

COLLEGE STUDENT PERSPECTIVES OF FOOD INSECURITY DURING THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A PHOTO-ELICITATION NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

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Food insecurity is a phenomenon with vast and deep implications on a college student's personal and academic experience. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, some college students faced exacerbated food insecurity due to campus closings, fluctuating hours and availability of food options on campus, shifting living arrangements (e.g., limited or no on campus housing), and a global economic recession. Previous scholarship has primarily focused research from the perspective of the student at one point in time without consideration of social identities within political and historical contexts. Employing narrative inquiry and photo elicitation through the lens of intersectionality theory, this study will examine marginalized college student experiences with food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the inquiry seeks to explore how intersecting social identities of students influenced internal and external campus support systems, perceptions of food insecurity on academic performance, and higher education's general response to the twin crises of a global pandemic and college student food insecurity. This research will extend existing knowledge of the lived experiences of food insecure college students and provide insight on the inequities encountered through higher education's power systems, policies, and practices during the pandemic.

KEY WORDS: Food insecurity, College student, Higher education, Pandemic, Food secure, COVID-19, Economic recession.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The World Food Program (2020) warned in their report that the health and economic threat of COVID-19 would trigger an international food security crisis. Disruptions to food supply chains could create food shortages as the world continues grappling with a shifting virus and its impact. Further, the economy is unstable. Unemployment has been see-sawing back and forth, reaching as high as 14.7% in the United States, with many people underemployed (U.S. Department of Labor and Statistics, 2020). By November 2020, more than 50 million individuals faced food insecurity caused or enhanced by the economic recession generated by the pandemic (Feeding America, 2020). Food is a vital provision to sustain life; it is an essential basic human right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) Article 25 states:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of myself and of his [sic] family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care, and necessary social services, and the right to securing in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his [sic] control (p. 7).

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) distinguishes four conditions be met for an individual to be considered food secure: (a) access, (b) availability, (c) utilization, and (d) stability. If one of these conditions are not met, an individual is considered food insecure. Food insecurity is defined as inadequate or unpredictable obtainability of nutritionally sufficient and culturally appropriate foods or

lacking the means or capacity to secure provisions through socially accepted means (Anderson, 1990; Hamilton et al., 1997). It is a prominent global public health concern and matter of social justice, becoming more egregious as the pandemic continues.

Throughout the United States, various federal, state, and local organizations have established food assistance programs to provide sufficient food access to the overall and targeted sub-group populations (e.g., families and individuals low socioeconomic status, persons 65 years and older, and children and adolescents attending public schools) (Feeding America, 2020). However, these organizations have become overwhelmed and are struggling to meet the demand as thousands of individuals, many for the first time, are facing food insecurity due to the economic recession caused by the global pandemic. As reported by Feeding America (2019), in 2019 nearly 40 million individuals in the United States benefitted from free meal programs and visited over 60,000 food banks and soup kitchens. Food insecurity projections based on historic trends estimate between 4.1 million to 17.1 million more individuals will experience food insecurity as the economic recession from the pandemic continues (Feeding America, 2020).

Universities are not exempt from assisting their students as more grapple with acute or moderate food insecurity. Prior to the pandemic, several researchers (Cady, 2014; El Zein et al., 2018; Gaines et al., 2014; Freudenberg et al., 2019; Shanafelt et al., 2016) had explored food insecurity rates among college students and reported rates 12% higher than for the overall U.S. population. Reasons for significantly higher food insecurity rates among this sub-population included high college tuition costs, weak employment markets, federal and state food assistant program requirements that exclude college students, and insufficient academic and personal financial resources (Cady, 2014;

Freudenberg et al., 2019; Stettner & Novello, 2020). In a collaborative study by universities in the United Kingdom (UK) and United States (U.S.), approximately 41% of students surveyed were concerned they would not have enough food during university closures caused by the pandemic (Defeyter et al., 2020). Also noted within the study, 35% of those students reported experiencing acute or moderate levels of food insecurity (Defeyter et al., 2020).

Statement of Problem

Food insecurity within institutions of higher education has been a growing and recognized concern within higher education (Adamovic et al., 2020; Cady, 2014; Lee et al., 2018; Payne-Sturges et al., 2017). Before COVID-19, tuition costs and student loan debt were significant contributing factors to food insecurity (Gaines et al., 2014; Maynard, et al., 2018; Twill et al., 2016), and are now compounded by a volatile economy and a reduction in financial aid packages (Ochs Rosinger, 2019). Students are being confronted with substantial unmet financial needs that surpass their available resources, directly influencing their ability to address their basic needs including food and housing (Cheng et al., 2017; Morrissey, 2019; Niles et al., 2020).

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, students were struggling with food insecurity. A 2018 nationwide survey jointly conducted between Temple University and the Wisconsin HOPE Lab (Goldrick-Rab, et al., 2018), identified 1 in 3 students as food insecure, described as grappling with obtaining sufficient food supply within the past 30 days. In the wake of COVID-19, university closures and mass layoffs have driven some students to experience food insecurity for the first time and amplified the distress for those already struggling with the issue. Much is still unknown as to how students have

been both directly and/or indirectly impacted due to the pandemic regarding their food security status.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study is to gain awareness and understanding into food insecurity experienced by college students during the COVID-19 pandemic utilizing an intersectional framework. The study will examine how intersecting social identities of students influenced internal and external campus support systems, perceptions of food insecurity on academic performance, and higher education's general response to the twin crises of a global pandemic and college student food insecurity.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is the centering of student narratives of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic through intersectional data collection and analytical approaches. In addition to narrative inquiry, the study harnesses photo elicitation methodology and intersectionality theory in its design. Narrative inquiry examines a participant's lived experiences and the meaning they interpret through their voice (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Employing the use of photo elicitation will support and stimulate participants' perspectives, enhancing the narrative interviews, and allowing a greater insight into how college students experienced food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic (Latz, 2017). Through the framework of intersectionality, the study will extend existing knowledge of the lived experiences of food insecure college students and provide insight on the inequities encountered through higher education's power systems, policies, and practices during the pandemic.

Countless students rely on university housing, dining halls, and work-study programs for their primary housing, food, and income needs (Baum, 2019; Cady, 2014; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). Currently, no peer-reviewed research covers the topic of student food insecurity during a global pandemic and economic recession or how higher education's response impacted students (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017). To understand this phenomenon is to examine the issue during the present time (Nord et al., 2011). By exploring the phenomena, college administrators will be able to identify the on and off campus support mechanisms students relied on during the pandemic and economic fall-out to meet their basic and academic needs. Greater pressure is being placed on universities to fill the void as students and families suffering from food insecurity have risen drastically due to COVID-19 (Lowe, 2020; Wolcott, 2020). Finally, in the absence of university policies to assist food insecure students on campus, the outcomes of the study could be considered to guide administrators and legislators for permanent change to support students during future pandemics and disasters. The study has the potential to inform college and university administrators, legislators, food programs, and non-profit groups on the experiences of food insecurity during one pandemic for this specific sub-population of college students. Insights may help inform policy, practice, and preparation.

Definition of Terms

In this section, I provide definitions for the following terms noted and defined in professional and academic scholarship for the framework of this research: food insecurity, food security, economic recession, pandemic, and novel coronavirus.

Food Security: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has defined as “the access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life” (USDA, 2020). Food secure individuals have the means to promptly obtain nutritionally sufficient foods and are able to obtain these provisions through socially accepted means (i.e., excluding scavenging and stealing for food) (Anderson, 1990; Nord et al., 2009).

Food Insecurity: the restricted access to nutritionally sufficient and culturally appropriate foods that can be acquired in a socially accepted manner (Anderson, 1990; Hamilton et al., 1997) and is a condition resulting from the absence of financial and physical resources (i.e., proximity to food supply chains, transportation, etc.) that in turn restricts food access (Bickel et al., 2000). Food insecurity is assessed through levels based on the responses of a survey produced by the USDA and is contingent on an individual’s variation of reduced quality, assortment, or value of diet in addition to skipping meals or forgoing entire days without eating (Nord et al., 2011). The USDA classifies individuals along a continuum ranging in severity: very low food security, low food security, marginal food security, and food secure (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2020). Regarding this scale, food insecurity is classified withing low and very low food security categories.

Pandemic: defined as an outbreak and global spread of a new disease and is typically used when an outbreak is caused by a strain of influenza (CDC, 2020b). Other than strains of the flu, no other respiratory illness has been documented from its origin to community spread. However, due to the lack of understanding of COVID-19 transmission and global spread, it has been deemed a pandemic. In late January 2020 the World Health Organization (2020) declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a “public

health emergency of international concern” (WHO, 2020), as the virus spread at rapid pace across continents. The public health crisis was deemed a pandemic on March 11, 2020, by the World Health Organization (CDC, 2020a). However, there is no actual scientific definition of what constitutes a pandemic (CDC, 2020a).

Economic Recession: is a breakdown of local, state, national, or global economies occurring during a time of crisis. Also referred to as economic recession, can occur rapidly due to unforeseen events, or over a period of time by known circumstances. An economic recession is identified as a normal part of the economic cycle, as it is decline of normal market conditions (Altman, 2009).

