

## **Five-Year Strategic Plan for the Hampshire College Farm**

### **DRAFT: May 17, 2017**

#### Introduction:

Agricultural use of the Hampshire College farmland dates back to colonial times, with uses over the years ranging from woodlots to small dairy farms to orchards to vegetable gardens. One of the early members of the Board of Trustees, John Kendall, had the vision to secure the farmland to protect the College's northern perimeter from the encroachment of development. In the late 1970s, three initial projects created the idea of a farm on campus with a research/educational purpose: sheep for New England pastures; livestock guardian dogs for nonlethal predator control; and nitrogen-fixing plants for pasture improvement and animal forage. Almost forty years later, the farm still serves as a resource for faculty and student research and for Hampshire college courses across the disciplines.

Over time, the farm operation evolved into an important supplier of healthy food for Hampshire College as well. In 1992, two students designed a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program to produce organic vegetables for 30 shareholders. Since 1999, under the leadership of Nancy Hanson, the CSA has grown to more than 200 shares, with the College's dining services contractor, Bon Appetit, currently purchasing 75 of those shares. The farm's roles in the recreational and social lives of students and faculty and in Hampshire's relationship with its surrounding community have also evolved and expanded in recent years. At this point, the Farm is an important factor in the recruitment and retention of students at Hampshire.

A college-wide focus on sustainability and a nation-wide interest in local food production have provided the context for serious strategic planning for the Hampshire College Farm. In 2014-15, a Strategic Planning Committee did extensive outreach and made preliminary recommendations to President Lash, which form the foundation for our current planning effort. During that earlier process, a faculty member commented, "The farm has been a tremendous resource in search of an identity." The purpose of this Five-Year Plan is to further define that identity and realize the farm's full potential as a unique resource and multi-faceted program of the College.

We submit this current Plan at a time of change in the governance and administrative structures that support the Farm's operation and development. The Farm has benefitted significantly from having a Director of Farm, Food, and Sustainability operating out of the President's office. Her efforts, in conjunction with those of the farm staff and interested faculty members and students, have resulted in enhanced academic, co-curricular, and community outreach programs. The Farm program has made excellent progress in the areas of intercollegiate collaboration, student internships and collaborative research. There have been important strides in promoting a sustainable and just food system, through the establishment of a Hampshire College Food Systems Collaborative. In addition, there is a new interdisciplinary co-curricular living learning community, focusing on food production, environmental justice, and sustainable agriculture, radiating out from the Hampshire Farm.

The Farm is poised for ongoing development and success. Our committee is particularly struck by the opportunity the Farm provides to live the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion through a community-based approach to the basic human practice of food production. Yet the Director of Farm, Food, and Sustainability will be leaving Hampshire, and her position will not be filled. President Lash himself, who has nurtured the emergence of new dimensions to the Farm program, will be leaving in a year. We hope to convey in this document a strategic approach that will carry the Farm through this period of change and help it emerge at a new level of administrative and financial sustainability. Key to that vision is “institutionalizing” the Farm’s place at the College by having it fall under the Dean of Faculty’s purview, without adding an undue administrative burden to the Associate Dean, to whom the Farm will report. We describe the approach to a newly-constituted Farm Steering Committee that we believe will make this possible in Goal #1 and Appendix A.

### Hampshire Farm Mission and Vision:

The mission of the Hampshire College Farm is to enhance and exemplify Hampshire’s approach to a liberal arts education.

The Hampshire College Farm:

- supports teaching and research opportunities for faculty and students;
- serves as a model for land stewardship and ecological agricultural practices; and
- provides a “living lab” for Hampshire’s values, particularly in the areas of sustainability, social justice, community-building, and experiential education.

Our Vision is of a thriving, well-run farm that inspires interdisciplinary inquiry through the enterprise of ethical and sustainable food production, fosters connection to place and community through authentic and practical work, and provides opportunities for research, individual creativity, reflection and recreation. We see the operation and governance of the farm, and our potential to influence similar efforts at other colleges, as central and powerful components of Hampshire’s pursuit of a larger mission *to foster a lifelong passion for learning, inquiry, and ethical citizenship that inspires students to contribute to knowledge, justice and positive change and, by doing so, to transform higher education.*

### **Strategic Plan for 2017-2022**

**Goal #1: To enhance the governance infrastructure and financial planning practices of the Farm, as befits a mature program, in order to solidify the role of the farm as an integrated part of Hampshire College**

Objectives:

