


To: The Honorable Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

From: Dan Toscano, Chairman 
University of Connecticut Board of Trustees

Date: February 14, 2020

Subject: SA 19-25 Report

On behalf of the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees, I would like to submit the following report developed pursuant to Special Act 19-25, *An Act Concerning Food-Insecure Students at Public Institutions of Higher Education*.

Please do not hesitate to contact our Office of Governmental Relations at 860-486-5519 should you have any questions or require additional information.

Thank you for your continued support of the University of Connecticut.

University of Connecticut

Report on Food Insecurity

Developed in Response to Special Act 19-25

February 2020

Executive Summary

The attached report is submitted in response to SA 19-25, *An Act Concerning Food Insecure Students at Public Institutions of Higher Education*. The University of Connecticut assessed the level of food security among its undergraduate students using standards developed by the USDA. In addition, as required by the Act, the University assessed and reported on the use of emergency funds and other efforts to assist food insecure students.

The following observations are noted:

- UConn testified in support of this legislation with student leaders and advocated on the topic of food insecurity. All CT public universities were required to participate.
- UConn is and remains deeply committed to understanding the role of food insecurity on college campuses. The problem of food insecurity is a national concern and UConn is not alone in recognizing this problem exists on college campuses.
- UConn is fortunate to have the research and policy expertise of the Rudd Food Policy and Obesity Center. We have been reliant on their guidance in developing the recommendations and action items that are presented in the final pages of the report.
- The data reveals that there is clearly a need for a differentiated response that leverages our research expertise through Rudd and addresses the variance in the survey results based on the needs of our various student populations.
- Our greatest finding and concern is the rate of food insecurity at some of our regional campuses.
- There is a higher food security reported for Storrs students who have meal plans and live on campus. We will build upon that strength to help high need students through the Students First program and UConn Swipes.
- Through the generosity of donors, the UConn Students First Fund has awarded through Student Affairs nearly \$150,000 over the course of three semesters for students with emergency needs.

We are grateful to the expertise and time provided by our student leaders, the Provost's office, Rudd Center, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, the President's office and Student Affairs. This was truly a holistic and thoughtful effort by UConn.

I. Introduction:

In response to SA 19-25, *An Act Concerning Food Insecure Students at Public Institutions of Higher Education*, the University of Connecticut launched a survey of the all undergraduate campuses to determine the rate of food insecurity. The University also assessed emergency resources for students who are food insecure and/or experiencing unexpected financial hardship. The following report shares:

- Survey results and analysis
- Usage of emergency funds and resources
- Policies Impacting Student Access to Food
- Evaluation of whether current emergency resources are “sufficient to meet the needs of all students at the institution experiencing food insecurity”
- Further analysis
- Action items reflecting university priorities and short term goals

We wish to thank the General Assembly for prioritizing food insecurity on college campuses. We appreciate the opportunity to assess the scope of this issue at the University and look forward to continuing and expanding our work to address it.

II. Survey Results and Initial Analysis

According the USDA, food insecurity means “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life” (USDA, 2019). In October of 2019, the University of Connecticut administered a survey of its undergraduate population across Storrs and the regional campuses. In an effort to utilize comparative national data, UConn relied on the current USDA assessment, which is a standard method nationally for measuring food insecurity. The USDA survey instrument insures that our determination of food insecurity is properly benchmarked against a national standard. Further analysis will follow but initial findings indicate food security at UConn falls within the marginal range (a step below high food security) at the Storrs campus. At the regional campuses rates of food security are lower.

The sample of respondents with usable data is 2,506 undergraduate students, which is about 10% of our undergraduate population. To measure food security, we used the Adult Food Security Module survey instrument developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).¹

The first question we ask is “*Are the survey respondents representative of our population of students?*” Table 1 shows that the most glaring shortfall in representation is male respondents, where they represent only a third of respondents, despite being closer to half of the population.

¹ Language modifications were made to the survey instrument to fit the college setting. One question from the USDA survey module regarding weight loss was excluded from this survey administration, and additional questions were added.

