SEED Wayne welcomed at Western Michigan
Students tour sustainability programs at WMU, KVCC

SEED Wayne student leaders, Slava Pallas, Tyler Shelton, and Adam Pruett, and director Kami Pothukuchi were shown great hospitality by their hosts at Western Michigan University during a visit, March 17-18. Pothukuchi delivered a lecture, “What is the community that feeds you? Reimagining food, reimagining community,” sponsored by the University Center for the Humanities, March 17, and led a community conversation the following morning, sponsored by the university’s Office for Sustainability.

Pallas (MA candidate in Anthropology and WSU Farmers Market SNAP operations leader), Shelton (MUP candidate and 2-season farmers market Student Advantage volunteer and Western Michigan alumnus), and Pruett (Biology senior and Warrior Garden leader) carpooled to Kalamazoo. Pruett roomed with a friend at Gibbs House, a living-learning sustainability lab on campus that we toured, Friday.

More than 150 attendees piled into Knauss Hall where the lecture took place, and nearly 50 invited guests joined the Friday morning community conversation. The latter started with campus-community collaborations around sustainable food systems but evolved quickly into strategies for local networking on specific initiatives related to improving the quality of school food in Kalamazoo Public Schools and creating a local Food Policy Council.

Long time friends and SEED Wayne supporters, Professors Ken Dahlberg (Emeritus) and Olga Bonfiglio (Communication Studies) and recent Ann Arbor transplant (but K’zoo native) Rachel Bair, attended one or both events. An expert on sustainable food systems and food policy councils, Dahlberg gave Pothukuchi a tour of the city and local food sites before the lecture. Hired away from Fair Food Network—sponsor of the Double Up Food Bucks program at the WSU Farmers Market—by the Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Bair is leading a culinary arts program that has an extensive farm-to-chef hands-on curriculum, a first of its kind in the country.

Above: Alleah Webb of Drifter Coffee will return to the market in 2016

Photos: J. Converse

Farmers Market Back at Reuther

The 2016 Wayne State Farmers Market will open its 9th season, as usual, the first Wednesday of June. Like last year, it will happen in front of Reuther Library, 5401 Cass Avenue. Fresh foods, including fruits and vegetables, flowers, salad greens, herbs, berries, potted plants, and honey will return, as will prepared foods such as breads, sandwiches, paninis, wraps, soups, salads, popcorn, and delectable desserts.

The market accepts cash, and Bridge Card, WIC Project FRESH and Senior Market FRESH benefits. As in the past, we will match Bridge Card spending with Double Up Food Bucks (DUBF), which is made possible by SEED Wayne partner Fair Food Network. Also back is the Student Advantage Project, which gives enrolled students $10 in market vouchers to be spent exclusively on fresh produce, in exchange for $5 in cash.

We are collaborating with a variety of partners to offer chef’s demos, nutrition and healthy eating information, and yoga at the market. More
SEED Wayne at Western Michigan, cont’d.

Pothukuchi’s lecture discussed how organizing around urban agriculture and just and sustainable food on campus and in the city helps feed new ideas about community—both, of people and of place.

After the Friday morning conversation, a small group of WMU and Kalamazoo College faculty and students stayed behind along with the WSU contingent, to tour Gibbs House and sustainability programs led by students there, as well as the shiny new KVCC campus building and its 10,000 sq. ft. greenhouse.

In addition to checking out the passive solar greenhouse at Gibbs House that is heated by a Jean Pain style compost pile made up of woodchips, sawdust, and manure, all sealed within a straw bale container, and vermicomposting bins, we learned about composting with the help of the Black Soldier fly larvae that can convert 20 lbs. of waste/day into one lb. of compost. The nearby seven-layer food forest composed of nut and fruit trees, semi dwarf cherry trees, food-bearing bushes and shrubs, herbaceous plants closer to the ground, tubers and other below-ground growers, and vining plants—together forming seven edible layers—are planned with a living fence to boot.

