

University of British Columbia

Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Sustainability Program

Student Research Report

Advancing Food Sovereignty and Justice through a UBC-Vancouver Climate-Friendly Food System (CFFS) Procurement Strategy

Prepared by: Haley Kardash, Shirley Ting, Marriam Dia, Andy Ruo Chen Qin, & Kiana Stark

Prepared for: Student Housing & Community Services, Campus and Community Planning, UBC Wellbeing, & SEEDS Sustainability Program

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Globally, it is recognized that we are currently in the midst of a climate emergency. The phrase “climate emergency” acknowledges that human activity is responsible for increasing the earth’s global average temperature through the release of greenhouse gasses (GHGs) (UNEP, 2021). This declaration stresses the need for global leaders to take action and prioritize climate change mitigation in their policies (UNEP, 2021). UBC has created the Climate Action Plan (CAP 2030) to provide a trajectory towards net zero emissions (UBC Campus + Community Planning, 2021) to abide by the Paris Agreement, which stipulates that global warming must be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Moreover, food was recognized as the second highest contributor to UBC’s GHG emissions (UBC, 2021). Food has also been identified as a significant area of focus for social advocacy and action (Block et al., 2011). Therefore, it is crucial to address the importance of climate-friendly food systems that foster food sovereignty and justice.

To understand how climate change, food sovereignty and food justice intersect, it is pertinent to be conscious of what these terms entail in a university context. Within this report, food sovereignty is defined as “the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods” (Food Secure Canada, 2018, pp. 9). Food justice is referred to as a social value and action that acknowledges how factors such as settler-colonialism, workers’ rights, historical injustices and other social issues are embedded within the food system (Clendenning et al., 2015). In addition, both of these terms relate to recognizing power dynamics such as socioeconomic inequalities and minority groups (Clendenning et al., 2015; McMichael, 2014). A campus that exemplifies food sovereignty and justice must prioritize having sustainable, affordable food options, provide opportunities for consumers to practice ethical self-determination, and have programs that focus on advocating for the right to culturally diverse food (Laforge et al., 2021; McMichael, 2014).

The purpose of this project was to foster a climate and socially-just food system within the UBC Vancouver campus in alignment with CAP 2030 goals. Furthermore, this project aimed to evaluate how campus stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty, administrators and food directors) understand and perceive current policies and procurement practices regarding food justice and food sovereignty and whether these values were being embodied within a campus context. We then used our research findings to develop a Climate-Friendly Food System (CFFS) Procurement Strategy that encapsulated the needs and interests of UBC stakeholders.

This project was executed through a Community-Based Action Research (CBAR) approach. Our research was conducted through guidance of SEEDS, UBC Wellbeing, and UBC Campus & Community Planning. Our research identified key opportunities for fostering food justice and sovereignty within UBC Vancouver’s food procurement practices. Specifically, key stakeholders in food procurement, climate action, and policy planning (e.g., food directors, researchers, administrative staff) were identified and interviewed. Focus groups were used to assess how these stakeholders currently view institutional food system issues and whether they believe there are practices, policies or future opportunities on campus to further these values. Questions that were used in interviews and focus groups included topics on accessibility, availability and awareness of food justice and sovereignty in the food system.

This project is significant as it holds UBC Vancouver’s food purchasing powers and policymakers accountable for cultivating food sovereignty and food justice to prioritizing the wellbeing of UBC community members. The project supports the UBC Vancouver community by suggesting a strategy that furthers UBC’s social and climate justice goals. This CFFS Food Procurement Strategy recommends targets, indicators, and actions that are intended to advance and operationalize food sovereignty and justice, as well as reduce food system-related GHG emissions as part of a more extensive CFFS Procurement Strategy.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
BC	British Columbia
CBAR	Community-Based Action Research
CAP 2030	Climate Action Plan 2030
CFFS	Climate-Friendly Food System
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon dioxide
GHG	Greenhouse gas
SEEDS Sustainability Program	Social Ecological Economic Development Studies Sustainability Program
SFU	Simon Fraser University
UBC	University of British Columbia
UVIC	University of Victoria
LFS	Land and Food Systems
AMS	Alma Mater Society
UNSDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
TFWP	Temporary Foreign Worker Program
SAWP	Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program
UFCW	United Food and Commercial Workers Union

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 RESEARCH TOPIC

A strong and resilient food system is critical to promote equity and sustainability. A sustainable food system must be able to combat the diverse challenges of climate change, which are shaped and have been altered by how humans interact with food (Laforge et al., 2021). These challenges are not distributed equally, as marginalized populations are more vulnerable to the social, economic, environmental, and cultural impacts of climate change (Laforge et al., 2021). As the world continues to face these unprecedented threats, it is critical that institutions learn to shift towards more ecologically and socially sustainable infrastructures. With robust frameworks such as the Climate Action Plan 2030 (CAP 2030), the University of British Columbia (UBC) is a champion when it comes to sustainability and has taken steps towards effective and meaningful action. As a leading voice in climate action, UBC's implementation of a climate-friendly food system (CFFS) must be prioritized as a catalyst for change in issues such as access and self-determination.

When conceptualizing the components of a CFFS, it is important to consider the values of food justice and sovereignty. Examining our food systems through the lens of food justice requires thoughtful engagement and recognition of issues relating to equality and access. Food justice entails equal and fair access to where, what, and how food is produced, distributed, and consumed (Gottlieb & Anupama, 2010). Additionally, food justice seeks to address the structural and systematic factors that create inequalities within and beyond our food system. Food justice contextualizes discourses surrounding food sovereignty and people's right to self-determination within their food systems and cultural traditions (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015). The concept of food sovereignty is particularly important to Indigenous communities who, since colonization, seek their own agricultural, fishing, and land rights to combat racial and settler hierarchies (Dennis & Robin, 2020). In the university context, UBC has acknowledged their role in reconciliation through support of the Indigenous Strategic Plan 2020, which includes the goal of establishing an Indigenous procurement strategy as a way to decolonize the food system. In this way, food justice and food sovereignty both recognize the unequal power dynamics within the food system and can be applied to the social injustices embedded in climate change.

The UBC Food Services, Campus and Community Planning, and the Social Ecological Economic

Development Studies (SEEDS) Program have made progress in climate action and justice through continuous research and the adoption of ethical practices. Moreover, the development of a CFFS Food Procurement Strategy that fosters food justice and sovereignty is an important step to uphold UBC's commitments for a just and sustainable campus. Therefore, this research offers key opportunities to inform the CFFS Procurement Strategy's goals for promoting food justice and sovereignty on campus. Ultimately, this project allows for actions to be developed that address the social injustices within the food system.

## 1.2 RESEARCH RELEVANCE

Promoting food sovereignty and food justice is crucial in our battle against climate change. In this project, our working definitions for food sovereignty and food justice are thus: food sovereignty is a value that exists in food systems where all food actors such as consumers, producers, and suppliers are able to engage in equitable and ethical food practices that align with community empowerment (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015); food justice describes processes that platform historically marginalized populations and seek to redistribute power and agency to create more equitable, ethical, and socially just food systems (Gottlieb & Anupama, 2010). In this way, food sovereignty and food justice are interconnected values that can be applied to the social injustices embedded in climate change. Moreover, it is important to note that the ways in which food sovereignty and food justice are manifested in food systems is contextually dependent and subject to change. Therefore, the definitions of food justice and food sovereignty are iterative and will evolve in tandem alongside further research and community engagement.

On the macro-scale, top-down governance structures, such as the historical oppression of racialized peoples, have negatively influenced marginalized communities and have exacerbated socio-economic inequalities (Laforge et al., 2021). This is apparent in Canada's food system, where food sovereignty and food justice have been neglected within the various processes of food production (Laforge et al., 2021). Moreover, food injustices intersect with climate injustices, as the food system is responsible for approximately one-quarter of GHG emissions and therefore, has a significant impact on climate change (Ritchie, 2019). For instance, the shift towards industrialization and maximized profit margins within Canada's agricultural industries have been tied to pollution, the release of GHG emissions, the exploitation of agricultural labourers, and the silencing of Indigenous peoples (Laforge et al., 2021; Beckford, 2016; Levkoe et al., 2021). Research has indicated that these issues stem from the notion that Canadian food production is embedded in a capitalist food system (Laforge et al., 2021).



On the meso-scale, UBC plays a significant role in addressing the challenges of climate change in our food system. Currently, the UBC food system creates more than 290,000 tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) annually (UBC Board of Governors, 2021). In recognition of the impacts UBC's food system has on climate change, UBC has committed itself to championing a climate-friendly food system. This has involved a number of research initiatives, which aim to halve GHG emissions by 2030, promote food justice, and increase food sovereignty on campus (UBC Board of Governors, 2021). For instance, previous research has engaged and collaborated with UBC Food Services to provide numerous constructive strategies to lower the carbon footprint within the procurement process, such as developing food procurement guidelines (Kang et al, 2010) and creating sustainable food procurement targets (Ruan et al, 2008). These community-engaged research initiatives facilitate the development of informed and evidence-based food procurement action plans and are essential for ensuring that UBC is meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) and advancing UBC's Climate Action Plan (CAP 2030). However, many of the past studies are limited in that they do not fully incorporate the importance of food justice and sovereignty in developing climate-friendly food systems.

