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The WE Over Me Farm at Paul Quinn College: A Review

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The WE Over Me Farm at Paul Quinn College: A Review

Abstract

In 2010, Paul Quinn College, located in South Dallas, Texas, created the WE Over Me Farm. Paul Quinn College and the WE Over Me farm were formerly located in a food desert. Thus, the farm was created in order to address the issues most prevalent in its community: food access and food insecurity. The WE Over Me Farm is a sustainable plant farm located on Paul Quinn College's former football field. When created, the WE Over Me Farm was intended to provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables in a community starved of healthy food options. Previously, residents located in the 75421 zip code were only able to purchase food from convince stores. Within the last two years, grocery stores have opened within a mile radius of this community, thus removing its food desert status. This research aims to analyze the impact Paul Quinn College has had on its surrounding community and identify the gaps present between its initial vision and what has become reality. Further, this paper aims to provide succinct, concrete recommendations that can help close identified gaps and further the impact of the WE Over Me Farm.

Keywords

food insecurity, food access, food desert, South Dallas, organic plant farm

Disciplines

Business | Environmental Sciences | Health and Physical Education | Sustainability

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Abstract

In 2010, Paul Quinn College, located in South Dallas, Texas, created the WE Over Me Farm. Paul Quinn College and the WE Over Me farm were formerly located in a food desert. Thus, the farm was created in order to address the issues most prevalent in its community: food access and food insecurity. The WE Over Me Farm is a sustainable plant farm located on Paul Quinn College's former football field. When created, the WE Over Me Farm was intended to provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables in a community starved of healthy food options. Previously, residents located in the 75421 zip code were only able to purchase food from convince stores. Within the last two years, grocery stores have opened within a mile radius of this community, thus removing its food desert status. This research aims to analyze the impact Paul Quinn College has had on its surrounding community and identify the gaps present between its initial vision and what has become reality. Further, this paper aims to provide succinct, concrete recommendations that can help close identified gaps and further the impact of the WE Over Me Farm.

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Introduction

Across the country there exists areas where access to nutritious, fresh foods is severely limited or non-existent. This problem, known as lack of food access affects countless American residents. In 2009, 23.5 million Americans did not have a grocery store within a mile of their homes and almost 8% of Americans lacked access to fresh produce (Albert S. et. al., 2015). Unsurprisingly, the communities and residents who lack the most access to fresh produce and grocery stores are low income communities and communities of color. Neighborhoods that do not have a grocery store within a mile radius to resident homes are known as “food deserts.” Residents who live in food deserts are forced to shop at convenience stores for groceries as their community’s lack access any other options. Further, these same residents are bombarded with easy access to fast food chains and convenience stores. The lack of access to fresh produce such as fruits, vegetables and grains has dire health consequences. Many chronic diseases such as type two diabetes, heart disease and obesity have been linked to a high intake of fatty, sugary foods and low consumption of fruits, vegetables and grains (Mead, 2008).

In addition to lacking access to healthy foods, many residents who live in food deserts also face the added issue of food insecurity. Food security is most commonly defined as “secure access at all times to sufficient food for a healthy life” (Frankenberger, 1992). A full definition of food security must also consider access, sufficiency, security and sustainability (Maxwell, 2008). Thus, resident access to nutritious food, ability to purchase and eat sufficient food, security in knowing when and where food will come from and ability to sustain the purchase of sufficient nutritious food must be considered when discussing food security. Many low-income households experience quite the opposite. Residents who experience food insecurity do not know when they will have their next meal, or where their next meal will come from. Further, these residents do

not have the funds to purchase adequate nutritious food consistently. Food insecurity is closely correlated with wealth and income. Households located in low income neighborhoods are more likely to be unable to provide consistent streams of healthy nutritious foods to their families.

