

Berkeley Food Institute

Cultivating Diversity, Justice, Resilience & Health

Summary of Programs and Update of Activities, 2013-2014

June 2014

Food is a catalyst, bringing many people and disciplines together in efforts to address critical social, environmental, and economic problems tied to food and agriculture systems. At the University of California, Berkeley, there is a remarkable surge of interest in cultivating sustainability in all parts of the food system, through research, education, and links to policy. The College of Natural Resources (CNR), the Goldman School of Public Policy, the Graduate School of Journalism, Berkeley Law, and the School of Public Health joined together in Fall 2012 to found the Berkeley Food Institute (BFI), launching officially in Spring 2013. This is a brief summary of BFI's strategies, programs, and achievements during our first year to date.

Mission and Vision

Through a participatory strategic planning meeting in Fall 2013, BFI solidified its mission and vision, as the following:

- The Berkeley Food Institute works to catalyze and support transformative changes in food systems, to promote diversity, justice, resilience, and health, from the local to the global
- BFI envisions a world in which all people have access to nutritious and affordable food that is sustainably and justly produced – ensuring healthy people and a healthy planet

Main Strategies and Objectives

BFI creates and supports linkages between research, education, policy, practice, and social movements that pertain to the Institute's mission. The following are the main overlapping strategies, and objectives for each:

Research: Conduct and support research that is:

- Interdisciplinary and innovative
- Participatory and collaborative
- Actionable and methodologically robust
- Aimed to foster and strengthen sustainable and just food systems on local through global scales

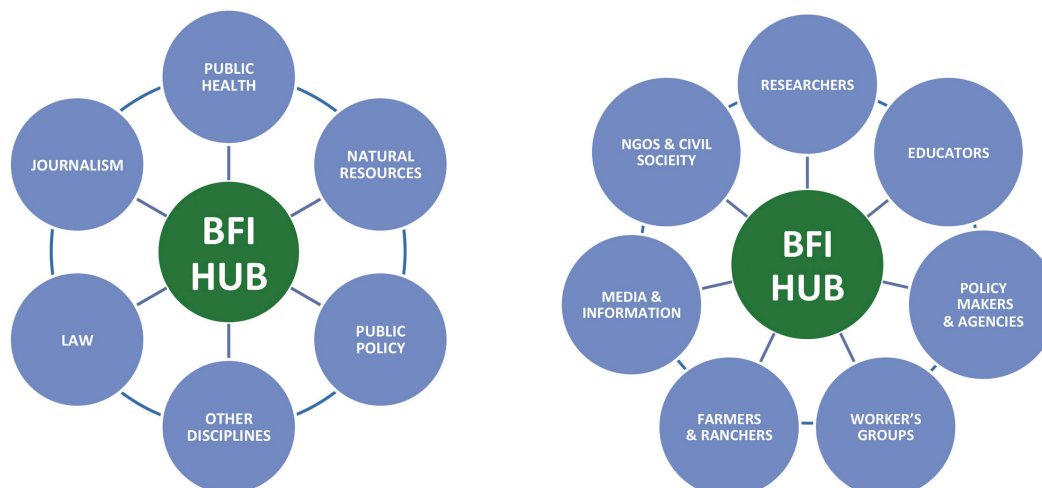
Education: Develop unique educational opportunities to advance knowledge and problem-solving in this field

Policy: Foster connections between research and policy, to communicate relevant scientific information to policy-makers and enable research to be effectively used by policy-makers on critical issues in food systems

Practice/Community: Collaborate and engage with community initiatives and innovative practitioners and public campaigns to support diverse, just, resilient, and healthy food systems

BFI as a Connector

The Berkeley Food Institute convenes many disciplines and schools at the University to facilitate dialogue, collaboration and problem-solving. BFI has **85 affiliated faculty and staff members** at UC Berkeley from many departments. These affiliates are participating in BFI program activities, and bring a wealth of expertise in this field. BFI is also forming valuable connections and interactions with many stakeholders off campus, at the local, state, national, and international levels, as noted later. BFI serves as a hub, facilitating **communication** among many groups, as illustrated below:



Main Thematic Areas and Expected Outcomes

- Health, labor, and justice
- Climate, agriculture, and natural resource use
- Agroecology and ecosystem services
- Governance, policy, and economics
- Urban farming and innovative business models

These themes in food systems both coincide with expertise existing at UC Berkeley and are crucial to affect policy and practice. BFI is also working to understand ways to accelerate the transition of food systems to become diverse, just, resilient, and healthy, by linking research to education, policy change, and problem-solving.

