Building Food Sovereign Campuses

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Why are Campus-Community Food Systems Important

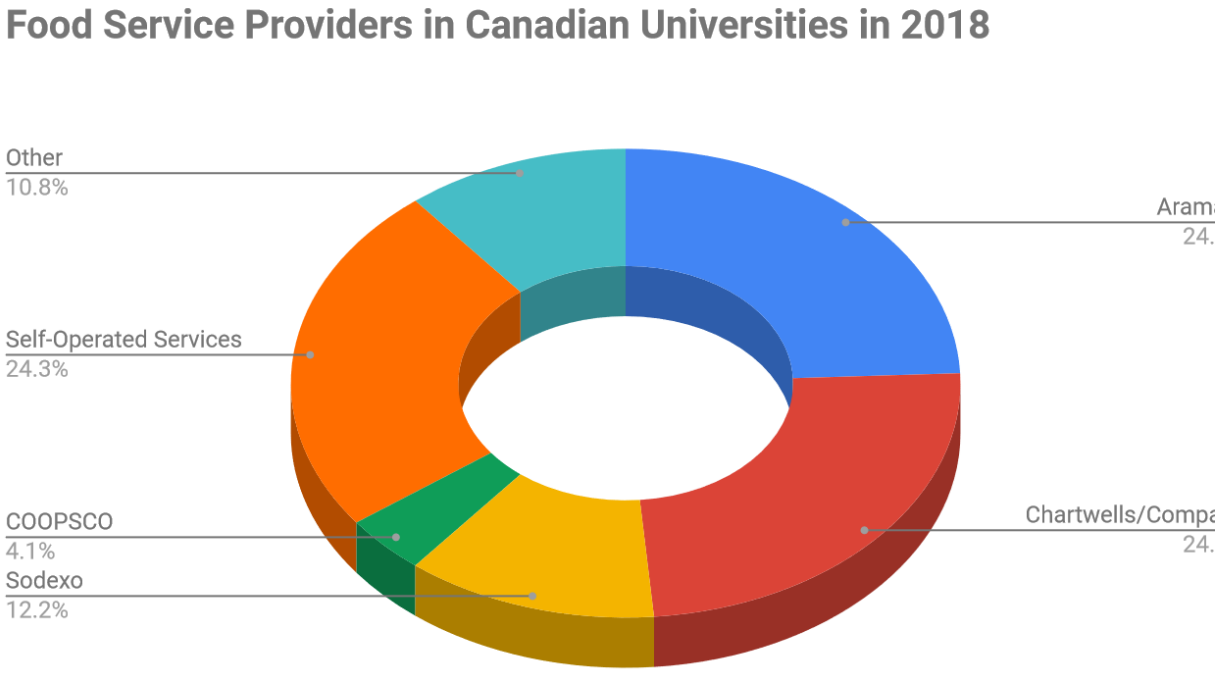
(1) The global food system is causing social and environmental harm

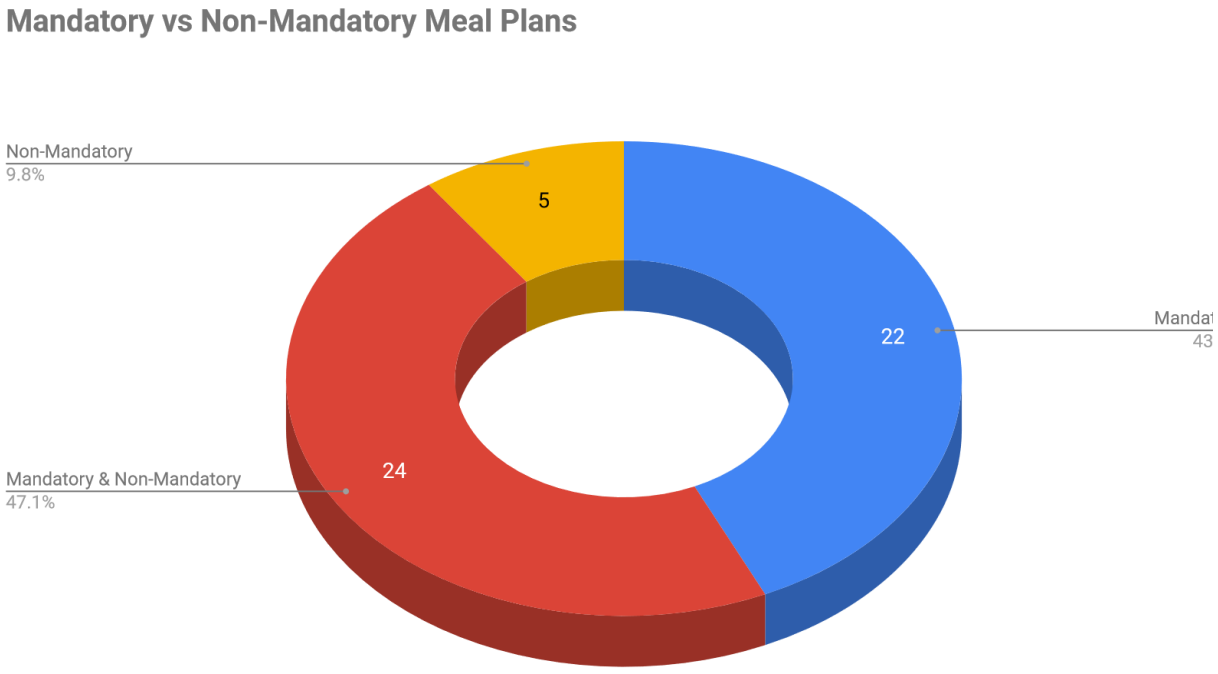
(2) Most Canadian universities hire large multinational corporations that contribute to these harms

(3) Universities can act as transition sites to create socially and environmentally just community-campus food systems

(4) We need to go beyond notions of sustainability and apply food sovereignty frameworks

Canadian University Foodservices





What's Wrong With Aramark, Chartwells, Sodexo?

