RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS TO THE IMPACTS OF SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS OF FOOD INSECURITY AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

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The trope of the 'starving college student' is widespread among college students, so much so that it has come to be an expected and celebrated part of the college experience. This standard of living defined by never having enough money to buy food, or rarely eating enough or eating nutritionally beneficial foods, is actually food insecurity. This pattern, which is talked about light and jokingly, has serious academic, physical, mental, and social repercussions. College students are in a particularly vulnerable position; many have never been required to be self-reliant previously, which can lead to unhealthy eating habits out of convenience and a lack of knowledge. This project asks: How do college students perceive food insecurity as an expected part of the student experience? What socioeconomic and personal factors influence food choice; are students lacking a personal knowledge of food security, systems, and management that impacts their food security status; and what changes need to be made to current on-campus food security resources to work towards establishing food security? I aim to demonstrate that food insecurity is a salient issue on college campuses that is not addressed with urgency or impact due to the 'starving student' narrative that has normalized food insecurity. Being a starving student is equivalent to being food insecure and it is imperative that this narrative is changed on all levels to ensure that students no longer go hungry.

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Introduction

For many students entering the world of higher education, they have been prepared for the experience through stories told in media and by close circles of long nights of studying fueled by ramen and red bull. This time is generally portrayed fondly; students have always been hungry, but it is a part of the experience. The memory of college wouldn't be the same without this rite of passage. Actually attending college, and especially after moving off-campus, I have observed this on my own, with my peers joking that they can't remember the last time they'd eaten a vegetable, eating microwaved mac-and-cheese for dinner for multiple days straight, relying on freebies handed out on campus to get them trough the day, or skipping meals because there wasn't enough time between work, class, and extracurriculars to have one. In most other contexts, this behavior would be problematic and worrying, but among college students, it is expected. These behaviors deserve to be closely and critically examined. This project asks: How do college students perceive food security (FS)—or a lack thereof—as part of the expected student experience? Furthermore, what socioeconomic and personal factors influence food choice among college students? Are they lacking a personal knowledge of FS, systems, and management that impacts their FS status, and what changes need to be made to current on-campus FS resources in order to increase student utilization and work towards establishing FS?

Through an extended review of existing literature, I aim to demonstrate that food insecurity (FI) is a salient issue on college campuses that is not addressed with urgency or impact due to the 'starving student' narrative that has normalized FI. Being a starving student is equivalent to being food insecure, just by a different name; students are reluctant to identify with the label due to the stigma attached to it, further perpetuating that this is an expected part of the college experience by refusing to challenge it. Change on all levels—individual, institutional,

and governmental—is needed in order to change this narrative and ensure students are no longer going hungry.

First, key definitions and terms will be defined, such as FS and FI, as well as an introduction to the most common methods used to measure FS/FI. Then, an overview of FS in the United States will be covered, including risk factors for FI, consequences, and existing social support nets that aim to mediate this impact. Risk factors and consequences will then be examined in the college student population, as students are in a unique position that exacerbates the risks for FI in the broader population. Students have a significantly higher rate of FI than the broader population due to this positioning; furthermore, it is passed on as normal due to a cultural excusing of the problem as an expected part of the entire experience. This issue will then be examined in the context of the University of Oregon (UO). Following, I offer an explanation for the drastically higher rate of FI among college students: that the normalization of being a 'starving student' excuses these poor and detrimental dietary patterns, and that a lack of food literacy and preparation knowledge further intensifies this refusal or avoidance of the food-insecure label (which also deters students from seeking help). To conclude, I present five recommendations, ranging from the individual to institutional and short-term to long term, targeted at reducing student FI. To begin on this journey, a baseline understanding of FS and FI must be communicated and explored.

Food Security and Insecurity: Definitions and Measures

The United States Department of Agriculture defines FS as "the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods" as well as the "assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies)".[1] Conversely, FI is defined as the "limited or uncertain availability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways".[2] FS is measured on a scale ranging form high FS to very low FS. A household that has no problems or anxiety regarding consistent access to adequate food is identified as having high FS, while a household that does have problems or anxiety regarding access to adequate food, but generally has no reduced quality, variety, or quantity of food, is identified as having marginal FS.[3] If a household falls under either category—high or marginal—they are identified as 'food secure'. FI denotes households that are identified as having low FS or very low FS. Households that are identified as having low FS have reduced quality, variety, and desirability of their diets, but overall, the quantity of food and normal eating patterns are not substantially disrupted.[4] This is further exacerbated in households that are identified as having very low FS. In very low FS households, at multiple times throughout the year, eating patterns of at least one household member is disrupted and overall food intake was reduced due to a lack of resources to obtain food.[5] The difference between low and very low FS largely lies in whether there is a lack of quality or quantity; the primary hardship in low FS is a reduction in dietary quality and variety, while the primary hardship in very low FS is a reduction in food intake and an increase in skipped meals.

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[1] USDA Economic Research Service, "Food Security Measurement."
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

There are a few other terms that come up in the discussion of FI that are important to define. First is food sufficiency/insufficiency: an individual would be food insufficient if they did not have enough to eat or did not have the desired kind of food to eat within the past seven days.[6] As noted above, a reduction in food quality and/or quantity is a marker of FI; however, the difference between security and sufficiency is that FS is measured within a minimum of the previous 30 days to a maximum of 12 months, while food sufficiency is measured within the previous seven days. As such, food sufficiency is an indicator of current need, not necessarily long-term patterns. Food worry is another adjacent term which measures how worried an individual is about having reliable access to enough, affordable, and nutritious food within the past 12 months.[7] The final term that will frequently come up is hunger, which is the physiological response to a need for food. When discussing these terms, it is crucial to keep in mind that while all three can be experienced by individuals who are food insecure, none are specific markers of FI on their own. Food secure individuals can experience levels of food worry, insufficiency, and hunger while still remaining food secure, and it is possible (albeit unlikely) that individuals who are food insecure may not experience all three of the above. While food sufficiency, worry, and hunger are interrelated to the concept of FS, their presence or lack thereof is not ultimately indicative of FS status on their own.

FS in the U.S. is most frequently measured through either the 18-question U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module, the ten-item U.S. Adult Food Security Module, or the abbreviated six-item version. For reference, the questions for the ten and six item surveys can be found in the appendix; the ten-item survey consists of items HH1-AD5a, and the six-item survey

[6] Ibid.
[7] Clark and Delgado-Riley, rep., Student Wellbeing and Success Initiative, 4.

consists of HH3-AD3. The U.S. Household Food Security Survey is the most thorough of the three as it measures FS as it pertains to children in the household, while also structured with screeners to avoid unnecessary respondent burden.[8] The U.S. Adult Food Security Survey consists of the same ten items that only pertain to adults in the full 18-question household survey.[9] The ten-item survey is ideal for households without children, or if there is a case where asking about children's FS may be sensitive; however, the limitation that comes with this is that it does not provide information on child FS as it does not ask. Finally, the six-item short form has the least respondent burden, and despite being shorter, the insecurity prevalence is only minimally biased when compared to the ten and 18 item surveys.[10] Again, one of the drawbacks with this measure is that it does not capture FS information on children. The six-item survey also does not measure the most severe form of FI (very low), as the results only indicate FS, marginal FS, or low FS.[11] The ten and 18 item surveys do measure all four degrees.[12,13] For the purposes of examining individual college students, most studies implement either then ten or six item surveys.

[8] USDA Economic Research Service, "U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module: Three-Stage Design."
[9] USDA Economic Research Service, "U.S. Adult Food Security Survey Module: Three-Stage Design."
[10] USDA Economic Research Service, "U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module: Six-Item Short Form."
[11] Ibid.
[12] USDA Economic Research Service, "U.S. Household Food Security Module: Three-Stage Design."
[13]USDA Economic Research Service, "U.S. Household Food Security Module: Six-Item Short Form."

Food Insecurity: U.S.A.

National household FS rates are measured by the U.S. Economic Research Service yearly utilizing the full 18-item survey. In 2022, it was found that 21.8% of U.S. households are food insecure, with 7.7% as having low FS and 5.1% as very low.[14] For households with no children overall (regardless of number of adults), 11% were food insecure, with 6% having low FS and 5% as very low.[15] Within that category, the rates also differ for women and men living alone: 15.1% of women living alone were identified as food insecure, as well as 13.8% of men.[16] The primary cause of FI is insufficient resources to obtain food, whether that be money, transportation, time, or preparation facilities. The percentage of Americans who are food insecure and in poverty are closely aligned; however, not all households that are in poverty experience FI, and the opposite is true as well, as some households that are not in poverty do experience FI.[17] Other risk factors that may bring about or exacerbate FI include socioeconomic factors (such as education level, race/ethnicity, family composition), time to acquire and prepare food, employment status, housing status, food knowledge and preparation skills, social network support, prior economic hardship, and the nearby availability of food.[18] The one definitive marker of FI is housing status; by definition, if a household is homeless, they are also food insecure.[19] Many of these risk factors may correlate with FI rates within those groups—however, it cannot be definitively said that these risk factors cause FI. How a household manages their

[14] Economic Research Service, "Household food security," 6.
[15] Ibid, 6.
[16] Ibid, 26.
[17] Alaimo, "Food Insecurity in the United States," 284.
[18] Ibid, 286.
[19] Ibid, 283.

situation and what coping skills they employ when faced with basic needs insecurities will largely direct the outcome.

