



California State University
SAN MARCOS

Proposal to develop the:

Veteran Organic Farming Certificate

Submitted to:

THE CSU COMMISSION ON THE EXTENDED UNIVERSITY

2015-2016

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President (signature)

Date: _____

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Project Abstract

The Veteran Organic Farming Certificate addresses health, re-entry, counseling, and workforce issues faced by post-9/11 veterans by providing certificate course work involving agricultural training, mental health awareness, leadership development, entrepreneurial training and strategies, nutrition, and internships with local and international agricultural organizations. The Veteran Organic Farming Certificate partners with existing veteran agricultural organizations to ensure that course work meets expressed needs and makes the most of the skill sets gained by military training, including the unique manner in which the military organizes labor and assigns tasks to accomplish goals, which is something that many civilian-based support agencies have failed to recognize. The certificate will create pathways for veterans to enter college and prepare for meaningful careers in agricultural professions.

Project Description***Stated Need***

The goal of the Veteran Organic Farming Certificate proposal is to address specific needs of post-9/11 veterans, including physical and counseling, re-entry, and workforce/occupational issues in the context of a cohort of veteran colleagues and specially designed course work. The certificate will be a two-year (6 semesters), part-time, for credit program consisting of six courses plus an internship.

The Federal 2014 Farm Bill recognizes the veteran population as a separate category of need for outreach and assistance. The veteran population has many “unique and relevant skills to create a new generation of innovative, ecological, and financially successful young farmers, land stewards and conservationists. The USDA already has a number of initiatives to help veterans returning home find meaningful work in agriculture.”(Farmer-Veteran Coalition) In the wake of 9/11, multiple

returning veteran groups dedicated to agricultural development have been formed, such as Archie's Acres, Semper Fi Growers, GroGreen, Hungry Mother Organics, Union Family Farm, Veteran Victory Farm, and Veterans Farm. These organizations are veteran-led and assist veterans in addressing agricultural business, mental and physical health, re-entry, and workforce issues. The Veteran Organic Farming Certificate will partner with and support these and other veteran-led organizations by providing accredited course work designed to meet multiple needs, including agricultural methods training, mental and physical health, nutrition, business and marketing, and leadership.

The principle target audience consists of veterans not enrolled in a university or college who have access to but are not utilizing the GI Bill benefits available to them. According to veteran organization collaborators, this sector of veterans is most vulnerable and hard-to-reach. These veterans are often isolated, unemployed, and face multiple mental health and re-entry challenges. The health component of the certificate involves on-going research focusing on high-risk behaviors associated with PTSD, now referred to as Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS). Research indicates that veterans with PTSS experience decreased high-risk behaviors when engaged in the cycles of farming. A research team led by clinical psychologists and medical anthropologists will assess PTSS-related behaviors of veterans entering and completing the certificate program. Collaborating veteran organizations will be instrumental in recruitment efforts for the program. This certificate will provide multiple options to many of the returning vets in need of education, re-entry solutions and pathways to higher education. The Veterans Organic Farming Certificate will provide graduates with an edge in the industry by advancing and adding new skill sets that are imperative and demanded in the workforce, including knowledge of how to organize and set up a non-profit organization, how to attain organic certification, how to access regional markets, how to initiate a farm, how to access veteran-specific resources, as well as how to address mental health challenges

and help colleagues suffering from PTSS access resources, and how to address nutritional resources that support mental and physical health. The need for veterans with these skills was underscored in the recent 2014 Farm Bill, which identified Veterans as a strong sector to reinvigorate the national farming community.

Project Objectives, Goals and Measurable Outcomes

The Veteran Organic Farming Certificate program will address all of the Commission objectives. First, it will meet the state's economic and workforce development needs by creating new career opportunities for veterans. Second, it will increase access and pathways to educational opportunities to a broader constituency of hard-to-reach and vulnerable members of the veteran population. These are veterans who may not consider a college education and are not utilizing federal Veterans Benefits, but will respond to extended learning opportunities, especially if these are in collaboration with veteran organizations such as SemperFi Growers. Third and fourth, the Veteran Organic Farming Certificate will develop a creative alternative instructional delivery system through a combination of classroom, on-line, and hands-on-the-ground (literally) farming internship with community partners. Fifth, the program will augment the veteran support community of CSUSM and its Veteran Center, creating lifelong personal friends and connections, plus established connections to the local farming businesses. Sixth, the VOFC will provide opportunities for farming outreach to international community sites through programs already available through the CSUSM Anthropology Department's summer programs in Ecuador and the Caribbean. Conversely, these programs will provide an opportunity for international students who are interested in innovative and effective agricultural methods in the U.S.

