

## TIPPING POINTS GRANTEE MEETING SUMMARY

### NEW LAB

19 Morris Ave building 128,  
Brooklyn, NY 11205

**Tuesday, November 5, 2019**

### PARTICIPANTS

#### Albany, New York

Beth Feingold, *University at Albany*  
Xiaobo Xue Romeiko, *University at Albany*  
Yetunde Sorunmu, *University at Albany*  
Mariana Torres Arroyo, *University at Albany*

#### Austin, Texas

Joy Casnovsky, *Sustainable Food Center*  
Alexandra van den Berg, *UTHealth*  
Pablo Lemoine, *Centro Nacional de Consultoría*

#### Cleveland, Ohio

Darcy Freedman, *Case Western Reserve University*  
Dominique Rose, *Case Western Reserve University*  
David Ngendahimana, *Case Western Reserve University*  
Jill Clark, *The Ohio State University*

#### Denver, Colorado

Becca Jablonski, *Colorado State University*  
James Hale, *Colorado State University*

#### Flint, Michigan

Steven Gray, *Michigan State University*  
Laura Schmitt Olabisi, *Michigan State University*  
Renee Wallace, *FoodPLUS Detroit*  
Chelsea Wentworth, *Michigan State University*

#### FFAR Staff

Sally Rockey, *Executive Director*  
John Reich, *Scientific Program Director*  
Hannah Wilkinson, *Scientific Program Officer*  
Rebecca Gyawu, *Scientific Program Associate*

### SUMMARY

Following introductions from participants and FFAR staff, FFAR's Executive Director, Sally Rockey, Ph.D. provided opening remarks to the group. Dr. Rockey expressed her enthusiasm for the Tipping Points program, appreciation for the research teams, and shared her reflections from the Smart Urban Food Systems Summit.

The meeting topics were decided upon feedback that was received from PI's and Modelers during the monthly Tipping Points call that took place on September 30, 2019. The overall meeting was designed to be flexible in content and design to allow the project teams to gain insight from each other. The morning session (8-10 am) was structured towards work in small groups and upon input from the participants, the afternoon (12-2 pm) was an open, facilitated discussion.

#### Morning Session

The morning session was broken into two parts: Conceptualization and Results and Reflections. Participants were seated at tables by their project team and began by working together to address the following question: *How is your team conceptualizing or leveraging tipping points and unpacking the concept?* Each team reported their reflections on how they had been conceptualizing the project and emerging tipping points.

The next section, participants dived into the content and each team provided an update on their projects, followed by one rotational session where team members mixed into smaller groups to discuss the following:

- Presentation of results (if available)
- What are the emerging tipping points?
- Encountered challenges and possible solutions
- The role of data
- Lessons learned

From the discussion, communication and translation emerged as key themes that emerged from multiple teams. In general, there is a need for a clear, coordinated message that acknowledges and communicates trade-offs to stakeholders. Teams stressed the need for more support in coordinating and communicating their work. Given the urgency for action that the project teams face, there is a clear need to define who is responsible for communication and translating results to action and how this could best be accomplished.

### **Afternoon Session**

In the afternoon session, each team was tasked with coming up with at least one challenge or topic they wanted to share with participants as part of an open, facilitated discussion. Each team was given 20-minutes dedicated to their topic(s). The following topics were included in the group discussion (the Austin team contributed their time to the overall group discussion and therefore are not listed below):

#### Flint, Michigan

- Communication and engagement to decision-makers
- Operationalizing quantitative modeling of qualitative concepts (i.e. equity, trust)

#### Cleveland, Ohio

- How we can move from the model to informed action
- Translation to diverse audiences

#### Albany, New York

- Developing an LCA for the food donation arm – what have other teams learned?
- Learn more from teams about what types of data sets they have gathered for agricultural production and supply chain
- Lessons learned from participatory modeling application

#### Denver, Colorado

- Communication across sub-teams

After the project-specific discussions, participants shared their thoughts on continuing their work together. The team discussed the possibility of their project teams working together to create a framework so that their models could be tested in areas. The Flint team suggested SESYNC as a potential funder for a workshop to develop this framework.

