



## Introduction

A 2018 national study of university students conducted by the Wisconsin Hope Lab found that 36% of university students in the United States were food insecure in the 30 days prior to the survey.<sup>[1]</sup> Food insecurity is associated with lower grades, depression, higher perceived stress and lower graduation rates<sup>[1]</sup>. Campuses across the country are responding to the problem in a variety of ways, including distribution of food directly to students such as through food pantries, bags of food, grocery gift cards and more.

Starting a campus program is not easy - it requires organizational decision-making, administrative support, funding, space, personnel and more. This research identifies the scope of campus food programs, and more importantly the challenges and opportunities of to help other campuses think about food insecurity and implement action plans to address food insecurity.

## Methods

We contacted 200 campus food pantries at colleges and universities in the United States by email inviting them to participate in a Qualtrics survey about their food pantry operations.

108 programs responded for a 54% response rate.

## Types of Programs

Campus food programs include the following programs:

- Vouchers for campus dining
- Gift cards to grocery stores
- Pre-packed bags of food
- Shopping model/client choice food pantries
- Community gardens
- Soup kitchen (hot meals)
- Pop up/mobile food pantries

## Five Biggest Challenges

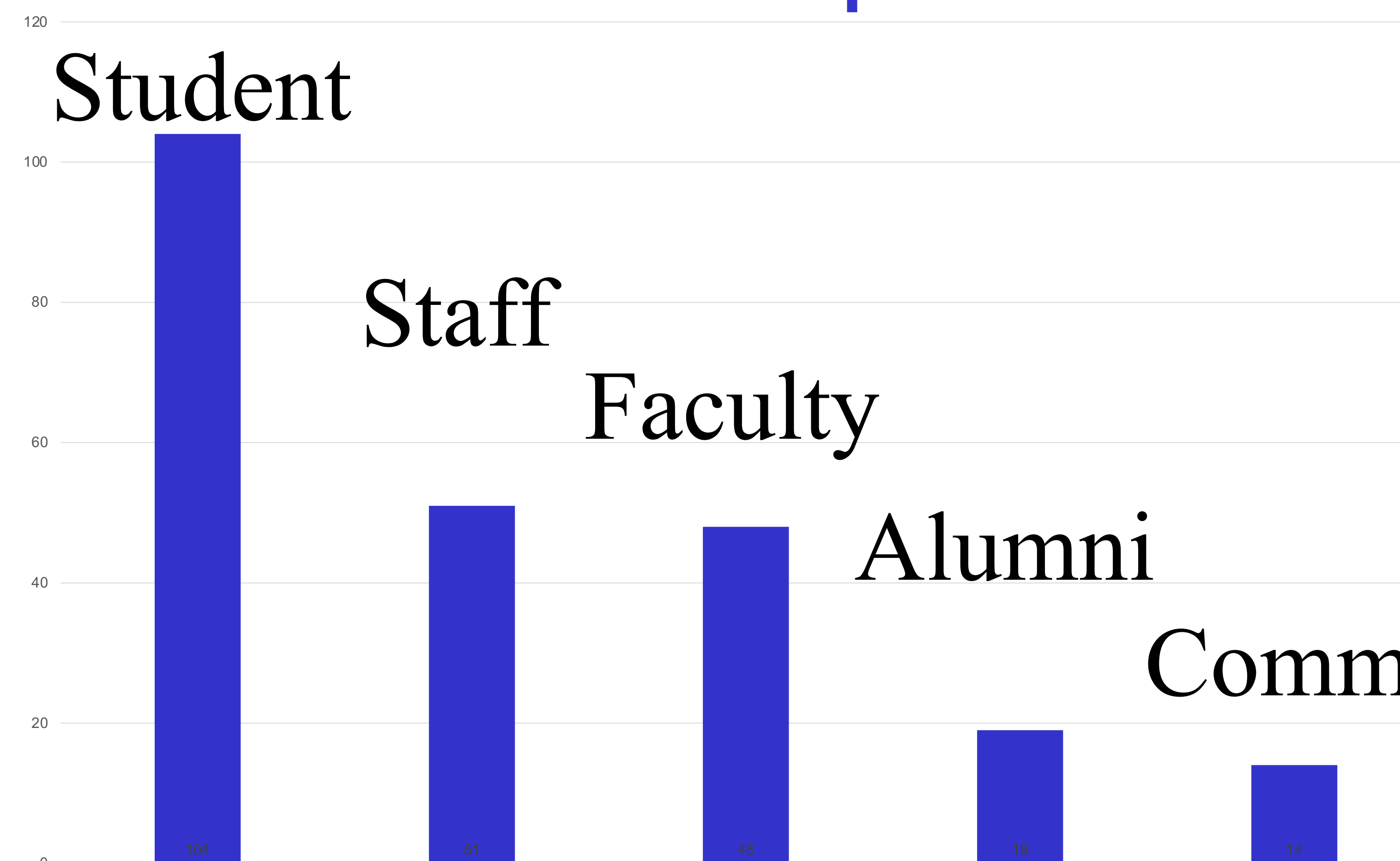
- Getting students to use the pantry (stigma)
- Space is too small
- Getting healthy food options
- Money/Fundraising
- Having enough food to meet demand

## Best Practices

We identified the following 10 best practices for campus food pantries:

- Start small
- Engage stakeholders from the beginning
- Think about how to reduce stigma and encourage use
- Tap into existing resources
- Identify sources of food (e.g. partner with Feeding America)
- Consider sustainability (funding, food, volunteers)
- Make it student centered (location, messaging)
- Get Faculty support (e.g. syllabi statements)
- Promote it in multiple ways
- Equity and diversity needs to built into everything you do

## Who Can Use Campus Pantries?



## Literature Cited

<sup>[1]</sup> Wisconsin Hope Lab “Still Hungry and Homeless in College” April 2018: <https://cufba.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Wisconsin-HOPE-Lab-Still-Hungry-and-Homeless.pdf>.

## Final Report

If you would like a copy of the final report, please contact Dr. Shannon Orr at [skorr@bgsu.edu](mailto:skorr@bgsu.edu).