

Empty Plates. Full Loads.

Food Insecurity and Homelessness at an HBCU

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Cooperative Extension Program



Purpose

The purpose of this research project was to

- Assess the nature and extent of the problem of food insecurity on a regional college campus and it's relationship to academic success, co-morbidity issues, and financial impact to the institution.
- Develop strategies and policies to address the problem.

Purpose

Understand food insecurity at a historically black college and university (HBCU).

- Beliefs
- Behaviors
- Attitudes
- Conditions
 - Provide “value” added services to students in need.

Problem

- Food insecurity is the **"state of being without adequate access to a sufficient quantity of nutritious food."**
- In a recent study of college campuses, researchers found that 47 percent of those that they surveyed had issues of food insecurity and **32 percent of those who were "food insecure" faced academic problems** (Dubick, Matthews, & Cady 2016).
- No studies have examined **Historically Black Colleges and Universities.**

Hunger on College Campuses

56%

First
Generation
Food
Insecure

48%

Food
Insecure

22%

Very
Hungry

57%

African
American Food
Insecurity

Source: Dubick, Matthews, & Cady (2016). "Hunger on College Campuses".

Hunger Impacts Success

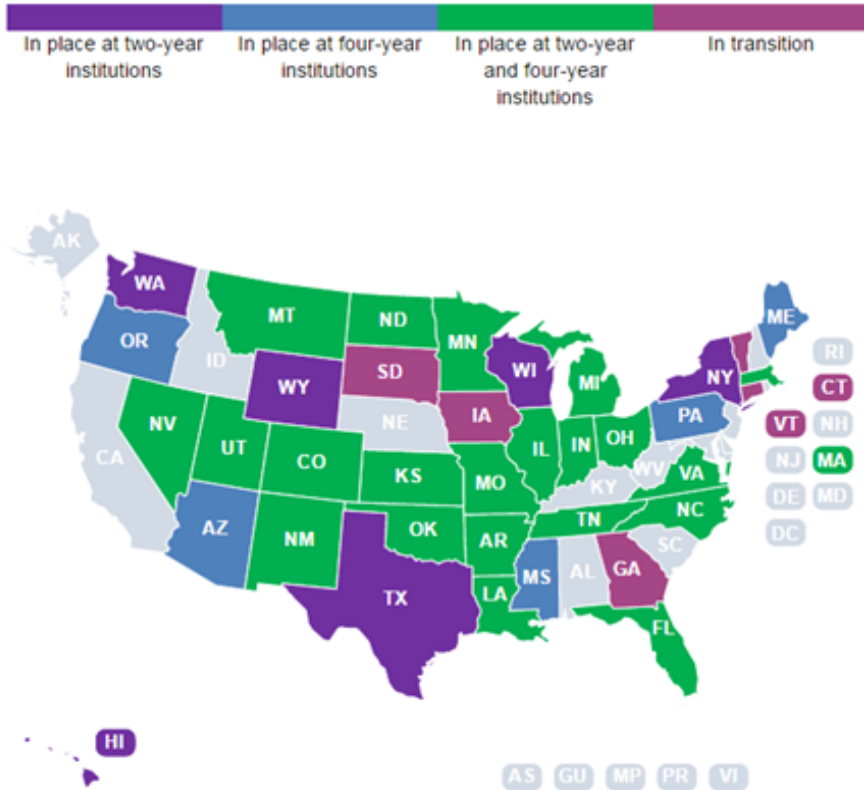


- **1 in 4** community college students had food insecurity issues and 1 in 5 four year college students reported food insecurity.
- **64** percent of “food insecure” students also had housing insecurity.



- **32** percent of “food insecure” students reported academic problems related to hunger.
 - 55 percent could not purchase a textbook.
 - 53 percent missed a class.
 - 25 percent dropped a course.

Performance Funding



32 states have adopted some form of performance funding for higher education. This means that funding for instruction and other activities are going to be directly tied to student success.

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick proposes cutting set-aside tuition grants that help lower-income students

PVAMU Needs



- The City of Prairie View is considered a “food desert” by the US Department of Agriculture based on: our distance to the *nearest supermarket, low access to public transportation, and low income population* (Ver Ploeg & Breneman, 2016).



- The two closest food pantries are in Waller (7 miles) or Hempstead (7 miles). Emergency food services are provided by the PVAMU Fire Department or by Saint Francis Episcopal *once a month*.
- *US News* reports that **86 percent of all PVAMU students received some form of “need” based financial aid (2016).**



Target Population

Prairie View A&M University has an enrollment of 8200 students as of Spring 2017.

