

# Viking Supported Agriculture

Campus Sustainability Planning Studio  
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## **1.0 Executive Summary:**

At the beginning of the quarter, there were no advertising or marketing efforts established for the Viking Supported Agriculture program on our campus. Our goal has been to employ a variety of marketing and advertising strategies throughout the quarter to promote the program and encourage more students, faculty, and staff to sign up for boxes.

## **2.0 Statement of Need:**

As of now, there are no precise statistics pertaining to the campus wide awareness of the VSA program on campus; however, through talking to people at tabling events and asking around campus, it is easy to see that not very many people are aware that the VSA program exists at Western, let alone what a CSA program is.

Prior to the birth of this project, there had been little to no efforts made to advertise for the VSA – making our job relatively simple, as there is nowhere to go but up! By successfully advertising and marketing for the VSA program, student, faculty, and staff awareness will be guaranteed to increase. This awareness is a critical piece of our project this quarter, if the Western community is informed about the weight their purchasing power has, they may feel more inclined to purchase a VSA box. It is important to our group to not only sell the VSA program to the people we interact with, but to educate about why it is important to eat locally and what eating sustainably really means. The VSA program is a great opportunity to reconnect consumers with producers and to remind the Western community of the importance of organic, local foods.

Advertising and marketing will be necessary for future quarters, as well. The Western population is constantly changing, providing the VSA with an abundance of new customers to attract. Being the first to implement any sort of official advertising, strategies that we find to be successful will be tactics that future groups working on this project may want to employ once again. We will be able to figure out which techniques are most productive and document our experiences with each strategy we pursue. Additionally, the poster designs that we create this quarter can easily be manipulated to suit the preferences of future groups and design teams. The website that we have created will be a consistent source of information that is open to the public that future groups may also decide to alter as they see fit.

We have much admiration and respect for the individuals who worked on this VSA program prior. Their accomplishments are recognized and appreciated greatly. We hope that our advertising and marketing efforts will do this wonderful program the justice that it deserves. We realize that there are many people involved with this program and we value the collaborative nature of this project. We hope that they view our willingness to work as an asset to this program, to aide productivity and spread awareness of the VSA program.

## **3.0 Project Description**

### **3.1 Goal:**

Get more students/staff/faculty signed up for the VSA program.

### **3.2 Objectives:**

1. We want to inform students, staff, and faculty about Western's VSA program and sign them up for the summer and fall boxes.
2. The program begins in late June and our aim is to have at least twice as many people signed up this season as we did during fall 2011 when the advertising was only done by word of mouth.
3. We will document our methods of advertising and gauge our success by the number of people signed up for more information and the actual number of shares purchased by the end of the quarter.
4. Several advertising mechanisms will be created such as a website, Facebook page, posters, and handbills, that can be utilized in future efforts.

### **3.3 Methods:**

#### **Methodology:**

- In order to advertise for the VSA's at Western, we plan to table at the Earth Day Festival in the MPR as well as table on several other occasions in Red Square. At our table we will have a sign-up sheet for people to get more information and reminders about upcoming dates for the program by email. Aside from that we will have cookies to entice people to come to our table and ask questions and we will be there to give them all the information they need. Tabling is an easy and effective way to get student interest especially if you have colorful posters and some treat to bring students up to your table. It is a good way to be able to give all the information needed to students in person and be available to answer any questions or clarify anything they may not completely understand.
- We will meet with Simon Davis-Cohen regularly to get brochures and other literature about current dates, prices, etc. and to see what kind of advertising he thinks we need.
- We will be emailing faculty and staff members to find out their weekly meeting times and see if we can get on the minutes in order to give a five minute presentation to get people interested who are not students. Furthermore, we will meet with clubs on campus and give classroom presentations to classes whose professors and coordinators who are willing to give us a few minutes to speak. Attending faculty and staff meetings will help us get the interest of the people who will be in Bellingham to utilize the summer VSA boxes that are being offered. Classroom presentations aid us in getting more teacher approval and reaching out to more students at a time in fields that may be related to agriculture.
- We will be meeting with Derek Bryson to design a poster to put up around campus for a week closer to the end of the quarter that has the dates, prices, and sign-up information on it. Most events and organizations on Western's campus make posters at some time or another to advertise for things. While many students are waiting for classes or lingering in dining locations, bulletin boards with posters for events are often a source of entertainment and definitely get through to a lot of students.
- We will talk to Shayne Smith to get a webpage up on the sustainability page through Western's website. Everyone at Western uses the main website for the campus hence, having a webpage for this program is a major way to spread awareness to all students and faculty.

- We will be typing up quarter-sheets of paper with all the information on it regarding sign-ups so that we can pass them out during our presentations and put the remaining up in places that students around campus will see them.
- If it is in our budget, we will also have more half-sheets printed to put in the napkin holders on the tables in the Fairhaven and Viking Commons dining halls. Many students who eat in the dining halls are going to be moving off campus next year and since everyone is on a budget while in college, these VSA boxes can really be of assistance to them. By putting advertisements on the napkin holders we are reaching all those who dine in these on campus locations.

