Summary Compilation of Goals for the PSU Student-Centered Farm Initiative

Community Visioning Session Responses

October 28-29, 2014 @ Stuckeman Family Building

Executive Summary

A = Site Design

B = Business/Operations

C = Curricula/Minor

Some ideas come up several times within the charted columns, since this summary is an amalgamation of six to nine small-group discussions for each category (A,B,C) over the course of two meetings, and certain responses differ among participants.

Executive Summary of the October 2014 Community Visioning Sessions

The community vision for a student farm affiliated with the Penn State University main campus includes myriad program elements, a variety of funding and operations options, and a well-rounded design for curricula implementation. Temporal and logistical limitations will determine when/if these visions occur, however at this point in the planning process, all ideas add momentum to the project.

Site Design

Participants added detail and priority to some of the program components initially proposed for the site design during Spring 2014 meetings. As technical data and funding are attained for these program elements, the list will narrow down further.

Immediate goals include establishing 2-3 acres of vegetables and cover crop, with eventual plans for orchards, livestock, experimental plots, alternative energy, comparison studies of conventional and organic agriculture, agricultural land stewardship practices, and an on-site structure or series of buildings that allow for packing produce, welcoming students and visitors, housing student and faculty offices, and hosting cooking demonstrations and on-farm courses, conferences, trainings, and events.

Business/Operations

Integrating farm operations with campus life and community activity came up throughout every discussion, to ensure the farm interacts with a diverse population and sustains multiple sources of social and logistical support.

Through a combination of endowment and donor funds, grants, revenue generated from the farm, and enrollment fees, participants identified several sources of funding for the farm. Revenue generated directly from farm activity could include food processed and prepared for events, dining halls, CSA memberships, and farmers' markets; as well as from hosting events, training programs, camps, and workshops on the farm.

Curricula/Minor

The idea of establishing learning on and off the farm required critical thinking from participants, enhancing the notion of experiential learning and engaged scholarship to include departments other than agricultural science.

Carving out a niche for a teaching, working farm different from the PSU Rock Springs agricultural research plots suggests a variety of courses will use the farm across a range, from once per semester to perhaps every week, and for purposes other than just research. Seasonal restrictions and the need for a summer term or "May-mester" may be necessary to make full use of the farm during the peak production period.

An integral question is how students will be compensated for their work time, whether through course credit, work-study hours, an apprentice stipend, or academic/professional certification. In addition, how can the student farm host non-student learners seeking certifications, trainings, tours, and continuing education opportunities?

A. Site Design

Time Frame	Short-term goals 1-2 YEARS	Medium-term goals 3-5 YEARS	Long term plans >5 YEARS
Many votes (5-10)	Other ideas 1) grow PA crops 2) perennial legumes and grasses to build soil fertility 3) grain crops such as corn 4) crop rotation Other ideas 1) Stay primitive but functional 2) Keep it simple 3) Avoid too much concrete and bells and whistles. Farm management strategies that closely represent a typical working farm 1) Strong feelings against typical 2) goal: education; progressive 3) opportunities for prototypes without necessarily competing with other farms.		
Some votes (1-5)	Solar Energy 1) energy planning needs to be up front; no need to do over and waste resources Permaculture 1) improves soil fertility 2) seen modeled successfully in other forms Orchard 1) Takes time to develop 2) Creates activities for student/communities, fall apple picking 3) Wider audience; fruit possibly more popular IPM 1) Avoid using pesticides that are harmful to the environment or toxic to humans. Outdoor Classroom 1) College of AgSci 2) College of EMS 3) College of LARCH	Fencing for animal containment and biosecurity 1) biosecurity immediate 2) perennial hay crops could feed livestock Campus Farmers' Market/Supported Agriculture 1) Bring in revenue? 2) concern about possible dissonance/ competition w/ State College community 3) perhaps the more the merrier (student specific?)	

