

WWU's Relationship With Local Food

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Table of Contents:

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

1.2 What is a Farmer's Market?

1.3 It's Significance to Western

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Contacts and Meetings

2.2 Projects and Pilot Development

3.0 Case Studies

3.1 U.C. Davis

3.2 Bellingham Farmer's Market

3.3 San Francisco State All Organic Farmers Market

4.0 Research and Analysis

4.1 Surveys: Students and Staff

5.0 Conclusion

6.0 Future Works

6.1 Starving Students CSA Box

6.2 Farmer's Market on Campus

7.0 Contacts

8.0 Works Cited

1.0 Introduction:

1.1 Purpose

The goal of our project is to implement a farmer's market on Western Washington University's campus where students can develop and foster a relationship with their food. A farmer's market is a great avenue for students to take in order to further understand where their food comes from and how buying local foods can help to make WWU and Whatcom County a sustainable economy. We have gathered information from a student and staff survey to understand what the interest is in creating a fun and educational space that supports local agriculture on campus. We ultimately hope to create awareness about the importance of eating locally, and how this practice effects our environment on a broad scale.

1.2 What is a Farmer's Market?

A farmer's market is a market that is usually held outside in an open public space where farmers can sell their goods and produce to the public. A farmer's market has many different kinds of booths such as: produce, meats, eggs, arts, crafts, jarred goods, and prepared foods. Farmer's markets can be a good way to increase the understanding and importance of agriculture in the nearby areas in Whatcom County. In addition, this is a great way to maintain support and sustain the local small farms that are on the fringe of urban areas. It helps urban centers become more connected with the farmers in the areas surrounding them. A farmer's market can also be a good draw for tourists in a city or town.

1.3 Significance to WWU

We believe that a Farmer's Market on campus would have a significant positive impact on our community, including local farmers, WWU students, staff, and faculty. Bringing a market to campus would help to create a closer connection between the WWU community and the food that we eat and rely on, thus increasing sustainability on not only the Western campus, but the Bellingham area as well. The student body has already expressed extreme interest in increasing the availability of local food on campus and we feel that major benefits will occur from this market. Students will be able to meet and form a network with the farmers that supply seasonal fresh produce to the area, as well as increase the opportunity for education and potential jobs on the farms. Local produce will reduce the consumption of imported produce from around the country, which is directly correlated with reducing the consumption of fossil fuels and carbon emissions. If WWU hosted a farmers market on campus, it would ultimately create another resource for students to lead healthier lifestyles as well as promote sustainability to the Bellingham community.

2.0 Methodology:

When we started this project our goal was to bring a farmers market on to the Western Washington Campus. We wanted to bring fresh local food to the campus and get people around campus to have a better idea of where their food comes from. We feel that we will eventually be able to meet this goal.

2.1 Contacts and Meetings

After talking to several people, especially Caprice Teske, who is the director of the Bellingham Farmer's Market Association, we realized that getting the market on campus might not happen for a couple years. She brought up the idea of looking into CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) boxes through Growing Washington. Growing Washington is a project-based community organization that strives not to exclude any Washingtonian. One program that they offer is the CSA boxes. These boxes are put together by Clayton Burrows (The director of Growing Washington) and his employees each week to be delivered to pick up sites around Whatcom and King County. The boxes are full of produce from local farmers that community members pre-order and purchase on Growing Washington's website. One can purchase different kinds of shares explained on growingwashington.org. The usual shares are half shares or full share boxes. The half share feeds 1-3 people and the full share feeds 2-5 people. Then each week, they will go to their designated pick up site and collect their CSA boxes. CSA consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farming operation where the growers and consumers share the risks and benefits of food production. Upon discussing amongst ourselves and our professor Seth Vidana, we decided to begin hosting a CSA box pick up site on campus as a pilot program (described in 2.2). We have been in contact with Clayton Burrow and his overall enthusiasm and excitement for the project has made him a crucial role in our pilot project and future works. In addition to our pick up site, we have sent out a detailed survey to a random sampling of Western students and staff that has provided us with useful information on the interest and previous knowledge that students have about local food, eating and grocery buying habits.

