


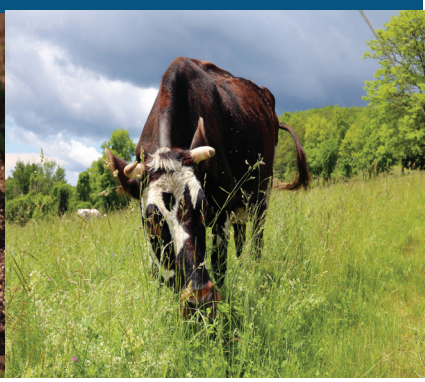

Linking Food and Agriculture Research to Policy: A University of California Workshop




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Prepared by the Policy Subcommittee of the Global Food Initiative:

Berkeley Food Institute, UC Berkeley
World Food Center, UC Davis
Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies, UC San Francisco

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A workshop titled **"Leveraging Research for Food and Agriculture Policy"** was held in July 2015 in Oakland, California. Hosted by the University of California's Global Food Initiative Policy Subcommittee, it achieved three main purposes:

1. Facilitated exchange of information between UC faculty/staff about ways in which research is used to effectively influence or inform policy in food and agriculture systems;
2. Provided training and guidance about approaches, capacities, and tools to connect and communicate research to policymakers; and
3. Identified examples, as well as opportunities and resources for UC researchers' involvement in policy, and collaboration in these efforts.

"As employees of a public university, UC researchers have a responsibility, not just an option, to engage in current public policy issues and help solve real problems," said State Senator Bill Monning in the morning's keynote address. Working closely and creatively with non-governmental and grassroots partners from the start of research projects is key to successful policy engagement, and has the following benefits:

- Increases the relevance of research to social and policy issues, by providing researchers with a deeper understanding of the stakeholders their research will impact;
- Brings valuable expertise and resources from other organizations to help communicate the policy implications;
- Demonstrates to policymakers the scope of implications from multiple stakeholders' perspectives.

While there are rules governing UC employees' engagement in policy advocacy, the UC Government affairs staff and legal offices can provide helpful guidance to faculty and staff about how to effectively (and legally) be involved in policy-related research and outreach.

- Building relationships between researchers and policymakers takes patience and commitment. Researchers are offered these tips when communicating with policymakers:
  a. Provide a simple clear message, and a short written summary of key points;
  b. State clear requests and/or recommendations (if relevant);
  c. Involve stakeholders to sustain engagement with policy makers.
- Interacting with the media can enable researchers to widely disseminate research results and can be a powerful tool, if used effectively, to have significant policy implications.
- According to experts who attended the workshop, UC's academic evaluation and incentive processes need to be reformed to allow policy-relevant research to be rewarded and valued equally with academic publications, as part of overall achievement evaluations.
- More training events and opportunities for exchange are needed in the University of California system to provide guidance about effective practices to link research with policy, share lessons about effective engagement in policy issues, and to facilitate interaction between researchers and policymakers.

INTRODUCTION

"The distinctive mission of the University is to serve society as a center of higher learning, providing long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge."

With the above mission in mind, on July 20, 2015, more than 70 food, agriculture, and public health researchers and administrators of the University of California convened at the UC Office of the President for a workshop titled "Leveraging Research for Food and Agriculture Policy." The event was organized by UC Global Food Initiative Policy Subcommittee members from the UC Berkeley Food Institute, the UC Davis World Food Center, the UC San Francisco Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies, UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the UC Berkeley School of Public Health Advocacy Initiative. The meeting showcased successful cases in which research was used effectively in policymaking, and researchers were given the opportunity to share best practices among themselves. The day incorporated training about methods to link research and policy, and featured keynote speeches from California Senator Bill Monning and U.S. Congressman Mark DeSaulnier. UC Legal Counsel and Government Relations representatives also provided technical guidance to researchers on effective means of policy engagement.