When:

- April 13, 2012: Meeting with Simon Davis-Cohen to get literature on VSA program from last fall and meeting with Derek to discuss poster
- April 21: Tabling at Earth Day Festival in MPR
- April 30- late May: Meetings with clubs, faculty, and classroom presentations
- April 25: Webpage up on website
- May 16: Napkin displays
- May 16: Announcement on KUGS radio station and on MyWestern announcement page.
- May 18: Table in Red Square
- May 18- 25 or May 25- June 1: Posters up
- May 25: Table Red Square

### **3.4 Staffing and Administration:**

Staffing/Administration:

- Anna Dudley, Heather Manning, and Miranda Safstrom, students in Campus Sustainability Planning Studio, are the main administrators of the above stated advertising.
- Office of Sustainability manager, Seth Vidana, will be providing all his knowledge regarding policies, pass ventures in VSA, etc. throughout the project's life-span. He can be reached at (360) 640-2491.
- Simon Davis-Cohen, the Student Coordinator for the VSA, will be providing all literature for upcoming VSA program and will be aiding in advertising as well. He is the one that is in charge of Western's VSA overall and was the main source of advertisement for the previous year's VSA on Campus. He can be reached at (503) 756-7019.
- Derek Bryson, graphic designer for the Office of Communications, will be making our posters. Reach him at (360) 650-2159.
- Shayne Smith, Office of Sustainability webmaster, will be creating and activating our webpage. She can be contacted at shayne.smith@wwu.edu.
- Dining hall managers will be helping us to get the napkin displays on the tables.

### 3.5 Evaluation:

In order to evaluate our project as we execute it and not just at the completion date, we will be relying highly on the number of sign-ups for more information that we get from each time we table. Our success will be based on how many people we have gotten interested in the VSA's as well as how many people now are aware that this program exists. Our progress will also be measured by how many people we have reached out to through classroom presentations and faculty and club meetings. In the end our success can be measured by the number of people who sign up for the program but that is a number that we will not obtain until after our project is over.

### 3.6 Sustainability:

Supporting the VSA program is an excellent way to continue Western's sustainability efforts. The current conventional food system has introduced a plethora of environmental and human health concerns by way of increasing CO2 emissions associated with food transportation, decreased nutritional value of food, water pollution from fertilizers and livestock, controversial uses of GMO seeds, and many more. The VSA program offers a way for the Western community to conveniently support local farmers who are employing sustainable practices and growing quality food. Each additional person who purchases a share makes a difference.

### 4.0 Budget:

Costs include:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Costs</i>
Posters	50	~\$30 per season
Handouts	400 (100 pages)	~\$4 per season
AS Worker (putting up and taking down posters)	1	~\$19-28.50 per season \$9.50hr approx 2-3hrs total (this is an AS costs)
Napkin Displays	300 (150 pages)	~\$45 per season

- Advertising costs are paid for by a grant from Whatcom Community Foundation
- Advertising will run for the month or two before the opening of the VSA program
- Posters will be distributed around campus by the AS and extras will be taken to hang up around the Bellingham community

### 5.0 Organizational Information:

The VSA program is a project of the Office of Sustainability and is funded by a Whatcom Community Foundation grant to help our community support sustainable local agriculture by making nutritious food available to members of the Viking Community. Our VSA program supports Growing Washington and Alm Hill Gardens, located in Everson 25 minutes northeast of Bellingham.

Growing Washington partners with upwards of a dozen small local Whatcom and Skagit County farms. By partaking in the VSA program and receiving fresh veggies you support local growers by investing all-at-once in well over a dozen small farms.

The first VSA was run for 5 weeks of fall 2011. There were approximately 50 registered VSA box receivers. The boxes were enthusiastically received but not widely known about.

This harvest season the goal is to make it well known that there is a CSA available to pick up on campus, available at a discount for students. We are trying to involve as many students, faculty, and staff as possible, get as many boxes distributed as we can.

This will be accomplished through word of mouth, tabling on campus, posters, handouts, Facebook, classroom announcements, etc.

## **6.0 Future Works**

For future persons advertising for the Viking Supported Agriculture program we have created several items that may be useful. The webpage will continue to be an available source of information for anyone interested in the VSA program. A potential project for someone continuing these efforts could be to expand the webpage, perhaps making it more interactive or appealing. We also created a Facebook page for the program and anyone interested could be added as an administrator by making contact with Mandy, Heather, or Anna. Additionally, a poster was designed by Derek Bryson that could easily be obtained by contacting him or Seth Vidana.

There are several techniques that may have been useful in hindsight that may also be beneficial for future efforts. Surveying at the beginning of the quarter and then again at the end would be a beneficial way to measure the success of advertising efforts and gauge campus-wide awareness of the program. Furthermore, working with Growing Washington to include some sort of questionnaire as to how the individuals who are signing up for a share online heard about the VSA would be a great way to determine which advertising techniques are most successful.