Table 1. Comparing population with sample statistics

Population	Students	Male	Female	White	Asian	Black	Latinx	Pell Eligible	Meal Plan
UConn	23,240	49%	51%	52%	12%	8%	14%	26%	
Storrs	18,585	49%	51%	55%	11%	7%	12%	22%	63%
Hartford	1,531	48%	52%	42%	20%	13%	17%	43%	n/a
Stamford	2,012	50%	50%	35%	10%	14%	30%	44%	n/a
Avery Point	526	46%	54%	61%	9%	3%	16%	34%	n/a
Waterbury	776	46%	54%	53%	9%	10%	20%	43%	n/a
Sample	Responses	Male	Female	White	Asian	Black	Latinx	Pell Eligible	Meal Plan
UConn	2,506	34%	65%	56%	13%	6%	15%	27%	n/a
Storrs	2,043	36%	64%	60%	13%	5%	13%	23%	60%
Hartford	168	32%	68%	35%	21%	15%	21%	45%	n/a
Stamford	177	29%	71%	34%	11%	15%	32%	46%	n/a
Avery Point	59	24%	76%	66%	8%	2%	19%	44%	n/a
Waterbury	43	23%	77%	53%	12%	0%	28%	58%	n/a

We summarize our findings in three sections. First, we will present the methodology for measuring food security and the average food security scores by race/ethnicity, gender, and campus. Based on these scores, we assess whether high, marginal, low, or very low food security exists. Second, we present the distribution of these scores. That is, we show what percent of a group at a given campus scored at a given level. Third, we present some analytic results that suggest opportunities for intervention.

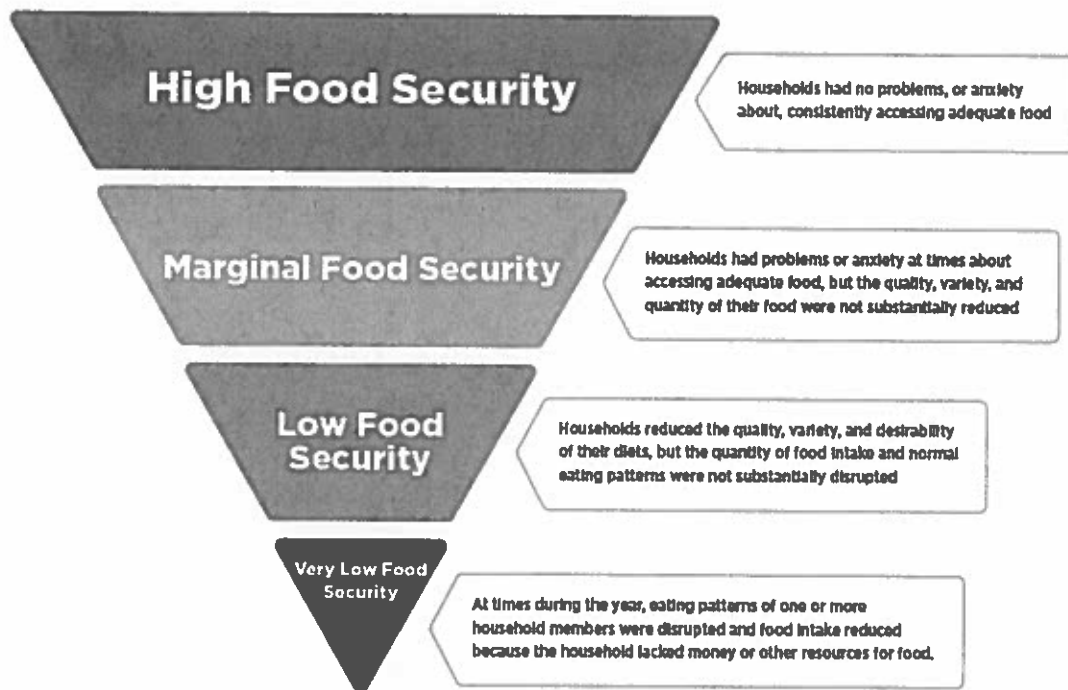
Measuring Food Security

We measure food security using the first nine questions of the survey (see Appendix). If the response was either “Yes,” “Sometimes true,” or “Usually true” to questions about a lack of food security, we scored this with a 1 (and 0 otherwise) and added these scores across questions into a raw score, which is our measure of food security that is consistent with USDA’s Adult Food Security Scale.²

- Raw score = 0: High food security
- Raw score = 1 to 2: Marginal food security
- Raw score = 3 to 5: Low food security
- Raw score = 6 to 9: Very low food security

² The food security scores reported in Table 2 do not include the additional questions, but because they exclude one of the 10 USDA questions, our scores likely are understated. Refer to the Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000 at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/>.

