ERADICATING HUNGER, MALNOURISHMENT, AND HOMELESSNESS:

The Movement for Student Basic Needs Security in Higher Education

By Sara Tsai

The normalized "ramen diet" of college students has become of greater concern as calls to eradicate hunger and homelessness on campuses gained traction in recent years, but little information is available on how this social movement began. This thesis traces the trajectory of the college basic needs movement and examines the challenges faced in implementing intervention mechanisms. Using a mixed-methods research design, I interviewed key leaders and conducted content analysis of media coverage of this issue, in addition to drawing upon insights from over three years of field work at the UC Berkeley Basic Needs Committee.

I argue that the college basic needs movement gained traction due to the combined effects of the widespread economic downturn during the 2007-2009 Great Recession, escalating student debt and cost of college, published research studies that legitimized the student experiences, and grassroots efforts to institutionalize intervention mechanisms. These factors contributed to the shift from individual campus initiatives to a holistic, collective movement and allowed its leaders to acquire resources and influence policy changes to combat this crisis. While the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the movement trajectory, it has raised awareness towards the changed reality of the college student experience and uplifted the importance of the holistic framework integrated in the movement. Ultimately, the college experience was not built for basic needs insecure students, and social service programs were not built for college students--addressing this fundamental misalignment will be a continued focus for the movement to eradicate hunger, malnourishment, and homelessness in higher education.

Introduction

In 2001, 100 Irvine High School students gave up their cell phones, money, and hygiene products to pretend to be homeless for a school experiment.[1] Almost two decades later, in 2019, and ten minutes down the road, the University of California, Irvine student government unanimously declared basic needs insecurity to be a campus emergency and pledged $400,000 to help its hungry and homeless students.[2]

The issues surrounding poverty have been part of the cultural consciousness of the United States since long before the college student basic needs insecurity crisis appeared in the news. The inaugural "National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week", designed to support local anti-poverty programs and bring attention towards the problem of poverty, was hosted in 1975 at Villanova University.[3] The 1983-1985 famine in northern Ethiopia, which killed over 400,000 people,[4] inspired marathon rock concerts against hunger[5] and hunger strikes led by college students to rally for fundraising and awareness.[6] These efforts centered around poverty off-campus, and for many decades it seemed that college students were the ones fighting on behalf of the hungry and homeless, not the ones experiencing hunger and homelessness.

Over the past few decades, understanding of what constitutes the college student experience has shifted dramatically. Searching for online news relating to college student food and housing in the early 2000s yields articles focused on the "Freshman Fifteen" weight gain or the increasingly lavish amenities offered on college campuses. However, during this time there was a divide between private and public institutions. In 2000, a Wall Street Journal article discussed "Princeton's new 241-seat movie theater...dorm-side beauty salons at Washington University in St. Louis…[and] coming soon to Rutgers University: a miniature-golf course".[7] Meanwhile, earlier that same year in California, the community college Santiago Canyon College was trying to transform its empty parking lots to a weekend used car lot to raise more money for scholarships and landscaping.[8] That narrative has since changed. In 2019, Assemblyman Marc Berman introduced a bill to let homeless students sleep in California community college parking lots. Though the bill failed to pass, it illustrated the severity of the crisis of basic needs insecurity.[9] In addition, this issue no longer applies to just public institutions, but also private universities. During the same year, an article in The *New York Times* stated:

> A senior at Lehman College in the Bronx dreams of starting her day with breakfast. An undergraduate at New York University said he has been so delirious from hunger, he's caught himself walking down the street not realizing where he's going. A health sciences student at Stony Brook University on Long Island describes "poverty naps," where she decides to go to sleep rather than deal with her hunger pangs.[10]

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1 Dana Parsons, "A taste of hunger, homelessness," Los Angeles Times, November 11, 2001. https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-nov-11-me-2936-story.html.

2 Nguyen, Lilly. "CITY & STATE: funds pledged for UCI food aid; student government pulls $400,000 from reserves to build up pantry and programs." Los Angeles Times, June 11, 2019. https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-uci-hunger-20190610-story.html#:~:text=The%20student%20government%20at%20UC,funds%20to%20help%20hungry%20students.&text=%E2%80%9CStudents%20will%20go%20to%20the,the%20shelves%20will%20be%20empty.%E2%80%9D.

3 "About the Event," Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week, May 1, 2020, https://hhweek.org/about-us.

4 Alex De Waal, Evil Days: Thirty Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia (Human Rights Watch, 1991), 5, Accessed May 1, 2020. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/Ethiopia919.pdf.

5 Gareth Parry, "Marathon rock concert to aid African famine appeal," The Guardian, July 15, 1985. https://www.theguardian.com/music/1985/jul/15/live8.artsfeatures.

6 Ray Perez, "'Strike' for hunger: Fasts focus attention on famine in third world," Los Angeles Times, May 12, 1985. https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-05-12-me-18603-story.html

7 Jonathan B. Weinbach, "College: Luxury learning." Wall Street Journal, November 10, 2000. https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB973809099587642577.

8 Kate Folmar, "Campuses put empty parking lots to work; finances: Area colleges and high schools allow car sales and flea markets on weekends--for a price: [home edition]" Los Angeles Times, May 2017, 2000. https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2000-may-17-me-31092-story.html.

9 Felicia Mello, "Parking lots stay off-limits overnight for homeless community college students," Cal Matters, September 5, 2019. https://calmatters.org/education/higher-education/2019/09/homeless-students-parking-lots-community-college-california.

10 Kaya Laterman, "Tuition or dinner? Nearly half of college students surveyed in a new report are going hungry," The New York Times, May 2, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/02/nyregion/hunger-college-food-insecurity.html.

In order to understand the sudden jump in narrative, it is important to look at other trends in higher education. The demographics of the college student population have changed. From 2000 to 2014, the number of overall recent high school completers who enrolled in college increased by 4.8% while the percentage of the low-income student subset increased by 8.1%.[11] As people from the growing college student population are increasingly coming from low-income backgrounds, the ability of higher education institutions to support these students' needs is becoming more and more important. However, the financial requirements of higher education have unfortunately become more unaffordable. The economic downturn during the 2007-2009 Great Recession resulted in weak labor conditions and heightened the growing conflict between increasing enrollment in higher education and decreasing public financial support.[12] Tuition is also no longer the main consideration for the cost of attendance. The cost of room and board at four-year colleges has doubled since 1980 in inflation-adjusted dollars, and even then, it does not capture the full living costs for off-campus students.[13] Simultaneously, there is now a student debt crisis, with the total student debt in the United States increasing to $1.5 trillion in 2019.[14] Collectively, these trends provide an important context that illustrates how the landscape of higher education has shifted.

While the federal government has collected food security data every year since 1995,[15] no research on the basic needs experiences of college students was available until a study conducted at the University of Hawaii at Manoa was published in 2009.[16] Prior to this, the "ramen diet" of college students was a commonly accepted standard, and little attention was paid to how students were supposed to transition from free or $0.40 or less reduced-price lunch offered through the National School Lunch Program[17] to $18.75-a-day meals at college campuses.[18] The movement for student basic needs security in higher education has since then taken off and grown substantially. Hundreds of articles, papers, and reports have become available, and the crisis of hunger and homelessness at college campuses has received national recognition. At the federal level, this issue has been acknowledged through bills such as the "College Student Hunger Act" by Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Al Lawson[19] and the "BASIC Act" by Senator Kamala Harris,[20] in addition to a 2018 Government Accountability Office report on student hunger.[21]

As the movement for basic needs security in higher education continues to gain traction and mobilize

11 "Percentage of Recent High School Completers Enrolled in 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges, by Income Level: 1975 through 2014." National Center for Education Statistics. United States Department of Education, 2015. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_302.30.asp.

