Engaging University Students In Local School Gardens

A Toolkit for School Districts, School Garden Support Organizations and Universities

from

UC Davis Student Farm
Life Lab at UC Santa Cruz
UC Berkeley
Authors

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Introduction

University Partnerships with Local School Gardens

School gardens are rich learning environments that are often in need of helping hands, while colleges and universities are often seeking meaningful experiential learning opportunities for their students. Pairing interested and eager university students with school gardens is a mutually beneficial arrangement. This guide summarizes three different models of University/School Garden Internship Programs at UC Berkeley, UC Davis, and Life Lab at UC Santa Cruz that facilitate undergraduate engagement in school garden programs.

This guide and associated programming are funded in part by the University of California Global Food Initiative. This guide and others from the GFI Experiential Learning Subcommittee can be accessed at [www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/best-practices/index.html](http://www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/best-practices/index.html).
Steps to Developing a School Garden Internship Program

The following flowchart (Fig. 1) outlines suggested steps to set up a school garden program with university student involvement. It is a resource for a school district (SD), non-profit (NP), or University (UV) interested in setting up a program for university students to engage with school gardens and/or to help initiate and establish school gardens in school districts where they don’t currently exist. Based on the three case studies highlighted in this toolkit, the following chart summarizes common elements of different school garden programs. The five steps are roughly in the chronological order needed to initiate, develop, conduct and evaluate school garden programs. Each step shows different options and considerations for which options may be most applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 1: Identifying or Initiating School Garden Programs (Choose 1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating gardening and/or cooking programs in local SDs; school capacity, needs and interest in UV student engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerations: location and transportation needs, student skills, school year, University (UV) supervision capacity and/or support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing SD Program with SD Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing SD gardens &amp; staff who interview and supervise UV interns; UV staff recruit interns and support HR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing SD Program w. NP Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing garden at SD, program through NP. UV does recruitment/HR. NP staff supervise and communicates with SD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiating a New Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No SD garden or program. Interns support building gardens/curriculum. Supervised by UV staff, NP or SD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 2: Designing a Program for UV Students (Choose 1 or multiple)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships with existing public service, internship, field course requirement, etc. and/or other cost incentives for students to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerations: resources, student accountability, framing, skill building &amp; educational support, accessibility for low income students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship (for credit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central office or through departments; varying hour required for number of units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing courses with service or experiential learning reqs. Varying hours required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring UV Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small stipend as incentive, may be a barrier for low-income; Or payment through work-study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less commitment; retention challenging; supervision, convening, reflection through UV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 3: Recruiting UV Students to the Program (Choose 1 or both)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to outreach and attract college students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerations: Need for students with former experience or course work, department restrictions with for credit-internships, timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment across the University; public service programs; former farms and garden community; tabling, flying, specific courses, newsletters, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment through major &amp; departments: sustainable ag, nutrition, food systems, school of education, public health, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 4: Mentoring Interns (Choose 1 or multiple)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training and support for students. Through professors, UV staff, SD staff. Individually and/or with cohorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerations: Capacity of UV and SD; cohort community building; necessary training and support for learning process and accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual with SD Mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day to day supervision in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort with Staff or UV Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular meetings, journal entries, final reflection or deliverable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Field Cohort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In field supervision and training by UV or non-profit staff with or without SD staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 5: Assessing Program Impact (Choose 1 or multiple)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating the benefits and impact for the SD programs and students and for the interns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerations: Staff time for routine check-ins, etc., accountability for interns and supervisors to complete assessment, metrics,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Reflections &amp; Self-Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interns complete weekly reflections, self-tracking and self-assessments; mentors evaluate based on a rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort Meeting Group Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group reflections during intern cohort meetings and/or post-activity discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys for student interns and site mentors to evaluate intern and mentor performance and impact of the program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program Overviews

