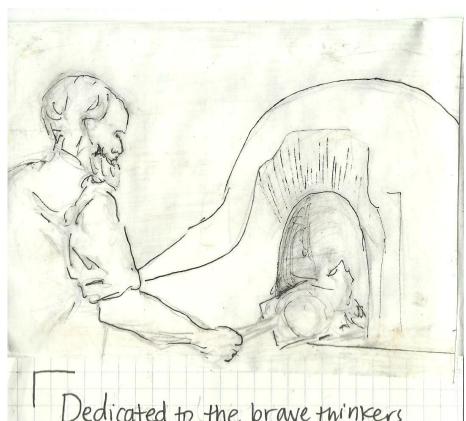


community

Nina Arlein UW Farm Director 2010-20111

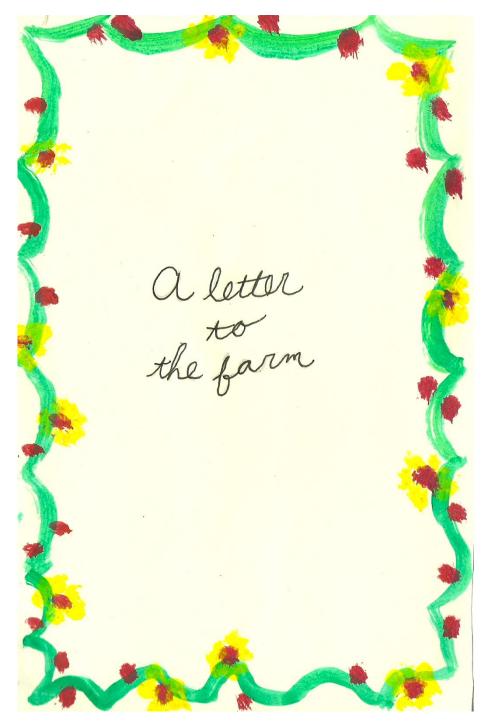


Dedicated to the brave thinkers and eternal students (the kind that make the best teachers!) of the UW Farm.

Special thanks to Doug, Beth, & Keith your unending enthusiasm for learning of teaching is an inspiration

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Dear farmers and farm friends,

Hello! Over the past two and a half years I have watched a lot change at the UW Farm. New friends have come and gone, beautiful projects have been made, and there are more volunteers, visions and ideas for the future than ever before. We are in a time of expansion and growth, and lots of knowledge has been generated along the way. This booklet is a way to document and share that knowledge so that the Farm continues to evolve, and to be a place where people can enact their ideas, and find new ways to teach one another.

The focus of this booklet is the Farm's community: how the group works together around shared interests and goals. Its content includes a Farm history, communication, collaboration and more. The community of people that sustains the physical space of the Farm is just as important to understand as cover crop or compost. Learning about and cultivating this community has been the most important part of my education over the past two years. I hope that this booklet will be a resource for new and old members, as well as others beyond the Farm, so that they too can feel empowered to understand and create communities around food, learning and ecological and social change.

Keep asking questions, and searching for answers in one another!

Enjoy!

Nina

p.s. a disclaimer: Please recognize that this booklet is largely informed by my personal experience with the Farm. It is a big organization and a multi-faceted place. I have depicted it as accurately as I can.

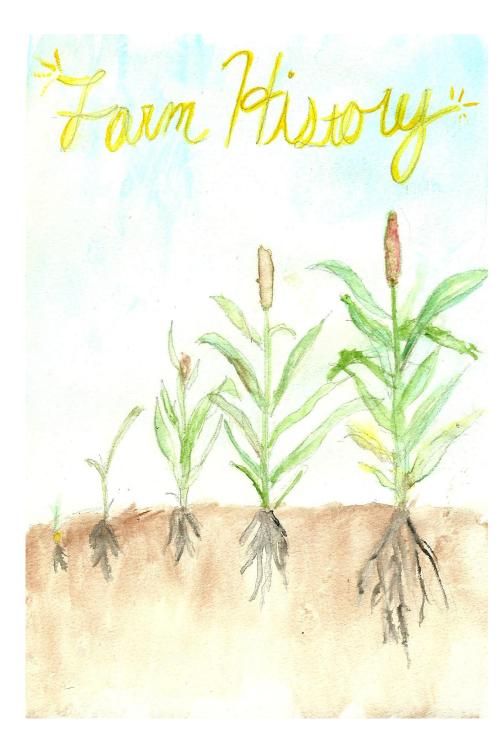
On Introduction the Farn Community Ultimarley the community could prove to have the most long lasting effect of the bain...
People leaving with positive,
memories to reflect om." Wedged between the concrete of buildings and roadways, on the University of Washington's 643 acre campus, is a small farm—just 1/3 acre that supports an interconnected community of people, plants, and animals.

Students at the Farm directly engage with the inner workings of this community, from pollination and nitrogen fixation, to group dynamics and collaborative leadership. This is the strength of the Farm. It provides a context to learn hands-on about our local ecological and social systems; and to experience the inseparability of the two.



At the Farm students do learn about sustainable agricultural practices, but they also explore a social system that will sustain and complement these practices. This has become particularly important in the past few years of growth. Until now the Farm has been lead by volunteers, it has had no financial support other then fundraising, and produce has been grown for volunteers. As the Farm changes we must continue to focus on community, asking questions like: how do we want to support each other, how can we facilitate knowledge sharing, and how can we create a place that is diverse, in all respects?

The answers to these questions will always be different, because our community is one of flux. This booklet documents our current practices and recent lessons learned together, but keep in mind that these practices are bound to and I think should change over time.



IDEAS: 2004



Alan Trimble and Jenifer Ruesink were two biology professors tired of graduating ecology students who "could not recognize a carrot growing in the ground." They along with Beth Wheat, a graduate student in Ruesink's lab, felt that there was a need for students to physically interact with ecosystems in a positive way; an antidote to the usual stories students heard of human environmental destruction.

In 2004 the three taught a "Foundations of Ecology" course. The class took a trip to the medicinal herb garden to study seed dispersal. There the teaching team started talking with Keith Possee, the garden's steward, about a possible solution. Each of them had experience with student farms or community gardens. And they all wanted to draw attention to the importance of sustainable agriculture. They were inspired by the "Cuba miracle"—the way Cuba had completely reinvented its agriculture in Havana nearly overnight. Keith remembers thinking, "if they can grow so much food right in the middle of the city we could at least try." This was the seed of an idea: the UW Farm.

