Urban Gardening at Bunker Hill Community College

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Students in the Honors Program

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Abstract: Urban Gardening at BHCC.

This project would promote sustainability at Bunker Hill by growing vegetables on campus. This local produce could be used in a variety of ways by the College and/or by community partners. Thus sustainable principles would be imparted to those student-farmers and to those biology, nursing, culimary, business , graphic design classes which participate in the growing and distribution of the produce. In addition, neighboring "green enterprises" Save that Stuff and the federal Wind Turbine Testing Center (located at 100 Terminal Ave.) would be invited to see and join our gardening efforts ; likewise they could offer our students/classes/faculty speakers, invitations to events, and job experience.

Project Significance:

In keeping with the interest in present and future carbon neutrality, this project would offer faculty,students, staff, and alumni opportunities to learn to grow, to distribute, and to enjoy local produce. This would reduce carbon used in transporting produce, would reach out to the community with sustainability awareness, and would be easily duplicated in any backyard or patio. In addition fruit-bearing trees and bushes might be planted whose leaves would help cleanse the air.

Working with Save That Stuff and the wind turbine testing center would open eyes and opportunities to "green"jobs nearby and to speakers who perform those jobs. New green technologies could be observed first-hand.

Project Plan:

The Honors Students have sought out this opportunity to connect with their upcoming Seminar topic on Food and Sustainability and to connect with the earth. For finding best practices, they would research currently active farm-to-schools programs in Massachussetts, Boston, and other area cities . For finding on-campus expertise they would speak to professors with gardening experience, to facilities managers, and to food service. They could carry out and make a schedule for the planting and tending of the vegetables. These activities would be part of their Honors credits. From the 200 Honors students so far a core of five have expressed interest, but they hope to recruit others and students from outside the Program as well.

The professor would coordinate the students' efforts and also do research into currently existing programs and their funding and food distribution as well as laws and permits governing this endeavor. The professor would complete the paperwork ,would procure a space, and would be liason to BHCC administration and other professors.

The timeline, for which school or municipal expertise is needed, depends on the growing season. Perhaps preliminary planting can begin during winter.

The speakers and connections to the green businesses could begin at the first of the semester.

Enhancement of Student Outcomes:

As a result of this project , students will see how to live more independently and free from fossil fuels. They will work with others collaboratively and will discover hidden talents of those who are familiar with gardening for their food. Stories and economic lessons will undoubtedly arise as will botanical and nutritional ones. Grown produce and printed materials about sustainable foods could be integrated into classes who participate in the project. Students could give back to their classmates, faculty, and community .

Statement on Assessment Plan:

Classroom and Honors teachers would assess the students' efforts in their classes. In addition, students could keep reflective journals of the process in action, which could be evaluated by the professor or other named faculty. Students could conduct surveys of their fellow students, staff, and faculty as to the project's contribution to the school, from which feedback can be obtained and analyzed for improving it.

Budget:

The materials and labor might be donated or funded; thus the need for the research into existing farm-to-school programs. The faculty stipend would be $500 for incorporating sustainability components into existing curricula. Faculty Development opportunities might be related to food-growing and/or nutrition.