Center for a Sustainable Future
Indiana University South Bend

Sustainable Campus Food Systems
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Executive Summary

As the Indiana University South Bend campus grows, so does its presence in the community. It is in the best interest of the university to continue to develop positive relationships with both the South Bend and the greater Michiana community. One way to do this is to create mutually beneficial economic relationships that can be grown and sustained over time. This can be accomplished, in part, by developing and implementing a sustainable food system that focuses on locally and sustainably produced food being served – and possibly grown - on campus.

IU South Bend has the opportunity to address the issue of sustainable food, food security, and a new approach to educating and involving students in their learning about global and local supply systems. Introducing fresh, local, sustainably produced foods on campus can enrich the educational experience, serve as a competitive recruitment factor to an increasingly environmentally aware student body, and enhance retention. A local food program could connect the South Bend campus to visions and plans already articulated in the IU Bloomington Sustainability Plan. Innovative and forward thinking programs such as local food procurement and production can attract donors from the IU South Bend community and the larger community as well. Purchasing more local goods can help develop the region economically.

Recommendations:

- Students could work with dining services staff to study current food purchasing patterns in order to assess what and how much is purchased each year.
- Once this is known, student researchers can determine long and short term purchasing priorities and begin to identify local food purchasing priorities and local producers.
- Once foods and local sources are determined, dining services can begin the change in menu and the beginning of local food education and awareness. Initial steps could include featuring a seasonal vegetable of the week or promoting an all local meal (complete with a vegetarian option), or an all-local meal feature every month.
- To complement and enhance changes with dining services, interdisciplinary, interactive courses and farm to college initiatives can be developed.
- Utilize a cooperative, multifaceted approach that engages and involves the campus and community on many levels.

Introduction

As the Indiana University South Bend campus grows, so does its presence in the community. It is in the best interest of the university to continue to develop positive relationships with both the South Bend and the greater Michiana community. One way to do this is to create mutually beneficial economic relationships that can be grown and sustained over time.

With more residential students expected every year, and more people coming to and staying on campus during the day, more people will be eating on campus. These factors, combined with the need to continue and develop community relations, provide an opportunity to extend the university's influence into student, faculty and staff lives and into the region. With the recent development of the Center for a Sustainable Future on the IU South Bend campus, the time is right for creating sustainable systems and educational programs. This can be accomplished, in part, by developing and implementing a sustainable food system that focuses on locally and sustainably produced food being served – and possibly grown - on campus.

Introducing fresh, local, sustainably produced foods on campus accomplishes many goals. It has the potential to enrich the educational experience and enhance retention. Featuring local foods can serve as a competitive recruitment factor to an increasingly environmentally aware student body. Involving student-faculty teams in a food program and curriculum can strengthen ties between students and the university. A local food program connects the South Bend campus to visions and plans already articulated in the IU Bloomington Sustainability Plan. Innovative and forward thinking programs such as local food procurement and production can attract donors from the IU South Bend community and the larger community as well. Finally, it can serve to develop the region economically. This can benefit IU South Bend as it creates more financial opportunity for potential students from the area.

While the concept of local and sustainable foods may be new to IU South Bend, it is one that has been and is being implemented at campuses across the country. This paper will examine not only what sustainability means, but what it means to be a sustainable university. The role of food on a sustainable campus, and the roles of campus and community systems to support and enhance it, will also be addressed. Recommendations, based on what has worked in other programs and on the unique position of South Bend to the region's producers, will conclude this examination.

Sustainability

The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development has defined sustainability as, "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."[1] When it comes to meeting the present needs of a large organization such as IU South Bend in a sustainable way, it is critical to keep the focus on what is known as the triple bottom line: profits, people and planet.[2] By harmonizing the elements of

economics, environment and social equity, according to the authors of *The Natural Step: Wealth, Ecology and the Evolutionary Corporation*, moving forward in a sustainable manner is possible. Operating in a sustainable isn't just a good idea. It includes benefits such as "improved competitiveness, lowered costs, enhanced profits, greater resources productivity,…improved staff morale, reduced staff turnover, lower environmental impact, and greater market share."[3] Sustainable planning and action is clearly a good idea for today and for the future.

