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Why Food?

Sustainability in food systems sits at the nexus of some of the most pressing issues of our time. The way the world produces, distributes and consumes food poses some of the most complex challenges and opportunities for sustainability, as food systems have large-scale impacts on climate change, environmental quality, biodiversity, economies, human health, and social equity.

The University of Michigan is in a unique position as a non-land-grant, tier-1 research institution with a strong and growing foundation in transdisciplinary sustainable food systems work. This report highlights the impacts from the collaboration of several different campus partners:

**SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS INITIATIVE (SFSI)**
is a group of over 50 affiliated faculty and staff who research and teach courses related to Sustainable Food Systems. This interdisciplinary group represents over 24 units across campus, and was catalyzed by a cluster hire of five interdisciplinary junior faculty specializing in sustainable food systems.

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROGRAM (UMSFP)**
is a student-led umbrella group for over ten different student organizations on campus that focus on developing innovative solutions to food system problems and hands-on opportunities for students across campus. Member groups include: Food Recovery Network, UM Bees, Maize and Blue Cupboard food pantry, Food Industry Student Association, and more. The UMSFP leverages its impact through internal collaborations with groups such as SFSI, MDining, the Office of Campus Sustainability, and the Graham Sustainability Institute.

**CAMPUS FARM**
is a multi-stakeholder living learning laboratory located at Matthaei Botanical Gardens. The farm engages faculty, researchers, and student leaders in sustainable agriculture while producing food year-round for MDining and creating opportunities for the scholarship and practice of sustainability across campus.

Together, these efforts are making the University of Michigan a world-class hub for cutting edge scholarly research and teaching on sustainable food systems and are generating knowledge and future leaders who will transform our food system. Curricular efforts are strengthened by highly motivated student groups, which are further buoyed by meaningful efforts on behalf of Dining and Operations to make sustainable food a campus-wide priority.
01. Sustainable Food Systems Initiative (SFSI)

The University of Michigan Sustainable Food Systems Initiative engages an interdisciplinary mix of students, faculty, and communities at local and global levels to learn from and build food systems that are health-promoting, economically viable, equitable, and ecologically sound.

SFSI is a group of fifty faculty from nine schools and colleges, as well as a number of staff members at the University of Michigan. As the demand for interdisciplinary food systems research and pedagogy grows, SFSI is making the University of Michigan a destination for faculty, students, and visiting scholars to analyze and transform the food system.

SFSI conducts research, teaches, and bridges academia and the community in analyzing the global food system. The initiative became formalized in 2012, when a core group of faculty was successful in receiving support for a cluster hire for five new faculty on the topic of sustainable food systems. The fifth junior faculty member joined UM during the Fall of 2016, completing all hires in the cluster.

SFSI faculty affiliates have launched an academic minor, a graduate certificate in Sustainable Food Systems, developed and taught innovative new courses, applied for and received grants from federal agencies and private foundations, sponsored outreach events, increased connections with community partners, and attracted strong undergraduate and graduate students.

3rd annual Fast Food for Thought

In October of 2016, SFSI presented the 3rd annual “Fast Food for Thought.” Each year, this high-energy speaker series brings together 10 interdisciplinary faculty members from across campus to give a series of fast-paced talks (5 minutes each) related to food and/or agriculture. Sharing snapshots of their perspective of the food system, faculty spoke about their research including topics of eating and self-regulation for children, using satellite imagery to measure sustainable agriculture, and the viability of farming as a career.

Left: Lesli Hoey (Taubman) presented community-based research strategies at the Michigan Good Food Summit in East Lansing in October 2016. Center: Meha Jain (SEAS) shared her research methods at the 2016 Fast Food for Thought. Right: Tim Crews, Research Director and Lead Scientist for The Land Institute, discussed perennial grain production in Food Literacy for All session. Bottom: Julia Wolfson (SPH) presented at Fast Food for Thought 2016.

SFSI: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/sustainablefoodsystems/
Jennifer Blesh, PhD
School for Environment and Sustainability

Blesh’s study investigated the potential for cover crops (non-harvested crops) to provide ecosystem functions on 8 farms in southeastern Michigan, in order to support farmers’ interest to reduce use of external inputs and associated environmental costs. In particular, Blesh investigated the relationship between the functional trait diversity of cover crop mixtures and the enhancement of multiple ecosystem functions at once (i.e., “multifunctionality”) across farms. Results from this research inform ecological understanding of biological nitrogen fixation and the development of more sustainable soil fertility management practices using legume nitrogen sources.

Regina Baucom, PhD
College of Literature Science and Arts, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Baucom studies the long-term evolutionary consequences of herbicide on agricultural weeds. In this study, she and her colleagues found that the mating system of Ipomoea purpurea (an agricultural weed) co-evolves with resistance. Specifically, populations of this species that are highly resistant tend to self-fertilize more often than susceptible populations. The lab’s findings highlight human impact on natural populations of agricultural weed, and may likewise apply to other scenarios of strong selection such as climate change or populations that are mate limited.

Andrew Jones, PhD
School of Public Health

Jones’ study utilized longitudinal methods to investigate the association between the diversity of crops grown by smallholder farmers and the quality and diversity of household diets. His findings indicate on-farm crop species richness in Malawi is positively associated with enhanced diet quality and diversity. Growing a greater variety of crops may allow farming households to diversify their diets both by consuming a greater diversity of own-produced foods, but also by facilitating new market opportunities through the sale of diverse crops which may allow families to purchase more diverse foods.

Lesi Hoey, PhD
Urban and Regional Planning

Hoey and colleagues examine six case studies of educational programs across North and Latin America to better understand the diverse origins of and approaches to teaching about food sovereignty. The authors highlight the financial and political constraints to starting and maintaining these educational programs, the common pedagogies they each employ, and how each responds to local food systems, concluding that the spread of food sovereignty education reflects a growing movement to raise more critical consciousness about the global food system.

