Annual Report 2015-16
Cultivating Diversity, Justice, Resilience & Health

Dear Friends,

Through the support, collaboration, and engagement of numerous diverse partners, the Berkeley Food Institute (BFI) has achieved significant progress this past year towards its vision to transform food systems—to expand access to healthy, affordable food and promote sustainable and equitable food production. We have also updated our mission—to empower new leaders with capacities to cultivate diverse, just, resilient, and healthy food systems.

In this report, we are excited to present highlights of our accomplishments from the past year, as illustrated by achievements in our core program areas—education, research, policy, community engagement, and communications. We continue to be motivated by the incredible surge of interest in food systems. We are delighted to see the many ways that food brings people together and builds new bridges across sectors.

We thank those who have contributed to and participated in BFI’s success, and invite all to be involved in realizing a transformative vision.

Sincerely, The BFI Team
Who Are We? People = Power

A key driver of Berkeley Food Institute’s advancement toward sustainable and equitable food systems is people power: the passion and intellectual capacity cultivated by our faculty, researchers, policy influencers, collaborators, and diverse and remarkable students who offer great promise for leadership, innovation, and effective change in food and agriculture.

Emphasizing the critical importance of people, BFI’s “refreshed” mission is to empower new leaders with capacities to cultivate diverse, just, resilient, and healthy food systems.

As an interdisciplinary hub, BFI acts as connective tissue, facilitating the partnership of seven colleges and schools across the UC Berkeley campus: Natural Resources, Public Policy, Journalism, Law, Public Health, and most recently, the College of Environmental Design and the Haas School of Business, who joined us in 2015-16. BFI leverages a breadth of human capital both on and off campus as a critical component for success. Our people power is comprised of:

- Passionate students, including our student fellows and employees
- Renowned faculty with intellectual leadership on numerous topics in food and agriculture systems
- Core staff of two faculty co-directors, executive director, policy director, program manager, and development and grant officer
- An executive committee, serving as an advisory group, that includes six deans and faculty, staff, and student representatives
- Distinguished visiting fellows
- Community collaborators and stakeholders including leading thinkers, educators, advocates, and farmers

See Appendix for details.

BFI’s structure breaks down silos between disciplines, and our approach reinforces values of equity, inclusion, diversity, and academic freedom.

We welcome all to B involved!

Priority Themes, Core Programs, and Activities

In 2015-16, BFI undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process. As a result, we narrowed our focus to three vital themes that address critical food system challenges and build upon the wealth of knowledge at UC Berkeley in these fields. We emphasize a holistic approach to address these pressing issues:

- Promoting equitable access to good food
- Advancing fair and healthy jobs in food systems
- Accelerating the adoption of agroecology

How do we work towards our goals and achieve impacts in these areas? BFI continued to implement programs in five core areas: education, research, policy, community engagement, and communications.

Importantly, we developed new connections across these program areas, linking research and education with policymaking and community-based initiatives—building capacities that impact food systems.

“BFI, as a multi-disciplinary effort, can accelerate the synthesis of knowledge to transform our food system to one more just, equitable, and sustainable. The challenges facing our state, our country, and the planet require bold, creative, and innovative solutions—BFI is part of developing those solutions.”

— Maria Echaveste, Distinguished Visiting Fellow at BFI; Lecturer at Berkeley Law; and Former Deputy Chief of Staff for President Bill Clinton
Highlights of Accomplishments by Theme: 2015-16

Over the past year, BFI achieved significant accomplishments in our thematic areas and across our core programs. By building the capacity of our students, researchers, and policy leaders, BFI is shaping food and agriculture systems that embody and promote greater diversity, justice, resilience, and health. Here are a few inspiring examples of our successes within each of our priority themes.

