

# Plant Futures Impact Report 2023



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PLANT FUTURES AT A GLANCE

**We are equipping students to become the next generation of ethical leaders, systems thinkers and effective advocates for a plant-centric future for our planet, people, and, animals.**

## Our Mission

Plant Futures, a project of the nonprofit Ideagarden, is a social venture committed to accelerating the transition to a plant-centric world for planetary, human and animal well-being by equipping and empowering the next generation of food system leaders with the necessary education, experience and network to become change makers.

## Our Why

Our world is facing urgent challenges. The climate is warming at an alarming rate, global hunger is on the rise, and countless animals suffer needlessly. But we believe that there's one solution that can address these pressing issues: fixing our broken \$8T food system. At Plant Futures, we're committed to doing so by accelerating the transition to a plant-centric future.



PLANT FUTURES AT A GLANCE

## Why Plants

Imagine a future where our food system is centered around plants. It's not only the most efficient and effective way to meet our current and future needs, but also holds the key to solving the climate crisis, fostering health, and ending animal suffering.



### Climate Impact

The production of food generates 1/3rd of all planet-heating gasses emitted by human activity, with meat and animal feed accounting for nearly 60% of all greenhouse gasses generated by the food sector.



### Human Health

A plant-based diet offers many health benefits, including maintaining a healthy weight and providing nutrition to a growing population.



### Animal Welfare

Our current system perpetuates the abuse of billions of farm animals. By embracing a plant-centric approach, we can spare these innocent lives and create a more compassionate world.

## Why Students

We believe in the power of the next generation to drive change. That's why we're actively building a global network of diverse college and graduate students committed to action. Equipped with multidisciplinary education, professional expertise, and key relationships, they are the catalysts for this critical transition.

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## A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Plant Futurists,

In a tumultuous year filled with global challenges, our students, backed by Plant Futures, have demonstrated unwavering resilience. Facing environmental crises and moral quandaries, their dedication to reshaping our food system has remained unshakeable. The past year showcased the extraordinary dedication of our network, driving innovation and foundational growth crucial for the evolution of our planet's well-being.

Our students have not only met but exceeded expectations, leaving us inspired for the journey ahead. Their collective impact and the transformative potential they hold for the decades to come fuel our daily commitment to this vital cause.

Plant Futures is more than an educational endeavor; it is a catalyst for personal and systemic change. We not only illuminate the flaws in the current food system, but empower students to align their passions and careers with a plant-centric future. Envision a student's journey with us: they enroll in a course, gain awareness, connect with passionate peers, receive mentorship, and build a career contributing to a sustainable and plant-centric industry that benefits human health, the environment, and animal welfare for years to come.

Reflecting on the past year, we feel honored to have worked toward this vision and invite you to delve into the pages of this report and enjoy learning about the remarkable year of impact we've collectively achieved at Plant Futures - here's to many more to come!

With heartfelt gratitude and unwavering hope,

**Samantha Derrick**

Plant Futures Executive Director



**METRICS OVERVIEW**

## Total Student Reach

2021 → **835**  
 2022 → **1,723**  
 2023 → **3,104**

The Plant Futures community has continued to grow rapidly over the past few years. The following figures represent students who enrolled in Plant Futures courses or participated in events, either on campus or via the student chapter network.

## Ecosystem Growth

Plant Futures continues to cultivate and benefit from a dynamic ecosystem fueled by distinguished speakers, devoted mentors, esteemed faculty, and visionary professional partners all committed to our students. Together, we are shaping the future of sustainable plant-centric solutions.

	2021	2022	2023
Speakers	<b>35</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>66</b>
Mentors	<b>11</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53</b>
Faculty Advisors & Board	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>35</b>
Professional Partners	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>29</b>

## Sustaining Our Mission

Plant Futures flourishes thanks to contributions from our mission-aligned professional partners, donors, and funder network.

	2021	2022	2023
Donations and Grants	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>



## Gaining Recognition

This year, Plant Futures was honored to win the GreatNonprofits Top-Rated Award.