In preparation for the workshop, the Policy Subcommittee compiled a set of case studies of UC research impacting food and agriculture policy at the local, state, federal, and international levels. Practical tips for future projects are included, as are lessons and examples from fields as diverse as urban planning, citrus breeding, water conservation, and school lunch. Those case studies are available for download here: http://www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/_files/leveraging-research-for-food-and-agriculture-policy.pdf

The following sections of this report are divided into key themes and lessons that emerged from the workshop, with attention given to topics of wide concern and interest. We hope that this provides a spark for conversation and useful information to all, whether you are a researcher, student, policymaker, or citizen.

UC Global Food Initiative Policy Subcommittee Members Featured: (left to right) Laura Schmidt, Josette Lewis, Nina F. Ichikawa, Laurie True, Ann Thrupp, Harry Snyder

IMPORTANCE OF POLICY ENGAGEMENT

"All of your training – all that you do – is to help improve the human condition. It is your responsibility to engage with policy."

State Senator Bill Monning, 17th District

Involving researchers in the design of food and agriculture policies moves government towards more effective, evidence-based solutions. Too often, research that is relevant to the real-world problems remains in the ivory tower. Yet with encouragement and training, researchers can be productive partners in the policymaking process. Echoing the importance of engagement, Senator Monning implored researchers in his opening comments: "Politics is the art of the possible. It is people convening to use government to improve our quality of life, to protect us."

CA State Senator Bill Monning, 17th District

UC Davis Dean of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Helene Dillard reflected that researchers have the unique ability to approach seemingly impossible questions, and to further our understanding of complex issues. Simply put, the discovery of new research results is limited in potential without the utilization of that research.

Other researchers who spoke at the workshop concurred that linking their research with policymakers and policy processes is meaningful for several reasons, including the recognition that their research can make a positive difference in society and in addressing difficult policy challenges related to food and agriculture. Some noted personal and professional satisfaction in knowing that their work can play a useful role in society and potentially in policy change. As examples:

Asa Bradman, PhD
Associate Director, Center for Environmental Research & Children's Health, UC Berkeley

- Asa Bradman of UC Berkeley described the application of scientific research in revealing health risks associated with pesticide exposure, which led to changes in pesticide regulations and application practices that can help protect vulnerable children and families exposed to pesticides.
- Louise Jackson of UC Davis described how her research on carbon sequestration and storage in farmland helped shape policymaking decisions concerning approaches to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.
- Patricia Crawford of UCANR and the Nutrition Policy Institute described her work with the California Department of Education to identify the financial implications of stopping the sale of soda, chips, and other competitive foods; other nutrition research by Crawford helped lead to policy changes in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.

University of California's Unique Perspective

"The distinctive mission of the University is to serve society as a center of higher learning, providing long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge. That obligation, more specifically, includes undergraduate ***education****, graduate and professional education,* ***research****, and other kinds of* ***public service****, which are shaped and bounded by the central pervasive mission of discovering and advancing knowledge."*

Mission Statement from the University of California
Academic Plan, 1974-1978

One of the key pillars of a public university is its responsibility, socially and fiscally, to taxpayers. Public university research is ultimately accountable to the taxpayers that support it. As UC Davis Civil and Environmental Engineering Professor Dr. Jay Lund expressed, "the University of California is great. Great things have great problems, and great problems make great research." Public university researchers have a unique role to play in policy, and a rare chance to enter the political arena and reshape the conversation. The strains of roadblocks, stalled conversations, and ideological impasses that can be related to the policy process are reduced when an academic brings more objective, research-based information to the conversation.

> *"As public university researchers, we provide an educational and scientific middle ground for policy discussions and policy-making."*
>
> Jay Lund
> Center for Watershed Sciences, UC Davis

Research from public universities is a vital resource to help policymakers understand and address complex social problems and develop innovative policy solutions. Good research is helpful – if not essential – in dealing with challenges in food and agriculture systems. Food systems intersect with some of the most urgent environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues of our time, and multidisciplinary knowledge is particularly critical in developing effective public responses.