12 Andrew Barr and Sarah E. Turner, "Expanding Enrollments and Contracting State Budgets: The Effect of the Great Recession on Higher Education," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 650, no. 1 (2013): 168. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716213500035.

13 Matthew M. Chingos, Victoria Lee, and Kristin Blagg, Five Facts about the Sharp Rise in College Living Costs, (Urban Institute, January 2017), 1, Accessed May 1, 2020. http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/87911/five_facts_about_living_costs.pdf.

14 Zack Friedman, "Student Loan Debt Statistics In 2019: A $1.5 Trillion Crisis," Forbes, February 25, 2019. https://www.forbes.com/sites/zackfriedman/2019/02/25/student-loan-debt-statistics-2019.

15 Alisha Coleman-Jensen et al., Household Food Security in the United States in 2017 § (2018), 1. https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/90023/err-256.pdf?v=0.

16 M Pia Chaparro et al., "Food Insecurity Prevalence among College Students at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa." Public Health Nutrition 12, no. 11 (2009): 2098. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1368980009990735.

17 "National School Lunch, Special Milk, and School Breakfast Programs, National Average Payments/Maximum Reimbursement Rates § (2019). https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/08/07/2019-16903/national-school-lunch-special-milk-and-school-breakfast-programs-national-average-paymentsmaximum.

18 Tara Garcia Mathewson, "A tough-to-swallow reason college keeps costing more: the price of meal plans," The Hechinger Report, January 18, 2017. https://hechingerreport.org/tough-swallow-reason-college-keeps-costing-price-meal-plans

19 "Senator Warren and Representative Lawson Introduce the College Student Hunger Act of 2019 to Address Hunger on College Campuses," Elizabeth Warren: United States Senator for Massachusetts, July 17, 2019. https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/senator-warren-and-representative-lawson-introduce-the-college-student-hunger-act-of-2019-to-address-hunger-on-college-campuses.

20 "Harris introduces BASIC Act to help college students afford basic needs," Kamala Harris: United States Senator for California, July 25, 2019. https://www.harris.senate.gov/news/press-releases/harris-introduces-basic-act-to-help-college-students-afford-basic-needs.

21 Better Information Could Help Eligible College Students Access Federal Food Assistance Benefits. § (2018). https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/696254.pdf.

thousands of students, staff, community members, faculty, and college administrators around the country, the question remains: what conditions allowed for the rise of this social movement to eradicate basic needs insecurity on college campuses? What factors led to its discovery and widespread acknowledgement? When and how did this story begin, and where will it go from here?

Literature Review

Student Food Insecurity

Millions of students across the country go to school hungry. Over 12.5 million children[22] and almost half of 2-year and 4-year college students report experiencing food insecurity,[23] meaning that they lack consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.[24] Food insecurity can be detrimental to students' educational and mental development, and students living in food insecure households face increased risk of academic and socio-emotional difficulties, which can have a negative impact on their growth.[25]

In particular, breakfast plays an important role in improving health and performance. Numerous studies have shown that eating breakfast generally improves concentration, academic performance, and working memory,[26] promotes healthier blood glucose levels,[27] and reduces behavior problems.[28] A national survey conducted by Kellogg showed that breakfast consumption decreases as children grow older, falling to 36% among high school students.[29] This is especially true at college campuses, where many students are living on their own for the first time.[30] Students are missing out on improved health outcomes due to this dietary habit; this begins in classroom education in K-8. Studies done on middle school food environments show that expanding nutritional education and food offerings affect students' food behavior and food choices.[31]

Student Homelessness & Housing Insecurity

There is a shocking number of students across the country who have no stable home to go to after the school day ends. In the 2017-2018 school year, over 1.5 million K-12 public school students in the United States reported experiences of homelessness, the highest number recorded in over a decade. In order to be categorized as homeless, an individual must lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Students in these situations often depend on shelters and transitional living programs or wind up living in cars, abandoned buildings, or places not generally meant for human habitation.[32]

Homelessness does not stop for students after they exit the K-12 system—a survey of almost 86,000 students conducted by The Hope Center for College, Community and Justice found that homelessness impacted

22 Coleman-Jensen et al., Household Food Security in the United States, 9.

23 Sara Goldrick-Rab et al., College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National #RealCollege Survey Report (The Hope Center, April 2019), 5. https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE_realcollege_National_report_digital.pdf.

24 Coleman-Jensen et al., Household Food Security in the United States, 2.

25 Allison J. Ames et al., "Food Insecurity and Educational Achievement: A Multilevel Generalization of Poisson Regression." International Journal of Food and Agricultural Economics 4, no. 1 (2016): 22. https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.231359.

26 Tia Shimada, Breakfast After The Bell Research Overview (California Food Policy Advocates, 2016), 1, Accessed May 1, 2020. https://cfpa.net/ChildNutrition/SBP/Legislation/BAB-ResearchOverview-2016.pdf.

27 Caroline R. Mahoney et al., "Effect of Breakfast Composition on Cognitive Processes in Elementary School Children," Physiology & Behavior 85, no. 5 (2005): 636. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physbeh.2005.06.023.

28 R.E. Kleinman et al., "Diet, Breakfast, and Academic Performance in Children," Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism 46, no. 1 (2002): 24. https://doi.org/10.1159/000066399.

29 "Kellogg reveals results of monumental breakfast survey," Kellogg Company, June 22, 2011. http://newsroom.kelloggcompany.com/news-releases?item=76379.

30 Giovanni Sogari et al., "College Students and Eating Habits: A Study Using An Ecological Model for Healthy Behavior," Nutrients 10, no. 12 (2018): 1823. https://doi.org/10.3390/nu10121823.

31 Doug Wordell et al., "Changes in a Middle School Food Environment Affect Food Behavior and Food Choices," Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics 112, no. 1 (2012): 137. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jada.2011.09.008.

32 Federal Data Summary: School Years 2015-2016 Through 2017-2018 § (2020), 31. https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Federal-Data-Summary-SY-15.16-to-17.18-Published-1.30.2020.pdf

18% of respondents who attended two-year colleges and 14% of respondents who attended four-year universities.[33] Students who do not qualify as homeless may also experience housing insecurity, which may include the inability to pay rent or the need to move frequently.[34] The aforementioned study found that this rate was much higher, with 48% of respondents who attended two-year colleges and 41% of respondents who attended four-year universities experiencing housing insecurity.[35]

It is not difficult to imagine that students experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity simultaneously experience hunger or food insecurity. In recent years, many campuses have begun to address these collective issues under the umbrella term "basic needs" or "basic needs security", which encompasses food, housing, and financial security and ties in mental, physical, and emotional health.[36] The impact of basic needs insecurity goes beyond immediate feelings of hunger, shame, or stress; a systemwide study conducted by the University of California found that students who experienced food and/or housing insecurity achieved statistically lower GPAs compared to their counterparts who did not experience food or housing insecurity.[37]

The Landscape of Food Assistance in the Education System

The mechanisms through which educational institutions intervene in situations of student basic needs insecurity differ depending on where in the pipeline students are at. Presently, despite federal guidelines on how schools should address student homelessness, there is no national program that systematically identifies, approves, and funds eligible students for housing assistance. Consequently, this section focuses on the landscape of food assistance, which has a more robust infrastructure of social services.

