

Gabriel R. Angulo

Weekly Journal: 6

I love to eat! However, I often fail to recognize or consider the process in which my food has been through. We spent this past week in Seattle and focused on understanding food systems. By working with faculty member Branden Born, who is an urban planner and food systems expert, we went on “food tours” to a rural working farm, a sustainably managed food distribution center, and key sites of urban agriculture to learn how the city has made a healthy, local, sustainable food system a priority.

To start off the week, we went to the District Market, which is the overpriced market located outside the dorm building that we all visit. We there met the manager who explained how the market fits into the food system. Moreover, we visited another market called Town and Country market and met with Tony Donofrio, who is the Sustainability Director. Tony noted the methods he implements in order to create a more sustainable market and the ideas he plans for the future. However, I noticed that the store was also overpriced and reached out for a crowd that was more economically enabled to purchase organic goods. From there, we proceeded to Jubilee Farm and learned about the local farm and their production process, which reached out towards the closer community.

We visited Seward Park and met with Jeff Thomas, who is a Muckleshoot tribal member. He described the Waterlines Map project and the historic significance of the region to Native American food systems. We then visited the Muckleshoot fish processing facility, which is contaminated due to the industrial presence. Regardless, there are still many people fishing contaminated fish and many are being sold without knowing their conditions.

We were able to visit one of Seattle’s food banks and met with the Volunteer Coordinator of the location. I was impressed by the genuine workers present and the creativity that had been imposed in the location. Many people in need of more nourishment visit the food bank and are assisted greatly! The food bank is also starting a rooftop garden, which impressed me a lot. We visited several urban gardens throughout the city and used them as a tool for environmental conservation and equity. I enjoy gardening and was really impressed by the beautiful and nourishing gardens. I noticed that the gardens that were present in the areas with higher income often focused on aesthetic values and the beauty of the garden. However, I noticed in areas of low income people often used up every potential space and emphasized their volume capacity with fruits and vegetables. These gardens are a great way to help families sustain a garden when they are not able to do so elsewhere. Additionally, we visited the Environmental Coalition of Southern Seattle (ECOSS), which focuses on empowering communities to live sustainably.

Having worked in the grape fields, I am able to vision a particular process of a food system. A food system is not simply the start of a seed onto the final fruit, but entails the wide scope of labor methods and also the protection of the workers. When I eat a fruit, I imagine the history that went behind it and the possibility of a mistreated farmworker. Next week we will travel to Eastern Washington and will have the opportunity to interact with farmworkers in the fields. My admiration towards them is endless, whether it is back at home or here in Washington!