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Enriching the Vision of Campus Kitchen: A Recipe for Justice

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Cover Page Footnote

The authors are grateful for the practical and theoretical contributions made to this article by the student leaders of Campus Kitchen at Saint Louis University, especially those who helped create the “No Stress Cooking” Cookbook. Special thanks go to Audra Youmans and Theresa Thiel, who offered thoughtful comments and ideas for the teaching and learning implications section of the manuscript, and to Noah Apprill-Sokol and Kyle Matsuba who made significant scholarly contributions to the conference presentation from which the initial planning for this article grew. Finally, as always, we are thankful for the neighbors and community members who are an essential part of the Campus Kitchen family.

Enriching the Vision of Campus Kitchen: A Recipe for Justice

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"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."
– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," 1963

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s iconic claim about humanity's interconnectedness "in an inescapable network of mutuality" (King, 2000, p. 64) is a beautifully articulated acknowledgement of the multi-faceted, intersectional, and relational nature of justice. King's pursuit of justice spanned a diverse landscape of issues – the social, political, cultural, economic, and spiritual domains of human existence. If his life had not been tragically cut short, his pursuits undoubtedly would have extended to environmental concerns, recognizing that marginalized communities of color also experience terrible forms of environmental racism, from the dumping of toxins to a lack of access to healthy foods. Still, given the relational view of justice that King espoused, he would have also understood that environmental threats to any one community were also harmful to all communities, as well as future generations. Most likely, King would have resonated with the claims of contemporary proponents of Eco-Justice, stating that the experiences of poverty, racism, sexism, and other social inequalities "can and must be traced to their shared foundation: the normalization of division and violence within human relationships with one another and the natural world" (Martusewicz & Johnson, 2016, p. 57).

The Eco-Justice framework (Bateson, 1972; Bowers, 2001), or what in some faith-based quarters has been called *integral ecology* (Francis, 2015; Kureethadam, 2019), offers a moral vision that consists of much more than a respect for the environment and the

natural world. Pithy phrases about "going green" or "save the whales," for all their utility at raising public awareness, fail to capture the depth and nuance of an Eco-Justice perspective and its sweeping implications for education (Bowers, 1993). Ultimately, Eco-Justice is a vision of profound interconnectedness, much like King's, inviting us to better understand "that issues of social and ecological justice are interwoven via the ways of thinking, practices, and relationships that compose identities as members of Western industrial societies" (Martusewicz & Johnson, 2016, p. 58). Beyond such a complex, systemic understanding is an extensive critique of contemporary culture. Proponents of Eco-Justice challenge

us to resist cultural norms and socialization pressures that promote "a hyper-consumeristic lifestyle based on material definitions of success and wealth, mechanistic conceptions of life processes, and hyper-separated relationships to the natural world" (Martusewicz & Edmundson, 2010, p. 73). In short, the Eco-Justice framework presents a lifestyle alternative, as Pope Francis (2015) has urged, to the pervasive "throw-away" culture and mindset that turns both people and products into readily expendable commodities.

At Saint Louis University (SLU), a similar moral vision and challenge is presented to the students and other community members who volunteer at the food recovery and outreach program, Campus Kitchen. Founded in 2001 as part of a national effort on college campuses in the United States to reduce food waste and redistribute food to those in need,

SLU's student-led chapter of Campus Kitchen has emerged as a model program for experiential learning and justice education. Akin to the far-reaching implications of Eco-Justice, Campus Kitchen's purpose has greater meaning than simply "feeding the hungry." SLU, as one of 27 U.S. institutions in the *Association for Jesuit Colleges and Universities*, prides itself on forming students' moral character, civic commitments, and spiritual values (Sokol, Sanchez, Wassel, Sweetman, & Peterson, 2021; Sweetman, Wassel, Belt, & Sokol, 2020). Accordingly, CKSLU, as the kitchen is often called, weaves together five priority areas in which volunteers are encouraged to learn and grow: 1) understanding food insecurity, 2) promoting sustainability, 3) building community relationships, 4) serving others, and 5) growing in faith-and-justice. Although CKSLU has highlighted principles of Eco-Justice across these five educational areas—including the constructive tensions embedded in personal and structural forms of justice (Sokol, Sweetman, Wassel, Franco, & Huffman, 2020)—many volunteers have nevertheless indicated more narrowly defined, and even shortsighted, reasons for their involvement. We will discuss findings from a recent survey of CKSLU volunteers that has led program leaders to re-envision their approach to "meeting students where they are" and to offer more robust learning opportunities through student-led projects that support a richer Eco-Justice vision. One of these projects—the production of a cookbook with nutritional details for simple meals and the distribution of slow-cookers and kitchen supplies to newly housed individuals who had experienced homelessness—illustrates how successful experiential learning provides students with a sense of autonomy and control, in the same way that promoting justice creates environments that mutually empower individuals (Sokol, Hammond, Kuebli, & Sweetman, 2015).