Novel Coronavirus: also known as *COVID-19*, is a virus that targets and affects cells in the respiratory system (CDC, 2020b). COVID-19 is a new and undocumented strain of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) that has the ability to cause acute respiratory distress in an individual. The virus is responsible for over 1,500,000 deaths worldwide, and over 380,000 deaths in the United States at the time of this writing (CDC, 2020b). Due to the widespread, speedy transmission of the virus, worldwide travel restrictions and economic shutdowns have occurred, resulting in many regions worldwide experiencing an economic recession (CDC, 2020a).

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by intersectionality theory. The development of intersectionality "challenged the notion that 'gender' was the primary factor determining a woman's fate" (hooks, 2014, p. 11) The past omission of black women throughout the feminist movement in the United States inspired Black 19th and 20th-century feminists who strongly opposed their chronicled oppression to develop the theory. Intersectionality

theory formally emerged in the early 1970s during the feminist movement, as Black women were unable to associate with concerns of conventional (White) feminists (Crenshaw, 1989). Black women were confronted with sexism while contributing to the Civil Rights movement, being completely disregarded for consideration of any leadership role (McCall, 2005). The compounded perspective of encountering racism in the feminist movement and sexism within the civil rights movement propelled black women to organize a feminist framework that focused their intersectional experiences of oppression. Understanding that the types of persecution faced by White women contrasted greatly from those experienced by Black women, Black feminists investigated methods to recognize in what way gender, race, sexuality, and socioeconomic class intersected (Combahee River Collective, 1974).

Kimberlé Crenshaw popularized the term intersectionality in 1989. In her work, Crenshaw (1989) defined intersectionality as individuals existing at intersections of overlapping systems of privilege and oppression. This theoretical framework stemmed from the critiques raised by feminist and critical race theories, with postmodernism and post-structuralism as theoretical influences. Intersectionality theory emphasized how individuals' social identities (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and (dis)ability) intersect to create differential experiences of oppression. Crenshaw (1989) maintained that race-only or gender-only frameworks perpetuated partial and inadequate analyses of the social injustices that illustrated Black women's lives, and that race, gender, socioeconomic class, and sexuality all influenced Black women's lived experiences.

Intersectionality, as a theoretical framework and multidimensional lens, has evolved into a variety of approaches intended to explore previously understudied origins of identity and their correlation to unequal social outcomes (International Encyclopedia, 2015). The framework has become a prominent facet of the critical vocabularies of queer and feminist studies and is employed in the scholarship of gender, queer, and ethnic studies (Talwar, 2010). Intersectionality places emphasis on lived experiences and the examination of identity salience subjected by systems of power and privilege and the interconnecting dispositions of such systems. It operates mutually as the analysis of power inequities, and the means by which the power inequities could be abolished. Intersectionality is not a theory of difference; it is a theory of oppression. Intersectionality recognizes that an individual's converging identities (e.g., "female" and "black") co-dependently exists as each identity informs the other, often creating a multifaceted junction of privilege and oppression. Hankivsky (2014) noted:

As researchers who employ intersectionality theory to analyze human experience beyond single categories of difference, it has been suggested that an intersectional approach is most qualified to critically investigate the complexity of multiple group similarities and differences, allowing evaluators to gain insight in the diversity-responsiveness of research, policy, and practice. (p. 238)

Viewing a student's experience through the lens of intersectionality is valuable in exploring the perception of food insecurity because food security "is based on a political analysis that challenges power structures blocking realization of the right to food" (Spieldoch, 2007, p. 12).

Food insecurity is often researched from the perspective of the individual at one point in time without the consideration of the social, political, and historical contexts that have influenced the individual's experience of food insecurity. Understanding how overlapping privileges and oppressions lead to the experience of food insecurity in the pandemic and a student's perspective regarding food security is critical in the comprehension of intersecting contexts (Younginer et al., 2015).

As universities and campuses have placed an emphasis on diversity and inclusion, higher education has employed the use of intersectionality theory through identity-based research (Bailey-Fakhoury & Frierson, 2017; Berrington et al., 2016; Dessel, 2015; Fenwick & Edwards, 2014; Gander, 2014; Jones & Abes, 2013; Miller, 2015; Phipps, 2017), but has not yet applied this theory in effort to understand the inequalities and systemic oppression experienced under the lens of food insecure college students. Therefore, the question remains about how research efforts to date have produced a more socially just institution. Considering the application of intersectionality within higher education research, it should be understood that, Intersectionality is not a label or an identity, it is an institutional practice. An individual or institution cannot simply be intersectional, individuals and institutions must enact intersectional feminist direct action, policy, and activism by purposefully centering and amplifying marginalized voices in the development of such acts in the first place (Poisson, 2018). The analysis of intersecting privileges and oppressions will provide insight in understanding the impacts of food insecurity during the pandemic and economic recession, as individuals will navigate the university's response differently.

Through the application of intersectionality theory in this study, college students will not be assumed as a homogenous collective, offering an understanding of how forms of power and systemic oppression influence a student's food security and potential barriers to food access during the pandemic and economic recession (Lokot & Avakyan, 2020; Ryan & Ayadi, 2020). The use of intersectionality theory will challenge the narrative of college students being a uniform collective offering a broad approach in conceptualizing how power systems and systemic marginalization during the pandemic and economic recession shaped a student's life experience concerning food security. Furthermore, the use of this theory will offer a critical approach in addressing higher education power systems that perpetuate inequities. Intersectionality will provide a multifaceted lens to the inequities faced by students who are unable to meet their basic needs as they navigate an educational system not designed for them (Bešić, 2020; Cassidy & Jackson, 2007; Giroix, 2010; Goldrick-Rab, 2016). Dominguez-Whitehead (2016) noted that employing the use of a social justice framework necessitates a broader lens in which to view food concerns that negatively impact a student's learning opportunities and academic outcomes. Intersectionality employed in this study will inform higher education researchers, policy makers, and administrators seeking to understand how the pandemic and economic recession affects the lives of food insecure students, bringing to light existing inequalities in an effort to provide a socially just campus through needed student support services and restructured institutional policies and practices.

Research Questions

The research questions were formulated based upon a review of the literature, which revealed a lack of scholarship of college student food insecurity through intersectional perspectives, coupled with a pandemic and economic recession.

1. How did college students experience food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession?
2. How do college students experience of intersecting oppressions (institutional, social, and cultural) arising from their social and personal identities (i.e., age, race, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, religion/religious beliefs, international students, non-US citizens, and social class/socioeconomic status) shape the experience of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How did an institution's response to the COVID-19 pandemic influence a college student's food insecurity status and shape their academic performance?

Limitations

All forms of research, qualitative and quantitative, present limitations to a study's outcomes and findings (Creswell, 2015; Ross & Zaidi, 2019). A limitation to this study is seeking participants at only one institution. A second limitation of the study is its restriction to individuals who self-select to participate. As data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, the study is limited to the self-reported experience of each of the participants.

Delimitations

I decided to perform this study at one 4-year public institution in southeast Texas. Another delimitation of my research was my decision to select participants who actively received services from the selected institution's on-campus food pantry at least once since March 2020. While some participants will be discussing their experiences from a reflective perspective, most will be discussing their experiences as developing in the moment as the pandemic and institution's response is ongoing. Data collection will be conducted through two interviews to be held through an online meeting service (i.e., Zoom), in addition to photo-elicitation in which participants will provide three original photos to be submitted as part of the inquiry. The decision to host interviews and collect photos through an online method offers the safest research protocols during the pandemic for both the participants and me.

Assumptions

The key underlying assumption of my study is the belief that all the participants in my study will respond honestly and candidly during the interview process. Additionally, I am assuming that the responses provided are an accurate representation of each participant's personal experience, resulting in trustworthy data. Declining to identify these assumptions would represent data that are not reflective of the lived experiences of students.

Organization of the Study

Through this photo elicitation narrative inquiry, I will investigate students experiencing food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession. Research questions are centered on how students make meaning of their lived

experiences with food insecurity during this unprecedented time. Intersectionality will be used as a framework in understanding experiences through interaction of social identities and how these are interconnected to produce experiences of both privilege and marginalization at the individual level. Chapter II presents a review of the literature demonstrating the complexity of food insecurity in the wake of a pandemic, encompassing literature reflecting (a) the extent of food insecurity in the U.S. and Higher Education prior to and during COVID-19; (b) student demographics and risk factors of food insecurity within higher education institutions; (c) student support mechanisms; (d) barriers to access of resources; (e) how academics are influenced by food insecurity; and (f) how narrative inquiry and photo-elicitation have been used to explore food insecurity in previous research. In Chapter III, I describe the research process (i.e., population, sampling, data collection, and procedures) and methodology. Chapter IV will provide the findings of my analysis. Lastly, in Chapter V, I will present an explanation of the experiences had by participants, provide an overview of the research conducted, summary of significant findings, implications, suggestions, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic and economic recession, the most current U.S. government reported data indicated that food insecurity affected one in seven households (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2018). A 2018 study of 43,000 students recorded 36% of college students had experienced food insecurity during some point within the past 30 days (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). Understanding the previously mentioned data illustrates millions of individuals face food insecurity during normal institutional and university operations. Extended university closures caused by the pandemic, or complete shutdowns due to economic factors, could place millions more at risk. There is currently no research examining how students experienced the pandemic and food insecurity. To recognize the complexity of food insecurity in the wake of a pandemic, literature reflecting the following will be examined: (a) the scope of food insecurity in the United States, and Higher Education, prior to and during COVID; (b) student demographics and risk factors of food insecurity within higher education institutions; (c) student support mechanisms and barriers to access of resources; and (d) how academics are influenced by food insecurity.

