

Student Reflections

What they learned

14

Student Reflections On The Experience

This section focuses on the student reflections taken over the semester from the spring 2005 student farm planning class. Starting with the Student expectation assessment taken the first week through the final class evaluation taken during week 15. Throughout the semester our goal was to assess student engagement in the process. As the instructors we believed that if the students were engaged in the process then we would be successful regardless of the outcome. In retrospect we probably should have asked more questions about what they thought they were learning or about what new ideas they collected throughout the semester.

Questions asked usually had a scale component and an open ended question or asked for additional comments. This helped provide both a quick snapshot and in depth information for analysis. Throughout the process every time we had the students answer survey questions we would always summarize the results and share them with the students. This was done to clarify that our interpretation was close and to further engage students that their opinions mattered and were important to us.

This section:

Student Reflections On The Experience	p. 101
Accessing student expectations	p. 102
Week 1 Survey Questions	p. 102
Student Reflections Time Table	p. 102
Week 1 Survey Results	p. 103
Reflections on Week 1 Survey	p. 104
Week 5 Survey Questions	p. 105
Week 5 Survey Results	p. 105
Reflections on Week 5 Survey	p. 106
Week 12 Survey	p. 107
Week 12 Survey Results	p. 108
Reflections on Week 12 Survey	p. 109
Week 14 Questions	p. 109
Responses to Week 14 Questions	p. 110
Reflections on Questions from Week 14	p. 111
2005 Final Class Evaluation	p. 112
Class Evaluation Results	p. 114
Reflections on the Final Class Evaluation	p. 120

Accessing student expectations

Understanding the perspectives and expectations of the students involved was important from the beginning. The eighteen students who enrolled in the course represented 12 different majors at the university ranging from Computer Science to Geography to Applied Economics to Environmental Horticulture. Each had reasons for enrolling in the course and specific ideas of what the course would cover, making sure students and instructors had similar goals from the onset was important.

Student Reflections Time Table	
Week of Class	Activities
1 (3 minutes)	Week 1 Survey (either emailed or turned in)
3 (10 minutes)	Share the results of the Week 1 survey with the class
5 (3 minutes)	Assign Week 5 survey
8 (10 minutes)	Share the results of the Week 5 survey with the class
12 (5 minutes)	Assign week 12 survey
13 (10 minutes)	Share the results of the Week 12 survey with the class
14 (3 minutes)	Week 14 Questions- done as an assignment
15 (15 minutes)	Final Class Evaluation

Week 1 Survey Questions:

Name: _____

Degree Program & Year: _____

1. Why did you take this class?
2. List at least 2 goals you have, that you would like to fulfill through this class.
3. How will you know you benefited from this course?
4. How will the instructors know if you benefited from this course?
5. What would you like your grade in this class to be determined by?

Week 1 Survey Results:

16 responses / 18 enrolled students

Degree Programs:

- Applied Economics
- Applied Plant Science
- Agricultural Education
- Computer Science
- Conservation Biology
- Environmental Horticulture
- Environmental Science
- Geography
- ICP: Sustainable Agriculture & Environmental Education
- ICP: Global Studies
- Natural Resource Management
- Political Science

Year: Sophomore-PhD Grad Student

1. Why did you take this class?

Responses	Tally	%
Plan / Run The Student Farm	5	31
Grow Plants Organically	5	31
Create a Sustainable Business Plan	5	31
Sustainable Agriculture	3	19
Group Consensus Building	2	13
Business Planning- widely applicable to life	2	13
Crop Management	1	6
Learn how to market local foods	1	6
Technology that makes organic farming work	1	6
Marketing	1	6
Network with people	1	6

2. List at least 2 goals you have, that you would like to fulfill through this class.

Responses	Tally	%
Operate / run a successful Student Farm	6	38
Create a student farm plan / sustainable business plan	5	31
Gain experience in Group Consensus Building	4	25
Learn about organic growing and certification	4	25
Tools to create my own farm in the future / try it out now?	3	19
Gain experience growing crops	2	13
Individual /personal project related to the course	2	13
Create more sustainability at the University	2	13
Marketing Organic crops	2	13
Work with other organizations	1	6
Financing	1	6
Learn more about Soil management & Soil testing	1	6