- Sodexo owns private prisons
- Business comes from 'captive markets'
- Issues with food quality
- Issues with labour conditions
- Contribute to unsustainable global food practices
  - Profits derive from cost externalization (social and environmental)
- Aramark is responsible for causing the largest prison strike in the USA because of the conditions of their food

Universities Can Act as Transition Sites to Transform Community Foodscapes

Teaching and Research

- Universities create opportunities for experiential learning and participatory-action research, which in return, can be useful in developing better food practices on campus and in the community (Andree, Kepkiewicz, Levkoe, Brynne, & Kneen, 2016; Levkoe, et al., 2016).
- Universities bring together professors, researchers, resources, funding, space, and other assets, making them ideal places to 'experiment' with food practices (Barlett, 2011)

Duty to Enhance Communities

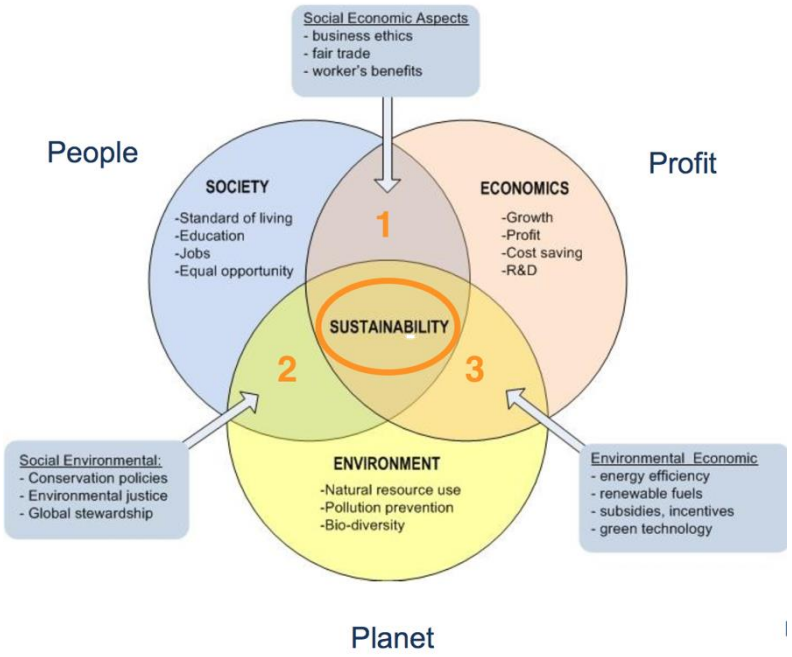
- Pothukuchi and Molnar (2015) and Pothukuchi (2012) argue that universities have a responsibility to foster democratic and social justice, especially in enhancing inner-city food projects.

Why Food Sovereignty Frameworks for University Food Services?

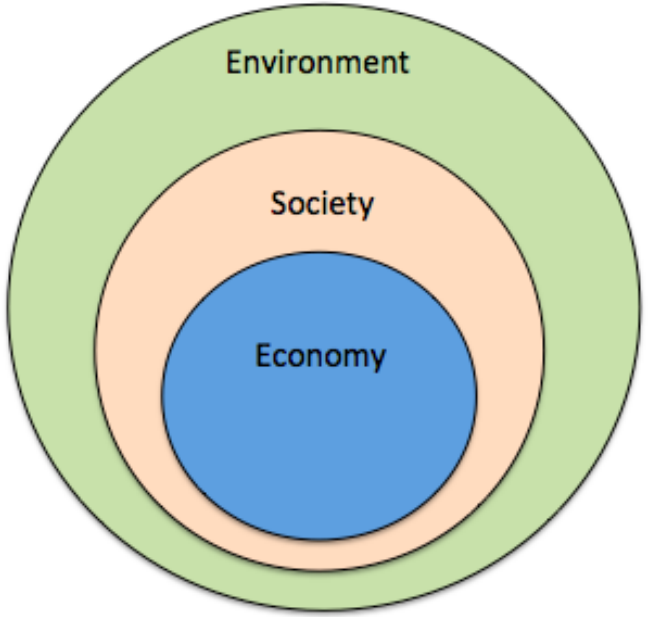
- At the World Food Summit in 1996, La Via Campesina declared that "Food sovereignty is a precondition for food security". (Via Campesina 1996 cited in Patel, 2009)
- I argue that developing a food sovereign campus is a precondition for offering 'truly' sustainable university food services.
- Food sovereignty is a transformative movement, while sustainability refers to a vast spectrum of corporate, reformist, transitional and transformative approaches. Sustainability is also frequently used to purposefully disguise harmful business practices – this is known as greenwashing.
- Despite Canadian Universities committing to be sustainable, none have achieved transformative, holistic, in-depth sustainability (Bieler and McKenzie, 2017)
- Although most research about university foodservices focuses on reforming multinational foodservice corporations, new researchers are focusing on transformative approaches (Bohunicky, Desmarais and Entz, 2019)

