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Global Food
Initiative

Global Food Initiative: Food and Housing Security at the University of California

December 2017

This report was made possible by funding from the University of California (UC) Office of the President Global Food Initiative. The University of California Global Food Initiative addresses one of the critical issues of our time: how to sustainably and nutritiously feed a world population expected to reach eight billion by 2025. By building on existing efforts and creating new collaborations among UC's 10 campuses, affiliated national laboratories and the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Global Food Initiative is working to develop and export solutions for food security, health and sustainability throughout California, the United States and the world. For more information, visit: www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative.

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Introduction

Meeting people's basic needs is a growing challenge in the United States, including on college campuses. Research has shown a significant impact to students and their academic experiences stemming from a lack of basic needs security. A new study conducted at the K-12 level⁵ applied existing knowledge about the link between growing up in households without enough to eat and poor academic performance years later.

Nationally, investment in public higher education has not kept pace with increases in the cost of living. Additionally, more than half of the students who reported experiencing hunger during their college years also held paying jobs or received financial aid, and many were enrolled in a meal plan.⁶ Although financial aid helps with costs, non-tuition expenses can account for more than 60 percent of the total cost of attending a college or university.⁷

The issue of unmet basic needs affects students across the country at both two- and four- year colleges and universities and is not isolated to those from lower-income families:

- In a 2015 survey of students at 10 community colleges in seven states, 52 percent of respondents reported some degree of food insecurity within 30 days of the survey.⁸
- A 2015 survey of low- and middle-income undergraduates, mostly at Wisconsin four-year colleges, found that 61 percent reported some food insecurity during the prior academic year (Goldrick-Rab, 2015).
- In a national survey of college students, more than 20 percent said they had experienced hunger in the past month (Dubick, 2016), and nearly 10 percent said they had been homeless at some point within a year of the survey (Field, 2017).
- Food insecurity among college students has been associated with poor health, poor academic performance and mental health symptoms such as depression and anxiety (Freudenberg, et al., 2011; 2011; Patton-Lopez, et al., 2014; Goldrick-Rab, Broton and Eisenberg, 2015; Knol, et al., 2017).

In California, the University of California and other public higher education segments are collaborating through research and awareness efforts to better understand and support students' food and basic needs security. Local governments and organizations are addressing the issue through legislation and promotion of partner programs such as CalFresh.

Like the national studies, those centered on California indicate basic needs are a challenge across our two- and four-year institutions of public higher education:

- In fall 2015 a study by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) found that about 63 percent of students surveyed experience food insecurity, with 38 percent of those students indicating very low food security.

⁵ Published article, Kids who suffer hunger in first years lag behind peers in school, Ruth Chaterjee, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/03/23/520997010/kids-who-suffer-hunger-in-first-years-lag-behind-their-peers-in-school%20on%20September%202012>

⁶ Hunger on Campus. *College and University Food Bank Alliance*. Retrieved from http://studentsagainsthunger.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Hunger_On_Campus.pdf

⁷ The real price of college. *Wisconsin Hope Lab*. Retrieved from <https://tcf.org/content/report/the-real-price-of-college/>

⁸ Hungry to Learn: Addressing Food & Housing Insecurity Among Undergraduates. *Wisconsin Hope Lab*, http://wihopelab.com/publications/Wisconsin_hope_lab_hungry_to_learn.pdf

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- A preliminary study released in winter 2016 by California State University found 8.7 percent experience homelessness and 21 percent lack consistent food sources (Crutchfield, et al., 2016).
 - Based on a 2015 USDA report, California ranks 48 out of 51 administrative districts (50 states and Washington, D.C.) in SNAP (CalFresh) participation lagging among those eligible to take part in the program.

The University of California's mission of research, teaching and public service continues to drive UC's engagement to tackle basic needs challenges. Through the development and sharing of best practices across California public higher education segments, ongoing institutional research and programmatic interventions, UC is working to address the various facets of basic needs security. A recent outcome of the intersegmental partnership includes working with the state legislature that passed legislation supporting "hunger-free" campuses across all three higher education segments. With statewide and systemwide coordination, the university remains committed to exploring the root causes of basic needs security among students, while actively identifying and implementing solutions to enhance their well-being.

