

# **Final Report**

*Local Food for Local People:  
Promoting food democracy in Appalachian Georgia*

**University of North Georgia  
Dr. Bonita Jacobs  
President  
82 College Circle  
Dahlonega, GA 30579  
706-864-1993**

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**Rosann Kent  
Director, Appalachian Studies Center  
University of North Georgia  
201 Vickery House  
82 College Circle  
Dahlonega, GA 30579  
706-864-1540  
[rkent@ung.edu](mailto:rkent@ung.edu)**

## Final Report Narrative

### **Title of Project:** *Local Food for Local People: Promoting food democracy in Appalachian Georgia*

**Grant Period:** February 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

**Grantee Name:** Appalachian Studies Center, University of North Georgia (UNG)

**Project Director:** Rosann Kent, Director Appalachian Studies  
Dr. Chris Dockery, ATP faculty mentor and associate professor of art

### **Description of Project:**

Local Food/Local People provided an opportunity for UNG students to engage in the Appalachian Regional Commission's regional food initiative by exploring the opportunities as well as the social, economic, and political barriers facing local food advocates in Lumpkin County, Georgia, especially the Dahlonega Farmers Market. Students interviewed city officials, vendors, potential and existing customers, both in the community and on campus. After analyzing the interviews, they proposed and implemented solutions to enhance the market, e.g., promoted the market on campus; provided a series of educational and community events at the market such as heirloom seed swaps, seed saving demonstrations, and food-related art exhibitions. Finally, students created a series of broadsides on an antique letterpress to be used as educational and promotional material for the market.



Led by Dr. Chris Dockery, faculty mentor, these nine students represented three classes of UNG students at the Dec. 2014 conference. More photos at our Facebook Page, Saving Appalachian Gardens and Stories at [www.facebook.com/seedsandstories](http://www.facebook.com/seedsandstories). Look for the photo album labeled, "[ATP 2014 Local Food/Local People.](#)"

## **Activities with community partner, Dahlonega Farmers Market:**

*Links to social media showing the students interacting with the partner are embedded below or samples of work are attached and listed at the end of this report.*

The 2014-15 ATP partner was [Dahlonega Farmers Market](#), sponsored by the City of Dahlonega's Main Street Program and Downtown Development Authority (DADA). This partner was selected because of the following rationale:

Georgia ranks in the bottom fourth of the [2014 Locavore Index](#), an annual state-by-state ranking of commitment to local foods measured by farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA), farm to school programs, and food hubs. Yet, Lumpkin County has no food hubs, no farm to school programs, only a few CSAs, and only one farmers market. Students wondered: *How could we help the Dahlonega Farmers Market contribute to a better regional food system in north Georgia?*

**May 2014.** To determine interest and feasibility of partnership, faculty mentors Rosann Kent and Dr. Chris Dockery wrote a mini-proposal and submitted to Rebecca Shirley, project coordinator for DADA. We discussed the project by phone and email.

**June 2014.** The first week in June, Ms. Shirley agreed to the partnership with the caveat that students submit questions in writing to her in advance. She also wanted to be able to read student responses for the Farmers Market Reflection.

**July 2014.** Students submitted written questions in advance of Ms. Shirley's July 9<sup>th</sup> visit. *GASC 3500 Special topics in Appalachian Studies, Saving Appalachian Gardens and Stories*. Students worked with Ms. Shirley to schedule, promote, and staff a booth at the Dahlonega Farmers Market on July 26. After the presentation and market experience and as part of their course work, students were asked to write Ms. Shirley a reflection paper.

**Aug. and Sept. 2014.** We used the same methodology for *GASC 3100: Introduction to Appalachian Studies*. Students submitted questions in advance to Ms. Shirley who later visited the class. [After this and other event](#) at the Farmers Market, students wrote and submitted a reflection paper to Ms. Shirley. (See attached file, Exemplar, for student submitted questions and reflections on Farmers Market).

**Nov. 19** – Partner and community presentation at the campus library. Ms. Shirley was invited to attend as well as members of the campus and community.

**Dec.** Ms. Shirley was invited to a potluck dinner to celebrate the end of the semester.

**Jan. to June 2014.** Ms. Shirley was at National Guard Training, so students worked with Shea Wages for the spring event in which the broadsides were displayed at City Hall.

**b. Presentations of student research to community groups other than the primary partner.** Links to social media are embedded below.

