



Clark University Food Aid Plan: Helping One Student At A Time

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Introduction

Prior to COVID-19, 39% of college students were food insecure, or being in a state without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable and nutritious food.

That number has skyrocketed since the onset of the pandemic. Some say food insecurity has doubled nationally. Others say it could be even worse than that.

The price of college has risen while minimum wage is stagnant, leaving the ever-diversifying student body left to juggle education, social life, work, food, housing, and more.



Photo Courtesy of Jeff Narod

Purpose

- Campus Hunger Cohort with Challah for Hunger, a national organization working to ensure that no student goes hungry on their college campuses
- Food insecurity comes in a lot of different shapes and sizes. What it looks like to one person might not be the same for another.
- I created a solution for food insecurity and inequity on my campus
- Nothing was in place at Clark University

Methods

I reached out to the Dean of Students and Sodexo with a food aid plan I had formulated, which would give students five meals a week.

My discussions with the Business Office ensured students will hold the same entrance card as those who bought meal plans, allowing for anonymity.

Financial Aid would recognize students through their financial packages, ensuring that the names of the students receiving aid would stay secure and on a privilege basis for the project only.

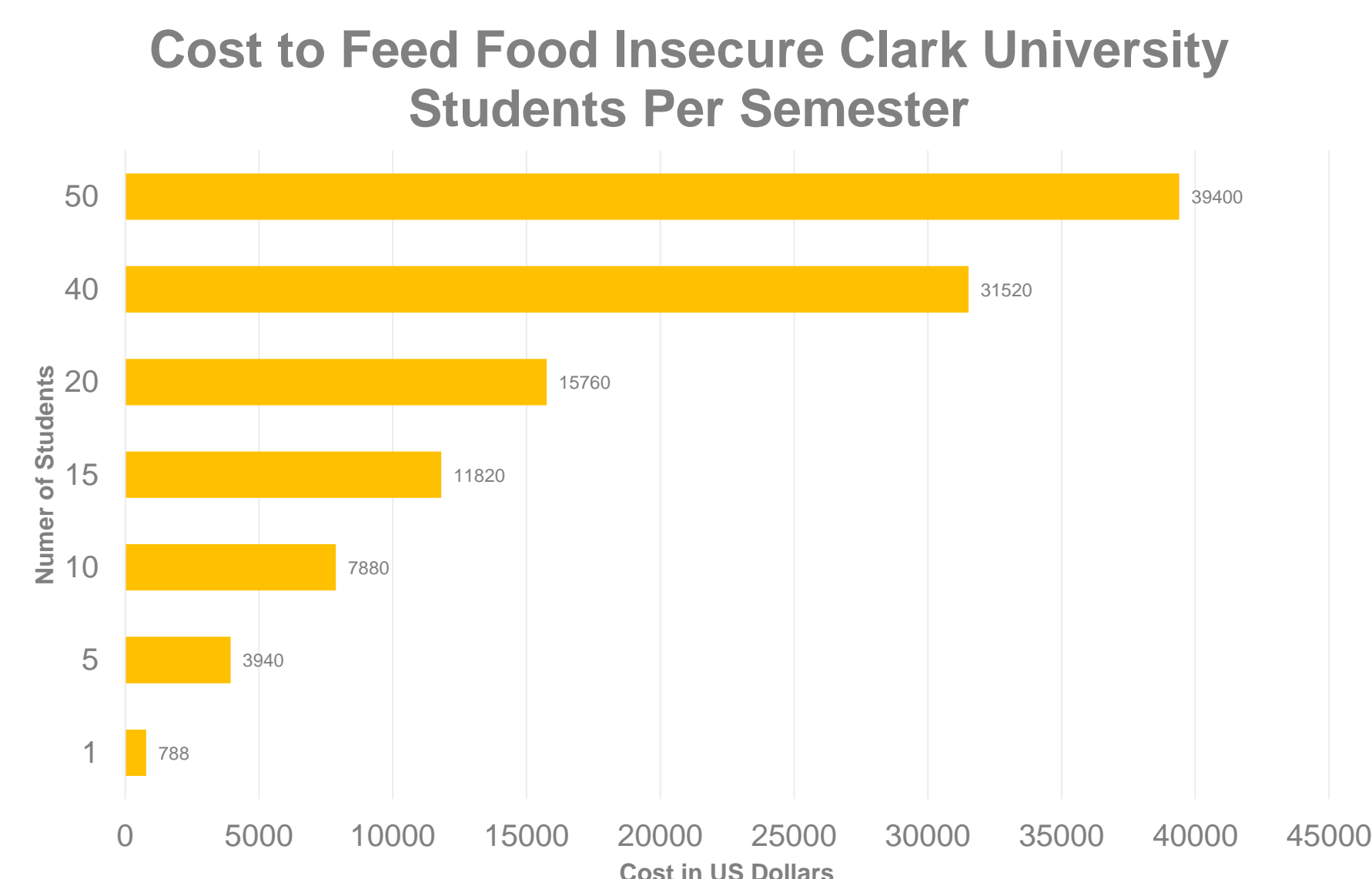
I also wrote multiple op-eds and started a podcast to share the importance.

Results

To feed 20 people in one semester, it would be less than \$16,000.

I have almost full confirmation of \$15,000 from SGA and a matched amount from the President.

We are sending a survey, like other campuses have, to find out the statistics on our campus rather than going off national numbers.



Discussion

Food insecurity is more pervasive than commonly believed.

Simple changes can help students who are in need. Colleges must help students if they want educational success.



Photo Courtesy of Clark University

Implications

I am imploring for other campuses to recognize the issue of food insecurity and create programs appropriate for their own students.

A food aid plan may not be the most appropriate for certain schools, especially if most students are commuting like at a community college or if everyone is required to be on the same meal plan.

Other resources like food pantries, scholarships, emergency aid, and swipe programs though can make a drastic difference to food insecure students

Literature Cited

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