FI impacts psychosocial and physical health across all age groups. Adequate food intake and nutritional quality is required for optimal physiological, cognitive, and emotional development throughout all stages of life.[20] Reduced food intake and nutritional quality can lead to hunger and malnutrition, which have both short-term and chronic health effects. One of the first trade-offs individuals experiencing FI begin to make is replacing nutrient-dense but calorie-sparse foods (such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins) with cheap, calorie-dense but nutrient-sparse alternatives (often processed, prepackaged foodstuffs); this swap leads to a diet that is high in starches, sugar, salt, and fat while lacking in essential nutrients.[21] When eaten in moderation, these can be part of a healthy diet; however, when these items make up the primary dietary composition, it can lead to obesity and the associated health effects. It has been shown that FI is associated with obesity as a potential outcome;[22] this is due to the cheap, easy access to these processed foods that many families turn to when resources are tight.

In addition to the physical effects, FI can disrupt and modify household dynamics. In households with very low FS, meals are skipped and food is not as eaten as frequently as social norms dictate it should be.[23] This may change the dynamic in households with children the most; parents may take the brunt of the reduced food intake so that children have enough to eat and are not impacted. FI may also lead to a feeling of psychological suffering and deprivation. The key marker of low FS is a reduction in the amount of choice in one's diet, which takes away the sense

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[20] Cook and Frank, "Food Security, Poverty, and Human Development," 193.
[21] Ibid, 196.
[22] Bhattacharya et al., "Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Nutritional Outcomes," 17.
[23] Alaimo, "Food Insecurity in the U.S.," 288.

of individual agency, dignity, and empowerment found through food choice. Combined with the lack of choice, utilizing public support services such as SNAP/WIC benefits, food pantries, and individual social networks to obtain food may lead to feelings of shame, embarrassment, powerlessness, frustration, and guilt over ones' situation.

There are several safety nets set up on a governmental level to assist FI households. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest program in the U.S. food social safety net and is available in every state. SNAP provides monthly benefits recipients can use in order to purchase food either at grocery stores or famers markets; this includes items such as fruits and vegetables, proteins, dairy products, bread and cereals, snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages, as well as seeds and plants for food production.[24] While the requirements for SNAP qualification very per state, Oregon will be utilized as an example for the purposes of this project; the individual or household applying must live in the state and meet income guidelines (for one person at the time of writing, monthly income cannot exceed $2,430/month) in order to receive benefits.[25] There are exemptions that must be met in order for higher education students, older adults, and non-citizens in order to be eligible.[26] Part of SNAP benefits—in some states including Oregon, but not all—is the Double Up Food Bucks Program (DUFB), which allows recipients to have $20 in benefits matched (for a total of $40) to use at participating stores, markets, CSAs, and farm stands.[27] DUFB can only be used to purchase fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, beans, herbs, and vegetable starts.[28] The intention with this program is to create equitable food to nutritional food for SNAP recipients by increasing their

[24] Oregon Department of Human Services, "SNAP Food Benefits."
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Double Up Food Bucks Oregon, "FAQ."

purchasing power without depleting their monthly benefits. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is another federal program that provides support for low-income pregnant and postpartum women, or women with infants and children under the age of 5.[29] WIC recipients can use funds to purchase certain approved foods under a much smaller list than SNAP recipients, including items like baby foods and specific nutrient-rich foods.[30] Another frequently utilized option for support is local food banks; although many are run through religious organizations, publicly funded and nonprofit options (such as Food for Lane County) are becoming more numerous.

The sub-group discussed here most relevant to college students for comparison is the household with no children and/or individuals living alone, with the primary risk factor being a lack of means to obtain food. The observed impacts of FI nationwide include detrimental physical, social, and psychological effects, which a number of federal and state social support services aim to offer relief from. When examining the issue on a nationwide level, we see that FI rates are easy to measure and easy to remediate; however, when moving to inspecting this among college students, we find that rates are difficult to measure and that support services go drastically underutilized. The following section will examine the risks, consequences, and support services related to FI among the college student population.

[29] USDA Food and Nutrition Service, “Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.”
[30] Ibid.

Food Insecurity: On U.S. College Campuses

Measuring Food Insecurity in the College Student Population

FI can affect any population, including college students. This population has been overlooked in the literature until the past fifteen years, despite it being a colloquially known issue for much longer. In 1960, the Daily Kent Starter at Kent State ran an article in 1960 titled "Starving Student is not a Joke", in which the student author writes that "The poor starving college student has become a cliché. Clichés are avoided and so are hungry students… I am a living witness: it is not just a myth. I get awfully hungry sometimes, all 130 pounds of me".[31] Despite this being an issue since *at least* 1960, it did not appear in the literature until 2009 with Chaparro and colleague's study examining FI prevalence among college students at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa. It was found that 21% of students surveyed were food insecure, with an additional 24% at risk.[32]

Since 2009, the number of studies measuring FI rates has steadily increased, with most studies either measuring a single campus or a mixture of a few. No study has carried out a nationwide survey of FI among college students, and each study may measure FI slightly differently (using the six-item survey vs. the ten-item, or creating their own measure). As such, it is difficult to come up with a nationwide estimate; however, several studies have examined the quality of studies that measure FI rates among college students and evaluated their measurement methods in order to provide a nationwide estimate. For example, Nikolaus and colleagues ran a review of 12,044 records (ranging from gray literature to peer-review studies) and closely examined 51 that met their inclusion criteria; across these studies, FI rates ranged from 10-

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[31] Golden, "Starving Student Is Not a Joke."
[32] Chaparro et al., "Food Insecurity Prevalence."

75%.[33] When weighted, the overall estimate of FI across the included studies was 41%.[34] Bruening and colleagues ran a similar study, finding that FI rates ranged from 12.5-84% with a weighted average of 42%.[35] However, both works note that these estimates should be taken with a grain of salt; they include data from both two-year community colleges along with four-year colleges and universities, of which the student demographics—and so as well the risk factors for FI—differ.[36,37] Furthermore, each campus may offer different student resources—or have a lack thereof—for combating FI. Regardless, these rates are alarmingly high, and given the time between the two reviews (2017-2020), are not going down.

Risk Factors for Food Insecurity Among College Students

The drastically higher rate of FI among the college student population is due to the unique circumstances college students find themselves in. These include financial challenges, such as the high and continually rising cost of college and insufficient financial aid,[38] needing to prioritize fixed expenses such as rent and bills first and placing food last,[39,40] having low financial knowledge and poor financial management skills,[41, 42] and limited earning potential while in college.[43, 44] Other causes of FI among college students include challenges that come with living independently for the first time, such as the diminished social support that comes

33 Nikolaus et al.., "Food Insecurity among College Students," 12.
34 Ibid, 17.
35 Bruening et al., "The Struggle Is Real," 5.
36 Nikolaus et al.., "Food Insecurity among College Students," 17.
37 Bruening et al., "The Struggle Is Real," 9.
38 Freudenberg et al., "College Students and Snap," 1652.
39 Anderson et al., "Navigating Hidden Hunger," 9.
40 Henry, 12.
41 et al., .
42 Worthy et al., "Problematic Financial Behaviors of College Students," 167.
43 Freudenberg et al., 1653.
44 Gaines et al., 377.

with living off-campus,[45, 46] and a lack of food management skills;[47] additionally, the lack of time due to school, study, and work can impact FS[48] along with a lack of transportation to be able to reliably and regularly purchase food.[49] Students who also previously struggled with FI or received free or reduced lunch prior to college are also likely to experience FI during college,[50,51] along with non-traditional students, who are continually increasing in college attendance.[52,53] Each of these will be discussed more thoroughly in turn.

FI is a resource-constrained condition; its presence or absence is directly impacted by what resources a household has in order to obtain food, which is largely financial.[54] For students, the lack of money to purchase food is brought about in several ways, including the high cost of college combined with insufficient financial aid, limited employment opportunities, and poor financial knowledge and management skills. A combination of these leads to a prioritization of expenses in which food takes last place. The cost of a degree continues to creep higher and higher—for example, between 1969 and 2016, the cost of a four-year degree doubled, even after adjusting for inflation, while the purchasing power of financial aid continues to decline.[55] Upon its inception in 1972, the Pell Grant, which is the primary federal subsidy for low-income students, covered more than 80% of the cost of attendance at a public, four-year university; in 2019, it covered less than 30%.[56] This leaves students with a much larger portion of their tuition

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[45] El Zein et al., "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity," 9.
[46] Olfert et al., 3.
[47] Gaines et al., 379.
[48] Anderson et al., 6.
[49] El Zein et al., "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity," 9.
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[51] Olfert et al., 3.
[52] Bruening et al., "The Struggle Is Real," 6.
[53] Olfert et al., 3.
[54] Cook and Frank, 193.
[55] Freudenberg et al., 1653.
[56] Ibid, 1653.

bill to foot themselves. In order to make up the rest, they must find additional scholarships, take out loans, work to earn income, or rely on familial support.