UC Davis Student Farm
The UC Davis school garden internship program is offered through the Student Farm, which hosts a number of experiential learning opportunities in food and agriculture. The school garden program is the first off-campus internship program undertaken by the Student Farm. Students who are interested in participating in school garden internships are encouraged to first enroll in the Garden and Farm-based Experiential Education Methods course taught by permanent staff at the Student Farm; they can then participate in one quarter of guiding field trips for children on site at the Student Farm. The course provides an introduction to elementary education, the Next Generation Science Standards, and a general understanding of how to use the garden as an educational tool. Students who have not taken the course but want to participate can be accepted into the school garden program internship if they have had experience working with youth. Most students sign up for one unit per quarter, though they are allowed to register for multiple units; each unit requires 30 total hours over the ten-week academic quarter. Students are supervised on-site by the partner organization which manages the school garden. The internship program matches the students with the best partner organization, with placement determined by the needs of the organization, intern skill sets, and travel and scheduling considerations. More information can be found at [http://asi.ucdavis.edu/programs/sf](http://asi.ucdavis.edu/programs/sf).

Life Lab at UCSC - Watsonville School Garden Program
The Watsonville School Garden Crew engages UCSC undergraduates in a weekly visit to the Watsonville Elementary School gardens. Interns involved in this program may receive two credits through the Environmental Studies Internship Office or other departments. Supervised by staff from the UCSC Life Lab, which designs and promotes experiential learning opportunities in the garden, students work with classes in third through fifth grade to take on seasonal garden caretaking tasks. Additionally, Garden Crew members take on special maintenance projects. Interns work one five-hour day per week for a ten-week quarter. Life Lab provides van transportation from UCSC to partner schools. More information about this program is available online at [www.lifelab.org/school-garden-crew](http://www.lifelab.org/school-garden-crew).

UC Berkeley - Berkeley Unified School District Garden and Nutrition Program
Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) has an established district-wide program that incorporates hands-on, interdisciplinary, experiential education in seventeen school gardens and four kitchen classrooms, from preschool through high school. This program is woven into academic standards, Common Core, and Next Generation Science, with a developed curriculum that is administered across schools. The BUSD Program is managed by a full-time staff program supervisor and garden and nutrition managers operating out of each of the schools to maintain garden and kitchen facilities and teach regular classes. The UC Berkeley-BUSD internship program enables UC Berkeley students to attain course credit for supporting designated garden or nutrition mentors in BUSD schools. Because of the strength and structure of the existing BUSD Program, the internship program largely acts to bridge the gap between the university and BUSD, and serves to provide both additional support and labor to BUSD programs and a hands-on learning and community engagement opportunity for UC Berkeley students. Details about this program can be found at [www.berkeleyschools.net/gcp/](http://www.berkeleyschools.net/gcp/).
Pedagogy

All three campuses have drawn from best practices in experiential learning, where emphasis is placed on both the experience itself and the opportunity to reflect on that experience and integrate new skills and knowledge. High-quality mentorship is critical to this process. Without it, students can fail and host sites can bear too great a responsibility; this can erode rather than build strong relationships between universities and communities.

While each campus structures mentorship in different ways, the ratio of mentor to student remains low across all programs. Furthermore, students are able to connect with peers who are also working in school gardens, receiving perspective and guidance throughout the experience thanks to a cohort model emphasizing peer-to-peer learning opportunities. In the school gardens, students also have opportunities to develop their capacity to teach and lead others which builds a sense of ownership that supports better student learning outcomes.
Getting Started

Connecting to University Students
There are various paths that undergraduates take to end up working in local school garden programs. A university campus often has a number of options available to connect undergraduates to and provide incentives for opportunities at local school gardening programs.

**Internships**
Most universities and colleges manage some sort of internship listings. Some university academic departments manage their own internship offices. Different amounts of internship units are earned by completing a set number of hours. There are often lower or upper-division unit internships that are dependent on the amount or level of work needed to be completed. Many majors, including the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems major at UC Davis, require internship units which can be conducted both on campus and elsewhere in the community.

**Class Placements and Service Learning**
University classes with experiential or service learning components are an excellent fit for engagement opportunities in school gardens. Education, environmental education, social and food justice, science education, nutrition and dietary studies, agriculture education, and landscaping are examples of university class subjects that pair well with school garden placements in cases where a practicum is required. Some colleges also require service learning hours for all of their undergraduates.

