance UBC's food sustainability initiatives and food systems. Each year, the UBCFSP convenes at a workshop to review the previous year's Priority Action Areas, set new priorities, and to engage in collaborative project planning for the following year. This report provides a summary of the UBC Food Systems Project in 2016-17, including:

- An overview of the food action priority areas set at the 2016 UBCFSP Workshop
- A summary of SEEDS projects completed in the 2016-17 academic year
- A summary of the 2017 UBC FSP Workshop and food action priority areas for the coming year

Project Goals

The following goals express the long-term and guiding vision for the UBC Food System Project. The goals encompass project values, structural components, and on-going food action commitments. These goals have been identified by the UBC Food Systems Project Committee.

1) To move the UBC campus food system towards sustainability, by:

- Facilitating a shared vision of a sustainable food system among project partners
- Coordinating project partners and other key campus food systems actors in their efforts to improve the campus food system
- Creating Campus as a Living Lab projects as a vehicle to address opportunities to improve the UBC food system

2) To positively impact the movement towards the sustainability of the larger BC, Canadian, North American and global food systems, by:

- Leading as a model for best practices for sustainable food systems
- Using UBC's leverage to influence the supply chain and broader sustainability practices

3) To offer students hands-on learning opportunities in a multi-disciplinary project with potential for positive impact on ecological and human health

UBC Food System Project Partners

- Alma Mater Society
 - AMS Food and Beverage
 - AMS Sustainability
 - AMS Brewery Committee
 - AMS Food Bank
 - AMS Student Services
- Student Housing & Hospitality Services
 - UBC Food Services
 - UBC Child Care services
- University Neighbourhoods Association
- UBC Wellbeing
- UBC Building Operations
 - UBC Waste Management
 - Landscape Design
 - Soft Landscapes
- UBC Botanical Garden
- Campus and Community Planning
 - Community Development
 - Sustainability and Engineering
 - SEEDS Sustainability Program
- Sprouts & Seedlings
- Agora
- University Neighbourhoods Association
- UBC Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at the UBC Farm
- Academic Partners from across campus (including the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, Faculty of Applied Science, and the Sauder School of Business)

2016-17 Food Systems Project Summary

2016-17 Food Action Priority Areas

At the 2016 Food Systems Project Workshop, 9 Food Action Priority Areas were identified:

- Production – Gardens and Farms
- Procurement
- Preparation
- Waste Management and Packaging
- Education, Marketing, and Promotion
- Guidelines, Policy, and Best Practices
- Community and Wellbeing
- Food Security
- Food Trucks

UBCFSP Committee Members have worked individually and collaboratively to make progress on each of these actions areas over the last year. Additionally, a number of student-led research projects were completed in support of these actions through the SEEDS Sustainability Program. These projects have been summarized below.

This year, the UBCFSP engaged over 200 participants including 15 faculty members, 29 staff, and 165 students across campus through 41 SEEDS projects.

Notable highlights from this year include:

- The implementation of Agronomy Garden, a new student-run garden at Agronomy and Main Mall
- The establishment of a food recovery partnership between UBC Food Services and the AMS Foodbank to increase food security while decreasing food waste on campus
- The formation of a partnership between the SEEDS Sustainability Program and Real Food Challenge Canada
- The development of the UBC Food Service Ware Procurement Guidelines which are helping to increase waste diversion rates across campus, as informed by a series of SEEDS projects dating back to 2014
- A new partnership with UBC Child Care services to improve education around child nutrition for staff and parents of kids on campus

2016-17 SEEDS Projects in Review

During the 2016-17 academic year, there were 30 SEEDS research projects completed related to the Food Action Priority Areas from the 2016 UBCFSP Workshop. Below you will find a brief summary of each project, organized by the priority areas outlined above. If you are interested in reading more about a specific project, you can find the project reports by searching their title on the [SEEDS Library](#), with the exception of those projects that are still in progress.

Production – Gardens and Farms

Project Title	Project Description
<i>Providing Space for Urban Agriculture in Multi-unit Residential Buildings</i>	Project developed a set of guidelines for developers and recommendations for policy regarding the provision of garden space in multi-unit residential buildings. Status: Complete
<i>Main Mall Community Garden Feasibility</i>	This project assessed the feasibility of a community garden on Main Mall. Status: In progress, expected completion August 2017

Procurement

Project Title	Project Description
<i>Diet Choices and the Environment: Environmental Footprints</i>	Explored what factors influence purchasing decisions around food in Metro Vancouver Status: Complete
<i>Diet Choices and the Environment: Perceived Impacts of Purchasing Habits</i>	Explored what factors influence purchasing decisions around food in Metro Vancouver Status: Complete
<i>Grocery Shopping Habits in Metro Vancouver</i>	Explored what factors influence purchasing decisions around food in Metro Vancouver Status: Complete

Preparation

No SEEDS projects on Preparation in 2016-17.