The following illustration from the USDA illustrates what these food security scores mean in the lived experience of an individual.



Source: Adapted from the USDA Economic Research Service.

The food security score for UConn is 2.18, which suggests “marginal” food security overall, and is a step below high food security. Table 2 breaks out these scores by racial/ethnic and gender groups and by campus.

- Stamford (3.85) and Waterbury (3.51) experience relatively low food security
- Hartford (2.62) and Avery Point (2.61) have marginal food security
- Storrs (1.95) has the most food security relative to other UConn campuses

Highlights in Table 2 show the racial/ethnic, gender, and campus incidences of low and very low food security. It shows that Black men and women, and Latino men, experience more low and very low food security regardless of campus (except Latinx at Storrs), but all racial/ethnic and gender groups face higher incidences of low and very low food security at Stamford (except white men and Asian women) and Waterbury campuses. At Avery Point, with the exception of white men having higher rates of low security than women, women of color have higher rates of low food security.

Table 2. Food Security Scores at UConn

	All		White		Asian		Black		Latinx	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
UConn	2.14	2.20	1.86	1.72	1.85	2.14	3.98	4.24	3.06	2.90
Storrs	1.98	1.94	1.73	1.58	1.78	2.02	3.92	3.77	2.72	2.60
Hartford	2.66	2.61	2.53	2.00	1.38	2.18	4.00	4.19	4.57	2.69
Stamford	3.23	4.10	2.61	3.48	3.25	2.93	4.50	5.35	4.57	4.12
Avery Point	2.50	2.64	3.10	1.83	0.00	3.50	-	7.00	2.00	3.89
Waterbury	4.80	3.12	5.40	3.00	6.00	3.67	-	-	3.00	3.00

Distribution of Food Security

Table 3 shows a detailed distribution of food security across the University. In the first data column, it shows that 44.2% of all respondents are scored with high food security (score = zero), 17% with marginal food security (scores one to two), 21.5% with low food security, and 17.2% with very low food security. Thus, more than a third (38%) of the respondents reported low or very low food security. Respondents on two campuses reported particularly high rates of low food security—Stamford and Waterbury.

- Storrs reported 35% low or very low food security: 20% low and 15% very low food security.
- Hartford reported 47% low or very low food security: 25% low and 22% very low food security.
- Stamford reported 67% low or very low food security: 32% low and 35% very low food security.
- Avery Point reported 46% low or very low food security: 27% low and 19% very low food security.
- Waterbury reported 62% low or very low food security: 23% low and 39% very low food security.

Table 3. Distribution of food security scores by campus

Food Security Interpretation	Food Security (FS) score	UConn	Storrs	Hartford	Stamford	Avery Point	Waterbury
High	FS score = 0	44.2	47.7	37.5	18.1	35.6	27.9
Marginal	FS = 1 to 2	10.1	10.4	8.3	7.3	8.5	9.3
	2 to 3	6.9	7.0	6.5	7.3	10.2	-
Low	3 to 4	7.7	7.6	8.3	8.5	8.5	4.6
	4 to 5	7.3	6.8	10.7	7.9	5.1	13.9
	5 to 6	6.5	5.6	6.5	15.2	13.6	4.6
Very Low	6 to 7	11.2	9.9	13.7	19.8	11.9	27.9
	7 or greater	6.0	4.8	8.3	15.8	6.8	14.6

Analytic Results

Our analysis first looks at the questions of the survey, and what dimensions of food security might be captured using factor analysis, which identified four latent dimensions to food security we believe to be *money*, *cooking skills*, *emergency food accessibility*, and *general food accessibility*. The following survey questions produced the strongest loadings on these four dimensions.

Money

- Q6. Did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?
- Q7. Were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?

Cooking skills

- Q17. How confident are you in doing the following?
 - a. Cooking a nutritious meal
 - b. Cooking a meal in a short amount of time
 - c. Cooking a nutritious meal without spending a lot of money
 - d. Following a recipe
 - e. Finding sufficient time to prepare food

Emergency food accessibility

- Q11. Did you ever get food from a food pantry or mobile food pantry?
- Q12. How often did this happen?

