BARRIERS TO CALFRESH ELIGIBILITY FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS: STARVING FOR RESOURCES MAY NEGATIVELY IMPACT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

By

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Abstract

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Emerging research demonstrates American college student food insecurity is a pressing issue, potentially affecting academic performance and health. However, college students do not qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) unless they meet specific exemptions, regardless of food security status. This study aims to identify policy barriers California students face in qualifying for SNAP (CalFresh). All of the policies responsible for excluding potentially food insecure students in this study are federal and therefore affect college students nationwide applying for these benefits. Unemployment or underemployment increases risk for food insecurity, but is a primary reason for disqualifying a college student from SNAP. Significant findings include: (1) the majority of respondents were ineligible for CalFresh. (2) 47.54 percent of all respondents identified work study eligibility as their only exemption. Counties’ interpretations of this exemption can significantly affect the proportion of students approved for SNAP. (3) The 20-hour a week paid work requirement was the primary barrier to qualification. (4) 30.33 percent of respondents who did not qualify for CalFresh did not meet any of the most common exemptions: working 20 or more hours per week of paid employment, qualifying for a work study program, or having dependent children under the age of 12, with certain requirements; (5) 61.79 percent of respondents felt lack...
of food played a role in lowering academic performance. (6) 22.76 percent of respondents felt lack of food played a role in delaying graduation. (7) Students who did not qualify for CalFresh were more likely to report lack of food played a role in delaying graduation than those who did qualify.
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Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify primary barriers Humboldt State University (HSU) college students faced in qualifying for CalFresh, the California state Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). While the focus of this research was to identify those primary barriers, it also sought to identify if students perceived lack of food resources as having had an influence on timeliness of graduation and/or academic performance. In addition, the study helped identify other characteristics of potentially food insecure students, such as those caring for dependent children.

This study was informed by data gathered at HSU CalFresh outreach events that took place in the academic year 2013-2014, in which the United States Department of Agriculture Household Food Security Module was administered on a volunteer basis to students, staff and faculty that participated in the CalFresh outreach events. Findings were significant. Nearly half of students (48%) of those seeking CalFresh did not qualify and, of those, nearly half reported skipping meals between five and twenty days per month. Forty-nine percent of survey participants reported it was “often true” or “sometimes true” they could not afford to eat nutritious food. Many students also described symptoms associated with hunger, including dizziness, headaches, lethargy, lack of concentration and preoccupation with food and budgeting (Maguire & O’Neill, in preparation).

SNAP is the single largest food insecurity mitigating program in the United States with a proven ability to help increase clients’ food security (Mabli, James, Jim Ohls, Lisa Dragoiset, Laura Castner & Betsy Santos, 2013). However, college students do not qualify
for SNAP in any state unless they meet specific exemptions (USDA, FNS, 2014). During the outreach events of 2013-2014, feedback from CalFresh application assistance consistently indicated that the primary reasons students did qualify were because (a) they met the exemption of working 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month of employment paid at minimum wage or higher; (b) they qualified for the federal or state-funded work study programs; (c) they had primary responsibility for a child under the age of 6; and/or (d) they were single parents and full-time students with the physical care of a dependent child under the age of 12. Unfortunately, most students did not meet these or any other exemption.

The effects of food insecurity are well documented for children in grades Kindergarten through 12 (Cook & Jeng, 2009; Florence, Asbridge & Veugelers, 2008), but have not been extensively studied in the college student population. The few research efforts that have been done indicate food insecurity is not only a significant and pressing problem on many college campuses, but that it may have adverse effects on physical health and academic performance (Pia Chaparro, Zaghloul, Holck, & Dobbs, 2009; Freudenberg, Manzo, Jones, Kwan, Tsui & Gagnon, 2011; Serebryanikova, Donaldson, Leveritt, & Hughes, 2011; Kobayashi, 2009; Maroto, 2013; Patton-Lopez, Lopez-Ceballos, Cancel-Tirado & Vasquez, 2014; Snow, 2004). SNAP has the ability to help reduce these negative effects, but policies surrounding college student eligibility for the program have not been significantly revised since their creation in 1977 (Lower-Basch & Lee, 2014). These outdated policies do not necessarily reflect the food security statuses of college students and, indeed, may be needlessly excluding food insecure students who
would benefit from the assistance. Despite this, the exemptions that pose the most consistent and formidable barriers to qualifying have not been well documented.

In response, I designed a survey to document these eligibility barriers. The population sample was HSU students (graduate or undergraduate), primarily recruited from the Oh SNAP! Campus Food Programs sign-in forms.
Literature Review

Food Insecurity and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

After the economic collapse of 2008, food insecurity increased dramatically in the United States. By 2010, 14.5 percent—or 17.2 million households—were considered food insecure by the United States Department of Agriculture, which was the highest number ever reported (Coleman-Jensen, Nord, Andrews, & Carlson, 2011). Food insecurity, as defined by the USDA, is a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Key characteristics of low food security (formerly called “food insecurity without hunger”) include reducing the quality, variety, and/or desirability of diets. Key characteristics of very low food security (formerly “food insecurity with hunger”) include multiple instances of disrupted eating patterns and/or multiple instances of reducing quantities of food (USDA, ERS, 2014). This is most often caused by inadequate resources to purchase food (Hamilton, et.al., 1997) and translates to poor nutrition and/or states of hunger.

Food insecurity is often a sign of broader struggles to survive. When low-income households could not provide for their basic needs—such as shelter, energy and transportation—food budgets were the first to be cut, according to a study conducted by the USDA in 2005 (Nord, Andrews & Carlson, 2005). Other bills are often much less flexible—such as rent or mortgage, car payments and gasoline costs, and heating and electricity. Food budgets, however, can be adjusted daily if necessary. When these households are struggling to cover their expenses, they often purchase inexpensive,
calorically dense, nutritionally inferior options to stave off hunger (Basiotis & Lino, 2003; Drewnowski, 2009; Drewnowski, 2004; Edin, et.al, 2013). This is further substantiated by studies identifying vegetables and lean proteins as the most expensive USDA MyPlate nutritional categories (Carlson & Frazão, 2012). In addition, many adults in food insecure households report cutting their own food intake to ensure the children in the household receive enough ((Mabli, Ohls, Dragoset, Castner, & Santos, 2013). Risk factors other than inadequate employment for food insecurity include being a member of certain minority groups, having dependent children in the household (particularly if a single parent), having a disability, having a history of low-income, and/or previous experience with food insecurity (Coleman-Jensen, Nord & Singh, 2013). The USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can help mitigate the effects of food insecurity by providing those who qualify with funding to purchase food. Indeed, empirical research demonstrates that households participating in SNAP increase their food security levels; how much food security increases is affected by how much funding SNAP provides (Mabli, et.al, 2013).

