

**Student Farm Equity and Inclusion Plan**

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**Background:**

The Student Farm is a 23-acre education farm at UC Davis. Currently, and historically, the Student Farm has focused on sustainable agriculture and food systems, emphasizes in-field experiential learning, and supports student exploration, creativity, initiative and leadership. In recent years, Students of Color and LGBTQIA students (and their allies) have challenged permanent staff to closely examine the values that make up the Student Farm and to develop a social justice plan that acknowledges the inequity in the larger food system and addresses how oppression manifests at the Student Farm specifically.

Students asked: How is the farm prioritizing social justice within its framework of sustainability? How does the Student Farm address current and historical injustices in our collective broader food system? How can the farm’s curriculum move away from Eurocentrism and heteronormativity to value the rich agricultural knowledge of POC and LGBTQIA people? Does the Farm’s leadership reflect an intention to value these knowledges? How does the Student Farm ensure that all students, regardless of background, major, or experience farming are welcome, heard, seen, and *safe* (physically, mentally, and emotionally) in this space? This last question echoes the famous words of Dr. Martin Luther King: “no one is free until we are all free.”

In response to these brave student voices, the Student Farm embarked on a year-long process to develop this plan. The process was productive and at times challenging. The work included getting input from students, staff and faculty and those who do and do not feel part of this place. At times this meant discomfort and pain, but also learning, unlearning, and many insights. One

result is the following plan which begins to address and explore many of the issues but certainly does not address all.

Some people will look at this plan and ask why are we engaging in this work? Others will look at this plan and ask why are we not doing more? It bears acknowledging that the Student Farm, like the university as a whole, is a complicated and complex place. Students come to it for a wide variety of reasons ranging from practicing social justice, to learning beginning gardening practices. Most agree that it is a place to garden and farm, as we explore different ways to know, connect and heal with land and community, in order to cultivate a better world. However, it is a fair assessment and perhaps ongoing critique and limitation, that as a whole, the Student Farm, is generally apolitical. This plan does not do all that the students who challenged the community to address these issues asked, or that valid critiques of the program might point towards. As such, this plan addresses equity and inclusion rather than social justice in its entirety. Social justice involves interrupting and deconstructing systems within and external to UC Davis. The Student Farm is working within the current system with an intent to institute inclusive practices

The Student Farm context is a program within the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science that also serves the entire campus. These same issues are being explored actively at the college and campus level and policy is being developed. UC Davis broadly, and the UCD Student Farm specifically, strives to “create an environment where everyone feels included and heard” (UCD Equity and Inclusion Plan). In 2017 UCD released a Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Vision that included 5 goals related to recruitment and retention of underrepresented students and staff; the campus climate; research, teaching, public service and training; and institutional commitment. These university goals, developed through a series of stakeholder meetings, broadly match those identified by the Student Farm community during the 2018-19 academic year through the following three channels: Farm Forum 2019, a study conducted by CHI 141 (Chicana/o Studies, Prof. Deeb-Sossa), and community meetings leading to the development of this draft plan. Moreover, the role of the UC Davis Student Farm at a public land grant university which were set up to benefit *all* people, requires that we address inequities in our ongoing work. See resource list for additional information on food system injustices.

Acknowledging that sustainable agriculture and food systems require not only environmental and economic sustainability, but also social sustainability, we have drafted this **Student Farm Equity and Inclusion Plan** to move our community towards greater social justice. We are guided by the

UC Davis definitions for equity and inclusion. UC Davis and the Student Farm define **Equity** as “the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty and staff, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.”

UC Davis and the Student Farm define **Inclusion** as “the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. Inclusion integrates the fact of diversity and embeds it into the core academic mission and institutional functioning.”