Kindergarten-12th Grade

For K-12 students from low-income families, the primary means of food assistance come from the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Children qualify for free or reduced-price meals if their household income is equal to or below 130% or 185% of the poverty guidelines, respectively.[38] In order to receive federal subsidies, both programs mandate that schools participating in the program adhere to USDA nutrition guidelines, which restrict the amount of fat and sodium and specify the amount of fruits, vegetables, grains, and more in the food served. Approximately 95% of schools across the country participate in the NSLP, which guarantees the vast majority of children in the K-12 public school system the availability of at least one meal during the school day.[39]

Skipping breakfast is disproportionately prevalent among minority youth.[40] Consequently, the SBP not only promotes healthier outcomes for children overall, but also acts as an important nutrition assistance program for food insecure students and a gateway towards building more equitable educational institutions that are inclusive of minority and low-income children. Still, despite the availability of federal subsidies for meals served through the SBP, many schools across the country do not offer breakfast to their students. In the 2016-2017 year, for every 100 low-income students that participated in school lunch, only 56.7 participated in school breakfast.[41]

33 Sara Goldrick-Rab et al., College and University Basic Needs Insecurity, 9.

34 Sara Goldrick-Rab, Jed Richardson, and Peter Kinsley, Guide to Assessing Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education (Wisconsin HOPE Lab, July 2018), 3. https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Basic-Needs-Insecurity-College-Students.pdf.

35 Sara Goldrick-Rab et al., College and University Basic Needs Insecurity, 5.

36 "About Us," Accessed May 1, 2020. https://basicneeds.berkeley.edu/about-us.

37 Global Food Initiative: Food and Housing Security at the University of California (University of California, December 2017), 34. https://www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/_files/food-housing-security.pdf

38 "School Meal Eligibility and Reimbursements," Accessed May 1, 2020. https://frac.org/school-meal-eligibility-reimbursements#:~:text=Children%20from%20families%20with%20incomes%20at%20or%20below%20130%20percent,eligible%20for%20reduced%2Dprice%20meals.

39 "National School Lunch Program," Accessed May 1, 2020. https://frac.org/programs/national-school-lunch-program.

40 Charles E. Basch. "Breakfast and the Achievement Gap Among Urban Minority Youth," Journal of School Health 81, no. 10 (2011): 635. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2011.00638.x.

41 Etienne Melcher Philbin and Randy Rosso, School Breakfast Scorecard: School Year 2016-2017 (Food Research & Action Center, February 2018), 6. https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/school-breakfast-scorecard-sy-2016-2017.pdf

Higher Education

For low-income college students, the primary means of food assistance is the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), previously known as Food Stamps. Students receive up to $194 per month in benefits on an EBT card, which can be used to buy groceries at authorized retailers such as grocery stores, farmers markets, and discount stores.[42] Unlike K-12 food assistance, SNAP has further restrictions, such as work requirements and limits on the types of food that these benefits can be used for. SNAP cannot be used to purchase prepared foods or pay for cafeteria meal plans, and students who live in dorms and receive more than half their meals from a meal plan are not eligible for benefits.[43] Restrictions and access vary state to state. While some states require students to meet a 20-hour weekly work requirement, others have allowed college students to be exempt from this. Overall, the aforementioned barriers to enrollment, in addition to other factors such as stigma, bureaucracy and financial literacy, have resulted in low enrollment among eligible students. Although 18% of college students across the country qualify for SNAP, only 3% are currently enrolled.[44]

The College Student Basic Needs Security Social Movement

The first college food pantry was opened in 1993 at Michigan State University.[45] Years later in 2020, over 700 college food pantries are now in operation and members of organizations such as the College & University Food Bank Alliance,[46] and several campuses have expanded their pantries into larger organizations that offer extensive services to tackle basic needs insecurity on multiple fronts. The University of California, Berkeley had a 5-day celebration in 2019 to commemorate the opening of its nearly 3000-square-foot Basic Needs Center next to its food pantry, which includes programs such as nutrition workshops, housing assistance, clinics for CalFresh enrollment, and case management led by a licensed clinical social.[47] That same year, over 500 college educators and researchers from around the country convened in Houston for the RealCollege conference to discuss solutions for college student hunger and homelessness.[48]

The literature on the nature of social movements indicates that social scientists play an important role in identifying social conditions that need to be reformed and influencing political changes.[49] Additionally, studies have found that in Western countries, especially starting in the 1980s, social movements have become more organizationally structured and embedded within institutions at the national level.[50] These features can be seen in the college student basic needs security movement. The aforementioned College & University Food Bank Alliance offers memberships to further support, train, and provide resources for people working on basic needs security initiatives at their local campuses.[51] Dr. Sara Goldrick Rab, who serves as the Founding Director of The

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42 "Frequently Asked Questions." Accessed May 1, 2020. https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility/elderly-disabled-special-rules.

43 Elizabeth Lower-Basch. SNAP for College Students (Center for Law and Social Policy, October 2017), 4. https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2017/10/SNAP%20for%20College%20Students-An%20Overview.pdf

44 Tom Allison, Rethinking SNAP Benefits for College Students (Young Invincibles, February 2018), 1. https://younginvincibles.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Rethinking_SNAP_benefits.pdf.

45 "About the Food Bank," Accessed May 1, 2020. http://foodbank.msu.edu/about/index.html.

46 "Become a Member," Accessed May 1, 2020. https://cufba.org/resources/.

47 Gretchen Kell, "One-of-a-kind Basic Needs Center a new hub for student help," University of California, Berkeley News, February 22, 2019. https://news.berkeley.edu/2019/02/22/new-basic-needs-center-to-open.

48 Laura Isensee "#RealCollege Conference comes to Houston to fight hunger and homelessness on campuses: Between a third and a half of all college students in the country struggle to find enough food to eat or a place to live," Houston Public Media, September 27, 2019. https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/education-news/2019/09/27/347520/realcollege-conference-comes-to-houston-to-fight-hunger-and-homelessness-on-campuses

49 Neil J. Smelser and John S. Reed, Usable Social Science. Ebook Central. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012, 302-12. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/berkeley-ebooks/ detail.action?docID=1040635.

50 Donatella Della Porta, "Building Bridges: Social Movements and Civil Society in Times of Crisis." VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations 31, no. 5 (March 11, 2020): 945. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-020-00199-5.

51 "Join," Accessed May 1, 2020. https://cufba.org/join.

Hope Center for College, Community and Justice at Temple University in Philadelphia[52] and is often cited for her research on basic needs insecurity in higher education, was the lead author on a Brookings Institution report urging for increased investment in community colleges; it captured attention of federal actors, and was credited with influencing President Obama's $12 billion American Graduation Initiative, which included many of the report's key recommendations.[53] Findings from research conducted on basic needs insecurity in higher education have also been acknowledged and further analyzed by key actors in the larger anti-hunger movement, such as the Food Research & Action Center.[54] Applying these social movement theories to the college student basic needs security movement illuminates some of the potential reasons for its success and national recognition.