**Aug. 23, 2014.** "Save your Seeds and Share" Our students were invited to come present their ATP work and exhibitions at the Wylde Center in Decatur, a suburb of Atlanta. Their mission is to cultivate vibrant greenspaces and inspire communities of environmental stewards. See [this page for documentation.](#)

**Dec. 2, 2014.**

Each year, all students involved in the ATP (not just those going to the conference) present a "sneak preview" to campus and community audiences at Library Technology Center on campus. [See this page for documentation.](#)

**January 2015**

**Wylde Center, National Seed Swap**

Two students represented the ATP project and distributed packets of heirloom seeds. For more info about the event, go [here.](#)

**March 27 to 29**

***Appalachian Studies Conference at East Tennessee State University***

Students presented a poster session featuring several 2014-15 ATP representatives and a paper about the unexpected discoveries made as a result of ATP researchers. Chris Dockery, co-faculty mentor, convened a panel based on arts-based research. [See documentation here ... and here... and here.](#)

**March 3 to 20**

***Broadside Exhibition at City Hall***

Students planned and implemented a broadside exhibition at City Hall where partner's offices are housed.

**March 30, 2015**

**[20<sup>th</sup> Annual Research Conference at the University of Georgia](#)**

Katie Teal, one of the students who attended ATP, presented at this campus honors conference and earned honorable mention.

**April 15, 2015**

The Appalachian Studies Center partnered with another department at UNG, the Lewis F. Rogers Institute for Environmental & Spatial Analysis , to bring Janisse Ray, author of Underground Seed Revolution, to campus as a visiting lecturer. ATP students planned a luncheon and presentation afterwards. Ms. Ray was very impressed by the project and said "It gives me hope." [For documentation, go here.](#)

**May 30, 2015**

***Exhibition at Wild Film Festival***

The Lewis F. Rogers Institute for Environmental & Spatial Analysis has invited the Appalachian Studies Center to provide a booth for Environmental Expo prior to the annual Wild and Scenic Film Festival in Gainesville, GA. Three students and faculty mentor staffed a table containing this year's ATP poster and arts-based research examples. [The link to the event is here.](#)

## **Project Outcomes:**

The following goals and objectives served as the focus the upcoming year's Plan of Work for the Appalachian Studies Center. Co-faculty mentors, Kent and Dockery, did embed and accomplish the proposed goals/objectives/activities/ in selected courses:

- GASC 3500: *Special Topics: Agro-biodiversity in Appalachia* (Summer 2014)
- Art 4915: *Special Topics in Art – Letter Press* (Fall 2014)
- GASC 3100 *Introduction to Appalachian Studies* (Fall 2014)
- GASC 3800 *Appalachian Experience: Capstone Project* (Fall 2014)

## **Project Goals/Objectives**

*This chart documents how we met the following goals and activities by embedding them in syllabi.*

1. As a result of their participation in Local Foods/Local People project, students were positioned as emerging leaders, scholars, artists and activists who can foster sustainability in the Appalachian Region.
2. Through place-based pedagogy, students were engaged as active learners, participants, and community researchers in Local Food for Local People.
3. Using qualitative methodologies, e.g., case study and arts based inquiry) students engaged in active research to assist Lumpkin County, GA in creative approaches to food sustainability through asset development.
4. Research will address first goal of the ARC strategic plan: increase job opportunities and per capita income as well as support the White House Rural Council initiative on regional food economies.

<b>ACTIVITES EMBEDDED IN SYLLABII</b>			
<b>ACVIVITY</b>	<b>GOAL</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>
All students will participate in assigned aspect of project.	1,2,4	The Center runs on a student team module. Students self-select as team leaders; however, every student serves on a team.	See attached syllabi for letter press class example of leadership and team assignments.
All students will contribute at least 15 hours of direct service in maintaining and harvesting heirloom seed	1,2	Direct service hours were recorded both in the Garden Journal as well as individual form that students turned in at end of semester. The form was signed by team leader.	<a href="#">See photo in Face Book</a> of Garden Journal and team leader's remarks.

demonstration garden and/or creating seed packets.			
All students will attend at least one of the four planned activities with partner.	1,3,4	Each activity leader was responsible for scheduling and making sure all shifts were covered. A community volunteer often attended events and would provide informal feedback as to student performance.	<a href="#">See Facebook photo.</a> On left, Steve Bordanaro, a retired pharmaceutical trainer who provided tutorials for ATP students on public speaking, staffing a booth, and handshaking!
All students will participate in presentations to partner and community.	1,2,3,4	All students, whether or not they went to Washington were required to participate in the "dress rehearsal" presentation always held the week before ATP conference.	See attached syllabi.
Selected students will attend ATP conference in Washington.	1	Nine students represented all four courses in Washington. Because of the number of classes and students, for the first time, we developed an application process.	See attached application
All students will participate in academic discussion to include lectures and analysis of assigned readings, which include selections from the following: <b>Bill Best's Saving Seeds/Preserving Taste: Appalachian Seed Savers</b>	1,4	Students were graded on field notebooks that contained class notes, reading annotations, and leadership roles and participant schedules.	See syllabi from GASC 3500 and GASC 3100.  See Facebook album for exemplar of Field Notebook.

