Foodscapes is an experiential learning journey that incorporates culture, tradition, seed-to-plate systems thinking and regenerative food circles to create a holistic shift in the modern food paradigm to celebrate the rich diversity and interdependence of people, place and food.

With Chef Roger Feely’s Foodscapes Program at UCI, students, community members, faculty and staff were invited to come together for hands-on experiences to engage in and discuss food issues that start before the seed and go beyond the plate to:

- Shift understanding of food from a linear transactional relationship to a holistic, circular and regenerative integrated relationship.

- Explore how cooking, eating and sourcing choices affect the land, society and public health.

- Become encouraged to make healthy, informed food system choices from a holistic viewpoint that considers the plethora of elements involved with and affected by these decisions.
The Seed-to-Plate series created a “campus as a living lab” environment at University of California, Irvine to offer food-related experiential learning journeys focused on regenerative food and agriculture systems.

During his time at UC Irvine, Chef Roger Feely developed co-curricular sustainability education modules on health, nutrition and real food. These programs helped participants think critically about their beliefs and habits related to food systems, inviting them to explore a new culture around food that celebrates the deep interconnectedness of people in the California - Central American corridor.

“Food, good food can bring people together for good things to happen.”
~seed-to-plate participant
# Seed-to-Plate Workshops

## Summer Programs

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“The reality of our global food system helped me understand the intense interconnectivity of life and our existence here on earth.”

~drought-friendly cooking workshop participant
Winter Programs

November 20
The People’s Kitchen – Dine for a Cause
Twenty-two UCI and community participants came together to rethink the way we source ingredients, cook our meals and dine together. The theme for this workshop was “Decolonizing Foodways.” We prepared dishes using traditional cooking techniques practiced by the indigenous Peoples of the Americas using pre-colonial ingredients native to the Americas.

Our hands-on cooking experience was followed by Café Encuentro, our communal dinner discussion hosted and facilitated by Victor Becerra.

December 3
Cooking with Wild Foods
Twenty-nine UCI and community participants came together to learn about wild edible foods of Southern California. Dr. Peter Bowler hosted wild food explorer Pascal Baudar at the UCI Arboretum in the morning as participants learned how to identify and forage wild edible plants. The wild harvest was brought to the UCI ARC kitchen where eco-chef Roger Feely and wild foods chef Mia Wasilevich, along with Pascal guided the group through a hands-on cooking experience focused on sustainable cooking practices and waste management.

Creating an intergenerational round table, we invited youth from Santa Ana Kidzworkz to join participants in discussion at our Café Encuentro session, hosted and facilitated by Victor Becerra. The theme for this session was food waste.

One participant enjoyed “the easy to approach atmosphere (while covering) such a huge body of knowledge.” While another participant commented that “cooking with community will be a bigger part of my way of being.”

January 21
Part 1. Food Matters Lecture

Part 2. Reimagining Mexican Food
Participants explored the art of Mexican cuisine with guest chef Jaime Maldonado from La Victoria in San Francisco.

Part 3. Dine with Café Encuentro
Guests dined with Café Encuentro and participated in a dialog about immigrant foodways and place-making.

UCI Food Fellow Dhruti Pravin Khetani grinds heirloom blue corn in the “People’s Kitchen - Decolonizing Foodways” workshop, one of the Seed-to-Plate workshops held at UCI in 2015 that was open to student, staff, faculty and community members.

“I really liked the atmosphere and I think the idea of bonding and discussing over food is a great idea.”

~Seed-to-Plate / Cafe Encuentro participant, December 2015
Foodscapes El Salvador

As part of the SERES Communiversity International Immersion training program, Chef Roger Feely offers Foodscapes learning journeys for local youth and UCI participants of SERES Sustainability Leadership Facilitator Training (SLFT) Programs in Central America.

In June 2015, a Food Equity learning journey in Guatemala allowed SERES SLFT participants the opportunity to corral ingredients from three different sources, then collectively prepare a meal to be served over a facilitated discussion focused on food access, seed to table routes and the equity of our food systems.

Following this SLFT, two UCI students joined the SERES team for a SERES Communiversity Design Workshop where we used our Foodscapes lenses to plan for planting, maintaining and harvesting edible plants for a Foodscapes eco kitchen. We also toured the landscape and learned about the sources of many common kitchen staple ingredients like cinnamon and mango.

In July and August of 2015, following a SERES SLFT and Permaculture workshop in Papaturo, El Salvador, four UCI students joined a group of twelve local SERES youth for an intensive, four-day Foodscapes learning journey. Participants learned from village elders and local artisans and visited a cottage dairy farm, a permaculture center, a fishing village and a family run cocoa plantation. Participants milked cows, made cheese from scratch, harvested coconuts, crossed lake Suchitlan in fishing boats and harvested local honey. We stayed in homes with local families who are deeply involved in the foodways of their village. We processed corn we harvested using traditional Mayan processes and brought our corn to the local mill to prepare handmade tortillas and tamales.

“Before Foodscapes, I would be stuck on choosing between Chick-fil-A or McDonald's for my lunch for the day. Living and breathing the reality of food and nature in El Salvador brought a new clarity to me; an understanding that our market economy, which prioritizes access and convenience, has completely disregarded the receptivity of our natural environment and our human biology to the things we create.”