CURRICULUM UPDATES

# Challenge Lab

Total

2023



## 2023 Partners



In 2023, the Challenge Lab was offered at 3 Universities for Major or Program Credit



## CURRICULUM UPDATES

### Challenge Lab

**99%**

of students said the Lab helped them gain multiple professional contacts in the plant-based food & ag sector

**98%**

said the lab helped them feel more equipped to work in the plant-based food & ag sector

**90%**

said the lab influenced how they discuss dietary choices and their impact with their friends and family

**97%**

said the lab helped strengthen their quantitative & technical skills

**97%**

said the lab helped strengthen their consumer research skills

**93%**

said the lab helped strengthen their data analysis skills

### New Curriculum

Thanks to a grant received by the UC Office of the President, in Fall 2024 we are launching a new three-unit, cross-campus course titled *Introduction to Plant-Centric Food Systems*. The course will be available to students at all nine UC campuses and will include ten modules on a variety of topics as they relate to sustainable food systems, including:

- Climate & Environment
- Health & Nutrition
- Animal Welfare
- Social Impacts
- Innovation
- Policy & Law
- Behavioral Change
- Media
- Plant-Based Cooking

Each module will feature recorded videos and learnings from experts in each field as well as guided discussions, activities, and assignments that further students' understanding of current issues in the food system and the pathways available to them to create positive change, both personally and systemically.



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CURRICULUM UPDATES

## Challenge Lab - Alumni Reflections

### Sonia Pramanick



“

Before the Challenge Lab, most of my business courses had focused on analyzing the prior successes and failures of a firm...**Plant Futures excited me because I got the opportunity to engage with company leaders in real time and work hands-on with an emerging start-up, and even see the tangible results from some of my team's recommendations.**

**I now intern with Adda Veggie, a vegetable forward and plant-based ground meat alternative. I owe my current internship to the Plant Futures Slack.** I would have never connected with Adda Veggie if I hadn't seen their post in the opportunities channel. And for that, I am forever grateful.

### Cheyenne Pritchard



“

**The Plant Futures Challenge Lab was one of the most impactful courses I took at UC Berkeley.** It influenced my capstone project, a framing analysis on the topic of "eating less meat" in the news, and showed me that I had a role to play in the climate sector

After the Challenge Lab, I completed my public health practicum with IdeaGarden...I also continued to work as a consultant for a few months with my Challenge Lab partner company! Not to mention, **I now work for Climate Finance Solutions (CFS) as the Partnership Lead.** I met my boss through the Plant Futures Challenge Lab.

## CURRICULUM UPDATES

### Impact Lab

This year we were thrilled to launch yet another way for students to gather the tools, networks, and experience necessary to make a meaningful impact in the sustainable food space: **The Plant Futures Impact Lab**.

This new initiative is an extension of our successful Challenge Lab that differs in two ways:

- The opportunity is *open to all of the students across our international network*
- Students get to gain hands-on experience in the plant-based space during shorter time frames and *accelerated projects*

For our first Impact Lab we were proud to partner with **Collider Lab** on a project in the dairy alternative space. You can read the full strategy project summary [here](#).

#### What Students Gained:

- A unique opportunity to be a part of a strategy team at a multinational institution
- Involvement in shaping the future of food
- Valuable resume-building and networking opportunities
- Mentorship and guidance from top marketing executives in the food industry
- Practical, hands-on experience and tangible skills



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CURRICULUM UPDATES

## Impact Lab - Student & Partner Reflections

### Alexa Zahlada

UC Berkeley



“

My time during the Impact Lab has been nothing short of wonderful. As a business student, **I was able to apply the positioning and branding frameworks I’d learned in my classes to an industry-relevant setting, developing valuable experience for the sustainable food space...** I got to participate in every step of the project, including sitting in on focus group interviews, joining team brainstorming sessions, and contributing to the final client deliverable.

Finally, I am excited to say **I landed a full-time offer for a strategy role at a food and beverage consultancy, utilizing the visual idea-mapping and deck-building skills I built through the project!**

### Ken Muench

CMO of Collider



“

Our experience with The Impact Lab was brilliant! It was an intense few weeks of work with some really committed bright young minds. In the end, **we didn’t just simply walk away with a stronger project because of these passionate young people, but we also got an extra dose of creative inspiration and fresh perspective from them**—which we didn’t expect!

