

API Food Justice Service-Learning Program

Funding Proposal for Associated Students Inc.

Fiscal Year 2017-2018

Applicant Information:

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Project Abstract:

This fall the API Food Justice Service-Learning program is going to build a urban farm in at the Anna Bing Arnold Child Care Center. We are going to transform the upper yard above the school rooms to a garden that allows them to learn, grow, and play at the Anna Bing Arnold Children's Center. We have cultivated a relationship with several engineering student groups that will help build structures for this garden. Thus, taking service learning and community development to another level, our Food Justice class connects classroom students in the humanities to the sciences and to younger children as part of the larger CSULA community.

We would like to use this urban farming project as a springboard for Associated Students, Inc. to be more involved with the API Food Justice Service-Learning Program and other service-learning programs across campus. One of President Covino's goals when he joined us at Cal State LA was to introduce Service-Learning or Civic Learning programs across all disciplines. It is now the responsibility of the campus to ensure that the programs are properly implemented, and that cannot be done without the support of Associated Students, Inc. and its members.

Funding Request:

This proposal is a request for \$2000 to provide an interactive learning space and urban farm for the Anna Bing Arnold Child Care Center to enhance the children's nutrition education and to provide Cal State LA families with accessible and affordable healthy eating choices. Due to a lack of funding and resources, the parties involved, the Asian and Asian American Studies Program, engineering student groups, and the Anna Bing Arnold Child Care Center, are unable to equip the students with the proper tools and supplies to build the garden. Without funds, students taking part in this program will not be able to fully grasp the learning objectives of the course and the families of Cal State LA and the Anna Bing Arnold Child Care Center will not have a resource for affordable and accessible healthy produce.

We want to make the upper yard of the Anna Bing Arnold Child Care Center a place for learning, growth, and play. We want the space to be utilized not only as a garden, but as an outdoor classroom. We will be growing culturally relevant produce using sustainable farming methods, including drip irrigation and growing California Native Plants. The garden will be ADA compliant and accessible to students. In addition to a garden, we will be placing two climbing structures, three sets of stairs for upper yard access, benches, a chicken coop, and a shallow pond. These features will provide an adequate multi-purpose garden for the children of the Anna Bing Arnold Child Care Center to thrive.

The \$2000 will be used to supply the lumber needed to build the infrastructure including the climbing walls and garden boxes. The \$500 will be coming from the budgets of the Natural

and Social Sciences Representatives, the Health and Human Service Representatives, the Community and Campus Affairs Representatives, and the Environmental Affairs Commissioner for a total of \$2000. We have already agreed to the terms of the funding through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Other Sources of Funding:

We currently have received \$1000 from the Asian and Asian American Studies Program and \$1000 from the Anna Bing Arnold Child Care Center. Additionally, we plan on applying for a small grant offered by Educational Participation In Communities (EPIC). We are asking for donations and discounts from previous suppliers we are working with, but the budget provided below does not factor in potential grants and discounts.

Project Objectives:

Provide an Outdoor Space of the Children of Cal State LA's family to Learn, Grow and Play:

The space will be used as an outdoor, interactive classroom, a play area and a place to nurture the children's growth. When the children are tired of being cooped up in classroom, bringing them outdoors to experience nature and get a little more active than they would be indoors will help keep the children stimulated during childhood development. The children will share the duty of taking care of the plants and animals teaching them responsibility and compassion for nature. The engineering students, utilizing the unique slope in the landscape, will be building climbing structures, creating a safe way for the children utilize more of the space at the child care center while developing their motor skills.

Providing Nutritional + Environmental Education; Encouraging Healthy Dining:

Food insecurity is not defined as lack of access to food, but lack of access to resources that allow one to partake in a healthy lifestyle. In addition to providing culturally relevant produce, we also want the space and its produce to be used to enrich the children's health education. With access to the produce, the children and their families will be able to afford to eat healthy.

Strengthen Ties Between Service-Learning on Campus with Associated Students, Inc.:

With the implementation of the new upper division G.E. overlay requirements and President Covino's commitment to service, service-learning has become an integral part of the academic priorities on campus. Because service-learning requires extra resources and support, it is essential that all units on campus work together to ensure service-learning and community engagement projects are executed well and our students receive the full benefits of this pedagogical method.

For this project, I will be working with the Associated Students, Inc. College of Natural and Social Sciences Representatives, College of Health and Human Services College Representatives, the Campus and Community Representatives-at-Large, and the Environmental Commissioner. The NSS representatives would like to support service-learning in their college and encourage interdisciplinary learning in the college's service-learning classes, for the community garden project touches on topics in the social sciences, environmental sciences, engineering, and nutrition.

The representatives from the College of Health and Human Services would like to use the community garden at the Anna Bing Arnold Child Care Center to provide a community engagement opportunity for its nutrition students to teach health education workshops for the children at the center. Additionally, the Child Development students, who utilize the child care center for their research projects, will be able to develop unique research on introducing children to outdoor learning spaces and urban farming.