The CSUSM Veteran Organic Farming Certificate aims to partner with and support veteran-led agricultural organizations by providing accredited course work designed to meet multiple needs,

including agricultural methods training, health, nutrition, business and marketing, leadership and counseling. The proposed courses will include the following:

- Health and Nutrition: Veterans and students will learn about the nutritional values of organically grown products and be able to identify how diet can affect mental health, PTSD, and general health as well as what foods support mental and physical health.
- Agricultural Methods: Veterans and students will be trained in organic and sustainable growing methods and be able to identify sustainable growing methods including water conservation, innovative growing techniques, and appropriate crop selection.
- Entrepreneurship for Veterans: Veterans and students will be able to identify how to start a non-profit organization, set up a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) business, find vet-specific financial support, and market and distribute their product in a sustainable way.
- Agro-Ecology: Veterans students will experience international agro-ecology projects and learn new agricultural methods in an international setting. In addition, students and veterans will learn about non-clinical definitions and approaches to PTSS and engage in active and applied healing practices.
- Soil and Plant Biology: Veterans and students will be able to identify soil and plant health and corresponding pathogens. They will also be able to identify sustainable management to ensure a healthy crop and soil.
- Counseling and Crisis Management: Veterans and Students will be able to identify the benefits of a long-term study of PTSS high-risk behaviors as related to farming, community building and participation in vet-supported networks.
- Internship with Community: Veterans will achieve hands-on experience in agricultural production that involves sustainability and ecologically sound practices.

The curriculum will be developed and taught by CSUSM faculty from the College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences (Bade, Guthey, Gonzalez), the College of Science and Mathematics (TBD), the College of Business (Brodowsky), industry experts, and veteran farming organizations. The combination of social, science and business courses specifically responds to the agricultural and veteran community's requests for educational programs designed to build a well-rounded curriculum that addresses veteran-specific needs such as employment, counseling, community and well-being. The six courses will be designed in collaboration with organized veteran groups to ensure that they attend to veteran needs.

The cohort model of the certificate courses capitalizes on the work organization of military personnel, such as the five-person "fire team," the five fire-team "squad," and the five squad "platoon." A fire team, for example, is a unit of military personnel assigned specific goals to

accomplish and the division of labor with the fire team works to achieve the goals. Veteran organizations such as Semper Fi Growers have expressed that the fire team model is ideal for farm building and labor divisions from seeding to cultivating to harvest to market. Semper Fi has stressed the need for civilian-based entities such as the university to recognize the unique organizational labor structures of the military and utilize them so that returning veterans can be most successful for re-entry and employment. The certificate includes an internship that reinforces the link and synergy between the University and the agricultural and veteran community, providing an opportunity to apply course materials as well as work on existing farms run by local organic growers or existing veteran farming organizations.

The certificate will be a two-year (6 semesters), part-time, for credit program for veterans. The principal target audience consists of veterans not enrolled in a university or college who have access to but are not utilizing the GI Bill benefits available to them.

Project Length and Timeline

The project will begin July 1, 2015 and end on June 30, 2017.

The two-year curriculum will allow time for working veterans to take the courses part-time and it will also provide time for an internship experience that includes an entire growing season.

In order to accomplish the stated program objective and meet the CSU Commission on the Extended University grant proposal objectives, we have outlined the following measurable project goals:

- 1) Establish a CSUSM Veteran Organic Farming Certificate Council consisting of a Farming Industry Advisory Committee, Veteran representatives, and a CSUSM Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development Committee. (Measure – established members and meeting schedule for both committees.)(Spring 2015)

- 2) Plan, design and develop program curriculum, including on-line courses for the CSUSM Veteran Organic Farming Certificate. (Measure – completed curricula.)(Spring/Summer 2015)
- 3) Develop letters of agreement with veterans farming businesses, organizations and individual farms to implement internship program. (Spring/Summer 2015)
- 4) Submit for campus approval all required curricular forms, including the initial proposal form and new certificate program form with accompanying new course forms. (Measure-completed approval forms.)(Spring/Summer 2015)
- 5) Establish admission criteria for prospective students (Measure - developed admission criteria.)(Fall 2015)
- 6) Search/Interview/Hire On-Campus and Community Professors/Instructors. (Measure - faculty in place.)(Fall 2015)
- 7) Begin Cohort 1 (Measure – 50 students.)(Spring 2016)
- 8) Establish a long-range marketing plan and begin advertising to students. (Measure - Marketing plan established and advertising/outreach activities; target goal is 50 applications.)(Spring 2016)
- 9) 2016 -2017: Cohort 2 begins program (Fall 2016 – Summer 2017)
- 10) Develop Dissemination Plan and Tool Kit for other campuses (Measure- Completed Plan and Tool Kit.) (Spring/Summer 2017)

Table 1 provides a suggested timeline for meeting the overall project objectives.