Food Insecurity in the United States and Higher Education Prior to the Pandemic

In 2019, prior to the onset of COVID-19, it was estimated more than 800 million individuals globally suffered from acute and chronic food insecurity. Armed government/civil conflicts, natural disasters, and economic shocks activate acute and chronic food insecurity, as each of these can disrupt global food supply chains and increase food price volatility. The United Nations World Food Program's (WFP) Global

Report on Food Crisis (2020) reported that 2019 had the highest number of individuals affected by any level of food insecurity since 2015. 135 million individuals in 55 countries have endured acute food crisis, with an additional 183 million on the cusp of slipping into that category (UNICEF, 2019; WFP, 2020). Worldwide it is estimated that one in three children under the age of five suffer from acute and severe food insecurity (UNICEF, 2019; WFP, 2020). Further, one in two children globally suffers from *hidden hunger* when the quality of food lacks the sufficient nutrient requirements needed for proper growth and development (Stein & Qaim, 2007).

During 2019, more than 38 million families in the United States lived in poverty, affecting more than 11 million children (Feeding America, 2020). Households experiencing poverty often report using multiple strategies and resources to ensure uninterrupted food access (Feeding America, 2020). There is no single community in the United States that is immune to food insecurity, as both rural and urban communities struggle with this crisis. A nationally recognized network of 200-member food banks, known as Feeding America, has provided nutritional support to approximately 46.5 million Americans every year since its inception (Weinfield et al., 2014). Through the Feeding America network, the nation's comprehensive research study series, *Hunger in America*, was designed as a "series of quadrennial studies that provided comprehensive demographic profiles of people seeking food assistance through the charitable sector" (Wienfield et al., 2014, p. 155). This sixth part of the study series employed the USDA's six-item Core Food Security Module, with the survey focusing on food security and assistance. The results of the study series indicated 84% of individuals who used one of the food banks within the vast network experienced moderate to acute food insecurity.

Ten percent of the total households surveyed identified as college students (Weinfield et al., 2014).

Additionally, over 90% of public and nonprofit private schools in the United States partake in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). These programs offer free or reduced meals to low socioeconomic children in K-12 grade levels in an effort to reduce food insecurity (Huang & Barnidge, 2016). For children to qualify for these programs the household earnings must be at or below 130% of the poverty level to receive meals at no charge, and earnings between 130%-180% qualify for reduced meal pricing for the 2020-2021 academic year (School Nutrition Association, 2020). These programs serve over 31 million children a year, with research findings (Gundersen et al., 2012) indicating a six percent reduction in low food security of households with children who participate in NSLP. Empirical literature (Artegag & Heflin, 2014; Bartfeld & Dunifon, 2006; Gundersen et al., 2012; Kabbani & Kmeid, 2005) has suggested households with students who participate in the free or reduced meal programs have a lower likelihood of food insecurity than households whose students do not participate. However, once a student graduates from high school there is no college equivalent to free or reduced meal programs. Students who utilized school meal programs due to lack of financial resources will experience the same constraints enrolling in college (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017).

Food Insecurity in Higher Education

In the past decade, researchers have centered on food insecurity among college students with findings indicating a significant prevalence. A Federal Government Accountability Office (2018) report on college student food insecurity estimated a range

from nine percent to just above 50%. There have been over 650 food pantries established within higher education institutions nationally (Goldrick-Rab, 2018). This provides evidence of the growing nationwide concern among higher education institutions as more are investing significant financial and physical resources to address students' basic needs.

Multiple surveys and reports show the prevalence of food insecurity on college campuses. In May 2011, 354 students were surveyed at Western Oregon University; among those students, 59% relayed being food insecure during some point in the year prior to the survey (Patton-Lopez et al., 2014). The data was a stark contrast to findings by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2012) reporting 14.5% of households were food insecure. Payne-Sturges et al. (2018) surveyed 237 students at a large mid-Atlantic 4-year institution and learned 15% of student respondents experienced food insecurity, and 16% of student respondents were at-risk for food insecurity. In similar surveys, two institutions in California, University of California and California State University, reported 40% and 42% of students, respectively, experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Martinez et al., 2016).

Levels of food insecurity vary widely among the vast majority of college institutional type (i.e., 4-year, 2-year, and vocational). Evaluations of student food insecurity frequencies in multiple studies (Blagg et al., 2017; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Martinez et al., 2017; & Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018) reported higher rates at 2-year than at 4-year institutions. Goldrick-Rab et al. (2018) performed a large, multi-institution study determining 42% of community college students responded as being food insecure in the previous 30 days, and 36% of students at 4-year colleges. Blagg et al. (2017) employed data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), denoting nationally

representative approximations of food insecurity amid college students, observing food insecurity rates of households compared to students enrolled in 4-year, and 2-year colleges were comparable, being 11.2% and 13.5%, respectively. The authors' study concluded that one out of five students enrolled in a 2-year college is food insecure in a nationally representative sample, with estimated rates higher among sub-populations of the sample.

Higher Education Food Insecurity Due to the Pandemic

During the 2019-2020 Congress legislative session, seventeen bills were proposed on the floor aiming to address college student food insecurity (Laska et al., 2020). None of the proposals moved forward, just as equally as none of the four COVID-19 stimulus bills have included stipulations to address college student food insecurity. During the onset of the pandemic, the American Council on Education (Turk et al., 2020) surveyed 192 university presidents across the country, and only 15% considered student basic needs security as a pressing concern, compared to 86% reporting summer and fall enrollment seemed a greater concern. Enrollment is a pressing issue, especially as enrollment trends show a drop in marginalized populations, specifically low-income students; yet dropout rates are related to various concerns, with food insecurity among them (Turk et al., 2020). In Goldrick-Rab et al.'s (2020) report, college student food insecurity increased from 33% in fall 2019 to 38% in spring 2020, with three in five students surveyed in spring saying they could not meet their basic needs. The WFP (2020) now includes COVID-19 to be a key driver of acute food insecurity, estimating the number of individuals suffering from acute or moderate food crisis and insecurity to double. Students already experiencing acute food crises and insecurity prior to the

pandemic are expected to degenerate significantly as students face the economic implications due to the lockdown as well as confront managing the virus itself. It has been reported by The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice since the start of the pandemic (i.e., April 20 – May 15) that now 3 out of every 5 students surveyed experienced basic needs insecurity. The online survey completed by 38,602 students indicated 38% and 44% of students enrolled in four-year institutions and two-year colleges, respectively, experienced food insecurity enhanced or caused by the pandemic.

Economic Recession

The primary source of food insecurity in the United States is insufficient income for unrestricted food access (Huang et al., 2016; Mammon et al., 2008; Nord et al., 2011; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2017). Fluctuations within employment sectors burden student resources, and fixed academic schedules affects students battling to access employment markets that demand time flexibility (which are also the job sectors in all probability to be accessed by working students, such as positions within the service industry). In the second quarter of 2020, approximately 38,206 students were surveyed by The Hope Center in an expanded effort to explore basic needs security among college students. Seventy-four percent of students disclosed being employed prior to the pandemic. When the pandemic began, 42% of students reported they lost their employment. Similarly, for students who had a reduction in pay or hours, 63% indicated basic needs insecurity (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). In addition, among students who stated their employment status was not modified because of the pandemic, approximately 50% reported facing the challenge of basic needs insecurity, suggesting loss of employment simply intensified existing instabilities (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020).

In an effort to combat a crippling economy during the public health crisis in the United States, the Trump Administration injected a multi-trillion-dollar economic stimulus package providing support to business, education, and individuals (The White House, 2020). Further, the administration passed and signed into law two ad hoc social protection policies, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (2020) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (2020). Included within the terms, the legislation strengthened food security programs through further capital spending in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), with funding for food banks and meal centers. Furthermore, the legislation ensured children who were reliant on free and reduced-priced meals had food available to them during school and daycare center closures.

