



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
Seattle, Washington 98195

UW PROGRAM ON THE ENVIRONMENT

April 12, 2021

Letter of Support for UW Farm CSF Proposal

I would like to convey my emphatic support for the proposal that is now being submitted to the Campus Sustainability Fund on behalf of the UW Farm. Since becoming Director of the Program on the Environment in March 2019, I have learned a great deal about the positive impact that the UW Farm has had across and beyond campus. I have watched with excitement the active discussions about how to sustain and increase that impact. I think the proposed RA funding could play a crucial role at this moment in strengthening the foundation for the Farm's future success.

The Farm is, in my judgment, at a pivotal moment in its history. Perry and others have done a brilliant job not simply in adjusting to the shifts required by COVID, but in using the crisis situation to launch new initiatives. Whether those can be sustained and whether resources can be matched to needs will be a critical question as we return to a situation of relative normalcy. The Farm needs badly to do strategic planning, and it needs the kind of help with research, writing, and coordination that a talented graduate student could provide.

This moment is pivotal for the Farm in part because PoE (in collaboration with the Program in Food Systems and Nutritional Health) has just received authorization to launch a search for a teaching professor position that would be focused on issues of food and agriculture, with specific responsibilities for assisting the curricular mission of the UW Farm. We hope to fill that position by early summer and to have that new hire working actively by next fall on joint ventures across these three units. So the curricular outreach of the Farm is likely to see significant re-focusing (and hopefully, expansion as well) over the next few years.

That new faculty position, however, will help to address only one of the Farm's multiple needs, and may in fact put additional pressure on the Farm by adding new opportunities. Having led strategic planning efforts in multiple departments (Comparative Literature, English), I am aware of the intensity of the process, and of the need for assistance in collecting and organizing data, creating budget projections, convening meetings—and all of the other steps involved in a thorough-going survey of present and future activities of any complex unit.

I urge you to approve this proposal and to assist in this way will propelling the UW Farm forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Handwerk".

Gary Handwerk
Bruce J. Leven Chair of Environmental Studies
Director, UW Program on the Environment
Professor, Comparative Literature & Comparative
History of Ideas
University of Washington, Seattle