

UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Student Report

**Bring Local Food to UBC Campus: 2007 UBC Food System Project (UBCFSP), Scenario 4  
Report**

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# ***Bring Local Food to UBC Campus: 2007 UBC Food System Project (UBCFSP), Scenario 4 Report***

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The UBC Food Systems Project is a collaborative Community Based Action Research Project initiated jointly between the Faculty of Land and Food Systems and Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) program of the UBC Campus Sustainability Office (CSO). Key project partners include: Faculty of Land and Food Systems (students and teaching team of AGSC 450 class), UBC Food Services, UBC Alma Mater Society Food and Beverage Department, UBC Waste Management, UBC Sage Bistro, UBC Farm, SEEDS and the CSO, and project collaborators include UBC Campus and Community Planning and the Sauder School of Business. (UBCFSP V, 2006)

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## ABSTRACT

The UBC Food Systems Project (UBCFSP) aims to improve the sustainability of UBC's food system through a joint initiative between numerous partners such as UBC Food Services, the Faculty of Land and Food Systems and the Alma Mater Food and Beverage Department (AMSFBD). Our specific project scenario focuses on increasing local BC food procurement on campus by establishing a local food distributor that can collaborate with one of the project partners; meeting their requirements of dependability, quantity, quality and cost.

Our group explored the potential of a working relationship between Discovery Island Organics (DIO), a local, organic food wholesaler that shares the same values as the UBCFSP, and the vision of UBCFS. We investigated the conditions necessary for DIO to meet UBCFS needs using community-based- action research (i.e.: document review, guest lectures, and informant interviews with the owners of DIO and Dorothy Yip from UBCFS). We found that DIO can meet the demanded volume and dependability required by UBCFS, however, price and price-fixing may be potential problems. In addition, UBCFS requires most produce to be prepared, which DIO is unable to do. This led us to focus on localizing whole food items on campus, specifically BC apples in residences. We suggest a 3-year plan as follows: 1) introduce BC apples 2) introduce other whole foods and improve sustainable processing 3) introduce other whole food items or expand into other UBC food sectors. We also recommend working with the current supplier to shift their non-local food items to local. The potential that UBC holds to increasing the amount of local food procurement available on campus is substantial, but it must be achieved by taking small progressive steps, towards the greater goal of creating a sustainable food system (i.e. incremental radicalism).

## INTRODUCTION

The sustainability of our current global food system is a growing concern and is the chief motivator for the UBCFSP. This food system has increased the distance our food travels to get from “farm to table,” thereby creating a disconnect between consumers and producers and people understanding where their food comes from. A food secure community should strive for self-reliant food production and minimize the distance food travels to get from “farm to table” by supporting a local food system (Kloppenburg *et al*, 1996). Purchasing local is important for the following reasons: it supports the local economy and assists the farming families and communities in maintaining their livelihood, it decreases food miles, thereby considering ecological sustainability (Kloppenburg *et al*, 1996); it increases the nutritional value of food, as decreased travel time and fewer preservatives required result in greater nutrient retention (Kloppenburg *et al*, 1996); and it creates community stewardship for the land, increasing consumer awareness about the land’s capabilities and limitations (Kloppenburg *et al*, 1996; MacKinnon, 2006).

The UBCFSP Project recognizes the importance of supporting a local food system and has therefore included localization of BC food procurement on UBC’s campus as one of its project scenarios for 2006. The UBCFSP is a Community Based Action Research Project that began in 2001 with a goal to enhance and expand the sustainability of UBC’s food system. Over the past 5 years, student groups in an AGSC 450 Land, Food and Community III course, a required capstone course focusing on sustainability and food system issues, have worked with multiple UBC partners on various scenarios that aim to achieve this goal. This report specifically partners with UBC Food Services and the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, focusing on increasing BC local food procurement on campus.

Previous UBCFSP scenarios required AGSC 450 students to establish the amount of local food that is currently being provided on UBC’s campus, as well as how much of the food on campus could potentially be provided by a local source. Our 2007 project aims to build upon these students previous findings, in addition to

making a connection between UBC Food Services (UBCFS) and a local distributor that is able to meet the university's demands of dependability, quantity, quality and cost requirements.

This paper is comprised of the following: an outline of our UBCFSP problem statement, reflections on the project's vision statement along with a statement of our value assumptions, the methodology by which we conducted our research, findings and discussion, our 3-year plan to increase local food procurement and recommendations to meet this plan, along with a conclusion explaining the importance of incremental radicalism on future AGSC 450 projects.

## **PROBLEM DEFINITION**

The main objective of this project was to "increase UBCFS procurement of seasonal BC food items to meet their large *volume* needs while meeting their costs, quality and dependability requirements" (2007 UBCFSP Scenario Outline). Specifically, we were to:

- research other food procurement activities at universities across North America, with a particular emphasis on the University of Toronto
- determine a current baseline of local food procurement among UBC food providers, proposing a 3 year target to increase local food distribution to UBCFS
- discover those items which are most frequently sold by UBCFS and determine which ones can be produced and obtained locally
- identify suitable local food distributors or producers able to consistently provide food items that meet the needs of UBCFS, also establishing if they are willing to do so and under what terms & conditions?