Health is recognized as a central thread, since food systems interact with the health of individuals, society, the economy, farms, climate and planet. In all of these areas, BFI aims for outcomes to support transformational change.



What Makes BFI Distinct?

Compared to other existing food institutes and centers, BFI offers: a) A comprehensive systems approach to our themes, connecting many different disciplines and people that are required to effect change; b) The ability to leverage enormous capacities at the University of California; c) Location in the San Francisco Bay area, an epicenter of innovation in this field; d) A full integration of health into our work, as noted above, and; e) A focus on crucial issues of justice and labor and other social and policy dimensions of food system, which are often overlooked.

Programs and Progress, May 2013 – May 2014

The table below lists programs that BFI has undertaken in the past year – indicated in green colored rows – which will be continued and expanded in future years. Blue colored rows indicate new activities that will be developed as the institute grows. The headings for the table show the main, interrelated strategies, and communication cross-cuts all programs.

PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES:			
POLICY	RESEARCH	EDUCATION	PRACTICE – PUBLIC
Grants for interdisciplinary action-oriented research; integrate research into policy agenda, outreach, and practice/action; expand grant program to scale up influence			
BFI symposia and action-oriented workshops for researchers, educators, policy makers, and community on timely topics like Food Policy (SNAP) and social movements with practitioners; link to policy issues			
Visiting Fellows Program; Faculty Seminars			
		Food Exchange Series	
		Edible Education Course	Growing Green Awards
		Collaboration with national and international forums and policy initiatives on food system change	
		Develop Food Systems Undergraduate Minor	
Policy Program: two-way linking of BFI/UC Berkeley research to policy makers; produce policy briefs			
Supportive role in development of an Urban Agro-Ecology Center			
		Internship Program in Food Systems; connection to Food Systems Undergraduate Minor	
		Support Grad Student Fellowships	Support Student Groups' activities (small grants)

Organizational Development and Communications

Below are highlights of organizational development and communications:

Executive Committee and Team-building: In 2012, BFI selected two Faculty Co-Directors – Claire Kremen and Alastair Iles – and established an Executive Committee comprised of members from the partnering colleges and schools, and founding donors, i.e., Bob Epstein of the Epstein/Roth Foundation and Sarah Bell of 11th Hour. The Executive Committee met monthly to begin to identify programs and to identify the institute name and aims. L. Ann Thrupp was hired as the Executive Director in September 2013. Graduate student Nora Gilbert became the Program Coordinator, and Rosalie Z. Fanshel began as Administrative Coordinator in January 2014.

Inaugural Symposium: BFI organized a major symposium in May 2013 that was attended by 170 people, including faculty members, renowned international experts, and stakeholders from multiple sectors. This symposium helped clarify major challenges and opportunities in food systems, and provided input for identifying BFI's research and policy priorities.

Strategic Development and Planning: BFI held a successful strategic planning meeting in November 2013, with participation of the majority of the Executive committee, staff, selected colleagues from UC Berkeley, and a facilitator. The results of this session helped to develop the strategic plan and direction for BFI for 2014–2017.

Affiliated Faculty and Staff: 85 members of the faculty and staff have become affiliates of the Berkeley Food Institute. These affiliates represent a diversity of fields, departments, and schools, and are conducting work related to food and agriculture systems. BFI is inclusive in its approach, and affiliation is open to any faculty or staff in this field. BFI sends affiliates regular news and announcements of grant opportunities, invites them to participate in events, and encourages information exchange and collaboration through faculty seminars and other means.

Website and Social Media: BFI launched its website in September 2013, and continually improves the site by incorporating more content, affiliates, events, and program information. We established a Facebook page and Twitter handle in Fall 2013.