A 500 gallon rainwater catchment system for Gibbs House and an outdoor earthen oven capped the tour and we were ushered indoors for delicious thin crust pizza, salad, and more conversation, this time on the many challenges of leading sustainability initiatives. Learning about the programs, the organization of student leadership, and their varied experiences was truly a mind-expanding experience for those of us visiting from Wayne State.

An institutional innovation that fuels sustainability work at WMU is the related fee charged each student every semester. Although not without local controversy, the fee facilitates many innovative, engaged learning opportunities on urban-natural systems. Adam Pruett and Tyler Shelton (indicated by arrows, 1 to r) at the community conversation sponsored by Western Michigan University’s Office for Sustainability, March 18.

Adam Pruett picks up reins to St. Andrew’s Garden from Hope Morrow; Garden applications out

Biology major and Warrior Garden leader Adam Pruett will lead the St. Andrew’s Garden in 2016. Following her graduation, two-year garden leader and psychology major Hope Morrow will support Pruett and the gardeners as needed. We send warm wishes to Morrow, who has found a full-time job as an artist at Painting with a Twist, as she embarks on a new phase of her life.

A member of the Detroit Industrial Gardeners (DIG) group, Pruett is currently participating in the Urban Roots agriculture and leadership training program offered by Keep Growing Detroit. In addition to bolstering his experience leading the Warrior Garden for two years, this program will connect him to gardener networks in the city, provide additional resources to campus gardens, and offer fresh tips about leadership in food production and marketing. DIG members sold produce from Warrior Garden last year. To learn more or apply for a plot, write adam.pruett@wayne.edu.

Meanwhile, Warrior Garden is also looking for gardeners. DIG leaders Jake Grobbel, engineering major, and Pruett are developing plans for the season at this garden. To volunteer at Warrior Garden, write adam.pruett@wayne.edu.

SEED Wayne Partners

Readers are invited to submit news on teaching, research, engagement, or operations of interest to SEED Wayne. For more information, contact k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu
Food Summit Highlights First Foods

The 6th Annual Food Summit—Food for Change—chalked yet another banner event for the Detroit Food Policy Council. Founded in 2009, the organization has a mission to promote food security, justice and sovereignty in the City of Detroit.

The Annual Summit is key to the organization’s mission. It allows locals and outsiders working on local and alternative food system issues to share their work and lessons, organizes panels and workshops around significant themes, provides a crucial networking opportunity, and showcases just, good food in its meals.

This year’s summit offered a spotlight on a much-neglected issue, first foods or breast milk—a critical resource for infant health and development—and illuminated disparities in support for breastfeeding in communities of color. While several speakers offered diverse perspectives, a highlight of the conference was a keynote presentation on Day 2 by Kimberly Seals Allers, an award-winning journalist, author, and nationally recognized media commentator.

Allers spoke about the impediments new mothers face to breastfeed, and shared innovative community-based strategies from projects in Detroit, Birmingham, New Orleans, and Philadelphia to create environments and policies that are more supportive of and friendly to breastfeeding.

Along with Fay Hansen of Oakland University, SEED Wayne’s Kami Pothukuchi led a workshop to engage participants in a conversation about how students may contribute to “food for change” and forge related campus-community collaborations. With more than 50 years separating the youngest and the oldest in the room, participants were also diverse in race, ethnicity, gender, and organizational affiliation. Many excellent ideas were generated, and some will be tried soon, in SEED Wayne’s Community Food Systems Planning Fellowship.

Join the Garden Resource Program!

This spring, thousands of residents across the city will be growing vegetable gardens transforming backyards into sources for nutritious meals, vacant lots into beautiful and productive community gardens and schoolyards into outdoor classrooms, filling the minds and bellies of students with fresh ideas and healthy food. The Garden Resource Program will support more than 1,400 gardens this spring with seeds, transplants and opportunities for education and connection to other growers in the city. We invite students, faculty and friends of SEED Wayne to join us this season to grow, learn and eat good food with us! To join the Garden Resource Program or learn about opportunities to volunteer or participate in educational classes, contact Keep Growing Detroit at 313-757-2635, keepgrowingdetroit@gmail.com or visit detroitagriculture.net.

