

Increasing food literacy: Resources and experts

What are successful ways to teach college students about food and agriculture? The University of California and its Global Food Initiative offer examples and resources.

EXPANDING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

From well-established student farms at UC Davis and UC Santa Cruz to a crop of new gardens, courses and programs popping up across the UC system, UC is offering experiential learning opportunities to students at all levels. This hands-on learning offers invaluable real-world experience to students, diversifying their skills, providing leadership development and helping prepare them for successful careers. UC Davis ranks No. 1 in the world for teaching and research in agriculture, and every UC undergraduate campus has a student-run farm or garden. A GFI report highlights lessons learned, best practices and case studies in experiential learning in food and agriculture. An online directory lists UC's more than 200 courses and 150 programs related to experiential learning in food and agriculture.

More information:

www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/learning-ground

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BUILDING FOOD LITERACY

A GFI subcommittee is working to develop a UC-wide plan that would advance food literacy for students, faculty and staff and be broadly adaptable by other organizations and institutions.

More information:

<http://universityofcalifornia.edu/news/increasing-agriculturalfood-literacy>

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DELIVERING ON FOOD DAY

UC campus dining services are working to increase sustainability, from sourcing food to reducing food waste. The education efforts, in partnership with wellness programs, particularly ramp up around Food Day in October, when UC campuses host a series of special events such as cooking demonstrations, film screenings, lectures and locally sourced meals at campus dining facilities. For World Food Day in October 2016, the UC Davis World Food Center and UC Nutrition Policy Institute will host a systemwide student video challenge.

More information:

<http://universityofcalifornia.edu/news/uc-celebrates-food-day-bounty-events>, <http://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/working-at-uc/livingwell/food-day.html>, <http://foodvideos.ucdavis.edu>

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LAUNCHING FOOD MINORS, FOOD COURSES

Building on a growing interest in studying food, UC Berkeley launched a food systems minor and UCLA launched a food studies minor. UCLA's minor includes a capstone experience and interdisciplinary courses such as "Food Studies and Food Justice," where students learn about food policy, the science of food and more while also serving internships with community organizations. Another course focuses on sustainability through the lens of food, with students making videos about the sustainability of a grocery item. As part of GFI, two UC campuses are developing online introductory food courses: "Edible Education" at UC Berkeley and "Feeding the World: From Farm to Fork" at UC Davis.

More information:

<https://nature.berkeley.edu/advising/minors/food-systems>,
www.uei.ucla.edu/foodstudiesminor.htm,
<http://food.berkeley.edu/edible-education-101>

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CONVENING CONVERSATIONS

GFI has sponsored lecture series on food equity and healthy campuses to build a broader public understanding of these issues, along with a series on leveraging research for food and agriculture policy.

More information:

http://worldfoodcenter.ucdavis.edu/events/UCCS_GFI_series.html

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STRENGTHENING FOOD LAW

The UCLA Resnick Program for Food Law and Policy studies and advances breakthrough solutions for improving the modern food system. As part of GFI, the UCLA program released a report on the opportunity for law schools within UC and across the country to more visibly and holistically address the social, economic and environmental injustices in our food system. GFI co-sponsored a food equity symposium at UC Irvine, and is supporting UCLA Law's development of a food law clinic that will provide students experiential and creative problem-solving opportunities in this field.

More information:

<http://universityofcalifornia.edu/news/how-law-schools-can-improve-food-system-inequities>, www.law.uci.edu/events/food-equity/2016

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COMMUNICATING CLEAR-LY

UC is helping to prepare the next generation of science communicators. GFI's CLEAR (Communication, Literacy and Education for Agricultural Research) subcommittee is active at UC Berkeley, UC Davis and UC San Diego. Members participate in projects, roundtables and other activities to help learn how to illuminate food and ag issues to journalists, policymakers and the public.

More information:

<https://clear-project.org>, <https://davissciencepolicy.wordpress.com>

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RELATED REPORTS

Read more about best practices, case studies and lessons learned in GFI working group reports on experiential learning and food equity.

www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/best-practices/index.html