Addressing College Students' Basic Needs

Food and Housing Insecurity on Campus

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Student Affairs Forum

The "Starving College Student"

Outdated Stereotypes Shape Public Perception of Struggling Students

Widespread Misperceptions Abound

Skimps on Meals to Buy Beer

"I remember many nights where I traded dinner for beer money!"

Eats Ramen Because They Like It

"They could always go to the dining hall if they're really hungry."

Works to Supplement Spending Money

"I worked through college too…kids these days are just spoiled."

Access to Additional Resources

"They're paying tuition, they can't really be hungry."

❝

A No-Win Situation

"For many people, it's a **contradiction in terms – homeless college student.** If you're a college student, you had to be with it enough to get yourself into college, so obviously you can't be homeless."

Paul Toro
Professor of Psychology
Wayne State University

❞

Contrasting Stereotypes with Reality

Hunger and Housing Insecurity a Real Problem for Today's Students

College-Going at an All-Time High...

17% Growth in **undergraduate enrollment** in the U.S., 2004 - 2014

2X Number of **FT university students** in Canada has doubled since 1980

...But No Longer the Ticket Out of Poverty

" Students and families all over the country are saving, working, taking out loans… Yet they still find themselves facing an unreasonably high price for college, **and fall short of the resources they need to successfully complete degrees.** Unexpected costs, even those that might appear modest in size, can derail students from families lacking financial cushions."

The Real Price of College
The Century Foundation

Alarming Prevalence of Basic Needs Insecurity

36%
Of students at four-year institutions in the U.S. qualify as having low food security

64%
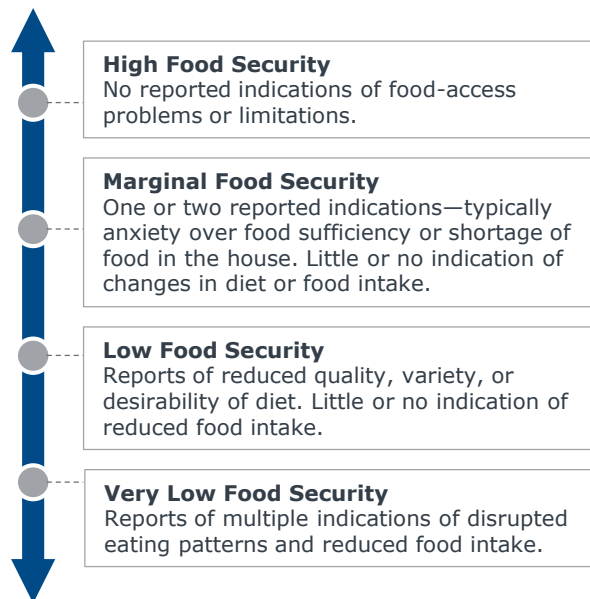Of food insecure students also experience housing insecurity

39%
Of Canadian university students experience food insecurity

Source: NCES Digest of Education Statistics: 2015, retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/ch_3.asp; Goldrick-Rab, Sara; Richardson, Jed; Hernandez, Anthony; and Clare Cady. *Still Hungry and Homeless in College*. 2018. Dubick, James, Brandon Mathews, and Clare Cady. *Hunger on Campus*. 2016; Silverthorn, Drew. Hungry for knowledge. 2016. Toronto: Meal Exchange; Goldrick-Rab, Sara, Kendall, Nancy. *The Real Price of College.* 2016. The Century Foundation; EAB interviews and analysis.

Speaking the Same Language

Key Terms and Definitions We Will Reference

Range of Food Security

USDA Economic Research Service

High Food Security
No reported indications of food-access problems or limitations.

Marginal Food Security
One or two reported indications—typically anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diet or food intake.

Low Food Security
Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.

Very Low Food Security
Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

Indicators of Housing Insecurity

Experienced any of the following in the last 12 months…

- Had difficulty paying rent
- Didn't pay full cost of rent
- Moved in with others, even briefly, because of financial problems
- Didn't pay full cost of utility bills
- Borrowed money to help pay bills
- Moved two or more times

Indicators of Homelessness

Experienced any of the following in the last 12 months…

- Didn't know where you were going to sleep, even for one night
- Stayed in any place not meant for regular housing, even for one night
- Evicted from home
- Thrown out of home by someone else in the household because of financial problems
- Didn't have a home
- Stayed in a shelter

Source: USDA Economic Research Service. Retrieved from https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security/. Dubick, James, Brandon Mathews, and Clare Cady. *Hunger on Campus*. 2016.