- **15 %** are part-time ; **90 %** are in state.
- **75 %** of the need is met on average.
- **83 %** are African American; **61 %** are Female
- **37 %** of the students who graduate are first generation.
- **84 %** undergraduate ; **90 %** in state ; **3.5 %** international.
- **53 %** of students live on campus.

Methods

- Subjects were **recruited by email** from the official list of all students who were 18 years old and were enrolled as part-time or full-time at Prairie View A&M University (**Pop. =8200**).
 - Follow up emails went out every week to encourage students to participate.
 - Public outreach campaign in freshman housing and core classes.
 - Eight recruiters were used to solicit respondents.
- Websurvey went live from **March 1 – March 27** and included both fixed response and open ended questions.
- **579 respondents** completed the survey with a margin of error of 4 percent.

Participant Demographics

African American	86%
Hispanic Latino	6%
White	5%
UG Student	85%
Female	75%
On Campus	56%
In State Residency	86%
International Student	6%
Median GPA Range	2.5-3.0

33%
Dietary
Restrictions

48%
Employed

70%
Meal Plan

53%
Adequate
Fin. Aid.



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Beliefs and Attitudes

- **74 %** reported to know someone who has experienced hunger during their time on PV's campus.
- **61 %** reported to know someone who had experienced homelessness.
- **92 %** believed that hunger or homelessness impacted academic success.
- **37 %** strongly believed that people who asked for assistance from a food pantry were looked down upon.
- **63 %** of respondents believed that students on campus experienced food insecurity 3 or more times during a semester.

Behaviors

	% Reporting
Consumed Fresh Produce Daily	88%
Consume Fast Food At Least Once A Week	83%
Eat on Campus at Least Once a Week	67%
Prepare Own Meals at Home Per Week	87%
Currently Use Tobacco	5%
Currently Use Recreational Drugs	8%
Currently Using Prescribed Medicine	27%
Does Not Eat Meat	7%



Conditions in the Past Year:

Think about the past year, did any of the following conditions apply to you?	% Agreement
--	-------------

I did not have enough money to meet my (personal) needs.	49%
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I was aware of students at PV that did not have enough food for the week.	57%
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I am currently experiencing food insecurity.	57%
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I am currently experiencing homelessness.	57%
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I have experienced food insecurity in the past year.	57%
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I am aware of students enrolled at PV that are currently experiencing homelessness.	57%
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67%

**Reported lack of
adequate food.**

39%

**Reported
academics
suffering due to
food insecurity.**



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TESTIMONIALS

“Over the course of my many years at [PVAM] I *experienced homelessness twice*. Not because I was not responsible but because I came out here for school and with no outside help I [have] to work my way through school. Most times overnight because of late classes. Tough times hit and I have to *choose between using my last ten to either get food or put that money in my gas tank for school*. And most times I chose school” – **Female Undergraduate**

TESTIMONIALS

“I feel very sad every time when I remember this, last year spring was my first semester very new to this country from India don't know any one who helps me. Cannot bare University housing expenses so **adjusted in very very bad apartment in Houston like almost 8 people (including a pregnant lady) used one toilet its the situation.** Don't have money for my expenses so adjusted like that. At the time of spring break 2016 for 10 days **I ate just once a day that too French-fries and chicken nuggets randomly from MC Donald.** I used to eat at 10 pm and go to sleep by 1 am woke up by 2 pm. Spent my most time in sleep to kill hunger. The same schedule I repeated for almost more than 10 days. Even **could not participate in academics due to these tensions,** till June 2016...”–
International Student

TESTIMONIALS

“There have been many times that **not just myself but my children have gone to bed hungry**. At least my children get to eat breakfast and lunch at school, but dinner is not always an option. ... This has **caused me several medical issues and has caused me to miss classes due to them**. Conditions such as anemia, that has affected my heart and immune system. Since I work, food stamp assistance is very low, less than 100 a month for 4 people. Add to that **my school expenses, work expenses and the like every penny I earn is gone long before I get paid**. So a food bank on campus could help a lot of students. Especially since the cost of eating a meal on campus is way to costly! ... And for those students living in their vehicles a food bank could make a huge difference.” – **Male Undergraduate Student**

Support for Food Bank

- **83 %** of respondents believed that a food pantry would be very beneficial or moderately beneficial.
- **27 %** of respondents have used a food pantry previously.
- **48 %** of respondents believed the best place for a food pantry would be in the student center.
- **47%** of respondents reported that they would “occasionally” use the food pantry. **10 %** reported that they would never use.
- **84%** of respondents reported that they would volunteer to support the food pantry.

