

## **SENATE RESOLUTION #2670**

**TITLE:** ASUW Support for Action on Food Insecurity

**DATE INTRODUCED:** September 24, 2019

**AUTHOR:** Director Savage

**SPONSORS:** Senators O'Connor, Titus, Trent, and Woodward


1. WHEREAS, the purpose of the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming
2. (ASUW) Student Government is to serve our fellow students in the best manner possible;
3. and,
4. WHEREAS, 37% of undergraduate students have either low food security or very low
5. food security according to Addendum A; and,
6. WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture defines low food security as,
7. “reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of
8. reduced food intake” and very low food security as “reports of multiple indications of
9. disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake,”; and,
10. WHEREAS, the current support for food insecure students on campus is limited to four
11. food sharing cabinets located in the Haub School, Corbett Hall, Visual Arts Building,
12. and the Guthrie House; and,
13. WHEREAS, while the greater Laramie community has resources such as Laramie
14. Interfaith, Feeding Laramie Valley, and the Laramie Soup Kitchen, University of
15. Wyoming (UW) students are reluctant to use them as they feel they are not meant for
16. student usage and there is a high demand for resources available on campus; and,
17. WHEREAS, UW’s peer institutions have created functional food security support
18. systems that provide resources to their students in need as shown in Addendum B; and,

19. WHEREAS, ASUW and other stakeholders across campus have been working to support  
20. food insecure students, however, the demand exceeds what is possible for these groups to  
21. meet alone; and,  
22. WHEREAS, research on campus has shown multiple viable scenarios for UW to  
23. implement that could improve food security for many on campus, such as a left-over food  
24. notification system, as referenced in the recommendation from the UW Office of  
25. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion included in Addendum C, a shared swipe system, as  
26. referenced in Addendum D, and a centralized food pantry.  
27. THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Associated Student of the University of Wyoming  
28. (ASUW) Student Government supports the current efforts to address food security issues  
29. on the University of Wyoming (UW) campus; and,  
30. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that all necessary parties be involved in this  
31. collaboration to tackle this issue including the affected parties and students; and,  
32. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that the ASUW Student Government recognizes the  
33. need for action by the UW's Upper Administration to address the food insecurity issue on  
34. campus, including action by the Office of the President and the Board of Trustees; and,  
35. THEREFORE, be it further resolved that the previously mentioned groups seriously  
36. investigate and consider solutions including, but not limited to, a left-over food  
37. notification system, shared swipe system, and a centralized food pantry.

**Referred to:** Advocacy, Diversity, and Policy; Programs and Institutional Development

**Date of Passage:** 10/01/2019 **Signed:** 

(ASUW Chairperson)

**"Being resolved on** 10/02/2019 **, I do hereby sign my name hereto and**  
**approve this Senate action."** 

**ASUW President**

## Addendum A

# Despite Low College Price-tag, Some UW Students Still Struggle To Eat

 Washakie Dining Center

Washakie Dining Center

Cqfx at English Wikipedia [CC BY-SA 3.0

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Jennet Nedirmammedova a senior at the University of Wyoming invited me into her apartment, a couple of blocks from campus. It, is cozy – a couple of rooms with paintings on every wall. She cooks was cooking pasta, and offers me some as we sit down at a wooden table edging her kitchen and the stairway. Nedirmammedova came to Wyoming from Turkmenistan to study environmental science, and she has since added a second major in religious studies, plus two minors. She also works two jobs.

“Because we're international students we're only allowed to work 20 twenty hours a week on campus – not even off campus,” she said.

Her paycheck has to cover rent, food, and tuition, which is highest for international students, and her status gives her fewer options for financial aid.

“I don't know how I'm going to pay for my next semester. I'm tired. It's like another huge stress,” Nedirmammedova said.

She is barely making ends meet. She sometimes gets free food from local non-profits, and usually cooks from whole ingredients because she is passionate about sustainability and using less packaging. She said that actually saves her money, but still, she is just surviving. Living so far from her family has forced her to be more open about her problems.

“I was very hesitant to approach people and ask for help. Nowadays I’m like ‘blegh,’ saying everything.”

Nedirmammedova is not the only student who is stressed about necessities like food. Last year, Cole Ehmke of UW’s Agricultural and Applied Economics department helped arrange a survey of financial wellness among undergraduates. One section focused on students’ access to food.

“If we total low food security and very low food security, both of those were at 18.7%... so, 36, 37%,” Ehmke said. “A little more than a third.”

More than a third of students at UW are food insecure, and that’s just undergraduates. Food insecurity is a term the [United States Department of Agriculture](#) uses to describe the broader picture surrounding hunger, including all the stress and health impacts of not knowing whether you’ll have enough food. So some students are stressed about getting food, and others are actually missing meals. These numbers match schools all over the country, even those with higher tuition and living costs. Ehmke said this data is concerning.

“It really does affect their success at university,” he said. “Both the money management and food security. Because who in the world can pay attention when they’re hungry?”

Students can take some comfort in the thought that once they graduate they’ll have better chances of making good wages in the future, but that isn’t a given.