Who Is the Basic Needs Insecure Student?

Three Groups of Students Struggling on Campus

1

Chronically Poor

Increased access brings more low-income students to college

↓

51%

Of K-12 students in U.S. public schools who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch

2

Newly Struggling

High costs overextend middle-class families, so basic needs insecurity is often just one unforeseen expense away

↓

57%

Percentage of food insecure students in the University of California system for whom hunger was a new phenomenon

3

In Crisis

Some students unexpectedly lose necessary support (e.g., LGBTQ students, victims of domestic violence)

↓

39%

Of LGBT individuals say they were rejected by a family member or close friend

Source: Rich, M., "Percentage of Poor Students in Public Schools Rises," The New York Times, January 16, 2015; *Student Food Access and Security Study,* University of California, 2016. EAB interviews and analysis.

Consistent Findings Across Institutional Sizes and Types

U.S. Public Institutions

42%
Of students report low food security at a **large system**

21%
Of students report low food security at a **mid-sized research university**

U.S. Private Institutions

23%
Of students report some level of food insecurity at a **small private institution**

22%
Of students experienced very low food security at a **mid-sized, very selective university**

Canadian Institutions

15%
Of students report severe food insecurity at a **small research university** in Canada

30%
Of students experience some level of food insecurity at a **large research university**

Source: Anderson, Nick. "*For the Poor in the Ivy League, a Full Ride Isn't Always What They Imagined."* Washington Post. May 16, 2016. Hungry for knowledge: Assessing the prevalence of student food insecurity on five Canadian campuses. Toronto: Meal Exchange. Martinez, Susanna, Maynard, Katie, and Lorrene Ritchie. *Student Food Access and Security Study*. University of California. 2016. *"Starving College Student" Is Not a Joke: Changing the Culture Around Food Insecurity on Campus*. University of Nevada, Reno. EAB interviews and analysis.

Looking Down the Pipeline

Urgency of Addressing Basic Needs Will Continue to Escalate

Increasingly Diverse Make-Up of Post-Secondary Enrollment

National Center for Education Statistics

	White	Black	Hispanic
1974	84%	10%	4%
2014	58%	14%	17%

■ 1974 ■ 2014
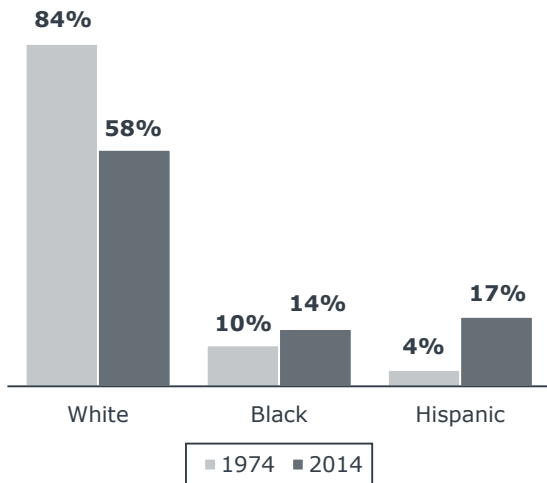
Need Will Grow in the Years Ahead

9%
Of white students in four-year colleges come from food insecure households

16%
Of Hispanic students in four-year colleges come from food insecure households

