



## “Yes, Our Students are Hungry” Promoting food security through a Culturally Affirming and Welcoming Student Food Resource Center

Diane Stadler, PhD, RD, LD

Professor & Director  
Graduate Programs in Human Nutrition  
Associate Director  
Bob & Charlee Moore Institute for  
Nutrition & Wellness  
Oregon Health & Science University  
Portland, OR



### Conflicts of Interest- Disclosures

- I have no conflicts of interest to disclose
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## Food Insecurity—many definitions for an all too common problem

- The state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food
- A household's inability to provide enough food for every person to live an active, healthy life. [Feeding America]
- Disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money and other recourses [Healthy People, 2020]
- Low food security: reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet—little or no indication of reduced food intake [USDA]
- Very low food security: reports of multiple indications

Photo credit: William Luther/The San Antonio Express News



## Screening for food insecurity— USDA 2-item screener

*“Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.”*

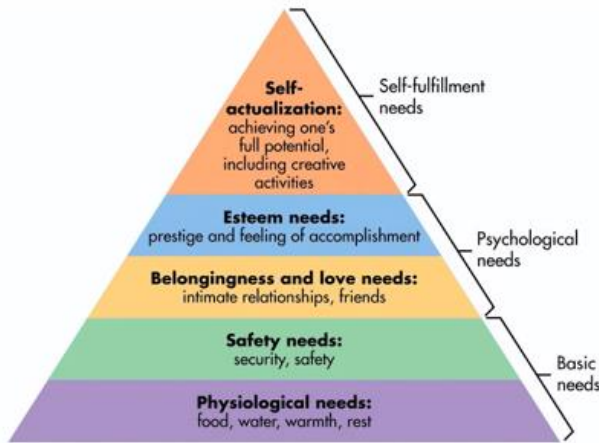
*“Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more.”*

A response of “Yes” to either or both questions identifies “food insecurity” with 97% sensitivity and 83% specificity.

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement>



## Food Insecurity and its impact in the United States



5 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Over 35 million people were food insecure in 2019, including 10 million children
- More than 30% of college/university students are food insecure
  - 43% of food insecure students have a meal plan
- What does food insecurity look like?
  - Unsure of where your next meal will come from
  - Anxious about food running out
  - Choosing between groceries and other bills/expenses (text books, computer)

## Impact of Food Insecurity on Wellbeing



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Coleman, 2020, Goldrick-Rab, et al., 2019; Reny, 2017, Meza, et al, 2019; Davidson Collage Lula Bell Food Pantry

# Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)

- Oregon's only comprehensive public academic health center
- Main campus is located in Portland, OR; regional and rural campuses throughout the State
- ~3000 students enrolled in undergraduate (27%) and graduate-level Health Professional, Public Health, Biomedical Sciences, and Business, Management & Health Administration educational programs



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Food insecurity is a significant concern for many of our learners (n=547)

*In 2016, more than > 1 in 4 students (~25%) at OHSU reported being food insecure:*

- *16% experiencing low food security*
- *10% experiencing very low food security*

*Being food insecure resulted in changes in behavior and/or eating choices*

Demunter, et al., OHSU Food Insecurity Report (Nov 2018)





## Outcome of 2016 Assessment

A **Food Insecurity Taskforce** as part of the OHSU 2025 strategic plan

In 2018, deployed more comprehensive survey to students and the broader OHSU community to:

- Better understand the impact of food insecurity on academic success
- Identify barriers contributing to food insecurity
- Recommend actionable solutions to mitigate this problem



## In 2018, food insecurity remains a significant concern for many of our learners

- 28.5% of respondents (n=1,133, 40%) experience food insecurity
- 10.9% experience very low food insecurity
- > 1 in 5 (21.3%) reported lack of food impacted academic performance

Demunter, et al., J Student Affairs Research & Practice-2020





## Impact of Food Insecurity on Health & Academic Success

- **>36% experienced physical effects from lack of food at least every few months; 21% experienced these symptoms at least monthly.**
- **>23% thought a lack of food impacted their academic performance at OHSU at least every few months**
  - 11% felt it impacted their performance at least monthly
  - 4% felt it impacted their performance about at least weekly.
- **Students who reported being food insecure were 11.7 times more likely to report lack of food affected their academic performance than students who were food secure ( $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI 6.3, 16.6).**

