



November 19th, 2008

Linda Barnes, Chair
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee
City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Rd
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Dear Councilor Barnes and Committee members,

The Richmond Food Security Task Force in conjunction with Kwantlen Polytechnic University would like to confirm our commitment to the formation of the Richmond Farm School. This school will train individuals in the practical science of growing food and will enable graduates to begin food production enterprises by 2010.

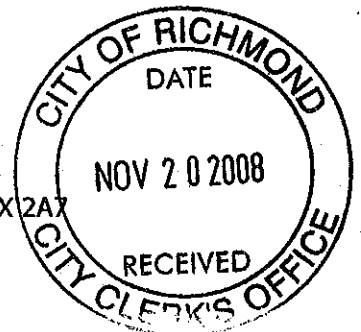
As you are aware, the farming population in Richmond is aging and farmers are struggling to find skilled and motivated individuals to carry on their farming enterprises. At the same time, land prices have risen to such an extent that new farmers, especially immigrants who come with farming experience, are finding it increasingly difficult to enter into agricultural production. All of this is happening at a time when broad concern about everyone's food security and support and demand for local food is at its highest level in recent history.

In order for the Richmond Farm School to obtain financial support, we are requesting the following from the City of Richmond:

1. An endorsement of the Farm School from the City of Richmond as an important component for the agricultural sector in the region
2. Access to City-owned agricultural land at the south end of Gilbert Rd, next to the Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Farm's Orchard.

We anticipate the school will begin operation in early 2009, initially based at the Terra Nova Rural Park. Interns in the school will help with the operation of the Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project's Sharing Farm, providing much needed labour support. If there is demand from the farming population, interns could also be made available to some of our local growers who are facing a shortage of skilled workers. As the students gain the skills they need, moving them to the south end of Gilbert Rd will enable them to practice these skills and test out their own small farm operations in a supervised and supported educational environment.

Food Security Task Force of the Richmond Poverty Response Committee
c/o Richmond Food Bank Society, #100 – 5800 Cedarbridge Way, Richmond, BC V6X 2A7
Tel. 604-205-4700 foodsecurity@richmondprc.org





**Richmond
Food
Security
Task
Force**

The Richmond Farm School will be the first of its kind to focus on Urban Agriculture and will put Richmond on the map as a leader in sustainability planning. We have already received many requests for applications and anticipate a full class for 2009.

We look forward to our partnership with the City of Richmond in this exciting endeavour.

Respectfully submitted

On behalf of the Richmond Food Security Task Force,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Gazetas".

Mary Gazetas
Co Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Margaret Hewlett".

for

Margaret Hewlett
Co Chair

November 19, 2008

Linda Barnes, Chair
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee
City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond BC V6Y 2C1

Dear Councillor Barnes:

This letter is to confirm and convey the full and enthusiastic commitment of Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KU), via the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture, to partner with the City of Richmond, the Richmond Food Security Task Force and the Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project to develop, implement and conduct a continuing education program of study in urban and peri-urban agriculture (please see attached document describing the program). The purpose of this program is to prepare individuals to engage in the breadth of enterprises associated with human scale, urban and peri-urban agriculture focused on direct marketed crops and products. Dr. Kent Mullinix, Sustainable Agriculture Specialist, Institute for Sustainable Horticulture, will lead facilitation of the University's contributions to this initiative.

It is anticipated that KU will contribute to the development, implementation and ongoing operation of the program in the following ways:

1. Offer the Urban Agriculture Studies program as a KU continuing/ professional education program of study.
2. Lead curriculum design and course development.
3. Identify, recruit and contract appropriate/ qualified teachers (non-KU faculty).
4. Develop and administer operational budgets.
5. Assign, receive, process and otherwise administer all associated participant fees.
6. Assume day to day program management responsibility; assure quality control.
7. Transcript program participation (as continuing education, i.e. non-credit affording) and award certificates of completion.
8. Liaise with City of Richmond and other partners.
9. Seek extramural funding, in collaboration with partners, for the development, implementation and ongoing operation of the program.

