

Summary of Farm Survey Questions:

I. What aspects of the farm do you most appreciate?

Many responses in this section expressed appreciation for the unique way that the farm cuts across all aspects of life at Hampshire.

“The farm is many things to many people: a tremendous academic resource, a significant source of student employment, a link to the real world and real world values in a somewhat rarefied environment, an environment of peace and beauty and great food too.”

“The impassioned, creative and wonderful people who work at the farm; the integration of the lived experience and the academic enterprise; being able to eat foods produced right on campus; the way the farm fuels the larger culture of sensibility at the College; etc. I am actually rarely at the farm but knowing that it is there makes me extremely happy and proud”

268 total responses

The majority of responses can be categorized into one or more of the following:

The food produced on the farm. (153 responses, 57%)

Community members appreciate the availability (through the CSA and the dining hall) and the quality the fresh food grown on the farm. Many like the fact that they can have a direct connection to their food and those who grow it.

“The relationship Hampshire has with the food grown on the farm is amazing”

“I absolutely love having access to fresh, delicious veggies grown right here at Hampshire through the CSA”

“The food available for students by the CSA and in the dining hall. I know where I’m getting my food from and who is picking it”

“The CSA is wonderful to have-provides a connection to our food”

The farm exists at the college and is available to the entire community as a place of beauty, relaxation, and connection to nature. (115 responses, 42%)

Many respondents stated that they use the farm as a place to walk or jog and enjoy the beauty of the natural surroundings or the aesthetic of the farm landscape. Several enjoy visiting with the farm animals.

“it’s a pretty, tranquil place for students who need a break from campus”

“I like that it exists at all”, “I most appreciate that it is simply there”

“I have to say, the farm is one of the greatest aspects of this campus and is just another reason why we are so unique. I love looking out my window on a clear day and seeing the animals and the scenery it is wonderful”

“I like looking at the cows”

“Living by a farm is just nice”

The farm provides opportunities for non-academic learning, work-study positions and community relationships. (98 responses, 37%)

Several responses expressed appreciation that the farm provides opportunities for students to learn skills and have experiences outside of the classroom mainly through work or other farm activities.

“I like that the farm is a place where I can spend time that isn’t class time, isn’t library time and isn’t in my room time...Having a work-study job has been amazing because I am very bad at working inside for long periods of time...it has also given me a fair amount of experience beginning to teach others about farming”

“It is also one of the few programs/classes that gives students direct physical experience which I think is important for Hampshire.”

“I have seen the benefits it provides the students who spend significant time there some very tangible, others less so”

“At any given moment, I would rather be shoveling cow shit than writing another research paper. I learn so much more from the farm than I learn from classes which is huge part of why I chose Hampshire”

The farm is a place for academic pursuits (66 responses, 25%)

Several responders appreciate that the farm is integrated into the academic program.

“ provides academic and practical resources for dealing with important questions of food politics, sustainability , organic farming, etc.”

“a resource for teaching and research”

“loved it that Lacanian psychoanalysis class used the farm as a resource for fieldwork-very Hampshire”

“living learning lab”

“opportunities for students to pursue hands-on research projects on the farm”

The farm is an embodiment of Hampshire’s values (60 responses, 22%)

Some responders see the focus on sustainability, experiential learning and land stewardship as representative of Hampshire’s core values.

“The farm emulates Hampshire’s values”

“it is vital to the college”

“The farm serves as a representative example of valuing food, valuing hard work, valuing a farm as a setting for learning and valuing the farm as a locus of a college community”

“a perfect example of Hampshire “putting its money where its mouth is””

“the way it defines Hampshire as unique and mission driven”

II. What aspects of the farm do you feel should be changed and/or improved?

226 total responses

The majority of responses can be categorized into one or more of the following:

More opportunities for non-academic community involvement and increased accessibility (89 responses, 39%)

Many of these responses requested increased programming for students that are not eligible for farm work-study jobs and are not studying agriculture or sustainability. There were several requests of more work-study jobs and internship opportunities. Physical accessibility was also addressed.

“I wish there were more community events maybe people cooking & playing music & telling stories...ways to draw people physically to the farm even if they are not interested in farms or farm work”

“It should feel more inclusive”

“I wish there were more events”

“I think that it is pretty removed from campus.”

“the farm feels far away from campus life”

“clearer walking paths”

Increased production of food and/or greater access to farm products (71 responses, 31%)

Many community members requested more access to farm products including eggs, meat, and the addition of dairy products. There was also a call for the availability of vegetables outside of the current CSA season and structure and a desire that the farm produce more of the food served in the dining hall. Respondents also addressed the affordability of farm products, especially for students.

