StudentAffairs.com 2020 Virtual Case Study Competition

Institution: Western Illinois University
Team Leader: Justin Conklin
Team Members: Lauren Hoover & Kelly Severs

Fontville College

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- Student Population: 19,500
- Location: Eastern, Coastal
- Public
- Live on requirement: 2 years
- Average financial award: $18,200

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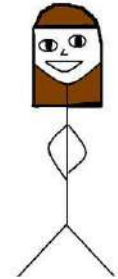**Fontville College**

Meet the Team

Justin
Director of Fontville
Mental Health
Resources

Kelly
Coordinator of
Student Activities

Lauren
Head of Campus
Dining

Pat
Director of
Residence Life

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Overview

Let's answer some common questions to better understand an issue on our campus

- What is food insecurity?
- Who is food insecure on college campuses?
- Why is there food insecurity on college campuses?
- What is the impact of food insecurity?
- What are the benefits of combating food insecurity?
- Q&A

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What is food insecurity?

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Food Insecurity Definition

- A limited or uncertain availability of nutritious and safe food (Payne-Sturges, et. al., 2018)

- A limited or uncertain availability to get acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (Payne-Sturges, et. al., 2018)

- Often a result of lack of money or other resources

- Characteristics including reduced caloric intake, not having access to healthy food, lack of variety in diet, hunger without eating, and reduced weight due to not consuming enough calories (USDA, 2014)

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What is food insecurity?

| Mild Food Insecurity | Moderate Food Insecurity | Severe Food Insecurity |

Worrying about the ability to obtain food

Compromising quality & variety of foods

Reducing amount of food, skipping meals

Experiencing hunger

(MSCSA, 2018)

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Who is food insecure on college campuses?

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Who is food insecure on college campuses?

- Incidence of food insecurity is higher among college students than the general population (Broton, Frank & Goldrick-Rab, 2014)

- **Anyone** can be food insecure, but certain populations are at a higher risk

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Who is food insecure on college campuses?
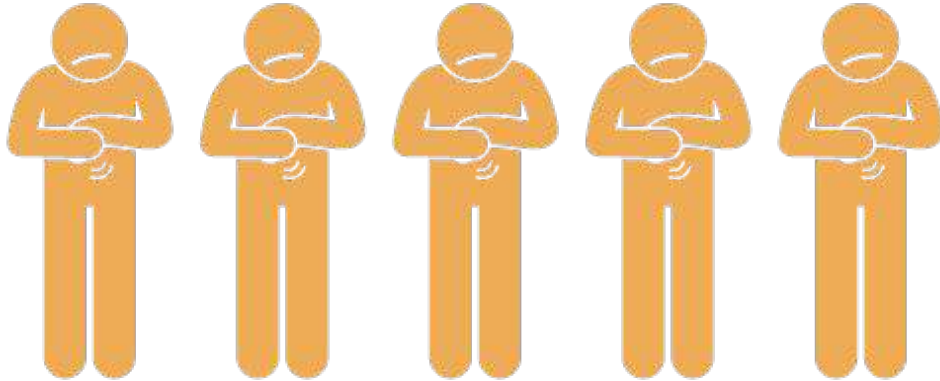
- Increased risk among:
  - Students whose families earn less than $20,000 annually
  - Students with poor health
  - Students that identify as Hispanic or Black
  - Financially independent students
  - Students who work more than 20 hours per week (Freudenberg et al., 2011)

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Why is there food insecurity on college campuses?

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Why is there food insecurity on college campuses?

- Most Americans can agree that college is too expensive (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2016)
- Beginning of the academic year can be stressful with tuition and fees due; books and school supplies to be bought; or even a security deposit to be put down for housing (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2016)

- According a study done of community college students, 40% of students were working but did not earn enough to cover tuition and living expenses (Lenhart & Petty, 2017)
- Students that might have received free or reduced lunch in high school do not have an equivalent in college

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What is the impact of food insecurity?