Time Frame	Short-term goals 1-2 YEARS	Medium-term goals 3-5 YEARS	Long term plans >5 YEARS
	4) Multipurpose, design more immediate, building might have to take place later Outdoor Eating/Gathering space Living Filter Bike trail trailhead Visitor welcome center Area for equipment demonstration, use, storage		
Some thought but no votes	Bus Stop 1) possibly include on campus loop. Alternative Irrigation Systems On-site Composting 1) integrate and coordinate with existing programs 2) Are we using this for farm waste? Then this needs to happen immediately 3) otherwise, let's share the existing on-campus compost facility Pollinator garden 1) Is this a duplicate effort to the arboretum? Living filter, water-waste reuse 1) Design space early in building process Fencing for animal containment and biosecurity 1) If for animal exclusion Other idea: Irrigation Walking trail around site Soil pit Farm management strategies that closely represent a typical working farm 1) The experience of working on a "real" farm is what PSU doesn't have right now. 2) Production and economically efficient production should be a high priority. Performance space 1) Events without permanent structure until we could get something more permanent,	Woody Crops/Intercropping Walking Trail around site Indoor Event Space Area for equipment Other ideas 1) opportunity for partnership with local farms 2) HUB w/local farms, bring farm on campus to campus food. Performance Space Covered outdoor event space 1) could all be one synthesized spaced Soil Pit 1) teaching facility 2) easy implementation Kitchen for on-farm meal prep Student housing 1) Goes with livestock timing 2) 8-12 interns living year round in communal housing (Dickinson farm model) CSA Program Equipment that may not always be found on a typical working farm 1) By necessity we may need to borrow existing PSU equipment to stay afloat Aquaponics Biofuel production Campus farmers' market 1) Start out with CSA Cut flowers 1) High value, money maker, $25K/acre/year Campus farmers' market Orchard	Experimental student plots 1) possible duplication 2) additional communication/ education 3) careful not to undermine current successful endeavors, possibly move Morning Star house. Garden space for youth/senior citizens/community programs 1) fostering community outreach Visitor welcome center 1) Small scale = short term, 2) but bigger = long term goal 3) education as to why this is important 4) general student/ community population Food composition analysis 1) possibly innovative program 2) goes with additional education/continuing research On-farm cafe Small engines repair lab Livestock and livestock pasture 1) groups agree that this is a long term goal Biofuel production Pollinator garden 1) important for production 2) cool design opportunities Student housing Farm camp Value-added processing Kitchen for on-farm meal prep Commercial kitchen/food processing facility for rent

Time Frame	Short-term goals 1-2 YEARS	Medium-term goals 3-5 YEARS	Long term plans >5 YEARS
	multiple/evolving/flexible use Outdoor classroom Outdoor eating/gathering space Value-added processing Fencing for animal containment and biosecurity risk Closed truck to transport produce to dining services GAP certification Greenhouse for herbs Kitchen for on-farm meal prep Wetlands, ponds, wildlife habitat	1) expensive startup 2) long return on investment Woody crops/intercropping Experimental student plots: for students! Other: Green engineering of onsite waste water management Campus Supported Ag program Agroforestry, wood products, fuel? Living filter, waste water reuse 1) Appropriate use of effluent input vis-à-vis food crops Bike trail trailhead Walking trail around site Livestock and livestock pasture Alternative irrigation systems Small engines repair lab Equipment not always found on typical working farm Food composition analysis	On-farm café 1) Requires easy transportation 2) helps establish farm as a place to be not just to work Livestock and livestock pasture Labyrinth 1) Corn maze Food composition analysis Garden space for senior citizen programs Garden space for youth community programs Alternative irrigation systems Small engines repair lab Integrated Pest Management sites Experimental student plots Permaculture Orchard Wetlands, ponds, wildlife habitat Woody crops/intercropping Solar energy, other alternative energy sources Biofuel production 1) bad practice, don't include at all. 2) Biodiesal, ethanol or greasecar. 3) Straight veg oil? These have different viabilities as practices. On farm café Aquaponics Student housing Commercial kitchen/food processing facility for rent Garden space for youth and community programs Visitor welcome center Permaculture Garden space for senior citizen programs Farm camp IPM sites

B. Business/Operations

Program name:

1. Penn State Grows (x2)
2. Learning farm
3. An acronym- Based on a donor, Area School, Organic, Healthy
4. Something similar to New Leaf Initiative: short and sweet
5. A name that is not exclusively for Ag, but for broader audiences

Farm Names:

1. Happy Valley Farm
2. Penn State Student Farm
3. Penn State Farm
4. The Blue Thumb
5. The Back 40
6. The Victory Garden (or Farm)
7. Overlook Farm
8. We Are Farm

Minor Name: Organic Production and Farm Management

Revenue:

1. Grants
2. Gifts/Donations
    a. Things named after donors (barns, buildings etc.)
    b. Endowments
    c. Crowd source
3. Product sales
    a. Outdoor food prep (pizza oven)
    b. Football game food sales
    c. On farm kitchen for value added
    d. Monthly farm food meal in dining hall
    e. Pick your own
    f. On farm market
    g. Sell to integrate lion cash (local restaurants, community members, dining commons, Nittany Lion Inn)
    h. Seed production
    i. CSA
4. Events
    a. Beginner farmer program, workshops, (bring in big-name presenter)
    b. Event space: weddings (large up-front investment), educational workshops, summer children's camps, alumni events
    c. Holiday events (pumpkin patch, corn maze, wreath making)
    d. Tours
5. Other
    a. Pay to work internships and apprenticeships
    b. Student enrollment/outreach credit course income
    c. Small plots for community space (growing?)