The following plan, developed by Student Farm staff and students and with input from a review committee, aims to be a practical guide providing actionable steps towards equity and inclusion. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to this process, to those who came before and to those still to come. Through this plan we hope to both better acknowledge and work against inequities experienced by people in agriculture and food systems and celebrate the significant contributions they’ve made. This plan is a starting point for us, which we hope will change the trajectory of our path in positive ways. Along with annual progress reports, in three years we’ll revisit the plan to review the progress we’ve made and how this plan might be updated. It bears note that we recognize that we can’t do this alone. We will need to develop strategic partnerships to build out our current knowledge base in these issues and continued support and leadership from the university.

**Timeline of Relevant Student Farm Activities\***

\*This timeline is incomplete in that it does not include all of the efforts and organizing on behalf of individuals and groups to bring these and other issues to light.

**1978:** Student Experimental Farm project is initiated at UC Davis by students who want to explore environmental and social justice in agriculture more thoroughly than other UCD venues were providing.

**Winter and Spring 2016:** Kids in the Garden program discussions center on the need for greater representation among Student Farm staff and student employees. This came to light as Kids in the Garden students reflected on the ways in which they did and did not represent the children they were bringing through the garden.

**September 2016:** Student Farm initiates the Community Table Project to help address food insecurity and explore social and food justice at the Student Farm and in the broader campus food system.

**2016-2018:** The Agricultural Sustainability Institute, under which the Student Farm resides, creates a Social Equity Committee, conducts a racial equity assessment and develops a Racial Equity Improvement Plan. Through the Community Table Project, the Student Farm builds its understanding and capacity around equity and inclusion through various ways, including working with campus partners (OCCR, PEACE, and the Arboretum) to develop and offer trainings in equity and inclusion to staff and student employees. Student Farm leadership values are revised to more clearly uplift equity and inclusion. Relationship building begins with faculty in Chicana/o Studies and Native American Studies and staff at student support centers in the Student Community Center and the Educational Opportunity Program.

**January 2019:** Students propose the idea of developing a social justice plan for the Student Farm at Farm Forum.

**Winter quarter 2019:** Chi 141 Class conducts a study at the Student Farm to gather feedback about student experience on the farm - with a focus on the experiences of Chicana students and underrepresented groups more broadly.

**May 2019:** Chi 141 Report Back meeting occurs at the farm. Student Farm community reviews the results of the Chi 141 study and generates additional thoughts on representation and diversity at the farm.

**Summer and Fall 2019:** Series of community and staff meetings along with small team work to develop the Equity and Inclusion Plan draft.

**Winter 2020:** Review committee meeting and additional community meeting and presentation of Student Farm Equity and Inclusion Plan at Farm Forum 2020

**Action Steps****1. Address sense of belonging at the Student Farm so all students thrive**

*We recognize that some students feel a sense of otherness in this space (includes some students of color, some LGBTQIA students, and some students that are non-science majors). Some students don't feel a part of the Student Farm community unless they're an intern or student employee, but student employee positions require previous experience as an intern and not all students are able to do unpaid internships.*

**1.1.** Build relationships and partnerships with groups on campus working with UCD's diverse student body to better understand how the Student Farm can support those groups. This could be accomplished for example by working with partners in the following ways: 1) creating workshops or activities that push beyond the three pillars of sustainable agriculture to make space for other visions of land relations (food sovereignty, land justice, queer ecologies, and indigenous practices), 2) supporting campus groups who may lack a farming focus but whose work is connected to land, and 3) strengthening partnerships with the Community Resource and Retention Centers, Educational Opportunity Program, and Student Academic Success Centers so that the Student Farm can best meet the needs of those students.

**1.2.** Review Student Farm documents such as internship learning objectives,, written guidelines for tours, course syllabi for classes taught by staff and identify ways to add additional programming when funding is available. Identify ways in which to integrate learning related to food justice - both highlighting inequities and celebrating the contributions of all peoples. This would require collaborations with faculty or staff with deep knowledge and experience related to these topics. This could also include, for example, supporting development of a First Year Seminar exploring cultural food ways, traditional farming and gardening practices, or exploring the Latinx experience in agriculture while using the Student Farm as a living laboratory.