**Good Food Access**
- Policies to promote and protect soil health
- Diversified farming systems
- Alternatives to pesticides
- Pollinator health

**Agroecology**

**Fair and Healthy Jobs**

**Accelerating the adoption of agroecology**
- Policies to promote and protect soil health
- Diversified farming systems
- Alternatives to pesticides
- Pollinator health

**Advancing fair and healthy jobs in food systems**
- Ensure fair and healthy working conditions within existing jobs
- Foster new jobs that build economic security for working families

**Promoting equitable access to good food**
- More effective food assistance programs
- Thriving agriculture in our cities
- Better access to organic food

**HIGHLIGHT**
We are documenting the environmental and socioeconomic benefits of diversified farming systems (DFS) and sustainable practices for growers in California and beyond. For example, studies published by DFS researchers this year revealed that supporting agricultural biodiversity on farms not only generates important pest control services, but is also compatible with food safety goals. A group of public policy graduate students completed a project on soil health, carbon, and climate change, in collaboration with BFI and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (an agency of the USDA). The resulting report was used by federal policymakers in considering potential program improvements to advance the adoption of soil health practices. Through these projects we are informing and influencing policy processes at the state, national, and international levels.

**HIGHLIGHT**
In 2015 BFI advanced a collaborative effort with scholars and practitioners from public health and antipoverty fields to propose improvements to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Our BFI faculty affiliates are generating and sharing policy recommendations aimed to increase equity and healthy food access in the program. In partnership with community groups working on food security and access, this work includes evaluation of healthy food incentives and production of a policy brief about ways to improve nutrition factors related to SNAP.

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**Photo by:** Ecology Center, state lead for the Market Match incentive program

**Photo by:** Andres Cediel, Investigative Reporting Program, UC Berkeley
Cumulative Impact: BFI by the Numbers 2013-2016

136 affiliated faculty and staff from 41 departments and programs
22 executive committee members
44 actively involved students including:
  10 undergraduate student employees
  5 graduate student researchers
  9 student fellows
  8 student contest awardees
  2 student council representatives
13 faculty research seed grants, comprised of:
  57 principal investigators and 49 collaborators
$336,312 total funding
$70,418 in funding provided to students through fellowships and awards

"Cross-pollination among diverse thought leaders and constituencies is vital to bring about food systems change. BFI is not only breaking down traditional silos in academia, but also leveraging innovative research for policymakers and supporting systems approaches to fix the food system. Galvanizing the remarkable intellectual resources at Cal, BFI's potential is limitless."

— Michael Pollan, BFI Affiliated Faculty and Executive Committee Member; Professor of Journalism; and Award-winning Author

Highlights of Accomplishments by Program: 2015-16

Education

BFI facilitated the development of a Food Systems Minor for undergraduate students. This program launched in August 2015, based on many months of work by BFI and committee collaborators, and provides a cohesive, comprehensive academic program for undergraduate students at Berkeley interested in food and agriculture. The Food Systems Minor was covered on the front page of the Los Angeles Times on Thanksgiving Day, 2015. The article featured quotes by Charlie James, a Berkeley student enrolled in the program.

BFI led a cross-campus project on Equity and Inclusion in Food Systems at UC Berkeley, featuring workshops for diverse representatives of food and agriculture programs, and efforts to overcome inequities and foster inclusiveness in these programs across the Berkeley campus.

BFI played a lead role in producing a report called "Learning from the Ground Up: Lessons from Experiential Education in Food and Agriculture at the University of California," and a directory of experiential learning projects in the UC system. The report, which was led by Kate Kaplan, a BFI student fellow supported by the UC Global Food initiative, is published on the website of the UC Office of the President, and hard copies have been distributed to more than 300 people who can use it as a resource for participating in or developing experiential learning programs.

Student-led class in the Student Organic Garden. Photo by: Jonathan Fong
Research

Several of the BFI-funded interdisciplinary research projects were completed this year. One of the projects documented human rights violations of restaurant workers and suggested policy changes to address workers’ wages and related issues. The project was led by Saru Jayaraman, Director of the Food Labor Research Center (FRLC), and Laurel Fletcher, Berkeley Law professor. In December 2015 the researchers released a report entitled “Working Below the Line: How the Subminimum Wage for Tipped Restaurant Workers Violates International Human Rights Standards.” BFI is preparing a policy brief based on the report.