From Sustainability to Food Sovereignty

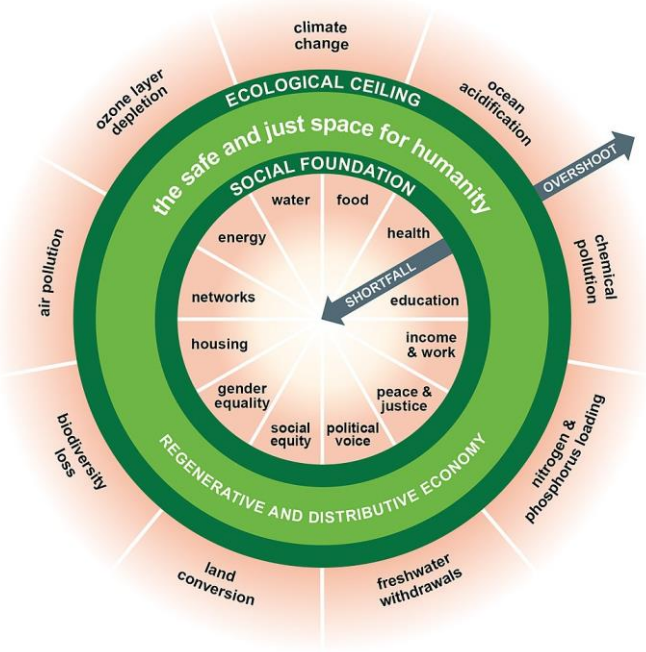
Triple Bottom Line



Nested Model



Doughnut Model



What is Food Sovereignty?

Food sovereignty is a multidimensional concept that refers to a process, an outcome and comparative framework

- **Process** – it describes a movement, a struggle, a democratic process perpetually in negotiation and always in motion.
- **Outcomes** – agreed upon declarations of rights, codes of ethics and guiding principles. These declarations are debated at conferences, meetings, and public forums and carried out by the parties (who agree with the declarations) in local communities, i.e. Nyéléni Declaration 2007
- **Comparative frameworks** – food regimes scholars have created frameworks to compare corporate, reformist, food justice and food sovereignty regimes.

Food sovereignty refers to:

- the rights of nations and people to control their own food economy – to decide how food is produced, consumed, processed, and distributed.
- a paradigm, trend, framework, discourse, regime and model. It is the most radical food movement discourse and rivals the corporate neoliberal food system.
- a right to food that is of quality, healthy, and culturally appropriate
- recognition and respect of women's role in food production
- social justice
- environmental sustainability
- recognition and respect for traditional knowledge and Indigenous Peoples
- agrarian reform including collective land rights and protection of Indigenous Peoples' Lands
- 're-commoning' land and right to defend land from transnational corporations
- against trade liberation

Food Regimes (Wittman, 2011)

Table 1: Food Sovereignty: An Emerging Alternative Food Regime?

	Corporate/Neoliberal Food Regime	Food Sovereignty Regime
Feeding the World	Food access/security through intensive production based on principle of comparative advantage and distributed through market mechanisms.	Food access/security through prioritizing local agricultural production and protecting local markets from dumping/subsidized food imports.
Role of Agriculture in Advancing National Development	Increase positive trade balances through increased exports of agricultural commodities. Economically successful communities will invest in infrastructure to improve community well-being (e.g., hospitals, schools).	Sustainable agriculture as part of a diversified economy will improve national well-being through improving food security and ensuring a healthy environment. Fair trade will spur economic growth.
Role of Technology in Advancing Agricultural Development	Increases in productivity come through scientific innovation, adoption of technology, and modern management. Problem solving based on a compartmentalized approach to problems of soil fertility, disease, pest infestation, etc.	Farmers must become efficient and competitive through diversifying production, using alternative technologies, and minimizing use of external inputs. Problem solving is based on a holistic approach to adoption of appropriate technology, including agroecology.
Environmental Stewardship	Protected areas, national parks, and environmental regulations are sufficient, as long as they do not harm the potential for the expansion of agricultural export crops.	Agriculture and environmental policy cannot be separated; sustainable agriculture protects biodiversity and leaves space for conservation areas.

Note: for other comparisons between the food sovereignty model and corporate/ neoliberal/ second food regime paradigms see Desmarais (forthcoming); Rosset (2003); Fairbairn (2010); Reardon and Perez (2010).

