

Post-conference Report on the 7th National Sustainable Agriculture Education Association (SAEA)

The 7th National SAEA Conference was held in Santa Cruz, CA in July 2016, co-hosted by UC Santa Cruz, UC Davis, UC Berkeley, University of Hawai‘i West O‘ahu, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA), Merritt College, and Stanford University, with major support from the University of California Office of the President’s Global Food Initiative.

The event was attended by 375 participants including students, staff, faculty, administrators from over 80 different institutions and organizations, as well as beginning farmers, non-profit and community-based organization staff, and activists working in adult education in sustainable agriculture and food systems. Participants gathered for three days to learn, share, and celebrate diversity through sustainable agriculture education. Some of the conference highlights included lessons from the best of California Central Coast organic agriculture education movement, a variety of local farm and community-based-organization’s garden education tours, music and of course –local and organic cuisine from Bay Area activist chefs. Sessions focused on presentations by numerous successful educational programs, in depth facilitated discussions on a wide range of pedagogical topics, and a morning devoted to in-depth practical workshops. There were also field visits of the UC Santa Cruz Farm, Stanford University Farm, Cal Poly Swanton Pacific Ranch, and ALBA, as well as plenary sessions focusing on the role of experiential learning in advancing a more just and sustainable agri-food systems. The conference also included presentation of educational videos and an interactive dinner event emphasizing culturally diverse foods and a discussion of equity, inclusion and decolonizing food systems. Conference program and presenter information can be found [here](#).

2016 National SAEA Conference Evaluation Results

A post-conference web-based survey was sent to all 375 participants requesting that they share their thoughts and feelings about their experiences at the event. Approximately 33%, (n=125) participants completed the evaluation. When 2016 SAEA Conference participants were asked to rate their overall experience, 24% reported it was the “Best conference I’ve ever been to”, 44% reported it was “Excellent”, and 26% reported “Above average.” This suggests that 94% had an exceptionally positive experience, overall.



The 2016 Conference was a first SAEA event, for 80% of participants, with 50% finding out about the event from a friend or colleague. Over 30% of participants were students, 50% were staff, faculty or administrators. Over 23% of participants reported being low-income staff or activist, 19% reported being a beginning farmer, apprentice or intern. Over 42% of participants were between the ages of 18-34, over 24% were between the ages of 34-44, with 22% between 45-74. Over 71% of participants identified as female.

When asked how useful the main activities were, participants ranked the Keynote Speakers and Decolonizing Foodways Symposium highest, followed closely by field trips, structured presentation sessions and workshops. Both dinner meals received the highest food satisfaction ranking by nearly 90% of participants. The Hay Barn, large meeting spaces, and Farm and Garden facilities also received the highest ranking by nearly 90% of participants. Over 80% of participants reported the event helped them a lot, to a great deal (highest ranking), in providing useful resources and building a network with peers and colleagues.

A generous award of \$1,500 from the Nell Newman Foundation contributed to covering the cost of scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students and beginning farmer attendees that are pursuing professional work in organic agriculture. The support for students and beginning farmers has made it possible for the conference to accomplish its goal of remaining affordable and accessible. Over 42% of the 2016 conference participants were low-income staff or activists, beginning farmers, apprentices or interns between the age of 18-34. Over 70% of participants identified as female. These demographics are evidence of a clear success in conference organizing; supporting those in most need of support, people who stand to do great work with even a little investment in their personal and professional. To see these results for yourself, please view this 5-minute overview video of the event, available online, [here](#).

All funds received from the Nell Newman Trust were expended in accordance with the grant agreement. There were no major deviances from expected spending. Acknowledgement of the Nell Newman Foundation support was displayed in all print conference materials and announced from the podium during the plenary session. Conference event budget, registration cost structure, and results of the full-length participant survey are appended to this report.

With gratitude from the SAEA community,

Damian Parr

Damian Parr, Ph.D.

Past-Chair and Co-Founder

Sustainable Agriculture Education Association





sustainable agriculture education association



July 29-31, 2016

University of California
Santa Cruz

**CENTER FOR
AGROECOLOGY
AND SUSTAINABLE
FOOD SYSTEMS
(CASFS)**

with field trips
to regional sustainable
agriculture education
projects



THE ECOLOGY OF FOOD SYSTEMS

Engaging
Interdisciplinary and
Applied Education for a
Just and Sustainable
Agriculture

The conference invites participants from across the agriculture and food system who are engaged in adult education: students, teachers and independent scholars; farmers, cooks, and community organizers; professionals in health, business, the arts, law, and the media. Participants will represent colleges, universities, farmer training organizations, and a range of professional and civil society organizations.

To encourage flexible and interactive learning, the format will be highly participant-driven, featuring Open-Space sessions, workshops, panel discussions, and diverse presentations.



This year's theme highlights the growing demand for inclusive and critical approaches to sustainable agriculture and food education at the post-secondary level. SAEA has a strong tradition of focusing on interdisciplinary and experiential learning from a systems thinking perspective.

The conference will focus on social justice and equity oriented educational programming and activities within the broader field of food systems.

For more info on conference details: sustainableaged.org
Have questions? contact: saea2016conference@ucsc.edu

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