

Education and Leadership

IV. Cultivating Leadership in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems

Summary

This initiative aims to create opportunities throughout ASI's three thematic areas (Agriculture, Resources and the Environment, Food and Society, and Education and Leadership) to cultivate leadership and nurture new leaders. Strategies will be implemented throughout ASI's activities to foster and reward leadership within UC, particularly with undergraduate and graduate students, new faculty and Cooperative Extension personnel. Additionally, working with diverse partners, leadership will be nurtured, encouraged and recognized among key community stakeholders across all aspects of the food system and allied fields.

Problem statement/ Baseline

- There is significant need for skilled, effective leaders in sustainable agriculture and food systems because of the vital importance of this area to the future of society and the environment.
- As a still emerging field, sustainable agriculture has relatively few established organizations and mechanisms for fostering and recognizing leaders in the field.

Structural issues/ Broad drivers shaping change

- Sustainable agriculture and food systems organizations often devote insufficient resources to leadership development.
- Interdisciplinary research and other collaborative projects can be very helpful in developing effective leadership skills, particularly among academics interested in sustainable agriculture and food systems. However, the reward structure at universities does little to encourage such activities.

Strategic opportunity

- There is a growing recognition of the need for effective leaders in the development of a more sustainable society and there are new organizations focused on sustainable agriculture emerging that will contribute to the development of such leaders.
- Many existing agricultural, environmental, community and academic organizations already promote leadership development.
- There are existing and emerging curricula and programs that include leadership development; they can provide valuable examples, approaches, materials, insights and lessons for developing leadership in students.

Desired outcomes

- Talented young people are supported in pursuing higher education and careers in agriculture and the food system and given opportunities to develop leadership skills through their involvement in this field. Groups traditionally underrepresented in agriculture and food systems are well represented.
- There are increasing numbers of sustainable agriculture leaders among practitioners, students, faculty and others who are skillfully and effectively serving society and contributing to the development of more sustainable agriculture and food systems.
- There are strong positive relationships among these leaders that include sharing, collaborating, mentoring and supporting one another in other ways.
- There are increased opportunities for developing leaders and leadership in sustainable agriculture and increased recognition of such leaders.

Key Partners

- Existing organizations and activities promoting sustainable agriculture leadership, their members and participants, particularly those in which ASI already has played key roles (e.g., National Symposium on Food Systems and Sustainability, Sustainable Agriculture Education Association, Institute for Conservation Leadership-FAS)
- Existing leadership groups (e.g., California Agricultural Leadership Foundation, Roots of Change Fellows Program, Sand County Foundation Aldo Leopold Award)
- Organizations and institutions working with primary and secondary school students in sustainable agriculture and food systems (e.g., FARMS, 4-H, FFA, GEO at Grant High School, Alameda Point Collaborative)
- Student groups at colleges (e.g. Students for Sustainable Agriculture)
- Faculty, staff and programs involved in mentoring students (e.g., Internship and Career Center)
- Sponsors and hosts for student internships
- Foundations and other financial supporters

Activities

- Leadership development is central to the new undergraduate major in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems and is incorporated into various courses, internships and other aspects of the major.
- Undergraduate and graduate students in courses, internships, research projects, student organizations etc. are mentored by faculty and staff to help build their leadership skills and confidence.
- ASI sponsors education and training events for individuals to help them develop their leadership skills and for faculty, staff and others to help improve their leadership mentoring skills.
- By hosting the National Symposium on Food Systems and Sustainability and Inter-institutional Network for Food, Agriculture and Sustainability (INFAS), ASI helps

existing and emerging sustainable agriculture and food systems leaders build stronger relationships and enhance their leadership abilities.

- Through INFAS these leaders collaborate to identify, assess and make visible critical trends and vulnerabilities in agriculture and food system sustainability, engage resources and capabilities to forge collaborative solutions, and make accessible useful, science-based knowledge to accelerate the transition to food system sustainability and social justice.
- ASI staff and affiliates help guide the Sustainable Agriculture Education Association which fosters leadership among sustainable agriculture learners and educators nationally.
- ASI collaborates with partners on leadership development for California youth in various ways.
- Through awards such as the Eric Bradford and Charlie Rominger Agricultural Sustainability Award, Van Vlieden undergraduate scholarship and the Shapiro Family dissertation award, ASI helps recognize and promote sustainable agriculture leadership.
- ASI offers scholarships for producers, farm and food service workers or other practitioners who exhibit potential for becoming new leaders and want to pursue additional training and education at UC.

Resources needed for 5 years

Total need: \$1.34 million

- Leadership and leadership mentoring training for educators and students: \$225K
- Scholarships for undergraduate students: \$250K
- High school youth leadership development collaborations: \$300K
- National Symposium on Food Systems and Inter-institutional Network for Food, Agriculture and Sustainability (INFAS): \$565

Current extramural funds: \$100K

Additional need: \$1.24 million