University of California Efforts

UC Global Food Initiative

In 2014, University of California President Janet Napolitano and UC's 10 chancellors launched the UC Global Food Initiative (GFI). The GFI involves all 10 UC campuses, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, aligning the university's research and outreach in the fields of agriculture, medicine, nutrition, climate science, public policy and social science, biological science, humanities, arts and law. There are multiple projects under the GFI with efforts focusing on one of the critical issues of our time: how to sustainably and nutritiously feed a growing world population.

In 2015, with the formation of the GFI Food Access and Security subcommittee and under the coordination of the subcommittee co-chairs, the issue of food insecurity was more deeply examined across the campuses. Based on the findings from the subcommittee's efforts and recognizing there was a growing concern around student food security, President Napolitano allocated \$75,000 per campus to address the immediate challenges of ensuring student access to nutritious food, while GFI co-chairs began examining the best approach for addressing the issue. In response to the findings from the GFI-funded Student Food Access and Security Survey (SFASS) in 2015 and a multiyear strategic plan created by the systemwide GFI co-chairs, the president committed an additional \$3.3 million over a two-year period to provide emergency assistance, financial and food literacy, life skills training and to establish food security working groups on each campus. The effort is built upon campuses participating across the system in processes that leverage campus expertise coupled with a systems approach to problem-solving. The Food Access and Security Basic Needs (FAS-BN) subcommittee, sponsored by GFI and overseen by UC's Office of Student Affairs, has established a working group on each campus that includes equitable representation from campus stakeholders. Led by GFI co-chairs, the FAS-BN workgroups have been working closely together to address basic needs challenges and develop implementation plans that address the unique needs of each respective campus. Based on the SFASS 2015 findings and campus input, the subcommittee workgroup recognized that efforts to not only address immediate emergency relief were needed, but consideration of long-term sustainable solutions to address student basic needs would be critical.

UC Food and Housing Security Framework

UC students are fortunate to benefit from strong institutional and state financial aid programs that help address both fee and non-fee costs. These programs make UC far more socioeconomically diverse than any other similarly competitive universities. However, despite the university's generous financial aid programs, many UC students face food and housing insecurity.

In order to help students meet their basic needs during their time at UC and beyond, the FAS-BN subcommittee created the UC Basic Needs Model to address holistic preventative education and training. The goal is to consistently reduce and eventually eliminate the number of students in need of emergency resources and/or experiencing a crisis. UC's Basic Needs Model approaches this goal by beginning with comprehensive educational efforts aimed at all students. This action-oriented model includes the establishment of a basic needs committee on each campus to support systemwide coordination of work and sharing of knowledge.

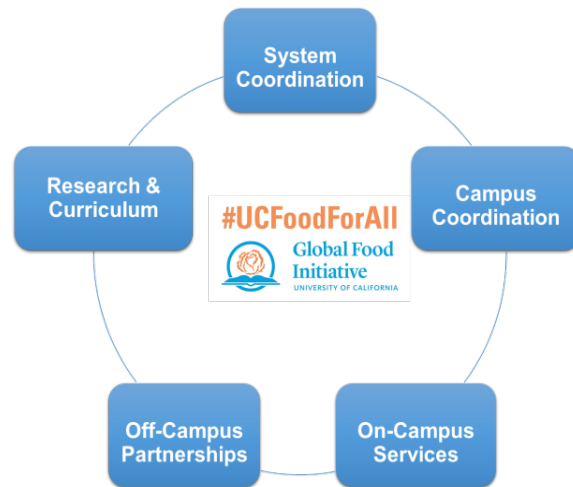


Figure 1: Food Access & Security Framework

UC's systemwide approach focuses on efforts that include:

- Updating pre-college programming curriculum and materials to teach effective basic needs strategies to high school and community college participants.
- Enhancing financial aid communications and skills training to include housing and food costs awareness and available student support services.
- Expanding existing crisis response teams to provide student support and guidance.
- Creating central basic needs online campus resources.
- Increasing collaboration with state and county offices to grow CalFresh registration of UC students where less than 10 percent of our potentially eligible students on our undergraduate campuses have enrolled.

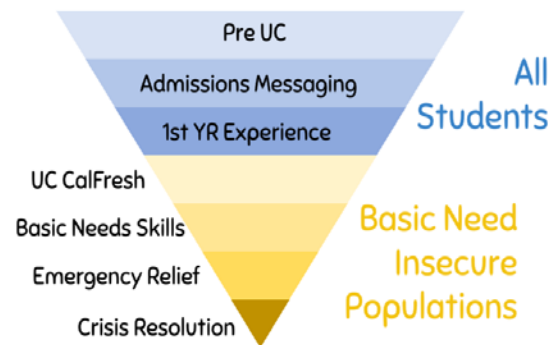


Figure 2: Student Experience Logic Model

- Expanding existing Swipe Out Hunger programs with campus dining services.
- Developing food voucher benefits and financial aid guidelines to support increased resources for students.
- Expanding healthy and culturally diverse food distribution and pantry sites.
- Establishing wellness and homeless student resolution protocols.