**1.3.** Help visitors and new students acclimate more easily to the space. This could be accomplished in the following ways: through 1) improved signage and art showing the location of the Student Farm including how people can access and move through the space beyond internships and courses, what this space is and who it is for, and additional information such as the land acknowledgement and history of agriculture (*see item 2.3 below*) and 2) developing a

protocol for guests and volunteers to identify and locate lead student farmers (e.g. walky-talky, signs, name tags.)

**1.4.** Ensure permanent staff and Lead Student Farmers reflect the UCD student body and broader California by reviewing hiring, recruitment, and retention efforts at the Student Farm (see *section 3 on hiring below.*)

**1.5.** Seek out, build relationships with and increase network of community partners, especially those that include farmers of color and queer farmers, e.g. through the Sacramento Area Farmers of Color network, including 3 Sisters Garden, the Cache Creek Tending and Gathering Garden, PASO garden, and Knights Landing Community Gardens, as a way to help students access different perspectives, celebrate and lift up their contributions to sustainable agriculture and just food systems, and learn how the Student Farm can better support this broader community.

**1.6.** Explore and report on avenues to increase Student Farm access for students unable to partake in short or long unpaid internships, e.g. through work study, philanthropic gifts, or grant funding (*see also item 3.2 below.*)

**1.7.** Explore and report on the idea and source of support to offer land access for underrepresented students, where, for example, students could grow food for donation, grow culturally diverse food, and could discuss issues related to equity and justice in the food system with support from mentors.

**1.8.** Review organizational structure of the Student Farm, the reporting and accountability avenues to ensure that specific concerns of students are received and valued (*see steps below.*)

**2. Increase the Student Farm's positive contribution to a campus climate of "equity and justice demonstrated by respect for one another."**

*We heard some students request improved employee trainings that address the experience of minority groups in this space, especially related to gender pronouns, micro-aggressions, and tokenization. Students requested the Student Farm develop a land acknowledgement statement recognizing the original stewards of this land. Some students were concerned about the tension between education and production in this space. Some students were concerned about police presence at the Student Farm. (Police have entered the Student Farm space in response to break-ins and park their vehicles near or on the Student Farm to do paperwork.) Students also expressed concern that POC and LGBTQIA students were being asked to lead efforts addressing these issues without compensation.*

**2.1.** Build and write shared language and understanding around Student Farm values and community agreements - especially as they relate to equity, inclusion, and social justice (see *item 1.1 and 1.2 above*).

**2.2.** Develop a shared understanding of the history of the Student Farm, e.g. related to student autonomy, activism, and the relationship between production for sale and education and how we can give back to the land. This could begin to be addressed by creating a written history and explanation of this ongoing tension.

**2.3.** Begin to build sustained relationships with local tribal groups to determine if and how tribes might want to engage with the Student Farm. Post, refer, and read the land acknowledgement statement published by UC Davis at Student Farm events and consider how it can be incorporated in other ways (see glossary for UCD Land Acknowledgement Statement).

**2.4.** Provide and require attendance at improved cross-cultural trainings for student and non-student employees of the Student Farm, especially related to gender, sexuality, and underrepresented groups. Address why creating equitable and inclusive learning environments is important. Prior to requiring attendance update position descriptions to include this required training.

**2.5.** Develop an employee handbook and continue to offer improved on-boarding process of Student Farm student and permanent employees. This would allow employees to better understand their role as farmers, mentors, and people who help shape the culture of the Student Farm and include references to this plan.

**2.6.** Explore and report on how we could develop a communication protocol for police when present on the Student Farm.