In summer 2004, our colleagues revealed that 83% of fresh produce used by UBCFS and AMS Food and Beverage Department can be obtained from BC sources (Wan et al, 2006). In 2006, group 19 confirmed the interest of UBC food providers in increasing procurement of seasonal BC food items, demonstrating both an availability of local food and a desire for local food procurement on UBC's campus (Wan et al, 2006). In

particular, group 19 focused on “building relationships with UBCFS to determine their needs and interests with respect to extending local food purchasing” (Wan et al., 2006); their findings outlined these needs and provided a list of food distributors which proved unsuitable for supplying local food. Their recommendations included finding another distributor whose primary focus is local food procurement (Wan et al, 2006). In 2006, group 23 also determined UBCFS’s volume requirements for produce and recommended that future students focus on encouraging more UBCFS outlets to provide local food, especially on residences, as they account for 40% of the UBCFS’s total revenue (Charalambous et al., 2006). For these reasons, and the fact that one of our group members knew of a potential local food distributor whom she had worked with during AGSC 350 the previous semester, we decided to focus specifically on the feasibility of Discovery Island Organics (DIO) providing local food to UBCFS.

### Importance of Local Food

In order to create a sustainable food system, we must consider supporting the production and purchasing of local food when improving all three pillars of sustainability: social, ecological and economical (Charalambous et al., 2006). Firstly, there is a growing disconnect between food producers and consumers as the current global food system has increased the distance our food travels to get from “farm to table” (Kloppenburg et al., 1996). Buying local food builds land stewardship, a true appreciation for the land and resources within one’s own community, along with a desire to pass healthy ecosystems on to future generations (Ministry of Forests, 2007). For example, James MacKinnon, author of the 100 Mile Diet, found that he felt a strong connection to the land, caring more about environmental threats such as pollution in the river where he obtains his fish, when he ate within 100 miles of his home (MacKinnon, 2006).

Secondly, buying locally supports the BC economy. Group 19 (2006), reported that “spending in BC will benefit the provincial economy, strengthen the tax base, support jobs in the agricultural sector and could help influence local policy towards supporting BC purchasing initiatives”. In addition, when we buy locally we contribute to the multiplier effect. For example, if we purchase local apples from a local farmer, they will likely

reinvest that money back into their local farm to grow more produce for the community and thereby contributing to the multiplier effect (New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, 2007).

Lastly, buying locally reduces the food energy needed to transport food, and thus, the negative implications of fossil fuels on the environment (Pollan, 2006). It is estimated to take between 7-10 calories of fossil fuel energy to deliver one calorie of food energy from the farm to the plate, as the average food item travels 1500 miles before reaching its destination (Pollan, 2006). Buying local food means purchasing items that have traveled less food miles, thus reducing carbon dioxide emissions which can contribute to global warming, protecting the vital habitats that make up our communities (Pollan, 2006).

### UBC as a Microcosm of the Global Food System

UBC is a microcosm, analogous to the much larger global ecosystem, but functioning as a distinct miniature world (Princeton Wordnet, 2007). With their extensive resources and key role in educating future generations, UBC and other universities hold the potential to lead the sustainability movement, modeling healthy socio-ecosystems and setting an example for the rest of the world (M'Gonigle and Starke, 2006). For example, throughout the project, we learned how large institutions such as UBC are hierarchical, with policies and procedures often preventing change, forcing individuals (i.e. our group members, AGSC 450 staff, UBCFS) to "be strategic and make the best use out of the 'small amount of power' they have" to make any difference (M'Gonigle & Starke, 2006). The same can be said for larger societies on a local or global scale; even starting a project as beneficial as a community garden often takes an immense amount of time and planning, as laws, budgets or hierarchy restrict implementation. The idea of incremental radicalism, a main aspect of our project, is focused on taking small steps towards a larger goal, to attain economic, ecological and social sustainability (M'Gonigle & Starke, 2006). We believe that UBC must act as a leader in slowly improving sustainability in its own food system, to demonstrate to the greater community that it is possible to work within the "Structured Power" (M'Gonigle & Starke, 2006) to improve global food problems.



Furthermore, UBC students can also be seen as “seeds to disperse.” We are the seeds that grow as we complete our education; when we learn about sustainability, graduate and go out into the world, we are “dispersed” to spread and share our wealth of knowledge. For example, education on the importance of sustainable food systems through courses such as the AGSC Land, Food and Community series provides practical experiences that students can take with them when entering the world to make greater change.

## **VISION STATEMENT & IDENTIFICATION OF VALUE ASSUMPTIONS**

The UBCFSP partners have developed a Vision Statement for the UBCFSP to achieve its goal of attaining a sustainable food system (Richer, 2005). These guiding principles are what participants in the UBCFSP, including our group members, have used to ensure that individual project scenario goals are consistent with that of the larger goals of the UBCFSP.