Despite SNAP’s ability to help relieve food insecurity, able-bodied college students ages 18 through 49 enrolled at least half time are not eligible for SNAP. When these previously food insecure individuals then, take on the role of college student it is reasonable to assume that their, and possibly their dependents’, risk of food insecurity may compound, particularly if denied SNAP benefits. Furthermore, approximately 76 percent of first-time, full-time undergraduate students in 2011-12 attending private for-profit, degree granting four-year institutions received federal grant money — which is
only given to students who demonstrate financial need — while 39 percent of students at public institutes did. For students attending two-year institutions, these percentages were 75 and 58, respectively. This provides an indication of general income levels among all first-year college students attending four-year and two-year institutes. As low income is a primary risk factor for food insecurity, all of these students could be at risk. (Volpe, 2013).

**Changing Demographics and Increased Costs in Higher Education**

In 2013, the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities reported that SNAP enrollment was expected to remain high despite an upswing in the economy and job markets because workers with less of a skill set are more likely to be released from employment before other, more skilled workers, and the last to be hired (Stone, Bernstein, Sherman & Rosenbaum, 2013). Yet these ‘last hired’ and ‘first fired’ are among those adults who often choose to pursue college in order to increase their skill levels and/or qualify for financial aid.

College students will not face the same financial circumstances their counterparts did just a decade ago, though. Average total tuition, fees and room and board charges in public four-year institutions has steadily increased 3.8 percent per year from 2002-03 to 2012-13 (Baum & Ma, 2013). Food prices have also increased according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) — steadily, at a similar rate of between two and three percent overall between 1990 and 2005, but then at a quicker clip. In 2008, food prices jumped approximately 5.5 percent and, in recent years, only transportation and medical
prices have inflated faster than food every year. Housing also went up — about ten percent between 2006 and 2012 (Volpe, 2013). All four of these, however — food, transportation, housing and medical— affect basic needs budgets. And when basic needs are threatened, food allowances tend to get sacrificed first in low-income households (Nord, Andrews & Carlson, 2005).

Considering these circumstances, it may not be surprising that Engle and Tinto (2008) found that first-generation and low-income students were graduating at much lower rates than their higher income counterparts. These students were nearly four times more likely to leave college after their first year than students who had neither of these risk factors. Six years after enrolling, 43 percent of low-income, first-generation students had left college without earning degrees (Engle & Tinto, 2008). Indeed, many low-income students have thousands of dollars of unmet need, even after considering their financial aid awards (Lower-Basch & Lee, 2014). Such findings provide evidence that these vulnerable students are not matching their counterparts in academic success. It is reasonable to assume that lack of resources to meet basic survival needs, including food, may play a part in this trend.

**College Student Food Insecurity and Implications for Academic Performance and Health**

The effects food insecurity has on children’s learning are well documented. For example, Cook and Jeng (2009), specified critical adverse effects of food insecurity for children in their literature review — including health, education, job readiness and
academic performance. Food insecure children did not perform as well academically as their food secure counterparts -- in part due to inability to concentrate (Cook & Jeng, 2009). Florence and colleagues also support the position there is a strong relationship between grade school children’s academic performance and diet (Florence, Asbridge & Veugelers, 2008).

Lack of access to enough nutritious foods has significant negative implications for physical (stuff, et.al, 2004), mental (Kleinman, Murphy, Little, Pagano, Wehler, Regal, & Jellinek, 1998), and social (Jyoti, Frongillo, & Jones, 2005) development for people of all ages though. The handful of studies that have been conducted on college student food insecurity indicate that the issue is not only a significant problem on the studied campuses, but that food insecurity has negative implications for overall health and academic performance (Pia Chaparro, 2009; Freudenberg, et. al., 2011; Serebryanikova, et.al., 2011; Kobayashi, 2009; Maroto, 2013; Patton-Lopez, et.al., 2014; Snow, 2004). Patton-Lopez (2014) and colleagues from Oregon State University conducted a food security analysis on their campus and found that 59 percent of their 354 survey respondents were food insecure. These food insecure students were more likely to be in fair or poor health than the food secure students. Good academic performance was also inversely associated with food insecurity. Maroto (2013) executed a similar study, but compared 301 respondents from one suburban (151 respondents) and one urban (150 respondents) community college in Maryland. Approximately half of respondents from each college were food insecure. Black and multiracial students were more likely to be food insecure than their white counterparts; single parents were more likely to be food
insecure than non-parents; and students living with parents were less likely to be food insecure than those living away from home. Food insecure students were also more likely to report lower energy and concentration levels and the degree of food insecurity affected the probability of reporting decreased energy or concentration difficulties. At suburban colleges, food insecure students were also more likely to fall into a lower GPA category than those in the highest GPA category.

Pia Chaparro (2009) and colleagues conducted a student food security assessment at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa in 2006. Twenty-one percent of the 441 participants were food insecure and another 27 percent were at risk of food insecurity. This study also found that living with family reduced the likelihood of being food insecure.

Freudenberg (2011) executed the most extensive study yet on college student food insecurity, released in 2011. Freudenberg conducted two food security assessments on undergraduates in 17 different community colleges and four-year universities in New York. The first sample had 1,086 respondents. The second sample included 1,114 students across 8 campuses with relatively high rates of students on public assistance. Overall, 39.2 percent of students were food insecure within the 12 months prior to taking the survey; Black and Hispanic students more likely to be food insecure than white and Asian students; and nearly half—46.3 percent — of students who supported themselves were food insecure. Approximately 24 percent of respondents were both food and housing insecure. In addition, 19.1 percent knew another student who was food insecure.
Serebryanikova (2011) and Snow (2004) conducted studies at universities in Queensland, Australia — which has a similar financial aid and tuition system as the United States, with students taking responsibility for educational and living costs but eligible to apply for government loans and scholarships. These sources of funding, however, often do not meet the need. Serebryanikova’s study, published in 2010, utilized questions from the Australian National Nutrition Survey and adapted versions of United States Department of Agriculture food assessment modules. Serebryanikova found that 46 percent of students at a Queensland-based university were food insecure without hunger and that 25.3 percent were food insecure with hunger. Of those identified as food insecure, 25 percent reported losing weight due to lack of money for food. Food insecure students were also less likely to have good overall health. Similar to other American studies, living with family decreased risk of food insecurity for these students. Snow (2004) conducted a similar survey in Queensland, Australia, finding government aid was not enough for students to live on and coping strategies included limiting food intake.

