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## Food Insecurity Amongst Urban College Students

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## Food Insecurity Amongst Urban College Students

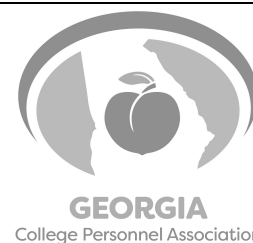
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*Food insecurity is a growing concern among college students. This narrative inquiry provides a greater understanding of food insecurity's impact on the college-going experience for urban students. Interviews were conducted with five college students who attend a large public urban university in the mid-Atlantic and use the on-campus food pantry. From the narrative inquiry, six themes emerged. They are peer relationships, government assistance, cost of living, access to healthy food, institutional help, and navigating college. As a result of the study, there are several actionable steps that institutions should take. Those steps include increased advertisement, adding toiletries and similar products, and funding positions that work directly with students facing issues like food insecurity.*

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I have been part of this university for almost three years, and I had no idea that they had a food pantry. The pantry is just not that easily accessible to students. Like nobody knows about it. It can be difficult to find out how to go there and get stuff from it. And the hours are really weird. So, I can't go very often. Because I have to work in the daytime, or you have a class or something like that. - Zainab

The need to address food insecurity among college students has recently seen increased attention. Soria and Coca (2023) define food insecurity as “the limited availability of nutritious foods, the uncertain ability to acquire nutritious food, or the inability to acquire nutritious foods” (p 102). However, Hagedorn et al. (2022) define food insecurity as “the lack of consistent access to food enough food to live an active and healthy lifestyle or the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate, safe foods obtained in socially acceptable ways” (p. 202). This is a growing problem for college students, with reports of over half of American college students struggling with food insecurity (Zein et al., 2022). In addition, nearly a third of first-generation students experience food insecurity (Waity et al., 2020). The rate is much higher than that of the general population of the United States, which is 12% (Freudenberg et al., 2019). Therefore, a lack of

adequate nutrition can cause many problems for college students, including a lack of exercise, higher rates of depression and anxiety, and poor academic performance (Zein et al., 2018). These can lead to more problems later in adulthood. There is also a link between food insecurity and retention (Weaver et al., 2019).

Students with food insecurity might have more difficulty attending class as they are forced to work to buy food (Silva et al., 2017). With poor grades, there is an increased risk of academic warning, probation, and suspension. While programs like SNAP exist, most college students are not eligible (Gaines et al., 2014). In addition, students might need more resources, such as money to buy groceries or access a grocery store (Meza et al., 2018).

If college students' basic needs are met, they will likely stay enrolled. Food insecure students have a more challenging time concentrating and have poorer physical and mental health (Farahbakhsh et al., 2017). They also have lower average GPAs than those who are not (Weaver et al., 2019). Food insecurity is also significantly higher among students of color and low-SES backgrounds (Wilcox et al., 2022). As a result, these students are less likely to be retained by the university at a time when enrollment is declining. Being hungry will cause a student

to struggle with concentrating on a test, which might cause the student to do poorly on the test and have a low GPA. A low GPA can lead to losing financial aid and possible suspension from the university. Thus, students who are most likely not to be retained (students of color and low-SES students) are also the most directly affected by food insecurity.

The participants in this study helped shed light on a side of being a student that not many people talk about. They bravely shared their stories so that professionals and other students could better understand food insecurity. As will be discussed in the literature review, most studies focused on food insecurity are quantitative; the five participants give human stories behind the numbers. The findings of this study will also illuminate the nuances of food insecurity.

### **Literature Review**

According to Bergdahl et al. (2022), the literature on food insecurity on college campuses was split into three groups before the COVID-19 pandemic. They offered suggestions for better responses to food insecurity, concerned with definitions and measurement of food insecurity and the good campus environment, as well as risk factors and outcomes for hungry college students (Bergdahl et al., 2022). Though the literature split, there

are not enough studies on food insecurity, especially among urban college students.

There are few studies on food insecurity among college students (Bruening et al., 2017). Only a handful of studies focus on the experience of urban college students facing food insecurity. The studies that focused on urban college students with food insecurity were quantitative (Bruening et al., 2016; Silva et al., 2017). According to Lee et al. (2018), most studies on food insecurity have been quantitative. A limitation of past qualitative studies is that they primarily focused on something other than urban college students. Shining the spotlight on urban college students in a qualitative study allows students to share their stories in a way that is more than just numbers. Using qualitative methods can better help practitioners understand urban students' issues with food insecurity.