BFI released its third annual call for proposals to UC Berkeley faculty and awarded two new seed research grants ($50,000 each) in spring 2016 to support cross-disciplinary projects on: 1) innovative school lunch programs in Oakland, by Malo Hutson, Jason Coburn, and collaborators; and 2) gender dynamics affecting food access among SNAP recipients, by Tina Sacks, Ron Strochlic, and collaborators.

Policy

BFI’s policy program identified strategic priorities and goals aligned with our three thematic areas. We held briefings in Washington, DC and Sacramento to introduce BFI faculty experts to policymakers and to share information and recommendations. For example, BFI arranged visits by campus experts Malo Huston and Dennis Baldocchi with several members of the California Legislature to talk about their policy-relevant work on equitable food access and climate change and agriculture, respectively. BFI also facilitated exchanges between diversified farming systems experts, Claire Kremen and Amber Sciligo, with USDA officials and legislators in Washington, DC, to share findings regarding effective methods to protect pollinators, enhance ecosystem services, and advance diversified organic practices. BFI also awarded graduate students opportunities to co-develop policy briefs related to our main themes. BFI organized two successful policy-training workshops for faculty to share information on effective engagement in policymaking processes.
Community Engagement

BFI launched a summer fellowship program for graduate students to partner with community organizations with common food systems interests. Students were selected through a competitive process and matched with organizations working on important food system issues, such as the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Sustainable Economies Law Center. 2015 student fellow Laura Moreno carried out a project on food waste with NRDC that led her to secure a job with the organization.

We also helped organize, participated in, and publicized dozens of additional public education events such as a conference, “Working for Justice in the Valley: People, Food, Land, and Water,” co-organized with the California Institute for Rural Studies, San Joaquin Valley Sustainable Agriculture Collaborative, UC Merced, and UC Global Food Initiative.
Cumulative Impact: BFI Events 2013-16

- **15** “Food Exchange” forums, attended by **1,468** people
- **19** diversified farming systems seminars, attended by **570** people
- **3** equity and inclusion workshops, attended by **85** people
- **5** policy workshops, symposia, and briefings attended by **309** people
- **6** other special events, attended by **694** people

**Event Highlight from 2015-16:**
BFI organized a forum in October 2015 on “Decolonizing Foodways,” featuring guest speakers and renowned chefs-activists who engaged 125 participants in a highly interactive discussion and meal that explored what it means to liberate our diets from colonial relationships of production and consumption.

**Escalating Impact in 2016-17 and Beyond**

BFI leverages UC Berkeley’s academic strengths and innovation in food systems to break down silos and build bridges among many different constituents necessary to effect change and develop solutions in this field. BFI’s policy work results in more effective use of rigorous research findings by policymakers and facilitates necessary dialogue between academics and public decision-makers. Policymakers have begun to look to BFI as an expert resource because we provide relevant information that can lead to practical change in food systems. Our community engagement program directly connects BFI’s students and faculty with a variety of groups outside the university to engage in fruitful projects.

Learnings from our first three years reveal that younger generations have a very important role in transformative change in this field. To support this constituency further, BFI has adjusted its mission to address the empowerment of food and agriculture leaders through expanded student initiatives and fellowships, as well as a greater focus on assisting young and emerging UC Berkeley researchers and educators with effective communication of valuable research findings.

After educational and work experiences at BFI, our students are finding fulfilling professional opportunities that allow them to make greater impact in food systems. For example, Pallavi Sherikar, an undergraduate student employee at BFI, helped to produce the report, “Leveraging Food and Agriculture Research for Policy.” Pallavi was so inspired by her experience with BFI that she is now working with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition in Washington, DC. Two former graduate student researchers, Nora Gilbert and Sally Smyth, worked at the USDA after studying and working on food policy through BFI.

