

Integrating Aboriginal Food into the UBC Food System

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LFS 450

April 2012

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Integrating Aboriginal Food into the UBC Food System

Scenario #4

LFS 450: Land, Food, and Community III
Section 001
UBC – Vancouver
Winter Session: January-April 2012
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Abstract

In order to understand how to integrate Aboriginal food into the UBC food system, a situational analysis has been conducted. In this analysis, we focused our research based on the Aboriginal community. The initial steps in our research involved setting interviews with Hannah Lewis (Aboriginal program liaison), Rick Ouellet (Student and Community Development Officer) and Denise Sparrow (owner of Salishan Catering). Subsequently, a discussion board was held at the UBC Long House during the Feast Bowl event. Through our method of research, we were able to determine who our key stakeholders were. The key findings from our interviews were that Aboriginal food is constantly evolving through every generation; thus, it should not be romanticized as static set of cuisine. Also, in the Aboriginal community, food is used as a vehicle for community connection and sharing. Through the open-ended discussion board at the UBC Long house, some of the key finds were that most respondents favored the idea of integrating Aboriginal food into the UBC food system. However, concerns were raised that the UBC Food Services focuses primarily on economic profitability, turning the food into a commodity, where ultimately the cultural context in the food would be lost. Before integration of Aboriginal food into the UBC food system can commence, we recommend that UBC Food Services and the Aboriginal community to establish a common vision through meetings, committees and etc. Subsequently, we recommend increasing land availability for production of Aboriginal crops and implementing Aboriginal cooking classes.

Introduction

As part of our LFS450 project, we were given the scenario of integrating Aboriginal foods in to the UBC food system. On campus, the UBC food system has cuisines associated with ethnic minorities available but those of foods linked to the First Nation community is less visible. Therefore we set out to address this scenario with a long-term goal of integrating BC indigenous community's food into the university's food system. In order to move in that direction and begin the integration process our group first conducted a situational analysis of Aboriginal foods in the

UBC food system. This paper is the discussion of our analysis, the methodology, our findings and the conclusions made based on those findings.

But before proceeding with that discussion, in our introduction we would like to highlight factors that will help to give readers an understanding of our position and approach to investigating this scenario. We began our investigation by identifying key reasons for the need and importance of engaging with the Aboriginal community at UBC and whether food could be used as a medium for this engagement. In our introduction we will also discuss what we felt would be the best approach to conducting our investigation and why we chose it. Later we will discuss the research questions that were developed to guide our situational analysis of Aboriginal food at UBC. Finally how this scenario at UBC is a microcosm of food system challenges faced by communities throughout North America and the world.

- *Reasons for engaging with Aboriginal community*

There are a variety of reasons for engaging with the Aboriginal community. A fundamental reason for this engagement is because it is a means through which UBC can meet the priorities the university has set out to do in its strategic plan of “Place and Promise.” In an effort to becoming an institution with a learning environment that “fosters global citizenship [and] advancing a civil and sustainable society” the university has articulated various commitments to work towards. Those that address our scenario are UBC’s commitment to engaging with the Aboriginal community, promote intercultural understanding and to sustainability. As outlined by the university, UBC would like to build a “mutually supportive” relationship with the First Nation community allowing for understanding of the indigenous culture creating a stronger sense of inclusion being socially and economically responsible and sustainable.

In moving in the direction of UBC's "Place and Promise" strategic plan commitments, a potential means through which they can be achieved is via the UBC food systems project (UBC FSP). The UBC FSP allows for the medium of food as a tool for Aboriginal engagement and intercultural exchange through processes that are identified as sustainable. An object of the UBC FSP is the identification of avenues of improving sustainability of the UBC food system and therefore UBC's food security. The integration of Aboriginal foods into the UBC food system requires the utilization of indigenous plants, wild game and seafood that is local to the BC west coast. Not only would this have environmental benefits (Altieri and Toledo 2011) but we also foresee that there are also social benefits as well. The integration of Aboriginal foods into the UBC food system would allow for additional avenue through which the Aboriginal community can continue to build on their knowledge of their food traditions (Elliott and Jayatilaka 2010) and it would be an opportunity for them to share that learning with non-Aboriginal community. Arguably this can allow for better communication channels and means of intercultural exchange nurturing those commitments UBC has set for itself.

- *Research Question*

To guide our situational analysis of Aboriginal food within the UBC food system and our investigation of integrating Aboriginal food into the UBC food system, we proceeded to develop key research questions. The research questions discussed here are broad themes that form a framework to directed our inquiry and helped focus our investigation.

One of the first things that our groups had to learn was - what was Aboriginal food as defined by the Aboriginal community? What constitutes as being Aboriginal and how is it different to other cuisines?