In order to address the issues of food insecurity and overall poverty, government programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Lone Star Card and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provide residents with food subsidies. SNAP “provides important nutritional support for low-wage working families, low-income seniors, and people with disabilities living on fixed incomes” (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). Households eligible for the program must be at or below 130 percent of the poverty line (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). Further, most states impose work requirements on participants where adults in households receiving SNAP must work 20 hours or more in order to receive any benefits. Under TANF, “the federal government provides a block grant to the states, which use these funds to operate their own programs” (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). In Texas, this program is known as the Lone Star Card. The Lone Star Card provides Texas residents access to SNAP and TANF benefits. The Lone Star Card functions similarly to a debit card. Residents swipe the Lone Star Card at grocery store or participating farmers market registers when paying for groceries. They then enter a personal identification number in order to access funds from their SNAP or TANF accounts. Lastly, WIC’s program specifically aims to assist mothers and children maintain healthy eating habits. “WIC provides nutritious foods, counseling on healthy eating, breastfeeding support, and health care referrals to nearly 8 million low-income women, infants, and children at nutritional risk — and leads to long-term benefits” (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). WIC “improves the nutrition and

health of low- income families — leading to healthier infants, more nutritious diets and better health care for children, and subsequently to higher academic achievement for students” (Carlson et. al., 2017).

In Dallas, like in many other metropolitan areas across the United States, there is a clear divide between the haves and have nots. This divide manifests itself in the two distinct areas of Dallas: Uptown and South Dallas. Households and residents of South Dallas are among the poorest, least educated and most food insecure in the region. When considering this substantial divide, the conversation of race cannot be forgotten as “nearly twice the percentage of African-American and Latino residents and nearly twice the number of residents who live below the poverty line [in Dallas] live in areas that lack access to healthy food, as compared to white, higher-income residents” (Albert S. et. al., 2015). Due to a lack of easy access to healthy fresh foods, many residents turn to convenience stores, corner stores or small food retailers. These stores do not sell fresh produce, grains or healthy food options to fulfill resident food needs. Studies show that people who lack access to or who do not include fresh produce and healthy foods in their diets experience higher rates of obesity, diabetes and other diet related health problems. In Dallas, 49 percent of children are either overweight or obese (Albert S. et. al., 2015).

Over the past decade, Paul Quinn College, through the We Over Me Farm, has made an effort to help solve some of the issues most affecting the South Dallas region. The immediate community surrounding Paul Quin College, zip code 75241, is composed of low income, majority African American, residents. Thus, issues of food insecurity, food access and poverty are wildly prevalent. As a historically black educational institution, Paul Quinn College provides access to higher education to many of the students living in its very zip code, effectively working

to end poverty amongst the African American community. The We Over Me Farm and Paul Quinn College have tried to address the issues of food insecurity and food access by selling inexpensive, organic fresh fruits and vegetables in the 75421 zip code. Every Thursday from March through December, the We Over Me Farm has operated the Paul Quinn College Farmer's Market, bringing together vendors of all backgrounds with healthy, organic and inexpensive products for residents to buy. During the farmer's market, the We Over Me Farm operates a farm stand, selling fruits, vegetables and occasionally eggs. In addition, the farmers market accepts the Lone Star Card, making fresh produce even more accessible to residents who rely on SNAP, TANF and WIC benefits.

The farm originally set out to not only help students learn, change the culture of its campus and service the greater Dallas region, but also mend ties within the 75241 zip code. The official mission of the farm is to "transform the health and well-being of under-resourced communities in South Dallas by providing fresh, healthy, affordable food options and by educating and empowering future generations to take better care of themselves, their environments, and their communities." Today, the farm has impacted its community in many ways. However, the main barrier the WE Over Me Farm has faced in meeting its original goal of providing access to fresh produce and healthy eating options in this zip code is community engagement. Yes, the WE Over me farm provides "access" to fresh produce in the 75241 zip code in that they are a business in that zip code selling these products. However, the number of residents using this service is small, compared to the number of residents who could benefit from them.