Table 1. Veterans Organic Farming Certificate Timeline

Program Objective	Proposed Completion Date
Establish Advisory Council Veterans Agriculture Advisory Sub-Committee Meetings	Spring 2015
Plan, Design, Develop Curriculum	Spring/Summer 2015

Submit to Curriculum Committee	Spring/Summer 2015
Submit for University Approval	Fall 2015
Develop Course Online	Fall 2015
Establish Admission Criteria for Proposed Students	Fall 2015
Advertise/Interview/Hire Faculty	Fall 2015
Begin Cohort 1	Spring 2016
Long Range Marketing Plan	Spring 2016
Begin Cohort 2	Fall 2016
Dissemination Plan	Spring/Summer 2017

Implementation Plan

Initial stages of curriculum development will include the key faculty and staff from the College of Humanities, Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences, the College of Science and Mathematics, and the College of Business in consultation with organized veteran growers, such as SemperFi Growers. As depicted above in the Timeline, the Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development Committee will submit appropriate forms (i.e. c-forms) to requisite college curriculum committees and subsequently shepherd them through the senate approval processes beginning in Fall of 2015.

Key personnel and responsibilities will be as follows:

- Bonnie Bade, Ph.D., Chair, Anthropology Department, CHABSS, Co-Director of VOFC
- Gerardo Gonzalez, Ph.D., Psychology Department, CHABSS
- Jill Litschewski, Director, Science and Mathematics, Extended Learning
- Greig Guthey, Ph.D., Geography/Liberal Studies Department, Co-Director of VOFC
- Glen Brodowky, Ph.D., Marketing Department, College of Business Administration
- Faculty Representative, Ph.D., College of Science and Mathematics, Co-Director of VOFC
- Veteran Liaison, Sam Grosso, CSUSM Veteran Alum and SemperFi Co-Director

Project Impact

The Veteran Organic Farming Certificate will be initiated at California State University, San Marcos. As the Certificate Program becomes established, it will become a replicable model for other campuses. The curriculum will receive input from veteran and farming industry representatives on the proposed Farming Industry Advisory Committee and the Veterans Advisory Committee of the Veteran Organic Farming Certificate Council.

We anticipate applying for additional federal (Veteran-specific USDA, Mental Health, Education, Health), state and local funding. We will also reach out to the local and regional farming industry and veteran communities for funding as well as applying to private and corporate foundations. A primary target audience for the VFOC includes post-9/11 veterans with access to the G.I. Bill, which provides up to \$35,000 a year for 36 months to veteran students. The VOFC will generate revenue via course fees, equipment fees, and travel fees associated with the program.

The certificate will benefit the University as a whole due to its interdisciplinary nature – providing another demonstration of true inter-college/department collaboration, as well as the University's goals to participate in the overall CSU-wide support of the Veteran Population. The proposed VOFC program will also allow the opportunity to apply for Veteran-specific grants. A demonstration and training garden will be set up at CSUSM that displays farming techniques, companion planting and water capitation methods to be utilized on vet-led farms around California. An initial start-up funding grant would provide the necessary support for program and curriculum development for this new certificate program.

The certificate will generate a sustainable method for veterans to train each other in farming and business while at the same time improve health and decrease high-risk behaviors associated with PTSD. Veterans will be provided the knowledge and experience to begin their own farms and

businesses. This project will provide education and career pathways that will positively change the course of people's lives, especially those of veterans.

Dissemination Plan

In the second program year, program leaders will develop a plan and a tool kit for other campuses to be able to replicate the Veterans Organic Farming Certificate program. Program results may also be presented at various CSU Commission and state-wide Extended Education Leadership Council meetings. Additionally, CSUSM will present findings and reports at CSU Counterparts events and at meetings for the San Diego Farm Bureau.

Evaluation Plan

The program will be evaluated by the National Latino Research Center, an organization with the history and experience of conducting program evaluation across a variety of educational and business sectors of the community. Furthermore, at the end of each semester, we will obtain student and industry survey data, which will provide measures regarding the value of the program to both the student and industry stakeholder groups. Lastly, the program budget will be tracked and analyzed to ensure that the program is generating a positive flow of revenue to enable future growth.

BUDGET and BUDGET NARRATIVE

Source of Funds	CEE Grant Request	Local Funds (Extended Learning)	Project Total
<i>Salaries</i>			
Project Coordinator	\$6,600		\$6,600
Veteran Liaison	\$3,600		\$3,600
<i>Faculty Stipends</i>			
Faculty Curriculum Co-Development	\$11,250		\$11,250
<i>Travel</i>			
Veteran/Agriculture events	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$7,500
<i>Miscellaneous</i>			
Marketing & Recruiting		\$10,000	\$10,000
Veteran/Agriculture Summit		\$5,000	\$5,000
Equipment	\$20,000		\$18,000
Totals	\$46,450	\$17,500	\$63,950

Budget Narrative*Project Coordinator*

Based on the proposed workload and involvement of the Project Coordinator, a 1 unit release at \$2,200/unit for three semesters, will be included in the budget. The Project Director will coordinate the overall project, be responsible for ensuring that all course objectives are met within one-year timeframe and Chair the Veterans Organic Farming Certificate Advisory Committee.

