



# Sustainable Food Futures & Strengthening Our Roots Grant Updates

Paula Cantú, Strengthening Our Roots Intern  
Waverly Ray, Geography Professor

December 5, 2023 ❖ President's Cabinet

# Mesa2030

Sustainable Food Futures &  
Strengthening Our Roots



## Highlights

**Completion:** Increase basic needs security

**Pathways and Partnerships:** Community engagement, experiential learning, bridge to SDSU (and graduate studies)

**Community:** An inclusive space

**Stewardship:** Alignment with Climate Action Plan, reducing carbon footprint, and increasing climate literacy

**Scholarship:** Undergraduate research opportunities



# Sustainable Food Futures

Year 2 of 4

Subaward from SDSU; USDA-funded



## Research

Students conduct research and present at the MCRC

Complete 1-credit WE course



## SDSU Course

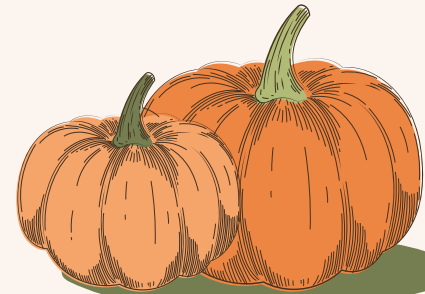
Enrollment in CAL 400: Transnational Approaches to Sustainable Food Futures

Opportunity for summer research internships in SDSU Food Science and Biochemistry labs



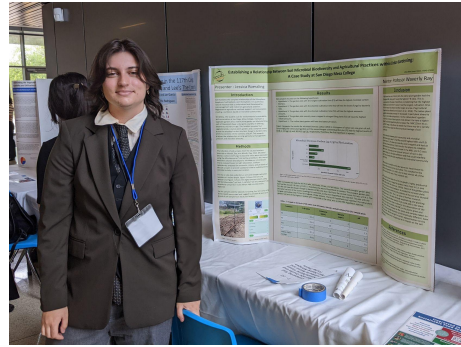
## EOP Bridge

Reserved spots for SDSU's summer program

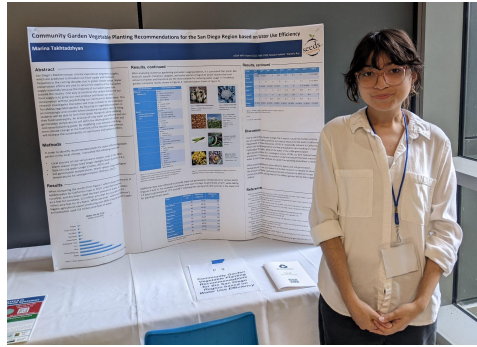




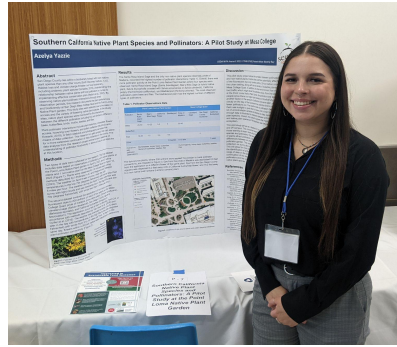
# Spring 2023 Cohort Researchers



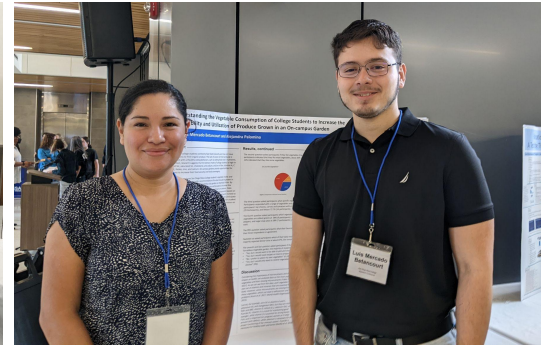
**Jessica Roesling**  
Topic: Soil Microbes



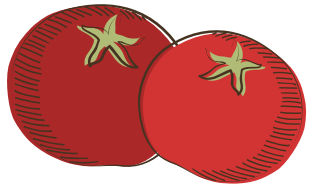
**Marina Takhtadzhyan**  
Topic: Water-efficient Crops