Research Overview

This research focuses on analyzing whether Paul Quinn College has had an impact on its community by way of the WE Over Me Farm. In order to analyze the impact Paul Quinn College, and subsequently the WE Over Me Farm has had on its community, I first had to define the words “impact” and “community.” Impact is a hard word to define as its meaning varies depending on the situation in which it is measured. The Oxford English Dictionary gives two definitions of the word, one being “a marked effect or influence.” Having worked at the farm for three weeks, interacted with residents who frequent the farm stand and conversed with residents at the local library, I have come to agree with this definition of impact and witnessed it while in Dallas. Paul Quinn College’s and the WE Over Me Farm’s “community” consists of three different populations. The WE Over Me Farm services the greater Dallas region, Paul Quinn College and the 75241 zip code. The null hypothesis is as follows: the WE Over Me Farm has had no impact on any of the three communities it services. Thus, this research aims to answer the question: Has Paul Quinn College had an impact on its community by way of the WE Over Me Farm?

Methodology

Interviews were conducted using standard questions (shown in the appendix) and follow-up questions posed depending on the answers given. Interview questions were informed by preliminary research done on the Paul Quinn College Farm through its website and news articles written about the farm. Surveys were conducted during the Paul Quinn College Farm stand hours, every Thursday from 3-7pm and at the Highland Hills Library for a week from 12-3pm. At the farm stand and the Highland Hills Library, I asked any person, who looked above the age of 15, whether they were 18 years or older and if they lived in the 75241 zip code. People who responded yes to both questions were then handed the consent form and questionnaire. These questions were created to probe residents about their involvement with the Paul Quinn College Farm and their own food habits. Both interviews and surveys were performed in order to gather qualitative and quantitative data. Interviews were conducted with strong influencers of the farm, organizations the farm partners with and people who work closely with the farm to accomplish its mission. Surveys were handed to people who were considered a part of the community. Statistical analysis was performed on the survey data collected. The results are discussed in the findings portion of this paper.

Findings

My time at the WE Over Me Farm, the interactions I had with community members and leaders and the surveys I conducted, provided vital information to analyze whether Paul Quinn College, by way of the WE Over Me farm, has made an impact on its community. The three communities examined were the greater Dallas region, Paul Quinn College itself and the 75241 zip code. The main finding of this research are as follows: the WE Over Me Farm does not currently make the most of its existing resources. While additional resources could undoubtedly help the farm to achieve its stated goals, my research revealed that it could also make significant progress toward these goals through more efficient use of existing resources.

Greater Dallas Region

The WE Over Me Farm has made an impact on the greater Dallas region as it partners with local restaurants and organizations which help increase food access and eliminate food insecurity in the greater Dallas region. These partnerships meet the criteria for “marked effect of influence.” The WE Over Me Farm partners with three local restaurants, supplying them with produce from the farm. During my time in Dallas, I was able to interview two of the three owners of these restaurants. I first interviewed Mark Wooton, owner of Garden Café. Mr. Wooton not only buys produce from the farm, but also teaches community cooks programs at the farm during community days. Further, he uses his restaurant as a model for gardens which residents can create in their own backyards. Garden Café’s garden currently consists of three chickens, an aquaponics system and various fruits and vegetables. The produce which the restaurant grows in its garden finds its way in many of the dishes on the menu. Community days at the farm occur the second Saturday of every month. Residents are encouraged to attend

through the farm website. The day consists of “a tour of the farm, farm activities, a question and answer period, and when possible, a chance to harvest.” However, guest presentations, like Mr. Wootons’s, teach volunteers how to cook the vegetables harvested from the farm. One of the biggest problems residents said their community faces when wanting to buy produce from the farm, or farmers markets like it, is not knowing how to cook or use the produce in their meals. Teach-in community events help close the barrier between buying farm produce and using it. Further, Garden Café’s dedication to be a leader of the local, organic sustainable movement is inspiring. By connecting with influencers who can close gaps between community interest and actual use of the farms’s resources, the WE Over Me makes an even greater marked effect on its community.

