

# Food Insecurity in Higher Education

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# College Students are our State's Assets!

- Highest payers of personal income taxes.
- Running NM businesses.
- Future doctors and health care workers.
- Working in the legislature.
- Future legislators.
- Breaking the cycle of generational poverty.

# College Degree Benefits

- College graduates earn an average of 84% more than non-graduates.
- The unemployment rate is double for those without a college degree compared to those who have one.
- Without a college degree, one is four times more likely to be living in poverty.
- People with degrees: live longer healthier lives, have less divorce, and raise more educated children.

# Fiscal Benefits

- Fiscal rate of return of public benefits to public investments in higher education is about 10%.
- “Tax revenues from college graduates alone (roughly \$471,000 per degree over lifetime) are more than six times the gross government cost per college.”
- Lost income from 2002 NM dropouts: \$2,993,000 in federal income tax and \$955,000 in lost state income tax & lost personal income in NM \$19,955,000.

*(Sources: Trostel, 2010; Schneider&Lin, 2011)*

# NM Food Insecurity Prevalence

- 2019 Household: 16%
- 2019 Childhood: 22%
- 2020 UNM Undergraduates: 36.8%

# Methodology

- Online survey administered in April 2020 to a stratified random sample of 12,000 UNM students.
  - USDA 10-item Adult Food Security Survey Module
  - Housing security and homelessness measures (based on McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness)
  - Demographics:
    - Gender Identity
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Dependents (if any)
- Response total was 2,654 students.

# USDA Food Security Survey Module

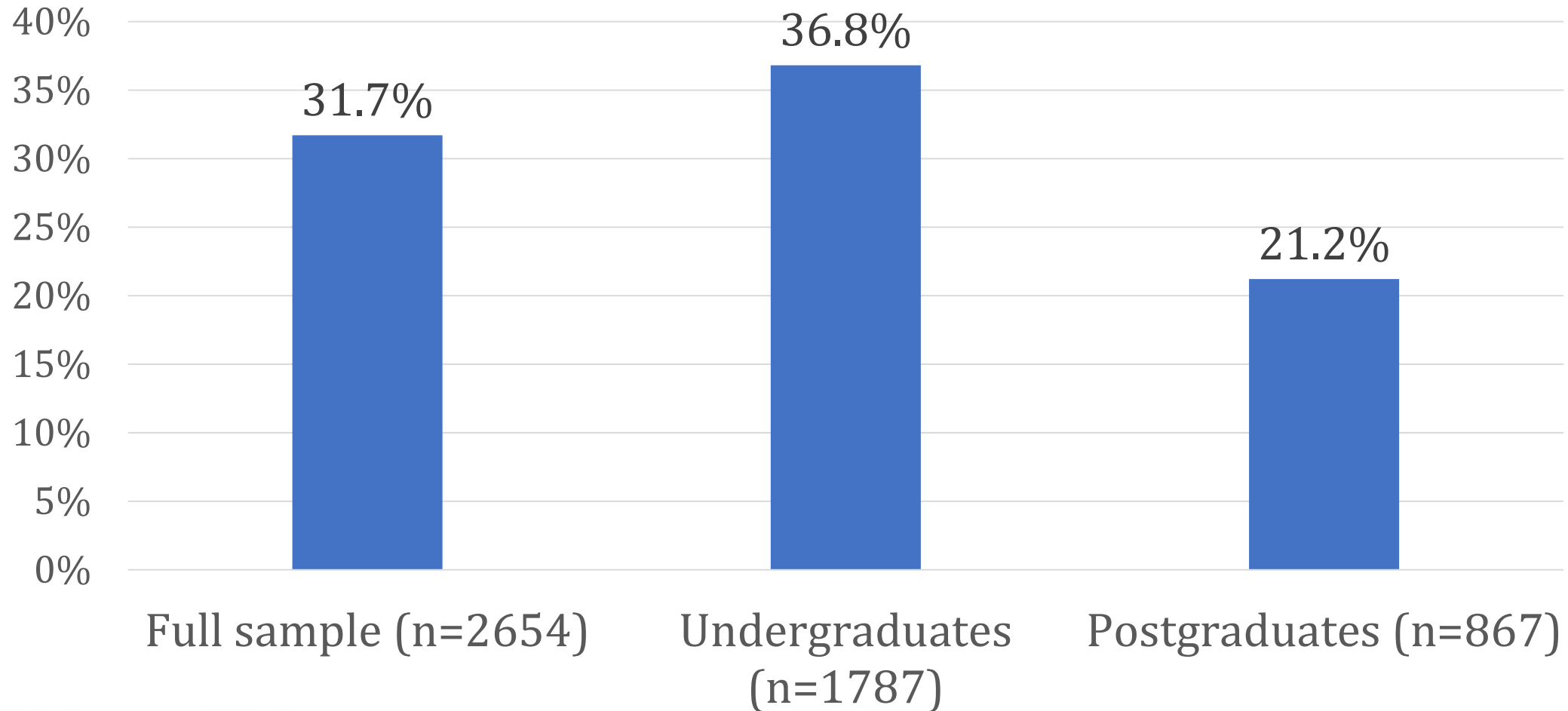
- In the last 30 days...
  - I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more
  - I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals
  - The food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more
  - Were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?