A related study from 2009 by Futoshi Kobayashi compared Japanese and American students in Japan, investigating the relationship between GPA, BMI and fast food intake. Findings revealed GPA was negatively correlated with BMI and fast food intake in both the Japanese and American student samples, suggesting a link between the nutritional quality of foods and academic performance (Kobayashi, 2009).

If collegiate student performance and physical health are, indeed, linked with food security as these studies suggest, consequences of food insecurity in college could include poorer grades, lower academic performance, poorer health and lower retention
and/or graduation rates. These indicators may in turn, affect students’ abilities to gain employment and pursue postgraduate degrees.

**College Students and Participation in Food Programs**

Despite these findings, college students may have low overall participation rates in food programs, even when in need of them. Patton-Lopez (2014) reported that only 27 percent of the food insecure respondents in her study were using a food assistance program, such as SNAP, WIC or food banks. Freudenberg (2011) reported that only 6.4 percent of respondents used SNAP, even though 18 percent knew they may be eligible. SNAP, however, may not be enough; 63 percent of Freudenberg’s respondents who did utilize the program said SNAP did not provide adequate resources to achieve food security.

If SNAP, as the largest food program in the United States, has the ability to at least significantly mitigate food insecurity for most subgroups (Mabli, et.al, 2013), it is reasonable to assume it can also aid in reducing college student food insecurity. However, SNAP explicitly excludes most able-bodied college students enrolled at least half-time in an institute of higher education and are between the ages of 18 and 49 from participating unless they meet specific exemptions (USDA, FNS, 2014). While states have the ability to do some minor modifications or clarifications to these, federal exemptions are strict and as follows:

(1) *Receiving public assistance benefits under a Title IV-A program*; (2) *Taking part in a State or federally financed work study program*; (3) *Working at least 20*
hours a week; (4) Taking care of a dependent household member under the age of 6; (5) Taking care of a dependent household member over the age of 5 but under 12 and do not have adequate child care to enable them to attend school and work a minimum of 20 hours, or to take part in a State or federally financed work study program; or (6) Are a single parent enrolled full time in college and taking care of a dependent household member under the age of 12 if otherwise eligible, or (7) Are assigned to or placed in a college or certain other schools through: a program under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, a program under Section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974, an employment and training program under the Food Stamp Act, or an employment and training program operated by a State or local government. (USDA, FNS, 2014).

The survey in this study, College Student Barriers to CalFresh, uses California standards for these exemptions to assess whether students were, or were not likely, to be eligible or ineligible for the program. However, California exemptions must adhere to federal regulations and did not differ in any significant way from federal regulations; it is therefore reasonable to assume that a student who was disqualified from the SNAP program in California would be very likely to be disqualified if applying in another state. SNAP has the potential to increase access to healthy and nutritious foods for food insecure college students by providing funding for food purchases, but because of limits both real (USDA, FNS, 2014) and perceived about SNAP eligibility, these students often do not apply or qualify for this program. For instance, in California, the maximum monthly benefit allotment for an individual who qualifies for SNAP is $194.00. (State of
Over the course of a 10-month academic year, this would amount to $1940.00 each student could use specifically for food purchases, helping to dismantle the primary barrier associated with food insecurity: lack of financial resources (Coleman-Jensen, Nord & Singh, 2013). This is approximately one-third of the maximum Pell Grant for the academic year 2014-2015, a grant provided to low-income students to help cover the costs of education. Much like SNAP, Pell Grants are guaranteed to applicants who apply and meet eligibility requirements. The specific benefit amount for awardees of both programs is also adjusted based on need. (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

**Summary**

Considering the above findings, the following themes emerged for college students from the limited data provided thus far: (1) food insecurity was a significant issue for college students at all studied campuses, with a minimum of 21 percent food insecurity rate and a maximum of 59 percent food insecurity rate for studied campuses (Chaparro, et.al., 2009; Freudenberg, et.al., 2011; Serebryanikova, et.al., 2011; Kobayashi, 2009; Maroto, 2013; Patton-Lopez, et.al., 2014; Snow, 2004); (2) food insecurity negatively impacted academic performance and/or concentration levels for those studies that correlated these factors with food insecurity; (3) food insecurity negatively impacted overall health for those studies that correlated health with food insecurity; (4) ethnic minorities were more likely to experience food insecurity than their white counterparts; (5) living with family reduced a college student’s likelihood of being
food insecure; (6) SNAP has the ability to mitigate food insecurity, but able-bodied college students attending college at least half time and are between the ages of 18 and 49 are automatically disqualified unless they meet specific exemptions; and (7) scholars encourage further food security evaluations on college campuses, as well as increasing vulnerable students’ participation in food programs — which includes changing policies to make more college students eligible for programs like SNAP.
Method

Hypothesis

Due to anecdotal information received from CalFresh student engagement assistants at HSU CalFresh outreach events in the academic year 2013-14, CalFresh student engagement assistants at HSU’s Oh SNAP! Campus Food Programs, and CalFresh eligibility workers from Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services, the hypotheses of this study are as follows: (1) the majority of students would not qualify for CalFresh; (2) the primary eligibility barrier for students qualifying for CalFresh would be the 20-hour a week (or 80-hour a month) work requirement; (3) the majority of students taking the survey would not have dependent children; (4) having the option to conduct the determination interview over the phone would influence students’ decision to apply; (5) students who did not qualify for CalFresh would state that lack of food delayed graduation at a higher rate than students who did qualify; and (6) students who did not qualify for CalFresh would state that lack of food played a role in lowering their academic performance in college at a higher rate than those who did qualify.

Sample

Survey respondents were primarily recruited from the sign-in forms at HSU’s Oh SNAP! Campus Food Programs, which serves only undergraduate and graduate students at HSU. This program provides students with food assistance, including a free food cupboard; CalFresh application assistance; a shuttle service to another local food bank
and the Farmer’s Market; and cooking demonstrations. These respondents had visited the Oh SNAP! Campus Food Programs, filled out a sign-in form, provided an email address and given permission to be contacted about further information regarding CalFresh and/or opportunities to participate in food security-related research. Secondary recruitment came from word of mouth.