18%
Of black students in four-year colleges come from food insecure households

56%
Of Aboriginal post-secondary students in Canada experience food insecurity

Whatever the Cause, the Consequences Are Real

Severe Personal and Physical Impacts for Basic Needs Insecure Students

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
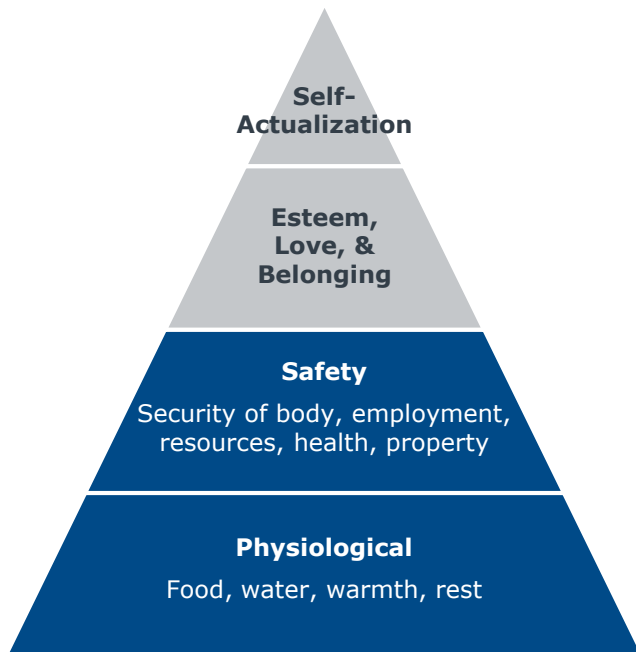
Under-Resourced Students Face Constraints on Their Time and Focus

*"When I leave the dining hall I take an apple or a banana with me. I always think ahead about food – **it never leaves my mind."***

Self-Actualization

Esteem, Love, & Belonging

*"I'll take photos of a textbook with more than 500 page **so I can avoid buying it**. It takes hours but you get into a rhythm."*

Safety
Security of body, employment, resources, health, property

*"Trying to do homework when you **haven't eaten in 70 hours** is not going to happen."*

Physiological
Food, water, warmth, rest

*"**I never know if I'll have quiet**, or an internet connection at night, so I try to get as much done as I can during the day."*

Source: Anderson, Nick. "*For the Poor in the Ivy League, a Full Ride Isn't Always What They Imagined."* Washington Post. May 16, 2016. Sj, Taylor. *This is What It's Like to Be Homeless in College."* Vice. July 23, 2015. EAB interviews and analysis.

Institutional Priorities Around Student Outcomes

Stress and Anxiety Levels

Early Academic Indicators

A+ **Academic Performance**

Retention

55%
Of students with very low food security also report symptoms of clinical depression

25%
Of basic needs insecure students consequentially drop a class

15X
Higher chance food insecure students will fail a class

<20%
Of basic needs insecure students will graduate in five years

Source: Goldrick-Rab, S., Broton, K., and Eisenberg, D., *Hungry to Learn: Addressing Food & Housing Insecurity Among Undergraduates*, Wisconsin Hope Lab, 2015; Dubick, James, Brandon Mathews, and Clare Cady. *Hunger on Campus*. 2016. Retrieved from http://studentsagainsthunger.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Hunger_On_Campus.pdf; Goldrick-Rab, S., *Paying the* Price, 2016; EAB interviews and analysis.

Our Focus Today

Four Ways to Strengthen Support For Basic Needs Insecure Students

Reduce Barriers to Accessing Support

Connect Students With Surplus Campus Resources

Build a Campus-Wide Referral Network

Create a Mechanism to Identify and Support Students

But Students Face Additional Challenges in Seeking Help

Public Support Programs Abound...

TANF — Temporary Assistance Programs

Head Start — Child Care

WIC — Women and Children Programs

SNAP — Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

WorkBC — Support for Young Families

...But Many Barriers Prevent Students From Accessing Benefits

❌ Lack of awareness

❌ Fear of social stigma

❌ Perception of benefits as charity

❌ Assumption of ineligibility

❌ Arduous application process

Reducing the Information Gap

University of California Berkeley's Basic Needs Resource Portal

Resources Exist in the Community...

Food pantry

Emergency housing

Clothing donation center

...And on Campus

Emergency grants
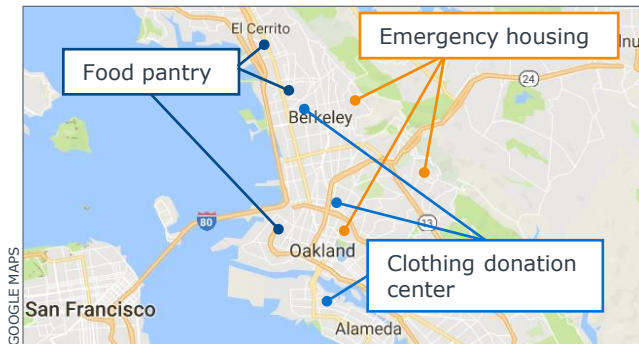
Student legal services
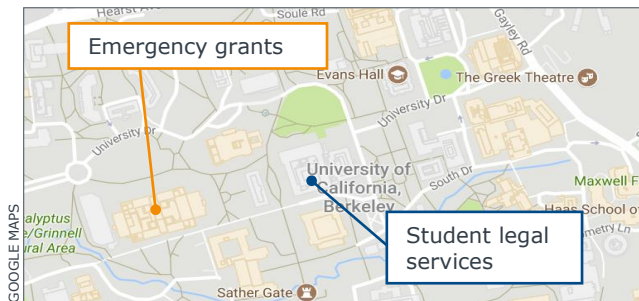
Key Steps in Creating the Portal