Veteran Liaison

An amount of \$1,200/semester for three semesters will be paid to a Veteran Liaison who will assist in coordinating the overall project, establish and maintain external relationships with the Veteran Agricultural community and be the Veteran based expert.

Stipends

Monies will be paid to faculty for program development at \$500/unit for 18 units (face-to-face) and \$750 for 3 units (on-line) totaling \$11,250.

Travel

Money will be allocated for local travel to companies within the industry to discuss internships and to various Veteran/Agriculture events including the CSU Agriculture Research Institute, Farmer Veteran Coalition and San Diego Farm Bureau events.

Miscellaneous

- Marketing and Recruiting

Marketing money will be used to develop print materials for the program. Monies will also be used to purchase mailing lists and contact information for local companies to disseminate program information. Monies will also be earmarked to advertise the program in the San Diego Veterans Magazine and other local-area publications.

- Veterans/Agriculture Summit

Monies will be budgeted for the purpose of holding a Veteran/Agriculture Industry Summit. The Summit will bring together university faculty, local-area business/agriculture leaders, Veteran organizations and university administration for the purpose of collaborative development of the Veteran Organic Farming credit certificate curriculum. The Summit meeting will provide the opportunity for community input in the project's development. The Summit meeting will be held in the Fall semester.

Appendix A



January 14, 2015

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing this letter to express the support of the San Diego County Farm Bureau for the development of the Veterans Organic Farming Certificate at California State University San Marcos.

Our organizational mission is to support the needs of farmers and be the voice of our agricultural community and related businesses. San Diego County is ranked as the 19th largest agricultural economy in the nation with 68 percent of the farms between 1-9 acres. It is these small farmers that are the life-blood of the local agricultural economy. It is also an important demographic to note that the average age of farmers in our county, state, and nation is approaching 60. As the returning veteran population increases in San Diego, we hope that the percentage of veteran owned farms throughout the county increases as well and adds to our dynamic farm economy.

The returning veteran population coupled with the need for new farmers has created the development of a national partnership with the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Farmer Veteran Coalition to assist veterans transitioning into agriculture. This partnership can provide services to the returning veterans interested in making agriculture a career.

The San Diego Farm Bureau is excited to see the development of the Veterans Organic Farming Certificate at California State University San Marcos and looks forward to future collaborations to support the veteran population in agriculture.

If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Larson', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Eric Larson
Executive Director



34428 Via Gomez
Capistrano Beach, CA 92624

SemperFi Growers

(760) 445-1421
leifkemp@semperfigrowers

January 15, 2015
Re: CSUSM Veterans Organic Farming Certificate
From: Leif Kemp Founder/CEO SemperFi Growers

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the development of the Veteran Organic Farming Certificate at Extended Learning, California State University, San Marcos.

The CSUSM Veteran Organic Farming Certificate proposal is a response to the specific needs of post-9/11 veterans to address health (physical and mental), re-entry, and workforce/occupational issues in the context of a cohort of veteran colleagues and specially designed course work. The certificate will be a two-year (6 semesters), part-time, for credit program consisting of six courses plus an internship.

We are happy to see involvement from California State University, San Marcos in Veteran and Farming communities. I look forward to working with the planning committee that will contribute to the creation of the curriculum and the program's implementation, marketing, and recruitment of participants.

According to the Bob Woodruff Foundation, in studies of Post 9/11 veterans:

- **-92% report that serving their community is important to them**
- **-While still serving on active duty, 70% felt motivated to volunteer in their communities**
- **-of all community based issues, 95% wanted to serve wounded veterans**

At SemperFi Growers, our mission is to equip veterans in the fundamentals of High-performance Urban Agriculture. We believe that veterans who will achieve this certificate will have the skills to contribute to our organization, and assist our business achieve its goal of utilizing veteran leadership to affect ultimate change in their communities through healthy, nutritious fruits and vegetables. As a growing sector in North San Diego County, organic farming is developing into a major employer and we believe there are no better candidates for entrepreneurship in the agricultural environment than the hard-working men, and women of the United States Armed Forces.

We look forward to participating in this worthy program and working with our fellow Veterans.

Thank you,

Semper fi!

Leif Kemp
Founder/CEO
SemperFi Growers