Meha Jain, PhD
School for Environment and Sustainability

Jain and colleagues are developing new algorithms to map smallholder farm characteristics, like cropped area, yield, and irrigation use, from space using satellite data. These methods are automated and require no on-the-ground calibration data, which is important since these data rarely exist in smallholder systems. Jain and her lab are using these datasets to understand the factors that are limiting production across India and to identify sustainable ways to enhance production and food security.
Food Systems Research

Alicia Cohen, M.D., MSc  
Department of Family Medicine  
Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation

Cohen and colleagues found that a five minute chat in the waiting room of health clinics may catalyze low-income populations to eat more fruits and vegetables. Families learned that SNAP dollars spent at farmers markets can be doubled on fruit and vegetable purchases through the Michigan-based Double Up Food Bucks program, which led to both a fourfold increase in program participation and sustained increase in fruit and vegetable consumption.


John Vandermeer, PhD and Ivette Perfecto, PhD  
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology  
School for Environment and Sustainability

SFSI affiliates Vandermeer and Perfecto collaborated with colleagues in Mexico to develop a chess-like board game to help small-scale Mexican coffee farmers better understand the complex interactions between the insects and fungi that live on their plants — and how some of those creatures can help provide agroecological pest control.


Margot Finn, PhD  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

In her 2017 book, Finn argues that ‘good food’ has become conflated with high status. She presents the historical contexts of food fads such as gourmet, ethnic, diet, and organic foods, and examines “taste hierarchies” within the broader context of class, culture, and the economy.


Julia Wolfson, PhD  
Department of Health Management and Policy, School of Public Health

In this study, Wolfson and colleagues used surveys and focus groups to examine how perceptions of cooking relate to confidence, attitudes and behaviors towards cooking. The perception of cooking was identified by use of scratch ingredients, convenience foods, and not using heat. Results show that while Cooking frequency is similar among US adults regardless of how they perceive cooking, cooking confidence and enjoyment are lowest among Americans who perceive cooking as including the use of convenience foods. The study has implications about how healthier cooking is portrayed in public health messages.


SFSI: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/sustainablefoodsystems/
My work broadly tries to understand the impacts of environmental change and natural resource degradation on agricultural production and how farmers are responding and adapting to these changes. My goal is to figure out ways to more efficiently use limited natural resources, to increase equity, and to sustain current levels of production.

How has being a part of the sustainable food systems cluster hire impacted your first year on campus?

Both personally and research-wise, it has been great to join an existing community of people who are interested in the same sorts of issues and questions.


Monica Dus, PhD
Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology

Dr. Monica Dus was awarded the NIH New Innovator Award, a $2 million, five-year grant to further her research on how nutrients affect the brain and regulate eating behaviors. Her lab examines excess sugar in fruit flies and its effect on the brain.


Don Scavia, PhD
School for Environment and Sustainability, College of Engineering

Scavia examined policy related questions to address hypoxic zones in the Northern Gulf of Mexico. His findings provide policymakers with options to address agriculturally-derived nutrient load and corresponding adaptive management processes. Scavia found that "... a 59% reduction in Mississippi River nitrogen load is required to reduce hypoxic area to 5,000 km." He put this work, and that of other agriculturally-dominated watersheds of Chesapeake Bay and Lake Erie, in the context of US agricultural policy in his most recent blog.


Aniket Aga, PhD
School for Environment and Sustainability

Following the development of genetically modified mustard seed in India, Aga analyzes the government’s involvement which limited public access to the agronomic and biosafety assessments. Aga argues that the government has the right to commercialize the new seed but “this cannot come at the cost of transparency and fidelity to the law.”


Ashley Gearhardt, PhD
Department of Psychology
Food and Addiction Science and Treatment Lab (FAST)

What factors are associated with addictive-like eating in children? Gearhardt et al. examined links between addictive eating in young children and obesity, parental food addiction patterns and feeding practices of the child. Findings indicate the need for future research on how these links develop through adolescence and adulthood.


Food Systems Research
From food policy to agroecosystems to obesity prevention

SFSI: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/sustainablefoodsystems/


Crews, T. E., Blesch, J., Culman, S. W., Hayes, R. C., Jensen, E. S., Mack, M. C., ... & Schipanski, M. E. (2016). Going where no grains have gone before: From early to mid-succession. Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment, 222, 223-238.


Alison Miller (SPH), continued her NIH-funded work on childhood obesity with an intervention study focused on improving self-regulation in children as a possible mechanism for obesity prevention interventions ($1.4 million across 3 years), as well as research focused on family processes related to food parenting ($100,000) and child eating behavior ($100,000). She also completed a research review on child stress and obesity for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Healthy Eating Research Initiative.

Meha Jain (SEAS) received two grants from NASA, the New Investigator Program Award ($262,612) and the Land Use Land Cover Change Award ($751,707), to understand the impacts of changing weather patterns and groundwater depletion on agricultural production in India and whether farmers are able to adapt to these changes. She is collaborating with David Lobell (Stanford University), Ram Fishman (Tel Aviv University), Ashwini Chhatre (Indian School of Business), and Balwinder Singh (CIMMYT-India) on this work. They will use a combination of remote sensing, household surveys, and census datasets to understand these questions from the household to regional scales.

Ivette Perfecto (SEAS) and John Vandermeer (EEB) joined forces with Javier Lugo (University of Puerto Rico) for a $500,000 USDA research grant to study the ecosystems services in coffee production in the central coffee-producing region of Puerto Rico. The project aims to evaluate the role of shade in the promotion of the ecosystem services of pest control, pollination, production, biodiversity preservation, and carbon storage.

Andrew Jones (SPH) is leading a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded project ($339,467) in three regions of Ghana studying how animal husbandry may have impacts on anemia among women. In collaboration with colleagues in the School of Public Health, the University of Ghana, Innovations for Poverty Action, and Michigan State University, Jones and team are using a mixed-methods approach to examine diverse linkages between livestock and anemia including nutrition, infectious disease, and gender related pathways.