To address this, our research provides a clear definition of food justice and sovereignty that is specific to the context of UBC Vancouver's community. Our project also assessed key stakeholders' awareness, attitudes, and practices regarding these climate-just food initiatives. Our findings were then used to develop CFFS procurement action plans. Numerous studies have indicated that recognizing peoples' rights to healthy food which is produced through sustainable, ecologically sound, and ethical methods can improve the quality of life for a majority of stakeholders in the food system (Nyeleni, 2007). In this way, involving the needs, considerations, and attitudes of individuals is crucial in developing a foodscape that champions food sovereignty and food justice.

### 1.3 PROJECT CONTEXT

As an institution, UBC recognizes that we are currently in the midst of a global climate crisis, where climate challenges are intersectional. Consequently, UBC Vancouver has established a goal of developing and maintaining "climate-friendly, just and accessible food [systems]" that champion sustainability, social resilience, and food justice (UBC Climate-Friendly Food System Action Team, 2021). This has involved a number of initiatives, including but not limited to the UBC Climate Action Plan 2030 (CAP 2030), the development of the draft Climate-Friendly Food System Charter, the UBC Climate Emergency Engagement, the Indigenous Strategic

Plan 2020, and the Sustainability Hub Strategic Plan. Moreover, community-engaged organizations such as the UBC Climate Hub, Climate Justice UBC, AMS Sustainability and the SEEDS Sustainability Program utilize community assets to further UBC's vision for a climate-engaged foodscape.

This project was developed to support the CAP 2030 target of reducing food-system related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50% (UBC Campus + Community Planning, 2021). The specific climate actions related to this project include the development of a campus-wide Climate-Friendly Food System (CFFS) definition and Procurement Guideline as part of climate mitigation and adaptation strategies (UBC Campus + Community Planning, 2021). This project is situated within the context of the intersectional values of food sovereignty, food justice, and climate justice. These complex terms refer to the power imbalances which are prevalent throughout the food system that impact peoples' access to healthy and culturally relevant food, food-related agency (Food Secure Canada, 2020). Moreover, social and economic hierarchies are tied to the disproportionate impacts of climate change on marginalized communities (Salas, 2021).

The topics of justice, equity, and sovereignty are central to addressing the 'wicked problem' of climate change within our food systems (UBC, 2021). For instance, the unprecedented 2021 heatwaves in British Columbia exacerbated food justice issues in the province's food production-supply chain. Migrant farmworkers are crucial to our agricultural labor force. However, they are marginalized and vulnerable to mistreatment and danger during their employment in 'normal' climate conditions (UFCW, 2020). Their working conditions worsened during the heatwave as they were forced to continue working long shifts in direct sunlight with inadequate access to food, water, and shelter (Weiler, 2022). This is important as food justice cannot exist in an unethical system that exploits its workers. As an institution with significant purchasing-power, UBC can support migrant farmworkers through a food procurement strategy that seeks to support and platform movements which address the power imbalances in our current food system. In this way, the relationship of climate and social justice must be further researched to highlight the human welfare aspects of climate change-related issues that exist within the food supply chains and food procurement strategies of UBC Vancouver.

#### 1.4 PROJECT PURPOSE, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Research Purpose

To foster food justice and sovereignty within the University of British Columbia's Vancouver campus in alignment with the Climate Action Plan 2030 (CAP 2030) goals.

## Research Goals

This project aims to 1) operationalize food justice and food sovereignty, 2) inform the development of a Climate-Friendly Food System (CFFS) Procurement Strategy with a focus on food justice and sovereignty, and 3) identify the most impactful opportunities for fostering these values within UBC Vancouver's procurement practices. These goals reflect UBC's commitment in pursuing adaptation efforts in light of the current climate crisis.

## Research Objectives

1. Evaluate research regarding food sovereignty and justice in the context of food procurement strategies from UBC and other post-secondary institutions through an environmental scan and literature reviews to further UBC's Climate Action Plan 2030 goals
2. Identify opportunities and barriers in promoting food sovereignty and food justice to support climate adaptation on campus in UBC Food Services food procurement methods
3. Conduct interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders in food procurement, climate action, and policy to assess opportunities in procurement practices that promote food justice and sovereignty
4. Recommend targets, indicators and actions that can advance food sovereignty and food justice as part of a more comprehensive Climate-Friendly Food System (CFFS) Procurement Strategy

## 2. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

### 2.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This project incorporated the Community-Based Action Research (CBAR) approach to foster a partnership that emphasizes equitable collaboration between community stakeholders and UBC. Applying the CBAR principle created fruitful discourse and guided the development of a sustainable food procurement action plan. Three focus sessions were conducted with our client groups to gain insights on justice-centered food procurement resources that are already being implemented at UBC. Focus sessions also provided opportunities to acquire relevant contacts that

greatly contributed to our knowledge pool and informed our creation of an action plan. One focus session was conducted with students from UBC’s general community to examine student insights regarding the implementation and awareness of food justice and food sovereignty in UBC’s food services. Focus sessions contributed to our research goals and objectives by identifying areas where current food procurement strategies required further research, support, or instances where current practices did not fulfill the needs of university stakeholders (e.g. students, administration, etc.).

Current food procurement strategies at UBC Vancouver were examined by conducting interviews with client groups working within these fields related to food procurement and climate action at UBC. We also interviewed members working in similar fields at other post-secondary institutions. This allowed us to compare UBC Vancouver’s food procurement strategy with the strategies of other institutions to assess areas in which UBC can improve. Student leadership groups that specialize in food justice and climate action were also invited in focus groups to identify future actions that can be taken by UBC to promote climate awareness and ethical food procurement. These methods of data collection enhanced our understanding of the student community’s position on the issues at hand, which ensured that our action plan reflects the needs and assets of the UBC Vancouver community in alignment with UBC’s CAP 2030 goals.

## 2.2 RESEARCH METHODS

This project gathered information from key stakeholders in food procurement, food and climate action, and climate policy planning from the UBC Vancouver community and other post-secondary institutions. This research was carried out in the form of literature reviews, focus groups, and interviews that searched for common themes (e.g., policy change, food accessibility, etc.) and the examination of strategies to inform a CFFS Food Procurement Strategy that emphasizes food justice and sovereignty.

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### 2.2.1 SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION RESEARCH METHODS

Our secondary data collection consisted of an environmental scan and literature reviews that were conducted by our research team. We executed environmental scans to distinguish key stakeholders within UBC and other post-secondary institutions in British Columbia (BC) for primary research recruitment. These literature reviews addressed the scope of various food justice and sovereignty issues such as exploitative migrant labor in Canada, Indigenous food sovereignty in Canada, and student engagement. Literature reviews

identified areas of opportunity in policy-making in powerful institutions such as universities. Secondary research findings were qualitatively analyzed using coding techniques, where we examined scholarly literature (n=66) using search terms such as food procurement, food justice, food sovereignty, Indigenous food sovereignty, migrant labour, climate justice, and settler colonialism. Through coding, data was divided into broad categories (issues and recommendations). Codes were organized into themes and sub-themes (e.g., policy change, grassroots advocacy).

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## 2.2.2 PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION RESEARCH METHODS

Interviews and focus groups served as the primary research methods for this project. We conducted a total of four focus groups and four interviews. Focus groups were selected as group dynamics elicit diverse and enriching dialogue that are helpful when discussing complex topics such as food justice and sovereignty. However, it is important to note that three focus group sessions were organized by representatives from the SEEDS team, where CFFS action team members volunteered to participate in our research (n=10). Eight students signed up to participate in focus group, yet only six (n=6) students actually. A total of twenty emails were sent out to identify interview candidates, and five (n=5) candidates responded and agreed to participate in our research. The response rate for interview invitations is 25%.

Focus groups and interviews were held through zoom and the scheduling was based on the availability of the participants and research team. Our group members acted as moderators to facilitate the discussion and record the meeting. Discussion topics were open-ended and designed based on the findings from literature reviews. Food justice and sovereignty served as the primary focus of these discussions with questions centered around their meanings and manifestations through food procurement strategies at UBC Vancouver. These were scheduled from February 16<sup>th</sup> to March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Our data collection tool consisted of a set of questions that featured slight variations in wording and follow-up questions that changed depending on the role of the participants (Administration/Students/Indigenous) that were used in interviews and focus groups (Appendix C). Moreover, due to time constraints, one interview was conducted asynchronously, where the participant answered the set of questions on a google document. The remaining interviews and all focus groups were conducted online via Zoom due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. We received permission from two interview groups and one focus group to record the session and the transcript of these meeting

sessions were automatically generated using *Descript*. For the remaining two interviews and two focus groups, we used Google Docs for note-taking.

### 2.3 Methods of Administration

Interviews were selected as a research method, as they allowed us to gain in-depth and detailed information regarding food justice and food sovereignty issues associated with post-secondary food service and procurement practices. This method also allows for flexibility, as it accommodates time restrictions regarding the schedules of the interviewees and researchers. Focus groups were also chosen as group dynamics elicit diverse and enriching dialogues that are helpful when discussing complex topics like food justice and sovereignty.