The role of higher education in the sustainability movement is necessary. Challenges never faced by previous generations, such as the rapid increase of global warming, the rapidly shrinking amount of fossil fuels, a population explosion and increased demand for land for living and farming will present but a few of the issues that will need addressing with new solutions. Paul Marthers, dean of admissions at Reed College, asserts this point, stating that "There will be enormous, perhaps incalculable, consequences if higher education misses the opportunity to make green initiatives as ubiquitous on campuses as student unions and sports centers. With the future of the planet at stake, colleges must be on the side of solutions."[4] The new ideas and approaches to these issues through research, jobs and educational opportunities can develop and grow at colleges and universities.

The Role of Food in Sustainable Campus –Community Relationships

On Campus

Exciting opportunities await for innovative and forward thinking institutions. As Anthony D. Cortese, co-founder of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, explains:

> "Higher education will need to come up with new energy sources, cleaner kinds of products, better designs for cities, and more effective ways of dealing with social problems if civilization is going to move ahead…. Universities should assume the role they took in winning the space race and in waging the war on cancer…and take on sustainability as their next great challenge."[5]

IU South Bend has the opportunity to address a more effective way of approaching the issue of sustainable food, food security, and a new approach to educating and involving students in their learning about global and local supply systems. Food systems are a good place to start when a campus decides to become "environmentally sensitive."[6] Many campuses across the United States and in Canada have been addressing these issues for years by engaging students in interdisciplinary learning about the issue of food. The University of British Columbia has had their 'Food System Project' for almost ten years, and has found

> "there is no aspect of life that cannot be related to food: from human well-being and health to biodiversity and ecosystem health…to the impacts of human activity in the natural world, to issues related to hunger and malnutrition, and to the very nature of

> human communities. Food thus becomes an ideal terrain for the integration of knowledge."[7]

Marthers echoes this sentiment, stating that "Going green can help colleges and universities achieve their mission because sustainable practices are consistent with education for global citizenship."[8] He adds that taking bold and innovative steps can even help attract new donors to the university.

At Indiana University in Bloomington, the recent adoption of a sustainability plan includes the assertion that "…a campus food plan or model based on supply from local growers and farmers would be in the best interest of Indiana University and of the surrounding community."[9] The Task Force Report on Campus Sustainability also states that an objective is to "support sustainable agricultural and food distribution practices" with goals that include "efforts to develop and support relationships with vendors of locally-produced foods" and "support a farm-to-college initiative to produce food for campus dining halls and to create food production learning experiences for students."[10] These statements set the course for IU to shift its food policies as a way to best serve the university and the community. This decision can influence public perception of the university as one that is tied to its community, concerned about the region, and supportive of healthy and regionally-sustaining practices.

As outlined in the IU Task Force goals, there are two main places to start when considering the shift to purchasing more local foods on campus. One is the dining services, and the other is education around the initiative in the classrooms and through hands-on learning.

Dining Services

In order to reduce waste, control food costs, and prevent food insecurity threats due to fuel prices or contamination, it is necessary to examine the source, amount and use of foods brought onto campus. One way the University of Northern Iowa has begun to integrate local foods into its dining services menus is to feature "all-Iowa meals." Northern Iowa's farm-to-college program coordinator Kamyar Enshayan reports that these meals are "far more source-accountable than what you get from distributors."[11] In a time of *E. coli* contaminated spinach and Mad Cow Disease, the long and convoluted path dining services food typically takes from farm to table could be shortened and secured by using local foods.

There are a variety of ways to integrate local foods into campus food services. At Cornell University, dining services features a "seasonal vegetable of the week," and at the University of Pennsylvania a student-run program hosts local meal events.[12] Other options include further reducing costs and greenhouse gas emissions by having locally-sourced vegetarian or vegan days on the food service calendar. Because beef and other animal products produce up to three times the amount of greenhouse gases as vegetable and grains, students can learn about dietary options and how those choices can impact the planet.