1 **Inventory Available Local Resources**
Basic Needs Committee engages in one-time audit of available resources for students experiencing food and/or housing insecurity

2 **Centralize Information Online**
Resources are compiled and organized into an easily accessible web portal

3 **Publicize Resource Portal**
Educate campus partners about website and market widely across campus

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Easy Access to Streamlined Information

User-Friendly Design Empowers Students to Access Support

WELCOME TO UC BERKELEY'S BASIC NEEDS SECURITY HUB!

BASIC NEEDS AREAS OF FOCUS

food security | housing security | financial security | crisis resolution

mental & emotional wellness | safety | accessibility

✓ **Easy to Navigate**

Categorize comprehensive list of resources into areas of focus

✓ **Self-Accessible**

Provide students crucial information without needing to visit an office or talk to a staff person

✓ **Clear Next Steps**

Compile information to ease benefits access (e.g., hours, public transportation options)

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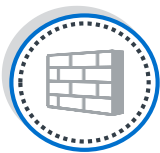
Reduce Barriers to Accessing Support

Connect Students With Surplus Campus Resources
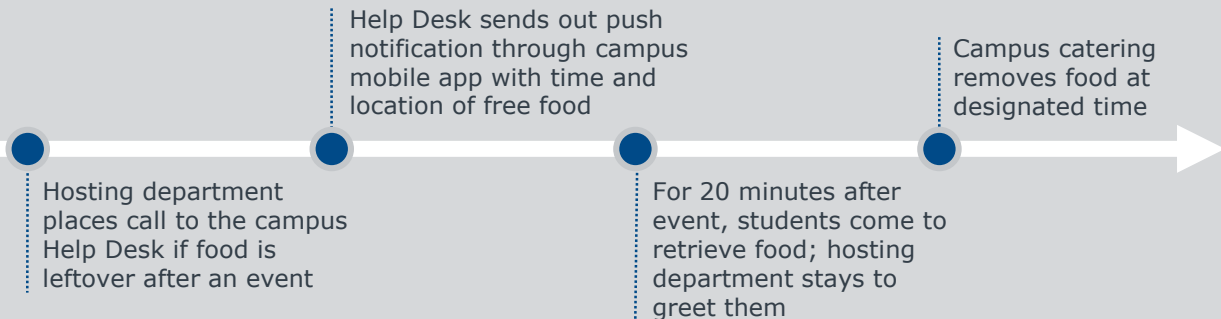
Build a Campus-Wide Referral Network

Create a Mechanism to Identify and Support Students

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Coordinated Efforts to Distribute Surplus Food

Fresno State's Catered Cupboard Makes It Easy to Participate

Streamlined and Efficient Process for All Involved Parties

Help Desk sends out push notification through campus mobile app with time and location of free food

Campus catering removes food at designated time

Hosting department places call to the campus Help Desk if food is leftover after an event

For 20 minutes after event, students come to retrieve food; hosting department stays to greet them

Keys to Success

Convenient for Students and Departments

Students find out about free food on campus in real time, and departments reduce food waste

Targeted Recruitment

Outreach was targeted toward the 20 departments that use catering most frequently