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- Continually reviewing and evaluating institutional student assessment tools.

At the same time, the FAS-BN subcommittee has recognized that this work is a united effort across campus departments and institutional lines. Therefore, the committee has organized the framework of the model around the following five components:

1. **On-campus student services and programming**, such as food pantries, demonstration cooking kitchens and financial literacy materials;
2. **Off-campus partnerships and engagement**, such as CalFresh outreach and application assistance, CalFresh enrollment, food banks and local farmers markets;
3. **Campus coordination**, such as centralized and accessible resources, or college student finances and nutrition workshops;
4. **Systemwide coordination**, such as hosting a quarterly systemwide convening of workgroups and statewide conferences which include our intersegmental partners; and
5. **Research and data collection** through UCUES, GSWBS, and campus surveys and focus groups.

UC campuses are in the second year of executing their 2016-2018 implementation plans. So far, campuses have implemented best practices, shared lessons learned and continue to advance efforts to meet each local community's particular needs. From establishing and enhancing food pantry/distribution efforts and bolstering campus gardens/farms for student engaged production to streamlining communication channels to ensure target populations have access to resources, a systemwide integration of support is being implemented. Available resources of activities taking place across UC can be accessed through the *Student Food Access and Security Toolkit*.⁹

Cumulative campus impacts to date since the inception of the FAS-BN systemwide project include:

- Established food access and distribution channels that include choice-based pantries, pop-up markets, and mobile access sites to centralized Basic Needs Hubs offering a range of support services (i.e., UC Irvine and UC San Diego).
- Efforts to raise student awareness and reduce stigma through the development of print and social media basic needs messaging and creation of campus basic needs webpages for centralization of on- and off-site resources.
- Increased supplemental acute support resources that include campus meal voucher/Swipes programs, retail grocery gift cards and emergency financial assistance to address student basic needs.
- Increased staff and student peer-based CalFresh promotion and enrollment assistance.
- Added new basic needs evaluation and campus assessment measures to ensure a responsive model of improving support services.

Campus specific impacts and advances that have been undertaken include:

⁹ Food Security and Access Toolkit, <http://www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/files/food-security-toolkit.pdf>

UC Berkeley

- Developed and hosted training on college student basic needs to institutional outreach and through recruitment entities such as the Centers for Educational Partnership on campuses that support preparation for and success in higher education.
- Increased the UC Berkeley CalFresh Clinic services by approximately 200 percent in a single academic year with support from the Alameda County Food Bank (from 70 to 208 participants).
- In November 2017 UC Berkeley hosted the first-of-its-kind CalFresh Mega Clinic where 184 applications were submitted within five hours. UC Berkeley Food Pantry has increased its services from 424 to 2,113 unique students since opening in 2014.
- Hired a UC Berkeley Farm & Gardens Coordinator who is producing a five-year strategic plan to coordinate research, courses, programming, harvesting and distribution.
- Launched a campus basic needs website, centralizing basic needs information, materials and resources (basicneeds.berkeley.edu); the site averages 4,919 visitors per month.
- Instituted a Food Recovery Coalition to minimize campus wasted food levels and direct nutritious foods to our students in need.

UC Davis

- Launched the [Aggie Food Connections website](http://foodconnection.ucdavis.edu/find-food) (foodconnection.ucdavis.edu/find-food) that aggregates existing UC Davis services into an online central repository, is user-friendly and provides access to available resources.
- Formalized Yolo County Partnerships and implemented the GetCalFresh mobile tool to increase UC Davis student CalFresh enrollment.
- Implemented Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) capability at UC Davis stores and in the renovated Memorial Union markets (opened May 2017).
- Created an edible gardens and seasonal fruiting trees map for the campus (ediblecampus.ucdavis.edu).
- Achieved through outreach and marketing campaigns a 200 percent increase in the number of individual students using UC Davis Food Pantry.
- Established the “Back to Basics” Resource Center, which is scheduled to open in spring 2018 and is funded by \$200,000 from the chancellor.