Interview candidates were identified during the initial environmental scan. We examined the food service department websites from many BC post-secondary institutions, including UBC, SFU, UVIC, and Langara College, to identify admins and professionals candidates and collect their contact information. To recruit the candidates, we emailed each candidate to determine their willingness to participate in our research and time availability (Appendix B). In case of candidates who were unable to participate, we communicated our understanding in our email correspondences and inquired whether they were able or willing to recommend someone else within their institution whom we were able to contact.

The focus group candidates were identified and recruited using multiple methods. During the environmental scan, we conducted an online google search using keyword combinations such as “UBC student clubs,” “food and agriculture,” “sustainability,” and “indigenous students” to identify relevant student-run organizations at UBC. We contacted these organizations to determine their willingness, availability and capacity to support our research recruitment by forwarding our promotional poster, which contained 4 designated time slots for focus groups, to their members. Our focus group promotional poster was designed to attract students to attend our stakeholder focus group. We also posted this advertisement on social media, along with a Google Form that contained our stakeholder focus group schedule for interested students to sign up. An incentive of \$5 Starbucks gift card was offered to each student participant to compensate for their time and effort. The LFS 450 teaching team also organized two focus group sessions and recruited administration and professionals who work in food related fields at UBC.

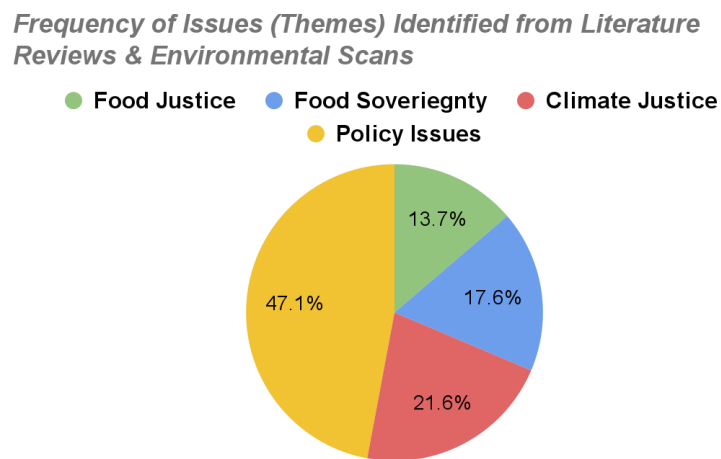
## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH RESULTS

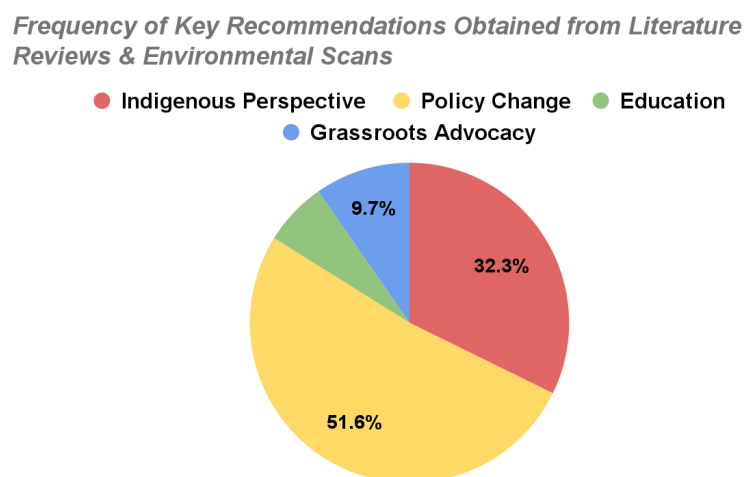
#### 3.1.1 LITERATURE REVIEWS

To tabulate our results, two pie charts were used to illustrate the frequency of issues and recommendations. The frequency of issues represents 4 themes; 1) food justice, 2) food sovereignty, 3) climate justice and 4) policy issues (refer to Figure 1). Recommendations were exemplified by 4 themes; 1) Indigenous perspectives, 2) policy change, 3) education and 4) grassroots advocacy (refer to Figure 2). With this, we obtained a visual representation to communicate our secondary data collection results.

**Figure 1.** Frequency of Issues Identified from Literature Reviews & Environmental Scans



**Figure 2.** Frequency of Key Recommendations Obtained from Literature Reviews & Environmental Scans



## **Climate Justice, Settler-Colonialism, Food Justice, and Food Sovereignty**

The current discourses surrounding climate justice are intersectional. In Canada, it is widely agreed that climate justice is situated within the context of settler-colonialism. Williams and Mos-Shogbamimu (2021) argue that racialized communities are often the most impacted by the consequences of climate change. Salas supports this claim, noting that long histories of racial oppression and marginalization exacerbate the adverse health consequences of climate change amongst racialized communities (2021). Furthermore, research suggests that the complex and dynamic relationships between climate justice, health, and settler-colonialism manifest in our food systems and can be described through the concepts of food justice and food sovereignty. According to Cadeiux and Slocum, food justice and food sovereignty are embodied through the institutionalization of “equity and control over the food system” (2015). However, Hjalmarson (2021) notes that in Canada, racism underscores socio-economic differences to justify, create, and maintain hierarchies, exclusions, and exploitation, which are phenomena that can be observed in Canada’s food system. Gottlieb and Joshi (2010) build to this point, noting that racialized communities are often disempowered at various levels of Canada’s foodscape. Therefore, current discourses suggest that Canada’s food system is shaped by complex interactions between climate justice, race, food justice, and food sovereignty. In our literature review, two key factors that have been identified within British Columbia are Indigenous food sovereignty and the treatment of migrant agricultural labourers.

### **Indigenous Food Sovereignty**

Our literature review indicated that a strong and resilient food system is necessary to promote equity and sustainability. However, researchers have found that Canada’s settler-colonial agendas have led to adverse consequences for people’s relationships with food systems (Levkoe et al., 2021). This is especially important in the Indigenous context. Levkoe et al. (2021) note that Indigenous peoples have been forcefully removed from their territories, cultures, and foodways. Scholars such as Dennis and Robin (2020) claim that this illustrates the notion that the restriction of food knowledge, culture, and tradition has been used as a tool to propagate genocide and assimilation. In this way, the current literature suggests that Canada’s history of settler-colonialism has had a significant and long-lasting impact on Indigenous food practices. This is reflected in the current discourses surrounding Indigenous food sovereignty. For instance, Rotz and Kepkiewicz note that conversations surrounding decolonizing Canada’s food system have become more frequent in recent years, where food sovereignty has



emerged as a vessel to reclaim the significance of food through people's right to control and cultivate their food (2018).

Research indicates that the term 'Indigenous food sovereignty' has been a focal point for social movements that seek to restore and increase accessibility to traditional foods and strengthen cultural heritage (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019; Cote, 2016). However, scholars and activists note that while Indigenous food sovereignty is an important concept, it is often overlooked throughout Canada (Merriam, 2016). Merriam argues that a significant challenge in promoting Indigenous food sovereignty is that Indigenous connections and relationships to land have been weakened by colonialism and systemic forms of oppression (2016). Moreover, Vanthuyne notes that although there have been efforts by the Canadian government to advance Indigenous rights through policy developments, there continues to be uncertainties regarding how best to understand and effectively support Indigenous sovereignty (2021). In response, scholars and activists have identified a number of recommendations to support Indigenous self-determination, confront barriers to traditional foods, and create space for Indigenous voices (Robin, 2019; Merriam, 2016). For instance, Levkoe and Blay-Palmer found that assessments on food sovereignty in Canada are scarce, which presents a significant opportunity for policy makers to revise legislations that uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples with respect to food systems (2018). This position is supported by Desmarais and Wittman, who assert that policy change and advocacy is a key action that can be undertaken by political figures and community stakeholders to support Indigenous food sovereignty (2014). Powerful institutions have adopted policy changes to support Indigenous social movements, such as the Indigenous Strategic Plan at UBC (UBC, 2020). In this way, the current literature suggests that there are a number of opportunities available that advance Indigenous food sovereignty and Indigenous food rights.

### **Food Justice and Migrant Labour**

Our literature review indicated that the exploitation of migrant labour is a key food justice issue in Canada. As Vosko and Spring note, Canada's food system is heavily dependent on racialized labour which is underscored by settler-colonial and imperial dynamics (Vosko & Spring, 2021). In Canada, migrant labour is primarily facilitated by the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), which allows temporary non-Canadian workers to fill in labour shortages (Canada, 2021). Of particular relevance to the agricultural industry is the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), which is a branch of the TFWP that is designed to support Canadian

employers source flexible and low-wage labour (Vosko & Spring, 2021). In 2018 alone, the SAWP drew in over 60,000 migrant workers from the Global South (UFCW, 2020). In this way, the SAWP is a significant policy instrument in Canada's agricultural economy.

The SAWP has been increasingly criticized by scholars and advocates for contributing to the exploitative and capitalistic treatment of migrant workers. Critics of the SAWP argue that the program fails to meet international standards for labour rights and perpetuates legislated inequality (Cohen & Hjalmarson, 2020; Preibisch and Otero, 2014). For example, in British Columbia, farmworkers are not entitled to overtime or statutory holiday pay (BC Ministry of Jobs, 2021). Beckford observes that while this policy applies to all farmworkers, migrants are in a particularly vulnerable position as they reportedly work an average of ten to twelve hours per day, often at the behest of their employers (2016). Beckford also notes that migrants often feel unable to reduce their working hours for fear of retribution, as SAWP contracts allow employers to terminate them for virtually any reason (2016). Therefore, scholars and advocates argue that migrant farmworkers occupy a precarious and vulnerable position in Canada's agricultural systems.

