

## BUDGET PROPOSAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Department Name: Center for Student Involvement

Create Date: 01/14/2026

Due Date: 02/06/2026

Submitter Name: Clare Tupper

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Department Head Approval:

Department Head: Conor Leary

Requested Amount: **\$80,339**

## Departmental Information

### STUDENT UTILIZATION

The Giving Garden is asking for continued funding that will allow us to grow food for students, further partner with faculty in integrating the Giving Garden in classes, and connect with the UW Tacoma community through educational and service-oriented events.

The Giving Garden is requesting funds to continue the employment for one of two current student positions with the majority of our remaining 3% increase budget. Continued employment through the summer quarter will provide consistent income for our student

The Giving Garden Coordinator budget has been increased by 3% to account for merit increases. Continued funds for this position allows the program to expand and grow to increase student access to food, greenspace, and educational opportunities

The Giving Garden is also requesting funds for our garden planner that improves our efficiency, core material for starting our plants, and donation containers. These items ensure our program may continue providing fresh produce to our students, as is our main purpose.

### CORE VALUES/MISSION ALIGNMENT

#### Goal 1: Students:

- Remove institutional barriers to student progress.
- Ensure every student has opportunities to engage in high impact practices.

The impact of food insecurity on a student's education is well documented. The Giving Garden was created in part to support the well-being of students by providing them with fresh produce and access to green space on campus. As our garden grows, we provide more food and an inviting/comforting environment for students to engage with food systems and nature.

Beyond supporting food security for our students, the Giving Garden acts as a living classroom for students to engage with their food systems and an access point to a diverse selection of plants in a downtown setting. The garden has also proven to be an effective hands-on tool for research projects and capstones for Engineer students and has often been utilized in documentary-based class work.

#### Goal 2: Communities: Create and strengthen entry points for the community to partner with UW Tacoma.

The Giving Garden Coordinator is a recurring staff member of our sustainability committee; the garden is involved in the planning and implementation of events that incorporate the community and community establishments such as our annual Earth Day Celebration. The garden is also open to all community members during our hours of operation and volunteer opportunities.

During Summer months when there is less need for our harvest on campus, we partner with local shelters and food banks to ensure every bit of our crop is being utilized. In 2025 we donated 157lbs of produce the Nourish Mobile Food Bank

The Giving Garden is committed to collaborating with local organizations to enhance program opportunities for both our students and local communities. The following is a list of local organization affiliations from the past few years: Emergency Food Network, Harvest Pierce County, UWTMSL program, Grit City Carnivore Project, City of Tacoma's Urban Green, Tacoma Tree Foundation, Beacon Youth Shelter, The Puyallup Tribe of Indians Language Department, local high schools, Zeolite Composites LLC, and the Boys and Girls Club

### **Increase Community Collaboration:**

In 2025 we engaged with an additional 2 organizations than 2024 while retaining collaboration with two other organizations

See supplemental (2025 Annual Report) for some examples

Increase Volunteer Participation. Particularly by students

This year we have made a more intentional approach to hour volunteer opportunities. By co-hosting all our events with Husky Volunteers on Dubnet, students are more informed about the events and are easily able to track their hours for the Husky Volunteer Medallion program. To show our appreciation to our volunteers, now when they track their hours through Husky Volunteers, they can earn Giving Garden specific swag. We no longer just give our swag away during tabling events.

In the past, we have chosen our volunteer hours based solely on the Garden Assistant's availability for the quarter but have received many comments from students wanting to attend but the hours not fitting their schedules. To help remedy this, we will be posting a survey asking students what times work before each new quarter. The 2026 Winter quarter was the first time we did this and were able to schedule one of our weekly events to fit a regular volunteers' availability!

### **Increase Harvest**

During the 2025 calendar year we were able to stay within a similar range of production as the last few years even with a significant decrease in staffing. We have proudly donated 394lbs to the Pantry and Nourish Mobile Food Bank. In addition to tacking pounds, we have begun calculating the amount of servings we donate. This year we donated 2,283 servings in total. See our 2025 Annual Report for more details.

This year we have a day-by-day calendar for the garden with a matching layout. This organization will help the entire Giving Garden team have clear objectives and vision of how to utilize our space the most efficiently.

### **Enhance the Accessibility/Beauty of the Garden**

We have received a grant from Tacoma Gardeners Club to replace 5 raised garden beds. Broken and deteriorating beds are not pleasant to look at and become less used. Replacing the bed will make the space look cleaner and taken care of. This is important to ensure the space stays a welcoming green space for our community. The new beds will also be 4 inches taller than previous beds, making them easier to access

Tacoma's Gray's Lumber is also matching our grant amount in lumber for an additional 5 beds. With the help from SAF-C Fall Special Allocations, we will be able to replace 15 beds in total!

