Project Title:
Titans Feeding Titans Food Pantry

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Abstract
The objective of the Titans Feeding Titans food pantry is to help address the food insecurity that many of our undergraduate students and graduate students are experiencing. Food insecurity is defined as not knowing where a next meal will come from, or how to get it. The College and University Food Bank Alliance (CUFBA) has reported that food insecurity is rapidly becoming a major barrier for students on university campuses. This issue can pose a threat not only to overall student success, but also to student retention and degree completion. In a survey conducted on the IU South Bend campus, 71 % of respondents stated a food pantry would be beneficial. These same respondents also stated that they felt addressing food insecurity on campus would relieve student stress. Titans Feeding Titans will address a student’s physical and emotional needs.

Narrative
“Campuses across the country are starting to realize that there is a sector of people who don’t know where their next meal is coming from.” Said Nate Smith-Tyge, Director of the Michigan State University Student Food Bank. “It’s not only a moral issue but also a curricular and academic issue.”- The Washington Post

A recent research study conducted in 2016 consisting of 3765 students across 12 states found that:
Consistent with prior studies, 48 percent of respondents reported food insecurity in the previous 30 days, including 22 percent with very low levels of food security that qualify them as hungry.

Food insecurity was more prevalent among students of color. Fully 57 percent of Black or African American students reported food insecurity, compared to 40 percent of non-Hispanic white students.

More than half of all first-generation students (56 percent) were food insecure, compared 56 percent of food insecure students reported having a paying job. Of those employed students, 38 percent worked 20 hours or more per week.

Being enrolled in a meal plan with a campus dining hall does not eliminate the threat of food insecurity. Among the respondents from four-year colleges, 43 percent of meal plan enrollees still experienced food insecurity. -Hunger on Campus. The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students.

David-Steele Figuerado states that:

The American Council on Education’s Christopher Nellum, in Fighting Food Insecurity on Campus, defines the overall situation in unmistakable terms:

The numbers are striking. Feeding America, a national nonprofit network of food banks ... estimates that nearly half (49.3 percent) of its clients in college must choose between educational expenses (i.e., tuition, books and supplies, rent) and food annually, and that 21 percent did so for a full 12 months. -Huffington Post

Goals

The mission of Titans Feeding Titans (TFT) is “To provide IU South Bend students with supplemental non-perishable food items in times of need to alleviate hunger,” with an overall vision that “No student attending IU South Bend’s campus should have to endure going without food. Everyone will have access to nutritious and quality food.” – Titans Feeding Titans Research Proposal 2014.

The TFT food pantry was proposed in 2014 by an undergraduate class of Bachelor of Social Work students as a policy research assignment. An entire semester was spent researching not only the need for a food pantry on campus but also the impact it would have on the students academically as well. At the end of the semester, the class presented the proposal to Chancellor Allison, as well as other Directors and faculty and staff, and it was met overall with excitement and approval as a way to help our students. The pantry TFT was developed by students, for students, and it is run by students.

While many students on campus may be faced with food insecurity, many are not eligible for other services that could help them address this issue. Many times in order to receive such services as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a certain income level, or many times household size, must be met in order to receive assistance. Because of these federal guidelines, there are many students that do not qualify for this type of help. While there are some local food pantries that may possibly be
able to serve the IUSB community, for those students without reliable transportation, this poses another roadblock. Maintaining TFT on campus will address many of these needs.

With approximately 7,500 students on campus, the number of students that are facing food insecurity issues could be substantial. Our IUSB fast facts (2015) report that approximately $61 million of financial aid is distributed to an estimated 6450 students. This indicates that the income level of many students is low, and the need for assistance exists.

Average cost for an IUSB student living on campus, including tuition and other fees:

$11,556 per academic year, not including summer

Average cost for an IUSB student living off campus, including tuition and other fees:

$9560 per academic year, not including summer

Average job working part time at $7.25 an hour working approximately 15 hours per week:

$1630 in wages per semester

Considering the total figures given for on campus costs and off campus costs a deficit exists.

$4500 for on campus

$3500 for off campus

While many students will take advantage of the $61 million in financial aid, whether in loans, scholarships, or grants, there are still many that are ineligible for additional funds. These students are many times living in poverty in some cases, forced to choose between books, tuition, and food.