## Appendix A



# Viking Supported Agriculture (VSA) Boxes

### **What is a VSA and what's it all about?**

VSA is Western's trademarked CSA. CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture. Because we are Vikings, we buy VSAs. By signing up you will receive a box of local *fresh* organic fruits and veggies every Thursday from June 21<sup>st</sup> until November 1<sup>st</sup> (20 weeks) or December 6<sup>th</sup> (25 weeks). See below for costs and box options!

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Growing Washington partners with upwards of a dozen small local Whatcom and Skagit County farms. By partaking in the VSA program and receiving fresh veggies you support local growers by investing all-at-once in well over a dozen small farms!

**To sign up:** There are two ways to sign up. The easiest is to visit [Growingwashington.org](http://Growingwashington.org). Here you will click on "Now Accepting 2012 CSA Members!" and then follow the directions. Choose your "Pickup Location" as Whatcom-Bellingham-WWU, and pay by credit card. You can also sign up via snail mail (for check/cash payment). Contact WWU student Simon Davis-Cohen @ (503) 756-7019, [simon@readthedirt.org](mailto:simon@readthedirt.org) to get the mail-in sign up form, or if you have *any other questions*. (Visiting [Growingwashington.org](http://Growingwashington.org) may answer questions as well).

**Payment:** Payment can be made in Credit Card, Cash or Check (including a 4 installment option). Registration through the website ([Growingwashington.org](http://Growingwashington.org)) includes a convenient card purchase process. Checks made out to Growing Washington or Cash are accepted.

**Starving Student Discount:** Starving Students get 15% off! When signing up on Growingwashington.org type in "Starving Student" into the discount field and get 15% off any purchase.

**Where/When:** Boxes will be available in the afternoons in front of Carver Gym on Thursdays.

**The Options:**

A. Local Choice Boxes - A Local Choice Box means you get to decide what you'd like in your box each week. Once signed up you'll receive an email every week that allows you to log in and pick from all of the available fruit, veggies & herbs at the participating farms. Once selected, your choice is harvested, packed and delivered all within 24 hours! If you forget or get too busy during the week, Growing Washington will provide you with a great Farmer Choice box.

B. Farmer Choice Boxes- A Farmer Choice Box means the participating farms coordinate to decide and provide the best selection of locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs for your box each week.

C. Add-On Items are available! □ In addition to your produce, great local Milk, Butter, Sour Cream, Cheese, Eggs, Pasta & Roasted Coffee are available to add-on to your shares. Local Choice members can choose eggs, butter, sour cream and other non-produce items from our weekly fresh list. With the Farmer's Choice box, you can add these items to your box for the season but not on a weekly basis.

**Local Choice Box Options:**

Size	# Items/Box	Cost
<b>Family</b>	<b>15</b>	20 Weeks \$960 / 25 Weeks \$1,200
<b>Large</b>	<b>12</b>	20 Weeks \$780 / 25 Weeks \$975
<b>Small</b>	<b>9</b>	20 Weeks \$612 / 25 Weeks \$765
<b>Mini</b>	<b>6</b>	20 Weeks \$420 / 25 Weeks \$525

**Farmer Choice Box Options:**

Size	#Items/Box	Cost
<b>Family</b>	<b>15</b>	20 Weeks \$700 / 25 Weeks \$875
<b>Large</b>	<b>12</b>	20 Weeks \$564 / 25 Weeks \$705
<b>Small</b>	<b>9</b>	20 Weeks \$432 / 25 Weeks \$540
<b>Mini</b>	<b>6</b>	20 Weeks \$300 / 25 Weeks \$375

**Farm Fresh Add-Ons:**

	Size	Cost
Glass Bottle Milk	½ gal	20 Weeks \$70/25 Weeks \$87.5
Handmade Yogurt	1 pint	20 Weeks \$60/25 Weeks \$75
Fresh Sour Cream	8 oz	20 Weeks \$50/25 Weeks

		\$62.5
Sweet Butter	8oz	20 Weeks \$60/25 Weeks \$75
Farmstead Cheese	1 wedge	20 Weeks \$220/25 Weeks \$275
Fresh Pasta	1 lb	20 Weeks \$110/25 Weeks \$137.5
Locally Roasted Coffee	$\frac{3}{4}$ lb	20 Weeks \$160/25 Weeks \$200
Farm Fresh Eggs	1 doz	20 Weeks \$120/25 Weeks \$150

**What to Expect:**

- Asparagus!
- Apples
- Apricots!
- Arugula
- Asian Pears
- Basil
- Beans, Green and Shelling!
- Beets
- Blackberries!
- Blueberries!
- Bok Choy
- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cherries!
- Celery
- Collard Greens
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Cauliflower
- Eggplant
- Fennel
- Garlic
- Kale
- Leeks
- Lettuce, Head and Mix
- Onions
- Peaches!
- Peas!
- Peppers
- Plums
- Pluots
- Potatoes
- Pumpkins
- Radishes
- Raspberries!
- Rosemary
- Rutabaga
- Sage
- Salad Greens!
- Shallots
- Spinach
- Strawberries!
- Swiss Chard
- Tomatillos
- Tomatoes!!!
- Turnips
- Wheat Berries
- Summer and Winter Squash
- And more!