~UCI Social Ecology Student and Carbon Neutrality Initiative Fellow Cody Lee
Café Encuentro

Through the sharing of these stories, Foodscapes invites exploration into dialogue beyond the communal cooking experience via Café Encuentro, where we tackle topics that are often mistakenly considered to be black and white issues: sustainable agriculture, native and wild ingredients, traditional cooking techniques, food security, indigenous traditions...

Café Encuentro is an open table dinner discussion introduced by Victor Becerra and Roger Feely as a way to deepen the Seed-to-Plate experience by creating a space for participants to engage and share stories. “Here, we can move the conversation about food beyond personal to one focused on the connected, issues—such as poverty and access to healthy food, food production and environment-linked contamination—that people need to consider.” - Victor Becerra. Café Encuentro is held at the end of each Seed-to-Plate cooking session.

“Definitely looking at things in a new light after learning about colonization (of foodways).”

~ participant of the People’s Kitchen Cafe Encuentro workshop
On October 3, a group of sustainability student volunteers and chef Roger took Foodsapes to the Festival of Discovery to host drought friendly cooking demonstrations. We challenged the audience to think about sustainable food systems as we blended sauces in our pedal powered blender and demonstrated how to use drought friendly cooking techniques and ingredients in home kitchens.
As part of the Summer Institute for Sustainability Leadership, UCI students took part in Foodscape’s Seed-to-Plate Learning Journeys that allowed them to collect stories from different food sources which they shared over a meal cooked together with Chef Roger. The Foodscape themes of food access, food justice and equitable food systems were hot topics at the dinner discussions. Participants shared sustainable cooking and shopping techniques and offered plans of action to improve their personal and communal food habits.

Foodscape also provided programs and made meals using seasonal, local ingredients and regenerative cooking practices for many of the UCI Sustainability Initiative sponsored retreats from May 2015- January 2016.

“Thank you SO MUCH for a fantastic retreat. Everyone asks me how it was... I say it was one of the best things I’ve done.”
~Ryan Dowdy, Food Fellow, UC Davis, system wide retreat

“The food is always phenomenal and is an integral part of the program. The vision of a traditional form of community gathering is crystal clear thanks to my exposure to his work and philosophies.”
~Participant of Sustainability Leadership Training in San Francisco
Community Building

Community members and UCI students come together to work the land at the Arboretum for the Permaculture Native Forest Workshop with Fernando Maldonado and Juliet Norton.

“Food brings people together, and Roger's food methodologies are not only healthy for the body but are nourishing for the soul.”

UCI Housing Staff enjoy a Foodscape’s “Lunch and Learn” workshop on sustainable holiday cooking.

“At our best, institutions of higher education bring into the world people who are kind, thoughtful, inquisitive and analytic, who are open to new ideas and committed to the values of a peaceful, diverse, conversational community”
~ His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, speaking to UCI in 2015

Foodscapes fermentation and pickling Seed-to-Plate workshop at UCI.

UCI students collecting stories and sourcing produce at the SoCo Farmers’ Market as part of the Seed-to-Plate Food Equity Workshop in August.

Eco chef, food justice activist and cookbook author Bryant Terry visits Kevin Simonson’s UCI Aquaponic project.
“Food is a touchy issue in America and not many people are talking about it with this bigger picture in mind.”

“Chef Roger has really inspired me. I feel motivated to perform tasks that will improve my life and the lives of those who surround me.”

“I felt like I was actually eating from the earth for once, and not from the supermarket”

“(I liked) the generosity of all the presenters, the humor, the food, and all the new ideas”

“I loved the cultural foods and recipes that Roger introduced to the group. Not only cultural but also sustainable, minimal waste & wild food.”
Collaborators

Campus Collaborators
Fernando Maldonado
Dr. Peter Bowler
Victor Becerra
Rachel Harvey
UC Irvine Master Gardeners

Community Collaborators
Bryant Terry
Mia Wasilevich
Pascal Baudard
OC Food Access
Alegria Fresh Farm
Jami Cortez

Central America
SERES
IMAP Instituto de Permacultura Mesoamerica
IPES Instituto Permacultura El Salvador
Daniel Mejia, Celina Ramos
Don Daniel Sanchez, El Papaturro
Acknowledgements

The 2015 Seed-to-Plate Workshop Series by Foodscapes and the UCI Sustainability Initiative would like to thank the following folks and organizations:

**CENTRAL AMERICA**
Home of Doña Milagro Sanchez
Casa Mejia, Celina Ramos
Casa Recinas, Suchitoto
Don Victor Ruiz, El Milagro
Rony, Ramiro, Gregorio IMAP
Don Milton, Celina Ramos
Don Miguel Molino, Papaturro
Don Lorenzo Aviles, Papaturro
Erick Dan
La Casa de Mujeres, Suchitoto
SERES, Suchitoto
SERES, Guatemala
Daniel IPES, Suchitoto
Daniel Mejia, Suchitoto
Maria Elena de San Juan Obisbo

**USA**
Jessica VanRoo
Kimberly Serrano
Molly Schneider
Mo Sami
Carlos Salgado
Abby Reyes
Diana Loflin
Corrina Grace
Sally Geisler
Andrea Bell
UCI Global Sustainability Resource Center
UCI Community Gardens
Schools Without Borders
The Center for Living Peace
Anteater Recreation Center
Anonymous Donor