According to Cuy Castellanos and Holcomb (2024), food security is positively linked to academic performance. If students are to be adequately prepared to take on the challenges of college, they need to be food secure. Food insecure students are likelier to have lower GPAs (Patton-Lopez et al., 2014). They are also more likely to develop depression (Morris et al., 2016). Food insecure students can often skip meals or go without eating all day as the cost of housing, tuition, and other costs associated with

college contribute to food insecurity (Gaines et al., 2014). As such, the living arrangements of college students are a risk factor for food insecurity. Food insecurity is also linked to aggression, anxiety, and depression (Mukigi, 2018).

The number of college students who are employed while in school has increased dramatically (Wan et al., 2017). This number includes urban students who are often forced to work due to the rising cost of college. Urban students often pay higher rent than the national average, and university financial aid packages may not cover the cost of living (Silva et al., 2017). According to Silva et al. (2017), many students on urban campuses worry about having enough money to purchase food, cannot afford to eat balanced meals, and sometimes even skip meals.

The purpose of this study was to (1) Allow students on urban campuses to share their stories, (2) make sense of their stories, and (3) add to the literature on food insecurity on urban college campuses. Findings from this study will help college administrators on urban campuses create an environment where students with food insecurity can succeed.

### **Positionality**

The topic of food insecurity came to me during my talks with my students. They shared that they are so focused on school and

having a place to live that they do not always have time to eat. This had me thinking about my experience as an undergraduate student. I often did not know when I would eat the next time as I was too busy focusing on paying for school and a place to live. I would often forego meals if it meant that my rent was paid on time. This was in a small rural town where rent was only \$325. My current students live in an urban area where rent gets more expensive as the months pass. Studying how this impacted students' food security naturally drew me. I wanted to understand what they went through and what colleges can do to help these students.

### **Methods**

This study utilized qualitative data collection techniques. Hammersely (2013) defines qualitative research as:

A form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis. (p. 12)

Qualitative research allows participants to speak in their own words about their experiences and perspectives (Hammersley, 2013). Qualitative research relies on non-

numerical data (Jackson et al., 2007). There are numerous options for conducting qualitative research (Creswell et al., 2007). A narrative inquiry was used as the researcher sought to understand the impact of food insecurity on urban college students. Narrative inquiry is the chosen design as it centers the experience of the students involved in the study. Narrative research aims to acquire stories in rich detail with minimal direction from the researcher. The focus is on what and why the participants are experiencing something (Josselson & Hammack, 2021).

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, an email was sent to food pantry personnel. The email requested that the personnel send a study invitation to students using the food pantry. As a result, five students agreed to participate in the study. The participants were selected based on a response from emails soliciting participants for the study. In total, five students who use the campus food pantry were interviewed. Eligible students were 18 or older, enrolled at an urban university, and used the on-campus food pantry. The participants were given pseudonyms using a random name generator to ensure confidentiality. An informed consent agreement was required for each participant. The interviews were conducted using the Zoom platform. Memos were made during the interview to minimize researcher bias. Participants were

asked 12 questions that helped answer the research questions. The interviews were then transcribed using *Otter.ai*. Finally, a codebook was developed based on the transcripts that looked at emerging themes and categories. Coding was used to gain valuable insights (Skjott et al., 2019). Each sentence was deconstructed and reconstructed to understand its meaning.

### **Data Analysis**

As Josselson and Hammack (2021) highlighted, “One presupposition of narrative research is that humans experience their lives in forms resembling stories (p. 9).” Narrative research aims to acquire stories in rich detail with minimal direction from the researcher. The focus is on what and why the participants are experiencing something (Josselson & Hammack, 2021). Narrative research focuses on the experiences of the participants. Josselson and Hammack (2021) stated that “Stories are central to the human experience (p. 4).” Narrative inquiry allows us to answer questions about the lived experiences of others (Creswell et al., 2007). Narrative inquiry involves themes and meanings (Squire et al., 2014). The participants' stories are the data (Creswell et al., 2007). It is based on the idea that people live and understand their lives through stories (Josselson & Hammack, 2021). Narrative researchers seek to understand subjectivity

and human complexity (Josselson & Hammack, 2021). Narrative inquiry seeks to account for the multiple perspectives of both the researcher and the participants. According to Josselson and Hammack (2021), "Narratives are also created with reference to dominant cultural narratives or contesting them" (p. 11).