Finding and maintaining employment while enrolled can be difficult for many students. While on-campus jobs must work around a student's class schedule, this is not the case for off-campus employers; they may avoid hiring college students altogether out of convenience for scheduling, or students may resign to missing class in order to work.[57] Additionally, emerging adults on the whole are likely to engage in high-risk financial behaviors, leaving them vulnerable to financial crisis.[58] Whether or not a student will fall prey to risky financial behaviors is largely tied to whether their parents also obtained a degree and their level of income; students whose parents attended college and have a high income often have a more successful transition to adulthood, while students who come from a low-income background and are responsible for their own expenses often make a more rapid—but rocky—transition to adulthood due to a lack of capital.[59] For example, utilizing credit cards to pay for day-to-day expenses like food provides access to much needed flexibility for students in financially precarious situations; however, if the liquidity of their spending is not balanced by earned income, the inability to pay off accrued debt may have an adverse effect on future finances, thus increasing risk of FI.[60] For many low-income students, financial skills such as managing a credit card or loan balance are not taught intergenerationally, leaving them vulnerable in the transition to financial independence. This financial bind—the continually increasing cost of attending a four-year institution with limited ways to fund it—forces to students to prioritize what they can and cannot pay for in order to

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[57] Ibid, 1653..
[58] Worthy et al., 162.
[59] Ibid, 163.
[60] Gaines et al., 383.

finish their education. ‘Fixed’ expenses, such as rent, tuition, and utilities, get paid first, and remaining expenses come last, including food. Among the basic necessities, food is the first to go.[61]

Other resources that impact student FS are time and transportation. Time constraints have a real impact on FS! Students live busy lives between class, completing assignments, studying, and working part-time; this leaves little or no time (or do not want to use the little remaining time) to go to the store, shop, and prepare nutritious meals.[62,63] Students who feel this time restraint report buying items that are quick and easy to prepare, which while convenient and cheap, are frequently not nutritious.[64] If students do not have reliable means of transportation to buy food, then they do not have the assured ability to acquire food. Whether or not this actually impacts a student is largely context-dependent; their distance to a preferred grocery store will vary based on living location, which will change what mode of transportation is needed. If a student lives several miles away from the nearest grocery store, a car or bus is needed; however, if it is a few blocks away, it is easily accessible by a walk or bike. Even if there is a grocery store nearby, though, it may not be what the student prefers. If it is too expensive or does not carry culturally relevant and/or the specific foods the student is seeking, the distance needed to travel to obtain food would be extended.

Yet another factor that impacts student FS is the massive life transition that is packed within the experience of higher education. For many students, the time they spend attending college is the first time they have had to carry out day-to-day responsibilities associated with

[61] Alaimo, “Food Insecurity in the U.S.,” 290.
[62] Henry, 9.
[63] Anderson et al., 6.
[64] Henry, 9.

independent living, including (but of course not limited to) feeding oneself. In order to carry this out successfully, it is critical that students have a strong sense of food literacy, which is:

> "The scaffolding that empowers individuals… to protect diet quality through change and strengthen dietary resilience over time. It is composed of a collection of interrelated knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to plan, manage, select, prepare, and eat food to meet needs and determine intake."[65]

In practice, this means that food literacy is the ability to process and utilize information and skills in order to use food to achieve positive physical and psychosocial outcomes.[66] This includes having strong planning and management skills, which aids students in making time for food and eating, as well as having a plan and the skills to execute it.[67] As noted above, having strong food literacy skills also requires the capacity to make informed selection of foods; young adults struggle in this area. Young adults are aware of nutritional content and its importance when choosing foods, but tend to eat within a usual repertoire based on convenience, taste, shelf life, comfort, equipment, and skills.[68] They similarly struggle with food preparation; among this group, their priority when preparing food is that it tastes good rather than ensuring it is nutritious and balanced.[69] Food literacy is a kind of intellectual capital; without it, students struggle to follow an adequate, nutritious diet, as they do not have the knowledge or skill set in order to achieve it.

When examining food literacy rates in actuality, young adults tend to drastically overestimate their level of food literacy. The overall food preparation of young adults is low, but when surveyed, they greatly overestimate their actual abilities.[70] Young adults who do

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[65] Vidgen and Gallegos, "Defining Food Literacy", 54.
[66] Palumbo, "Sustainability of Well-Being through Literacy," 101.
[67] Vidgen and Gallegos, 55.
[68] Ibid, 55.
[69] Ibid, 55.
[70] Byrd-Bredbenner, "Food Preparation Knowledge and Attitudes of Young Adults," 162.

overestimate their abilities also perceive their diet to be much more nutritious than it actually is as a result of this knowledge gap (and the absence of recognition of it).[71] This limited actual knowledge is a barrier to implementing dietary recommendations, as a lack of basic nutrition knowledge and food management skills forms a disconnect between the information and implementation. Lacking knowledge on what even is nutritious or an adequate supply of food places students at a massive risk for FI—without knowing what an adequate and nutritious diet is, students may continue to eat inadequate meals in terms of quality and quantity while being under the impression they are meeting recommendations for a healthy diet.

The final observed risk factors for FI among college students are being a non-traditional college student and having a prior history with FI. Non-traditional students are students for whom the decision to attend college is not expected of them, struggle to weigh the cost between attending college and supporting the family income, have few close connections that can assist in the application and learning process, and are often unaware of the opportunities and resources available to them when on-campus.[72] In 2022, over 70% of students could be considered non-traditional[73]—as these students are frequently low-income and have strained financial obligations, they are an at-risk group for the financial reasons discussed above. Additionally, if students experienced FI as a child, they are 235% more likely to experience FI in college.[74] Take a study done in the University of California system, which found that 76% of food insecure students had a childhood history of FI, compared to 24% of their food secure peers.[75] This could be due to a variety of reasons; students may have been taught to eat a certain way due to FI in the

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[71] Ibid, 160.
[72] Rendón Linares and Muñoz, "Revisiting Validation Theory," 17.
[73] Anderson et al., 1.
[74] Olfert et al., 5.
[75] Martinez et al., "Pathways from Food Insecurity", 5.

household and continued to eat that way after leaving, for one. Another potential cause could be a lack of familial financial support for college; although it is important to remember that not all food insecure families are in poverty (and vice versa), FI is an indicator that resources are strained to the point that a household struggles to pay for food out of their own volition. If they require assistance to pay for food, it is unlikely that there would be money to spare for college support, leaving the student to manage on their own.

All of these factors lead college students into a pattern of FI. Ultimately, FI is a resource-determined condition; when observed in the student population, this includes constraints surrounding money, time, transportation, and knowledge. These all lead to some form of lacking that results in the limited and/or uncertain availability of quality foodstuffs, falling in line with the definition of FI. Both the tangible (means to obtain food and the food itself) and intangible (food literacy skills) lacking should both be considered equally as important, as one can have access to food, but no knowledge of what to buy or what to do with it to make a quality meal. This extends backwards as well; one may have a strong sense of food literacy, but no reliable access to food items to utilize their skillset. Both pieces of the puzzle contribute to the overall high presence of FI among college students.

Consequences of Food Insecurity Among College Students

FI in the student population incurs the same consequences as it does for the general population, but is manifested within and impacts the college experience in unique ways. First, food insecure students exhibit reduced food intake, both in terms of portion size and skipping meals.[76,77,78] This is tied to both the daily availability of food as well as the time taken to

[76] Anderson et al., 6.
[77] El Zein et al., "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity," 9.
[78] Watson et al., "College Students Identify University Support," 134.

consume and or/cook meals. Food insecure students routinely skip breakfast more than their food secure peers in addition to adapting to low food supplies by skipping lunch and dinner as needed, leading to an overall reduced food intake across time.[79,80] This means that food insecure students are eating less often than social norms dictate is adequate; while three meals a day is not a scientifically hard and fast rule, it does indicate that this student group may not be eating consistently enough to avoid the physical and psychosocial effects that come as a result of this inconsistency in quantity.[81]

Food insecure students also have a diet that is low in terms of nutritional quality. This i in large part due to frequent consumption and reliance on low-quality food items, such as processed, pre-packaged meals and foodstuffs.[82,83,84,85,86,87] Along with frequent consumption of these nutritionally poor foods, food insecure students eat less nutritionally rich foods such as fruits and vegetables than recommended.[88,89] This may be tied into a lack of time to prepare food; when busy day-to-day life and overall food preferences are ranked as a top priority in food choice for students, students consume fewer fruits and vegetables, more sugar sweetened beverages, and more added sugar—the same is also observed when price point becomes a priority.[90] The financial, time, and knowledge constraints that bring about and perpetuate FI within the college student population are major factors in these diet selection choices.

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[79] Anderson et al., 6.
[80] Watson et al., 134.
[81] Alaimo, "Food Insecurity in the U.S.," 287.
[82] Anderson et al., 5.
[83] Bruening et al., "High Rates of Food Insecurity," 5.
[84] Freudenberg et al., 1654.
[85] Maynard et al., "Experiences of Food Insecurity," 135.
[86] Vilaro et al., "Food Choice Priorities," 3.
[87] Watson et al., 134.
[88] El Zein et al., "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity," 5.
[89] Martinez et al., "Pathways from Food Insecurity," 5.
[90] Vilaro et al., 3.

This nutritionally poor and inconsistent diet also results in physical health consequences. Food insecure students report poor overall health, specifically noting irregular sleep patterns and poor sleep quality, fatigue, physical weakness, and fewer days that included some kind of physical activity.[91,92,93] Additionally, food insecure students report observing weight gain,[94,95] affirming findings that food insecure students are more likely than their food secure peers to be overweight or obese.[96,97] One study found 33% of food insecure students observed were overweight or obese; a significant difference from the food secure group, which had a 25% overweight or obesity rate.[98] While this is likely in part due to regular consumption of calorically rich, nutrient poor foods—as discussed previously—there must be something beyond poor food quality leading to this outcome, given that food insecure students also lack in food quantity. This higher obesity prevalence is due to the feast and famine cycle taking place in turn with food availability; routine abstinence from eating while hungry forces the body to adapt in its storage and utilization of energy, resulting in an excess of fat storage in preparation for the next period of starvation.[99] Through these cycles of starvation and re-feeding, the body learns to hold on to any energy it may get as it anticipates another starvation period, while also slowing down the basal metabolic rate to conserve energy overall.[100] These health impacts as a result of FI have direct impacts in the short-term, but also lead to chronic health effects after the resource-strained period is over.

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[91] Anderson et al., 5.
[92] El Zein et al., "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity," 9.
[93] Maynard et al., 138.
[94] Ibid, 138.
[95] Watson et al., 134.
[96] Bhattcharya et al., 17.
[97] Freudenberg et al., 1654.
[98] Martinez et al., "Pathways from Food Insecurity," 4.
[99] El Zein et al., "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity," 9.
[100] Ibid, 9.

