EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Big Red Eats Green Guide fills the educational component of the sustainable food model for Indiana University Bloomington. The Guide provides students a basic introduction into sustainability and food, simple strategies for eating sustainably, and local resources for sustainable eating. The Guide outlines the best practices of a handful of local institutions. This report outlines the process and motivation that went into formulating the guide and it outlines the next steps needed to expand Big Red Eats Green into a broad campaign.

MOTIVATION

The approach to the educational model included five key motivations:

1. Audience
   At Indiana University we have a captive audience and marketing infrastructure to reach that audience. The systems of academic departments, residence halls, student organizations, etc are all housed under the auspices of Indiana University, making it easy to reach a large population. As the largest economic player in Bloomington, we have an unwritten directive to educate our students to do the most good for the community in which they reside during their education.

2. Student Buy-In
   Achieving a sustainable food system at Indiana University will require a financial commitment and follow-through from the students. Although a recent study has shown that even if people say they will spend more money for sustainable food they may not actually spend the money, we should work towards shifting students’ values so that they take pride in purchasing sustainably-sourced food and understand the environmental benefits of doing so.

3. Timing
   College is often the first time people make their own food choices. Students’ do not have a parent or guardian cooking for them and deciding what they eat. In this time period the university and the community serves as the parent, giving them a broad range of options of to what to eat. This time period provides a window of opportunity to educate students about the environmental, social, and economic impacts of their food choices.

4. Educational Setting
Being a university whose goals are research and teaching, an educational component to any sustainability initiative is vital. IU does not have a culinary arts program or an agriculture program; therefore we have no singular department that could sponsor an educational component to the sustainable food model.\(^1\) Big Red Eats Green must have a multidisciplinary approach.

5. Community Engagement
Bloomington offers tremendous resources to students outside of the university setting. Sustainable food choices often inherently local, therefore students should utilize off-campus local resources to engage with their community.

*Why focus on local food?*
In my experience, engaging students with their food requires intimate knowledge of what they are eating and the impacts of the food system. Although 100% local food purchasing may not be the best choice all of the time, it forces people to address the question “Where does your food come from?”\(^2\) Purchasing directly from local growers ensures accountability and transparency in the food system. Bloomington, the University’s home, has a robust local food system compared to many areas of the Indiana and other parts the nation. Although organically grown food provides another viable sustainable option most of the organic food available in local stores (aside from Bloomingfoods or possibly Sahara Mart), is available nationwide, and indistinguishable from non-organic commodities.

**METHODS**

*Summary of previous work*
The sustainable food initiatives on campus were first codified in Benjamin Schultz’s 2007 document *A Proposed Sustainable Food Model For Indiana University, Bloomington Indiana*, which provides a thorough background on the issue, and gives several recommendations for future projects.

“Primary Elements:
  1. Strive for sustainable production and delivery
  2. Reduce/recycle packaging
  3. Reduce/recycle food waste

Secondary Elements:
  4. Create an educational component for the food model
  5. Calculate the food carbon footprint to establish a benchmark*
  6. Develop an edible permaculture plan*
  7. Incorporate eco-friendly cleaning products in dining halls*
  8. Institute a series of cooking shows to introduce students to the food model*
  9. Create an interest group to communicate and promote the food model on campus.*

Recommendations marked with an asterisk have either been completed or have been planned by previous interns.

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1 These programs do not necessarily focus on sustainability, but do focus on food.
3 Schultz, Benjamin. *A Proposed Sustainable Food Model For Indiana University, Bloomington Indiana* (2007). Recommendations made therein can be found at http://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/Food/index.html
Previous intern projects included:

- Andrew Shelby (Summer 2007) created Students For Sustainable Food (SFSF), and analyzed the current state of the campus food system determining what local food could be purchased.\(^4\)
- Sharaya Gilbert (Spring 2008) worked with the Local Growers Guild to connect local farmers to RPS and also began research on composting in RPS dining halls.
- Jessica Colaluca (Summer 2008) worked to develop methods by which RPS could purchase locally-grown foods for use in the dining halls and researched ways to establish a compost system on campus.\(^5\)
- Alayna Herr, (Summer 2008) researched IU’s Food-related carbon footprint.\(^6\)
- Isabel Estevez, Laura Nading, and John Galuska, wrote the Community Garden Proposal, citing the need for interns to design and implement on-campus edible gardens and organic food production gardens.
- Christina Musgrave and Kate Rogoski (academic year 2008-2009) designed and began to implement the aforementioned plans, but the garden was never constructed.