General food accessibility

- Q13. Thinking about your nearest place to buy food, how easy or difficult would it be to get there by walking, riding your bike, or taking the bus?
- Q14. Thinking about the places where you buy food, how much variety of food do they provide?
- Q16. Thinking about the current semester (not during breaks), do you have sufficient access to the appliances necessary for preparing food?

These factor analysis results suggest that food security may be a function of money, cooking skills, and access to food (in general and on emergency basis). Table 4 below shows the average food security score by response to questions our factor analysis suggests are most important.³ With regard to cooking skills, it shows that the lack of confidence in cooking a nutritious meal and finding sufficient time to prepare food are related to higher incidences of low high security. With regard to general food accessibility, those who claim difficulty in accessing food and not enough variety in the food they can access have higher incidences of low food security. Finally, with regard to emergency food access, those who use food pantries more often score twice as high in low food security as those who use them infrequently.

³ Of the key questions identified in the factor analysis, the ones representing the money dimension are embedded in the food security score itself, so we only examine the relationship between the food security score and the other dimensions not so embedded.

Table 4. Relationship between food security scores and key dimensions of food security

	Less Confident	Extremely or Very Confident	Very or Somewhat Difficult, Not Enough, No	Less Difficult, Enough, Yes	Yes, Almost every or some weeks	No, None or only 1 or 2 weeks
Cooking skills						
Cooking a nutritious meal	2.36	1.94				
Cooking a meal in a short amount of time	2.32	1.95				
Cooking a nutritious meal without spending a lot of money	2.37	1.52				
Following a recipe	2.32	2.11				
Finding sufficient time to prepare food	2.33	1.70				
General food accessibility						
How difficult to get to nearest place to eat?			3.03	1.99		
How much variety is available?			3.03	1.89		
Access to appliances			2.32	2.10		
Emergency food accessibility						
Get food from pantry?					4.36	2.04
How many times?					4.54	2.12

While these bivariate relationships to food security seem intuitive on its face, the various factors that might explain food security likely are related to one another, so a multivariate analysis is required to distinguish the effects of one factor versus another.

In Tables 5 and 6, we present estimates of the marginal effects of the various potential factors that might explain food security. Each column in Table 5 represents the results of a probit regression, where the dependent variable (FS_low) is equal to 1 when the food security score is greater than or equal to 3 (suggesting low or very low food security), and zero otherwise. Each column in Table 6 represents the same, except the dependent variable (FS_verylow) is equal to 1 when the food security score is greater than or equal to 6 (suggesting very low food security), and zero otherwise. For each table, column 1 starts with an estimate of the regional campus effect, and with columns 2 through 4, we sequentially add race/ethnicity and gender controls (column 2), a Pell eligibility indicator to control for low income background (column 3), and race-gender-Pell interaction terms (column 4). These are demographic factors that might reveal which groups face more or less food security. With columns 5 through 8, we sequentially add intervention options to examine which approach to relieving low or very low food security might be most effective. The intervention options include a meal plan (column 5), efforts to improve cooking skills (column 6), and efforts to improve general (column 7) and emergency (column 8) food accessibility. At the bottom of each column, we report the percent of the variation in the dependent variable explained by the model.

With the addition of the demographic controls, they explain away about half of the original regional campus effect on very low food security, but not on low food security. However, controlling for whether or not the respondent had a meal plan (column 5) explains away any remaining regional campus effect. Notice that the magnitude of the meal plan effect is roughly equal to (in absolute value) the magnitude of the Pell eligibility effect for both food security indicators. This suggests that having a meal plan offsets the disadvantage of having a low income background.

Next, we add the cooking skills indicators, and while cooking skills seem to improve low food security (see negative marginal effects in Table 5, column 6), such skills do not appear to ameliorate very low food security (see Table 6, column 6). However, when we add the food accessibility indicators (columns 7 and 8), which impact both low and very low food security, the effect of cooking a nutritious meal on very low food security becomes marginally significant. This suggests that when food is accessible, and in reasonable variety, cooking skills may improve very low food security as well as low food security.

In conclusion, these results are intuitive. Improving food security requires providing students greater access to and variety of affordable food and cooking skills.

