

**PROGRAM REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**  
**FIRST ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**  
**Sustainable Agriculture and Community Food Systems**  
**2018 - 2019**

**Recommendation 1. Investment in a staff (e.g., Academic Coordinator) or lecturer position is needed.** Such a person could help increase student numbers and contribute to programmatic teaching. Possible responsibilities include:

- Formalizing internship opportunities and expectations with community partners and industry;
- Increasing student research involvement;
- Tracking alums and deepening connections between them and current students;
- Advising students;
- Teaching within SAG;
- Program recruitment/advertising, participating in 'UK and you', deepening diversity recruitment;
- Communications (web, newsletter, social media, etc.)
- Assist with program assessment.

**Assessment method:** Allocation of a staff position to the program.

**Results:** We have not been able to invest in the full-time staff position that was intended by this suggestion. However, we have used SAG program funds (generated from tuition and course fees) to invest in a student employee (Kelly Walker, NRES major) to manage our social media (~2-4 hours per week). Kelly is receiving support and some graphic design mentorship from Seth Riker, Marketing and Communications Manager in the CAFÉ Center for Student Success. We are grateful for Mr. Riker's support and mentorship.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** It is clear that we cannot fulfill all of the staff functions needed to grow a program and cultivate alumni relationships without an allocated staff member. However, we can continue to meet teaching obligations and prioritize strategic functions that academic program staff provide. It is unlikely the College is in a financial position to invest in this kind of position at the moment, based on discussion at the five-year periodic program review of the program. As such, it is likely we will need to use ad hoc program support and leverage existing resources to fulfill priority functions.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** We will continue to look for creative opportunities to find support to fulfill roles that current program faculty are unable to fulfill. Progress will just be slow and steady, and we would welcome an investment in this position when possible.

**Recommendation 2. Recruit/hire a new SAG teaching/extension faculty member.** This person could fill the holes left by the recent faculty departures/promotions, increase the program's teaching capacity, and explicitly acknowledge the program's important extension function. Responsibilities might include:

- Teach/oversee the apprenticeship, capstone, and other production-related courses;
- Develop a beginning farmer certification program in coordination with the CSA;

- Develop a Commonwealth-wide extension program that formalizes SAG faculty efforts to date in this arena;
- Assist with developing more community food system related internship opportunities, especially with alumni and partner organizations.

**Assessment method:** Recruitment or hiring of a new faculty member.

**Results:** We have not obtained commitments from CAFÉ department- or College-levels for a SAG-dedicated faculty position at this time. We have not yet begun to talk with department chairs about potential overlap with upcoming open positions. SAG Steering Committee faculty are committed advocating for this within their own departments.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** Based on SAG Steering Committee discussions of potential candidates and future potential hires, we believe that the SAG program could be a potential recruitment tool for some faculty searches. It is clear we need to speak with chairs to communicate our program needs and opportunities, and focus on Recommendation 3 if we are to recruit additional faculty resources into the program.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** Meet with department chairs and continue to build stronger relationships with other departments.

**Recommendation 3. Build stronger relationships with other Departments.** This is the most immediate way to help fill the instructional gaps, but it is also likely to lead to a more diverse and engaged faculty of record. While the program has made some progress on this front since the last review, more still could be done. Ideas on how to accomplish include:

- Develop a strategy to recruit and reward contributing faculty from other Departments (Dietetics & Human Nutrition, Community & Leadership Development, Agricultural Economics, Plant & Soil Sciences, Entomology, Plant Pathology, and others outside the College, such as Philosophy, Anthropology, Geography, Sociology, etc.);
- Negotiate for SAG teaching/advising responsibilities to be explicitly written into new faculty hires in multiple departments (possibly as a cluster hire?);
- Consider developing MOUs with contributing Departments;
- Develop other Department buy-in for support of the SAG program beyond teaching (HR, IT, financial, recruitment support, etc.).

**Assessment method:** Recruit and retain a diverse faculty of record. Documented departmental resource sharing with the SAG program.

**Results:** We have strengthened the program faculty of record with additional members from Community and Leadership Development to represent both CLD and Career and Technical Education, as well as Animal Sciences and Dietetics and Human Nutrition. We have not added additional members from Arts and Sciences or other Colleges at this point. CLD faculty are interested in additional teaching and course development, and Horticulture maintains strong facilities and faculty support for the program. Plant and Soil Sciences has recently begun teaching a SAG cross-listed course (Plant Production Systems), which adds some welcome teaching relief and instructional

diversity in the SAG program. We have not developed any other buy-in support for the SAG program, in teaching or other regards at this time.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** There is great opportunity for strengthening our relationships with other departments. We would like to think that such relationships could be reciprocal, and that teaching and other support of the SAG program would help recruit new faculty as well as provide an engaging and collaborative environment for supporting faculty and staff. However, such value must compete with pragmatic teaching and staffing needs of the contributing departments. It is likely some departments may be more able to contribute different resources than others, and time must be spent investing in relationship building and developing strategic requests that are tailored to the strengths and resources of each department. This is a time-consuming task that will likely progress slowly with existing program faculty and administrative resources.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** We will develop a plan during the 2019-2020 academic year to strengthen relationships with departments that may be able to make immediate teaching and other program contributions, based on information from the Steering Council. We will continue to look for timely opportunities (e.g. internal and external funding opportunities around SAG program goals) to catalyze these discussions, as these relationships can be built much more quickly with a tangible goal or project in mind.