A total of 156 of 369 (42.28%) students contacted responded to the survey. However, only 135 of those 369 (36.59%) provided surveys that answered one or more of the seven questions. Twenty-one surveys were discarded due to these respondents not completing at least one of the seven questions. In these instances, clients agreed to the consent form, but did not complete any of the questions.

Design

The survey, College Student Barriers to CalFresh, was administered online and designed to be easily duplicated with or without minor modifications. Questions were multiple-choice, short answer or multiple choice with the opportunity to provide short answers for clarification. The population sample was HSU students (graduate or undergraduate), primarily recruited from the Oh SNAP! Campus Food Programs sign-in forms.

Data Collection and Storage

Emails were sent to identified individuals using the emails they provided, as outlined above, explaining the purpose of the study. The email also included a web link
to an online survey hosted by Survey Monkey. Data was collected between January 26th, 2015 and April 20th, 2015. Responses were stored in the secure servers of the host and accessed by the Primary Investigator through a password protected Survey Monkey account on a password protected computer.

**Data Analysis**

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate the proportion of respondents who did and did not qualify for CalFresh, the exemptions that were met, the exemptions that were not met, whether or not having the option to schedule the CalFresh determination interview over the phone (versus in person) affected a student’s decision to apply, whether or not students felt lack of food had played a role in lowering their academic performance in college, and whether or not students felt lack of food had played a role in delaying their graduation. Percentages were reported. Correlations were also performed to determine the relationship between those who did qualify for CalFresh and the exemptions they met; those who did not qualify and the exemptions they did not meet; those who did qualify and whether or not those respondents felt their academic performance had been affected by lack of food; those who did qualify and whether or not those respondents felt their graduation had been delayed, in part, by lack of food; those who did not qualify and whether or not those respondents felt their academic performance had been affected by lack of food; and those who did not qualify and whether or not those respondents felt their graduation had been delayed, in part, by lack of food.
The qualitative results are summarized by utilizing direct quotes from Questions 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. These quotes exemplify the predominant findings, as well as articulate common scenarios not explained by the descriptive statistics.

Limitations

Limitations of this study included a small sample size. The sample was not representative of the entire HSU student population, but restricted to those Oh SNAP! Campus Food Programs clients who had given appropriate permissions and responded to the survey request. This study was not designed to provide data on the total proportion of students attending HSU campus who would, or would not, qualify for CalFresh or who would, or would not, report food affected graduation timeliness and/or academic performance. This study, however, did provide a more targeted sample of those students who were more likely to have experienced food security and/or had recent experience applying for CalFresh as indicated by seeking services at the program. It also sought to understand factors that affect college student eligibility for CalFresh, encouraging broader investigations.

Permissions on this survey were established so that the survey could be completed multiple times from the same computer. This was in order to take into consideration understandable and common factors such as the use of public computers on the HSU campus; shared computers among friends, roommates or colleagues; and shared computers at places of employment. It was possible, therefore, that any one student may have completed the survey more than once. However, 77 of the 135 surveys were linked
with the respondents’ emails on a voluntary basis, which helped to reduce the chance of utilizing duplicated surveys. No duplicated surveys were found in this manner.

It was possible that students who had children under the age of six may have also indicated they were single, full-time students and had children under the age of 12 if they also met the latter requirements. This may have affected the total number of students recorded as parents. Total number of student parents in the survey would not have exceeded the number of those who indicated they were single, full-time students and had children under the age of six, however. The survey tool did not allow the comparison of these results.

It is possible some respondents did not understand Question 2, which sought to determine if they were eligible for CalFresh. For instance, some students who responded “No,” versus “Eligibility Still Being Determined,” or “Did not apply” also indicated they met one or more of the student exemptions.

Questions 7 and 8, which aimed to determine if students felt lack of food delayed their graduation and/or lowered their academic performance in college was not intended to determine if CalFresh eligibility was a factor in either of these. Respondents who were receiving benefits may have only been receiving them for a short period of time. Respondents who were not receiving benefits may have, indeed, been eligible or had applications pending.
Risk Management Procedures

Participants provided informed consent before taking the survey. They were also made aware their participation was voluntary and could be stopped at any time during the process. Contact information was provided for the Principal Investigator in the event respondents desired to ask questions or file a complaint. No questions were posed or complaints filed.
Results

Quantitative Results

A total of 135 (N=135) respondents answered the survey [see Appendix]. Analysis revealed 127 (n=127) answered Question 3, “Were you determined as eligible for CalFresh?” Of these, 61 (48.03%) qualified for CalFresh, while 33 (25.98%) did not. Sixteen (12.6%) indicated their eligibility was still being determined and 17 (13.39%) did not apply (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Answers to Question 3 reported as percentages and number of respondents.
Four of the 17 (23.53%) who did not apply provided information indicating they met at least one exemption that may qualify them for the program. Eleven of those seventeen (64.71%) expressed that they did not apply because they felt they would not qualify for the program, though this did not always appear to be the case based on the exemptions they identified. Approximately 27 percent of those 17 felt lack of food had played a role in delaying their graduation and approximately 67 percent felt lack of food played a role in lowering academic performance.

A total of 106 responded to Question 4, which sought to identify whether or not a student met an exemption that may enable him or her to qualify for CalFresh. Of those 106, 48 (45.28%) were approved for federal/state work study and anticipated working in the current term; 25 (24.58%) worked twenty or more hours per week or 80 hours per month of paid employment; 20 (18.87%) were full-time students, single parents and had responsibility for a child under the age of twelve; 10 (9.43%) had primary responsibility for the physical care of a dependent child in their household under the age of six; four (3.77%) were physically or mentally unfit for employment; and two (1.89%) were placed in college by EDD, WIA, Vocational Rehabilitation or similar government employment or training program (see Figure 2). Meeting any one or more of these exemptions is required for college students to qualify for CalFresh.
Figure 2. Answers to Question 4 reported as percentages and number of respondents.

Question 5 sought to identify specific reasons college students may not be eligible for CalFresh. A total of 82 responded. Forty-six (56.1%) did not work 20 or more hours per week or 80 hours per month of paid employment; 38 (46.34%) did not have dependent children; 24 (29.27%) did not qualify for federal/state work study programs;
fourteen (17%) respondents had a campus meal plan that provided 50 percent or more of their food needs; and six (7.32%) reported their income was too high to qualify for CalFresh (see Figure 3). Of these, only having a meal plan that provided at least half of food needs or having an income that exceeded the CalFresh eligibility threshold superseded all other exemptions. A student who did not work 20 or more hours per week (or 80 hours per month), or have dependent children, or qualify for work study programs could still meet a different exemption and qualify.
Figure 3. Answers to Question 5 reported as percentages and number of respondents.