The dramatic downturn in the United States economy, combined with stringent limitation on movement, has and will continue the increase of mass unemployment. Since the onset of the pandemic over 30 million individuals have filed for unemployment, and only 47% of those who have filed have received supplement funding (Long & Guskin, 2002; Stettner & Novello, 2020). Among the 19.3 million young adult workers between the ages 16 to 24, nearly 25% have lost their employment due to the pandemic (Pew Center, 2020; U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 2020). The loss of jobs within this age group is similar to prior recessions, as 9.2 million young adults are employed in high risks industries and service sector jobs (i.e., restaurants, hotels, retail, and transportation) (Kochhar, 2020; Kochhar & Barroso, 2020). Additionally, wages in high-risk and service sector industries are below national wage averages as workers within these industries earned an average weekly income in January 2020 of \$975. Comparatively, laborers in

food services and wine/cocktail establishments received on average \$394 per week (Kochhar, 2020; Kochhar & Barroso, 2020). Laborers in the other high-risk job sectors received an income ranging from around \$500 to \$600 per week, excluding transportation workers, who averaged an income of \$956 per week. In addition to low wages, majority of laborers in these job sectors do not have access to benefits (i.e., paid leave, telecommuting, and salary-based income), which individuals in other types of job sectors are exercising in following with social distancing guidelines (Kochhar, 2020).

According to a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation (2020), one in four individuals reported either they or members of their household have skipped meals or have relied on charity or government funded programs during the pandemic. It is projected that the pandemic will significantly increase the number of individuals suffering from food insecurity and deepen the pre-existing food crisis as 37.2 million individuals in the United States existed in food-insecure households prior to the outbreak (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2018).

Student Demographics and Risk Factors for Food Insecurity

Demographics of students enrolled today no longer fit the description of what has historically been reflected as the traditional college student. A traditional college student is no longer the majority enrolled within intuitions, as the term is generally defined as an individual who attends college as full time student directly after completing high school, is not monetarily independent and requires support from their parents, and either is not employed or works part-time (NCES, n.d.). Today, the nontraditional student makes up most students enrolled, with the traditional college student as the ever-growing minority of students. This shift in college enrollment demographics is attributed to workforce

shifts, technology, and economic stability are just some of the factors related to this trend (CLASP, 2015; Wyatt, 2011)

In terms of financial support, students have vastly different levels. According to National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) data, less than fifty percent of all undergraduate students attending college were deemed monetarily independent from their parents (Radwin et al., 2018). The study reported nearly 22% reported having dependent children (i.e., children between the ages of birth to 18), and 14% were single parent families. In 2016, the average age of an enrolled college student at 4-year public institutions was 26 years old and the average age of first enrolling was age 21 (Radwin et al., 2018).

Multiple researchers (Cady, 2014; El Zein et al., 2018; Freudenberg et al., 2019; Shanafelt et al., 2016) have explored food insecurity rates among college students reporting rates among this sub-population 12% higher than for the overall U.S. population. Reasons for significantly higher food insecurity rates among this sub-population included high college tuition costs, weak employment market, federal and state food assistant program requirements that exclude college students, and insufficient academic and personal financial resources (Cady, 2014; Freudenberg et al., 2019; Stettner & Novello, 2020). Student risk factors include low socioeconomic status, single parent, and marginalized populations (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Kinarsky, 2017; King, 2017; Mabli et al., 2013; & Silva et al., 2017). In this section, aspects of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, and dependent status will be described as it noted to affect a student's food security status.

Socioeconomic Status

Over the past several decades, researchers (Broton, 2017; El Zein et al., 2018; Gains et al, 2014; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018) have reported a rising percentage of students from low socioeconomic households are enrolling and attending college. The Pell Grant, the largest source of need based federal financial aid program, was designed to provide subsidies to financially disadvantaged students in an effort to widen higher education access as well as increase affordability (Turner, 2014). When first established, the Pell Grant covered nearly 40% of a student's tuition and fees; however, presently the Pell Grant barely covers 20% of a student's tuition bill at a 4-year public institution (Diamond et al., 2019). As tuition costs rise and financial assistance decreases, financially disadvantaged students are predisposed to experiencing reduced accessibility to nutritious food options (Freudenberg et al., 2011; Patton-López et al., 2014). Accordant with NPSAS data, the percentage of undergraduates who had household net income at or below 130% of the federal poverty line climbed from 28% to 39% in twenty years (Radwin et al., 2018). Simultaneously, the percentage of college students accepting Pell Grants for financial aid has practically doubled over the same time frame. In the 1999-2000 academic year, nearly 23% of college students accepted a Pell Grant, and in 2016, this number was 40% (Radwin et al., 2018). Some researchers (Barr & McClellan, 2017; CIC, 2017; Flores & Shepard, 2014) have implied that cutbacks in federal and state monies toward higher education comparative to the mounting price tag of college tuition have combined with this particular student demographic increasing the burden of costs onto students, which reduces a student's financial ability to fund their basic needs.

A low-socioeconomic status is deemed the key risk factor to food insecurity (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2019; Coleman-Jensen et al., 2020; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018). Corresponding to the U.S. GAO report, the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study data indicated college enrollment as continued to increase in the number of students who are deemed low income. Federal grants offer support to students in to cover some of the costs for higher education, however, costs related with higher education have also continued to climb (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018). Additionally, many grants and other sources of financial aid do not cover all the costs of college attendance (Barr & Turner, 2014; Bricker et al., 2014; Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019). Food expenses on campuses may also be high relative to students' financial resources (Calvez et al., 2016). Students with limited income and who lack financial resources are some of the obstacles in meeting their basic needs (Gaines et al., 2014; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017) and some must make a financial decision between buying course materials (i.e., books, calculators, or technology) or food (Dubick et al., 2016). Devoid of sufficient financial resources and stability for food, countless students go hungry (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017).

Twenty-nine percent of undergraduates have reported low wages and are subjected to one or more additional risk factors contributing to food insecurity, according to the 2016 NPSAS data (Rawdin et al., 2018). Reported by Rawdin et al. (2018) nearly 14% reported low wages and one additional risk factor and 15% reported low wages and two or more additional risk factors associated with food insecurity. Risk factors correlated with food insecurity are more widespread among low-income students than the conventional student population, with 75% of low-income students encountering one or

more additional risk factors. Students enrolled at 2-year colleges and vocational programs are more likely to have multiple risk factors.

Dependents. College students who have dependents incur additional financial hardships that influence the student's food security status. Seventy-seven percent of 301 undergraduate students surveyed at two community colleges identified as single parents who were at high-risk food insecure for food insecurity (Maroto et al., 2015). Gault et al. (2016) reported 4.8 million students were parenting dependent children, as one in four students enrolled in higher education report having one or more dependents while enrolled. Seventy-one percent of all students who have dependents identify as single parents (Gault et al., 2014), with 43% of the total student parent population identifying as single and female. More dependents equate to additional financial hardships, that in turn influence a student's experience with food insecurity and how they seek how out support and resources (Resnikoff, 2014).

Marginalized Populations. High rates of food insecurity have been associated with marginalized populations (i.e., racial/ethnic minorities, LGBTQI* community, and individuals with mental and physical disabilities). Bruenig et al. (2016) estimates one-third of college students are food insecure and students with marginalized identities are most likely to suffer at increased rates due to inequitable power systems within higher education and society as a whole (Bruenig et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015; Martinez-Aleman et al., 2015). Black/African American students are considered moderate or high-risk for food insecurity, statistically higher than any other race/ethnicity (Chaparro et al., 2009; Payne-Sturges et al., 2018). Fifty-seven percent of Black students responded to a survey as having to experience moderate to severe food insecurity, as

opposed to only 40% of White students surveyed (Dubick et al., 2016). Collectively, marginalized populations (i.e., BIPOC, LGBTQI*, women, and persons with a disability) reported having higher incident rates of food insecurity than the entire U.S. population (Cady, 2014; Wilson & Conron, 2020).

In the United States, Latinx, African American, and other minoritized students are predisposed to have a higher probability of food insecurity (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2016), as research has established the intersectional relationship between race/ethnicity and food insecurity being interconnected to established determinants including socioeconomic status, employment status, and household status (Kaiser et al., 2004; Kochher & Fry, 2014; Odoms-Young & Bruce, 2018) . During the pandemic Goldrick-Rab et al. (2020) surveyed students from 54 colleges across the United States, with over 35,000 student respondents, and revealed 71% of Black students and 65% of Latinx students responded as lacking basic needs security, compared to White student respondents. Additionally, in the report, other ethnic populations (i.e., Indigenous, Middle Eastern, American Indian, or Pacific Islander) experienced basic needs insecurity rates 15% to 22% greater than White students.

It is estimated in 2019 that over 3 million individuals, or 27%, in the LGBTQI* community have experienced food insecurity (Wilson & Conron, 2020). Broken down into subpopulations, young adults (i.e., ages 18-34) experience a statistically significant higher rate, nearly 30%, as compared to other age groups. Regarding race and ethnicity within the LGBTQI* community, Black and Latinx LGBTQI* individuals reported food insecurity rates of 10% and 6% higher, respectively, when compared to White and Asian subpopulations (Wilson & Conron, 2020).

Several studies (Freudenberg et al., 2011; Morris et al., 2016; Niles, et al., 2020; Patton-Lopez et al., 2014; Wilson & Conron, 2020) have found disparities of food security status based on gender. Maroto et al. (2015) surveyed students at two community colleges reporting 58% of female students, as opposed to only 53% of males, were food insecure. Wilson and Conron (2020) reported three in five women, compared to one in five men, experience food insecurity within the LGBTQTI* community. Finally, multiracial women are 1.8 times greater to experience food insecurity than other women (Woods et al. 2016). The variations of student backgrounds add to the complexity of the issue, but higher education institutions should be aware what students are at higher-risk and how to offer varying degrees of services (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015).