The leadership team was fully committed to making the project work and really bent over backwards to select the right candidates and ensure that there was real value being created. **I highly recommend the process and can’t wait to work with them again.**

## CURRICULUM UPDATES

### Symposium

Early in 2023 our community gathered for two days of communal learning and networking with experts and industry leaders worldwide, along with our international network of Plant Futurists. We welcomed over **30 esteemed thought leaders and speakers**, including Marion Nestle, Chef Michel Nischan, Team Sherzai, and representatives from UPSIDE foods, Finless Foods, GFI, and Mercy for Animals. **The inaugural live event drew 280 attendees, with 400+ joining us virtually.**



#### Topics covered included:

- Plant-based diets as a tool to decolonize
- Innovations in plant-centric food systems
- Using behavioral science to improve health
- Ethics of cultured meat research
- Investing in plant-based foods
- Vegan entrepreneurship
- Emissions reductions
- Plant bioactives
- Food politics
- Trends in alternative proteins



**This event made my entire heart happy** because there are not a lot of opportunities out there to talk about plant based futures and veganism in a very holistic ways. So being able to talk about it from a lens of innovation and medicine and social justice ...has been really insightful for me and brings me back to community and a place where I can learn and continue my own understanding and activism in the space.

**Carlo Morante**  
Sustainability Educator



I think **this event has been done really well in framing the overall landscape and making sure that we are being solutions oriented.** There has been discussion around individual changes that you can make, as well as systemic changes and things you can do in your community. It has been a great balance.

**Kayla Kaplan**  
Nutrition Communications Consultant

## CHAPTER NETWORK

### U.S Chapters



**23 → 36** Growth in the number of Student Chapters and Chapter Liaisons

**68%** Of our chapters are female-founded and led

**11+** Student-led events held on campus by chapter leaders

**10+** Prospective chapters for 2024

## CHAPTER NETWORK

## US Chapters



I have always struggled to envision how my passion for a sustainable, nutritious, and ethical food system would manifest in my career, specifically in public health. When I heard of Plant Futures, I was excited by the opportunity to hear from a variety of professionals that found their own pathway within this sector. As someone keen about intersectionality, Plant Futures felt like the perfect fit for my plant-forward passions.

**Sarahjeet Dosanjh**, UCLA Chapter Leader

I'm excited to grow the Harvard Plant Futures community and to welcome new members who are plant-based enthusiasts or even just plant-curious. I'm also excited to host events that engage the broader Harvard community on plant-based issues and to put these issues on everyone's radar, so we can facilitate greater support for plant-based at Harvard and beyond.

**Navin Durbhakula**, Harvard Chapter Leader

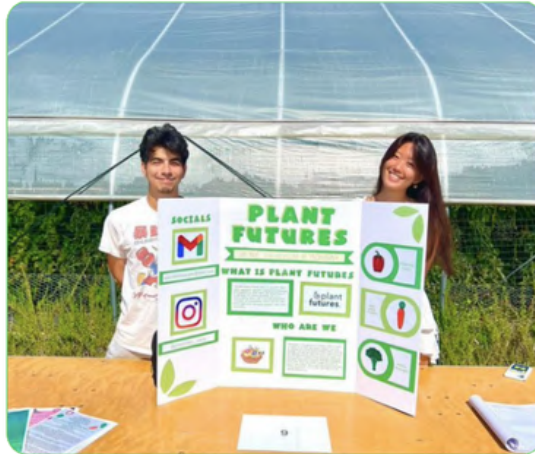


Oftentimes, as an undergraduate student, it's not uncommon to feel overlooked or like an assistant rather than a leader. Plant Futures nixes this sentiment by going as far as including the students in their mission statement. As someone who is passionate about creating a community in my university and making a difference in plant-centric food systems, I appreciate the creative freedom that is allowed for me and my fellow board members to tailor the Plant Futures experience to our personal campus.

**Ivy Zhao**, UMichigan Chapter Leader

CHAPTER NETWORK

US Chapters Events



## CHAPTER NETWORK

# International Expansion



## Mexico Update

### In 2023 our expansion into Mexico officially began! Why Mexico?

- The plant-based movement is undeniably on the rise in Mexico.
- During our research phase, we discovered a motivated community of students who are passionate about creating a sustainable future.
- Mexico's rich culinary heritage offers a diverse range of plant-based ingredients and traditional dishes, not to mention Sam, Plant Futures' founder, and her Mexican heritage and connection to the country.

### Progress Report

- We have had interest from students living in 16 out of 32 Mexican States
- Univeristy leads include Tec de Monterrey, UNAM, Universidad Simón Bolívar, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, and more
- 45 different majors have been registered so far in our initial outreach.