Link to UC Food Initiative: BFI has participated in the discussions of the University of California Food Initiative, which is a new initiative launched by the UC Office of the President in February 2014. BFI is collaborating with the Chancellor's office representative, Dean Keith Gilles of CNR, and others on campus to develop a proposal for advancing progress in sustainable food systems, and communicate our interests and involvement in food systems.

Other Communications: BFI has developed an extensive list of contacts, which includes UC Berkeley people and a diversity of relevant stakeholders. We continually add more names to this contact list, send out regular newsletters, and have designed communication tools and program summaries. BFI does on-going outreach among many people on campus and in the community, and is developing a logo and Customer Relationship Management System in Spring 2014.

BFI Executive Committee*

Sarah Bell – Program Manager, 11th Hour Project, Schmidt Family Foundation

Henry Brady – Dean and Professor of Political Science and Public Policy, Goldman School of Public Policy

Edwin Dobb – Carnegie Lecturer, Knight Program in Science and Environmental Journalism, Graduate School of Journalism

Annette Doornbos – Assistant Dean for External Relations and Development, Goldman School of Public Policy

Maria Echaveste – Policy and Program Director, Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy

Bob Epstein – Co-Founder, E2; Co-Founder and Former EVP, Sybase; Advisory Board, Goldman School of Public Policy

Christy Getz – Assistant Cooperative Extension Specialist, College of Natural Resources

Nora Gilbert – Program Coordinator, BFI, Dual Masters Student, School of Public Health and Department of City and Regional Planning

J. Keith Gilles – Dean of College of Natural Resources; Professor, Environmental Science, Policy and Management and Agricultural Resource Economics

Alastair Iles – Professor, Environmental Science, Policy, and Management; Faculty Co-Director, BFI

Claire Kremen – Professor, Environmental Science, Policy, and Management; Faculty Co-Director, BFI

Barbara Lاراia – Associate Professor, School of Public Health

Kathryn Moriarty-Baldwin – Assistant Dean, Development and Public Information, College of Natural Resources

Michael Pollan – John S. and James L. Knight Professor of Journalism, Graduate School of Journalism; Director, Knight Program in Science and Environmental Journalism

L. Ann Thrupp – Executive Director, BFI

*All of the committee members are at UC Berkeley except Sarah Bell & Bob Epstein

BFI Staff

Faculty Co-Directors: Alastair Iles & Claire Kremen

Executive Director: L. Ann Thrupp

Administrative Coordinator: Rosalie Z. Fanshel

Program Coordinator (Student): Nora Gilbert

Work Study Student: Stella Kim

Research Progress

Seeding Collaborative Change-oriented Research: In Fall 2013 BFI developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide small seed grants for funding for action-oriented research in food/agriculture systems. The RFP was circulated to all faculty across campus. The criteria for selection emphasized inter-disciplinarity and innovation, collaboration among departments or stakeholders, and strong potential to affect policy or practice, aligned with the BFI mission. BFI formed a selection committee of seven people, including two external experts, and conducted a systematic review process. BFI was pleased to receive 24 high-quality proposals from diverse researchers from 13 departments. The committee selected five excellent proposals to receive initial small grants in 2014–2015:

- Food stamp policy (SNAP) reforms and potential restrictions, related to health and nutrition (\$15,000)
- Survey of urban farms to address critical agroecological problems (\$9,000)
- Increasing access to nutritious food sources through urban foraging (\$25,000)
- Using a human rights approach to overcome labor injustices in the food industry (\$20,000)
- Participatory mapping with farmworker and farmer families in Salinas (\$20,000)

BFI is seeking funding to support additional strong research projects tied to the mission.

Visiting Scholars and Research Approaches on Transitions to Sustainable and Just Food Systems: BFI attracted two visiting scholars to the Institute for 2013–2014: Olivier de Schutter, Special Rapporteur to the Right to Food, United Nations; and Saru Jayaraman, Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC-United) and Director of the Food Labor Research Center at UC Berkeley. Both taught excellent classes and faculty seminars and are actively involved in initiatives that are achieving policy change in food systems. The seminars contributed to plans for future research.