Question 6 asked, “Did having the choice to do your interview over the phone with the Department of Health and Human Services influence your decision to apply for CalFresh?” A total of 123 responded, with 52 (42.28%) replying “yes” and 44 (35.77%) replying “no.” Previously, applicants had been required to attend an in-person interview.
California ranks 49 out of 50 states in the percentage of eligible SNAP residents who actually receive benefits (Eslami & Cunnyngham, 2014). This change aims to increase accessibility and therefore enrollment.

Of 123 respondents to both Questions 7 and 8, 28 (22.76%) reported they felt lack of food played a role in delaying graduation (Figure 4) and 76 (61.79%) felt lack of food played a role in lowering academic performance in college (see Figure 5).

Figure 4. Answers to Question 7 reported as percentages and number of respondents.
Respondents Eligible for CalFresh

Sixty-one of 127 respondents (48.03%) answered “yes” to Question 1, which asked if they had been determined as eligible for CalFresh. Of those, 59 answered Question 4, which sought to identify exemptions the students met. Thirty-seven of those 59 (62.71%) reported they were approved for a federal/state funded work study program; 29 (78.38%) of those 37 identified work study eligibility as their only CalFresh exemption. Eighteen (30.51%) worked at least 20 hours a week or 80 hours a month at
minimum wage or higher. Twelve (20.34%) identified themselves as full-time students, single parents and had responsibility for a child under the age of 12. Eight (13.56%) had primary responsibility for the physical care of at least one child under the age of six. Those with children under the age of six were more likely to qualify (80%) than those who cared for children under 12, were single and full-time students (60%) (See Figure 6).
Figure 6. Answers to Question 4 for those who replied "yes" to Question 3. Reported as percentages and number of respondents.

All 61 respondents who answered “yes” to being determined eligible for CalFresh responded to Questions 7 and 8, which sought to identify if lack of food had played a role in delaying graduation or lowering academic performance in college. Twelve (19.67%)
said they felt lack of food played a role in delaying their graduation (see Figure 7) and 38
(62.3%) said they felt lack of food had played a role in lowering their academic
performance in college (Figure 8).

Figure 7. Answers to Question 7 for those who replied "yes" to Question 3. Reported as percentages and
number of respondents.
Respondents Ineligible for CalFresh

A total of 33 responded “no” to being determined as eligible for CalFresh. Ten of the 33 (30.33%) neither qualified for work study, nor were employed 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month, nor had dependent children. Four (12.12%) were international students, which usually disqualifies an applicant.

Several of the 33 who answered “no” to being determined as eligible for CalFresh later identified in the survey that they met at least one exemption for CalFresh.
qualification. Possible explanations include: (1) misunderstanding the question; (2) clicking on the incorrect answer, either for Question 3, or a subsequent question that identified them as meeting an exemption; (3) misunderstanding or being misinformed of their qualification status; or (4) having another factor which disqualified them from the program despite meeting one or more of the other exemptions. Four of the 17 who responded “no” to being eligible for CalFresh (23.53%) worked at least 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month of paid employment, three (17.65%) were approved for work study, two (11.76%) had the primary responsibility of at least one child under six, five (29.41%) were full-time students, single parents and had the responsibility for a child under 12, one (5.88%) was placed in college by EDD, WIA, Vocational Rehabilitation or similar government employment or training program and one (5.88%) was deemed physically or mentally unfit for employment.

Some respondents provided illustrations of circumstances that disqualified him or her even though (s)he met one of the exemptions. For example, one of the single parents reported (s)he worked 16-18 hours per week and would have financially qualified for work study programs, but was denied federal aid due to exceeding credit hour limits. Another student reported attending school full time, volunteering 10 hours per week and not having enough financial aid to cover tuition and fees. However, (s)he did not qualify for work study, nor did (s)he have dependent children. Two of the three who reported they were ineligible for CalFresh but work study eligible had a meal plan that provided 50 percent or more of their food.
Twenty-nine of the 33 who answered “no” to being determined eligible for CalFresh responded to Question 5, which aimed to identify exemptions the students did not meet. Nineteen of the 29 (65.52%) indicated they did not work 20 or more hours per week or 80 hours per month of paid employment, 15 (51.72%) did not qualify for work study, 17 (58.62%) did not have dependent children of any age, five (17.24%) reported their income was too high and seven (24.14%) had a campus meal plan that provided more than 50 percent of their meals. These meals plans disqualify students from CalFresh, even if they meet one or more of the other exemptions (see Figure 9).
Figure 9. Answers to Question 5 for those who replied "no" to Question 3. Reported as percentages and number of respondents.

Thirty-one of the 33 answered Questions 7 and 8. Nine (29.03%) felt lack of food played a role in delaying their graduation (Figure 10), while 19 (61.29%) felt lack of food
had played a role in lowering their academic performance in college (Figure 11). Five of the 10 (50%) respondents who did not qualify for CalFresh, answered Questions 7 and 8 and neither worked 20 or more hours per week (or 80 hours per month), nor qualified for work study, nor had dependent children felt lack of food had played a role in delaying graduation. Six (60%) felt lack of food had played a role in lowering academic performance. Two of the four international students (50%) felt lack of food had played a role in lowering academic performance.
Figure 10. Answers to Question 7 for those who replied "no" to Question 3. Reported as percentages and number of respondents.
Figure 11. Answers to Question 8 for those who replied "no" to Question 3. Reported as percentages and number of respondents.

**CalFresh Eligibility Still Being Determined**

Sixteen respondents answered that their eligibility to CalFresh was still being determined, making it likely they had an application in-process. Twelve of the sixteen (75%) indicated they met at least one exemption that may qualify them for the program. Thirteen of the 16 responded to Question 3. Of those, eight were approved for work study (61.54%); two (15.38%) were full-time students, single parents and had responsibility for
a child under the age of 12; one (7.69%) was placed in college by EDD, WIA, Vocational Rehabilitation or similar government employment or training program; and three (23.08%) were deemed mentally or physically unfit for employment. All 16 of those who reported their eligibility for CalFresh was still being determined responded to Questions 7 and 8. Three (18.75%) felt lack of food had played a role in delaying graduation and nine (56.25%) felt lack of food had played a role in lowering academic performance in college.

