

2014-2015 Proposal for Appalachian Teaching Project

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

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**ATP Project Date
February 2014 – June 30, 2015**

**Date Submitted
June 15, 2014**

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PROJECT FOCUS

The Appalachian Teaching Project, “Local Food for Local People” will examine opportunities and challenges as well as propose and implement solutions to strengthening the local food economy by partnering with the Downtown Dahlonega Farmers Market.

PROJECT DETAILS:

Course Number: GASC 3500

Name: *Special topics in Appalachian Studies, Saving Appalachian Gardens and Stories* (Summer 2014).

Other courses: Because this interdisciplinary research project cannot be accomplished in one semester, faculty mentors will integrate portions of it into the syllabi of selected other courses in UNG’s Minor in Appalachian Studies:

- Art 4915: *Special Topics in Art – Letter Press* (Fall 2014)
- GASC 3100 *Introduction to Appalachian Studies* (Fall and Spring 2014)
- GASC 3800 *Appalachian Experience: Capstone Project* (Fall & Spring 2015).

Instructors: Rosann Kent and Dr. Chris Dockery. Professor Karrie Ann Fadroski, biology professor, will also provide technical assistance for selected activities.

Community Partner: [Downtown Dahlonega Farmers Market](#), sponsored by the City of Dahlonega’s Main Street Program and Downtown Development Authority.

Need:

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 in Appalachian Georgia has no food hubs, no farm to school programs, only a few CSAs, and one farmers market. How can the Downtown Dahlonega Farmers Market contribute to a better regional food system in north Georgia?

Number & description of planned meetings with community partner

Faculty mentors began informal discussions with Dahlonega Farmers Market in April 2014 and held the initial planning meeting in June. Students will meet monthly with partner from July to November and then again in Feb. 2015 for the broadside exhibition at City Hall.

1. June 13, 2014. Initial Planning Meeting with faculty mentor.

2. July 2014. Introduce students to partners; partner-led discussion followed by Q/A.
3. August 2014. Introduce new students to partners; partner-led discussion followed by Q/A
4. September 2014. Students provide initial findings to partner.
5. October 2014 Discuss details of fourth and final activity.
6. November 2014: Partner reviews ATP presentation and gives feedback before “dress rehearsal” to partner and public.
7. Feb. 2015. Garden broadsides are displayed at City Hall.
8. Other meetings will be scheduled as needed.

Overview of the project, including its central focus

The Local Food/Local People project provides students an opportunity to engage in ARC’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 Downtown Dahlonega Farmers Market. Students will interview city officials, vendors, potential and existing customers, both in the community and on campus. After analyzing the interviews, they will propose and implement solutions to enhance the market, e.g. promoting the market on campus; providing a series of four educational and community events at the market such as heirloom seed swaps, seed saving demonstrations, and food-related art exhibitions. Finally, students will create a series of broadsides on an antique letterpress to be used as educational and promotional material for the 2015 market season.

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives will serve as the focus the upcoming year’s Plan of Work for the Appalachian Studies Center. Faculty mentors in Appalachian Studies, art, and biology will integrate the following goals/objectives/activities/ in selected courses outlined above.

Project Goals/Objectives embedded in syllabi

1. As a result of their participation in Local Foods/Local People project, students will be positioned as emerging leaders, scholars, artists and activists who can foster sustainability in the Appalachian Region.
2. Through place-based pedagogy, students will be 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 will engage 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.

Activities embedded in syllabi

1. All students will participate in assigned aspect of Local Food/Local People project.
2. All students will contribute at least 15 hours of direct service in maintaining and harvesting heirloom seed demonstration garden and/or creating seed packets.
3. All students will attend at least one of the four planned activities with partner.
4. All students will participate in presentation to partner and community.
5. Selected students will attend ATP conference in Washington
6. All students will participate in academic discussion to include lectures and analysis of assigned readings, which include selections from
 - Bill Best's *Saving Seeds/Preserving Taste: Appalachian Seed Savers*
 - Hassanein's [Practicing Food Democracy: A Pragmatics Politics of Transformation](#).
 - Vandana Shiva's [Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply](#)
 - Rose Hayden Smith's *Sowing the Seeds of Victory: American gardening programs of World War I*.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Develop leadership and civic-capacity among the students engaged in the project
- Provide opportunities for students to experience various parts of the region and the work of the Commission in Washington, D.C
- Contribute to the ARC's initiative on regional food systems and enhance student and community awareness ARC's presence in north Georgia

These outcomes will be demonstrated through

1. All students will serve on at least one leadership team, which is student-selected and governed.
2. All students will participate in formal and informal discussions with partner representative, Rebecca Shirley, Project Coordinator, Downtown Dahlonega Farmers Market (FM). Ms. Shirley was a former ARC Governor's Intern during the early years of UNG's Appalachian Studies Center.
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
4. Students will promote FM on campus.
5. Students will plan and staff a series of events at the FM in July, Aug, Sept, and Oct. 2.
6. Students will visit and report on farmers markets of adjacent counties.
7. Students in letterpress class will create a broadside promoting local foods via the Downtown Dahlonega Farmers Market. [See sample here.](#) [Also here.](#)
8. Students will curate exhibition broadsides at City Hall.
9. Students will learn to present and publish their undergraduate research

- October 2014. Selected students will prepare and submit a proposal to the Appalachian Teaching Conference.
- Nov. 2014. Local Food/Local People presentation to partner, campus, and community
- Dec. 2014: Presentation at the ATP Conference in Washington, D.C. 2014 to include Prezi and poster.
- Jan. 2015: Submission of article to *Papers and Pubs*, a scholarly peer-reviewed journal for undergraduates.
- March 2015: Poster session and presentation to Appalachian Studies Association