Narrative inquiry analysis involved several data readings (Josselson & Hammack, 2021). Each reading was to identify the initial thematic content of the study. Next, the recording was listened to, and the transcription was read. Finally, the transcript was annotated, and an analysis memo with impressions and an initial list of thematic content (Josselson & Hammack, 2021). The readings also called for identifying the voices and narratives of the participants as more themes emerged. Readings also looked for patterns and unanimity in the narratives. Readings also identified links between texts and theory. Finally, readings situated the narrative in relation to other narratives collected in the study (Josselson & Hammack, 2021).

### **Trustworthiness**

Leung (2015) noted, "Validity in qualitative research means "appropriateness" of the tools, processes, and data" (p. 325). This study's interview questions were designed to answer the research questions. As stated by Thomas and Magilvy (2011), "To establish credibility, a researcher will review the individual transcripts, looking for similarities within and across study participants" (p. 152). The researcher reviewed each transcript in this study to look for commonalities across the study participants. A way to establish validity is to minimize research bias. This was done by transcribing and coding the interviews to understand the content better.

### **Participants**

The participants listed in Table 1 represent various student levels, ages, and races. Each class level, from freshman to senior, was represented. The participants' ages and races varied. There was not much gender diversity, as four of the participants identified as women and one as a man. This could be because women are more likely to experience food insecurity than men (Patterson et al., 2020).

**Table 1. Individual Interview Participant Profile Table**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Student Level</b>
Wendy	White	23	Senior
Austin	White	18	Freshman
Zainab	Two or More Races	22	Junior
Samia	Black	23	Senior
Maggie	Hispanic/Non-White	19	Sophomore

### **Findings**

Food insecurity meant something different to each participant. For Austin, it meant not knowing where your food would come from. He states, "Food insecurity loosely would most likely be defined as not knowing where your food will come from when you're going to have access to food next." Wendy speaks about the lack of access and affordability. She shares, "Food insecurity is the lack of food within a household or per individual where you can't access it, or you can't afford it." Zainab discusses not knowing where your next meal is coming from. Zainab says, "Food insecurity to me is not necessarily knowing where your next meal is going to come from and not being able to buy and have food regularly." Maggie believes it is being poor and lacking access to food. She says, "It's not being able to properly have food readily available to you. You don't have the money for it. You're basically on the poorer side, and you don't have access to the food that you need." Finally, Samia believes

it is a lack of resources. She observes, "It seems like an individual has a lack of resources and is embarrassed to even talk about how they get their food or where they get their food from."

Securing data on food insecurity among college students resulted in several themes emerging from the data analysis. These include peer relationships, government assistance, the cost of living, access to healthy food, university help, and navigating college.

### **Peer Relationships**

Peer relationships are one of the defining features of the college experience for students and can be considered one of the cornerstones of college. Students who do not find meaningful connections to the university are less likely to persist. However, most participants felt some level of ostracization from their peers due to food insecurity. Austin states about his relationship with peers:



A lot of it is relatability. A lot of people who are not in that type of situation do not really understand how it is not to be able to afford food, not to have the money to be able to just go out and purchase whatever you are craving at any given moment. So, it is hard to relate to other peers.

Students wanted to participate in social activities such as going out to eat or eating in the food court but needed help. When asked to what extent food insecurity impacts her relationship with peers, Wendy states:

When I walk into the food court, there are all the kids hanging out, and they are all at Chick-fil-A, or they are all buying sushi together at Starbucks. I cannot participate in that because I do not have the money to go out and enjoy brunch or lunch with friends. I do not have the luxury to go and buy something out of nowhere.

There is a level of shame felt when it comes to hanging out with peers. No one wants to feel embarrassed around their peers. This is especially true for students who are developing into adults. One wrong move could mean permanent ostracization from the group. While most students can afford the occasional meal out or from the food court, students with food insecurity are less likely to be in this position. This can cause a tremendous internal struggle, as Zainab states. She says,

“It can be embarrassing to say no to doing things with them around eating or going out because you cannot afford it.” Maggie is not as embarrassed but still careful when she goes to eat. She says:

It's kind of hard for me. It just makes it a little harder to want to go out to eat with friends. So we have to find a cheaper place, or I can't go out with you as often or I'll hang out with you after you eat. I have to eat first. I can't share as much as I wish I could.