2.2 Projects and Pilot Development

In order to implement our pilot project we have been working with Clayton Burrows to create a student specific option for the CSA, which will be more accommodating to student's spending and eating habits. The student option will have a 25% discount, with accommodations for students being out of town during long school breaks. In order for this to happen, we have gathered five interested students willing to purchase a CSA box for two weeks, thus allowing us to host a pick-up site according to the requirements set by Growing Washington. In addition we have received an Exterior Space permit on Vendors Row from Jim Schuster, who is the Director of Viking Union Facilities

Management. We have also sent a written proposal to Jim outlining a step by step process of how we will be meeting Washington Department of Health codes as well as how we will be managing our booth. We will begin with a two-week pilot of the student specific CSA box and pickup station in vendor's row to judge its success. This two-week pick up will happen on Tuesday November 30, 2010 and Tuesday December 7, 2010. Cailen McDevitt, Jonathan Cooper, and Connor Mack, the creators of this project and authors of this document, will monitor the pickup station for two hours (12pm to 2pm) on the dates mentioned above. During those two hours we will be handing out the CSA boxes to the people that purchased them and giving out information to passing students and staff to further spread an interest in a future longer term CSA box pickup station on campus. If this pilot is successful we will know if more local food on campus is desired and whether students and staff would be interested in creating other ways to get local food more accessible on campus. This is a vital first step to implementing our ultimate goal of creating a farmer's market on campus.

3.0 Case Studies:

3.1 UC Davis Farmers Market

The University of California Davis campus has implemented a farmers market on campus since 2007. The university started out with a pilot project in the Fall of 2006, and with a huge success rate, they made the market a permanent service in the Spring of 2007. The goal of their project was to bring awareness and accessibility of local produce closer to the students of UC Davis. A report of their findings from a survey taken in 2005 said that less than 60 percent of students were eating less than two servings of nutritional fruits or vegetables each day. With these results, the university's health center in conjunction with the Davis farmers market aimed to bring a smaller satellite market to the campus community. Entities that were present throughout this whole project included the groups mentioned above, as well as students from the Experimental Farm of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences on campus. The farmers market received support from several community members and organizations in the Davis area. The overall project has received a lot of support and positive feedback. The UC Davis market has been running now for the last three years with much success due to the increased student patrons, as well as a noticeable overall increase in healthy foods that are consumed. This is a great example of what we would like to bring to Western Washington University's campus and the benefits to the students are undeniable.

3.2 Bellingham Farmers Market

"It began when two Western Washington University students had a vision to have locally grown produce sold in a downtown urban location." The market opened on June 19th, 1993 with fifteen vendors. Mark Finger, from Cedarville farm, became the

president of the market and was also one of the vendors. Today, the market still happens every Saturday, with only a couple months off in the dead of winter when nothing is growing. There are about 110 vendors on the busiest summer Saturdays at the market. The cost to rent the space for the day is about 500 dollars. Each 10X10 stall costs 30 dollars which pays for expenses such as the lease, insurance, and advertising. The market has also expanded to a Wednesday market located in Fairhaven's village green during the summer months. This market usually consists of about 25 vendors on any given Wednesday. Caprice Teske is the market's director, whom we interviewed for our project. She is in the middle of a strategic plan, sending out surveys to community members and farmers to find out what they envision as growth for the farmer's market. The mission: "The Bellingham Farmers' Market supports local sustainable agriculture by connecting the public with local farmers, artisans, and other producers in an economically viable marketplace."

3.3 San Francisco State University All-Organic Farmers Market

Jeremy Nicoloff, Associated Students Inc. graduate student representative, came up with the idea of the all-organic farmer's market that was put together through the SFSU Associated Students in 2007. They have four local Northern California vendors that come to campus from 11 am to 3 pm every Thursday at a walkway located between the Humanities building and a campus cafe. At the farmer's market vendors sell fresh produce such as green garlic, kale, chard and tree fruits.