### **Recommendations for FFAR**

- Create a shared drive for team members
- Connect teams to project funders (future recommendation)

- Is there a way to streamline reporting to help faculty have limited bandwidth? (many of their projects have multiple community funders)
- One person of contact to help communications between Tipping Points and FFAR

At future monthly calls, PI's and modelers will be expected to read a written report-out provided by the presenting group. This report out will structure the dialogue for the meeting. The group decided that meetings will rotate between teams with Flint being the first to present in January.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- Dr. Beth Feingold to connect Flint team to micro-financing consultant
- Dr. Steven Gray to share information on SESYNC and paper on participatory modeling
- FFAR to create a shared drive for teams to
  - Create a list of events and meetings for next year's convening
  - Share resources – publications, online resources
- Flint to present and prepare a write-up for January meeting

## Key Insights from Morning Session

- Trade-offs are real and there is a need to communicate effectively to stakeholders
- For the Austin team, the assumptions they tested in the model did not match their expectations, there can be sub-populations
- There is an urgency for action but *how* do we translate this information and *who* is responsible?
- The Denver team recommended additional staff, such as a project coordinator/project manager to provide additional support
- There is a need to coordinate and unify the message from community groups
- The coordination of community partners has to be dynamic
- The Flint team shared the challenge of donor dependency. In general, there is increased collaboration and coordinate of governance, but this is not true in all sectors. The communication of available programs that could provide support to individuals and families in Flint is not reaching all members of the community and there is a need for more support that goes beyond donor support from the Flint water crisis

## Key Insights from Afternoon Session

### Flint, Michigan

- Communication and engagement to decision-makers
- Operationalizing quantitative modeling of qualitative concepts (i.e. equity, trust)

The Flint team talked about the idea of measuring food equity and how to balance complexity in attempting to build quantitative modeling around qualitative concepts. To their second point, they wanted to know how decision-makers interact with the model? The Cleveland team shared key insights with the Flint team:

- Immediate needs of the community are not building the models
- The model can help inform the policy agenda
- Some priorities of these community groups are not necessarily included in the model

Other comments from project teams:

- With an average of 15 hours of meetings per month, the Cleveland team expressed the feeling of ‘meeting fatigue’ they have experienced
- The Denver team shared that decision-makers are the ultimate end-user, but this is mostly due to bandwidth constraints

The Flint team described the challenge of donor funding that is not addressing food insecurity issues. There is a big issue of fragmentation, lack of collaboration and issues with trust. The team discussed the need to be impartial as to not exacerbate these already known issues. Austin asked if there was a mechanism to build back this trust within the community and Dr. Beth Feingold from the Albany team offered to connect Flint to a micro-financing consultant.

### Cleveland, Ohio

- How we can move from the model to informed action
- Translation to diverse audiences

The Cleveland team wanted to discuss the issue of knowing how much information to share with stakeholders to also maintain their trust.

- The Denver team discussed detailed documentation sheets they make available but encouraged teams to watch out for predatory consultation. It was recommended that this information not be released to community members but could be made available upon request (better to allow them to ask for more information if needed rather than provide everything upfront).
- The Albany team recommended that stakeholders self-select information so that it is tailored to the intended audience. Stakeholders often want a brief message, providing a one-sentence summary or figure is often enough.

- The Flint team advised that it is best to be upfront about the assumptions tested in the model.
- In the experience of the Austin team, they have found that simple images and infographics can be quite helpful.
- Empathy is important.

### Albany, New York

- Developing an LCA for the food donation arm – what have other teams learned?
- Learn more from teams about what types of data sets they have gathered for agricultural production and supply chain
- Lessons learned from participatory modeling application

The Albany team wanted to focus their time on lessons learned from other project teams that might be helpful to inform their work in wasted food. They mentioned the need to use consistent language by referring to the issue as ‘wasted or surplus food’ as opposed to food waste. Since the team is in the early stages of model development, they wanted to know if other teams had looked into the transport of food. Issues raised included the challenge of stores throwing away food rather than changing their pricing structure and issue of dignity around food that is about to be wasted. This led to comments on processing technologies to create secondary products before food is wasted (i.e. blueberry powder). The Flint team offered to share a report on lessons learned from participatory modeling.

### Denver, Colorado

- Communication across sub-teams