### Looking Ahead

- By the end of Summer 2024, we expect between 8 to 12 official chapters



## CHAPTER NETWORK

# Mentorship Program

The newly formed Plant Futures mentorship program is designed to empower a diverse group of college students, equipping them for successful and impactful careers within the food systems and plant-centric food sectors.

We strive to build bridges between ambitious students and accomplished professionals, facilitating a dynamic exchange that empowers young leaders to drive transformative growth across the entire food system.



Plant Futures' inaugural mentors engaged with students throughout the course of a semester, and hailed from renowned organizations in the plant-based and agriculture sectors including...

- Beyond Meat
- Plant City
- MBT Consulting
- Climate Finance Solutions
- Fresh Point, Inc.
- Glass Wall Syndicate
- The Humane Society of the US
- Mission Barnes

- The Common Market
- Protein Directory
- PBFI
- Ingredient
- Black Sheep Foods
- Tindle
- Transfarmation
- Mission:Plant LLC

- Farm Sanctuary
- Stray Dog Institute
- Crafty Counter
- MFA
- PBFA
- AKUA

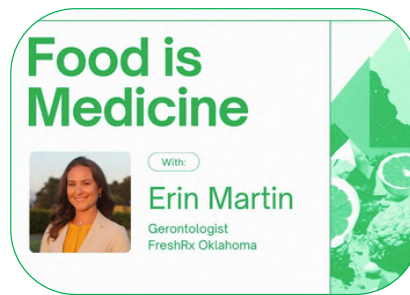
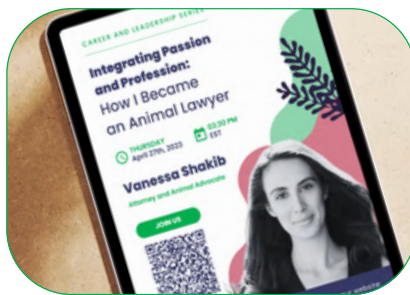


EVENTS

## Career and Leadership Series

Our Career and Leadership series is designed as an opportunity for our students to learn about the career trajectories of Plant Futurists in our ecosystem in a small-group setting. Speakers provide mentorship, networking, and valuable insights to our student leaders. This year, we had the privilege of hosting visionary change makers including:

- Zoe Novic, Greener by Default
- Jelly Young, Deloitte
- Georgia Loftis, Meati
- Vanessa Shakib, Advancing Animal Law
- JJ Kass, Tindle
- Katherine Jernigan, Transformation
- Alice Wistar, Black Sheep Foods
- Emma Stein, Miyoko’s Creamery
- Rachel Domb, Rooted Living



## Plant Futures Forum

This year we piloted the Plant Futures Forum, a series dedicated to exploring the diverse facets of a sustainable, plant-centric food systems and lifestyle. Featured events covered diverse topics, including sustainable agriculture and cooking methods, the healing power of food, creating food forests, and more. Designed with both seasoned advocates and those just beginning on their green journey in mind, this series offered something for everyone. Featured events included:

- Plant-Based on A Budget
- How to Build a Food Forest
- Food Is Medicine

391+ virtual attendees in 2023

22 virtual events in 2023

## EVENTS

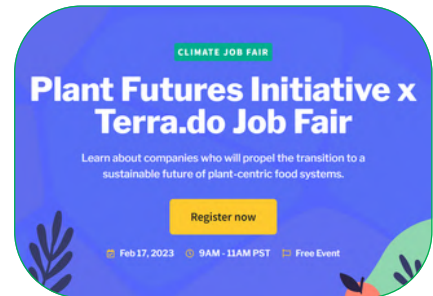
### Job Fairs

In collaboration with Terra.do, we hosted our inaugural virtual job fair in February, with a second round following huge success in October. Our event allowed companies to efficiently share information about current opportunities with qualified applicants, providing a platform for interaction and Q&A sessions. A post-fair networking event enabled further conversations with promising candidates.

**A total of 423 attendees from 48 countries participated, with 243 engaging in breakout rooms with hiring organizations representing 12 plant-centric companies.**

### Career Exploration & Impact Mapping Workshop

Our tailored small group workshop, held in partnership with 12 of our chapters, helped students explore pathways within the plant-centric food system. Through brainstorming sessions, students connected with peers from different universities, while also gaining insights, strategies, and tools to pursue their interests.