Once these basic questions were answered we proceeded to inquire about the access and availability of the Aboriginal food within the UBC food system. Is Aboriginal food available on campus, if so where? To what level is Aboriginal food available? How many people involved in the Aboriginal food system on campus and what is their level of involvement? How is the Aboriginal food in the UBC food system currently organized? The findings to these set of questions allowed us to develop an overview of the Aboriginal food on campus, assess the locations and levels through which it was available and who the stakeholders are.

The final element to our research questions framework was to gain insight into the perspectives of the various stakeholders in regards to our scenario. We wanted to gather data on the opinions of the UBC food services and the Aboriginal community as to the integration of the UBC food system. We wanted to identify what might their opinions be and how they may differ to each other.

These question themes help us conduct a situational analysis of First Nation food on campus and the findings allowed us to develop our discussion into integrating Aboriginal food into the UBC food system.

- *Project's relevance in the context of UBC food system North America and the world's food system*

Through our investigation we have come to appreciate that the elements of the UBC food system as it pertains to our scenario is a microcosm of challenges faced by indigenous minorities in North America and the world. From our investigation we see that common themes arise in regards to the challenges the Aboriginal community faces with regards to food security and food sovereignty.

According to Elliott and Jayatilaka (2010) Vancouver's Aboriginal communities have limited access to their traditional indigenous foods. Due to assimilation, urbanization and environmental

concerns, First Nations people struggle to acquire foods that are culturally appropriate and safe. Environmental degradation and deforestation has contaminated and reduced indigenous food stocks. Colonization and government policies, introduce hunting and fishing rights regulate Aboriginal's access to their traditional foods setting boundaries and limits on foods access (Elliott and Jayatilaka 2010). Knowledge around use of indigenous food is lost because of forced assimilation through residential schools (Elliott and Jayatilaka 2010). These highlight issues of food sovereignty and food security for Aboriginal people.

These challenges are not unique to the First nation community in North America or UBC, rather they are challenges faced by indigenous minorities elsewhere in the post-colonial world (Altieri and Toledo 2011). John Ziker (1998) notes that capitalism and the market economy are agents of change, which according to Mintz and Du Bois (2002), alters the culinary and eating patterns of many people around the world. Countries that engage in large-scale industrial farming acquire and require vast plots of land for monoculture cultivation. This often displaces indigenous peoples for their lands which would of been a source for acquiring food.

Additionally commercial agro-businesses cultivating monocultures require fertilizes and fossil fuels, which often pollute the environment, harming the natural flora and fauna thus contaminating the food resources of indigenous peoples. Urbanization contributes to the loss of traditional food knowledge as indigenous people migrate to cities where their indigenous foods are no longer available.

Methodology

Our methodologies and research focus is on the Aboriginal perspective because their views are not as apparent to us as that of the UBC Food Systems. To ensure that we gain high quality of findings, we approached our investigation into our scenario in a culturally respectful way

In the area of public health the development and delivery of health programs are done in a manner that is culturally appropriate and sensitive. Although health promotion is concerned with supporting and facilitating the individual and their communities in achieving a better health (Fleming and Parker 2007), we felt that given the field is rigorously studied, the proven benefits to culturally appropriate health programs can be transferred to our investigation. Hawthorne et al (2010) found that health education interventions were more successful when they are designed in a “culturally acceptable” (Hawthorne et al 2010 pp621) and appropriate way compared to the usual un-adapted programs. According to Henderson, Kendall and See (2011) the benefits to culturally appropriate program development and deliver translate to “improved communication channels” between the patient and health care worker, “increased trust” and an “expan[sion] of cultural understanding.” (Henderson, Kendal and See 2011 pp226)

Since our scenario of integrating Aboriginal foods into the UBC food system requires that our group engage with a community different from our own, we decided that our investigation be grounded in an approach that was culturally appropriate and respectful. To ensure this, our group would discuss our research methodology plans with UBC faculty and staff associated with the Aboriginal community. By continually questioning the cultural appropriateness of our methodology, we were increasingly culturally aware and open minded of the Aboriginal culture. This led to an improved understanding of First Nation community compared with our knowledge at the beginning of this investigation and allows for better communication. This allowed us to engage with the community had we been culturally insensitive and provided for a high quality of findings.

The methodology that was applied to address our research question were, the conducting of interviews with Hannah Lewis from UBC Institute for Aboriginal Health, Rick Ouellet from

the UBC First Nations Long House, Dennis Sparrow from Salishan Catering service, and short meetings with staff of the UBC food services after post-presentation meeting with staff from UBC and AMS food services. We also attended luncheons at the UBC First Nations Long House, hosted by the Institute for Aboriginal Health's "Feast Bowl". During the event, we have volunteer and help set up room and prepare food for luncheons. Also, we toured the garden plots of the Aboriginal programs the run out of the UBC farm. This is a situation analysis allowing us to see the food availability on the Aboriginal's Garden area, whether is sufficient for future expansion to support our scenario. Our group has gain knowledge of their culture by observing what kinds of crops are being grown on the Aboriginal garden.