The shift to more local foods by campus dining services works best when accompanied by education and outreach that is both by and for the students. Many campuses have already begun this process. They have relied heavily on student participation to help with analyzing food service invoices, researching the farms and distributors that supply campus foods, and working with local farmers. In return, the

> "students learned how their institutions worked; they learned about agriculture, economics, ecology, and ethics; and they learned that they were implicated in food service systems that were neither sustainable nor just. When their colleges adopted the proposals, they also learned that they could affect real change."[13]

Changes in campus dining services work best when they involve the dining services staff, but will best succeed if students are involved and educated during the process.

Education

Interdisciplinary and Interactive - The IU Task Force on Campus Sustainability has already identified that a sustainable food model "has the potential to promote interdisciplinary understanding and civic engagement." It recognizes that the local, national and global scale of food issues involves other areas such as farm subsidies, labor/immigration policy, and the health of local economies to world hunger, global warming, and the politics of food security and culture."[14] Education centered on food can provide a unique, hands-on and interdisciplinary learning experience for students. The creation and development of a sustainable food system can be run in part or largely by student research, outreach, publicity and hands-on farming work. Some results of providing an innovative and engaging aspect to the curriculum is that students may be attracted to IU South Bend and alumni and donors may take note of the new and creative way the campus is working to grow and sustain itself.

Courses - The University of British Columbia took a proactive approach to sustainability beginning in the mid-1990s. Their goal was to develop students who had a "solid understanding of ecological, social, and economic sustainability," and to prepare students to address basic societal issues such as health, sustainable food sources, and "the responsible use of renewable natural resources."[15] To achieve this, UBC requires students to take courses focused on sustainability and food systems. IU South Bend is poised and ready to integrate themes into curriculum, and has the opportunity to expand service learning courses and expand current internships.

Farm to College - Other universities keep the educational component field-based and optional. At the University of Michigan, students are involved with "researching the availability of local products, menu/event planning, working on campus farm/garden and promotional/educational outreach."[16] The hands-on approach to local food provides a tangible education to students on the source and quality of the food. One of the benefits of such a program, explains Rich Pirog,

Associate Director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University, is that "it connects students to their own food." They learn how things grow, the effort put into producing each item, and the benefits and pleasures of fresh food.[17]

Programs such as the ones described here did not happen quickly, but thoughtfully, and with set goals. There are several options available to pursue when developing a sustainable food system plan. There are also challenges to prepare for and expect along the way.

Challenges to Implementing a Sustainable Food Program

As a campus prepares to make the shift towards purchasing local foods, the road towards reduced food miles, fresh and healthy foods, and keeping food costs within the budget has a few potholes. Initial concerns of how much more the food might cost, where it will come from, how it will be delivered, and what is available are valid ones. Easy solutions may not be readily available, but may instead provide new opportunities for the university to act as an agent of social change and integrated, results-oriented educational projects.

Cost – At Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, just over ten percent of the produce served is local or organic. This percentage is small enough that there was no significant increase in cost, according to Susan Presto, director of dining services at Furman. [18] According to national farm-to-college program manager Kristen Markley, "local foods usually account for only about 5 percent to 10 percent of the overall food budget." Working with local growers can also serve to keep food costs in check. Another approach, suggested by IU Bloomington' Sustainability Task Force intern Jessica Colaluca, is to give local growers a price advantage when it comes to food bids. This can occur through a percentage system, where local growers get a small but significant price edge advantage, or through a price leveling system. These could help keep the potentially slightly higher asking price of a local farmer competitive with non-local, bulk, industrially shipped foods.[19]

Procurement - At Emory University in Georgia, planners found that there were not large enough local food providers or easy paths to purchasing local foods. It is now working to create its own local-food movement. What to purchase or request locally is another challenge. Emory has evaluated the situation and decided that it could either provide "lower-quality foods (that would yield a) higher diversity of foods OR two or three high-quality offerings…(that) would make it easier for the farmers to provide food for the colleges."[20] This could, in turn, make it easier for dining staff to prepare the foods and help to reduce cost.