Food insecure students also suffer academic consequences as a result of the health impacts in addition to the time and resource constraints that give rise to FI. It is known that children and teens experiencing FI suffer academic consequences in elementary and high school; several works introduce a pipeline approach on this topic, proposing that factors and behaviors that impede academic progress form a through-line from elementary, secondary, and higher education. This leads to the conclusion that if FI is detrimental to K-12 student success (which is known), it must also be detrimental to higher education student success.[101,102] Children and teens experiencing FI are more likely to have repeated a grade and miss more school days than their food-secure peers;[103] do not achieve to the same levels as their food-secure peers, especially in reading and math;[104] and are more likely to have been suspended.[105,106] This is echoed in the academic repercussions college students face while experiencing FI, which is of special salience since it undermines progress towards the ultimate goal of obtaining a degree.

First, students experiencing FI have lower GPAs than their food-secure peers.[107,108,109] Students experiencing FI are two times more likely to have a GPA under 3.0 than their food-secure peers,[110] being most likely to fall into the 2-2.49 GPA range.[111] Only 30% of students experiencing FI reported an "A" average, with 19% having a "C" average (while compared to 9% of their food-secure peers).[112] Students experiencing FI may also miss class due to hunger or

[101] Cady, "Food Insecurity as a Student Issue," 268.
[102] Henry, 8.
[103] Alaimo et al., "Food Insufficiency," 46.
[104] Ibid, 48.
[105] Ibid, 46.
[106] Cook and Frank, 202.
[107] El Zein et al., "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity," 5.
[108] Maroto et al., "Food Insecurity Among Community College Students," 520.
[109] Martinez et al., "No Food for Thought," 1933.
[110] El Zein et al., "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity," 5.
[111] Maroto et al., 520.
[112] Martinez et al., "No Food for Thought," 1933.

to work in order to support their basic needs. In order to meet minimum basic needs, these students may pick up as many hours as they can; however, while working 10-15 hours a week has a positive impact on student outcomes, 20 or greater begins to have the opposite effect.[113] This leaves students with less time remaining during the week to complete assignments and study; in some cases, students may be skipping class to work, leaving them without the chance to learn the material firsthand. Some students find that they need to take time off school in order to work to pay tuition and the cost of living, leading to delayed graduation times and a higher likelihood of dropping out.[114,115] Students experiencing FI also report difficulty concentrating in class as well as when completing assignments or studying.[116,117,118] One study found 30% of students experiencing FI reported falling grades due to hunger, while 50% reported difficulty concentrating.[119] This is due to what Allen and Alleman dub a "food insecurity reordered time-use strategy"; the psychological response to a missing need is to be consumed by that unfulfilled need, where time that could have spent studying is instead spent worrying about food.[120] This lack of focus may also be due to the stress of being in a state of FI, which can lead to maladaptive psychological responses such as impaired concentration and decision making.[121]

The psychological consequences of FI extend beyond their impact on negative academic performance. Students experiencing FI also experience higher rates of psychological suffering than their food-secure peers. Martinez and colleagues found that students experiencing FI had

[113] Cady, 267.
[114] Allen and Alleman, "Private Struggle at a Private Institution," 60.
[115] Henry, 15.
[116] Martinez et al., "No Food for Thought," 1935.
[117] Maynard et al., 138.
[118] Watson et al., 134.
[119] Henry, 14.
[120] 64.
[121] Graham and Ciciurkaite, "The Risk for Food Insecurity," 4.

higher rates of all the following: feeling hopeless, overwhelmed, exhausted, lonely, sad, anxious, angry, depressed, and tremendously stressed than their food-secure peers; specifically, 53% of food insecure students were very lonely, 58% were very sad, and 56% were overwhelmingly anxious.[122] Furthermore, being at risk for FI is associated with increased odds for suicidal ideation.[123] These findings are pressing and worrying. There is a wealth of focus and concern on holistic student wellbeing, including mental health; the effect of FI, as well as basic needs insecurities more broadly, on mental health must be considered in this conversation moving forward. A lack or uncertainty of the basic needs required to survive is clearly a stressor that impacts students physically, academically, mentally, and socially.

FI can also lead to social alienation, lack of acceptance, and social withdrawal. Cooking together, going out to eat or drink, and eating together is a positive way for students to connect; it offers a communal space that can be utilized to build friendships and share a common experience. However, FI students struggle to find the extra money, as well as time, to participate in these activities.[124] This leads students experiencing FI to continually opt-out of activities involving going out to eat or where it may be expected of them to bring food to share, giving way to a feeling that they are not accepted or welcome in that space if they cannot afford to partake.[125] Furthermore, at an affluent university, the dominant perspective also assumes affluence; this leads to the assumption that all students have the financial flexibility to socialize over food, making it difficult for students experiencing FI to form relationships with food-secure peers as they likely do not understand the experience of lacking basic needs.[126] This leads to self-

[122] "No Food For Thought," 1935.
[123] Graham and Ciciurkaite, 11.
[124] Henry, 15.
[125] Graham and Ciciurkaite, 4.
[126] Allen and Alleman, 62.

isolation so other students do not ask questions and become exposed to this private struggle, which only weighs on a student's emotional burden and harms their sense of self-worth. In this way, FI poses a barrier to social inclusion; food can be an entry into social interactions and valuable relationships, but only if you can afford it.

Coping with Food Insecurity in College

These effects must be mediated in order for students to succeed in their education. There are three general ways in which individuals and households cope with FI: self-reliance, which is making do with what resources and foodstuffs are remaining in the household or seeking out additional income; informal bartering of services among social networks, such as trading services for food among friends and family; and reliance on formal institutions such as food banks and SNAP benefits, which is typically a household's last resort.[127] Students reported coping with FI in ways that fit all three categories: seeking out scholarships and government assistance, taking on part-time jobs, borrowing money, sharing food with roommates, reducing meat purchases, buying in bulk, couponing, taking advantage of student discounts, and finding free food on campus when available.[128]

Note that utilizing an on-or-off campus food pantry or other forms of institutional or community support are not on the above list. Repeatedly, students have reported that they do not want to utilize formal resources because they feel undeserving, as other students are 'worse off' than they are.[129] Students also report feeling a sense of shame when they do utilize formal resources; this stands in direct conflict with their self-expectations as an independent, adult

[127] Alaimo et al., "Food Insecurity in the U.S.," 286.
[128] Maynard et al., 138.
[129] El Zein et al., "Obstacles to University Food Pantry Use," 10.

college student.[130,131] Students also do not utilize formal resources due to insufficient information on how the program works, unsuitable food choices, or inconvenient hours.[132] In one study, 70% of all students surveyed were aware of the on-campus food pantry's existence, but only 15.6% actually used it; of the food-insecure group surveyed, only 38.5% had used it.[133] Despite the negative impacts of FI discussed thus far, students will go to great lengths to mitigate the impact, but fall short of connecting with support services.

Students have suggested a myriad of ways in which their institutions can support them towards improving student FS status. This includes calls for a general basic needs assistance office, where students can go to receive assistance applying for SNAP/WIC, as well as education on nutrition, food literacy, budgeting, and cooking.[134,135] Specific suggestions for improving the utilization of on-campus food pantries included rebranding it to a community resource center; providing more food options, such as fresh produce, proteins, and culturally diverse foods; employing satellite locations and online ordering systems; expanding hours; and increasing discretion and privacy for users.[136] Screening for FI risk as students entering the university and monitoring routinely throughout their college career was also suggested; this would allow schools to step in quickly and offer assistance to students before their situation impacts their academic aspirations and abilities.[137,138] Additional financial support is another proposed solution, such as a food scholarship;[139] basic needs stipend;[140] emergency funds that could be

[130] Anderson et al., 9.
[131] Crutchfield et al., 8.
[132] El Zein et al., "Obstacles to University Food Pantry Use," 12.
[133] El Zein et al., "Hungry College Students Not Seeking Help," 4.
[134] Anderson et al., 12.
[135] El Zein et al., "Hungry College Students Not Seeking Help," 10.
[136] Ibid, 10.
[137] Martinez et al., "Pathways from Food Insecurity," 7.
[138] Olfert et al., 7.
[139] Anderson et al., 11.
[140] Bruening et al., "The Struggle is Real," 6.

used to prevent utility cutoffs, eviction, or for food;[141] an expansion of some sort of the K-12 free breakfast and reduced lunch program to include college students;[142,143] meal vouchers for on-campus venues for students who qualify (like a campus-exclusive version of food stamps);[144,145] and an overall restructuring of financial aid packages with the burden of FI in mind.[146] Some more creative solutions that work directly on the university level are food recovery programs that redirect safe-to-eat leftover food from dining halls and catering to students directly as well as some kind of work-for-food program where students could pick up flexible shifts on-campus in exchange for a meal.[147] On a governmental scale, there are calls to ensure that college students are being included in federal aid packages and to expand the SNAP eligibility requirements for college students.[148]

In sum, FI is a pressing issue on college campuses which, despite being readily measurable and theoretically remediable, is continuing to run rampant with concrete consequences for the students affected. The roots of FI among students, at their core, are the same as among the general population; FI results from a lack of resources of various kinds to obtain food. For students, this is further exacerbated by the drastic life transition they find themselves in, leaving them with sudden expected independence and a lack of food literacy skills that leaves them unprepared to fuel themselves. The consequences of FI then manifest themselves in ways that uniquely impact the college experience in addition to the physical effects observed in the general population; students experiencing FI struggle with academic,

[141] Freudenberg et al., 1656.
[142] Henry, 16.
[143] Martinez et al., "Pathways from Food Insecurity," 8.
[144] El Zein et al., "Hungry College Students Not Seeking Help," PAGE.
[145] Henry, 16.
[146] Nazmi et al., 11.
[147] Henry, 16-17.
[148] Fruedenberg et al., 1656.

psychological, and social repercussions, ultimately undermining many of the desired outcomes of attending college. Despite this, we know that many students that suffer from FI do not attempt to access formal or informal support services. Many students feel that resources and programs that promote FS are not intended for them, leading to a self-imposed deterrence out of fear for potential stigma if utilized. These findings in the college population at large are further reflected within our campus community here at the University of Oregon.