Methodology

To trace the origins of this social movement, I utilized a mixed-methods research design that includes interviews with basic needs researchers and advocates and content analysis of news and research publications on this issue. The insights drawn from the data were used to create a timeline of events to illustrate the growth and trajectory of the college student basic needs movement.

Interviews

In total, I interviewed ten basic needs researchers and advocates on their experiences working in this field. The interviews lasted thirty minutes each and were conducted over the phone. All interviewees were asked the same questions and notes were taken on the interviewee responses. Because the movement does not have a singular, hierarchical structure and is instead composed of numerous individuals and organizations from all across the country, it was not feasible to accurately list the total population of potential interviewees and apply a randomized selection method to reduce bias. Furthermore, the scope of knowledge that individual leaders have regarding the origins and future priorities of the movement varies depending on factors such as their role, tenure, region, and affiliation.

Using the networks cultivated from over three years of field study work at the UC Berkeley Basic Needs Committee, I reached out to individuals who were consistently recognized as leaders in the basic needs movement at settings such as conferences, workshops, expert panels, and leadership convenings. In addition, I considered each individual's scope of work, and completed interviews with people whose expertise covered one or more of the following topics: research, advocacy, homelessness, food insecurity, and social services. The interviewee pool included individuals who have led national campaigns to end student hunger on college campuses, conducted basic needs research published in academic journals, been involved with advocacy that reached the federal level, and worked in leading national basic needs organizations. I chose this method of recruiting and selection because individuals who have reached this scope of work are likely to be familiar with the origins of the movement and can speak to their experiences and perspectives on its growth. These individuals are also likely to have more accurate projections of the future direction that this movement is moving towards, in addition to insider knowledge on issues that will take priority.

Content Analysis

In order to understand whether my initial observation—that coverage of basic needs security in higher education in the United States has increased in recent years—is correct, I collected data on the number of newspaper and scholarly articles published in the United States on basic needs security from the years 2000 to 2019. Using the

52 "About Sara," Accessed May 1, 2020. https://saragoldrickrab.com/aboutsara.

53 Todd Finkelmeyer. "UW-Madison profs help shape bold initiative for community Colleges," The Cap Times, July 20, 2009. https://madison.com/ct/news/local/education/university/uw-madison-profs-help-shape-bold-initiative-for-community-colleges/article_08c44697-6bd2-5f96-a374-842a6c3c9b22.html.

54 "New Research Confirms That Food Insecurity Is a Major Threat to College Students' Ability to Thrive," Food Research & Action Center (blog), June 3, 2019. https://frac.org/blog/new-research- confirms-that-food-insecurity-is-a-major-threat-to-college-students-ability-to-thrive.

database ProQuest, I searched for newspaper and peer-reviewed scholarly articles published from January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2019 on this topic using the following keywords:

Hunger
Homelessness
Food security
Food insecurity
Housing security
Housing insecurity
Campus
College
Hungry
Student

I manually went through all the search results to find the articles that covered college student basic needs security and categorized those articles based on their year of publication. The finalized data was then visualized using line graphs to illustrate the publication trends from 2000 to 2019.

Findings

Interviews

The Driving Forces Behind the Movement

According to interviewees, several conditions set the backdrop for the rise of the social movement to eradicate basic needs insecurity on college campuses. As one interviewee described, the 2000s and 2010s had the "perfect storm of bad economy, high student debt, and expensive college." Furthermore, more and more students, particularly low-income students, are attending college[55] while the cost of attendance is increasing[56] and public investment in higher education is decreasing.[57] Some interviewees also cite the economic conditions resulting from the 2007–2009 Great Recession as something that exacerbated basic needs insecurity. As one interviewee said, "people lost homes to foreclosures, big banks bought the houses, a lot of people were pushed into the housing market, and this made rent more competitive." Meanwhile, another interviewee disagreed, stating that the Great Recession led to more people returning to school, but did not result in a spike in food insecurity.

While no exact date can be attributed to the official birth of the movement to eradicate basic needs insecurity in higher education, this timeline pieces together the interviewees' collective experiences of the movement trajectory:

Time Period	Event(s) and/or milestone(s)
1970s to 1980s	Service learning and community service in K-12 public schools began, which allowed students to learn more about off-campus community issues and become more willing to volunteer.

55 "Percentage of Recent High School Completers Enrolled in 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges, by Income Level: 1975 through 2014," National Center for Education Statistics, United States Department of Education, 2015. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_302.30.asp.

56 Chingos, Five Facts about the Sharp Rise in College Living Costs, 1.

57 Andrew Barr and Sarah E. Turner, "Expanding Enrollments and Contracting State Budgets: The Effect of the Great Recession on Higher Education," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 650, no. 1 (2013): 188. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716213500035.

1980s	Student advocacy on hunger and homelessness off-campus began due to the cultural awareness of the famine in Ethiopia and the increased street homelessness after the Reagan administration closed down much of the mental health infrastructure, resulting in protests and hunger strikes.
1990s	Students began to also shift to on-campus issues, as evidenced by the creation of the first student-led college campus food pantry at Michigan State University
Early to mid-2000s	Interviewees started hearing about the rising student debt and cost of college and this issue was covered in media channels. During this time, a few more college campus food pantries opened.
2008	In the midst of the Great Recession, people began to talk about basic needs insecurity on college campuses in earnest and grassroots efforts were being initiated. Working groups were formed, some research began, and more food pantries were being opened.
2009	The first research study ever conducted on college student food insecurity was published.
2014-2015	Basic needs insecurity in higher education became a mainstream topic, and media channels began covering this issue. Legislation on college student hunger and homelessness began, and prior to this, only people who worked on or experienced these issues were aware of them. The campus food pantry movement reached a milestone of surpassing 100 campus pantries.
2017-2018	Membership for the College & University Food Bank Alliance doubled in size and attention towards this issue continued to escalate. The University of California systemwide study on basic needs insecurity among its undergraduate and graduate students was published and research studies on this issue continued to grow in number.

Table 1. Timeline of the College Student Basic Needs Security Movement

From this timeline, it is evident that 2008–2009 and 2014–2015 represent key years that galvanized the social movement, the former having to do with jumpstarting grassroots efforts and the latter having to do with reaching widespread acknowledgement.

Across the board, interviewees credit students as being the ones to truly drive and expand the movement in terms of advocating, organizing, and volunteering for this cause. Based on interviewees' perception of conditions that allowed for this movement to rise at this time, the overall awareness of hunger and homelessness in the cultural consciousness of the country helped set the stage for collective student action. Specifically, interviewees referenced issues and developments such as the famine in Ethiopia, increasingly visible street homelessness, and service learning engagement programs. Research publications on student food and housing insecurity in higher education were also crucial in legitimizing basic needs insecurity as a crisis on college campuses and informing legislators and university administrators about the size and scope of this issue, which led to increased funding and policy support.

