

MEAL EXCHANGE



# Case Study: The Good Food Challenge at the University of Victoria

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*Farm to School: Canada Digs In!* is a multi-sectoral chronic disease prevention initiative lead by Farm to Cafeteria Canada in partnership with the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Whole Kids Foundation, Meal Exchange, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Food First Newfoundland, New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, Equiterre, Sustain Ontario and the Public Health Association of British Columbia.

## Territory acknowledgement

The University of Victoria (UVic) is located on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen-speaking peoples, specifically those of the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEĆ First Nations. We acknowledge as authors, our positionality as settlers; and our responsibility to address imbalances of power and privilege in the university food system. Part of this work includes building relationships with Indigenous communities, and responding to their calls to action, in order to assist in decolonizing efforts.

## Background

At the University of Victoria, many students face food insecurity; between September 2017 to March 2018, an estimated 10,000 of UVic's 21,800 students visited the UVic Student Society (UVSS) Food Bank. Nearly 50% of those users are international students, 68% are undergrads, and 32% are graduate students. Further, 20% are sourcing for families, while 80% are individuals (UVSS Food Bank and Freestore, 2018, p.10). Students rely on the food bank as an 'emergency service', however, it faces significant barriers such as limited space for storage, increasing tuition fees,<sup>1</sup> decreasing regional job security, lack of access to healthy and culturally appropriate foods, and the limited capacity of food bank volunteers to run the space (UVSS Food Bank and Freestore, 2018). Students also have limited knowledge of where the food they are eating comes from, such as whether or not it is sustainably sourced. In this light, students have been asking critical questions about food on campus, organizing opportunities for students to discuss food issues, and leading changes to the campus food system. This includes issues of food insecurity, food sovereignty, healthy eating, food literacy, food access and institutional procurement practices.

This case study will explore the ways in which some of these barriers are being tackled through the implementation of the Good Food Challenge (GFC) at UVic. The process has involved student-led food procurement audits, procurement recommendations and policy analysis delivered to campus food services. Students have also run food literacy programming to increase awareness and the celebration of food that is sustainable, ethical, socially just and ecologically sound. Initiatives have been coordinated in partnership with UVic Food Services, the Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability (OCPS), the UVSS student government, UVSS Food Bank, the UVic Campus Community Garden, the Community Cabbage, the UVic Native Students Union (NSU), and several regional partners including: the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CRFAIR), Topsoil Innovative Urban Agriculture, the Good Food Box, Farm to School BC, and Farm to Cafeteria Canada (F2CC).

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<sup>1</sup> International students have faced tuition hikes of 24% between 2017-2018 alone.

# UVIC MEAL EXCHANGE

## UVic Students' Society (UVSS)



Founded in 1964, the UVSS is a social justice based non-profit run by students, it is separate from the University, and it runs a successful social enterprise that includes nine unique businesses. The students' society exists to provide advocacy, representation, services, and events for its members. The UVSS works on issues affecting students, such as post-secondary funding, public transit, sexualized violence, campus sustainability, student employment, and affordable housing.

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## UVSS Food Bank and Freestore



Located in UVSS SUB, the Food Bank & Free Store offers students grocery staples and free household items on a weekly basis. Hours are 9:30am-5pm Mon-Fri (Sept-March) and 11am-3pm Mon-Thu (April-Aug).

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## UVic Native Students Union



The UVic Native Students Union is a student-run organization dedicated to supporting the Indigenous student community at the University of Victoria.

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## Community Cabbage



The Cabbage serves a free weekly hot meal to the campus community prepared from food 'rescued' from the waste stream of grocery stores. Find us on campus on Fridays at noon. BYOBowl.

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## UVic Community Garden



UVic's Campus Community Garden is a space for students, faculty and staff to engage in local, organic food production, education and community building.

