

**Fund Type:**

Sustainable Agriculture Place-Based Project Grants

**Purpose:**

The Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship welcomes proposals from faculty across the university who wish to collaborate with students to study or contribute to the systems in place at the Sustainable Agriculture Project (SAP). Funding of up to \$6000 is available annually to support such projects; this funding can be awarded to one project or divided among multiple projects.

The Sustainable Agriculture Project is an integrated, locally-based, small-scale agricultural system for teaching and learning in the broadest sense. Projects involving the SAP should address any aspect of triple bottom line sustainability, meaning it can focus on any aspect of environmental, economic, and social justice impact associated with agriculture.

Proposals should address the impact of their project on the social, educational, environmental, economic, and aesthetic systems at the SAP both in the short and long term. The SAP fulfills many functions, which are described in the mission statement (see appendix). Proposals should strive to minimize negative impact of any of these functions and, ideally, positively impact at least one.

Funding is available for the following types of projects:

- Student-led scholarly or creative projects, mentored by a faculty member
- Faculty-led scholarly or creative projects involving undergraduate students
- Faculty-led scholarly or creative pilot or seed projects that involve undergraduate students. These projects would potentially lead to a larger grant opportunity that will also involve students.
- Faculty-led scholarly or creative seed projects that would lead to increased undergraduate student involvement at the SAP site.

Funding priorities include disciplinary or interdisciplinary scholarship or creative activity involving:

- Intensive agricultural practices that are ecologically durable, socially responsible, and economically viable.
- Social and food justice.
- Place-based food systems educational practices.
- The interface of food systems and community or global development.
- Design in food or agricultural education systems.
- The nature of interdisciplinary teaching, learning, or scholarly/creative methods and/or outcomes.

**Please note:** if these funds are used for a seed project leading to a larger grant opportunity, twice the amount of the original seed grant or 25% of the college's indirects (whichever is smaller) should go back to the SAP project fund,

**Eligibility:**

Tenure-line and affiliate faculty.

**Funding Guidelines:**

Up to \$6000 for supplies and materials. Please note this award does not include student stipends, unless students are doing work that would prepare the faculty member's research to engage additional students over an extended period of time. For example, the grant can cover work toward helping the faculty member to include the SAP in his or her courses, or to establish a project that can involve more students in the near future. The award does not include faculty stipend.

**Applications will require the following documents:**

1. A proposal as described below
2. An updated CV
3. A research/scholarship statement that demonstrates how this project fits with your larger scholarly/creative agenda
4. A letter of support from the faculty member's department chair, or unit head.

**Proposal**

**Section 1: Project Description and Abstract**

Provide a clear, concise description of the research project to be supported. Write this for a generalist audience. **(Maximum 200 words)**

**Section 2: Engagement of Undergraduate Students**

Explain how your research in this area will be inclusive of undergraduate researchers and scholars. **(Maximum 200 words)**

**Section 3: Budget Justification**

The budget justification should address the relevance of the proposed budget in terms of its relation to the proposed project. This section should also include a disclosure of all start up funds provided by internal and external sources.

**Section 4: Project Description and timeline**

Clearly describe the research/ scholarship to be supported and how the additional funds will allow for the inclusion of undergraduate students. **(The project description must be single-spaced and cannot exceed 1000 words, excluding bibliography).**

**A. Show how the project aligns with the SAP mission.**

Proposals should clearly show how the project goals contribute to the mission of the SAP by contributing to existing projects or by expanding the diversity of projects at the SAP and how it helps students and the broader community learn the major characteristics/attributes of sustainable small-scale agriculture.

In addition, the proposals should explain how the systems in place at the SAP make it an ideal setting for carrying out the project.

**B. Show evidence of involvement of the SAP community in the project design:**

Every working farm is a community with its own practices and procedures. We invite you to consult with any member of the SAP community to help you understand that community as you develop your proposal. You should address to what extent your project design involves consultation or collaboration with students, staff, faculty and/or Farm Club at the SAP. Projects which have been designed with input from the staff, students or faculty and/or farm club involved in the SAP will have higher priority.