Financial Impact

- **NAFSAA National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (2016)** *“while campus meal plans and public assistance programs can be a helpful way to ensure students have access to food, the survey showed that they do not entirely eliminate the threat of food insecurity”*
- **U.S News & World Report (2016)** *“[Harvard study] uncovering hunger among undergraduates at elite institutions that purport to meet their full financial needs. His ethnographic research found students turning to off-campus food pantries and sometimes fainting from hunger. This is startling given the positive media attention paid to such schools, which often advertise ‘no loans’ policies”*
- **The Best Schools (2016)** *“America’s more privileged students are leaving unnumbered thousands of unused meal plan swipes on the table. And collectively, most universities happily gobble up these remaining meals at the end of every semester without paying back a dime.”*

Panther Food Center

Mission

- To provide, **safe, confidential and discrete access to supplemental nutrition** for PVAMU students facing food insecurity and to provide other value added referral services to appropriate campus resources to students in need.
- The goal of this project is to **increase student success** and retention.

Vision

- We envision a campus community where **no student will have to choose between their studies and finding their next meal.**



Examples/Models

Considerations	Tarleton State University	Texas A&M University	Penn State University
Who Manages?	Faculty / Staff Oversight Committee	Student Group With Student Affairs Support	Student Group
Where Housed?	Multicultural Affairs	Student Affairs	Student Affairs
Partner Agencies?	None	Brazos Valley Food Bank	None
Volunteers?	Faculty, Staff, and Students	Students and SGA	Students
Service Model?	Shopping Model	Shopping Model	Shopping Model
Availability?	Weekly	Two Weeks a Month	Weekly
Requirements?	Optional Entry Form	Based on Income	Student ID Only

PFC Main Campus Model



- Only students with a valid **student ID**.
 - Digital intake form developed by WebServices (Option).
- Open multiple times a week to accommodate student needs (**Est. 20 hours**).
- Shopping / client choice model.
 - 10 item max per visit (not including toiletries)
 - No limit on visits
- Housed in the Office of **Student Engagement**



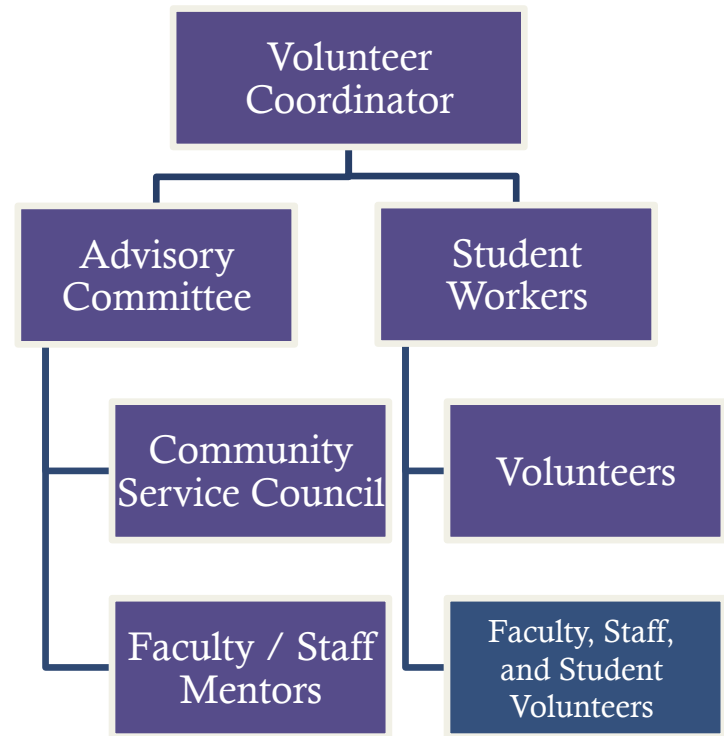
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Management and Oversight

- The Volunteer Coordinator will advise the PFC through her role in the Office of Student Engagement.
- The existing Community Service Council will advise / manage the PFC with the support of faculty and staff mentors and will meet at least two times a year.
- **Two work study students or a graduate student** will be hired to support the food bank, coordinate volunteers, and assist in programming..