# The Good Food Challenge

## What is the GFC?

The Good Food Challenge has been inspired by and developed in partnership with the Real Food Challenge in the United States. The Good Food Challenge uses the power of youth and students to create campus food systems that are sustainable, socially just, humane, and healthy. Amidst a sea of confusing labels, certifications and claims about sustainability and ethical purchasing, the Good Food Challenge offers campuses a comprehensive and decisive definition for Good Food, set a high standard upheld consistently among institutions, and support users in tracking their progress. The Good Food Challenge is comprised of the Good Food Calculator, and the Good Food Campus Commitment.

## What is Good Food?

In the Calculator results, a Good Food product is ranked based on how many pillars of the Good Food Guide it meets. Good Food is a food item that qualifies as Good Food in one pillar (such as produce that is only Ecologically-sound). Good Food+ is a food item that qualifies as Good Food in more than one pillar (such as eggs that are Community-based and Humane). This distinction is made in an effort to recognize various levels of success. Good Food+ is advantageous for more stakeholders. While Good Food has room for improvement, it is important to recognize that progress is being made. Good Food+ and Good Food count equally towards the overall Good Food percentage for the institution.

## The GFC Process

The GFC Process (varies in different campus contexts)

1. Build relationships with university food service staff and present the Good Food Challenge
2. Encourage your university to sign the 20% Good Food Commitment by 2025
3. Gain access to food procurement invoices for one or two months of data to evaluate their current level of Good Food procurement
4. Research each food item down to the farm level to determine if each item meets at least one of the pillars on the Good Food Guide (community-based, socially-just, ecologically-sound, humane)
5. Present audit results and recommendations to food services and other stakeholders
6. Create a Good Food Campus Committee with students, staff, faculty and other relevant stakeholders to support changes to food procurement
7. Campaign for the university to sign the Good Food Commitment, if the campus not yet signed
8. Develop an Implementation Strategy and Multi-year Action Plan with milestones to increase Good Food procurement
9. Re-audit the campus to measure progress
10. Achieve and celebrate the 20% goal!

For more information about the Good Food Challenge, visit <https://www.mealexchange.com/gfc>

The first step of the auditing process at UVic, and at large, involves meeting with 'institutional officials' or primary contacts within campus staff and/or faculty, and filling out a 'baseline survey' or analysis of total food expenditure, customer visits, staff numbers etc. Following, students are given access to invoices for a particular month (or two months if it is within their capacity). Generally, it is good practice to choose both a winter and fall/spring month in order to capture metrics for seasonality. Further, the auditing process itself involves data input, and detailed research and evaluation of each item using the Good Food Guide criteria. Firstly, students input key data (with the exception of proprietary information, such as unit prices) into a spreadsheet, and then utilize this data (e.g. product names, codes, and dollar amount spent) to conduct research of each item down to the farm level.

Researching to the farm level is key to the GFC as, for example, many companies are considered 'local' when the manufacturing and/or company office is located locally, however, actual production and sourcing might not be. For example, many locally owned bakeries on Vancouver Island source their wheat from Saskatchewan, meaning that the vast majority of their ingredients come from beyond Meal Exchange's definition of local (within the province or 50km outside of). In this light, as Meal Exchange is particularly concerned with production practices on farms, and their locality, students must research and track the main ingredients of a product. Students are asked to determine the presence of organic, humane and socially-minded certifications and the percentage of the ingredients that have been third-party verified by GFC approved certifications. Further, students must determine whether the ingredients (50% or above) are considered community-based at the farm level (e.g. within the province or 50km outside of it, transparent and a small to medium sized enterprise). This focus on the farm level, and in particular the emphasis on ingredient analysis, is key as it inhibits local businesses that source distant ingredients from counting as 'local' or 'community-based'.

Further, the importance of third-party procurement audits has become evident at UVic, as there have been discrepancies not only in defining local/community-based, but also determining which items are third-party verified, and/or meet sustainable and socially just criteria. A core benefit of third-party audits, such as the Good Food Calculator from Meal Exchange, is that an organization with deep knowledge of food systems, certifications, and sustainable and socially responsible procurement is able to provide an unbiased analysis of campus food procurement and provide resources (e.g. funding for student coordinators, metrics, and network connections) to often overworked university staff. It has become evident through the GFC Canada-wide, that often food service staff simply do not have the capacity and resources to complete the work necessary to shift their food procurement to date. The role of Meal Exchange is to alleviate these pressures on staff by conducting research and co-developing pathways forward for sustainable changes to procurement practices.

