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2020 Virtual Case Study

Food Insecurity On Campus

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What is Food Insecurity?

Food Insecurity: the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the ability to acquire such foods in a socially acceptable manner (Goldrick-Rab, 2018)

- Includes situations where the food accessible is unhealthy, not nutritionally adequate, expensive, or unavailable at certain times of the day or points in the year
- Is a component of **basic needs insecurity**, which describes an individual's limited ability to access food, shelter, clothing, transportation, education, and medical care.

Categories (US Department of Agriculture):

- High Food Security: No reported indications of food access problems or limitations
- Marginal Food Security: One or two reported indications of anxiety over food shortage
- Low Food Security: Reports of reduced quality, desirability, or desirability of diet, but not of restricted intake
- Very Low Food Security: Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating and reduced intake

Prevalence in College Students

- Nearly **60%** of students report experiencing some level of food insecurity (Patton-Lopez, Lopez-Cevallos, Cancel-Tirado, & Vazquez, 2014 as cited in NASPA)

- Community College students are at an even higher risk
  - A 2016 HOPE Lab found that 56% of community college students experienced low or very low food insecurity, 51% were housing insecure, and 14% were homeless (as cited in Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018)

- 62.8% of students know many, some, or few students besides themselves who currently or sometime during the past 7 months had problems with food insecurity or hunger ()

- As of 2013, roughly 52% of college students lived at or below the poverty line, compared to the national poverty line of 14.5% (U.S. Census Bureau)

- About 1/3 of Pell Grant-eligible students reported that they would likely use a food pantry (Cady, Dubick, & Matthews, 2016)

Communities of Particular Concern

Students at greater risk for food insecurity include:
- First Generation College Students
  - 2016 Study found that more than half of all first-generation students (56%) were food insecure (Cady, Dubick, & Matthews)
- Community College Students
- LGBTQ+ Students
- Former foster youth
- Pell-Eligible Students
- Black Students
  - 17% more likely than non-Hispanic white peers to experience food insecurity(Price et al., 2019)
- Hispanic and Latinx students
- Students with dependents
- Students experiencing housing insecurity:
  - Up to 64% of food insecure students also reported experiencing housing insecurity

Many historically marginalized people live in **food deserts:** or areas with little to no available and accessible healthy food (Guy and David 2004 as cited in Miller et al., 2019)

(Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017, 2018), (Freudenberg et al., 2011 as cited in Collins, Gupton, & Trost, 2018), (O'Hara, 2019)

Consequences of Food Insecurity

Mental Health Concerns
- Stress and anxiety
- Depression, sadness, and hopelessness
- Feeling undeserving of help

Physical Health Concerns
- Lack of Energy
- Obesity and high blood pressure
- Pain, weight and hair loss, and other manifestations of hunger
- Lack of access to healthy food

Relationship Development
- Struggles to develop meaningful social relationships
- Resentment of students in more stable food and financial situations

Academic Performance & Retention
- Worsened academic performance due to inability to focus
- Decreasing GPA, retention, and graduation rates
- Frustration directed at the academic institution for not providing enough support
- Missing or dropping classes
- Not purchasing required textbooks and materials

(Meza, Altman, Martinez, & Leung, 2019), (Kolowich, 2015), (Cady, Dubick, & Matthews, 2016)

Barriers to Food Access

Meal Plan Limitations
- May only cover meals from early morning to early evening, often inaccessible to athletes and students who work (Ganim, 2014)
- Students on the cheapest meal plans are most likely to report food insecurity. However, in Fall 2016, 26% of first-year students on unlimited meal plans also reported food insecurity (Adams et al., 2019)

Costs of College
- 80% of students work part-time jobs, averaging 19 hours per week, while attending college (CUFBA)
- Only 18% of students in one study reported being able to cover their college expenses by working a job (CUFBA)
- Less than 25% of students have college expenses covered by parents (CUFBA)
- The national poverty rate in 2013 was 14.5%; for students who were not living with relatives or on campus the poverty rate was nearly 52% (CUFBA)
- The average Pell Grant covers only 37 percent of students' two-year-college expenses (Mangan & Schmalz, 2019)
- Students may be forced to choose between spending money on tuition, housing, materials, or food

