



Aggie Compass: Leading Students to Basic Needs Security

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UC Davis Aggie Compass Basic Needs Center



Introduction

- College students experience disproportionately high rates of basic needs insecurities, particularly in food and housing.
- Student basic needs security has been an institutional priority at the University of California: Office of the President founded the Global Food Initiative in 2014 and UC Regents endorsed an expanded definition of basic needs and set a goal of reducing food and housing insecurity.¹
- A 2017 report found that 44% of undergraduate students and 26% of graduate students in the University of California experienced some level of food insecurity.²
- A UC Davis specific survey conducted in 2018 found 44% of students experienced low or very low food security; while 18% of students experienced housing insecurity.³
- Although food access resources existed on campus, programs operated without central coordination.
- Activist students and staff conceived the idea for a central hub to provide services for students experiencing food and housing insecurity.



Purpose

- The mission of the Aggie Compass Basic Needs Center is to help mitigate the effects of food and housing insecurity on students, while working to change policy, systems, and environment to affect long term change.

Methods

- Aggie Compass was conceived as a referral and coordination center that would point students to existing resources.
- Funds were acquired from institutional support and allocations from the CA state budget.
- Partnerships were established with on-campus centers and resources and community providers, including UC Davis Student Farm, Yolo County Dept of Health and Human Services, Office of Financial Aid, and Lutheran Social Services to provide services and programming to students.



Director Leslie Kemp speaking at the Aggie Compass launch event on June 19, 2018 to celebrate its grand opening.



Results

- Aggie Compass Basic Needs Center opened in 2018.
- As shown in Figure 1, utilization of Aggie Compass has been high, with many students seeking services from the Center multiple times per quarter.

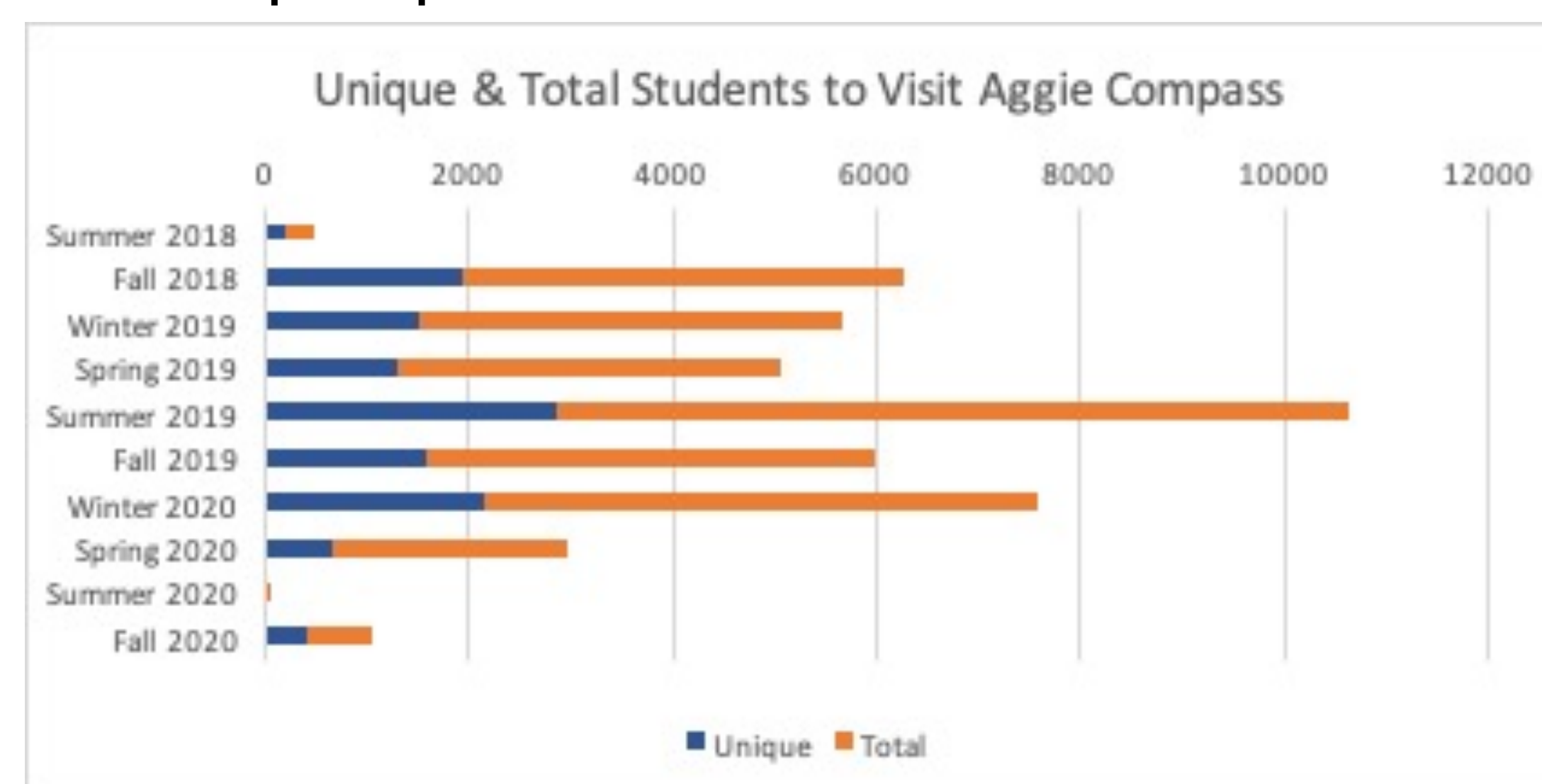


Figure 1. Student Engagement with Aggie Compass per Academic Quarter

Note: Although Aggie Compass is an essential service, offerings were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote services (basic needs grants and grocery gift cards) are not included.

Discussion

- Since its establishment, Aggie Compass has been able to coordinate basic needs services in collaboration with on-campus resources and partners as well as community partnerships.
- Programming and services provided by Aggie Compass has increasingly grown in scope and address multiple domains within basic needs security.
- As the University of California adopts an expanded definition of basic needs, Aggie Compass is well-positioned to expand its service offerings.



Student volunteers prepare for Fruit & Veggie Up!, a program to distribute free fruits and vegetables.



Implications

- Aggie Compass Basic Needs Center is highly utilized by the student population at UC Davis.
- Coordination of services is a best practice to provide holistic support to students experiencing basic needs challenges.
- Institutional support and student engagement are crucial components for successfully initiating and growing a Center.

Literature Cited

1. <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/regmeet/nov20/s1attach.pdf>
2. <https://www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/files/food-housing-security.pdf>
3. <https://leadership.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk1166/files/page/Food%20Security%20Task%20Force%20Report%202018-07-05.pdf>

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that Aggie Compass and UC Davis are located on land that for thousands of years had been the home of the Patwin people. Today, there are three federally recognized Patwin tribes: Cachil DeHe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community, Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation, and Yoche Dehe Wintun Nation. The Patwin people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations. We are honored and grateful to be located on their traditional lands.