

# Breaking Barriers: Unpacking Student Food Insecurity

WELCOME



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

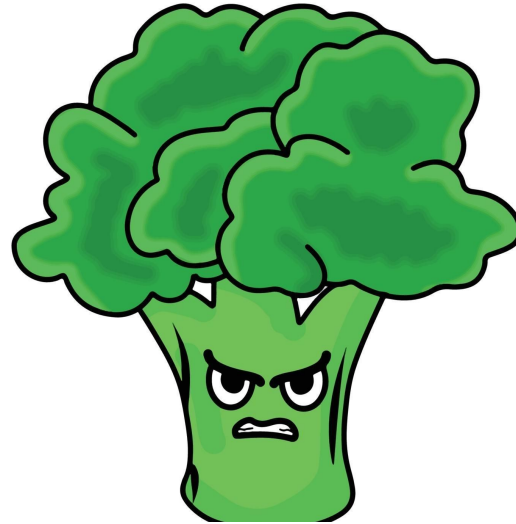


# Breaking Barriers: Goals



- Feed the people!
- Help students fit themselves into a new, revised definition of food insecurity, to increase uptake of on-campus food resources.
- Discuss the intricate relationship between hunger and student experience.
- Identify and discuss the social and systemic factors that directly and indirectly impact student food security at the University of Lethbridge.

# Food Insecurity: what is it?



**"I'm always the last one left on the plate!"**



**I LOOK LIKE A TREE**



**I LOOK LIKE AN UMBRELLA**



**I LOOK LIKE A HUMAN BRAIN**



**LET'S CHANGE THE SUBJECT**

# Definition:

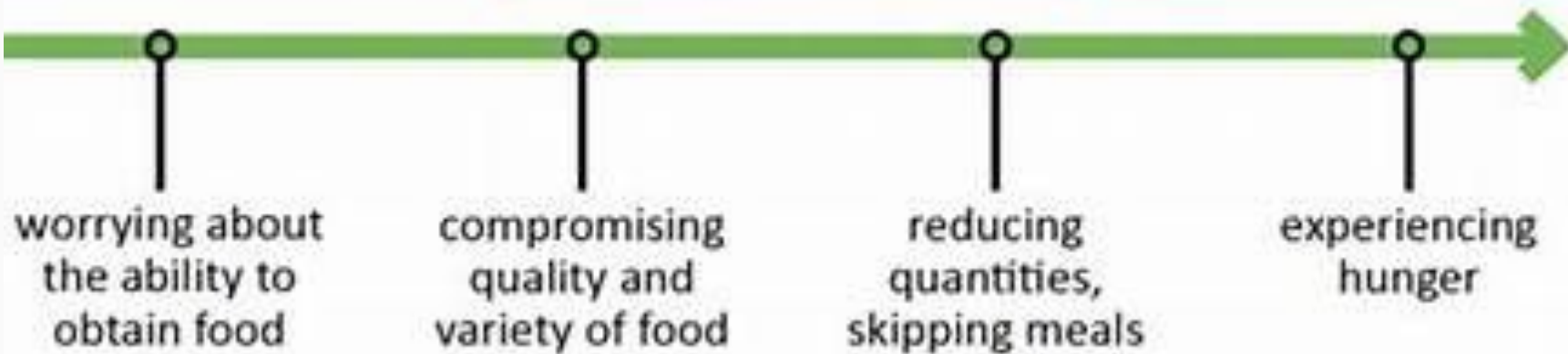
The “inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet of **quality or sufficient quantity** of food in **socially acceptable ways**, or the **uncertainty** that one will be able to do so. Household food insecurity is often linked with the household's **financial ability** to access adequate food”  
(Government of Canada, 2020).

# WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?

MILD FOOD INSECURITY

MODERATE FOOD INSECURITY

SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY



35-40%

The “Silent Epidemic”

(Olauson et al, 2017)

(Silverthorn, 2016)

(Entz et al, 2017)

# Activity 1: Identifying our own Food Insecurity

Discuss:

- What is your own experience with food and hunger while being a student?
- Have you ever struggled to fit in meals in between studying or classes?
- How much does access to food inhibit your eating habits? (e.g. cost of groceries, food options on campus, etc.,)
- Where does eating enough meals, as well as nutritious meals, fall on your priority list in terms of budgeting?
- Can any of your own experiences maybe explain the disproportionate rates of food insecurity among University students as a whole?



# Student Priorities

Research shows that  
post-secondary students will use  
their income/funds for housing first,  
THEN tuition, and THEN whatever is  
leftover is allocated to food.  
(Brenda et al, 2023).

Food insecurity is not an  
**INDIVIDUAL PROBLEM**, It's a  
**SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE**

# Harms of the “**Hungry Student**” Narrative and the **Stigmatization** of Food Insecure People

(Power et al, 2021)

**MOST COMMON REASON FOOD INSECURE  
STUDENTS DO NOT ACCESS FREE FOOD RESOURCES  
ON CAMPUS:**

**1. Social Stigma**

Can you think of the other reasons why food insecure students may avoid these resources?

(El Zein et al, 2018)

# MOST COMMON REASON **FOOD INSECURE** STUDENTS DO NOT ACCESS **FREE FOOD RESOURCES** ON CAMPUS:

## 1. **Social Stigma**

Can you think of the other reasons why food insecure students may avoid these resources?

## 2. **Lack of information**

# **MOST COMMON REASON FOOD INSECURE STUDENTS DO NOT ACCESS FREE FOOD RESOURCES ON CAMPUS:**

## **1. Social Stigma**

Can you think of the other reasons why food insecure students may avoid these resources?

- 2. Lack of information**
- 3. Self-identity**

(El Zein et al, 2018)

# **MOST COMMON REASON FOOD INSECURE STUDENTS DO NOT ACCESS FREE FOOD RESOURCES ON CAMPUS:**

## **1. Social Stigma**

Can you think of the other reasons why food insecure students may avoid these resources?

- 2. Lack of information**
- 3. Self-identity**
- 4. Time constraints**

(El Zein et al, 2018)

# SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (SDOH)

“The study of the range of social factors that influence the health status of individuals or populations” (Strohschein & Weitz, 2021)

Social factors can include: income, employment status, education, race, sex, gender, age, and **food security**



# FOOD INSECURITY AS A SDOH

## **Food insecurity has been linked to:**

- Worse mental health, depression
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Hyperlipidemia (high fat in blood)
- Lower physician-reported health
- Lower self-reported health
- Oral problems

(Gunderson et al, 2017)

## **Furthermore, Students who are food insecure:**

- Have lower Grade point average (GPA)
- More likely to fail, or withdraw from a course
- More likely to fail, or withdraw from a program
- Troubles focusing in class or exams due to hunger
- Poor psychosocial health
- Poor overall health (self-reported)

(Raskind et al, 2019) (Farahbakhsh et al, 2017)

# A chat with a nutritionist (Marc Bomhof, PHD, RD)

I asked:

**“What would you consider to be the greatest reason(s) to explain the extreme rates of food insecurity on our campus”**

His answer:

**“Money and time”**

## Domestic Students

Annual total	\$7,615.32
--------------	------------

Books and supplies	\$1,250 per year (\$125 per course)
--------------------	--

Cost of living (off-campus)	\$1,450 per month, based on shared accommodation
-----------------------------	--

## International Student:

Annual Total	\$22,183
--------------	----------

Books and supplies	\$2,500 per year (\$1,250 per term)
--------------------	--

Cost of living (off-campus)	\$1,450 per month, based on shared accommodation. Includes food, utilities, internet etc.
-----------------------------	--

Canada · PRICED OUT

## Rising tuition, student debt weigh heavily on post-secondary students

'It's so hard to get out of university and just start your life with so much debt already,' says undergrad

[Danielle Piper, Jessica Wong](#) · CBC News · Posted: Mar 14, 2022 2:00 AM MDT | Last Updated: March 14, 2022

