



STATEMENT OF VALUES

1. We give voice.

-We sing the unsung

- We go beneath the surface of communities and cultures in search of unpredictable, unexpected, and endangered expressions of people and place through food.

-We listen well and share freely a people's history of the South

- We record histories about people whose work in—or thoughts about—Southern food and culture deserves a platform.
- We stage events that showcase individual talents and highlight collective contributions to Southern foodways.

-We tell honest and sometimes difficult stories about our region

- We embrace Southern history, the realities of the Southern present, and the opportunities for Southern futures. In other words, we don't flinch from talking about race, class, religion, gender, and all the other biggies.

-We honor and support oral history subjects long beyond the interview

- We welcome oral history subjects into the SFA family, establishing lasting relationships with individuals and communities throughout the region.

-We inspire communities to invest in their culinary cultures

- We promote pride of place, and encourage local communities to invest in cultural richness through fieldwork, events, and volunteer opportunities. We serve as advocates for economic and cultural heritage development.

-We honor the people of our region

- We recognize men and women whose hard work enriches the landscape of Southern food and culture.
- We honor workaday individuals of great repute with the Tabasco Guardian of the Tradition and the Ruth Fertel Keeper of the Flame Awards. We honor our region's leading lights with Craig Claiborne Lifetime Achievement Awards. We honor people working toward race, class, gender, and environmental justice with John Egerton Prizes.

2. We are an academic institution.

- Academic rigor underscores our work

- We are and will continue to be the foremost national resource on the study and living history of Southern foodways.
- We're a nontraditional—but integral—part of the University of Mississippi. As an institute of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, we take seriously our charge to contribute to the cultural studies dialogue on food.
- We aid students by offering internships, graduate assistantships, and post-doctoral teaching fellowships.

- Our work is intended for public consumption

- We distribute our content free via the web and share our work with the broadest audience possible in an effort to tell our common story as seen through the distinctive lens of Southern foodways.
- We archive our oral history and film work on the web and at the University of Mississippi library, where collections are free and available to all and stored for future generations.

3. We deliver pleasures that are substantive and contextual.

- All presentations and plates benefit from context

- Meals and menus at events are built sourcing ingredients, cooks, and chefs who are pertinent to the event dialogue.

-We encourage the free exchange of sometimes conflicting ideas

- Our products—events, publications, and documentaries —provide opportunities for table discussions. We engage while we entertain.
- We foster a community that is open to meaningful dialogue and the sharing of ideas. We playfully engage our members and inspire them to listen, think, and share.
- We pitch a big tent under which all may gather to learn and cavort.

-We serve honest, remarkable, and delicious food and drink

- We offer authentic, responsible, and damn good food and drink at all of our events. We know where the food we share comes from, who prepares it, and how it can tell stories of our region.

4. We are collaborative

-We partner with other like-minded organizations, both academic and other

- We pursue relationships with others who share our mission and work in a spirit of honesty, generosity, and reciprocity.

-We are purposefully inclusive

- We share a common table with people of all races, genders, ages, and classes. We believe that there is knowledge, power, and beauty in diversity.

-We cover the whole of the South. No matter how you define it

- We strive to be geographically inclusive in our programming and documentary work, making sure that our region is thoroughly and thoughtfully represented.

-We trust the locals

- We rely on expertise and assistance from members in their communities.

5. We provide a rewarding experience.

-We provide a professional and supportive workplace for SFA employees

- SFA headquarters is a microcosm of the organization. Engaged employees are dedicated to the SFA's mission and work in an environment that fosters communication, education, and fun.

-We successfully retain existing members and enthusiastically welcome new ones

- We actively support our friends and family while bringing new folks into the fold. We will always have room at the table.
- Because membership dollars help to fund our mission, members feel they are part of our projects.

-We curate a joyful community

- Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement ideal of the "Beloved Community," we foster a South where all are welcome and all are valued.

6. We work toward the greater good.

-We volunteer to help others

- We collaborate with our membership and local communities in a spirit of volunteerism, spearheading, supporting, and inspiring projects whenever and wherever we can.

- For those in need, we rally support and leverage our strengths to help

- Our membership expresses its appreciation for the region by stepping up to help.

-We respect the environment

- When possible, we use sustainable materials and responsibly source the food we serve.

- We believe honest regional food should be affordable for all

- Pastured pork and local collards should not be the province of wealthy patrons and gourmet fetishists.

7. We are good financial stewards

- Our staff earns good pay and great flexibility

- We don't believe nonprofit employees should be paid less than people with comparable skills in the profit sector. And we trust staff to manage their own time, so long as their work is good and timely.

- We're thrifty, but not cheap stewards of SFA resources

- SFA staff stay in middling hotels, and book cheap rental cars, but we eat well, patronizing member restaurants, barbecue joints, fish shacks, and the like, always tipping accomplished servers excessively.

-We bank money to sustain us through lean times

- We maintain a rainy day fund equal to two years of our operating budget.

-We run our organization with entrepreneurial zeal

- We work to streamline operations, minimize travel costs, and operate the organization as affordably as possible.

-We are financially transparent

- Our books are open to all. And we are audited quarterly.

8. We operate on the up and up.

- SFA staff and members do not accept graft. No lobbyists need apply

- The SFA is a collaborative enterprise, not a venue for opportunism. We work together toward the fulfillment of our mission and each other.

-We offer payment for food, travel, and time to EVERYONE who shares time and talent with us

- You get what you pay for, and we expect a lot from those who work with us on events and other projects.

- Our endorsement is not for sale

- We are an egalitarian organization. To that end, we do not accept support—financial or otherwise—that compromises the integrity of the organization in any way.

- We treat all with respect

- We honor the dishwasher as well as the chef, the migrant farmer along with the farm CEO.
- We solicit feedback from our members at every opportunity. And we act on it.

9. We are offbeat.

-We don't follow the status quo

- Who cares how the other non-profits in the food world do it? We plow our own row.

-We are serious about our work, but not too serious about ourselves.

- After all, we're citizens of the Banana Pudding Republic!

-We're irreverent

- We once constructed a bacon tree, draped with slices of cured pork belly.

- We value funk

- Against the good advice of a number of folks we staged a Field Trip dinner in a haunted jailhouse.

- We celebrate the South, but we do so thoughtfully and oftentimes critically

- The South has a complicated and peculiar history. We acknowledge that. And we leverage that past for our future.