# Focus Groups

- 13 focus groups conducted in fall 2020
  - 44 students participated
- Goal: understand experiences of basic needs insecurity and inform solutions from students' perspectives
- Focus group questions:
  - How does insecurity impact your academic success?
  - What resources or strategies have you or your friends used to access support for food or housing?



# Food Insecurity at UNM 2020



# Food Insecurity at UNM 2020

## Race/Ethnicity

- American Indians: 52%
- African American: 44%
- International students: 39%
- Hispanic: 35%
- White: 25%
- Asian: 24%

## Gender and Sexuality

- Transgender, gender fluid, or other gender: 52%
- Male: 32%
- Female: 31%
- Gay or lesbian: 46%
- Bisexual 43%
- Heterosexual/straight: 29%

# Basic Needs Insecurity Among College Students Nationally

- 123 institutions, 86,000 students (2018):
  - 45% food insecure
  - 56% housing insecure
  - 17% homeless

**TABLE 8: EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF FOOD AND HOUSING INSECURITY ON FOOD INSECURE STUDENTS, LAST 12 MONTHS**

	YES
Have hunger or housing problems had an impact on your education?	32%
<b>HAVE HUNGER OR HOUSING PROBLEMS CAUSED YOU TO DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?*</b>	
Done any of the following	86%
Miss a class	53%
Miss a study session	54%
Miss a club meeting	37%
Opt not to join an extracurricular activity	55%
Not buy a required textbook	55%
Drop a class	25%
Not perform as well in your academics as you otherwise could have	81%

\*Asked only of students who responded "yes" to the previous question about educational impact.

## [Hunger on Campus Report \(2016\)](#)

- 3,765 students from 12 states
- 8 community colleges
- 26 four-year colleges and universities

# Health Impacts of FI in College Students

- Compared to food secure students, food insecure students:
  - Higher prevalence of overweight/obesity
    - 5.13 (95% CI: 2.63, 10.00) times the odds of obesity
  - Lower self-rated health
  - Fewer daily servings of fruits and vegetables, higher added sugar intake
  - Fewer days of enough sleep
  - Fewer days of physical activity
  - Higher degree of stress and depression
  - Eating disorders

# Student Experience

- “I’m a first-generation college student... I can’t get my mother to help me with the [FAFSA] paperwork. You know, I don’t have family to really support me in in this way... I’m just trying to go to college. I’m trying to get myself out of this generational poverty.”

# Student Experience

“You know there are times ... where it’s like you get offered another shift and you have a bunch of homework that needs to be done. But with that extra shift, you know that it can help you. And so, you are super tempted to take it or you do take it and then that impacts the amount of sleep that people get and also obviously, their academic success which becomes super overwhelming very quickly.”

# Causes of Food Insecurity

- Cost of attendance up by 54% since 2000 at public universities.
- Student fees grew by 95% between 1999 and 2012 (Goldrick-Rab, 2017).
- Pell Grant covered 80% of attendance costs in 1972, less than 1/3 today (G-R, 2017).
- 73% of college students are non-traditional (CUBFA, "Running a Pantry Toolkit").
- 52% of students live below the poverty level (CUFBA).




# Immediate Solutions

- Over 750 food pantries on college campuses.
- Meal donation programs (Swipe Out Hunger).
- Accept SNAP on campus.
- Emergency Grants.

# Campaign Against Stigma

NOT ENOUGH MONEY FOR GROCERIES?  
DON'T WORRY JUST

# SNAP!



might be eligible for SNAP food benefits. Apply TODAY at [www.yes.state.nm.us](http://www.yes.state.nm.us). Email UNM Women's Resource Center at [women@unm.edu](mailto:women@unm.edu) and schedule an appointment.

EXTRA FRIDGE SPACE?

# WE CAN CHANGE THAT!

STOP BY FOR FREE GROCERIES

EVERY MONDAY  
11:30 AM-1:30 PM  
"A" PARKING LOT BEHIND TENNIS COURTS

JUST BRING YOUR STUDENT ID AND A MASK!



# Funding Research

- Establish prevalence including funding statewide research.
- Host a NM conference.
- Create and assess interventions.
- Focus groups and student participation.

# Systemic Change

- Treat going to college as a job (lose SNAP work requirement).
- Change lottery scholarship rules to allow students to take fewer courses.
- New norm for institutions: provide food. New norm for students: accept help.
- 10 meals dining hall per week/semester: \$1,240 (\$7.75 per meal) x 3000 very low food security students = \$3,720,000
- 5 meals/week @ \$640 per week/semester x 3000 students = \$1,920,000