#### **Recommendation 4. Deepen relationships with alums:**

- Increase formal tracking of students;
- Improve alumni networking (maintain directories & current listservs);
- Develop opportunities for alumni and current students to interact and gain a broader understanding of food systems, such as a seminar format course bringing in alums.

**Assessment method:** Develop an alumni tracking system. Develop opportunities for alumni and current students to interact.

**Results:** We have an ad hoc alumni tracking system (Excel spreadsheet, email with alumni, and Facebook contacts) that allow us to reach most of our program alumni. We have not developed any alumni listserv or directory, or created the events that were described here.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** Although our ad hoc tracking of alumni contacts does not speak to a systematic approach, we do stay in touch with our program alumni through these methods. The investment in assistance with our social media will likely help us maintain and build these connections via social media. However, as the program grows, staying in touch with our alumni is going to be become more difficult. We need to develop such a system for both program tracking purposes as well as curating philanthropic support opportunities for our alumni. Unfortunately, at this moment, this is simply beyond the ability of the SAG program faculty at this time, as we prioritize building student numbers and focus on program recruitment and visibility.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** In the next year, we will reach out to CAFÉ resources (Office of Philanthropy) and discuss how we may leverage assistance at the College-level to help with this. It is outside of the scope of what we can do at this time, but we are committed to try to leverage resources and expertise as we are able.

### **Recommendation 5. Expand the mandate of the Steering Committee:**

- Develop more formalized roles so that the steering committee functions more like an executive committee, delegating administrative, operations, strategic planning to individuals or groups within the committee to help share the load;
- Broaden leadership across the involved disciplines to facilitate buy-in and commitment from associated Departments;
- Include extension representation on the committee (possibly the UK SARE coordinator?);
- Further build the diversity, multidisciplinary of the participants and foster community amongst the members;
- Consider including stakeholders somehow.

**Assessment method:** Documented increase in number of Steering Committee meetings and expansion of requests for help from committee. Expansion of diversity and disciplines involved, as well as title-series (Extension). Inclusion of stakeholders in program discussions.

**Results:** We have increased the number of Steering Committee meetings to two per semester, with a greater number of items for discussion and feedback for the group (recruitment materials, course listing, minor revisions, etc.). We have worked to recruit meaningful contributors from CAFÉ departments, with a nod toward diversity and inclusivity, which definitely enriches the group. We continue to discuss how best to include stakeholders in meaningful ways.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** We realize that reporting progress as “Additional Steering Committee meetings” may sound like a small and meaningless step. However, historically the DUS and Steering Committee Chair have shouldered most of the program work, and informed the Steering Committee of program happenings. We are actively working to change this committee culture, and the Steering Committee are excited to contribute more. We look forward to reporting more specific examples of shared work, collaboration, inclusivity, and stakeholder engagement in the future.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** We will continue to create plans for the Steering Committee to engage in ways that leverage their expertise and that are professionally rewarding and personally fulfilling. In addition to contributing to more routine curricular activities, like revision of the SAG program minor, we look forward to engaging in creative exercises such as helping craft recruitment and publicity materials, team-building activities, etc.

### **Recommendation 6. Maintain the summer Apprenticeship:**

- Explore financial options to help students with the cost (e.g., use online teaching revenue to help subsidize the cost or create scholarships, philanthropy);
- Re-thinking the size and financial operations of the CSA is needed, since apprentice labor has been free to-date and apprentice numbers may go down due to summer tuition. Consider reducing the size of the CSA to provide a more even balance between commercial production and other activities that associated staff or faculty engage in, such as teaching, research, and extension.
- Given the importance of the CSA to the UK community (and beyond) and the apprenticeship for the SAG program, hard funding for a farm educational coordinator/CSA manager may be needed.

**Assessment method:** Maintaining the summer apprenticeship in a sustainable manner, which includes viable student numbers and sufficient support for the CSA.

**Results:** Based on this recommendation, we formally changed the Apprenticeship to a 12-week summer course. We had 10 tuition-paying students, as at this time, we do not have a way to offer financial assistance. We have been able to obtain funding for the CSA manager position, shared by the College and Department of Horticulture. This year provided valuable baseline financial data on whether we will be able to re-think the size of the CSA and various scenarios therein. The online tuition returns refer to the online SAG 210 course that will begin to be offered in Spring 2020, and as such, are not yet relevant to this discussion.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** We are committed to offering the Apprenticeship as a summer course, required of SAG majors. However, the burden of summer tuition and the lack of ability for students to continue their hours into the fall creates complications for other students served by the course. For example, we have experienced a growth in SAG minors from the Career and Technical Education major. These students are typically unable (financially and schedule-wise) to complete their hours in the summer semester. We are in discussions with Ag Ed faculty (also Steering Committee members) as to how to best serve these students through the hands-on experience the Apprenticeship offers. At this time, we are still evaluating the financial benefit from the tuition revenue and staff support from the Apprenticeship before we can make informed decisions about scholarships, reducing the CSA size, etc.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** We will continue to evaluate how best to support the educational outcomes of the Apprenticeship to the SAG majors, minors, and many other students we serve. This is an ongoing conversation that occurs in conjunction with discussions of responsible fiscal management of the CSA by the Department of Horticulture.