

Food Insecurity at UVM

UVM has a food insecurity working group comprised of faculty, staff and students that is tasked with data collection and proposing short- and long-term strategies to increase food security. Below are their multiple strategies and a status update on the group's progress.

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES:

1. Student Financial Services to increase the meal component of the **financial aid package** for off-campus students and apply VSAC grants to a student's account prior to the add/drop period. *(Achieved)*
2. Host a free three-week **cooking workshop** at Discovery Kitchen for off-campus students. *(Achieved)*
3. **\$1,000 grant** from Cooperative Christian Ministry to be allocated across existing food pantries on campus- Mosaic Center and TRIO. *(Achieved)*
4. Re-release **UVM Hunger Resource Guide** and Hunger Free Vermont outreach materials to campus community groups. *(Achieved)*
5. Release of **survey data summary** to campus community groups including: Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate Student Association, Medical Student Association, Faculty Senate, Faculty Union, Staff Council, Administration and College Deans, Vermont Cynic. *(In Progress)*

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES:

1. Allocate research resources: Food Systems master's student to work 10 hours a week with Sodexo on food insecurity on campus. *(Achieved)*
2. Explore financial and technical feasibility of implementing a "Swipe Out Hunger" **meal donation program** within the UVM Dining system. Put forth formal recommendations by end of 2018. *(In Progress, Pilot Expected)*
3. Work with Hunger Free Vermont to implement strategies that would encourage and assist students who are food insecure to apply for **3SquaresVT benefits**. *(In Progress)*
4. Develop a **report on existing strategies** across other U.S. campuses to reduce textbook and course material costs by end of 2018. *(In Progress)*
5. Determine the feasibility of opening a **Food Pantry** run by students on campus. *(In Progress)*
6. Conduct a third **survey** on food insecurity on campus in the fall 2018 semester. *(Not Yet Achieved)*
7. Analyze the legal and liability considerations for accepting **food donations** from campus events from dining services. *(Not Yet Achieved)*

For more information on the food insecurity working group please contact the co-chairs: Meredith Niles, Assistant Professor, Nutrition and Food Sciences, mtniles@uvm.edu
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DATA

The group conducted research on food insecurity at UVM through two surveys in 2017. A random sample of UVM community members (undergraduate, graduate, and medical students and faculty and staff) were sampled with a 24.5% and 25.8% response rate in spring and fall*.

Percent of the UVM community who was food insecure:

19.6%

spring '17 survey

15.0%

fall '17 survey

By comparison: the national rate in 2016 was 12.3% and in Vermont it was 10.1%.

Students who were the most food insecure:

25.9%

spring '17 survey
undergraduate

20.0%

fall '17 survey
graduate & medical

"THE OFF-CAMPUS EFFECT"

In both surveys, students living off campus were more likely to be food insecure.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

In both surveys, first generation students were more likely to be food insecure.

Students of color were more likely to be food insecure in the spring '17 survey only.

Transgender / queer / gender non-conforming students were more likely to be food insecure in the fall '17 survey only.

TIME IN THE SEMESTER

Students most frequently cited food insecurity following book/lab/course material purchases and before final exams.

*margin of error +/- 3%