UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

December 17, 2014
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And Justice for All

Aiming to forge collaborations and conversations about food justice across the state's college communities, a multicampus team of University of California staff members has created a first-of-its-kind conference to address the issue.

A project of the nascent UC Global Food Initiative, the inaugural California Higher Education Food Summit will be held from January 16–18 at UC Santa Barbara. The event, which is open to the public, is a joint effort of the UCSB Associated Students Food Bank, UC Santa Cruz's Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems and UC Berkeley's Centers for Educational Equity and Excellence.

"In three years servicing thousands of hungry students at the AS Food Bank, the fact that the need is always growing is indicative of larger issues students are dealing with, such as tuition, housing, medical and other living costs," said Tuyen Nguyen, food bank coordinator at UCSB. "The California Higher Education Food Summit is an important step toward change and resolving the problems that face our students, so they no longer have to choose between an education and food. This summit will provide an opportunity to learn from other campuses and community organizations how to better service our students and create a better food security model for UCSB and beyond."

The three-day gathering will bring together students, staff and faculty from UC, California State University and community college campuses with community and food agency leaders at large to examine the environmental, social and economic pressures creating barriers to food access, security and justice. With a full slate of

keynote talks, panel discussions and workshops, the summit's ultimate goals are to strengthen partnerships and share best practices to inform action.

"This inaugural forum provides an opportunity for the thinkers, doers and policymakers to come together and explore where our public higher education institutions currently are when it comes to supporting student food access and security and advancing relationships with our food and farming economies with just and sustainable practices, as well as examine how concepts of justice and equity are being engaged with inside and outside of the classroom," said summit co-organizer Tim Galarneau, a food systems education and research program specialist for UCSC's Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems. "It is our hope that the summit will serve as a catalyzing space for those working in the trenches of our public educational system on education and empowerment, student support services, budding aligned research and community partnerships, and re-envisioning the role of institutional policy to advance a just and sustainable food system."

The conference is being held under the umbrella of the broader UC Global Food Initiative (UCGFI), which is designed to coordinate the diverse resources of the University of California to help ensure adequate nutrition — starting with access to food — for all. Unveiled by UC President Janet Napolitano in July, the UCGFI will harness the system's collective excellence in research, outreach and operations in a sustained effort to develop, demonstrate and export solutions — throughout California, the U.S. and the world — for food security, health and sustainability.

For its part in the larger initiative, UCSB is a key player on systemwide committees looking at issues including sustainable farming practices, better enabling small growers to become suppliers, fisheries research, student food banks and more.

Registration is underway for the first-ever food summit, where sessions will examine the thematic areas of community engagement, activism and policy, and education and research — all in the context of food justice.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society.

All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.