UC Irvine

- Passed the Food Pantry Initiative Referendum in 2016, providing \$3.00 (adjusts to CPI) per undergraduate student for the next 10 years to support campus basic needs services.
- Opened the UC Irvine FRESH Basic Needs Hub in fall 2017. The Hub provides a 2,630 square foot space where advising, food preparation, community meetings, teaching, CalFresh and Food Pantry services are centralized.
- Increased pantry clients served by 300 percent in one academic year through outreach efforts with 9,954 visits; partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank, receiving 5,000 lbs. of free food weekly.

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- Launched the Emergency Meal Swipe Program to provide meal swipes to students in need.
 - Launched Basic Needs Emergency Grants in partnership with campus social workers and the Office of Financial Aid.
 - Launched Smart Eaters Life Skills Series: Nutrition, Financial Wellness, Cooking Skills.
 - Facilitated the first summer program workshop on basic needs for high school students.

UCLA

- Expanded the Community Program Office's food closet to include increased fresh fruits and vegetables as well as refrigerated goods.
- Formed the Teaching Kitchen Collaborative bringing together students from the schools of Medicine, Public Health, Dental and Nursing to teach healthy eating cooking classes and food demonstrations.
- Completed UCLA's Community Garden site where students are growing food for pantry needs and hosting a wide range of basic needs/sustainable agriculture focused workshops.
- Launched the UCLA CalFresh Initiative, which hosts ongoing large- scale enrollment and promotion days on campus.
- Created the Holiday Food Boxes program to provide food and care packages to students who remain at school during campus holiday closures.
- Students donated \$400,000 through the UCLA dining Swipes program.
- Launched a grocery shuttle service to provide weekly student transportation support to a diverse range of grocery retail stores that accept CalFresh benefits.

UC Merced

- Established an on-campus research and analysis partnership with the UC Merced Blum Center to oversee student basic needs research and provide action grants.
- Introduced CropMobster, a new phone app and web platform, that provides students with daily updates on food donation availability from farms and local food businesses as well as onsite catering and dining.¹⁰
- Launched a new peer-to-peer outreach program to increase student enrollment through facilitated training by CalFresh representatives.
- Hired a full-time Basic Needs Coordinator to expand support services and begin to develop mid-to long-term plans for advancing basic needs.
- Served local residents, community college students and UC Merced affiliates through a community distribution pantry.

¹⁰ Published article, Campus launches countywide food and ag exchange
<http://www.ucmerced.edu/news/2017/campus-launches-countywide-food-and-ag-exchange>

UC Riverside

- In 2015-2016, UC Riverside Dining became the first campus to establish an onsite retail food business that accepts EBT and CalFresh benefits.
- Established staff and student peer CalFresh enrollment support services by appointment and during quarterly outreach events.
- Expanded operations of the R'Pantry in addition to toiletries and infant support supplies, providing more products including fresh, refrigerated and dry goods.
- Utilized student grown R'garden produce to support R'pantry services.
- Launched a dining Swipes program.
- Created UC Riverside Basic Needs workshops facilitated by UC Riverside Highland Chefs that host food provisioning and food preparation demonstrations and donate food to onsite distribution efforts.
- Created a "Food Resources for Students" web page.

UC Santa Barbara

- Created a campus Economic Crisis Response Team that integrates Counseling and Psychological Services, Financial Aid, and Student Affairs with the goal of responding with a greater holistic understanding of student needs.
- Distributed over 5,000 meal vouchers in 2016-2017 to students in need of acute food assistance. The program is expanding and advancing to track usage and increase impact.
- Established a Basic Needs committee that coordinates over 60 workshops quarterly, targeting both residential and non-residential student populations, reaching over 1,000 participants per quarter.
- Expanded pantry services to ensure a broader selection of fresh and refrigerated goods and opened a second satellite site to support student families in campus-affiliated housing.
- Created a systemwide UC Gardens and Farms Group consisting of UC students, staff and faculty. The group holds monthly conference calls and they are creating a best practices series of fact sheets.
- Collected food from the first harvest of the campus Vertical Garden Project and donated to the AS food bank.

UC Santa Cruz

- Served more than 1,000 students per quarter through two primary pantry sites, open daily.
- Began monthly food distribution at Family Student Housing, as well as at a west campus satellite pantry that opened in fall 2017.
- Produced over 20,000 lbs. of fruits and vegetables from the UC Santa Cruz Farm for use in campus food access efforts.
- Hosted a weekly, student-run "pop-up" market that accepts EBT and CalFresh.