WSU Farmers Market, cont’d from p 1.

details on these activities will be available in coming weeks.

We are grateful for the assistance of and collaboration by numerous campus and community partners and volunteers, without whom the annual market would be impossible: University Libraries, Office of Campus Sustainability, Wayne State Police, and Detroit Yoga Lab. We seek market ambassadors from across campus who will post flyers and conduct periodic email and personal outreach for the market to students and staff with whom they work on a routine basis.

If you can serve as an ambassador for the market, please write Kami Pothukuchi at k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu.

Mark Your Calendars and Spread the Word

March-April
Check out Education Series at Keep Growing Detroit, detroitagriculture.net/
3/28, 6:30 pm, MSU Center (3408 Woodward), Monday night gathering (Community Science, Re-imagining the Environmentalist). Info: www. glbd.org.
4/4, 11, 18, 5:30– 7 pm, 114 State Hall, WSU, Food system leaders speak in UP 5430. RSVP k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu

April
4/22, 6 pm, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, 10th Anniversary. For info and tickets: Detroitcharities.org.
4/23, 11 am-1 pm, St. Andrew’s Garden Kickoff. (Members only). For info or to join garden, write adam.prueitt@wayne.edu

April-May-June
4/25, 6:30 pm, MSU Center (3408 Woodward), Monday night gathering, Our Relationship to the Biosphere. Info: glbd.org.
5/23, same time, place as above, Monday night movie. “A People’s Story of Detroit”
6/1, 11 am, WSU Farmers Market starts, Reuther Library, 5401 Cass Ave. Cash, Bridge Card, WIC Project FRESH, Senior Project FRESH accepted.
With the Cities and Food class (UP 5430, HON 4280) offered this winter semester, the brand new SEED Wayne Fellowship in Community Food Systems Planning has gotten off to a good start. Sixteen students from urban planning, I. D. Reid Honors College, social work, communication arts, and elsewhere are enrolled. Also participating, but not for course credit, are three members of the Detroit Food Policy Council, with the Council and SEED Wayne sharing tuition costs. This diversity of backgrounds and experiences has served the class well as it enters the final month.

Gathering Monday evenings in 114 State Hall, the class is offered in partnership with community food organizations. Representatives from these organizations lecture weekly on topics as varied as enhancing neighborhood grocery stores, food hubs, school food, emergency food assistance, urban agriculture, food justice and sovereignty, and food policy organizing. A link to a roster of guest lecturers is available at SEED Wayne’s homepage at clas.wayne.edu/seedwayne.

Student teams are undertaking projects for partner organizations. For example, two teams are analyzing the Fresh Food Share and the Smart Bites programs for Gleaners Community Food Bank. Two others are interviewing residents and leaders of the Bangladeshi and Spanish-speaking communities of Hamtramck and Southwest Detroit, respectively, to understand the neighborhood-based availability of ethnically based foods and coping strategies community members adopt when such foods are scarce or absent.

The Fellowship kicks off with UP 5430/HON 4280 Cities and Food class explores key justice questions

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Fair Food Network’s Charles Walker lectures to the class on an initiative to introduce Double Up Food Bucks in select city grocery stores. Colleague Elissa Trumbull spoke about DUFB in the state’s farmers markets. www.doubleupfoodbucks.org

Another component of the Fellowship, the Community Food Planning Internship (UP 7810) will be offered in the Spring-Summer semesters. Already, a handful of students have expressed an interest in it. The Fellowship is made possible by grants from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and Ford Motor Company’s College Community Challenge Fund.

SEED Wayne is dedicated to collaboratively building sustainable food systems on campus and in Detroit neighborhoods through activities in teaching, research, engagement, and campus operations.

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SEED Wayne embraces core university functions in teaching, research, engagement and operations.

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