

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES OF SELECT STUDENT ORGANIC FARMS
SEPTEMBER 20, 2007
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the methods, findings, and analysis from an investigation into the organizational structure of eight student organic farms. The investigation was conducted for Michigan State University’s College of Agriculture and Natural Resources on behalf of the MSU Student Organic Farm. Using online research and phone interviews, data were collected about farm management, leadership, and finances. The farms investigated have adopted a diversity of structures that are delimited, in part, by their answers to the following five questions:

- What is the most suitable administrative home for the farm?
- Who should serve as the farm’s administrator of record?
- Who will lead the farm?
- Who will be responsible for which farm expenses?
- How will the farm generate income?

The analysis summarizes the eight farms’ range of responses to these questions, demonstrating that there is clearly no organizational “best practice” and that each farm’s structure is largely a function of its context and preferred leadership model.

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BACKGROUND

Due to its rapid development in recent years, the Student Organic Farm (SOF) at Michigan State University (MSU) has outgrown its organizational structure. Early this year, the SOF leadership approached the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) administration for assistance with developing its management, leadership, and financial structures. CANR responded by 1) engaging Ron Whitmore of Integra Consulting to investigate the organizational structure of other campus farms in North America and 2) engaging Ray Vlasin to facilitate a strategic planning process for the SOF. The assumption is that, by integrating lessons learned from other campuses into the strategic planning process, the SOF will be well-equipped to design an organizational structure that is aligned with the SOF's mission and forecasted development. This report summarizes what Ron Whitmore learned from his investigation into the organizational structure of other campus farms.

METHODS

In July 2007, the SOF leadership provided Ron Whitmore with a prioritized list of nine campus farms in North America that may serve as examples for sustaining and advancing the SOF. From late July through early September, Whitmore conducted Internet and phone interview research into the administrative and financial structure of those farms. Questions that guided the research included:

Administration

- Where is the farm's administrative home?
- Which individual *manages* the farm (i.e., who is the administrator of record)?
- Which individuals *lead* the farm (i.e., who makes strategic operational decisions?)

Fiscal Management

- What are the farm's major budget line items?
- What are the farm's principal sources of income?

Lessons Learned

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of this arrangement for the farm? And for the college/university?
- What has worked well? And what would you do differently?

Whitmore began by collecting information from the web sites of the following nine farms:

- University of California Santa Cruz's Center for Agroecology and Food Systems (CASFS)
- University of California Davis' Student Farm
- The Program in Ecological Agriculture and Society (PEAS) farm, which works in partnership with the University of Montana
- University of British Columbia's Farm
- Washington State University's Organic Teaching Farm
- University of Maine's Black Bear Food Guild
- Evergreen State College's Organic Farm

- Cal Poly San Luis Obispo's Organic Farm
- University of Minnesota's Student Organic Farm.

He then conducted phone interviews with the leadership of seven of the nine farms. Despite repeated attempts, he was not able to talk to staff at UC Santa Cruz, though he was able to gather additional information by email. He chose not to interview staff from Washington State because the farm is run like all of the University's other research farms.

FINDINGS

Findings are summarized below in both narrative and table format. The narrative is arranged in the order of priority specified by the leadership of the Student Organic Farm. The table on page 14, in turn, is organized from left to right by the level of university support for each farm.

University of California Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology and Food Systems (CASFS)

<http://casfs.ucsc.edu/>

Patricia Allen, Interim Director: (831) 459-4243; rats@ucsc.edu

Gwendolyn Keith, Project Coordinator: (831) 459-2741; gtkeith@ucsc.edu

CASFS celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2007 as a research, education, and public service program. Its 25-acre farm includes annual and perennial food and ornamental crops, mechanically cultivated row crops, orchards, and research plots. Other facilities include a 2-acre garden, offices, an agroecology laboratory, a greenhouse, a visitors' center, and the offices of the Life Lab Science Program, which develops garden-based science and nutrition curricula for elementary schools. Each year, 35 to 40 students complete a 6-month apprenticeship that complements classroom education with production and marketing experience. CASFS also sponsors conferences and offers a competitive research grants program. CASFS is in the midst of a strategic planning process through which its organizational structure will likely be altered.

Management

CASFS is a Center within the Division of Social Sciences and is not affiliated with a department. Traditionally, the Center Director is a tenure-stream faculty member, though the current Acting Director is not.