The Myth of the Starving College Student

"You're supposed to eat ramen. Those stereotypes have already persisted even when I was a college student. You're supposed to scrape by, not live a lavish lifestyle, because that's part of the college experience," stated

one interviewee, who graduated from college in the early 2000s. Across the board, interviewees agreed that the normalized "ramen diet" of college students has contributed to the invisibility of the basic needs insecurity crisis in higher education. Furthermore, there is a noticeable gap between high school and college. More than half of the University of California system students who reported experiencing food insecurity in college did not experience food insecurity as a child.[58] For some interviewees, living through those experiences and understanding the severity of this challenge on the ground level drove them to want to take action and become involved with eradicating hunger and homelessness in higher education. This was demonstrated anecdotally by another interviewee who graduated from one of the UC campuses in the early-2010s:

> I had a full scholarship, but I struggled for my food at the end of every month. It was kind of an expected part of the collegiate experience that you're going to struggle with food and I just never agreed with that. I wasn't always food insecure. I became food insecure when I came to college. In college, we were eating each other's leftovers or splitting the $5 Subway footlong in half and that was what was sustaining us. So noticing that challenge, living that challenge, and starting to ask 'why are people struggling' led me to now as we not just ask, but are doing something about it.

When asked about the support gap between high school and college, the interviewees provided a variety of responses. A key issue is that the framework for supporting basic needs insecure students in K-12 does not transition well to higher education institutions. One interviewee described how there are a lot of different government programs for K-12 students that provide resources such as subsidized lunches and breakfast that students lose access to once they turn eighteen and graduate from high school. Additionally, while there is a legal framework for K-12 school districts to support homeless students, this carries over poorly to college, where there is "horrible" red tape, such as students not having access to paperwork to prove their homeless status. While there are also factors such as financial and nutritional literacy that may impact basic needs security, another interviewee stated that it is important to not look not just at the individual level, which can result in blaming centered around students. Instead, institutional factors at the community, environmental, and political level that contribute to student basic needs insecurity should be the primary focus. For example, meals on and around college campuses are often expensive, and students may live in food deserts, where there is a lack of affordable, healthy food options available to them.

Barriers to Social Service Programs

According to interviewees, funding for research, advocacy, and service work continue to act as barriers for the basic needs movement as it continues to progress. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, has been highlighted as one of the primary mechanisms through which food insecurity is alleviated, largely due to the fact that it is a federal program that also enjoys state support through enrollment and legislation. However, under the Trump administration, there have been efforts to increase work requirements and decrease eligibility, which may further exacerbate barriers to receiving assistance for food insecure students.[59] In current SNAP enrollment processes, interviewees highlighted several key barriers to enrollment and usage among college students.

Approving EBT Machines on College Campuses

Some interviewees discussed the difficulty in bringing EBT machines to campus. EBT benefits must be used at authorized retailers and may not be used for prepared foods. However, each campus vendor must individually apply for the reader, which requires several steps in paperwork and approval. Many colleges have several outside vendors that operate on their campus and these vendors are the most accessible in terms of proximity

58 Meg Prier, "UC Berkeley Basic Needs Today," Berkeley Food Institute, December 12, 2018. https://food.berkeley.edu/from-the-field/uc-berkeley-basic-needs-today.

59 Rachel Treisman, "New SNAP Rule Impacts College Students By Limiting Benefits And Adding Confusion," National Public Radio, December 21, 2019. https://www.npr.org/2019/12/21/789295697/new-snap-rule-impacts-college-students-by-limiting-benefits-and-adding-confusion.

and convenience for students. However, policies mandating individual vendor registration instead of allowing universities to simultaneously complete this registration for all vendors makes it difficult for EBT machines to be installed at all possible locations.

Retaining EBT Machines on College Campuses

According to one interviewee working on a University of California campus, when EBT machines are not swiped at least once in a two-week period, they go offline and shut down. Rebooting the machines would require going through another round of approval by the United States Department of Agriculture. Because all college campuses operate on academic calendars, which include breaks during the winter, spring, and summer, their dining and food facilities are bound to be offline past this period as they close their operations for break. Thus, this issue makes it incredibly difficult for vendors that have successfully gone through the process to get an EBT machine to retain this machine for usage. Despite months-long efforts by the interviewee to work with the United States Department of Agriculture to resolve this issue, he received no response.

Changes in Living Circumstances

Additionally, college students using SNAP are different from most SNAP recipients because their yearly schedule follows the academic calendar set by the school. For example, during the summer students often travel for study abroad, internships, or work, which often requires them to leave the city in which they attend college. This change in living circumstances means that their SNAP benefits may stop during the period that they are not in town, and once they come back they must complete paperwork to restart their benefits. Several interviewees talked about how the application process was already convoluted enough, and issues like these presented another difficulty in preserving continuity for students' food assistance support. One interviewee, who helped students with SNAP enrollment, provided an example of the challenging process with the story of one student, who was denied SNAP benefits seven times before finally being approved.

Food Pantries & Future Trajectory

Across interviewees who worked on college campuses, food pantries were highlighted as "band-aid solutions" for basic needs insecurity. While many campus food pantries have been established or expanded over the past few years, these interviewees stress that they are not the end goal. Campus food pantries offer emergency-based services in the form of non-perishable foods, fresh produce, and donated items such as bread and pastries. However, there is a lot of stigma associated with going to a pantry, presenting a barrier in pantry usage by students in need. Pantries also require continuous funding and staffing, and many campuses do not have budget lines allocated for this purpose. Nevertheless, interviewees stress that these pantries act as important resources for students who are in situations of crises. As one interviewee stated, "Yes, they are band-aids. But band-aids are important when you are bleeding."

According to interviewees, the movement is ultimately aiming to create a preventative model that involves intervention before situations of crises happen. Rather than helping students after they start experiencing severe hunger and homelessness, interviewees say that campuses should identify and reach these individuals and provide resources that uplift their food and housing security. This manifests in the form of nutritional and financial literacy classes, proactive SNAP enrollment, and transparent admissions messaging for students as they embark on their college journey to ensure they understand all the financial obligations and resources involved. This holistic way of looking at students' basic needs security is a crucial part of the movement's trajectory as it continues to progress through this framework in the coming years.