Mark Wilson (SPH and EEB) is part of a multi-university, NIH-funded, collaboration coordinated by colleagues at Michigan State University to evaluate how social and environmental factors affect risk of malaria in southern Malawi. Among the major hypothesized drivers of elevated exposure are agricultural activities near dwellings, particularly proximity to irrigated rice cultivation and smaller maize and vegetable plots nearby households. One goal of this 7-year, $8 million project aims to understand how to balance food production benefits with risk and prevention of malaria.

In May 2017, The interdisciplinary team of SFSI affiliates Andrew Jones (SPH), Lesli Hoey (Taubman) and Marty Heller (Center for Sustainable Systems) received a three year Transformation Grant of $450,000 from the Graham Sustainability Institute to research links between diet, human health and the environment in Kenya and Vietnam. Through their work, the team hopes ‘to accelerate progress toward achieving sustainable diets in the global south.’ The long term impact of the project will ‘safeguard human health, mitigate climate change, and sustainably use the planet’s natural resources.'


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**$500,000**
USDA research grant

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**$339,467**
Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation funded project

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**$8 million**
7-year NIH funded project

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**$450,000**
3-year Graham Sustainability Initiative Transformation Grant

**Meha Jain (SEAS)** received two grants from NASA, the New Investigator Program Award ($262,612) and the Land Use Land Cover Change Award ($751,707), to understand the impacts of changing weather patterns and groundwater depletion on agricultural production in India and whether farmers are able to adapt to these changes. She is collaborating with David Lobell (Stanford University), Ram Fishman (Tel Aviv University), Ashwini Chhatre (Indian School of Business), and Balwinder Singh (CIMMYT-India) on this work. They will use a combination of remote sensing, household surveys, and census datasets to understand these questions from the household to regional scales.

**$262,612**
New Investigator Program Award

**$751,707**
Land Use Land Cover Change Award

**Alison Miller (SPH),** continued her NIH-funded work on childhood obesity with an intervention study focused on improving self-regulation in children as a possible mechanism for obesity prevention interventions ($1.4 million across 3 years), as well as research focused on family processes related to food parenting ($100,000) and child eating behavior ($100,000). She also completed a research review on child stress and obesity for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Healthy Eating Research Initiative.

**$1.4 million**
3-year NIH grant

**SFSI**: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/sustainablefoodsystems/
Is there a specific class or professor that sparked your interest in food systems?

Doug Kelbaugh’s course, Architecture 357: “Architecture, Sustainability and the City”, really sparked and solidified my interest in what role urbanity can play in the food system. As a component of the course, a few students and I visited urban farms around Detroit. Seeing those operations in action structured most of the rest of my college experience.

What resources or opportunities at U-M have had an impact on you?

The Food Literacy for All class truly left me speechless. I couldn’t have been more pleased with the interaction between students and community and felt as though the speakers were unbelievably enlightening.

The Campus Farm in conjunction with Dining has also made a huge impact on the Michigan community.

As an Academic Ambassador for the University of Michigan Sustainable Food Program, I worked alongside some truly incredibly people striving to make our university a mecca for sustainability and food studies.

The number of students enrolling in the food minor is growing.
Andy Harmon, SNRE
Food systems graduate certificate
Class of 2017

I appreciated taking a combination of courses for the graduate certificate including Soil Ecology (with Don Zak), Ecology of Agroecosystems (with John Vandermeer), and Agroecosystem Management (with Jennifer Blesh). Each instructor had a different voice and a different focus that broadened my understanding and appreciation of the complex interactions taking place in modern agriculture, how those interactions are managed by different groups of farmers, and how those choices create a legacy of ecological effects both on and off the farm.

What resources or opportunities at U-M have been particularly helpful to your interest in sustainable food systems?

I enjoyed going to the U-M campus farm and made sure to attend the Fast Food For Thought presentations every year. Probably the greatest opportunity was the development of the courses for the graduate certificate, many of which were being offered for the first time as I started my Masters. These opportunities enabled me to expand my understanding of foods systems and agroecology in ways that I would not have been able to previously.

In the future I hope to translate my experience with sustainable food systems into a position where I can work with farmers interested in preserving the ecological and cultural importance of their land alongside its agricultural value.
Food Literacy for All

The inaugural 2017 course was launched by a leadership team of Jennifer Blesh (agroecologist and SEAS faculty), Malik Yakini (Detroit Black Community Food Security Network) and Lilly Fink Shapiro (SFSI).

According to Fink Shapiro, "This course is about recognizing forms of knowledge that exist outside the ivory tower and making those learnings accessible to everyone."

SFSI advisory board member John Vandermeer said "This course was not afraid to confront political power in the food system."

"One of the most significant aspects of Food Literacy for All is that it modeled what a university–community partnership can look like."

-Malik Yakini
Course co-facilitator

"The larger goal underlying the course is to increase the number and expand the diversity of students involved in food systems studies at U-M."

-Jennifer Blesh
SEAS faculty instructor

"Out of all the courses I have taken thus far, Food Literacy for All was the most engaging and thought-provoking. I enjoyed the opportunity to learn from the community members in attendance as well as the amazing and knowledgeable speakers. The content presented in this course is the epitome of what I hoped to learn during my graduate school experience."

-Leah Webster
Graduate student

"I am FIRED UP after Saru's talk this evening and willing to do whatever it takes to get One Fair Wage on the Michigan ballot...Thanks so much. I am overwhelmed by how much this class has given to me this semester."

-Community attendee

Food Literacy for All speaker, Raj Patel, spoke about the origins of our current food system as depicted in 15th century art, recipes and artifacts. He described the large social and ecological costs of agricultural industrialization, and argued that fully understanding the Green Revolution requires an analysis of history, class, injustice, and power."

The 2017 Food Literacy for All course was supported by the UM Sustainable Food Systems Initiative, with funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), LSA Instructional Support Services (LSA-ISS), the Office of the Provost, the International Institute, the Institute for the Humanities, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRGW), Graham Sustainability Institute, the Center for Engaged Academic Learning (CEAL), and the Nutritional Sciences Department.