Jay Lund, PhD
Director, Center for Watershed Sciences, UC Davis

WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN THE POLICY PROCESS

One recurrent theme throughout the workshop was that a key to successful policy applications of research is stakeholder engagement. Involving the community and other key stakeholders is vital at the start of the research in order to form strong partnerships and ensure research relevance to social and political issues in food systems. Dr. Laura Schmidt from the Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies at UC San Francisco presented a case study about the San Francisco Ballot Measure E, the "City of San Francisco Sugary Drink Tax." The case study focused on the San Francisco Health Improvement Partnership, a multi-sector partnership that included UC San Francisco, and their efforts to implement a soda tax. Schmidt addressed the various challenges the partnership faced, and how their group handled those obstacles. In the end, while the ballot measure failed, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed legislation that, for the first time in America, will place warning labels on sugary beverage advertising within city limits. In her presentation, she emphasized the importance of collaborating with the community.

Laura Schmidt, PhD
Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies , UC San Francisco

> *"We gave the community trust, so we were no longer the prestigious, foreboding, medical university, but rather a community partner."*
>
> Laura Schmidt
> Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies
> UC San Francisco

Several of the speakers mentioned that picking a research topic that has policy or social relevance is important when beginning a project or study. It is significantly easier to form relationships with stakeholders if the research is relevant to current social, economic and political concerns. To be more effective, researchers can also find organizations that can help communicate the policy implications of their research.

Patricia Crawford, PhD, RD
Senior Director of Research, University of California Nutrition Policy Institute

Dr. Patricia Crawford and Dr. Lorrene Ritchie recommended finding a center or institute with which to partner. Crawford worked with her team at the Atkins Center for Weight and Health at UC Berkeley, along with other partners, to determine the effects of limiting competitive (non-school lunch or breakfast) food and beverages from K-12 schools. Partly as a result of her team's research, California became the first state in the nation to pass legislation to limit the sales of competitive foods and beverages.

Both researchers also collaborated with California Food Policy Advocates and the Samuels Center for Public Health Research and Evaluation to work on Assembly Bill (AB) 2084, the most comprehensive of any state laws on childcare beverages.

In this case, working with outside collaborators enabled the researchers to share research data among themselves and communicate their findings to policymakers.

WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN THE POLICY PROCESS

Louise Jackson, PhD
Specialist, UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Professor, UC Davis

Cultivating strong partnerships is just as necessary at the conclusion of a research project. Dillard emphasized that keeping partners involved when research results unfold is critical and respectful. Communication with stakeholders throughout the research project can reduce the risk of surprises to stakeholders, and maintain positive two-way relationships that can lead to future partnership.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can also help researchers get engaged directly in the policy arena. Dr. Louise Jackson from UC Davis was the principal investigator on a study to determine how climate change will affect agriculture in Yolo County, CA. This study provided an evidentiary base for Senate Bill (SB) 367, which would provide financial incentives for agricultural investment in measures to adapt to climate change and also reduce greenhouse gas emissions or improve carbon sequestration. Her research team partnered with an NGO, which she describes as "absolutely critical." She discussed how cooperating with an NGO pushed her to make "work in progress" presentations, and keep the community in the loop.

Building community trust is a long process. Dr. Asa Bradman from the Center for Environmental Research and Children's Health (CERCH) at UC Berkeley presented his work on the Center for the Health Assessment of Mothers and Children of Salinas. One of the first steps Bradman took was creating a Community Advisory Board that included a scientific advisory board, a grower's council, a farmworker council, and a youth community council. This ensured that the community was heard. To build trust with his partners, he provided them with unpublished reports along the way; this kept them in the loop, and avoided shock when the reports were published.

Other workshop speakers suggested giving attention to businesses and trade groups as potential stakeholders in research efforts. Congressman DeSaulnier spoke about the changing food culture in California and beyond, informed by his time as a restaurateur and business owner in the Bay Area. He urged researchers to leverage interest in the business community on the topics of food and farming to gain greater attention to research results.