Diversified Farming Systems Research: BFI collaborates with and co-hosts an interdisciplinary working group on Diversified Farming Systems among faculty and students researching the multiple ecological and socioeconomic benefits of diverse farming approaches in agroecosystems. This group is making large strides in developing and implementing two comprehensive research projects that exemplify the link between research and policy/practice:

- Effects of food safety scares and regulations on biodiversity, ecosystem services, and livelihoods
- Quantifying a suite of farming practices on ecosystem services and economics, aimed to inform growers about costs, benefits, and trade-offs of the approaches

Education Progress

Inventory at UC Berkeley Courses Related to Food Systems: BFI did an inventory of courses related to food and agriculture systems offered at UC Berkeley, documenting over 90 courses, which are posted on the BFI website. This serves as an excellent resource for students, faculty, and prospective students.

Monthly Food Exchange Series: Held monthly from September 2013 to May 2014, the Food Exchange Series featured Berkeley faculty and external experts who discussed key issues such as climate change and farming, the right to food, pesticides, and labor and health issues. Each forum attracted 45–80 people, generated lively discussions, and earned positive evaluations.

Special Public Policy Event: BFI hosted former Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Kathleen Merrigan and Michael Pollan for a special presentation on the Future of the Food Movement for the Horace M. Albright lecture, November 14, 2013. Attended by more than 500 people, the public event was accompanied by a lively private reception for donors, policy-makers, invited faculty, and the Chancellor. Kathleen Merrigan's visit also included meetings with students, faculty, and BFI staff about food system change.

Edible Education Course: BFI co-sponsored a special course in Spring 2014 called Edible Education, led by Michael Pollan and Raj Patel, which was attended by 500 students and 200 community members every week. BFI collaborated with the Edible Schoolyard Foundation, Alice Waters, and Graduate School of Journalism to support the course and organize discussion groups.

Development of a Food Systems Minor: In response to escalating interest by students and faculty, BFI has taken a lead role in developing a undergraduate Food Systems Minor at UC Berkeley, that will enable students to get a comprehensive and well-founded educational program on critical social, ecological/biological and cultural issues related to food systems. BFI facilitates a committee of faculty, staff and students, who are collaboratively developing the proposal for the Minor. CNR is interested in housing the minor and the courses will be highly interdisciplinary. BFI began collaborative efforts to develop an urban agroecology program, linked to the Minor.

Student Interaction: There is enormous activity, enthusiasm, and knowledge among UC Berkeley students who want to pursue careers in food system transformation. BFI is interacting with students through meetings with student clubs, listing student resources on our website, and supporting educational events. BFI is expanding opportunities for student involvement through hiring graduate and undergraduate students into positions that support BFI's mission while providing unique career and educational opportunities for students.

Policy and Practice Progress

Identifying Prospects for Policy Influence: Executive Director L. Ann Thrupp has met with dozens of faculty members and stakeholders – including policy-makers, NGOs, and other scientists outside of UC Berkeley – to identify current or future research that has potential for informing policy-makers or influencing policy in food systems. BFI developed a survey to identify research needs in this field.

Building Connections with Stakeholders and Allies: BFI has also begun collaborations with organizations such as the Ecology Center, Union of Concerned Scientists, Institute for Trade and Agriculture Policy, California Climate and Agriculture Network, and relevant international groups, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, Sustainable Food Trust in the UK, ETH/World Food Systems Center in Switzerland, EAT Stockholm (an international coalition of organizations). We initiated conversations with directors of UC Santa Cruz' Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems program, UC Davis' Agricultural Sustainability Institute, and Stanford's Food Systems initiative, to discuss potential collaboration. These relationships can advance common interests in food systems changes.

Connections with Policy-makers: L. Ann Thrupp and Executive Committee member Barbara Laraia (School of Public Health) met with Speaker John Perez (D-Los Angeles), who is interested in addressing health problems associated with "food deserts." We provided information from UC Berkeley research that can help inform policy decision-making on this topic. BFI leaders also met with State Senators Mark DeSaulnier and Loni Hancock in January 2014 to learn about their interests and research needs on food policy issues, and to discuss potential for BFI to collaborate in this field. BFI was asked by the FAO to carry out a policy analysis of governmental leverage points for advancing national programs that support pollination and ecosystem services. Further connections with policy-makers at the state, federal, and global levels are being identified.