**Hiring University Students**
When a school garden or support organization has funds to hire university students, it provides one of the most straightforward means to engage an undergraduate in local school garden work. Campus career centers should be able to provide information on how best to post positions.

When funds are limited, the Federal Work-Study Program provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need. The Work-Study Program will pay half the hourly wage of such students employed at community-based programs and at educational institutions, leaving the host program to cover the other half of the student employee wage. This program is often available only during the school year, and is not covered during the summer; more information should be available at any university career center.

**Volunteers**
Not all university students need to gain credit for their service. Recruiting volunteers for school garden support should not be overlooked. Although, when considering working with volunteers note that the lack of incentives, such as earning class credit or fulfilling a class placement, may lead your volunteer to be less motivated and possibly not complete the full term. Connecting with student volunteer centers or student groups that provide community service can be beneficial when looking for larger groups of volunteers for special events and workdays.
Recruitment Strategies Case Studies

**UC Davis Student Farm**

Our hope for the first year of the school garden internship program was to attract students with demonstrated interest in garden-based education and, ideally, some experience. Given that each school garden site has a unique structure and level of support, it seemed important for students to have some background to help them make the most of the internship. Our first efforts to recruit students in the program focused on outreach to students who had completed student farm internships at our Ecological Garden as well as students who had participated in the Kids in the Garden program, a two-quarter class and internship series that teaches students to lead garden-based activities for school groups. We also did some outreach to the larger community of students studying sustainable agriculture at UC Davis. Not surprisingly, the most successful early recruitment occurred from the garden-based programs mentioned above. It's also important to note that the Student Farm specifically works on outreach and recruitment with students of diverse backgrounds, particularly students who have been underrepresented at student farms and in agriculture education. As we move into our second year of recruitment, we have had success among nutrition majors, even though these students don’t typically have previous garden or farm experience.

**Life Lab at UCSC - Watsonville School Garden Program**

Santa Cruz County has strong elementary school garden culture, but the south county region is underrepresented in garden programming. UCSC is situated in the northern part of the county near the stronger school garden programs. Life Lab recruits UCSC interns and provides transportation to connect higher need garden programs with eager and interested undergraduates. Interns receive two credits for six hours of service per week. Life Lab has a popular garden educator internship program at the Life Lab Garden Classroom located on the UCSC Farm. Getting undergraduates to commit to internships 15-20 miles away is more challenging, so it has implemented new recruitment strategies, including:

- Facebook posts via campus groups
- Direct outreach to classes that have placement requirements/opportunities
- Posting in the Environmental Studies internship office
- Tabling at campus quad
- Tabling at Fall Festival
- Class visits
- Communications to past Life Lab interns
- Bus stop flyering on campus.

The Life Lab Internship Recruitment Page can be found at [http://www.lifelab.org/internships](http://www.lifelab.org/internships).

**UC Berkeley - Berkeley Unified School District Garden and Nutrition Program**

Student interns are currently able to receive academic credit through two field study courses in the School of Education and the Food Systems Minor in the College of Natural Resources. Recruitment for this pilot year has focused on direct recruitment to School of Education field study students, recruitment via the Berkeley Food Network Student Opportunities Newsletter and the School of Education newsletter. These outreach avenues were sufficient in attracting more qualified applicants than we were able to offer positions for. Because of timing and interest we had significantly more applicants from the Food Systems Minor than the School of Education. In the future we want to increase outreach to more diverse communities on campus via field study opportunities in other departments. For more information, reference this [BUSD Outreach flyer](#).
Recruiting Tips
If you are looking to recruit undergraduates to work in school gardens, start with a specific description of your school garden placement, including what the internship will entail, when and where it will take place, and how to apply and earn university credit. See [www.lifelab.org/internships](http://www.lifelab.org/internships) for examples of Life Lab internship descriptions.

