

Holy Cross Community Garden

PROPOSAL

We, the undersigned, are asking the College of the Holy Cross permission to create a vegetable, fruit, and plants garden on the Holy Cross campus, with the conviction that this would greatly benefit our community as well as the communities surrounding us.

MOTIVATION

Over the past years, in different ways, a large number of the members of our community at Holy Cross showed concern regarding our food choices and habits. To name a few examples: the reading selected for our incoming class in the Fall of '07 was Michael Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma*; the Chaplain's Office made plans about starting a garden for the academic year '07-'08, which products would have been used to cook meals for Campion's House; Jenks Seminar, in the Spring '08, was devoted to Michael Pollan's writings; throughout the '07-'08 academic year, Kimball dining services have been organizing Slow Food dinners, with tremendous success. In brief: slowly, an educated, multifarious desire for a different culture of food has been recently developing on campus.

After repeatedly exchanging ideas on food issues, we decided to put together a proposal to do what seems a suitable way to bring together our experiences: to start a community garden on campus where to grow vegetables, fruits, and plants to sustain ourselves and those who surround the campus in a way which is in keeping with our commitments to a culture of food that we find suitable.

The fast-paced environment in which we live renders tremendously difficult to connect with the food we eat. Rarely, we have time to seat at the table and consume our meals with others; rarely, we know where the food in our plate is coming from, or who and under what circumstances produced it; we only superficially think about the effects that our food choices will have upon others and the environment. But eating is arguably one of the most visceral of the human activities; it can reconstitute great pleasure to us, and it can enhance bonds among our sisters and brothers. Our disconnection with the food we eat is a disconnection within ourselves and those surrounding us.

The disconnection should be of particular concern in an educational setting. If it is our conviction that students' education ought to be well rounded; if we value the relationships that we have with the members of our community; then, it is crucial to teach students also how to connect with the food they eat and how food can be used to connect with others.

This goal can be achieved in a number of ways, and we believe that one of them is to involve some students on campus in producing at least some of the food that they will eat and that they will share with others. Similar projects have been undertaken with success by other Colleges and Universities, such as Middlebury College and Yale University (see, for example, this overview of the Yale project:

http://www.treehugger.com/files/2005/03/the_yale_sustai.php).

Our proposal, outlined here below, incorporates the spirit of the above mentioned projects as well as the founding values of the Jesuit tradition, such as: the communal dimension, the openness and inclusiveness, and the attention for those in need who surround us.

GARDEN OUTLINE

Here are some of the key principles that would guide the running of our garden:

Plant Varieties

The garden would host vegetables, fruits, and plants that are best suited for our climate and environment, including: potatoes; pumpkins; zucchini; squash; asparagus; lettuce and other salad greens; onions; cabbages; tomatoes; carrots; beets; parsnips; rhubarb; kale broccoli; Swiss chard; sweet and hot peppers; strawberries; blueberry bushes; raspberry canes; hardy kiwis. When needed, before being transferred to the garden, plants will be raised in the Biology Department greenhouse when it is not needed for departmental teaching or research.

Method of production:

The garden will be run with minimal inputs of synthetic chemical pesticides and inorganic fertilizers, with an attention to the meaning and value of the species produced. For example, the appropriate yard and kitchen wastes from campus will be composted nearby the garden, so that we can use this material to amend the soil.

Garden membership:

The garden maintenance will be open to all the members of the Holy Cross community; that is, any student, faculty member, or staff member on campus can become a garden member at any time. This is one of our guiding principles.

Use of garden products:

Garden products would be used in three main ways:

- Part of the garden produce will be sold to Dining Services (to prepare food offered in lower Kimball, at Slow Food dinners, or Board of Trustees dinners), in order also to generate revenues necessary for the garden maintenance; perhaps also sold to the Jesuit residence;
- Those members who wish to do so, will have the opportunity to take some produce to their dorms or homes (compatible with availability);
- The rest of the produce will be devolved to outreach activities of various kinds. Hopefully, this will be a consistent part of the produce, increasing over the years. Among the foreseen outreach activities, we include:
 - To organize on-campus cook-days with young students from surrounding schools, during which students would help pick up products from the garden, prepare them, and enjoy them with their peers and with campus members; for the first year, we will have one cook-day at the end of the academic year, and the number of such days will possibly increase in subsequent years; possibly, this kind of event will be co-organized with the groups on campus that volunteer at nearby schools;
 - To provide snacks or fresh products to students from surrounding schools; possibly, this kind of event will be co-organized with the groups on campus that volunteer at nearby schools;
 - Over the Summer, part of the produce will be donated to Abby's House or other comparable institutions.

- Sold at the farmer's market run by the Regional Environmental Council

Space and Location

The space we are asking for is approximately five to ten thousand square feet. The proposed location would be in the vicinity of the current warehouse (right below the practice football field).

⇒ Implementation: the space we have been allocated measures about 4100 square feet, and is located on the foothill of the football practice field (to the north of the Hart Center).

