

A bronze statue of a woman with her arms outstretched, set against a background of green trees. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange and blue gradient.

Food Security Strategy Task Force

THE NEXT **150**

Alex Winter-Nelson

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Membership

Chair, Alex Winter-Nelson,
Agricultural & Consumer Econ.

Richard Akresh, Economics

Brian Dill, Sociology

Brenna Ellison, Agricultural &
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Barbara Fiese, Human Development
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Paolo Gardoni, Civil & Environmental
Engineering

Richard Gates, Agricultural &
Biological Engineering

Craig Gundersen, Agricultural &
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Kristin Hoganson, History

John “Jack” Juvik, Crop Sciences

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Jesse Ribot, Geography & GIS

Hans Stein, Animal Sciences

Sarah Williams, University Library

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Goals for Food Security Strategy

Transformative education that equips students to understand and engage with food issues.

Research that expands sustainable and reliable food availability, food access, and nutritional utilization of food.

Engagement that supports sustainable and reliable food access and nutritional health in our community and globally.

Resources

- ❖ Significant research from institutes and a range of departments
 - ❖ RIPE (\$70 million committed, GATES)
 - ❖ SIL (\$20 million committed, USAID)
 - ❖ Childhood Hunger Research (\$7 million, USDA)
- ❖ Existing curricular programs related to food security
 - ❖ Courses spread throughout campus (7 colleges).
 - ❖ Degree programs, minors, certificates and concentrations.
- ❖ Impactful engagement programs in the community, state and globally
 - ❖ SNAP-Ed (over \$30 million, USDA)
 - ❖ AgReach (over \$40 million, USAID)
 - ❖ Community engagement in food and hunger initiatives.

Areas where Illinois has the greatest opportunity to impact food security through research, education and engagement

- ❖ Leverage broad excellence in relevant fields to expand **interdisciplinary research** on food security in the US and abroad.
 - ❖ Complexity of food systems maps to our capacities but requires integrative research.
 - ❖ Agriculture for Nutrition; Food Insecurity and Health; Climate Resilient Food Systems.
- ❖ Structure **experiential learning programs** that build on existing courses, research and engagement.
 - ❖ Immediacy of food insecurity and hands-on nature of research across disciplines => service learning opportunities and undergraduate research opportunities.
 - ❖ Sustainable Farm, Wesley Food Pantry, NSF-REU, SIL Internships, UI Extension.
- ❖ Establish **food security engagement hub** to integrate learning and research with engagement related locally and abroad.
 - ❖ Sponsors and observers recognize of value to engagement-informed research and research-informed engagement in food security (NSF, USAID, CSR).

Opportunities in food security-related research and education over the next five to ten years

❖ Research

- ❖ Broad-based excellence across range of disciplines and missions.
- ❖ Sponsors' interest in challenge-based, multi-disciplinary research in food security.
- ❖ Rapid scientific and technical advances in relevant areas not yet applied to topic.

❖ Education

- ❖ Deep pool of professional, service, and hands-on research activities available.
- ❖ Strength in food-related instruction in ACES and beyond.
- ❖ High level of student and popular interest in food issues.

Challenges in food security-related research and education over the next five to ten years

- ❖ Siloed research limits the food security problems we address
 - ❖ Missed opportunities for collaboration among scholars in area.
 - ❖ Interdisciplinary teams defined by missions outside of food security.
- ❖ Recent reductions in food-related capacity
 - ❖ 15% decline in ACES Faculty FTE since 2008
 - ❖ 35% decline in UI Extension FTE since 2008
- ❖ Limited integration of engagement and coursework
 - ❖ Students' food security-related engagement not supported by curricula or systematic advising.
- ❖ Engagement insufficiently connected to students & research
 - ❖ Lack of central mechanism to connect students and researchers with engagement activities creates barriers to cooperation.

Specific actions that would be most effective in realizing our potential in food security education, research and engagement

Short Term Actions

- ❖ Incubate **integrative food security research programs** through support to working groups, workshops, and symposia.
- ❖ Launch **food security experiential education programs** based on existing courses, additional seminars, and structured experiential learning activities.
- ❖ Create a **food security engagement hub** to facilitate coordination of engagement efforts involving local community, state-level programs, DPI-IIN, UI Extension, U of I researchers and students.

Specific actions that would be most effective in realizing our potential in food security education, research and engagement

Medium Term Actions

- ❖ Provide seed grants for interdisciplinary research teams.
- ❖ Support development of externally sponsored projects.
- ❖ Promote targeted hiring to address gaps in capacity.
- ❖ Expand service learning and undergraduate research activities.
- ❖ Maintain forum for research & engagement interface.

Ways we can better leverage our research strengths to enhance the university's educational mission in food security

- ❖ Establish a **Food Security Experiential Education Program** for centralized services.
- ❖ Create **Global Food Systems and Food Security Certificate** based on existing courses and integrated experiential learning in Illinois and abroad.
- ❖ Create **Food Security Scholars Program** integrating food security research into academic programs of promising undergraduates who have experienced or been exposed to food insecurity.
- ❖ Promote creation of **experiential courses**.
- ❖ Provide advising support and **facilitation for REU applications**.
- ❖ Provide a **clearinghouse** of service learning and undergraduate research opportunities.
- ❖ Provide **grants** for student research and for faculty in social sciences and humanities to hire student research assistance.

Ways to best engage our local community through food security?

❖ Opportunities and Challenges

- ❖ Local activity by private sector, charitable organizations & government agencies addressing food production, access, and nutritional health.
- ❖ Distributed but fragmented engagement by faculty, staff, and students.
- ❖ Absence of visible public engagement entry point or mechanism for coordinating campus activities.
- ❖ Weak incentives to engagement activities by faculty.
- ❖ Reductions in state support to engagement through UI Extension.

❖ Actions

- ❖ Create a **food security resource center** for improved communication and coordination over engagement, research and education activities.
- ❖ Organize and facilitate campus based hunger initiatives.
- ❖ **Convene** stakeholders on food security-related issues (Illinois Hunger Summit).
- ❖ **Catalogue and share information** on activities and best practices.

Recommendation

Establish an **Illinois Food Security Institute** to integrate across disciplines and missions for maximum impact on food security locally and globally.

Institute would house:

Integrative Food Security Research Program

Food Security Experiential Education Program

Food Security Resource Center