Additionally as part of our methodology in addressing our research question we held a discussion board attached to the Institute of Aboriginal Health during the March "Feast Bowl" at the Long House with members of UBC's Aboriginal community. The discussion board was held in an open-ended discussion rather than a formal discussion group. Hannah Lewis and Rick Ouellet recommended this approach. The discussion board consists of a few questions, which able to gain opinions from an Aboriginal perspective. The question being asked should allow Aboriginal to think both side of the spectrum weather than driven toward one side. At the same time, the question should help us with our research process. This method allowed us to gain a wider range of opinion and a better sense of the Aboriginal community perspective. Also we have provided post-it for participants to write their own opinion with being pressure. We have adjust our methodology to suit their preferred way of engage in academic research, that way the Aboriginal community had a sense that we respect them.

Before the discussion board, our group was thinking whether food is a good way to use as a medium for non-Aboriginal to learn about their culture and food. This following question was

prepared to answer our curiosity: **“Do you think food should be used as a way for UBC’s non-Aboriginal community to learn about the First Nations culture? Why or why not?”** After coming up with the first question, we would like to attain from Aboriginal in their opinions of sharing their culture through food. Would this be respectful and culturally appropriate and is it appropriate to allow Food Services to take on their food. The following question is being asked: **“In your opinion would it be appropriate for UBC Food Services to have Aboriginal food options available to the wider UBC population as a means for intercultural exchange & learning of First Nations culture?”** Continuing on the previous question, we would like to know the Aboriginal point of view and how they perceive us from their perspective. Also we would like to know how Aboriginal would like their food to be represented. One of the goal we want to establish indirectly is we hoped that participants start to discuss risks and ways of preventing them associated with this process: **“What would it look like to have the non-Aboriginal community gain an understanding of First Nations culture through the medium of food?”** Integrating Aboriginal food into UBC Food System is a huge step. We would like to take notice from the Aboriginal community on how they would like the collaboration to be approach and in what level of involvement they want to be in. the last question being presented: **“What are the appropriate steps you’d recommend they (i.e. the UBC Food Services) take when integrating Aboriginal food into the UBC food system?”** However, this approach will limit the amount of data being collected. The size of the sample is small and thus may not be a good representation of the community. We will discuss later in the paper on recommendation to eliminate the limit for this scenario.

Through this processes we want to gain an appreciation of the perspective of our scenario from the lens of the Aboriginal community and gain their insight as to a culturally appropriate

approach to integrating Aboriginal foods into the UBC food system. Our methodology is a means through which we could conduct a situational analysis of the Aboriginal foods within the UBC food system. Through this process we could identify stakeholders and determine their roles and perspectives as it relates to our scenario. At the same time identify current resources available within the UBC community.

Findings and Outcomes

Our chosen methodology resulted in key findings throughout the course of our research. Through a situational analysis, our group determined the stakeholders that are central to our scenario. The following are the key stakeholders for this project: the Aboriginal community on the UBC campus, UBC Food Services, AMS Food and Beverage, the First Nations Longhouse at UBC, UBC Farm, UBC Waste Management, and consumers, which include students, faculty, staff and other community members of UBC.

This situational analysis of UBC continued with determining the current availability of Aboriginal food on campus. Through our community contact, Hannah Lewis, we became aware of two events on campus. The first is the community garden lunches at the UBC Farm; here, the Aboriginal community gathers and cooks lunch together utilizing some indigenous ingredients grown on the UBC Farm. The second is the monthly Feast Bowl held at the Longhouse at UBC, which is a lunch of Aboriginal style dishes prepared by volunteers for the Aboriginal community of UBC. With the meal, the event also connects the community to health resources such as testing for blood pressure and blood sugar levels, and is a means for both gathering the community together and embracing the culture.

A common theme among our interviews with Hannah Lewis, Rick Ouellet, and Denise Sparrow was the idea that food, for the Aboriginal community, is a way for individuals to

connect with their land and with their community. Aboriginal people understand the significant connection among mind, body and spirit, and the importance of centralizing community sharing. Food should not be romanticized as static set of cuisine, but is constantly evolving every generation. People tend to believe that there are certain dishes that define the Aboriginal culture, but this has become unrealistic as much of the Aboriginal community today defines food differently. The origin of food for the Aboriginal community is recognized as sacred. For example, wild salmon must be used over farmed salmon, as this would be the natural method of consumption of nature. This origin connects to the idea of sustainability as an essential concept, as the emphasis within the Aboriginal culture is to consume only what is needed. The powerful connection to the land creates food as a central aspect to Aboriginals as a healing process. Many community members find working at UBC Farm gardens and eating with others a form of a healing physically and spiritually.