Production Practices:

1. Production related
    a. To learn sustainable techniques (ecologically informed)
        i. Specific irrigation/drip
        ii. No-till/ strip-till
        iii. Organic fertilizer (soil testing)
    b. Rain barrels
    c. Composting
    d. Crop diversity (fruit, veg, agronomic, heirloom)
    e. Crop rotation
    f. Cover crops
    g. Season extension (high tunnel)
    h. A place to compare organic vs conventional
        i. Certification not necessary
        ii. If pesticides are used, safe handling practices need to be stressed. (Applicators certification course)
        iii. Increased supervision needed if pesticides are involved
    i. Permaculture (Perennials), biodynamics
        i. Work with native ecosystem (pollinator garden, ponds, native species)
    j. Production practices are in-line with intent of the farm and the markets
    k. GAPs certification (proper storage, closed vehicles)
    l. Multiple production systems for comparison and to bring in a variety of interests
    m. Produce low-cost hardware and energy systems built by student and faculty
2. Organizational
    a. Don’t hide practices
    b. Decision making structure, Student vs. Admin
    c. Incorporated with class work, hands on learning.
    d. Well-defined standard operating procedures
    e. Build a sense of community
    f. Center for long term researching
    g. Crash course for current committee member dreamers to experience the farm
3. Financial
    a. Value added
    b. Yield vs sustainable vs profit
    c. NOTE: The dining hall won’t pay more/ doesn’t differentiate organic certification vs. non-certified organic

C. Curricula/Food System Minor

Time Frame	Short-term goals 1-2 YEARS	Medium-term goals 3-5 YEARS	Long term plans >5 YEARS
Many votes (5-10)	Volunteer workdays 1) Starting a farm requires a lot of labor; Linked to work study and internships		
Some votes (1-5)	Substantive farm (hands-on) experience for students now Courses that use the farm for labs 1) Needs to be semi-established, but professors need to decide how to use it Cooking demonstrations & samples 1) General publicity and visibility in student body; 2) Requires some level of production to have begun Beginning farmer training modules 1) Lots of farming to be done before the plants go in the dirt Work Study 1) Linked to internships and volunteer workdays Summer Internships 1) Year long?; Linked to work study and workdays Food Systems Symposium 1) Amit Sharma Service learning projects 1) Labor intensive, hands-on learning; Building community; Linked with work study, workdays, and internships. Blocked semester/2 semester program/Immersion Supervised ag experiences 1) Through the minor	Chef tours 1) students in training, professional chefs, sustainability practices - why local, organic, responsible sourcing and discourse between farmer and chef Work study Food donation program Summer internships Summer-long internships Graduate Assistantships Courses that use the farm occasionally 1) contact departments to get engaged (nutrition), dean of HHD Service learning projects Courses that use the farm for labs Other: Mix of annuals and perennials 1) will allow for year round use by courses 2) include it in early planning phase	
Some thought but no votes	Annual community open house; 1) recruitment tool 2) Guided Tours; will be impressive tour early on, must be "sold" to observe 3) Marketing/exposure, but requires something	Regular volunteer workdays Student-run farm market that would sell produce on campus Crop and varietal testing and comparison trials 1) exclusively for small scale farms? (not Rock Springs)	Courses that are entirely on-farm; 1) by necessity we'll need more than a year to develop a brand new course 2) unpredictability of the first growing season may not

