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CSU Board of Trustees Approves State-wide Sustainable Food Policy

\$20+ million to be devoted annually to local, sustainable farms and food businesses

Long Beach, CA – As the state of California struggles with record droughts and wildfires, today the California State University Board of Trustees, including Governor Jerry Brown, approved a long-awaited sustainable food policy will govern the more than \$100 million spent on food across the 23-campus system. Under the new policy, each campus will have until 2020 to ensure that at least 20% of all food spending goes to farms and food businesses that meet Real Food Challenge—a national student group advocating for just food systems—guidelines: local and community-based, fair, ecologically sound, and/or humane.

“The sustainable food service goal in the university policy demonstrates the power of student participation,” said Michael Clemson, Associate Energy Analyst at the California State University Chancellor’s office. “Trustees supported student leadership on this issue and we at the CSU Chancellor’s Office are excited to continue working with the Real Food Challenge.”

The sustainable food policy has been in the works for more than a year, and was adopted as part of a wider sustainability policy, which also includes sections on energy, water, buildings and transportation.

The food section of the policy responds directly to the advocacy of a student campaign, “Real Food for CSUs.” In advance of the May 21 vote, the group gathered petition signatures from more than 1,000 supporters across the state, coordinated actions on 8 CSU campuses and won endorsements from the Cal State Student Association and the California Student Sustainability Coalition. The group has given testimony at all five Board meetings this year.

“This is more than just a passing of a policy. Today the CSU Board is answering a call to change from students, faculty, and community members alike, all across the state of California,” comments Kristin Ouimette, student at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and a leader of the Real Food for CSU Campaign. “This vote is huge because students have a right to have access to quality food that not only nourishes our bodies, but also our communities.”

Already, many CSU campuses have developed models that will aid state-wide adoption of the policy. CSU Chico, Cal Poly Pomona, Cal Poly SLO and CSU Monterey Bay are now using the Real Food Calculator, a student-designed assessment tool to research what percent of their school's current purchases meet the 'real food' or sustainable food criteria. Cal Poly Pomona has also developed a for-credit course for students to research and make recommendations about how their campus food service can improve.

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The California State University System is a leader in high-quality, accessible, student-focused higher education. With 23 campuses, almost 447,000 students, and 45,000 faculty and staff, CSU is the largest, the most diverse, and one of the most affordable university systems in the country.

The Real Food Challenge (RFC) is the largest national student organization working for a more just and sustainable food system. RFC's primary goal is to shift \$1 billion of higher education food spending away from industrial agriculture and junk food and toward healthy, local, fair, and sustainable farms and food businesses. Every year, Real Food Challenge student leaders take action on more than 300 campuses. To date, 25 colleges and universities plus the University of California system have adopted RFC's 20% by 2020 'real food' policy. 150 campuses nationally use the Real Food Calculator to track progress towards their goals.