Student Support Systems and Barriers to Access of Resources

The convergence of intersectional identities, policy, practice, law, regulation, and institutional/societal resources contribute to food insecurity among college students. Yet reasons cited for not seeking out or receiving support from on or off-campus resources include social stigma, ineligibility, lack of awareness and inadequate access prevent access for several basic financial and food assistance programs that could assist in supporting the students' needs (Koller, 2014).

In the wake of COVID-19, the United States government and higher education institutions responded through the increase or development of resources (i.e., financial and food assistance). Support services, both on and off-campus, increased students' opportunities for access to student well-being, offering financial and food assistance. Yet, as noted above, there are reasons preventing students from accessing these resources. In

this section, on and off-campus student support programs will be reviewed and barriers to access these resources.

Campus Food Pantries

The College and University Food Bank Alliance (CUFBA, 2020) is a national organization that provides more than 200 institutions with training and resources in establishing and maintaining on campus food banks (CUFBA, 2020). Institutions have responded to the concern of food insecurity among students by opening over 650 food pantries with additional pantries being developed nationally, presenting a glimpse of a developing concern and confirmation of the changing landscape of higher education in the United States well before the pandemic began. The emergence of campus food pantries is attributed to rising tuition costs, changing student demographics, lack of student transportation, and student ineligibility for federally funded food assistance programs (Bartkowiak, 2015). Furthermore, scholars (Buch et al., 2016; Farahbakhsh et al., 2015; Twill et al., 2016) have associated international students, and others who may not qualify for federal financial aid, as primary beneficiaries of campus food pantries. Yet in a survey, only 262 public and community college reported having a food pantry, and most are maintained by student groups, staff, or faculty, with no direct support from institutions themselves (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). The development of food banks and interventions to tackle food insecurity among college students is emerging within literature and practice.

As on campus food assistance is becoming more widely available, not all who are food insecure are utilizing this resource due to reported barriers. El Zein et al. (2018) determined a correlation between students reporting perceived barriers to the student's

food security status to college campus food pantry use. Sixty-two percent of students who registered having low or very low food security noted more barriers in using the campus pantry than students who are food secure. Primary impediments reported to using the campus pantry included 36.8% of students citing social stigma, 33.9% noting insufficient information (i.e., eligibility and procedures), 17.6% stating self-identity (i.e., internal social context that others need the service more than they do), and 11.8% stating hours of operation conflicting with their schedule. Among students who utilized food pantries, over half recorded social stigma, inadequate communication and information, and inconvenient operating hours as obstacles associated with food insecurity.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also referred to as SNAP, is a federally funded food assistance program that provides households temporary funding benefits for the purchase of groceries. Student eligibility for the program hinges on factors including course enrollment, employment, dependents, and assistance from other state or federally funded programs (USDA; FNS, 2019). During 2019, the United States had approximately 35 million individuals enrolled in the program (USDA; FNS, 2019). GAO (2018) identified 5.5 million students as eligible for SNAP. However, among those who qualified, 57% did not participate in the program. SNAP is one of many government food assistance programs that is underutilized by college students. College students are either not eligible or are not aware that they are able to receive this type of food assistance (Diamond et al., 2019). The reported barriers described by students from seeking out and enrolling in this program have included social stigma, perception and awareness of services, application process, and language discrepancies for individuals

who speak English as their second language (Algert et al., 2006; Bhattarai et al., 2005; El Zein et al., 2018; Fong et al., 2016; Kissane, 2003).

In 2019, under the Trump administration, nearly 700,000 individuals, college students included, lost SNAP benefits due to the implementation of a new policy explicitly stating, “able-bodied adults without dependents” and working at least 20 hours a week are no longer eligible (Godoy, 2020). The rule disproportionately affects young individuals and marginalized populations. The design of SNAP already excluded the majority of students attending an institution of higher education. SNAP is designed with the ‘traditional’ college student in mind, which is an individual entering college directly from high school, relying on family for financial support, with no dependents, and no employment. Aiming to expand college students’ access to SNAP benefits (i.e., removing the 20 hour a week work stipulation) a federal waiver was filed but ultimately denied on April 10, 2020 (USDA, 2020). Modest enrollment exceptions have been instituted, however, the income limits, immigrations status, and school enrollment standards are confusing, and a majority still do not meet the exemptions, resulting in low student eligibility rates (Price et al. 2014).

Additionally, many food assistance programs require in-person enrollments, accepted for in-store purchases only, and restrict brands and cost limits when product availability was limited (Baskin, 2020). Food insecurity is not only the lack of funding to purchase food but is the result of multiple contributing factors including unavailability of food, inability to access food resources, decline in food utilization, and volatile economic and political conditions (Niles et al., 2020; UNICEF, 2019; WFP, 2020).

With the onset of the first media reports of the pandemic, temporary unavailability of food began in the United States because of panic buying, which emptied shelves across grocery stores nationwide (Grose, 2020). In addition, food availability was compromised due to a large reduction within the supply chain. Concurrently, the cost of food increased, beginning an infrastructural foundation recession, directly influencing food accessibility (McKenzie, 2020; Nielsen, 2020; Niles et al., 2020). This involved changes in the way food assistance was distributed, the availability of public transport, and product shortages in some areas (Niles et al., 2020). Market reports also suggest that food buying behavior has also changed, pointing to reduced utilization patterns (McKenzie, 2020; Nielsen, 2020).

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security

In March 2020, the Trump administration signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The CARES Act made available \$14 billion in for emergency relief funding for higher education and is the largest injection of funds from the government to higher education institutions since the 2008 recession (ARRA, 2009; & NASFAA, 2020a). The funding formula for higher education intuitions were based on enrollment of Pell-grant (e.g., 75% of total funding formula) and non-Pell-grant (e.g., 25% of total funding formula) full time equivalent students. Preliminary reports stipulated the CARES Act was generally successful in the awarding of aid to financially at-risk students (NASFAA, 2020b). Based on the U.S. Department of Education (2020) guidelines, CARES Act funding was contingent on demonstrated financial need based on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The guidelines detailed exclusions, which included students who identified as international,

non-U.S. citizens (DACA), and dual credit, enrolled exclusively in an online program prior to March 13, 2020, or not considered as good Satisfactory Academic Progress status. However, institutions have reported problems with awarding students aid due insufficient guidelines (Miller, 2020), student application exemptions (Kerr, 2020), and administrative hurdles (Lustig, 2020). Students and institutions alike described the guidelines of the eligibility process as unclear, due to continuous updates to the policies and procedures and lack of guidance for the distribution of funds (EAB, 2020). Students who did not complete a FAFSA, enrolled fully online, were undocumented, and international students were rendered ineligible to access CARES Act funding, resulting in some of the most at-risk student populations ineligible to obtain needed financial support during the public health crisis (Kerr, 2020).

Zentner (2020) assessed the impact of the CARES ACT on online students compared to students in other modalities surveying 1,176 students and found students who had enrolled in fully online programs reported the highest proportionality related to essential needs (i.e., housing and food). In the study, 69% percent of students learning online reported running out of food, compared to only 17% of those learning in person or through hybrid models. Findings from this research indicate online and other student populations are equally if not more affected from the implications of the pandemic and economic recession yet were excluded from receiving CARES Act funding.

Simultaneously, with federal relief, institutions created institutional emergency student funding opportunities through private and charitable fundraising (Kerr, 2020). Institutions campaigned to donors in an effort to supplement the shortfall of eligibility to many subpopulations of students who did not qualify for CARES funding, with some

institutions, like the University of California, receiving upwards of \$900,000 (Whitford, 2020). Yet, students still faced barriers in receiving this type of financial aid, such as applications with essays, or being waitlisted due to the demand (Weissman & Schmidt, 2020). An additional issue reported in the survey by Goldrick-Rab et al. (2020) noted a third of students were unaware of emergency aid offered through their institution and 19% reported not understanding the application process for emergency aid.

Higher Education Course Instruction Transition Implemented During COVID -19

As the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic began to unfold, institutions had to rapidly adapt. A myriad of ever-changing guidelines and directives brought forth by federal, state, and local governments generated tremendous change across higher educational institutions. One of the most notable changes was delivery of instruction, as nationwide institutions were forced to shut down all traditional classrooms, moving to fully remote instruction. However, challenges associated with this transition were not equitably distributed across college student populations. One survey conducted by Means et al. (2020) revealed Latinx students reported a greater number of challenges in continued course participation compared to other student populations due to the unplanned shift from traditional learning to remote instruction. These students reported in terms of measures associated to financial issues and basic needs, as well as, inability to balance responsibilities and coursework, finding a space to be able to complete assignments, and not knowing how or where to receive assistance with coursework after going fully remote. Another point in the study noted Latinx and Black students were less likely to have technology access (i.e., hardware and software) compared to White students (Means et al., 2020).