### **Vision Statement for a Sustainable UBC Food System: *Plain Language Version***

The overarching goal of a sustainable food system is to protect and enhance the diversity and quality of the ecosystem and to improve social equity, whereby:

1. Food is locally grown, produced and processed.
2. Waste must be recycled or composted locally
3. Food is ethnically diverse, affordable, safe and nutritious
4. Providers and educators promote awareness among consumers about cultivation, processing, ingredients and nutrition
5. Food brings people together and enhances community
6. Is produced by socially, ecologically conscious producers
7. Providers and growers pay and receive fair prices

Our group agrees with each of the 7 Guiding Principles of the UBCFSP. These guiding principles influenced many of our decisions throughout the project. In particular, we used these principles to make sure

that we chose to work with a distributor who shared a similar vision and whose values coincided with UBCFSPs.

Our group reflection upon these guiding principles raised an interesting discussion regarding principle number one. We believe that this principle would be enhanced by expanding it to: “Food is grown, produced, and processed using sustainable methods.” One of the main goals of the UBCFSP is to “make desired transitions towards sustainability” (UBCFSP V, 2007) and we feel that just because food is grown, produced and processed locally, does not necessarily mean that it has been done so sustainably. If we do not grow, produce, and process food sustainably, in a way which allows us to meet our current needs while allowing future generations to do the same, then eventually, there will be no future generations.

Our group also wanted to share our thoughts on principle number seven that “providers and growers should pay and receive fair prices” (UBCFSP V, 2007). Similar to group 19 (2006), in working through our project we realized that price is often the main controlling factor, and this allowed us to reflect on the importance of this principle. We felt that there were extensive financial constraints on both sides (i.e. UBCFS and the distributor). UBCFS works within a highly defined budget and the distributor we chose to work with is very concerned about ensuring that their growers get paid properly for their produce and efforts. We learned that finding a happy medium and appropriate balance can be very challenging. However, it is our group’s belief that by paying fair prices to local farmers and distributors, we can generate the “multiplier effect”, which facilitates local farmers to produce more revenue, in turn enabling the farmers to invest their money in other local business, creating a ripple effect in the local economy (NCDL, 2002). Looking through the lens of a consumer, a student who buys an apple from a university, that has been purchased from a local distributor, that has been grown by a local farmer, sequentially becomes part of the multiplier effect. Imagine the enormous impact that UBC, with its large purchasing power potential, could have on the local economy if they purchased all of their apples from a local source and every student purchased an apple.

In addressing the problem scenario, our group took a weak anthropocentric position. To elaborate, while we take a human-centered approach to ensuring that food is affordable, available, acceptable, appropriate, and safe, we believe that the land has intrinsic value beyond our needs for its resources; if sustainability is to be achieved, we must always have an ecological conscience. In addition, we also value the concept of “incremental radicalism.” Incremental radicalism is the idea that taking small, progressive steps can ultimately lead to larger successes in creating radical change (M’Gonigle & Starke, 2006), and we believe this is key to how the UBCFSP can achieve its long-term goal of creating a sustainable food system on campus. It is important that participants not get overwhelmed by the enormity of the project and remember that each year that the project continues, small steps forward are how we will eventually attain this greater goal. With that in mind, we completed our project with care, trying not to take on too much and ultimately fall short of our smaller scenario goal, instead working with the consideration that future colleagues can build upon our successes. Finally, we strove to provide recommendations for future AGSC 450 students, which incorporated both our positive and negative findings, with the hope that our group’s contribution will lead them to eventually achieving a sustainable food system at UBC.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Methodological Perspective:**

Ernest Stringer’s “Community Based Action Research” (CBAR) is the overarching methodological perspective that has been employed in the UBCFSP and we have continued to use it in our project scenario to increase food procurement of seasonal locally produced food on UBC’s campus. CBAR is a non-traditional, investigative approach that aims to treat all participants, both researcher and subject, as equal members and contributors (Stringer, 1999). The goals of CBAR are to facilitate communication between the researcher and

participants, to assess the community's needs and experiences, and to produce change through action giving back to the community from which the research originally came from (Stringer, 1999).

### **Methods of Data Collection:**

Methods of data collection that we used consist of the following resources:

#### **Document Review:**

We began our research process by conducting a thorough review of documents related to our assigned scenario. This included information on what other universities are doing to connect their schools to local sustainably produced food (i.e. University of Toronto and Oberlin College), previous and current required class readings, previous AGSC 450 presentations and reports, the 2005 UBC Food System Project and several others as referenced. The document review facilitated our understanding of the importance of supporting locally produced food in secondary education establishments and communities in general. It also enabled us to identify key questions and issues arising from previous research. In particular, the review of previous AGSC 450 students' reports assisted us in establishing a baseline for where UBC food providers are now in terms of supplying local produce on campus. This information was vital in identifying what areas can be expanded on and thus, where we should focus our research.

#### **Presentations:**

The presentations given by UBCFSP partner UBCFS (representatives Andrew Parr and Dorothy Yip) provided us with important details of their mandate, needs and goals. This information helped to establish our project focus and direction, as well as identify important questions and objectives related to UBCFS's budget requirements and project expectations.

