

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BASIC NEEDS:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of January 15, 2019

REVIEW OF UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BASIC NEEDS EFFORTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UC Global Food Initiative, now in its fourth year of operation, has enabled all UC campuses to establish robust Basic Needs Committees that are comprised of UC students, faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as community subject-matter experts who work and learn together. The committees have four areas of focus: 1) preventative campus models; 2) sustainable institutionalization; 3) advocacy; and 4) research. These efforts have expanded learning and impact beyond the University of California system through intersegmental partnerships with the California State University and California Community College systems.

BACKGROUND

President Napolitano launched the Global Food Initiative (GFI) in July 2014 with the goal of providing nutritious food in a sustainable manner for a world population expected to reach 8 billion by 2025. The initiative aligns with the University's research, outreach, and operations in a sustained effort to develop, demonstrate, and export solutions for food security, health, and sustainability throughout California, the United States, and the world. From the beginning, this ambitious goal has included a focus on addressing food security, and later basic needs security, among UC students.

Many of the campus and systemwide efforts that have been undertaken as part of GFI have focused on student food security research, on-campus student services and programming, and state, national, and global student food security engagement. As the initiative matured, it became clear that food insecurity was just one issue under a broader "basic needs" framework that includes food and housing security.

Student basic needs: A statewide and national issue

UC has not been alone in its efforts to address students' basic needs. Universities and other institutions across the state and country have also been working to better understand students' basic needs. Research indicates that the challenges students face are problems not only in California, but across the nation. Some of the salient findings among recent studies include:

- A 2015 study by California State University that suggests that nine percent of CSU's 460,000 students are homeless, while 21 percent lack consistent food sources.
- A fall 2016 study by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) that found that 63 percent of students surveyed experience food insecurity, with 38 percent experiencing very low food security. Nineteen percent indicated experiencing homelessness within a year of the time the questionnaire was administered.
- A 2017 survey that included 33,000 students across 70 community colleges in 24 states found that 66 percent of students had experienced food insecurity, 50 percent had experienced housing insecurity, and 14 percent experienced homelessness at some point. Researchers also determined that there was minimal geographic variation in hunger and homelessness among community college students.
- Other surveys have suggested that more than one in five students had experienced hunger during the past month, and that close to one in ten responded they had been homeless at some point in the past year.

2016 UC Survey Results

As a follow-up to a 2015 Student Food Access and Security Survey (SFASS) conducted by the University, food and housing questions were added to the 2016 UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) and the Graduate Student Well-Being Survey (GSWBS) to further examine the issue of basic needs.

Food Insecurity

- Forty-four percent of undergraduate students and 26 percent of graduate students reported having experienced food insecurity, which is in line with the 2015 SFASS findings of 48 percent and 25 percent, respectively.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines very low food security as reduced food intake or disrupted eating patterns at times due to limited resources. Low food security is defined as reduced quality, variety or desirability of diet, with little or no indication of reduced food intake. These two categories comprise food insecurity.
- The limited validated questions on the 2016 survey do not provide adequate information to distinguish between low and very low food security. However, in the 2015 study, 23 percent of undergraduate respondents reported they had "low food security" and 19 percent indicated having "very low food security," based on the USDA definitions above.

Housing Insecurity

As part of its comprehensive approach to student well-being, UC has proactively begun to examine the housing challenges students face. Current data in this area are limited at both the

state and national level. Nevertheless, UC took a first internal step of preliminarily assessing housing challenges by including one question on homelessness in its 2016 UCUES and GSWBS surveys, which indicates:

- Five percent of both UC undergraduate and graduate student populations said they had experienced homelessness at some point during their enrollment.
- The question used has not been validated to ensure it is an accurate measurement of homelessness and the issue of defining “homelessness” and how to correctly measure housing insecurity is still being addressed nationally.
- The definition of homelessness in the UC question provided responses ranging from “couch surfing” at a friend’s place to living on the streets.
- Moving forward, UC intends to improve upon this preliminary finding with additional research, including using housing-related questions that have been validated to accurately measure housing security.

Funding Allocations

During the 2015-16 academic year, President Napolitano allocated \$75,000 per undergraduate campus to immediately support student food access and enhance existing campus food security projects. Each campus was also asked to form a working group to oversee implementation of the funding and to identify short-term and medium-term food security efforts. As a result, all undergraduate campuses successfully established emergency food relief resources and services for students with immediate needs. This funding also enabled UC Irvine to host the 2016 California Higher Education Food Summit where all UC campuses gathered for the first time to create a multi-year strategic plan with the goal of addressing the basic needs of undergraduate and graduate students.