Growing Green Award Program: BFI is collaborating with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) for the implementation of the "Growing Green" Award program, which recognizes and awards national leaders in sustainable and just farming, food systems, education, and activism. BFI collaborated in the selection process and organization the award event in May 2014, which will include a fun "learning fair" at a reception to enable exchange of information.

Participation in Forums: BFI leaders have participated and spoken in many conferences and forums relevant to food systems. Topics/venues include: Climate and Agriculture, True Cost Accounting of Food, Public Health and Food Forum, Bioneers, California Academy of Sciences, and more.

Finances, Goals and Priorities for 2014–2015

Budget and Goals

Current budget = **\$645,000**

Accelerated goal for 2015–2016 = **\$1.4 million per year**

Larger aspiration for 2020 = **\$20 million endowment**

Priorities for 2014–15:

BFI will build upon successes of the first year, and continue to build programs, and focus on the following areas that deserve greater attention:

Policy: Hire a Policy Coordinator, create policy briefs, and communicate with policy-makers to ensure effective adoption of change. Much of the policy work will be aimed to address issues that desperately need more attention, including justice and equity in food systems, access to healthy and nutritious foods, ecosystem services, and participation of civil society and social movements in the transition to more sustainable agriculture.

Research: Increase seed grants to support unique research.

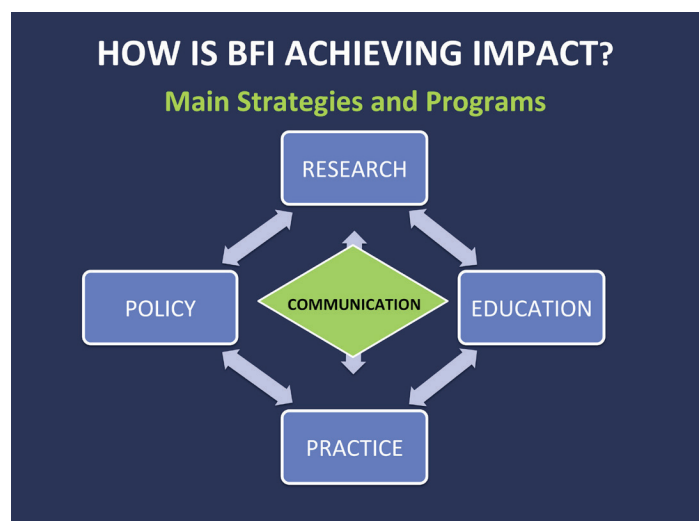
Education:

- Build the Food Systems Minor, which requires hiring a faculty coordinator for experiential learning
- Develop an internship program
- Support student fellowships
- Support unique classes and interactive forums involving community members and experts

Urban Agroecology Center/Program: for multiple purposes, including gardening and culinary program on campus for experiential learning, education, and research.

Practice: Continue to collaborate with NGOs such as IATP, NRDC, and others, to develop outreach and increase impact.

All of these priority activities are aimed to support change and innovation, and to foster sustainable, healthy, and just food systems.



Fundraising

BFI greatly appreciates the important contributions of our funders:

- The 11th Hour Project of the Schmidt Family Foundation
- The Epstein/Roth Foundation
- UC Berkeley Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research
- Heller Foundation
- UC Berkeley College of Natural Resources
- Debra and Reza Abbaszadeh
- Lynn Feintech and Tony Bernhardt
- Deborah and Robin Hicks
- Noelle Leca and Michael Moradzadeh
- Ali Partovi
- Richard and Beth Schnieders
- Silberstein Foundation
- Dana and Edward Slatkin
- Jennifer Solow and Tom Jacoby
- Local Initiatives Fund of RSF Social Finance
- Owsley Brown Family Foundation
- Lisa Holmes
- Organic Valley
- Annie's Inc
- Clif Bar Foundation
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- Anonymous

Several foundations have expressed considerable interest in BFI's plans. The UC Berkeley Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research has also offered to help identify government grant opportunities. BFI continues to explore new funding opportunities.

The BFI Team

Alastair Iles
Faculty Co-Director

Claire Kremen
Faculty Co-Director

L. Ann Thrupp
Executive Director



Rosalie Z. Fanshel
Administrative Coordinator

Nora Gilbert
Program Coordinator

Stella Kim
Work Study Student



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