

Five-Year Strategic Plan for the Hampshire College Farm

April 24, 2018

Introduction:

Agricultural use of the Hampshire College farmland dates back to colonial times, with uses over the years ranging from woodlots to small dairy farms to orchards to vegetable gardens. One of the early members of the Board of Trustees, John Kendall, had the vision to secure the farmland to protect the College's northern perimeter from the encroachment of development. In the late 1970s, three initial projects created the idea of a farm on campus with a research/educational purpose: sheep for New England pastures; livestock guardian dogs for nonlethal predator control; and nitrogen-fixing plants for pasture improvement and animal forage. Almost forty years later, the farm still serves as a resource for faculty and student research and for Hampshire college courses across the disciplines.

Over time, the farm operation evolved into an important supplier of healthy food for Hampshire College as well. In 1992, two students designed a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program to produce organic vegetables for 30 shareholders. Since 1999, under the leadership of Nancy Hanson, the CSA has grown to more than 100 shares, while providing the College's dining services contractor, Bon Appétit, with nearly the equivalent of an additional 100 shares worth of food. The farm's roles in the recreational and social lives of students and faculty and in Hampshire's relationship with its surrounding community have also evolved and expanded in recent years. At this point, the Farm is an important factor in the recruitment and retention of students at Hampshire.

A college-wide focus on sustainability and a nation-wide interest in local food production have provided the context for serious strategic planning for the Hampshire College Farm. In 2014-15, a Strategic Planning Committee did extensive outreach and made preliminary recommendations to President Lash, which form the foundation for our current planning effort. During that earlier process, a faculty member commented, "The farm has been a tremendous resource in search of an identity." The purpose of this Five-Year Plan is to further define that identity and realize the farm's full potential as a unique resource and multi-faceted program of the College.

We submit this current Plan at a time of change in the governance and administrative structures that support the Farm's operation and development. The Farm benefitted significantly from having a Director of Farm, Food, and Sustainability operating out of the President's office. Her efforts, in conjunction with those of the farm staff and interested faculty members and students, resulted in enhanced academic, co-curricular, and community outreach programs. The Farm program has made excellent progress in the areas of intercollegiate collaboration, student internships, and collaborative research. There have been important strides in promoting a sustainable and just food system, through the work of the Hampshire College Food Systems Collaborative. In addition, we have established an interdisciplinary, co-curricular Living Learning Community, focusing on food production, environmental justice, and sustainable agriculture, radiating out from the Hampshire Farm.

The Farm is poised for ongoing development and success. Our committee is particularly struck by the opportunity the Farm provides to live the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion through a community-based approach to the basic human practice of food production. Yet the Director of Farm, Food, and Sustainability has left Hampshire, and her position will not be filled. President Lash himself, who has nurtured the emergence of new dimensions to the Farm program, is leaving shortly. We hope to convey in this document a strategic approach that will carry the Farm through this period of change and help it emerge at a new level of administrative and financial sustainability. Key to that vision is “institutionalizing” the Farm’s place at the College by having it fall under the Dean of Faculty’s purview, without adding an undue administrative burden to the Associate Dean, to whom the Farm will report. We describe the approach to a newly-constituted Farm Steering Committee that we believe will make this possible in Goal #1.

Hampshire Farm Mission and Vision:

The mission of the Hampshire College Farm is to enhance and exemplify Hampshire’s approach to a liberal arts education.

The Hampshire College Farm:

- supports teaching and research opportunities for faculty and students;
- serves as a model for land stewardship and ecological agricultural practices; and
- provides a “living lab” for Hampshire’s values, particularly in the areas of sustainability, social justice, community-building, and experiential education.

Our vision is of a thriving, well-run farm that inspires interdisciplinary inquiry through the enterprise of ethical and sustainable food production, fosters connection to place and community through authentic and practical work, and provides opportunities for research, individual creativity, reflection, and recreation. We see the operation and governance of the farm, and our potential to influence similar efforts at other colleges, as central and powerful components of Hampshire’s pursuit of a larger mission *to foster a lifelong passion for learning, inquiry, and ethical citizenship that inspires students to contribute to knowledge, justice and positive change and, by doing so, to transform higher education.*

Strategic Plan for 2018-2023

Goal #1: To enhance the governance infrastructure and financial planning practices of the Farm, as befits a mature program, in order to solidify the role of the Farm as an integrated part of Hampshire College

Objectives:

- to complete the process of establishing a high-functioning Farm Steering Committee, comprised of faculty, students, and staff, as the governing body for ongoing decisions and recommendations – completed as of September 2017
- to change the administrative home of the Farm Steering Committee from the President's Office to the Dean of Faculty's Office – completed as of July 1, 2017;
- to assure the financial sustainability of the Farm by providing adjusted operating and capital budgets that will support a robust academic and co-curricular farm program; steps in the 2018-19 academic year include:
 - updating the farm use plan;
 - taking a proactive approach to budgeting for capital and infrastructure needs;
 - having these budgets and the needs of the Farm be understood and embraced as part of the overall development efforts of the College;
- to have the Hampshire College Farm included in next college-wide strategic plan as both an educational resource and an integral part of the Hampshire College food system.