Following that initial support, the UC Office of the President (UCOP) committed more than \$3 million to UC campuses over a three-year period to comprehensively address basic needs challenges. That funding allowed campuses to move beyond emergency food support services to a holistic basic needs model. Through on- and off-campus partnerships, campuses were able to launch farm and garden efforts to provide organic and sustainable produce to their campus pantries. Some campuses also presented financial skills-building workshops; launched institutional basic needs websites that provide information about campus and community resources; provided emergency services and assistance with crisis resolution; engaged in basic needs awareness campaigns; and hired staff and student interns to contribute to programming, case management, advocacy, and planning. In addition, initiative funding enabled several campuses to secure new spaces for their food pantries, renovate and expand facilities, and provide students with cooking demonstrations, nutrition information, CalFresh enrollment sessions, and spaces for studying, eating, and lounging.

In response to growing awareness of food security issues in California and at college campuses nationwide, the California State Legislature has also provided \$4 million in funding since 2017 to support UC’s efforts to address student hunger. Funds from the State have helped UC campuses to: 1) expand emergency meal services; 2) host CalFresh enrollment clinics; 3) invest

in one-time infrastructure and equipment needs; and 4) hire temporary staff (e.g., student employees, contract employees, etc.) to bolster overall basic needs efforts at the local level.

Finally, the University has also tackled basic needs challenges by working to ensure sufficient and affordable student housing availability systemwide. In January 2016, President Napolitano announced the UC Student Housing Initiative, which aimed to add 14,000 new affordable beds by 2020. In support of that initiative, a one-time allocation of \$27 million was approved in July 2017 to support campus efforts to address housing needs for students, faculty, and staff. A second allocation for the same purpose was approved in May 2018, allocating an additional \$30 million in one-time funds to campuses. The funding has provided assistance for existing or new housing programs, studies in support of advancing new housing projects, and/or capital improvements. Given the unique housing challenges facing each individual campus, they have the flexibility to utilize funding based on specific needs identified at the local level. Since the announcement of the Student Housing Initiative, the UC system has increased the number of students housed from 87,345 (33.9 percent of students enrolled) in fall 2015 to 97,185 (35.2 percent of students enrolled) in fall 2018. These 9,845 additional beds have come through a combination of new construction and increasing the density within existing facilities. Based on current campus plans, over 15,500 beds are expected to be available before fall 2020, which would achieve the initiative's goal. Beyond 2020, projects resulting in an additional 15,000 beds are planned to be open before fall 2024.

UC Basic Needs Framework

In order to increase students' ability to meet their own basic needs during their time at UC and beyond, the UC Basic Needs Security Model addresses holistic preventative education and training. The goal of the model is to consistently decrease and eventually eliminate the number of students in need of emergency food-secure resources. UC's Model focuses on five components: 1) on-campus student services and programming; 2) off-campus partnerships and engagement; 3) campus coordination; 4) systemwide coordination; and 5) research and data collection.

The Model calls for expanding food pantry storage and access; integrating food preparation and secure storage space into new housing design and construction; increasing collaboration with State and county offices to register students for CalFresh; establishing student support services and food access awareness campaigns; providing mobile kitchen services; enhancing financial aid communications about housing and food costs; expanding existing economic crisis response teams/creation of new teams; amplifying the existing Swipes programs; and developing food voucher benefits and financial aid guidelines to support increased resources for students.

Tackling the challenges of food and housing insecurity is a long-term, resource-driven endeavor. The University has adopted an expansive approach toward student and systems solutions, incorporating extensive research, outreach and collaboration among campuses and partners to help students meet basic needs. The UC system has built campus and system infrastructure that will facilitate the improvement of ongoing learning, services and systems transformation. UC will continue close collaboration with the State of California, California State University, and

California Community Colleges to continue to comprehensively combat the basic needs challenges that affect students statewide.

Key to Acronyms

GFI	Global Food Initiative
GSWBS	Graduate Student Well-Being Survey
SFASS	Student Food Access and Security Survey
UCOP	UC Office of the President
UCUES	UC Undergraduate Experience Survey