3. How will you know you benefited from this course?

Responses	Tally	%
Unforeseen ways as of yet	5	31
Increase confidence & understanding	4	25
Grow an early crop of spinach / see the plan in action	3	19
Accomplish Goals	3	19
Know how to build a sustainable business and run an organic farm	2	13
Direction in life... job vs. grad school, to be a farmer?	2	13
Able to apply skills to life	1	6
Contribute to master plan	1	6
Involvement in the process, regardless of success	1	6
Understand certification process in MN	1	6

Week 1 Survey Results (continued)

4. How will the instructors know if you benefited from this course?

Responses	Tally	%
Develop a master plan that is environmentally friendly and economically feasible	7	44
Engaged in learning / involvement with group process	5	31
Still Smiling, Enthusiastic	3	19
Will tell us	2	13
Post Class Survey	1	6
Plan in action after semester ends	1	6
Personal Project	1	6
Don't know	1	6

5. What would you like your grade in this class to be determined by?

Responses	Tally	%
Participation & Attendance	14	88
Contributions to the Master Plan	5	31
Personal Project	3	19
Not important	1	6
Looks and charm	1	6

Reflections on Week 1 Survey

As we started the class I think everyone was surprised at what a diverse group of majors everyone had. We had no prerequisites for the course so it was open to anyone at the University of Minnesota who was interested in coming. The week 1 surveys don't accurately reveal the diverse agendas and backgrounds the students came into the class with. Some students had completely different ideas about why they were there and what this class would be about. Most made the best of the situation finding ways to engage in the aspects that appealed to them the most.

In retrospect, we covered to some extent all of the primary reasons people took the class (or at least the reasons they listed on the survey the first week). I can not say the same about all the goals students had for the class early on. Students got minimal experience the first year actually growing organic crops unless they stuck around for summer internships. We also did no marketing of actual organic crops although we did at least talk about ways to market organic crops. We barely touched on soil management and testing. We also had no real individual / personal project other than all the components of the master plan students worked on individually.

The responses to questions 3 & 4 were all helpful, although the personal project response to question 4 did raise a small red flag, otherwise it all seemed within an acceptable range. The responses to question 5 did help us figure out the grading scheme a little but really at that point we, the instructors were still not sure exactly what end products we'd have as a result of the class.

Week 5 Survey Questions

Name:

1. What's your area of interest (Please rate 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. if multiple areas):

Production / Growing

Planning

Planting

Weeding

Harvesting

Processing

Marketing

Finances

Other:

2.a Are you interested in conducting research within the Student Farm?

Yes

No

Maybe

2.b If yes, on what crop?

2.c Have you identified a faculty advisor for this project?

2.d Are you seeking funds to pay for your research time?

Yes

No

From what entity?

3.a Will you be around this summer (2005)?

Yes

No

3.b If yes, are you interested in being a paid intern on the student farm?

Yes # of hours/week:

No

Maybe

4. Are you interested in volunteering on the farm this summer (2005)?

Yes # of hours/week or # hours/month

No

Maybe

Week 5 Survey Results

Name: 17 responses (missing Peter)

1. What's your area of interest

(Please rate 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. if multiple areas):

Production / Growing
(7- #1, 1-#2, 3-#4)

Response:	Tally
#1	7
#2	1
#3	0
#4	3

Processing

Response:	Tally
#1	0
#2	3
#3	2
#4	3
#5	1
#6	1

Planning

Response:	Tally
#1	6
#2	3
#3	2
#4	2

Marketing

Response:	Tally
#1	1
#2	4
#3	4
#4	3
#5	1
#6	1

Planting

Response:	Tally
#1	6
#2	5
#3	1
#4	1
#5	1

Finances

Response:	Tally
#1	0
#2	2
#3	2
#4	4
#5	0
#6	0
#7	1

Weeding

Response:	Tally
#1	3
#2	2
#3	3
#4	4
#5	0
#6	1
#7	1

Other:

Environmental Monitoring
1-#1

Harvesting

Response:	Tally
#1	3
#2	2
#3	2
#4	3
#5	1
#6	1

2.a Are you interested in conducting research within the Student Farm?

Response	Tally
Yes	4
No	9
Maybe	2

2.b If yes, on what crop?