The employment conditions of migrant workers are also unjust. According to Cohen and Hjalmarson, migrants work under the explicit understanding that they are expendable and will be terminated if their labour is found to be dissatisfactory in any way (2020). This observation is supported by McLaughlin's research, where it was found that migrant workers 'work like machines' to demonstrate their usefulness to their employers and avoid termination (2010). Scholars have also criticized the living conditions migrant workers are forced to endure. Reid-Musson describes the SAWP as a "legally-sanctioned form of labour unfreedom" as migrants are tethered to one employer, are forced to live in employer-provided housing, and lack a physical means to leave (2017). Vosko and Spring suggest that the conditions which migrant workers are subjected to throughout their SAWP contracts create unjust and inequitable power dynamics between labourers and employers that are used to further capitalistic agendas (2021).

In response to the unethical treatment of migrant workers, the current literature identifies a number of promising practices to foster food justice in our agricultural industries. Caxaj and Cohen argue that anticipating and addressing barriers, acknowledging the accountability of the system, and building trust and community as key practices that will address the structural inequities of the SAWP (2021). Cadeieux and Slocum build onto these

suggestions, noting that food justice and food sovereignty requires meaningful and intentional engagement with historically marginalized stakeholders and actors in our food system (2015). More specifically, their research found that providing leadership roles for marginalized communities in various sectors of food systems can undermine racial and social settler-colonial hierarchies (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015). Dobbins and Prowse contribute to this discourse by noting that paying a living wage – the minimum income needed to cover the costs of living and fully participate in society – is a powerful tool that can be used by policymakers to dismantle the economic disparities that frequently impact marginalized groups (2022). In this way, current discourses suggest that community empowerment is a crucial element to addressing migrant labour exploitation.

### **Student Engagement and Community-based Learning**

The current discourses regarding student engagement suggest that community-based learning are key practices to enhance academic learning and student empowerment. According to Hebel, community-based learning is a powerful tool that can be used by academic institutions because it emphasizes the connections between pedagogy, human rights, and social empowerment (2017). Hunt builds to this point, noting that community-based learning emphasizes the importance of student research within the contexts of our social environments and histories (2015). Moreover, research suggests that experiential learning can be used to add legitimacy and further social movements. Kowasch et al. note that student-led grassroots movements are primary sources of power and traction for climate justice movements (2021). McLeod notes that this is especially important, as universities have an institutional and social responsibility to demonstrate a commitment to the social empowerment of academically engaged youths (2011). In this way, the current literature suggests that community-based learning can further youth-led social movements.

## **3.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH RESULTS**

### **3.2.1 PRIMARY RESEARCH RESULTS WITH ADMINISTRATION AND FACULTY MEMBERS**

COMMON THEMES:

#### ***Lack of Awareness:***

Some administration members and professionals working within the food sector of post-secondary institutions were unfamiliar with or lacked a definition for the term ‘food sovereignty.’

“Um... Really haven't thought about that ... I don't really have a good definition for you on that one and I don't know.”

Call for policymakers to be more cognizant and active regarding the existence of food justice and food sovereignty issues on campus.

“The administration and the people who have the power should realize that this is an issue”

***Lack of Community Collaboration:***

Community stakeholders sometimes do not share the same vision and mission with institutions. For instance, large food suppliers and franchised food businesses that have the ability to influence food services at post-secondary institutions can be reluctant to adopt change, especially if the action involves a potential reduction in their income or revenue.

“[Advancing food justice is] a little bit challenging because we have to work through others”

“[Community stakeholders say] that's a great idea, we are all in favor, but then are slow to implement. It's not in their best interest to sometimes change, or they just don't have the push to do that.”

“...could only limit it to where they have control over the food services... For chain businesses or like all those other ones, there's not a way that they can say, okay, well you need to give these students a discount.”

***Resource Constraints:***

Financial and human resource constraints create barriers for student involvement and policy changes at the administrative level.

“Sometimes it's hard to get people out ... people are busy.”

“We were working on this ... innovation project .. a multi-year action plan to work on some of these issues with food ... what we found in this project is there's no funding.”

“There's a lot of staff time devoted to, say, food service. But related to food justice and sovereignty ... [there] isn't dedicated staff time.”

***Inadequate decision-making and insufficient policy implementation:***

Currently, food justice and food sovereignty issues are considered to be lower in priority compared to other food issues such as food security. It is suggested that this is because post-secondary institutions do not have sufficient policies that are specifically designed to mitigate food justice and sovereignty issues on existing campuses.

“I would say there aren't policies that really support [food justice and food policy] ... and I can give you examples of policies that don't support that ... for example, food, generally on campus, is a bit of a commodity.”

Policy implementation is time intensive and often takes institutions significant time investments to adopt newly proposed recommendations into policies.

“[Policy makers will] deal with this later, in like five to 10 years. ... No, you gotta work on this now.”

Lack of supervision and legal consequences have allowed policymakers to not enforce their policies and signed agreements.

“The right to food is like a good framework ... It already exists, Canada signed on to it ... with a bunch of other countries. It's just that, because it's really not legally binding, everyone can sign onto it and not do anything.”

Decision makers view food as a type of commodity to make revenue from students. Policies are designed to maximize profit rather than ensure student's health.

“Purchasing decisions are made by institutions, but the decisions are typically made by [people in] director level positions. And they are made based on saying, okay, students are the customers, they are the revenues. We want to be able to maximize our revenues from selling these foods.”

“It's not about making sure students are nourished and making sure they're healthy.”

Excluding students in the process of decision decision-making.

“I hate to say this, but sometimes students are forgotten, and policies are being made ....”

***Food Accessibility and Affordability:***

Food offered on campus lacks variety and is often economically inaccessible.

“We give the customer what they want and the customer’s going to pay for it ... As a result, the people who have the ability to pay for the food [are] going to get all the food that they want, and people who can’t pay for the food ... will be stuck or won’t have as good options.

The high food price is sometimes subject to inflation which is beyond the control of the post-secondary institution.

“There’s a lot of food inflation and we can’t always have everything that’s super cheap. But what we try to do is have a variety of options so that there are value items that people can get on campus.”

**Recommendation:*****Student Involvement/Engagement:***

“I think [change] works better when it’s students asking for it. Companies are a little more receptive of that because they see [students] as future consumers to them.”

“Ideally, we get somebody who’s an undergraduate, who can stay with us for a few years and kind of lead [the student movements], someone passionate.”

***Strong Administration Response and Decision-Making:***

“[We] basically told..., we’re not going to open one on our campus unless you have fair trade espresso ... We were successful in that, and it rolled out throughout Canada at universities now.”

“As far as our procurement policies, they’re very supportive. They’re very mandated to make certain kinds of changes. They’re willing to stand up to bigger companies.”

“What [we] aim for with food is that 30% is local ... and 25% of produce, fruits, and vegetables should be local as well.”

***Community Collaboration:***

Administrators and policymakers are negotiating with community partners, through lobbying efforts, to influence community partners to incorporate food justice and food sovereignty elements in their business model.

“There’s a lobby that’s going right now ... one of the largest in BC in campus group.... And so all of us who are ... run campuses have all lobbied together. So we’ve said we want [to procure] local, there’s a whole list of stuff, but local.”

***Administration Support:***

Although student movements and organizations are promoting food justice and sovereignty, their efforts cannot be successful without the support of administrators and policymakers.

“The student is the one driving it with...passion, right from the beginning. Other times it has to be administration or faculty... They are hearing it from the student, but the students aren’t set up.”

***Policy Change and Implementation:***

Clearly define what ‘local’ entails at each institution and make policy changes that mandate a fixed percentage of local foods in food procurement.

“Local for...is not the hundred mile, local is defined as BC.”

Food provided on campus should be accessible and affordable, while emphasizing nutritional value and cultural sensitivity.

“My opinion is [that] food should be kind of like .... Water fountains working at the university... It’s just like a thing that everyone needs.”

Create dedicated positions on campus that focus on solving food justice and sovereignty issues.

“You should have a staff position that is focused on the food portfolio, and you put the money towards that ... That could be a great position, say, for a student to graduate and then take on as a full-time job.

Food supply chain workers need to be paid with a fair, living wage.

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### 3.2.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH RESULTS WITH STUDENTS

COMMON THEMES:

***Lack of Awareness:***

Most student participants had never heard of food justice and sovereignty and were uncertain of the definition of

these two terms. They were unable to distinguish the difference between food justice and food sovereignty, and how these terms related to other food issues, such as food security, food safety, and sustainability.

“I have no idea what that is. What is that? Is that food safe? Yeah, I literally have no idea what that is.”

“For food justice, I think it has something to do with sustainability and also the quantity of food people can eat... And in terms of sovereignty, does it have something to do with producing the food, or like arranging their own [food production] to support their own people?”

***Limited Food Accessibility and Restricted Food Choice on Campus:***

Students believe food options and varieties offered by UBC food services are limited. Students report that this constricts their ability to choose appropriate food for themselves.

Lack of food diversity and cultural sensitivity is an issue on campus. Foods from certain regions, such as African foods, are underrepresented on campus.

