

HB 4055: Addressing Food and Housing Insecurity on Oregon's Campuses

Problem

College students should be able to focus on pursuing dreams for their families and communities. Yet too many students have to worry about not having enough to eat, or having a safe place to sleep. Food and housing insecurity are disrupting student outcomes both in Oregon and nationwide.

College students who experience food and housing insecurity are more likely to have:

- Lower grades
- More academic disruptions (stress, lighter course loads, prioritizing family needs)¹
- Lower graduation rates²

In Oregon, studies conducted at Oregon State University, University of Oregon³, Portland State University⁴, and Western Oregon University⁵ have shown that more than half of the college students at these institutions experience food insecurity. This is in line with national data that shows nearly half of college students experienced food insecurity in the last year, and more than half experienced housing insecurity⁶.

"I hear stories of students eating only a potato for the whole day just before class and I'm quickly reminded of when I didn't eat for almost two days, so that my kids didn't go without food..The experience of hunger at a minimum = sleepless nights, stress, scared, body aches, headaches, anxiety, depression, and many others, but most of all for me it was hopelessness. Hunger claws at my heart when I know we can do better."

Venus Barnes, Portland Community College Learning Garden Coordinator and PCC Alumnus



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Solution

HB 4055 requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to conduct a study to provide an in-depth understanding of the prevalence of food and housing insecurity across all Oregon public universities and community colleges, and report back to the legislature on long-term policy and budgetary proposals.

This study:

- Asks colleges to provide data and the ways that they are addressing food and housing insecurity for students at their schools and compares this with national trends.
- Provides recommendations for new policies, including budgetary increases, to help combat food and housing insecurity on Oregon's campuses.

Contact

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¹ Katharine Broton & Sara Goldrick-Rab (2016) *The Dark Side of College (Un)Affordability: Food and Housing Insecurity in Higher Education*, *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 48:1, 16-25, DOI: 10.1080/00091383.2016.1121081

² Diana F. Jyoti, Edward A. Frongillo, and Sonya J. Jones, "Food Insecurity Affects School Children's Academic Performance, Weight Gain, and Social Skills," *The Journal of Nutrition* 135, no. 12 (December 1, 2005): 2831–39; Martinez et al., "No Food for Thought."

³ Tegethoff, Eric; Public News Service, July 24, 2017. *Starving Students? An Unfortunate Trend on College Campuses* <https://www.publicnewsservice.org/index.php?/content/article/58649-1>

⁴ Cole, Jessica, Portland State University, Committee for Improving Student Food Security, updated 3/16/17. https://www.pdx.edu/student-access-center/sites/www.pdx.edu.student-access-center/files/PSU-Info_CISFS-SFI-Info_v03.16.2017.pdf

⁵ Patton-Lopez, Megan et al, Western Oregon University, 2014. "Prevalence and correlates of food insecurity among students attending a midsize rural university in Oregon." <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24406268>

⁶ Goldrick Rab, et al., Temple University, 2019. <https://hope4college.com/college-and-university-basic-needs-insecurity-a-national-realcollege-survey-report/>