# Statistics Canada says...

Between April 2021 and April 2022

- Canadian CPI increased by 6.8%
- Canadians payed 9.7% more for food purchases

Alberta post secondary students pay the **Highest compulsory fees in the country**

- Undergraduates students: 1287\$ (23.8% above the national average)
- Graduate students: 1170\$ (16.9% higher than the national average)

Geography	Level of study	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023	2023 / 2024
Alberta ( <a href="#">map</a> )	Canadian undergraduate	5,692	6,111	6,582	7,203	7,586
	Canadian graduate	6,749	6,673	6,764	7,515	7,879
	International undergraduate	21,884	27,188	27,714	29,507	31,549
	International graduate	11,295	14,851	15,146	16,909	18,018
Canada ( <a href="#">map</a> )	Canadian undergraduate	6,468	6,580	6,660	6,872	7,076
	Canadian graduate	7,186	7,361	7,315	7,409	7,573
	International undergraduate	29,883	32,039	33,446	35,836	38,081
	International graduate	17,934	19,429	20,246	21,155	22,061

# Students most at risk for food insecurity:

- International students have 2 time the risk compared to domestic students
  - Higher tuition fees
  - Work limits
  - Class-load requirements
  - Access to cultural foods
- Graduate students have 1.2x the risk
- Students who are parents or caregivers have 1.7x the risk

(Hanbazaza et al, 2021)  
(Olauson et al, 2017)

# Other Students at High Risk for food insecurity.

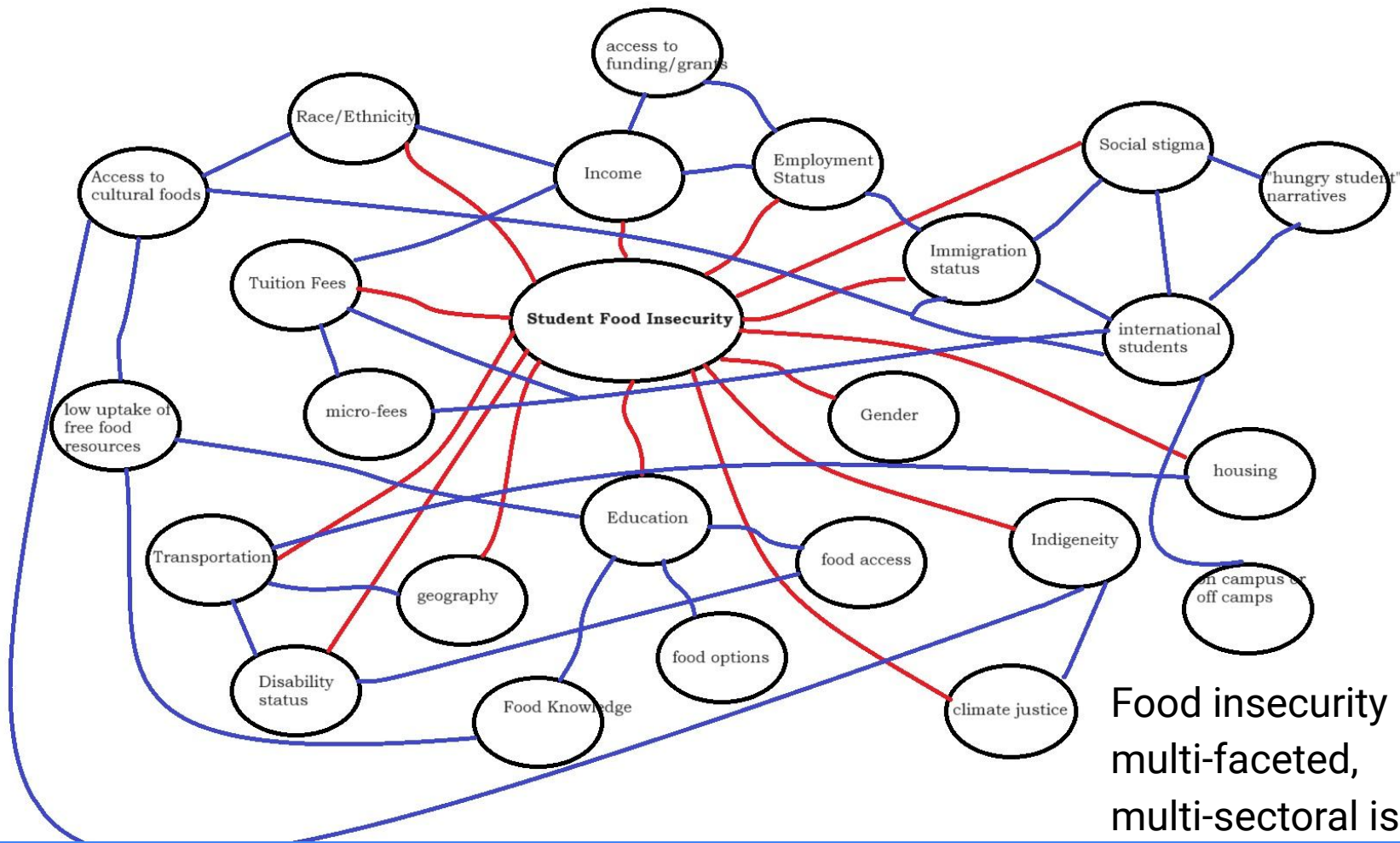
## Students who:

- Rely on loans, government assistance, financial aid (Blundell et al, 2019)
- Come from low-income families (Wang et al, 2023)
  - High-income families as a protective factors for young adults
  - Each additional 5,000\$ of annual income has an adjusted, improved rate of food security
- Students of colour (Riddle et al, 2020)
- Experience adverse life events (trauma) (Raskind et al, 2019)
  - Increases with each event experienced

# Mind mapping student food insecurity

## Activity 2

- Write “Food Insecurity” in the middle portion of your poster
- With your table, discuss what social determinants, correlates, and/or systemic barriers that impact student food insecurity (write these on your sticky notes)
- These can be as general, or as specific as you like
- Begin connecting your sticky notes with lines to form a spider web
- Pick a few of your favourites, and send a representative up from your table to place your sticky notes on our community mind map!



Food insecurity is a multi-faceted, multi-sectoral issue.

Register  
for next  
week and  
get  
ANOTHER  
free meal!

Workshop #2

**AWARENESS TO ACTION:  
BUILDING A HUNGER  
FREE CAMPUS**

Free Meal

November 29th 12-1pm  
Science Atrium



Explore practical solutions across multiple levels, from individual steps to broader systemic changes. Together, let's empower change and create a hunger free campus for all.



Register on the MyExperience website by 9pm on November 26th.

OR EMAIL [jason.funkhouser@uleth.ca](mailto:jason.funkhouser@uleth.ca)



# FOOD RESOURCES ON OUR CAMPUS

- Lethbridge Foodbank on campus handing out fresh produce November 22 and December 5 at 1pm outside of first choice savings centre.
- LPIRG's fresh food boxes December 7 and 16. Sign up through LPIRG or watch for call on social media.
- Food literacy workshops: Nov 29 at noon
- 6 free food pantries around campus
- Emergency food cards from ULSU
- Free sandwich program through Ikaisskini Student Services

Check out our website for recipes and resource:

<https://www.ulethbridge.ca/food-for-thought>



## Little Library Food Pantries

The little library food pantries are pantries around campus stocked weekly with food for students. This food is free and meant for all students so you are welcome to take what you need from them!



### Fresh Food Boxes

LPIRG has teamed up with Food for Thought to provide ULeth students with fresh food! Scan QR code to register for a fresh food box.

Also watch for the produce cart on campus handing out free food!