Demunter, et al., J Student Affairs Research & Practice-2020



## Barriers contributing to food insecurity

### Competing expenses with costs to purchase food

- Housing, transportation and educational expenses
- Child care & other personal expenses

### Lack of access to food and time to access food on campus

- OHSU campus is a “food desert”
  - 4-6 miles to closest grocery stores
  - Few restaurants other than OHSU cafés
  - Meals can be expensive, \$8 -10 for lunch
- Use of public transportation or bicycle to get to/from campus so difficult to transport food

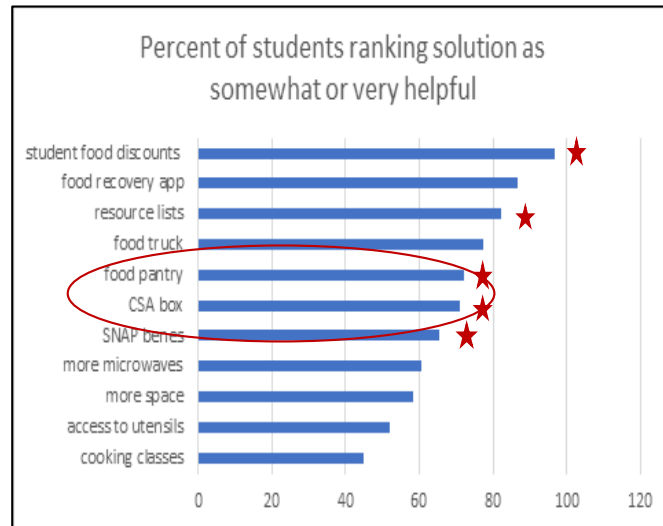
### Not enough time to prepare foods at home.

Demunter, et al., J Student Affairs Research & Practice-2020





## Potential Solutions to Improve Access to Nutritious Foods



Demunter, et al., J Student Affairs Research & Practice-2020



## Where Do Health Professional and Graduate Students Fit into the Grocery Gap during the COVID pandemic?

2020 follow-up survey to assess:

- Food security status and food resource use among OHSU students 12-months before and 3-months after the “shelter at home” mandate and implementation of University “Modified Operations”
- ~27% of students were food insecure before and after the Shelter at Home mandate
- Lower use of on-campus food resources
  - Retail food discounts, emergency meal in a bag, free meals
- Similar use of community food resources
  - Trends to higher SNAP enrollment and unemployment insurance

Unpublished data, Corrin Kalinich. OHSU 2021 Master's Thesis





# Emergency “Meal in a Bag”

## Rice and Beans 3 Ways

### Baked Beans & Brown Rice

Prep: 5 minutes / Cook: 1.5 hours / Ready In: 1 hour and 35 minutes

#### Ingredients (6 servings; Total cost: \$3.42)

- 1/2 can carrots, drained\*
- 1 can of tomatoes
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup brown rice, uncooked
- 2 tsp Italian seasonings
- 2 garlic cloves, minced (or 1/4 tsp garlic powder)
- 1 small onion, chopped (or 1 tsp onion powder)
- 1 cup of your favorite shredded cheese, such as cheddar

#### Directions

1. Drain and rinse cans of mixed vegetables & beans under water
2. In a 13 x 9 baking dish, combine all of the ingredients, except the cheese
3. Cover with foil and bake at 300 degrees for 1 hour and 10 minutes
4. Remove from oven and spread the cheese over the beans mixture and bake for an additional 20 minutes

**Notes:** Fresh chopped vegetables can be substituted for canned vegetables. Sauté ½ cup carrot

Feel free to customize this recipe by adding your favorite vegetables and seasonings

### Delicious Black Beans & Rice

Prep: 5 minutes / Cook: 30 minutes / Ready In: 35 minutes

#### Ingredients (4 servings; Total Cost: \$4.00)

- 1 Tbsp oil
- 1 onion, chopped (or 1 tsp onion powder)
- 1 can black beans, undrained
- 1 can stewed tomatoes
- 1 cup chicken or vegetable broth
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1.5 cups brown rice, uncooked
- Optional Garnishes: sliced avocado and shredded cheddar cheese