PLANNING: 2005

The team met with campus officials and tried to get formal permission for the Farm, but the University's bureaucratic process was slow. Alan was concerned that the group's momentum might stall. So one day, standing behind the Botany Greenhouse he asked, "why not right here?" The group approached Doug, the greenhouse manager, who replied with his normal mischievous grin, "go ahead - I'll blame the vandals."



(From left to right: Keith Possee, Doug Ewing, Beth Wheat, Jen Ruesink, & Alan Trimble)

It was a beautiful convergence of people, Jen explained. "Alan brought the energy, Doug the land, and Keith the plant knowledge and experience." That fall the group broke ground and the Farm began to grow. (For more information on the physical development of the Farm see Appendix B).

Lesson #1: Ask for forgiveness not permission.

The paradox of student stewardship: A group of UW Bothell students are currently trying to start a community garden on their campus. They "actually have a really open campus" (direct quote UW Bothell student), but the chancellor is concerned about students' ability to steward the space over the long-term. While this concern is legitimate, denying space to garden because of it is a paradox. Students continue to be denied space, because they don't have the organizing or gardening know-how to maintain it, and they don't have the know-how to maintain a space, because they continue to be denied space. In other words, without space how can we ever begin to learn? At the UW Farm, if it was never decided that it was better to just try (despite the possibility of failure) the Farm might not have ever come to fruition.

Note: Tangible projects are empowering and energizing, a necessary component of keeping a student community engaged. But if you ask for permission many of these projects can quickly be surrounded by "red tape," and slowed to a pace that goes beyond a single students' time at the university. Weigh the importance of student interest and the risk of alienating administrators.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT



At the start student involvement at the Farm was low. With no solid base of volunteers, student-driven learning and peer mentorship were difficult goals to realize. In those days Keith was the main source of knowledge. He'd leave out seeds or plants, with precise instructions on planting. If this

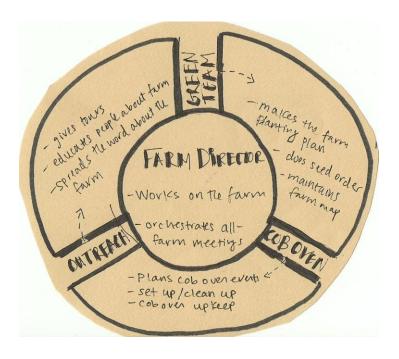
didn't work he or Alan would just do the work. The students who were involved were more often graduate students who were connected to the biology department. Thus, in these early years the main goal of the Farm was developing a "critical mass" of student engagement by getting more students from a variety of disciplines involved. The cob oven was pivotal in reaching this goal and attaining the critical mass needed to make the Farm sustainable. It was built in the spring of 2007 and for the first year after its construction the UW Farm had a pizza bake every week.

Lesson#2: The value of eating together!

At a speech for the Community Alliance for Global Justice's fundraiser dinner last year I learned that "companion" is a borrowed French word, literally meaning "with bread." The word "companion" derives from the act of breaking bread together. People bond over food. It helps forge community ties, and is key to intimacy. Family gatherings, and time spent with friends all involve eating. The cob oven inspires this companionship. It is the Farm's proverbial hearth, the gathering space for people to come together and share in the preparation and consumption of food. The celebration of food around the cob oven is often the initial connection people have to the Farm community. * I suggest that any organization have some sort of regular ritual around food!

CREATING STRUCTURE and STUDENT AGENCY

"All Farm Meetings" have been a staple at the Farm since its inception. These meetings were originally the space to brainstorm new projects, and to make big structural decisions. At the last All Farm Meeting in the spring of 2007, it was decided that the Farm should become a "Registered Student Organization" (RSO). It was this decision and the process that followed that created the first hints of student governance. To be an RSO you need a constitution and officers. Arwen Norman, a biology student, rose to the occasion. She volunteered to be the Farm's first "Farm Director," and orchestrated the registration of the Farm as an RSO. She also came up with a new structure, a sort of "wagon wheel", with the Farm Director at the center. A "Cob Oven Team," "Outreach" and the "Green Team" were envisioned as the wheel's "spokes."



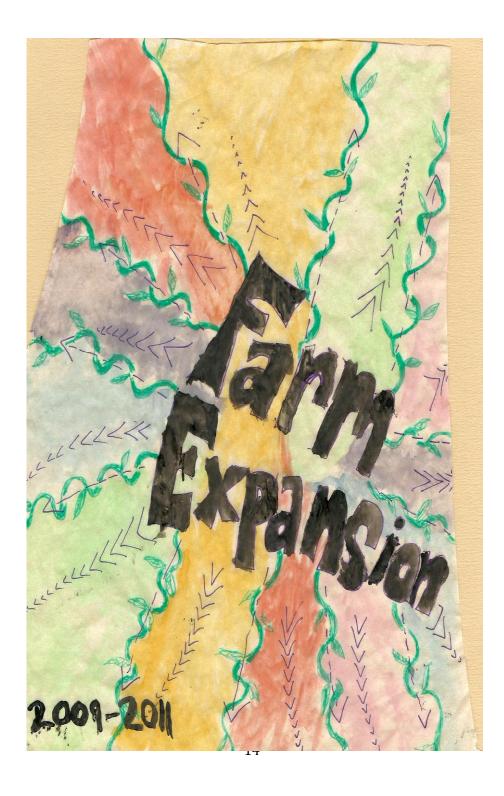
Lesson #3: Structure helps new leaders "rise to the occasion"

According to Michael Jacoby Brown's "Building Powerful Community Organizations" the "iron rule" in community organizing assumes that people naturally want to take on leadership roles. Structured commitments like committees, projects, or titled positions helps this natural leadership manifest. Tangible commitments give people specific responsibilities, and a framework that makes leadership more manageable.

The Green Team represented a big change in education at the Farm. In fall of 2007, when that first planting plan was finished, it became clear to Keith that a critical aspect of the learning at the Farm was not just what you did, but "how you do it and who does it" (Beth had been pushing this ideology already for some time). The students had to learn through doing—to be empowered to make decisions about how the Farm would run, and enact those decisions together. This new pedagogy became central to the Farm's ethos. Students continue to innovate their own education at the Farm, developing new projects to learn from (e.g. chickens), structure to support collaborative learning (e.g. the Chicken Crew), and formal linkages to the University (e.g., Food Focus Group). (For a timeline of these developments see Appendix A).