“There are only burgers and cheesecakes at the [totem park residence]. I am Chinese and I think I regard myself as privileged just because there are so many Chinese people here, so I can still reach out to someone when I want to have some Chinese food ... What about people who are from other developing countries, such as South Africa, what happened to their food? There is zero food representation from those places here on campus.”

“I have a teammate this semester, and she is from Nigeria. One time we were doing the group project quite late, and I decided to order dinner. And she says she can eat anything, the only food that she likes to buy is Tim Hortons [because of the lack of cultural food on campus].

The location of food facilities on campus are concentrated in certain areas, and require some students to walk a long distance to access food.

“I think [food locations] are kind of concentrated in certain locations, instead of like spread out in different locations down the campus.”



“I am a computer science student, and I don’t think there are many options for me to choose. I basically have to take a bus or walk to the village to buy some food.”

“In terms of the accessibility of food [on campus], I think it really depends on where you live ... I usually just go to the dining hall, because it can take me like 20 minutes to get to other good food places.”

“As a Sauder student, I feel privileged because we have like bento sushi ... We have like three restaurants that are next to Sauder.”

Students pointed out they often had to study/work late at night. However, UBC food services end their operations at 7:00. Consequently, students living on campus report that they feel forced to choose between unhealthy food options near UBC, such as McDonald's or A&W, or paying higher food costs for late night food deliveries to access meal options.

“I think people are able to get food from maybe 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM [on campus]. But what about other times? For people who want to get late night food, they don't have too many choices other than McDonald’s. That’s an issue because McDonald’s isn't that healthy.”

“I am someone who always has late night cravings. So when you open door dash, and there are not many choices, you just feel like you're abandoned in this world.”

“... at least for me, food is a place of joy and a place to reduce my stress ... I feel like the inaccessibility to food late at night connects with my very horrifying mental health late at night.”

Not all students have the sufficient food knowledge and necessary cooking skills to prepare food for themselves.

### ***Affordability and Equity:***

All the student participants reported feeling that food options on campus were overpriced and unaffordable, especially healthy food options and protein food options.

“If you asked me about a food, or let’s say just like a meal, which is below the 10-dollar range, I cannot think of anything. Personally, I feel like this is making food so inaccessible to the students who are coming from economically disadvantaged families.”

“I think for people who are wealthy and poor ... the range of what kind of food [they can choose are] different ... For example, protein is more expensive than [carbohydrates].”

“I used to live [in] totem park residence. The prices that are charged for each meal is just like really high ... much higher than if you dine in at Richmond.”

“If you don’t have the meal plan, you’re going to pay for like maybe 18 bucks for just an order of fish and chips. I don’t think that’s reasonable.”

Students reported that financially privileged individuals enjoy increased access to all the food options available on campus. However, less financially privileged students observed that they are unable to select healthy food options, which are often expensive.

“...People who are rich can just choose whatever food they want. But if you are not [wealthy], you can’t choose those healthy foods basically.”

Eating habits differ amongst individuals. Students argued that those who have larger appetites are left hungry due challenges relating to financial access to food.

“Different people ... some are overweight and some are thin. [The meal plan only allows you] to allocate about 3,000 to 4,000 dollars. However, for someone like me who is overweight, who needs to just digest so much food just to be able to survive. I don’t have that ... I feel like it’s not fair.”

### ***Marginalization and Discrimination:***

Students reported experiencing implicit discrimination against individuals who spoke English as a second language accessing food on campus.

“When I was still in my first year, I was unable to speak English fluently ... I didn’t know how to swipe my student card [to make payments], [some food service staff] would just roll their eyes. And then, like you can just tell that they are angry with you. I just feel that that kind of experience made the food so inaccessible to students whose first language isn’t English”

### ***Inadequate University Policies:***

Students were not satisfied with their first-year meal plan experience. They argued that this mandatory policy forced them to pay for financially unsustainable food and restricted their food options.

“I only came to UBC for less than a year, and I don’t have much experience with meal plans. I’ve heard about it and I don’t think it’s a legit thing. Why is it a mandatory thing for housing residents to pay for the meal [provided by the residence]? ... What if someone just doesn't like the food provided by the canteen in the housing? ... I don’t know why [mandatory meal plan] still exists at UBC”

“If you have the meal plan, you've got something like 25% off, but then that’s just like the regular price”

### **Recommendations:**

#### ***Making Food More Accessible and Affordable:***

Adding more food options and adding food facilities with different price ranges on campus to accommodate the needs of students with different financial status.

“I personally feel like the first thing that needs to be done is definitely lowering the price, or set a price ceiling. So basically just like those restaurants cannot set a price that is higher than [the ceiling].

“I think one thing UBC can do is [add] more buffets. Because, personally, I eat a lot, and I want to eat healthy food. So I think it is a good idea to set different price range for different level of buffet. Like ... under \$10, \$10, \$15, and \$20.”

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Our secondary research findings highlight a need to decentralize power at various levels of CFFS’s Food Procurement Strategy to foster food justice and food sovereignty. Drawing on our results, the critical engagement of marginalized groups and students is needed to facilitate meaningful change (McLeod, 2011; Cadieux & Slocum, 2015; Cajax and Cohen, 2021). To operationalize critical engagement, multi-level interventions are needed to reflect the dynamic and nuanced pathways in which climate justice, food justice, and food sovereignty intersect within the context of settler-colonialism. At UBC, this can be implemented by building on and contributing to the power and traction of grassroots social movements involving Indigenous sovereignty, migrant worker advocacy, and student engagement (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2019; Cote, 2016; Cadieux & Slocum, 2015; Hunt, 2015; Dobbin &

Prowse, 2022). In particular, this can be furthered at UBC by extending UBC's commitment to fair wages by enforcing living wage payments to marginalized communities such as migrant workers who are involved in sectors such as food procurement.

Dismantling settler-colonialism in our food system requires emphasizing the connection and relationships between land and community (Levkoe & Blay-Palmer, 2018; Desmarais and Wittman, 2014). Indeed, food justice cannot exist when marginalized communities are systematically exploited for capitalistic gains. Through our research, we found that exploitation of racialized Others is a leading food justice issue in Canada, where the country's food system is heavily reliant on racialized labour (Vosko & Spring, 2021; Hjalmarson, 2021). This is especially important within the context of Indigeneity, as long histories of oppression and assimilation have created numerous barriers and uncertainties regarding how to effectively and meaningfully engage with Indigenous stakeholders. Therefore, policies such as the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan align with literature recommendations (University of British Columbia, 2020). For instance, Caxaj and Cohen's suggestion to anticipate and address barriers within institutional policies is being implemented within academic institutions to avoid perpetuating settler power dynamics between privileged academic structures and historically disempowered groups such as Indigenous peoples (2021). Cognizance and recognition of power differentials between different social and economic groups is also incredibly relevant to other sectors of our food system. For instance, the unequal and inequitable relationships between migrant workers and their employers is an extension of racial hierarchies that are then a means for capitalistic exploitation (Beckford, 2016). In this way, research suggests that empowering and platforming marginalized voices is a key area of opportunity for UBC to advance food justice and food sovereignty on campus.

## 4.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Our primary research findings illuminated main themes that require immediate consideration in building a sustainable food procurement strategy for institutions, such as a lack of awareness, lack of community collaboration, and insufficient policy implementation. One interviewee for instance, mentioned the fact that food on campus is more of a commodity as opposed to being a right (Anonymous, 2022). The lack of policies could in part, be alluded to the fact that these issues are not prioritized by government or institutions. Rather, issues such as food insecurity are considered the pinnacle of the nation's food-related problems (United Nations, 2020). This grievance was voiced by an interviewee who stated that policymakers tend to push food-related issues such as food justice

and sovereignty on the backbench (Anonymous, 2022). The disconnect between food justice and sovereignty from issues such as food insecurity does a great disservice to our food system, as food security is unattainable without the consideration or understanding of social justice, which is rooted in these issues (Cadieux & Slocum, 2015). Therefore, it was suggested through interviews that policies addressing food justice and sovereignty be implemented not only institutionally, but at the national level as well. For one interviewee, policies that could mandate a fixed percentage of local procurement could help promote sustainable food procurement although what is constituted as ‘local’ might differ for each institution (Anonymous, 2022). The interviewee pointed out that for some institutions, local would not mean a hundred mile, but would have to be defined within the context of British Columbia (BC) (Anonymous, 2022). It is obvious that a policy mandating a fixed percentage of local procurement will require careful consideration, as our food system is complex and constitutes different stakeholders including consumers, farmers, processors, and distributors among others.

There has been a great need for student involvement in championing sustainable procurement strategies on campus. Students have been some of the greatest advocates when it comes to food-related issues in post-secondary institutions. A good example of this was indicated by Simon Fraser University (SFU) in partnership with the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), where they worked to employ sustainable purchasing practices on campus to promote fair trade (*Fair Trade - Simon Fraser University*, n.d.). Similarly, an interviewee backed this idea by stating that change can most certainly happen when it's student-led, mainly because food suppliers regard students as [consumers] and would be responsive to their needs (Anonymous, 2022). Although student-led campaigns and advocacies have garnered the attention of administration and to a certain degree, food suppliers, there is only so much students can do with regard to sustainable food procurement strategies. Institutional administrators and individuals in positions of power could benefit from having a partnership with students that potentially goes beyond a student position into a staff position. This could certainly be something that UBC benefits from as the majority of students working or volunteering on campus depart from their roles upon graduation. Additionally, ample time should be given to departing students to transition out of these roles and pass the baton to incoming students to ensure they are equipped in their assigned roles.

