

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of September 13, 2017

BASIC NEEDS SECURITY: YEAR THREE UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UC Global Food Initiative, now in its third 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

In July 2014, President Napolitano launched the Global Food Initiative (GFI) to align the University's research, outreach, and operations in a sustained effort to develop, demonstrate, and export solutions – throughout California, the United States, and the world – for food security, health, and sustainability.

At the May 2015 Regents' meeting, former Student Regent Saifuddin, along with GFI Food Access and Security Subcommittee Co-Chairs Ruben Canedo and Tim Galarneau discussed food insecurity at the college level, as well as the steps the University would take to address this issue. In the months following that presentation, the GFI Basic Needs Access and Security Subcommittee focused on student food security research; on-campus student services and programming; and state, national, and global student food security engagement. As the Co-Chairs engaged campus staff and students in discussion on the topic, it became clear that food insecurity was just one issue under a broader, "basic needs" framework and that the effort needed to expand to address the basic needs security of students – defined as food, housing, and wellness security. Thus, the Subcommittee has been renamed the Basic Needs Committee.

Student Food Security Research

Building on the results of the 2015 UC Student Food Access and Security Survey, the University incorporated food and housing insecurity questions into the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey and the Graduate Student Well-Being Survey, both administered in 2016. Finally, some

campuses have initiated qualitative studies to further explore student basic needs experiences. The results of these systemwide and campus studies will be featured in a UC System Basic Needs Report that will be published during the National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week in November 2017.

On-Campus Student Services and Programming

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 Food Security Working Group to oversee implementation of the funding and to identify short-term and medium-term food security efforts on each campus. 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.

In 2016, President Napolitano expanded her commitment to providing basic needs security by allocating \$151,000 per campus over three years. This 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.

State, National, and Global Student Food Security Engagement

Intersegmental leaders at the UC, California State University, and California Community College systems hosted two strategy sessions. These sessions enabled participants to recognize that: challenges of basic needs are shared across their respective public education systems; research needs to be coordinated and collaborative; direct service providers need to learn from one another and collaborate regionally; and advocacy can be more effective by uniting to address State and federal policies. Intersegmental researchers are proactively engaging one another as thought partners and collaborators on an ongoing basis.

The first intersegmental partnership meeting resulted in a commitment from the California Department of Social Services to co-sponsor a statewide guidebook for counties to better understand and enroll eligible college and university students in social services and public benefits such as CalFresh. As a result of successful advocacy for a number of proposals focused on food assistance for students in higher education institutions, California has become the most

inclusive and accessible state for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program eligibility for college and university students. This program provides eligible individual students with up to \$194 per month that does not negatively impact their financial aid packages.

The California Legislature recently provided \$2.5 million in one-time funding for UC campuses that are implementing specific activities to help them become “hunger free campuses.” The University appreciates the Legislature’s commitment to help meet the basic needs of students throughout the state.

On the national stage, UC’s basic needs efforts were featured in a nationally broadcasted Public Broadcasting System News Hour story. The HOPE Lab also adopted UC’s basic needs language and strategy to shape its two latest national publications entitled, “Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study on Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education” and “Guide to Assessing Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education.” In addition, the GFI Basic Needs Co-Chairs have been confirmed as plenary session panelists and lead trainers for a day-long institute for national higher education leaders who are committed to student basic needs at the #RealCollege: National Convening on Food & Housing Insecurity.

Next Steps

Moving forward, the GFI Basic Needs Co-Chairs, in collaboration with UC Office of the President leadership, will work to ensure that all campuses prioritize the outreach, enrollment, and advocacy required to increase CalFresh enrollment. Each campus will explore expanding the number of on-campus food vendors that accept Electronic Benefit Transfer cards to ensure that CalFresh recipients have access to nutritious meals.

Additionally, the UC Office of the President and GFI Basic Needs Co-Chairs are working to operationalize the one-time “hunger-free campus” funding provided by the Legislature.

Lastly, in partnership with UC Office of the President leadership, the Student Regent, and the UC Student Association, the GFI Basic Needs Co-Chairs will facilitate the engagement of all UC campuses to host week-long events in honor of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness week in November.