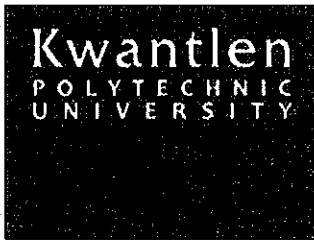
Our enthusiasm for and dedication to partnering with the City of Richmond to realize this unique and important educational offering cannot be overstated. We are confident that the Urban Agriculture Studies program will serve an important, emerging community and regional need and look forward to contributing to its realization.

Sincerely,



Gordon R. Lee

Vice President Finance and Administration



Urban Agriculture Studies program.

9/6/2008

The following summarizes plans for the Urban Agriculture Studies program being developed in Richmond, B.C.

Objectives: To prepare people to engage in urban agriculture enterprises including production, processing adding value, distribution, marketing and sales and to develop professional and leadership capacity to advance urban agriculture as an element of sustainable cities.

Partners: The Urban Agriculture Studies program is a collaboration of the City of Richmond, the Richmond Food Security Task Force, the Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project and the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture, Kwantlen Polytechnic University. The partnership will steer its development, implementation and ongoing operation.

Background: The City of Richmond, like many cities across North America is facing a crisis in its agricultural sector. Farmers are aging and a younger generation of growers is not able to take their place. Reasons for this are complex but include lack of affordable land for those young people with agricultural backgrounds and lack of production knowledge for those who come from more urban backgrounds or are new immigrants. Farms are moving further away from urban centers, compounding an already large food miles footprint.

Overview: The Urban Agriculture Studies program is being designed to prepare people from all walks of life to engage in and build regional agri-food systems in, around and for municipalities. No other such program, as we envision this one, exists in North America. The program of study will focus on balancing theoretical and applied (experiential) studies with the express objective of teaching agriculture as the applied science that it is. Upon completion of a course, a compliment of courses or the complete program students will not just know about (urban) agriculture but will also have developed the skills to engage in it. Our students will learn by doing. As such actual farming, processing, marketing and sales learning experience(s) will be a defining and unique feature of the curriculum.

A second defining feature of the curriculum will be its focus on sustainability. In this we mean teaching about and for an agri-food system that is economically viable, environmentally sound and socially responsive and just. We will also focus on the creation of a sustainable urban agri-food sector as an integral element of sustainable cities and in compliment to existing agri-food systems elements.

Lastly, through the partnership with the City of Richmond, students will have access to land to begin their agricultural enterprises. This partnership is unique in North America and will unquestionably set this Urban Agriculture Studies program apart from any others.

Students, educational goals and Kwantlen Polytechnic University: We anticipate the program will attract a wide range of students. Many will be older, 25 plus, and already have college/university as well as career experience. We have no doubt that upon full implementation the program will attract students from across B.C., Canada and around the world. What all students will have in common is the conviction that sustainability must be the premiere focus of human enterprise in the 21st century, that urban agri-food systems will be a critical component of sustainable cities and that agriculture is the way they want to contribute to a sustainable society.

The Institute for Sustainable Horticulture, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, will administer the program, hire teachers and oversee/coordinate instruction. The University's School of Professional and Continuing Studies has agreed to work with us to facilitate conferring professional development clock hours for program classes and the creation of either a diploma or degree (or both) in Urban Agriculture. We anticipate that classes will be able to be taken either for personal/professional enrichment, professional development credit/clock hours or for a University credential as the student wishes and that entrance, exit and reentrance to the program can occur easily and at any time. We also are designing the program to be delivered, as much as possible, in the evenings and on weekends so that students can fit studies into their schedules.

The curriculum: The following lists classes and their estimated durations that will comprise the curriculum.