The discussion board at the monthly Feast Bowl yielded important points from the First Nations Longhouse community. More than half of the responses were in favor of integrating Aboriginal food on campus; of these responses, the majority continued to emphasize culturally appropriate approaches. As well, those positive about this idea felt that food could be transformed creatively by the UBC Food Services to become new types of dishes. Consultation with the UBC non-Aboriginal community of how they feel about this integration must be continued in the next stages of this process. Responses underlined that even if a large-scale integration within UBC Food Services cannot take place, it is worthwhile to focus on expanding or increasing involvement within existing programs and services. Some participants felt UBC Food Services is primarily economically focused and therefore should not be the avenue in

which culture is shared; there was concern that food will turn into a commodity with no cultural connection.

A discussion with UBC Food Services representatives indicated their focus on obtaining Aboriginal recipes and discussing resources and financially viable options for obtaining ingredients; as well, there was concern whether appropriate costs for students would be problematic. Dialogue primarily emphasized the need to answer the logistical issues around Aboriginal food.

Certain challenges were discussed throughout the course of our research. A tour of the UBC Farm gardens revealed the current level of production of crops being only sufficient for supplying small-scale community lunch programs at UBC. Throughout the year, even this level of production is limited and must be supplemented by products from community connections and resources from reserves. The loss of knowledge is a major challenge that has occurred over time; elders often keep knowledge contained, as they fear misrepresentation can occur by both the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal community.

Discussion

This section is an opportunity for us to discuss our findings and data that we have collected through the course of our investigation of this scenario. It will give the reader an understanding and appreciation of the recommendation that we have made in the next section.

In our discussion we will highlight the interrelation between three main stakeholders that we were able to determine from our research of integrating Aboriginal food into the UBC food system. From this phase of the investigation we have identified the Aboriginal community, UBC food services and UBC food services consumers as the main stakeholders. Despite our research focus on the Aboriginal community for reasons mentioned earlier, through reflection and

supportive literary research, our group has been able to determine the potential harms and benefits to UBC food system if Aboriginal foods were to be integrated.

As noted, our three identified stakeholders are the UBC Aboriginal community, UBC food services and the consumers. The Aboriginal community at UBC consists of the First Nation UBC students, elders in of the community, the staff, volunteers and members of Aboriginal community garden programs at the UBC farm, as well as those from the UBC Long House. While UBC Food Services is a general term for food outlets on campus and the associated management and operation team. Finally consumers of UBC food services are all patrons that have or will acquire foods from UBC food services outlet. We would also like to add that this interaction would occur within the context of the UBC food system and therefore, recognize that the resulting interactions will also affect the social and ecological environment of our learning institution. We foresee potential benefits resulting from the successful integration of Aboriginal foods and is a means through which UBC can deliver its commitments outlined in its “Place and Promise” strategic plan.

One of the potential harms that could come out of integrating Aboriginal foods into the UBC food system are disagreements and conflicts between UBC Food Services and the Aboriginal community. From our investigation we have determined that a majority of individuals within the Aboriginal community are in support of integrating Aboriginal food into the UBC food system. Those who were less supportive advised us to exercise caution because they viewed UBC food services as a business primarily focused on generating profit. From the Aboriginal community’s perspective, UBC food service is mainly concerned with maximizing financial gains to the endeavor of making Aboriginal food options available to consumers. As a result, it would take Aboriginal food out of its cultural meaning and context. For the Aboriginal

community, the end product of prepared food is not what identifies it as being Aboriginal, because foods that Aboriginal's consume are a reflection of a variety of social and environmental influences. Wilk (1999) notes that the cooking of foods and ingredients used are a reflection an individuals' economic status, history and interrelations with ethnic groups outside their own. Therefore, we found during our involvement with the "Feast Bowl" that a variety of ingredients are used, which might not necessarily be associated with the Aboriginal community. For example, at one such luncheon they served curry, which is mainly associated with the East Indian community was used in one of the dishes served. Rather, what is of concern is the sustainability of acquiring the food. However, there are key fundamentals that are maintained, and for Aboriginal communities, it is the origin of the food. The communities are concerned with acquiring food in a ecologically responsible way but that "you just take what you need" to feed the community (Ross and Pickering [2002] pp195). The key elements are ecological responsible management of food resources and that food is not for the individual, but for everyone. The Aboriginal philosophy of health is more holistic and not just concerned with the individual and the absence of disease (Native foods and Nutrition Health Canada 1994). The health of the individual is directly linked to that of their community, society and the natural environment. This is a fundamental that must be maintained when Aboriginal food is integrated into the UBC food system.

On the other hand, we felt that UBC food service had a different approach and philosophy to food, which is likely to be in contrast to that of the Aboriginal community. From LFS 450 class presentation by UBC Food Services on the 8th of February and from reviewing their website, we saw that they were dedication to ethical business practice with a focus on social and environmental responsibility. However, after their class presentation we proceeded to ask

clarifying questions of the presenters and we determined that their approach to this scenario is in contrast to that of the Aboriginal community. UBC Food Services focused on acquiring the end product and may have overlooked the harms that could have come out of this approach. We understand that UBC food services, as a business rightfully operations with the concerned for profitability when making Aboriginal food options available on campus. Thus, when food services makes First Nation food options available at their outlets, Aboriginal foods item will turn into a commodity, to be bought and sold. This fundamentally alters the food item into “property” of the individual who purchased it which is conceptually a Western European idea (Nadasdy 2002). To the Aboriginal community, food is is never meant for the individual but is to be shared and to nourish the community (interview Denise 2012). Food is used as medium for community members to come together and is a platform for which community activities take place (George and Grains 1997). So if UBC provides Aboriginal food options, we recommend that it does so in a manner the preserves the element of community.