Leadership

CASFS has a large staff that provides leadership through a traditional organizational hierarchy.

Administrative Staff:

Director

Associate Director

Assistant to the Director

Project Assistant for CASFS (Receptionist)

Operations Staff:

Two Garden Managers

Farm Operations Manager

Field Production Manager

Program Staff:

Life Lab Coordinator

Farm to College Coordinator

CSA Coordinator

40th Anniversary Coordinator

Apprenticeship Course Coordinator

Curriculum Editor

Apprenticeship Assistant

Program Assistant

Development Staff:

Development Director

Apprentice Course Grant Writer

Research Staff:

Post-Doc Research Manager

Two Research Associates

Specialist: Farm Extension

Associate Specialist: Social Issues (currently serving as Acting Director)

Thirteen Affiliated Faculty

Finances

The University provides the land and water and has recently provided office space because the CASFS trailer offices were condemned. The University also covers the salaries and fringes of the Director, the Assistant to the Director, the Project Assistant (receptionist), the Farm Operations Manager, the Garden Manager, and at least half of the Associate Director.

The Division of Social Science covers CASFS administrative expenses (except those associated with the Apprenticeship Program) and recently partially funded a new development position for CASFS.

CASFS is responsible for the rest of the labor and the facilities. The principal revenue sources include grants, produce sales, and apprentice tuition (\$4,000/apprentice). Research managers, research associates, and graduate student researchers are primarily funded through USDA and other government grants. Conferences are typically self-supporting. Administrative expenses for the Apprenticeship Program and other program and facilities expenses are primarily funded through private foundations, individual donations, and corporate donations.

Lessons Learned

Some unspecified difficulties have arisen since the Action Director is not a faculty member, and the former Director was.

University of California Davis Student Farm

<http://studentfarm.ucdavis.edu/>

Mark Van Horn, Program Director: (530) 752-7645, mxvanhorn@ucdavis.edu

The 1.5 acre UC Davis Student Farm celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2007. It includes an Ecological Garden, a Market Garden, a Children's Garden, and a Compost Project. The Student Farm offers internships, courses, and research projects for students interested in exploring the principles and practices of sustainable agriculture.

Management

The Student Farm is a program of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences as part of the new Agricultural Sustainability Institute. The Department of Plant Sciences serves as the Farm's administrative home. Three other departments have served in that capacity since the Farm was created.

The Program Director is a non-tenure stream Academic Coordinator and has both administrative and teaching responsibilities on the Farm.

Leadership

The Program Director works collaboratively with the three other Farm staff, all of whom are ½- to ¾-time: the Children's Garden Coordinator, the Market Garden Coordinator, and the Field Operations Coordinator. The Program Director also works closely with faculty to develop the undergraduate curriculum in sustainable agriculture. Several students serve as full-time interns during the summer growing season, but student leadership is otherwise limited to specific components of the Farm.

Finances

The University provides the land and facilities, the College pays the four staff members out of its general fund teaching budget, and the Department covers the Farm's administrative expenses. The Farm is on very valuable land within the campus core and is part of the Plant Sciences teaching complex.

The Farm is responsible for all operating and production expenses, including seed, fertilizer, fuel, and other production services, as well as student intern labor. Some of the interns get paid, but most are involved through classes, get academic credit, or volunteer.

Farm income is generated from market garden sales, including the year-round CSA that has 60 subscribers and brings in ~\$40,000/year and sales to the campus coffee house, which brings in ~\$5,000/year. The Farm also occasionally sells compost to researchers. The Farm also secures grants for special extension and research projects, and some faculty bring research funding with them to the Farm.

The Children's Garden generates ~\$5,500/year by requesting \$2 donations for tours and charging for workshops.

Lessons Learned

It has been helpful to link the Farm to the academic curriculum.

The Farm provides the University with great public relations opportunities, and it serves as a draw for many students. With the recent focus on sustainable agriculture, the University sees the Farm as a significant asset.