A. Foundational/Context

1. Foundation in Sustainability and Agri-food systems. 8 hrs
2. Basic Ecology; Cycles and Systems. 4 hrs
3. Models of Sustainable Agriculture Systems. 8 hrs
4. Community-Student Seminar. 4 hrs

B. Basic/Introductory Agriculture Sciences

1. Soils and Soil Management. 40 hrs
2. Water and Irrigation Management. 40 hrs
3. Ecologically Based Farmscaping. 24 hrs
4. Plant Science. 40 hrs
5. Ecologically Based Pest Management. 40 hrs
6. Plant Propagation. 24 hrs

C. Agriculture/Farm Business Management

1. Farm Production/Operations Planning. 40 hrs
2. Resources and Support. 4 hrs
3. Regulations and Certifications. 4 hrs
4. On Farm Research. 8 hrs
5. Farm/Agribusiness Management, Marketing and Sales. 40 hrs

D. Farm Infrastructure

1. Farm Construction. 40 hrs
2. Machinery and Tool Operation and Maintenance. 40 hrs
3. Protected Environments. 8 hrs

E. Production

1. Season Extension. 8 hrs
2. Market Crops Production. 40 hrs
3. Fruit Crops Production. 40 hrs
4. Animal Husbandry. 40 hrs
5. Forages and Pasture Management. 40 hrs
6. Novel and Crops. 8 hrs
7. Post Harvest Handling and Storage. 40 hrs
8. Crop Improvement/Seed Saving. 40 hrs
9. Composts and Composting. 16 hrs

There is a total of 768 hours (96 eight hour days or approximately 19.2 weeks) of formal agricultural instruction.

We have yet to develop the class sequence or finalize overall program configuration. This is our most immediate program development goal. However, we anticipate the courses being more or less evenly divided between two years with a compliment of introductory, year 1 classes and a compliment of advanced, year 2 classes. We also plan that a significant part of the curriculum will be Cooperative Education, whereby students earn credits through working (in this case on our teaching/learning farms and in our teaching/learning markets etc.). Cooperative Education will most likely occur after year one when students are operating farm enterprises semi-independently, but with instructional/technical support.

So, we are thinking in terms of a basic one year curriculum with opportunity for up to four-five years of assisted/mentored farming experience. Year two classes would enhance and broaden agriculture production and marketing/sales skills, if one so desired. Additional years of classes would be required if one sought a baccalaureate credential. It is important to emphasize that the program would be configured so that students could readily avail themselves to the components that supported their goals without obligation to lengthy degree program. That is to say, they will be able to take those courses and supervised/supported farming/husbandry experiences that best serve their urban agriculture objectives with no obligation to take traditional classes for many years. And after one year of formal classes/experience they would be eligible to undertake semi-independent production practice on program lands.

A one to four year study experience might look something like this (remember that students would be able to exit at any time):

Year 1- Introductory agriculture classes with practical experience/skill development (applied) component facilitated by integrating class laboratories with operations of the Richmond Sharing Tree Project Farm (at Terra Nova) and Orchard (at the intersection of S. Dike and Gilbert Rds.).

Year 2- Advanced agriculture classes with the practical experience/ skill development component facilitated by students farming small plots (1/4 to 1/2 acre), under direct instructional supervision and support at the Gilbert Rd. site and at direct marketing sites operated by students (also under instructional supervision and direction). Students would be required to develop their own production and financial plans, cultivate their crops and manage labor (year 1 students) and equipment. Crops/products would be sold through program markets.

Year 3 and 4- After years 1 and 2, and having developed the requisite knowledge and skills to engage in agriculture enterprise more independently, students would then be afforded access to larger tracts of land (1 to five acres) to farm more or less independently and for Cooperative credit if degree seeking. We describe these as incubator farms. Land rent would be part of the arrangement. A micro-loan program may be necessary to support student farming. Students would retain all net proceeds.

As previously mentioned, while incubator farming, students will be able to take breadth classes for degree program completion if so desired. Such coursework would likely include an appropriate complement of liberal arts and sciences studies, such as biology, ecology, statistics, chemistry, English, communications, history, philosophy, sociology, urban/rural planning, environmental science, and resource management. These student farmers will also serve as mentors to the year 1 and 2 students who they employ.

To allow students to semi-independently plan for and experience an economically feasible venture reflective of the full range of agriculture production, marketing and sales functions it will be necessary to allow them to farm these tracts (under minimal oversight) for a minimum of two seasons with an option to extend leases for up to five years. Incubator tracts would be available at municipal lands off the S. Dike Rd.