Table 5. Estimated marginal effects of various factors on low food security

UConn (n = 2,506)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent variable = FS_low (FoodSecurityScore > 2)	Campus	Add race/ethnicity and gender	Add Pell eligibility	Add gender-race-Pell interactions	Add meal plan	Add cooking skills	Add general food accessibility	Add emergency food accessibility
Regional campus	0.204***	0.163***	0.116***	0.117***	0.016	0.012	0.010	0.012
<u>Target populations</u>								
Black	-	0.313***	0.255***	0.290***	0.285***	0.288***	0.261***	0.247***
Latinx	-	0.175***	0.120***	0.129***	0.126***	0.122***	0.104***	0.095***
Female	-	0.006	0.005	0.011	0.001	0.000	-0.002	-0.003
Pell eligible	-	-	0.200***	0.210***	0.215***	0.209***	0.196***	0.180***
Black Female & Pell eligible	-	-	-	-0.105	-0.121	-0.123	-0.132*	-0.147*
Latina & Pell eligible	-	-	-	-0.032	-0.036	-0.051	-0.057	-0.061
<u>Intervention options</u>								
Meal plan	-	-	-	-	0.200***	-0.209***	-0.197***	-0.188***
Cook nutritious meal	-	-	-	-	-	-0.059***	-0.063***	-0.072***
Find time to prepare food	-	-	-	-	-	-0.084***	-0.071***	-0.068***
Difficulty getting to nearest place to eat	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.076***	0.071***
Not much variety is available	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.198***	0.193***
Get food from pantry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.246***
How many times	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.010
Percent of variation explained	2.1%	5.0%	7.8%	7.9%	11.3%	12.3%	14.6%	15.8%

*** statistically significant 1% level; ** statistically significant at 5% level; * statistically significant at 10% level

Table 6. Estimated marginal effects of various factors on very low food security

UConn (n = 2,506)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent variable = FS_verylow (FoodSecurityScore > 5)	Campus	Add race/ethnicity and gender	Add Pell eligibility	Add gender-race-Pell interactions	Add meal plan	Add cooking skills	Add general food accessibility	Add emergency food accessibility
Regional campus	0.117***	.091***	.061***	.062***	-0.001	-0.002	0.002	0.005
<u>Target populations</u>								
Black	-	.219***	.183***	.227***	.224***	.226***	.208***	.198***
Latinx	-	.083***	.047***	.045*	.041*	.040*	.029	0.024
Female	-	-.027*	-.027*	-0.021	-0.029*	-0.029*	-0.030**	-0.032**
Pell eligible	-	-	.126***	.133***	.137***	.136***	.123***	.112***
Black Female & Pell eligible	-	-	-	-.116**	-.133***	-.134***	-.147***	-.156***
Latina & Pell eligible	-	-	-	-.002	-0.005	-0.008	-0.015	-0.022
<u>Intervention options</u>								
Meal plan	-	-	-	-	-.142***	-.145***	-.130***	-.126***
Cook nutritious meal	-	-	-	-	-0.016	-0.016	-0.022	-0.026*
Find time to prepare food	-	-	-	-	-0.022	-0.022	-0.011	-0.011
Difficulty getting to nearest place to eat	-	-	-	-	.089***	.089***	.089***	.084***
Not much variety is available	-	-	-	-	0.119***	0.119***	0.119***	0.116***
Get food from pantry	-	-	-	-	0.123***	0.123***	0.123***	0.123***
How many times	-	-	-	-	.005	.005	.005	.005
Percent of variation explained	1.9%	5.3%	8.4%	8.6%	12.6%	12.8%	16.3%	17.4%

*** statistically significant 1% level; ** statistically significant at 5% level; * statistically significant at 10% level

III. Use of Emergency Funds and Resources

A. Students First Fund

To assist students experiencing financial duress, the UConn Foundation established the Students First Fund in 2008. The Students First Fund provides emergency support for students facing financial challenges due to situations beyond their control. This fund is managed by the UConn Foundation and is fully donor-supported. Students who are considered for a Students First Fund award must demonstrate an unforeseen circumstance. Below is a breakdown of awards from fiscal year 2019. The average Students First Fund award during this time was \$1,500.