Space and Facilities

- Two room office suite in Anderson Hall with a processing area, **food and toiletry storage**, and a supply closet.
 - Office locked with punch code combination
 - Additional lock for food storage.
 - Existing data drops and phone jacks.
 - Monthly pest inspections by SSC.
- **Metal movable shelving to house merchandise.**
 - Shelves should be 2 inches from wall and lowest shelf should be 6 inches from ground.



Example shelving from TAMU's 12th Can.



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Food Management



- Code dating methodology will be used and volunteers will be trained.
- Older items are to be rotated out first by labeling them with the date received, and always using the **“First In, First Out”** rule.
 - Older food will be donated to WARM or House of Help subject to immediate expiration



- Dry storage should be in a dry, clean, well-ventilated area and the temperature should be between 50° to 70° F as dry goods can become unsafe if they get too cold or too hot.
- When food is brought into the storage area, it should be stored properly and immediately. Food items should never be stored on the floor.

Requested Items



- **Shelf stable proteins** (peanut butter, almond putter, Nutella, canned chicken, beans and canned tuna, canned salmon).
- Pastas, ramen noodles, box meals, **all canned goods** such as soups, vegetables (examples include corn, green beans and carrots), tomato sauce, rice, grits, chili, stew and canned fruits.
- **Snacks** such as: crackers, granola bars, cereal bars, popcorn, Pop Tarts.
- **Toiletries**, toilet paper, toothpaste, mouth wash, toothbrushes, deodorant, feminine products, soap and shampoo.



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Marketing: Getting the Word Out



#PFCfedme

- Community involvement is the key to sustainability.
- Social media: **#PFCfedme**, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter may be used for informational campaigns.
- 1876 Magazine, TriAg Magazine, and Alumni Association
- Greek Letter Organizations, Registered Student Organizations; *Social Work Action Club, Student Dietetics Association, Panther PhD's, PALs.*
- Food drives: World Food Day and Spring Fest.

Faculty / Staff / Alumni Giving



- Sustainability is key! Money could be used for the purchase of food or other items for student needs.
- Account profile to be set up for monetary donations through the Office of Development and Panthermart (online giving)
- Competitions between colleges for food donations. (Secure buy in from Deans and Dept. Heads)
- Major kick off campaign using 1876 Magazine, the PVAMU website, alumni chapters, and student media. (Could this also be done for world food day)

Volunteer Management

- Orientation/training conducted by Advisory Committee or Volunteer Coordinator (1 Hour)
 - Cleary Act
 - Risk Management
 - Food Processes
 - Confidentiality
- Faculty, staff, and student volunteers.
- Two PFC volunteers should be in the Center at all times.
- Intake Personnel - Trained student staff, interns, or faculty/staff. (For confidentiality purposes.)
- Food Collection and Management – Twice a month, volunteers may come in to clean and inventory food, or seek out donation partnerships.
- Marketing Team – Marketing the PFC and also information awareness about issues related to food insecurity.

Client Intake Process

- Student clients arrive to the PFC and will have to show a student ID.
- At this point, they will be presented with the optional *Panther Food Center Participant Information Sheet* by volunteer workers. No person will be turned away for refusing to fill out the form.
- Volunteer will enter “de-identified” demographic data into a database for assessment purposes.
 - If referral information is requested, the *Information Sheet* will be sent to the Volunteer Coordinator or the Owens Franklin Health Center for action.
 - Volunteers will be trained to respect confidentiality and informed of all relevant Cleary Act, Risk Management, and compliance protocols.

Referral Services

- Student completes *Panther Food Center Participant Information Sheet* and indicates a need for additional support. Form is submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Student referral form is sent to the qualifying authority. (Owens Franklin Health Center OR the Counseling Center)
- Interventions are implemented by authorized/certified/licensed individuals and the student's progress is monitored by those individuals. **PFC will not provide counseling or remediation to clients.**
- For data collection purposes only the Panthers Food Center will ask the Owen's Franklin Health Center or Counseling Center to report on the outcome of the referral.

Potential Extensions

- Partnership with: Cooperative Extension, College of Agriculture, and Houston Food Bank.
- Internship opportunities for: Nursing, Social Work, Nutrition, Health, and Business / Marketing students.
- Extensions into the College of Nursing and NWHC.
- Community engagement: Cookbook, Chancellor's Wellness Initiative, Partnerships



Tarleton State's "Sustainability Garden."



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They Deserve a seat at the
Dinner Table!

References and Resources

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