Integrated with Fresno State App

Leverages connection the university already has with students

Fresno State Uses Mobile App with Push Notifications

1 **Featured Prominently on App Main Page**

2 **Authentication Required to Verify Student Status**

3 **Push Notification Alerts Students to Food on Campus**
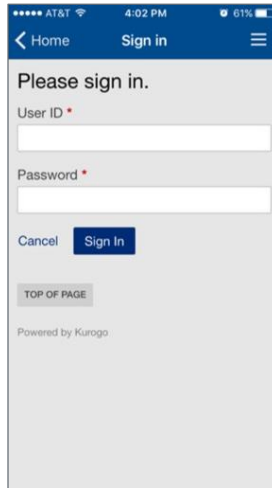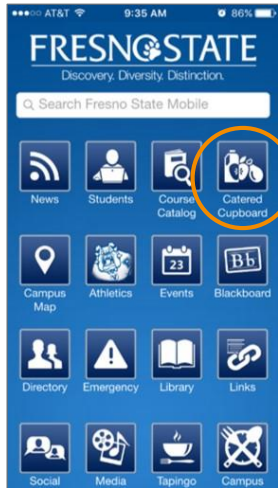
5 Events with leftover food advertised on app **each day**

Reaching Students Where They Are

Social Media Campaigns Connect Students with Leftover Food

Rochester Institute of Technology's FoodShare Facebook Group

Organizations (e.g., student clubs, academic departments) post to the group when there is leftover food

Group promoted in presentations to student groups, faculty senate, staff council, different student affairs divisions

2,742 Members of RIT FoodShare Group

5-7 Average number of posts per day in RIT FoodShare Group

Connecting Students with Each Other

NYU's Share Meals App Facilitates Direct Connections

NYU

Student-Created App Enables Shared Meal Swipes

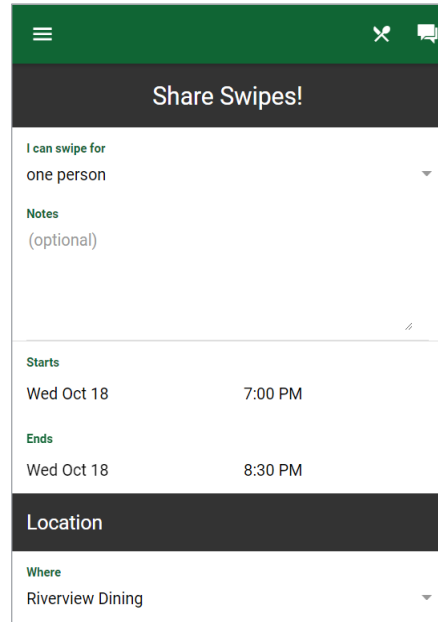Students download Share Meals app **to offer or claim swipes** into the dining hall

Student with excess meals **meets student who needs swipe** in dining hall

Social media, word of mouth, press coverage, and tabling **promote usage**

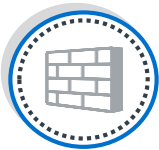**600** Meal swipes offered through Share Meals in 2016-2017

Share Meals Mobile App

Share Swipes!

I can swipe for
one person

Notes
(optional)

Starts
Wed Oct 18   7:00 PM

Ends
Wed Oct 18   8:30 PM

Location

Where
Riverview Dining

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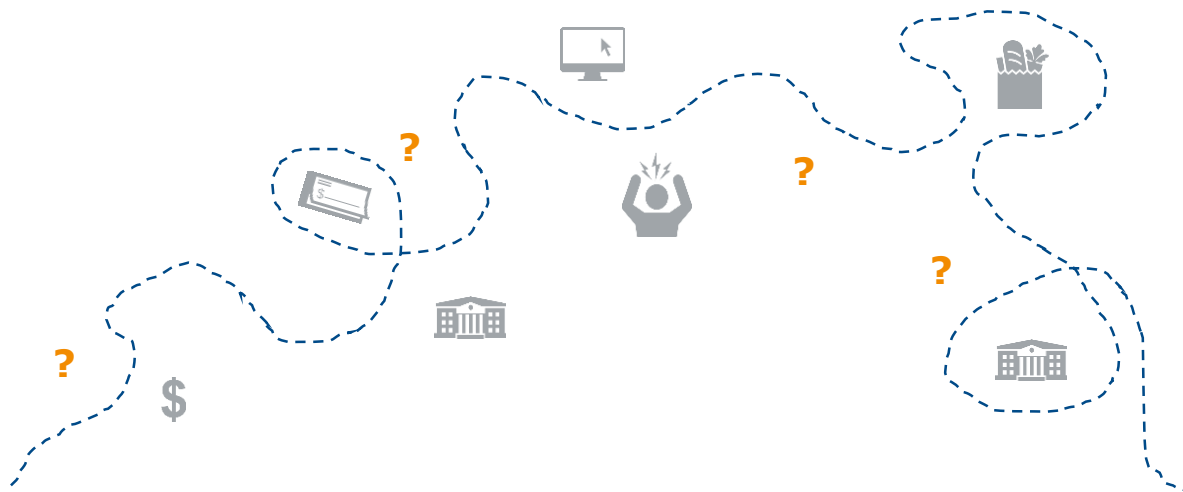
Build a Campus-Wide Referral Network

