

Conference Schedule: Facilitating Sustainable Agriculture: A Participatory National Conference on Post-Secondary Education

Tuesday, January 24 (Day 1)

Question: What is the one question that is perhaps not so obvious but one you hope is addressed here (at the conference)?

Collected responses:

- Administrative Support: how do you build it?
- How do you deal with conflict/detractors of efforts toward sustainability in agriculture curriculum?
- How do we avoid alienating the wider agricultural community as we push the “sustainable” agenda?
- How do we beat corporate interests? --Bring localization and sustainable food systems into institutional change for a better world?
- In what ways are we in Sustainable Agriculture being myopic? (i.e. do we threaten our success from within in some way?)
- What is the purpose of college farms? (Financial, educational, for food in the cafeteria, etc.)
- What are the goals of Sustainable Agriculture education (careers, knowledge, social transformation)?
- How much energy/resources are needed to advertise/sell/market food? How much can quality food sell itself?
- What are we educating people for—what careers?
- In the field of Sustainable Agriculture, how do we ensure (tangible jobs assurance of careers) to our students in sustainable Ag/Ed programs?
- Where is all the organic matter headed? After it’s no longer a resource, but a resource opportunity. Municipal scale and farm scale application of nutrient management.
- How do we reach all classes and cultures in Sustainable Agriculture?
- How do we bridge the gap between “regular” people and Sustainable Agriculture’ers?
- Is Sustainable Agriculture a realistic goal?
- How do you teach/educate/facilitate behavioral change that reflects a sustainable lifestyle?
- Is there danger in the terminology of Sustainable Agriculture to turn off certain factions of interested students from one area or another?

- How do we get real costs of foods & different production methods to consumers?
- How do we, with our grand intentions and aspirations insure that we stay true to our ideals and still build support, community, and trust with the greater world population?
- How do we sell or justify Sustainable Ag. to parents of college students? i.e. “Can my child make a living doing this?”
- How do we make Sustainable Agriculture programs wildly popular among youth today?
- How do we reconcile the academic calendar with the production calendar to get students involved in meaningful projects?
- Given the increasing knowledge base of consumers, how does that impact the evolving Sustainable Agriculture programs?
- What does a sustainable food system look like?
- When will I be able to stop spending so much time defending what I do, and when will I be able to stop looking over my shoulder for predators?
- As members of the Sustainable Ag greater community how/where are we different and how/where are we the same?
- The need for a more academic infrastructure in this area. Students are all kind of on their own looking for internships, graduate programs. Is a bit more organization among groups and campuses possible?
- How do you do interdisciplinary work in a disciplinary system?
- How do the finances/administration work across these established “department” boundaries?
- How can we continue this process of sharing and learning about Sustainable Agriculture education after we leave this conference?
- What are some hard skills for classroom teaching
 - ◆ grading
 - ◆ break-out groups
 - ◆ Lecture assistance)?

I’m new to teaching and feel a huge lack of training and teacher skills working with and encouraging students.

- Are students in large-scale Sustainable Agriculture programs getting their hands dirty?
- How can post-secondary institutions (colleges of Agriculture, certificate programs, etc.) support (e.g. \$) organizations and programs that are already working to head high school students towards education in Sustainable Agriculture?