### **Methods of Administration:**

#### **Informant Interviews:**

We conducted personal interviews with the owners of DIO (Randy Hooper and Annie Moss), our wholesale supplier of choice, as well as project partner UBCFS (Dorothy Yip- General Manager of Retail

Operation, Purchasing & Project Coordination). We first contacted Randy via email on February 19th, 2007 and booked an interview at DIO's headquarters for March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007. On this day, we visited DIO and conducted an interview with both Randy and Annie to determine their company goals and whether they would be able to meet the dependability, quantity, quality and cost requirements of UBCFS (i.e.: purchasing policy, ordering and price list etc). On March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 we also contacted Dorothy via email to arrange a meeting for March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007, at UBC Food Services on campus. The objective of this interview was to relay findings and receive feedback from our meeting with DIO. Dorothy advised us to reposition our focus from local produce in general, to BC apples, specifically in residences. Lastly, we arranged a final interview with DIO via email, and met with Annie on April 2<sup>nd</sup> to determine if this was feasible. Ethics consent forms were signed by these parties to ensure that our interviews met ethical guidelines for this project.

#### Why we chose DIO:

We chose DIO for the following reasons: firstly, one of our group members already had an established relationship with them from a previous AGSC project, and she related that DIO had the potential to meet UBCFS needs of a "steady secure supply of produce" (Parr, 2007) because they are a wholesale supplier, as opposed to a smaller retail supplier such as SPUD (Small Potatoes Urban Delivery). The "specific task" guidelines suggested that we investigate the potential of SPUD as a possible supplier for UBCFS. However, our group already knew that DIO supplied SPUD with their produce, thus we determined that working with DIO directly and eliminating one step in the road to get the food from "farm to table" would be a more sustainable choice, as well as likely decrease costs for UBCFS.

Our group member's previous experience with DIO also suggested that they operate their business using economically, ecologically and socially sustainable practices. Since this is both a part of UBCFS vision (Parr, 2007), as well as a criteria for partnership by UBCFS, we contended that DIO might be a good fit for this project.

Our group member also related that DIO only supplied local “organic” produce. We thought this could potentially pose a problem because organic food tends to be more expensive than conventional produce (UBCFS operates within a strict budget), and our specific scenario task was to locate a distributor of local produce, not local organic produce. In addition, we acknowledged that organic produce is not always grown sustainably, as illustrated by Pollan’s (2006) concept of “Industrial Organic”. However, our already established relationship with DIO, combined with the knowledge that they met other specific needs of UBCFS (i.e. large steady supply of produce and they practice sustainability), influenced further investigation into DIO’s potential for supplying the UBC campus with local produce was necessary.

## **FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

### **Presentations:**

**Andrew Parr, Director of UBCFS, Dorothy Yip, General Manager of Retail Operation, Purchasing & Project Coordination for UBCFS & Mark Bomford, UBC Farm Program Coordinator**

### **Findings**

- UBCFS prefers to collaborate with a distributor who incorporates economically and ecologically sustainable practices
- UBCFS requires a contractual 8 month fixed price
- A main concern is a steady supply of produce, meeting their requirements for quantity, quality and cost
- The distributor must be able to deliver produce daily, on weekends and at late hours
- Cost is stressed as a determining factor in deciding what they purchase and who they purchase from, as they work within a strictly-defined budget
- “Local” is defined as bioregional, supporting the BC economy when possible
- UBCFS Value Statement: SPICE - Sustainability, People first, Innovative, Caring, Excellence

- UBC Food Services is a 100% self-funded and comprised of four major business segments: Cash, Residence Dining , UBC Catering, University Centre
- They would prefer to deal with 1 distributor because of logistical requirements, as well as to reduce fossil fuel emissions from numerous trucks coming on/off campus
- Allied Foods is the current produce distributor, however, UBCFS is open to looking at other distributors
- The UBC farm has a good working relationship with DIO, and Mark stated that Discovery “is reliable and consistent”

## **Discussion**

Fitting in the Box - After attending this lecture, it was apparent that cost would be the ultimate deciding factor in what UBCFS purchases and who they purchase from. While they are extremely committed to finding ways to implement more sustainable practices into their business, they are limited to what they can achieve because of their operational budget constraints. For this reason, we rationalized that we must work within the “price box” and try to use this lens when making choices and decisions affecting the project scenario.

Andrew also emphasized the importance of finding a distributor who demonstrated an interest in sustainable practices, such as giving back to the community, recycling, reducing packaging, etc. Therefore, it was important for us to find a distributor that met this requirement, incorporating socially, ecologically and economically sustainable practices into their vision statement. This is one of the reasons that we chose to investigate and collaborate with DIO, as their business practices are conducted using sustainable methods (as will be further explained in the next section).

## **Informant Interviews**

### **1. Randy Hooper & Annie Moss – Owners of Discovery Island Organics (DIO)**

#### **Findings**

- DIO is a wholesale business operating from East Vancouver who supply retailers (Choices, Capers), co-ops (UBC Food Co-op), home delivery companies (SPUD) and consumer buying groups with Certified Organic produce and whole bulk foods

- Company Mission: to increase the amount of Certified Organic locally grown produce sold in Western Canada. Company Motto: Create healthy communities; keep economies local; promote fresh foods; build living soils
- DIO incorporates sustainable practices in all aspects of its operations
- The paradigms and visions of DIO and UBCFS are similar
- DIO has a minimum purchasing policy of \$300.00
- DIO's definition of "local" is bioregional (using the least food miles as possible)
- Supply from Discovery is very secure with the exception of severe climate changes resulting in fluctuations in crop supply.
- DIO can deliver produce to meet the needs of UBCFS (7 days/week, last minute notice, holidays, etc.)
- While currently DIO does not offer 'fixed' prices, they are open for negotiation with UBCFS
- Randy stated that DIO would be able to provide some organic produce items at a lower cost than the conventional items that Allied supplies (i.e.: apples, potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, sprouts, etc.)