**Quantitative Results Summary**

Data revealed the majority of college students who participated in the survey at Humboldt State University were not eligible for CalFresh. Qualifying for a federally or state-funded work study program was the most commonly met CalFresh exemption. The majority of those who met this exemption did not indicate they met any other exemption. An estimated one-fifth of respondents were parents, with the possibility that this proportion was higher. Over half of students did not work 20 or more hours (or 80 hours per month) of paid employment and approximately one-third did not qualify for work study programs. A high proportion of respondents felt lack of food had played a role in lowering their academic performance in college, while a significant minority believed lack of food had played a role in delaying their graduation. Those who did not qualify for CalFresh were more likely to report that lack of food had played a role in delaying their graduation, but not more likely to report lack of food had played a role in lowering academic performance in college.
Qualitative Results

Employment Requirements

The most formidable barrier to qualifying for CalFresh was the work hour requirement. Only a quarter of students were employed 20 or more hours per week or 80 hours per month. This regulation does not consider understandable and extenuating circumstances that may prevent, or make it unrealistic, for students to meet this requirement. For instance, jobs for which a student qualifies and that meet the hourly requirements may not be available; employers may not be willing to flex around student schedules, which often shift every semester and leave the student unavailable at conventional work hours; and full-time credit loads — particularly in conjunction with unpaid internship or volunteer hours required by an academic program — may make it unrealistic for a student to work 20 hours per week. Indeed, some students feel forced to choose between working and fulfilling their program requirements. While other CalFresh clients may perform volunteer, community service and/or employment search hours in lieu of this requirement, college students cannot. Furthermore, the work requirement for most able-bodied persons applying in any county in California has been waived until at least September 30, 2015 — but, again, not for college students. (State of California, Department of Social Services, 2007). Several respondents provided quotes that demonstrate these situations.

*I work 10 hours a week doing volunteer/internship work where I am unpaid. I go to school full time. I do not receive enough financial aid to cover my full tuition/fees. I should definitely qualify for CalFresh, but unfortunately, none of those matter.*
I had to quit my full time job in order to attend my internship.

I'm currently a full time student but my current CalFresh benefits are to expire in April. I can re-apply but I won't qualify because I'm a full time student but only working 18 hours a week. My job will not give me 20 hours a week (which CalFresh requires for full time students).

I work but I am unpaid. Also, my parents pay for two other college students, and soon to be 3 others once my little brother gets into college this coming fall.

Another barrier within the California State University system is that no student can work more than 20 hours per week in any combination of campus jobs (California State University, 2012). This motivates campus employers to schedule their employees for just under 20 hours to guard against overages. This leaves such students in the difficult and improbable situation of finding a second employer willing to hire them for just a few hours a week so they can meet SNAP eligibility requirements.

... I don't work enough hours on campus to buy food and pay bills. I am only allowed to work 20 hours a week at The J and even then, management doesn't give 20 hours, only 18 hours in fear of students going over 20 hour limit.

**Student Parents**

Student parents with children under the age of six must meet no other requirement to qualify for CalFresh. For student parents with children between the ages of six and 12, they must be attending college full time, be single and demonstrate that adequate childcare enabling them to attend school and work 20 hours per week, or participate in a work study program, is not available. This is determined on a case-by-case basis. (State of California, Department of Social Services, 2007). This leaves single parents in the difficult position of having to work part time, attend school full time (if otherwise
ineligible, such as through a work study program) and take care of children in order to qualify. If such a parent, then, has child care subsidized by the state that enables him or her to work part time, this calls into question the cost efficacy of this policy, as well as its practicality for parents attempting to further their education. This also leaves partnered parents and parents with children over twelve subject to regulations imposed on other college students, which are often difficult for non-parent students to meet. This leads more student parents with children under six able to qualify than student parents with older children. Student parents conveyed their need for the SNAP program. In response to Question 2, “Did you complete the CalFresh application? Why or why not?” two parents gave the following responses:

Yes, because I needed the extra help to feed my children, while I am in school.

Going to school full time does not leave me with much additional time to work, pay the bills, and raise my family of 3. CalFresh really helps us with eating right and staying healthy.

**Potential Effects of Food Insecurity on Academic Performance and Timely Graduation**

Over 60 (n=x) percent of respondents overall indicated lack of food had played a part in lowering their academic performance in college and approximately one-quarter felt it had played a role in delaying graduation. This is in line with other literature indicating lower academic performance is associated with food insecurity for college students (Patton-Lopez, et.al., 2014; Maroto, 2013). Several respondents indicated there
were times they had to make the choice between either participating in, or paying for, their education or paying for living expenses, including food.

Yes [I applied for CalFresh] because I didn't have money to eat good. I tapped into my rent money for food then had no money to eat. It was scary.

Although it was not a situation as drastic as withdrawing from class or dropping out for a semester, the lack of food in my household has affected my ability to focus and fully participate in classes. Also having to choose between buying a textbook or food has occurred.

School is important to me so rather than quit school, I ate less each day. Sometimes only 1 or 2 meals a day when money was more tight.

Hunger causes changes in mood, fatigue and lower concentration. If I am too busy working to get money for food, I will skip class.

I would drop courses or not take as many in order to work additional hours at my jobs to make ends meet. This would also take time away from my reading.

Sometimes I have to miss classes to pick up hours so I can pay for food.

Several respondents also indicated that lack of food had produced preoccupation with how to obtain food and/or hunger symptoms, to the point of affecting their studies.

Anxiety over obtaining food is an indication of food insecurity, beginning with moderate food insecurity and occurring in low and very low food insecurity stages as well. Physical hunger is a sign of very low food insecurity (USDA, ERS, 2014).

In the past, I have reduced my class load or taken a second job to make ends meet in order to feed my kids. This has lengthened my stay in community college, as it took longer to be eligible to transfer.

I was struggling with academic performance due to exceedingly stressful living situations. I was having difficulty paying for food because my financial aid was cut in half due to withdrawing from classes. I did not feel I had enough energy to follow
through with all my classes. Furthermore, there was a major recession and the jobs that I would be able to work were scarce.

I have gone to school hungry before and not been able to focus properly, hindering my performance and thus my chance at graduating.

Lack of proper nutrition is a major reason for lower academic performance because I do not have the energy to give my all and at times can find myself falling asleep or leaving school from hunger.

Again, without food I can not focus on paying attention in class because I am worried about where I am going to get food from.

I spend time in class thinking about obtaining food and could not focus on my academic performance.

I've lost the ability to concentrate on learning before due to hunger. Even missing out on a single class can have an impact on the rest of the semester.

...I have had problems staying focused when I was hungry. I also am a member of the cross country and track team and my performances were poor because of lack of energy.