### **3. Improve recruitment and retention at the Student Farm**

*We recognize that students were concerned about representation among and diversity of Student Farm employees. Students were also concerned about the transparency of hiring practices at the Student Farm.*

**3.1.** Review hiring process across spaces to ensure that the process is transparent, that positions are openly and broadly advertised, that job posting language is inclusive, and that job qualifications are clearly stated in position descriptions. Use UC Davis resources and support tools (<https://diversity.ucdavis.edu/how-do-i/diversify-my-hiring>)

**3.2.** Review and update position descriptions with support from the UC Davis Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Ensure that all position qualifications include cultural competence and ability to work with diverse audiences. Consider adding additional requirements related to a background in land justice, food justice, and/or social justice.

**3.3.** Explore and report on pathways to employment for students unable to intern without pay and creating opportunities for undocumented students.

**3.4.** Outline recruitment, retention, promotion, rehire, evaluation and termination processes for all employees.

**4. Improve equity in learning and across programs at the Student Farm**

*We understand that some students were concerned about an educational model built around selling goods, how they perceive it to impacts relationships between programs, and how that impacts learning. Some students were also concerned that some students had more access to Student Farm knowledge than others (e.g. volunteers vs interns vs Lead Student Farmers).*

**4.1.** Improve understanding between Student Farm programs and explore the relationship between money generating and non-money generating programs (see also item 1.6 on non-money generating land access).

**4.2.** Explore the pros and cons of the idea of moving away from income generating program models, determine if and how students access farm produce and flowers, including through CSA membership, and the possibility of holding a proportion of CSA memberships for students.

**4.3.** Clearly describe and publish how student learning, access to knowledge, role, and responsibility in the different programs changes over time, e.g. volunteer, general intern, FLD intern, specialized intern, Lead Student Farmer

**5. Ensure Student Farm commitment and accountability**

*We understand that students want to make sure that there is action and follow through with this plan.*

**5.1.** Post this plan publicly on the UC Davis Student Farm website and at various farm spaces (e.g. field house, packing shed).

**5. 2** Form a Committee of partners, students and staff to provide advice and facilitate movement forward throughout the year on the plan’s action items.

**5.3.** Develop multiple pathways through which students (volunteers, interns, and employees) can communicate with staff to provide feedback, e.g. check-ins, end of quarter survey, non-permanent

staff liaison. In addition, engage and request feedback from staff, campus partners, and community groups.

**5.4.** Work with campus partners to develop clear and transparent processes when issues arise at the Student Farm.

**5.4.** Revisit progress on action steps at the end of Spring Quarter 2020 and report on progress at Farm Forums in January 2021, January 2022, and January 2023

### **What's next?**

#### Winter Quarter 2020

- Student Farm staff will (1) meet with the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion to review language in this document, (2) prioritize action steps based on both feasibility, funding and urgency - taking into account Farm Forum 2020 feedback, (3) post this document on the Student Farm website and make hardcopies available at the farm, and (4) identify funding and staff time available for the upcoming year

#### Spring/Summer Quarter 2020

- Student Farm staff or a Lead Student Farmer will announce the call for the committee to help move short and medium term priorities forward and develop a work plan for the 2020-21 academic year

#### Fall Quarter 2020

- Implement 2020-21 academic year work plan

#### Winter Quarter 2021

- Implement 2020-21 academic year work plan
- Report on and review progress of plan implementation at Farm Forum 2021

**Glossary of Terms Used**

**Student Farm:** A 23-acre education farm at UC Davis that focuses on sustainable agriculture and food systems, emphasizes in-field experiential learning, and supports student exploration, creativity, initiative and leadership.

**Student Farm Community:** A collection of individuals who interact (or have interacted) with the student farm as students, volunteers, interns, visitors, and staff. As with any community, it is a contested space with uneven power relations where some have more voice than others. We recognize that strong community does not magically occur from holding events and that some community members may not feel safe or welcome in such gatherings. We look forward to doing the reconciliatory and healing work to become a community where conflict is generative and relationships are honest and genuine.