Mike Vercauteran is the director of Interfaith Good Samaritan, the organization that runs the local food pantry. He said he’s seen a few students come through – not many – but he does see university staff, and can think of several people who were students, left before graduating, and are still struggling.

“This is a critical time for people in their life,” he said. “There’s a whole population of students that are on the verge of dropping out. I can think of countless people that just – they can’t afford to stay in school.”

There are other organizations in town working to make food more accessible. Feeding Laramie Valley grows and distributes produce and offers garden space. Laramie Soup Kitchen provides community meals on weekdays and has a deal with the University that allows them to take some of the leftover food from events and dining. But according to

staff at each of these organizations, it doesn't sound like many students are taking advantage of their programs this.

UW Vice President of Academic Affairs Anne Alexander said these resources are wonderful, but there's a stigma in using them.

"Study after study after study recently has shown that college students, and particularly students who come from rural backgrounds, do not take advantage of community resources as much as you would think that they would, frankly out of a sense of shame, almost," she said.

She and Ehmke pointed to money management as a way to address food insecurity. That's part of the intent of a course that administrators are piloting next year. Alexander said it will be required for incoming freshmen, and focused on – "...time management, stress management, financial wellness, but also getting folks acquainted with resources on campus like study abroad and things like that."

In Nedirmammedova's case, such a course may not be much help. Even if she were just starting at UW, she transferred from community college, so she may not have to take it. And she said she is already careful about managing her time and money.

"Thankfully because of my major I think I kept my certain behavior, in terms of like sustainability, lifestyle, sleeping schedules, dietary, everything, just like I did in my home country. Which is nice, I think," she said.

People at UW have tried to put a food pantry on campus before, and in response to this new study staff and administrators are talking about picking up those efforts. It will likely be a part of the Strategic Plan for Student Affairs. But it could take more than a year to actually implement something, and Nedirmammedova, along with many others in her same position, will have graduated by then.

## Addendum B

	Paid Sustainability Position	Meal Swipe	Emergency Relief Loans	Food Pantry/Cabinet	Event Sharing
Colleges					
University of Wyoming	NO	NO	YES	Yes (Cabinets)	NO *
New Mexico State University	YES	NO	YES	NO	Food Recovery Network*
Oklahoma State University	YES	NO	YES*	NO	NO
Utah State University	YES	NO	YES	YES (Pantry)*	Food Recovery Network*
South Dakota State University	YES	NO	YES	YES (Pantry)*	No
University of Montana	YES	NO	YES	YES (Pantry)*	NO
Montana State University	YES	NO	YES	YES (Pantry)*	NO
University of Idaho	YES	NO	YES	YES (Pantry)*	NO
Colorado State University	YES	YES*	YES	YES	Yes/App Alert
Virginia Tech	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES*
University of Maine	YES	NO	YES	YES (Pantry)*	NO

### **Addendum C**

Food and Housing Insecurity: Over the last 12 months, students (6%), staff (2%) and faculty (1%) shared they ‘often’ ran out of food and did not have money to obtain more. Students (15%) staff (7%) and faculty (3%) shared they ‘sometimes’ ran out of food and didn’t having money to buy more. Overall, 34% of all respondents share they often/sometimes ran out of food and did not have money to obtain more. For students, 3% shared they had a period of homelessness and 7% had a few times when they were unsure of where they would be staying for the night while attending UW. While the majority of those in that last group were living in on-campus residence halls, the other two groups were fairly consistent among that living in all types of housing, with those living off campus or in a fraternity or sorority house slightly more affected by these issues.

- Identify community resources to offer support to students experiencing food insecurity, homelessness or other challenges meeting their basic needs while at school. Once these community resources have been identified, it will be equally important to advertise and help students access these services. One such innovative program involves using an app to prevent food waste. Northeastern University<sup>3</sup> uses such an application to notify students, faculty and staff when leftover food from an event, staff meeting, or other activity is available for pick up.

Source:

[https://www.uwyo.edu/diversity/files/uw-climate\\_final\\_report.9.24.19.pdf](https://www.uwyo.edu/diversity/files/uw-climate_final_report.9.24.19.pdf)

## **Addendum D**

UWSOH will repurpose unused meal swipes to help students with food insecurity.

Undergraduates entering their freshman year at UW are required to select a dining plan if they live in the residence halls. According to UW, “All students living in the residence halls may choose between the Unlimited, Any-15, or Any-12 dining plans,” (UW; *Dining Plans*). If meal plans are unused, they do not carry into the next week (UW; *Dining Plans*). Meal plans also come with guest passes that expire at the end of the semester (UW; *FAQ*). Implementation of UWSOH will require partnership with the Residential Life and Dining Services (RLDS). RLDS will repurpose unused meal swipes by turning the meal swipes into meal vouchers and place the meal vouchers into a “fund” until a maximum cap for a quarter is reached. UWSOH will then allocate the vouchers to students with food insecurity at the beginning of the next quarter. To promote students to share unused meals, a quarterly swipe drive will be hosted, and an online website will continuously promote UWSOH.

Source:

“Combating Food Insecurity at the University of Wyoming by Implementing a Meal Sharing Program”