- to complete the process of establishing a high-functioning Farm Steering Committee, comprised of faculty, students, and staff, as the governing body for ongoing decisions

and recommendations (see Appendix A: “Keys to Successful Governance” from 2014-15 planning effort);

- to change the administrative home of the Farm Steering Committee from the President’s Office to the Dean of Faculty’s Office;
- to assure the financial sustainability of the Farm by providing adjusted operating and capital budgets that will support a robust academic and co-curricular farm program; steps in the 2017-18 academic year include:
  - updating the farm use plan;
  - taking a proactive approach to budgeting for capital and infrastructure needs;
  - having these budgets and the needs of the Farm be understood and embraced as part of the overall development efforts of the College;
- to have the Hampshire College Farm included in next college-wide strategic plan as both an educational resource and an integral part of the Hampshire College food system.

**Goal #2: To support, improve, and expand student, faculty, and staff interactions with the farm in a variety of modes**

Objectives:

- to improve outreach, coordination, and communication with faculty across the Schools who want to use the farm for course-related activities; approval of activities will be expedited by clear criteria and protocols;
- to encourage ongoing faculty and student research projects on the farm, mindful of the planning horizons required by natural systems; here again, approval of research projects will be expedited by clear criteria and protocols (see Appendix B);
- to further integrate issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the program, and communicate about how these issues are understood and acted upon;
- to continue an annual Living Learning Community (LLC) centered at the farm and farm-based celebrations like the Family & Friends weekend;
- to strengthen regular communications efforts, so as to increase knowledge, interest and support of the farm among students, faculty, and staff;
- longer-term, with additional staffing capacity (e.g. program coordinator, farm fellows, interns):
  - to expand and support recreational opportunities on the farm, e.g., providing trail maps, alerting people to notable sights and activities;
  - to expand activities such as canning and preserving;
  - to investigate the possibility of creating a student living unit on the farm in coordination with campus-wide living initiatives;
  - to support an expanded and proactive approach to the Farm as a living lab for Hampshire College values: sustainability, social justice, and community-building

### **Goal #3: Within five years, to expand the impact of the farm beyond the Hampshire College community**

#### Objectives:

- to expand existing networking efforts with other sustainable agriculture programs, particularly those undertaken as part of a comprehensive program at a college or university;
- to continue the Hampshire Farm Camp and explore new opportunities for summer programs that bring people to the farm during the period of maximum productivity;
- to serve as host and convener on topics of sustainable agriculture, building on existing initiatives.

#### **Implementation:**

Community Participation and Buy-In: This approach to a Five-Year Strategic Plan for the Hampshire College Farm was presented to President Lash and the Dean of Faculty in May, 2017, where they approved of its overall direction, specific goals, and objectives. Their feedback has been incorporated in this document. The Dean of Faculty will include a reference to the Plan in her end of year letter to faculty. At the beginning of Fall 2017, the Farm Steering Committee will present a draft of the Plan to the larger Hampshire community electronically for their consideration. They will follow up with a public meeting to address questions, comments and gather feedback.

The Committee will incorporate feedback from the community and present the final Plan to the Dean of Faculty and President for final approval.

The final Plan will present timetables, assign responsibilities, and identify measures for success for next steps for each objective above.

Appropriate adjustments in salaries for farm staff will take effect in the first year of the Plan but are covered by existing funds. Similarly, some of the added staff capacity we call for in Goal #2 already exist in a grace period provided by previous fundraising. One of the tasks for the new Farm Steering Committee in 2017-18 is to work with the College administration to craft the financing plan for the more integrated farm programs in 2018-19 and beyond.

#### **Signed by Farm STAR Committee:**

Fred Wirth (Chairperson), Nancy Hanson, Pete Solis, Beth Hooker, Sue Darlington, Hope Tucker, Grace Adzima, Francis Eddy Magai (F16), and April Nugent (F15)

## **Appendix A: Keys to Successful Governance**

*This document identifies attributes that the Farm Steering Committee in January 2015 believed would be essential to successful governance of the Farm in the future. The current planning group concurs and believes that the success of the new structure we are proposing relies on clear and high standards for the newly-constituted Farm Steering Committee that will report to the Associate Dean of Faculty.*

### **Clear about Purpose, Roles, and Responsibilities**

- Purpose, roles, responsibilities for all stakeholders are clearly defined and agreed to by the full committee.
  - Stakeholders feel confident in their ability to productively fulfill designated roles.
  - Steering committee is trusted by community to fulfill its responsibilities.
  - Definitions of purpose, roles and responsibilities are readily available for reference.