Barriers to Food Access

Ineligibility For/Unawareness of Government Assistance Programs
- 57% of students who are eligible for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP),did not participate in it in 2016. Some didn't know they qualified (Mangan & Schmalz, 2019)
- A 1980 addendum to SNAP prevents students from receiving benefits, but exemptions are available for students not receiving outside assistance
- 63% of SNAP recipients report that food stamps are not enough to provide food security (Freudenberg et al., 2011 as cited in Miller et al., 2019)

Stigma
- Negative stigmas can be associated with accessing on- and off-campus resources (Goldrick-Rab, 2018)
- The GAO reports that 80% of colleges surveyed struggled with "overcoming the stigma some students associate with accepting help for their basic needs. (O'Hara, 2019)
- Midwestern University found that 50% of food insecure respondents reported that they did not want to be served by their peers at a campus food pantry (Goldrick-Rab, Richardson, & Schneider, 2018)

Current Initiatives: Campus Food Pantries

- The first known university food pantry opened at Michigan State University in 1993
- Close to 250 colleges and universities have food banks/pantries to help support their students
- Can be located in many offices: student government, student life, counseling centers, health centers, Dean of Students offices

- Duties generally include...
    - Coordinating and recruiting pantry volunteers
    - Soliciting, receiving, and maintaining supplies and funds
    - Coordinating dispersion of resources to students in need
    - Assisting students in signing up for government benefits
    - Referring students to other community and campus resources

- Opportunities for Growth
    - Hire full time–staff for campus food pantries
    - Expand pantry hours
    - Exist in spaces that offer visibility and minimize stigma for students in need
    - Secure departmental funding
    - Establish common practices

(Collins, Gupton, & Trost, 2018), (Camp et al., 2019), (Reppond, Thomas-Brown, Sampson, & Price 2018), (NASPA)

Current Initiatives: Donation Programs

Unused Food Collection: Food Recovery Network & Campus Kitchens Project
- Collection programs gather unused food from campus and community dining, then use on-campus kitchen space to package this food into ready-to-eat meals
- Meals are then donated to campus and community food pantries

Meal Swipe Donations
- Swipe Out Hunger partners with campuses to allow students who have extra meal swipes to donate to a Swipe Fund
- Students in need receive meal swipes or campus food pantry donations from the Swipe Fund
- At Columbia University, Dining Services has created a virtual food bank where students can access donated meal points, requesting six free meals per semester

Community Gardens
- At The University of Arkansas, student organizations GoGreen hosts a community garden
- Half of the produce grown is donated to the campus food pantry

Textbook Assistance
- Mt. San Antonio College in California provides book scholarships to student who may have to choose between books and food
- At Brown University, any students receiving university scholarship funds who have no parent financial contribution will have costs covered for their textbooks

(Cady, Dubick, & Matthew, 2016), (Swipe Out Hunger), (Brown), (Kolowich, 2015), (Taylor, 2018)

Current Initiatives: Donation Programs (cont.)

Gift Cards
- Western Oregon Student Affairs distributes $100 gift cards to local grocery stores for students experiencing food insecurity

Food For Fines
- Initiative by the University of Georgia Student Government Association in partnership with Parking and Transportation Services
- Students are able to donate canned food items in place of any parking fines $50 or less

Social Media
- The MEANS mobile app allows restaurants, dining halls, and other food donors to post a notice when they have excess food available. Community and campus food banks can claim the excess food, contact the donor, and pick up the donations
- At Columbia University, a student organizations created a Facebook Group (CU Meal Share) where students can volunteer to swipe their peers into campus dining halls

(Miranda, 2019), (Kolowich, 2015), (Cady, Dubick, & Matthew, 2016)

Systemic Inititiaves

Government Assistance and Education
- January 2019, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report, titled Better Information Could Help Eligible College Students Access Federal Food Assistance Benefits
  - First legislation to acknowledge the issue of college food insecurity
  - Recommends more education on SNAP exemptions
- At CUNY, administrators are assisting students in navigating eligibility and application for public assistance, as only 6% of their student use food stamps despite higher rates of food insecurity (Kolowich, 2015)