Problem Statement

As the civic engagement movement in higher education began to gain traction in the mid-1990s, Saltmarsh and Hartley (2011) noted that service-learning proponents tended to fall into one of two camps. Together, these camps have created anchor points on diverging ends of a service-learning continuum. There were those who fell firmly in the "academic neutrality" group, arguing that "the surest means of anchoring [service-learning] in the core work of the academy was to adhere to academic norms" (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011, p. 14). For these scholars and educators, service-learning resembled disciplinary-based fieldwork or clinical practica that did little to change traditional educational practices or institutional structures, nor

transform the conventional transactions between the university and community (Morton, 1995; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). In the other camp, by contrast, were those who promoted "the notion of faculty as moral agents whose 'moral and civic imaginations' are directed at public works" (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011, p. 14). These social-change-minded educators tended to align service-learning with critical pedagogies, such as Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, with the aim of disrupting the status quo and encouraging students to challenge unequal power structures and the unfair distribution of resources. Critical educators from this group have proposed distinguishing their goals from others in the service-learning discourse by calling their educational efforts "justice-learning" (Butin, 2007).

Although CKSLU's overarching commitments to Eco-Justice align best with the justice-learning side of the continuum, maintaining the tension between neutral or "traditional service-learning" and more progressive or "critical service-learning" (Mitchell, 2008) is a constructive heuristic for capturing Campus Kitchen's varied purposes. Both anchor points on the service-learning continuum illustrate the complexities and interconnections of community life on the practical level, suggesting the inadequacy of either-or formulations in "real-world" community engagement (Morton & Bergbauer, 2015). In the faith-based context of SLU, this tension resembles two expressions of "love-in-action": charity and justice (Sokol et al., 2021). Each reflects a necessary and worthy goal given the practical circumstances in which CKSLU operates, although the ultimate vision that charity and justice serve, as a whole, is the creation of a just and equitable world in which all people may thrive together.

For this two-part reason, CKSLU conducts charitable outreach, on the one hand, by distributing healthy meals to people with immediate food security needs. In doing so, they invest in the person and present moment, seeking an expeditious remedy for individuals' current state of hunger. On the other hand, CKSLU also advocates for longer-term solutions to food insecurity, particularly by modeling more sustainable relationships to food production and waste. In doing so, they subvert a persistent throwaway culture and combat the broader unjust circumstances that cause hunger and debase people's dignity. Of course, many volunteers begin their participation with CKSLU from a relatively unexamined understanding of service and justice – that is, they arrive with a simple "feeding the hungry" perspective. Holding the dynamic tensions between charity, justice, and the sustainability principles of Eco-Justice all in mind at once is challenging, to say the least.

The central issue that has emerged, therefore, is this:

How does the Campus Kitchen leadership team educate for justice in a way that captures the complex interconnectedness of the social and natural world and encourages students to grow in their resistance to a throwaway culture? What steps should be taken to shape the understanding and motivations of CKSLU volunteers to align more closely with a richer vision of Eco-Justice, capturing the mindset and practices of encountering the world and other people from a position of preserving and elevating each other's dignity?

Our method for addressing these questions was informed by the research literature in social psychology exploring volunteer motivations (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998), as well as scholarship originating in study of personal agency and empowerment (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sokol et al., 2015). Two steps followed: First, we devised a questionnaire to circulate among CKSLU volunteers as a means to better assess their action motivations and potential alignment with Campus Kitchen's educational priorities; then, we explored the motivational impact, through a qualitative examination of student reflections, of special community-focused projects that promoted a sense of agency and control, both among the student leaders and community members involved. To better understand the rationale for these steps, we must set the stage with several other metrics that CKSLU has used as success indicators. CKSLU's measurement strategies, as we hope to make clear, have varied from a focus on material concerns to areas of personal growth and relationship-building.