## **Discussion**

### **DIO Sustainable Practices** (social, ecological, economical)

We found that DIO operates with a socially sustainable commitment to put farmers first, as evident in their strong relationships with their producers. They assess farms' abilities to grow crops and provide consultation as to which produce items are of best interest, least 'risk,' and most profitable for each individual farm to invest in. Regardless of the size of a farm, Annie will spend hours conducting a needs assessment for a farmer, asking questions such as: "How big is your farm? Where is it located exactly, do you get a lot of sun? What are your neighbours growing, are they successful? How many children or other family members will work on your farm? How is your back? Because if it is good then you can grow potatoes, but if it is not, corn is more suitable for you," etc. DIO takes the time to explain to their growers that there are ups and downs in the market, and that market shortages can be taken advantage to increase farmer profits and make each



farm as successful as possible. Each farm's landscaping and soil properties are assessed to ensure that the most suitable crop is grown. DIO makes exact recommendations on what food items each farmer can and should produce to be successful, and commits to reliable distribution, knowing they have the demand from clients to make the farmers a profit.

Secondly, DIO operates with a "no-kick policy", whereby they do not refuse a shipment simply because some of the items are damaged or expired, instead sorting it to retrieve any sellable portions. Other distributors commonly ship this damaged produce back to the farmer, thereby increasing fossil fuel consumption and polluting the environment. DIO uses this policy to protect farmers' from losing all of their profits, as happens when the entire shipment is returned.

Furthermore, the sorted produce items are then sold to retailers at a reduced cost, encouraging them to support buying local. If some produce is not of retail grade but is still acceptable for consumption (i.e. un-uniform apples), DIO donates and delivers this to local charities such as Ray-Cam, a cooperative housing centre in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside (Ray-Cam, 2007).

In terms of waste management, sorted wasted (damaged/expired items) is composted and delivered to farmers at no cost for use as organic feed, an item that is usually quite expensive to purchase. DIO also utilizes plastic, reusable bins and recycles every container, box or wrap when possible.

Lastly, we were most impressed by DIO's commitment to promoting BC local food producers. Upon explaining UBCFS's requirements for produce and their current relationship with Allied, Annie spent a lot of time explaining the importance of UBC's purchasing power and that this power could be used to influence large companies such as Allied to support more local producers. Annie offered to collaborate, free of charge, with UBCFS and Allied foods to link them to local producers, solely because of DIO's belief in buying local and supporting sustainable food systems. DIO also offered their expertise and information on other industry members who would be willing to collaborate on the UBCFSP, stating they could act as an informational resource for future students working on the project. DIO's commitment to sustainability is a key finding in our

project, as they could potentially be an extremely valuable connection and information source for future AGSC 450 students.

### DIO & UBCFSP – Matching Visions

An important link we made from our findings with DIO is that their company vision statement and operations closely match those of the UBCFSP 7 Guiding Principles. The following highlights some of our findings on these similarities:

#### **1. Food is locally grown, produced and processed**

DIO's main mandate is to increase the amount of locally grown produce that is sold in Western Canada; their definition of "local" is bioregional and incorporates only local farm business into its logistics, supporting the Canadian economy where possible (DIO, 2007).

#### **2. Waste must be recycled or composted locally**

All waste is composted locally and given to farmers, free of charge, for use as organic feed. DIO utilizes plastic, reusable containers and all packaging is recycled whenever possible.

#### **3. Food is ethnically diverse, affordable, safe and nutritious**

DIO is a company that has made local, organic produce affordable and collaborates with many local farmers to provide ethnically diverse food items (i.e. bok choy; leeks; arugula, etc). Their high operational standards for safety and nutrition include sorting all received produce to prevent contamination and educating retailers on proper storage/preparation methods.

#### **4. Providers and educators promote awareness among consumers about cultivation, processing, ingredients and nutrition**

DIO is cooperative and supportive and is interested in networking with UBC and other local groups to use purchasing as a means to pressure larger distribution companies to buy locally. DIO also creates promotional materials to educate consumers on local, organic food; an example is their annual calendar, which showcases producers and their farms as a means to link land, food, and community.

## **5. Food brings people together and enhances community**

Non-retail grade food is given away to local impoverished communities to help improve nutrition and public health among at-risk groups, such as those in the DTES. They support and provide the UBC Farmer's Markets with a variety of produce so that more consumers will attend the markets, bringing people together to support local food production and community.

## **6. Is produced by socially, ecologically conscious producers**

DIO goes the extra step to make ecologically sound decisions, such as knowing all producers personally and working only with those who believe in DIO's vision to "create living soils". They believe in reducing food miles, as illustrated by their bioregional definition of local.

## **7. Providers and growers pay and receive fair prices**

DIO informs farmers of produce that is most marketable and most suitable for growth on their particular farm, as they want to ensure that farms can make money and be successful; when farmers are successful, DIO believes that communities will then have affordable food to buy. Also, the "no-kick policy" works to give farmers the best possible revenue on their crops, guaranteeing that they receive fair prices for their produce.

