

## Office of the President

### TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY:

#### DISCUSSION ITEM

*For Meeting of July 21, 2016*

### FOOD ACCESS AND SECURITY: AN UPDATE

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2014, President Napolitano launched the UC Global Food Initiative (GFI) with the goal of putting the world on a path to “sustainably and nutritiously feed itself.” The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that one out of every seven United States households can be described as food insecure, meaning it has experienced a reduced quality of diet or reduced food intake as a result of financial or other resource limitations. As awareness of the prevalence of food-insecure households has increased, colleges and universities across the country have raised concerns about food insecurity among students. At the May 2015 Regents’ meeting, former Regent Saifuddin along with GFI Food Access and Security Co-chairs Ruben Canedo and Tim Galarneau discussed college food insecurity and the steps UC will take to address the issue at UC.

In the months following that presentation, the GFI Food Access and Security Subcommittee focused on the following areas: 1) student food insecurity research; 2) on-campus student services and programming; 3) development of a UC Food Access and Security Model; and 4) state, national, and global student food security engagement.

#### BACKGROUND

##### *Student Food Insecurity Research*

To gauge the extent of food insecurity at UC and support the development of effective responses, President Napolitano commissioned the UC Student Food Access and Security Survey, the University’s first in-depth food security study. It was administered online in spring 2015 to a random sample of students across all ten campuses. Of those asked to participate, 8,932 undergraduate and graduate students completed the survey, a 14-percent response rate. Students were asked to “think about the past 12 months” and answer questions about skipping meals or lacking money to purchase food.

The broad term “food insecurity” can encompass various experiences – from a poor-quality diet that lacks variety to a diet with irregular eating patterns and reduced food consumption. UC’s Student Food Access and Security survey found that 19 percent of student respondents had “very

low” food security, which the U.S. Department of Agriculture defines as experiencing periodic reduced food intake due to limited resources. An additional 23 percent of survey respondents were characterized as having “low” food security, defined as having reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet, with little to no indication of reduced food intake.

The survey also found that food insecure students were more likely to receive federal nutrition assistance and need-based financial aid. These students were also more likely to have experienced food insecurity as a child. Although current and childhood food insecurity are related, it is important to note that the study found that 57 percent of food insecure students experienced food insecurity for the first time, suggesting that students may require additional information about crisis resources, financial aid, and making healthy choices on a limited budget.

Moving forward, the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey, Graduate Wellbeing Survey, and the University’s Undergraduate Cost of Attendance Survey have all been updated with revised questions and responses so UC can further understand student food insecurity. The cumulative information garnered from these revised surveys will serve as an ongoing gauge of food insecurity at UC and will help inform the University’s efforts to develop and implement effective solutions.

### ***On-campus Student Services and Programming***

In addition to commissioning the systemwide survey, President Napolitano allocated an initial \$75,000 per campus during the 2015-16 academic year to immediately support student food access and enhance existing campus food security projects. In turn, each campus was asked to form a Food Security Working Group (including staff, faculty, and students) to oversee implementation of the funding and to identify short-term and medium-term food security efforts on each campus. As a result, all ten campuses have successfully established emergency food relief resources and services for students with immediate needs.

As efforts evolve, campuses aim to go beyond emergency food pantries and begin to address basic needs security at a holistic level. This includes educating students on issues of financial wellness, basic cooking and food provisioning skills, nutrition education and health, and sustainable food systems.

### ***UC Food Access and Security Model***

In order to increase students’ ability to fulfill their own basic needs (housing and food) during their time at UC and beyond, the UC Food Access and Security Model addresses holistic preventative education and training. The goal is to consistently decrease and eventually eliminate the number of students in need of emergency food resources. UC’s Food Access and Security Model, building on existing efforts, 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 includes:

- 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 and creating new teams to provide support and guidance to students experiencing immediate financial hardship
- Expanding the existing Swipe Out Hunger programs, which allow students to donate excess dollars on their meal plan to reduce hunger on campuses
- Developing food voucher benefits and financial aid guidelines to support increased resources for students.

To implement the Model, President Napolitano has renewed her commitment to addressing food insecurity by approving more than \$3.3 million in funding over two years (fiscal years 2016-17 and 2017-18), including \$151,000 per campus, per year.

### ***State, National, and Global Student Food Security Engagement***

The Second Annual California Higher Education Food Summit (CHEFS) at UC Irvine, a conference launched by the GFI Food Access and Security Subcommittee in 2015, convened key stakeholders who conduct food security work. The Summit fostered promising discussions with the California State University Chancellor's Office to explore the establishment of a formal cross-segment basic-needs security partnership.

In addition to CHEFS, the GFI Food Access and Security Subcommittee Co-chairs have been engaged on the national level to present UC's food security efforts and to influence and advise others who are just beginning to address the problem, including the following convenings: 2015 Closing the Hunger Gap National Conference, the 2016 National College Student Food and Housing Insecurity Convening, and the 2015 Global Access to Postsecondary Education World Summit.

Student hunger is a national issue, and UC is addressing it head-on. UC's Food Access and Security Survey and Food Access and Security Model represent significant steps in understanding and beginning to address this complex and nuanced issue. UC is dedicated to providing an equitable and sustainable food system for the University community, and to that end, will continue to work toward long-term solutions that improve student nutrition, thus enhancing student success at UC.

**Attachment: Report**

### **Key to Acronyms**

CHEFS	California Higher Education Food Summit
-------	---

GFI	Global Food Initiative
-----	------------------------