- Cucurbits
- Ground Plums, Sunchokes, Apples, Chickens
- Companion plants, looking at differences in growth and health in relation to other plants

Week 5 Survey Results (continued)

2.c Have you identified a faculty advisor for this project?

Paul?
Bud?

3.a Will you be around this summer (2005)?

Response	Tally
Yes	11
No	4
Maybe	3

4. Are you interested in volunteering on the farm this summer (2005)?

Response	Tally
Yes	9
No	0
Maybe	7

2.d Are you seeking funds to pay for your research time?

Yes (3/5)
No

From what entity?
SARE / MISA, UROP,
Work study

3.b If yes, are you interested in being a paid intern on the student farm?

Response	Tally
Yes	6
No	6
Maybe	3

# of Hours / Week	Tally
10+	2
5-10	2
5-8	1
2-6	1
2.5	1
1-5	1
1+	1

# of Hours / Week	Tally
Up to 40	2
20 +	3
10-20	1
5-20	1

Reflections on Week 5 Survey

With the week 5 survey we were trying to gauge student interest in various areas and assess who would be around for the summer internships. At that point it was still early in the semester but its interesting to see that students were starting to think about ideas for summer projects and all were at least probably planning on being involved on some level. Its interesting to note that exactly 6 of the students in the spring class would go on to become summer interns- survey question number 3 was fairly accurate in predicting future summer interns. However at that point it was helpful to know that none of them had sought out an advisor which meant that few had actually sought out the funding opportunities requiring an advisor.

Circle the closest response.

1. How would you rate this class so far?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 I dread this class I'm learning something Best class ever!

2. How would you rate our progress to date?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 We're not going anywhere Where I expected us to be ahead of schedule

3. How would you rate your effort in helping this class move towards our goal of creating a master plan for the student farm? (How many fingers?)

1 2 3 4 5

4. How much involvement with the farm do you see for yourself in the future?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 I'm out of here! I'll be an active volunteer Intern!

5. What's your biggest concern for the student farm right now?

6. What have you gained from the class so far?

Week 12 Survey Results

1. How would you rate this class so far?

Response	Tally	
I dread this class	1	1
	2	0
I'm learning something	3	1
	4	3
	5	7
Best class ever!	6	4
	7	1

2. How would you rate our progress to date?

Response	Tally	
We're not going anywhere	1	0
	2	0
Where I expected us to be	3	3
	4	7
	5	6
Ahead of schedule	6	1
	7	0
No response		1

3. How would you rate your effort in helping this class move towards our goal of creating a master plan for the student farm? (How many fingers?)

Response	Tally
1	0
2	1
3	3
4	7
5	6

4. How much involvement with the farm do you see for yourself in the future?

Response	Tally	
I'm out of here!	1	0
	2	0
I'll be an active volunteer	3	4
	4	3
	5	2
Intern!	6	4
	7	3

5. What's your biggest concern for the student farm right now?

- Making it work
- No clear direction
- Seems a little spontaneous
- Continuity (2 responses)
- Properly planning and planting perennials
- Logistics / Long Term
- Organic Control Methods
- Organizational Structure & Planting
- Priorities we are not a model
- Finish this through strongly and transition class to interns
- The amount of work
- Too much time planning and too little time making things happen
- Should be creating market demand
- Building support for Sustainable Agriculture
- That we won't have enough (wo)man hours into the summer

6. What have you gained from the class so far?

- Met good people
- Knowledge of crops, systems and group consensus
- Teamwork skills
- Greenhouse experience
- Experience with planning, organization and networking
- Knowledge of facilities in St. Paul
- How to build a business
- Leadership skills, friendships
- How many students committed to organics
- A summer job
- A wider spectrum
- Ideas on the organization process
- The process and the challenges of consensus management
- Group Dynamics
- Organic certification and implementation process
- A great headache

Week 12 Survey Results (Continued)

Question 6 Responses (continued)

- Understanding of organizational development and farming/ growing techniques
- Amazing insight into how big a process this is
- Market Analysis Skills
- More knowledge of Sustainable Agriculture
- Great experience working with a group in a fairly democratic manner

Reflections on Week 12 Survey

By week 12 we were almost to the end of the semester. This survey shows that at this point in the semester the students responded that they were overall enjoying and learning something from the class, with 1-2 students on either end dreading the class or thinking it was the best class ever. Most students also answered that they thought our progress was approximately where they expected us to be. In response to question 3 about the master plan most students responded that they felt they had contributed significantly.

