

Potluck Small Group Notes  
9/11/14  
the co.space

Seven small groups (Facilitators: Mitch, Briana, Lara, Barbara, Danielle, Dave, Abbe) answered the following questions:

1. What is unique about our local area?
2. What do you think is essential for Penn State's student farm to make possible, or do, for yourself, for Penn Staters, for the community and beyond?
3. What are the central goals the student farm and Sustainable Food Systems minor should have? Do you agree with what's on the word map? Is anything missing?
4. What programs and strategies do you think the student farm should incorporate, in order to accomplish its mission, goals and principles?
5. Who else needs to be part of our future conversations and how can you reach out to them?
6. Identify the top 3 words, phrases or concepts your group views as essential guiding principles of a Penn State Sustainable Student Farm and Sustainable Food Systems minor, to write on the wall.

### **Group 1**

Unique About This Place:

1. Diverse population
2. Smart people
3. Higher income in town
4. Penn State top employer
5. Mountains and valleys
6. Shale and sandstone
7. Lots of local farms: produce, commodities, livestock
8. Wet climate and unpredictable weather patterns
9. Ag Extension office
10. Town/gown dynamics
11. Progressive town that is very comfortable and doesn't like change
12. Lots of research
13. Young town, few recent grads

Essential Functions:

1. Focus on the native ecosystem
  - a. Species unique to our valley
  - b. Harmonize with natives
2. Fresh food for dining commons
3. Education versus function?
  - a. Tension or do both?
4. Integrative and interdisciplinary
5. Service opportunity: OF the community, not separate
6. Redefine Penn State ag image: support for small, sustainable farmers
7. Real, not a showpiece
8. Very accessible, open for people to go help

#### Central Goals:

1. On-site experience
2. Mix of science and social food systems problems, accessible to many majors
3. Bring communities together, stronger, HDNRE
4. Student and community education and outreach
5. Ownership and flexibility of personal education
6. Capstones on-site
7. Active student leaders, ownership

#### Programs and Strategies:

1. Farm manager
2. Student apprentices (live-in)
3. As inclusive as possible, interdisciplinary (hospitality kids)
4. Using on-campus expertise to integrate the farm into the community
5. Work study for room and board
6. Service learning (exposition)
7. Targeting people that might not be connected to the farm and food system

#### Who Else:

1. Others who have succeeded in similar operations
2. People who haven't "drank the Kool-Aid"

#### Three Main Points:

1. Interdisciplinary and accessible
2. Form/function + education = experience, craft experiential learning by marrying real farm/fooding and structured education
3. Community-building, community development and ownership

### **Group 2**

#### Unique About This Place:

1. Transient population, new ideas
2. Area farms, support
3. Rich soils
4. Diversity in backgrounds and experiences

#### Essential Functions:

1. Experiential learning

#### Central Goals:

1. Diverse engagement
2. Clearer vision of what the farm will entail so students feel that they are involved in something real and tangible. We talked about the importance of gathering input on what the student farm should be/include. However, we thought that the more detailed a vision/information could be the better (this was from people new to the project).
3. Permaculture
4. PSU pride: can use PSU pride and support for funding and marketing

#### Programs and Strategies:

1. Get interested students involved at workday at the community garden, pollinator garden, etc.
2. Do some kind of hands on work where we could say the farm will be like this (but better!). Also it would help unite people and give them a place to get their hands dirty.
3. More outreach in non-ag classes - possibly by going into larger entry-level classes (chem 110, bio 140, etc) to recruit underclassmen and general student population.
4. Slogan: make the farm trend
5. Find an outlet for students interested in the student farm to participate in: pollinator garden, community garden, etc.