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- Established campus food access programs and systems that empower students through academic, co-curricular and paid internship experiences.
 - Facilitated more than 25 quarterly basic needs events, workshops and programmatic activities. Led by undergraduates and graduate student researchers.
 - Created “Swipes for Slugs” program and distributed over 5,000 meal vouchers in FY 16-17.
 - Worked with campus dining to develop software to facilitate meal voucher transfer directly to student ID cards to reduce stigma and simplify use of the voucher program.

UC San Diego

- Hired a campus Basic Needs Coordinator.
- Launched a successful campus website that aggregates information on food and other basic needs resources: basicneeds.ucsd.edu
- Transformed the Triton Food Pantry to the Basic Needs Center.
- Increased connections with CalFresh, Housing Dining & Hospitality, Financial Aid, San Diego Hunger Coalition, San Diego Food System Alliance, Food Recovery Network, Campus Community Centers, Academic Enrichment Programs and Campus Gardens.
- Developed a short-term emergency housing protocol in collaboration with Housing & Dining Services.
- Expanded service at the Triton Food Pantry, with 10,413 overall visits — a 64 percent increase in undergraduate and graduate student attendance from the 2015-2016 academic year.
- Collaborated with the Center for Community Health to develop a basic needs awareness campaign and an evaluation plan.

UC San Francisco

- Created the Food Security Emergency Relief Program, providing UCSF students with urgent, short-term emergency food assistance via \$70 food gift card packets.
- Distributed 1,700 gift card packets and saw a 38 percent increase in student use of the Food Security Emergency Relief Program between 2015 and 2017.
- Created a “Food 4 UCSF Students” app which is an opt-in text message notification system for untouched leftover food from UCSF catered events. Since its launch in June 2017, 1,458 students have signed up, 44 percent of enrolled students.
- Promoted awareness of how to sign up for CalFresh through fliers and the GetCalFresh.org app. Financial Aid advisors assisted students interested in applying for CalFresh.
- Distributed 200 farmers market vouchers to students during Winter Quarter finals. Approximately 90 percent of the vouchers were redeemed within three weeks.
- Initiated planning and fundraising efforts for a training kitchen near UCSF which would include programming for students, staff and faculty; patients and their families; and at-risk populations in San Francisco.

Moving Forward: Implementing a Basic Needs Master Plan

The University of California is committed to tackling this critical issue and produced this report to provide analysis on the basic needs challenges facing our students. All of UC's 10 campuses have provided robust outreach, education and services to their students over the past three years as part of the GFI Food Access Security and Basic Needs project. Students on some campuses have also directly demonstrated their commitment to alleviating student food insecurity for their fellow students by initiating and adopting student-approved fees used to support food pantries and other efforts.

Based on the survey findings shared in this report, campuses will now be able to:

- Prioritize resources and efforts for the most vulnerable student populations — URM, LGBTQ, 5th and 6th year students, etc.
- Utilize researched-based evaluations to determine if existing efforts are working and how these efforts can be better targeted to reach student populations that are more vulnerable to food insecurity.
- Improve how we ask about housing insecurity, not just homelessness.
- Strengthen and deepen the existing partnership with the California Department of Social Services to increase student access and enrollment in CalFresh. This partnership has already resulted in meaningful engagement that is benefiting college students across California by troubleshooting barriers to student participation in the program.
- Host on-campus CalFresh sign-up sessions for identified populations of students who are more likely to need and qualify for food assistance.
- Increase education around food literacy and financial literacy which were two areas that have been consistently mentioned in the campuses' qualitative research as requiring attention.

Basic Needs Master Plan

The FAS-BN co-chairs and campus working groups are working on a master plan to build off the momentum that began in 2014 with the launch of the GFI. The focus of this plan is to assess sustainable, action-oriented efforts that can continue building on the foundation and advances made in addressing student basic needs established across the university. Evaluation tools and long-term sustainable programs and activities will be built into this master plan.