**C. Show a positive impact and lack of negative impact on the other uses of the SAP:**

Outline the specific elements of your project (i.e. what you propose to do, and how you will do it). Be explicit about the relationships between your project and the social, educational, environmental, economic and aesthetic systems of the SAP. Projects which negatively affect these systems, or the relationships between them, are less likely to be approved. Thus it is important to thoroughly address how the proposed project will affect current users and community members at the SAP. Questions such as these should be addressed where relevant for your particular project:

1. What **space** will be required for the project?
2. How **long** will the project be in place (Is there an end date? How will it be removed when complete, if applicable?)?
3. What **additional resources** at the SAP will be required (for example, parking, use of the house and grounds, caretaking and managing, water, nutrient resources, removal of the project once it is finished, etc.)?
4. What resources **will** or **may** be ADDED to the SAP (eg. What plants will be planted and in what configuration? What tools, dollars, infrastructure, equipment, artwork, etc. will be added either temporarily or permanently?) Please note: animals (poultry, mammals, reptiles) may not be added to the project.
5. **Economic impacts:** Describe the positive and negative effects of your project on the economic and marketing activities at the SAP. (eg. What produce will be harvested and how will this be marketed or donated? How will the profits (if any) be used?)
6. **Pest control:** What strategy does the project involve for control of pests? (The SAP uses a strategy of polyculture to avoid the use of inorganic chemical pesticides and projects should conform to this strategy.)
7. **Fertilizer:** What strategy does the project involve for replenishing nutrients in the soil? (The SAP uses a strategy of regenerative, low-input, organic agriculture to replenish soil nutrients and projects should conform to this strategy.)
8. **Impact on Student Experience:** How will the project affect the experience of students at the farm (social; educational; aesthetic)?
9. **Impact on Education:** How will you educate people about your project while on site at the SAP (For example, will you post signs? Host groups?)?

**Reportage**

At the conclusion of the project or 1 year after the funds are granted, a 1-2 page report should be submitted to OURS that describes what was accomplished along with a copy of whatever final product was produced. It is expected that the short report (and preferred that any products are produced) be submitted to Scholar Works.

Recipients of this grant are expected to present their work on and off campus as appropriate, such as at the Environmental Studies showcase, Student Scholars Day, or a professional conference.

**Submission Information**

The deadline for submission is May 1, 2016. Applicants will be notified of funding status by June 1, 2016. Funds will be available at the time of notification. Faculty members will be expected to attend an Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (OURS) mentorship program during 2016-17, as well as provide a summary description on their research and how undergraduate students can become involved. This description will be featured on the OURS website.

Please forward applications to Susan Mendoza, Director of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship, 230 LIB, [mendozs@gvsu.edu](mailto:mendozs@gvsu.edu).

This fund is supported by the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies and the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship.

## **Appendix: Sustainable Agriculture Project Mission Statement**

### **1. Seeding sustainable food practices**

We foster sustainable farming practices to promote ecological and food literacy. The farm strives to implement intensive agricultural practices that are ecologically durable, socially responsible, and economically viable. We promote social and food justice, while exploring various means of sustainable food production.

### **2. Cultivating leadership and learning**

We value student leadership with the continued mentoring and support of faculty and the farm manager. We foster student leadership through the Farm Club, volunteerism, internships, and student-led research. The farm is a student-led space.

We value sustainable food system education that is rigorous and experiential. The project provides support to courses across the university. We encourage research projects that are student-initiated and/or interdisciplinary. We wish to foster collaboration and experimentation within all teaching and learning in the project.

### **3. Nurturing place**

We value land and its ecological integrity. Place-based learning is at the heart of our work. The project sites provide places where the practical, political, ecological, and symbolic challenges of such work can be negotiated and explored.

### **4. Growing community**

The project is rooted in community. We seek to grow relationships by providing a space for dialogue across disciplinary boundaries, the negotiation of interdisciplinary practices, and the contestation of ideas.

The project is run as a collaborative effort among students, faculty, administrators, the Office of Sustainability Practices and Facilities Services & Planning.