In general, long-term involvement of both researchers and community is possible if founded on a basis of mutual commitment. The way to achieve long-term sustainability, according to Dr. Laura Schmidt, is "integrating, intertwining the 'bottom-up' stakeholder engagement with the 'top-down' policy."

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLICYMAKERS

Building relationships directly with policymakers can take two directions: 1) Researchers may communicate findings to inform policymakers, and/or 2) Policymakers may approach researchers to express their priorities or to seek information. Dr. Lindsay Allen, the Center Director of the USDA-Agricultural Research Service Western Human Nutrition Research Center, made this distinction: "It is up to you [the researcher] to strike the balance between being influenced by them versus educating them, and getting the job done."

Andrew Bindman, MD
Professor, UC San Francisco School of Medicine

Dr. Andrew Bindman from the UC San Francisco Medical School shared his lessons from extensive work in health policy and teaching doctors and medical students how to engage with policymakers. Prior to the event, he shared with participants the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Connect Resource Manual that takes an even deeper look into building good relationships with policymakers. Below is a summary of his guidelines and suggestions for researchers to communicate with policymakers.

1. *Figure Out Who to Talk To:*

The first step is to figure out where the research issue can be addressed within the framework of government. That means figuring out what level of government (local, state or national), what branch of government (legislative or executive), and what legislative committee of jurisdiction. Determining these things will help ensure that the research is seen by the appropriate entities.

2. *Engaging with Staff Representatives*

More often than not, the first meeting will be with a staff representative rather than an elected official. It is important to note that this is not a slight. Staff representatives have more time to devote, and tend to have more in-depth knowledge of issues. They provide the necessary bridge between all disciplines.

> *"Our staff is knowledgeable, informed, and can provide you and 'us' the best way to move forward. We take notice of who treats our staff well, and who does not. Those who do get meetings."*
>
> *State Senator Bill Monning, 17th District*

3. *Do Your Homework*

It is important to identify the political context for action. This means understanding the current election cycle (including pending legislation and laws), and most importantly, knowing policymakers' voting history with the issue. This will help determine how to frame the pitch.

4. *Be Clear about Who You Represent*

In the meeting, make sure it is clear what entity the researcher represents. Entities can include private interests, community-based groups, professional organizations, and universities. Also make sure that the entity the researcher claims to represent knows about it ahead of time.

5. *Communicate Effectively*

Anticipate receiving 15-30 minutes for the meeting. With this in mind, keep messages very simple. Thank the policymaker for their historical efforts on the issue. Then jump into the issue by limiting summarization to three specific points. Weaving the points into a story can also be very helpful, especially if it is relevant to the policymaker's constituents. Practicing beforehand makes this process easier.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLICYMAKERS

6. *State What You Are Asking For*

Perhaps the most important aspect is making sure to clearly state "the ask." It is easy to get consumed by the research and backstory, but ultimately the purpose of the meeting is to ask the elected official for something actionable. Make sure the ask is reasonable and specific. Examples of some asks may include letters of support, participation in a meeting, a hearing or investigation, support for pending legislation, and drafting of new legislation.

7. *Leave Something Behind*

It is important to make sure to leave something behind so that the issue stays on the radar. Leave behind a one page bullet pointed summary that includes three main points, perspectives of key stakeholders, the ask, contact details, and lots of white space.

8. *Commit to a Relationship*

Building trust and credibility over the issue takes time and effort. It is helpful to act more as a general resource on than simply a promoter of a given issue. Make sure to be available when called upon, and make sure to follow through on action items.

9. *Hearings*

There may come a time when researchers are called upon to present at a hearing. This will help increase visibility for the issue because researchers will be able to engage with policymakers, stakeholders, press, and the public simultaneously. Keep in mind that presenters will be a witness either for the majority or minority party; tailor the testimony accordingly. Keep it simple in written and oral testimony and clearly state your ask.