Food Regimes Framework

Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011)

Table 14.1
Politics, production models, and approaches

	Corporate food regime		Food movements	
Politics	Neoliberal	Reformist	Progressive	Radical
Discourse	*Food enterprise*	*Food security*	*Food justice*	*Food sovereignty*
Main institutions	International Finance Corporation (World Bank); IMF, WTO: USDA; Global Food Security Bill; Green Revolution; Millennium Challenge; Heritage Foundation; Chicago Global Council; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; ONE Campaign	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank); FAO; UN Commission on Sustainable Development; International Federation of Agricultural Producers; mainstream fair trade; Slow Food Movement; some Food Policy Councils; most food banks and food aid programs	Alternative fair trade and many Slow Food chapters; many organizations in the Community Food Security Movement; CSAs; many Food Policy Councils and youth food and justice movements; many farmworker and labor organizations	Via Campesina, International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty; Global March for Women; many food justice and rights-based movements

Food Regimes Framework

Holt-Giménez and Shattuck (2011)

Table 14.1
(continued)

Orientation	*Corporate*	*Development*	*Empowerment*	*Entitlement*
Model	Overproduction; corporate concentration; unregulated markets and monopolies; monocultures (including organic); GMOs; agrofuels; mass global consumption of industrial food; phasing out of peasant and family agriculture and local retail	Mainstreaming/ certification of niche markets (e.g. organic, fair, local, sustainable); maintaining northern agricultural subsidies; "sustainable" roundtables for agrofuels, soy, forest products, etc.; market-led land reform	Agroecologically produced local food; investment in underserved communities; new business models and community benefit packages for production, processing, and retail; better wages for ag. workers; solidarity economies; land access; regulated markets and supply	Dismantle corporate agrifoods monopoly power; parity; redistributive land reform; community rights to water and seed; regionally based food systems; democratization of food system; sustainable livelihoods; protection from dumping/ overproduction; revival of agroecologically managed peasant agriculture to distribute wealth and cool the planet
Approach to the food crisis	Increased industrial production; unregulated corporate monopolies; land grabs; expansion of GMOs; public-private partnerships; liberal markets; international sourced food aid	Same as neoliberal but with increased medium farmer production and some locally sourced food aid; more agricultural aid but tied to GMOs and "bio-fortified/climate-resistant" crops	Right to food; better safety nets; sustainably produced, locally-sourced food; agroecologically based agricultural development	Human right to food sovereignty; locally sourced, sustainably produced, culturally appropriate, democratically controlled focus on UN/ FAO negotiations
	Guiding document: World Bank 2009 Development Report	Guiding document: World Bank 2009 Development Report	Guiding document: International Assessment on Agriculture Science Technology and Development	Guiding document: Peoples' Comprehensive Framework for Action to Eradicate Hunger

Concordia Campus-Community Food Groups Research Project

Methods

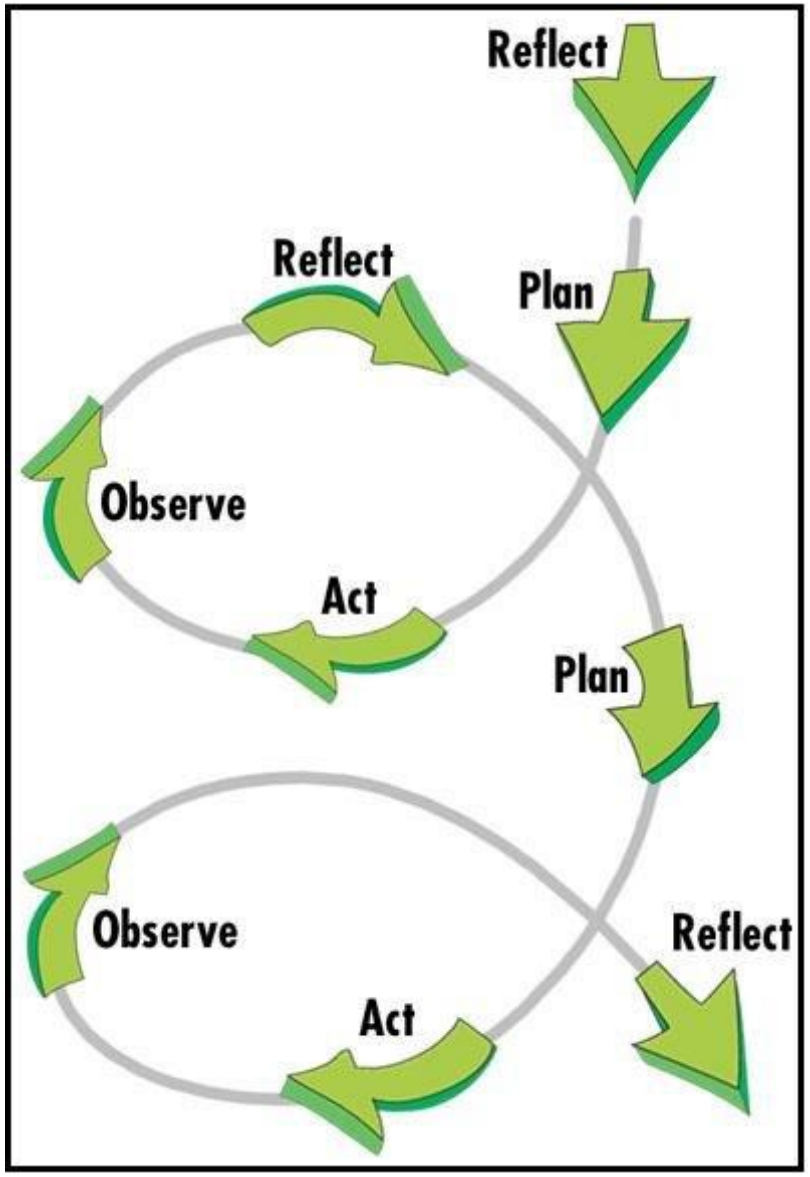
Ongoing project

Approach

- Critical-participatory-action-research

Three phases

- Gather information
- Produce multimedia content
- Hold public conversations(Food Group Assemblies) about our findings and create an action plan



Research Questions

Mapping

- What campus-community food organizations exist at Concordia as of 2018?
- What factors facilitated and hindered the development and viability of the campus-community food system at Concordia University.
- How does the Concordia campus-community food system contribute to understanding how to build food sovereign campuses?