SFSI: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/sustainablefoodsystems/
“Food Literacy for All” is a community-academic partnership course that leverages the academic strengths of the university with the expertise of community-based practitioners to build capacity for transforming our complex and inequitable food system. A pioneering class model for UM, Food Literacy for All, is an interdisciplinary course that welcomes community members to attend for free and learn alongside enrolled students.

The course is co-designed and co-led by both University and Detroit-based community leaders. Offered for the first time during the 2017 winter semester, the course featured high-profile speakers from across the country who attracted 200-300 people each week.

137 students enrolled in the course. Over 438 different community members attended throughout the semester.

Senator Debbie Stabenow, ranking member on the Senate Agricultural Committee, beamed into the Food Literacy for All course via video to emphasize the importance of federal legislation and the Farm Bill on food systems and to wish the students a productive semester. Photo: Lilly Fink Shapiro

Food Literacy for All pioneered a new course model at the University

20% increase in student belief that community engagement is important to improve the food system

2,000+ views of Food Literacy for All sessions on YouTube

In January 2017, the Detroit Food Policy Council invited Food Literacy for All guest speaker Frances Moore Lappé to participate in a public panel on Detroit food policy and tour the hoophouses of Earthworks Urban Farm. The Detroit based grassroots initiatives left such an impression on Moore Lappé that she committed to use her public platform to share Detroit based narratives with audiences around the world.

Food Literacy for All was featured in the SEAS alumni magazine for its innovative community engagement model and interdisciplinary approach to food systems education.

SFSI: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/sustainablefoodsystems/
SFSI collaborates with the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network to offer a summer student internship at D-Town Farm, the largest urban farm in Detroit.

Jessica Robinson
SEAS Masters student, class of 2018
SFSI intern at D-Town Farm

I spend hours with my hands deep in the cool earth of D-Town Farm following the rhizomes of bindweed and milk thistle into the complex maze of roots within the soil. As I weed, the sun warms my soul and I feel as deeply rooted as the burdock I try in vain to pull from the growing bed.

Having learned about the theory of agroecological management and food systems through coursework, gaining practical experience in farming has been essential to connecting everything I’ve learned. Thoughts of nutrient cycling, competition, soil ecology, labor, resource accessibility, food sovereignty, and community run through my mind everyday.

Growing food is just one component of D-Town Farm’s objective. On the farm, the mulberries are ripening and as we pick the ripest berries, we have conversations about meditation, democracy, industry, and the need for a revolution. I’m grateful for these conversations and the ability of the mulberry tree to gather us together and slow us down.

It has been an honor to learn from the staff about farming and their lives, and how intertwined they are. What I find beautiful about these endeavors are the social, economic, and artistic collaborations that the farm staff build between themselves. These collaborations keep money, skills, and social capital circulating within the black community. I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this community empowerment and I’m excited to see how the farm and its stewards continue to evolve.

In 2016 and 2017, SFSI teamed up with UMSFP and the Campus Farm to create a several week food systems immersion experience for incoming freshman participating in the LSA Summer Bridge Scholars Program. These activities are a part of SFSI’s USDA Higher Education Challenge grant and aim to increase the diversity of students taking food systems courses, participating in UMSFP member groups, and volunteering and/or working at the Campus Farm.

The summer Bridge immersion program engaged underrepresented students in food systems courses, student groups, and volunteer opportunities.

53% of students are first generation college students

47% of students are interested in pursuing the food minor

100% of students increased their understanding of how food affects health, the environment, and issues of equity and justice
SFSI Faculty and Staff Affiliates

**Faculty Affiliates**

Susan Aaronson, MA, RD   SPH
Aniket Aga, PhD   SEAS
Jake Allgeier, PhD   LSA
Alicia Alvarez, JD   Law School
Olivia Anderson, PhD, RD   SPH
Catherine Badgley, PhD    LSA
Regina Baucom, PhD   LSA
Jennifer Blesh, PhD   SEAS
Shannon Brines, MEng   SEAS
Victoria Campbell-Arvai, PhD   SEAS
Alicia Cohen, MD   Medical School
Raymond De Young, PhD   SEAS
James Diana, PhD   SEAS
Monica Dus, PhD   LSA
Margot Finn, PhD   LSA
Ashley Gearhardt, PhD   LSA
Michael Gordon, PD   Ross
Robert Grese, MSLA   SEAS
Kristen Harrison, PhD   LSA
Martin Heller, PhD   SEAS
Andrew Herscher, PhD   Taubman
Lesli Hoey, PhD   Taubman
Mark Hunter, PhD   LSA
MaryCarol Hunter, PhD   SEAS
Barbara Israel, DrPH   SPH
Meha Jain, PhD   SEAS
Andrew Jones, PhD   SPH
Gregory Keoleian, PhD   SEAS, CE
Laurie Lachance, PhD   SPH
Larissa Larsen, PhD   Taubman
Steven Mankouche, MArch   Taubman
Alison Miller, PhD   SPH
Virginia Murphy, MA   LSA
Joan Nassauer, MLA   SEAS
Josh Newell, PhD   SEAS
Richard Norton, PhD, JD   LSA, Taubman
Scott Page, PhD   LSA
Ivette Perfecto, PhD   SEAS
Karen Peterson, DSc   SPH
Thomas Princen, PhD   SEAS
Don Scavia, PhD   SEAS, CE
Amy Schulz, PhD   SPH
Jasprit Singh, PhD   CE (emeritus)
Sara Soderstrom, PhD   LSA
Dorceta Taylor, PhD   SEAS
Nicholas Tobier, MFA   Stamps
Joseph Trumpey, MFA   SEAS, Stamps
Vivian Valencia, PhD   SEAS
John Vandermeer, PhD   SEAS, LSA
Mark Wilson, ScD   SPH, LSA
Julia Wolfson, PhD, MPP   SPH
Lisa Young, PhD   LSA

**Staff Affiliates**

Alex Bryan   UMSEP/Michigan Dining
Emily Canosa, MA   Sustainable Living Experience
Barbara Hagan, PMP   Sustainability Administrator
Lilly Fink Shapiro, MPH   SFSI Program Manager
Juli McLoone, MA   Special Collections Library
Jeremy Moghtader, MS   Matthaei Botanical Gardens/Campus Farm
Adrienne O'Brien   Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum
Keith Soster   Michigan Dining
Maren Spolum, MPH, MPP   SEAS
Emily Springfield, MS   Dentistry