**The GFC provides a clear and systematized mechanism for supporting university staff to increase Good Food on Campuses.** The 'Good Food Guide' is an integral part of the GFC, as it outlines the standards from which audits are conducted during the Good Food Challenge. The guide represents Meal Exchange's 'Good Food Standards', and is used as a reference for student researchers who are conducting the 'Calculator Audit'. Meal Exchange has chosen this mechanism because the use of third-party certifications guarantee ecological and human welfare along the supply chain, have increased in popularity and efficacy in recent years. Today, 7% of the coffee and 12% of the wild fish sold in international markets are certified as sustainable (Blackman & Rivera, 2011, pp. 1177), demonstrating the usefulness of third-party food certifications on the global market. Notably however, not all certifications are equal in caliber, as some have more stringent criteria than others. As such, the GFC serves as a useful tool for universities by offering them a comprehensive list of certifications that match the standards set out in the

Good Food Guide. These standards have been developed for the university context in collaboration with students, experts in the food system, professors, university staff, and farmers. Further, the Good Food Guide is useful for universities as it was created with university food purchasing patterns and student values in mind. The GFC offers university Food Service providers a clear and systematic methodology for increasing sustainable food on their campuses. Lastly, 'Disqualifiers' are ingredients that are so egregious to human health, that a product containing one cannot count as Good Food, even if it meets other Good Food criteria (Meal Exchange, 2018). However, the presence of disqualified items will not reduce the overall percentage of Good Food at a given campus. Instead, those foods with disqualified ingredients are identified as a priority to replace with 'Good Food'.

The auditing process involves an evaluation of purchasing invoices, and contacting vendors to determine the *percentage of the total dollar amount spent* on foods that uphold at least one of the pillars of Good Food - community-based, ecologically-sound, fair, and humane. In order to identify products that meet Meal Exchange's criteria set out in the GFC, their 'Students Standards Committee' cross referenced Meal Exchange's definition of "good food" with existing sustainable food certification programs. Examples of certifications that count as 'Good Food' included: USDA Organic, SPCA Certified, Rainforest Alliance Certified and Fair Trade International.

The longer term goal of the GFC is for the President and key decision makers at participating universities to sign the 'Good Food Campus Commitment.' That is, to purchase 20% Good Food by 2025 (based on the percentage of the total campus food budget). This Commitment enables student researchers and coordinators to hold their campuses accountable towards tangible procurement shifts in support of a more healthy, sustainable food system.

MEAL EXCHANGE

# UVIC AUDITS

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BRANDS TO LOOK FOR  
AT MYSTIC MARKET AND  
THE CADBORO COMMONS

12 %

## MYSTIC MARKET

In the month of February 2016, Mystic Market purchased a total of 12% Good Food; with the highest percentages in Socially Just and Ecologically Sound foods.

7 %

## CADBORO COMMONS

In the month of October 2017, Cadboro Commons had a total of 7% Good Food served; with the highest percentages in Socially Just and Ecologically Sound Foods.

## GOOD FOOD



Meadow  
fresh



Celebrating people, planet and pure tea



The Cadboro Commons and Mystic market are UVic's largest food service outlets. Both outlets consist primarily of independently owned restaurants, with the exception of Bento Sushi and Booster Juice.

**Socially just:** Due to UVic's recent adoption of the 'Fair Trade Campus designation through Fair Trade Canada, both audits found that the majority of food items counted in the category of 'socially just'. Items served on campus that meet both the Fair Trade Campus designation and the GFC's socially just standards included: Spirit Bear, Resiprocate/Canterbury, Kicking Horse and Salt Spring Island Coffee, Two Leaves, and Numi tea. Despite a higher percentage in this category, barriers have been highlighted by UVic student researchers for increasing the availability of fair trade produce and sugar. Namely, a shift in purchasing to replace conventional bananas and avocados for fair trade certified options was prevented in 2018, due to an existing fruit and vegetable contract, and this vendors' desire to capture, at minimum, a 50% profit above the market price made this transition unfeasible for the university. This issue has highlighted the need for a shift in contract practices to include sustainability and social justice criteria, in order to protect the university in its move toward increasing sustainable and ethical purchases.