University of Montana in partnership with Garden City Harvest Program in Ecological Agriculture and Society (PEAS) farm

<http://www.gardencityharvest.org/programs/farm.html>

Josh Slotnick, Farm Director: office (406) 243-4660, cell (406) 239-6993,
joshua.slotnick@mso.umt.edu

The Program in Ecological Agriculture and Society (PEAS) farm is a joint project of the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Montana and Garden City Harvest, a nonprofit organization. The PEAS farm serves both the teaching mission of the University and the food security mission of Garden City Harvest through its internship program. The PEAS farm was started in 1997 and has been at its current 6.5-acre location near campus since 2001.

Management and Leadership

The PEAS farm is a program of Garden City Harvest (GCH), a 501c3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide high quality food to low-income people, offer education and training in ecologically conscious food production, and support personal restoration of troubled youth and adults. GCH supports four programs: Community Gardens, Youth Harvest, Community Education, and the PEAS Farm. The PEAS farm is a collaborative effort working to provide high quality produce to Missoulians in need while educating the Missoula community and University of Montana students about sustainable food systems and agriculture. GCH is the senior partner responsible for program administration.

The Farm Director is employed part-time by both GCH and the Environmental Studies Department, so he receives two different W-2 forms.

Rather than an Executive Director, GCH has a Management Team composed of the program coordinators that meets monthly. In addition to the Management Team, GCH has a Development Director and Bookkeeper. The Board of Directors meets separately and is responsible for personnel issues.

Finances

The PEAS farm is not on University land, but the University covers the compensation of the Farm Director and two graduate students. 1/3 of the compensation is from the College of Arts and Sciences general fund, and 2/3 is soft money raised by a sympathetic Environmental Studies faculty member through private individual donations and foundation grants.

GCH covers all production costs (e.g., supplies, fuel, insurance), which exceed staff expenses.

Income sources include foundation grants, Missoula County Public Schools, the City of Missoula, the court system, private and corporate donations, and produce sales. Produce sales through the CSA are the principal source of income.

Lessons Learned

The partnership minimizes dependency on a single entity, reduces risk for the partners, and increases fundraising options because the farm is able to access both private and University resources.

For a limited investment, the University enjoys a high return in the form of good public relations, increased enrollment, and a strengthened teaching program.

University of British Columbia UBC Farm

<http://www.landfood.ubc.ca/ubcfarm/index.php> (last updated in 2003)

Mark Bomford, Program Coordinator: (604) 822-5092, mark.bomford@ubc.ca

The University of British Columbia is not a land grant institution, so no system is in place to preserve University farm land. Instead, the Faculty “holds stewardship” of different farm land, usually as field research sites associated with particular disciplines. With the trend in research moving from field to lab, fewer farms are stewarded by faculty, so in 2000, the UBC Farm “reinvented” an abandoned research site previously stewarded by the Botany, Forest Sciences, and Botanical Gardens Faculties. The farm is located on 24 hectares, with 10 hectares of cultivatable land featuring a market garden, a demonstration garden, chickens, a medicinal garden, and field research plots.

Management

The UBC Farm is an “activity” within the Faculty of Land and Food Systems (equivalent to a College). The Farm is not a separate unit, and departments have been dissolved, so the Farm is administered informally by the Faculty. The Farm is managed by a nearly-full-time Program Coordinator, which is a soft-money, unclassified, management/professional staff position.

Leadership

The Farm is configured and led like a staff-led nonprofit organization without a Board of Directors or other form of transparent governance. The Farm’s Advisory Council is more analogous to a nonprofit Advisory Board than a Board of Directors. It is composed of faculty, staff, and students appointed by the Dean (with guidance from the Program Coordinator). The Program Coordinator reports to the Dean and the Council. The Farm has no “faculty champion.”

The Program Coordinator is responsible for meeting the day-to-day needs of the Farm, funders, and the University, including the funding needed to cover his own and other staff members’ salary. There are three other, seasonal staff members. The Market Garden Coordinator works 8 months full-time and 2 months part-time. The Marketing Coordinator is full-time during the growing season, and the Outreach and Education Coordinator is almost full time during the

growing season. Students are also hired seasonally to work in the fields and as part of Farm teaching or research projects. As with many nonprofits, staff levels and pay vary depending on the status of funding.

Finances

The University provides the land, buildings, insurance, and utilities. The Farm inherited a tractor but has purchased all of its other equipment. The University does not maintain the buildings, but when Farm staff made some improvements, the Farm was fined \$15,000 for violating the union contract.