**SFSI Staff**

Lilly Fink Shapiro, MPH   SFSI Program Manager
Mariah Van Ermen   SFSI Program Coordinator

**Advisory Board**

Catherine Badgley, PhD   LSA
Larissa Larsen, PhD   Taubman
Ivette Perfecto, PhD   SEAS
Mark Wilson, ScD   SPH, LSA
John Vandermeer, PhD   SEAS, LSA

**Key**

LSA: Literature Science and Arts
SPH: School of Public Health
SEAS: School for Environment and Sustainability
CE: College of Engineering
Stamps: Stamps School of Art and Design
Taubman: Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning
Ross: Ross School of Business

SFSI affiliates gathered in the Fall of 2016 to discuss upcoming plans for the '16-'17 academic year. Photo: Lilly Fink Shapiro

SFSI: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/sustainablefoodsystems/
02. University of Michigan Sustainable Food Program

Mission

The UM Sustainable Food Program (UMSFP) is led by a student Leadership team and is mentored and advised by a staff Program Manager, as well as, an Advisory Board. UMSFP fosters collaborative leadership that empowers students to create a sustainable food system at the University of Michigan while becoming change agents for a vibrant planet. To further this mission, the UMSFP focuses its efforts in three specific areas:

- Developing responsible citizens and leaders by facilitating formal and informal education on sustainable food topics
- Strengthening communities through collaborative programming and outreach
- Growing sustainable food that supports the wellbeing of people and the environment at the University of Michigan and beyond

UMSFP provides support to organizations on campus dedicated to building a sustainable food system and currently connects student Member Groups, seven campus gardens and the Campus Farm.

UMSFP Welcomes a Full-Time Manager

UMSFP secured funds through the Presidents office to hire a full-time program manager and operate with a modest discretionary budget. The position, nested in MDining, was hired in tandem with a full-time Campus Farm manager. Alex Bryan re-joined his alma mater after spending 7 years in Lansing at the Greater Lansing Food Bank as Director of Agricultural Programs. He serves on multiple non-profit boards, including National Young Farmers Coalition; and, is a small-scale farmer himself, co-owning a 4-acre urban farm in Detroit, Food Field.

Left: Students of Permaculture Design Team table on the Diag to recruit members and share resources. Center: Campus Farm Student Managers work with staff and volunteers at the Cultivating Community Garden at Ginsberg Center. Right: UMSFP T-Shirts with the slogan ‘Grow Blue’ are sold at UGo’s and Matthaei Botanical Gardens.
Food systems have many parts that range from production to distribution and waste management and there are students working to improve and educate people about this extensive system. These student organizations have hosted educational dinners, organized film screenings, planted community gardens, started a campus farm and much more. UMSFP supports these students, the University of Michigan and greater Michigan communities by helping them reach a broader audience and organize their unique visions into collective action around sustainable food.

### Il Student Member Groups

- Ann Arbor Student Food Co
- Cultivating Community
- Feel Good
- Food Industry Student Association
- Food Recovery Network
- Friends of the Campus Farm
- Maize and Blue Cupboard
- Medical Campus Garden
- Student Advocates for Nutrition
- UM Permaculture Design Team
- UMBees

### Food Industry Student Association (FISA)

FISA is a predominantly engineering student group to support pathways for students interested in sustainable food careers. FISA hosted the 2nd annual Startup Food Panel, in partnership with MPowered. Representatives from four local companies: Vic and Barb Catering; JD’s Motown Mustard; Shimmy Shack Vegan Food Truck; and Not Your Mama’s Meatballs (a student startup) presented on start-up culture for food industry entrepreneurs and challenges they faced along the way. Over 90 students were in attendance.

### Student Advocates for Nutrition (SAN)

In December, SAN worked with Students Engaged in Global Health to host a Hunger Banquet. Following the Oxfam guide, attendees were randomly assigned to a hypothetical low, middle, or high income bracket and talked through stories of people throughout the world in each income bracket. Each income bracket was served a meal in accordance with their means, and the session ended with a discussion about the realities of poverty and hunger throughout the world.

### Maize and Blue Cupboard

Maize and Blue Cupboard, a student-run food pantry, experienced a significant increase in the number of attendees at each of the food distributions, with an average of 170 people at each event. In response to the increased need, Maize and Blue Cupboard expanded their food varieties and quantities, with a large focus on fresh produce and pantry staples, and increased to twice a month.
**Nicole Kasper**  
PhD ’15 Nutrition Sciences  
UMSFP Alum

**How were you involved with UMSFP?**

I helped start Student Food Co; I worked on student food access and insecurity research for my doctoral degree; and, I received a grant for a 'Student’s food hub' which hosted educational programs.

**What did you do after you finished your studies?**

I went to the University of Colorado for a postdoc position working on Farm to School

**How is food a part of your life now?**

Besides eating lots of it! I am working on Farm to School programs, research on school food environments, and will be soon starting research on post partum health with food as a major factor. I’m also excited to start a small farm at our home.

**Do you think your experiences with UMSFP influenced, inspired, or prepared you for what you do now in any way? If so, let us know how.**

Absolutely! Everything about my experience with UMSFP has had a strong influence on my life! For example, I learned how to start and run a non-profit! I learned so much about local foods and the local food system that is now integral to the work I am doing. My visit to Tantre farms (UMSFP Retreat) was transformative - I think that was when something clicked and I felt like I really understood the true importance of local foods. Also, it made me want to pursue small scale farming and I recently bought a house that was once a small family farm.