Students First Fund Awards FY 2019		
Term	Total Awards	Amount awarded
Summer 2018	17	\$ 36,260.00
Fall 2018	55	\$ 83,378.00
Spring 2019	30	\$ 29,255.00
Total	102	\$ 148,893.00

During fiscal year 19 there were 5 students who were denied Students First Fund grants because they did not meet the eligibility requirements of an unforeseen circumstance, were ineligible because they did not have unmet need based on financial aid regulations, or because they were not accessing all forms of financial aid previously offered.

B. UConn Swipes

The UConn Swipes program was established in 2019 to ensure food insecure students have access to UConn dining facilities. The program essentially allows student to “swipe” in to Dining Hall facilities. UConn Swipes is administered out of the Dean of Students Office. Students complete a needs-based assessment to determine if they qualify for the program. Students who qualify will receive a block of **twenty-five meal swipes** to be used in the UConn Dining Halls. A “swipe” is the equivalent of a meal for students on the dining plan.

The UConn Swipes program is funded through meal swipe donations by students at select times during the semester. The donated meal swipes are converted to a cash value which is managed in an account to purchase Community meal plans (blocks of 25 meals).

Fall 2019 UConn Swipes Awards

Month	# of Students Receiving Awards	Cash Value of Award
September	1	\$290.00
October	8	\$2,320.00
November	7	\$2,030.00
December	1	\$290.00
Total	17	\$4,930.00

Distribution of Recipients by Class Standing

Class Standing	# of Students Receiving Awards
Freshman	1
Sophomore	1
Junior	6
Senior	8
Graduate	1
Total	17

a. Process for Students:

A student interested in participating in the UConn Swipes Program must meet certain criteria to be considered. Participants must be a currently enrolled student at UConn. If a student meets this initial criterion, they can meet with a staff member in the Dean of Students Office to complete a needs-based assessment to determine their eligibility for the program. Meeting the basic criteria does not guarantee that the program will be awarded to a given student.

Students should:

1. Visit the Dean of Students Office during walk-in hours, Monday through Friday from 1:00pm-4:00pm or contact 860-486-3426 to make an appointment outside of walk-in hours.
2. Request to meet with a staff member to learn more about the UConn Swipes program.
3. Complete a needs-based assessment to determine possible eligibility for the program.
4. Talk with an Assistant Dean about the needs-based assessment and potentially other issues they may be facing which are affecting their student life.

b. Steps for Dean of Students Office Staff Members:

1. Meet with the student; explain the Dean of Students office and the UConn Swipes Program.
2. Explain the needs-based assessment and provide the student with a copy and instructions.
3. Provide the student with reasonable privacy while they complete the assessment.
4. Once completed, tally the assessment to determine level of risk (low, moderate, high) and eligibility for the program.
5. Inform the student of whether they are or are not eligible for the UConn Swipes program.

6. If a student is not eligible for the UConn Swipes Program:
 - a. Provide support and discuss other possible resources to address their needs.
7. If a student is eligible for the UConn Swipes Program:
 - a. Explain to the student that they will receive an email once Community Meal Plan is available on their student ID card and ready for use. This will happen within 24 hours.
 - b. Provide support and discuss other possible resources to address any additional needs or concerns that came up in conversation

IV. Policies Impacting Student Access to Food

The University's Bursar Hold policy states "Students with outstanding balances of greater than \$100 on their fee bills will have a "Bursar hold" placed on their accounts. This hold prevents students from accessing services such as class registration, recreation services, library services, parking services, transcripts and other important services." The University *does not* suspend access to meal plans as a result of a student having an unpaid tuition or fee bill.

Dining facilities remain in operation during the break periods and students remaining on campus can purchase a winter break meal plan. During the Fall Break and Spring Break periods, any student who remains on campus and has an active dining plan can access meals in the facilities open during the break periods.

V. Analysis as to whether current emergency resources are "sufficient to meet the needs of all students at the institution experiencing food insecurity"

Current usage rates do not demonstrate that UConn is serving a population that is proportionate to the need disclosed in the survey. UConn will need to assess the results further, explore available capacity, and develop additional resources.

Given the current preliminary analysis of students meeting the definition of food insecurity, it would be advisable for the University of Connecticut to consider seeking additional resources enabling food insecure students to a) obtain a meal plan, b) access UConn Swipes, c) provide food at regional campuses through the creation of a pantry or other service.

