



McKAY FARM
& RESEARCH STATION

MCKAY FARM AND RESEARCH STATION
END OF YEAR REVIEW
GOALS & ACHIEVEMENTS
2019-2020



McKay Farm and Research Station serves Unity College's academic and research programs, hosts and contributes to community programs, and is a resource to area gardeners, growers, farmers, and other non-profit agencies throughout the state.

McKay Farm and Research Station was gifted to the College in 2013 and has grown to be a vital part of the academic experience as well as a valuable community resource. In August 2019, the farm became part of the newly created Sustainable Ventures, Unity College's Sustainable Education Business Unit (SEBU) dedicated to offering sustainable products and services as well as entrepreneurial experiences for students.

McKay Farm is led by a Farm Director and staffed by an Assistant Manager and seasonal Greenhouse Technician. It also employs work-study students as they are available. In 2019-2020 work study was cut short due to COVID-19.

The fiscal year 2019-2020 saw continued infrastructure improvements while presenting unique challenges due to COVID-19. McKay Farm is still striving toward revenue neutrality despite only being able to achieve approximately 50% of its goal due to a state mandated shutdown in the spring of 2020. We continue to renew our existing partnerships and, in 2020, McKay Farm was once again conferred organic certification from Maine Organic Farmers and Growers Association (MOFGA).

CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Academic

Unity College Flagship students and classes used indoor and outdoor space as well as other McKay Farm resources for academic assignments and projects in 2019 and the first half of the Spring 2020 semester, prior to transitioning to remote learning.

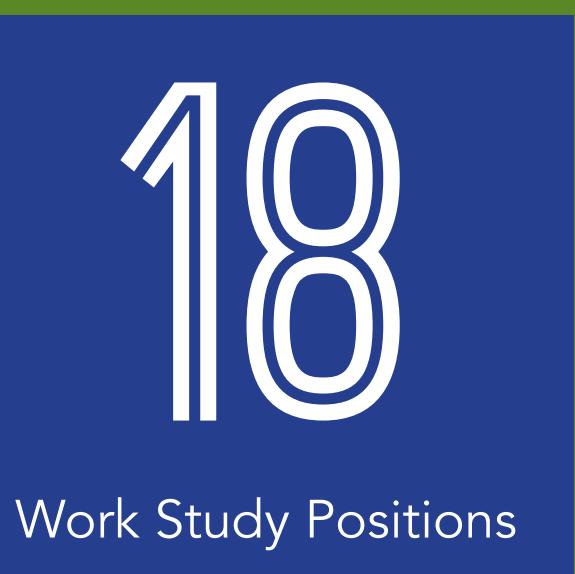
The farm was also an integral part of the TERRAIN testbed in 2019. TERRAIN uses Expeditionary Learning as its educational model, with innovative and integrated courses where students receive comprehensive, relevant, and outcome-based opportunities to help build or retool their knowledge and professional skills in sustainability fields. Of Unity College's incoming Fall 2019 Flagship class of 223, 61 students participated in the testbed.

Here is a sample of the classes that used McKay Farm in 2019-2020:

- Fisheries Science and Techniques
- Environmental Issues & Insights
- Environmental Scenarios & Solutions
- Fundamentals of Organic Horticulture
- Sustainable Agriculture Systems
- High Tunnel
- The American Chestnut Restoration project
- Student independent projects
- Geology
- TERRAIN

Work-Study

A total of 18 Flagship students were employed at McKay Farm in 2019-2020 through the federal work study program, gaining sustainable agriculture skills as well as entrepreneurial experience in plant production and care, customer service, retail sales, and community relations.



10

Classes Supported



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Events

McKay Farm offered or participated in four community events (a decrease in events was caused by COVID-19). In total, more than 169 individuals participated.

- Common Ground Fair
- Makers Market for local vendors
- Forest Bathing Class
- Invasive Species Class

Volunteers

During 2019-2020, more than 33 volunteer hours were contributed by Unity College Flagship students, students from local area high schools, and area community members.

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Community
Events

169

Participants

Partnerships

In 2019-2020 McKay Farm once again served as a pickup site for the Waldo County Woodshed, distributing several cords of firewood to area individuals in need of wood as a source of home heating. The farm also invested in a new shelter for the wood pick-up area.

For the fifth consecutive year, McKay Farm hosted seed germination exercises and field plant-outs of experimental strains of American chestnut trees as part of an ongoing collaborative between Unity College, The University of Maine, and The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF).

McKay Farm also expanded its relationship with Cultivating Community by helping grow seedlings for refugee farmers who are putting down roots in their new home in Maine.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Revenues in 2019-2020, including workshops, wholesale, and retail sales, were \$67,232, while expenses, including utilities and labor, were \$205,798. McKay Farm continues to realize savings in expenses through strategic management of greenhouse heating and has reinvested those funds in supplies.

McKay Farm continues to provide organically grown produce, herbs, and edible flowers to Unity College Dining Services and through campus markets.

To date, McKay Farm has more than 1,500 individuals who have either "liked" us on Facebook or have followed us on Instagram.

Demand for seedling care services for local farming enterprises has increased and exceeds current supply of space.

Other new business opportunities include increased wholesale relationships.

67K

Revenue

1,500

Social Media Followers

ECONOMIC IMPACTS:

JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

As McKay Farm becomes more financially independent, the subsidy provided by Unity College will decrease with a goal of total self sufficiency, making good on our commitment to the region as it grows.

\$67,232

Earned Income

\$205,798

Operating Budget

\$138,566

Institutional Commitment
to McKay Farm

LOCAL AREA

We like to serve the people in our communities, and our customers are the community's customers.

1,378

Customers Served

\$46

Average Spent per Customer

33

Volunteer Hours

169

People Served through Community Programs

90

Pounds of Food Donated

STUDENT

Our students have the chance to immerse themselves in a hands-on learning experience and create positive memories of the region.

10

Classes Supported

35

Students Visited

18

Work Study Positions

MAINE ECONOMY

Shopping locally is core to our values because it helps local vendors and reduces our environmental impact. We were also able to invest in capital improvements funded by grants and Unity College.

84.3%

Amount Spent with Maine Vendors (over \$51K)

46

Farming Enterprises Supported

\$611

Investment in Facilities and Construction

EMPLOYMENT

Our employees, who live in Waldo County, have the financial resources they need to participate in the community, both socially and economically.

3

Employees

\$144,906

Annual Payroll & Benefits

OPERATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

During 2019-2020, several infrastructure improvements were made including:

Minor maintenance on all greenhouse structures

Continued to service and upgrade heating systems and ventilation motors

Replaced the furnace

Replaced the rollups on greenhouses

UPCOMING

Grants and gifts to further our research and operations

Invite more garden clubs to tour

Partner with hotels and resorts on the coast to supply plants in 2021

Re-establish relationships post-COVID-19

Continue to develop non-profit and government relationships



A photograph showing a group of approximately ten students in a greenhouse. They are wearing winter clothing like hats, scarves, and jackets. Some students are kneeling or crouching, while others are standing. They are all focused on their work, which involves handling small potted plants and soil. The greenhouse has a metal frame and plastic covering. In the foreground, there is a large pile of dark brown soil. On the left side of the image, there is a green rectangular overlay containing white text.

1,378

Customers Served