The WE Over Me Farm also partners with Café Momentum. Chad Houser, owner of Café Momentum, has created a very unique organization. At his restaurant, Mr. Houser employs formerly incarcerated youth in all parts of his staff. These students come from low income neighborhoods and many of them have not finished high school. They are people who, without Café Momentum, would have a very difficult time finding employment and starting a new life markedly different from their old one. Café Momentum provides an opportunity to change the direction of their lives for the better. The restaurant is certified 501(c)(3). Students are not only employed at Café Momentum, but also are enrolled in the restaurant’s step-by-step program. The program forces students to take on responsibility; responsibility which increases as the students progress through the program. Further, the program mandates that students return to school while they work. Most importantly, the restaurant provides comradery and companionship among students who are trying to better themselves and increases their chances of attaining positive opportunities in the future. The Café also employs a supervising staff that includes counselors

who work with students to identify and overcome the biggest struggles they face mentally and emotionally. Thus, Café Momentum is not just a job, but a community. The WE Over Me Farm also sells fresh produce to Café Momentum. The students who work at Café Momentum are students who, at home, face the very issues the WE Over Me Farm set out to tackle. By partnering with this organization, the farm supports its mission to end food insecurity and food access as the students now have the opportunity to learn about healthy, good tasting food and be employed. The Café Momentum program directly addresses the issue of food insecurity and food access by providing young students, who are affected by these issues, the chance to change. The WE Over Me Farm supporting this organization only helps the farm further expand its mission.

In addition to restaurants, the WE Over Me Farm partners with organizations like Grow North Texas and Good Local Markets. These two organizations are dedicated to enhancing access to farm fresh produce from local farmers. I had the opportunity to speak with Susie Marshall, the head of Grown North Texas, also a 501(c)(3) organization, which partners with local, organic farms in the greater Dallas region. Grow North Texas' mission is to strengthen the food system in Dallas, create economic opportunities around food and address the issues of food access in the greater Dallas region. The organization also works to education the Dallas region about healthy foods and nutrition. Grow North Texas operates a stand at the Dallas farmers market called Good Local Provisions. There they sell products and produce from local farmers. The organization helps to keep local small farms and farmers in business as much as they possibly can by providing a dependable place where farmers can sell their produce. Grow North Texas and the WE Over Me Farm have very similar goals. Working together allows them both to further their impact.

Lastly, I was able to interview Casey Cutler of Good Local Markets. Good Local Markets sponsors the Paul Quinn College Farmer's Market. Organizations like Good Local Markets help smaller farmers markets organize permits and abide by local ordinances. In addition, the farm and Good Local Markets have a mutually beneficial relationship where they help one another to expand the impact of their respective organizations. The farm has partnered with Good Local Markets on private foundation and USDA grants targeting food access, farmers markets and nutrition education programming. Good Local Markets is also currently working on a Lone Star double dollar program. The program would match the funds currently available to Lone Star participants at farmers markets in the Dallas region. Participants who originally would only have \$20 on their Lone Star cards would now essentially have \$40 when shopping at farmers markets. Further, Good Local Markets co-operates Market Provisions with Grow North Texas. Thus, Good Local Markets also supports the farm by selling the farms produce. The farm supports Good Local Markets by supplying weekly produce to WIC clinics sponsored by them. The initiatives described all have one thing in common: they address the issues of stark inequality and food access in the greater Dallas region.

Paul Quinn College

The WE Over Me Farm has had a substantial impact on Paul Quinn College, especially its students. However, the resources of the farm can be more widely used throughout its campus. When President Michael Sorrell took over Paul Quinn College, he implemented a student worker program. The student worker program helps students learn job skills during the school year while earning money towards their tuition. All students participate in the program. Students earn a 5,000 tuition grant each year when they take a job working for the school. These jobs range from

tour guides to farm hands at the WE Over Me Farm. In this case, the farm does help increase food access and improve food insecurity by enabling students from their own school to graduate from Paul Quinn College with minimal debt and work experience.