Food Insecurity: At the University of Oregon

At the University of Oregon, two studies have examined the prevalence of FI on campus and its effects on students for the 2022-2023 school year. One study, carried out by the Hope Center at Temple University, is external; the other—part of the Student Wellbeing and Success Initiative (SWaSI)—is external and carried out by the Office of Assessment and Research in the Division of Student Life. Both found alarming rates of FI among the student body. The SWaSI report found that 39.7% of students at UO experienced FI[149] and the Hope Center found a rate of 38%.[150] The SWaSI report utilized the USDA 10-item survey to measure FI, while the Hope Center utilized the 18-item version. Given that the Hope Center only reports the data on the FS status of adults—and not any of the children that may be in the surveyed households—these results are comparable. Perhaps most alarmingly, the SWaSI report from 2021 found that 21.8% of UO students experienced FI—a 17% increase in a two-year time span as opposed to any sort of decline is of concern.[151] The SWaSI report also found that 74.6% of students experiencing FI were worried about food on a regular basis as well.[152]

[149] Clark and Delgado-Riley, 4.
[150] Hope Center, "2023 Student Basic Needs Survey," 2.
[151] Clark and Delgado-Riley, 6.
[152] Ibid, 4.

The Hope Center report also offers a question-by-question breakdown of each measure of the 10 items in the USSDA survey that pertain only to adults. Of all students surveyed, 44% sometimes or often could not afford to eat balanced meals, 41% sometimes or often worried about food running out, 33% cut the size of or skipped meals due to a lack of money for food, 33% also ate less than they feel due to a lack of money for food, 28% sometimes or often ran out of food and didn't have money to buy more, 27% were hungry but did not eat because of a lack of money for food, 24% cut the size of or skipped meals three or more times because of a lack of money for food, 15% lost weight because of a lack of money for food, 7% did not eat for a whole day due to a lack of money for food, and less than 5% did not eat for a whole day three times of more because of a lack of money for food.[153]

In terms of predictors and risk factors for FI, some commonalities were found with what has previously been discussed; for one, the SWaSI report found that familial socioeconomic status is a significant predictor of FI. Of the students whose families were upper class, 24% experienced FI; middle class, 38.2% FI; and lower class, 52.5% FI.[154] This demonstrates that as socioeconomic class increases, the concentration of FI decreases; simultaneously, though, there is a notable percentage of students in all classes who experience FI. In addition, 52.4% of first-generation students experienced FI, compared to 34.7% of students who had family members who previously attended a higher education institution.[155] Transfer students also had a higher rate of FI, with 50% of transfer students identified as food insecure as compared to 37.8% of non-transfers.[156] The data on first-generation students and transfer students reflects that these students

[153] Hope Center, 12.
[154] Clark and Delgado-Riley, 10.
[155] Ibid, 11.
[156] Ibid, 11.

may not be aware of what resources on campus are available to them, in addition to a new campus where their supporters may be unfamiliar with the college experience entirely and unable or unsure of how to offer support. This data also suggests that student status is not an end-all-be-predictor of FS; it can impact any student. This speaks to a larger imbedded cultural problem that goes beyond having enough resources and means to protect FS status.

Consequences of FI at UO are similar to what has been observed elsewhere. The SWaSI report found that experiencing FI is associated with higher stress, more sadness, and lower life satisfaction; this also applied to students were also worried about food (not necessarily food insecure).[157] Students also reported an overall struggle to make ends meet due to the rising cost of food, housing, and tuition, despite some students reporting working multiple jobs.[158] Neither the SWaSI report no the Hope Center surveyed academic outcomes among students experiencing FI; however given the high rates of FI on campus, it is inferable that students who experience FI here are suffering the same physical, academic, and social consequences as their peers across the country.

UO does offer a range of basic needs support services for students, regardless of whether they experience FI or just food worry. There is a Student Food Pantry located walking distance from campus that serves all college students in the greater Eugene area; a weekly produce drop that is free for students; the Ducks Feeding Ducks program, where students short on cash for a meal can receive $12 in Duck Bucks to use on campus; Leftover Textover, which alerts students when there are leftovers from UO Catering on campus; SNAP enrollment assistance; and the Duck Nest and Duck Rides Grocery Shuttle, which takes a limited amount of students every

[157] Hope Center, 12.
[158] Clark and Delgado-Riley, 28.

week to WinCO and trader Joe's.[159] There are other food-related community resources the Basic Needs Office promotes; however, many students may feel uncomfortable utilizing them as many are affiliated with religious organizations. The Basic Needs Office also connects students with financial assistance; undergraduate students are able to receive one-time financial support from the Students in Crisis Fund (generally capped at $700) as well as the UO Emergency Loan Program (capped at $300 with 90-days interest free).[160] The office also supports a Basic Needs Assistance Form, where either students can self-refer, or peers, faculty, staff, coaches, etc. can refer the student in order to request a consultation with a Basic Needs Coordinator to find possible solutions and receive support.[161] This program entails what many of the respondents from other institutions request in terms of basic needs support, however, this program is not without its limitations and potential for improvement.

While this program is robust, it is not yet shown through the data; this may be because it has not yet had the time to make a significant impact. The Basics Needs Office opened at the start of the 2022-2023 school year and began its programs right away, but when the SWaSI and Hope Center surveys were conducted following that year, students still felt there is more to be done on campus in order to increase FS (in the latter end of 2023). This is made clear in a few ways: first, despite the significant rate of FI, worryingly few students utilize on-campus FS resources. While 63% of students had heard of the food pantry, only 13% had actually utilized it; similarly with Ducks Feeding Ducks, 45% had heard of it, but only 6% had actually used it; and while 62% had heard about SNAP application assistance, only 12% had actually used it.[162]

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[159] Office of the Dean of Students, "Food Security."
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Hope Center, 18.

Students also feel that current programs are not meeting their needs, reporting that they want healthier food options on campus (including nutrient dense staple foods that are both healthy and culturally diverse), a food pantry that is non-religious and operates through the UO, expansion of the Ducks Feeding Ducks Program, extended hours for the dining halls, the ability to use SNAP benefits in the EMU, better communication of resources throughout the academic year, and ultimately to actually feel that UO cares about student wellbeing.[163]

What is observed at UO is a reflection of the problem of student FI on a nationwide scale. As it stands now, this is still a problem; however, the groundwork has been laid for programs that can have a massive impact on student FS. Compared to what many institutions lack, UO has set itself up for success through the implementation of the Basic Needs Program and FS programming. These programs have not hit their stride yet, and listening to the student voice will be crucial to optimizing these resources. As far less students are utilizing the programs than the number that experience FI, we must ask why students are not catching on to them. To understand why these programs are not yet working—in addition to how they may be improved—it is imperative to understand why students appear accepting of being in a state of FI and make little effort to correct.

[163] Clark and Delgado-Riley, 29.

Perpetuating the 'Starving Student' Narrative

With a sizable number of students identified as food-insecure—many of whom are aware of the supportive resources on campus—and so few actually utilizing present resources, there must be some factor deterring students from seeking help. Students consistently report two primary social-based reasons as to why they do not seek out help: first, they perceive that everyone else is experiencing the same and so it is a normal, expected part of the college experience; second, they either have experienced feeling (or anticipate they would feel) shame accepting help, as they perceive themselves to be better off than others who are more deserving of aid. This leads to a tricky balancing of dynamics. Students are normalizing the experience of being food insecure while simultaneously refusing to acknowledge it for what it is due to stigma associated with stereotypical images of poverty. Avoiding the acknowledgement of what being a starving student is—being food insecure—only keeps students in a perpetual cycle of FI.

Qualitative studies demonstrate that college students believe that eating a poor diet is typical of the college experience, demonstrating that students perceive a lack of basic needs to be typical of the college experience and a 'rite of passage' of sorts. One student stated: "This is just how colleges are. It's all about starving yourself and being broke."[164] Students also discuss shorting themselves on diet quality and quantity in order to make ends meet: "So I would have to buy… ramen and things like that so I can make sure that I have somewhere to live and I have electricity and things like that."[165] Students assume they need to adapt to the financial circumstances through the deprioritization of food; they see their peers consuming the same diets and hear from upperclassmen doing just the same, resulting in a learned behavior of relying on

[164] El Zein et al., "Obstacles to University Food Pantry Use," 10.
[165] Watson et al., 133.

poor quality foods and enduring food shortages as they come.[166] Students do not seek out aid because they perceive this among their peers as normal.

FI can also be mistaken for fun and risk-seeking behaviors exhibited by college students. For example, alcohol and substance abuse often come after a period of brief starvation to 'get drunk faster' or because getting a drink is cheaper than food for the day. The original student article from 1960 offers this scenario:

> "Sometimes you are faced with the problem of what to do with the last 30 cents you'll probably ever see the rest of your life—buy a can of corned beef or a pack of cigarettes. The answer is simple; get the cigarettes and smoke until the thought of food is obliterated from your bereaved mind."[167]

These stories are later told in fond memory. Students whose parents attended college and have fond memories of the time—despite being hungry throughout it—may find themselves with no financial support from their parents because their parents also endured it, look back on it kindly, and later view it as a 'character-building experience'.[168] If students look to their parents and peers for support and express their suffering but are met with a sentiment that makes light of the experience, their day-to-day struggle becomes invalidated, reinforcing the belief that their lacking is not of concern and that they should continue to persevere.