Lesson #4: Appeal to collaborative and student- directed learning

The sort of learning mentioned above is appealing, because it is an alternative to the typical individualistic and top-down education provided by the University. As solitary individuals, students are relatively powerless in the institution of the University. Providing a community and educational opportunities like these empowers students, helping "regain the balance of power, to the people" (Brown, 100).



IDEAS: 2009

The cob oven, and the student governance and collaborative education that proliferated after 2007 facilitated the Farm's crescendo into "critical mass." By 2009 there was a core of dedicated leaders, a large group of regular volunteers (formalized by the development of the "Dirty Dozen:" for more information see Appendix B), and still more students looking to get involved. The Farm was buzzing, people were suddenly ever-present, planting, weeding, dreaming and organizing; and starting to get publicity for it too. In just a few months there were several articles published in University and community magazines and newsletters about the Farm. At the same time, however, there were other schemes hatching for the Farm.

In the fall of 2009 development personnel were "walking around our vegetable



with polished patches boots. thinking about big structures" (Beth Wheat, direct quote). They wanted to build a new LEED certified building biology that would effectively pave over the current Greenhouse and Farm. Beth and Doug were worried, and started talking about the need to find the Farm a new space. Now that the

Farm was in the public eye, we'd now have to ask for permission. At risk of getting stuck in the University's web of bureaucracy, the process had to begin immediately, or it could be years without land. If that happened the Farm community could lose momentum, or worse, fall apart. Despite this immanent threat, the thought of a new space was also filled with promise. We could have more land to accommodate growing student interest, and maybe sell produce... We might even be able to fund a paid staff person that would facilitate student leadership, share Farm knowledge, and foster academic connections across the University. And so it was in this context of hazard and hope that Farm Visioning began.

VISIONING PART I: 2009-2010

As Brady, past farm director, remembers it, expansion wasn't the primary goal of visioning meetings. But, "we were going in enough directions that we needed to have a core at the helm", — a consistent group of volunteers to plan our possible next steps. The first visioning meeting was held in December 2009. I personally remember that meeting as tense. It was strange meeting outside the context of the greenhouse. In a room full of faculty and community advisors, a white board, and fluorescent lights, things felt more official.



We met a few times before winter quarter began, and then at the start of 2010 a group of students began to meet weekly at 7 AM. In these first meetings we began generating ideas for our vision.

• Do we want to find

more space?

- Do we want a paid staff person?
- Do we want to grow food to sell?
- Would we need a new committee structure? What would that look like?

LESSON #5: Have food at all meetings! Especially when they are in the morning or evening. This keeps people alert and deters grumpiness!

From our visions we started to generate an expansion plan, a proposal document we could show administrators or potential funders of our project. The space we were focusing on was Foege Field.

FOEGE: Spring 2010

Foege Field was conveniently close to our current location, was a full acre, was in the public eye, and most importantly was on the main campus. This space was selected with the help



of the University's landscape architect, and people in the Capital Resource Planning Office. During this process Beth, Brady, and I met several times with faculty advisors, the Landscape Architect, Deans from the College of Arts and Sciences, and administrators in the Capital Resource Office. These folks helped us learn the inner workings of campus bureaucracy and to figure out the contents of our proposal (for more information on the network of people and offices involved in this process see Appendix C). The proposal included a strategic plan, a continued plan, the Farm structure, phasing, a site plan, and shade analysis (you can access the "Original Expansion Plan Foege Field" document on the Farm website:

http://students.washington.edu/uwFarm/documents

We worked on this document for months, breaking into teams to make the process more manageable. When it was finally complete we presented it to Dean Ana Mari Cauce of the College of Arts and Sciences, who floated it by her team, the Provost, and Kirk Pawlowski, the lead in the Capital Resource Planning Office. At a meeting with these folks a month later, we got a YES! Beth, Brady, and I looked at one another speechlessly (Beth was education coordinator, Brady- the farm director, and I-the soon to be farm director for more information on these roles see Appendix D) looked at one another speechlessly. As a final caveat at the end of the meeting, we

were told that we needed final approval from the faculty in the adjacent buildings. They called it a "formality."

What followed is unclear, but Dean Cauce emailed us a week later to say that we would NOT be getting the space after all. Apparently the Dean of Health Sciences had vetoed it. We never got a complete explanation as to why. She told us that we could fight the decision, but she would not be in support of countering another dean. That was a devastating blow; after six months of tireless work, meetings and document writing, we felt that we were in the same place as where we began. After a tumultuous month we took a much-needed break for the summer.

Lesson #6: Learn the bureaucracy

This initial expansion process was our first lesson in the University's bureaucratic system. We learned as we went, and because of our naïveté we were a bit more vulnerable. We let the process take over, and allowed the Dean to be our spokesperson. While I am certain she was well intentioned, this process does not fit with the Farm's value of community involvement and transparency. We lost sight of that in our eagerness to move quickly. *I suggest becoming well acquainted with the institution you are dealing with so your organization can choose when you want/need to utilize that system, or work in your own way. For the Farm this meant that for the next go-round, we would contact stakeholders directly and make proposals on our own behalf.

FARM PARTNERSHIP: Fall 2010- NOW

(For more information on this see Michelle Harvey's Handbook)



In early August of 2010 Beth and I met again with University officials (folk from CPRO and CPO (see Appendix C) in search for alternative spaces for the Farm. They mentioned a few spaces to pursue, all the rest were less than an acre and/or unlikely (e.g., Denny field). They thought that the Center of Urban Horticulture (CUH)- was the best option, and advocated strongly for us talking with Youth Garden Works1 Seattle (SYGW), and giving it some thought

(for more information on CUH and its relationship with the Farm see Appendix C).

We met with a small contingency of the visioning team and talked about our options. We thought that the possibility of building a connection with SYGW would be a significant step in addressing food justice issues and strengthening community alliances. We felt that we couldn't continue to pursue the Foege Field option without sacrificing our relationship with the Deans. So, despite the distance and the possibility we might have to pay for greenhouse space there, we thought it was a good option. After discussion at an All Farm Meeting we made the decision official. We began to work with Seattle Tilth to come up with a partnership to share the acre of space.

Lesson #7: At a roadblock ask your allies for advice

If a doctor told you that you needed surgery and it was unavoidable you should ask for a second opinion. Although the gravity of the situation was much less serious, the same protocol could be applied to our expansion project. At a Farm board of advisors meeting, some time after we were already in the process of working on the CUH

¹ Seattle Youth Garden Works (SYGW) is a program that works with at risk and homeless youth, building job skills through market farming. The program already had a small veggie patch down at CUH, but had had lost funding from the Church Alliance. The program had recently come under the direction of Seattle Tilth, who were now thinking of expanding the space.

space and a partnership with Tilth our faculty were still discussing the possibility of Foege Field, wondering why we had accepted the decision passively. They were in support of our new Farm partnership, but they also believed that if we had continued to agitate we would have likely gotten the space, or at least a more clear reason for why we had not.