Vendors also have exclusive rights to what they sell, which means that only one vendor can sell a specific product. The student union felt it was important to foster a non-competitive environment not only among vendors at the farmer's market, but with permanent vendors as well. Meaning that vendors cannot sell foods already being sold on campus.

To ensure the market's future success, Nicoloff wanted it to be as profitable for vendors as it is convenient and affordable for students. And while vendors are often charged a fee to set up stalls at other markets, the student union waived all fees for the farmer's market event.

4.0 Research and Analysis:

4.1 Surveys: Students and Staff

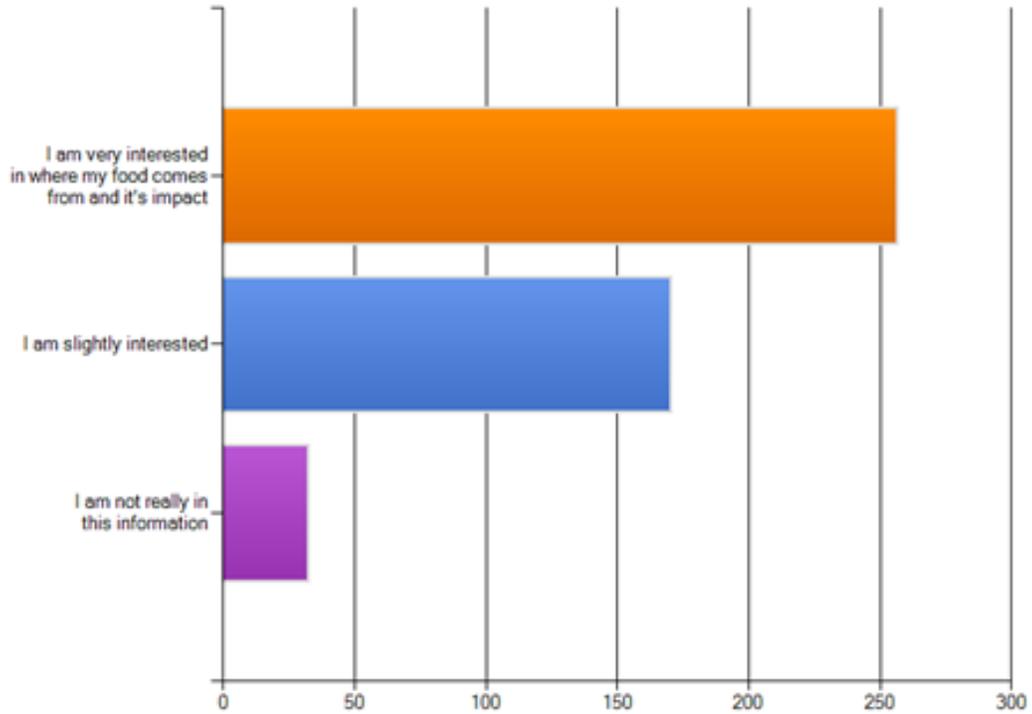
We met with Gene Meyers, a professor for Huxley at WWU, for advice on creating our survey questions. After we created our questions, Mardi Solomon, the coordinator of Whatcom Farm to School, gave us suggestions for our questions. Then using Survey Monkey we developed a survey to send out to staff and students at WWU. Seth Vidana, the sustainability coordinator at WWU and our instructor, helped us send out our survey to 3,000 students and 360 staff members. The questions gathered information about

when, where, and the interest level of students and staff to be involved in or to use a farmer's market on WWU's campus. We received information back from 444 staff and students combined. The survey results showed that the interest level students have in where their food comes from and its impact on the environment was over 55%. 37% said that they were slightly interested. We believe that if people had more resources and ways to connect with local food that their interest level would increase. Over 71% of people also said that they would buy and eat local food if it was more convenient to them. This is a crucial piece of data because it gives us strong reason to believe that if there was a farmer's market on campus students and staff would want to use it and value its positive impact on the environment and the Bellingham community.