Further, there was a call for inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the institution's current procurement strategies. Cadieux and Slocum asserted that food sovereignty for Indigenous people around the world is closely

related to their struggles with self-determination and land claims (2015). In addition to land being a barrier, language, culture and access were identified as obstacles to achieving Indigenous food justice and sovereignty. Much like other interviewees, the problem of treating food as a commodity was brought up by one interviewee, consequently resulting in a disparity in our understanding of the terms food sovereignty and ‘Indigenous food sovereignty’ (Anonymous, 2022). Indigenous food sovereignty is a specific approach that addresses the issues affecting Indigenous peoples and [their] ability to respond to their need for culturally adapted food and health (Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty, n.d.). If Indigenous people are restricted in what food they grow or what they can eat due to land claims and employed regulations, then our food system has failed to cater to all people groups, which is currently the case. To combat such problems, one interviewee proposed that institutions invite more Indigenous vendors and provide them spaces where they can freely provide food services including traditional Indigenous foods among other things. This will, however, require further research in identifying key stakeholders within the institution and outside UBC, to allow for collaboration in building a more sustainable food procurement strategy.

### 4.3 UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

This project came across unexpected findings pertaining to the research gathered. When selecting stakeholders to interview, the research purpose was to identify and contact key stakeholders in food procurement, climate action, and policy planning at academic institutions within British Columbia (BC). This was seen as the most appropriate actionable step as these stakeholders would likely be familiar with the terms ‘food justice’ and ‘food sovereignty.’ Therefore, we did not expect that select interviewees struggled to define these terms that are deemed relevant and essential in food system discourses. Additionally, it was unexpected to learn how stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of food justice knowledge held by many administration personnel at these institutions. This is a significant finding as it speaks to the lack of awareness regarding the existence of food justice and food sovereignty issues on campus. Moreover, it presents the opportunity for further engagement in food-related discourses, as our recommendations below aim to achieve.

### 4.4 DATA LIMITATIONS

This project has encountered a number of data limitations. Firstly, the sample sizes for our interviews and focus groups are narrow, where only four interviews and four focus groups were conducted. The number of stakeholders, administrators, and policy makers are statistically insignificant and do not accurately reflect the insights and perspectives of the communities at UBC and other BC post-secondary institutions. Secondly, due to time constraints, interviews and focus groups were limited to one-hour sessions maximum with limited opportunities to ask further questions. This restricted the number of questions we were able to ask, which also impacted the depth and breadth of the responses of participants. Thirdly, due to the timeline enforced by this project as well as practical limitations, our literature review does not encompass the entirety of the discourses surrounding settler-colonialism, climate justice, food justice, food sovereignty, Indigenous food sovereignty, student engagement, and migrant labour. In this way, the research findings of our project do not cover the full scope of the existing scholarship and stakeholder engagements regarding food justice and food sovereignty within the context of institutional food procurement.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

A set of objectives were developed for the project clients to inform the development of a campus wide Climate-Friendly Food System (CFFS) Procurement Strategy, with a focus on fostering food justice and sovereignty (refer to Appendix D). These objectives reflect our project's deliverable of a UBC CFFS Procurement Strategy fostering food justice and sovereignty. There are 4 main objectives, including actions, targets, and indicators, as seen in Appendix D. These objectives are informed by our research and findings, which highlighted the need for stronger worker rights, increased engagement with Indigenous food culture and practices, and increased student engagement in food procurement decisions. These objectives are in alignment with our project's purpose of promoting food justice and sovereignty on UBC Vancouver's campus in accordance with the Climate Action Plan 2030 (CAP 2030) goals. Furthermore, these objectives have been clearly outlined for our project clients to follow in order to take the necessary steps towards fostering food justice and sovereignty within UBC Food Services procurement practices.

A comprehensive set of recommendations for action and implementation was developed to inform future food justice and sovereignty planning on the UBC Vancouver campus, as seen below in Tables 3-11. These recommendations include targeted and specific actions that require stakeholders, such as UBC Food Services,

Campus and Community Planning, and the SEEDS office, to work collaboratively on. These recommendations are informed by our research findings that uncovered important areas for action in the context of fostering food justice and sovereignty within an institution, such as UBC. These recommendations can be executed immediately or within the next three to five years to promote a more just and sustainable food system on the UBC Vancouver campus.

### 5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

For each recommendation stated below, actionable steps to be executed by each stakeholder have been organized indicating the immediate, short-term, and mid-term actions relevant to the UBC Food Services (refer to Table 3, 6, and 9), Campus and Community Planning (refer to Table 4, 7, and 10), and the SEEDS Office (refer to Table 5, 8, and 11). These actions have been developed to support each recommendation.

1. **Recommendation:** Use purchasing power to support ethical food businesses and migrant worker’s basic rights

**Table 3:** Actionable steps to be taken on by the UBC Food Services

Immediate Actions (within the next 6 months)	Short-term Actions (by 2025)	Mid-term Actions (2025-2030)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess current contracts to ensure living wages are paid</li> <li>● Assess current purchases and devise a baseline of current contracts from marginalized communities</li> <li>● Use purchasing power to demand and pressure agricultural producers to respect migrant worker’s basic rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prioritize food contracts for diverse and ethical businesses, including marginalized producers and minority-owned food businesses</li> <li>● Continue to purchase from suppliers that share the values of ethical production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mandate that all food producers holding a contract with UBC must provide their migrant workers with living wages and equitable employment conditions</li> </ul>

**Table 4:** Actionable steps to be taken on by Campus and Community Planning

Immediate Actions (within the next 6 months)	Short-term Actions (by 2025)	Mid-term Actions (2025-2030)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Host a series of conferences to increase public awareness about the treatment of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a relationship and rapport with migrant worker advocacy groups in BC (ex. MOSAIC) to publicly demonstrate institutional support for migrant worker rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● UBC leverage its membership of the Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement (CCSP) to promote a unified effort</li> </ul>



<p>migrant workers in BC to promote public support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assess funding capacity to support migrant worker rights and ethical businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Amend Supplier Code of Conduct to ensure that food suppliers respect migrant worker’s rights and dignities. In particular, re-examine the following sections, which can be found in Appendix F <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Disciplinary Practices</li> <li>○ Freedom of Association</li> <li>○ Wages and Benefits</li> <li>○ Hours of Work</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>amongst Canadian institutions to form a procurement standard that strictly supports vendors who respect migrant worker rights to living wages and equitable employment conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Refer to Appendix F</li> </ul>
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**Table 5:** Actionable steps to be taken on by the SEEDS Office

Immediate Actions (ongoing)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evaluate existing research and literature pertaining to the treatment of migrant workers in British Columbia’s food system</li> <li>● Identify future research opportunities to further migrant workers rights</li> </ul>

2. **Recommendation: Mobilize Indigenous knowledge holders and systems to further develop UBC Vancouver campus’ understanding and enrichment of Indigenous food sovereignty.**

**Table 6:** Actionable steps to be taken on by the UBC Food Services

Immediate Actions (within the next 6 months)	Short-term Actions (by 2025)	Mid-term Actions (2025-2030)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review game farming licenses and applications in the province of British Columbia to explore opportunities to increase sourcing of Indigenous-procured food products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More information on the provincial government’s legislation and regulation of game farming can be found in Appendix F</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop an Indigenous food procurement strategy on UBC Vancouver’s campus that highlights goods and services from Indigenous vendors and businesses as per the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan</li> <li>● Establish stronger relationships with Indigenous chefs and caterers to explore opportunities of bringing Indigenous recipes on campus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop an Indigenous food procurement strategy that highlights goods and services from Indigenous vendors and businesses as per the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan</li> </ul>

**Table 7:** Actionable steps to be taken on by Campus and Community Planning

Immediate Actions (within the next 6 months)	Short-term Actions (by 2025)	Mid-term Actions (2025-2030)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage with the Musqueam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dedicate food-sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish an Indigenous</li> </ul>

<p>community and other Indigenous nations, as appropriate, regarding the campus' current food system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to uphold UBC's commitments in advancing Indigenous engagement and inclusion on campus as per the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan, which can be found in Appendix F</li> <li>• Implement workshops led by Indigenous community members, as appropriate that foster community food knowledge and skills</li> </ul>	<p>spaces for Indigenous students, faculty, and staff to promote engagement in Indigenous traditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an Indigenous food procurement strategy on UBC Vancouver's campus that highlights goods and services from Indigenous vendors and businesses as per the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	<p>committee featuring community members from UBC and beyond who hold decision-making power to promote nutritious, affordable, and culturally relevant foods on UBC campus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the Musqueam Garden, Maya in Exile Garden, and x<sup>w</sup>cičəsəm: Indigenous Health Research &amp; Education Garden at the UBC Farm to explore further opportunities for promoting the intersection of land, food and community on UBC campus</li> </ul>
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**Table 8:** Actionable steps to be taken on by the SEEDS Office