The Farm's annual budget is ~\$180,000, all of which the Farm has to raise on its own. Nearly half of all revenue comes from produce sales. 75% of produce sales are through public markets, and the rest are through wholesale sales to restaurants on and off campus and through a CSA program. The Farm charges for tours, which covers tour costs, and about 70% of the costs of the summer camp are recovered through registration fees.

Grants complement produce sales, and the Dean has recently given the Farm the time of Faculty development staff. The Farm doesn't receive any course revenue, but it does capture \$700 for every international student enrolled in a farm course during the summer term. The Farm also collects fees from researchers using the Farm and competes for one-time program grants through the University that cover student wages or project-specific costs for teaching and community service projects.

Lessons Learned

The Program Manager recognizes that the UBC Farm's leadership model is dependent on one individual and therefore unsustainable.

The Program Manager stressed that it's unrealistic to expect a campus farm to be self-sustaining like a commercial farm. Students are getting paid much better than local farm laborers, even "volunteer" labor actually costs the Farm \$5/hour, and both students and volunteers are far less efficient than typical farm labor.

University of Maine Black Bear Food Guild

http://www.sag.umaine.edu/index.php?action=food_guild

Dr. Marianne Sarrantonio, Program Coordinator: (207) 581-2913; mariann2@maine.edu

Established in 1994, the Black Bear Food Guild is a community supported agricultural endeavor initiated and developed by students in response to their desire for more hands on learning. Students manage 2 acres of certified organic vegetable production and 1.5 acres in a cover crop, wheat, and dry beans.

Management

The Food Guild is part of the University's Sustainable Agriculture Program, which is administered in the Department of Plant, Soil, and Environmental Sciences. The tenure-stream

faculty member who coordinates the Sustainable Agriculture Program serves as faculty advisor and administrator of record for the Food Guild.

Leadership

Students lead the Food Guild and are identified through an informal process of self-selection and faculty advisor approval. One student who is a Sustainable Agriculture major and who worked on the farm the previous year serves as leader each year. The faculty advisor and student leader then identify two or three full-time and two or three part-time students to work on the farm. Students can earn credit for the experience, and Sustainable Agriculture majors can satisfy their internship requirement with the Food Guild.

The students are supported by an Advisory Team composed of two faculty members, the experimental farm manager, and the faculty advisor's technician, all of whom are donating their time. There are no other paid staff.

Finances

The University charges \$2000/year for the land and facilities (including a barn and tractors) but does not charge any administrative overhead. The \$2000 "rent" is often renegotiated depending on annual production. The University does not provide any other funding.

The students develop a budget each year based on how many CSA members they can take on, their production costs, and how much they want to pay themselves. The faculty advisor helps them keep the budget realistic and encourages them to leave \$1000 for start-up costs the following year.

Students decide each year what to grow and how to market it. There is consistently more demand for CSA shares than can be supplied. The students also typically sell produce at a roadside farm, and overflow is either sold to the local food coop or donated to the food bank. This year, the students are marketing beef and cheese from University beef and dairy farms, from which the students earn a small cut. In the past, students have sold produce to the University food system, local grocers, and restaurants and sold a muffin mix and dry beans to a local processor.

Lessons Learned

The Food Guild is an excellent, low risk way for students to get hand-on experience in cultivation, farm management, and marketing.

The University enjoys great public relations for little investment.

While a full-time farm manager is not necessary, because the Advisory Team members are donating their time, it would be helpful to have a part-time (10 hours/week) staff person to help with cultivation.

The Evergreen State College Organic Farm

<http://www.evergreen.edu/cell/organicfarm.htm>

Melissa Barker, Farm Manager: (360) 867-6160, barkerm@evergreen.edu

The Organic Farm at the Evergreen State College was started in 1971 and modeled after the UC Santa Cruz gardens. The Farm is on 24 acres that are mostly wooded and include 3 acres in production (including grass, orchards, and chickens) and two acres for greenhouses, a compost shed, a work/office shed, and a classroom. Students operated the farm until 1980 when a part-time farm manager was hired. A 9-month, full-time Farm academic program is offered each spring, summer, and fall, and it includes 8 hours of class time and 20 hours of farm work each week.