### Potential Problems for Collaboration

While UBCFS's supply needs and prices proved to be both manageable and negotiable respectively, one potentially negative finding from DIO is that they do not allow for fixed pricing contracts, something UBCFS mentioned is extremely important. Annie explained that avoiding fixed pricing protects the interest of the farmer, ensuring that they receive fair prices for their produce (UBCFSP Guiding Principle 7). We are unsure as to whether this is essential for UBCFS, but will have to keep this in mind when discussing possible contract terms and conditions.

## Summary of Discussion: DIO

Overall, we were satisfied with our findings from DIO, who appeared to be a great match for UBCFS. Their sustainable practices certainly meet UBCFS's requirements, and DIO's vision statement coincides with that of UBCFS (SPICE) and the 7 Guiding Principles of the UBSFSP. While fixed pricing may be an issue, our findings indicate that there seem to be many more positive reasons to pursue a relationship with this distributor.

## **2. Dorothy Yip, General Manager of Retail Operation, Purchasing & Project Coordination for UBCFS**

### **Findings**

- UBCFS requires preparation of all vegetables and many fruit items
- UBCFS contract with Allied Foods is terminating in May
- UBCFS's fixed price policy is non-negotiable
- UBCFS is interested in providing BC, organic apples in residences (Totem Park and Place Vanier) and marketing the apples as such

### **Discussion**

Our finding from our meeting with Dorothy that UBCFS requires preparation of all vegetables and most fruit was probably the most important finding of our entire project, and appears to be a finding that has previously never been brought to the attention of AGSC 450 students or teaching staff. UBCFS contracts Allied Foods to prepare produce in advance, allowing them to cut down on production time and save costs associated with preparation at UBC. As a result, vegetables from Allied Foods are washed, peeled, and cut. For example, UBCFS' requires a salad mix of radicchio, iceberg, romaine and spinach, cut, washed and sealed in vacuum-sealed plastic packages. All potatoes and onions are peeled and sliced and even fruit is made into fruit salad.

However, certain food items are received whole, such as apples, pears, some tomatoes, oranges, etc., providing the potential for collaboration with DIO to make these whole food items local. UBCFS is extremely

interested in providing BC local, organic apples (varieties: Gala, Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, and Granny Smith) and marketing them as such (Yip, 2007).

Lastly, as the UBCFS contract with Allied is up for tender in May 2007, UBCFS would have to work quickly with Discovery to negotiate a contract for distribution, but we feel this is possible. The only issue relates to a fixed pricing contract, which we learned is non-negotiable, however, Dorothy mentioned her interest in meeting with DIO regardless, especially if they can provide BC local apples at cheaper cost.

From this meeting, we further defined our project's focus to investigating the feasibility of organic apples in residences. We believe that by introducing local organic apples into UBC residences it will be an important "first step" toward promoting BC local food procurement on campus (i.e. incremental radicalism). We hope that this beginning step will increase students' awareness of local (and organic) food, hopefully improving their desire to buy locally and support the vision of the UBCFSP of creating a sustainable food system.

## **Apples: A Potential Starting Point**

### **Findings**

Our group found the following information related to the feasibility of implementing local, BC apples into residences at UBC:

- UBCFS would like to partner with DIO to provide local, organic apples, provided an appropriate price can be negotiated on
- DIO is able to meet UBCFS's volume need and is willing to negotiate price
- Allied Foods obtains only conventional apples from Washington, USA – none from local, organic BC sources
- DIO obtains local, organic apples from B.C. Tree Fruits (see <http://www.bctree.com/>), meeting the scenario tasks to increase food procurement levels of BC food items

**Summary of Findings for apple prices from Allied and DIO:**

	<b>Allied</b> (\$/113 ct)	<b>Discovery</b> (\$/113ct)	<b>Price Difference (%)</b>
Apples Red Delicious	26.80	32.00	16
Apples Golden Delicious	34.55	32.00	8
Apples Royal Gala (\$/100 ct)	39.35	42.50	7
Apples Granny Smith (\$/88 ct)	25.50	44.00	42

**Summary of Findings for UBCFS Apple Usage at Totem Park and Place Vanier Residences**

Total Apple Usage (piece)	62,373
Total amount of apples purchased	\$17,050.40
Total produce purchased	\$622,897.99
% of Apples purchased (of total produce)	3%
Revenue from Apple Sales	\$34,100
Total Residence Revenue	\$6,697,197

**Discussion**

Our findings indicate that it would be more expensive for DIO to supply apples to UBCFS, however, Randy guaranteed that DIO would be able to provide them at a cheaper cost, agreed to “crunch some numbers” which we were unable to receive before this project deadline due to his very busy schedule. The finding from UBCFS that residences generate \$34,100 from apples alone is significant. Although it is a small number compared to the total residence revenue, it is a significant amount when considering that this would be BC generated revenue if the apples were provided by DIO (BC local). As well, committed to incremental radicalism, we believe that residence apple revenue is small enough to use as a baby step towards improved sustainability.