### **Effective**

- Meetings are held regularly and committee members who fail to attend a majority of them are replaced.
- Members make decisions with the farm's and the college's missions and values in mind.
- Decisions are made in a timely manner and once made are final.
  - There is a clear mechanism for reviewing decisions and revising as needed.

### **Transparent**

- Decisions and basic reasoning are clearly communicated to the community.
  - Meeting minutes available to community via website.
  - Committee holds regular open meetings in order to update
- All stakeholders have a shared understanding of transparency and are committed to ensuring its application through consultative and effective communication with all stakeholders.

### **Representative**

- Governing body is small but composed of faculty, staff, and students in equal numbers.
- Committee members accessible to speak with community members
  - Committee holds regular open forums to gather input from community.

### **Responsive**

- All members of the committee are responsive to the needs of others, both inside and beyond the committee itself, through a deliberative and inclusive process that involves all of the effected stakeholders.

- Committee creates an iterative mechanism for collecting community feedback on decisions, discussing input in committee meetings, and readdressing with community members.
- A process exists for making requests that includes a timeframe for action as well as a shared understanding of feasibility (academic, financial, labor).

**Responsible for ongoing learning**

- Committee understands existing farm academic program as well as the complexity of day-to-day farm operations.
- Committee actively reaches out to other programs and initiatives to provide support and collaborate on new interdisciplinary opportunities

## Appendix B: Proposed Guidelines

### I. Proposal Guidelines for faculty and staff projects

The Hampshire College Farm welcomes projects from faculty and staff. Please provide a proposal for any work involving livestock or land use so that the Farm STAR committee can review and provide feedback. The Farm STAR committee will make final determinations. Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

#### **Descriptive Title of the Project:**

**Overview:** summarize the proposal, offering a brief outline of the project content. Include the basic elements from the application questions, highlighting the essential points and elements.

#### **Answer the following questions:**

1. Please tell us what you would like to do or create. Briefly state the idea, issue or opportunity and why it matters.
2. What is your proposed approach? What are your objectives.
3. Describe what you will do and how you will do it.
4. What is the timeline of your project? Outline the steps, identifying when they will occur, how long they will take, and who will do them. Please include dates to be clear about when events happen.
5. What is your research or education outreach plan? What is the plan for community engagement or audience interaction? What activities will take place? For example, will you conduct a workshop around your project?
6. Address the feasibility of the project and your capacity to create it at the Farm. How much support will be needed from the Farm? Describe how your project and project timeline will fit within the Hampshire Farm operation. It is important that you work with Pete Solis and/or Nancy Hanson to determine this.

***The Farm may not be able to fund your project; however it is important to identify a budget for review. In addition to a spreadsheet, for all items in your budget, give a brief description of the purpose in a narrative doc.***

### II. Proposal Guidelines for student projects

The Hampshire College Farm welcomes student projects. Please provide a proposal for any work involving livestock, or land use, so that the Farm STAR committee can review and provide

feedback. The Farm STAR committee will make final determinations. Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

**Title:** Descriptive title of the project

**Overview:** summarize the proposal, offering a brief outline of the project content. Include the basic elements from the application questions, highlighting the essential points and elements.

**Answer the following questions, including a budget justification:**

7. What is the problem and why is it important? Briefly state the problem, issue or opportunity and why it matters. *500 words.*
8. What is your proposed approach to find a solution? Present your idea or main question you seek to study and briefly state your project's objectives. *200 words.*
9. What efforts have been made by others to solve the problem? Tell us how your project builds on what is currently known and how it is different. *750 words.*
10. What will your methods and measurements be? Describe what you will do and how you will do it. Also, include information about how much support will be needed from the staff. *1000 words.*
11. What is the timetable of your project? Outline the steps listed in the methods and measurement and outreach sections, identifying when they will occur, how long they will take, and who will do them. Use dates to be clear about when events happen. *500 words.*
12. What is your research and education outreach plan? For example, will you conduct an EPEC around your project? Will you present your results in your division ii or division iii portfolios? *250 words.*
13. Describe how your project will fit with the Hampshire Farm operation. It is very important that you work with Pete Solis and/or Nancy Hanson to determine this. *300 words.*
14. Budget justification and narrative. For all items, give a brief, clear description of the purpose. The Farm may not be able to fund your project; however it is very important to identify a budget, for review. Include plans for funding.