If in the future, UBC food services make Aboriginal foods part of their operations, the Aboriginal community needs to be approach to identify culturally appropriate and respectful methods for integration (Elliot and Jayatilaka 2010). Goetze (2005) notes that often co-management of Aboriginal resources like food involve elements of consultation and do not take the form of equal participatory decision making relationships between stakeholders. In this way, the Aboriginal community is only able to provide advice on matters and is not considered a partner in the management of food and culture for this scenario (Geotze 2005). This will lead to conflicts and the integration of Aboriginal foods into the UBC food system in a manner that is socially responsible. In effect, the UBC food services has the capacity to alter the way Aboriginal communities have engaged with the non-Aboriginal community historical (Ross and

Pickering 2002 and Mundel and Chapman 2010). In turn, UBC food system has also to gain from this endeavour. Ross and Pickering (2002) note that the Aboriginal communities worldwide have “traditional ecological knowledge” (Ross and Pickering 2002 pp 190) and a deep understanding of the indigenous ecosystem. The UBC Aboriginal community can potentially pass this knowledge on to food services whereby food services in turn can practice and “accomplish long term resource sustainability.” (Ross and Pickering pp 200) This will allow UBC food services to practice and engage in those social and economic sustainable objectives it has set out for itself. The application of indigenous ecosystems knowledge has the potential for environmental benefits. This will improve the diversification of plant species and with the introduction of indigenous plant food in farming, reduce the need for non-renewable resources of water or the need for fertilizers. In this way UBC’s food system can improve and increase its operation practices to be more sustainable. The social environment of the UBC food system can potentially gain. If food services integrate Aboriginal food into the UBC food system, there is a potential for consumers to learn of First Nation culture through the medium of food. Freeman (2006) notes that food is a means for social interactions and (Wilk 1999) aspects of culture can be transmitted through the medium of food. According to Mintz and Du Bois (2002), humans connect food to culture, belief systems and community identity. Thus, we foresee our scenario that is the fundamental cultural aspects of Aboriginal food can be maintained in the process of integration, the UBC population can learn of the Aboriginal community. In the end, this integration is a means through which UBC can promote intercultural exchange and foster understanding of the Aboriginal culture. The successful and culturally appropriate integration of Aboriginal food could potentially deepen First Nation involvement and engagement at the UBC and foster environmental and social sustainability as outline in UBC’s strategic plan.

Stakeholder Recommendations

Our team has developed several recommendations that attempt to integrate Aboriginal food into the UBC food system. Based on our discussions, we currently recognize that the UBC Food Services and the Aboriginal Community have dissimilar perspectives on *how* to integrate Aboriginal food into the UBC food system. This dissimilarity in perspective may inflict harm or conflict when common grounds between the two stakeholders are not properly established. As a result, to address this discrepancy between the two stakeholders, we recommend that within the next year, the UBC Food Services and the Aboriginal Community can establish a common vision through meetings, committees and etc. Through this process, we hope that the two stakeholders may be able to compromise their values, where the Aboriginal cultural context in the food may be preserved and also reach economic feasibility in producing the food.

We also recommend that within the next year, representatives from all stakeholders to discuss about protocols for approaching Aboriginal culture within the UBC community. These protocols may include establishing a committee that consists of equal number of representatives from the UBC Food Services and the Aboriginal community, such that stakeholders from both sides can make equal contributions.

In the long term, when common visions between the two stakeholders are attained, we recognize that the current level of production for Aboriginal indigenous crops at UBC (UBC Farm) would not be sufficient to feed the capacity of consumers at UBC. In addition, the production may also encounter other difficulties, such as during off-seasons, certain Aboriginal ingredients are difficult to be attained and the driving distance to purchase Aboriginal ingredients is generally not economically feasible. Consequently, our group has recommended to inquire whether or not the Musqueam would like to be a part of the UBC food system. If permission is

obtained, UBC Food Services would utilize a portion of their land to cultivate indigenous crops. In this fashion, UBC Food Services would have easier and cost-effective access to Aboriginal indigenous crops.

Through our findings, we learned that the misuse of Aboriginal indigenous crops may be toxic if harvested in the wrong season or improperly prepared. There are also limited individuals who possess knowledge on how to properly use Aboriginal indigenous crops. As a result, to properly facilitate safe and authentic Aboriginal food, we recommend that Aboriginal cooking classes should be offered within the next two years. These classes would be taught by well educated Aboriginal partners that will teach non-Aboriginals or Aboriginal students that do not have proper background knowledge on how to use Aboriginal indigenous crops and cook traditional Aboriginal dishes.