10. *Make a Sustained Effort over Time*

Political action takes time and patience. Stay prepared for swings in political power and changes in representatives over time. Utilize stakeholders to build consensus and political pressure for the issue.

In his keynote presentation, Congressman DeSaulnier commented that university-based research has a lot of value to translate into policy. A good example of the successful relationship between research institutions and policymakers is the long-standing agreement between University of California and state government, which declares the University of California to be the research arm of the state's three-tier public higher education system (which includes the California State University and the California Community Colleges systems), as set forth by the California Master Plan for Higher Education. The Master Plan (adopted by the state in 1960) designates UC as the primary state-supported academic research institution. Using that agreement effectively will ensure that evidence-based approaches will form the basis of policy decisions. That said, the contracting process has to work for both the government and the university. Some professors at the workshop were working to expedite the contracting process so that it encourages productive and mutually beneficial partnerships with state agencies.

U.S. Congressman Mark DeSaulnier, 11th District

PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Credentials from a public university inspire trust and respect, and that trust and respect depends on the university's role as a public institution. University of California policies help guide faculty and staff to engage in policy outreach consistent with the university's public role.

Ellen Auriti, JD
Senior Counsel, UC Office of the President

To assist and guide faculty in this area, each campus has an office of Government Affairs, well-equipped both to help navigate campus policy and to strengthen connections to policymakers. Michelle Moskowitz, Director of Advocacy and Institutional Relations at UC Berkeley's Office of Government Affairs, recommended reaching out early when entering the political arena, regardless of the progress of the research. Government Relations Offices at all campuses have worked to cultivate strong relationships with policymakers over the years, and they often have the connections or knowledge to connect researchers to the right policymaker.

For those who are interested or have already begun working with community stakeholders and/or policymakers, outlined below are rules and guidelines for University of California researchers provided by Ellen Auriti, Senior Counsel at UC Office of the President:

As a 501(c)(3) Charity and State Agency:

i. UC may not endorse, oppose, or contribute to candidates.
ii. UC may not advocate on measures that qualified for the ballot.
iii. UC is allowed to engage in direct and grassroots legislative lobbying, as long as it remains an insubstantial (~5%) part of UC's activities.
iv. UC is allowed to host non-partisan activities (debates, voter registration drives) if it is consistent with the tax-exempt purpose.

Individual Role vs. University Role:

i. Individual employees wishing to engage in private political activities have a constitutional right to as long as they do so:
    a. On their own time.
    b. Without using public/UC resources.
    c. Keep records when necessary (use of vacation, reimbursements to UC if non-incidental use of resources).
ii. Individuals' use of the UC Title: Employees may endorse a ballot measure or write an op-ed in his or her private capacity and identify themselves by university title as long as they use an express disclaimer of university endorsement. In this situation, researchers may NOT use university letterhead as that is a use of university resources.
    a. Example: "Title for identification purposes only; this endorsement is made in a personal capacity and does not represent the views of UC."

Prohibited Activities Using UC Resources:

i. Production of buttons, bumper stickers, speeches, or media spots urging yes/no votes on ballot initiatives.
ii.Disseminate ballot initiative advocacy materials.
iii.Preference given to campaign-related requests to use facilities.

PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Potentially Impermissible Activities:

i. Special UC mailing (or web posting) close to election:

a. "Proposition xyz will promote student health and help stamp out obesity. Your support in November is crucial."

ii. UC social media (Facebook) campaign:

a. "A vote for Prop ABC is a vote against Big Tobacco."

iii. UC web page:

a. "Remember to vote on Prop XYZ," and including the link only to the Pro XYZ campaign, or two links of starkly different quality.

At the workshop, there were questions concerning the extra influence researchers funded through private interests had on the policy process, particularly if those funding sources were not disclosed. Auriti's response was as follows: While private research funding does have influence, university researchers without private funding can still influence the policy process by leveraging their Government Relations Office.

