

SUMMARY REPORT

2016 UC Carbon Neutrality Initiative and Global Food Initiative
Fellows Sustainability Leadership Retreats



“I feel more open, powerful, and capable of effecting change.”

- Hannah Malan



Activity at southern retreat

OVERVIEW

What is transformation?

We seek deep and lasting fundamental change in our current systems and cultures towards sustainability and social justice. By teaching and modeling tools and practices of transformation, these programs aim to accelerate the shift to life-sustaining and just societies. UCI Sustainability Initiative and SERES design the content of these programs by drawing upon multiple sources including: Appreciative Inquiry and Design, Foodscapes, Movement Strategy Center, Play for Peace, Rockwood Leadership Institute, SERES, Social Transformation Project, Strategic Questioning, the Work that Reconnects, and Youth Lead the World.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the sustainability leadership retreat was to increase the skill of the Carbon Neutrality Initiative (CNI) and Global Food Initiative (GFI) fellows in transformational leadership, communication about critical food and climate issues, and select organizing tools; to provide a community-building forum for participants to reflect more deeply and critically about the global context in which their fellowship projects take place; to provide a platform for participants to engage in dialogue and peer learning to enhance their current carbon neutrality and food sustainability practices and projects; and to formulate collective reflection and input for broader sharing and impact. Two 2.5-day sustainability leadership retreats were held in 2016 for fellows at northern and southern campuses. The northern retreat was held January 8-10 at Camp Arroyo in Livermore, CA and the southern retreat was held January 15-17 at Anza Borrego Desert Research Center in Borrego Springs, CA. Both retreats were led by the UCI Sustainability Initiative, Global Sustainability Resource Center, and community partners from SERES and Soul Cocina.

Desired Outcomes

It was expected that participants in this program would:

- Develop sustainability, food, organizing, and climate leadership skills relevant to their projects and engagement post fellowship
- Deepen understanding and improve capacity to articulate the CNI and GFI objectives and the global context in which their fellowship projects take place
- Gain clarity about student engagement role in the Carbon Neutrality and Global Food Initiatives, and create shared understanding of how to strengthen it in coming years
- Gain understanding of how to become involved with other student leaders to increase campus and system-wide innovation on climate and food action through existing UC mechanisms
- Develop a network and strong sense of community with peers across issue
- Deepen understanding of and generate new thinking about further involvement and commitment to these issues at their home campus, with UC, and beyond after the close of their fellowship year

Evaluation

An online survey was conducted at the end of each retreat. Respondents had the option to include their name or be anonymous. Most chose to include their name. In total, 11 of the 15 participants for the northern retreat and 21 of the 24 participants from the southern retreat responded. The following section highlights responses from the surveys.

“It has given me the ability and confidence to continue my work with a community of peers.”
- Hoathi Dang



Activity at southern retreat

OVERALL SATISFACTION

When asked about their overall level of satisfaction with the workshop, all attendees who completed evaluations indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied.

All respondents indicated that they would 100% recommend the experience to other fellows.

Respondents indicated that the three most important aspects of the overall workshop included:



Comments

- “Amazing. Wouldn’t have traded this weekend for anything.” - *Ben Sommerkorn*
- “This event surpassed any kind of expectations I could have set for this weekend. I expected something relatively dry, that followed the same kind of formulaic structure almost all other kinds of conferences or retreats follow. I was completely surprised in the best way possible!” - *Melina Reyes*
- “This retreat was hands down the best retreat that I have ever been to. I have attended a number of events like this and this was the best the of them so far. I was inspired, challenged, encouraged, and motivated throughout the weekend. The facilitators were extremely conscious of their actions, their words, and their thoughts which directly impacted my experience. I am very grateful for their dedication to provide as much as they could in a limited amount of time to us to improve ourselves professionally and as change agent citizens. Thank you, thank you, thank you.” - *Jamison Czarniecki*

“All of the facilitators made me feel safe and secure throughout the entire retreat. They gave great and honest feedback in response to our perspectives and visions, which was something I really needed.”