Time Frame	Short-term goals 1-2 YEARS	Medium-term goals 3-5 YEARS	Long term plans >5 YEARS
	established Regular volunteer workdays; 1) Free labor is beneficial Semester-long internships Summer internships; 1) paid or credited? Responsibilities greater or less than work- study/ grad assistantship? Free communal garden plots and/or paid private garden plots Food donation program 1) determined by type/volume of composting On-farm dinners 1) early-on celebrations that the farm exists. Supervised Ag Experiences for AEE students, other teacher training Undergraduate research area 1) connected to certificate/minor Courses that use the farm occasionally 1) connected to certificate/minor Courses that use the farm for labs 1) connected to certificate/minor Other ideas: 1) minor or certificate; could include internships, etc. 2) start with certificate with existing courses, then go to minor Service learning projects 1) Also in farm development initially? Tabling in dining commons 1) Linked to hub demonstrations	2) selling research food=regulatory problems 3) Rodale list collaboration as they do small scale organic research as well. Beginning farmer training modules Food Systems Symposium On-farm technology development (GIS, etc) Offer trainings through PASA or PA WAgN Sustainable Food Systems Minor or Certificate Guided tours 1) Must be distinguishable as something farm like before we have tours Undergraduate research program On farm technology development 1) Open source hardware Food Hub training 1) Would make initiative more interdisciplinary (business majors); work for local food in dining commons Free communal garden plots 1) Expand original; Perhaps doesn't make sense as part of the student farm (exclusive) Crop and varietal testing and comparison trials Offer Trainings 1) Organic farmer training program (like MSU) Annual community open house Food systems symposium 1) Could also work in immediate goal as Network building activity; 2) I want to work on this: Carolyne Meehan, carolynemeehan@gmail.com (Friends and Farmers Co-op)	be good for a class dependent on the land Chef Tours 1) campus dining hall chefs? Or external chefs? 2) we need the farm to look impressive before sending investors/ purchases through officially Graduate Assistantships 1) More expensive to university than official work study 2) we might have money for these after 1st season, 3) could start spring prior to season 2 Work study 1) assigned or choose to work on farm 2) official work study wouldn't cost as much money involved in financial aid Cooking demonstrations at HUB with food from the farm 1) samples and info for students; Tabling in dining commons, 1) taste testing; do this winter after 1st growing in time to recruit students for spring/ summer semester. On-farm dinners Chef tours Food donation program Semester long internships Student-run farmers' market 1) Methods for high quality food production will take years to cultivate; 2) Competing with local farmers? 3) Redundant?

Time Frame	Short-term goals 1-2 YEARS	Medium-term goals 3-5 YEARS	Long term plans >5 YEARS
	Graduate assistantships 1) Teaching/Research; Experiential learning; Linked to AEE teaching opps 2) Could be as early as planning, expand over time Regular Volunteer Workdays Courses that are entirely on-farm 1) A sustained course not dependent on graduation of participants. Semester-long internships Courses that use the farm for labs 1) Could be useful for initial construction, change focus over time. Guided tours Summer internships 1) Foundational parts of farm development On-farm dinners 1) As soon as have produce Service learning projects Courses that use the farm occasionally 1) Interdisciplinary, ownership, "body" is keyword, get *somebody*. 2) I want to work on this: George Vahoviak (grv1@psu.edu) 3) I suggest you talk to this person about this: Deans, associate deans together in each college – talk about how each college can use the farm. Undergraduate research area 1) for students, by students. Supervised ag experiences for AEE students, other teacher training 1) the revolution in school gardens makes this necessary.	Work study Cooking demonstrations at HUB with food from the farm, samples, and info. for students 1) How will this be developed? 2) I want to work on this: abbe@psu.edu Offer trainings through PASA or PA WAgN 1) Collaboratively. 2) I want to work on this: Mary Barbercheck (meb34@psu.edu) Free communal garden plots and/or paid private garden plots 1) How long did it take to get current community garden started? Food donation program 1) State College Food Bank makes it so easy to donate as little or as much produce as you have. Other Ideas: Food Systems Minor Regular volunteer workdays Courses that are entirely on-farm 1) semester doesn't align with agronomic year 2) 8 week long courses 3) practicums Other: Farm courses for university credit Cooking demonstrations at HUB with food from the farm, samples and info for students 1) demonstrations would be longer term 2) samples/info more immediate Annual community open house Tabling in dining commons, taste testing 1) want good quality products On-farm dinners Guided tours Other: short courses in the summer for all ages Other: in-service teacher training for school districts with food production 1) gardening or other needs ex. summer "boot camp"	4) Wagon wheel approach (Food hub) Beginning farmer training modules 1) The farm needs to actually work in proof for some time to earn the credibility with farmers, farm bureau, PASA, etc. Fill a *gap* carved by PAWAgN, Rodale, etc. Crop and varietal testing and comparison trials Student-run farm market that would sell produce on campus 1) Who staffs the farm market? Ties to a course? Paid? On-farm technology development (GIS, etc.) Table in dining commons, taste-testing. 1) I want to work on this: abbe@psu.edu Chef tours Other ideas 1) Beginning farmer training modules. 2) Other ideas: Wagon wheel HUB; community-based central point, not competition, collaboration!!