Samia says that the thought of not having money to eat is embarrassing:

I feel like it affects peer (relationships) a lot. If you're going beyond just being in a classroom, going out to lunch, and stuff, some of us not may have the money to afford it. I would feel embarrassed if that was the case. Or even just saying I don't want to go out because of personal reasons. Having that weighing on your mind and also on your bank account is hard.

### **Government Assistance**

Unprompted, four participants mentioned the struggle to get government assistance to offset their food insecurity. To be eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps), there are two requirements, and a college

student must meet one. First, they must be eligible to participate in state or federally-financed work-study during the regular school year. The second is that they must have an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of \$0 in the current academic year, determined by Part F of Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. This is in addition to the standard requirements that a person must meet to be eligible. When discussing food stamps, Samia stated, "The snap process is very long. I know a few people who have been denied when they should rightfully get it. I do not think they work well with students, which is unfair."

There is a 20-hour-a-week work requirement to get SNAP. That limits a student's time on school-related things such as class or studying. The SNAP application process also deters students from using the benefits. Austin says, "I have been trying to apply for food stamps and all that; it is an insane process if you are not aware, so that is extremely hard." Having someone at the university level who can offer assistance might help students who need it. Zainab shares a similar stance. She states, "Imagine all the college students with food stamps. Having someone to navigate the benefits process for them would be helpful."

Wendy has found the requirements to be detrimental. She says:

I used to receive EBT (SNAP). But their standards for college students are ridiculous. If you are a full-time college student, you have to have a mandatory amount of work hours to even receive food stamps because loans are a sort of income.

Students with food insecurity are caught in a lose-lose situation regarding SNAP benefits. If they work too many hours, they might need more time to take classes or study for their enrolled courses. They might also have to let go of extra-curricular activities to work. If they do not work enough hours, they might not be eligible for food stamps.

### **Cost of Living**

With the rising cost of living across the country, as well as the rising cost of higher education, college students need help to make ends meet. The participants who lived off campus described the cost of rent as a barrier to having access to more food. Zainab says, "More than 50% of my income goes to my rent. Rent plus bills. Oftentimes, there is no money left." The cost of living is preventing students from buying food. This is a recipe for disaster for our students. Having to choose between a place to stay and food, students will choose a place to stay. As Wendy explains:

As inflation is going up, the prices for rent are increasing. If you are not able

to afford your rent, then where are you supposed to live? So, a lot of people are sacrificing food to pay bills because they think they can wait it out. Not starving, but we could survive on so much. And we basically take our food and organize it in a way where we can survive off it while giving out all our money to pay toward rent so we have a place to live. Because if we did not have that place to live, we would have nowhere to go because we would be fined by the cities or the local counties for being homeless because that is not legal. We are not allowed to live in our car. So, we have no choice but to sacrifice all just toward rent.

The cost of living in most cities is beyond what college students can make working part-time or relying on loans. Samia confirms this finding. She states:

When I first moved here during COVID, my rent was only 550 because I had three other roommates. But this year, because of inflation, everything is going up. I have to pay \$600. And then utilities are adding more to it. Now that I have different roommates, they have different lifestyles. They all have mini fridges in their room, and I don't, but I'm still

here paying a quarter of the responsibility. And even when the rent went up, my dad was looking online in our neighborhood and around. He said that our house was still the cheapest on the market.

### **Access to healthy food**

Living close to campus is not an option for some students as the cost of housing is higher. Couple that with living in an urban city where rent is naturally higher than in rural areas, and students might need help to afford a place to live. However, students living in more rural areas might need more access to food options. Wendy is such a student, as she recalls:

Living off campus lessens my resources or my availability to those resources because I'm not close by, but it's all I can afford. If I live on campus, it will take an even bigger toll on me because it is even more expensive to live near the school, which is sad, but it is true. I have to go as far as I can, with what I can afford, and with all the resources I do have to make it through.