**Ecologically Sound:** The second largest category achieved at UVic were those items that counted under the ecologically sound category. Brands that achieved the qualification of Good Food included but were not limited to: Amy's, Annie's Homegrown, Nature's Path, Prana, Santa Cruz Organics, Whole Alternative, Ben and Jerry's ice cream, Eden, GT's and several of the coffee and tea options that were included under the socially just category as well (e.g. Spirit bear, Canterbury). Notably, this category offers several opportunities for an increase in Good Food percentage at UVic due to existing manufacturers having organic options available; including shifts in purchasing to organic dairy free milk (e.g. So Good and So Nice soy and almond milk), and several aggregated products such as granola bars, soups and juices. It is expected that shifts under this category will be some of the easiest to make with the support of the university.

**Community based:** Community-based food is defined by Meal Exchange as foods that can be traced to nearby farms that are locally owned and operated (within the province or 50 km outside of it). Sourcing locally farmed foods supports the local economy by keeping money in the community and builds community relations. However, definitions of 'local' food can vary considerably between campus food services; at UVic, student researchers found that food could be labelled as local even if only part of the processing of the final product occurred locally, or if the business was locally owned (as seen in the self-reported 2017 AASHE stars report)<sup>2</sup>. This finding has as such presented a key focus area for chapter coordinators at UVic, as consistency in terms of defining the meaning of local food production (i.e. farming, fishing, etc.) is important for both the preservation and maintenance of local farming. Namely, by increasing the amount of food procured from local farms, and not only local businesses, campuses can have a direct, and positive impact on preserving and encouraging the local farming economy. Further, definitions of local that focuses on business ownership and food processing instead of production, ignore the carbon footprint of long food miles and the dependence on fossil fuels for food transportation (Freidmann, 2006, pp. 391). As such, student coordinators at UVic have encouraged a shift in the meaning of 'local' used in official campus policies, to incorporate farms which are within BC or 50 km outside of it.

In terms of specific audit results at UVic, community-based foods were the third highest percentages at both facilities, and included locally grown, transparent and small-medium size productions such as Portofino Bakery, Island Gold eggs, TransCold distribution Ltd. (dairy), Mario's Gelati, and Meadowfresh. Unfortunately, due to a lack of transparency in terms of tracing items back to their point of production, and determining size thresholds for producers, we were unable to qualify some locally grown items as community-based during our second audit. It has been, as such, recommended to UVic food services that increased transparency be established with all of

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<sup>2</sup> "The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) is a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance" (AASHE, 2019). UVic's Food and Beverage scores (and several other department scores) can be found on the AASHE Stars website.

its vendors, in order to better understand their production chain<sup>3</sup>. Further, the Cadboro Commons audit measured items purchased in the month of October, did not demonstrate a significant increase (i.e. above 2%) to procure local foods, even if we added those food items that did not qualify under the transparency requirement to the overall percentage. This is an important finding because there is more local food available during the fall months, than in February when the Mystic audit was conducted.

A local non-profit, the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CRFAIR), as part of a program called “Closing the Supply Gap”, has identified a need for better distribution in the region for local farms, as well as a need for increased capacity of farmers. This program works to help build the capacity of farmers so they can sell at higher volumes to purchasers such as Thrifty Foods (a local grocery store), as well as supporting increased distribution space in the region for local food. In terms of the latter, the CRFAIR is supporting and partnering with the province of BC, several local non-profits (including the Mustard Seed food bank), and businesses to create a distribution warehouse in Victoria. This space will provide a storage, aggregation and distribution center for farmers, and increase the viability of institutional procurement shifts toward higher volumes of local food in the region. In this light, UVic Meal Exchange coordinators have recommended UVic as a future partner/ purchaser through this program after it becomes established in the coming months<sup>4</sup>.