#### Three Main Points:

1. Experiential learning
2. Diverse engagement
3. Multiple farming systems

#### **Group 3, Team Extreme Ag**

##### Unique About This Place:

1. Resources for PSU: funding, knowledge, experience in agriculture, social science (community), business and marketing, etc.
2. High percent of young people, able-bodied farmers
3. Location, landscape are beautiful; publicity from what the Arboretum is already doing and already has going on.
4. Proximity to a green network

##### Essential Functions:

1. Awareness of food systems – what's lacking in our understanding? We need more systems thinking about issues like food waste.
2. Profit
3. Education (for-credit work)
4. Research
5. Culture of awareness of safety

##### Central Goals:

1. Get lots of different departments involved, i.e. engineering, farm safety, etc.
2. Peer education, student education in the dining halls.
3. Accessibility – can it be approached without school connections?
4. Sustainable, organic and permaculture
5. Education of all types of farming

##### Programs and Strategies:

1. Biodiesel
2. You-pick days, Campus-Supported Ag programs, who will subscribe?
3. Tie into national competitions like the Decathlon? Host a state-wide or national farm conference for student farmers, farmer-teacher trainings
4. Sustainability, sustainable building opportunity, wind turbines, off-set energy, returning energy to the grid
5. Health point of view
6. Soil plot studies, forestry

7. Health monitoring
8. Therapeutic garden
9. Equipment maintenance for community farmers training
10. Central location for workshops and tutorials

Who Else:

1. Other universities
2. People in industry
3. Community farmers
4. Organizers
5. Youth groups, children

Three Main Points:

1. Inter-department efforts, inclusive of community youth and other outreach opportunities (stand, national)
2. Regarding the minor: class credit, work-study, tour guide for the farm (off-hours when students don't have class so they can come visit), RAs GIS-intensive, incorporate safety and precision-ag for small scales, farm could be a prototype for vegetable farming and precise data collection for this enterprise
3. Educating next generation about food systems through local practice and peer education: all systems, i.e. sustainable, organic, conventional, permaculture, aquaculture

**Group 4**

Unique About This Place:

1. Cooperative projects
2. Interaction between students and town
3. Urban and agricultural ideal land

Essential Functions:

1. Immersive learning, not classroom, for students not from agriculture backgrounds
2. More learning than commercial farm internships
3. Reach more people, wider topics

Central Goals:

1. Link farm minor to other ag majors
2. Productive landscaping
3. See actual results
4. Dining services uses products
5. Working business, model business
6. Students have a serious say in decisions
7. Balance function with aesthetics, for example, pollinator nesting habitat

Programs and Strategies:

1. Host parties at the farm
2. Have football players do tilling
3. Dining commons is a unique size as buyer
4. Donate to food bank
5. It's more educational to identify markets and sales opportunities

6. Used existing extension programs to educate students

Who Else:

1. Extension, small fruit and vegetable roundtable
2. Markets
3. Rock Spring farm managers

Three Main Points:

1. Cooperative science experimenting and **immersive**
2. **Holistic**, interdisciplinary
3. Real-world and **tangible**

**Group 5**

Unique About This Place:

1. Small-scale agriculture
2. Highly educated population
3. Rural
4. Agriculture-dependent economy
5. Soils are fertile
6. Public interest in sustainable agriculture and sustainability in general
7. Composting facility
8. Living filter, waste-water reuse
9. Recycling effort
10. Resource conscious
11. Growing season constraints
12. PASA

Essential Functions:

1. Public awareness
2. Outreach
3. Accessible
4. Using the farm to give back to the community
5. Funding and business plan to sustain the farm
6. Buy-in from colleges other than agriculture

Central Goals:

1. Teach people to farm
2. Hands-on student learning
3. Way to track our success as a sustainable farm, assessment
4. Transparency about the farm (how we define sustainability)
5. Empowerment to being able to grow our own food
6. Missing from the map: empowerment

Programs and Strategies:

1. Fundraising and endowments, sugar-daddy
2. Partnerships, with local farms and other student farms
3. Integration of the farm with curriculum, instruction and research
4. Exchange programs, international agriculture

#### Who Else:

1. Someone in development
2. A champion for sustainable agriculture
3. International agriculture

#### Three Main Points:

1. Empowerment
2. Sugar daddy
3. Small-scale agriculture

#### **Group 6**

##### Unique About This Place:

1. Soils
2. Lots going on
3. Wealth of human resources
4. Beauty in landscapes, public hiking, etc.
5. Potential growth opportunities
6. Tradition, strong culture
7. Revolving door of new people
8. High commerce activity