Wendy later states:

It really hit me hard because I get access to the food pantry, but there are only certain things I could eat. Because I don't have access to a

refrigerator. I don't have access to an oven or microwave, or stove. So, everything I would have to pick and choose. Let's say they had chicken or green beans; how am I supposed to eat that if I can't cook it, so I'd end up eating it raw.

With the rising food costs, the amount and quality of food students can afford is dwindling. Even with a meal plan, the on-campus options cost more than the off-campus ones. Samia says:

The Chick-fil-A, down (the road), could be a certain price. But if you're paying at the university, it is probably a little bit more because you're not using a swipe or dining dollar. And I think that is the hardest part because, you're getting food, but you have to pay a lot for it. And it shouldn't really be (expensive). It's kind of like dining out. Who has money, and who doesn't? And it kind of sucks because the idea of a dining plan is good, but for how long? Can it really last you because sometimes, it doesn't last your whole semester. It lasts you about two months.

Zainab relies on other food banks to help her access healthy food. She states, "I know where the food banks are. I buy low-cost meals or food prep. I buy stuff that I can keep."

### **Institutional Help**

Institutions should see intervening in food insecurity as an obligation to help at-risk students. Students are at risk for various academic and environmental issues. Food insecurity can be counted among the environmental factors.

All five students believe that there is more that universities can do to help students with food insecurity. Their ideas include more advertisements, expanded hours, and dedicated social workers working with students facing food insecurity. On the advertisements, Austin states, "Having it more viewable and accessible on websites. Especially with where it is located. Having some more signs or something to say where it is located because it is very hard to find if you are not specifically looking for it."

On the other hand, Zainab would like to see more flexible hours. She mentions, "the hours are weird. I can't go very often because I have to work in the daytime, or you have class or something like that."

Social workers would be a big help to college students. On social workers, Wendy observed:

It (a program at a community college) worked directly with unaccompanied youth or people who just got out of foster care. The kids that just got out of high school and they need help transitioning into college because

they don't have the support that other people do, such as a family background, a financial background, nothing to help stabilize them to help get them into college. And I was completely dependent on that. Every day, I sought guidance from them; they helped me find a house, they helped me find food, they put clothes on my back. As soon as I transferred, they had none of that.

Samira would like the food pantry to expand its options to include items such as frozen meats and toiletries to match some off-campus food banks. She adds, "I know I can get deodorant and lotion from my local food bank compared to the campus pantry. Luckily, the food bank here (off-campus) does serve frozen meats and other cold food that the campus pantry cannot have."

### **Navigating College**

Navigating college can be difficult for some students. However, adding the layer of food insecurity can become daunting. When asked what the most difficult part of navigating college is, being food insecure, all the participants had unique answers.

Zainab must choose where her money is going:

I think it's just really difficult to figure out what money you should allocate. Where? Can I buy a textbook? Or can

I pay for dinner? Can I go to class? Or do I have to go to work? Because I need to pay for food. I need those hours to pay for stuff like that.

Maggie must spend her time cooking at home. She says, "I have to think ahead of time, and I have to cook. I am actually able to have an oven here, so I can cook. And that takes more time."

Austin has trouble balancing his time: Really, I would say being able to balance time, being able to do classes, being able to work to get money, like I have been talking about, and being able to have time to get to like grocery stores or order groceries before shops close and everything. That is like a whole juggling act.

Samia would like to have an affordable meal on campus:

Having the pantry is nice, but also wanting to have a good sturdy meal on campus is hard because everything is a swipe or a dining dollar and it's upcharge from the normal price of what the food should be if it was off campus.

To navigate college, Wendy has turned to extreme measures. Wendy states: It really hit me hard because I would get access to the food pantry, but there are only certain things I could eat because I don't have access to a

refrigerator. I don't have access to an oven, a microwave, or a stove. Let's say they had chicken, or they even had green beans. How am I supposed to eat that if I can't cook it? So I ended up eating it raw. So it was pretty savage, but I didn't have a choice. That's something that I really struggled with. Even when I took out loans and was able to afford food, I could only buy what I had access to. So it was like dried goods or canned goods, which, in the long run, they're really not that good for your health, but I just had to survive. So that's what I was mainly dependent on.

Food insecurity impacts students in various ways. It affects the student's ability to progress through college and might keep them from being retained by the university and thus failing to graduate.