**Is there anything else you want to share?**

This was a very important component to my University experience and I think UM should strive to be a school that is known for its student food movement. There is a unique opportunity to lead right now.
2017-2018 Student Leadership Team

Lauren Hoff - PitE; EEB; Creative Writing Minor (B.S. 2018)
Ben Iuliano - EEB (B.S. 2018)
Rebecca Simonov - Communications (B.A. 2019)
Sara Farooqui - Biochemistry; Asian Studies (B.S. 2020)
Kate Samra - Plant Biology; Food & the Environment Minor (B.S. 2019)
Connor Kippe - PitE; Political Science (B.A. 2019)
Aaron Brodkey - PitE (B.S. 2018)
Claire Grenchik - Psychology (B.A. 2020)
Adam Reichenberger - Sustainable Food Systems certificate (2018)

I’m one of the UMSFP Co-Presidents for the 2017-2018 year and this is my second year on the UMSFP Leadership Team, I joined UMSFP at the end of my sophomore year, shortly after declaring my PitE major. I had always been interested in sustainable food and agriculture and UMSFP is the perfect way to further explore that interest.

In the past year and a half, I’ve helped rebuild an urban farm in Detroit, spent a few weeks WWOOFing in North Carolina, learned about sustainable agriculture on a farm in Idaho, and even took a class on food and the environment. None of this would have been possible without the support of UMSFP and all of the unique and talented people that it has brought into my life. It’s rare to find a group of people so committed to promoting sustainable food as UMSFP and each of its member groups, and I’m grateful to be a part of it.

While I am entering my final year at Michigan, my work with sustainable food certainly isn’t over. After graduation, I’ll be heading to medical school where I plan to study the interactions between human health and the environment, focusing specifically on agriculture. I hope to either get involved with, or start, a medical campus garden and one day open up my own organic farm.

My advice to fellow students who want to learn more about UMSFP and sustainable food is just don’t be afraid to put yourself out there. Anyone who wants to learn about sustainable food will be welcomed with open arms by UMSFP and all of our member groups.
On January 21st, 2017 a retreat was held with the UMSFP leadership team and member group representation facilitated by the Campus Farm Manager and UMSFP Manager. The purpose of the retreat was to support a student led refresher of the strategic plan, particularly around ‘Big Hairy Audacious Goals’. Many of the original goals of UMSFP had been accomplished, such as the creation of a Campus Farm, hiring of staff, and clearer academic pathways in food systems.

Create Sustainable Food Innovation Hub

The Sustainable Food Innovation Hub represents a physical embodiment of many individual goals and needs of UMSFP. It is a place of education, of community development, and for sharing food. It could be a portion of an existing building, it could be an existing house, or it could be a new space. Regardless, it is a physical space that is student directed and staff supported, open to all of the community.

Comprehensive Support for UMSFP & Member Group Professional Growth

There will be clear support for student engagement, learning and leadership development throughout UMSFP’s work. The leadership structure will be changed to encourage more regular engagement and to create growth opportunities for students. UMSFP member group benefits will be expanded and more collective action will be encouraged. The student voice has more impact when efforts are collaborative, coordinated, and continue for more than one year. Students have many priorities, and finding clear ways to help prioritize UMSFP is critical.

Grow the Impact of the Campus Farm

There will be a significant expansion and scaling of the Campus Farm driven by production increase, increasing formalized academic and research collaborations, and scaffolding for student leadership and professional development. Production at the farm exists in the service of programmatic and strategic objectives and will focus on food grown by students prepared for and consumed by students through MDining. Research involving faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students will be conducted in agroecology and food systems and the farm will serve as a living laboratory for teaching and learning about sustainable food production and systems at the University. Just as the University recognizes the need for a vibrant art museum while realizing not everyone will be an artist, the University needs a robust Campus Farm to educate on and lead sustainability efforts in the broader food system.

Student Advocates for Nutrition (SAN) host a panel discussion, Food Policy in the Next Four Years. Speakers included Oran Hesterman, Betty Wiggins, Michelle Napier-Dunnings, and Amanda Edmonds; moderated by Andy Jones and Julia Wolfson. The star-studded event was supported financially by UMSFP.

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5-Year Plan

Support Low-Hanging Fruit and Shoot for the Moon
While most of UMSFP goals fit into broad categories of work, it is important to keep individual and actionable goals at the forefront to provide the space for creativity, quick impact, and continued engagement of student interest.

UMSFP will encourage:
- a formal partnership with the new School for Environment and Sustainability, Sustainable Food Systems Initiative, and other educational programs;
- integration with Sustainable Living Experience, both formally and informally;
- green roof or garden on all new campus buildings and all existing buildings undergoing major renovations;
- accessible kitchenettes for students that live off-campus and would need space to refrigerate/reheat their lunch, encouraging thriftier, healthier, and more sustainable eating.

Increase Sustainable Food Culture
It is clear that a supportive campus culture for sustainable foods is critical to the success of UMSFP. Education, learning and development are more impactful when they are immersive and comprehensive. UMSFP will engage holistically with issues of campus culture, sustainable food awareness, and the intricate web that food plays in the many facets of our lives. UMSFP realizes that food culture, knowledge, and access are not the same for everyone and need to be approached intentionally with sensitivity and compassion. It is the goal of UMSFP that ‘no one graduates from the University of Michigan without thinking critically about their personal food system.’

Honor the Needs and Knowledge of the Broader Community
Food crosses boundaries more easily and more directly than other education concepts at the University. The line between campus and the broader community is constantly blurred for students; whether eating in dining halls supplied by food distributors and local farmers, rescuing unused food to donate to a local food pantry, distributing food from the local food bank to in-need students and staff, or finding an internship with a community partner. It is the goal of UMSFP to build an intentional connection to a broader community that respects education as a reciprocal process. UMSFP will respond to community needs and interests rather than exert desired outcomes on others, learning from and partnering with the Ginsberg Center and other exemplary departments on campus.

UMSFP will:
- build stronger connections to organizations and food systems leaders in Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, Flint, and Detroit, using the success of Food Literacy for All as a model of successful community engagement.

Maintaining authentic and grassroots student voice and leadership are critical to the development of the future of the University. These goals, structure and ideas represent the student voice from the retreat and individual meetings with student stakeholders. It is evident that student leadership and autonomy must be maintained, while seeking highly collaborative and co-created structures between SFSI, UMSFP, Campus Farm, SEAS, SLE and other excited partners.