Historical Analysis

- How did the Concordia campus-community food organizations come into existence?
- What factors that prevented food activists from replacing multinational foodservice corporations with a local, ethical, social enterprise?
- What does the history of the campus-community food system contribute to understanding how to build food sovereign campuses?

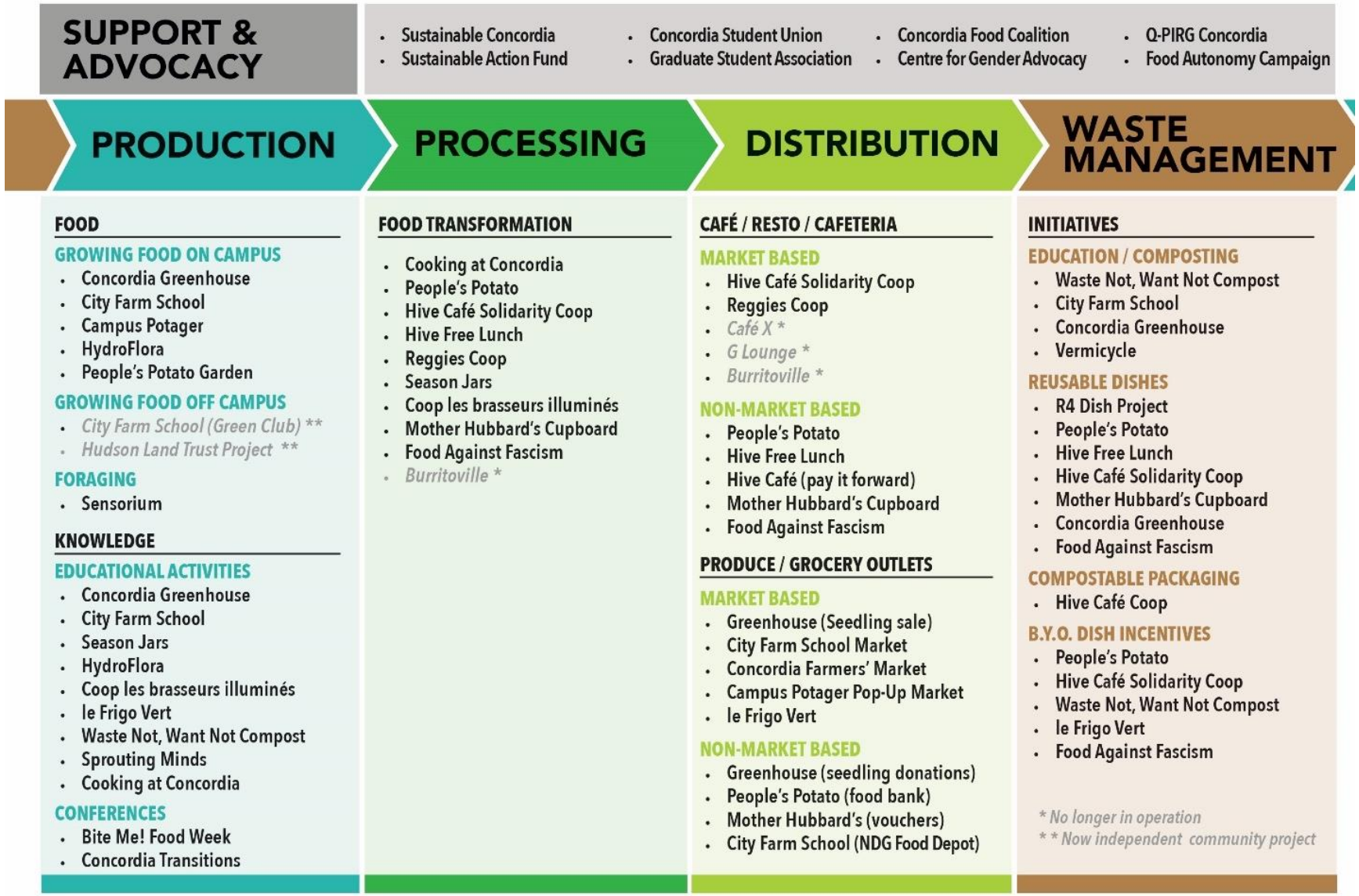
Public Discussion

- What can we learn from the campus-community organizations about building a food sovereign campus?

Food Sovereignty Framework

- How could previous literature and the case-study of the campus-community food groups help construct a framework for building food sovereign campuses?

