

Campus Urban Farm



Founded in February 2018 after approval by Presidential Cabinet, the CSUDH Campus Urban Farm (Farm) is an outdoor classroom, lab, and garden that uses a multi-disciplinary approach to address student food insecurity, urban agriculture, and sustainability. A venue for faculty-led research and experiential learning for students, the Farm is now the site for experiments with composting, solar, permaculture, and water-wise techniques.

The Farm occupies approximately .11 acres with 30'x 80' of available growing space. It also houses a large nursery shed, and an adjoining

space that is used as an outdoor classroom. Once the site of a campus nursery, the Farm is fully enclosed with a gate and has a sidewalk encircling the main growing area which now consists of 15 raised planter beds, three solar-powered hydroponic towers, and several demonstration growing areas/exhibits.

Mission

The Farm has a strong educational mission, and not only provides fresh produce to food-insecure students, but supports the study of urban agriculture, sustainability, and other faculty-led research projects. By weaving sustainability training and education into the farm experience, CSUDH is preparing environmentally-responsible community members who understand the importance of reducing their energy, water, and waste, as well as understanding the impacts that urban agriculture can have on a community.

The mission of the Farm is to serve as a resource for:

- Providing free and/or affordable produce to food-insecure students.
- Providing a living laboratory space for faculty and students to integrate sustainability into their coursework and research.
- Providing an outdoor classroom space and event venue to support relationship-building in the community, both on-campus and off.
- Piloting a campus composting program to support efforts to keep campus green waste on-site.

Summary Metrics

To ensure the Farm is supporting its mission, it maintains metrics on several key performance indicators. The summary of those metrics is listed here:

Fiscal Year	Pounds of Food Distributed to Campus	Volunteers Engaged	Classes Engaged
2017-18 Fiscal Year (February-June)	0 (construction)	140	2
2018-19 Fiscal Year (July-June)	104	291	7

2018-19 FY Highlights

As it began its first year of full operations, the Farm completed its raised beds and started planting in fall semester of 2018. Despite only having one semester to harvest crops, the Farm was still able to deliver 104 pounds of produce to campus food pantries and Campus Dining in order to help feed fellow Toros. It also attracted significant funding and engagement with on and off-campus entities to help support further expansion of its operations.

Funding

In recognition of the unique resources the Farm offers in terms of supporting basic needs for students, the CSU Chancellor's Office awarded Basic Needs mini-grants in all three of its offered categories to CSUDH to support Farm operations totaling \$20,500. This included a student research grant to support food/basic needs research, a faculty grant to the Farm's faculty liaison to build additional produce preparation and storage capabilities at the Farm, and a staff grant to the Office of Sustainability to build up the Farm's infrastructure and develop an aquaponics exhibit.¹

Shell Oil also generously donated \$9,000 towards the development of K-12 educational workshops at the Farm to help build engagement with four local schools in the Carson area. These workshops will be taking place in fall semester 2019.

The campus also provided \$8,000 in supplies for a Community Impact work day of service. This allowed the Farm to invest in three state-of-the-art hydroponic towers and build an accompanying solar panel array to power it with engineering support from Facilities Services/Central Plant. The additional supplies and tools will support all Farm users in the upcoming academic year as well as the re-scheduled Community Impact Day of service taking place on October 5 specifically.



Engagement

As an ideal on-campus location for community service, the Farm served as an engagement hub for several different groups and entities via dedicated work day events. This included team-building days of service for the Loker Student Union's student leaders, Sharefest youth (7th and 8th graders), Shell employees, and the CSUDH volleyball and softball teams. Many CSUDH students and staff also volunteered on an ongoing basis to support the Farm either for personal enjoyment or for academic credit via formal coursework.

Academics

Seven different academic courses from Earth Sciences, Interdisciplinary Studies, Sociology, and Clinical Sciences formally engaged with the Farm during the 2018-19 academic year. This included activities ranging from volunteering, class lectures, tours, and maintaining designated raised beds. The Farm also continued to offer Open House events once per semester to invite additional faculty to explore the Farm.



Contact Us

For more information, please visit our website at: www.csudh.edu/sustainability/campus-urban-farm/
The CSUDH Campus Urban Farm regularly posts to Instagram @durbanfarm and can be reached directly at durbanfarm@gmail.com

¹ <https://www2.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/student-success/basic-needs-initiative/Pages/mini-grant-opportunities.aspx>