- Gabriel Morabe



Facilitators from left to right: Janika McFeely (UCOP), Abby Reyes (UCI), Roger Feely (Soul Cocina), Corrina Grace (SERES), Fernando Maldonado (UCI)

PROGRAM TEAM

When asked about their overall level of satisfaction with how the Program Team facilitated the workshop, all attendees who completed evaluations indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the facilitation.



Wild turkeys in Livermore

Comments

- “Thank you for creating such an inspiring and empowering space for us to have meaningful conversation. It has really grounded and prepared me to continue my work.” - *David Robles*
- “Thank you for the time and effort you spent this weekend. Your passion was evident in facilitating the programs this weekend and was inspiring.” - *Colleen McCamy*
- “...would like to maintain contact to see if there is a way to have some (if not all) of the facilitators to come and host a workshop day for my peers in student government at UCR.” - *Melina Reyes*
- “Approachable and relatable while strongly driven in their efforts to educate us with the skills sets we need to be successful leaders” - *Jordi Vasquez, Santa Cruz*
- “All wonderful people and great facilitators!” - *Ariana Vito*
- “The facilitators complemented each other well and each brought their own unique gifts to the retreat experience. I appreciated their willingness to share their own personal experiences and their clear mastery of the approaches employed during each workshop.” - *Hannah Malan*
- “Very good balance of facilitators! Great work dynamic” - *Anonymous*
- “Thank you for creating such an inspiring and empowering space for us to have meaningful conversation. It has really grounded in and prepared me to continue my work.” *Renu Singh*

“As a leader, I have to be confident but humble as I take the time to listen to suggestions and complaints from my peers, or community. This quality will help me improve my communication skills, and make me be more attractive to others in the sense that they will know that I am interested in having us all succeed together.”

- *Claudia Villegas*



Journaling at southern retreat

PROCESS AND CONTENT

Overall, attendees appreciated the introspective tone of the retreat with several evaluators pointing to the power dynamic discussion and strategic questioning as a highlight. The strategic questioning section was added to the southern retreat and was a huge success.

According to the evaluations, other retreat strengths included:

1. Helping connect with other fellows from across the UC system regarding critical food and climate issues, and
2. Providing space to engage in meaningful dialogue and peer-to-peer learning that will enhance fellows' future carbon neutrality/food activities.

Future retreats could be improved by adding or augmenting components that help attendees reflect more deeply and critically about the global context of their work and how their fellowship relates to future decisions and career choices.



World Cafe at northern retreat

Comments

- “Distilling down to why I care and conveying that in a vision statement was empowering.” - *Drew Story*
- “I learned about the various powers I have and the ones I need to work on which will definitely help me develop into a stronger leader.” - *Isabella Beltran*
- “I think the most important approach I learned was the use of strategic questioning and deep listening. I think developing these skills further will help me to become an exceptional leader.” - *Laura Rood*
- “I learned that are different ways of communicating the message even when there are lot of messages going at the same time.” - *Lesly Figueroa*
- “Organizing and building movements include the ability to empower others. This includes the passing on of wisdom through retreats like this. I hope that with these experiences, I can effectively communicate the ideas and inspiration to other students that I have received this past weekend.” - *Hoaiti Dang*
- “The biggest take-away for me was the recognition that people and communities define their needs differently; I realize more than ever the need to break down barriers and open lines of communication to co-create goals and action plans.” - *Hannah Malan*
- “I learned that I have to be open to transformational change, and this requires an open mind and ability to perceive my roles, responsibilities and relationships.” - *Claudia Villegas*
- “That it’s okay for me to involve feelings in my work, and that I have a support system and power to make a change.” - *Gaby Estrada*

"I learned that vegetarian meals are so much more than Indian food and salad. ...did a great job providing delicious vegetarian meals that challenged my perception and proved to be a great change to usual meals at these types of events."

- Jamison Czarnecki



The southern retreat before dinner

FOOD AND FACILITIES

Roger Feely of Soul Cocina led the food component of the retreat, which is an intrinsic part of the experience for the students. The location for the northern retreat unfortunately wouldn't allow the team access to the kitchen, however, Roger still wove in a foodscapes component to the weekend. The southern retreat benefited from Roger's cooking as well as a special dinner designed to stimulate conversation around food and social equity.

In general, attendees were very satisfied with the food and location for each retreat. Some attendees struggled with the vegetarian menu while others were excited to try a new type of diet. A number of participants complained about the travel distance, particularly those in southern California as many hit traffic on the Friday evening.



