

Addressing Campus Food Issues through Student Organization Collaborations

Dr. Miranda Sue Terry, Dr. Nancy Shepherd, Joy Hammonds, Brittany Hearnberger, Stephen Decker

Department of Kinesiology and Health Science; School of Human Sciences; Hunger Jacks
Stephen F. Austin State University

Abstract

With the rising cost of tuition, college students have difficult decisions to make between school, work, housing, food, utilities, medical bills, to name a few. For example, according to the Huffington Post, there are over 58,000 homeless college students in the United States (Ashtari, 2014). Colleges have a task of keep their students safe, which is reiterated in their student codes and university policies. Yet, one of the aspects rarely taken into consideration is the students' access to food, which is a safety concern. While most colleges offer meal plans, there are issues with the upfront expense of meal plans and guessing how much food one will eat the entire semester. In addition, students who are hungry or worrying about where their next meal is going to come from have worse academic outcomes (Jyoti et al. 2005). Colleges need to have resources to assist students both in and out of the classroom. Hunger Jacks, a student organization at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA), partnered up with Student Government and Sprout at SFA Community Gardens to address these concerns resulting in two resources being developed on campus: Food for Thought food pantry and Fresh Food Fridays.

Hunger in America meets Higher Education

Food Insecurity, as defined by the Department of Agriculture, is the lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life.

Feeding America's latest report on Hunger in America was the first to include data on food insecurities among College Students. The data is clear: millions of college students across the nation experience food insecurities annually.



Contributing Factors:

- ❖ The economic crisis of 2008
- ❖ The rising cost of living in America
- ❖ The rising cost of Higher Education
- ❖ The compressed job market in America
- ❖ The increase of non-traditional students on college campuses
- ❖ The increase of lower and lower-middle class on college campuses

Acknowledgements:
Thanks to Hunger Jacks, the food pantry volunteers, Student Government Association, Sprout at SFA Community Gardens, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and the Office of Student Engagement for making this all possible. Huge thanks to Victoria Alexis for creating the FFT logo!

Websites and Resources:
<http://www.cufba.org>
<http://foodbank.msu.edu>
<http://www.feedingamerica.org>
<http://money.cnn.com/2014/11/25/pf/college/college-food-banks>
<http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/the-hunger-crisis-americas-universities>
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/more-college-students-battle-hunger-as-education-and-living-costs-rise>
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/hunger-is-a-growing-problem-on-college-campus>
http://www.salon.com/2013/11/20/how_can_you_study_when_you_cant_eat_the_invisible_problem_of_hunger_on_campus
<http://www.takepart.com/article/2012/09/20/are-college-students-new-face-food-insecurity>

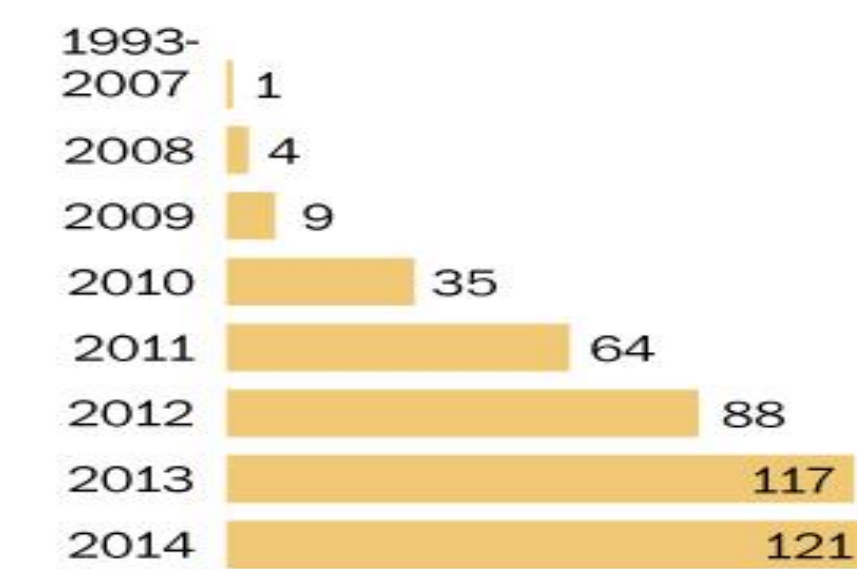
Growth in college Food Pantries

Michigan State University open the first student food bank in 1993. It would remain the only on campus student food bank until 2008.

The number of food pantries on college campuses has increased rapidly in the past six years – especially at colleges with a lot of low-income or first generation students.

Now there are well over 100 student food pantries across the country, and that number is certain to increase as awareness of this issue grows.

This graph shows the number of campuses that have started food banks after consulting with Michigan State University about their Food Bank.



Source: Michigan State University Student Food Bank
The Washington Post

Meeting the Need at Stephen F. Austin State University

In response to the growing awareness of food insecurities on college campuses, student organizations have partnered with Faculty and Staff across campus to address this issue at SFA. Through the efforts of Hunger Jacks and the Student Government Association the Food for Thought Student Food Pantry has been established on the SFA Campus.

Food for Thought's Mission

The purpose of Food for Thought Student Food Pantry is to provide supplemental healthy food to SFA students who are experiencing food insecurities.

Eligibility

The only requirement to be eligible for Food for Thought services is to be enrolled for courses at SFA.

How to become apart of this program:

- ❖ Donate targeted items
- ❖ Volunteer on distribution days
- ❖ Host a food drive
- ❖ Financial contributions

Targeted items needed include:

- ❖ Canned Vegetables
- ❖ Canned Fruit & Fruit Juice
- ❖ Rice & Rice Sides
- ❖ Boxed Cereal & Oatmeal
- ❖ Pasta & Pasta Sides
- ❖ Peanut Butter & Jelly
- ❖ Spaghetti Sauce
- ❖ Canned Soup
- ❖ Macaroni & Cheese
- ❖ Chef Boyardee
- ❖ Canned Chicken
- ❖ Canned Tuna
- ❖ Canned Beans
- ❖ Salt, Pepper & Spices

Food for Thought Pantry & Events

Food for Thought campus food pantry:

Food for Thought campus food pantry is open on Mondays during the academic year from 3pm – 6pm in the Baker Pattillo Student Center 3.201.

- Opened on Monday, January 26, 2015
- Has had 82 visitors
- 55 students have utilized the food pantry since January 26, 2015



Fresh Food Fridays:

- Mission: To increase fresh produce consumption among college students as these types of foods usually does not fit within a college student's food budget
- Eligibility: Open to all!
- In collaboration with Sprout at SFA Community Gardens, every Friday we have fresh produce donated from Sprout that is handed out to any student who wants to take it
- Starts at 2pm until produce runs out, either in front of the Student Center (on nice days) or diagonal from Which Wich inside the Student Center (on rainy, cold days)



Stock Up for Spring Break event:

A special event open to all SFA students who would be remaining on campus during Spring Break when most campus offices would be closed.

- Assisted 23 students during this event



Sustaining Food for Thought:

The campus food pantry received initial seed funding from the SFA Student Government. However, we rely heavily on donations received through Hunger Jacks food and funds drives as well as the generous donations and efforts of others in order to keep the food pantry open and stocked to assist the students facing food insecurity.