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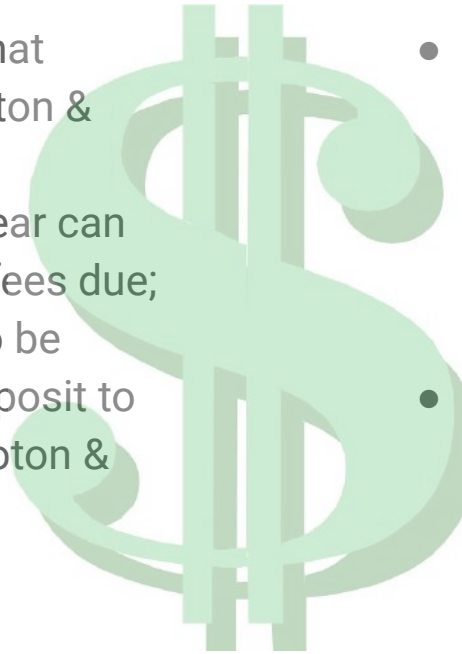
What is the impact of food insecurity?

- Associated with higher odds of mental health issues, unhealthy eating, and alcohol use behaviors (Bruening et. al., 2016)
- Lower academic achievement, behavioral and attention problems, & adverse psychosocial development
- Students are at greater risk of not completing their studies

- More likely than food secure students to report a low GPA (2.0–2.49) vs. a higher GPA (3.5–4.0) (Maroto et. al., 2015)
- Poverty and financial stress (causes of food insecurity) can lead to increased anxiety and detrimental impacts on mental health and suicidal ideation (Eisenberg et al. 2007; Woessner 2012)

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What are the benefits of combating food insecurity?

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Benefits of combating food insecurity

- Students report increased sense of belonging and integration when poverty alleviation supports are advertised as a normal resource (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2016)
- When students' basic needs are being met, their abilities to focus on higher level cognitive processes are amplified

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Thank You!

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End of first presentation

Operation Feed Fontville

A three-part approach to combat food insecurities at Fontville College addressing both immediate and long-term needs

Justin, Kelly, Lauren, & Pat

Fontville Food Insecurity Committee

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Overview

- Part One: Immediate Solution
  - #EatFreeFC
- Part Two: Short Term Solution
  - Campus Partnership with University Dining
- Part Three: Long Term Solution
  - Alternative Meal Plan

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Part One: #EatFreeFC

- Immediate solution
- All remaining or leftover food purchased with Fontville College dollars from any campus event will be brought to central office location for students to take
  - Location: Jaime's Student Activities Office, located in the Student Union
  - Food will be available for pick-up within 1-2 business days of drop-off
  - Student Activities student staff and volunteers will distribute food to students on a first-come, first-serve basis
  - A post will be created using the hashtag when food is brought to the office

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- When free food is available at Fontville College programs and events they will use the hashtag in promotions
- $1,000 of the budget will be used to buy a fridge to prevent overnight food spoilage, additional shelving to store non-perishables, and giveaway tupperware