When students learn about FI, they often find they align with the markers of it; however, they resist identifying with the term due to the subsequent stigma and expectation to access formal support once the label has been applied. One student stated: "A lot of students don't even know, technically, what food insecurity means. If they knew what it actually meant, I think they would consider themselves food insecure."[169] Another student, when asked if they felt they

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[166] Maynard et al., 136.
[167] Golden.
[168] Henry, 11.
[169] El Zein et al., "Obstacles to University Food Pantry Use," 10.

identified with the markers of FI, stated that "I've heard [of] it. I don't use it. It feels kind of weird to like intellectualize this process that just comes down to like, I'm hungry, and I don't have money to buy food, you know."[170] Again, FI is a resource-constrained issue; if a student whose patterns fall into ones that mark FI acknowledges that they are food insecure, they also acknowledge they are in a form of poverty. However, students instead view it as a part of the experience, something that must be endured in order to reap rewards post-graduation. The identification of the experience as normal is much easier to accept and cope with than confronting the situation for what it is

Taking on a label that comes with a form of poverty brings with it an additional set of stigmatization that students do not want attached to them. Admitting to poverty is admitting to a failure to accrue enough resources to support themselves, bringing with it the stigma associated with low-income individuals. There is a perception that low-income people are viewed as a burden on the system, as well as lazy, uneducated, and uncaring of those they seek support from.[171,172] Students experiencing FI often do not view themselves as food insecure, as they are following a pattern of behavioral norms that is encouraged by those around them and exacerbated by their circumstances; therefore, they do not see themselves in a form of poverty, as this is not the name they know their situation by. However, if they were to take on the label of being food insecure, it would also mean facing their identity from a much more meaningfully charged perspective that requires reckoning with.

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[170] Watson et al., 133.
[171] Reutter et al., "Perceptions of and responses to Poverty Stigma," 302.
[172] Graham and Ciurkaite, 4.

Students place themselves in a 'struggle hierarchy', taking on higher assumed privilege because they are attending a higher education institution.[173] They believe that because they are responsible enough to choose to go to school and take on such a financial burden, they need to also be responsible enough to provide for their experience on their own.[174] This leads to a reluctance to ask for help due to the fears of stigma described above, as well as a belief that other are worse off than them and that they are undeserving of help, seeing as they chose to enter the situation they are in. Students believe that 'people like them' do not suffer or ask for public assistance; they are either not poor enough, or they are not the kind of person that needs support;[175] or if they do utilize resources, they feel they are directly taking away from someone else who genuinely needs it.[176] Students experiencing FI, though, are in need of support and deserving of help! The negotiation these students are unconsciously making is between acknowledging the reality of their situation for what it is and perpetuating the norm that allows them to continue them behavior. Starving students do not see themselves as food insecure; simply, they just see themselves as a starving student, and that terminology makes all the difference.

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[173] Crutchfield et al., 9.
[174] Henry, 11.
[175] Crutchfield et al., 7.
[176] Henry, 11.

Recommendations

In response to the above, I offer five recommendations towards the eventual improvement of student FS status. First, institutions must be proactive in providing support and education; to do so successfully requires a reframing of the transaction between student and institution and a genuine reprioritization of holistic student wellbeing. Furthermore, student burden must be reduced whenever possible. In order to achieve an eventual goal that requires a total shift of habit for many students, the start of the journey must be made as easy as possible to promote student engagement. Students also must have some level of personal interest and engagement in food and food justice, and the institution has the opportunity to play a large part in fostering that curiosity and care. Institutions should also require home economics as a core education requirement; just as we cannot assume that all students have the same base level of academic knowledge and training, we cannot assume the same for life skills and food literacy. In order to ensure academic success and flourishing past graduation, institutions need to ensure their students have the life skills possible to do so. Finally, present solutions address the effects of FI, not the causes. While reactive solutions provide a band-aid on the problem in the short-term, long-term solutions that target the causes must be prioritized while short-term solutions are optimized in the interim. Each of these will be addressed in turn.

Institutional Proactivity in Providing Support and Education

Colleges and universities are well-positioned to keep tabs on the prevalence of FI in their student body as well as to provide food literacy education and FS resources; students are a sort of 'captive audience' that is relatively easy to measure and communicate with. Utilizing this connection and organizational structure is crucial in the approach to decreasing FI. Students thrive best when they feel that they matter to their institution; if their basic needs are not being

met, and they perceive the various costs of attending a higher education institution as what deters them from achieving security, it reads as insensitive and negligent from the student perspective for their institution to leave the issue unaddressed. This walks a narrow line; students and their families knowingly take on the responsibility of paying for the cost of higher education, which results in the financial strain that gives way to FI. One could argue, then, that this burden falls entirely on the student—they made the choice to pursue a degree, and going hungry is a personal, private, unfortunate side effect of that decision. In the current transaction between student and institution, higher education is a business; but it can—and should—be more. To ignore the institutional role in this entanglement is to waive institutional responsibility in encouraging holistic student success.

The relationship between student and institution should be beneficial in both directions. Students receive a degree, and the institution receives their tuition; however, there are also intangible and long-lasting exchanges beyond this. After leaving higher education and entering the workforce, students are in a valuable position to name who gave them their skills and to give back to the institution, spreading a (hopefully) positive reputation and bolstering the strength of the institution for current students. The stronger the ties the student makes and to what degree they are able to succeed while they are in attendance will impact how the student views the institution post-graduation; it is in the institution's best interest to ensure this is positive. If student success is truly prioritized, the relationship between student and institution must be reframed as a mutually beneficial exchange instead of a one-way transaction for a degree. The more an institution is able to do for a student during their time in attendance, the more the student will be able to do for the institution in return. While it is unfortunate that this must be justified in a who-can-do-what-for-who mentality instead out of genuine care and concern, it

demonstrates that even in the current transactional framework in which the relationship between student and institution lies, it is still of benefit to prioritize student wellbeing for later institutional gains. I suggest the following tactics to improve institutional proactivity in securing student success through the meeting of basic needs:

First, find out which students are experiencing FI and which are at-risk when entering the institution—and follow up by routinely screening for this throughout the duration of a student's attendance. The screening can take place as part of the intake paperwork students complete prior to their first term, and may take the form of the USDA questionnaire as well as making note of familial SES, prior utilization of the free lunch program, and traditional/non-traditional student status as risk factors for FI during enrollment. This screening may be used to enroll students in support plans, such as receipt of on-campus meal vouchers, reduced meal plans, eligibility to apply for food scholarships, or a meeting with a basic needs coordinator. While routine screening should be mandatory, engaging with a follow-up support meeting needs to be voluntary and non-obtrusive. A discreet email invitation to set up a time to meet or with options for support leaves the decision to engage in the hands of the student, which is crucial for emphasizing student agency; the institution should always offer the opportunity, but the results will not take unless students choose to engage. Despite the inevitable fact that not all students in need of support will engage with the support available to them, proactively and intentionally reaching out to students that can benefit from it will produce more participation than if this step is not taken. Given that many of the students at risk for FI are also unaware of the on-campus support services available to them, it is imperative that the information reaches them. Furthermore, routine gathering of this data through key transition points during enrollment can paint a picture of which time periods during a college career are turning points towards or away from FS.

Additionally, institutions should implement a basic food literacy and nutrition module or learning session for first-year students as they enter higher education and offer follow-up refreshers as they move off-campus. If first year students are required to live on campus under the notion that students who live on-campus achieve more highly academically, that requirement needs to be capitalized on to ensure student success even after living off campus. At UO, all first-year students are required to attend IntroDUCKtion, which has an in-person component as well as a virtual course; a basic overview of on-campus dining options and how to find and make sense of the nutritional content of dining options would be appropriate here, either in-person or virtually. The vast majority of first-year students also live on campus, where they are required to have one-on-one meetings with their Resident Assistant each term. These are valuable touch points to assess student wellbeing and connections with on-campus resources, as well as to learn from a student perspective what is and is not working on campus that is intended to promote student success. Ultimately, you cannot assume that any given student has a baseline understanding of nutrition and food literacy, just as you cannot assume that any two students have the same understanding of essay writing and academic integrity; we have checks and balances to ensure a base level of understanding in academic areas for our first-year students, but are lacking the same in the area of life skills. We know that students come from different academic backgrounds and aim to level the field in first-year studies through course requirements—it is imperative we employ the same thinking with life skills.

Faculty and staff must also be prepared to engage with students in a manner that places the student at the center of their education, opening the door for conversation and encouraging the student to feel a sense of belonging on their campus. Students view their instructors, employers, and mentors as an extension of the institution; a negative experience can taint their

larger experience and thinking of the institution and dim their view on higher education as a whole. Students who are experiencing FI—and also likely are experiencing financial strain—may feel at odds with the typical college experience, or if coming from a nontraditional background may be lost in how to navigate it. There is a sense of detachment from the 'true' college experience that these students may feel, unable to afford the 'fun' element and missing out on club and extracurricular opportunities due to the time obligations for work and class. For these students, it is critical they feel welcomed in the space of higher education. This may take the form of instructors making a point of learning their students' names and making sure to employ them, framing class discussions in a way that encourages connection with life experiences to the material, and being empathetic to student challenges and needs (such as extensions and further explanations of the material, but within reason—instructors also stand in a critical position to teach professional boundaries and expectations, and should do so). This demonstrates to the student that there is care factored in to their education, and encourages care from the student in their engagement with the course and campus community in return. If the goal is student investment in the institution, the institution needs to establish investment in them first.