<p><b>Hassanein's</b>  <a href="#">Practicing Food Democracy: A Pragmatics Politics of Transformation.</a>  <b>Vandana Shiva's</b> <a href="#">Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply</a>  <b>Rose Hayden Smith's</b> Sowing the Seeds of Victory: American gardening programs of World War I.</p>			
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**PROJECT OUTCOMES**

The chart below will demonstrate how we met the following project outcomes:  
 A. Develop leadership and civic-capacity among the students engaged in the project  
 B. Provide opportunities for students to experience various parts of the region and the work of the Commission in Washington, D.C  
 C. Contribute to the ARC's initiative on regional food systems and enhance student and community awareness ARC's presence in north Georgia

	<b>MET</b>	<b>NOT MET</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
1. All students will serve on at least one leadership team, which is student-selected and governed	x		See syllabi as well as attached document, Letterpress Leadership Shop Assignments	A,B,C
2. All students will participate in formal and informal discussions with partner.	x		See documentation of this requirement in syllabi as well as in attachment called Exemplar.	A,B

	<b>MET</b>	<b>NOT MET</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
3. Students will interview selected city officials, potential and current vendors and customers as well as UNG students about local food issues in Lumpkin County	X			A, B
4. Students will promote FM on campus.	x		See article in our <a href="#">student newspaper by Katie Teal, a student</a> decided – on her own – to write about her relationship with the Farmers Market.	A,B,C
5. Students will plan and staff a series of FOUR events at the Farmers Market in July, Aug, Sept, and Oct.		x	PARTICALLY MET: We only held three events. In August, we were asked to present at the Wylde Center. <a href="#">See documentation here.</a> This event was an opportunity to continue to build our network near Atlanta. By October, our time for research was running out. We had completed our interviews and surveys, and needed the remainder of the time to interpret the data, work with letterpress class to extract a message from the data, and create broadsides.	A,B,C
6. Students will visit and report on farmers markets of adjacent counties.		x	We underestimated the amount of time the broadsides would take. However, two students did volunteer to work the 2014 Northeast Georgia Farm Tour and reported to the class on farms in adjacent counties	B
7. Letterpress class will create a broadside promoting local foods via the Dahlonega Farmers Market	x		See Facebook album for photos.	A,B



	<b>MET</b>	<b>NOT MET</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
8. Students will curate exhibition broadsides at City Hall.	x			A,B
9. Students will learn to present and publish their undergraduate research	x		<p><b>PUBLISH:</b> Although we did not meet our goal of submission of article to <i>Papers and Pubs</i>, a scholarly peer-reviewed journal for undergraduates, students were published in two other online publications:</p> <p>Seeds and snakes and bears – oh my! , <a href="#">Digest: A journal of foodways and culture</a></p> <p>Mildred Haun 2014 Conference Proceedings, page 26</p> <p><b>PRESENTATION/EXHIBITION:</b> (already documented)  <b>Aug. 2014.</b> Wylde Center in Atlanta  <b>Dec. 2014.</b>  * Partner, campus, and community at Library Technology Learning Center  <b>*Appalachian Teaching Project Jan. 2015.</b> Wylde Center in Atlanta  <b>March 2015</b> Poster session and presentation to Appalachian Studies Association  <b>May 2015.</b> Wild Film Fest in Gainesville, GA</p>	A,B,C
10. Selected students will prepare and submit a proposal to the Appalachian Studies Association	x		<p>4 students submitted a proposal for ATP poster and one student submitted a proposal for papers. Co-mentor also submitted a proposal to chair a session on arts-based research. <a href="#">See documentation here and here and here.</a></p>	B,C

## Unanticipated outcomes

### **2. The project created an opportunity for students to meet significantly more local people.**

Although the Appalachian Studies Center has been collecting seeds for seven years, there is such a town/gown gulf that we have not been able to reach the local people to the fullest extent possible. This market, which is 100% local, features vendors living and producing food in counties adjacent to Lumpkin: Hall, Dawson, White, Fannin, Gilmer, or Union. Therefore, students were exposed to many local than all the former years of the seed saving project combined. They are developed relationships with several of the vendors who now serve as gardening mentors for students.

### **3. The project inspired students to attend the Farmers Market on their own.**

As faculty mentors, we had hoped for this outcome but did not list it. For the 2015 market season, we visited the market to see if any ATP were there. On three different occasions, I saw at least three "unassigned" students who were talking, hugging, or buying from the vendors.