#EatFreeFC

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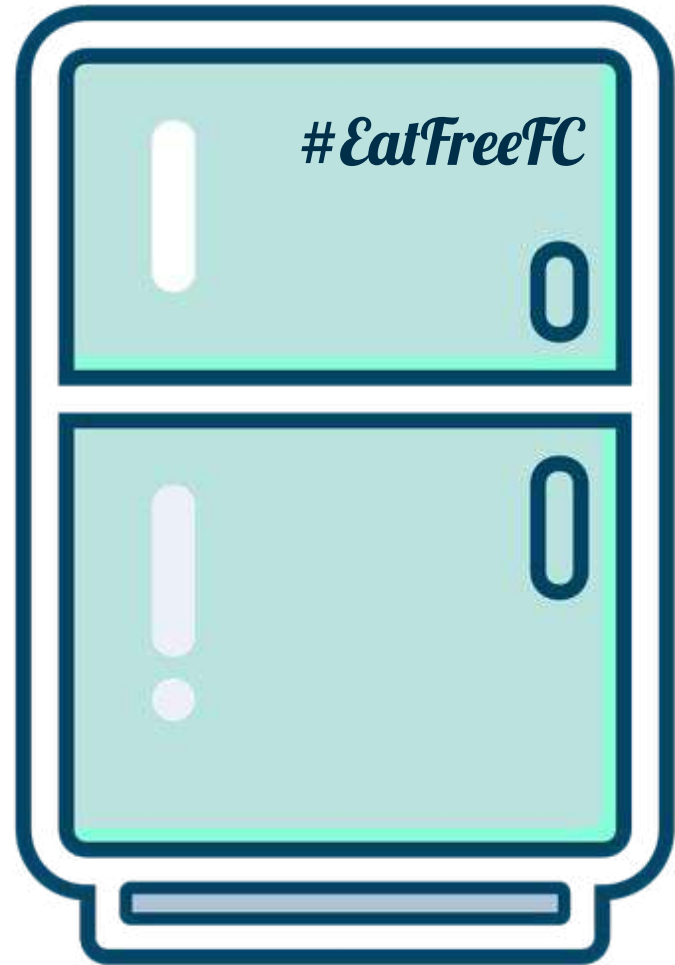
Part One: #EatFreeFC

- Benefits
    - Keeps institution dollars in house
    - Increases foot traffic to Student Union and Student Activities Office
    - Fast identification of students with continual need; can push toward additional resources
- Evaluation Plan
    - Track how many times the hashtag is used within first 2 months
    - At the end of each week count the number of tupperware containers left to know how many are being taken
    - Student staff will tally the number of students coming in

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# Part Two: Campus Partnership with University Dining

- Short-term Solution

- Dining Centers will offer 3 "deal of the day" options where one entree will be offered for a cheaper rate at each meal time throughout the semester

- Reduced rate meals provide a nutritious food option while still encouraging students utilize on campus dining facilities

- Head of Campus Dining has worked with campus food providers to adapt contracts for the remainder of the academic year to accommodate
  - This language will be negotiated into the next contract

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Part Two: Campus Partnership with University Dining

- Next day meals will be offered at a deeply discounted rate (60% off regular price)
  - Served daily from 12-3PM in one centrally located dining center
  - First-come/first-serve basis
  - $1,500.00 of budget will be used to assist with the purchase of "make and take" reusable containers, reusable silverware, and reprogramming cashier system
  - Students who bring a reusable container will receive an additional 10% discount
  - Students may make & take up to 1 meal per meal time
- Serving next day meals our campus will contribute to sustainability efforts by reducing food waste created in dining centers and providing a unique way to serve our students with food insecurities

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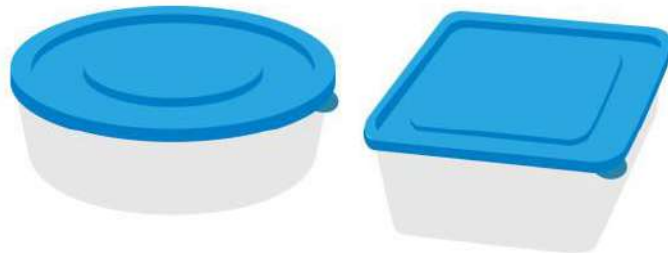
Part Two: Campus Partnership with University Dining
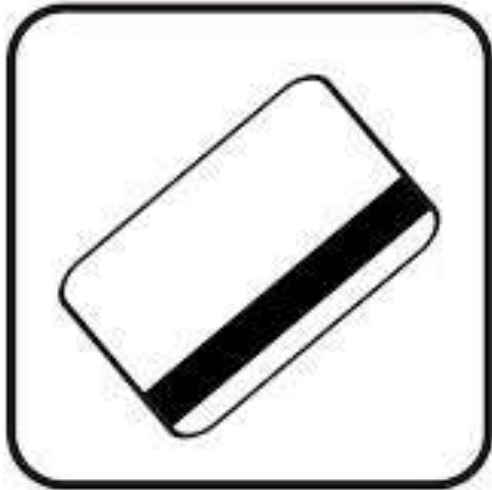
- Evaluation Plan
  - Cashier swiping system will be updated with "Next Day" & "Deal of the Day" buttons for cashiers to press when those meals are bought
  - Reports can be pulled calculating how many students are utilizing either option