Opening the door for conversation with the student makes it clear that they do belong on a higher education campus, and providing them with the tools to succeed through establishing basic needs security first allows them to complete their education and thrive while doing so. As discussed previously, students who are experiencing FI often do not recognize that they are; employing proactive screening, education, and an open door for belonging and support increases the chance that they will recognize the deficit and receive the aid they need. Just as students invest in higher education, higher education institutions need to invest in their students; ensuring

success academically requires a prerequisite of the knowledge and resources to live healthfully, and this gap needs to be filled.

Reduce Student Burden Whenever Possible

In the current framework, FI is an individual problem; like above, this perspective claims that because students chose to take on the responsibility of the cost of higher education, they are also solely responsible for managing the consequences. To place the onus on solving FI solely on the student is to ignore the larger socioeconomic factors leading them to that position as well as the broad normalization of FI in a higher education setting. For some students, experiencing FI may come as a result of the high cost of education combined with living expenses and a lack of time resulting from paid work in the remaining time outside of class; for others, it may be a result of the normalization of these eating patterns while in college and a lack of food literacy to direct them otherwise. There may be students in each of these groups who want to have better nutritional knowledge and dietary patterns, but either due to the institutional structure and requirements they must fulfill or a lack of knowledge that a better diet is possible, do not attempt to seek out strategies to move towards FS. To ignore that FI is a consequence of these broader patterns is to ignore institutional responsibility in facilitating their perpetuation.

With this in mind, if strategies towards increasing FS on campus only rely on individual student agency in seeking out assistance and display that in their messaging, it portrays an institutional blind spot in their role in creating the problem. Therefore, solutions must be offered aplenty in ways that are easy for students to engage with. This is crucial, especially since it is difficult to get students to show up to things and participate in campus programming. With this in mind, offered engagement with FS resources and programming needs to be as easy and convenient to access as possible; especially when the long-term goal is a total change of habits,

time prioritization, and diet, a total conversion and high level of engagement with offered programming cannot be expected immediately. This is why institutional proactivity in monitoring FI rates and risk factors, in addition to active communication and work with those students, is so crucial. Students already experiencing the burden of FI—whether knowingly or unknowingly—do not need the additional burden of navigating a system to alleviate it on their own; their institution should provide guidance in the student's best interest with the long-term goal of improved security.

In practice, this looks like reducing the total amount of steps possible for a student to access a support service or piece of knowledge that will move them closer towards FS. The goal is to have as few barriers as possible between a student and increasing their FS. For example, at UO, this could look like investment in an on-campus food pantry, perhaps with online ordering or satellite pickup features at dining halls; this reduces the distance needed to travel to access the food pantry (since students are already on campus for class) as well as the time commitment to shop (since it would be pre-ordered). The pantry could put together 'meal kits' with all of the necessary ingredients for a meal along with the recipe—this reduces the mental load of planning and shopping in addition to providing a step-by-step instruction on what to do next. Another potential example could be automatic enrollment in discounted on-campus meals for eligible students. This removal of barriers to access in addition to the ease of guidance once utilized increases the chances that a student will actually engage with the resource. It ultimately needs to be easy for a student to utilize any given resource; if it involved multiple steps, appears complex, or isn't convenient in general, not all students who could benefit will take advantage. The entry steps towards achieving FS on the student end must be low-effort, easy to find, and incentivizing to maintain.

Encourage Student Interest in Food and Food Justice

With the above being said, individual effort is still required in order to improve FI. There can be a certain extent of hand-holding through education and support services, but the information and assistance will not stick in the long-term unless students actually care enough to practice and maintain what they've learned. There are three main ways I suggest inciting this interest: encouraging conversation surrounding food and hunger, create opportunities to engage over food, and facilitation of experiential learning pertaining to food. Through inviting discussion, celebration, and learning of food meaning and experiences, students are able to form a personal connection to food and may be driven to employ learned practices in their personal lives as a result, inching them closer to a state of FS.

First, students need to be discussing food. They need to talk with each other about how they afford it, make time to cook, decide what to cook, learn new cooking skills, and discover what they like and don't like. They need to share with each other what their day-to-day experiences with food and hunger are beyond a joking level; two friends may think on the surface level they think about and intake food in the same way, but upon further discussion, may realize they are actually coming from two different places. In this discovery, though, they can learn from each other and fill in knowledge gaps the other may be missing. This also breaks the joking trope of the 'starving student' down and begins a more meaningful conversation, challenging students to reframe their experiences with food, perhaps beginning the process of re-examining their experience as one of FI and deserving of attention and remedy. The more students talk about food and all of their experiences surrounding it, the less taboo it is to bring these struggles to light, and the trope of the 'starving student' as acceptable and expected is challenged. This might take the formal form of conversation circles hosted on campus or in small

group work in class, but this does not need to be formally facilitated (and perhaps is not most effective if done so). These conversations can take place between friends, roommates, classmates and coworkers; start chatting about what you are eating or enjoying recently, and let the conversation dig in.

Following conversation, this interest can be further fueled by engagement with food in group settings. Food is a social facilitator; gathering over a meal is a space to hold conversation over a shared activity, but also a place to share values, stories, and emotions through food. Many on-campus student organizations do this already with a different aim; providing food at a club meeting or event as a draw demonstrates that it serves as an incentive for bringing people together. These events should obviously continue, however, there should be more organized on-campus opportunities to gather over food for food's sake, in addition to the introduction of this practice in the personal lives of students. Some organizations—such as Hillel and the Black Cultural Center—already implement this. The residence halls are also well poised to implement community meals, as they have the space and a captive audience of resident students. Many faculty members also encourage students to bring food to share for the last day of class; perhaps a short note or explanation of the significance of the food brought (even if it's that they saw the recipe trending on social media or that it's their favorite food) could be added to this tradition. Hopefully, this bleeds into a student practice of community meals with their own social circles. This creates a fun, collaborative environment for students to share meals and discuss, demonstrating to some (maybe for the first time) that food can serve a purpose that is beyond just sustenance. Forming an association between food, community, and enjoyment creates a vested interest in thinking about food beyond survival means, beginning to grow a level of care and attentiveness to the role of food in one's life.

Experiential learning opportunities also stand in a fantastic position to create student engagement and investment in their relationship with food. As we become increasingly separated from our food production, we lose a connection and interest in where our food comes from; if current industrialization patterns continue, this will only be exacerbated. With this in mind, it becomes ever more crucial to implement hands-on learning to reconnect students with the food system. On campus, the Urban Farm program does just this. For many students taking the class, this is the first time they have seen where their food comes from. Furthermore, seeing the entire process—from seed to taking home a harvest—creates an investment in their food and pride in the production. The knowledge of where the food grown at the Urban Farm comes from vs. the mystery of where processed food comes from creates a sort of unsettling dissonance, pushing students to think critically about what they are consuming and why it's important to interrogate it. Hopefully, by the end of the course, students have a deeper appreciation for food and integrate what they've learned into their daily practices. Working hands-on with food production in this way creates a vested interest, hopefully one that will last beyond the end of the course. Once students care about food beyond a means of survival, they will be more likely to engage with resources that allow them to employ food literacy and management skills in their own life, bringing them closer to a sense of food freedom as they have a vested interest in escaping FI.

Bring Back Home Ec!

To expand on the previous suggestions, students need to be taught effective food literacy and management skills. If they have the resources to do so and the interest in cooking food, they also need the tools and knowledge to make it happen! An effective solution here is to bring back home economics classes—and require them for *all* students. Home ec has suffered a poor reputation; while it taught valuable life skills, it only taught them to young women. This led to a

sense of frustration, and justifiably so; why should young men be excused from learning these skills that anyone can benefit from, leaving young women to carry the burden of domestic knowledge? As Anthony Bourdain argues, cooking is a moral virtue that none should be excused from learning as a basic rite of passage, and home ec is well suited to teach this:

> When we finally closed down home ec, maybe we missed an opportunity. Instead of shutting down compulsory cooking classes for young women, maybe we should have been far better off simply demanding that men learn how to cook, too… Through a combination of early training and gentle but consistent peer pressure, every boy and girl would leave high school at least prepared to cook for themselves and a few others. cooking skills are a virtue, that they ability to feed yourself and a few others with proficiency should be taught to every young man and woman as a fundamental skill…At college, where money is tight and good meals are rare, the ability to throw together a decent meal for your friends would probably be much admired. One might even be reasonably expected to have a small but serviceable list of specialties that you could cook for your roommates. Cooking has already become 'cool.' So, maybe, it is now time to make the idea of *not* cooking 'un-cool'—and, in the harshest possible ways short of physical brutality, drive that message home.[177]

Requiring a one-credit course on how to feed yourself—and even going one step further to make it at no cost to students—is not too extreme. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology requires all students to take a swimming test in order to graduate; if they cannot pass, they must take a remedial course. I argue that swimming is less essential than being able to feed oneself, and yet no higher education institution requires any sort of course or instruction in how to do this.

So, what skills should we teach in this class? Bourdain offers basic knife skills, cooking eggs, grilling a steak, cooking vegetables, whipping up a vinaigrette, shopping for fresh produce, handling seafood, testing for meat doneness, roasting potatoes, making rice, and making soup as the skills everyone should know.[178] Reasonably, these are all good things for students to know in order to fuel themselves; these techniques are nothing fancy and are not difficult to do. The

[177] Bourdain, "Medium Raw," 61.
[178] Ibid, 63.

absolute basics here are the most crucial to teach: knife skills, how to meal plan, how to shop for produce and store it, basic food preparation safety, basic nutrition knowledge, and how to make a few specific things that can be utilized to make simple meals (techniques for how to cook grains, vegetables, and proteins). These skills are absolutely crucial and complete the puzzle in improving FS status and providing prevention against FI after students leave the higher education sphere. If students recognize that being a 'starving student' is actually detrimental to their potential success in college, have the interest in eating more and eating well, and utilize on-campus resources to begin to alleviate their experience of FI, they also need the tangible food literacy and management skills to actualize FS for themselves. The institution needs to set students up for success in every way possible to give the best chances of alleviating FI, including through the teaching of these life skills.