It is interesting to compare the responses to the summer involvement question to similar questions on the week 5 survey. At that point only 2 students knew they would be interns but a few more than the final 6 were strongly considering it.

The responses to question 5 seem to primarily reflect either uncertainty about the summer or things students left we left out. Question 6 reveals that a number of our objectives in terms of building community, student leadership, using consensus to make decisions and creating networks into the community were all successful.

Week 14 Questions

Final Questions for the Student Farm Planning Class

Please respond to the following questions on no more than 2 Pages! Please send via email to Courtney (tchi0003@umn.edu), Paul (pporter@umn.edu) and Bud (amarkhar@umn.edu) by Thursday morning at 10:00 AM on May 5th.

1. What have you learned about consensus building as it has been used in the Student Farm Planning Course?
2. What has been your biggest disappointment with the student farm planning course?
3. What has been your biggest accomplishment as a part of the student farm planning class?
4. What advice do you have for next year's class or how should the course change for next year?
5. What do you think the name for our farm/plot/garden should be?
6. Please also tell us about any ways you have participated in the class that are not reflected on the assignment sheet (not including class discussions).

Responses to Week 14 Questions

14 responses

1. What have you learned about consensus building as it has been used in the Student Farm Planning Course?

Various answers.

Response	Tally
Positive	9
Mostly Positive	2
Negative	2
No response	1

2. What has been your biggest disappointment with the student farm planning course?

- Not enough textbook
- Inability to actually implement the farm
- No time to visit other farms, case studies of market models, talk to farmers, discussions on sustainability
- Not enough doing, classes not in the greenhouse, too much planning
- Not getting a response from a potential partner, people interrupting, too much focus on markets
- Market focus bigger than just focus on instilling organic mind set into students
- Marketing versus growing to feed students, two credits not one- too busy
- Needed more time, more structure?
- Not what I expected. Other people didn't think like me
- Not enough time to contribute more, focus on small things led to not enough time for other important things
- Not enough connection to the plot
- None
- Didn't answer (2)

3. What has been your biggest accomplishment as a part of the student farm planning class?

- Putting together the WUSA seminar at the end of the semester- got good feedback from the audience
- Master Plan submissions
- Group Learning & Work, Companion Plants Plan
- Companion planting submission
- Attracting and maintaining dedicated people to our project,
- Organizational structure discussion, voicing opinions
- Partner contact
- Volunteer list, crop profiles, language in guiding principles,
- Not yet- organizational structure Friday?
- Taking an idea from conception to a \$30,000 funded program
- The research proposal for my upcoming summer internship
- None / Nothing / Didn't Answer (3 responses)

Responses to Week 14 Questions (continued)

4. What advice do you have for next year's class or how should the course change for next year?

- Review essentials & More meat (pests, marketing, finances)
- Analysis of the past year's system, effectiveness of cropping systems, research new cropping methods, secure future markets, publicity issues, infiltrate the student farm into classes, student life and community
- Review Mission & goals, review what worked and what didn't, visit a farm, sustainability discussion, management structure, improve education and outreach, Measure our goals,
- Divide and delegate more work for research and proposals, more in the field work,
- Review this year's class and learn from it.
- Hands on work- planting!
- More focus on alternative systems
- Use the consensus model
- More structure, field trips to local farms, theory!
- Identify more research questions related to specific crops
- Use majority rule over consensus, reduce homework, more planting in class,
- Make sure we have records for organic certification, develop process and criteria for cleaning equipment so that we don't get contaminated.
- Lab component, call it: Season extension planning and implementation for the Student Farm

5. What do you think the name for our farm/plot/garden should be?

Various answers.

6. Please also tell us about any ways you have participated in the class that are not reflected on the assignment sheet (not including class discussions).

Various answers.

Reflections on Questions from Week 14

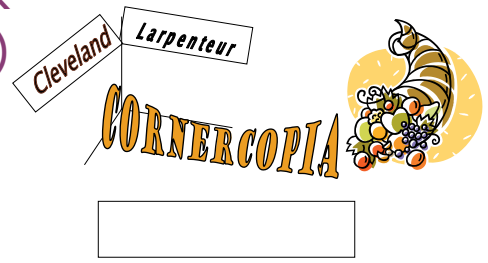
The first question on consensus building revealed that for the most part the students understood the consensus building process and had a range of opinions about how well it worked. Question two did not hold any real surprises we knew students wanted more time working with plants and the land - we were able to adjust the focus to address those concerns in future years.