**Humane:** the lowest score landed in the category of humane certified foods; the single item identified was Ben and Jerry’s ice cream. There is significant work to be done in increasing the amount of food on campus that is verified humane, which has been noted as a focus area for future food literacy initiatives on campus by the new UVic Meal Exchange chapter lead.

## Current Relationships and Looking Forward

Between 2017-2018, the UVic Meal Exchange chapter worked exclusively with Food Services and the OCPS on auditing initiatives. As UVic was one of the first campuses to complete full audits, we were focused on piloting the Good Food Calculator and did not ask for a signed commitment to the GFC prior to completing the audits. Further, UVic Food Services did not have a Lead Director at the time of this work, which made it impractical to promote the Good Food Campus Commitment and associated changes to food procurement policies. In the interim, student coordinators have engaged in policy analysis as a tool for leveraging changes in procurement.

Through a directed study coordinated by Deborah Curran, Associate Professor at UVic and Executive Director at the Environmental Law Centre, and Jessica Schellenberg (the UVic chapter coordinator at the time) created a policy memo with recommendations for UVic Food Services and the OCPS in line with existing policies at the University. The memo offered tangible actions to Food Services to meet the ‘Dining Services’ mission, set out by the OCPS Action Plan 2014: “to be an institutional model of sustainability, leading the way through innovative local purchasing initiatives and sustainable operational practices that minimize our carbon footprint and provide high quality, ethically sourced, nutritious and diverse food options that sustain the health and wellbeing of our community (University of Victoria, 2014, pp. 14)”. With these existing policies in mind, recommendations made in 2018 included:

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<sup>3</sup> Notably, the overall Good Food percentage would have increased only a small amount had we counted those items, due to a small amount of local procurement by UVic, overall.

<sup>4</sup> The province has given 3 million dollars to the Victoria foundation, which will allow the Mustard Seed to access 2 million dollars for the purchase of a 20,000 sqft warehouse at 808 Viewfield Victoria B.C. The CRFAIR is closely connected to the coordination of this project.

## A. Star Recommendation: Hire a Sustainable Procurement Officer within Food Services

1. Manage and maintain sustainable purchasing decisions within Food Services.
2. Maintain UVic's policy directives under sections '5.6 Purchasing' and '5.3 Dining Services' of the Sustainability Action Plan;
  - Work with vendors to increase the availability of sustainable food; and
  - Maintain independent restaurants above franchise tenures.
3. Implement sustainability clauses within contracts between Food Services and its vendors.
4. Maintain relationships with key stakeholders involved in UVic's food culture including: Campus clubs, Meal Exchange, local First Nations, CRFAIR, Farm to Cafeteria Canada, TOPSOIL innovative urban agriculture, and Fair Trade Canada.
5. Partner to implement a pilot project for an organic educational farm that grows produce for sale to Food Services (long term goal).
  - Increase UVic's Good Food percentage;
  - Educate students about organic growing processes, and running an urban agriculture site; and
  - Respond to two key strategies within UVic's Strategic Plan (written in section 2.3 of the Sustainability Action Plan).

## B. Adopt the GFC at UVic

1. Incorporate Good Food Challenge Benchmarks into the Sustainability Action Plan.
2. Implement the GFC's 20% Good Food Commitment;
  - i. Implement strategies to go beyond the 20% Commitment, once it is achieved; and
  - ii. Continue to run the Calculator Audit at additional facilities on campus.