After examining the Sustainable Food Model, previous work and with consultation with mentors Christine Barbour and Bruce Jacobs, I decided that work was needed on three fronts: (1) assessing the desire for a sustainable food model on campus, (2) education, and (3) building capacity for local food distribution and processing.

**Meeting with the Food Working Group**

In November 2009, the first thing I did was meet with the Food Working Group (FWG) to establish what they saw as the most pressing concerns—which were vast. Several members supported an educational component that would focus on how easy it is for students to “vote with their fork” by purchasing sustainable foods and by establishing habits that reduce waste. In addition, members discussed the need to build capacity in the local food processing and distribution network. A few local farmers claimed that the local food system does not have the capacity to supply RPS Dining in the necessary quantities and may not have the appropriate insurance coverage to work with a public institution. The majority of the meeting focused on the possibility of (1) aggregating local producers and processing (freezing, canning, etc.) locally grown products and (2) working with farmers to increase their production to meet the growing demand that may accompany aggregated processing and distribution capabilities. The group briefly discussed composting and establishing organic garden on campus, but the majority of the members thought that a larger infrastructure project was significantly more important.\(^7\) The Food Working Group established a subcommittee to work on the issue of local food distribution and processing, and I continued to assist on this endeavor as I worked on my other projects.

**Assessing the need**

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\(^4\) [http://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/docs/sinterns_07/shelby_pp.pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/docs/sinterns_07/shelby_pp.pdf)

\(^5\) [http://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/docs/sinterns_08/colaluca_report.pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/docs/sinterns_08/colaluca_report.pdf)

\(^6\) [http://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/docs/sinterns_08/herr_report.pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/docs/sinterns_08/herr_report.pdf)

\(^7\) Previous internships have covered these two areas, so, although they are extremely important, I decided not to address these issues. The organic gardening initiative may have more logistical difficulties and costs than working on other issues that may have larger impact to the sustainability of a local food system.
In reviewing the aforementioned recommendations made in Benjamin Schultz’s extremely thorough *Sustainable Food Model*, I saw that the “educational component” had not been addressed, and that this project was one of the few projects that could be tackled during the time of my internship. A survey of the campus population would determine where the education component would focus. After Meeting with Bill Brown and Emilie Rex of the Office of Sustainability, I narrowed the educational component down into two distinct parts: (1) suggestions for easy, unintimidating, affordable ways students can eat more sustainably, and (2) a list of what local organizations, including the IMU and RPS Dining services, were doing sustainably and positing those organizations as resources for students.  

*Bloomington Eats Green conference*  
During the weekend of January 22-24, the Bloomington Eats Green conference gathered together local stakeholders in the greater Bloomington-area food system to discuss ways of establishing a more sustainable food system. I acted as a scribe for the morning and afternoon breakout sessions. During the afternoon session, focused on education and outreach, many people noted the need for a centralized source of sustainable food information in the community, but some were unsure if that should be housed at Indiana University. Also non-university stakeholders were skeptical or uninformed about many of the initiatives of the IUOS and other university entities.

*Research*  
In the past several years, the amount of research available has increased, as had the visibility of that research. The aim of the guide is not to give students a semester’s worth of information in twenty pages, so I wanted to focus on showcasing a handful of important findings. I wanted the Suggestions for Sustainable Eating section of the guide to include facts about environmental harm done by the current industrial agricultural system (including pollution, carbon emissions, and waste), as well as research on why the proposed strategies would help alleviate these problems.

*Using the survey*  
From the start, I knew that I needed to assess the current state of sustainable eating on campus. I wanted to know (1) how much sustainability played a part in food-purchasing decisions, (2) how knowledgeable they consider themselves on sustainability issues, (3) where students purchase their food, (4) how students deal with food waste.

Upon completing the survey, it would be possible to find areas that need more attention than others. For example, if everyone recycles, then we do not need to include recycling as a prominent part of the educational component. Assessing how much people consider sustainability in their food-purchasing decisions, compared with other considerations such as healthiness of the food or fair treatment of animals, will tell us how much we need to focus on what areas of education.