The following are suggested methods to promote school garden placement opportunities:

- Campus tabling and flyering
- Class announcements conducted the term prior to the placement term
- Social media posting - encourage past interns to share via their networks
- Department student list-serves
- Campus radio station PSA or other promotions
- Campus newspaper
- Inquire with class instructors that offer practicums
- Conduct campus internship office presentations
- Ask current university students for their suggestions of the best ways to share your placement opportunities

Creating Local School and Program Partnerships

Regulations for Working in Public Schools
School districts may have particular regulations for volunteers or interns to work with children. Criminal background checks and Tuberculosis testing are common requirements that districts may have. Consult with a school principal or district office to learn more about volunteering on school campuses. If the district you are partnering with does have particular requirements make sure to communicate these requirements to the university students you are recruiting. Make it clear to your interns if you will be reimbursing them for costs associated with background checks or TB testing.

Relationship Building
UC Davis holds an end of school year partner gathering. The meeting brings together the UC Davis team and those working directly with students at school sites - Yolo Farm to Fork and Soil Born Farms. The goals of the meeting are to do an in-person debrief of the internship program over the school year and to show appreciation to our partners for providing students with experiential learning opportunities. During the meeting, the program and goals for student interns were discussed. The discussion centered around importance for students to have experiential learning opportunities which allow them to implement and build upon their life and educational knowledge. Partners are able to share an overview of their programs and their internship needs. UC Davis uses this information to enhance recruitment efforts the following year. The meeting also allows partners to connect with each other and share program experiences with each other such as how to pay intern travel stipends or how to get a district on board with garden curriculum.
Mentoring Students and Program Management

Off-Campus School Garden Internship Programs at UC Davis, UC Berkeley, and UC Santa Cruz each provide a central point of contact for student interns and community partners that support school gardens to connect to one another. Partners work with one group on each UC campus in order to recruit interns from many majors who all undergo the same program mentorship and fulfill the same coursework requirements. University students work with school garden support partners who have agreed to support the learning objectives of the campus program. Our programs all aim to provide valuable experiential learning experiences for university students that include important steps such as goal setting, cohort collaboration, constructive feedback, and reflection.

Each campus begins recruiting interns in the weeks prior to the quarter/semester start. Internship recruitment on each campus is done by posting internships on various major and internship listservs. During this time, campuses also work with their community partners to identify the intern needs they have for the upcoming term. Interns who meet the partner’s needs are selected to interview with the partner if required, or simply matched with no interview. The student is then oriented into the program from the campus perspective—this looks slightly different on each campus.

Depending on your circumstances you may decide to provide mileage or transportation reimbursements to students that have to travel long distances for their internship.

Case Studies

**UC Davis Student Farm**

Students begin their internship with a brief program orientation with the School Garden Coordinator. Ideally, this meeting occurs prior to the quarter start. This goal of this meeting is to meet face to face with the student and discuss how the program works, share the expectations and hour requirements, answer questions, finalize partner placement, and address concerns.

Students are given access to a Google Drive folder with various educational materials, songs, and activities that are useful in the garden, and are encouraged to use this folder to share materials with each other. Materials are then shared with the next cohort. Because students are generally placed at different schools, it can be hard for them to share experiences with each other regularly; the Google Drive folder allows the cohort to stay connected to each other. Students also attend two cohort meetings throughout the quarter. By coming together in person, students are able to collaborate, share experiences, and gain insights.

Students who are new to school gardens write weekly reflections. Reflections are used as a guide to understand the student’s exposure to experiential learning opportunities. The School Garden Internship Coordinator reads and responds to these reflections. This is a main way for students and the Student Farm to have a continuous dialogue about the experiences happening in the field.

Students are also mentored by school garden support partners: Davis Farm to School, Yolo Farm to Fork, and Soil Born Farms. These partners work directly with students in a school garden. After a quarter to two working with the same partner, the student and partner may elect to have the student work independently with some classes in the garden.

Students who enroll in additional quarters may elect to continue with the same partner or try a new one. Staying with one partner is positive for all parties, especially the youth who become attached to their garden teachers. However, it’s also advantageous to switch partners for students who want to experience working with various school environments, school philosophies, community needs, and/or grade levels.
Life Lab at UCSC - Watsonville School Garden Program

Life Lab manages various internship programs that engage undergraduates in farm- and garden-based learning. Internship recruitment efforts are done collaboratively among programs. Due to the variability of program types each program manages its own training and mentorship of interns.