Management

The Organic Farm is the core of the Center for Ecological Living and Learning (CELL), which is part of the Environmental Studies Planning Unit (i.e., Department). The Farm Manager recently became a full-time, 12-month, “Plant Technician” position (it had previously been ¾-time, 11-month position). The Farm Manager reports to the Science and Operations Manager, who oversees all laboratories, the art annex, the wood shop, etc. Either the Science and Operations Manager or the faculty member who teaches the Farm academic program represents the Farm within the College structure.

Leadership

The Farm Manager is responsible for day-to-day affairs and has four student aids/employees, whom she sometimes involves in decision-making.

Finances

The College provides land, facilities, and utilities and provides pay and benefits for the Farm Manager and the student aids. The Farm is also able to submit a capital equipment request each year, and the amount awarded varies from year to year. Students enrolled in the academic program pay a \$100 course fee, and expenses associated with their Farm projects are covered either by the course budget or the Farm budget.

The Farm covers production expenses, including tools, seeds, and repairs, and pays the business administration office \$2000/year to manage the Farm’s accounts. The Farm has ~\$20,000 in produce sales each year primarily through a CSA and farm stand.

Lessons Learned

The Farm Manager suggests planning for growth and to not “think too small.”

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Organic Farm

<http://www.calpolyorgfarm.com/>

Dr. John Phillips, Faculty Advisor: (805) 756-6146, jphillip@calpoly.edu

The Cal Poly Organic Farm was started as a graduate student project in 1989 and has grown rapidly ever since. It is an 11-acre certified organic farm with a 240 member CSA. Classes are also taught at the Farm.

Management

Cal Poly has a unique business structure that is well suited to projects like the Organic Farm. Like the dining system and the bookstore, the Farm is a “commercial account” of the Cal Poly Corporation, which is the business arm of the University. 95% of the Farm’s income and expenses go through that account, which is managed by the Corporation. The other 5% is channeled through an “enterprise project” account at the Corporation that is opened and closed each quarter for specific, student-managed enterprises or projects associated with the Organic Enterprise and Organic Agriculture courses taught at the Farm. Students enrolled in the enterprise each quarter contract with the Corporation, income is channeled through that account, and project costs, including student stipends, are billed to that account.

The Faculty Advisor is the Director of the commercial account. He has an appointment with the Horticulture and Crop Science Department.

Leadership

Other Farm staff include the Farm Manager, who makes daily decisions and supervises staff and students, the Production Supervisor, and the Sales and Marketing Supervisor.

The Organic Farm also uses a unique management and leadership system – the “holistic management” (HM) model. The HM “decision makers” include the Faculty Advisor and the three staff members, all of whom were trained in HM. The decisions makers use “testing questions” to make decisions that lead to economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable outcomes.

The Farm staff meet regularly with student employees and enterprise project students to discuss decisions and plan work on the Farm.

Finances

The Faculty Advisor is paid through normal College/Departmental systems. The Corporation is the landlord but doesn’t charge for use of the land or irrigation.

The three staff members are full-time employees of the Corporation with benefits, and 20 students are also on the Corporation’s part-time payroll. All Farm payroll expenses are paid through the Farm’s Corporation account. The Farm also pays the Corporation a per acre fee for farm operation and a standard 9% administrative fee, and other production costs are built into the enterprise and Corporation budgets. Other Farm expenses include produce purchases from local growers to add more diversity to the weekly CSA “box”.

An additional 5-12 enterprise students get academic credit and the possibility of small stipends if the enterprise turns a profit.

The Farm grosses ~\$300,000/year, mostly through the CSA. Produce is also sold at local farmers markets, to the campus dining system, and wholesale to super markets.

Cal Poly's Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center (SARC), which serves as the hub of the network of sustainable agriculture activities at the University, raises money through donations, grants, Farm tours, training workshops, and conferences, which it sometimes uses to cover the Organic Farm's deficit.

Lessons Learned

Cal Poly's management model helps keep staff and students focused on self-sustainability, though because student labor is less efficient, it is unlikely that the Farm will ever turn a profit. The University is content to subsidize the Farm (as it does other University commercial enterprises) because it serves the teaching mission by rounding out its educational program and because the Farm generates positive public relations.

The Faculty Advisor does not recommend that others establish this type of management system unless the University already has a similar infrastructure in place.