Collectively the campuses have been working under the guidance of the FAS-BN co-chairs to create the master plan that will include the following key areas of focus:

- Vision/Goal
 - All students have the information, resources and services needed to have a basic needs secure UC experience.
- Infrastructure and staffing:

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- For those campuses that have not already done so, they will identify and establish a Basic Needs Center/Hub, where existing staff and services will be coordinated for greater impact and efficiency. These “centers” may reflect both physical and virtual elements as well as coordinate decentralized services to meet needs across the campus landscape.
 - Campuses will identify and confirm adequate staffing to coordinate and facilitate campus basic needs efforts.
 - Campuses will integrate both undergraduate and graduate students through academic internships as well as compensated positions to ensure a participatory approach to student engagement in improving student basic needs.
 - Funding
 - Campuses will identify funding — federal, state and institutional — and utilize fundraising opportunities to sustain the resources needed for basic needs programming, services, facilities and staffing.
 - Institutionalizing a basic needs model
 - At the systemwide and campus level, update pre-undergraduate and pre-graduate student informational materials, outreach presentations and programming to include basic needs. Outreach efforts will go beyond teaching prospective students about application logistics and how to be competitive and teach students how to better prepare and transition into their respective programs and manage their basic needs.
 - At the systemwide and campus level, integrate basic needs information and materials for new undergraduate and graduate student orientations.
 - Campuses will provide early basic needs screening of incoming students. Results will generate a personalized basic needs resource section in their student portal.
 - Proactive targeted outreach to populations with higher insecurity rates (as identified by the UCUES and GSWBS survey results). Prioritizing resources and efforts for the most vulnerable student populations.
 - Host both on-campus and web-based CalFresh application assistance sessions for eligible student populations. There are an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 potentially eligible students per campus.
 - Coordinate and provide trainings and workshops that address financial literacy from personal budgeting to understanding college aid packages, healthy and culturally relevant meal provisioning and preparation, housing and rental planning, and self-advocacy. Campus qualitative research has identified these areas as requiring training.
 - Enhance emergency resources, such as food pantries and donated meal swipes (via Swipe Out Hunger programs or similar) to better serve targeted populations that are not eligible for Financial Aid or CalFresh.
 - Establish a holistic crisis resolution protocol that will go beyond providing transactional resources to chronically food insecure and/or homeless students. Protocol will include additional health, wellness, academic and professional development support.
 - Research and evaluation
 - At the systemwide level and campus level, utilize researched-based mixed-method evaluations to determine if existing efforts are working and how these efforts can be better targeted to reach more vulnerable student populations.
 - At the systemwide level, ensure institutional student experience survey tools implemented through Institutional Research & Academic Planning (IRAP) include sufficient and validated question sets to measure student basic needs.
 - Ensure UC data infrastructure integrates both campus and systemwide levels in order to capture student basic needs data.

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- UC partnerships
 - Strengthen and deepen the existing partnership with the California Department of Social Services to increase student access and enrollment in CalFresh. This partnership has already resulted in meaningful engagement that is benefiting college students across California by clarifying eligibility requirements, troubleshooting barriers to student participation and improving communication at state/local levels.
 - Strengthen and deepen the existing California higher education basic needs partnership to improve research and evaluation collaborations, local, state and federal policy engagement, and coordination of local to state programming and services.
 - Strengthen and deepen intersegmental partnerships for shared knowledge and best practices information such as defining student basic needs and validating questions that capture this concept to better identify students at risk for food and housing insecurity, and therefore address/close the gap in student basic needs.

Worth noting is another systemwide program that came online under the GFI in 2017 as part of the initiative's ongoing work: the Healthy Campus Network (HCN). Emanating from the chancellor's office on each campus the HCN was launched in January 2017. The HCN objective is "to make UC the healthiest place to work, learn and live" by creating a healthy campus culture and environment through campus and systemwide collaboration on policies, programs, services and initiatives addressing all dimensions of well-being for students, faculty and staff. The efforts of the FAS-BN workgroups are part of the campus health and well-being assets. We hope to continue to promote collaborative systemwide programs that will foster positive synergies among students, staff, faculty and administrators devoted to health and wellness-related activities and a successful UC community.

Dealing with the challenges of basic needs is a systemic issue that requires a collaborative, dedicated response and is a long-term, resource-driven enterprise. While the University of California does not control federal and state funding for public higher education and the cost of living where our universities are situated, we recognize the need to develop solutions that ensure a holistic approach to the basic needs of our student populations. Significant research and learning, infrastructure development and services to students in need have made progress in addressing the basic needs issue on our campuses. However, there is still work ahead that will also rely on our partnerships with our state, federal and intersegmental public higher education partners. The University of California is fully committed and embraces the responsibility of ensuring that all students regardless of student characteristics or socioeconomic standing are supported equitably and have access to available resources to ensure a healthy and safe college experience for future success.

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