Identifying local sources of food in Michiana is possible through a variety of networks. There are several farmer's markets in the area, including the South bend Farmer's Market, the Urban Garden Market on South Bend's west side, the Elkhart, Goshen, Plymouth and Niles, Michigan markets are also relatively close to campus. In addition there exist area grower's cooperatives,

and a local foods purchasing co-op. All could provide needed connections to local growers willing and able to supply local foods in the short and long-term to IU South Bend.

Contracts and purchasing priorities may limit the ability to purchase foods from local vendors. Along with other campuses across the country, IU Bloomington has examined new approaches to purchasing local produce that provides a competitive edge to local growers while keeping food costs within a budget. Implementing bidding requirements for purchasing local food is a start. Coordinating with local growers to identify what items are available and in what quantity and can guide purchasing decisions. Obtaining vendor information forms from growers and assuring risk management concerns are met may allow vendors to more easily be of service to the campus and more easily identify sources of local items to campus purchasing agents. The systems, forms and seasonal availability charts already exist. Implementing them in an organized and focused manner can enable farm-to-college relationships.

Education – Why are some foods not available at certain times of the year? What happened to the exotic fruits? How is this food helping me? How is it helping the planet? A switch to a sustainable local food focus on any campus may require ongoing education about what is being served and why. Buy-in from students, faculty and staff can be achieved, as mentioned earlier, through interactive educational opportunities and classroom instruction. For example, education and information can be provided to diners through meal "labels" which identify not simply the nutritional content of the food, but the source of the food. At Hendrix College, food labels have "a state sticker if it is made with Arkansas products. Food items from local suppliers often include the name and location of the farmer."[21] As awareness is raised and individual moral and ethical motivations shift in regards to the source of the food, local choices can make sense and grow in favor. Involving food service workers, students and faculty from a variety of disciplines can create a team that is best equipped to educate and motivate diners about locally grown food options.

One approach, used by Green Mountain College, is what they call the "three tined approach." Their goals are to buy more from local growers, grow more on the college farm, and provide education about the complexity of local food issues such as climatic constraints, ethical concerns and economic advantages of buying local.[22]

Recommendations

As a regional campus, it can be challenging to develop programs that the main campus has not yet endorsed or studies. In the case of creating a sustainable local food system for campus, this is not the case. The IU Sustainability Report features food issues as a key component of the plan. Local farmers are already beginning to sell produce to dining halls. Students are gardening on campus and providing food for their dorms. Courses exist to expand on and provide more in-depth examination of the issue, and, based on academic interest coalescing around the food issue,

a new PhD program in anthropology, the anthropology of food, has begun. Food purchasing systems have been and continue to be monitored to determine how much of what types of food are being purchased and what can be purchased locally, who it can be purchased from, and what it will cost. With the visionary backing of the main campus, creating a sustainable local food system at IU South Bend is merely a matter of local motivation.

Getting started on a local food program can be a campus community project. To begin, students can work with dining services staff to study current food purchasing patterns in order to assess what and how much is purchased each year. Once this is known, student researchers can determine long and short term purchasing priorities. With this background and baseline information, the next step could be to identify local food purchasing priorities and producers who can meet these needs in both the long and short term.

Concurrently, the development of courses and educational materials can begin. Raising the awareness and developing the ethical and moral foundation is crucial to the success of the initiative. These approaches could include interdisciplinary courses for undergraduates and graduate students focused on food issues. Hands-on "lab" based credit could be instituted as part of developing and maintaining a farm-to-college program in the form of gardens around student housing. Developing on-campus gardens can provide food production learning experiences for students. Developing a local food campus theme and related book, such as *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver, could reinforce these concepts. Until a garden can be established, course fees can be used to purchase working shares in a local CSA (community supported agriculture) farm and requiring student involvement in the farm. These shares can provide hands-on experience on a local farm and could temporarily substitute for, or supplement, on-campus gardening. Education can be a multifaceted part of the campus sustainable foods initiative. This component, potentially the most powerful and impactful aspect of the program, allows for integrated, hands-on, results-oriented learning that students may come to IU South Bend to get and take with them everywhere their lives and careers take them.