**Misinformation and Lack of Information on SNAP Eligibility for College Students**

Anecdotal feedback from the Oh SNAP! Campus Food Programs staff and interns at HSU indicate that many students were unaware that CalFresh was the term used for the California SNAP program. In addition, many were unaware what SNAP was, but knew what the term “food stamps” meant. Many students did not know that college students could qualify at all for the program and many of those who did were misinformed or admitted a high level of confusion over which students did, and did not, qualify. This statement was provided by one of the respondents:

...although I had wanted to get food stamps for many semesters now, I had heard through people (mainly students) that it was difficult for students to get it so I did not even try. It wasn’t until I went into the OH SNAP office were they able to help me fill the form out and explain everything clearly.
**Student Reflections on Gaining Benefits**

While this study was not designed to assess how CalFresh may improve food insecurity for those students who qualify, some respondents who did qualify provided comments regarding the effects of receiving the benefit.

*I completed the CalFresh application process because my parents went back to school and could not help me pay for meals. It also gave me the opportunity to afford to pay for my textbooks this semester.*

*Before being approved for CalFresh, I would struggle to focus on my studies because of hunger.*

*During the time I applied for CalFresh, I had a low amount of points on my meal plan (which is why I applied for CalFresh), and I had to "ration" how many points I used before I received CalFresh. I was hungry a lot during class and couldn't focus as much.*

**Other Considerations**

Students are ineligible for SNAP if they have a meal plan that provides 50 percent or more of his or her food. This is true even if they meet one of the other exemptions.

Many colleges and universities require students who reside on campus to purchase a meal plan. These plans are often inadequate to provide for nutritional needs. If that student is also low-income, it leaves him or her vulnerable to food insecurity. International students are also ineligible for CalFresh (State of California, Department of Health and Human Services, 2007).
Results Summary

This study failed to reject the following hypotheses: (1) the majority of students would not qualify for CalFresh; (2) the primary eligibility barrier for students qualifying for CalFresh would be the 20-hour a week (or 80-hour a month) work requirement; (3) the majority of students taking the survey would not have dependent children; (4) having the option to conduct the determination interview over the phone would influence students’ decision to apply; and (5) students who did not qualify for CalFresh would state that lack of food delayed graduation at a higher rate than students who did qualify. This study rejected the hypothesis that students who did not qualify for CalFresh would state that lack of food played a role in lowering their academic performance in college at a higher rate than those who did qualify.
Discussion

All of the barriers students faced in qualifying for CalFresh in this study were due to federal, not state, policies. These regulations do not necessarily reflect food security status. Therefore, all 21 million students attending college in the United States (Institute for Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2015) are subject to these regulations, regardless of whether or not they are food insecure. In fact, not meeting the employment exemption may put students at an increased risk of food insecurity, as low-income is a primary risk factor (Coleman-Jensen, Nord & Singh, 2013). This leads to situations in which students who are unable to work, for a variety of reasons, are also ineligible for a program that may help mitigate the financial burdens created by lack of adequate employment.

Current literature on college student food insecurity has not examined the rate at which students are meeting, or not meeting SNAP exemptions and how this may be correlated with food insecurity and/or academic performance and/or delayed graduation. The limited data that is available confirms low income is linked with food insecurity (Coleman-Jensen, Nord & Singh, 2013). It also suggests food insecurity is linked with lower academic performance in college (Patton-Lopez, et.al., 2014; Maroto, 2013) and that college students have a lower participation rate in food programs (Patton-Lopez, et.al., 2014; Freudenberg, et.al., 2011). In addition, delayed graduation or not graduating at all may be linked with limited resources, as indicated by disproportionately lower four-year graduation rates of low-income and first-generation students (Engle & Tinto V, 2008).
As work study eligibility was the most common exemption met—particularly as it was the only exemption met for the majority of those who qualified for work study—it is critical to consider circumstances surrounding how college students’ work study eligibility may affect their ability to qualify for SNAP. SNAP, which is the federal program overseeing state programs, outlines that students must “Take part in a State or federally financed work study program,” (USDA, FNS, 2014) while CalFresh — the California SNAP program — states students must “Be approved for state or federally financed work study for the current school term, as defined by the institution, and anticipate working during the term” (State of California, Department of Social Services, 2007). While subtle, different California counties interpret this regulation in different ways. Some require students to be actively employed via work study, but others take into consideration that colleges and universities often do not have enough vacant positions for all their students who qualify. Some universities are not even accepting work study applications due to lack of open positions (Johnson, 2015). Therefore, some counties such as Humboldt (where this study takes place) allow students to meet this exemption if (s)he qualifies for work study, no positions are available at his/her institution, and that (s)he expects to work if and when such a position is offered. Anecdotal information from Oh SNAP! Campus Food Programs workers suggest that the large majority of those who qualified via work study did so only because of the latter interpretation, as few of these positions were available at HSU. Many of the students who were not actively employed via work study, however, were not initially aware they were qualified for the program.
Oh SNAP! staff directed these students to the financial aid office, where they were able to determine this.

Policy changes on the federal level are necessary in order to reduce the number of food insecure college students denied SNAP benefits. The most formidable barrier was the required 20 hours of weekly (or 80 hours monthly) of paid work for most able-bodied students. It is recommended this requirement be removed for full-time students who demonstrate low-income status at or below the 200 percent Poverty Level (the current income threshold for CalFresh benefits) (State of California, Department of Social Services, 2014) — either through financial aid eligibility or (as financial aid is often based on a student’s family’s income, even when that family is unable to provide for living expenses), the same income verifications a state would require for non-students. Barring the removal of this requirement, substitutions should be allowed to fulfill the work requirement, as they are for clients on certain welfare programs who receive this benefit, such as CalWORKS (State of California, Department of Social Services, 2014). These substitutions could include volunteer hours, unpaid internship hours and high credit load. For instance, credit hours could be assigned a value in work hours (such as 1 credit hour could be equivalent to 1 work hour per week). This would also help part-time students qualify, but the work hour substitution would then be in proportion to the number of credit hours.

Financially qualifying for a state of federally financed work study program, and the willingness to accept such a position if it has not yet been offered, should be sufficient to qualify for SNAP. Work study qualification indicates low-income status, but
these positions are not available on many college and university campuses at the rate their students qualify for them. Not being actively employed in a work study position, even if one qualifies, is often due to no fault of the student.

