
Evidence-Based Health Policy Project

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Farmers, Eaters, and Legislators: The State Role in Food Systems and Nutrition Policy

Speaker Biographies

Jed Colquhoun, Ph.D.

Interim Associate Dean for Extension and Outreach

UW-Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences

Presentation: Wisconsin Agriculture: A Viable Local Solution to Nutritional Insecurity

Dr. Colquhoun serves as the Interim Associate Dean for Extension and Outreach the UW-Madison College of Agricultural & Life Sciences, and Program Director for Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension at UW-Extension. He's also a Professor at UW-Madison specializing in fruit and vegetable production. His work is centered at the crossroads of productive agricultural systems and natural resource management. He served as co-director of the Environmental Resources Center and the Integrated Pest Management Program for several years, providing leadership for staff on multiple UW-System campuses and in county offices statewide. Dr. Colquhoun also serves as an advisor for a number of agriculture- and food-related organizations. He received his bachelor and master's degrees from Cornell University and his Ph.D. from UW-Madison. Prior to returning to UW-Madison, he was a faculty member at Oregon State University.

Vanessa Herald, MS

Farm to Institution Outreach Specialist

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, UW-Madison

Presentation: Wisconsin on the Lunch Tray: How Local and Regional Food Systems Grow Healthy Children

Ms. Herald is a Farm to Institution Specialist at the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS). Current projects focus on providing resources and support for Wisconsin and Great Lakes Region institutions -- including schools, early care centers, hospitals, and universities -- to purchase and serve Wisconsin and regionally grown food items in their cafeterias. Ms. Herald works with organizations including the National Farm to School Network, School Food Focus and Wisconsin Farm to School to develop resources, provide direct training, and align supply and demand of local and regional items for various institutions. This work is informed by experience in garden-based education, production agriculture, and an MS in Nutrition from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, with the goal to improve institutional food environments and increase economic opportunities for agricultural producers.

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Amy Mihm MS, RD

Clinical Nutrition Specialist: Health Promotion

UW Health

Presentation: Local and Sustainable Purchasing at UW Health

Ms. Mihm is a Clinical Nutrition Specialist in Health Promotion with UW Health. Her energy stems from the desire to enhance health and well-being through optimal nutrition and active lifestyle practices. She possesses more than 15 years of clinical experience associated with preventive and therapeutic health care strategies in cardiology, adult and pediatric weight management and wellness. Ms. Mihm strives to empower individuals with the knowledge, ability and confidence to integrate nutritious eating and an active lifestyle into everyday habits.

Ellen Ritter

Executive Chef

UW Health

Presentation: Local and Sustainable Purchasing at UW Health

Ms. Ritter is the Executive Chef for UW Health. In this role, she oversees patient and retail food production, procurement and purchasing, as well as the implementation of policy initiatives related to local and sustainable partnerships. She is committed to growing the local/sustainable purchasing program to exceed policy goals. Ms. Ritter has worked in the food service and hospitality industry for over 20 years, 15 of which have been in the healthcare sector. Prior to joining UW Health in October 2015, Ms. Ritter was Executive Chef for Torrance Memorial Medical Center in Torrance, California.