Scenario Evaluation & Feedback

Before integration of Aboriginal food, factors such as consumer demand and interest for Aboriginal food on UBC Vancouver campus must also be considered. Consumer interest is a significant because the amount of consumer demand gives a good approximation as to how extensive should Aboriginal food be offered on campus. This leads to the considerations of whether it should be offered only at certain outlets or should it only be offered through events. We feel that by offering Aboriginal food at events, it will still foster community connection and sharing of the food, whereas this objective would be more difficult to achieve if it were to be sold at food outlets. As recommended by Denise Sparrow from the UBC Long House, a survey should be implemented in order to evaluate success rate for selling Aboriginal food. We recommend that future LFS 450 students to devise a survey within the next year.

One of our limitations to our methods was that the sample size we collected during our discussion board at the UBC Long House was too small to make a representative reflection of the Aboriginal community. Despite that sample size, a single discussion board session does not capture all the perspectives of the Aboriginal community. As a result, we recommend that within the next year, LFS 450 students should hold multiple discussion board sessions at the UBC Long House in order to determine if the general population of the Aboriginal community has consistent perspectives. Another alternative is to set up an Aboriginal community forum by LFS 450 students. This forum can be designed to inform the community about existing programs and services, as well as a place to make connections.

Through our method of investigation within the Aboriginal community, we have interviewed a number of individuals that has provided us with valuable information. Subsequently, we have developed a profile list that enables future LFS 450 students or stakeholders to use it as reference. Please refer to appendices for the profile list. We recommend the next LFS 450 group to continue this profile list, as this would help broaden the scope of Aboriginal perspectives. In addition, we also recommend the next LFS 450 students to create a profile list for the non-Aboriginal community, especially for the UBC Food Services.

This project is unique in that several adjustments were necessary throughout the course of the semester. Although we accepted and were flexible to these adjustments, we recommend that before the start of the next teaching session, the LFS 450 teaching team should carefully consider our findings, discussion, and evaluation when preparing this scenario for the following team. To leave ambiguity of the scenario will be ineffective in continuing this process; rather, it is important to emphasize key objectives and goals for the next group. The teaching team may follow the next step we envisioned as building stakeholder connections and resulting in a

successful discussion among representatives particularly from the Aboriginal community and UBC Food Services. We also feel it is necessary for the teaching team, at the time of introducing the next group of students to the scenario, set specific restrictions as to the breadth of research that is required; the next group may tackle too many research questions and not obtain the main research goal if proper restrictions are not identified. For example, we feel the teaching team should emphasize that the feasibility of growing Aboriginal food on campus may be important, but not until a later stage in these research processes. These points addressing the LFS 450 teaching team have a collective hope that the teaching team will be an important catalyst in the successful research of the next group of this scenario.

Our group faced both successes and challenges throughout the course of our project. We felt no discouragement, however, but rather continued to learn and grow throughout the process. During our first meeting our team felt unequipped to face such a complex issue of UBC. It was unclear where we were to start and what is necessary to succeed in our research. These challenges gradually evolved into successes as we began to understand that LFS 450 was not only designed to tackle the issues of our campus, but is essentially an opportunity for undergraduate students to realize the impact of their work. As a result of hard work throughout the term, we leave this project satisfied of our accomplishments not only as relevant findings and key recommendations, but also as academics that have grasped the concepts of research, teamwork, and community involvement. It is our hope that we can carry these skills in our pursuits beyond this class and positively impact the greater society.

Media Release

UBC Food System Project

April 2012

Project Title: Integrating Aboriginal Food into the UBC Food System

Description:

According to the University of British Columbia Place and Promise, the university community aims to engage with Aboriginal people in mutually supportive and productive relationships. UBC Food Services has proposed the idea of utilizing food as a means to integrate understandings of Indigenous cultures and histories. It is this idea that our research team has taken upon ourselves to investigate. In its very beginning stages, our primary objective was to understand the different perspectives that arise if

Aboriginal food were to be integrated into the UBC Food System. Our group has carried out a situational analysis of the UBC campus, conducted interviews with individuals from the university and Aboriginal community, and organized a discussion board at the Feast Bowl held at the First Nations House of Learning. This work has provided a strong start to this complex, yet exciting process.

This photo of an Apple Crisp dish was of great significance to our research. This was only one of several dishes prepared for the Aboriginal community at the Feast Bowl lunch. We feel this picture represents both the dedication of volunteers who prepare the meal and the Aboriginal community that gathers together to share the food. Not only did this meal enrich our taste buds, but it also enlightened our minds to the culture we knew little about.