Garden maintenance

Garden activities will be regulated by a Committee on the Garden; and the garden will be run by the Managing Group on the Garden with the aid of volunteers. During the regular academic year, one work-study student will coordinate the activities of volunteer garden members, each of which would put in a minimum of two hours per week. For the Summer period, care of the garden would be taken over by two work-study students; volunteer garden members will still have the possibility to help during this period.

More in details, here is an overview of the garden managing structure.

Committee on the Garden

- ⇒ Meets a few times a year (one or two times per semester) to talk about policy issues concerning the garden
- ⇒ Composed of five members (at least one long-term, e.g. the Physical Plant representative; one member will act as the Coordinator):
 1. Physical Plant Representative
 2. Technical Advisor (faculty or staff)
 3. Outreach Coordinator (student)
 4. Student
 5. One Faculty/Staff

⇒ Implementation: the initial Committee will be thus composed: James Long (Physical Plant); Prof. Bertin (Biology; Technical Advisor); Melissa Ogonowski (work-study student); Kevin O'Connell (student); Prof. Borghini (Philosophy; Coordinator).

Managing Group on the Garden

- ⇒ Is responsible for running the garden, that is: maintain a garden work schedule; schedule garden activities; coordinate outreach activities; coordinate campus initiatives and relationships with other campus institutions, *et coetera*.
- ⇒ Composed of three members:
 1. Technical Advisor (faculty or staff)
 2. Two students: these will be two work-study students, with on campus housing, over the Summer, who will collaborate with organizations such as the Regional Environmental Council; over the regular academic year, there will be one work-study student, with the option of finding a professor who will be willing to do a tutorial on issues appropriately related to the garden and for which the garden work would count as part of the coursework. The

work-study positions will be allotted on the basis of a College-wide search conducted by the Committee on the Garden.

⇒ Implementation: the initial Technical Advisor will be Prof. Bertin (Biology); for the a.y. 2008-2009, the work-study student will be Melissa Ogonowsky; she will especially help with designing and filling out the two work-study positions for the Summer.

Volunteers

- ⇒ Work directly on the garden *or* help coordinating garden-related activities (such as, outreach activities, campus events, *et coetera*)
- ⇒ Have the privilege of taking some produce home
- ⇒ May be, students or staff or faculty members

(Small) Start-Up Budget

Compatibly with the College possibilities, we are asking also for a small start-up budget of \$2,000 to cover the costs for the tools necessary to operate the garden and to provide proper fencing for it.

The garden will require the following tools and equipment: wheelbarrow; garden cart; various shovels; digging fork; compost fork; garden rake; hoes; industrial and soaker hoses; sprinkler; watering nozzle; trowel; hand cultivator; hand pruner; plant supports; heat mats.

The following must be bought on a yearly basis: seeds; pots and potting soil; fertilizer.

The predicted costs associated with running the garden in future years would be around \$400. It is our aim to cover this sum with the revenues deriving from the transactions with dining services.

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We thank you for your consideration. We remain at your disposal for any suggestion or request of further information that you might have. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,

STUDENTS

David Anderson '09
 Rachel Bernier '11
 Sarah Bolthrunis '09
 Erin Broadie '09
 Rose Calvo '11
 Alicia Cianciola '09
 Marjorie Corbman '09
 Casey Delaney '11
 Ashley DuBay '10
 Liz Flaherty '11

Christina Giudice '12
 Renee Harkins '10
 Matthew Harper '11
 Meredith Houghton '11
 Jennifer Larsen '11
 Katie Larson '11
 Jill Lindblad '11
 Zachary Lavender '11
 Stephanie Marlin '12
 Katherine Masury '11
 Moira McKenna '11
 Brianna Medeiros '12
 Margaret Molloy '11
 Janet Ng '11
 Caitlin Paluilis '09
 Matthew Ruppel '09
 Nik Savage '11
 Carrie Staab '11
 Rachael Stephens '10
 Jennifer Ugolino '09

FACULTY

Susan Amatangelo (Modern Languages and Literatures)
 Robert Bertin (Biology)
 Andrea Borghini (Philosophy)
 Kimberley Frederick (Chemistry)
 Marybeth Kearns-Barrett (College Chaplain)
 Leslie Killgore (Sociology and Anthropology)
 Alice Laffey (Religious Studies)
 Alison B. Ludden (Psychology)
 Theresa M. McBride (History)
 Catherine A. Roberts (Mathematics and Computer Science)
 Joanna E. Ziegler (Visual Arts)

STAFF

William Campbell (Chaplain's Office)
 Art Korandanis (Auxiliary Services)
 Denise Davies (ITS)
 Marty Dudeck (Dining Services)
 Gordon Keir (ITS)
 Ellen Keohane (ITS)
 Kim McElaney (Chaplain's Office)

FAMILY MEMBERS

Darren Prodder (Kim Frederick)

OTHERS

Lauren Chenarides '08
Julius Jones (Regional Environmental Council)