Content Analysis
Newspaper Articles

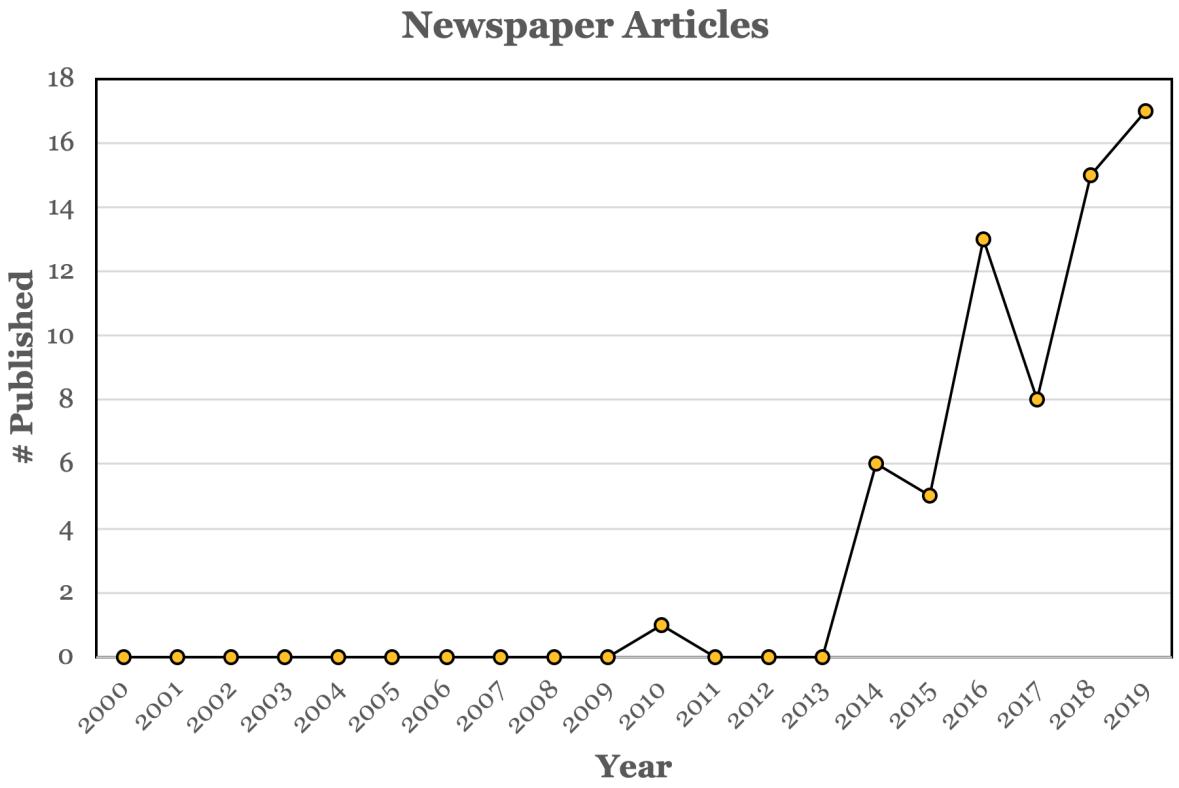

Figure 1. Newspaper Articles on College Student Basic Needs Security Published Between 2000-2019. Articles from ProQuest (2020).

The data indicates that 2014 was the year that newspaper publications started to widely recognize and cover basic needs security on college campuses. Prior to that, only one article was published in the 2000 to 2013 period, and it was done so in 2010, the year following the end of the Great Recession. That *Los Angeles Times* article was titled "Food for thought: UCLA reaches out to its hungry and homeless students—a hidden issue that has been getting more attention," which included the following statement:

> Campus officials began hearing anecdotal evidence in 2008 of the economic downturn's effect on students, said Antonio Sandoval, director of UCLA's Community Programs Office. No one knows the exact number of homeless or hungry students on campus, he said. Some are undocumented, some are veterans. Many have parents who have become destitute either through divorce or lost jobs. Concern grew enough that the chancellor created an economic response team to provide resources and gather more information. But many students in need prefer to remain hidden.[60]

Similar to the interviewees' accounts, this article supports the view that action was taken to address the issue of college student basic needs insecurity after people on campus noticed the problem and wanted to understand it better. However, barriers such as stigma contributed to the mystery of exactly how many people were experiencing food and housing insecurity. In addition, though widespread coverage did not begin until 2014, the creation of the economic response team discussed in the article further supports the interviewees' experiences that there was already mobilization occurring on the ground as more and more people began to be made aware of this crisis.

Fast forward to 2019 and both the scope and news coverage of the movement have shifted significantly.

60 Carla Rivera, "Food for thought; UCLA reaches out to its hungry and homeless students -- a hidden issue that has been getting more attention," Los Angeles Times, June 14, 2010. https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2010-jun-14-la-me-ucla-food-20100614-story.html.

During this year, there were seventeen articles published on basic needs insecurity in higher education in eleven unique publications, including The *Wall Street Journal*, The *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, The *Washington Post*, and *Chicago Tribune*, which rank in the "Top 10 U.S. Daily Newspapers"[61] by circulation. The *New York Times* article "Tuition or Dinner? Nearly Half of College Students Surveyed in a New Report Are Going Hungry" discussed the following:

> Stories about college hunger have been largely anecdotal, cemented by ramen and macaroni and cheese jokes. But recent data indicate the problem is more serious and widespread, affecting almost half of the student population at community and public colleges...Although the college food-pantry movement is well underway...efforts have recently expanded to include redistributing leftover food from dining halls and catered events, making students eligible for food stamps and other benefits, and perhaps most important, changing national and state education funding to cover living expenses, not just tuition.[62]

The understanding of this issue has shifted from anecdotal evidence to national studies, and the movement has expanded from emergency intervention through mechanisms such as food pantries to a holistic, collective effort that incorporates policy, food recovery, social services, and more. This article supports the interviewees' accounts of how the "myth of the starving college student," as one interviewee phrased it, is now being challenged as people recognize that this is a serious, national issue affecting millions of students, and that something should be done to address it.

Research Articles

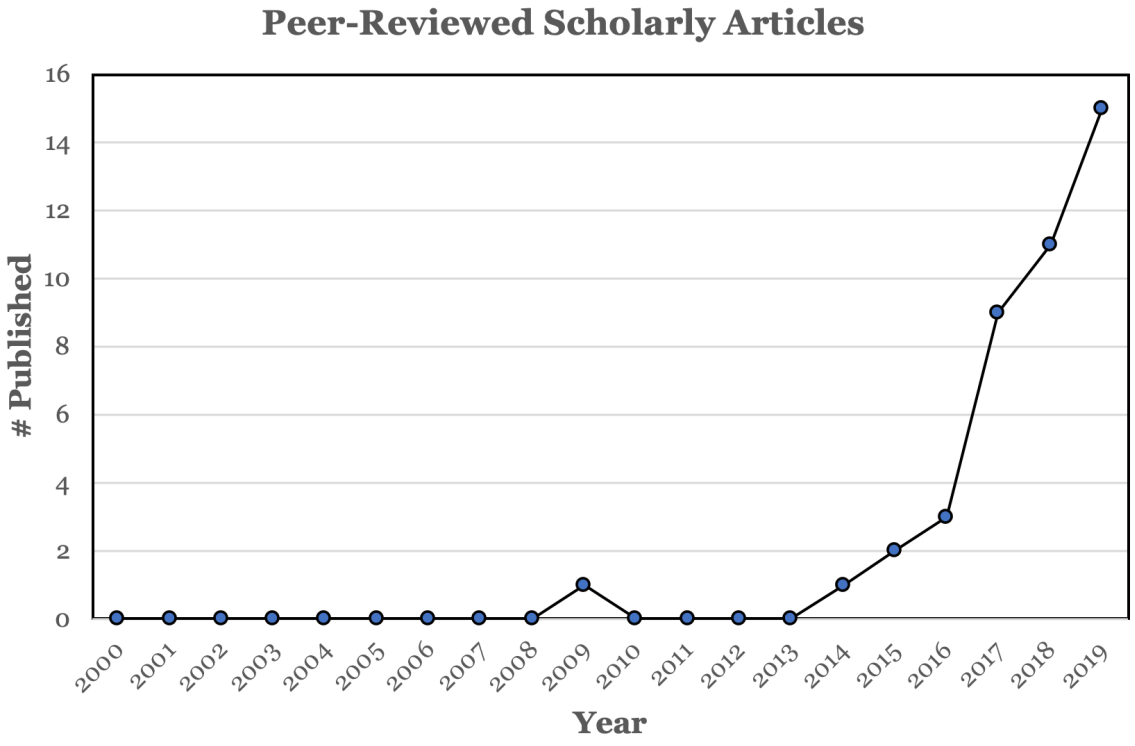

Figure 2. Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Articles on College Student Basic Needs Security Published Between 2000-2019. Data Gathered from ProQuest (2020).

Source: ProQuest

61 "Top 10 U.S. Daily Newspapers," Cision Media Research, January 4, 2019. https://www.cision.com/us/2019/01/top-ten-us-daily-newspapers/.