#### Directions

1. In a large saucepan, heat oil over medium-high.
2. Add onion and a small pinch of salt, cook and stir until tender.
3. Add beans, tomatoes, oregano, garlic powder, broth and brown rice.
4. Bring to a boil.
5. Cover; reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes
6. Remove from heat; let stand 5 minutes before serving
7. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper, and garnished with scallions before serving



## Student-run “Grocery Box Delivery Program”

May-December 2020

Free of charge for all students regardless of need

3 delivery options; 10 items/week

Milk and Plant-based Alternatives (shelf-stable)

Protein (canned tuna, chicken, beans, peanut/nut butters)

Grains (pastas, cereals, bread, rice, other grains)

Fresh, canned & frozen Fruits & Vegetables

Soups & Packaged Meals

Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Dental Floss, Mouthwash

Hand Sanitizer, tampons, pads, condoms

Paper Towels, Toilet Paper





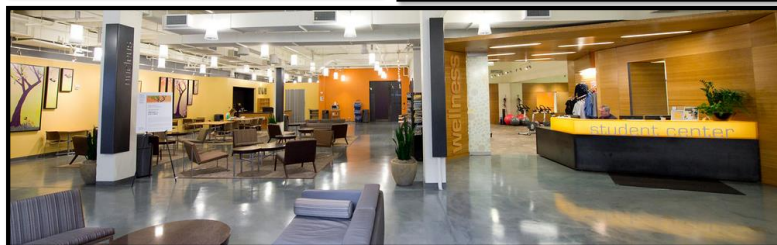
## Heart and Spade Farm Community Supported Agriculture Shares



Photo courtesy of Annika La Fave



Food Resource Center@OHSU  
“Help fill our shelves” campaign  
[support.ohsufoundation.org/OHSV20QF](https://support.ohsufoundation.org/OHSV20QF)



## Our Partners

Allen Temple  
Food Pantry

Outside In



OHSU  
Food & Nutrition  
Services



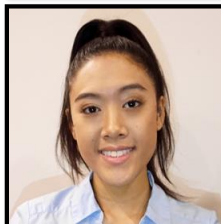
All you have to do  
is ask...



And soon our shelves were stocked...



We asked for advice  
...and received  
thoughtful suggestions



## Culturally Affirming Foods

Students representing a variety of cultures offered suggestions of foods that align with our goal of creating a welcoming environment with foods that remind them that "I belong."



## Students share stories and photos



## ...and comments & reflections



- “I never thought the foods in a food pantry would be of such high quality”
- “ I haven’t had a piece of fresh fruit in months”
- “Offering fresh produce is so important”
- “Coffee? Yes, I drink coffee. I drink a lot of coffee!!”
- “Thank you for having spices—I love that my meals are more flavorful”
- “This makes such a difference!”
- “Thank you for asking...”
- “How can I volunteer?”

## Student Outreach through Grocery Box Program May 2020-May 2021



54 Weeks



1370 Orders  
Filled



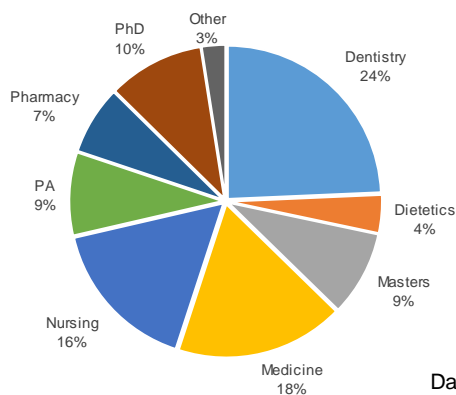
435 Unique  
Users



492 Deliveries



58  
Volunteers



Data courtesy of Madi Egan, MS3

And what we can no longer distribute goes back to the farm.



## Next steps...

- Expand to serve residents, fellows and post-docs
- Work with University HR and union representatives to include other sectors of the OHSU workforce
- Partner with Hospital and Clinic staff to serve OHSU patients and their families

## What do we need to move forward?

- More space (central & satellite)
- Freezers & Refrigerators
- On-going financial support with dedicated FTE to manage the FRC
- Places on campus for students to store & reheat food
- Comfortable areas to enjoy eating meals



Thank you

On behalf of all those  
helping to reduce  
food insecurity  
throughout Oregon  
and beyond.

Diane Stadler, PhD, RD, LD

[stadlerd@OHSU.edu](mailto:stadlerd@OHSU.edu)