Campus changes to food service must, of course, include informing food service providers about the plan to provide more sustainable dining options. They need to know and understand how this can affect the contract process, deliveries, preparation, menu planning and outreach and education to diners. Food services must receive encouragement to help highlight the issue and transition to a new system. The progression of changes in the dining services can include featuring a seasonal vegetable of the week or promoting an all local meal (complete with a vegetarian option).

Most importantly, a campus local food project must create and implement such a program with as much campus buy-in as possible from all levels. Developing a local food plan collaboratively can engage all members of the campus community. It can include specific goals and objectives, as well as benchmarks, to monitor progress. The ultimate goal, of course, is not to create a new

administrative burden, but to alter administrative processes and procedures so that they can center on building a sustainable, local food system. The key to this program is, as Hendrix College determined, to set a realistic time frame.[23]

Conclusion

Colleges and universities of all sizes and styles are seeking image boosting, economically sensible and educationally engaging approaches to creating a sustainable campus. By incorporating food as a central facet of that approach, there are a multitude of benefits. The students benefit from a hands-on, interdisciplinary education around a central lifelong issue. The faculty and staff benefit from having a healthier, more engaged student population. The community benefits from the economic support and closer relationship to campus resources. The school itself benefits through increased public image, a strong and proactive approach to providing an integrated and useful education to its students, and potential increases in donor and community support.

The IU Bloomington Sustainability study's task force on food has indicated that a sustainable food program can serve the university in many ways. It can increase the visibility of the school and provide it with a recruitment edge in the growing areas of sustainability studies. It can also serve the campus community by improving student health through the provision of healthier foods and thus improve achievement.[24]

It is very possible to develop a system for purchasing local foods by utilizing a multifaceted approach that engages and involves the campus community on many levels. Resources already exist that can be utilized to evaluate and develop a local food program. IU South Bend can take the lead locally to create such a program and involve its students and campus community in acting on the goal of developing a sustainable campus – one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. What better place to commit to such a future than by insuring that the most basic element of life, the food people need to survive, is provided and secured for generations to come.

Notes

[1] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Commission on Sustainable Development http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm

[2] Nattrass, Brian and Mary Altomare. *The Natural Step for Business: Wealth, Ecology and the Evolutionary Corporation*. (Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers, 1999), 7.

[3] Ibid

[4] Marther, Paul. "Making the Twenty-first Century College Sustainable" *Confluence* 13, no 1 (Fall 2007): 42.

[5] Carlson, Scott. "In Search of the Sustainable Campus." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 53, no 9 (10/20/2006).

[6] Eagan, David J and David W. Orr, eds. *The Campus and Environmental Responsibility*. (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 1992), 78.

[7] Rojas, Alejandro. "University of British Columbia Food System Project: Towards Sustainable and Secure Campus Food Systems" *EcoHealth* 4, no 1 (2007): 87.

[8] Marther, *Making the Twenty-first Centruy College Sustainable*, 43.

[9] Schultz, Benjamin, et al. "A Proposed Sustainable Food Model for Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana." (working paper, Indiana University Task Force on Sustainability Food Working Group, October 31, 2007), https://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/wp-content/uploads/food_report.pdf (accessed 12/07/2008), xx.

[10] Ibid, p.ix

[11] Fleming, Brandon. "Not Their Father's Dorm Food" *Chronicle of Higher Education* 51, no 50 (9/24/2004), A6.

[12] Schultz, *A Proposed Sustainable Food Model*, 16.

[13] Eagan, *The Cmapus and Environmental Responsibility*, 6.

[14] "Campus Sustainability Report." Indiana University Task Force on Campus Sustainability, https://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/wp-content/uploads/Campus_Sustainability_Report.pdf (accessed 11/2/2008), 81.

[15] Rojas, *Univesity of British Columbia Food System Project*, 86.

[16] Schultz, *A Proposed Sustainable Food Model*, 16.