Waste Management and Packaging

Project Title	Project Description
<i>Sustainability Messaging and Behaviour Change</i>	Explored effectiveness of different messaging on influencing students to use re-usable mugs and recommend creating signage around reusable mug usage that employ prompts, encouraging commitment to action, appealing to community identity, and emphasizing the capacity of impact Status: Complete
<i>Visual Prompts for Sorting Waste</i>	Five projects looked at the effectiveness of various visual prompts on waste sorting behaviour on campus. Status: Complete
<i>Bring Your Own Mug Marketing Strategy</i>	Students developed a marketing strategy for a “Bring Your Own Mug” campaign. Status: Complete
<i>The Story of Seedlings Food</i>	Project proposed a procedure to standardize the ordering process for Seedlings Café to minimize food waste from their kitchen. Status: Complete

Education, Marketing, and Promotion

Project Title	Project Description
<i>UBC Farmer's Market Project</i>	Project developed a marketing strategy for the UBC Farm with the goal of increasing sales. Status: Complete
<i>Sprouts Engagement Plan</i>	Project aimed to increase student engagement in the Sprouts food system, and to provide a long-term model to retain and increase student involvement over time. Status: Complete
<i>Open Kitchen Labeling Literacy</i>	Two projects assessed the usefulness and comprehension of the nutrition labels in Open Kitchen, and aimed to gain insight for future direction in residence dining at UBC. Status: Complete

Guidelines, Policy, and Best Practices

Project Title	Project Description
<i>Real Food Challenge: Open Kitchen Edition</i>	<p>Project analyzed Open Kitchen purchasing data to determine whether food meets 'Real Food' criteria of supporting a community-based, socially just, ecologically sound, and humane food system.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<i>From Meat to Plant-based Offerings: Understanding Current Purchasing Habits</i>	<p>Project analyzed sales data from 10 UBC Food Services Outlets to determine the percentage of earnings and offerings coming from plant-based food and found indication of unmet demand for plant-based food at a number of outlets.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>

Community and Wellbeing

Project Title	Project Description
<i>Seedlings Nutritional Analysis</i>	<p>Project conducted a nutritional analysis of the Seedlings menu and provided recommendations for more nutritious menu offerings.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<i>Child Care Feeding Philosophy</i>	<p>Project aimed to capture and communicate UBC Child Care Services' feeding philosophy, equipping early childhood educators with tools to communicate with parents what they can expect from Child Care Services.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<i>Future of Food Services</i>	<p>Four projects proposed big-picture strategies and recommendations for the future of Food Services at UBC with respect to operations and sustainability.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<i>Child Care Nutrition Project</i>	<p>Project explored opportunities for improving access to healthy food at UBC Child Care Services.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>

Food Security

Project Title	Project Description
<i>Food Insecurity Among Land and Food Systems Students: Phase 2</i>	<p>This project is the second phase of a project exploring food security among LFS students, and is currently in progress.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<i>UBC Farm for UBC Families</i>	<p>Project explored the perceived barriers and limitations to food security among student families currently living in Acadia Park.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<i>Food Security Among Land and Food Systems Students at UBC</i>	<p>Project looked into food security in the Land and Food Systems faculty. A survey was used to assess food security among the student population, and found that 55% were food secure and 45% food insecure, and only 5% of food insecure students have used emergency food programs indicating a need for increased awareness of emergency food resources.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<i>Food Donation and Recovery at UBC Food Services</i>	<p>Project explored options for a food recovery program partnership between UBC Food Services and the AMS Food Bank. Key findings included that in one week of food logging, approximately 2100 meals were disposed of, and approximately half of those were freezable and therefore recoverable.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>

Food Trucks

No SEEDS projects on Food Trucks in 2016-17.

2017 Workshop Summary

The 2017 UBCFSP Workshop provided an opportunity for UBCFSP Committee Members to review the key actions identified in 2016, and to share successes, identify emerging priorities, and identify challenges for the coming year. Committee members also worked together to identify collaborative approaches to addressing both existing, emerging, and challenging priorities over the coming year.

Objectives

The 2017 UBCFSP Workshop objectives were to:

- Provide updates on progress on UBC Food System Project and partner priorities
- Review past Food Action Priorities Document and to identify successes, challenges, and emerging priorities
- Identify strategic food system priorities including departmental and collaborative actions, and research needs for 2017-18

Workshop Activities

Participants were asked to complete three activities in order to achieve the objectives of the workshop:

1. Think, Pair, Share: each participant was asked to identify their greatest successes over the last year, and their biggest challenges, and emerging priorities for the coming year
2. Identifying Top Priority Areas: successes, challenges, and emerging priorities were grouped by Priority Action Areas to identify the group's collective top priorities
3. Strategic Planning Exercise: roundtable discussions to plan 2017-18 food actions and research

Priority Action Areas and Research Opportunities

Participants were asked to conduct round table discussions for three priority areas which were collectively agreed upon identified based on the first two activities. The Priority Action Areas identified were: Reduced Packaging and Consumer Waste, Internal Communication and Outreach, Healthy and Affordable Food, and Climate Action and Resiliency. Committee members will work individually and collaboratively over the coming year to make progress on each of the priority areas. Highlights from roundtable discussions on each of the priority areas are summarized below.

Reduced Packaging and Consumer Waste

Round table highlights included discussion around the need to continue to reduce packaging waste, bottled water consumption, and improve waste sorting behaviour, particularly in student housing. It was also highlighted that there is a need to coordinate among student groups who are working on sustainability issues to raise the profile of the student voice on campus.

Internal Communication and Outreach Strategies

There was a consensus regarding the need to decrease redundancy, improve communication internally, and to promote and celebrate success publicly. There is a desire to engage experts in story-telling, ranging from the Ubysey, to UBC PR, to student groups, to tell those stories externally. The potential for a regular, informal gathering of food systems stakeholders was highlighted.

Healthy and Affordable Food

There is a need to reconcile the cost of healthy food with student budgets. Additionally, there is a need to improve education around the cost of real, healthy food on campus (from production to preparation costs). Some potential cost-saving measures include: increased food recovery, utilization of student labour, and discounts on day-old goods.

Climate Action and Resiliency

There is a need to better communicate the importance of biodiversity in the food system (including soil, plant, and gut biodiversity). There is also a need to gain a baseline understanding of both the carbon footprint and resiliency of the UBC food systems, and identify areas for improvement. There is also interest in potentially reviving the Food Action Committee – LFS, Botanical Garden, and the Farm, should all be involved.