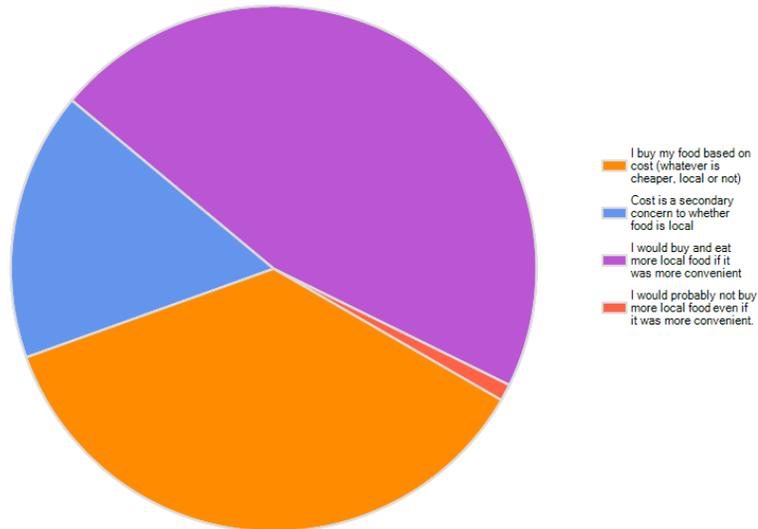
55% of students also said that they buy their food based on what is cheapest regardless of if it is local or not. 40% also said that they would only pay an extra 25 cents to buy an item of food that is local. We recognize that both students and staff place cost above whether food is local or not as a priority. This tells us that we would have to make sure that whatever local food options we implement on campus must be cost effective for students and staff. With the 25% discount, if students split a CSA box with three roommates they would each pay less than 7 dollars on a full share.

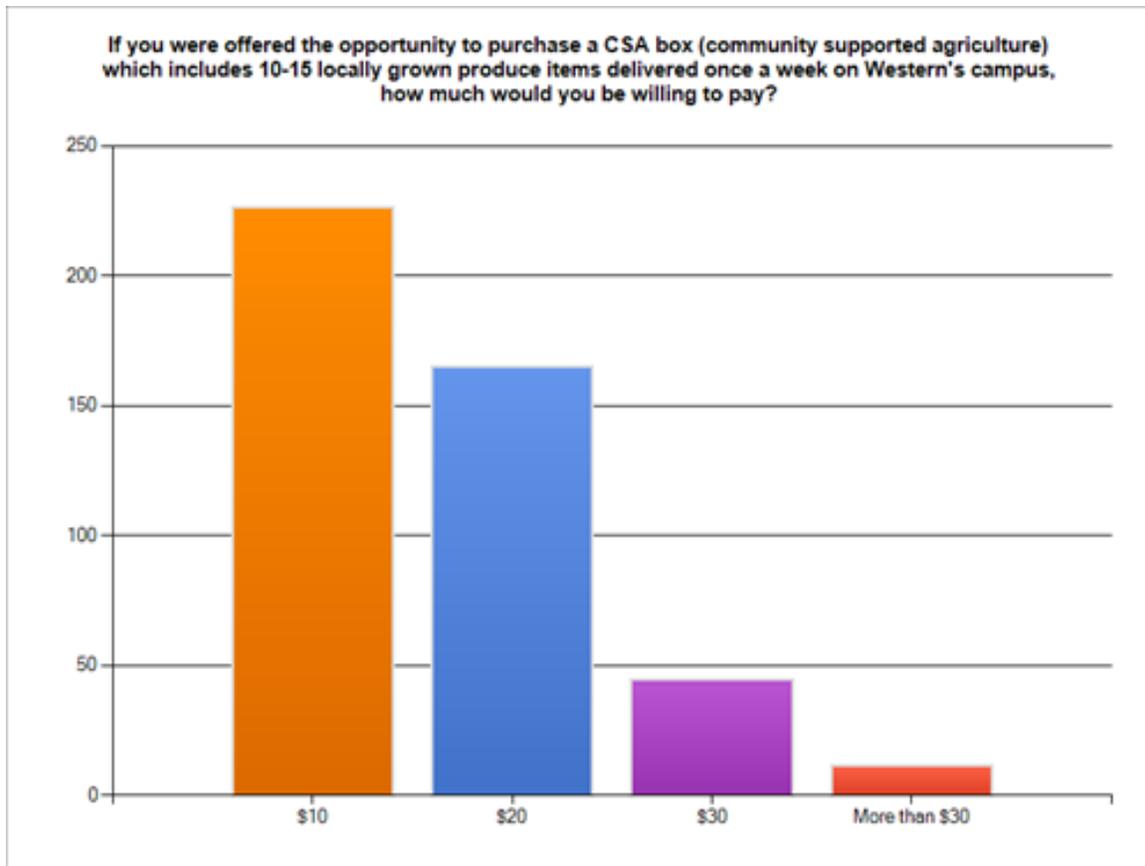
The survey also gathered data on important factors concerning the potential farmer's market that we hope to have on campus in the future. 93% of people have been to a farmer's market and 48% of those that had visited the Bellingham Farmer's Market reported that they loved it. 43% of people also reported that they visit the produce stands at farmer's markets the most. 70% reported that they buy prepared, ready to eat food, from the farmer's market. This tells us that at our future market we will need to have mostly booths that have prepared local foods for students and staff to enjoy. The survey also tells us that 60% of students would prefer the farmer's market on campus to run between the hours of 11am to 3pm on weekdays.