“it would be nice if it was bigger so that more food could come to campus”

“would love to see things sold on campus to non-CSA members”,

“increase production capacity”

“extend the CSA to include meat and eggs”

“add a creamery”

“there is so much potential to expand the farm especially the animal portion”

“it would be nice if farm shares were cheaper to Hampshire students”

Improved communication to the college community (51 responses, 23%)

Many respondents expressed an ignorance of what goes on at the farm and suggested better communication with the wider campus community.

“get the word out about more of the programming”

“make accessing the farm more transparent. Until now I did not know that you could go to the farm to hang out”

“I don’t know about the pathways of communication”

“it would be great to have more open houses so more people can learn about what goes on at the farm”

“more visibility on campus”

Increased and more varied academic connections (38 responses, 17%)

Some responses called for a better integration of the farm in the academic curriculum. These included calls for more connections across all portions of the academic program, not just with NS based students and faculty. These suggested connections include class tours and student and faculty research. There is some minor concern that focus on production will compromise academic use of the farm (4 responses, <2%).

“more farm tours for 100 and 200 level science courses”

“being more intertwined with academic classes”

“I wish the farm was used more by faculty of all sorts (not just NS)”

“it would be cool to see the farm integrated in courses that don’t relate directly to food...maybe some HACU or CSI courses”

“I would like to see more approaches to using the farm creatively as a “classroom” to teach a variety of disciplines of study. Having classes from seemingly unconnected concentrations include lessons based around the farm would foster a deeper connection between the farm and the community while also modeling creative academic intersections”

III. The Planning Committee would appreciate any further thoughts you may have about the role of a farm center at a liberal arts institution, specifically the Farm Center at Hampshire College.

141 responses

Most of these responses reiterated one or more of the themes addressed in the two previous responses, including:

The farm is vital to the mission of a liberal arts education; it is a valuable resource and a powerful symbol of our community values. It is one of the things that make Hampshire unique. (80 responses, 57%)

Requests for more connections to classes, especially those focused on the humanities, the arts and social justice, requests for increased opportunities for community engagement and suggestions for increased communications with the greater college community. (59 responses, 42%)

Some respondents addressed the balance between the focus on agricultural production and/or education. Some (22 responses, 16%) advocated for an increase in production or stated that a viable, productive farm is essential to the educational mission. Others (10 responses, 7%) expressed concern that a focus on production would detract from the educational mission.

Some highlights:

“I view the farm as integral to the hands-on learning/teaching philosophy. It is a living laboratory and a library full of unwritten books that provides experiential lessons on the synthesis of art and science. What, if not this, is a liberal arts education about?”

“I think a farm center aligns beautifully with a liberal arts education. Farming uses an array of disciplines-soil chemistries, business implications, biology, design of all kinds-I mean it is a perfect model of blending art and science at its finest. Not to mention it enhances a healthy community. The fresh vegetables, the gathering of meals, the nature surrounding a farm-it’s all an important part of community engagement-something very integral in a liberal arts community as well.”

“I think that it is really awesome and really important to have a working, real life farm. Environmental justice, food justice, sustainability, feeding students in mods, accessible and meaningful food production are all things that the farm has passively or actively contributed to for me and for other students.”

“I wish that more classes in the Humanities involved that farm...I would love to learn about the labor history of agriculture, the different work processes involved

in slave plantation work, migrant harvesting tenant farming/sharecropping, or Soviet Union style cooperative farming...”

“I wonder if there has been a course that combines food and art...”

“The farm should be a teaching tool and meeting space foremost. Focusing on production is really the wrong approach...Less of a focus on production and more on the educational opportunities that the farm provides. All of this, if possible would align the farm more closely with Hampshire’s emphasis on social/environmental justice.”

“I live here and I learn here. Neither one of those two things should come first in a mission statement; they have to be treated as equal, as this is a residential college. Also when I talk about learning, it’s important to note that most of the learning I’ve done on the farm hasn’t been with professors involvement, it’s been through work-study, observations made through time spent walking around, and conversation with the farm staff about why and how things are done. This seems to fit in well with a liberal arts education—many ways of thinking, many ways of learning, many places to learn in. So, the discussion about learning on the farm has to include farm staff as educators. Finally, the farm has to function in a mildly efficient way so as to continue to resemble a farm rather than a fairly large garden. In order to remain useful as an educational space/tool/whatever you want to call it, all the people using it for education have to respect that it needs to function as a farm.”