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Part Three: Alternative Meal Plan

- Long-term solution
- Each meal swipe has a monetary value of $10
- Funds that are unused from meal plans at the end of the academic year will be put into an "Alternative Meal Plan" Account

- Students that feel they cannot afford a traditional Meal Plan can apply for the alternative meal plan
- Meal plans will be distributed Based on need determined by application
  - 5, 10, or 15 meal/week plan offered

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Part Three: Alternative Meal Plan

- Evaluation Plan
    - Track how many students apply
    - Track how many meals students use vs the amount they are receiving
        - Data used to assess meal plan quantities received
    - Monitor budget
        - Funds coming in from rollover
        - Funds going out/being used

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Marketing

- $500.00 of budget will go toward marketing, this includes:
  - Flyers advertising the initiative
  - Giveaways
  - Make & Take containers will have initiative logo, hashtag, and contact information
  - Sandwich board to identify "Next Day Meals" location in the dining center

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Thank You!

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Fontville College

StudentAffairs.com 2020 Virtual Case Study: Narrative Supplement

Justin Conklin, Lauren Hoover, and Kelly Severs

Western Illinois University

StudentAffairs.com Virtual Case Study Competition: Narrative Supplement

The purpose of this paper is to expand upon the materials presented in the previous slides. We will discuss some background on the topic of food insecurity, our theoretical framework for approaching this case study and the rationalization for our program.

Background

Payne-Sturges, et. al. (2018), defines food insecurity in two ways; a limited or uncertain availability to safe and nutritious food or the limited access to get safe and nutritious foods in a socially acceptable manner. While it's hard to understand that students across the nation are experiencing this type of stress, research shows that it is all too common; according to Henry (2017) 14-59% of college students experienced food insecurity at some point throughout their college experience. It is the opinion of our team that institutions of higher education are responsible, to some degree, for providing nutritious and financially accessible meal options for students. Poverty and financial stress can lead to increased anxiety and detrimental impacts on mental health (Eisenberg et al. 2007; Woessner 2012, as cited in Henry, 2017). Financial and mental stress puts students at a greater risk for not completing their academic studies. With this knowledge, it is our duty to combat poverty and financial stress to ensure the physical and mental health of all students and increasing retention.

Theoretical Framework

There were a couple of theories that framed our approach and offered insights to factors affecting students and how to address food insecurities. First, by grounding our program development in Maslow's Hierarchy of needs we developed an understanding of the importance of basic needs being met in order to obtain higher levels of thinking and achievement. Maslow

theorized that needs are arranged in sequential order of importance, and that needs at lower levels must be met before addressing the next level (Satter, 2007). This directly applies to students that are food insecure, their basic physiological needs are not being met so they are not able to address their higher level needs necessary to do well in college.

Part One: #EatFreeFC

When thinking about this project we wanted to do something that could immediately begin helping students have their basic needs met. This made us think of all the events happening on campus everyday where food is usually available for free, and we wanted to make sure there was a way students could search for opportunities based on where food was available. In addition, a lot of food that is not eaten during these events goes to waste when it could be made available to students. Based on our research, students felt increased belonging and integration when poverty alleviation supports were advertised as a normal resource (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2016). We felt that that including this hashtag when events are already being promoted, as well as advertising when there is leftover food available is part of destigmatizing food insecurity, and normalizing these resources. The committee will work to create a guide to send out to departments for what to do with their leftover food. When there is food leftover from events, it will be taken to the Student Activities office which is centrally located. Students have cited that lack of transportation is a significant barrier to accessing food (Henry, 2017), so we found it important to put food in locations close to where students already are.

