

Title: Meeting the Needs of College Students: Knowledge and Nourishment

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Abstract

College students are a population that may struggle with food insecurity during their higher education journey. To combat this, campus food pantries have become a common intervention to support students, but there may be more that can be done. The purpose of this study was to explore avenues to provide nutrition education and/or food access in the form of frozen meals through the Cobber Food Pantry, with the goal of best meeting students' nutritional needs. Participation was open to all Concordia College students of any major, degree level, and credit load. The final sample included 82 students (66%, n = 47 females; 93%, n = 66 white or Caucasian; 45%, n = 32 on-campus residents). All students were sent an online survey that measured their perceptions and assessed their general nutrition and food safety knowledge. Perceptions were measured on a self-rated scale, and knowledge was assessed through either 13 nutrition or 15 food safety questions. Results revealed that while participants perceived a high degree of knowledge, their actual general knowledge of nutrition and food safety was limited, regardless of whether students had completed prior nutrition education. Ultimately, 46% (n = 37) of students desired nutrition education and 57% (n = 41) desired access to frozen meals. In support of the outstanding literature, general nutrition education should be the primary intervention to meet Concordia College students' nutrition and food safety knowledge deficit.