With student leadership turnover at the end of the 2019 school year, new relationships are needed with Food Service and OCPS staff. Currently, students are working to build these relationships, and to reinvigorate conversations about the Good Food Campus Commitment, and previously recommended shifts in policy. Further, as of July 2019, the UVic Meal Exchange team has begun a new relationship with the UVSS student government, which controls food services at the Student Union Building (SUB). The newly elected government 'Hear UVic' was elected in March of 2019 on a platform of environmental sustainability and social justice initiatives. The UVic chapter, along with several other food clubs on campus, officially endorsed their campaign, and began conversations about the Good Food Challenge at the onset of their being elected. The UVic chapter is currently partnering with UVSS to conduct an audit of their food purchasing and have a signed Good Food Campus Commitment at the onset. This new endeavour on campus will enable Meal Exchange to partner with a passionate, socially and environmentally-minded student government. Further, as they have influence over the SUB as a whole, there is more potential for action items that may come after the audit, such as campus gardens, increasing the capacity of the food bank, and/or creating an on-site farmers market.

Community partners are also an integral part of the success of the Good Food Challenge at UVic. Currently, the UVic chapter as well as the national team are engaging with the CRFAIR (a group working to increase the capacity of local farms for sale to larger

institutions) on their 'Closing the Supply Gap' initiative, with contracts and partnerships being established currently at Thrifty Foods. UVic has now been placed on the docket for this project as an institutional purchaser, pending the completion of the audit and the creation of a Good Food campus committee<sup>5</sup>. In addition, student leaders have worked to build partnerships with a local urban farm, TOPSOIL innovative urban agriculture, who provide fresh, local produce from their site in downtown Victoria. TOPSOIL provides a modular garden system that can be moved or taken down at any time, and thus offers a viable option for increasing UVic's Good Food percentage, as well as creating green space on campus. There are opportunities for this model to provide healthy local greens for salad bars on campus, for instance.

## Campaigning

In 2018/2019, UVic students have also engaged in several campaigns to support an increase in food justice and sustainability. The first and most vigorous campaign was the chapter's support for a 'Stop Starbucks' campaign, which involved networking with other food clubs on campus to determine messaging, and action items around attempting to prevent a Starbucks from replacing a local campus business called 'Finnerty Express'. Through this campaign, students demanded evidence from UVic's Board of Governors and Director of Ancillary Services of meaningful consultation. With assistance from the campus newspaper 'The Martlet' students were able to determine that ~200 students, staff and faculty out of a survey sent to 2,000 people chose Starbucks from a choice of three chains, highlighting the lack of meaningful demand for the introduction of this chain. Despite gathering over 2,000 signatures, and connecting with several news networks, students were unsuccessful in preventing the chain (due to the fact that it had already been purchased prior to the announcement). However, UVic chapter coordinators and other student club leads on campus are now having detailed conversations with the director of ancillary services to increase the sustainability and ethicality of the new Starbucks chain. For example, they are encouraging fair trade coffee/tea/sugar, more sustainable waste reduction practices, and attempting to maintain some control over what food is served.

Further, students engaged in a larger campaign against the tuition fee hikes for international students at UVic, which have risen by 24% in the last three years, making it extremely difficult for international students (especially those that are financially vulnerable) to live on campus. This campaign directly tied into food security, as international students constitute 40% of the UVSS Food Bank's user base. Although students were unable to prevent the hike to date, through coordination with the Food Bank, and on campus protest and food drive was able to fully stock the food bank for 3 weeks. The power of demonstration and collaboration proved beneficial despite a lack of movement in official policy, as students were able to coordinate and improve temporary food access for students in need. Further, with the goal of longer-term change in mind, students have also played a part in shifting perceptions on campus, and linking issues of race, classism, and food security for increased awareness about the interconnectedness of these issues.

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<sup>5</sup> The Good Food Campus Committee is responsible for developing and coordinating the implementation of the Good Food Campus Commitment. This group can be comprised of students, staff, and other relevant collaborators in Good Food work such as faculty, food service managers, and food service workers.

## Food Literacy at UVic

The UVic Meal Exchange chapter has engaged students, staff and faculty in several food literacy workshops. In 2017, the UVic Meal Exchange chapter ran a campus-wide and community Think Tank to determine what areas of impact were needed on campus in terms of food security. The result of this Think Tank was to develop 'pop-up' campus community-kitchens in the short term, and to support the development of more usable kitchen space for students.