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8 The local food processing and distribution project was deemed too large to tackle in one academic year.
9 Organized by Rick Wilk, Peter Todd, and Sara Minard.
10 The survey was delayed due to obtaining IRB Human Subjects Approval and, therefore, was not utilized as much as I planned it to have been in constructing the Guide.
Interacting with stakeholders

One key tenant of sustainable eating is eating locally, and thus any educational campaign must include local stakeholders as a key part of connecting students with their food. At the beginning of my internship, I devised a preliminary list of local stakeholders whom I was considering including in the guide. This list included (1) campus institutions, mainly RPS Dining Services and the Indiana Memorial Union (IMU), (2) local non-profit organizations (including the Bloomington Community Farmers’ Market), and (3) local restaurants and grocery stores. Initially, I planned to canvas as many local establishments as possible and include them in the Guide, but three major challenges hindered this effort. First, I would have to establish an equitable grading or rating system to denote which organizations were best exemplifying sustainable practices. Second, communication with stakeholders was challenging. Third, time constraints (along with communication difficulties) limited the number of stakeholders I could visit. I chose to focus on responsive stakeholders/institutions who were either (1) Key Resources for sustainable eating, such as the Local Growers Guild (LGG), and the Bloomington Community Farmers’ Market, (2) campus institutions, or (3) important local businesses and that exhibit best practices in local food procurement, waste reduction, and community involvement.

When meeting with stakeholders, I enquired about four main categories of sustainability efforts:

1. Sustainability as part of the mission of the organization,
2. Local food procurement,
3. Waste reduction and recycling, and energy use reduction, and
4. Community involvement

Visibility

I wanted to ensure that the Bloomington Eats Green had an appealing, simple, and recognizable logo that could be used to identify anything associated with the campaign. The previous semester’s BFA in Graphic Design class focused their project on local food. I contacted the School of Fine Arts office informing them that I was looking for someone to create a logo, cover page, and poster template for the Big Red Eats Green campaign. I received several responses of undergraduate students willing to help on the project. I responded personally to each student asking to schedule a time to meet and discuss the project. Following my responses, only one student scheduled a meeting, although she never arrived at the time and place, and failed to respond to my subsequent e-mails. Afterwards, I solicited Tiffany Roberts, a graphic design BFA candidate, to design a simple logo, cover page, and poster template.

Posters

I worked with Jamie Panunzio, IUOS intern (sustainability database), on creating informational posters to hang in food courts and dining halls across campus (for AASHE STARS points). Posters will initially be installed in the Collins dining halls, but will go out to other RPS dining halls and possibly the IMU food court.

Outline of the Big Red Eats Green Guide

I. Title Page
II. Introduction
   a. What is sustainability?

11 See “Communications” in the section on Barriers and Recommendations below.
b. A complex issue
c. Why local?
d. Definitions:
   i. Local
   ii. Sustainable
   iii. Natural
   iv. Organic

III. Simple Strategies for Eating Sustainably

IV. Resources
   a. Key Resources
   b. Local Resources
   c. Educational Resources

V. Acknowledgements

VI. Endnotes/Works Cited

**Policy Implications/Next Steps**

1. **Getting student commitments**
   According to *Fostering Sustainable Behavior*, by Doug McKenzie-Mohr, education alone is not enough to change behaviors. Behaviors must be coupled with a commitment to adopting these behaviors.\(^{12}\) To ensure IU adopts the proposed strategies for sustainable eating, should devise a commitment technique that would allow people to sign a written commitment that would be made public. This may also help in gaining support from local stakeholders to participate in future events. Commitments would also allow us to compile a list of e-mail addresses to contact students. Working with Residence Halls Association (RHA) and RAs may be an easy network with which to start.

2. **Increasing visibility and reminding people**
   McKenzie-Mohr writes that studies have shown that people must be reminded to adopt new behaviors.\(^{13}\) Weekly or bi-weekly e-mails could be sent out reminding students of the Farmers’ Market or letting them know what foods are in season. If funding allowed, key chains, stickers, lunch bags, or reusable shopping bags with the Big Red Eats Green logo could be passed out to freshman during welcome week.

3. **Expanding**
   Ideally, more local resources should be added to the Guide. Before adding many more, we should establish a rating system for local restaurants and groceries to denote which institutions will be included in the Guide and how they will be represented. More pictures and video could be included with the guide. Include seasonal recipes submitted by students, local restaurateurs, and farmers.