Part Two: Campus Partnership with University Dining

It is unrealistic for campus professionals to believe students can achieve the higher levels of thinking needed to succeed when basic, lower level needs are going unmet. To empower

students to succeed, we need to directly combat hunger and lack of availability to nutritious meal options; to do this our team developed a partnership with University Dining. This aspect of our three-tiered initiative is focused on increasing inexpensive meal availability for students through two approaches.

First, a centrally located dining center will offer three "meal deals" each week. These meals will be the same every week, to provide consistency, but are subject to change each semester. This aspect of the program is aimed at offering consistent nutritious meal options that students can afford. Examples of meal options are Taco Tuesday: one taco with all toppings provided, Chopped Wednesday: lettuce salad with protein, toppings, and salad dressing, and Fresh Friday: grilled chicken breast and side of steamed vegetable. All meal options are offered for at least 25% off of the regular menu price.

The second part of our campus partnership comes in the form of next day meals. One food service station in the dining center will always be a next day meal station that will provide reduced meal options, 60-70% off menu price. The food sold will be left over meals from the day before, in order to provide our students with another reduced rate food option, and help fight against campus-wide food waste. Dining center staff will be appropriately trained in dating food, and no food will be sold two days past its original cook date.

In order to ensure the success of these programs, initial investments are going to be made; $1,500 will be used to purchase a dining center station sign, reprogramming of the cashier system, and reusable containers for students. The sign will increase awareness for the next day meal food station. Reprogramming of the cashier system is necessary for evaluation and purchase of these new meals. When reprogramming, a "deal of the day" button and "next day

meal" button will be created on the register. When pushed by the cashier, a list of the daily

semester options will populate and the corresponding meal can be selected. When selected, a

menu will populate allowing the cashier to select if the student is using a dining center container

or has brought a reusable container from home which results in an additional 10% off.

Part Three: Alternative Meal Plan

After addressing immediate and short term needs, our team wanted to find a long term

solution. Addressing campus food insecurity would not but complete without thorough

examination of the current meal plan systems in place. According to Mathewson (2017), the

average cost of university and college meal plans are approximately $4,500 an academic year

($18.75 per day). This is significantly more than the annual $3,989 ($11 per day) the Bureau of

Labor Statistics (2015) report of what the average person spends on food in a 12 month year.

This means institutions are charging students 70% more than what the students would spend

without a meal plan. In addition to the costliness of campus dining, a significant portion of the

meals they are paying for up front are not being used by the end of the year. A study at New

York University indicated that between the 523 survey participants, 45,399 meal swipes had

gone unused by the end of the year, equalling about one third of the meals that had been paid for

(Chin, 2013). Similar to many institutions, the swipes expire at the end of the year. With meal

swipes averaging to be $10 per swipe, that is a total of $453,990 worth of unused swipes the

survey accounted for.

Our program repurposes these leftover funds from unused swipes to be the financial

foundation of our long-term plan in combating food insecurity. Students are automatically

enrolled to have their unused swipes added into this fund, but they are able to opt-out on their

housing application. With our budgetary source identified, we propose an alternative meal plan

that students may apply for instead of selecting one of the costly traditional meal plan options.

This application will include questions regarding their personal income, parental/household

income, obligatory expenditures, as well as financial aid received. Based on the information

provided, a determination of the amount of dining hall swipes per week (5, 10, or 15) will be

provided free of charge. By swiping their Student I.D. card, approved students will be in order

to receive their free meal, capping at 3 swipes per day (1 per meal time).

Conclusion

Food insecurity remains a largely stigmatized issue on college campuses. We believe that

our first presentation successfully addresses many of the common questions and misconceptions

that faculty, staff and students have about food insecurity. Once there is a better understanding of

food insecurity, who it affects, and the effects it has on college campuses, we believe

implementing our three-step initiative will make a significant impact on the lives of many

students at Fontville College.

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