Student Emergency Funds
- Usually housed within Student Affairs, most colleges and universities have Student Emergency Funds
- Provide students with limited, one-time funds to respond to temporary, emergency hardships

Large-Scale Projects
- University of Connecticut Access to Food Effort (UCAFE) seeks to address campus food insecurity and is back by the UConn IDEA Grant
  - IDEA funds student-led projects around creativity, research, and service
- University of Kentucky Hunger Strike resulted in the creation of a central center and donor fund for student needs

(O'Hara, 2019), (Severance, 2019), (Patel, 2019)

CUFBA: Professional Standards

College & University Food Bank Alliance (CUFBA): "Professional organization of campus-based programs focused on alleviating food insecurity, hunger, and poverty among college and university students in the United States." (CUFBA)

- Vision: "To alleviate the barriers and challenges associated with food insecurity and hunger so that college and university students can remain in school and, ultimately, earn their degrees."

- Created by partners at Michigan State University and Oregon State University to provide education, resources, and best practices to other campuses with existing or newly founded food pantries
- As of 2018, CUFBA reports over 700 members, representing roughly 15% of all institutions

- Goals:
  - Provide education and resources for campuses on starting food banks
  - Provide guidelines for professional standards for campus food banks
  - Encourage collaboration between campuses and community partners
  - Advocate for policy that benefits students in need
  - Provide information to students in need on how to access resources

(Collins, Gupton, & Trost, 2018), (Camp et al., 2019), (CUFBA, 2020)

Issues Faced by Current Initiatives

Funding
- Since many food banks, pantries, and scholarship funds are donor-driven, funding is inconsistent and relient on outside forces
- Initiatives may struggle to receive consistent, sufficient institutional funding due to the fact that there are donations

Administrative Support
- While many administrators are champions for students and their needs, others may feel that addressing food insecurity is the role of the institution and it does not serve its mission
- Mission Creep: The belief that by colleges addressing student basic needs, they are straying from the mission of institution and detracting from students' education

Short-Term Impact
- Emergency funds and food banks serve only immediate needs, but do not support students in need on an ongoing basis
- Meal plan swipe donations may be ongoing programs, but the swipes that students have access to are usually limited

(Broton, Frank, & Goldrick-Rab, 2014), (Collins, Gupton, & Trost, 2018), (Mangan & Schmalz, 2019)

Future Initiatives

Expanding and Revising Legislation
- Further, widespread education on SNAP eligibility and assistance in applying for resources
- Expansion of eligibility for SNAP and other aid to involve students who are receiving scholarships or some financial assistance from family
- Expansion of the National School Lunch Program, that provides K-12 student with free or reduced lunches, to include eligible college students in need
- Simplification and streamlining of other aid applications, such as the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

University Administration Investment
- Resilience on nonprofits and donations is not sustainable; universities must invest their own resources into addressing food insecurity for students
- Construction and design of all-encompassing, non-stigmatizing, accessible Food Pantries and Need Centers
- Education of staff and faculty across Divisions on the realities of food insecurity, misconceptions, and signs that students may be in need
- Re-evaluation of tuition and costs for all students, regardless of whether they are currently receiving aid

(Cady, 2016) , (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018), (St. Amour, 2019), (Cady, Dubick, & Matthews, 2018)

Future Initiatives

Collaboration with Nonprofit Sector
- Campuses should involve community organizations and nonprofits to provide holistic, ongoing care for students on and off campus
- Sustainable service focused;
- Ongoing monthly meetings; joint goals and objectives
- Benchmarking
- Shelters and food banks; tie in related things and digital resources

Assessment
- Universities should conduct individual assessment into:
  - The number of food insecure students on their campuses
  - What resources their students are currently accessing
  - What sub-populations of students are of particular concern
  - The concerns and initiatives in the surrounding community
  - The frequency and amount of donation, and what funding would be equal to this
- Assessment should be used to initiate tangible programs and changes

(Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018), (St. Amour, 2019), (Cady, Dubick, & Matthews, 2018), (Ellison, Nikolaus, and Nickols-Richardson, 2019)

Conclusion

Food Insecurity is too often an invisible crisis on campuses that affects students at varying levels, but can result in damaging outcomes for physical health, mental health, and academic performance.