**4. We did not expect to find such hidden hunger in our quaint, respected tourist town.** The ARC Dahlonega ranks as a transitional county. However, one student, who is on staff with No One Alone, a domestic violence shelter explained to the class the challenges of feeding these women nutritious food and/or homegrown vegetables. She was so passionate in her appeal that she led in class in learning about issues of food deserts. She wrote, submitted, and presented a paper at the ASA conference, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Hidden Hunger in Domestic Violence Victims.* [See her abstract here.](#)

**5. Another unanticipated outcome was the recognition the ATP project received in the popular press and on line.** (The 3 academic publications are listed above.)

**a. [Welcome to Appalachian – home of the original locavore.](#)**

This article was picked up by [Democraticunderground.com.](#)

**b. The University of Georgia released [Appalachian Studies Center Earns Grant](#)**

**c Discover Dekalb. [Wylde Centers Hosts Seed Saving event.](#)**

**d. In Decaturish.com was another announcement., [Wylde Center Hosts Seedsaving Event.](#)**

## **Problems Encountered:**

This interdisciplinary research – art, biology, and cultural studies – can not be completed in one semester nor can the ATP be accomplished in one class. Collaboration is essential.

though all the goals in the original plan of work submitted were accomplished – only one was partially accomplished, we found this approach to be very difficult for two reasons:

**1. Longer than expected planning time.** Co-faculty mentors had to meet several times a week and communicate daily by email and text to facilitate the number of student meetings and project planning required for an ATP program of this intricacy. We found ourselves working many extra hours a week because the ATP is just one portion of the job. Students also went above and beyond their direct hour requirements and course assignments. All of our students work and were often put in the uncomfortable position of deciding between work or ATP. We were lucky that ATP alumni are still nearby and often returned to contribute to research or staffing the Farmers Markets and other events. At this point, we do not have a solution for this dilemma, except to seek grants that emphasize student leadership, entrepreneurship so students can be compensated for their contributions.

**2. Class community.** Students did not form the deep bonds of former years because they were scattered over several semesters and several courses. At our university, no other courses work like this, so students were unsure and, in some cases, uncomfortable with what we were asking them to do.

**3. Learning letterpress took longer than anticipated.** The process of learning the art and skill of letterpress printing on an antique press demanded a larger learning curve than expected for students working in this medium for the first time. The class was the inaugural offering of letterpress in the visual arts department and the format/ structure was experimental. The success of the broadsides was remarkable given the circumstances and students overcame significant obstacles for first time printers thanks to their problem solving skills and commitment to the project. Their success at working within these limitations is not to be underestimated. Students having had prior experience with or at least an orientation to letterpress in the future would improve the outcome significantly.

### **Program Continuation and Sustainability:**

The ATP continues to force us as faculty mentors to think deeply about our teaching methods and goals of the Appalachian Studies Center. Last year, we revised our mission statement, developed a different leadership structure and started the integration within two other departments: biology and visual arts. This year, however, we discovered that we must have more resources (funding, personnel and equipment) if we can want to grow.

### **Conclusions**

Because of the broadsides, farmers market participation, and students' community presentations required for this grant, public visibility has risen dramatically for locally and in the larger Appalachian region. We receive at least one request per week to host or present a session about preserving heirloom seed and accompanying artwork. For example, next week, we will host a Camp Appalachia for gifted 9 to 12<sup>th</sup> graders with

ATP alumni leading many of the sessions. In September, the state Master Gardener convention will meet in September on our campus and we will present two sessions as well as prepare 300 seed packets for the attendees. To serve this demand resulting from the ATP accomplishments, more students must be recruited to the Minor and more resources must be found. Therefore, the \$500 increase in funding is much appreciated.

### **Recommendations**

1. **Consider contracting directly with the hotel to secure accommodations for ATP teams.** At our institution, students must secure the room with a credit card and then wait a lengthy time for reimbursement. Most of our students do not have a credit card, nor enough credit to "float" a loan to a state institutions.
2. **Consider funding multi-year projects.** To tackle problems related to sustainability, institutions need more than one year to adequately investigate, much less solve problems. We understand that ARC cannot fund the same project year after year; however, would you consider funding on-going projects in two, three, or even five year increments if the proposal and reports clearly showed each year's contribution to the overall goal?

### **Attachments (in PDF format):**

**Note:** *Most required documentation is available digitally and has been embedded throughout the report.*

For photos of students in action, see Facebook Page, [Saving Appalachian Gardens](https://www.facebook.com/seedsandstories) and Stories at <https://www.facebook.com/seedsandstories>. Go to Photos, Albums, and click on [ATP 2014-15](#). Photographs are also tagged as Appalachian Regional Commission or Appalachian Teaching Project.

Attachments include the following documents:

1. Syllabus for GASC 3100: Introduction to Appalachian Studies
2. Syllabus for ART 4219 Letterpress
3. Syllabus for GASC 3500: Agro-biodiversity in Appalachia
4. Exemplar
5. Letterpress Shop Team Assignments
6. Application for ATP