Create a Mechanism to Identify and Support Students

A Reactive and Ad Hoc Status Quo

Current Approach Focuses on Troubleshooting Issues as They Arise

Students Experience a Maze of Unconnected Support Options

1 **Decentralized**

Resources are available through various offices and staff across campus

2 **Siloed**

There is often little knowledge sharing between offices providing support

3 **Ad Hoc**

Interventions are often tailored to a specific student situation, rather than holistic support

Campus-Wide Efforts to Build Student Awareness

Current Efforts Only Scratching the Surface

A Wide Range of Student-Facing Efforts...
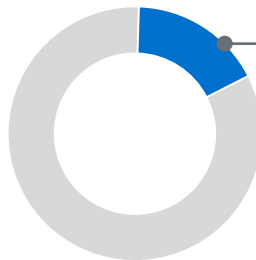
Orientation Presentations

Tabling on Campus

Class or Club Presentations

Office Tours

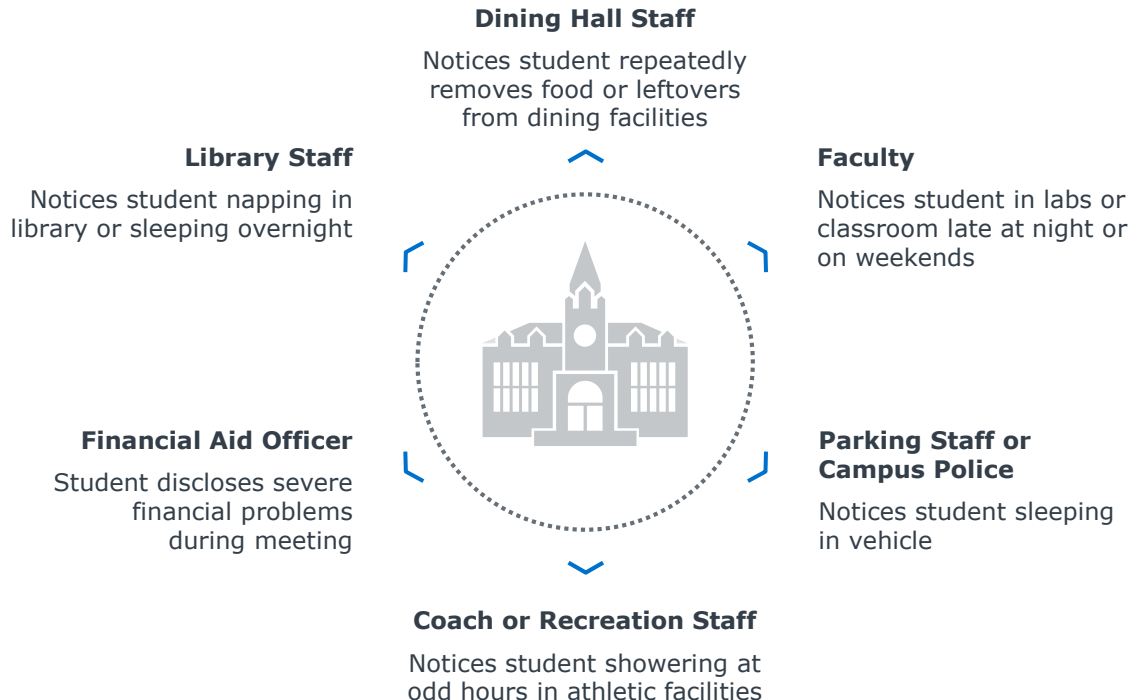**...But Most Students Still Not Connecting with Needed Resources**