Concordia Campus-Community Food Groups Map





Le Frigo Vert



The People's Potato



The Concordia Food Coalition


HIVE CAFÉ
COOPÉRATIVE DE SOLIDARITÉ
SOLIDARITY COOPERATIVE
新迎舊除

The Hive



The Greenhouse

The Garden Groups









SANKOFA FARMING CO-OP

CultivAction Solidarity Cooperative







CONCORDIA (OUR) FOOD SYSTEM

PRODUCTION

Growing food, plants & seeds

- Coop CultivAction
- People's Potato Collective Garden
- Hamidou Horticulture
- mind.heart.mouth
- Concordia Greenhouse
- HydroFlora
- Concordia Pollinators
- Sankofa Farm Coop

PROCESSING

Transforming food

- Hive Café Co-op
- Hive Free Lunch
- The People's Potato
- Reggies Co-op Bar
- Le Frigo Vert

DISTRIBUTION

Selling & Giving food

Resto/Cafeteria:
- Hive Café Co-op
- Reggies Co-op Bar

Community Kitchens:
- The People's Potato
- Hive Free Lunch

Produce & Grocery:
- Concordia Farmers' Market
- Coop CultivAction
- Megan's Fridge
- Hamidou Horticulture
- The Refugee Centre

WASTE MGMT

Recuperation Initiatives

Composting:
- enuf
- ABCompost
- Loyola gardens & farms

BYO, Reusable & Compostable Dishes:
- Hive Café & Free Lunch
- Reggie's Coop Bar
- The People's Potato
- The Dish Project
- Zero Waste Dish Project
- Cano Cup Program

SUPPORT & ADVOCACY

- Concordia Food Coalition
- Sustainability Action Fund
- SEIZE
- Concordia Student Union
- Sustainable Concordia
- Q-PIRG Concordia
- Centre for Gender Advocacy

WHAT'S THE GOAL? LOCAL CONTROL!

Facilitating the Creation and Perpetuation of the Campus-Community Food System

- Student activism
- Community service learning and community-campus engagement
- Fee levies
- Robust support system

Impeding the Development and Viability of the Campus-Community Food System

- Challenging fee levies
- Processing limitations
- Gap between production and processing
- Students graduate and move on
- Some students lacked expertise
- Relying on volunteers was not always viable
- No agriculture schools or food studies program
- Not always easy to negotiate with the Concordia administration
- Large foodservice providers
- Alternatives not always viable



Multinational Foodservice Corporations

Campaign Against Multinational Food Service Corporations

Administration

- Risk aversion
- Viability of foodservice operations
- Corporate model of university foodservices
- View of sustainability
- Request for proposal process

Students

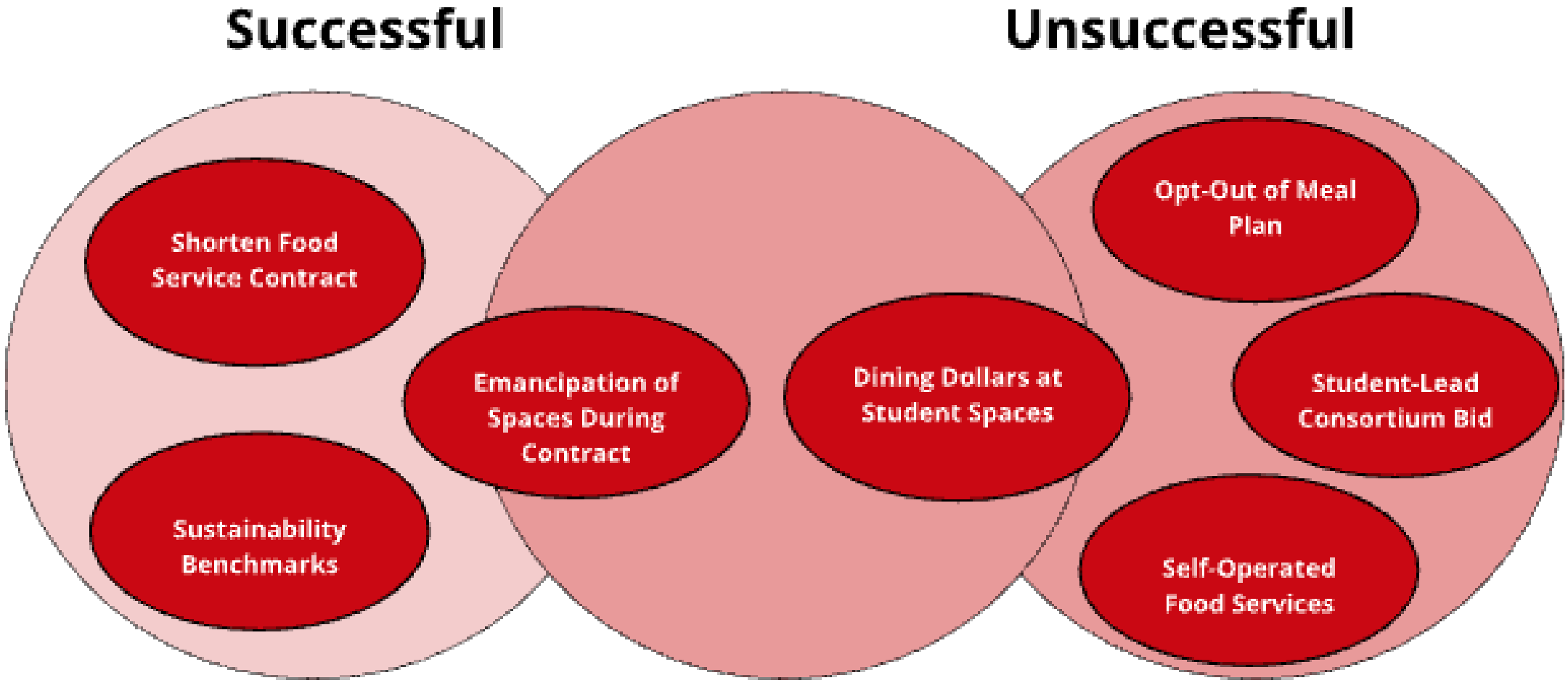
- Anti-activists
- Conflict amongst activists
- Student turnover & lack of experience

