Endowed Chair & Professorship Report
2012-2013

W. K. Kellogg Endowed Chair in Sustainable Food Systems
Dr. Thomas P. Tomich
Professor and Director
Agricultural Sustainability Institute

RESEARCH
The prestige conferred by the W.K. Kellog Endowed Chair in Sustainable Food Systems and the endowment income have played decisive roles in progress across an ambitious agenda. Through support of the Kellogg Endowed Chair, we were able to launch the Agricultural Sustainability Institute (ASI) at UC Davis, as well as the successful integration of the UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SAREP) within ASI. We are extremely proud of the roll-out of a new undergraduate major--Sustainable Agricultural and Food Systems. In fact, we conferred our first bachelor of science degree in SA&FS last June, 2012.

Through my work, I aim to launch the first phases of an integrated ecosystem assessment of California’s agriculture and food system, including development of a set of indicators that are scientifically valid as well as being useful to farmers and ranchers, activists, policymakers, and the public. My research program also is intended to enhance our understanding of sustainability science as applied to the food and agriculture sector in order to improve society’s capabilities to link science and action, both at the community level and in policy arenas.

TEACHING
ASI’s educational programs, both the new undergraduate major in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems and various graduate groups, probably are ASI’s most important entry points with faculty members. Support for education in sustainability science and experiential learning clarifies and enhances ASI’s role as part of the University.

I serve as Master Advisor for our new Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (SA&FS) major, and I teach the two-quarter sequence Environmental Science and Planning ESP 191a and b, “Workshop on Food System Sustainability”. I also designed and lead a freshman seminar, Community and Regional Development CRD 098, “Environmental and Agricultural Sustainability”.

At the graduate level, I designed and led four doctoral seminars related to the general topic of “Agroecosystem Assessment”. With a colleague we also designed a new graduate seminar on “Food System Analysis”.

ACTIVITIES DIRECTLY SUPPORTED BY THIS FUND
In 2009 and 2010, ASI hosted the inaugural and second Symposiums on Food Systems and Sustainability. Although the inaugural symposium in 2009 was successful in creating a national scientific baseline and brought together a core group for inter-institutional collaboration, the structure and organization of the 2010 symposium were intended to address perceived shortcomings in linking science with action. Participant evaluations indicate that the 2010 symposium was very effective both in engaging underserved (“invisible”) groups in the food system but also in providing meaningful professional experience for younger colleagues.
During my tenure, I’ve had the opportunity to make more than 60 professional and 135 outreach presentations to over 12,000 colleagues, students, farmers and ranchers, policymakers and public agency staff, among many other stakeholders.

The income from the endowed chair also plays strategic roles ranging from underwriting events to expand stakeholder engagement to “seed funding” to engage students in targeted projects that contribute to ASI’s development. This ability to support students from income of the endowed chair provides valuable flexibility in developing my activities within ASI programs.