



## Brief Context for the National Student Food Charter:

The National Student Food Charter has proudly engaged over 400 students through 25 peer-led consultations sessions on campuses across Canada. Responses from these sessions are hosted on [studentfood.ca](http://studentfood.ca).

A drafting team led by 8 students and supported by food systems experts created value statements to reflect students' submissions. A full report of that session is available here. The draft has been circulated for feedback from student networks and participants. Final edits have been incorporated and approved by the student-led writing team.

This charter has been successful because of dedication from hundreds of students who took the time to facilitate and contribute to sessions, provide feedback, and draft this vision. The values expressed in the charter below have been created by students, for students. Students' submissions represent an impressive amount of diverse considerations and a deep understanding of the complexities of food systems.

Students will be taking the National Student Food Charter to campuses in fall 2012 for its pilot year. As a national vision for the future of food on campus, the charter is intended to help students engage stakeholders in discussions, collective actions, and the development of strategies for food systems' change. Meal Exchange will be providing students with resources and supports for students who take the charter to campus.

Despite outreach efforts, we regret that we did not receive feedback from French or Aboriginal student groups. The charter is currently being translated to French for future use and will be available along with resources for use to all student groups and demographics.

Read more about the charter's process and vision on [studentfood.ca](http://studentfood.ca).



This charter has been created by post-secondary students from across Canada to guide their work in collaboration with students' unions, administrations, food service providers, health services, and staff and faculty; as well as food businesses, local producers, governments, and non-government agencies in their communities. The values expressed in this charter provide a compass for the student food movement.

Given that citizens, governments of all levels, and industry leaders have recognized the need for coordinated food systems\* planning, and the need to establish principles to govern decisions regarding food production, distribution, access, consumption and waste management;

We, post-secondary students, believe that our institutions have an opportunity to exercise leadership in communities and throughout society by developing food systems that support social justice, healthy individuals and communities, the environment, local economies, democratic governance, and celebration.

We have developed this charter to guide our work with our institutions. We endorse the following values as the foundation of a comprehensive food systems framework for campus planning, contracts, policy, research, and program development:



**Because we value the role of post-secondary education in society, we shall**

- Recognize universities and colleges as places for innovation, critical thought and learning about our place in local and global food systems;
- Support research and curriculum development relating to food systems that is interdisciplinary, applied and community engaged;
- Facilitate relationship building between the university and college communities and the regional food system.

**Because we value healthy individuals and communities, we shall**

- Foster healthy diet options on campus that contribute to the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being and academic success of all students;
- Contribute to the development of food literacy\* and skills to encourage healthy food\* choices;
- Affirm that access\* to affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate food is essential to the well-being of individuals and communities.

**Because we value **social justice**\*, we shall**

- Uphold healthy food as a basic human right;
- Prioritize institutional policies and programs that reduce social and economic barriers to healthy and culturally appropriate food and eliminate hunger;
- Support and develop campus programs that reduce stigma and build capacity for universal access to healthy and culturally appropriate food;
- Advocate for fair\* wages and safe, respectful, and meaningful working environments for all people at all levels of the food system.

**Because we value **the Earth and environmental sustainability**, we shall**

- Support ecologically-sound food production\* by optimizing inputs and outputs of the food system to sustain or enhance the environment;
- Use campus space as a resource to produce and share food, model local food practices and provide educational opportunities for students around food;
- Appreciate and honour the seasonal cycle of the Canadian landscape;
- Recognize diverse ways of acquiring food, such as foraging, hunting, fishing, gardening;
- Respect animal welfare\*.

**Because we value **vibrant local economies**, we shall**

- Direct purchasing power, practices and policies to locally and sustainably produced and fairly traded food;
- Seek partnerships that enable our campuses to host local businesses and purchase from local and sustainable suppliers.
- Play a role in building regional food infrastructure, economies, and coordinating food chain linkages;

**Because we value **democratic governance**\* and transparency, we shall**

- Enable decision-making processes that include the meaningful participation of students and multiple stakeholders as valuable contributors to decisions made about food on campus;
- Provide accessible, comprehensive information about food offered on campus;
- Promote open and transparent\* food and beverage contracts, as well as a diversity of providers, producers, and distributors to enable the values of this charter.

**Because we value the **celebration of food as a universal human experience**, we shall**

- Foster opportunities for joyful preparing, eating and sharing of food through intentional allocation of campus space, time, and resources;
- Nurture diversity; cultivate relationships and strong communities through shared food experiences;
- Recognize our interconnectedness to the food we eat, taking a systems perspective that respects the health of our ecosystem, of our communities, and the rich history of food cultures that precede us.



# Glossary of Terms:

**Food Sovereignty:** The heart of food sovereignty is reclaiming decision-making power in the food system. This means that people have a say in how their food is produced and where it comes from. Food sovereignty seeks to rebuild the relationship between people and the land, and between those who grow and harvest food and those who eat it. <sup>1</sup>

**Food Charter:** A collaboratively created set of values and principles created to guide food policy development.

**Access:** Physical and economic availability of healthy and culturally acceptable food, for all people at all times. <sup>2</sup>

**Animal welfare:** Freedom from hunger and thirst; pain, injury and disease; distress and discomfort; freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being. <sup>3</sup>

**Democratic Governance:** Democratic governance within food systems involves diverse participation of various stakeholders (consumers, producers, distributors, cooks, servers, etc.) in decision-making processes about how these systems are organized, what food policies will look like, and what food contracts are signed.

**Ecologically sound food production:** Food production that reduces on-farm energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions; conserves soil and water, and reduces or eliminates synthetic pesticides and fertilizers; avoids the use of hormones, antibiotics, and genetic engineering. <sup>4</sup>

**Fair:** Fairness within food systems relates to the quality of life of all people within the food system. This means that producers, processors, distributors, salespeople, and servers all deserve safe working conditions and living wages.

**Food Literacy:** Understanding the impact of food choices on health, the environment, and community. <sup>5</sup>

**Food System:** The food system comprises all processes that are involved with supplying and disposing of food. This includes: growing, harvesting, hunting, gathering, packaging, transporting, processing, marketing, selling, purchasing, consuming and disposing of food. <sup>6</sup>

**Healthy food:** Healthy food includes personal, environmental, economic, and community factors. Food need be nutritious, in order to support human growth, development, and activity. Healthy food systems can improve community health by contributing to personal, environmental, social, and economic well-being. Healthy food systems are also closely related to the environment and economy, including sustainable practices, fair wages for workers, affordable food prices, and increasing support for local businesses and producers. <sup>7</sup>

**Social Justice:** Social justice generally refers to the idea of creating an egalitarian society or institution that is based on the principles of equality that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being. <sup>8</sup>

**Transparency:** Open and transparent decision-making processes are those that are accessible and clear.

1 People's Food Policy Project

2 Center for Studies in Food Security at Ryerson

3 BC SPCA

4 Local Food Plus

5 California Food Literacy Center

6 Food System Concepts – John Ingram

7 Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador

8 The Stop Community Food Center