VI. Further Analysis and Possible Action Items

Researchers from UConn's Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, who are experts on food insecurity, are assisting us in analyzing the data from the survey further and, with their assistance and in collaboration with campus leadership, we will be pursuing strategies appropriate to the distinctive nature of the student populations on both Storrs and the regional campuses.

Action Item: Engage in further analysis with the Rudd Center to further understand differentiated needs among specific populations (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, regional populations).

Meal Plans: Students living in campus housing with a meal plan have significantly higher rates of food security. It is worth further assessment to determine how students can be encouraged to enroll in campus housing and dining. Such efforts would include further education on the true costs of living off campus.

Action Item: UConn Storrs will explore developing a lower cost meal plan for approved off-campus students who demonstrate significant financial need and the real threat of food insecurity. UConn Storrs will explore adding housing and meal plans to be factors considered within cost of attendance for high need students.

Emergency Funds: The University of Connecticut clearly benefits from having donor-funded initiatives that meet emergency needs of students. Our data clearly indicates there is a consistent need to support unexpected hardship in the student experience. If this need is present throughout Connecticut colleges and universities, some additional consideration is warranted to provide all institutions with additional emergency funds.

Action Items: UConn will prioritize fund raising initiatives expressed through the Division of Students Affairs to continue to include the Students First fund. UConn Student Affairs will also continue to work with students to advertise days of giving for food swipes.

Regionals: UConn regional campuses do not have residential facilities (with the exception of Stamford) or meals plans available to students. This is not uncommon practice for commuter campuses. While 'grab and go' arrangements exist on the regional campuses, there is need for additional assessment for the development of food pantries or other viable options to assist food insecure students. Regional campuses should also explore educating students about SNAP.

Action Items: The Provost's office will explore with regional campus directors developing strategies appropriate to the distinctive populations and needs on those campuses including providing food at regional campuses through the creation of a pantry or other service. Regional campuses will promote SNAP awareness among their populations.

Health and Wellness: Though they may not fit the definition of food insecure, it is clear that many students are not necessarily eating healthfully or utilizing the food choice in campus dining. These broader observations are worth further analysis in relation to concerns about students' overall health and well-being.

Action Items: UConn Student Affairs has recently created a Wellness Coalition with widespread participation throughout the UConn system. This will continue to be a strategic priority for Student Health and Wellness.

Appendix

Food Security Survey Results

Summary of Responses (3,043 submissions in total)

Question 1: * I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.

- 323 (10.61%) "Often true"
- 720 (23.66%) "Sometimes true"
- 104 (3.42%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 1560 (51.27%) "Never true"
- 336 (11.04%) Did not respond to the question

Question 2: * The food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more.

- 216 (7.10%) "Often true"
- 649 (21.33%) "Sometimes true"
- 121 (3.98%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 1721 (56.56%) "Never true"
- 336 (11.04%) Did not respond to the question

Question 3: * I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.

- 434 (14.26%) "Often true"
- 812 (26.68%) "Sometimes true"
- 96 (3.15%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 1365 (44.86%) "Never true"
- 336 (11.04%) Did not respond to the question

Question 4: Did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because you didn't have enough money for food?

- 933 (30.66%) "Yes"
- 47 (1.54%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 512 (16.83%) "No"
- 1551 (50.97%) Did not respond to the question

Question 5: How often did this happen?

- 238 (7.82%) "Almost every week"
- 204 (6.70%) "Only 1 or 2 weeks"
- 421 (13.84%) "Some weeks but not every week"
- 44 (1.45%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 2136 (70.19%) Did not respond to the question

Question 6: Did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?

- 789 (25.93%) "Yes"
- 65 (2.14%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 587 (19.29%) "No"
- 1602 (52.65%) Did not respond to the question

Question 7: Were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?

- 761 (25.01%) "Yes"
- 58 (1.91%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 618 (20.31%) "No"
- 1606 (52.78%) Did not respond to the question

Question 8: Did you ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

- 223 (7.33%) "Yes"
- 29 (0.95%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 668 (21.95%) "No"
- 2123 (69.77%) Did not respond to the question

Question 9: How often did this happen?

- 57 (1.87%) "Almost every week"
- 57 (1.87%) "Only 1 or 2 weeks"
- 97 (3.19%) "Some weeks but not every week"
- 11 (0.36%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 2821 (92.70%) Did not respond to the question

Question 10: Do you know if you are SNAP eligible? SNAP is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a federal government program designed to provide basic food assistance for needy individuals and families.