One of faculty's primary concerns in regard to their university's response are about equity gaps. The learning equity gap heightened due to the pandemic has left 66% of faculty concerned for students of marginalized populations and disadvantaged backgrounds as they believe their university's response has disproportionately affect some students (Lederman, 2020). Some cited faculty concerns include balancing responsibilities and course load, mental health and overall wellness, student management of financial stress in the wake of COVID-19, and lack of equal access (Lederman, 2020).

Student Food Insecurity and Academic Outcomes

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic scholarship centered on the relationship between food insecurity and academic performance and outcomes. Although incidents of food insecurity in primary and secondary education are substantial, research has been limited regarding the issue in higher education. Researchers (Alaimo et al., 2001; Jyoti, et al., 2005; Winicki & Jemison, 2003) have addressed in primary and secondary educational settings the direct relationship between food insecurity and reduced academic outcomes. Additional studies (Hinton et al., 2010; Kuluis et al., 2002) noted the educational hardships experienced by a student prior to entering college will continue to progress in complexity with the individual as they move into a post-secondary setting.

Academic Progress

Researchers (Alamio et al., 2001; Bergerson, 2006; Rowan et al., 2004) who have centered their scholarship within primary education settings indicate students who experience some form of food insecurity do not perform or meet the same academic levels as their peers. Students who do not meet satisfactory academic outcomes due to food insecurity prior to transitioning into post-secondary education are expected to

remain on the same academic trajectory (Pallas, 2002). Additional adverse outcomes related to food insecurity include lower academic achievement in STEM courses (Alaimo et al., 2001; Ashiabi, 2006; Jyoti et al., 2005), behavioral challenges (Murphy et al., 1998), and reduced memory function (Evans & Chambert, 2009).

In a survey conducted by University of Massachusetts, Boston, 80% of students responded food insecurity negatively impacted their academic performance, and 55% of those respondents reported food insecurity compromised course attendance. Researchers, (El Zein et al., 2018) determined students who did not have access to adequate food “showed significantly higher perceived stress and disordered eating behaviors and lower sleep quality” (p. 2) and those students also were more likely to have GPAs below a 3.0. Furthermore, students who were food insecure were two times as likely to report maintaining a GPA below 3.0 contrasted to food secure students.

Additional scholarship (Marotoa et al, 2014; Morris et al., 2016; & Patton-Lopex et al., 2014) established similar conclusions, indicating satisfactory academic performance (i.e., GPA above 3.0) was directly correlated with food security. Food secure students reported a higher GPA. Researchers (El Zein et al., 2019; Morris et al., 2016) observed a distinguishable relationship concerning food security and GPA in which students who held a GPA within a higher range (≥ 3.00) were more food-secure than students who reported a GPA below the 3.0 range.

Perhaps one of the most comprehensive studies, Dubick et al. (2016) investigated college student food insecurity surveying 3,765 students in 12 states and 34 institutions. In alignment with similar literature, 48% of participants at four-year institutions noted experiencing food insecurity in the previous 30 days. Also noted within the study,

approximately 32% of students who identified as being food insecure believed their lack of food resources had adversely affected their academic performance (Dubick et al., 2016). Among students who reported an effect of their academic performance, 81% of students suggested food insecurity resulted in negative academic outcomes. Fifty-five percent of students reported their food insecurity caused them not to purchase a required textbook, 54% did not attend optional or required study sessions, and 53% did not attend class at least once (Dubick et al., 2016). Findings of this study elucidate how college students who struggle with food insecurity experience various ramifications that negatively influence students' academic performance and outcomes.

Food insecurity amongst college students has gained a greater national focus in recent years as a potential negative influence on college retention and graduation rates (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017; Cady, 2014; Gallegos et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2017; Maguire et al., 2016). According to Goldrick-Rab et al. (2020), in the wake of the pandemic, retention rates of marginalized populations are of particular concern to institutions as these populations are more likely to be affected by food insecurity. Additionally, the authors (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020) also informed of other adverse effects caused by food insecurity. Half of the survey respondents experienced at least moderate anxiety during the pandemic, and 63% of students stated that they could not concentrate on coursework. Retention rates of marginalized students, who are disproportionately confronting basic needs insecurity, are of particular concern, according to the report (Weissman & Schmidt, 2020).

A study (Maroto et al., 2015) carried out at a community college demonstrated students most at risk for food insecurity registered a GPA range of 2.0 - 2.49. Findings of

the study revealed a significant difference when compared to food secure students who reported a GPA range between 3.5 - 4.0, correlating the relationship involving food insecurity and lower academic performance and outcomes (Maroto et al, 2015).

MacDonald (2016) completed a study at the University of Arkansas, and determined a similar relationship presenting a negative association between GPA and food insecurity. Students whose GPA was in the range of 2.1 - 3.0 reported being moderately to severely food insecure contrasted greatly to students reporting higher GPAs. Lastly, a study conducted at the University of North Texas captured the effects of students who were food insecure. Henry et al. (2014) reported food insecure students further stated their status to be a factor to lack of energy to study and complete coursework, essentially influencing academic performance (e.g. failing assignments due to inability to concentrate), even if students were motivated to perform well (Henry et al., 2014).

Academics, Demographics, and Socioeconomics

As the pandemic continues to rage on, 56% of college students state they can no longer afford college, and nearly 40% of parents have resorted to utilizing funds set aside for their student's tuition to assist with living expenses during the pandemic (Dickler, 2020). Researchers (Aucejo et al. 2020) from Arizona State University surveyed 1,500 students inquiring how national and university responses to COVID-19 have influenced their academic status and timeline. Results of the survey varied, yet a common factor to many of the responses were dependent on a student's socioeconomic status and race. Reported in the study, students with low socioeconomic status are 55% more likely to delay graduation than those with higher income status, and nearly 70% of Black,

Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) students were more likely to change their major during the pandemic than compared to White students (Aucejo et al. 2020).

Prior to the pandemic, six out of ten parents surveyed claimed to have financially assisted their child with expenses (i.e., tuition, utilities, rent, or groceries) (Dickler, 2020). The University of Minnesota surveyed parents in the midst of the pandemic reporting that the pandemic resulted in job loss for 40% of the respondents, of whom 20% stated has negatively impacted their families finances significantly influencing their ability to assist their student with college related expenses (Dworkin et al., 2020).

Reduced reliance on family financial support has been especially common for marginalized students (i.e., first-generation students, BIPOC, and LGBTQI*), who comprise just over 45% of enrolled college students (Eichelberger et al., 2017; Espinosa et al., 2019). Moreover, sixty-four percent of college students were employed part-time while attending college, and twenty-five percent reported being full time employees (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018).

Intersectionality, Higher Education, and Food Insecurity

Much of the intersectionality research within higher education has been centered on student identity development and connecting identities to systems of privilege and oppression (Jones & Abes, 2013; Moffitt et al., 2020). Strayhorn (2013) noted, “it has become increasingly difficult to view students as members of discrete and isolated categories” (p. 4) and “that separate and discrete categorical approaches were inadequate for capturing the complexity of students’ lives” (p. 3). Thus the growth of intersectionality research within higher education has exponentially increased to understand and address issues related to marginalized students’ identities connected to

systems of privilege and oppression (Harris & Patton, 2018; Jones & Abes, 2013), moving scholarship, policy, and practice, beyond a single axis framework (Jones & Abe, 2013; Nicholas & Stahl, 2019). The theory's origins stem from Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) who wanted to describe how identities intersect and overlap accounting for influence of privilege, oppression, and systems of power through lived experiences of an individual. The theory is distinguished by a primary focus of an individual's lived experience(s) influenced by systems of privileges and oppressions in an attempt to create more socially just policies, practices, and society (Crenshaw, 1989; Dominguez-Whitehead, 2017; Jones & Abes, 2013). Its analytical power offers an approach in understanding how power systems have contoured the lives of multiple marginalized identities (i.e., race, gender, sexuality, ability status, religious affiliation, etc.) (Duran & Nunez, 2020) focusing on individuals and group identity issues by "connecting individuals to groups; groups to society; and individuals, groups and society-all in connection to structures of power" (Jones & Abes, 2013, p. 141).

The expansion of access to higher education in the United States has been to address the economic, social, and education inequality of the underrepresented populations. Institutions have laid claim in committing to the recruitment of students from underrepresented and (dis)advantaged populations. Dominguez-Whitehead (2019) noted:

Historically, students from under-resourced and low-income backgrounds have been underrepresented in higher education and have faced multiple barriers in gaining access to higher education and thus efforts to increase access to traditionally underrepresented groups signal a commitment to provide equal

opportunities and to transform higher education institutions into places that are characterized by diversity. (p. 552)

However, as access to higher education has expanded, additional challenges have occurred for students in marginalized populations. Access to an education does not equal access to resources. Rooted in social justice, intersectionality exposes the lack of equality within power relations associated to interlocking structural oppressions in an effort to advance equity. Viewed in this manner, intersectionality offers the analysis of inequitable power dynamics within educational settings. As institutions have become more diverse, many of their policies and practices continue to perpetuate the marginalization of some students while privileging others (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Roland, 2018; Simkins, 2005). Higher education settings have the opportunity of discontinuing the production and reproduction of social and institutional inequities and injustices through the creation “of political skill and decision-making strategies that can be used to intervene in hegemonic systems that undermine social justice” (Roland, 2018, p. 4). However, many of higher education’s financial based policies and practices (i.e., tuition, housing, financial aid, etc.) have not changed much in the past half a century (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2016). The decline of federal student financial aid coupled with the costs of college tuition drastically increasing each year leaves students from marginalized and underrepresented populations contending with progressively grim academic and financial choices. Intersectionality theory underscores the inequitable educational and financial policies and practices related to education and access of resources to an ever-growing diverse student body within the higher education setting (Dickler, 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2016).

