Presentation Objectives

• Participants will be able to outline the action steps to planning and implementing one kind of campus food pantry and garden.
• Participants will be able to discuss ways to partner with community groups for campus food security.

Why address college student hunger?

• It’s a major issue affecting student retention and academic success
• National research:
  • CCCSE
  • Sara Goldrick-Rab and associates from Wisconsin Hope Lab
  • Dubick, Mathews, Cady (2016)
• Local situation at Pellissippi State Community College in Knoxville, TN

Canned/packaged foods & fresh produce

• Utilizes online application and monthly food order form
• Provides student/household with food for 1X healthy meal daily for 2 weeks at a time
• Offers personal care items/accepts special requests within reason
• Delivers food to campus or student location/each order packed up
• Confidently filled by students/half-organic produce available
• Emphasizes healthy eating
  • Organic produce from campus garden
• Stronger campus-based on student produces not sold as calories
• In partnership with volunteers, donors, partners, total college support

The Online Pantry/Garden:

One Way to Fight College Student Hunger

Annie Gray, PhD

What does our pantry do?

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Packaged & canned goods, produce, partnerships, personal care items

What does our garden do?
• Provides 11 months of organically grown produce to our Pantry
• Provides ways to integrate academic courses and individuals
  • Volunteer hours and healthy outdoor recreation
  • General education and research projects
• Provides ways for staff, students, community partners to join together for a common good
• Educates about sustainable gardening practices/eating locally and healthily

Education, volunteers, community

Key questions you should explore first
• What is the need?
• Who will organize/ run pantry?
• What will be your start-up funding? How will you keep it going financially?
• Who will you serve? (students/staff/families?)
• What kind of space is available? What kind of access? What kind of storage?
• If you are a not a non-profit, can you find a fiscal non-profit sponsor?
• How often will you distribute and how? Shopping style, pre-packed?
• What are risk management concerns? Food safety training?
• What about outreach to let people know about your pantry? Press inquiries?
• How will you recruit and train volunteers?
• Who will your community partners be?
• What kinds of foods? Nonperishable? Frozen? Fresh?
• What is your sustainability plan?

Online Pantry/Garden Action Steps
• Call to action from President or Chancellor
• Fund/equip key point person
• Form an Advisory Board/Steering Committee
• Join the College & University Food Bank Alliance (CUFBA)
• Identify the need, gather initial data for pilot
• Secure your strategic partners
• Locate physical space for base of operations
• Key online resources: crowdfunding sites or create online forms (payment & backups)
• Strategize for sustainability: community partners support (external)
• Strategize for sustainability: whole-college buy-in (internal)
• Key college divisions: staff, student leaders, faculty leaders, alumni, Foundation
• Evaluate regularly

Call to action from President or Chancellor
• A key decision maker, preferably the President or Chancellor, needs to take the lead by empowering a campus leader and a cross-functional work team to take action.
• Grants and Foundation units: locate funding opportunities to jumpstart the operation
• An endowment: the most sustainable way to fund these kinds of projects for the long-term.
Fund/equip key point person

- Someone who knows the system
- Tenured faculty leader with release time
- Staff leader with time release for project development
- Service Learning Director, Student Life Director (someone with access to students)?
- Systems perspective: dialogue/negotiation skills a must
- Provide an initial operating budget

Form an Advisory Board/Steering Committee

- Key for working out particulars:
  - A first step—RISK MANAGEMENT
  - Bill Emerson Food Donation Act/Good Samaritan Act
  - Application and release forms: signing for each delivery
  - Confidential: how orders are placed up and why
  - Food safety training
  - Dignity considerations
  - Data collection
  - Fraud prevention
  - Future makes it happen: responsibilities of operation

Join the College & University Food Bank Alliance/CUFBA

- CUFBA: “a professional organization consisting of campus-based programs focused on alleviating food insecurity, hunger and poverty among college and university students in the United States. Our vision is to alleviate the barriers and challenges associated with food insecurity and hunger so that college and university students can remain in school and ultimately, earn their degree. We are dedicated to our mission of providing support, training and resources to campus-based food banks and pantries that primarily serve students.”

  (CUFBA Food Pantry Toolkit, September, 2015, p. 5)

Identify the need/gather initial data

- Is there anecdotal evidence of need? Pin down some particulars.
- Ask financial aid, counseling, advising, tutoring services, etc.
- Is an initial student survey feasible?