Immediate Actions (ongoing)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate existing research and literature pertaining to Indigenizing the Canadian food system</li> <li>• Mobilizing existing research regarding Indigenous food sovereignty into UBC's food procurement strategy</li> <li>• Further the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan in alignment with UBC food procurement strategies and CAP 2030 goals</li> </ul>

3. **Recommendation: Expand food justice and food sovereignty knowledge and action on the UBC Vancouver campus**

**Table 9:** Actionable steps to be taken on by the UBC Food Services

Immediate Actions (within the next 6 months)	Short-term Actions (by 2025)	Mid-term Actions (2025-2030)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities for students to voice their opinions in procurement decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create additional staff capacity to manage, oversee, and facilitate student-engaged research relating to food justice and food sovereignty in the context of food procurement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish relationships with food justice stakeholders and advocacy groups beyond the UBC community to support collective action and share best practices</li> </ul>

**Table 10:** Actionable steps to be taken on by Campus and Community Planning

Immediate Actions (within the next 6 months)	Short-term Actions (by 2025)	Mid-term Actions (2025-2030)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote a culture of advocacy and community engagement at UBC that encourages and empowers food justice action by students, alumni, faculty, and staff</li> <li>Increase capacity and resources for engagement in the UBC community to facilitate discussion on topics regarding food justice and food sovereignty</li> <li>Promote interdisciplinary discourses regarding food justice and food sovereignty through collaboration across various faculties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand food justice and sovereignty education and professional development opportunities for students through designated Work Learn positions and Co-op programs</li> <li>Establish an interdisciplinary research team dedicated to food justice and sovereignty that is composed of students, alumni, faculty, and staff to assess UBC’s food procurement practices</li> <li>Continue to support educators to develop guidelines and curriculum that embed climate justice, food justice, and food sovereignty across disciplines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicate a staff position to maintain and manage research, education, and advocacy of food justice and sovereignty on campus                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize hiring an individual who is already familiar with UBC food procurement strategies, campus values, and communities</li> </ul> </li> <li>Expand cross-faculty food system education opportunities to ensure that all students, regardless of their program, can academically engage with food justice and sovereignty</li> <li>Establish relationships with food justice stakeholders and advocacy groups beyond the UBC community to support collective action and share best practices</li> </ul>

**Table 11:** Actionable steps to be taken on by the SEEDS Office

Immediate Actions (ongoing)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue fostering student-engaged learning and research through LFS 450</li> <li>Explore more opportunities for interdisciplinary research, collaboration and learning regarding food justice and food sovereignty in UBC</li> </ul>

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Recommendations for future research have been outlined as an opportunity for our project clients and other stakeholders, such as Community and Campus Planning and the SEEDS office, to explore other potential areas of impact where more information is still needed. Our research was focused on advancing food justice and sovereignty within UBC Vancouver’s campus. As the terms ‘food justice’ and ‘food sovereignty’ have only recently become widespread within the climate justice and food system movements, there remains significant

future opportunities to further develop and research best practices to foster these values throughout UBC's campus, as part of the more extensive Climate-Friendly Food System (CFFS) Procurement Strategy. Oftentimes in our primary research, the definitions of these terms were met with long pauses and abstract understandings. This resulted in a significant amount of research dedicated to promoting food justice and sovereignty in institutions like UBC. As this is the first CFFS Procurement Strategy of its kind, more research will be required once the recommendations for action have been implemented as they provide the next steps for advancing food justice and sovereignty.

### **Food Justice Certification**

Through our research, we identified a number of food-just certifications that UBC is currently utilizing, such as the Oceanwise and Fair-Trade certifications currently being used in UBC's food procurement practices. From the recommendations obtained in interviews and focus groups, the Food Justice Certification was suggested as an opportunity to further promote stronger procurement standards to support the ethical treatment of workers and support for farmers and businesses. However, at present, food businesses and farms in the United States are the only eligible contenders to apply to be Food Justice Certified (Agricultural Justice Project, n.d.). Therefore, future research should consider examining what it would look like to implement this certification in British Columbia and more broadly throughout Canada. This certification appears to be a promising area to explore as it aligns with the values of ethical labor and trade practices in the agricultural industry. Furthermore, it is linked to food justice as it advocates for just working conditions for agricultural workers (Agricultural Justice Project, n.d.). Once research on applicability and feasibility is determined, the Food Justice Certification can act as a promising action that can be utilized in UBC's food procurement practices.

### **Indigenous Perspectives on the Food System**

To strengthen the Indigenous presence at UBC Vancouver's campus, it would be helpful to have a better understanding of the values and needs of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff on campus. Although this was not covered in the project's scope, it would be impactful to conduct a survey targeted at UBC students who identify as Indigenous. By doing so, critical insights can be obtained to examine how Indigenous students perceive UBC's current food system and what changes they would like to see. The results from this survey could inform the type of

changes that would be implemented on campus and within UBC Food Services procurement methods. As each Indigenous community is unique in regards to their cultures and practices, it is important to understand Indigenous students' conceptualization of the UBC food system.

### **Student Engagement**

Student engagement is widely considered a key practice to further social values in academic institutions. Therefore, we recommend that further research be conducted to identify further pathways to obtain funding and subsidies to improve access and availability of student engagement opportunities. Moreover, student-led-initiatives demonstrated tremendous effort and engagement in identifying existing issues on campus. For instance, student leadership has made ground-breaking efforts in taking action to mitigate issues, and lobbying for changes for issues such as a fair-trade campus. Therefore, providing increased funding and subsidies for student initiatives is a promising area of opportunity for UBC. Lastly, for food companies, students are the consumers, which lends student-led-initiatives more leverage in pushing community stakeholders to make changes. More resources, especially funding, should be allocated towards supporting student-led organizations such as student society and student clubs.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This project had an aim to identify and operationalize sustainable food procurement strategies at UBC that promoted food justice and sovereignty. With the continued increase in campus food system GHG emissions, there lies a great need to improve how food is procured and served so as to align the proposed strategies with CAP 2030 goals. Through the extensive research conducted, policy change surrounding procurement practices, a need for student engagement and indigenous perspectives in the food system were identified as the most prevalent themes requiring action. The issues rooted in the lack of policy surrounding food justice and sovereignty explain why food is currently being treated by institutions as a commodity as opposed to a right. This problem was echoed in both the primary and secondary data collected, which is indicative of the further work that needs to be done in order to constitute policies not just at an institutional level, but national level as well. Further, in their future procurement strategies, UBC should continue to invest in relationship building and collaboration with key stakeholders such as students, indigenous communities, and producers among others, to foster innovative solutions to problems surrounding food justice and sovereignty.

The devised action plan is a starting point for UBC to develop sustainable procurement strategies that encompass a food system built on relationality and collaboration with different people groups. This project serves as a beginning to UBC's proposed goal for a climate-friendly food system that coordinates with the CAP 2030 goals.

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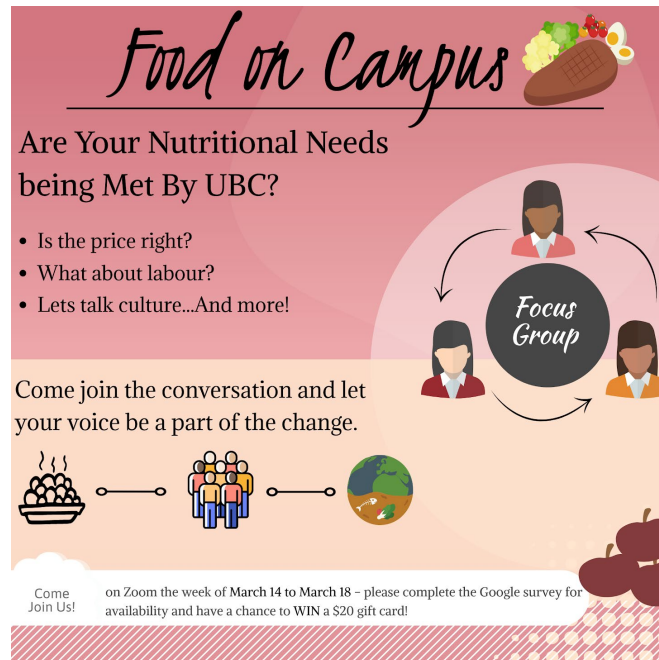
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP ADVERTISEMENT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PURPOSES.



APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INITIAL RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Hope this email finds you well.

My name is Andy Qin and I am part of the LFS 450 class at UBC conducting a project on sustainable food procurement strategies. We have been tasked with creating an action plan that encompasses climate-friendly food procurement strategies that also promote food justice and food sovereignty. Through our search and/or recommendations from our SEEDS (Social Ecological Economic Development Studies) client groups, we believe you would be an ideal candidate to interview in the hopes of gaining knowledge regarding this topic.

We would appreciate the opportunity to have a virtual meeting/interview when convenient. If this is not a possibility, would you have any recommendations to whom we may reach out in your institution?

We look forward to hearing back from you and hope you have a lovely day!

Kind regards,  
Andy on behalf of LFS 450 Group 2.

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS.

