

2021 Best Practices Proposal Form



Completed proposals are to be submitted to
Jeremy DiGorio, Chair, SACUBO Best Practices Committee, info@sacubo.org
The deadline is December 16, 2020.

Best Practices Submission:

Title: *Farm to Fork at Furman University: The Key Ingredients for a Successful Local Food Program*

Primary* Contact Information:

The primary contact must be a SACUBO member institution of higher education.

Institution: Furman University

Address1: 3300 Poinsett Hwy

Address2:

City: Greenville

State/Prov: SC

Zip Code: 29613

Salutation: Prof. Dr. X Mr. Mrs. Ms.

First Name: Tony Middle Name/Initial: Last Name: McQuirt

Suffix (Jr, III, etc.)

Professional Title: Director of Auxiliary Services

Email: tony.mcquirt@furman.edu

Phone: 864-294-2448

Fax:

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*Additional team contacts may be listed at the bottom of this form.

Institution Information:

Institution:

Research Comprehensive/Doctoral Small Institutions Community College

Year Founded: 1826

Geographical Location: Greenville SC

Number of Students: 2731

Website: Furman.edu

Statement of the Problem:

Provide a brief statement identifying the challenge your institution encountered that benefited from your best practice.

Furman envisions its campus as a sustainability pedagogical opportunity, a chance to infuse sustainability across the curriculum and provide applied, real-world sustainability experiences for students. These “Living Learning Labs” merge academics and campus spaces to provide students with real-world skills and, in some cases, a path to help meet sustainability goals. One of these living learning labs is the Furman Farm, a campus organic practice farm. Food choices have a significant impact on health, culture, environment, and local and global economies. Furman is committed to limiting these impacts by using fresh, locally and sustainably produced foods. The challenge that Furman encountered was to find ways to incorporate using fresh, locally and sustainably produced foods in its dining program while integrating student experiences and supporting the local economy.

Identify the Solution (250-words maximum):

Describe how you identified and developed your best practice solution including those involved with the process, impact on the organization, finances and resources.

The Farm to Fork at Furman University program was initiated by engaging Furman’s dining services provider, Bon Appetit Management Company, which is a role model in the industry for responsible sourcing with their local sourcing initiative, the Farm to Fork program. They are dedicated to being sustainable in their operations and making as many local and organic food options as possible available to students.

The Farm to Fork program requires chefs to purchase 20% of their ingredients from small, owner-operated farms and ranches within 150 miles of their location. It differs from other local sourcing initiatives because it relies on localized culinary creativity and flexibility. Chefs are asked to come up with their own menus – no corporate recipes or cycle menus – and are empowered to buy what is in season from local farmers.

The Furman Farm partners closely with Dining Services. Along with the help of Furman students, the farm’s manager, Bruce Adams, grows over 35 different varieties of fruits and vegetables to be served at the Daniel Dining Hall. On many days, vegetables are harvested in the morning, and then served to students at dinner. Furman Dining’s flexibility in purchasing also means that it can create mutually beneficial long-term purchasing agreements with local farmers,

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including Stone Creek Hydroponics, which supplies all of the lettuce served in the Daniel Dining Hall, and Green Valley Farm, which provides all of the beef served on campus.

Implementation Timeline:

Provide a bulleted list of the steps and implementation timeline of your best practice solution.

Implementation began in 2016 when Furman partnered with a food service provider that shared the same philosophy on sustainability as Furman. Below are the steps taken over the first three years to develop this program.

- Partnered with a food service provider, Bon Appetit, that shared Furman’s philosophy on sustainability
- Identified local providers to procure fresh product from
- Developed partnership with Furman Farm to provide fresh produce planted, raised and harvested by Furman students
- Began to incorporate related academic programs and projects through the Shi Center for Sustainable Communities that are student lead
 - Composting program
 - Recycling initiatives
 - Use of green cleaning products

We are now in a phase of reviewing, enhancing and adding new initiatives to the program on an annual basis.

Benefits & Retrospect:

Provide a brief statement of the benefits achieved by implementing the best practice solution.

The Farm to Fork at Furman University program has met the three challenges identified above: incorporating fresh, locally, and sustainably produced foods into the dining program, integrating student experiences, and supporting the local economy.

Fresh, locally and sustainably produced foods are procured from over 25 local (within 150-mile radius) and small (under \$5 million in sales) owner-operated farms and ranches, providing a mixture of foods from fruits, vegetables and meats to cream, butter, cheese, and flour. The foods grown in Furman’s own community, and in some cases, Furman’s campus, were probably picked within a day or two, preserving the crispness, sweetness, flavor and nutrients.

The Furman Farm is largely student-run under the supervision of the farm manager. The students gain invaluable experience through working on the farm which has a comprehensive composting program. The composting program handles all of the pre- and post-consumer waste from the dining hall. The compost is then used as a natural fertilizer for the Furman Farm. About 90,000 pounds of food waste are composted each year. The Furman Farm also serves as a living laboratory for student research and engagement with food systems and the natural world, resulting in strengthened bonds between the student community and the sources of their food, helping them understand the complex food system and the role food choices play in it.

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Locally sourcing food from over 25 nearby and small farms supports local farm families and the local economy. Because Furman chefs are allowed culinary creativity and flexibility, they are able to incorporate what is in season from local farmers into their weekly menus, or they can commit to growers to buy all of a certain crop for an entire growing season. This flexibility creates opportunities both for long-term sourcing arrangements, so farms can synchronize supply and demand ahead of time, as well as for nimble just-in-time purchasing, when a farmer may have a bumper crop or a highly perishable crop.

Additional Team Contact Information:

Additional Contact #2:

Institution: Furman University

Address1: 3300 Poinsett Hwy

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Zip Code: 29613

Institution:

Research Comprehensive/ Doctoral Small Institutions Community College

Salutation: Prof. Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms.

First Name: Koren

Middle Name/Initial: L.

Last Name: Nappi

Suffix (Jr, III, etc.)

Professional Title: Resident District Manager

Email: koren.nappi@cafebonappetit.com

Phone: 408-396-0307

Fax:

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Additional Contact #3:

Institution:

Address1:

Address2:

City:

State/Prov:

Zip Code:

Institution:

Research Comprehensive/ Doctoral Small Institutions Community College

Salutation: Prof. Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms.

First Name:

Middle Name/Initial:

Last Name:

Suffix (Jr, III, etc.)

Professional Title:

Email :

Phone:

Fax:

Additional Contact #4:

Institution:

Address1:

Address2:

City:

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State/Prov:

Zip Code:

Institution:

Research Comprehensive/ Doctoral Small Institutions Community College

Salutation: Prof. Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms.

First Name:

Middle Name/Initial:

Last Name:

Suffix (Jr, III, etc.)

Professional Title:

Email :

Phone:

Fax:

Form: Updated November 2020