Full-time student parents of any age should qualify for SNAP. Part-time student parents with children under the age of 12 should also qualify. Parenthood is not only a financial responsibility, it is a responsibility of time. Student parents of children between the ages of six and 12, under current regulations, are forced to be a full-time student and work at least 20 hours of paid employment per week unless they can demonstrate child care is unavailable. Yet this isn’t simply about child care — it’s about a family’s qualify of life. Asking a full-time parent to also be a full-time student, as well as a part-time employee to qualify for a benefit increasing the likelihood of obtaining proper nutrition, is creating a situation in which academic success is more difficult.

It is additionally recommended that colleges and universities conduct more campus-wide food security evaluations — not only the rate of occurrence, but the degree of food insecurity and its effect on academic performance, retention and four-year graduation rates. All of the research currently conducted in this area confirm food insecurity is significant problem on studied campuses; some studies have also confirmed it affects the academic performance of those student experiencing food insecurity.

To address this issue, collaborative frameworks are essential. Collaborative frameworks among departments, student service sectors, and students allow outreach webs to form across various disciplines, ethnic groups, age groups and levels of need. What source of information one student trusts — or who (s)he is comfortable approaching about this
major life stressor — may differ dramatically from that of another. Conveying clear information about who may qualify, and doing so in a supportive and unbiased manner is critical. The success of the HSU Oh SNAP! Campus Food Programs has been largely attributed to collaborative frameworks, student leadership and faculty guidance that supported these two elements. This program (“Oh SNAP!”) began as a grassroots, student led, faculty supported movement in the academic year of 2013-14. It offered a few CalFresh outreach events and one food security survey. Those few events highlighted a pressing need. Faculty and students responded swiftly, efficiently and collaboratively. In under 18 months, those efforts progressed to an official university program, named Oh SNAP! Campus Food Programs, with an on-campus location open four days a week offering a free food cupboard, free shuttle service to a local food bank and farmer’s market, free cooking demonstrations and CalFresh application assistance. Between October 2014 and April 2014, this program served nearly 1,000 on a campus of approximately 8,000 students.
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Hello! I am a Master of Social Work student at Humboldt State University. Through my involvement with the student-led food security program, Oh SNAP!, I learned of various policies that determine whether or not college students qualify for CalFresh, the California Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). CalFresh provides resources to buy food. Many food insecure students who could benefit from this assistance do not qualify. However, these reasons have not been properly documented. Without documentation, policy changes can be difficult. Please share your experience! Whether or not you qualified for CalFresh, telling of your experience will help build the picture of who does, and does not, have access to this resource. Thank you!

1. You have been asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to identify reasons college students at HSU did, or did not, meet the eligibility requirements for CalFresh. The information learned may also be useful to other social workers and may be published. Direct quotes from your responses may be used without any information that could be connected to your identity if you give permission to do so. If you do not wish your direct quotes to be used in this way, you are still welcome to take the survey. The survey should take you about five minutes to complete. There are no benefits or risks to you for participating. If applicable, information from your sign-in form at the Oh Snap! Pantry may also be used for this study to help understand CalFresh eligibility issues with students. If this applies, we will combine your survey with the information on your sign-in form. Then all names will be REMOVED so your information will not be linked with the data. Responses are confidential and no identifying information will be used when and if data is shared or published. The data collected will remain in a password protected computer.

For more information you may contact the Primary Investigator, Heather King at hek7@humboldt.edu or Jennifer Maguire, 707, 826-4465.

I understand that the Investigator will answer any questions I have about this study. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may stop at any time.
If you have any concerns with this study, contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Dr. Ethan Gahtan, at eg51@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-4545.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, report them to the Humboldt State University Dean of Research, Dr. Rhea Williamson, at Rhea.Williamson@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-5169.

Upon request we will give you a copy of the informed consent form to retain for your future reference. If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research as described, please begin the electronic survey. Thank you for your participation in this research.

☐ I agree

☐ I do not agree

PLEASE PROVIDE THE EMAIL you used to sign in at Oh SNAP! (if applicable). This will help us better understand who does and does not qualify for CalFresh and will not be shared or linked with your responses in the final results (as outlined in the above consent form). PLEASE TAKE THE SURVEY EVEN IF YOU DO NOT PROVIDE YOUR EMAIL; your responses will still be used.

2. Did you complete the CalFresh application process? Briefly, why or why not?

3. Were you determined as eligible for CalFresh?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Eligibility Still Being Determined (Don't Know Yet)

☐ Not Applicable (Did not apply)
4. CalFresh is only given to college students if they meet certain exemptions. Did you meet any of the following exemptions? (Check all that apply please.) If you did NOT apply for CalFresh, please choose "Not Applicable (Did not apply for CalFresh).

☐ Work an average of 20 or more hours per week OR 80 hours per month of paid employment.
☐ Approved for federal/state work study in the current term and anticipate working in the current term.
☐ Have primary responsibility for the physical care of a dependent child in your household under age 6.
☐ Place in college by EDD, WIA, Vocational Rehabilitation or similar government employment or training program.
☐ Physically or mentally unfit for employment.
☐ Not applicable (Did not apply for CalFresh)

Other Reasons (please specify) or Additional Comments

5. Below are some common reasons college students are not eligible or reasons that can affect eligibility. Please check all that apply to you. If you were not eligible for CalFresh, why? If there is a different or additional reason other than those listed here, please let us know.

☐ You do not work 20 or more paid hours per week.
☐ You did not qualify for federal/state work study.
☐ You do not have dependent children.
☐ You were convicted of a drug related felony.
☐ Your income was too high.
☐ You have a campus meal plan that provides 50% or more of your food.
☐ Not Applicable (Did not apply for CalFresh).

Other Reason or Reasons (please specify)
6. Did having the choice to do your interview with the Department of Health and Human Services over the phone influence your decision to apply for CalFresh?

- Yes
- No
- No Applicable (Did not apply for CalFresh)

Additional Comment (voluntary)

7. Has lack of food in your household ever played a role in delaying your graduation? For instance, did you ever withdraw from classes, in part or in whole, because you were unable to pay for food? Please say “yes” or “no” and briefly describe the circumstances.

- Yes
- No

Description:
8. Do you feel lack of food has ever played a role in lowering your academic performance in college? Please say “yes” or “no” and give a brief explanation.

☐ Yes
☐ No

Description/Explanation:

☐ 9. You may use direct quotes from my survey as a part of sharing the results of this survey. I understand any information identifying me as the originator of this quote will be removed.

☐ Yes you may use my direct quotes

☐ without identifying information. No, you may not use my direct quotes.