I think the comment that, "Not what I expected. Other people didn't think like me" is particularly revealing in terms of the discovery process that students undergo when engaged in a process like this. In many ways an experience like this can and will open ones eyes to both perceived conceptions and the reality that even though you'd expect a room full of people to think like you they probably don't and when you dig deep their reasons for thinking differently as just as valid as your own.

The responses to question 3 are not surprising. In retrospect a question about what do you think has been the biggest accomplishment of the class this semester might have been more enlightening. In preparing for the next year's class we applied most of the student responses to question 4.

Reflections on Questions from Week 14 (Continued)

Each year we review the previous years work. We analyze the sales records, and the whole growing season. We briefly review the mission and goals and then dig into more hands-on activities. We still use the consensus building model although there is a lot less to argue about since the word-smithing on the mission statement and guiding principles are complete. We've incorporated case studies from other farms but not full fledged farm tours. We've also added a lab component that is integrated into the whole class.



By the end of the first class our farm still lacked a real name. In fact we were still trying to decide if it was a garden or a farm. The class decided to let the summer interns wrestle with that question out in the field. By early summer the name, Cornercopia Student Organic Farm had emerged (we think it might have originated from that first WUSA seminar back in November of 2004). It's stuck ever since.

2005 Final Class Evaluation

Agro 4093 / Hort 5090

Student Farm Planning Class - Spring 2005

Rating Key:

1- Unsatisfactory
2- Poor
3- Fair

4- Satisfactory
5- Good

6- Very Good
7- Exceptional

____ 1. What is your overall evaluation of this course?

Comments:

____ 2. This course was 'student driven' with the goal of establishing a student farm. How would you rate its effectiveness in your learning?

Comments:

____ 3. How would you rate the course's overall 'teacher-as-a-facilitator' approach?

Comments:

____ 4. How would you rate the consensus building approach utilized during the course?

Comments:

_____ 5. How would you rate the physical environment in which you took this class, especially the classroom facilities, including your ability to see, hear, concentrate and participate?

Comments:

_____ 6. How would you rate Courtney's ability to facilitate the discussion and progress toward the course objective?

Comments:

_____ 7. How would you rate Bud's ability to facilitate the discussion and progress toward the course objective?

Comments:

_____ 8. How would you rate Paul's ability to facilitate the discussion and progress toward the course objective?

Comments:

_____ 9. Across instructors, how would you rate the instructors' knowledge of the subject matter?

Comments:

_____ 10. Across instructors, how would you rate the instructors' respect and concern for students?

Comments:

(Key: 1- Almost Nothing; 4- Amount expected; 7- An exceptional amount)

_____ 11. How much would you say you learned in this course?

Comments:

Class Evaluation Results

1. What is your overall evaluation of this course?

Total # Responses		14
Response		Tally
Unsatisfactory	1	0
Poor	2	1
Fair	3	1
Satisfactory	4	2
Good	5	5
Very Good	6	6
Exceptional	7	0
Average		4.93

Student Comments:

- The class itself was okay
- The diversity of the group made this challenging and fun. Great people & New Skills
- This experience adds a whole new dimension to my education
- Learned a lot, met great people, feel like I did something amazing
- Good
- It was tough at times, but a great learning experience
- Most days it was a pain to come to class and sit through arguments that seemed to go no where
- Lots of valuable information
- Good chaotic fun, nice to try out consensus model

2. This course was 'student driven' with the goal of establishing a student farm. How would you rate its effectiveness in your learning?

Total # Responses		14
Response		Tally
Unsatisfactory	1	0
Poor	2	1
Fair	3	2
Satisfactory	4	3
Good	5	5
Very Good	6	2
Exceptional	7	1
Average		4.57

Student Comments:

- We did a lot of talking and planting but I think it would have been more effective if interspersed with physical work
- The consensus building was the most interesting piece.