Current initiatives that address food insecurity, like Food Pantries and meal donation programs, assist student in immediate crisis, but do not address the long term needs of college students.

Future initiatives are needed that support students across and beyond their college career, reach across divisional lines, and connect students to community partners. Institutions should address barriers to access head-on and provide funding that is not reliant on donors.

Institutional Information: Fontville College

Fontville College is a large, public research institution in a mid-sized city. The mission of Fontville College is to serve the larger community by preparing tomorrow's scholar-leaders for engagement in a global community.

- Setting: Mid-Size Urban City
- Demographics
    - 15,000 enrolled students
    - 74% undergraduate, 26% graduate or professional students
    - 55% White (Non-Hispanic); 12.8% African American; 7.7% Hispanic/Latino; 3.7% Two or More Races
    - Average In-State Tuition: $16,000 per academic year
    - Average Out-of-State Tuition: $28,000 per academic year

Phase Outline

Principles for Action

- Anti-Deficit Approach
- Confidentiality and respect for students in need
- Accessibility of spaces and resources
- Necessity of campus and community support
- Holistic approach to basic need resources
- Long-term goals for systemic changes
- Proactive

1 Developing a Foundation

2 Initiating Access

3 Moving Towards Sustainable Change

Phase 1: Developing a Foundation

Convene
- Assemble team members of the Basic Needs Task Force
- Establish Task Force mission statement and goals

Learn
- Conduct initial assessment of institutional needs
- Compile information and resources around best practices
- Professional Development and education of task force members

Advocate
- Connect with campus leadership teams and community partners
- Meet with potential donors

Address Immediate Needs
- Connect students to existing nonprofits, community resources, and Student Care and Outreach Office to triage
- Evaluate Dean of Students budget to locate additional emergency funds

Basic Needs Task Force

Housed in the Dean of Students Office within the Division of Student Affairs, the mission of the Basic Needs Task Force is to investigate barriers to accessing basic needs (including food and housing insecurity), advocate for students in need, and champion systemic change.

Members
- Chair: Dean of Students
- Members: Representatives from the Office of the President, the Dean of Students Office, Housing and Residence Life, Dining Services, First Generation Initiatives, Counseling and Psychological Services, University Health Center, TRIO Support Services, Academic Advising, Faculty Senate, and Student Government Association

Use of Initial $3000 Budget
- Professional development and education on basic needs access for Task Force members (in the form of a guest speaker, workshop series, or other curriculum)
- Marketing materials
- Business and travel costs (related to engaging with community partners)
- Assessment-related expenses

Basic Needs Task Force: Goals

- **Maintain awareness** of national and local research on basic needs access for college students
- **Conduct assessment** into the number of students experiencing basic needs insecurity, the resources available to students, and how current resources are being utilized
- **Engage with leadership** committees across the institution to educate on basic needs access and gain support for initiatives
- **Establish relationships** with community partners and nonprofits related to basic needs insecurity
- **Increase visibility** of current campus and community resources through marketing and outreach
- **Edit** existing physical and digital resources for donation and access
- **Refer students** with immediate needs to appropriate offices and resources
- **Develop plans** for the creation of the Center for Student Need, assistance funds, and digital resources
- **Lobby** for long-term policy change in collaboration with the Office of Governmental Relations
- **Evaluate** current budgets and meet with donors to identity additional sources of funding for initiatives

Phase 2: Initiating Access

Establishment of Center for Student Needs
- Secure funding
- Establish reporting and organizational structure
- Initiate and complete staff searches
- Locate/Construct and design space
- Establish in-house Food Pantry and Advising

Assistance Funds
- Develop and expand emergency aid funds
- Offer meal plan scholarships and
- Develop and roll out a meal swipe donation program

Digital Resources
- Development of a Student Resource Website accessible from main university page
- Online presence of Center for Student Needs

Adapt Roles of Task Force
- Continue research into best practices
- Advocate and educate campus and local communities
- Ongoing evaluation of current efforts
- Serve as a liaison to donors and community partners

Continued Marketing

Center for Student Needs

The mission of the **Center for Student Need** is to provide a permanent, confidential, and accessible space for students experiencing basic needs insecurity to access resources, receive care, and consult with caring professionals.