4. **Updating**
   The Big Red Eats Green should be updated to include additional resources, and also to advertise local events involving local/sustainable food.\(^{14}\)

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\(^{14}\) See “Continuity” section of Barriers and Recommendations below.
5. **Events**
   Lectures, panel discussions, film screenings, and food tastings could supplement and enliven the Guide.

6. **Bring together IMU, RPS, and Athletics to help on this program**
   Encourage participation by key stakeholders in each of these corporations. Establish a Big Red Eats Green representative from each to update the Guide quarterly.

7. **Establish a relationship with First-Year Experience**
   Incoming freshman enter college and are making food choices immediately. Big Red Eats Green should influence students’ choices as soon as they enter Indiana University. Copies of the Guide, or the aforementioned “reminders”, could be passed out during orientation or, ideally, during welcome week.

8. **Work with other departments (HPER, Business, SPEA) to present research on areas of expertise, especially nutrition-related facts.**
   The Guide could include more nutritional information and more facts regarding environmental impacts of the food system. Experts from other departments could contribute additional strategies for eating sustainably and facts surrounding each strategy.

**BARRIERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Continuity**
The major in such a community-rooted issue such as food is ensuring continuity in the food internship projects such as this. Because of Bloomington’s transitory nature, student-led projects often lack follow through and support, as shown by IU’s Slow Food chapter, which has disappeared and reappeared over time. Pairing future interns with community leaders such as Maggie Sullivan (formerly of the Local Growers’ Guild) or someone as equally invested, would be ideal—especially for a food internship. The relationships with mentors could be key since the Office of Sustainability has limited resources, and the mentors ideally would commit for a period of several years. Successful programs like the E-waste Collection and Energy Challenge benefit from having established themselves as successful event-based programs with continuity through the years.

Recommendation: Establish a long-term, community-based (non-IU) mentor for future food interns.

**Communication**
As I learned in the middle of the project, people in the food industry: restaurateurs, farmers, chefs, and administrators in the food system are very busy people who rarely have time to answer e-mails and may not remember to contact you if you speak to them in passing. Telephone communication, visits, and persistence are the most successful methods for reaching these community members. Initially I wanted the guide to include a larger array of local restaurants and organizations. I e-mailed members of the Bloomington Independent Restaurant Association (BIRA) through the director of the organization and received only two responses (both of whom I had known personally). Then I met dozens of local business owners and organization leaders and introduced myself to them and asked them to contact me to set up a time to meet. Lastly, I sent out personal e-mails to individual organizations and businesses from whom I got only a handful of replies. In the end, I changed the focus of the resources section of
the guide to include the resources I considered most important and whose representatives were responsive.

Recommendation: Hold a “successful communications” seminar with future intern groups before they begin their projects, explaining strategies for successful, professional communication.

Complexity
Sustainability food is an immensely complex issue, as is sustainability in general. Educating students about the food system will require more than a simple sustainability angle; you also have to consider taste, health, economic, social, ethnic issues, so the any educational program should work with other University departments (such as anthropology, business, and HPER) to broaden the scope of the project. One intern cannot be an expert on all areas, even if he or she tries.

Recommendation: Assemble a panel of sustainable food experts panel including professors/experts in economics, political science, nutrition, biology, environmental sciences, business, etc.

Support
Achieving a sustainable food system as outlined by the Sustainable Food Model, would be a full time job for several people. To achieve (1) sustainable production and delivery, (2) reduction and recycling of packaging, and (3) reduction and recycling of food waste, we may need people assigned to directing each task. Ancil Drake noted that he would need a full-time staff member in charge of assuring the availability of locally-grown (or even sustainably grown foods) foods to supply to campus. Additional staff members with RPS would have to be hired to train staff and support a large-scale composting effort. Nora Kayden’s success at the IMU show that this can be done, but composting for RPS dining services is on a much larger scale.

Recommendation: Hire (1) a sustainable food procurement staff member within RPS Dining Services and (2) a composting initiative supervisor within RPS dining services.
## Key Contacts

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<th>Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organization/Department</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bannister</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kayden</td>
<td>Nora</td>
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<td>Mangan</td>
<td>Steve</td>
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<td>Panunzio</td>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>IUOS Intern (Sustainability Database)</td>
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<td>Roberts</td>
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<td>Food Works/Middle Way House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sullivan</td>
<td>Maggie</td>
<td>formerly of the Local Growers’ Guild</td>
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<tr>
<td>Menard</td>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>Anthropology of Food PhD Student and Organizer of Bloomington Eats Green conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilk</td>
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