Looking ahead, we see great, untapped potential for expanding the impacts of our programs. We will continue to leverage our successes and partnerships from the last three years while we hone our activities to focus on our goals of promoting equitable access to good food, advancing fair and healthy jobs in food systems, and accelerating the adoption of agroecology. In order to work toward more effective change in these areas, we will expand upon our communications, community engagement, and policy program areas, and launch new research-to-policy initiatives that contribute to successful systems change.

“BFI has had a tremendous impact on my personal career interests. I knew very little about the complexity of food systems when I first joined BFI, but after witnessing the energy, dedication, and hard work that BFI puts in to changing our system towards a more sustainable and equitable food system, I was inspired to delve deeper into food and agriculture policy. This summer I am working as a policy intern in Washington, DC at NSAC where I am building on the phenomenal experience I had at BFI.”

— Pallavi Sherikar, Environmental Economics and Policy, Class of 2017

“BFI’s research community represents a tremendous breadth and depth of expertise in disciplines ranging from journalism to nutrition policy, soil ecology to agrarian reform. Looking forward, it can become a paragon of ‘responsive’ research, and a catalyst for advancing transformative paradigms.”

— Maywa Montenegro de Wit, BFI Student Fellow and PhD Candidate, Environmental Science, Policy, and Management

We thank you for your interest in the Berkeley Food Institute. We invite you to join in and support our programs and encourage you to be engaged in food systems change!
Appendix

Funders and Supporters

We are incredibly grateful to the numerous people and organizations that support our work. This list comprises donors and supporters in fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016). We regret any errors or omissions.

$10,000 and Higher

11th Hour Project of the Schmidt Family Foundation
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UC Global Food Initiative
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**Designated to support research of the Center for Diversified Farming Systems, which is housed within the Berkeley Food Institute

$1,000 to $9,999

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Nora Norback and Darrel Hess
Bryna and Daryl Ross
Jeanine and Guy Saperstein
John Swift

Under $1,000

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Marguerite Matthews
Kathryn Moriarty Baldwin and Gregory Baldwin
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Staff

Claire Kremen, Faculty Co-director
Alastair Iles, Faculty Co-director
L. Ann Thrupp, Executive Director
Rosalie Z. Fanshel, Program Manager
Nina F. Ichikawa, Policy Director
Amy Regan, Development and Grant Officer

Executive Committee

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Sarah Ting, Goldman School of Public Policy
David Tuller, School of Public Health and Graduate School of Journalism
Edward Wasserman, Graduate School of Journalism
Jennifer Wolch, College of Environmental Design

Alternates:
Priya Mehta, School of Public Health
Robert Strand, Haas School of Business

Student Employees, Fellows, and Awardees in 2015-16

Emily Altman, UC Global Food Initiative Fellow
Michelle Azurin, Community Engagement Fellow
Tara Benesch, UC Global Food Initiative Fellow
Liz Carlisle, Research Fellow
Steven Castro, UC Global Food Initiative Video Awardee
Luke Craven, Visiting Student Fellow
Sabine Dabady, Policy Consultant
Laura Driscoll, Policy Consultant
Luna Fassett, Equity and Inclusion Fellow
Kali Feiereisel, Graduate Student Researcher
Aquatea Goodman, Student Assistant
Gina Hervey, UC Global Food Initiative Sustainable Agriculture Inventory Assistant
Jodie Howard, UC Global Food Initiative Sustainable Agriculture Inventory Fellow
Amy Huynh, Equity and Inclusion Fellow
Talitha McAdams, UC Global Food Initiative Video Awardee
Mayava Montenegro de Wit, Center for Diversified Farming Systems Fellow
Laura Moreno, Community Engagement Fellow
Melina Packer, Equity and Inclusion Fellow
John Romankiewicz, Community Engagement Fellow
Pallavi Sherikar, UC Global Food Initiative Policy Assistant
Andrew Stevens, Research Fellow
Sarah Ting, Policy Consultant
Julia Tuber, Communications Assistant
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