Time Frame	Short-term goals 1-2 YEARS	Medium-term goals 3-5 YEARS	Long term plans >5 YEARS
		Supervised ag experiences for AEE students, other teacher training 1) course credit for participation 2) practical training for ag teachers 3) develop curricula for future students or for their own professional use after graduation Offer trainings through PASA or PA WAgN 1) local officers in community could support 2) immediate training for students, long term for others Beginning farmer training modules Crop and varietal testing and comparison trials 1) community connection, smaller scale 2) not necessarily government funded 3) less formal grant process and support 4) niche crop trials Other: summer camps – residential 1) day-camp only, for elementary and secondary students Student-run market that would sell produce on campus 1) speak with local farmers about collaborations, increasing demand drives interest, local farmers could also sell products on campus Sustainable food systems minor or certificate 1) required hours of work time on farm Food systems symposium 1) host a national conference, students organize the event, established farm needed 2) success stories to show Other: campus dining farm market where local farmers are also invited (along with PSU	

Time Frame	Short-term goals 1-2 YEARS	Medium-term goals 3-5 YEARS	Long term plans >5 YEARS
		products) 1) general public education and outreach On-farm technology development (GIS, etc.) 1) GPS, widely used 2) custom operation 3) planning (crop management), more applicable for grains 4) avoid double-backing, precision-ag 5) most cost effective with many acres, rotating annuals and perennials Undergraduate research program 1) longer term commitment, faculty host Free communal garden plots and/or paid private garden plots 1) need more than 2 acres	

Additional Notes (Category C):

Graduate assistantship/semester-long internships possible during and after the creation of the farm.

College of Education: environmental education training (not necessarily entirely on the farm).

i.e. That it is interdepartmental

Architecture, engineering

No barriers to entry, so not solely College of Ag

Available to other colleges

Other fields (arts, businesses) – INTERDISCIPLINARY

Chef tour is long term because it's not integral to the farm's success

A sustained course not dependent on graduation of participants.

Already existing communal garden plots and/or paid garden plots.

How long does it take for a community garden to be staffed?

Tours during what time of the year? During creation of the farm as well?

Logo/marketing tool

Crop and varietal testing:

Immediate: exciting the faculty/extension

Long-term: involvement/implementation

Takeaway:

PR, marketing, community engagement

Things that can happen before the farm

Front load things that can contribute to networking (bring people together from the beginning)

Purpose/Goals of Program

1. Systems Thinking
    a. Scale of space and time; connection between things
2. Personal Food Ethic
    a. Personal relationships with food
    b. Societal understanding of food and its production
    c. Social science ('fluffy')
    d. Needed lots of clarification
    e. Food Sovereignty
        i. Access to food
        ii. Food security
        iii. Access to means of production
3. Career Development (Skills/knowledge)
    a. Communications skills (connecting people from different backgrounds)
    b. Be able to talk $$
    c. Top-down v. Bottom-up (ideas of transition and change)

Additional Themes:

1. Sustainability
    a. Beyond environmental sustainability (came out of discussion about food sovereignty)
    b. Barriers to access
    c. Reality v. Possibility (What the systems are NOW and what they COULD BE)
2. Community
    a. Integrating arts
    b. Bowl and soup idea (from Dave M. from art professor on Tuesday)
    c. Wagon Wheel Hub
3. Education
    a. Experiential learning (hands on)
    b. Varied points of access (not everyone has to be 'boots in the dirt' – there are many other ways to 'work' on the farm)
    c. Interdisciplinary – many pieces make up food/community
    d. Different models of farming – having permaculture, conventional, and organic all in the same space for comparison purposes (net impact)

        i. Willing to sacrifice production for the sake of education

What does 'labor' look like?

1. Manager/boss – extremely important! Will fail without! Everyone agreed…
2. Volunteer opportunities
    a. Organized, routine time blocks (like a club meeting)
    b. Possibilities for extra credit through classes
3. Student Leadership Opportunities
    a. Independent study, block semester
    b. Competitive, for-pay internship position
        i. CAS program to get internship for credit covered by scholarship
    c. Tiered system of tasks and responsibilities
    d. All dependent on choice of production practices – affects scale and availability of opportunities
4. What else does experiential learning mean?
    a. Management v. Classes
        i. There will have to be consistency in farm staff, but classes can be transient

Concern: competition with local farms/food producers

Local has seasonal constraints

Site visits/tours between PSU farm and local/professional farms, restaurants

Local farmers/producers should look at collaboration to meet growing demand for fresh food

How will we differentiate from Rock Springs?

Based on number of students could it be a full class project?

Regular commitment - how to entice? Pay, food, credit, is experience itself enough to attract student labor?

Possibly tie into arboretum internship program for summer interns

Ecological restoration demonstration/education: wildflowers/natives

Other partners: PVCA, PACO (workshops)