University of Minnesota Cornucopia: The Student Organic Farm

<http://sof.cfans.umn.edu/>

Courtney Tchida, Program Coordinator, Sustainable Agriculture Systems Minor:
(612) 625-2738, tchi0003@umn.edu

The mission of the University of Minnesota's Student Organic Farm is to steward a student managed, organic, sustainable farm that provides food, a place for community building, multidisciplinary education, research and outreach.

Management

The University of Minnesota's Student Organic Farm started as a student group and later became a student program of the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA). MISA is a partnership between the College of Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resource Sciences, Minnesota Extension, and five nonprofit organizations and is housed in the Department of Agronomy and Plant Genomics.

A MISA Program Coordinator, which is a 30-hour/week, non-academic, non-union civil service position, manages the Farm along with several other MISA projects.

Leadership

The Farm is led by students through different mechanisms during each season: a class during the spring (9-18 students typically enroll), paid internships during the summer (many of the interns

are typically enrolled in the spring course), and an internship that fulfills an academic program's volunteer requirement in the fall. Three interns serve as Student Farm Manager, Sales and Marketing Manager, and Volunteer Coordinator. The Program Coordinator and two faculty advisors (one each from Agronomy and Horticulture) facilitate students' production and marketing decisions.

Finances

The Farm is on Extension land, and Extension charges \$300/acre/year for land, water, and production equipment. The Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics covers the cost of bookkeeping. The Program Coordinator's salary is covered by the graduate school for her work coordinating the Sustainable Agriculture Minor and other grants. All other production and administration expenses are covered by produce sales through local farmers markets, office deliveries, the Student Union, and two off-campus restaurants. Last year, MISA made a one-time contribution of \$8,000 to cover Farm expenses and interns.

Lessons Learned

It's useful to have a staff person who maintains program stability and keeps the "institutional memory."

The University gets lots of "bang for the buck", including good public relations and growing enrollment in the Sustainable Agriculture Minor.

Organizational Structure by Farm

	UCSC	UC Davis	Cal Poly	Evergreen	U of MN	U of Maine	U of British Columbia	U of Montana
Management Structure								
Admin. Home	Center within the Division (College) of Social Sciences	College program as part of new Agricultural Sustainability Institute Department of Plant Sciences provides admin services	Commercial account of Cal Poly Corporation New enterprise account opened each quarter	Environmental Studies Department	MISA: partnership of College, Extension, and 5 nonprofits but housed in Department of Agronomy and Plant Genomics	Part of Sustainable Agriculture Program in Department of Plant, Soil, and Environmental Sciences	“Activity” of College (College has no departments)	Nonprofit Garden City Harvest (GCH) Farm is one of four GCH programs
Administrator of Record	Center Director (faculty member)	Program Director (academic coordinator)	Faculty Advisor from Horticulture and Crop Sciences Department	Science and Operations Manager (admin. staff of College)	MISA Student Programs Coordinator (civil service, non-union staff)	Faculty Advisor/ Coordinator of Sustainable Agriculture Program	Program Coordinator (mgmt/professional position)	GCH staff (Farm Director) GCH staff management team governs GCH (no Executive Director)
Unit responsible for Administrative Expenses	College	Department of Plant Sciences	Farm pays standard 9% Corporation fee	Farm pays \$2000 for services	Department	Department	Farm	GCH

	UCSC	UC Davis	Cal Poly	Evergreen	U of MN	U of Maine	U of British Columbia	U of Montana
Leadership Roles and Compensation								
Principal	Center Director	Program Director	Faculty Advisor	Farm Manager (plant technician)	Students	Student leader who is Sustainable Agriculture major	Program Coordinator (role comparable to nonprofit Executive Director)	Farm Director manages farm and teaches courses (employed by both GCH and University)
Team Members	Large staff: admin., operations, program, development, and research staff plus affiliated faculty	Three program and operations coordinators	Holistic Management “decision makers”: Faculty Advisory, Farm Manager, Production Supervisor, Sales and Marketing Supervisor	Four student employees	Student Farm Manager Student Sales and Marketing Manager Student Volunteer Coordinator 9-18 students in spring class, summer interns, fall intern	2-3 full-time students and 2-3 part-time students	Market Garden Coordinator Marketing Coordinator Outreach and Education Coordinator	Two graduate students