62 Laterman, "Tuition or dinner?", The New York Times.

The data indicates that 2014 was the year that peer-reviewed scholarly articles began to be regularly published, which is the same case as the newspaper publication trend. Similarly, there was one article published in 2009 (for newspaper articles it was one published in 2010), at the end of the Great Recession. The article, titled "Food insecurity prevalence among college students at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa," discussed the findings from a study of 441 non-freshman students and concluded that:

> Food insecurity is a significant problem among college students at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Food availability and accessibility should be increased for these students through the establishment of on-campus food banks and student gardens. Future studies should assess the prevalence of food insecurity in other college campuses nationwide.[63]

This was the first study ever done on college student basic needs security and it had a wide reach. Many of the interviewees credited this study as a key piece in galvanizing the college student basic needs security movement off the ground by legitimizing the changed reality of the college student experience.

Since 2014, the number of peer-reviewed scholarly articles on college student basic needs security published has only increased. In 2019, there were fifteen articles published in eleven unique publications. One article, titled "A systematic review of food insecurity among US students in higher education" and published in the Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition, found that:

> Accumulating evidence suggests that food insecurity in US colleges and universities is higher than in US households, making this a new public health priority...Short-term emergency solutions, such as food pantries, may be useful, but upstream solutions to address basic needs are imperative.[64]

This finding is consistent with the increased attention on the need for intersectional and holistic efforts in eradicating college student basic needs security discussed in the aforementioned 2019 The *New York Times* article and supported by interviewees, who acknowledged how creating more food pantries is not the end solution for this movement.

Sum of Article Trends

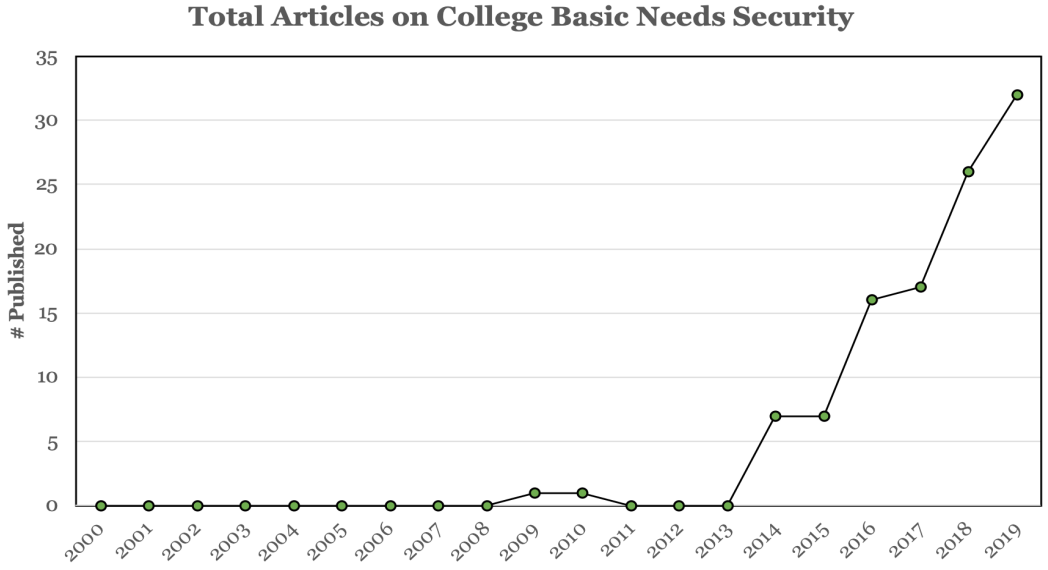

Figure 3. Sum of Newspaper and Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Article Trends. Data Gathered from ProQuest (2020).

63 M Pia Chaparro et al., "Food Insecurity Prevalence among College Students," 2097.

64 Aydin Nazmi, et al., "A Systematic Review of Food Insecurity among US Students in Higher Education." Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition 14, no. 5 (2018): 725. https://doi.org/10.1080/19320248.2018.1484316.

Together, the sum of these two trends helps illustrate the larger picture of the college student basic needs security landscape and movement trajectory. Though there are certain years where the number of newspaper articles published decreased, such as in 2015 and 2017, this graph shows that the total number of peer-reviewed scholarly articles and newspaper articles published has not decreased starting in 2014, when college student basic needs security began to reach widespread awareness. Interviewees attributed the growth of this movement to both media coverage and research studies that helped legitimize and increase acknowledgement of this issue, which consequently led to more people getting involved in volunteering, donating, or organizing, more administrators willing to work on addressing this issue, and more legislators willing to help pass policies to alleviate these problems.

Issues and Considerations

Data Representativeness

The ProQuest database was used to collect data on the number of peer-reviewed scholarly articles and newspaper articles published between 2000 and 2019. However, it is possible that relevant articles were not available in this database and were consequently left out of the trend visualization, thus painting a potentially inaccurate picture of the trajectory of the college student basic needs security movement. Furthermore, other forms of media that could have increased cultural awareness of basic needs insecurity in higher education, such as podcasts, magazines, documentaries, informative videos, interviews, and radio segments, were not included. The number of peer-reviewed scholarly articles was used to illustrate research on this issue. However, as interviewees mentioned, some of the key research studies that helped legitimize the reality of basic needs insecurity on college campuses were reports commissioned by the universities themselves, but they did not appear in the search because they were not published in an academic journal.

In order to address these potential issues, search data from Google Trends was used to compare for validity. Using Google Trends data from 2004-2019, the term "student food insecurity" was selected to demonstrate changes in online awareness and interest in this issue. The terms "student basic needs insecurity" and "student housing insecurity" were also considered, but did not have enough searches to yield data from Google Trends. Additionally, the terms "student hunger" and "student homelessness" were considered, but not used, because of the greater preciseness of the term "student food insecurity" in generating results that were representative of the college student basic needs security movement rather than the anti-hunger movement, which includes K-12 student advocacy, more generally.

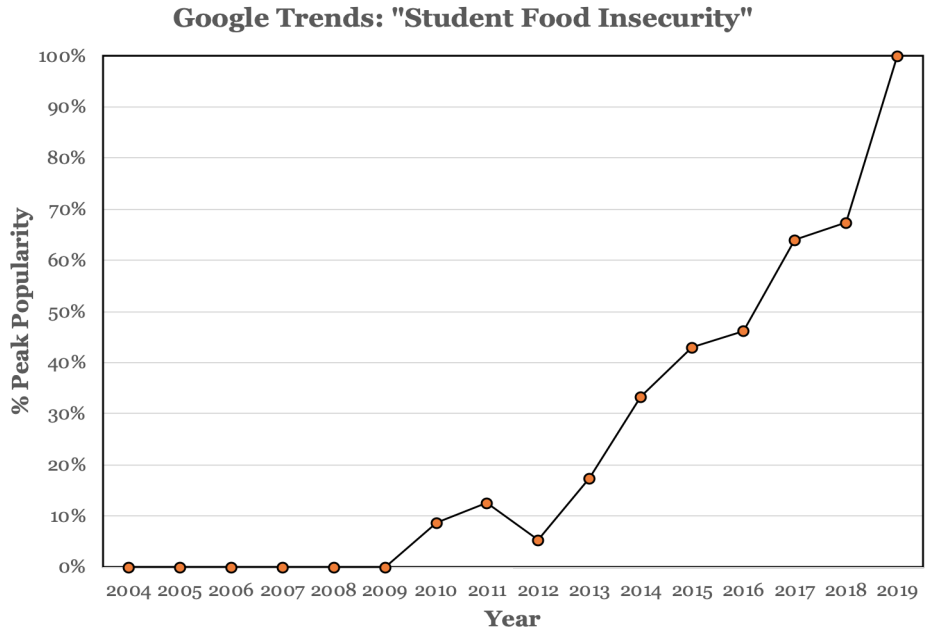

Figure 4. Google Trends on the Term "Student Food Insecurity" from 2004-2019. Data Source: Google Trends (2020).

