

ABSTRACT

Experiential community-based learning has been identified as an important aspect in enhancing university curriculum. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the feasibility of utilizing the Acadia Community Farm as a support and teaching tool within the curriculum of the Acadia School of Nutrition and Dietetics. Following ethics approval, faculty and students from the Acadia School of Nutrition and Dietetics were recruited for the research study. All faculty were invited to take part in face-to-face interviews, and second, third, and fourth year students were invited to take part in one of three focus groups aligning with their year of study. The research methodology utilized for the study was grounded theory; interviews and focus groups were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and were coded to identify themes.

The main themes identified were increased awareness of the Farm, procurement of food, volunteering, and sustainability. Study results determined that the main challenges were the logistical implications of incorporating the farm into pre-existing curriculum, and included time, seasonal availability, and limited resources. Recommendations for future integration include forming a working group with representatives from Nutrition and Dietetics and the Acadia Community Farm to move forward with ideas for incorporating the Farm into curriculum, changing the procurement process, influencing national accreditation guidelines, and incorporating a multidisciplinary approach to support sustainability. In conclusion, this study provides the Acadia School of Nutrition and Dietetics with potential opportunities and recommendations for future integration of the Acadia Community Farm into curriculum.