	UCSC	UC Davis	Cal Poly	Evergreen	U of MN	U of Maine	U of British Columbia	U of Montana
Unit responsible for Leadership Compensation	University: Director, Assistant, ½ of Associate Director, Receptionist, Farm Operations Manager, Garden Manager College: Development CASFS: all other staff and labor	College: Director, Market Garden Coordinator, and Field Operations Coordinator Farm: interns and student labor	Farm: Farm Manager, Production Supervisor, Sales and Marketing Supervisor, 20 students College of Ag chips in as needed	University: Farm Manager and student pay	Farm: student leadership and labor Grad School: Student Programs Manager	Farm: Students pay themselves with sales revenue Advisory Team members volunteer	Farm: Program Coordinator, Market Garden Coordinator, Outreach and Education Coordinator, Marketing Coordinator, and student labor	University (1/3 Arts and Sciences general fund and 2/3 Env Studies soft money): Farm Director and two grad students
Student Leadership	?	Limited	Students provide input to “decision makers”	Additional students engaged through farm curriculum	See above	See above	Limited	Limited
Other Leadership Support			Part of SARC, which is hub of sustainable agriculture activities in College	Faculty member who teaches farm curriculum	MISA Program Coordinator and two faculty advisors	Advisory Team (two faculty, manager of experimental farm, technician)	Advisory Council (faculty, staff, and students) like nonprofit Advisory Board	GCH Board of Directors

	UCSC	UC Davis	Cal Poly	Evergreen	U of MN	U of Maine	U of British Columbia	U of Montana
Production and Facilities Expenses								
Unit responsible for Land rents	University provides land	University provides land (valuable land in campus core)	Corporation provides land	University provides land	Farm pays Extension \$300/acre for land, water, & machinery	Farm pays University \$2000/year for land and facilities	University provides land	GCH leases land
Facilities provided by	CASFS responsible but University recently provided office space	University	Corporation	University	Farm pays Extension \$300/acre for land, water, & machinery	Farm pays University \$2000/year for land and facilities	University	GCH
Unit responsible for Water/Utility expenses	University	?	Corporation	University	Farm pays Extension \$300/acre for land, water, & machinery	Farm pays University \$2000/year for land and facilities	University	GCH
Unit responsible for Cultivation expenses	CASFS	Farm	Farm pays standard per acre fee	Farm	Farm pays Extension \$300/acre for land, water, & machinery	Farm	Farm	GCH
Unit responsible for Seed & Supplies	CASFS	Farm	Farm	Farm	Farm	Farm	Farm	GCH

	UCSC	UC Davis	Cal Poly	Evergreen	U of MN	U of Maine	U of British Columbia	U of Montana
Income Sources								
Produce Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSA • On campus roadside market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSA • Campus Coffee House 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSA • Farmers Markets • Wholesale to super-markets • Campus dining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm stand • CSA • Farm gate • Special events • Previously to Aramark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers Markets • Campus subscriptions • Campus Club at Student Union • 2 off-campus restaurants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSA • Roadside stand • Food coop • Other enterprises (muffin mix, beans to processor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public markets (75%) • Direct marketing with restaurants on and off campus (15%) • CSA (15%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSA
Fee for Service	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Garden Tours • Workshops for teachers and others 	A little through SARC	No	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research fees for use of farm • Tours break even • Summer Camp covers 70% of costs 	No
Program Grants	Yes	Yes	Via SARC	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Donations	Yes	No	Via SARC	No	Seed and other supplies	No	Yes	Yes
Tuition	Apprentice program	No	Via enterprise class	\$100 course fee/student	No	No	International students	No

ANALYSIS

The organizational structure adopted by each of the investigated farms is a function of that farm's unique context and preferred model of leadership. Given the diversity of structures adopted among a relatively small subset of student organic farms, there is clearly no organizational "best practice." There appear to be, however, five major questions that each farm has considered. Those questions and the range of farms' responses to those questions are summarized below to assist MSU's Student Organic Farm with the development of an organizational structure well suited to its context and preferred leadership model.

1. **What is the most suitable administrative home for the farm?** Among the farms investigated, there are four basic types of administrative home:
 - Commercial enterprise of the university (Cal Poly)
 - College center, program, or activity (UCSC, UC Davis, UBC)
 - Department, as part of a larger program or partnership (Evergreen, U of MN, U of Maine)
 - Nonprofit partner (U of Montana).