Description of Practice

As CKSLU celebrates its 20th year, both the academically neutral and the social change sides of the service-learning/justice-learning continuum are evident. Organizationally, CKSLU is part of the University's Center for Service and Community Engagement (CSCE; now rebranded as the Center for Social Action), a team that supports a wide array of service-learning in curricular and co-curricular outlets across campus, working with faculty, students, staff, and community members. The CSCE employs a part-time coordinator to support the student leaders of CKSLU and to help ensure that community partners' needs are consistently met, particularly through the summer months, when most students are unavailable. The operational priorities of the Campus Kitchen are straightforward: (a) recover food that would normally be thrown away (promote food sustainability); and (b) repurpose that food into nutritious meals that

are then distributed to individuals in need (combat food insecurity). Both of these goals are equally important to attaining food justice and follow from faith-oriented principles elaborated in *Laudato Si'* (Francis, 2015), a document circulated by the Roman Catholic Church to address a growing throwaway culture. As the document outlines: "We know that approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor" (Francis, 2015, pp. 35–36). To put this claim in context for CKSLU volunteers, in St. Louis City specifically, nearly one out of four residents of the city meet criteria for being food insecure, including 13,970 children. With a similar percentage of the city's population (24.2%) living below the poverty line, many members of the community must choose between buying food and providing for other basic needs, such as housing and health care. Such food insecurity is exacerbated by the fact that 54.9% of St. Louis residents live in a food desert, an area that has limited access to affordable and healthy food (Incarnate Word Foundation, 2020), including neighborhoods immediately adjacent to SLU's campus. Concomitantly, around 40% of food is wasted in the USA annually (Spiegel, 2019), with the vast majority ending up in landfills. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (2021) reports that wasted food is the "the single largest category of material placed in landfills," representing nutrition that "could have helped feed families in need."

Material Metrics: Food Recovery and Redistribution

Campus Kitchen accomplishes the first goal of food recovery in a robust way, recovering an average of 1,000 pounds of food each week that would normally be thrown out. This food is collected from a Trader Joe's grocery store as well as SLU on-campus dining services. Examples of recovered food include a five-pound bag of apples in which one apple is rotten, or a dozen eggs in which one is cracked. On campus, CKSLU recovers such things as sandwiches and fruit that are too close to the "best by" date to be sold and pans of leftover food from the students' dining halls. Campus Kitchen is also partnered with the St. Louis Area Food Bank as a designated recipient for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which includes food that is sold to the federal government from US farmers and producers. Altogether, in 2020, CKSLU recovered a total of 50,000 pounds of food.

Campus Kitchen then uses the recovered food to cook about 400 meals each week and deliver them to seven community partners, including transitional housing programs, apartments for elderly and dis-

abled individuals, and emergency homeless shelters. An additional three non-profit organizations are given fresh, uncooked food that is used to provide groceries to their own clients. Nearly 600 individuals are fed each week through the efforts of CKSLU, and in 2020, a total of 21,000 meals were delivered – all from food that would have otherwise gone to waste.

However, the principal means of evaluating program success is not just based on “pounds-of-food-recovered” or “meals-served.” Certainly, after 20 years, CKSLU can take stock in these numbers, nevertheless it risks diluting the experience by focusing too much on a predetermined materialistic goal. As part of a bigger educational effort of the CSCE, Campus Kitchen must also provide an environment that is ripe for community-based learning experiences in which the one doing the serving and one being served encounter each other within a framework of respect, reciprocity, relevance, and reflection (Butin, 2007, p. 177). These experiences embrace other priorities of relationship-building and faith-and-justice, focus on the process of questioning and disrupting commonplace assumptions, and set up Campus Kitchen as a service-learning site that educates for justice.

When Campus Kitchen first began at SLU in 2001, it was a neat trick to take food that was going to be thrown out and turn it into a nutritious meal. But through the lens of Eco-Justice, it does not seem so clever. Instead, the critical consciousness formed by an enriched Eco-Justice perspective now highlights a troubling pattern of connections. The heart of Campus Kitchen’s operations trade on cultural conventions and social norms that attach misguided meanings to material excess. Some of CKSLU’s volunteers have questioned whether “recovered-food” is only good enough for people who cannot afford food. This is far from the case. If anything, an abundance of food, and the relative ease of its disposal in landfills, represents a disturbing position of privilege in a throwaway culture. Finally, through an Eco-Justice lens, CKSLU’s material metrics of success are perversely tied to food industry standards that tend to be driven more by money-making pressures of a market economy than authentic concerns for sustaining people’s nutrition and wellbeing (Wilkinson, 2021). Such critical realizations point to the need for CKSLU to balance material indicators like “pounds-of-food-recovered” with person-centered and relational markers of evaluation. Indeed, the interconnections revealed by Eco-Justice has entailed re-framing CKSLU’s assessment strategies, drawing greater attention to dynamic tensions and places for better alignment.