**Between 2017 and 2019, students hosted six campus community kitchens which will be explored in this section.**

Community kitchens meet the needs of students and campus food sustainability stakeholders who want/need to connect deeper with food, sustainability, their peers and campus services. Time is spent preparing food in addition to learning about its importance, cultural ties and how to prepare a finished meal. It offers participants a chance to learn about healthy eating, food access, food security, food sovereignty, their relationship to nature, seasonal eating, preserving food, cooking, community-building and more!

Representatives from the community who have deeper knowledge and context on a particular pillar of the GFC provide a meaningful learning experience. For example, guiding questions for the Community-based cooking workshop in October 2018 included:

- Why does local food procurement matter?
- What is your role in the local food movement?
- What would you like to see improved at UVic and/or in the community?
- And, what are some good things happening in the community/ at UVic we can support?

### Important considerations for community kitchens:

**Cultural food and food sovereignty:** UVic Meal Exchange has worked to partner with culturally diverse student groups and clubs, in order to provide a platform for a diversity of foods to be served at your workshops, and to create culturally safe spaces. These partners have included the UVic Native Students Union (NSU) and the UVic Global Community.

**Learning impairments:** when possible/applicable, coordinators note any learning impairments (e.g. visual and hearing). Responses could include an educator with knowledge of sign language for instance, or include visual cues in presentations to accommodate hearing impairments.

**Dietary restrictions:** it is very important to take allergies and dietary restrictions into consideration, and to identify what foods you will be cooking ahead of time to attendees. This is generally carried out by checking in with guests via event pages on social media.

## Events hosted:

### Think Tank:

\* In attendance: 25 (students, staff, faculty, community members)

\*On the menu: Local baked potatoes, sour cream, onions and chives from SPUD (an organic grocery delivery service operating in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, and Edmonton).



This workshop included student leaders from several UVic clubs including the Community Cabbage, the UVSS food bank, the UVic Campus Community Garden, and UVic Meal Exchange chapter members. Also in attendance were faculty members (from Education and Environmental Studies), campus administration and staff (OCPS, Food Services), as well as community members from the CRFAIR, Farm to School BC and TOPSOIL innovative urban agriculture.

The objective of this workshop was to define and prioritize needs on campus in terms of food security and food sovereignty. Several project ideas were recommended to mitigate student hunger including a pay-it-forward program and increased capacity at the UVSS Food Bank, in addition to food literacy programming and community kitchen space. As a group, it was decided that we would focus on building community kitchen workshops, as well as on-campus kitchen space. In order to achieve this goal, students spent the remainder of the 2018 winter semester planning, creating material lists and budgets, and developing relationships with the Think Tank attendees. Funding for these workshops thus far has been largely secured through a guaranteed club budget of \$100 per semester, as well as two rounds of 'Special Project Grant (SPG)' funding through the UVSS, amounting to \$500 in 2018/19. In July of 2019, the chapter coordinator has also applied for a 'Taking it Global' grant via Canada Service Corps, to further develop these workshops in the 2019/2020 academic year.

## Cooking Community-based:

\* In attendance: 15 students, 2 faculty, 1 staff

\* On the menu: Turnip chips (sauteed with olive oil and salt) and Pasta Fazool (recipe provided by UVic Food Services nutrition coordinator)



Our first community kitchen was hosted in September of 2018 with collaboration between the UVic Meal Exchange chapter and the UVSS Food Bank and Freestore. This workshop was made possible through donated produce via TOPSOIL, Portofino, the Good Food Box, and the UVSS Food Bank. The objective of this workshop was to initiate a discussion with students about the GFC pillar, community-based, and coordinate discussion on how best to increase food items under this category on campus. In addition, students were able to provide attendees with a delicious and healthy free dinner, while engaging in a food literacy workshop. Serendipitously, there was a 'Tiny House' build, coordinated by the Secwépemc First Nation occurring on the same night, and we were able to give a warm cup of stew to students protecting the home overnight; highlighting another way in which community kitchens can help build up our campus community for increased resiliency!