Register Between	Pickup in SU Galileo's Lounge 12PM-3PM	Produce Cart
September 9-16	September 23	September 14
October 13-21	October 28	October 12
November 10-18	November 25	November 9
December 2-9	December 16	December 7

Fresh Food Boxes are free but if you'd like to make a donation please consider:  
1 person box - \$10  
2 person box - \$25  
4-5 person box - \$40



Scan this QR code to sign up for a box. For more information visit: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/food-for-thought> and [www.lpirg.org](http://www.lpirg.org)

- Blundell, Lisa, M.P.H., R.D., Mathews, M., Ph.D., Bowley, Claire, M.P.H., R.D., & Roebathan, Barbara, Ph.D., R.D. (2019). Determining Student Food Insecurity at Memorial University of Newfoundland. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, 80(1), 14-21. <https://doi.org/10.3148/cjdpr-2018-026>
- Brenda A. Z. Abu, Samantha Tavaréz & Wilna Oldewage-Theron (2023) University Students Suggest Solutions to Campus Food Insecurity: A Mixed Methods Study, *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 18:1, 96-111, DOI: 10.1080/19320248.2022.2055437
- Government of Canada. (2020, February 18), *Household food insecurity in Canada: Overview*. Retrieved November 8, 2023 from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/food-nutrition-surveillance/health-nutrition-surveys/canadian-community-health-survey-cchs/household-food-insecurity-canada-overview.html>
- El Zein, A., Mathews, A. E., House, L., & Shelnutt, K. P. (2018). Why Are Hungry College Students Not Seeking Help? Predictors of and Barriers to Using an On-Campus Food Pantry. *Nutrients*, 10(9), 1163. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu10091163>
- Entz, Slater, & Desmarais (2017). Student food insecurity at the University of Manitoba. *Canadian Food Studies*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 139–159 DOI: 10.15353/cfs-rcea.v4i1.204
- Farahbakhsh, J., Hanbazaza, M., Ball, G.D.C., Farmer, A.P., Maximova, K. and Willows, N.D. (2017), Food insecure student clients of a university-based food bank have compromised health, dietary intake and academic quality. *Nutr Diet*, 74: 67-73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1747-0080.12307>
- Gundersen, C., & Ziliak, J. P. (2015). Food Insecurity And Health Outcomes. *Health Affairs*, 34(11), 1830-1839. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2015.0645>

- Hanbazaza, M., Kebbe, M., Perez, A., Ball, G., Farmer, A. P., Maximova, K., & Willows, N. D. (2021). Food Insecurity Among International Post-Secondary Students Studying on a Canadian Campus: A Qualitative Description Study. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 51(2), 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.vi0.188977>
- Olauson, C., Engler-Stringer, R., Vatanparast, H., & Hanoski, R. (2018). Student food insecurity: Examining barriers to higher education at the University of Saskatchewan, *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 13:1, 19-27, DOI: [10.1080/19320248.2017.1393365](https://doi.org/10.1080/19320248.2017.1393365)
- Power, E., Dietrich, J., Walter, Z., & Belyea, S. (2021). “I don’t want to say I’m broke”: Student experiences of food insecurity at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. *Canadian Food Studies / La Revue Canadienne Des Études Sur l’alimentation*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.15353/cfs-rcea.v8i1.423>
- Silverthorn, D. (2016). Hungry for knowledge: Assessing the prevalence of student food insecurity on five Canadian campuses. Toronto: Meal Exchange. Retrieved from: <http://mealexchange.com>
- Strohschein, L., & Weitz, R. (2021). *The sociology of health, illness, & health care in Canada: a critical approach*. Cengage Learning Inc. Press.
- Raskind, I. G., Haardörfer, R., & Berg, C. J. (2019). Food insecurity, psychosocial health and academic performance among college and university students in Georgia, USA. *Public health nutrition*, 22(3), 476–485. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980018003439>
- Wang, Y., St-Germain, A.-A. F., & Tarasuk, V. (2023). Prevalence and sociodemographic correlates of food insecurity among post-secondary students and non-students of similar age in Canada. *BMC Public Health*, 23(1), NA. c