Knowing the rules is meant to empower, not discourage researchers from engaging with key social issues. With awareness of existing parameters, and constant engagement with local Government Relations Offices, research can have significant impact. These rules help protect the impartiality of research and ensure that credentials are respected. Questions about different forms of engagement can be answered by local Government Relations Offices.

Featured (left to right): UC Davis College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Dean Helene Dillard, Ellen Auriti from UC Office of the President, and Michelle Moskowitz from UC Berkeley Government Relations.

INTERACTING WITH THE MEDIA

Helene Dillard, PhD
Dean, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, UC Davis

Colloquially, the media is often referred to as the fourth branch of government because of the unique power it has in society. Lund points out "it is key to really think about how you are going to communicate your findings before you start research." Too many researchers stop at publication. Lund emphasized, "After you release the report, you have to do many media inquiries; you are only halfway through when you publish a report." Campus media relations can be great resources to help with media inquiries.

Dillard also made an important note in her presentation. If the published research has the potential for controversy, it is always good to inform the dean and University Communications before the publication goes out. Provide the following information to them: talking points, rationale, purpose of the study, and implications of the data. That will ensure that when asked for responses to the publication, the dean and University Communications can have answers ready, and act as supporters of the research.

Dillard also recommended starting a blog to disseminate the research as it is going through the various phases. Blogs can be especially helpful considering the rapidly evolving media landscape. Blogs allow researchers the chance to write in their own words and avoid misquotes or misrepresentations.

As many researchers at the workshop echoed, when engaging with the media, it is likely that there will be a few times where the research or the researcher will be misrepresented. Working with University Communications and Media Relations can help avoid issues like this. The media is a powerful tool, and using it effectively can amplify scholarly work in the policy arena.

RAISING THE VALUE OF POLICY ENGAGEMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY REWARD STRUCTURE

The Academic Personnel Manual of the University of California cites three criteria for appointment and advancement for university professors:

1. International and National recognition of distinguished scholarship including published seminal research.

2. Exceptional ability and desire to teach, stimulate, and inspire students of all levels including undergraduate, graduate and professional courses.

3. Interests and accomplishments that extend beyond academia and demonstration of willingness to serve the university beyond the home campus.

Dennis Pendleton, PhD
Executive Advisor to the Provost, UC Davis

Although all three of these criteria are mentioned in the manual, speakers and other participants in the workshop recognize that the third item related to public service is generally given less attention in the UC structures for tenure reviews and performance evaluations.

RAISING THE VALUE OF POLICY ENGAGEMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY REWARD STRUCTURE

Featured: (Left to Right) Dennis Pendleton from UC Davis and Henry Brady, Dean of the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley

For example, Dean Henry Brady from the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley pointed out that the reward structure currently gives too little "credit" to research that is translated or utilized effectively in policy, and tends to discourage faculty members from engaging in research that has policy and practical relevance. Dr. Dennis Pendleton from UC Davis pointed out similar patterns and problems with the lack of recognition of research that involves community engagement and/or participatory approaches.

These speakers and others have called for changes in the university reward system. Changes are needed to give more or equal value to the public service aspects of research; researchers who are engaged effectively in policy processes and/or community service oriented work should be rewarded for the important roles they are playing in society.

Related to this need, Pendleton is working with the UC Davis administration in a project to analyze the reward structures and other issues related to "community engaged" research, which includes consideration of linkages between research and policy processes. Although the conclusion of that UC Davis study and the recommendations are not yet complete, this is an important effort to recognize the significance of research that is aimed to inform or affect social and policy change. Pendleton expressed hope that the findings can be useful to other universities as well as to UC Davis.

Brady also spoke about balancing the professional costs associated with working in policy. He acknowledged how his own work on voter enfranchisement came at the consequence of writing fewer publications. This may be the case within the current framework. However, Brady left researchers with a poignant parting thought:

> *"You will face professional costs, but those professional costs are outweighed by the knowledge that you might actually make a difference in the world – and isn't that what its all about?"*
>
> Henry Brady
> Dean, Goldman School of Public Policy
> UC Berkeley