- How do we base Sustainable Agriculture curricula on science and reality without “bursting students’ bubbles” who come with excitement, purpose, and philosophy to our programs?
- Sustainable Agriculture as a discipline (the “other”) vs. sustainability and systems/ holism within existing disciplines and curriculum. (How) can the latter be done to allow Sustainable Agriculture to be embedded, not the other?
- How do we:
 - ◆ Integrate organic farming/Sustainable Agriculture skills into the college campus?
 - ◆ Create a framework through interaction of educators, organizations, economics, etc to harness and empower the energy of college in sustainability issues/systems? Where do we go from school?
- Facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration between natural and social scientists around Sustainable Agriculture/local food systems questions
- Marginalization of Sustainable Agriculture budgets in conventional Agriculture depts.
- How does a program develop the institutional support to become sustainably viable?
- Which colleges/universities are using permaculture to formulate curricula for classes/degrees/programs?
- What is the best way to create the dialogue and interdisciplinary respect needed to transform curricula?
- How to get funding and institutional support from your university?
- How can you create a curriculum that is inclusive and represents the broad applicability of sustainability, and still be focused on Sustainable Agriculture?
- We pride ourselves in reaching non-traditional students, but how can we reach “traditional” students who will be returning to the family farm?
- How will this make a difference in the life of a student or a person in the community? How can these ideas be transformed into actions?
- What direction should our institution take in the path towards a sustainable future?
- What are the ways and tools that development of Sustainable Agriculture/food systems curricula can be shared among institutions of higher ed. or the Sustainable Agriculture advocates within those institutions?
- Quality versus/ quality. How to care about organic food since most Americans buying food ready!?
- How do we build the entrepreneurial aspect of life [for students, for land grants, for science] so as to make Sustainable Agriculture a viable part of our culture?

- How is Sustainable Ag defined by programs/curricula at other institutions?
- How are the great ideas generated at the conference going to be implemented into a global reality?
- Strategies for starting campus farms?
- How can we consolidate and form solidarity the concept of sustainability (agriculture and community-wide living) so there will be permanence of this “movement”?
- How do you facilitate having an entire institution (and all the individual interests involved) moving towards sustainable methods of eating/living?
- Are production agriculture with sustainable focus (major) a viable program for land grant institutions and if so how can we ensure institutional support?
- How do we (Sustainable Agriculture) take this (money, support) to elementary/high school programs?
- How do I gain access to/ collaborate with the work (curriculum etc) of my peers in other programs?
- How do we educate the public about FOOD CHOICES?
- What opportunities exist for graduates in Sustainable Agriculture programs?
- How does the way we construct knowledge (and apply it) affect agriculture, our food system, and our communities (human, ecological...)?
- How do we keep Sustainable Agriculture from being co-opted by the status quo institutions? (aka the MAN)
- Fossil fuel dependence. How to deal with this issue?
- How do we develop interdisciplinary Sustainable Agriculture programs that can be supported and enhanced by our universities and colleges? (taking into account the larger context of agriculture and the economy)
- Where are we headed? How do we unite as a group? How do we exchange information and grow together? How do we learn from each other instead of creating the same thing everywhere?
- What strategies have been successful for others to elevate Sustainable Agriculture and gain access to resources, institutional support and student enrollment increases (etc.)?
- Are we capable of creating a force that is intentional to bring Sustainable Agriculture education into world focus? What would it take to become a group making a bold statement?
- Are we realistically assessing the role of politics and power that imprint on our hope for a more sustainable world?

- How can we move beyond university/institutional agricultural education to provide low-cost, holistic Sustainable Agriculture education on a necessity-based, participation-oriented, multicultural, grassroots level?
- How do you set up post-graduation opportunities for young people to go into farming—i.e. farming incubators and eventual farm ownership/operation? (given high cost of land/equipment)
- What are the major forces that hinder people from participating in sustainable food systems? What are the most effective ways of overcoming those hindering forces?
- How to open students' eyes to the complexity of agriculture—especially to issues like policy, urban growth, international trade—and to introduce tools like conflict management and facilitation and not OVERWHELM but empower to action.
- What are some creative, win-win ways to negotiate institutional structures and politics to create successful interdisciplinary degree programs?
- How do we sustain our own careers in Sustainable Agriculture Ed?
- Are we preparing students for a career that won't support them economically? Is that sustainable?
- When establishing a “Sustainable Ag” program, how can we avoid administrative roadblocks? What makes a program successful in the eyes of the administration?
- How can you have a successful Sustainable Agriculture curriculum at an urban university where agriculture programs do not exist?
- How do we change institutional norms on and off campus?
 - ◆ Is an interdisciplinary approach a good way to achieve this?
 - ◆ How?
- Are there enough students interested in Sustainable Agriculture to fill all the potential new programs?
 - ◆ (If you build it, will they come? Or just come from another school's program?)
- How can we best train/support/develop agriculture educators as both teachers and farmers?
- What are successful strategies for getting university leadership to address issues of sustainability within agriculture and in the way the university conducts business?
- How can we get spell check to recognize the word “sustainable”?
 - ◆ It's about time!