Personal Metrics: Motivational and Educational Alignment

Campus Kitchen’s educational priorities have not always matched the personal motivations of volunteers. Clary and Snyder (1999) have provided compelling evidence that sustained patterns of volunteerism and community engagement “depend on the interaction of person-based dynamics and situational opportunities” (p. 159). Their program of research (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998) has identified six major motivational factors for volunteers, including alignment with values, understanding, personal growth, career aspirations, social connection, and psychological well-being. These personal motivations, at a general level, parallel most of the particular educational areas that CKSLU has worked to prioritize. Obviously, given the educational context of Campus Kitchen and SLU – the relevant “situational opportunities,” as Clary and Snyder (1999) would say—there is a more specific emphasis placed on food justice and faith-based concerns. Again, these are: 1) understanding food insecurity, 2) promoting sustainability, 3) building community relationships, 4) serving others, and 5) growing in faith-and-justice. To explore the alignment or “fit” between these areas, the CKSLU leadership team developed a 30-item questionnaire to circulate among its student volunteers. Students were asked to rate their level of agreement, on a 5-point scale, to questions in the five areas. The goal was to generate two questions for each: one associated with beliefs and motivations and one related to taking action. For instance, the two items associated with the priority area of valuing and practicing sustainability were: 1) How relevant is the value of sustainability in shaping your commitment to community service? and 2) How committed are you to reducing food waste in your own daily practices? Ratings were combined to create an aggregated score for each of the CKSLU priorities.

Fifty-four completed questionnaires were returned, with balanced representation from a range of students, including first-timers and seasoned-veteran volunteers. The majority of respondents (just over 70%) were women, but this is consistent with the overall CKSLU volunteer base, which is predominantly women. The average age of the respondents was 19-years-old, and most volunteered at least once a week, if not more.

In addition to asking volunteers about each area, they also rank-ordered the CKSLU priorities, as they understood them, in relation to their own personal

motivations. “Serving others,” not surprisingly, was a top motivator (see Figure 1). SLU’s service narrative is a salient thread in all University programs, and many students attend SLU because of the many service opportunities the institution provides. Nevertheless, because CKSLU’s goal is to educate students regarding the nuanced meanings of service and justice, a more rigorous examination of volunteers’ mindsets was necessary. Accordingly, in the bar graph of rankings, the location of “growing in faith-and-justice” and “valuing sustainability” (both near the bottom) provided a more meaningful place to begin our inquiry.

Together, these two areas represent the primary focus of CKSLU’s educational messaging, yet students treat them as secondary in their personal motivational priorities. Importantly, the rankings did not differ significantly by students’ frequency and time volunteering at CKSLU, nor did they differ based on other demographics like enrollment status, age, or gender. Given the spiritual exploration and meaning-making known to arise during the college years (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Barry & Abo-Zena, 2014; Smith & Snell, 2009), these findings make some sense, even if perhaps disappointing from a perspective of SLU’s faith-based values. Many emerging adults in higher education contexts, as Parks (1991) has noted, are working to free their conceptions of faith from a “too facile equation with religion and belief” and reconnecting it to “trust, meaning, and truth” (p. 10). In the “faith-and-justice” framing of spirituality in Catholic, Jesuit education, students often resonate much more with the justice-side of

this formulation than the faith-side. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the one questionnaire item which directly emphasized justice (How active are you in advocating for the rights of vulnerable or marginalized people?) had a very high level of agreement (mean 3.54) with 55% of respondents indicating a 4 or a 5. Whereas the item that referenced faith-and-spirituality most explicitly saw the opposite pattern (mean of 2.85) with nearly 45% of respondents indicating only a 1 or 2 (see Figure 1).

The news about Campus Kitchen’s success in meeting its top educational priorities, however, is not all bad, especially if delving into responses to other questionnaire items. For instance, the highest score for any of the questions – a mean of 4.39 – was to “How clear has Campus Kitchen’s priority to reduce food waste been during your involvement with its outreach?” Volunteers, as a whole, agreed that CKSLU is effective in communicating a commitment to reducing food waste, even if at an individual level they do not rank food sustainability practices as their highest personal motivator. Examining the means for the aggregated scores in each of the areas provides further clarity. As shown in Figure 2, food sustainability and understanding food insecurity were the two highest scores, and follow-up analyses indicated these differ statistically from all but one of the relationship-building areas.