The impact that the TFT food pantry can have on students is to continue to have a positive influence on those students who take advantage of this service.

Attaining Goals

The TFT food pantry seeks to accomplish our goal of helping to reduce food insecurity and affecting retention and academics by offering free food to those in need. The pantry is currently open 3 days per week. Monday and Friday from 10am -1 pm, and Tuesday from 2 - 6pm. By staggering the hours, we have been able to serve more students. The TFT pantry is also offering a variety of simple, filling, and nutritious foods for the students to shop from, giving them options from each of our sections, for instance, starches, vegetables, fruits, and cereals, just to name a few. Students are allowed to make their own selections, and dependent on the number of individuals in their household, the number of items from which they can choose is varied.

The TFT food pantry is now partnering with IUSB Housing to hold workshops on stretching food dollars, recipe ideas, and food preparation and storage. These workshops will be held later
in the spring 2017 semester, dependent on times and availability and will recur each academic year.

By offering additional times that TFT is open, with a variety of foods, as well as offering ideas on recipes and preparation, we hope to impact a substantial part of our student population.

The TFT food pantry is also partnering with IUSB Alumni this academic year in different fundraising activities, such as donation boxes on campus, a Fundly account, and give back nights, as well as recruiting volunteers to run the pantry.

The Schurz Library has agreed to do another food for fines drive with the proceeds going to TFT.

In addition to working with other departments, we are getting the word out about the pantry with flyers on campus, and continual information on the Daily Titan, as well as other social media.

Assessment

In order to assess the impact on students, the needs and the frequency in which students use the TFT pantry, we are logging each individual that uses the pantry. Information documented will also include products taken, in order to monitor our inventory, size of household, and other information. We will then be able to state that a certain percentage of students are taking advantage of the TFT food pantry, as well as the amount of food and other products that we are able to provide. The TFT food pantry will have been open for a year as of February 14th, 2017. In the past year we have distributed approximately $6000 worth of food to students on campus. The average visit is estimated at $25 per bag, which works out to about 200 students who have already used the pantry in just one year. It should be noted that the average household size reported was 3 persons, which means the total number impacted was higher than 200. These initial numbers are approximated as we did not have a set tracking system down at the initial opening of TFT. However, now we track each client, number of visits, household, and we will be weighing the food as it leaves. Given we have taken in donations at different times of the year, it is difficult to estimate the dollar amount distributed, but we will be documenting donations and expenditures going forward as well.

Budget

Currently the TFT food pantry has had one successful community food drive, as well as taken in cash donations. We have also partnered with the IU Foundation for an account for fundraising, and we are working with the Alumni office as well. To ensure that the TFT is able to be there consistently for IUSB students, we need to continually replenish our stock, which is done with both cash and product donations. Because we are partnered with the Northern Indiana Food Bank, we can purchase food at .09 per pound. This helps us to be cost effective. With the growth that we have already had, and the number of students and households served, we anticipate another year of growth for TFT.

Our budget for the Vision 20/20 grant would be as follows:

| Food for pantry | $5000.00 |

When estimating the amount of food that we could purchase at .09 a pound, that is approximately 45,000 pounds of food. This would certainly go a long way in keeping the food pantry stocked.

Future Goals
Now that the TFT is established, our goals include some perishable foods. We are already stocking cleaning and paper products, diapers, personal hygiene and other items necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

While our location in room SAC 114 is small at this time, it is serving our initial purpose. However, a long term goal of TFT is to acquire a larger space, approximately 560 square feet, where we can eventually have refrigerated units, so we can offer fresh produce, meats and dairy, and frozen foods. In conducting a campus survey in the Fall semester of 2016, participants expressed a desire and need for fresh foods. By growing the TFT pantry, which we hope to do by the end of the summer session, 2017, the idea is that we will be able to help more students, and to be able to meet a greater need. In doing so, many students could be better prepared to address the demands of college.

Sustainability

The future of TFT will depend on several things. This first year, we are concentrating on making the campus aware that the pantry is here, open, and accessible to all. We are working on taking in more donations, which goes along with achieving continual publicity for the food pantry. In a recent survey sent out to the IUSB community, with over 130 respondents at this time, 80% stated they would use, or probably will use the TFT food pantry at some point this semester. That is a high percentage, but also very encouraging in that we will be able to help them.