**Broader Student Farm Community:** A collection of the student farm community and its partners in the Yolo and Sac County area. Also includes anyone who is interested in sustainable agriculture and food systems in these areas.

**Sustainability:** Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental, and social.

**Sustainable Agriculture:** The goal of sustainable agriculture is to meet society's food and textile needs in the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (see **sustainability** definition). Practitioners of sustainable agriculture seek to integrate three main objectives into their work: a healthy environment, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. Although the conversation around sustainable agriculture in the US tends to be Eurocentric, many of the agricultural practices used originated from people of color. (adapted from UCD [Agricultural Sustainability Institute](#))

**Apolitical:** Technically defined as “not interested or involved in politics.” Practically it often means that the individual or organization intentionally or unintentionally accepts the status quo without seeking to challenge it.

**Eurocentrism:** 1. The process and product of the cultural default of Whiteness. 2. The utilization of European cultural standards as universal standards that all should be judged by. 3. To orient to European people and cultures as the benchmark of: humanity, culture, truth, virtue, style, beauty, civility, knowledge, and ethics; a deification of European people and their cultures. (YWCA Social Justice Glossary)

**Heteronormativity:** Attitudes and behaviors that incorrectly assume gender is binary, ignoring genders besides women and men, and that people should and will align with conventional expectations of society for gender identity, gender expression, and sexual and romantic attraction. For example, someone assigned female at birth is expected to 1) have a body that is considered “female” by the dominant culture, 2) identify as a girl or woman, 3) act feminine and fulfill the roles associated with girls and/or women, and 4) be romantically and sexually attracted to men. (UCD LGBTQIA resource center)

**Privilege:** A set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group. The concept has roots in WEB DuBois’ work on “psychological wage” and white people’s feelings of superiority over Black people. Peggy McIntosh wrote about privilege as a white woman and developed an inventory of unearned privileges that she experienced in daily life because of her whiteness. (UCD LGBTQIA resource center)

**Micro-aggression:** 1. Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. 2. The “normalized” (verbal and non-verbal) violent behaviors that daily challenge the full humanity and dignity of people who are or appear to be members of a minoritized population. Due to their frequency, microaggressions have a cumulative (negative) impact on the psychological, emotional, and/or physical well-being of the recipients of these assaults. Examples of microaggressions include a person who is not white being told they speak “good English” or someone saying something is “gay” to mean they think something is bad. ( YWCA Social Justice Glossary; UCD LGBTQIA resource center)

**Food Justice:** Communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy and culturally appropriate food (adapted from Just Food).

**Food Sovereignty:** Communities exercising the power to define their own food & agriculture systems. Food sovereignty moves from a rights based framework to a community governance and power framework, recognizing that “rights” are almost never given without a fight. This shift centers the needs of those working and consuming at all points of the food chain, over the demands of corporations & markets (adapted from [National Black Food and Justice Alliance](#)).

**Otherness:** A term used for the way people tend to view others (people or nature) that are dissimilar and separated from them. 1. In some cases the terms are used in a general and neutral way to signify that which is fundamental different. 2. In other cases they imply a complex system of devaluation ([Barnhill, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh](#)).

**Diversity:** A variety of things. Recognition of difference alone does not equal justice or inclusion. A diversity focus emphasizes “how many of these” we have in the room, organization, etc. Diversity programs and cultural celebrations/education programs are not equivalent to doing racial justice. It is possible to name, acknowledge, and celebrate diverse cultures without doing anything to transform the institutional or structural systems that produce, and maintain racialized injustices in our communities. (YWCA Social Justice Glossary)

**Tokenism:** Tokenism is the practice of cherry-picking a handful of societally underrepresented individuals, as a perfunctory effort to appear diverse and representative of the larger society. ([Gal-dem](#))

**Equity:** To treat everyone fairly. An equity emphasis seeks to render justice by deeply considering structural factors that benefit some social groups/communities and harms other social groups/communities. Sometimes justice demands, for the purpose of equity, an unequal response. (YWCA Social Justice Glossary)