In the United States, college student food insecurity varies across campuses yet was on the rise and has now heightened due to the pandemic, bringing into intense light “the ways of dealing with inequality that our societies have consistently disguised and ignored” (Sefton-Green, 2020). Performing research of food insecurity through an intersectional lens broadens food insecurity related concerns fundamentally connected to the policies and practices put forth that are associated to the distribution of student resources. The issue of student food insecurity is an intersectional matter stemming from policies and practices throughout the economy, society, and political systems (Sibicca, 2012). The concerns pertaining to food insecurity related to higher education are the compounding intersectional factors that disproportionately impact students of marginalized populations, as traditionally they often originate from communities that are typically underrepresented and often experience barriers in accessing postsecondary education (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2016; Miller, 1999). Mouzon (2018) describes food insecurity through the intersectional cycle of oppression experienced by marginalized individuals:

How are racism and hunger related? Being mistreated at school, on the job, in health care and beyond, translates to lower wages and exclusion from society. When employers discriminate, people of color make lower wages than white people. When health-care providers discriminate, people cannot get the health care they need, and when the courts and the police are biased, they are more likely to put our family members behind bars, which damages their prospects for economic security.

The pandemic has highlighted many facets within education that disproportionately burden marginalized populations, thus widening the educational gap in higher education (Aucejo et al., 2020). In recent research (Aucejo et al., 2020; Bacher-Hicks et al., 2020; Rothstein, 2020) findings have come to the general conclusion that the pandemic has been acutely challenging for low-socioeconomic status and marginalized students as these populations have been more likely to be financially impacted by COVID-19 and hold greater health risks from the virus (CDC, 2020). “Thus, recognizing food concerns as a growing problem, examining this problem, and working toward creating a more equitable society in which resources are distributed more equitably, constitute part of what is required to conceptualize food research as a matter of social justice” (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2016, p. 554). The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the numerous fragilities and vulnerabilities of food insecurity created by overlapping systems of oppression and privilege. Historically, college student food insecurity has been researched from a unitary perspective that stresses single identity data that proves insufficient for addressing and understanding food insecurity of individuals with intersecting marginalized identities (Bowleg, 2012). Intersectional research of college student food insecurity is vital in understanding the complexities of a diverse student body and addressing systems of privilege and oppression within higher education to ensure equitable distribution of resources.

Narrative Inquiry, Photo Elicitation, and Food Insecurity

Narrative inquiry and photo elicitation methods offer the possibility to generate data that can communicate multiple dimensions of the human experience and elicit a theme unseen to the researcher but evident to the interviewee (Schwartz, 1989). In recent

scholarship, narrative inquiry (Daughtery et al., 2019; Klugesherz, 2017; Okamoto, 2017) and photo elicitation methods (Johnson, 2011; Summey, 2018; Shannon et al., 2020) have been utilized to understand the human experience related to food insecurity. Daughtery et al.'s (2019) research explored food insecure students' experience using an on-campus food pantry. The findings of the study provided an in-depth understanding of the students' meanings related to food insecurity in connection with food pantry utilization, dietary selections, and well-being. Additional studies (Borron, 2013; Cannuscio et al., 2010; Diez et al., 2016; Heidelberger & Smith, 2015) have applied photo-elicitation in food studies research to better understand experiences related to social influence and food consumption decisions, local food options, and shopping habits. Narrative inquiry has been utilized in understanding social injustice and inequity (Rahatzad et al., 2016) and photo elicitation can reduce power differentials establishing a safe space for dialogue (Ford et al., 2017). Both methods offer an advantage when exploring food insecurity through intersectional data collection procedures with marginalized populations.

Although current research has examined food insecurity related to pantry utilization and food consumption influenced by social context, there is a deficit of literature employing narrative inquiry and photo elicitation exploring the complex and intersecting identities of food insecure students during a global health and economic crisis.

Conclusion

There has been momentum for higher education institutions to eradicate college student food insecurity. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt campuses, create economic distress, and limit internal and external resources available to students, the call is greater than ever to ensure students' basic needs are being met. Previous scholarship

provides evidence on how we understand the phenomenon of college student food insecurity, methods employed in research, and the responses from institutions and governing bodies through policies and practices. Yet existing research has been conducted primarily through unilateral perspectives and the dominant discourse proving insufficient for understanding and addressing food insecurity of marginalized students (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). There is a continuing need to expand college student food insecurity research beyond single identity data. The utilization of intersectional research will allow marginalized voices, often suppressed within power systems, a place at the table to ensure equitable distribution of resources. In the next chapter, I will outline methods that will be used in this study to expand the scholarship of college student food insecurity through the use of narrative inquiry methodology supported with photo elicitation and intersectionality theory.

CHAPTER III

Research Methods

The content of this chapter will provide discussion of the methodology employed to investigate college student experiences with food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology (data collection and analysis) is informed by intersectionality theory. Thus, the study centers how systems of oppression affected students' food insecurity within higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession. First, I provide a review of the research questions, and then examine the utilization of narrative inquiry and photo-elicitation methods for this study. I review narrative inquiry through the lens of intersectionality theory, the critical paradigm undergirding the methodology in this study. Next, I provide a description of the recruitment and selection of participants, setting, and procedures for data collection and analysis. Lastly, I conclude this chapter with the role of the researcher and strategies that will be employed to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

Review of Research Questions

In this section I investigated the phenomena to address the following research questions involving college student food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession. The following research questions were used to direct the research:

1. How did college students experience food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession?
2. How did college students experience of intersecting oppressions (institutional, social, and cultural) arising from their social and personal identities (i.e., age, race, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, religion/religious beliefs,

international students, non-US citizens, and social class/socioeconomic status) shape the experience of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. How did an intuition's response to the COVID-19 pandemic influence a college student's food insecurity status and shape their academic performance?

Qualitative Research Design

Selecting the design for research involves identifying the outline of procedures (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2010b). Qualitative research permits the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of individual lives and the context in which they exist (Jones et al., 2006). Ryen (2016) proclaims, "qualitative research calls for moral responsibility in a field scattered with dilemmas not for quick pre-fixed answers" (p. 6). Qualitative methodology offers a naturalistic approach to the study of phenomena, purposefully selecting participants to gain an in-depth understanding, in contrast to quantitative research which seeks statistical generalizations (Patton, 2015). Quantitative research allows for the oversimplification of lived experiences whereas a qualitative approach aims to provide an understanding of the complexities of a phenomenon or phenomena (Patton, 2015). The utilization of qualitative analyses allows the researcher to deduce themes, through deductive and inductive reasoning, the synthesis of participants' narratives, and other creative participatory research methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015). The central research questions of this study align with qualitative inquiry as they are open-ended, asking *how*, *why*, and *what* the experience of food insecurity was during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study intended to capture participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015) to gain in-depth

responses and insights in connecting student social identities and food insecurity within higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, a qualitative inquiry was deemed appropriate.

Methodology: Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry directed the collection and analysis of data for this study. This method is grounded in the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1990, 2006) who describe narrative inquiry as “a way of characterizing the phenomena of human experience and its study” (p. 2). This particular approach investigates the lived experiences of individuals through the collection of comprehensive and detailed accounts, permitting the researcher to generate narratives with a primary emphasis on meanings (Clandinin, 2013; Hones, 1998). Clandinin (2013) notes narrative inquiry offers a holistic understanding of the human experience as it is an “exploration of the social, cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives within which individuals’ experiences were, and are, constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted” (p. 18).