Lesson #8: Be careful how options are framed.

When facilitating big decision-making conversations a personal bias can easily alter how an issue is framed, or how options are presented to an organization. It is important to realize that if you are a leader your opinion will carry more weight and will impact the decision-making process, possibly limiting the ability of others, especially newcomers to think creatively and challenge assumptions. As an example, during the "give up Foege and take on CUH" conversation I and other leaders believed that Foege was no longer an option. This belief certainly shaped the conversation and limited the scope of our collective imagination. * Suggestion: To deal with this sticky situation make a conscious effort to first lay out all the facts as objectively as possible. You may even want someone who is less involved to frame the conversation and explain the known options. If you are a leader, hold off on giving your opinion until other voices have been heard. A possible exercise to give people time to formulate and share their opinions is doing a free write, followed by a round-robin that gives all participants equal time to share their opinions.

FUNDING and MOU's: fall 2010- spring 2011



At the start of fall quarter the Farm visioning team reconvened, with the primary task of expansion planning. The first step to accomplish was finding funding. That quarter we had many meetings daily, (sometimes up to 5!) with other student groups, Farm committees, Seattle Tilth

and CUH, trying to complete our proposal for the first round of submissions to the Campus Sustainability Fund (CSF). At the end of autumn quarter, after countless hours of work we got our CSF proposal in, and at the start of winter quarter 2011 we got the good news that our proposal had been approved and we'd get our full \$80,000 award! (For more information on what was in that proposal see "CSF Grant Proposal":

http://students.washington.edu/uwfarm/documents/)

At this point we started formalizing our relationship with Tilth and CUH by making MOUs. An MOU is a memorandum of understanding: a non-legally binding agreement or contract, describing the action, and nature of a relationship between two or more organizations. This was a difficult and time-consuming feat. CUH has a different funding model then other departments at UW, and so has a different relationship with space and money. Despite the tense beginnings with CUH, it was actually more of challenge figuring out our MOU with Tilth. There were many logistical questions about joint leadership and power dynamics that came up throughout the process. (For more information on these proceedings see Michelle Harvey's handbook).

Lesson #9: Honest communication = no assumptions = good partnership

In a partnership it is important to be clear about each party's organizational structure, decision-making process, mission, and goals. At one of our first meetings Tilth asked us to explain these but for some reason we never asked the same of them. We didn't think to ask about these essential facets of the organization. We made an assumption. Assumptions were a recurring theme and hard point throughout this process. Each organization had a different idea of what a partnership was, who had priority over land, how the volunteer forces would interact on site, etc. Each time these assumptions arose it made visionary conversations feel like uncomfortable business negotiations. Although I don't think these moments are altogether unavoidable or negative, I do think that if assumptions are aired earlier on much miscommunication can be avoided.

*Suggestion: At the start of any partnership have each group explain their goals, mission, values, and structure, and decision-making process. Discuss how these might be different and where they might align. Figure out how you will manage these differences: how will they be a challenge and/or strength? Also make a list of each group's assets: what is each organization bringing to the table. Are these assets equivalent? If they are different how will that be reflected later in the partnership? Also make a list of each organization's liabilities: what might these be? How will they be addressed later on?

VISIONING MEETINGS Part II: 2010-2011

In visioning meetings we worked out many issues and had lots of lively debates. We discussed how we ought to break ground: tractor vs. sod cutter, how our relationship with SYGW should look, etc. In this process, however, some critical questions and thoughts, big picture issues, were often pushed aside, and left in the land of the ethereal. This included revisiting our mission and goals, and addressing important questions like, how should our community should be structured, how will the CUH space and current site be in conversation with one another, how will we collaborate with student groups? When we did have these conversations they often felt rushed. To try and make space for these much needed conversations we eventually relegated expansion conversations to a new separate committee that would meet and report

back to visioning. All and all we have accomplished a lot, and in May we finalized our MOU with CUH and Tilth and finally broke ground at our new site!



Site plan for new Farm Space



Breaking ground at CUH!

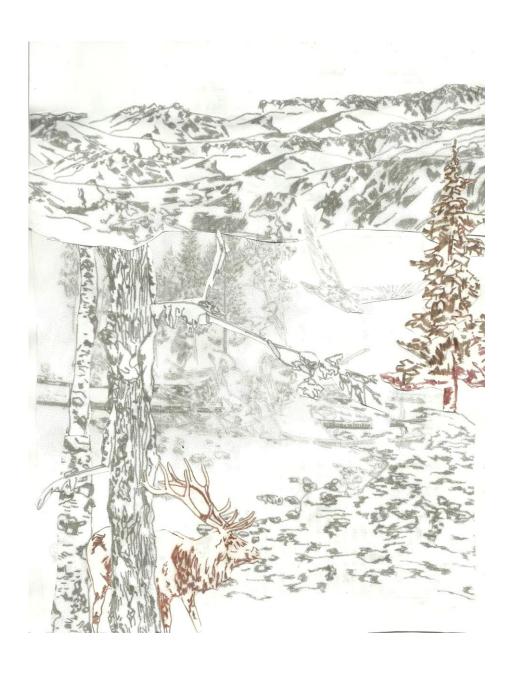
Lesson #10: Learning to balance the needs of individuals in a group, with the overall group's needs.

Throughout it has been difficult to balance the variety of needs of the volunteers in the Farm community. This is especially true of Visioning meetings that have become either heavily "product-oriented" (i.e., focused on the end rather than the means, and having tangible results from conversations: specific tasks to do) or heavily "process oriented (i.e. focused on how our actions fit into the "bigger picture". The means are the ends)."

At different moments different people might need a more "process-oriented" or "product-oriented" focus. During the spring quarter some "product-oriented" individuals felt frustrated with our conversations on organizational structure. Likewise, during winter quarter many of the Farm's "process-oriented" people felt frustrated when meetings were focused on to-do lists and assigning tasks.