## **What are Other Universities Doing?**

### **1) University of Toronto**

#### **Findings:**

- In September 2006 the University of Toronto partnered with Local Flavour Plus (LFP) to increase its local food procurement on campus.
- LFP is a non-profit organization that provides third party certification to farmers and processors who follow their environmentally and socially responsible standards. Their goal is to help build local sustainable food systems by using their ten guiding principles which focus on production methods, labour standards, habitat preservation, and energy use. (please see website for details [www.localflavourplus.ca/principles](http://www.localflavourplus.ca/principles) )
- LFP's network of certified local farmers and processors supply their local sustainable produce to cafeteria's and residences on the St. George Campus at U of T. This includes both seasonal produce (squash, apples, etc.) as well as foods that are available year round (dairy, chicken, beef, etc) (Macdonald, 2007).
- U of T's goal is to increase the amount of local food they bring onto campus each year, taking small steps to eventually create substantial change (Macdonald, 2007)
- "U of T has substantial purchasing clout" (Macdonald, 2007). They use this "power" to negotiate contracts and prices (Macdonald, 2007).

#### **Discussion:**

In supporting the relationships and infrastructure for a local food system, via collaboration with LFP, the University of Toronto has positioned itself as a leader of the sustainability movement. The University of Toronto's farm-to-school model and their approach of taking small progressive steps to eventually make significant change, sets an excellent example that both the UBCFSP and UBCFS can learn from. This concept of "incremental radicalism" is how the UBCFSP and its project partners can gradually "institutionalize

sustainability”, thereby bridging the gap between the project’s goals of sustainability and the “Structured Power” of UBC’s bureaucracy (M’Gonigle and Starke, 2006).

The purchasing power of post secondary institutions is substantial, therefore when universities make sustainability a priority and choose to support local food and the local economy, the financial contribution and the positive impact they have on the local community is considerable (CEUC, 2006; Roberts, 2006). Anne Macdonald acknowledges U of T’s purchasing power and she deliberately and constructively uses this power to negotiate contracts with distributors and processors to increase local food procurement on campus. UBCFS also has substantial purchasing clout, however, it was made very clear to us throughout the project that while ecologic and social sustainability are important to UBCFS, economic sustainability was even more so. While recognizing that economic viability is crucial to any business’ longevity and success, we want to ensure that UBCFS is not under-estimating the power that they have to influence the distributors and processors that they choose to work with.

The city of Vancouver does not currently have an organization, such as LFP, that can facilitate the connection between local farmers and processors to the UBC campus. However, as previously mentioned, (Finding- DIO meeting #2), DIO is willing to assist UBCFS in creating connections and establishing relationships with local farmers, because DIO believes in the goals of the UBCFSP and creating more sustainable communities.

## **2) Oberlin College, Ohio**

### **Findings:**

- Oberlin College uses the Bon Appetit Management Company to connect local producers to campus food outlets and increase local food procurement on campus.
- Bon Appetit is a food management company that is committed to supporting sustainable food services (i.e. providing local, organic and fair-trade foods) (Oberlin College, 2007).



- Bon Appetit are advocates of promoting sustainability and teaching consumers about where their food comes from and how it is grown (BAMC, 2006). They have won awards for their work including: the prestigious Ecological Society of America Corporate Award, the Humane Society of the United States Excellence in Food Service Award, and the Food Alliance Keeper of the Vision Award.
- Some examples of the programs that have been implemented by Oberlin and Bon Appétit include: the “Farm to Fork” program which helps connect campus chefs with local sustainably grown or raised food producers; and the “Eat Local Challenges” which challenge campus chef to compete in cooking meals with ingredients that have been produced within 150 mile radius (Oberlin College, 2007).
- Funds raised are put towards building greenhouses in order to allow year-round local harvest of vegetables like salad greens and herbs which are then used by campus food services. In addition, this project acts as an education tool and a laboratory for students to learn how to grow their own food sustainably (Oberlin College, 2007).

**Discussion:**

In choosing to work with a distributor that already believes in providing sustainably grown food as well as actively participates in raising food sustainability awareness, Oberlin College has fully embraced the idea of “institutionalizing sustainability” (M’Gonigle and Starke, 2006). Since a long-term goal of the UBCFSP is to facilitate the creation of an economically, ecologically and socially sustainability food system on campus, the concept of sustainability needs to be incorporated into the core of the university’s decision making process. When a university or college is able to collaborate with companies whose mandates exemplify sustainable practices already, it is that much easier to achieve this goal.

## **Three Year Plan**

The following is a three-year plan to increase UBCFS procurement of seasonal BC food items:

### **Year 1: Implement local, organic, BC apples into Totem Park and Place Vanier Residences**

- Begin contract and pricing negotiations between UBCFS & DIO for apples – Suggested deadline for signed contract May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007
- Implement apples into residences for September, 2007
- Develop a marketing campaign to target students to purchase local, organic apples
- Research methods to improve sustainability through a reduction in processing/preparation requirements for produce items – deadline for implementation April 30, 2007
- Put pressure onto Allied Foods to use local producers – link them with DIO