I was able to interview all three of the farm hands who worked at the farm this summer. Those students, Davis, Matt and Joey, spoke of the positive impact working on the farm has had on their lives. The student's names have been changed in order to maintain confidentiality. Working on the farm has motivated them to want to own their own businesses once they graduate. All of them want their businesses to have something to do with farming. Davis wants to open his own plant nursery, Matt wants to own his own farm, as does Joey. The farm has taught them valuable farming and entrepreneurial skills, but most importantly has given the students "a lot of opportunity." The students say they are able to "learn the business role and actually go behind the scenes." In fact, Davis has already begun working on his business. The farm director and staff support Davis as he operates his own garden at the farm. In his interview, Davis mentioned that he grows common household plants such as "Aloe Vera, Candelabra Cactus and different Euphorbias." He has turned this small garden into a business which he says helps him "make a little money for himself." When asked if he found the farm beneficial, Davis responded saying "actually I do." He went on to explain how working specifically at an organic farm will help him and the community "start a healthy life style." He believes the farm "teaches the community [about the] [bodily] benefi[ts]" of eating organic while "providing local, fresh, organic vegetables to the community."

However, the farm could have a more substantial impact in other parts of student life at Paul Quinn. The students interviewed said that their classmates know the farm exists, but most do not have any information about the farm other than its farm stand operating hours. Thus, most

students feel like the farm does not impact their daily lives. The cafeteria does not use food from the farm for almost any of the meals prepared. On more than one occasion, students I spoke to said they never eat cafeteria food. While conducting research at Paul Quinn College, I ate lunch at the Cafeteria almost every day. I observed little to no vegetarian options and no vegan options. Almost all of the food served had animal products in them, even the salad had bits of bacon. This observation was disappointing seeing as the WE Over Me Farm was created to better the health of its community, and has yet to address the health of its own students.

75241 Zip Code

The original plan of research was to canvas the 75241 zip code which encompasses the Highland Hills community. I was immediately told that walking door to door would not be safe. This warning, among other comments, helped me understand the relationship staff, workers and students at Paul Quinn College have with the immediate surrounding community. After weeks of waiting to see if any student or staff would canvas the neighborhood with me, I decided to go about another method. I went to the Highland Hills Library, every day, for a week from 12pm to 3pm, asking all people who walked into the Library if they were over the age of 18 and if they lived in the 75241 zip code. I gave surveys to any person who responded yes to both questions. Thus, survey participants self-opted to join the survey after meeting the survey criteria.

101 people were surveyed. Of the people surveyed, even after being questioned about their zip code and age, 97 indicated that they lived in the 75241 zip code. Only surveys with an answer of “yes” for the first question, indication of whether they lived in the 75241 zip code, were analyzed. 93% of residents responded that they shop for food at grocery stores most frequently. This statistic contradicts the widely held belief at Paul Quinn that most residents in

the community shop at convenience stores for their groceries. 47% of residents surveyed did not know the farm or its farm stand existed, which is close to half of the surveyed population. It is worrisome that among the more educated population of the community, who actively attended the library on their own accord, know little of the farm. Of residents who did and did not know about the farm, 77% said they did not “frequent” the farm stand at all. However, of residents who did know the farm existed, 41% said they “frequented” the farm stand. Of the residents who said they frequented the farm stand, 86% reported that they went to the farm stand on Thursdays at least two times or more a month. Thus, the farm does have a good retention rate among the people who use it as a resource. Finally, of residents who knew about the farm, 58% responded that knowledge of the farm and the farm stand had changed their dietary habits. This is a substantial percentage of the population which feels personally affected by the actions of the farm, indicating that the farm has impacted, in some way, the residents in its surrounding community. Of residents who did not know the farm existed, 94% of residents said that after taking this survey and learning about the farm and farm stand they were encouraged to use the farm stand as a resource for their home. The future looks very optimistic as the farm could easily build upon the work it has already done to improve the lives of the residents who live in its community.