**Azelya Yazzie**  
Topic: Native Pollinators



**Luis Mercado &  
Alejandra Palomino**  
Topic: Vegetable Consumption



## Students in the SDSU Course:



**Luis Mercado**



**Alli Dangio'**



**James Rackstraw**

# Strengthening Our Roots:

Expanded Food Sovereignty through  
TerraMesa and Garden 31

Semester 1 of 3

San Diego Foundation Community Food Grant



Outdoor  
Classroom &  
Curriculum  
Development



Garden  
Internships



Increased  
Vegetable  
Production



Community  
Workshops



# Fall 2023 Activities

- 259 pounds of organic produce distributed to 55 students
- 78 student volunteers
- 376 volunteer hours (general population, honors, & service learning)
- 3 Garden 31 workshops:
  - Last one is December 14th on regenerative agriculture
- 2 Curriculum projects: English and geography

## Our Interns:



Paula Cantú



Margaret Reed



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**FREE WORKSHOPS WITH GARDEN 31 AT MESA COLLEGE**

### PLANTS POWER PEOPLE!!! WORKSHOP SERIES

**JOIN US TO:**

- Learn how to grow your own organic food
- Bring joy to your day
- Heal the Earth one seed at a time

**1 IT ALL STARTS WITH SOIL**  
Thursday, October 19  
3-6pm

**2 PLANT (& PEOPLE) CARE**  
Thursday, November 9  
3-6pm

**3 WHY WE DO THIS**  
An approach to regenerative agriculture  
Thursday, December 14  
2-5pm

**ABOUT GARDEN 31**  
Garden 31 is a non-profit that empowers socioeconomically disadvantaged populations and strengthens communities by providing career opportunities in regenerative agriculture, food sovereignty and land conservation.

Workshop location:  
At the Terra Mesa Community Center  
on Maricopa Drive  
bit.ly/garden31

**Strengthening Our Roots Curriculum Project**  
Strengthening Our Roots  
Roots



# Student Quotes

## On Volunteering:

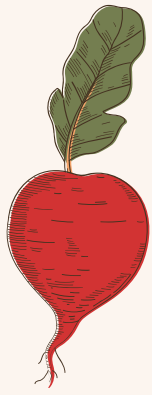
- Volunteering at the garden allows me to take a step back from school and **decompress** with hands on work!
- Volunteering in the garden has improved my stress levels and made me **feel connected** to Mesa college on another level. I love being part of this community and I think it's one of the best programs Mesa offers for students!
- I felt a lot **closer to the college community** being able to do work alongside my fellow students knowing that others would benefit from what we had done together.
- **Inspired me** to start my own garden at home.



## On Produce Distribution:

- I got to learn more about how to cook healthier vegetables that I've never tried before. I feel **more confident in eating healthier** and more sustainably since I know more on how to cook it.
- Receiving produce has made me realize my role in our food system, the **interconnectedness of gardening and wellbeing**, and made me want to get more involved in the garden and distribute produce to more students. Fresh produce that is handpicked is hard to come by, and I'm **grateful** to have this experience and source of fresh food.
- I loved being able to eat while living on a tight budget, especially when I have classes at two campuses. The Stand and TerraMesa have been a great and **positive influence** on me and my peers!
- It made me **very proud** to cook and eat the kale I took home after spending time in the garden knowing that someone else would be able to eat the produce I helped plant once it's ready to harvest!





# So Many Thanks!

**Administration:** President Hands, Vice President Legaspi, Vice President O'Connor, Dean Ly, Alex Berry

**Facilities/Operations:** Jacqueline Collins, Gio Garcia, Dave Warczakowski, Ana Fuentes, Gerry Vanderpot

**Professors:** Pegah Motaleb, Mary Gwin, Anthony Reuss, Shirin Safaee, Erin Evans, Michelle Rodriguez

**Work-Based Learning Faculty & Support:** Pavel Consuegra, Carole Thompson, Shawn Fawcett, Megan Bouquet

**Mesa Foundation:** Krista Stellmacher, Heidi Brogren, Amanda Brown

**President's Office/Business Services/Classified:** Patty Garcia, Marco Chavez, Rosa Mejia, Virgie Enriquez, Karina Dam, Anh Dinh, Beth Cain

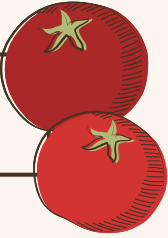
**Office of Communications:** Jennifer Kearns, Hai Duong

**Student Services/Student Support:** Rising Scholars, The Stand, The FAST Center, EOPS





# Help Us Grow Our Impact



## Spread the word!

- Contact [info@terramesa.org](mailto:info@terramesa.org) for flyers
- Follow the garden on instagram @sdmesagarden
- Garden volunteer registration available at: [bit.ly/tmgardenreg](https://bit.ly/tmgardenreg)
  - Employees are welcome!

## Partner with us!