All together, these data shed light on places of both promise and improvement in volunteer mindsets and CKSLU’s educational priorities. They also



Figure 1: Respondents’ Rankings of Priorities

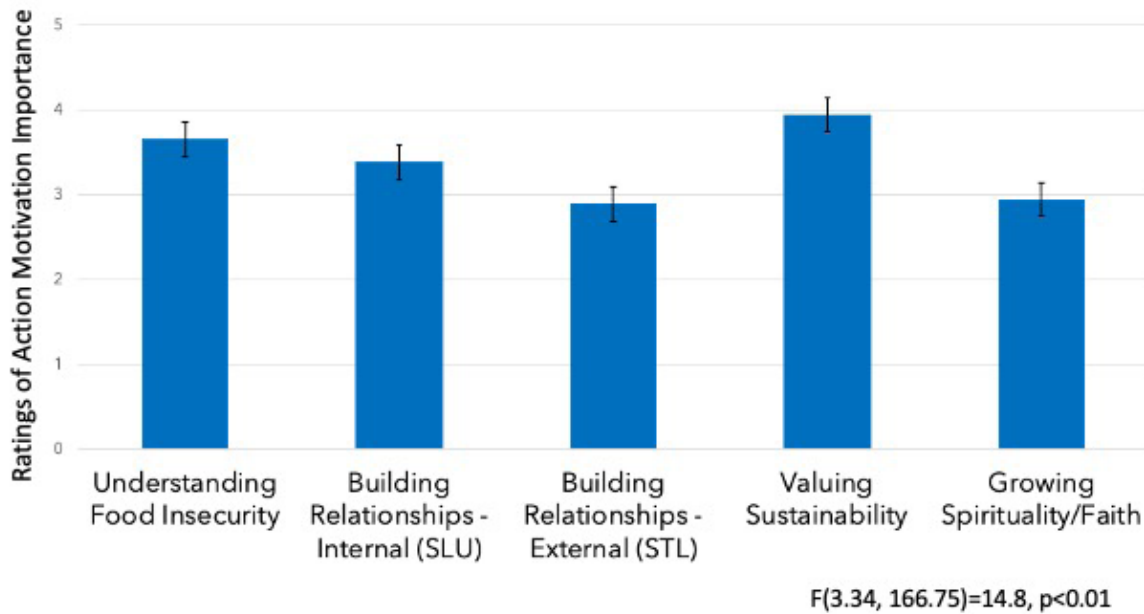


Figure 2: Respondents' Action Motivations

point to the varied motivations that volunteers hold and the importance of working from these to achieve a better alignment in meeting service-learning goals.

Relational Metrics: Personal and Communal Agency

Moving yet another step beyond the material metrics of food distribution, CKSLU recognizes that hunger is not simply an empty stomach, and has worked in various ways to combat the sense of isolation that food insecurity creates. These efforts have taken the form of pen-pal letter exchanges, monthly game nights, holiday baking sessions, and a community art installation—all in an effort to foster more meaningful personal relationships between the volunteers and the neighbors that they serve. Among the questionnaire findings, the item dealing with “making connections among fellow volunteers” had a mean score of 3.91, the second highest score of all the motivation-related items. Indeed, food is a powerful motivator for relationship-building and community: the notion of “breaking bread” and companionship share a common etymological root (com=together and panis=bread). Sharing food with others represents a moment of shared humanity and a reliance on one another for growth. In the research literature on motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), such moments reflect a basic psychological need for relatedness, or a sense of belonging. The human motivation to experience relatedness and community “concerns the universal propensity to interact with, be connected to, and experience caring for other people” (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004, p. 25). Still, the psychological motivation to be in community is also held in tension

with an opposing psychological need for autonomy, or sense of agency and control. Autonomy refers to the need to experience volition and choice when acting, to feel in control and to act in accord with one’s values and interests (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004). Human well-being has sometimes been framed as a healthy balance between community and autonomy, a duality of communion-and-agency (Bakan, 1966; Sokol et al., 2015; Wiggins, 1991).