The y-axis represents changes in searches as a percentage of peak popularity for the term. The original data retrieved from Google Trends was based on month; this was converted into year to improve comparability with the publication trends shown in Figure 1 and 2. The data demonstrates that interest in this term didn't start until 2010, and has continued to increase until 2019, other than a dip in 2012. The start of the search trends matches the findings from the newspaper and scholarly article trends in that it began near the end of the Great Recession in 2010 (the first scholarly article was published in 2009 and the first newspaper article was published in 2010). Unlike the publication trends data, however, this graph shows that there were still many searches throughout the 2010-2014 years, instead of a gap between 2010 and 2014. Unlike Google searches, publications require time for researching, interviewing, writing, editing, and more, which may explain the delay. It is logical for there to be continued interest through online searches rather than completely no searches after awareness of this issue first began.

Impact of Changing Student Demographics on Results

Another potential issue is the aforementioned changing student demographics; specifically, the increase in low-income students attending college. One alternative explanation could be that because more low-income students are making their way to higher education, the incidents of food and housing insecurity are merely reflecting affordability problems originating from the students' family socioeconomic backgrounds rather than reflecting a crisis of basic needs insecurity impacting college students overall. Therefore, the increase in the quantity of students experiencing basic needs insecurity may have been the driving force that increased the visibility of this problem.

It is important to note that the issue of college affordability does not affect just low-income students. In a study conducted by the Pell Institute, the authors found that, adjusted for inflation, the average cost of college has more than doubled for four-year public and private institutions from 1974-1975 to 2016-2017.[65] In addition, the unmet financial need of dependent full-time undergraduates has increased across students from all four family income quartiles, not just for low-income students.[66] Furthermore, in a 2017 report, researchers found that although 55% of students in the University of California system from low-income backgrounds experienced food insecurity, which is above the average of 44%, there were still hundreds of students from non-low-income backgrounds who experienced food insecurity.[67]

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic broke out in the middle of the Spring 2020 semester and led to the unprecedented closures and workforce interruptions across the globe. Many households have been impacted in terms of their income and ability to access necessary resources. Consequently, the population of staff, researchers, and advocates coordinating the basic needs movement have been doubly inundated with work as organizations scrambled to meet this sudden surge in need for social services while battling issues with campus closures, staff shortage, resource shortage, and distribution in the face of social distancing and shelter-in-place requirements. Therefore, I elected to narrow my scope to the 10 interviews I had completed prior to this outbreak.

Continued field study work at the Basic Needs Committee allowed me to gain insight into how the college student basic needs security movement has continued to evolve despite these disruptions. The parallels between the crisis of uncertainty that the world is now facing in the midst of the pandemic and the crisis of basic needs insecurity that college students have been experiencing for years appear to be raising awareness towards the importance of access to consistent and nutritious food and housing in daily functioning. While the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted the college student basic needs movement trajectory, it has also uplifted the need to

65 Margaret W. Cahalan, et al., 2018 Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States: Historical Trend Report, (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, Council for Opportunity in Education, and Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy of the University of Pennsylvania, 2018), 79. http://pellinstitute.org/downloads/publications-Indicators_of_Higher_Education_Equity_in_the_US_2018_Historical_Trend_Report.pdf.

66 Ibid.

67 Global Food Initiative, University of California, 50-54.

address fundamental gaps in the social service framework and brought further attention to the inequities among students in higher education and resulting impact on academic achievement.[68] However, despite basic needs security being a national priority now, college students are still being excluded from federal aid.[69] Though the movement for basic needs security in higher education has reached widespread acknowledgement, it is clear that there is still a ways to go.

Conclusion

The issue of student basic needs insecurity in higher education is a crisis that has mobilized thousands of supporters as attention towards the grim reality of the college student experience continues to grow. Issues of affordability stemming from trends such as the increasing cost of college and decreasing public investment in higher education are forcing students to skip meals and sleep in their cars to survive at college campuses. The gap between high school and college and the exclusion of the needs of college students in social service programs must be addressed to alleviate these burdens. While the myth of the starving college student has normalized food insecurity, grassroots efforts by students, researchers, and advocates have led to the acknowledgement that hunger, malnourishment, and homelessness should not be part of the college student experience. This has progressed to a holistic, collective movement that includes the institutionalization of proactive intervention mechanisms aimed at dismantling the barriers to food and housing access and successful lobbying measures at the state and national level.

Although this issue did not reach mainstream awareness until 2014-2015, changes in American cultural consciousness dating back to the 1970-90s served as an important backdrop for the movement's later success. The increasing recognition of hunger and homelessness as moral issues helped galvanize the success of student organizing in battling basic needs insecurity on college campuses. After researchers joined the movement by helping legitimize the crisis of basic needs insecurity through published studies identifying the scope and depth of this issue starting in 2008-2009, administrators and legislators became more privy to help initiate institutional changes to address the problem.

As this movement grows, the future trajectory is aimed towards implementing preventative measures to stop students from falling into situations of basic needs insecurity in the first place, with food pantries acting as "band-aid" intermediaries to address immediate needs. This includes programs such as nutritional and financial literacy classes, proactive SNAP enrollment, and transparent admissions messaging to help incoming students prepare for the reality of the college experience, which includes barriers such as food deserts and high costs of living. Though the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted global operations, including the college student basic needs security movement, it has shed light into the crisis of uncertainty and precarious situations that students in higher education face. Even so, college students are still being left out of federal considerations for economic support. As awareness of this movement progressively expands, the people fighting for basic needs security in higher education will need to continue to dismantle social structures and stigmas that are inhibiting access to nutritious and healthy food and safe and affordable housing in order to eradicate hunger, malnourishment, and homelessness from college campuses.

68 Casey, "College Made Them Feel Equal. The Virus Exposed How Equal Their Lives Are", The New York Times.

69 Friedman, "Most College Students Won't Get a Stimulus Check", Forbes.

Contributor's Notes

Sara Tsai (she/her/hers) graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with degrees in Business Administration and Interdisciplinary Studies and a minor in Food Systems in May 2020. She is currently studying for a Juris Doctor degree at Harvard Law School. After learning about the student basic needs insecurity crisis at a conference her freshman year, she became extensively involved with the UC Berkeley Basic Needs Committee and other food justice organizations to tackle this issue. Under the supervision of Dr. Rakesh Bhandari and Dr. Kathryn DeMaster, Sara wrote this piece for her senior honors thesis, which ultimately received highest honors and was nominated for the Interdisciplinary Studies Department Citation. Sara would like to convey the utmost gratitude to her two thesis advisors for their endless support and encouragement, in addition to Ruben Elias Canedo from the UC Berkeley Basic Needs Committee for introducing her to this village community and galvanizing her involvement with this cause.

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