Faculty

- Lack of engagement

Multinational Corporations

- Skewed competition


Successful
Unsuccessful
Shorten Food Service Contract
Sustainability Benchmarks
Emancipation of Spaces During Contract
Dining Dollars at Student Spaces
Opt-Out of Meal Plan
Student-Lead Consortium Bid
Self-Operated Food Services

Key Findings

- Food sovereignty can describe the social justice outcomes on campus, like policies, organizational procedures (reflected through by-laws and constitutions), bans on harmful practices (i.e. selling bottled water), among others.
- Campus food sovereignty is an ongoing process of negotiating with others who are actively trying to transform the food system.
- Food sovereignty is not a reformist movement, it is transformational.
- A food sovereign campus is controlled by students, faculty, the Concordia community and community at large and should create positive value to these constituencies.
- A food sovereign campus does not force students onto a meal plan so that large multinational corporations, and universities (through a profit and loss model) can receive financial returns.
- Food sovereign campuses are made up of social enterprises that practice an array of diverse economy practices.
- A food sovereign campus is more radical than corporate and weak sustainability approaches and can be differentiated through the framework provided in this thesis.
- Even though food sovereignty is hard to define and apply to university campuses, sustainability is equally confusing and often used to uphold unsustainable practices.

	Corporate Approach to University Food Services	Weak Sustainability Approach to University Food Services	Food Sovereignty Approach to University Food Services
Who runs food services	External Corporation	External Corporation or self-operated (administration run)	Campus-community stakeholders – partnerships with faculty, students, administrators, staff, and the community at large
Approach to sustainability	None	Weak sustainability or triple bottom line approach	A transformative approach to sustainability that includes social justice, decolonization, and anti-racism
The goal of campus food services	Profit from a captive market of resident students	Provide food to a captive market of resident students	Improve the foodscape on campus and in the surrounding communities
The business model of food services	For-profit (profit and loss)	For-profit or non-profit	Social enterprise or social innovation approach
Involvement of faculty	Faculty are potential customers	Faculty are potential customers and consultants	Faculty are stakeholders and co-create the food system through research and community-service learning projects
Involvement of students	Students are the main customers	Students are consulted about their food preferences	Students are co-creators of the campus food system
Involvement of community at large	The community at large are potential customers or not important	The community at large are not the main focus of food services	Beneficiaries of and partners with a campus food system that creates community value
Consultations about campus food services	Part of a marketing strategy to increase profit	Consultations about food preferences, led by the administration	Led by a federation, coalition and/or network of campus-community organizations
How to address food insecurity on campus	None - Student residents are the primary customer and must purchase a meal plan as a condition living in residence	Food banks and emergency food relief for hungry students	A holistic approach of connecting people to food production, processing and distribution on campus and in the community at large
How food service employees are treated	Driving down the cost of labour is key to maximizing profits	Labourers treated with respect and are paid fair wages – but are excluded from decision making and not paid their true value	Labourers are involved in decision making, are not exploited via wages, and given proper benefits to lead a fulfilling life
Food procurement	Bulk purchasing from large distributers to drive down the cost of produce	Purchasing food from local farmers at the lowest price possible	Purchasing food, at a fair price, from a network of local farmers that hire workers for fair wages and/or where possible, grow food on and around campus through farmers coops of faculty, students and the community at large
Environmental Stewardship	Externalize environmental costs maximize profits	Reduce waste and procure food locally when possible	Holistic approach that reconnects people to the biosphere through food practices, regenerative agriculture and decolonization

	Corporate Approach to University Food Services	Soft Sustainability Approach to University Food Services	Food Sovereignty Approach to University Food Services
Who runs food services	External Corporation	External Corporation or self-operated (administration run)	Campus-community stakeholders – partnerships with faculty, students, administrators, staff, and the community at large
Approach to sustainability	None	Soft sustainability or triple bottom line approach	A transformative approach to sustainability that includes social justice, decolonization, and anti-racism
The goal of campus food services	Profit from a captive market of resident students	Provide food to a captive market of resident students	Improve the foodscape on campus and in the surrounding communities
The business model of food services	For-profit	For-profit or non-profit	Social enterprise or social innovation approach

	Corporate Approach to University Food Services	Soft Sustainability Approach to University Food Services	Food Sovereignty Approach to University Food Services
Involvement of faculty	Faculty are potential customers	Faculty are potential customers and consultants	Faculty are stakeholders and co-create the food system through research and community-service learning projects
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The Communal Lunch Project

- Campus Food Group Events
- DevOur Campus
- National Food Survey
- Mapping George Brown College
- National Food Coalition
- National Campus Mapping Exercise