Two of the legislative goals of Associated Students, Inc. is to improve campus food security and its budget priorities. The Campus and Community Representatives-at-large will use this opportunity to inform students of food insecurity on campus and push for more funding on programs such as service-learning.

Community gardens are much better for the environment than large scale agriculture since smaller sized urban farms can implement more sustainable farming methods. Because the farms are local, transportation cost are reduced as well. This garden will be one of the first community gardens on campus and the Environmental Commissioner would like to support this unique service-learning project not only because of its environmental benefits, but also for its ability to set precedent and encourage sustainable practices, like community gardening, on campus.

Program Overview:

This class is the first of its kind in California. The class utilizes urban farming and community gardens as a pedagogical tool to educate Cal State LA students in Food Justice, the Body, and the Environment within API and the campus' surrounding communities. Over the course of the past two years, our Food Justice class has established two high gardens at Alhambra Unified School District (Alhambra High School and Mark Keppel High School) and gave seed money for the completion of Garvey Intermediate School (Garvey School District) garden. These garden openings were widely covered by China Daily newspaper, the largest Chinese language newspaper in southern California. Our food justice class has been instrumental in helping to transform communities throughout San Gabriel Valley by working with one garden, one school at a time model. Because of our limited budget, we have also received in kind donations for our work, helping to touch the lives of thousands of students in those schools. Moreover, these gardens are for every student as we have made them ADA compliant for special needs students ensuring that all students have equal access. As a service learning course, this means extending our learning outside of the classroom, building gardens with significant API communities in the immediate community in the San Gabriel Valley.

Program Objectives:

Strengthen Campus and Community Ties:

The API Food Justice Service-Learning Program has forged strong bonds with the local school districts, students, and families with past garden projects and will continue to create more. Many Cal State LA students are from the local communities. The API Food Justice Program allows students to apply the skills that they have obtained from studying at Cal State LA to benefit the communities they come from. We are not only serving the community, but the community is providing opportunities for our students to learn and grow as people. Through community engagement, students will be able to gain experiential knowledge, preparing them for life outside of school.

Use Urban Farming as a Pedagogical Tool in Social/Food Justice Education:

Designing and building an urban farm for and cooperating with Cal State LA's surrounding communities encourages students to reflect on a wide range of topics surrounding food justice in their own communities. Students need to be considerate of the different cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses and levels of ability of the surrounding communities when designing a garden to ensure it is financially sustainable and accessible for all. Additionally, students also need to keep in mind the environmental and ecological impacts of the garden and utilize sustainable farming techniques, such as drip irrigation, while also promoting sustainable practices to the families utilizing the garden. The work needed to create an urban farm fosters an intersectional approach to thoughts on food justice and food security by uncovering the inseparable roles of racial, economic and disabilities injustices in fueling food insecurity.

Address Community Food Insecurity through Urban Farming:

Service-Learning is a two-way street. While studying food justice, students actively address food insecurity by building community gardens at local schools. The students grow culturally relevant produce with eco-friendly farming methods. When they finish the project, the students provide a book of healthy and culturally relevant recipes to promote healthier eating in local communities.

Rationale:

Benefits to Cal State LA Students:

Service-Learning enriches learning by taking students outside of the traditional classroom setting and allows them to learn through experience and reflection. Being involved in the communities that they are studying will allow them to gain a deeper understanding of the issues at hand. Students will not only know of the issues, but will also be able to generate solutions to target these issues. Additionally, Service-Learning broadens the scope of knowledge flowing through a class by allowing for multiple "authorities" for knowledge to come from. Students will not just be learning from the teacher, but from other students' experiences, their community partners and the people they serve. This fosters a respect for other's talents, ways of learning, and backgrounds.

Service-Learning also aids in developing citizenship in students by creating a channel for students to become more connected to the communities that are around them. With voter turnout at an all-time low in Los Angeles and LA County at an 11.45% voter turnout, the city is in desperate need of civic education. Service-Learning makes students aware of the social issues by having them experience them first hand in the communities they work in. This experience will help produce informed voters for future elections.

Service-Learning improves student social skills by requiring them to work and communicate with diverse groups of people. Instead of smaller individual assignments, the main goal of a service learning project is to create something bigger together as a service to a community. This requires classmates to communicate with each other, with faculty, and the community more often in order to ensure everyone is on the same page and feedback can be given promptly. In this case, students are working with younger students and acting as mentors. Having this experience working with people outside of their peer group and taking on leadership roles will well prepare students for the work force.

Unlike volunteerism, Service-Learning gets rid of the power differential emphasizing reciprocity. A power differential is clearly in place with traditional volunteerism with a group

that has resources comes in to help those without. But with reciprocity, both sides are receiving benefits from the garden.