##### Essential Functions:

1. Accessibility to the farm
2. User-friendly
3. Reach across the university
4. Education, entertain, volunteer
5. Multiple ways of engaging with the farm
6. Refuge, a place to rest, wildlife

##### Central Goals:

1. Food education and awareness
2. Teaching sustainable farming practice
3. Physical labor, learn how to work with your body
4. Grounding in reality, applicable skills, immediate
5. Include the community
6. Focus on students who have least connection with food
  - a. Where does my food come from and why do I eat what I eat?
7. The political connection to food
8. Awareness for an uncertain future
9. Community, tentacles to broaden community culture
10. Relaxing, reprieve

##### Programs and Strategies:

1. Reach out to students in high-volume areas with hands-on activities
2. Free communal plots and paid private plots
3. Cooking demonstrations at HUB with food from the garden and samples and information for students

4. Land, history, food and people
5. Eat
6. Climate
7. Connect
8. Culture
9. Perspective
10. Sovereignty
11. Food under foot

Who Else:

1. Tomorrow's Table (book)

Three Main Points:

1. Refuge
2. Culture of connection: people, food, land
3. Tentacles to broaden reach

### **Group 7**

Unique About This Place:

1. Already an agricultural community
  - a. More supportive of local farms than other places
2. College-driven settlement with seasonal population fluxes
3. World-class agriculture school and good agricultural land
  - a. Great minds and great land
4. Student farm could keep undergraduates around for the summer

Essential Functions:

1. Educational summer work will spread to other places when students leave
2. Bridge town and gown, someplace where everyone can go and get food from
3. Unifying, productive way for students to interact with the community
4. Educate, make a community gathering point and improve participants' lives, provide local food to the dining halls or food bank, not just learn about agriculture, but learn about the people who come to the farm
5. Non-competition with existing local businesses and community hubs, focus on supplying dining halls

Central Goals:

1. Non-ag and non-student involvement
2. Energy systems focus in the sustainable food systems curriculum, energy return on investment
3. A place for agriculture students to own, be stakeholders, have higher responsibilities than in class
4. Minor: understand big picture sustainable as well as nuts and bolts of farming
5. Little picture on the farm, big picture in class (particular to general and back again)
6. Minor: on-farm requirement, definitely. You need practical experience
7. Agriculture doesn't talk a lot about "future world visions"
8. Diversity: make it way more interesting, also spreads the knowledge across social and cultural circles

- a. Would be easy to keep this an agricultural sciences thing, must aggressively try to meet a “quota” of non-agriculture kids, advertise it as something for everyone

#### Programs and Strategies:

6. Totally organic serving station in the dining halls (we used to have one)
7. Café Laura should stock our stuff, replace some of the corporate food chains on campus
8. Minor: look at EROI (embedded energy)
9. Analyze the student farm for class to make sustainability recommendations
10. IPM major
11. List all majors and figure out how each can be applied on the farm
12. We need transportation
13. Only start with land and activity the student body can support
14. How will the public be able to interact with the farm?
  - a. Farmers markets: ask what we could provide
  - b. Get community support generally, get sponsored
  - c. Student farm means student run, but why not community workers interspersed?
  - d. Can it be a high school student farm too? At-risk youth? (would be good incentive to recruit social work students)
  - e. Parents should be able to bring kids, farm tours, work-for-food days for public, people with food stamps work-for-food days

#### Who Else:

1. State College non-university people, sell the town-gown relations
2. Mayor of State College
3. Can we use the PSU compost and integrate that?
4. Local churches: offer the space for their events, church-community to farm-community
5. It should be north of campus

#### Three Main Points:

1. Emphasize non-agriculture and non-student involvement
2. Energy systems analysis and return on investment study to incorporate into the sustainable food systems curriculum
3. A place for agriculture students to have ownership, pride and a stakeholder position