

Rio Salado College

Program Review: Sustainable Food Systems Executive Summary

Three Year Review: 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 Academic Year Review Conducted: 2015-16

Purpose and Mission of the Sustainable Food Systems Program

The Sustainable Food Systems Program at Rio Salado College is designed to provide students with knowledge and skills required for employment in the field of Sustainable Foods. The program provides information and training in the areas of sustainability, gardening, cooking, baking, nutrition, food safety and systems.

Required courses are offered in a combination of formats including online and hybrid delivery methods. There is also a required internship which gives program students on the job training in their chosen Sustainable Food pathway such as interning on a farm, in a restaurant or in other community based organizations.

Sustainability is a “Core Value” at Rio Salado College and the Sustainable Food Systems program is sustainability in action. The Café @ Rio, the program’s teaching kitchen, recycles its fryer oil for use as biofuel; uses Bagasse (recycled sugarcane fiber) plates and containers; works with local farmers, ranchers and artisans and menus healthy options along with vegetarian cuisine. The Garden @ Rio does not use any herbicides or pesticides and does not use synthetic fertilizers. Fruit and vegetable trimmings, coffee grounds and egg shells from the Café @ Rio are composted in the garden to produce the next round of nutrient rich soil amendments.

The program is neither a culinary or horticulture program; instead, it has been reinvented to serve the needs of a burgeoning sector. Furthermore, program internships are customized to meet the needs and interests of students.

Associate in Applied Science in Sustainable Food Systems

The Sustainable Food Systems program is designed for a diverse student population, including those who are currently working within the food service industry and are interested in building upon their culinary skills in sustainable practices, as well as those with no culinary background. The program provides students with an overview of the Nation's current food model and alternative methods for altering this model and creating more sustainable foods. Courses include concepts supporting the real food movement, which represents reeducating the individual and the

community on the way food is purchased, brought to the table, and consumed. In addition, courses will cover sanitation guidelines, basic principles, and preparation techniques for the cooking and baking process. The program includes a Certificate of Completion (CCL) in Sustainable Food Systems and an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Sustainable Food Systems.

Program Notes:

+ indicates course has prerequisite and/or corequisites.
 Students must earn a grade of "C" or better in all courses required within the program.

Admission Criteria:

Formal application and admission into the Sustainable Food Systems program is required. Applications are available from a program advisor.

Required Courses: 42 credits

Certificate of Completion in Sustainable Food Systems

General Education Requirements: 18-22 credits

General Education Core: 9-12 credits

First-Year Composition 3 credits

- + Met by ENG101 in the Program Prerequisites area
AND
- + ENG102 First-Year Composition (3) OR
- + ENG111 Technical and Professional Writing (3)

Oral Communication 3 credits

- COM100 Introduction to Human Communication (3) OR
- COM110 Interpersonal Communication (3)

Critical Reading 0-3 credits

- + CRE101 College Critical Reading (3) OR
- + CRE111 Critical Reading for Business and Industry (3) OR
Equivalent as indicated by assessment

Mathematics 3 credits

- + MAT102 Mathematical Concepts/Applications (3) OR
Satisfactory completion of a higher level mathematics course

General Education Distribution: 9-10 credits

Humanities and Fine Arts 3 credits

Any approved General Education course in the Humanities and Fine Arts area.

Social and Behavioral Sciences 3 credits

ECN211 Macroeconomic Principles (3) OR
ECN212 Microeconomic Principles (3)

Natural Sciences 3-4 credits

BIO105 Environmental Biology (4) OR
CHM107 Chemistry and Society (3)

Certificate of Completion in Sustainable Food Systems

The Certificate of Completion (CCL) in Sustainable Food Systems program is designed for students who want to learn about historical events that mark the nation's current food model and take part in creating solutions to alter this model to produce a more sustainable food system worldwide.

Course topics include concepts covering gardening concepts, food safety and security, sustainability principles and strategies, global food systems and sustainable food productions systems. Students may also earn certification in a national food service safety and sanitation program. An Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree in Sustainable Food Systems is also available.

Program Prerequisites: 3 credits

+ ENG101 First-Year Composition 3

Required Courses: 9 credits

AGS182 Gardening Practices and Techniques 2

FON100 Introductory Nutrition 3

FON104 Certification in Food Service Safety and Sanitation 1

FON118 Commercial Baking Techniques (3) OR
FON135 Cooking Life (3) 3

FON122 Principles of Food and Beverage Service 3

FON143 Food and Culture 3

FON160 Modern Food Systems 3

+ FON161 Sustainable Food Production Systems 3

+ FON162 Organic Foods Production 3

+ FON163 Sustainable Restaurant Practices 3

FON180 Principles and Skills for Professional Cooking 3

- + FON271AC Culinary Studies Internship (3) 6
Students must complete six (6) credits of internship.
- + PHI216 Environmental Ethics 3

Program Decisions and Action Plans

In FY15, the program will see a reduction in total credits to 21 credits in the Certificate of Completion [CCL]. Other notable changes to the certificate include a reduction to 4 required courses: AGS 182, FON 104, FON 161 and SUS 100 for a total of 9 credits. Students will then choose 9 credits from restricted electives and continue to take ENG 101 as a prerequisite course.

Student feedback indicated that many students were not interested in finishing the CCL because they were not able to dedicate sufficient time to the required internship. This was due largely to outside influences such as jobs and family commitments. In response to this feedback, the internship was removed from the CCL and added to the list of restricted electives in the Associate in Applied Science [AAS].

Program's Best Practices

The Sustainable Food Systems program is a viable program for Rio Salado College and utilizes a number of best practices that other programs could replicate. There are two best practices that are conveyed heavily throughout the many courses in these programs. First, all courses involve more than one method for assessing student learning. For example, in FON143, students take traditional assessments (quizzes, final exam) but also complete weekly case studies that ensure students can apply these concepts to real-life scenarios. They also complete projects in which they analyze the content and research further into the subject matter. This allows students to be able to be assessed multi-dimensionally. Also, the courses that have these types of assessments (case studies, projects, etc.) give students rubrics and guidelines to help shape their process for developing their final product. A clear understanding of expectations is important for all students.

The on-site kitchen (Café @ Rio) is used to conduct SFS culinary classes and as an option for SFS students to participate in internships. The Café @ Rio is the only café on campus and provides food and beverage to over 500 customers per day, therefore, is a shared space for classes and café production. Café revenues are used to pay for expenses such as food and beverage purchases, paper and cleaning supplies; and as well as labor. Café revenues have increased year over year. In

addition, the Garden @ Rio harvests and delivers all usable produce and flowers to the Café @ Rio. In FY 14, the garden generated \$7,600 of organic produce that was used in the café.

Lastly, to hear from a few Sustainable Food Systems Graduates, watch a quick video at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YzYq1e1Y#t=12>

Areas for Improvement

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Future Reports/Reviews

The next program review for Sustainable Food Systems will be in 2020-21.