George Brown College Campus-Community Food Systems Map

Production

FOOD

GROWING FOOD ON CAMPUS
- SNAP Community Garden
- Sustainability Squad (Growing Grounds)
- Second Nature Apiary
- CHCA Café
- Chefs' House Restaurant

PROCURING FOOD ON CAMPUS
- CHCA Café
- Chefs' House Restaurant
- SNAP

PROCURING FOOD OFF CAMPUS
- Communal Lunch Program
- Good Food Market
- CHCA Café
- Chefs' House Restaurant
- Chef on the Run (via ICC)
- Second Nature Apiary
- SNAP
- Organic Campus Project (via ICC)

PRODUCING EQUIPMENT TO GROW FOOD
- CHCA Café
- Chefs' House Restaurant
- Second Nature Apiary

GROWING FOOD OFF CAMPUS
- Enactus

GLEANING
- SNAP Community Garden

KNOWLEDGE

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES
- Communal Lunch Program
- Good Food Market
- CHCA Café
- Chefs' House Restaurant
- Chef on the Run
- Second Nature Apiary
- Sustainability Squad
- SNAP
- SNAP Community Garden
- Organic Campus Project

SOCIAL CAPITAL
- Communal Lunch Program
- Good Food Market
- CHCA Café
- Chefs' House Restaurant
- SNAP
- SNAP Community Garden

Transformation

FOOD TRANSFORMATION
- Communal Lunch Program
- Good Food Market
- CHCA Café
- Chefs' House Restaurant
- Chef on the Run
- Enactus
- Second Nature Apiary
- Sustainability Squad
- SNAP

Distribution

CAFÉ/RESTO/CAFETERIA

MARKET BASED
- CHCA Café
- Chefs' House Restaurant
- Chef on the Run

NON-MARKET BASED
- Communal Lunch Program
- Sustainability Squad

PRODUCE/GROCERY OUTLET

MARKET BASED
- Good Food Market
- Second Nature Apiary

NON-MARKET BASED
- SNAP
- SNAP Community Garden
- Enactus

Waste Management

INITIATIVES

EDUCATION
- Sustainability Squad

REUSABLE DISHES
- Communal Lunch Program
- Good Food Market
- CHCA Café (beginning Fall 2024)
- Second Nature Apiary

COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING
- Communal Lunch Program
- Good Food Market
- CHCA Café
- Second Nature Apiary

RE-PURPOSE FOOD PACKAGING
- Good Food Market
- SNAP

FOOD LOSS/WASTE REDUCTION
- Good Food Market
- SNAP
- CHCA Café
- Chefs' House Restaurant
- Chef on the Run
- Enactus (food waste into new products)
- Second Nature Apiary

SEED SAVING
- Second Nature Apiary

Support & Advocacy
- Good Food Market)
- Enactus
- Sustainability Squad

COMMUNAL LUNCH PROJECT

Problems with University Food Systems According to Student Union Representatives

Problems (Reported by 6-10 Student Unions)	Problems (Reported by 2-5 Student Unions)
Increasing food insecurity	Food insecurity affecting mental health issues
General affordability concerns	Increasing tuition
Lack of funding for food programs	International student food insecurity
Expensive food services on campus	Demand exceeds supply at the foodbank
Campus food service doesn't cater to dietary restrictions	Organizing capacity/loss of student community post covid
	Food programs are "Band-Aid solutions"
	Lack of mobilization around food issues - students don't have time to organize around food issues
	Lack of understanding about student hunger
	Health issues due to food insecurity
	University not taking action/responsibility for ameliorating student food insecurity
	Stigma around accessing food support such as foodbank
	Lack of labour to support student-run food initiatives
	Monopoly of meal service providers over catering for student-run events and or food services
	Students being ripped off because of pay-by-weight scheme meal service
	Campus food dessert, issues accessing food
	Food on campus is bad quality
	Food on campus lacks diversity (cultural or otherwise)
	Fairly evaluating need for charity-based programs

Potential for Campus Food System Transformation

Potential (Reported by 6-15 Student Unions)	Potentials (Reported by 2-5 Student Unions)
Student union runs food bank, food pantry/hampers	Student union runs cooking workshops
Student-run food outlet	Collaboration between student union run food initiatives and other community organizations
On-campus community garden	Student union gives free meals
	Student union gives money to students to buy groceries
	Student union runs food literacy workshops
	A committee to discuss on-campus food issues
	On-campus farmers market
	Food studies research groups
	On-campus beekeeping
	On-campus greenhouse
	On-campus groups that work with compost

Starting Points for Developing Food Sovereign Campuses?

Students

- Develop an alternative campus-community food system
- Challenge oppressive campus food practices
- Create food coalitions and food groups assemblies
    - Set conditions (like the Nyéléni declaration)

Faculty

- Practice critical-participatory-action research and involve campus-community food organizations
- Assign community-service learning, community-campus engagement and community-based learning projects
- Direct research funds and other resources towards campus-community food systems

Administration

- Adopt a food sovereignty approach (instead of soft-sustainability and/or corporate approach) to campus foodservices
- Do not force students in residence to purchase a meal plan
- Build or hire a social economy-based foodservice provider

Thank you!

Questions, concerns?