The biggest tell of Paul Quinn College’s impact on its immediate community is the number of people who attend the farmers market weekly and the percentage of those people who were from the 75241 zip code. A week into my research, Good Local Markets decided to temporarily suspend the Paul Quinn College Farmers Market until the heat index in the area lowered. The farmers who had stands at the markets and the WE Over Me Farm decided to continue operating the stand anyways, without the support of Good Local Markets. This did have an impact on

market attendance during my three-week research project. In addition, I only began conducting written surveys after attempting to conduct short interviews of attendees the first Thursday.

During the first market I attended on June 28th 2018, I did keep tally of people who attended the market, and people who indicated they were residents of the 75241 zip code. During the market of June 28th, 54% of market attendees indicated that they resided in the 75241 zip code. The subsequent two Thursdays, there was a good turnout at the market and I was able to give written surveys to attendees who indicated they were from the 75241 zip code. On July 5th 2018, 18% of market attendees were residents of the 75241 zip code. On July 12th 2018, 19% of attendees were of the zip code. Of the resident present, a decent number were a part of the immediate community illustrating that the farm is having a marked effect of the community. However, market attendance was low when considering how many residents in the community can benefit from the farm's services. In conclusion, the WE Over Me Farm needs to re-allocate the resources it currently has in order to further engage the community it originally set out to serve. The recommendations portion of this research aims to provide concrete examples to help the farm better manage its resources and close the gaps identified. In order for the farm to make a greater impact, its students and staff must also internally analyze its practices, operation and production methods.

Recommendations

The farm has a great deal of potential to substantially impact all three populations which make up its community. However, the farm has yet to fully tap into said potential. This section offers concrete recommendations to assist the farm in achieving an even larger impact in its community. The three areas the farm should work on in order to improve its impact amongst the community include community outreach, students and resources. Primarily, the farm should focus on the farm improving its impact in the 75241 zip code. The majority of the recommendations that follow concern immediate community engagement and more specifically, improving in in-person communication. In addition, student productivity and engagement should be more closely monitored.

Community Outreach

The disconnect between community and farm is due to the lack of in-person connection. As discussed previously, almost half of the residents who frequented the Library did not know of the farm at all, and on its best day only 20% of farm stand attendees were from the 75241 zip code. The farm could expand its customer base, and thus its impact, by having a representative visit the Highland Hills Library once a week, and speak to residents about the farm, its mission and produce. These visits could also include cooking lessons and taste testing sessions of produce being harvested from the farm during that season. In addition, this representative could visit recreation centers and other community gathering places in the Highland Hills community to expand its reach. The Highland Hills Library runs a free lunch program during the summer for residents to use. The farm could partner with the library and donate some of their produce to this program. Thus, the farm would directly address the issue of food insecurity and healthy food

access in its immediate community by directly providing food access to residents who openly need it the most. Further, the farm could also send students to the Highland Hills library once a month to explain to residents why certain vegetables and fruits are being planted and harvested during that time period. Lastly, the farm needs to make it much more known that they accept TANF and SNAP benefits and the Lone Star Card at its farm stands.

Students

In order to enhance the productivity of the farm, communication between Farm Director and student worker should be improved. At times I observed the Farm Director not knowing where the students were or what tasks they had completed. This meant the director had to take time away from his busy schedule to communicate with the student workers. A white board system could be created to keep tasks assigned and tasks completed in order. The white board could also keep track of student shifts and time worked. The Director would then not have to spend time figuring out what tasks students have completed, nor when they will complete them. Secondly, the Farm Director and Assistant Director could delegate administrative tasks to students and then review them once students have accomplished these tasks to ensure they were completed well. This would help reduce some of the overarching responsibilities of both staff positions, while teaching students new and helpful skills. Some of these tasks would include community outreach, inherently improving this aspect of the farm.