Food prepared by Soul Cocina.

Comments

- “The dinner distinguished by class was definitely my most favorite experience. I got a firsthand perspective of this issue, and it motivates me to work even harder to resolve the issue.” - *Dhruti Khetani*
- “I think the food social experiment was really effective on me. It challenged my actual actions on how I engage in complacency around food justice and poverty.” - *Jamison Czarnecki*
- “Facility was great. Food was out of this world!” - *Melina Reyes*
- “I enjoyed that the location was at a camp or within nature. The camp fire was easily one of the most connecting and organic meeting spaces I encountered.” - *Hoaiti Dang*
- “The food was delicious and made with so much love and care. I appreciate Roger explaining all the dishes and ingredients, and really made me want to be more mindful of each bite and sourcing.” - *Anonymous*
- “Learning about the food and how humans relate to it was one of my favorite parts of the weekend.” - *Rob Holland*
- Everything was extraordinary!!! - *Claudia Villegas*

“I came not knowing what my project will be this semester, to actually outlining my outcomes and deliverables through my vision statement.”

- Drew Story



Fellow Phuong Le at the southern retreat after sharing her vision stance

VISION STATEMENTS

Participants drafted vision statements about their projects and presented them to the group on the last day. A few are included here.



Fellows delivering their vision stances at the southern retreat

“I want all UCSB students to have access to safe, nutritious food, and to be able to focus on their goals/ studies without feeling food insecure.”

- *Nancy Yang and Maile Hartsook*

“I know I will have succeeded when more people value the environment as something to reach harmony with as opposed to exploit, and when freshwater resources have a robust, adaptive, and sustainable management construct independent of human subjectivity.” - *Drew Story*

“I know I will have succeeded when I have met with 15 organizations from different disciplines, 5 working group committees and 3 charrettes for students, staff and faculty each.” - *Jamison Czarnecki*

“I believe that empowering students to use their voice in regards to the climate action plan and policy to reach carbon neutrality on campus will enlist the student community to be engaged.” - *Colleen McCamy*

“I want the UC campuses to be truly carbon neutral (powered by 100% renewable sources without offsets) by 2025 and for the UC’s transition to carbon neutrality to lead other institutions to pursuing and achieving similar goals.” - *Ariana Uito*

“I believe that if I work together with both public and private entities that we can create policy that drives a more sustainable society. Therefore I will dedicate the rest of my life and all my energy to work towards this goal which would manifest itself as my degree/career in Eco planning, maintaining healthy and sustainable relationships, creating art to reach out to people and raise awareness, and by living by example.” - *Emanuel Preciado*

ATTENDEES AND AGENDA

Northern California

January 8-10
Livermore, CA

Alex Lee, Davis
Aria Wexler, Davis
Benjamin Sommerkorn, CNI, Riverside
Colin Mickle, CNI, Davis
David Robles, GFI, Santa Cruz
Drew Story, CNI, Riverside
Estella Shi, CNI, Berkeley
Gabriel Morabe, CNI, Merced
Hoaiti Dang, GFI, Merced
Isabella Beltran, Merced
Linsey Shariq, Davis
Maximilian Stiefel, Santa Barbara
Nicole Wong, Berkeley
Renu Singh
Ryan Dowdy