*Suggestion: Since we are all leaders it is important to be aware of your personal needs and how they might be directing the focus/style of meetings. It is necessary to hold your own needs up with others' individual needs, and the needs of the group as a whole. It is a juggling act, and if you hold one ball up, you have to keep juggling the other balls in your other hand, or you'll drop them. There will be moments when the group has to be more "process-oriented" to figure out "big picture" questions. That is okay as long as there is sensitivity to the needs of folk who might want a "product-oriented" focus. If you are a facilitator and this situation arises, make transparent what is going on, and acknowledge that this might be challenging to people who are "product-oriented." Invite suggestions on how to accommodate the needs of those who are at risk of feeling alienated. Perhaps find a way to frame the conversation so that people can come away with tasks, or a feeling that progress has been made. And vice- versa for a "product-oriented" situation.

The Inner workings of a Community



Part of the job of building an organization is to continually reflect... From the mission, to the goals, to the objectives, we constantly ask ourselves: is this where we want to go...is it possible to accomplish [our] goal with... the conditions we face and the power we have? We also have to ask ourselves: what are we learning as we go along? Sometimes the situation changes and sometimes our understanding, knowledge, or assumptions change (Brown, 85).

These words reflect many of the lessons I have learned this year. This section depicts those lessons, the steps we took, and can continue to take toward strengthening our community. This section speaks to perennial strategies in organizing, and the creation of institutional structure: mission and values, decision-making, communication, facilitation, and collaboration. In the past year it has become evident that as the Farm grows, takes on new projects, and becomes more connected with the University and other community groups, the need for a clear structure also grows. It is equally important, however, to maintain flexibility and openness. Being able to change strategies and systems as needed should be an integral part of the Farm's (or any organization's) institutional structure.

P P P P P P P P P P P

MISSION AND VALUES:

A **mission statement** can be an important component of a community's functioning. The mission statement can be used as a standard against which actions can be evaluated, and as a way to decipher how the community's focus might be changing. The aim when writing this is to make something that will be useful to a wide array of people: administrators, potential funders, new volunteers, and most importantly for current group members to use in decision-making.

Note #1: The UW Farm's Mission Statement

This Farm's first and only explicit mission was written for the Foege Expansion document mentioned above. It was written with the intention to use both as a

decision-making and legitimizing tool. A small group of people wrote this based on brainstorming done with everyone in visioning. In a visioning meeting after collaborative editing this statement was approved. There was never any discussion however, on how we would actually use this statement. Because of this it fell into the background, and was instead used exclusively for outreach, until this year... This is it...

The UW Farm is a campus center for the practice and study of urban agriculture and sustainability. It is an educational, community-oriented resource for people who want to learn about building productive and sustainable urban landscapes.

The UW Farm has three driving principles:

- Community The UW Farm will inspire and support a diverse, intergenerational, and interdisciplinary community on campus, in the city of Seattle, and beyond. Experiential education at the UW farm will help develop future leaders in urban agriculture and sustainable communities.
- 2. Connections The UW Farm will reconnect the campus and greater community with the sources of their food and raise awareness about the environmental impacts of these sources. The Farm will inspire people to make healthier and more sustainable food choices.
- 3. Sustainability The UW Farm will improve the current campus food system by growing sustainably produced local food while reducing the UW's carbon footprint.



Identifying **shared values** can also be an important first step to building a sustainable community. Having an intentional conversation about values makes transparent the differences between individuals, and the cohesiveness of the group— the glue that holds everyone together. Similar to the mission, it is

important to document these in some way; not to set them in stone, but to have a record of where the organization is at during a particular time. Values are a good window into a whole organization, because they are reflected in its goals, communication style, decision-making, governance, etc. These values, however, are bound to change. This is why, referring back and re-visioning is just as important as their initial drafting.

The Farm's mission alludes to some shared values. However, an intentional conversation about what these are has not happened yet. Below is my attempt at distilling the farm's values based on my experience the past two and a half years.

- Community. We value building strong connections between people, by eating, working and playing together.
- **Empowerment.** We value a community that is empowered to take on leadership roles, make decisions, take action, and teach one another other.



• **Egalitarianism**. We value a learning space and community that is nonhierarchical, where knowledge is transferred horizontally: gathered, shared, and redistributed to the community.

Note #2: Egalitarianism & the University

Attempting to be accessible to the larger University community, while upholding this value is a balancing act. The more entangled with the University we are, via class tours, connections to HFS, etc., the more difficult it becomes to maintain this value, because the University relies heavily on hierarchies and bureaucracy to function.

• Transparency. This is a key ingredient to creating an egalitarian and accessible community. It is important to make sure all who want to know what the Farm does, how it works, and how to plug into it, can easily access that information.

Note #3: Environmental and Social Justice

At a meeting this year we briefly revisited our mission. Currently environmental and social justices are not explicitly mentioned in the mission, or mentioned as a group value. This was the one piece folks agreed was missing. * Personally, I would like to see the Farm trying to work towards these as goals, and to try and draw connections between them more explicitly within our own organization. As participants in the new "food movement", it is important to think reflexively about the connection between our individual identities and how those shape our engagement and experiences with food, agriculture, and activism. How does one's social position contribute to her ability to volunteer, to be part of an organization like the UW Farm? Who is not present at the UW Farm, and why are they absent? Who is getting the food grown at the UW Farm? I think with creativity, openness, and a lot of hard work the Farm can address these issues more explicitly in its social organization and the work it does.

- Good food. We value good food! Throughout time humans have come
 together and learned how to support one another and work together in the
 interest of food. It is important to never forget that without the food we
 grow, and without our hands in the dirt we wouldn't be a Farm community.
- **FUN!** No explanation needed.



DECISION MAKING

It is also important for a community to have a clear system of decisionmaking. The process that is decided upon should reflect the group's values. In line with the Farm's value of egalitarianism, community, and empowerment we have tried to practice consensus decision-making.

"Requiring ourselves to craft decisions that all members can support ensures that no point of view will be silenced in our process... For a policy to be adopted, everyone has to consent to support the decision. This does not mean everyone has to agree it is the perfect decision, but everyone has to consent and support it... Consensus is a group process where the input of everyone is carefully considered and an outcome is crafted that best meets the needs of the group... It is a process of synthesizing the wisdom of all the participants into the best decision possible at the time." (UW's Community, Environment and Planning Program website).

In order for consensus decision making to work there has to be a structure in place. Questions such as—what warrants an official consensus decision? Is notice needed to prepare statements/opinions before decision are made? How much notice is needed?—need to be explored fully for true consensus to work.