Urban farmer, Melvin Parson of We the Peoples Growers Association visits with Summer Bridge Scholars Program Students. Farmer Parsons spoke about his business and goals of creating a world-class urban farm, hiring formerly incarcerated individuals.

Photo: Lilly Fink Shapiro
03. University of Michigan Campus Farm

The Campus Farm serves the greater University of Michigan community through formal and informal educational opportunities and research related to the production of sustainable food.

Living Learning Laboratory

The Campus Farm is a place where students, faculty and staff can engage hands on in food production, education and research and where student managers engage in leadership development, authentic educational opportunities and problem solving.

Food Grown by Students for Students "From Our Farm to Our Tables"

In partnership with MDining Student Managers of the Campus Farm are growing produce to feed their fellow students. Increasing awareness of the impact of sustainability in food production to students in residence halls all across campus.

Academic Engagement Faculty, Courses, Programs and Research

The Campus Farm hosts and engages with food systems related courses from all across campus, partnering and collaborating on new course development, lab exercises, and research with faculty, graduate and undergraduate students.

Farm Manager Hired!

In 2016 a long held goal of the Campus Farm was achieved as the first full-time permanent staff farm manager was hired. Jeremy Moghtader joined the staff team in November at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens where the farm is located, with the goals of facilitating and mentoring robust student management as well as increasing program development at the farm for teaching and research. Prior to joining CF Jeremy was the director of programs and farm manager at the MSU Student Organic Farm where he worked for the past 12 years. Jeremy is a UM alum with a BS in Economics (1998) and MS in Resource Ecology and Management from SNRE/SEAS (2004).

Left: Sydney Fuller (Art- Design/ Program in the Environment 2018 & Campus Farm Student Manager) watering in the inaugural hoophouse planting at the CF Center. Blake Mowatttars (PiTE 2020) and Haley Kerner (PiTE 2019) both Campus Farm Student Managers with bountiful produce headed to MDining.

Right: Eliot Jackson (SEAS MS 2017), conducting soil sampling for Blesh Agroecology Lab (SEAS) research at Campus Farm.

Bottom: Jeremy Moghtader (Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum) with Kossak storage kohlrabi.
A Hoophouse Raising

Students and Volunteers raised a 30’x 96’ Passive Solar Greenhouse (aka a hoophouse).

The Planet Blue Student Innovation Fund supported the first hoophouse at the Campus Farm which helped to synchronize production and student engagement opportunities with the academic year.

What is a Hoophouse?

A passive solar greenhouse or high tunnel or hoophouse as the regional variations go are names for a structure that is heated only by the sun, but allows for the year round production of local produce even in places with cold winters like MI. Solar radiation enters the plastic film covered structure and is either absorbed by the thermal mass of the soil or reflected back up toward the roof where much of it is then reflected back down into the greenhouse the same way it works in our atmosphere hence the “greenhouse effect”. Harried in this fashion, it allows for production of nutritious leafy greens like spinach, kale and collards all winter long while extending the production of warm season crops like tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers earlier and later into the season.

"These structures allow students the opportunity to engage with the farm throughout the academic year when most students are on campus both with planting and harvesting. In addition winter production better meets the peak demand for MDining at a time when local produce is hardest to source", according to Campus Farm Manager Jeremy Moghtader who has over 12 years of experience growing local produce year round in these structures.

More hoophouses are planned for the Campus Farm in the coming years with the next 2 houses being built fall 2018.

Dorris Duke Conservation Scholars (DDCS) visiting the Campus Farm in 2017. They are one of the several summer programs with which Campus Farm engages, including, M-STEM Academies and the LSA Summer Bridge Scholars Program.

- 15 Courses visited the Campus Farm or received guest lectures from the Campus Farm manager
- 297 Students comprising 427 contact hours engaged with the farm during class
- 530 Student visits Friends of the Campus Farm student organization facilitated to their workdays
- 25 Friday Campus Farm workdays during fall and winter term with free transportation organized by Friends of the Campus Farm

Left to Right: Jena Brooker, Doris Duke Conservation Scholar, and Campus Farm Student Managers Haley Kemter and Connor Kippe, harvest kale and chard for MDining in the hoophouse.
GAP Certification Enables Campus Farm to Sell Produce to MDining

"Producing food for my fellow students is an empowering and impactful experience... one that I hope can help raise awareness of critical issues and innovative solutions in Sustainable Food Systems."

–Kate Samra
Campus Farm, lead student manager
Plant Biology and PPE (2019)
UMSFP board member

First Delivery: 100 lbs of chard and 100 lbs of kale with produce being prepared for lunch less than 20 minutes after leaving the Campus Farm
**Research and Course Engagement**

**Blesh Agroecology Lab (SEAS)**

Dr. Jennifer Blesh and her Agroecology Lab are conducting several experiments this season at the Campus Farm investigating links between plant diversity in farm fields and multiple ecosystem services including soil health, soil nutrient cycling processes, and nutritional value of food crops.

The Campus Farm hosted research in 2017 for 2 Blesh Lab PhD students, a masters student, and a senior honors thesis student.

*pictured: top Dr. Jennifer Blesh, Eliot Jackson (SEAS MS2017), Anne Elise Stratton (SEAS PhD Student)*

**Diverse Farming Systems Theory and Practice**

SEAS 553

Dr. Ivette Perfecto, SEAS

Campus Farm Manager Jeremy Moghtader collaborated with Dr. Ivette Perfecto to design, plant and maintain an intercropping system that SEAS 553 students will use for an all day field lab investigating over-yielding in systems where two crops are planted together.

*Corn & Bean Intercrop experiment planted at Campus Farm Summer of 2017 for SEAS 553*

**Why did you choose to be a student manager at the Campus Farm?**

I love that at the farm we provide our peers with fresh, quality, organic produce through the dining halls on campus. The inequities and difficulties that farmers around the world face at every scale are very concerning to me. As an employee of the Campus Farm, I am learning not only how to grow quality produce but also how to think about sustainable solutions for complicated problems that farmers face every day.