Class Evaluation Results (continued)

2. Student Comments (continued)

- Instead of consulting so many books on things like cropping systems, it would have been good to be connected to faculty working in those areas.
- Good to learn about group process in starting a project
- I don't feel that I really learned anything
- Very empowering
- I hate group work in general, I loved this class, learned the most about working with others
- I think we created more arguments than actual progress

3. How would you rate the course's overall 'teacher-as-a-facilitator' approach?

Total # Responses		14
Response		Tally
Unsatisfactory	1	0
Poor	2	0
Fair	3	3
Satisfactory	4	6
Good	5	1.5
Very Good	6	1.5
Exceptional	7	2
Average		4.54

Student Comments:

- Good, I thought stepping in when needed was well done, I think we could have had a better schedule for the class as a whole
- Had to make some quick dictorial decisions but it was necessary
- Could of had more guidelines so we weren't arguing in circles
- Approach was good
- Bud, Paul and Courtney are fabulous
- Good, it was interesting to see where the decisions went
- Courtney was more than facilitator
- okay

4. How would you rate thee consensus building approach utilized during the course?

Total # Responses		14
Response		Tally
Unsatisfactory	1	0
Poor	2	3
Fair	3	0
Satisfactory	4	2
Good	5	4
Very Good	6	3
Exceptional	7	2
Average		4.71

Class Evaluation Results (continued)

4. (Continued)

Student Comments:

- Awesome
- This was a neat to experience
- Though we decided with consensus, the decisions allowed to be decided upon were very much certain peoples choices and bias
- A lot of decisions took place outside of class without the full classes input
- Necessary
- Not a fan of consensus building, instead of arriving at the best decision that everyone is happy with decisions are based on who talks the longest and wears everyone else down.
- Sometimes slow but very valuable, made us very analytical and I learned from others opinions.
- Its nice to know that this works and that people really can come together on things.
- Not very efficient- You can't have your cake and eat it too- voting still does what the majority wants and moves faster.

5. How would you rate the physical environment in which you took this class, especially the classroom facilities, including your ability to see, hear, concentrate and participate?

Total # Responses		14
Response		Tally
Unsatisfactory	1	0
Poor	2	0
Fair	3	0
Satisfactory	4	3
Good	5	3
Very Good	6	6
Exceptional	7	2
Average		5.5

Student Comments:

- No problems
- I liked the evolution to the round table
- Too hot!
- Would have been nice to go outside, see the field as introduction during class time
- A bit warm
- Comfortable- being able to each lunch was a nice, St. Paul campus is great
- Would have helped to spend more days in the field
- Always warm

Class Evaluation Results (continued)

6. How would you rate Courtney's ability to facilitate the discussion and progress toward the course objective?

Total # Responses		12
Response		Tally
Unsatisfactory	1	0
Poor	2	0
Fair	3	1
Satisfactory	4	6
Good	5	1
Very Good	6	4
Exceptional	7	0
Average		4.67

Student Comments:

- Pretty good
- Did well without having expectations of how to run this
- Better each week
- Too much emphasis on master plan formation and not enough time to discuss goals
- A little too controlling
- I don't agree with a lot of what was emphasized but would I have done any better?
- In all fairness, the facilitation went well- A key component of facilitation is disconnection & this was challenging for her, I believe.
- I would appreciate a greater concern / acknowledgment of alternative viewpoints

7. How would you rate Bud's ability to facilitate the discussion and progress toward the course objective?

Total # Responses		12
Response		Tally
Unsatisfactory	1	0
Poor	2	0
Fair	3	1
Satisfactory	4	0
Good	5	4.5
Very Good	6	4.5
Exceptional	7	2
Average		5.54

Student Comments:

- Great instructor & insightful
- Gets distracted sometimes, almost too considerate so slows down his communication
- I was astonished at how little both Bud and Paul stepped in- I realize that their objective was to let it run- I would have liked their opinions more often
- The peace and sanity keeper
- Would have liked more input

Class Evaluation Results (continued)

8. How would you rate Paul's ability to facilitate the discussion and progress toward the course objective?

Total # Responses		11
Response		Tally
Unsatisfactory	1	0
Poor	2	0
Fair	3	0
Satisfactory	4	0
Good	5	3
Very Good	6	6
Exceptional	7	1
Average		5.77

Student Comments:

- I was astonished at how little both Bud and Paul stepped in- I realize that their objective was to let it run- I would have liked their opinions more often
- Would have liked more input
- Good work
- Brings up good points, good speaking pace
- Voice of reason & concern for success- very helpful

9. Across instructors, how would you rate the instructors' knowledge of the subject matter?

Total # Responses		12
Response		Tally
Unsatisfactory	1	0
Poor	2	0
Fair	3	0
Satisfactory	4	1
Good	5	2
Very Good	6	3.5
Exceptional	7	5.5
Average		6.13

Student Comments:

- Highly knowledgeable
- More chance to shine in teaching in future years
- Everyone had a different perspective / expertise so complementary
- It was great to have that experience and knowledge around
- Only the best
- Courtney has a large body of knowledge on sustainability and ag issues that has not even begun to be tapped.

Class Evaluation Results (continued)

10. Across instructors, how would you rate the instructors' respect and concern for students?

Total # Responses		12
Response		Tally
Unsatisfactory	1	0
Poor	2	0
Fair	3	1
Satisfactory	4	1
Good	5	2
Very Good	6	3.5
Exceptional	7	4.5
Average		5.79

Student Comments:

- Always available and attentive
- Very good but biased viewpoints

11. How much would you say you learned in this course?

Total # Responses		12
Response		Tally
Almost Nothing	1	0
	2	0
Amount Expected	3	1
	4	1
	5	2.5
An Exceptional Amount	6	4.5
	7	3
Average		5.63

Student Comments:

- Hard to measure the knowledge gained, I learned a lot about growing but mainly learned through the experience of developing an organization
- I learned less about starting a business than I thought I expected but more about the realities of consensus decision making than I expected
- Hard to say, definitely gained an experience
- I will be interested in taking this class again as it was a huge education
- Didn't learn enough about farming or education/outreach, but learned a lot of unexpected things like political processes/ dynamics, the nature of natural formation of allies & enemies, the nature of balance between conflict

Reflections on the Final Class Evaluation

The average response on the overall evaluation of the course was a "good". Obviously a few students didn't enjoy it as much as others but those students also may have learned more than others about perception of ones peers and opinions. Its interesting how the comments reflect how closely the students saw this class as engaging in the consensus building model.

With question two we addressed the "student driven" nature of the course- in that the students were the ones exploring options and using the consensus building model to make decisions. The students responses to this question spanned the possibilities. Some students loved the student driven nature other students hated it. The average landed right in the middle.

In this course we tried to make the students experts at various points by having them research the options and report back to the class. I served as the facilitator to keep us on track and keep the flow moving throughout the semester. Again student responses to this question varied. The comments reflect that it mostly worked. Given it was the first time we tried it and average response in the middle is acceptable.

For consensus building students responses overall appreciated it with a few not enjoying it at all. There are number of truths in the students comments about it being time intensive, that some decisions were made outside of class but that those decisions were always brought back to the class for a full class discussion where consensus had to be met. I hope other students besides the one who wrote it, "learned from other peoples opinions".

The physical environment aside from being warm at times worked well. Its nice to see one student noticed how the table arrangement evolved into as close to a circle you can get with rectangular tables.

Its humbling to read student comments on ones ability to "facilitate the discussion and progress toward the course objective". The average score was between satisfactory and good. After one semester of pushing, prodding and pulling the students along some of them definitely didn't like me, others did. I realize that this isn't about being likeable its about getting a job accomplished but in the second and third class I definitely learned how to have more fun which in turn made the students enjoy the process more and still accomplished what we needed to.

The comments for questions seven and eight reveal how little the two other advisors really interjected into the conversations and discussions. This turns out to be a pretty good reflection of how much they interject into the actual running of the farm. By stepping way back they actually help empower the students to make more of the decisions independently.

Its nice to see that students perceived the knowledge base of the instructors as very good on average. Their comments are equally generous. As for respect and concern for students the students responded similarly. The comment that we have biased viewpoints is probably true. The way I look at it I work for the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture - which is FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE. I'd better be biased towards sustainable agriculture not indifferent to it.

The results of the last question are probably the most important. It is good to see that students overall at minimum learned about what they expected to on one end and an exceptional amount on the other. No one learned almost nothing. Their comments also reflect the planning process focus of the class which definitely dominated this first year. In subsequent years the student farm planning class would become the student farm planning, growing and marketing class.