Current community outreach consists of Facebook posts, online advertisements and roadside posters by the school entrance next to where the Paul Quinn College Farmers Market and Farm Stand operates. Part of the Assistant Farm Director's responsibilities include community outreach and marketing. However, the Assistant Farm Director also maintains the

farm, works at the farmers markets and assists the Farm Director with all tasks. Student workers dedicated to community outreach would strengthen this aspect of the farm because more time would be dedicated to its success. Students could manage an online and in print newsletter, where residents could sign up at the Highland Hills Library and at the farmers markets. The newsletter would keep residents conscious of the farmers markets and other farm events. Further, the newsletter would be consistent reminder of the resources available to residents in their community. In paper and online options would allow the farm to keep older and younger residents informed. Allowing students to write newsletters will provide them with writing, communication and public relations skills vital in the work place. This added responsibility would also incentivize students who do not want to consistently work directly on the farm, but be a part of the project, to work at the farm. Student workers could also send monthly coupons to all residents living in the 75241 zip code to encourage residents to use the farm as a resource. The coupons would help remind residents that the farm exists, but also remind them of the inexpensive pricing for organic, fresh produce from the farm. Students would learn critical persuasive and entrepreneurial skills by participating in the farms marketing and budgeting plan.

Resources

As mentioned previously, in order to improve the productivity of the farm and the reach of its impact, the farm should better allocate its resources. These resource with the most untapped potential are the student workers. The Farm Director works 80 to 100-hour work weeks to keep all parts of the farm operating. Some of the Farm Director's responsibilities include planting, harvesting, grant writing and teaching students how to farm every academic semester. The farm would greatly benefit from adding positions that assist the Farm Director in all aspect

of farm operations and community outreach. This new position could be filled by an upper classmen student who would be willing to take on 10 hours of administration work a week. Upperclassman are inherently more skilled, settled and knowledgeable of school life in general. Thus, filling this role with an upperclassman student would provide the skill level and responsibility needed to accomplish part of the Farm Director's duties. Tasks that students do not currently assist the director with, but could help with in the future, are grant writing and teaching new students basic farming techniques. English majors could assist with the grant writing, and students passionate about farming, who have worked on the farm previously, could hold hour long introductory crash courses on how to farm. Further, students could create community outreach programs and lead them throughout the year.

When considering how to train farm hands, the Farm Director and Assistant Farm Director could create a student handbook which prospective farm hands would read and learn from prior to working on the farm. These handbooks would detail important information the students would need to learn and take students through the most basic of tasks needed to farm. Although hands on experiences are most vital when learning to farm, a short introductory booklet could help minimize the overall time needed to teach basic skills to new students every semester. Further, Paul Quinn College should partner with the farm to provide the majority of the vegetables served in their own cafeteria and create a liaison position for students to facilitate the partnership. This position would attract students who are passionate about food and culinary arts, providing yet another avenue of opportunities. The cafeteria could create a seasonal menu to not only educate students about the value of organic, farm fresh vegetables, feed students healthy foods that they want to eat, but also teach them the value of organic fresh foods. It seems odd that the farm provides vegetables to high end restaurants in Dallas, but not its own cafeteria. The

Farm Stand could greatly benefit from having just one student or staff operating it, instead of three or four at a time. This would allow for other student workers to work on the farm during that time or accomplish other tasks.

Final Remarks

I sincerely enjoyed my time at the ME Over WE Farm and Paul Quinn College. I learned a lot about farming and good produce. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work at Paul Quinn College and on the WE Over Me Farm. I am also very grateful to have met all the wonderful people who make the farm and its impact a reality every day. I learned a lot from all of the people I met, not only the students, staff, community organizers and community members whom I interviewed. While there is still a lot of work to do, the farm is doing a great job at being a role model and resource for residents in the south Dallas region. These recommendations are intended to help the farm strive to achieve its initial mission: be a center to encourage community, relationships and healthily living.

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