

Merritt Landscape Horticulture Advisory Committee Meeting

May 8, 2013, 5:00pm – 8PM, room H105 (and Department grounds)

Members Present at the meeting:

Lori Palmquist (LP), Peter Rosen (PR), Mary Fisher (MF), Brian Fenske (BF), Dick Turner (DT), Troy McGregor (TM), Betty Young (BY), Scott Sommerfeld (SS), Jim Ryugo (JR)

Landscape Horticulture Department Members Present at the meeting: Chris Grampp (CG), chair, Lawrence Lee (LL), Laura Forlin (LF), Molly Sealund (MS)

Challenges and opportunities addressed at the outset of the meeting:

Curriculum – Importance of teaching relevant classes.

Grounds – Our facility should serve as an outdoor classroom.

Funding - How can we expand on our fundraising efforts?

Outreach – How can we expand our outreach efforts?

Committee Deliberations

General observations made by committee members:

LP – Noted that during her time taking courses in the department, there was little focus on licensing (contractor, architect or pest control applicator). She felt more could be done in terms of professional development.

PR – in the same vein, Peter felt during his time taking classes in the department, the emphasis was on Landscape Design, however, he felt it was important to have multiple skills (maintenance, pruning, nursery management, etc.) in order to be successful. Again, he felt the business aspect was lacking.

DT – Wondered if we had ever done broad surveys in an attempt to identify why the students were taking courses in the department, how they found their way to the department and what they hoped to get out of the experience/goals.

MF – Spoke about the survey she and Chris have been working scheduled to be sent out to alumni to identify what kind of work alumni is doing and what their income is.

BF – The department is well known for its strong emphasis on horticulture and felt it was important to focus on what we do well

BY – There are very few people skilled in restoration and native plant species identification and felt this was a burgeoning area of need for skilled workers.

BF – On the same topic, Brian noted many large construction jobs/new construction jobs require mitigation/restoration. Union workers must fill many of these jobs and Brian noted it is very challenging to find skilled laborers. Unions will often pay

for training. This could be a potential opportunity for partnership, and an area for curriculum development.

JR – expressed an interest in pursuing a partnership with the department, perhaps establishing a paid internship program with our students (the city has funds for training).

PR – Suggested fostering a more robust Horticulture Club.

MS – Noted that it was challenging to maintain a thriving Horticulture Club due to turnover in participation. Molly also noted there was potential for fundraising via alumni.

LL – Discussed the successful career night organized by Mary Fisher – a way to provide interaction between alumni and current students. Could this be expanded on?

SS – Felt we needed to focus on lifting the skill level around water budgeting/management using sustainable practices. Suggested adding a new course focused on this.

MF – Suggested a water management class, one that would expand upon the topics we already offer in our LH17 Irrigation class.

CG – wondered how we could make Permaculture more connected within the department; to integrate that program's focus more strongly into our overall departmental focus.

TM – Suggested bridging Permaculture and the department by integrating it into the general gardening courses.

RG – Suggested having Farmer's Market on main campus to increase our exposure on main campus, selling veggies raised on the hort grounds.

General Recommendations

Curriculum development:

- a. Consider developing a course on business practices/professional development.
- b. Consider expanding current irrigation course to include more sustainable, water efficient practices, shifting to more focus on drip and less on spray, and consider adding another irrigation course which focuses on water management using latest technology, water budgets, etc.
- c. Consider offering QWEL training.
- d. Consider expanding curriculum to include restoration course/s.
- e. Attempt to bridge the gap between Permaculture and other programs in the department – consider integrating Permaculture in general gardening courses.

Grounds

- a. Partner with EBMUD to put in a water efficient irrigation system demonstration area on the grounds.
- b. Focus on sustainable plantings on the grounds.
- c. Focus efforts on improving appearance of grounds/more demonstration areas.

Funding

- a. Contact local union organizations – potential funding for restoration training.
- b. Meet with Kathleen Socolofsky (UC Davis Arboretum Director) – brainstorm funding as well as vision (integration of vision from arboretum to main campus – could be a model for Landscape Horticulture Department).
- c. Consider funding possibilities via outreach to alumni.

Outreach:

- a. Outreach to alumni. Consider starting an alumni club/group.
- b. Expand the horticulture club.
- c. Consider joint meetings with the horticulture club and alumni to foster mentor/internship possibilities.
- d. Consider hosting meetings on main campus as a way to increase connection and visibility on main campus.
- e. Consider putting in demonstration gardens on main campus to increase visibility and connection.
- f. Consider Farmers Market on main campus.
- g. Partner with the city of Oakland to develop a paid internship program for students.
- h. Develop a survey for new students, to address the following questions: why are they taking classes in the department; how they found the department; what are there goals. Could use survey monkey, or moodle.