Preserving this balance or tension in CKSLU’s special projects has emerged as another educational priority, particularly with new opportunities for students to apply for small seed grants through the Center for Service and Community Engagement. The grants—called *1818 Community Engagement Grants* to recognize the year SLU was founded—are designed to engage students’ passions and provide more tailored mentorship and leadership training. They are also designed to encourage deeper community collaborations and a sense of mutuality in the partnerships that are formed. Not everyone’s passions and interests are the same. Some love cooking, some enjoy photography and storytelling, others contribute to Campus Kitchen’s new garden boxes to harvest fresh vegetables and herbs. Providing multiple options and opportunities to create new relationships and grow partnership possibilities has become an attractive way to engage more students and promote their sense of autonomy. One project that grew out of students’ homelessness outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic built even more on this intrinsic motivation for autonomy and control, empowering not only the students involved, but also their unhoused friends in the community.

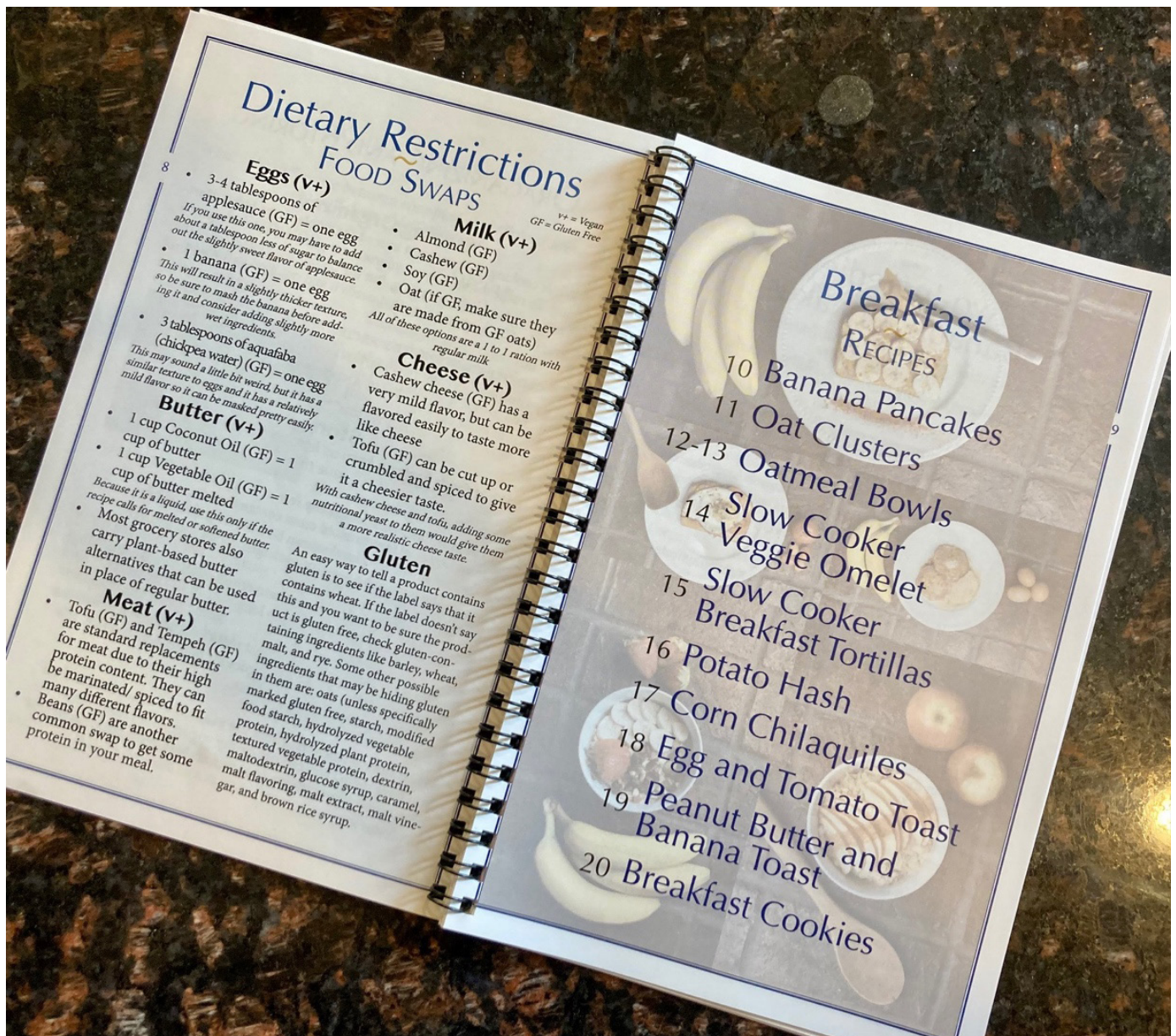


Figure 3: No Stress Cookbook

The “No Stress Cooking” Cookbook was the culmination of an 1818 Grant that drew together a team of eleven students partnered with the organization, Tent Mission STL, to create a collection of recipes for inexpensive, but nutritious, meal options. The cookbooks were distributed with a new electric slow-cooker, pots and pans, and grocery supplies to community members who were transitioning from living on the streets to new homes as part of St. Louis’ “Housing First” model. The model is built on the premise that individuals experiencing homelessness are more successful if they begin with secure housing, and then, from a stable-base, seek out social services for further support. The cookbook and kitchen supplies served as a housewarming gift, as well as a means to support independent living. The eleven students designed the cookbooks based

on their own individual skills and interests. Beyond recipe writing, some students offered food-safety and money-saving tips, some gathered nutritional and cost information to include with the recipes, and others prepared the recipes to photograph and layout in an appealing glossy-paged book. As one student leader remarked in a reflection activity following the project:

People deserve their autonomy with their food. Nothing is better than a home-cooked meal. By bringing groceries, rather than meals, people can choose what they want and how they want to make it. By providing crockpots, people can cook even if they don’t have appliances, utensils, or vast cooking knowledge. This project was intended to be comprehensive and holistic, promoting the autonomy of oneself, especially after having that autonomy stripped away by living with a survival mindset.

Importantly, the students have discussed how they plan to continue the project, maintaining closer relationships with recipients of the cookbook and supplies. They hope to get continuous feedback from these people regarding their food preferences and needs. They intend to recruit nutrition and dietetics students to help provide additional expertise and guide selections for even healthier foods. They are exploring other sources of funding to expand from crockpots to other items, such as meat thermometers, microwaves, and small kitchen appliances. Finally, motivated by a desire to avoid creating a context of dependency, they plan to educate people about available food pantries and ways to seek other forms of assistance, like SNAP and WIC, so they can continue to make personal choices about their sources of nutrition. A participating student reflected that:

... in many realms of giving, people say 'beggars can't be choosers.' We asked, why not? Why take away someone's autonomy when easy steps can be taken to preserve it? While some may answer that there are not enough resources, we continue to probe: if we have resources (even limited ones), we should be giving people options. This act of maintaining choices grows trust and deepens relationships.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

The revered college basketball coach, John Wooden, is credited with saying, "Don't mistake activity with achievement." While there are many benefits to experiential learning opportunities, scholars and educators have remained wary of assuming that the "mere doing" in service-learning contexts is sufficient to promote personal, moral, and civic growth (Hart, Matsuba, & Atkins, 2008). Adopting additional means to guide and set meaning-making parameters on students' learning is needed. The metrics and findings from experiences at CKSLU are illustrative of what some of this guidance could look like.

1. Serve a broad, integrative vision and look beyond markers of material success. Although meeting the nutritional needs of SLU's neighboring communities is important for Campus Kitchen, its priorities follow from an even richer vision of Eco-Justice that aims to transform people's hearts and minds and cultivate a life-long commitment to justice. Success in meeting this vision requires understanding complex volunteer motivations and thoughtful relationship-building, as well as igniting individuals' passions and creating autonomy-granting opportunities for their pursuit.

2. Honor the dignity of all stakeholders and tailor programmatic goals to the interests of students and community members. The pursuit of justice involves an awareness of the complex interconnections and relationships that join people to the social and natural world. Creating "right relationships" (Sokol et al., 2021) that promote equity and well-being within these networks is an ongoing process that requires constant attention to the dynamics of the social context and the unique characteristics of individuals. CKSLU inhabits a small part of a system of relationships dealing with food and people, but it takes great care to create an environment that empowers individuals, provides a space for giving and making personal choices, and increasingly encourages all stakeholders to serve themselves, whether in the nutritional options for community members or the educational goals of students.

3. Allow for mixed motivations and creative tensions to further promote personal growth and sustain life-long learning. Famed educator and activist, Parker Palmer (2011) argued that democratic citizenship depended on "learning to hold tension creatively" (p. 71) in the public sphere in order to "generate a sense of personal voice and agency" and to further "strengthen our capacity to create community" (p. 45). Optimal experiential learning similarly requires an openness to mixed motivations and understandings (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary, Snyder, & Stukas, 1998), but also demands intentional efforts to shape individuals' ongoing critical reflection in relation to broader frames of meaning, such as Eco-Justice. A significant practical outcome for CKSLU's assessments has been the creation of a new leadership position on the student-led executive team, the Vice President for Service-Learning and Scholarship. The responsibilities of this position are to develop and implement reflection opportunities and to share educational resources at every volunteer shift in the kitchen, as well as make presentations to other student groups across campus and encourage increased political advocacy for food justice policies.