10:00 – 10:30am

Body break

10:30 – 11:15am

Finding Focus

11:15 – 12:30pm

Creating Impact: World Café

12:30 – 2:30pm

Lunch

2:30 – 4:00pm

The Challenges of Change:
Bringing about change in UC and beyond

4:00 – 6:00pm

Communicating for Change

6:00 – 7:30pm

Dinner

7:30 – 9:00pm

Foodscapes

Sunday, January 17

7:30 – 8:15am

Breakfast

8:30 – 10:00am

Preparation of Vision Stance

10:00 – 12:30pm

Taking it Forward

12:30 – 1:30pm

Lunch

1:30 – 2:30pm

Cleaning and Departure

Agenda

Friday, January 15

5:00 – 6:00pm

Welcome: framing and context

6:00 – 7:30pm

Dinner

7:30 – 8:00pm

Taking the Pulse

8:00 – 9:30pm

Collaboration Among Fellows' Projects

Saturday, January 16

7:30 – 8:15am

Breakfast

8:30 – 10:00am

Exploring Our Work:
Theory of Transformation

ATTENDEES AND AGENDA

Southern California

January 15-17
Borrego Springs, CA

Hannah Campi, Riverside
Jamison Czarnecki, Santa Cruz
Lesly Figueroa, San Diego
Sarah Geldmacher, Irvine
Robert Holland, Santa Barbara
Katie Luong, Los Angeles
Colleen McCamy, Santa Barbara
Jordi Vasquez, Santa Cruz
Ariana Vito, Los Angeles
Gabriela Estrada, San Diego
Genesis Gilroy, Santa Barbara
Maile Hartsook, Santa Barbara
Dhruti Khetani, Irvine
Phuong Le, Los Angeles
Hannah Malan, Los Angeles
Jessica Pompa, San Diego
Emanuel Preciado, Irvine
Melina Reyes, Riverside
Laura Rood, Irvine
Claudia Villegas, Riverside
Nancy Yang, Santa Barbara

Agenda

Friday, January 15

5:00 – 6:00pm
6:00 – 7:30pm
7:30 – 8:00pm
8:00 – 9:30pm

Welcome: framing and context
Dinner
Taking the Pulse
Collaboration Among Fellows' Projects

Saturday, January 16

7:30 – 8:15am
8:30 – 10:00am
10:00 – 10:30am
10:30 – 12:30pm
12:30 – 2:30pm
2:30 – 4:00pm
4:00 – 6:00pm
6:00 – 7:30pm
7:30 – 9:00pm

Breakfast
Communicating for Change
Body break
Exploring the Potential of our Work
Lunch
Finding Focus
The Challenges of Change
Dinner
Strategic Questioning

Sunday, January 17

7:30 – 8:15am
8:30 – 10:00am
10:00 – 12:30pm
12:30 – 1:30pm
1:30 – 2:30pm
2:30 – 3:00pm

Breakfast
Preparation of Vision Stance
Taking it Forward
Lunch
Closing
Cleaning and Departure

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Program Design



SERES is an organization based in Central America whose mission is to empower young leaders to build sustainable, healthy and thriving communities through education and transformative leadership. SERES leaders facilitate empowering opportunities for young people that engage them as the principal agents of change, connecting their skills and passions with the most pressing community needs, and helping them to develop a skill set that allows them to start creating positive social change where they are. SERES principal Corrina Grace is a Visiting Scholar in Sustainability Leadership at UC Irvine.

<http://seres.org>



Soul Cocina is pioneering Foodscapes programming, which incorporates culture, tradition, seed-to-plate systems thinking, and sustainability to create a holistic shift in beliefs and habits to invite a new culture around food that celebrates the rich bio-cultural diversity and interdependence of people, place, and food. Soul Cocina principal Roger Feely is a sustainable food-systems educator, curator of food-related cultural events, and a Visiting Eco-Chef at UC Irvine.

<http://www.soulcocina.org>



The Global Sustainability Resource Center at UC Irvine unleashes youth leadership for community resilience to a changing climate. This pursuit informs students' academics, career choices, and ways of life. The GSRC is a hub for students and community partners to co-create and experience an integrated, holistic resilience framework that addresses

the root causes of sustainability crises and deepens understanding of the interdependence of all life.

<http://sustainability.uci.edu/studentinvolvement/gsrc/>

The involvement of SERES and Soul Cocina principals Corrina Grace and Roger Feely at UCI during 2015-16 has been supported by the Center for Living Peace and an anonymous foundation.

Institutional Support

UC Irvine Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Thomas Parham, Chair, Student Engagement Working Group of the UC President's Global Climate Leadership Council

UC Irvine Vice Chancellor of Administrative and Business Services Wendall Brase, Co-Chair of the UC President's Global Climate Leadership Council

UC Chief Operating Officer Rachel Nava, Co-Chair of the UC President's Global Climate Leadership Council

UC Office of the President

UC Irvine Sustainability Initiative

This work is also made possible by the support of individuals, including Julie Hill, Polly Howells and Eric Werthman, and an anonymous individual donor.