In the Watsonville School Garden Crew one Life Lab staff is in charge of scheduling third through fifth grade classes to participate in garden caretaking tasks. On the first day there is a brief orientation, a visit to the district office to fingerprint interns and a visit to school garden.

Brief instruction is provided to the interns before the school students arrive to the garden. Once the students arrive an intern or pairs of interns take a small group of students through the garden activity planned for the day. The “learning by doing” method is the main method of instruction for the university interns. On some days fewer classes visit and the focus is on adult garden tasks that are less conducive to whole class engagement.

Seasonally-appropriate garden caretaking tasks are performed throughout the year. In the Winter/Spring focus is on fruit tree care (fertilizing and mulching), weeding, seed sowing and transplanting. In the Fall/Winter focus is on composting, cover cropping and transplanting. Garden caretaker activity sheets that were created for Garden Crew Caretaking days are available at www.lifelab.org/caretaker-activities.

UC Berkeley - Berkeley Unified School District Garden and Nutrition Program

The outreach and student application process for this program begins one month before the start of the semester. During the application review process, the UCB supervisor and BUSD supervisor screen applications, while the BUSD supervisor identifies garden or kitchen managers in need of an intern and how many total interns are needed. Managers have access to all applications, and select their top choice for an informal phone interview, to discuss scheduling and logistics, and to offer the position as appropriate.

Once students have been hired, the onboarding process takes between two and four weeks. New hires must undergo fingerprinting (these costs are covered by UC Berkeley), along with a tuberculosis test through the UC Berkeley health center. Students then enroll in field study courses for one or two credits, with each credit requiring 45 hours of work per semester. They must also attend an orientation session with all interns and program managers; this session requires students to formalize their commitment to the position by signing a contract, and provides a networking opportunity among program participants.

The program manager oversees student interns directly, while the BUSD program manager and UCB supervisor serve as backup support to troubleshoot any problems that arise. Students must attend meetings with peers interning at other programs, complete reflection papers, and otherwise satisfy the requirements of their field study course. They must also complete the required hours by the end of the semester. Students submit monthly timesheets, and fill out evaluation surveys at the end of their internship experience. There are efforts underway to utilize some material from student reflection to draft blog posts and other materials that can help the next group of incoming interns with their onboarding experience. A closing session with all managers and interns in attendance provides a final opportunity for participants to complete the program, reflect collectively, and provide feedback. More information about the program can be found at https://www.berkeleyschools.net/gcp/.
## Program Management Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UC Davis</th>
<th>UC Berkeley</th>
<th>UC Santa Cruz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Program</strong></td>
<td>Student Farm</td>
<td>Berkeley Food Institute</td>
<td>Farm / Life Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Partners</strong></td>
<td>Yolo Farm to Fork,</td>
<td>Berkeley Unified School District Garden and</td>
<td>Pajaro Valley Unified School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Davis Farm to School, Soil Born Farms</td>
<td>Nutrition Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students Earn Units</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students Earn Stipends</strong></td>
<td>Yes - $150-$300 per quarter Amount depends on distance traveled</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students Receive Training?</strong></td>
<td>Students receive regular support from School Garden Internship coordinator throughout the quarter. Students are given lessons, games, and activity guides for use in the internship. Students are also supported on-site by the partner.</td>
<td>Students receive training and support from the school garden or kitchen manager they work with during the semester. UCB program supervisor is available as a backup for troubleshooting problems in the internship.</td>
<td>Students received ongoing support and training from Life Lab staff who attend all Garden Crew days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written Reflections Required?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Weekly reflections turned into School Garden Coordinator at Student Farm</td>
<td>Yes. In accordance with the major requirements of the student</td>
<td>No. Not by Life Lab, but some academic placements may require.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohort Meetings</strong></td>
<td>Yes - Week 2 and Week 6</td>
<td>Yes - In accordance with the major requirements of the student</td>
<td>Yes - Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>End of program evaluation for students and partners</strong></td>
<td>Had a partner meeting at end of year. Working on student evaluations for next school year.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment

Assessment is a general term for what happens when we get curious about how things are going and how we try to gather data that might improve them. Because internships are usually pass/fail units, we don’t focus our assessment efforts on grades but on the quality of students’ experiences and their overall learning outcomes.