*Sydney Fuller
Campus Farm Student Manager| Art and Design & PitE (2018)*

**The Campus Farm: Looking Ahead**

- Collaboration with SEAS around the Food and Environment minor to develop gateway or capstone course experiences based at the Campus Farm
- Increase the number of courses and the number of researchers utilizing and collaborating with the Campus Farm
- Build strong and diverse student management team that empowers students to develop and build skills needed to be positive change agents for a more sustainable world
- Build more hoophouses and grow more food to feed minds and bodies across campus

**Etienne Herrick**
Senior Honors Thesis researcher in Blesh Agroecology Lab (SEAS)

Why are you interested in Agroecological Research and what were the benefits to doing your research at the Campus Farm?

I have a strong interest in improving the health of both humanity and the environment. Agroecology represents a systemic approach to doing just that, encompassing ecological, social, political, and economic dimensions, which must all be carefully considered when attempting to solve a problem as big and complex as our broken food system.

Doing my research at Campus Farm enabled me to conduct a field research project in a more controlled environment exploring how to enhance ecosystem services in agricultural systems through the application of cover crops (non-harvested crops).

Etienne was the President of the Student Food Co., a UMSFP member group. She is pursuing a B.S. in PitE with a Terrestrial Ecology specialization, a Food Systems minor and Honors Thesis.
Michigan Dining works directly with local farmers and producers to include sustainable foods in menus. It has a goal of serving 20 percent of food on campus purchased from farms within a 250-mile radius.

MDining has nine dining halls, catering services and more than two dozen markets and cafés located across the Ann Arbor campus.

MDining serves approximately 25000 meals a day, over 4 million per year.

97% of dining staff are Planet Blue ambassador certified. Staff go through a sustainability training that focuses on our campuses’ five sustainability goals (Waste, water, food, energy, and culture).

Left: MFarmers Market set up on South Ingalls Mall with posters highlighting local food.
Center: Local farmer, Dale Lesser, sells honey at the MFarmers Market on South Ingalls Mall
Right: Chef Matt Zatraka prepares sustainable seafood for students at an event in South Quad Dining Hall.
Bottom: Chefs Nicholas Machinski, Brian Barker, Frank Turchan, and Allan Sheldon are checking out produce from its source at UM Campus Farm.

https://dining.umich.edu/
Dining Prioritizes Sustainable

Food expenses are shifting to more local and sustainable.

18% of sustainable/local food spend in Michigan Dining.

90% of Michigan Dining food expenses are spent on Michigan-based companies.

Michigan Dining works with local growers, producers and vendors to increase local and sustainable food purchases. What does that mean?

Local
- Grown locally (within 250 miles or within the state of Michigan) Processed foods that are processed locally with more than 50% of the ingredients by cost are grown locally.

Sustainable
- Third party certified (Organic, Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, MSC, etc)

Michigan Company
- Michigan based company and product was not sourced locally or processed using the definition above.

Tom Zilke, of Zilke Vegetable Farm, sells produce to market goers on South Ingalls Mall. Tom provides fresh produce to MDining from his farm in Milan, MI.

Incoming first year students eat food at the convocation picnic, coordinated by New Student Programming, MDining, and Office of Campus Sustainability. The zero waste event is also a distribution point for students to receive a free reusable water bottle to aid the University’s goal of waste reduction.

The Expanded M Farmers Markets celebrate healthy eating and sustainable living during a day filled with chef demonstrations of easy recipes, tips for healthy eating, free samples, giveaways, information stations and more.

Fresh fruits, veggies and other locally sourced food items are sold by local farms, including the Campus Farm. The partnership event focuses on sustainability and education. Four larger events targeted towards students were held in Fall 2016, two on North Campus and two on Central Campus. The market is a valuable opportunity for students to interact with the farmers who produce the University of Michigan’s food and to directly access healthy food options.

M Farmers Market is a collaboration of Michigan Dining, Central Student Government, MHealthy, Planet Blue, and the Student Sustainability Initiative.
In an effort to provide a living-learning laboratory, MDining hosts the Planet Blue Student Leaders Program. Planet Blue Student Leaders work in Student Life as peer-to-peer "eco-reps" and focus on supporting a culture of sustainability.

This winter, MDining hosted the Culinary Institute of America’s regional meeting with a strong focus on highlighting Sea to Table options for attending members. The meeting is hosted by a different restaurant or institution each month and highlights the locations strength or point of pride. With a continued shift towards sustainable and local, MDining focused on sustainable fisheries.

Through a partnership with Sea to Table, a company that provides seafood from sustainable wild fisheries, MDining staff prepared fish that are typically not seen in commercial and retail locations, such as monkfish and spiny dogfish. These atypical fish are in abundance in the sea and can take the pressure off highly utilized seafood.

In an effort to provide a living-learning laboratory, MDining hosts the Planet Blue Student Leaders Program. Planet Blue Student Leaders work in Student Life as peer-to-peer "eco-reps" and focus on supporting a culture of sustainability.

Daniel Wu – EEB (B.S. 2018)
Planet Blue Student Leader
Composting Pilot

Daniel’s experience working with PBSL:

What do you do with your banana peel once you’ve eaten your banana? In most places you would have to throw it away. But for Bursley residents, this is no longer the case!

Composting is a simple process and many other universities have successful residence hall composting programs. However, it isn’t as simple as plopping down some bins and telling people to use them.

It took independent work, group meetings and one-on-one meetings to make it all happen. We, as Planet Blue Student Leaders, researched composting, contacted other schools to learn about their best practices for implementing and running a program, selected and ordered bins, organized a competition to promote student participation, planned a kick-off event, recruited students to participate in the pilot, developed a slew of marketing materials, and coordinated with the awesome facilities team. Working on the Bursley composting pilot thrust me right into the inner workings of the university.
Hungry for more?

Sustainable Food Systems Initiative (SFSI)
Sustainable Food Program (UMSFP)
Campus Farm Dining and Operations