1. What comes to mind when you hear 'food justice' and 'food sovereignty'?
    - i) what kinds of frameworks and perspectives have shaped your definition?
  2. In your view, what are some key food justice/sovereignty issues (exist or might exist at UBC) in your institution?
  3. What current food justice/sovereignty interventions do you feel are helpful?
    - i) What interventions are being implemented right now?
    - ii) What would you like to see more of?
  4. How do you feel about the accessibility of food on campus? Why?
  5. How do you feel about how food is priced on campus?
    - i) What do you think can be done to change this?
  6. Do you ever feel marginalized or having difficulties accessing food on campus because of ethnicity, skin color, or sexual orientation.
- Let's get started, thank you so much for taking your time on a Friday night to participate in our research project in the form of a focus group. Our project is focused on developing a food justice and sovereignty centered food procurement strategy for UBC food service, and we would love to gain insights on you - the UBC student's perspectives of food justice, sovereignty, and other food related issues might be experienced on campus.

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What comes to mind when you hear 'food justice' and 'food sovereignty'?
  - i) what kinds of frameworks and perspectives have shaped your definition?
2. In your view, what are some key food justice/sovereignty issues in your institution?
3. What current food justice/sovereignty interventions do you feel are helpful?
  - i) What interventions are being implemented right now?
  - ii) What would you like to see more of?
4. How do you feel about the accessibility of food on campus? Why?
5. How do you feel about how food is priced on campus?
  - i) What do you think can be done to change this?

## APPENDIX E: UBC VANCOUVER CFFS PROCUREMENT STRATEGY: FOOD JUSTICE AND SOVEREIGNTY

### Introduction

This set of objectives was produced for our project clients to inform the development of a campus wide Climate-Friendly Food System (CFFS) Procurement Strategy, with a focus on fostering food justice and sovereignty. There are 4 main objectives, including actions, targets, and indicators, as seen in Table 1. These objectives are informed by our research and findings, which highlighted the need for stronger worker rights, increased engagement with Indigenous food culture and practices, and increased student engagement in food procurement decisions. These objectives are in alignment with our project's purpose of promoting food justice and sovereignty on UBC Vancouver's campus in accordance with the Climate Action Plan 2030 (CAP 2030) goals. Furthermore, these objectives have been clearly outlined for our project clients to follow in order to take the necessary steps towards fostering food justice and sovereignty within UBC's food procurement practices.

### Procurement Objectives

The first objective calls on our project clients to leverage UBC's significant purchasing power to support migrant worker's basic rights. Moreover, our objective entails prioritizing food contracts for ethical and minority-owned food businesses to align with Caxaj and Cohen's recommendation to cultivate trust and community amongst marginalized stakeholders to bolster food justice and food sovereignty (2021). Food justice can not exist when agricultural workers are systematically exploited for capitalistic gains. Therefore, our research findings suggest that the exploitation of migrant labour is a key food justice issue in British Columbia (Vosko & Spring, 2021; Beckford, 2016; Cohen & Hjalmarson, 2020). A significant challenge related to wages experienced by migrant workers is labour exploitation. For instance, migrant workers are unentitled to overtime pay but are often pressured to work ten to twelve hours per day (Beckford, 2016). Moreover, the

working conditions experienced by migrant workers are unethical. For example, migrants feel that they must comply with their employers' demands due to fear of termination. This is important, as many employers capitalize on this power differential to maximize the amount of labour taken from migrants at the lowest cost possible (Hjalmarson, 2021). It is also important to note that the current literature connects the exploitation of migrant labour with the historically unethical treatment of racialized Others within the context of settler-colonialism (Hjalmarson, 2021). To address this, we utilize Cadeiux and Slocum's suggestion to weaken social and racial hierarchies in our food systems by bringing marginalized food actors to the forefront of UBC's efforts in championing food justice and food sovereignty (2015).

Our second and third objectives are to advance UBC's procurement standards and to assess opportunities to increase Indigenous goods and services on campus, respectively. Our secondary research findings suggest that decolonizing our food system requires emphasizing the connection and relationships between land and community (Levkoe & Blay-Palmer, 2018; Desmarais and Wittman, 2014). This is especially important within the context of Indigeneity, as long histories of oppression and assimilation have created numerous barriers and uncertainties regarding how to effectively and meaningfully engage with Indigenous stakeholders. Therefore, we build on Caxaj and Cohen's suggestion to anticipate and address barriers and build trust between community stakeholders to promote Indigenous food sovereignty and food justice within institutional policies (2021). Furthermore, UBC's commitment to meaningful reconciliation, as expressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, calls on the institution to platform Indigenous voices and traditional knowledge systems on campus (United Nations, 2007). More specifically, the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan (University of British Columbia, 2020) provides goals to enrich the campus with a greater Indigenous presence. As UBC Food Services operates on the traditional, unceded and ancestral land of the Musqueam people, it is important to recognize Canada's settler-colonial agendas and the consequences this has had on Indigenous cultural continuity and traditional food practices (Levkoe et al., 2021).

Our last objective calls on our project clients to increase student engagement in food procurement decisions on campus. Our secondary research findings highlight the significance of community-based learning as a powerful tool to enhance student empowerment (Hebel, 2017). Scholars have suggested that universities hold an institutional and social responsibility to demonstrate a commitment to the social empowerment of academically engaged youths (McLeod, 2011; Hebel 2017). This is important in the context of food justice and sovereignty, as students have shown to be the primary sources of power and traction for climate justice movements (Kowasch et al., 2021). Furthermore, our primary research findings highlight the need for increased student engagement and inclusion in food procurement decisions. From analyzing our interviews and focus groups, key stakeholders in food procurement and climate justice expressed the importance of student-led initiatives and the power of student movements.

**Note from Authors**

We would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to all of our participants in our interviews and focus groups for providing their insights and sharing their experiences to inform this action plan. We would also like to thank our project clients and the LFS 450 team for their continued support throughout the process of our research.

**Table 1.** UBC Vancouver CFFS Procurement Strategy: Food Justice and Sovereignty

#	Action	Target	Indicator for Success	Timeline
1.	<p><b>Use purchasing power to support ethical food businesses and migrant worker's basic rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure producers and processors in contract with UBC Food Services to respect migrant worker's rights to living wages and equitable employment conditions</li> <li>• Prioritize food contracts for diverse and ethical businesses, including marginalized producers and minority-owned food businesses</li> </ul>	- By 2025, have 30% of UBC food procurement contracts be from ethical minority-owned businesses and suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage (%) of food purchase contracts from marginalized food producers and processors</li> <li>• Requirement added in Request for Proposals for food contracts that state producers respect migrant worker rights</li> </ul>	Immediate (ongoing)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess current contracts to ensure living wages are paid</li> </ul>			
2.	<p><b>Advance UBC’s procurement standards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandate that all food producers holding a contract with UBC must provide their workers with living wages and equitable employment conditions</li> <li>Continue to purchase from suppliers that share the values of ethical production</li> <li>Develop an Indigenous food procurement strategy that highlights goods and services from Indigenous vendors and businesses, as per the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By 2025, increase the availability of Indigenous goods and services on campus by 20%</li> <li>- By 2030, have all workers in UBC’s food procurement processes paid a living wage with ethical employment conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in the number of Indigenous vendors on campus</li> <li>An increase in the number of food suppliers in UBC’s food procurement processes that pay workers a living wage</li> <li>Requirement added in ‘Request for Proposals’ for food contracts to specify if producers/processors can guarantee workers are paid a living wage</li> </ul>	Short to Mid-term (over the next 3+ years)
3.	<p><b>Assess opportunities to increase Indigenous goods and services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review game farming licenses and applications in the province of British Columbia to explore opportunities to increase sourcing of Indigenous-procured food products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More information on the provincial government’s legislation and regulation of game farming can be found here: <a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/agricultural-licences-and-forms/game-farming">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/animals-and-crops/agricultural-licences-and-forms/game-farming</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>Establish stronger relationships with Indigenous chefs and caterers to explore opportunities of bringing Indigenous recipes on campus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By 2025, identify key areas of opportunity to increase Indigenous-procured food supplies for UBC</li> <li>- By 2030, increase the variety of Indigenous foods available on campus by 25%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in the pathways in which Indigenous food is procured at UBC</li> <li>An increase in Indigenous cultural foods available at UBC food services</li> <li>An increase in the volume and value of contracts awarded to Indigenous businesses</li> </ul>	Short to Mid-term (over the next 3+ years)

<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Increase student engagement in food procurement decisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create opportunities for students to voice their opinions in procurement decisions             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collaborate with Campus and Community Planning to promote a culture of advocacy and community engagement at UBC that encourages and empowers food justice action by students</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Create additional staff capacity to manage, oversee, and facilitate student-engaged research relating to food justice and food sovereignty in the context of food procurement</li> </ul>	<p>- By 2025, increase student-stakeholder engagement in food procurement decisions by 20%</p> <p>→ This can be achieved through increasing student awareness and interest in UBC food procurement practices</p> <p>- By 2030, increase the number of student-engaged research opportunities relating to food justice and food sovereignty in procurement by 30%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in students who are actively engaged in UBC’s food procurement decisions</li> <li>• An increase in students actively involved in research relating to food justice and food sovereignty in procurement</li> </ul>	<p>Immediate (ongoing)</p>
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**APPENDIX F: WEBSITES AS POSSIBLE ACTIONABLE STEPS FOR UBC STAKEHOLDERS**

To access:

[The Financial Operations Supplier Code of Conduct](#)

[Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement](#)

[Game Farming Licenses](#)

[UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan](#)