Our first-hand experience with volunteering and sitting with the community over one meal has allowed us an opportunity to be immersed into such a rich culture. The members of the Aboriginal community have taught us the importance of recognizing food to represent a connection to land and community. It is our hope that the research we have accumulated over the semester will contribute to the greater cause of sharing the Aboriginal culture with the entire UBC campus.



“Food is a great medium in general and can be a step in appreciation of cultural contributions and use of food grown locally” –Discussion Board Participant

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Appendices

Google map of Scenario 4 (LFS 450 Group 8)

<http://maps.google.ca/maps?hl=en&tab=ml>

Community Contact

- 1) Meeting with Hannah Lewis - Aboriginal Programs Liaison
February 1st 2010 at the Institute for Aboriginal health

Bullet points of the meeting notes that day:

Current work pertaining to Aboriginal work on campus:

Working with 4 gardens but other three, not too much familiarity

Close familiarity with Aboriginal health garden

Not Aboriginal herself

Perspective on Aboriginal food on campus:

No such thing as one singular set of Aboriginal food

Those in Downtown Eastside are from nations from all around

All different food ways

Incorporate their food ways while Musqueam is addressed as well

It is the Musqueam that begin and end ceremonies; and we focus is on respect, diversity and who's land we are on

Brings excitement and knowledge for their territory

UBC has a broad range of First Nations background

“Aboriginal” has Canadian connotations while Indigenous is international

Where can we get Aboriginal food?

A lot of fish, berries, not much agriculture

Bannock – did not exist in aboriginal diet until colonizers came

Constantly shaping with how indigenous interacted

Usually friend of friend who brings ingredients

Tapping into existing relationships for resources

Good way of respecting them

Don't romanticized and show that they have not change

Aboriginals have mixed diets now

Growing vegetables may not have been part of diet thousands of years ago but are now

Balance of things that can be grown on site and sourced on site

· Also how to respect proper Musqueam protocol

How do Aboriginals understand their own food?

Powerful feeling of food as medicine (cedar smoke house)

But to those in extreme poverty and with poor food access, they only know McDonald's or shelter food

Reality = Aboriginal relationships to food

Garden: Medicinal and food plants but intertwined

Holistic - mind body spirit

Finding ways to engage ways – e.g. if selling bannock, how is this traditional history
Start to learn about how to engage with ceremony with food

Legacies of colonialism

How people relate to traditional food

Maybe knowledge never passed down to them

May be sensitive area but Important area to address

Move along with respect and protocol

- Recommendations for our group & following action steps:

Eduardo – works with international food

Connect more formally with Eduardo - indigenous partnerships

Go to his office (usually in mornings)

He keeps portfolio for all the project

Looks at funding opportunities

Constantly think of the next years

Many people looking for these opportunities

Director : LEE BROWN – relationships to food through indigenous perspectives (food through medicine)

Focus group important

Folks around campus who have really good ideas

A space where we can share our food knowledge; without saying I know what it's like to be an aboriginal in this community

Being able to connect that way can allow non-aboriginal to connect on campus = relevant to everyone, ut doesn't diminish Canadian aboriginal community

Brought up recommendation from Bethany – committee

Who will take on next years

Choose a broader or focused sense

Must define what Aboriginal is for our report

Would we want something that comes from a certain radius?

Or more priority to reflect from other areas

Rick Ouellet – Longhouse

Aboriginal programs? Or ask Rick – better first step

Literature reviews = Waywall library – one on one session with librarians – resources on things we need articulated much better

Want to incorporate indigenous gardens and connecting with campus

Maintaining connections is important – liaison = Hannah

Keep connection going Next Feast Bowl, February 29 @ Longhouse, Tuesdays between 11-3 at the Farm are great for cooking lunch

Maiya and Musqueum

Or Hannah can bring feedback to them

Recommendation find someone to take leadership on this project

Great to have students to take on responsibility

Erika Mundel – Thesis – Urban aboriginal project at farm – do good way of combining food ways and settler society; also run the smoke house

Meeting with Rick Ouellet (Scenario 4, LFS 450 Group 8)

Rick Ouellet

Student and Community Development Officer

Current work pertaining to Aboriginal work on campus:

Perspective on Aboriginal food on campus:

Always look at idea of Musqueam within Aboriginality

Differences in types of food

Sustainability issues

E.g. Salmon is major foodstuff; 80% of diet historically; inside salmon are human figures

DON'T like farm salmon; could we get enough wild salmon? Probably not; lots of seafood – dealing with a challenge to make it sustainable

Sage bistro – they would have what they'd call indigenous food = too expensive for students \$20+

Supporting communities, thus costing a lot = out of range of students

OR Cheap seafood, students can purchase but not sustainable foods

Things like salmon berries – people usually don't find tasteful; usually find elders collecting these berries; but not a sweet berry so people won't buy them

Bannock - universal thing; when bannock, many people purchase; but not here yet

Vennicin (Granville island) comes from farm; wild deer = many regulations = challenge

If UBC could do that and had a relationship with a restaurant, it is a possibility – enough available