**Inclusion:** 1. An intentional effort to transform the status quo by creating opportunity for those who have been historically marginalized. 2. An inclusion focus emphasizes outcomes of diversity rather than assuming that increasing the amount of explicit diversity of people automatically creates equity in access/opportunity, or an enhanced organizational climate. 3. Begins with the needs, wants, and quality of life of the historically Minoritized population rather than the historically privileged. (YWCA Social Justice Glossary)

**Intersectionality:** A term coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s to describe the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalized identities. Intersectionality looks at the relationships between multiple marginalized identities and allows us to analyze social problems more fully, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy amongst communities. (UCD LGBTQIA resource center)

**Pronouns:** Linguistic tools used to refer to someone in the third person. Examples are they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his. In English and some other languages, pronouns have been tied to gender and are a common site of misgendering (attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect.) (UCD LGBTQIA resource center)

**Land Acknowledgement:** An Indigenous Land or Territorial Acknowledgement is a statement that recognizes the Indigenous peoples who have been dispossessed from the homelands and territories upon which an institution was built and currently occupies and operates in. It is critical public intervention that must be orally spoken and a necessary step toward honoring Native communities and enacting the much larger project of decolonization and reconciliation. Acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationship and informed action (adopted from [USDAC](#) and [Land Acknowledgement Guide Collective](#)).

*“We should take a moment to acknowledge the land on which we are gathered. For thousands of years, this land has been the home of Patwin people. Today, there are three federally recognized Patwin tribes: Cachil DeHe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community, Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation, and Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation. The Patwin people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations. We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands.”*

**Oppression:** 1. A system for gaining, abusing and maintaining structural and institutional power for the benefit of a limited dominant class. 2. The inequitable distribution of structural and institutional power. 3. A system where a select few hoard power, wealth and resources at the detriment of the many. 4. The lack of access, opportunity, safety, security and resources that Minoritized populations experience; a direct result of a vacuum created by privilege. 5. A state of being that is the opposite of social justice. (YWCA Social Justice Glossary)

**Social Justice:** 1. An anti-oppression orientation to social and political organization. 2. The process and goal of addressing the root causes of institutional and structural “isms.” 3. A vision of the world where all groups of people can live (and be perceived) as fully human on all levels (personal, social, institutional, and structural). 4. A vision of the world not rooted in the dominance of any one group over all others. Such a vision would include recognizing the inherent worth and connectedness of all people, animals, plants, and all other resources of our planet and universe. Additionally, this vision of the world would not be rooted in a scarcity model that devalues things that are abundant (many can have access to or can acquire) and highly values that which is scarce or rare (very few can have access to or acquire). (YWCA Social Justice Glossary)

**Sense of Belonging:** Sense of belonging is constituted through shared meanings and sense of social alliance between people and places where they reside” (Shutika 2011, p. 15). The development of sense of belonging is the result of activities that students at an institution, in this case a public land grant university, employ to situate themselves and others in new situations on campus in their everyday life.

**Collaboration:** The action of working with someone to produce or create something. Requires relationship building, respect and reciprocity.

### **Review Committee Members**

Review committee members were a mix of students, staff, and faculty and represented the following groups: Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, School of Education, Chicana/o Studies, LGBTQIA+ Resource Center, Asian Pacific Islander Retention Center, Housing and Dining Services, and UCSC’s Center for Agroecology and Food Systems. Additional people from Native American Studies, AB540 and Undocumented Student Center, and PEACE agreed to be on the committee but were unable to provide feedback in time for this iteration of this document.

**Resources:** “An Annotated Bibliography on Structural Racism Present in the U.S. Food System” compiled by Michigan State University’s Center for Regional Food Systems’ ([https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/structural\\_racism\\_in\\_us\\_food\\_system](https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/structural_racism_in_us_food_system)).