- 76 (2.50%) "Yes, I know I am eligible"
- 956 (31.42%) "Yes, I know that I am not eligible"
- 1433 (47.09%) "No, I don't know whether or not I am eligible"
- 79 (2.60%) "Decline to answer"
- 499 (16.40%) Did not respond to the question

Question 11: Did you ever get food from a food pantry or mobile food pantry?

- 173 (5.69%) "Yes"
- 82 (2.69%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 2289 (75.22%) "No"
- 499 (16.40%) Did not respond to the question

Question 12: How often did this happen?

- 21 (0.69%) "Almost every week"
- 50 (1.64%) "Only 1 or 2 weeks"
- 45 (1.48%) "Some weeks but not every week"
- 53 (1.74%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 2874 (94.45%) Did not respond to the question

Question 13: Thinking about your nearest place to buy food, how easy or difficult would it be to get there by walking, riding your bike, or taking the bus?

- 1081 (35.52%) "Very easy"
- 791 (25.99%) "Somewhat easy"
- 46 (1.51%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 377 (12.39%) "Somewhat difficult"
- 156 (5.13%) "Very difficult"
- 592 (19.45%) Did not respond to the question

Question 14: Thinking about the places where you buy food, how much variety of food do they provide?

- 2011 (66.09%) "Enough"
- 51 (1.68%) "Decline to answer"
- 387 (12.72%) "Not enough"
- 594 (19.52%) Did not respond to the question

Question 15: Thinking about the money you have to spend on food, would you say this is:

- 1196 (39.30%) "Enough"
- 875 (28.75%) "Sometimes enough"
- 81 (2.66%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 296 (9.73%) "Not enough"
- 595 (19.55%) Did not respond to the question

Question 16: Thinking about the current semester (not during breaks), do you have sufficient access to the appliances necessary for preparing food?

- 1720 (56.52%) "Yes, I have sufficient access to necessary appliances"
- 137 (4.50%) "Don't know or decline to answer"
- 587 (19.29%) "No, I do not have sufficient access to necessary appliances"
- 599 (19.68%) Did not respond to the question

Question 17 (1): How confident are you in doing the following? - Cooking a nutritious meal

- 591 (19.42%) "Extremely confident"
- 600 (19.72%) "Very confident"
- 758 (24.91%) "Somewhat confident"
- 338 (11.11%) "Not very confident"
- 132 (4.34%) "Not at all confident"
- 11 (0.36%) "Decline to answer"
- 613 (20.14%) Did not respond to the question

Question 17 (2): How confident are you in doing the following? - Cooking a meal in a short amount of time

- 414 (13.60%) "Extremely confident"
- 593 (19.49%) "Very confident"
- 797 (26.19%) "Somewhat confident"
- 437 (14.36%) "Not very confident"
- 170 (5.59%) "Not at all confident"
- 10 (0.33%) "Decline to answer"
- 622 (20.44%) Did not respond to the question

Question 17 (3): How confident are you in doing the following? - Cooking a nutritious meal without spending a lot of money

- 266 (8.74%) "Extremely confident"
- 359 (11.80%) "Very confident"
- 816 (26.82%) "Somewhat confident"
- 645 (21.20%) "Not very confident"
- 326 (10.71%) "Not at all confident"
- 15 (0.49%) "Decline to answer"
- 616 (20.24%) Did not respond to the question

Question 17 (4): How confident are you in doing the following? - Following a recipe

- 1020 (33.52%) "Extremely confident"
- 784 (25.76%) "Very confident"
- 481 (15.81%) "Somewhat confident"
- 83 (2.73%) "Not very confident"
- 43 (1.41%) "Not at all confident"
- 15 (0.49%) "Decline to answer"
- 617 (20.28%) Did not respond to the question

Question 17 (5): How confident are you in doing the following? - Finding sufficient time to prepare food

- 287 (9.43%) "Extremely confident"
- 362 (11.90%) "Very confident"
- 830 (27.28%) "Somewhat confident"
- 631 (20.74%) "Not very confident"
- 303 (9.96%) "Not at all confident"
- 16 (0.53%) "Decline to answer"
- 614 (20.18%) Did not respond to the question