Note #4: Limitations of Consensus

One issue with consensus that the Farm has run into is accessibility. Consensus is a new process for many, and as mentioned above it is difficult to accomplish this kind of decision making in its truest sense unless all participants understand it fully. This comes into conflict with the Farm's desire to make meetings and the decision-making process open to all. Some possible solutions that we have discussed are: to have a retreat before the quarter to educate people in history, decision making process, etc; to have people come to meetings to read up on consensus before they vote; to have folks attend two meetings before they vote.

COMMUNICATION

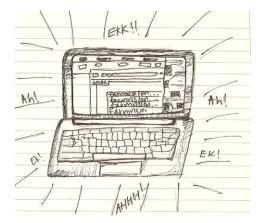


There is nothing more pivatol for an organization than communication. Whether it be about an upcoming event, or a contentious issue, communication within the community, or between partner organizations it is important to be clear, concise, honest, and respectful. This kind of communication can take many forms.

Note-taking is an essential form of communication. This process makes information accessible to all! If there are notes taken at every meeting people can keep abreast of the on-going complicated web of activities of an organization. This can help them participate in discussion and decision-making later on. Notes are also incredibly helpful as an organization ages. Understanding one's past helps to clarify where you are and where you are

Online communication vs. Faceto face: The Internet is a wonderful tool, a way to convey ideas, and share events with countless people instantly. However, when contentious issues are discussed it is more ambiguous whether face-to-face or online communication is best. While there is more of a tendency for

going.



miscommunication and misrepresentation via online dialogue, the written word is a comfortable medium for many to communicate their ideas. Multiple styles of communication are an important strength of a community, if utilized thoughtfully.

Note #5: Suggestions on using multiple forms of communication

To deal with the variety of communication styles present in the Farm community, and to limit miscommunication when a contentious issue comes up, I suggest a balance of in person and written communication. When a big issue arises, people could think on it, and write about it outside of a meeting. If they want they can share these thoughts through email. Folks can read these at home, and come into the next meeting with questions and responses. This would be effective for a number of reasons...

1. It would give people a chance to already have thought through an issue before a meeting, thus giving those who need more time to digest an issue a chance to be prepared with something to say at the meeting.

- 2. It would respect multiple styles of communication and the fact that some may not feel comfortable communicating about problematic subjects through email.
- 3. It would make meetings more efficient. Everyone could process before the meetings, so that a well thought through decision can be arrived at more quickly.
- 4. It would limit the long chains of heated emails that are difficult to keep abreast of and respond to.



FACILITATION

Facilitation is a key ingredient to the smooth running of any meeting. During difficult or tense conversations facilitation is even more important. The role of the facilitator is to have a toolbox of moderation techniques, and to know when certain methodologies work best. The facilitater should ...

- Be attentive to who is speaking and who isn't. Find ways to make space for people who haven't been speaking to share their opinions. The value of silence is huge!
- Be aware of the variety of identities in the room: who is an internal/ external-processor, who is product/process-oriented (for more on this see lesson 10), and to try and use strategies that will resonate with these identities.

• Help collate an agenda before the meeting, and publicize it. Quality is better than quantity, and having too much on an agenda can be burdensome.

Note #5: The Value of Delegation

Facilitating is a huge juggling act. My experience this year is that it is extremely difficult to get through an agenda, hear everyone's opinion, get decisions made, and make sure no one is being alienated in the process. That is where delegation becomes extremely valuable. There can be a note taker, timekeeper, and a "vibe checker" (a person who is focusing on everyone's emotional state). Assign these roles as needed.



STRUCTURE and ROLES

As I wrote in Lesson # 3, structure really does help folk get more involved in an organization. It helps people feel useful; that they are making a tangible contribution to help their community grow. Structure also gets rid of some of the ambiguous gray

areas of general volunteer labor that can act as an obstacle. According to an expert on garden volunteer work, "too many obstacles discourage learning and encourage passivity" (Moore, 4)

Note #6: Find your Focus

The Farm has various committees centered on one topic or responsibility—these provide a structured learning environment that encourages activity and agency in the community. The Farm becomes a much more fulfilling learning experience when you begin to focus your energy and answer questions like: what is it about the Farm that inspires you? What knowledge do you want to gain? How do YOU want to grow the Farm? (For more information on Farm committees see Appendix D).



COLLABORATION

Once a group has worked out the finer points of its structure, it becomes a lot easier to collaborate with other groups.

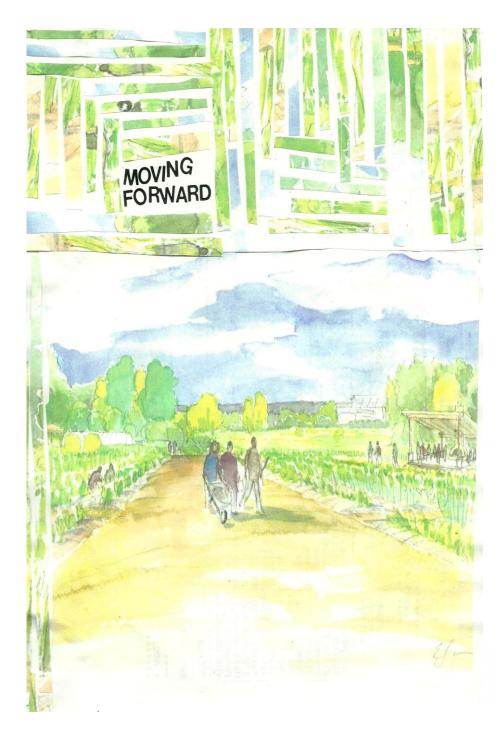
In the introduction to this booklet I wrote about the importance of recognizing the connection between the social

and environmental as a community organization. That relationship makes it clear that activism can't exist in "silos". While it is impossible to work on every issue, it is essential to make connections with the other communities around you—to recognize that "our issues aren't separate, there are connections, and mutual responsibility" (direct quote, student and activist). Organizations have even more strength to make positive change in the world when they work together.

There are number of ways to collaborate with and support other organizations. For example one could co-host an event, workshop or fundraiser; endorse another group's activity; host a discussion forum for another group's issue; share resources; publicize.

Note #7: Think Expansively

I think it's important to think expansively about linkages between your own organization and others. I hope the UW Farm makes strides to consider the broad connections our work might have with another organization and (avoiding overextending ourselves) to try and form bridges whenever possible.



CONCLUSION

There it is! I hope that the thoughts and history shared will be a helpful tool for organizers of all kinds, and especially for the Farm. This information is meant to be a stepping-stone, a way to help new people feel comfortable with the Farm and a way to push current members to reflect on how the community can grow, and what it has to share.