## The Taste of Fair Trade:

\*In attendance: 12 students

\*On the menu: Fair Trade caramelized bananas, Fair Trade coffee, tea and sugar



The goal of this workshop was to engage students in conversation and food literacy concerning socially just foods. In order to create a meaningful experience, we responded to a call to action via the Justice for Migrant Workers Network, and sent letters to government

officials, encouraging them to provide migrant farm workers with full access to Employment Insurance. We chose to focus on migrant workers, as there is currently lack of third-party verification for farm work standards in Canada that are comparable to Fair Trade designations (that often label food items produced in the Global South). Currently, there is only the Fair Food Program, a standard that is included in the GFC's standards for Socially Just.

### **Cooking Healthy on a Budget:**

- \* In attendance: 5 students (snow storm and rescheduled event)
- \* On the menu: Chicken stew
- \* Prize (name draw): Instant pot

This workshop was coordinated in partnership with the UVSS Food Bank and Freestore, as well as the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) chapter at UVic. The goal of the workshop was to facilitate a discussion on food access/pricing and healthy eating. The RBC rep was able to provide some tips and tricks on budgeting and staying within your means, as well as an instant pot for one student to take home. Because the group ended up being small, we had an open discussion afterwards and enjoyed an abundance of food!

### **Accessible Cooking:**

- \* In attendance: 6 students (last minute planning and specific topic)

This workshop was planned by the UVSS Food Bank and Freestore, with support from the UVic Meal Exchange chapter. The focus of the workshop was on easy-to-make recipes for those lower capacity days. We hosted a discussion aimed at sharing cooking tips and tricks and the impacts of stigmatized food access and how it intersects with disabilities. Barriers for this workshop included limited capacity of the UVic Students with Disabilities Society for coordination and the timing of the event during exam season. Rather than cooking at this short event, we gave away goodie bags with healthy, easy to make foods, as well as a recipe booklet for students to take home (e.g. buddha bowls, lentil loaves, leftover stew, using leftovers and imperfect produce).

## Cultural Foods Fair:

\*In attendance: ~150 students in and out, ~20 participants (cooking and serving cultural dishes)

\*On the menu: a variety of cultural dishes from the Cree/Dene First Nation, Pakistan, Syria, Russia, Japan, the UK and more!



This event was one of our biggest successes of the year, and was hosted in partnership with the UVSS Food Bank and Freestore as well as staff from the UVic Global Community/ International Student Society. We are proud to have been able to provide a meaningful and culturally diverse event for all students to attend and engage with questions of food sovereignty on campus. Because of an established partnership with UVic staff, we are also able to secure funding and leadership to continue hosting these events. Another fair is already being planned for the 2019/2020 school year!

## Additional volunteering through the UVic Meal Exchange chapter

### Trick or Eat

\* In attendance 2017 (~25 students)

\*In attendance 2018 (~20 students)

\*Objective: students went door to door in the community to collect non-perishable goods for the Mustard Seed and the UVSS Food Bank and Freestore.



## Project Reclaim volunteer day

\* In attendance: 9 students

\* Objective: Invasive species pull with the Tsartlip First Nation



## Conclusion

Alongside several other food clubs and local organizations, UVic Meal Exchange has driven the conversation about food security on campus; this has fostered conversations about food procurement shifts, while simultaneously engaging in student food literacy programming. Meal Exchange advocates for students across the country and, as an organization, is vital to the push for 'Good Food' for all. Equity, diversity and inclusion are core principles that drive Meal Exchange's work; therefore, its programming takes into consideration a large range of student interests and needs throughout the advocacy process. Further, the intersections between social justice and environmental sustainability are woven into all aspects of the GFC, thus providing mechanisms and tools for campuses to engage with such issues. Students are a powerful force in these conversations and, at UVic, the Meal Exchange chapter has implemented and developed powerful, solution-based programming to address some of the most pressing issues in the overall food system.

## Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to our funders at Vancouver Foundation, Public Health Agency of Canada, and Farm to Cafeteria Canada.

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