4. Approach tensions between charity-and-justice as a "both-and" rather than an "either-or." Although charitable actions risk the danger of sustaining the status quo and the broken systems that perpetuate need and waste, justice must balance both structural and personal dimensions. "Justice captures notions of inclusion, community, and well-being as they are embodied in both personal interactions and in societal structures" (Sokol et al. 202, p. 45). Practically speaking, this means responding to the basic needs of individuals, treating them with respect and care, and,

if the situation requires, providing food, clothing, and shelter. Still, in all of these acts of charity, advocates for justice must never lose sight of longer-term solutions to promoting community well-being and individual thriving. This means advocating for structural changes to systems that deprive people of their dignity, freedom, and ability to support themselves. Campus Kitchen's commitment to food justice is a "both-and" formulation – a recipe for justice – that ensures people are fed, relationships are valued, and throwaway attitudes and systems are subverted.

Next Steps

Beyond the implications for teaching and learning, the student reflections and questionnaire findings have provided critical insight into CKSLU volunteers' mindsets, especially the nuance of their motivations. Still, given the typical age of most college students, CKSLU's questions to volunteers may have neglected a central source of motivation: the need to belong to something greater than oneself, or a sense of 'self-transcendence' (Sokol, Chandler, Hammond, McEnerney, & Marle, 2018). Psychologists who study identity-formation (Lightfoot, 1997; Marcia, 1980; Youniss & Yates, 1997) have long noted that adolescents and young adults are primed to benefit from opportunities that intersect with issues of identity, personal responsibility, and authentic action (Arnett, 1998; Finlay, Wray-Lake, & Flanagan, 2010), particularly as they begin to imagine themselves as future members of society. Next steps in better understanding CKSLU volunteers will look less at whether they have embraced a vision of Eco-Justice and more at how they envision themselves and their personal role in the pursuit of justice, or what Martin Luther King, Jr. (2011) described as the long "arc of the moral universe." Many young people, as Youniss and Yates (1997) have highlighted, seek a sense of greater purpose. Far from fitting the stereotypes of being irresponsible and self-absorbed, "youth are concerned about the society they will inherit and have to decide how they can best relate to it" (Youniss & Yates, 1997, p. 22). Given our current historical position in MLK's "moral arc" and the salience of the Black Lives Matter movement in the collective consciousness of young people, a central concern for CKSLU volunteers, who by and large identify as white, has to involve examining their own implicit biases in relation to the renewed energy behind diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts on university campuses. At SLU, in particular, this examination has led to re-situating the Center for Service and Community Engagement and CKSLU into a newly re-organized and re-branded *Division for Diversity and Innovative Community Engagement*,

which launched in the fall of 2021. Although many higher education institutions have offices devoted to promoting diversity and inclusion, universities must take care to avoid formulaic, cookie-cutter solutions that fail to build true inclusive excellence and community. With CKSLU's enduring commitment to and rich experience with relationship-building, its participation in SLU's institutional-level DEI efforts offers a practical model for creating a robust inclusive community around principles of creativity, agency, well-being, and justice. Moreover, CKSLU illustrates how students can become leaders in these efforts.

The spirit of Eco-Justice that CKSLU has embraced points to the many benefits of experiential learning programs that promote holistic understanding and an interconnected vision of social justice. Campus Kitchen is fundamentally about creating new and more equitable ways of relating to food and community life, and combating the excesses of a "throwaway culture" that threaten our present ability to thrive and our future life together on this planet. As noted in the introduction, however, the Eco-Justice framework is capacious enough to challenge attitudes that perpetuate anti-communal norms and "isms" of all kinds. For SLU's Campus Kitchen volunteers especially, this has led to much deeper realizations about the ways their personal choices and actions can impact others, both positively and negatively, in the broader pursuit of justice. At the heart of these realizations is the hard fact: if we fail to critically analyze and reflect on our actions, or wrestle with issues of identity and privilege and what truly motivates us, we risk not only being ineffective in our community service, but also damaging to the relationships we hope to build in caring for others and our common home. Whatever recipe for justice we have offered by exploring the teaching and learning implications of Campus Kitchen, we must constantly examine and be willing to adjust our relationships if we hope to truly nourish ourselves and our communities. ■

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