Optimize Current Support Programs while Creating and Prioritizing Long-Term Solutions

There are currently plenty of on-campus services available to students that intend to alleviate FI; however, as discussed earlier, over the past few years FI rates have only increased. These support programs will not eradicate the issue on their own—as mentioned, student utilization and investment is also crucial in solving this problem—however, they provide a valuable resource that can be improved. First, it is imperative to ask students what is working and what isn't, and fortunately, we already have an idea of what they think. Most students are unaware of what resources are available, so more visibility is needed; there is also a call for an on-campus food pantry, which there is a current student-based push for in the works.

Furthermore, student dollars could be rerouted to support FS efforts. There is currently a massive surplus of student dollars from the I-Fee sitting in the hands of ASUO members; basic needs support—both in terms of providing dollars to on-campus student organizations and the

basic needs program, as well as off-campus contractors—falls under the guidelines for funding usage. These dollars could be used to expand the basic needs program through hiring more basic needs coordinators (just as each student has an advisor, maybe they also have a basic needs coordinator), replenishing the Ducks Feeding Ducks program back to a three times per term usage capacity, or food scholarships and discounted meal plans for qualifying students. The grocery shuttle program has been recently expanded as well, but can still only transport ten students per trip and is only offered on evenings; perhaps a morning session can increase the amount of students able to utilize this service. The Leftover Textover program could also be modified to include end-of-day leftovers from the dining halls that would otherwise be thrown away, or perhaps these could be sold at a greatly reduced price during the last fifteen minutes of business hours. Furthermore, student dining hall workers could also be allotted a free shift meal.

These current programs and resources do need to be optimized with input from students in mind in the short-term, but these solutions are a band-aid on the larger issue. They address the effects of FI, not the causes; in order to see long-term improvements, the roots must be addressed. This means addressing two things head-on: the normalization of being a starving student—which needs to be challenged from within the student body through conversation and a demonstrated interest in food, as discussed previously—as well as the financial and time constraints that place students in a position that leaves them vulnerable to FI. These long term solutions will largely originate on the college and governmental levels. For one, as discussed in earlier sections, the cost of higher education is a major barrier towards obtaining FS and leads students to place food low in a prioritization list of expenses. On the college level, institutions can offer basic needs scholarships, but can also go one step further and aim to reduce the cost of attendance; if not across the board, at least for the students demonstrating risk factors towards FI.

Perhaps ‘need based’ financial aid should take into consideration how a student is actually paying for their education and living expenses while they attend, as although current financial aid measures utilize parental or guardian income information to determine the expected family contribution, not all parents or guardians then actually fund their student’s education. If there is not a total lack of support, another common scenario is guardian support for tuition, but not for living expenses. Both of these types of cases should be taken into consideration with determining financial aid.

On a governmental level, the purchasing power of the Pell Grant needs to be appropriately adjusted for the massively inflated cost of higher education. Additionally, perhaps there could be some type of regulatory oversight over the cost of higher education, evaluating the advertised cost and recommending (or requiring) adjustments after observations, as well as requiring thorough explanations and breakdowns of the cost of attendance for students and their families. Furthermore, students would benefit greatly from SNAP eligibility requirements being relaxed. Although the state’s Department of Human Services will essentially walk someone through the process over the phone if needed, the application process appears daunting, and is somewhat so as it requires compiling a myriad of documents and either a (somewhat mysterious) phone or in-person interview. This scares many students who could benefit from receiving this service away. If these requirements were relaxed—perhaps 15 hours of work a week as opposed to 20, or a submission of a recording or letter instead of an interview—more students would be likely to apply. The above discussed reframing of the ‘starving student’ as an actual issue and the teaching of food literacy and preparation skills is also considered a long-term solution, as this addresses the lack of acknowledgement of a pattern of FI as an issue as well as the lack of knowledge that bars students from preparing their own food.

Short-term solutions address the effects of FI; long-term solutions address the cause. Long-term solutions are going to take years in sum to fully implement and see results from—in the meantime, short-term solutions can lessen the impact of FI while these long-term plans take form. At UO, we already have a fairly robust FS net compared to other institutions. Why not optimize it as much as possible for the benefit of our students, and ultimately, for the benefit of the future of the institution and students to come? Once these are functioning at full capacity, it may be tempting to leave them as is, however, it is imperative to push towards long-term stability on this campus and beyond.

Limitations of Existing Work and Recommendations

Regarding FI, it is nearly impossible to know for sure that the causes and effects of the status described throughout this paper are definitively related to FI. It is not something that is able to be ethically tested to confirm correlated findings; as such, qualitative research on this subject is incredibly valuable. However, qualitative responses rely on self-disclosed experiences, placing immense trust on the reliability of the story in believing that the participant feels comfortable enough to share and is being wholly honest in their responses.

Additionally, as discussed, FI among college students is an issue that stems from all levels, from major economic forces down to peer-to-peer interactions and internal perceptions of the self. The fact that only—to my knowledge—two scholarly articles have been written that discuss the starving student narrative explicitly in connection to the markers of FI is alarming, and also speaks to the perpetuation of the trope in academic circles. Research is noticing that FI is an issue on college campuses; however, the normalization of this status under the guise of the 'starving student', which is freely enabling these behaviors as acceptable, is not being interrogated. More qualitative work surrounding this topic is needed to illuminate these patterns.

Finally, a major limitation of the suggestions offered here is that not all students care to change existing patterns or want to invest in learning about food; this is disheartening, but also must be respected. Deeply investing in FS programs with the knowledge that there will always be students who need assistance but choose to not take the offer of it is an argument from an economical stance to not devote as many resources towards the issue as what might be possible, however, it is important that the option and offer for aid always stands. In an ideal world, all students who need assistance would choose to engage with the resources designed to guide them out of FI, but the reality is that this is not the case, especially at the beginning. This unavoidable lack of engagement from a few must not write off the possibility of engagement from the rest.

Conclusion

FI is a real, detrimental problem on college campuses in the U.S.. Students suffer from FI at a rate that is three to four times higher than the national average among all adults broadly; when there are programs that assist the broader populations with success, we should question why the programs we have targeted for college students are not finding the same results. These high rates of FI are a result of socioeconomic conditions that force students to pin the high costs of college and living against feeding themselves; due to a general sense of lacking—in time, money, and skills—students deprioritize food so that other needs can come first. This is exacerbated and encouraged by the fact that FI has been normalized under the guise of the trope of the 'starving student'; going hungry is seen as a rite of passage for students and something to be expected. Despite the normalization of going hungry, it is clear that it has adverse health and academic outcomes, which act in adverse ways towards the goal of college—successful progress towards and completion of an academic degree.

Although campuses offer a range of support services for students struggling to meet their basic needs, far less students actually utilize them than those that need the help. This stems from a fear of the stigma attached with utilizing those support services. This rationalization against utilizing support services is that college students go hungry as a part of the overall experience, and because college students are in a more privileged place than most, college students also do not need to seek help. If aid is accessed, they are taking on a label of someone who is in 'poverty' rather than just being a 'starving student'. In order to break the cycle of perpetuating this living standard for students, change needs to be made on the governmental, university, and individual level; but ultimately, these changes will not be successful unless students are

committed to change and to bettering their situation. Students are people too, and people need to eat; in higher-education spaces, this is being woefully neglected at the cost of student success.

When examining future routes for improving student FS, it is clear that a bigger reframing of the student-institution relationship is required to execute long-term change. The student choosing to take on the burden of attending a higher education institution does not excuse the institution from all responsibility of the outcomes on the student of that decision; if the goal of the institution is to promote long-term student success, student wellbeing must be prioritized in order to secure that outcome. Although many institutions—including UO—promote this goal, students do not feel that their institution genuinely cares. In solving the problem of FI, the institution must care about their students, and the students must care about their food; together, these are crucial pieces in the long-term work that must be done to reframe the issue and increase optimization and utilization of on-campus resources. College can be fun, but going hungry is not—it's time the discomfort of the expectation to go hungry is recognized and taken seriously by all parties involved in the higher education transaction.

Appendix: Combined U.S. Adult and Household Food Security Survey Modules

HH1 (Optional). Which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months: —enough of the kinds of food (I/we) want to eat; —enough, but not always the kinds of food (I/we) want; —sometimes not enough to eat; or, —often not enough to eat?

HH2. "(I/We) worried whether (my/our) food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more." Was that often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

HH3."The food that (I/we) bought just didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

HH4. "(I/we) couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

AD1. In the last 12 months, since last (name of current month), did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

AD1a. If yes, how often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

AD2. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?

AD3. In the last 12 months, were you every hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?

AD4. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn't enough money for food?

AD5. In the last 12 months, did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

AD5a. If yes, How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

CH1. "(I/we) relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed (my/our) child/the children) because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

CH2. “(I/We) couldn’t feed (my/our) child/the children) a balanced meal, because (I/we) couldn’t afford that.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

CH3. “(My/Our child was/The children were) not eating enough because (I/we) just couldn't afford enough food." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

CH4. In the last 12 months, since (current month) of last year, did you ever cut the size of (your child's/any of the children's) meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

CH5. In the last 12 months, did (CHILD’S NAME/any of the children) ever skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

CH5a. If yes, how often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

CH6. In the last 12 months, (was your child/were the children) ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food?

CH7. In the last 12 months, did (your child/any of the children) ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

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