

## Introduction

Food insecurity is defined as the lack of reliable access to sufficient quantities of affordable, nutritious food. Recent reports have found that food insecurity is a growing, and often overlooked concern for college students. The lack of adequate food is likely negatively impacting the academic achievement of a large percentage of US college students. A recent report of food insecurity among US college students found that 48% of respondents had some level of food insecurity, and that 22% had very low levels of food security, qualifying them as hungry<sup>1</sup>.

The report also identified that surprisingly, food insecurity exists in both 2 and 4 year colleges, and exists even among students who have a job, receive a meal plan, receive financial aid, and/or use aid services such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps)<sup>1</sup>.

At the University of Washington, the prevalence of food insecurity.....

Hunger has become a more common issues for students due to the increase in tuition costs and the rising cost of living in Seattle.

## The UW Food Pantry

In Spring 2016, the University of Washington launched its first food pantry, in an attempt to address the prevalent food insecurity concerns among students. Over 2,000 items were collected to be distributed at the three pilot pantries, which collectively served 114 students. The food pantry continued into Fall 2016 quarter, with locations at both the HUB and the Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC). [relevant stats about fall quarter that should be included??]

## Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

In a survey administered last May to patrons of the pilot UW Food Pantry, the most frequently requested items for the pantry were fruits, vegetables, and soup. More recent surveys from three pantries in Fall Quarter 2016 also found that fresh fruit and vegetables were requested frequently. With fresh fruits and vegetables often being more expensive than other processed foods, it is understandable that food insecure students have less access to those items, and therefore request them from the food pantry.

The national report recommended community gardens as one way to increase access to fresh fruit and vegetables for food insecure students<sup>1</sup>. There are numerous health benefits of fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as a high demand among pantry users for fresh produce. Because of this, we believe an investment should be made to establish a partnership with the existing University of Washington student-run farm. This partnership would provide the pantry with the nutritious fresh produce students want, and help to provide a balanced diet. Often individuals

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<sup>1</sup> Dubick James, Mathews Brandon, Cady Clare. Hunger on Campus; The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students. October 2016. College and University Food Bank Alliance, National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness, Student Government Resource Center, and Student Public Interest Research Groups. Retrieved from <http://www.cufba.org/report-hunger-on-campus/>.

who are food insecure limit fresh produce consumption before other items because of its expense and the fact that it may spoil. Campus food pantries should make an effort to provide these items to students who otherwise do not have access them, due to their many health benefits.

### **The UW Farm**

The University of Washington Farm is a student-run farm with three different growing spaces on campus whose mission is to promote the study and practice of urban agriculture and sustainability. The UW Farm is working to expand their scope to help address food access issues for students.

In Fall 2016, the UW Farm has on one occasion provided produce donations to the pantry, and on another occasion pantry volunteers came to the farm to glean produce for the pantry. The produce was very well received by patrons of the pantry. While these initiatives were successful at providing a one-time supply of produce, a more sustainable arrangement is needed for produce to be offered consistently at the pantry.

Donation of produce is unfortunately not a reliable way to ensure all patrons of the food pantry have access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The produce available at UW Farm varies greatly based on time of the season and obligation to provide to paying customers such as CSA members and Housing and Food Service.

### **Project Description**

The proposed project would be a formal partnership between UW Farm and the UW Food Pantry. If funding is granted, the pantry could purchase produce from the farm, which is necessary for the farm to guarantee a consistent supply of produce. The funding is used to dedicate space and staff time to grow and harvest produce specifically for the pantry. This would allow not only for the quantity of produce needed, but would also ensure the diversity of crops provided.

For food insecure students, fresh produce is arguably the most difficult to access due to its price relative to other processed options. But fresh produce is essential to a healthy diet. The food pantry is committed to providing a diverse supply of nutritious foods to students, but this is only possible with additional funding to ensure fresh produce is available at each pantry.

### **Pricing Details:**

Laurne: this is where you can decide how much produce you would like to have at each pantry to determine exactly how much money to request. Is the estimate of 20-50 people per pantry accurate?

The information I got from Sarah is based on CSA pricing: produce for a week for 4 people is \$30. So...

- One week's worth of produce for one person is \$7.50
- The pantry serves approximately 20-50 people per pantry (\$150-\$375 per pantry)
- There are 2 pantries per month (300-750)
- 900-2250 per quarter

BUT, the pantry is meant to supplement the diet, not provide ALL the produce needed. So if you wanted supplemental produce for one week, the above numbers could be cut roughly in half.

- \$450 - \$1125 per quarter.