### **Discussion**

This qualitative study focused on food security's impact on students' college-going experience at urban campuses. Six major themes emerged. One theme that emerged is food insecurity's effect on peer relationships. Participants felt ostracized. If students feel like they do not belong, the chance that the university will not retain them is higher (Tinto, 1975). Loneliness is a reason students do not persist at universities. As the college-

going population shrinks due to declining birth rates, the ability of colleges and universities to retain their students is invaluable.

A second theme is the need for government assistance. Participants feel that with the government's help, they will not be food insecure. However, since most college students do not qualify for government aid, more help will always be needed. Students are also struggling without government aid. Students often do not qualify for SNAP benefits, and none of the students in the study qualified. If research shows that the prevalence of food insecurity is much higher in college students than in the general population, the government has a responsibility to step up and help. Doing so will make it easier for students to focus on the other parts of being a college student. This plays into retention and college graduation. Students focusing on other parts of their college education will be more successful.

A third theme that emerged is that the cost of living impacts food insecurity. Students must choose between rent and food. The cost of living in urban areas is typically higher than the cost of living in rural areas. The cost of rent is often too much for students to afford while trying to maintain a healthy diet. If students are to choose between a place to stay and a meal, they are often choosing the housing.

The fourth theme that emerged is access to healthy food. Students described how the lack of access to healthy food negatively affected them. Given that the cost of food is rising, the little funds students have are not stretching far enough. Students often turn to fast-food restaurants and other potentially unhealthy meals for nutritional needs.

A fifth theme is the need for more help from universities. While universities are creating food banks, other things should happen, such as funding social workers or similar positions to help students who face food insecurity. If food insecurity is linked to academic performance, it is in the best interest of universities to do more. Schools are measured on retention and graduation rates. Helping students who are food insecure is a sure way to help retention and graduation rates.

The sixth theme is the difficulty of navigating the college process. Students must dedicate time to finding food, which can impact their ability to manage time. The time finding food could be used to study, make friends, or take part in an extracurricular activity. Students navigating food insecurity must decide between food and other necessities, such as books, for navigating college. They also have to decide between attending class and working to afford food.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

The following are recommendations to help urban students who deal with food insecurity. Initially, institutions can increase the advertisement of food pantries. This should be done to make it visible and easy to find. One suggestion is to place it under student resources on the school's website. Another is to include it on campus maps. Another recommendation is to add toiletries and similar items to off-campus food banks. Giving students the ability to get items such as deodorant will help alleviate the pressure of choosing between food and other products, and lastly, create positions similar to social workers who work specifically with students who are facing issues such as food insecurity.

This data set is helpful for student affairs personnel who run on-campus pantries. They can use this information to help stock the pantry. They are using their time effectively by focusing on what college students need. They can place items that will help students better, such as toiletries. They can also work with other departments, such as housing and student activities, to advertise the food pantry. Pantry staff can also work with admissions so that the food pantry is a stop on student tours.

At the bare minimum, all student affairs personnel should be aware of the food insecurity on our campuses. Wilcox et al. (2022) found that roughly 15.5% of college

employees surveyed believed food insecurity was not a problem. Student affairs personnel know students' pitfalls, but food insecurity is overlooked. Academic advisors can send all their students information about the food pantry, not to single out any students. All faculty and staff should be aware of where the food pantry is so they can direct students to it if needed. If they want to be an advocate for change, they should visit the food pantry to familiarize themselves with the typical offerings the food pantry has.

Findings shared some themes with other studies, but the majority differed (Henry, 2017; Meza, 2019; Beam, 2020). This study found that students had difficulty developing relationships with peers. By producing different themes, this study adds to the small but growing body of literature on food insecurity on college campuses. It specifically adds to the literature of urban college students.

### **Future Research**

This study intended to highlight the unique needs of urban college students. This means the findings may not apply to students on suburban or rural campuses. Another limitation is that the participants were students already using the on-campus food pantry. This leaves out the experience of students who are food insecure but do not access the food pantry. It also does not explicitly address the needs of one population, such as minority students or students who are mothers.

This study highlighted the experiences of urban college students facing food insecurity. It established that urban college students face unique challenges that impact their ability to be successful in college. Several themes emerged that show the need for more support for students facing food insecurity. Unfortunately, more research needs to be dedicated to this topic. If students are going to thrive in college, they need access to healthy food options, to say the least.



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