- What are effective strategies to convince college administrators that Sustainable Agriculture/food systems should be the central focus of learning and living—not tolerated or lightly supported?
- Is it better to let the students articulate the issues/problems and try to solve it themselves than to ‘fix’ it for them?
 - ◆ (are subversive aspects key *)
 - ◆ (*self-discovery and learning)
- Is there a way to continue the current momentum and interest in sustainability by instituting curriculums in secondary education to train tomorrow’s leaders?
- Who are current AND who are beginning/new sustainable farmers?
- What is the balance between academic learning and skills-based learning in a university level program?
- How can farms that are more established help newer programs to not have to “reinvent the wheel”?
- What specific strategies are we going to adopt to create the political buy-in necessary to change Sustainable Agriculture education?
- To what level are we dedicated to synthesizing our visions for enacting a sustainable world? To organizing agrarians?
- Who is the “target audience” for our programs? i.e. potential students?
- Is Sustainable Agriculture possible?
 - ◆ What would it look like?
 - ◆ What is the role of the university and higher education in greater society?
- What core competencies or skills should a Sustainable Agriculture graduate possess?
- How do we maintain long-term institutional support for Sustainable Agriculture programs?
- How do you structure an Organic Agriculture program to serve a variety of clientele: future farmers, consumers, transitional farmers, non-majors?
- How do we make consumers into citizens?
- How do we integrate the political nature of agriculture into our curriculum?
- How to make the connection and build relationships between academic and experiential training/education?
- How can we build relationships and respect for each person’s concept of what Sustainable Agriculture is? How can we value and respect that concept?

- How can Sustainable Ag Academic Education be institutionalized? Can University Administration be convinced that students trained in SA will be competitive in finding career paths?
- How do we sustain our own careers in Sustainable Agriculture education?
- How do we advise students who want to go into farming about how to actually make a living from farm income? (Especially—health insurance issues!)
- General education
 - ◆ Introduction to sustainability concepts for all students
 - ◆ Broad sense sustainability—e.g. how long can we drive gas guzzlers?
 - ◆ Building the linkage to sustainable food production systems
 - ◆ Can momentum be developed nationally for GE-sustainability?
- What relevant research is being applied to education in Sustainable Agriculture?
- What type of skills and concepts are we trying to building Sustainable Agriculture students?
- How do we address the issue of sustainable energy not only in agriculture but also in community at large? (How do we make the paradigm shift happen more quickly?)
- What career paths are we preparing our students to take? (Will they be able to earn a living?)
- How do you address sustainability in Ag, food security and ‘social justice’ issues in such a way that actual is created?
 - i.e. the issue of Sustainable Agriculture is not just an issue of farmers changing their practices, labor, access to land/land values, government subsidies, global free trade market econ.
 - Organic movement→industry—sucked into existing economy
 - HOW DO YOU ADDRESS/WORK TOWARD STAYING CHANGE?
- Given constraints of ‘access’ to higher education and Sustainable Agriculture discourse, how do we create Sustainable Agriculture higher education that cultivates a ‘sustainability ethos’ including social justice and voice?
- How do you create an experiential/hands-on setting for teaching sustainability issues across multiple disciplines? (Across forestry, agriculture, etc.)
- How are we realistically assessing the role of politics and power that imprint on our hope for a more sustainable world?