## STUDENT UTILIZATION (COMPARISON OVER PAST 2 YEARS)

### Student Utilization in 2023:

- 407lbs donated to the Pantry and local youth shelter nearly reaching our record of 411lbs.
- Hosted a volunteer event each quarter including our Earth Day event where we earned a Sustainability Impact Award for our community painted mural and participation in Day of Caring
- Students often use the garden as a topic for assignments or a field area for research.
- 217 volunteer visits (We did not record unduplicated students at this time)
- Roughly 35 attendees at Welcome Days event
- 351 volunteer labor hours from events and open volunteer hours

### Student Utilization in 2024:

- 337lbs donated to the Pantry, Nourish Mobile Food Bank, and directly to student volunteers. 451.5lbs total including donations made to local youth shelter (see supplemental document)

### **Volunteers (including reoccurring)**

- Students: 85 participants, 171 volunteer hours
- Community members: 29 participants, 51 volunteer hours
- Weekly volunteer hours: 82 participants, 160 volunteer hours
- Special events: 32 participants, 60 volunteer hours

### **Event (volunteer/social) student attendees (non-reoccurring) FROM AUGUST 2024 when we started using DUBNET**

- 59 students
- 53 undergraduate
- 6 Graduate

### **Four classes utilized the Giving Garden for class projects and informational sessions (see 2024 Annual Report)**

### Student Utilization in 2025:

**Donations:** 394lbs/ 2,283 servings donated to the Pantry or Nourish Mobile Food Bank

### **Volunteers**

- 29 individual students
- 22 Undergraduate
- 7 Graduate
- 122 total visits (including reoccurring students and community members)
- 259.5 volunteer hours (students ONLY)
- 198.5 weekly volunteer hours
- 61 special events

### **Events (Non-Volunteer)**

- Earth Day Celebration (co-hosted)
- SAB Time capsule Event
- Welcome Days Event
- 70 Check-ins

### **Academic**

- One research credit
- One capstone
- Three class visits

**COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK & IMPROVEMENTS**

Using the surveys conducted with The Pantry, we receive feedback on which fruits and vegetables students will benefit the most from.

These surveys also provide us with information regarding which culturally significant foods are the most sought after at The Pantry and whether the Giving Garden can provide those foods.

To track students' benefit we document volunteer hours, event attendance, and amount donated to The Pantry as a means of measuring engagement.

Based on participation numbers in previous years, we are trying to focus winter quarter volunteer hours on infrastructure projects to increase the level students can engage with the garden when there is limited crops.

Based on feedback from professors we have engaged with we are also focusing on outreach to faculty to increase awareness of the garden and collaborative opportunities

Based on feedback from students we will be including a survey for students to inform us of their availability for volunteer hours each quarter to better match the schedules of students who want to be involved.

**SERVICE BENEFITS TO STUDENTS**

According to UW Tacoma Faculty Dr. Christine Stevens who has been conducting research on food insecurity on our campus since 2018, as of 2021, 48% of uw students met low food security, greatly surpassing the national average numbers of one out of three university students. These statistics align with national studies (Goldrick-Rab, Sara, et al. Still Hungry and Homeless in College. Wisconsin Hope Lab. 2018) on food insecurity and show a need to assist our students.

The Giving Garden is already addressing this need by providing fresh produce to The Pantry. Fresh food and produce are a big request of students accessing The Pantry, according to their surveys. In 2025 the garden donated 394lbs/ 2,283 servings to the Pantry and Nourish Mobile Food Bank. Continued student employment, increased numbers of volunteers, and with our greenhouse to be heated next year, we expect those numbers to continue to climb.

The immediate benefit to students participating in the Giving Garden is access to fresh, nutritious food that they grow and a sense of service in supporting their fellow students. Beyond that, they have an outlet to be in nature and interact with the natural world without having to leave campus. Exposure to nature and fresh air have been shown to reduce stress and anxiety which is critical for busy students trying to balance their studies, work, and life. (Capaldi C, Dopko RL, Zelenski J. Frontiers in Psychology. 2014).

The Giving Garden also starts a career of community leadership with students, helping them learn about food security, equity, and the possibilities of growing your own food, even in an urban environment. The Giving Garden's harvests benefit every student who uses The Pantry and is exposed to fresh produce. Without ever attending an event or visiting the garden itself, students are impacted by what we do. The garden also provides opportunities for students to work on campus in a leadership capacity while aligning them within their community. It allows the students to engage in a professional setting while giving them tools and connections for their future. Courses that utilize the Giving Garden grounds also give an opportunity for students to step foot outside of the classroom, allowing them to learn through a hands-on approach while connecting amongst their peers and building their community. The garden is becoming more and more intertwined with the campus through its partnerships with The Pantry, the CSI, faculty and their curriculum, and Facilities Services. Access is a core value of the University of Washington Tacoma and the Giving Garden serves this value through access to food, education, community, green space, and student growth.

**Staff Budget Requests**

Category	Details	Amount Requested
Classified Staff <sup>2</sup>	<b>Giving Garden Coordinator</b> E001	
	Classified Staff Wages:	<b>\$59,740</b>
	Fringe @ 32.5%:	<b>\$19,416</b>
Student Staff <sup>3</sup>	<b>Giving Garden Student Assistant 1</b> E002	
	Student Staff Wages:	<b>\$857</b>
	Fringe @ 16.2%:	<b>\$139</b>
PERSONNEL TOTAL:		<b>\$80,151</b>

## Other Budget Requests

Category	Details	Amount Requested
Contracted Services	Seedtime garden planner annual subscription S001	\$84
Non-Food Supplies & Materials	3-Pack OMRI Cetified Compressed Brick 5KG / 11LB / 2.5 CF Organic Coconut coir Improves soil structure S002	\$74
	Pulp Fiber Produce Container (Medium) X2 S003	\$30
SUPPLIMENTAL TOTAL:		\$188

PERSONNEL TOTAL:	\$80,151
SUPPLEMENTAL TOTAL:	\$188
<b>COMPLETE PROPOSAL TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$80,339</b>

## Supplemental Documents



### 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Detailed report of program events, collaborations, projects, and general services. Data points for harvests and student engagement



### STUDENT EMPLOYEE TESTIMONY

Testimony of low staffing impacts on student employees and Giving Garden program



### FACULTY TESTIMONY

Capstone Faculty, Mark Pagano, letter of support