- The Center for Student Need reports to the Dean of Students Office and is housed within the Division of Student Affairs.
- In order to accommodate class, co-curricular, and work schedules, The Center for Student Need is open 6:00 AM-9:00 PM seven days per week.
- As with most student care offices, the Center for Student Need will utilize an electronic to keep track of students of concern and facilitate referrals from staff, faculty, or external parties.

Services Provided
- **Campus Food Pantry**
- **Enrollment** in government assistance programs
- **Assistance in applying** for emergency funds, scholarships and aid, housing, or meal plan donation programs
- **Referral** to campus and community partners
- **Service-Learning** opportunities for volunteers
- **Education** on basic needs insecurity, budgeting, and financial planning

Center for Student Need: Staff & Partners

Staff
- Director for Student Need: Maintains and develops partnerships with donors, community organizations, and university departments, Advocates for Center and the students that it serves
- Assistant Director: Assists students in benefit enrollment and referrals, Maintains relationships with government partners, Develops programs designed to increase Center visibility
- Graduate Assistant for The Food Pantry: Logs inventory, coordinates donations, trains and schedules student volunteers, assists the AD in programming
- Student volunteers trained in confidentiality and best practices

Partnerships
- Basic Needs Task Force
- University Departments: Dean of Students, Housing and Residence Life, Dining Services, University Health Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, Academic Advising, First Generation INitiatives, Student Government
- Government and Community Partners

Phase 3: Moving Towards Sustainable Change

Intra-Divisional Initiatives
- Collaboration between departments to offer education, programming, resources, and support to students in relation to basic needs
    - Counseling and Psychological Services: Basic Needs Support Group
    - Add basic needs education to Orientation and Residential Learning curriculum
    - Center for Student Activities: Encourage donations of food, clothes, and toiletries at events or center events around donations

Inter-Divisional Initiatives
- Collaboration between departments to offer education, programming, resources, and support to students in relation to basic needs
    - Alumni Relations: Establishment of an alumni donation fund to provide for student needs
    - Parking Services: Food for Fines initiative
    - Academics: Include a Basic Needs statement in syllabi (Berman, as cited in Goldrick-Rab, 2018)
    - Office of Governmental Relations: Advocacy for legislation that supports students in need

Phase 3: Moving Towards Sustainable Change

Sustainable Community Partnerships
- Develop Memorandums of Understanding with community partners to solidify ongoing commitment
- Ensure sustainable service through consistent funneling of volunteers, as needed
- Collaboration between government assistance agencies to promote services

Research and Education
- Ongoing training for faculty, staff, and students on basic needs access, incorporated into New Staff Training
- Applications for grants and scholarships to conduct research into food insecurity and basic needs access and implement related initiatives

Reorganization of Meal Plan System
- To accommodate school, work, and co-curricular schedules, there will be no limitations on eating times,
- Development of a 24-hr campus dining option
- Access to healthy, nutritious, and culturally competent food options
- Mandatory enrollment in meal plans for live-on, first year students that accommodate three meals per day
- Consult with CUFBA and National Association of College and University Food Services

Conclusion

Our three-pronged plan to address food insecurity at Temple University makes effective use of initial funds to establish an ongoing system to support students in need.

- **Phase 1: Developing a Foundation** establishes a Task Force that is able to refer students of immediate concern while simultaneously designing and setting up necessary relationships and concrete initiatives.
- **Phase 2: Initiating Access** establishes the Center for Student Need, donation programs, and digital resources to assist students experiencing a range of basic need insecurities.
- **Phase 3: Moving Towards Sustainable Change** establishes structures and partnerships for continual growth and expanding access

"Hunger is a symptom of poverty, and a holistic approach is the only way to eradicate it. Those going hungry should not only get access to food on campus but should be directed toward community resources."

(Cady, 2016)

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