### **Year 2: Incorporate other whole food items into residences**

- Conduct a thorough assessment of year 1 accomplishments and shortcomings. Review could include: demand for the apples, needs for improvement, satisfaction working with DIO, contract renewal terms, effectiveness of marketing campaign etc.
- Identify improvements to be made on these processes and methods of improvement (better marketing strategies, delivery options, prices, etc)
- Isolate and assess other whole food commodities that could be implemented into residences such as tomatoes, pears, etc. (or other items now possible from April 30, 2007 implementation of new preparation/processing requirements)
- Develop and include these produce items into a new contract with DIO – suggested deadline May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008
- Implement additional produce items into Totem Park and Place Vanier residences for September 2008
- Put pressure onto Allied Foods to use more local producers –continue to link them with DIO

**Year 3: Branch Outward**

- Conduct a thorough assessment of year 2 accomplishments and shortcomings. Review could include: demand for new produce items or current apples, needs for improvement, continued satisfaction working with DIO, contract renewal terms, effectiveness of marketing campaign etc.
- Assess the feasibility of supplying local, organic apples to other UBCFS outlets on campus (i.e: non-franchise food outlets, Sage Restaurant, UBC Catering, etc.)
  - If branching out is feasible, begin implementation with most feasible outlet – suggested deadline September, 2009
  - Extend marketing campaign to reach this new food outlet

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the above findings and discussion, we have the following recommendations for UBCFS, the 2008 AGSC 450 Class and the AGSC 450 Teaching Team:

<b>Audience</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>UBC Food Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the 3-year plan outlined above to increase food procurement levels of BC food items, implementing apples into residences for September 2007</li> <li>• A primary focus should continue to be on increasing local food procurement on campus</li> <li>• Consider the possibility of collaborating with future AGSC 450 students (all scenarios) or the UBC Sustainability office to create a promotional campaign that advertises BC local, organic apples</li> <li>• Assess the sustainability of current preparation or packaging requirements for produce items delivered from Allied – identify improvements that could make these requirements more sustainable such purchasing a tomato slicer, etc.</li> <li>• Use purchasing power and collaborate with DIO to negotiate with Allied to obtain more foods from local, BC sources</li> <li>• Assess the possibility of having a non-fixed contract with DIO if this means that more local food can be provided to campus</li> </ul>

<p><b>2008 Agsc 450 Class</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To gain a broader understanding of the UBCFSP, specifically relating to this scenario, also read the following reports thoroughly: <u>Group 19 Final Report</u> (Wan et al., 2006), <u>Group 23 Final Report</u>, (Charalambous et al., 2006), <u>2005 UBC Food System Project (UBCFSP) Report</u> (Richer, 2005)</li> <li>• Focus on the possibility working with DIO to gain resources, contacts and information to successfully pressure Allied Foods to utilize more BC producers for produce</li> <li>• Focus on improving UBCFS sustainability practices so that less foods are distributed prepared or vacuum-sealed – identify which local whole food items could be supplied by DIO</li> <li>• Focus on conducting an assessment of Allied foods to determine which produce items are local, when they are not local and how this affects costs - compare this to DIO</li> <li>• Collaborate with other scenarios on these ideas, utilizing accomplishments and established relationships from past AGSC 450 classes, and working to minimize the large scope of this scenario</li> <li>• Should work with UBCFS to design an effective advertising campaign to promote local, organic apples at residences. Also look at ways to promote eating local</li> <li>• Look at the possibility of collaborating with AMS Food and Beverage Department to implement local, organic apples into outlets run by the AMS – compare prices they pay for food items with that of UBCFS</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agsc 450 Teaching Team</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact UBCFS immediately with these findings in order to meet the May 31, 2007 target to bring local, organic apples into residences – support the 3 year plan</li> <li>• Next year: look to divide this scenario into smaller scenarios, as this is an extremely broad topic with a lot of potential. Suggestions for more specific scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on assessing sustainability related to processing and packaging requirements at UBCFS and AMSFBD – look to see if improvements can be made (less waste, more whole food items)</li> <li>○ Focus on using purchasing power as a means to influence other large distribution companies (Allied) to provide more local foods to UBCFS</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Next year: should attach the recommendations from AGSC 450 Final Reports (2007 only), along with the 3-year plan.</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSION

Through our research and analysis, we have identified a local distributor that can collaborate with UBCFS, bringing local, organic, BC apples into residences, thereby increasing the amount of local food procurement on campus. As we found that UBCFS requires prepared produce, we understand that a full collaboration for all food items with DIO is impossible, as Allied foods provides this service and has a positive, working relationship with UBCFS. However, we have successfully demonstrated DIO's potential for linking UBCFS to local producers and also found that DIO could distribute these local, whole food items at a lower cost than Allied. DIO's commitment to sustainability and coinciding vision statement to those of UBCFS and the UBCFSP also makes them a great resource and a good potential match.

Another main element of our research has involved the concept of incremental radicalism. M'Gonigle and Starke (2006) state that "unless you somehow land in a position where you have a lot of power to begin with, it is very difficult to have the level of influence that you really do need". Keeping in mind that we as students do not occupy such positions, our group created realistic targets to increase local food procurement available on campus, starting small and working towards increasing these levels over the coming years. Confident in this approach, we are hopeful that students living in Totem Park and Place Vanier residences will soon have the opportunity to buy local apples, learn about the importance of supporting the local economy and be able to say that their contributions are supporting the creation of a sustainable food system at UBC.

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