Goal #2: To support, improve, and expand student, faculty, and staff interactions with the farm in a variety of modes

Objectives:

- to improve outreach, coordination, and communication with faculty across the Schools who want to use the farm for course-related activities; approval of activities will be expedited by clear criteria and protocols;
- to encourage ongoing faculty and student research projects on the farm, mindful of the planning horizons required by natural systems; here again, approval of research projects will be expedited by clear criteria and protocols (see Appendix A);
- to further integrate issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the program, and communicate about how these issues are understood and acted upon;
- to continue an annual Living Learning Community (LLC) centered at the farm and farm-based celebrations like the Family & Friends weekend;
- to strengthen regular communications efforts, so as to increase knowledge, interest and support of the farm among students, faculty, and staff;
- longer-term, with additional staffing capacity (e.g. program coordinator, farm fellows, interns):
 - to expand and support recreational opportunities on the farm, e.g., providing trail maps, hosting movie nights, etc.;
 - to expand activities such as classes in cooking with local ingredients and traditional soap-making;
 - to investigate the possibility of creating a student living unit on the farm in coordination with campus-wide living initiatives;

- to support an expanded and proactive approach to the Farm as a living lab for Hampshire College values: sustainability, social justice, and community-building

Goal #3: Within five years, to expand the impact of the farm beyond the Hampshire College community

Objectives:

- to expand existing networking efforts with other sustainable agriculture programs, particularly those undertaken as part of a comprehensive program at a college or university;
- to continue to host the Farm Camp and explore new opportunities for summer/fall programs that bring people to the farm during the period of maximum productivity;
- to serve as host and convener on topics of sustainable agriculture, building on existing initiatives.

Implementation:

Community Participation and Buy-In: This approach to a Five-Year Strategic Plan for the Hampshire College Farm was presented to President Lash and the Dean of Faculty in May, 2017, where they approved of its overall direction, specific goals, and objectives. Their feedback has been incorporated in this document. The Dean of Faculty included a reference to the Plan in her end of year letter to faculty. During AY 18, the Farm Steering Committee presented a draft of the Plan to the larger Hampshire community via a farm slideshow to the schools on campus. It was also made available for comment on the Farm's website and blog.

Appropriate adjustments in salaries for farm staff took effect in FY 18 but are covered by existing funds. Similarly, some of the added staff capacity we call for in Goal #2 already exists in a grace period provided by previous fundraising. One of the tasks for the Farm Steering Committee in 2017-18 has been to work with the College administration to craft the financing plan for the more integrated farm programs in 2018-19 and beyond.

Signed by the Farm Committee:

Seeta Sistla (co-chair), Kara Lynch (co-chair), Nancy Hanson, Natalie Baillargeon (F17), Maureen Phelon, Laela Sayigh, Grace Adzima, April Nugent (F15)
Absent: Maggie Ng (F14)

Appendix A

Application For Projects Involving The Hampshire College Farm

The Hampshire College Farm welcomes applications for projects from students, faculty, and staff. Because the farm is an active, dynamic place with a long and ongoing history of vegetable, pasture, and livestock production, as well as a history of numerous research, art, and other projects, it is important that the Farm Committee is aware of and approves all proposed projects before their desired start date. This approval process serves to coordinate projects with current activities at the farm, as well as to provide an ongoing database of projects that can be referenced in the future.

Please email your application to farm@hampshire.edu. The Farm Committee meets regularly during the school year (generally once a month), and will review your application as soon as possible after it is received.

Name:

Phone # and email:

Date:

Hampshire College affiliation - if student, please include name of advisor:

Descriptive Title of the Project:

Please answer the following questions:

1. Please tell us what you would like to do or create. Give a brief overview of the idea, issue, or opportunity being explored.
2. What are your proposed approaches and objectives?
3. Please describe specifically what you would like to do and how you would like to do it. Provide an outline of the steps, using specific dates or date ranges, and include the names and contact information (phone and email) of any individuals (other than the primary applicant) who will be involved. Please include a timeline and plan for any set-up and cleanup, as needed.

4. If you anticipate any short- or long-term ramifications of your project on any component of the farm (e.g. impacts to soil quality, building structures, health and wellbeing of livestock, art installations, etc.), please explain them, as well as the anticipated type and length of impact.

5. What is your plan for disseminating your research and/or engaging the community in your project? For example, will you conduct a workshop? Give a final presentation? Write a paper? When and how do you plan to do this? When possible, please be sure to send a copy of any final product (e.g. a paper or a video recording of a presentation) to the farm for its records.

6. Please address the feasibility of the project and your capacity to create it at the farm. How much support will be needed, or what type, and from whom? Do you have this support lined up already? Describe how your project and project timeline will fit within the Hampshire Farm operation - you must work with the relevant farm staff member ahead of time to determine this. A list of farm staff can be found here: <https://www.hampshire.edu/farm/farm-staff>.

7. Except in very rare cases, the farm will not be able to fund your project; however, it is important to identify a budget for feasibility review. In addition to a spreadsheet, for all items in your budget, please give a brief description of the purpose in a narrative document. Please include your funding source(s).

Special note: Please be aware that the farm and its staff, while happy to encourage and support all feasible projects, cannot assume responsibility for projects in any way; the applicant is responsible for the project from start to finish. Additionally, any projects that are left on-site for more than two weeks after the completion date may be removed at the farm staff's discretion; if necessary, a clean-up fee will be charged to the applicant's account number.