  - Our method:
    - Financial aid profiles for baseline info
    - Pell eligibility? Remember the gap.
    - Students who would receive free or reduced lunch
    - Break down into independent/dependent students by income & # in household
    - Test the pantry service with pilot group before opening up to everyone

Assess pre-existing resources

- Gardening space on campus? Develop or repurpose pre-existing garden
- Foundation accounts for fundraising for special projects?
- People who want to make a difference?
- Financial aid, counseling, library, alumni group, student clubs, professors with course goals that can tie in to project (sociology, biology, nutrition, environmental science, marketing, cultural studies, etc.), community groups, alumni, etc.
- Underused rooms/closets for base of operations?
- Discarded shelving in facilities storage? Refrigerator?
- Cafeteria food service partnerships?

Locate physical space for base of operations

- Student unions, dorms, unused kitchens or rooms, administrative office spaces
- Operating style determines space requirements:
  - Shopping style
    - Per-packet model
    - We stock for both, with the “shopping” part online
  - Hours of operation
  - Necessary equipment: shelves, cabinets, collection bins, dolly, refrigerator/freezer
Collaborate with tech staff for online ordering

- We created a one-stop-shopping portal for anyone wanting service:
  - People email pantry@pstcc.edu to get a first-time application, which is filled out online via a dynamic forms process, which creates a report for Pantry Manager.
  - Returned applications trigger a monthly food order form to be sent with directions for pantry use.
- We have paper back-ups for counselors and other key people.
- Forms are simple and do not require income verification.

Strategize for sustainability:

- For PANTRY
  - AmeriCorps VISTA grant from the Corporation for National & Community Service
  - Our VISTA conducted the pilot, ordered the system, and runs and runs the site.
  - Regional food bank
    - Second Harvest Food Bank of East TN, a Feeding America subsidiary, for warehouse-priced food, Member Agency and food safety training, programming support, storage planning, volunteer orientation & tips
  - Local banks, grocery stores, bus drivers, townies, etc. (e.g., POST ALUMNI, AlCOA)
  - Major funding partners: Work with your Foundation to find them.

- For GARDEN
  - Another, large community garden program in the inner city (for additional produce)
  - Extension Service’s Master Gardener Intern training program (knowledgeable community volunteers)
  - Major funding partners. Work with your Foundation to find them: greenhouse, education pavilion
  - Involve faculty, staff, and students of all ages, especially those in engineering and even world cultures to build awareness.

Strategize for sustainability:

- Four broad groups of support are needed:
  - Key Administrative/Staff Leaders:
    - Chancellor’s or President’s Office
    - Foundation, Alumni Group, Grants Director
    - Student Affairs Director
    - Directors of Financial Aid, Counseling, Academic Tutoring, Advising, Veterans Services, etc.
  - Key Faculty Leaders: Social Work, Sociology, Psychology, Education, Service-Learning, etc.
  - Key Other Staff: Dining Services, Campus Health Center, etc.
  - Key Student Leaders: Student government, student organizations, Greek Life, etc.

Goal: This is everyone’s project

- Integrated presence of pantry/garden leads to
  - Unit-sponsored food drives which reduce the amount of $ to spend on warehouse food
  - Faculty/staff “Friends of the Pantry” who regularly donate certain items
  - Student projects/research focusing on food insecurity awareness and volunteering, nutrition education, etc.
  - Foundation scholarships for homelessness, related poverty alleviation needs
  - An eventual behavioral shift from charity-giving to activist and advocacy-based thinking about hunger, etc. in academic research.

Evaluate regularly

- Survey participants each semester in ways that help them see you value their input on
  - Quality of service
  - Preferences for the next year’s seasonal crops
  - Pantry services’ impacts on student retention/program completion
  - Ideas for improvement
  - Recipes and requests for specific types of nutrition education

Initial lessons learned

- Have your eyes on long-term sustainability, involve everyone possible in meaningful ways.
- Gathering accurate data is challenging. Improve consistency.
- Be flexible and responsive but keep track.
- Additional needs—such as housing, transportation, and mental health support—will arise for your participants.
- Regional food bank partnerships lead to a more stable inventory and process.
- Use cultural sensitivity
- Maintaining personal connections with participants, volunteers, and donors is essential.
References

1) Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2017). Making ends meet: The role of community colleges in student financial health. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, College of Education, Department of Educational Administration, Program in Higher Education Leadership.


Thank you.

Annie Gray, PhD
Pellissippi State Community College
Knoxville, TN

Save the Date!

Promoting Healthy Weight 2.0

The University of Tennessee Knoxville

Friday, September 29, 2017
12:30pm – 5:00pm EDST (onsite)
12:45pm – 5:00pm EDST (webcast)

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