What is your level of interest in learning about where your food comes from and the environmental impact of how we get our food?



In concern to buying local food, which statements here do you agree with? Check all that apply.





5.0 Conclusion:

The beginning of this project started with the goal to bring a local farmer's market to the Western Washington University campus. Ultimately we want to create more accessibility to local food for our students. With this idea in mind, our project shifted its initial direction with the help of Caprice Teske, the Director of the Bellingham Farmer's Market Association. She informed us that a satellite market on campus would not be feasible in the next couple of years due to current expansion projects going on within the public market that are of higher priority. The Community Supported Agriculture box idea was proposed as a way to still provide access to a wealth of local produce without the long delay of bringing a market to campus. After exciting and inspirational discussions with Clayton Burrows of Growing Washington, and many key players on the WWU campus we will be hosting a CSA box pick-up site in Vendors Row for two weeks (Nov. 30th and Dec. 7th). We have made a huge first step in providing accessible locally grown produce to the students of Western Washington University and we hope others will continue this trend for years to come.

6.0 Future Works:

6.1 Starving Students CSA box option

Our project has just touched the surface with the student CSA box option, but Clayton Burrows made it clear to us that he is very enthusiastic about implementing a more long term student option for CSA boxes which he coined with the name Starving Students and Staff. This CSA box option would be the same option that we are piloting this quarter, but for a whole season that would be catered to the needs of students and staff based on when their school breaks are.

6.2 Farmer's Market on Campus

Our ultimate goal is to put a small farmers market on campus. It would be a satellite farmer's market to the Bellingham Farmers Market through the direction of Caprice Teske. She is in the middle of a strategic plan to see what progress means for local farmers and community members. If expanding the Bellingham Farmers Market means progress to them, then the implementation of a farmers market on campus may not be so far away. The data we received from our survey also gave us high hopes because both students and staff responded positively to the idea of giving them more access to local foods.

7.0 Contacts:

Gene Meyers		
Caprice Teske	360 647 2060	Director of Bellingham Farmers Market
Liz Macnear	530 756 1695	Asst. Director Farmers Market at U.C. Davis
Jim Shuster	360 650 3451	Director of VU Facilities at WWU
Paul Mueller	360 650 3065	Risk Manager at WWU
Clayton Burrows	206 719 0056	Director of Growing Washington
Seth Vidana	360 650 2491	Sustainability Coordinator at WWU
Gail Feenstra	530 752 8408	Food Systems Coordinator at U.C. Davis
Connor Mack	206 375 0054	Project Developer
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Jonathan Cooper	425 422 0669	Project Developer

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