Reflection is a powerful tool, and this booklet is an example of that. As Farm Director this year I was completely immersed in the Farm. This was amplified by field notes, journaling, and thinking constantly about the beautiful complexity of community. This was also supplemented by research on place-based education, critical pedagogy, organizing, the commons and more. It is important to recognize that while a lot of information from the texts I read found their way into this booklet; the majority of it came from my participation in the communities in my life. I think this is testament to the power of alternative learning spaces, and the richness of the knowledge present in the people around us. I urge all who read this to utilize those resources thoroughly.

THANKS!

To my advisor Joyce LeCompte-Mastenbrook: for your unending patience and support. It guided me through a year of incredible learning, and stabilized the ever-changing tide of my thesis' focus. I couldn't have done it without you! You are a true teacher, mentor, and friend!

To Beth Wheat, Doug Ewing, Keith Possee, Ann Anagnost, & Jenifer Ruesink: for all your help, kindness, and knowledge. Your memories & thoughts were a large contribution to this book and my education.

To my lovely friends and contributing artists: Julia Reed, Madelena Romansic, Andrea Marcos, and Rachel Stubbs.

To CHID! My wonderful major filled with amazing people who pushed me to think critically and keep joy in my education.

APPENDIX A: Farm Timeline 2000-2011 (specific focus on educational growth)

- 2000- Keith and a group of students and faculty try to start a farm at UW, but they lost momentum and the group disintegrated in the process of finding space
- 2004- Jen, Keith, Alan, & Beth have the idea for the UW Farm
- 2005- The Farm gets started
- 2007- The cob oven is built; the Farm becomes an RSO; Arwen
- 2008 Autumn- Farm lunch started: during those first informal lunches there
 would be about six people sitting around the picnic table, sharing lunch and
 knowledge about farming and food.
- 2008 Spring -Beth started a credited Urban Farm class
- Fall 2008- Jeremy Mineau, a student in Beth's first Farm class is Farm director
- 2009 Winter- The chicken coop was built and the Farm had its first fundraiser, raising \$600.
- 2009 Spring- The chicken crew began; the Farm had its first Farm interns (interns work ten hours a week, do readings, and have a farm project).
- 2009 Summer- Brady Ryan became Farm director. His passion for plants made him a wealth of information for new farmers. Later he started leading foraging walks.
- 2009 Fall- Farm Lunch offered for credit and attendance skyrocketed to 40 students; and the Dirty Dozen was conceived.
- 2009 Winter- First visioning meeting
- 2010 Spring- Foege field: excitement and disappointment. Patrick Bader developed a Farm docent curriculum
- 2010 Fall- Nina Arlein became Farm Director. And the Farm begins its partnership with Seattle Tilth via SYGW
- 2010 Fall- The Board of Advisors has its first meeting!
- 2010 Winter- The Farm gets CSF grant!
- 2011 Spring- Lily Nash taught an educational pedagogy class based on the Farm. Members of the Farm and Co-op team up to teach focus group on food and community. Michelle Harvey facilitates Farm Lunch. The Farm breaks ground on new site!

APPENDIX B: Physical development of the Farm

In the spring of 2005 Keith, Jen, and Alan double dug the first three beds in Area A, right outside the greenhouse. Area C was next, it was totally overgrown with tall weeds, but it was cleared, beds were double dug and pots were lined up along the wall. Later the concrete containers in Area B were filled with soil. Then the concrete beds by the Burke Gilman Trail were filled and planted by Jen and Alan. Keith planted the rhubarb, currants, and gooseberries.



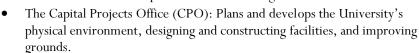


In 2009 we extended Area D and terraced a bit of the hillside by the Burke-Gillman Trail. Then in the winter of 2009 there was a large project clearing the Back 40 and making a composting system. In Spring 2010 we got a large order of soil donated and filled the concrete containers in Area E, we also got the Kincaid space and the greenroof. Winter of 2011 we extended out area D in the other direction along the chain link fence!

Understanding APPENDIX C: **University Bureaucracy**

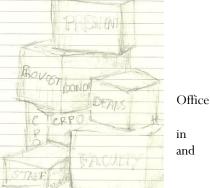
The Capital Resource Planning (CRPO) helps develop the University's capital plan. Is key university physical development campus planning.





- Kristine Kenney- Campus landscape architect. In Planning Services of the CPO.
- Brian Davis is the irrigation lead for CPO Facility Services.
- Deans: lot of decision-making happens at the college level between deans. The deans also have a direct link to the provost and president.
 - Ana Mari Cauce- Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.
 - 0 Steve Majeski- Associate Dean for Research Administration and Infrastructure for the College of Arts and Sciences.
 - Lisa Graumlich- Dean of the College of the Environment
- Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH): Is a part of the University of Washington's Botanic Gardens, which is housed in the School of Forest Resources in the College of the Environment. It is a "hub for plant science and ecosystem research, teaching, and stewardship" (from their website).
 - The CUH burnt down in May 2001, due to arson by the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). (visit crosscut.com for more information). This catastrophic event seriously affected the personnel of CUH.
 - UWBG also has a different fiscal model and works as a business, it is almost entirely fiscally independent from the UW.
 - Important personnel:
 - Sarah Reichard: Director of UWBG
 - Fred Hoyt: Associate Director of UWBG
 - David Zuckerman: UWBG Grounds Supervisor

APPENDIX D: FARM COMMITTEES AND STRUCTURE!



and



Green Team:

- A group of people who plan the Farm's crop rotation/ planting plan.
- Research companion plantings and crop succession patterns
- During Autumn Quarter, they meet regularly to create a seed order by January for the coming growing year (February – October).
- They map out how beds on the Farm will be filled in each season and make a timeline outlining when each crop should be planted in its bed.
- The Team should follow the plan's progress, meeting once in awhile to touch base about what is working and what could be improved for next year's plan.



Outreach:

- Brings new people to the Farm
- Makes promotional materials
- Organizes fundraisers and broadens the campus' awareness of and involvement in our work.



Social Media:

 Networks and spreads the word about the Farm using online media: facebook, twitter, blogs, and website upkeep



Compost Crew

- Gathers materials for compost at the Farm: vermicompost and thermacompost. This includes coffee grounds, food scraps, spent beer grains, saw dust, shredded paper and manure, from local farms, cafes, restraunts, and campus buildings.
- Designing and creating a larger and more efficient composting system in the Back 40.