### Earth Week: Harnessing the Power of Plants for a Healthier Planet

Our inaugural Earth Week Series showcased regenerative farmers, entrepreneurs, and holistic chefs united by their belief in the potential of plants to create scalable, healthy, and equitable pathways within our food system. With over 130 participants, this series infused hope and forward-thinking perspectives. Notable events included talks by:

- Karthik Sekar, Climax Foods
- Jason Angell, The Ecological Citizens Project
- Heath Emerson, HomeFarm
- Kelly Pan, Impact Food
- Chef Mieko Scott and Kami Quiñones, Hella Nuts

UPCOMING EVENT

The Plant Futures team is thrilled to officially invite you to the inaugural

# PLANT FUTURES FEST **OAKSTOP, OAK** FEB 24, 2024



Bryant Terry

Ashley Kirk

Seth Tibbott

**WHAT:** Plant Futures Fest is a daylong event filled with plant-based innovation, inspiration, and community to empower students and professionals to create a plant-centric future for the planet, people, and animals. The event will feature a *keynote and presentations, job fair, networking, cooking demos, food sampling, and music.*

**SPEAKERS:** Acclaimed vegan cook, author, artist and activist *Bryant Terry* will be featured as the keynote speaker. Terry is the winner of a James Beard Award, named among San Francisco Magazine’s Smartest People in the Bay Area Food Scene, and Fast Company’s *People Who Are Changing the Future of Food*. In regard to his food justice activism, Terry’s mentor Alice Waters says, “Bryant Terry knows that good food should be an everyday right and not a privilege.” The event will also feature presentations by *Seth Tibbott*, Founder of Tofurky, *Ashley Kirk*, founder of Planted Foods, and more.

**WHEN:** February 24, 2024 / 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.

**WHERE:** Oakstop, Oakland, California - 1721 Broadway #201, Oakland, CA 94612

**ATTEND:**

[Get Your Tickets →](#)

[plantfuturesinitiative.org/plant-futures-fest](https://plantfuturesinitiative.org/plant-futures-fest)

BUZZ

Plant Futures: Online and Making Headlines



**54%** Newsletter Open Rate

Over industry average of 29%

**New website**

is launched & gaining rapid traction and interaction

Successfully obtained

**Google Ad Grant**  
(\$10K spend/month)

Mailing List and Social Media Audience

2021 → N/A

2022 → **1,050**

2023 → **5,960**

The expansion of our engaged community is also visible online. With our current growth trajectory, we project reaching an audience of **8,000+** through our digital presence alone in 2024.

Social Growth

**5,960**

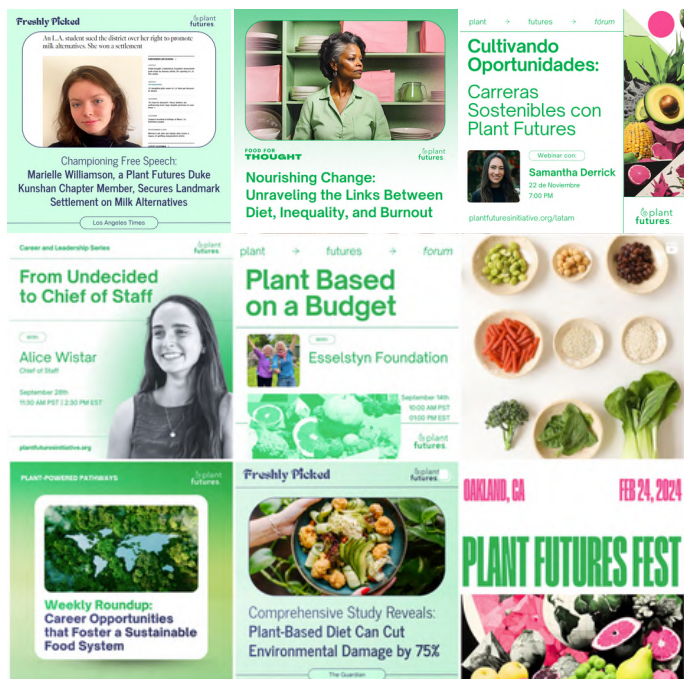
Total audience size  
(Organic Growth)

**72%**

Year over year growth percentage

Rank (by new followers)

		New Followers
1	The Good Food Institute	17,017
2	PBFA	5,922
3	Galvanize Climate Solutions	3,656
4	Plant Futures	1,215
5	New Roots Institute	808
6	Better Food Foundation	461



**Get Involved → Get Involved → Get Involved → Get Involved**

Partner with us in propelling the plant-centric movement forward by making a **donation** today!

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