Each campus has pursued different assessment strategies as their interests and program needs are varied. UC Davis is in the process of a large effort to document student learning outcomes, so its assessment strategies focused on formal ways to capture this information from student work. UC Berkeley focused on assessing the program itself, surveying students and partners on their experience. UC Santa Cruz had the most hands-on model with regard to mentorship with students directly supervised by Life Lab staff at all times, allowing opportunities for informal assessment each time students worked in the field, usually in the form of conversations while traveling to and from school garden sites and in post-activity discussions.

Creating a Mentoring Environment

When assessment is used to capture information about student learning that is still in process, we refer to it as formative. The most effective formative assessments for our programs have been the most straightforward—simply ask students how things are going. Check-in conversations, whether they are conducted at the end of a work session, or at a separate meeting, are a rich source of information on student experience that can be structured as much or as little as is helpful. They also offer students an opportunity to be partners in their own learning, by offering reflections on their own growth and development and surfacing concerns or suggestions about how their internship experience could be improved.

Summative assessment is, as it sounds, a summary of what the student has learned, usually employed at the end of an experience or some sub-unit of the overall experience. Summative assessments can generate information used for grading but also for understanding what a student has learned in a more qualitative way.

All three programs use conversations with students as the primary mode of formative assessment. Summative assessments are implemented to varying degrees across each campus. Here’s an example of how UC Davis is approaching this task.

Assessment Snapshot

At UC Davis, program staff have piloted a rubric tool for reviewing students’ written reflections. This tool aligns with larger curriculum goals for all interns supported by the Student Farm so we can determine whether all students are engaging in learning that is commensurate with intended outcomes.
Rubric Development Process

Staff read all interns’ written reflections over a quarter and compile a list of common themes that surface in the student work. They subsequently cross-reference those themes with a curriculum map that contained objectives and outcomes for all student internships. In keeping with a grounded theory approach, those themes both referenced by students and aligned to the curriculum map served to form the basis of the reading rubric that we are piloting.

Program Assessment

In addition to assessing student learning, each program is developing ways to capture feedback and lessons learned that will help move the program forward in future iterations.

- UC Berkeley has the most formalized process, in which student interns and BUSD managers are each asked to complete surveys specific to their roles. This is in addition to informal feedback received at the last intern-manager meeting.
- UC Santa Cruz undertakes an internal review where staff discuss what’s working in the program and what could be improved.
- UC Davis holds an end-of-year meeting with community partners to hear feedback and also solicits input from student interns at check-in meetings during the quarter.
Resources

400 Interns and Counting: Working with Interns at the Life Lab Garden Classroom Tips and Insight on Running Internships
Reflection on an Internship by Past Life Lab Intern
Life Lab’s Internship Training Manual (2012 Version)

School Garden Program Assessment Tools

The GREEN Tool: For Well Integrated School Gardens
From Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy at Teachers College Columbia University
This research brief describes the GREEN (Garden Resources, Education, and Environment Nexus) Tool - a practical, flexible, evidence-based tool designed to help gardens grow deep roots in schools.

Cornell Garden-Based Learning Evaluation Toolkit
From Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Easy to use guidance, aimed at the educator with minimum experience with evaluation, for purposes of program improvement and documentation.

Using Evaluation to More Your Program in to the Next Level
From Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy at Teachers College Columbia University
The guide walks participants through basic program evaluation methods giving them the tools to assess the effectiveness of their program, and includes activity sheets.

The Value of Garden-Based Learning

Benefits for Gardening With Children from the University of Colorado
Why School Gardens? from Slow Food USA
The Value of School gardens compiled by Life Lab

Other University - School Garden Programs

The University of Arizona’s Community and School Garden Program (CSGP) connects Tucson educators and community organizations with university students eager to participate in the school garden movement occurring throughout the country. University student interns are matched with low-income school and community placement sites where they support the installation, development and maintenance of a garden program.