Caution to have salmon as an item seasonally so RESPECT TRADITION

They buy salmon off Musqueam; could be extremely exciting for Musqueam to sell to a restaurant

Could say selling items from community seasonally

Hannah knows more about vegetables; there are things that are harvested that can be incorporated into salads

Problem no one is currently doing it

Feast bowl once a month, and we take up bulk of what they produce

Kelp & seaweed, historically huge part of diet

Currently no one using it

Currently people harvest and could be a great place to start

Easiest part: as long as you're on basis with Musqueam, then can free you up for students on campus; Musqueam like this stuff but just want to be recognized

Create something from communities and those who can get involved

E.g. Ted a student is a fisherman – could hook up with couple hundred lbs of halibut

As long as put framework down: how to open up space so consistent relationship with students, then that will come naturally

There are ways of doing that; any time do anything with students; never create membership model

Always freely open to participation

E.g. We're having these meetings, b/c you're an aboriginal student, you are always invited

That is the model; don't want to create a model that creates hierarchy (don't want to do that)

West coast = not egalitarian

Way to reach others; don't privilege people above others
Creating framework, say that this is how we will communicate, through discussions that are open; don't turn anyone away
Have seen things fail because of that exact issue
It also is how it works = recruiting tool; have one person come, they become agent to recruit other people; expecting people to come all the time; creating connections – will emerge; don't create that as it won't emerge
Idea, having a meeting, any Aboriginal student who shows up has equal say in meeting
Leaders will emerge themselves, you're not imposing that
Known strategy that works
Can't assume things about them; Have students from well off families and students from rural families and everything in between
No such thing as a typical aboriginal student
Among younger people = intermarriage; = those identify as Aboriginal
Whole concept = self identity
Community vents how that works; don't want to ask about status cards
Clearly outline this – and in line with UBC school
Concept of sustainably harvesting = way getting to what Aboriginal food is
E.g. Bannock came from fur trade but = Aboriginal food recognized
E.g. Wild salmon and not farmed salmon
Farm example, growing tobacco etc. and it's not that can't import, but recognition that it is happening on this land; it's not tobacco it's how we're getting the tobacco
Interesting to do it seasonally and around specific events
E.g. summer salsa or equinoxes
Cool to have a place here to celebrate something and bring things in from the farm; not necessarily a food item and celebration of food event
Good idea of where to start
If do that, open up a space and gather information from community
Can also existing within academic piece of LFS
If place you could go to get lunch and doing this, and incorporate some real world example – shown here that it is a realistic possibility
Demonstrating a way to have a relationship
If you want to do something in Aboriginal group; must build with them; don't just invite them to something we've built; as long as at first, participation is there

Recommendations for our group:

CONTACT: DENISE SPARROW - SALISH CATERING = MUSQUEUM, specifically
Aboriginal Foods; how realistic it could be for students to eat this food = good discussion
Denise in terms of musqueum community - knows most of this stuff
Does lots of fusion stuff

Recommendation: Every Tuesday = free lunch for students; recommend hosting one of first two lunches; How they will participate, what is going on

Meeting with Denise Sparrow (Scenario 4, LFS 450 Group 8)

(Salishan Catering) @Long House
<http://www.salishancatering.com/index.html>

Meeting began with an introduction of our scenario and proceeded to ask questions around Aboriginal engagement and exchange of indigenous knowledge.

During the discussion Denise made the following remarks;

Food supply

- Denise found that the supply of foods was limited and at times difficult to come by. In her catering menus are at times set according to foods available.
- The main thing around the service of Aboriginal foods is their origins and that they are wild, organically grown and ecologically sustainable.
- There are current limits to food available due to development and loss of forest. Pollution killing native plants and harming wild animals.
- As a result price of limited supply and the economic feasibility of students to consume such foods.

Foods that she is able to acquire done through her connections with other Aboriginal community members and reserves outside the Lower Main Land. She will trade and barter with those communities. Foods that she acquires comes in various forms of processing. Fresh, smoked, sun or air dried. Additional storage such as in cedar boxes.

Traditional Knowledge of foods and plant uses

- Denise mention that there may be limited to the the degree to which the Masqueam community can be a resource to integration of the indigenous foods into the food system. There is a lack of traditional knowledge around uses of plants as a food source. (There is a loss of traditional knowledge due to the historical relationship between Aboriginals and Western society. There are only a handful of people that would know of the uses of indigenous plants.)
- Elders with this knowledge are sometimes reluctant to dispense this knowledge for fear the information might be missed used.
- These may be challenges to integrating Aboriginal foods into the UBC food system.

Additional resources

- Denise provided additional resources (these are outside the UBC community) who have some level of experience working in collaboration with Aboriginal communities. Mainly found in the interior of BC.
- St Eugene Hotel and Resort - works in collaboration with indigenous community, fostering economic growth and community development.
<http://www.steugene.ca/resort/interpretive-centre/heritage>