

**Meeting Notes, Penn State Student-Centered Farm Student Visioning Meeting  
May 7, 2014, 4:30-6pm, 110 Henderson**

Attendees:

15 undergraduate and graduate students, 4 faculty members

Majors represented: ERM, ASM, Ani Sci, VBSC, AgBM, LArch, Agronomy, Plant Science, Psychology

Agenda:

- Introductions, overview of farm mission and planning timeline (Spring 2014-Spring 2016)
- Individuals write responses to 4 big questions
- 4 small groups organize and synthesize written responses and report back to the whole group
- Concluding large group discussion

Next steps for the summer:

- Develop a communications plan to recruit more student involvement in the fall
- Begin research projects on
  - Food systems curriculum
  - A student interest survey
  - Model student farms around the US
  - Dining commons market research

\*Contact Leslie, [lrp143@psu.edu](mailto:lrp143@psu.edu) if you are interested in helping with any of these projects.

Question 1: What topics, skills and benefits would you seek in a Sustainable Food Systems minor and farm? (Notes compiled by Keirstan Kure)

Sustainable Food Systems minor:

- Topics for in-class learning:
  - Social justice and labor issues within the agriculture and food systems in the United State
  - Legislation and policy that impacts agriculture, including the Farm Bill
  - Off season and off-farm planning, seed selection, nutrient management plans, field planning, etc.
  - Common barriers and how to work through them, i.e. socioeconomics
  - Agribusiness and food systems models including large scale farming, small scale farming, food companies, and marketing
  - Class time for the hands on experiences on the farm

- Benefits:
  - Credit or money for farm works?
  - Is farm work required to get the minor?

Student Run Farm:

- Hands on experience in:
  - Farm operations
  - Participation in marketing
  - Food safety including pre- and post-harvest produce handling
  - Soil nutrient management and soil improvement practices
  - IPM and weed management
  - Hoop house and greenhouse training
  - Urban agriculture (satellite farm on campus)
  - Irrigation
  - Biodiesel and biofuels
  - GMOs and seed varieties
  - Leadership roles, student board, internships
  - Labor management, business practices, labor compensation exercises

Question 2: How would you like to participate in the farm, and what incentives would encourage you to participate? (Notes compiled by Anna Schwyter)

Participation:

- Design: where it will be, what will we plant
- Work days
  - To learn how to farm
  - Just to get your hands in the dirt
- Hands on learning environment
- Leadership and organizational positions for students
- Farm hand/general labor
- Management positions
  - Agribusiness Management class
- Marketing opportunities
  - Market to campus commons
  - Food to go to campus food bank
  - Selling produce at farmers' market
- Class field trips

Incentives:

- Internships
  - For credit
- Class credit
  - For Sustainable Food Systems Minor
- Paid positions
- Free produce
- Income for selling produce
  - Would this money go back to the farm operation or to the individuals?

Not mentioned:

- Student research opportunities

Class uses:

- Class designed around the planning process
  - Planning, business, economics, design, financing, etc
- Field trips
  - Good for introductory classes (AG150)
  - Use as a model for farms, but closer option than Rock Springs or local farms
- Credit to count towards minor for working on farm
- Independent study

How we heard about the planning meeting:

- Animal Science listserv (very active listserv)
- Sustainable Agriculture Club
- Community Garden listserv
- EARTH House (special living option in North Halls)

Question 3: What features would you most like to see included at the farm? (Notes compiled by Briana Yablonski)

- Diversity of crops: vegetables, perennial fruits, agronomic crops
- Livestock: chickens, rabbits
- Aquaponics
- Close to campus - walking distance
- Strong focus on sustainable and best management practices - possibly organic
- Field trips to farm for PSU classes as well as children and elderly
- Student CSA
- Integration of non-ag students into farm
- Student involvement in all aspects of the farm - planning, marketing

Question 4: What resources currently exist within or beyond Penn State that you think could help support the farm planning, production, and distribution, and the minor? (Notes compiled by Rachel Milliron)

- Use of Farms
  - Existing Penn State Farms
    - Farmer wisdom
    - Logistics about working with Penn State; how to work within the system
    - Connections they may have for resources (ie: local dairies for manure)
  - Local, successful farms
    - Farmer wisdom
    - Farmer markets- share marketing techniques/wisdom
    - Crop Mobs- existing group connecting students and farmers; extend it to school and farmers
  - Student Farm Models
    - Look to established student farms on college campuses
    - Planning
    - Infrastructure
    - Knowledge
    - Overall model or example of strengths and weaknesses
- Dining and Distribution
  - On Campus dining and dining halls
    - Reach out/survey to see interest in student farm-restaurant/dining service supply options
    - Search for potential places to distribute products produced on farm into the student (dining halls) or faculty/alumni/staff community (Nittany Lion Inn/Penn Stater/Café Laura?)
  - Get food from farm into the community
    - Local community food bank- there is an active food bank in this community
      - Supply produce
      - Tap into their strategy of distribution
- Risk Management
  - Involve risk management in the planning of the farm
  - Use the established risk management team/department who know all the regulations and policies that would affect a student farm
  - In the planning process this would anticipate compliance with school/local/state/and federal laws/policies
- Students- need students for a student farm; how to tap into that resource

- Student groups
- Student Development (activities/big events)
- Student to student networking; class wrap introductions at beginning of classes, tabling at the HUB
- Classes and Minor
  - Use classes to find interested sources of people
  - Classes can use the farm to teach lessons- hands on interaction; increase interest in farm
- Funding
  - Make connections with the Alumni Pool for funds as well as wisdom (those who have graduated in fields related to farming/business/marketing operations).
- Residential Life
  - Residential program is required for all dorms/on campus housing; they have the funds to do programming and projects
  - Need to connect with Residential life to see what potential opportunities there could be
    - Living learning communities: (like global communities; living with a group of people with the same interests) could provide a way to get more students aware
- OPP: interested in a student farm; could possibly develop into an on campus residential “community” within a dorm/housing
  - Special day programs to get new students acquainted with some of the opportunities on campus such as the student farm
  - Working on or visiting the farm to do a sustainable program
    - Check master plan to see what land has already been designated for another use within the future
    - Contact OPP- the compost division- to see how the farm could utilize that resource (on campus, closed loop fertility source)

Other discussions: Strategies for outreach to more students will be important for the project. Students suggested several ideas, including:

- Talking to their friends
- Hanging fliers around campus
- Handing out information at student club booths at the Fall Involvement Fair (August 25-28, 11am-4pm, HUB)
- Handing out interest cards in classes
- Making announcements at the start of class to large lecture halls
- Giving presentations to student clubs