2. **Who should serve as the farm's administrator of record?** Among the farms investigated, there are five basic types of administrator of record:
 - Faculty member (UCSC, Cal Poly, U of Maine)
 - Academic coordinator (UC Davis)
 - Professional administrative staff (Evergreen, UBC)
 - Non-union staff (U of MN)
 - Nonprofit staff (U of Montana).

Among the farms investigated, there doesn't appear to be any clear correlation between the type of Administrative Home and the type of Administrator of Record.

3. **Who will lead the farm?** The farms investigated typically identified a) a principal, b) the role of student leadership, c) other leadership team members, and d) additional leadership support structures.
 - Each farm investigated made a fundamental choice between having faculty (UCSC, Cal Poly), staff (UC Davis, Evergreen, UBC, U of Montana), or students (U of MN, U of Maine) play the principal leadership role.
 - The administrator of record plays the principal leadership role at each of the farms investigated (UCSC, UC Davis, Cal Poly, UBC, U of Montana) except in the following two situations:
 - When the farm is principally led by students (U of MN, U of Maine)
 - When a professional staff member responsible for a wide range of facilities defers to the farm manager to serve as principal (Evergreen).
 - At each of the farms investigated, the principal shares leadership responsibilities with others who receive compensation for their contributions.
 - Among the farms investigated, it is common to have other leadership support for the farms, either through a campus sustainable agriculture network (Cal Poly), a formal advisory group (U of Maine, UBC), or faculty advisors (Evergreen, U of MN).

4. **Who will be responsible for which farm expenses?** The farms investigated vary in their decisions about how different types of farm expenses would be covered.
- Among the farms investigated, the university provides land, facilities, and utilities at no cost to the farm (UCSC, UC Davis, Cal Poly, Evergreen, UBC) except when students (U of MN, U of Maine) or a nonprofit (U of Montana) lead the farm.
 - Among the farms investigated, sometimes the farm is responsible for administrative expenses (Cal Poly, Evergreen, UBC) and sometimes a department (UC Davis, U of MN, U of Maine) or a college (UCSC) provides administrative services at no cost to the farm.
 - Among the farms investigated, there are three basic approaches to covering leadership and labor compensation:
 - The university or college covers the cost of all leadership and labor (Evergreen, U of Montana)
 - The university or college covers the cost of core leadership, and the farm covers labor costs (UCSC, UC Davis)
 - The farm covers all leadership and labor costs (Cal Poly, U of MN, U of Maine, UBC).
 - In several cases, faculty members are donating uncompensated time to the farm and/or staff members are working well above the amount of time they are compensated for.
 - Among the farms investigated, the farm typically covers the cost of cultivation, seed, and other production materials and supplies.
5. **How will the farm generate income?** The principle sources of revenue among the farms investigated include a) produce sales, b) grants, c) donations, and d) fee-for-service income. Except in the case of UC Santa Cruz, where an apprenticeship program is offered independently of the university, most farms are not capturing tuition income.
- Among the farms investigated, produce are sold in a variety of ways:
 - CSA (the most common and lucrative strategy)
 - Roadside stands
 - Farmers markets
 - Campus restaurants and coffee shops
 - Local grocers
 - Local restaurants
 - Special events.
 - Most of the farms investigated do not generate fee-for-service income, but some charge for tours, workshops, and camps to at least partially recover the expenses associated with those services.

The following themes also emerged from the “lessons learned” shared by representatives of the farms:

- **Universities reap significant benefits** from their student organic farms, including:
 - Concrete evidence of their commitment to the growing field of organic agriculture
 - Stronger academic programs
 - Increased student enrollment
 - Enhanced community relations.

- **It is unrealistic to expect a campus farm to be self-sustaining** like a commercial farm. Student labor is more expensive than local farm labor, and students and volunteers are less efficient than experienced farm workers.
- Regardless of where the balance between faculty, staff, and student leadership is struck, **it is useful to have a farm “principal”** who provides experienced leadership, expertise, and year-to-year “institutional memory” and stability.
- **Diversification in management and leadership roles as well as in sources of support and income help to reduce dependency and risk.** Through creative organizational structures, Cal Poly, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Montana, for instance, are able to access the resources of both public university systems and the private nonprofit sector.
- **Organizational structure should be flexible** enough to accommodate both the year-to-year changes in student roles and responsibilities and the long-term growth of the farm.