17%

Percent of food-insecure students who reported using a campus food pantry

Tap Into Network of Information Across the Campus Community

Dining Hall Staff

Notices student repeatedly removes food or leftovers from dining facilities

Library Staff

Notices student napping in library or sleeping overnight

Faculty

Notices student in labs or classroom late at night or on weekends

Financial Aid Officer

Student discloses severe financial problems during meeting

Parking Staff or Campus Police

Notices student sleeping in vehicle

Coach or Recreation Staff

Notices student showering at odd hours in athletic facilities

Make It Easy to Make Referrals

Equip Frontline Partners with Plug-and-Play Tools to Facilitate Referrals

UCLA's Basic Needs Referral Postcard

Financial Wellness Program distributes Basic Needs Referral Postcards to key frontline partners

Postcards highlight a few critical resources and where to go for more support

Staff members distribute postcards to students they suspect are struggling with basic needs

SECURITY CARD

Food Resources for Hungry Bruins

1. **CPO Food Closet**
   Student Activities Center 111 | M-F 8am-6pm
   http://www.cpo.ucla.edu/cpo/foodcloset/
2. **580 Café**
   Wesley Foundation serving UCLA
   580 Café @ 580 Hilgard (St. Alban's Church)
   Mon-Thu 9-6, Fri 9-3
   Face Book: 580 Café Phone: 310.909.4471
3. **UCLA Meal Vouchers**
   Distribution Locations: BRC, Dashew Center, CPO, LGBT Center
   ecr@saonet.ucla.edu
4. **CalFresh and General Relief Applications**
   dpss.lacounty.gov
   Questions? Email uclacalfresh@gmail.com
5. **Dial 211**
   Community food banks and resources.
   http://www.211.org/services/food

Financial Wellness Program
financialwellness@saonet.ucla.edu

Economic Crisis Response Team
ecr@saonet.ucla.edu

www.financialwellness.ucla.edu

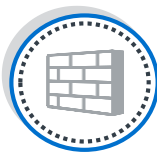UCLA Financial Wellness Program

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Postcards Distributed Widely to Staff

- Residential life
- Financial aid/bursar staff
- Center for international students
- Student legal services
- Academic counseling
- Special populations center

Our Focus Today

Four Ways to Strengthen Support For Basic Needs Insecure Students

Reduce Barriers to Accessing Support

Connect Students With Surplus Campus Resources

Build a Campus-Wide Referral Network

Create a Mechanism to Identify and Support Students

Bring Structure to Existing Campus-Wide Efforts

Cross-Campus Teams Provide Coordination and Clarity

UCLA's Economic Crisis Response Team (ECRT)

The ECRT provides support and guidance to students who have self-identified, or been identified by faculty or staff, as experiencing a financial crisis that impacts their academic success.

ECRT Triages Support for At-Risk Students

1 Identify
Team coordinator intakes referrals and collects case details

2 Consult
Team meets bi-weekly to discuss new cases and recommend resources

3 Support
Team connects students with appropriate resources and follow-up support

- Meal Vouchers
- Emergency or Crisis Housing
- Emergency Loans and Grants
- Advocacy and Other Support

✔ Centralized "one stop shop" model encourages and facilitates referrals

✔ Coordinated access to resources and personalized support

Diverse Team Composition Expands Campus Reach

Team Make-Up Reflects Common Constituencies Served

Economic Crisis Response Team Members

Residential Life

Financial Aid & Loan Services

Academic Affairs

Specialty Offices
- Former Foster Youth
- Veterans Center
- International Student Services
- Multicultural Center
- Transfer Student Services

Key Benefits

Broad campus awareness of team and its work

Access to diverse perspectives and resources

Expanded touchpoints to identify and serve students in need

ECRT's Growing Impact

50

Students served by the ECRT per week

4X

Increase in caseload since 2009 launch

Bringing This Research Back to Your Campus

Resources from the Student Affairs Forum

Basic Needs Insecurity Resource Center

Executive Briefing

Ready-to-go resource for senior leaders that explains the current state of affairs on campus and what institutions are doing to meet students' demand

Webinar Series

Each section spotlighted in 30- to 45-minute webinar sessions; perfect for team meetings and brown-bag workshops

Book-Length Publication

Every best practice from the study compiled in a bound publication, featuring guidance and worksheets for your team

Implementation Toolkit

Templates and examples from profiled institutions help student affairs leaders avoid "reinventing the wheel" and streamline new initiatives

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