[17] Newhouse, Ryan. "Have food, will travel--but not far." *Campus Ecology*, November 25, 2008. http://www.nwf.org/campusEcology/climateedu/articleView.cfm?iArticleID=34 (accessed 12-3-08).

[18] Lipka, Sara. "Truth in Advertising: Furman University's Local Produce." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 53, no 9 (10/20/2006).

[19] Rojas, *Univesity of British Columbia Food System Project*, 10.

[20] Carlson, Scott. "Colleges Chew on Local Food Phenomenon." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 55, no 5 (9/26/2008), A15.

[21] Eagan, *The Cmapus and Environmental Responsibility*, 85.

[22] Carlson, Scott. "Colleges Chew on Local Food Phenomenon." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 55, no 5 (9/26/2008), A16.

[23] Eagan, *The Cmapus and Environmental Responsibility*, 82-85.

[24] Schultz, *A Proposed Sustainable Food Model*, 6.

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Rojas, Alejandro. “University of British Columbia Food System Project: Towards Sustainable and Secure Campus Food Systems” *EcoHealth* 4, no 1 (2007): 86-94.

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UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Commission on Sustainable Development
http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm

Weggel, Anna, "Food Flight" *Chronicle of Higher Education* 54, no 16 (12/14/2007).

"What Is a Sustainable University?" *Chronicle of Higher Education* 53, no 9 (10/20/2006).

Appendix

Printed Resources

Halweil, Brian. *Home Grown: The Case for Local Food in a Global Market*.Worldwatch paper 163 (November 2002).

Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*.

Online Resources

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

www.aashe.org

AASHE is an association of colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada working to create a sustainable future. It aims to advance the efforts of the entire campus sustainability community by uniting diverse initiatives and connecting practitioners to resources and professional development opportunities. The vision is to see higher education take a leadership role in preparing students and employees to achieve a just and sustainable society. Site contains information and resources around best practices, tools for evaluating programs and implementing sustainable changes, and serves as a networking arena for member schools.

"Campus Sustainability Report." Indiana University Task Force on Campus Sustainability, https://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/wp-content/uploads/Campus_Sustainability_Report.pdf (accessed 11/2/2008).

Farm to College Program

http://www.farmtocollege.org

Provides information on starting and continuing a farm to college program, involving students and dining services, cost comparison guides, and examines policy issues related to such programs. Site also contains links to publications on program start up, resources and policy.

Newhouse, Ryan. "Have food, will travel--but not far." *Campus Ecology*, November 25, 2008. http://www.nwf.org/campusEcology/climateedu/articleView.cfm?iArticleID=34 (accessed 12-3-08).

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/

The Center is a research and education center with statewide programs to develop sustainable agricultural practices that are both profitable and conserve natural resources. Its mission is to conduct research into the negative impacts of agricultural practices; to assist in developing alternative practices; and to work with ISU Extension to inform the public of Leopold Center findings. This site contains information on the marketing, ecology and policy research and extensive information on sustainable agriculture provided by the Center.

The paper created a regenerative system to improve university campusesâ€™ sustainable lifestyles in Egypt, focusing on the German University in Cairo (GUC) as a case study. The GUC is self-sufficient where services and products are produced on campus. However, attention is not given to packaging of food served. Therefore, the paperâ€™s main focus is on the system of serving food at the GUC with the aim of implementing the outcome on other campuses. The outcome targets youth who tend to follow trends easier and faster and lifestyles in universities will positively influence society. This research u We invested â‚¬1.9 million in FY12 in sustainable cotton farming projects, reaching more than 100,000 farm-ers. We also started a project to use cotton more ef-ficiently by standardising the way we construct fabric. This could save 10â€“15% of the cotton needed to make the same amount of fabric.Â Because of the complexity of the palm oil supply chain, most of the oil produced sustainably is intermingled with conventional palm oil. Our goal is for all our palm oil to come from segregated sources by 2020. In addition, we are working with Johnson & Johnson, Kraft Foods and the Indonesian government to support a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sustainable palm oil project in Indonesia.