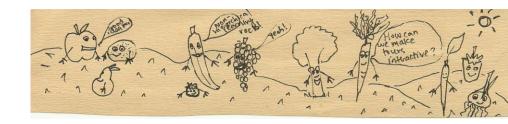
Chicken Crew

- Individuals who: either put them in at night, let them out in the morning and provide food, water, and a clean coop.
- Gets their eggs
- Repair and improve chicken coop and chicken tractor.
- May involve community get together... omelet fry!



Dirty Dozen

- Group of 12 -30 people
- Meet at 7:30 on Monday mornings and volunteer an additional two hours each week at a regularly scheduled time (we try to have people sign up for these hours in teams to build community, and generous support).
- Plan the Farm to-do list together



Education Committee

- Works to facilitate the sharing of skills, information and ideas between student farmers.
- Works to share this goal with others by developing curriculum and training docents to lead tours on the Farm for university courses, local community groups, and k-12 students.



Vision Team

- Works collectively to discover how the Farm can continue to grow. The
 future potential of the Farm and what it can offer to the university
 community. We discuss many possible ideas and work on our own system of
 dynamic governance.
- Next year it will be mandatory for leaders of various committees to come to visioning meetings, so that we can support one another's projects, and maintain dialogue between projects.
- The Visioining Team will also be open to all who'd like to participate in the heart of farm happenings.
- These meetings have been weekly

Farm coordinators for CUH and Greenhouse spaces (previously one Farm director at the original farm space):

- Help run dirty dozen (potentially) or organize interns
- Help run work parties
- Go to vision meetings
- Be at the Farm space regularly

- Ensure smooth running of the Farm—double-checking planting schedules, etc.
- Meets regularly with mentor (CUH: the Seattle Youth Garden Works (SYGW) Farm Coordinator; Greenhouse: informally with Keith, Doug, and Beth
- Liaison with SYGW/greenhouse
- Big vision for the Farm push forward/ coordinate big projects that keep working toward our goal of making a productive urban farm space.
- Before this year we have had just one Farm director: the "buck stops here kind of person". The hope is that with a revamped visioning team that responsibility will be delegated more widely. And more people will be able to represent the Farm at meetings.

Education coordinator

- In essence this is what Beth has been doing.
- Inspires student leadership, and acts as a mentor to leaders
- Supports student empowerment, self-directed learning, and collaboration.
- Teaches some Farm related classes, the Urban Farm class for example.
- Acts as a conduit between University academics and the Farm, helping to actualize the Farm's ability to be an outdoor classroom and lab for experimentation for many disciplines.
- Helps maintain a focus on our goals and an alignment between our actions and values.

****This role is a very important one, and one that Beth has been doing for free since the very beginning. This is not socially sustainable. We have been actively searching for University support and other funding sources to help sustain this position. Having a staff person would relieve a lot of the stress and pressure off the student leaders.

APPENDIX E: USEFUL RESOURCES (*sources cited here)

*Gruenewald, David. "The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place." Educational Researcher. 32.4 (2003): 3-12

In this article, Gruenewald explains some of the basic tenets of both critical pedagogy and place-based pedagogy. In examining them and each of their strengths and weaknesses, Gruenewald illustrates that where the two theories meet a more complex, inclusive, and challenging pedagogy is created. A critical pedagogy of place brings together environmental and social justice.

*More, Bibby (1989) Growing with Gardening: A twelve month guide for therapy, recreation, and education. USA: University of North Carolina Press. Good resource for a discussion of the more general positive mental, physical, and community building effects of gardening. Moore also provides some guidelines for a successful horticulture program.

*Jacoby- Brown, Michael (2006) Building Powerful Communities. Arlington, VA: Long Haul Press

This is a wonderful resource for learning what makes a strong community. The author distills 30 years of stories and experiences. It also includes excercises to do with your community

Pedagogy Zine by Tamara Meyers

This is an awesome resource for pedagogy and facilitation. Meyers discusses tactics that engages students and create an interactive and exciting classroom, or any learning experience. Please email me: ninarlein@gmail.com if you'd like access to this document.

Thorp, Laurie (2006) The Pull of the Earth. Laham: AltaMira Press This is a participatory ethnography and is a great resource for learning about school gardens and the important role they can play. Also a great example of an ethnography!

Handbook on Community Partnerships by Michelle Harvey & "The UW Farm Bible" Available in the UW Farm Library.

APPENDIX F: Images and Commentary

- *Note that any image not cited here was illaustrated by Nina Arlein.
 - Page 3: "Sunflowers" photograph by Julia Reed
 - Page 10: Photograph of Beth Wheat by Lucas Anderson, Photograph of Jenifer Ruesink and Alan Trimble from: http://depts.washington.edu/jlrlab
 - Page 12: "Building the Cob Oven" photograph by Jeannette Milne
 - Page 17: "Vision Meeting" photography by Michelle Harvey
 - Page 18: "Why not right here, right now?" unknown
 - Page 22: "Joyous Farmers Hugging" by Lucas Andersen
 - Page 24: "CUH Site Plan" watercolor by Erin Lau
 - Page 24: "Breaking Ground" photograph by Rachel Stubss
 - Page 26: "The Innerworkings of a Community" drawings by Andrea Marcos, collaged by Nina Arlein
 - O I chose to use a "natural" community, an ecosystem, to represent a human community to draw a parallel between the interconnectedness and dynamism of both kinds of communities and to try and break down the dichotomy between these two.
 - Page 28: "All Farm Meeting" photograph by Michelle Harvey
 - Page 29: "Asparagus" drawing by Julia Reed
 - Page 30: Image excerpt from "The True Cost of Coal" by "The Bee Hive Collective"
 - o "The Bee Hive Collective" is a group of activists/artists that create posters (like the one this image was taken from) to teach people about ecological/social injustices, history, and the power of visioning a different future. For more information visit their website: http://www.beehivecollective.org"/
 - Page 34: "Carrot People" by Julia Reed
 - Page 35: "Blessing Ceremony" photography by Lucas Andersen
 - Page 36: Watercolor of the CUH space by Erin Lau, collaged by Nina Arlein
 - Page 39: "Farm Growth Photos" by Jeanette Milne
 - Page 40: "Green Team" by Julia Reed
 - Page 42: "Compost Crew" by Julia Reed
 - Page 42: "Chicken Crew", "Dirty Dozen", and "Visioning Team" by Madelena Romansic

This booklet was a CHID Senior Thesis.

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For more information on this booklet contact Nina Arlein: ninarlein@gmail.com or visit the UW Farm website: http://students.washington.edu/uwfarm/