Narrative methodology asks participants to tell their stories in various ways: through structured or semi-structured interviews; through the engagement of conversation; or through storytelling triggered by artifacts (i.e., images, sounds, or objects) (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). As storytelling and the engagement of dialogue is an integral part of narrative inquiry, the relationship between the researcher and participant(s) is of paramount importance (Reissman, 2008). Data of the study is fluid and co-constructed in a sequential order between the researcher and the participants retelling of their experiences and reflection upon the continuous interpretation of experiences. The researcher influences the narrative yet remains transparent to the

participants throughout the inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Moen, 2006), centering the relationship between the participant and researcher as a main theme within narrative inquiry.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) advanced narrative methodologies to specifically a narrative inquiry that starts and stops “in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people’s lives, both individual and social” (p. 20). Individuals position their lived experiences in time, integrating time and the experiences into incessant narratives (McAdams, 2008). A narrative is co-constructed and emerges in a chronological manner, with consideration to critical points or experiences in an individuals’ life, and placed within contextual forces (Clandinin, 2013). Clandinin and Connelly (1990, 2000) draw from John Dewey (1938), and his emphasis on education as a product of personal and social experiences. Dewey (1938) describes individuals as both separate entities connected to others, unendingly placed within past, present, and future social contexts. Clandinin and Connelly based their work on Dewey’s (1938) principles of interaction and continuity and advanced his aspect of the three-dimensional narrative structure approach: interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Dewey, 1938). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note that this structure creates “a metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and social along a second dimension, and place along a third” (p. 50). Analysis of the narratives will highlight interactions, social and personal, that exist and shape the narrative. Continuity will examine the time (i.e., past, present, and future) of the narrative. Finally, situation of the narrative will describe the location in which the experience happened (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000;

Dewey, 1938). This framework will give structure to the analysis as it integrates time with socio-cultural context to make meaning of experiences through the perspective of the storyteller Adama et al., 2016).

Theoretical Framework: Intersectionality

Narrative methodologies are often an approach employed by researchers (Cole, 2009; Ludvig, 2006; Mirza, 2013) whose scholarship is associated with critical theories such as intersectionality. Narrative inquiry has been expressed as informally associated with non-Western forms of knowledge creation challenging the dominant discourses (Collins, 1992). Narrative inquiry provides “epistemic privilege to marginalized voices” (Chadwick, 2017, p. 17), and as intersectionality theory examines overlapping systems of privilege and oppression, it too challenges the dominant discourses by placing an emphasis on the contradictory narratives illuminating marginalized voices through the “material, structural, and political realities that co-construct lives/narratives” (Chadwick, 2017, p. 15).

By employing an intersectional framework, we can better understand how power systems operate and how interconnected overlapping systems of privilege and oppression influence and are influenced by equally complex individual experience, challenging the dominant discourses (Corus & Saatcioglu, 2015; Harris & Patton, 2018; Nichols & Stahl, 2019). Intersectionality is an appropriate framework for exploring college students experiencing food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic because the framework recognizes what is experienced at the overlapping intersections of privilege and oppression of a student’s multiple identities during a historical point in time (Brown et al., 2016; Duran & Nunez, 2020; Freudenberg et al., 2019; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019;

Hancock, 2016; Hickey et al., 2019). It is also equally important to examine the institutional structures of higher education as power systems. Examining how institutions define and address food insecurity prior to and during the pandemic offers an insight into historical and systematic policies and practices taking place within higher education (Duran & Nunez, 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019), which may alleviate or exacerbate social inequities. Furthermore, student food insecurity is generally a manifestation of power structures, specifically coordinated discrimination produced and designed by overlapping systems of oppression and privilege (Crewnshaw, 1989). Intersectionality theory has the ability to examine and analyze all of these convergences. By adopting an intersectional framework, the research can offer an understanding of the factors influencing students' experience with food insecurity and bring about social change in institutional policies and practices (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019). The contributing factors to marginalized student populations experiencing food insecurity are multifaceted. Thus, it is critical to examine the various historic, underrepresented, and institutional experiences concurrently, as it exposes perceptions and experiences that are not holistically understood when they are explored independently. Therefore, the intersectional approach allowed this research to better investigate the merging intersections of food insecurity, college life, systems influencing higher education, all compounded by multiple institutional system's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Paradigm

Intersectionality theory falls within a critical research paradigm (Jones et al., 2013). Narrative inquiry has often been used to focus explicitly on the experiences of marginalized individuals. Thus, this study, focused on marginalized college students dealing with food insecurity during the COVID-19 global pandemic and subsequent economic volatility, aligning with the aims of narrative inquiry and photo elicitation research through a critical theory analytic. Critical theory paradigms emerged from the works of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud and are influenced by postmodernism and feminist theories that critically examine power structures to promote equality and inclusion challenging the status quo (Asghar, 2013; Guido et al., 2010; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Jones & Abe, 2013; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994). There are three criteria that characterize this paradigm: (a) the paradigm is centered on the lived experiences of marginalized populations in how privilege and oppression are structured; (b) the analysis of how inequities are reproduced in asymmetric power relationships; and (c) identifies action for social change (Asghar, 2013; Mertens, 2017; Mertens et al., 1994). Mertens (2017) describes this paradigm as “the recognition that realities are constructed and shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, and racial/ethnic values indicates that power and privilege are important determinants of which reality will be privileged in a research context” (p. 1). The employment of this paradigm within any research study is to not only examine the problem but to identify strategies for implementation that offer equality and inclusion for every individual (Asghar, 2013). As intersectionality is the framework of this study, the use of the critical theory paradigm centers on the critical meanings of experiences as they relate to social identities (i.e., gender, race, class, sexual

orientation, etc.) concerning privilege and oppression. Therefore, a critical theory paradigm was appropriate for my purpose of inquiry to gain an understanding of intersectional narratives of food insecure college students influenced by overarching policies and practices at national, state, and institutional levels.

Participants and Setting

The institution selected offers a standalone on-campus food pantry that maintained full operations during university closures caused by the pandemic. The campus selected is a Tier 2, 4-year university, which rests in a rural community in the southern United States. The institution has a student population just over 21,000 students, undergraduate and graduate level, over the past year (U.S. News & World Report, 2019). Although located in a rural area, this university is in close proximity to a large city and its surrounding suburbs, which account for a large percentage of its student population. A majority of students live at or near campus due to its being in a rural community with limited public transportation. The student population is considered above the national average in diversity. The institution holds a greater female than male population and approximately 49% of the student body identifies as BIPOC. Participant selection will be limited to students who visited the food pantry from March 15, 2020 through December 15, 2020.

Sampling Scheme

Sampling strategies involve a design for distinguishing possible individuals who can offer their experience and perspective on the phenomena of inquiry being investigated (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2005). Sample size correlates to the mode of research being performed (Boddy, 2016). Different variables guide the criteria (i.e., age, race,

gender, sexual orientation, etc.) and the number of participants electing to participate in the research and the willingness of individuals to participate (Drew et al., 2008).

The sampling scheme of purposeful convenience sampling was applied to this study (Merriam, 2009). Defined by Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007a), convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where the sample is taken from a population due to ease and availability to partake in a study. Convenience sampling was deemed appropriate for this study due to the site location (i.e., institution and food pantry) and phenomena under investigation (i.e., students experiencing food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and using campus food pantry resources). Purposeful sampling allows the utilization of a non-probability sampling in an effort to understand the specific phenomena researched among participants, who meet specific inclusion criteria. Each of the participants were selected by the following criteria: (a) enrolled at the university during the spring, summer, or fall 2020 semesters (b) have utilized the on-campus pantry between March 15, 2020 and December 15, 2020, (c) between the ages of 18-65, (d) are enrolled as an undergraduate, and (e) identify with particular social identity backgrounds (i.e., age, race, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, religion/religious beliefs, international students, non-US citizens, and social class/socioeconomic status).

Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment began after an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (see Appendix G). The recruitment of participants was undertaken via electronic communication. A report-identifying those students who visited the pantry between March 15, 2020 through December 15, 2020 was generated, and an email outlining the research and soliciting their participation was sent to those individuals (see Appendix A).

I requested students to complete an online interest form to participate in the study (see Appendix E). The online interest form was completed through the Qualtrics (Provo, UT) platform, and all identifying information was kept confidential and password protected. I sought to interview between 5-10 participants for this study. If there was a large interest to be part of this research, I would have screened by the number of times an individual has utilized the services of the pantry and seek those who have visited on a regular basis. Finally, students of marginalized backgrounds (i.e., racial or ethnic minorities; sexual minorities; international students; non-US citizens; low socioeconomic status, etc.) were given highest priority for partaking in this study.

Once participants were selected for the study, every participant was also provided a disclosure statement outlining procedures and potential risks of participation. In an effort to protect student identities and ensure confidentiality, participants were asked to select their own pseudonyms and were referred to by their self-selected pseudonyms. Additionally, informed consent documentation was provided and is located in Appendix B. It was required that the informed consent be electronically signed, and date stamped one day prior to the first interview. The consent form provided details to the participants regarding the research process, risk, and benefits, and how the data is maintained. Participants were advised their participation was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw at any point during the study. Participants were instructed to read through all documents and had an opportunity to ask me questions about the study and their rights prior to agreeing to participate in the study. Each participant had the opportunity prior to each interview to ask questions about the study and their rights.

Data Collection

For this research study I employed a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix D) along with photo elicitation methods. As the researcher for this study, I identified myself as a major instrument in the study, designing and executing the interview protocol. Romantic conception was represented as the frame of the interview by the researcher. Romantic is one of six conceptions described by Roulston (2010) as to “generate the kind of conversation that is intimate and self-revealing” that “lead[s] the interviewer to establish rapport and empathic connection with the interviewee in order to produce intimate conversation between the [interviewer] and [interviewee] in which the interviewer plays an active role” (p. 217). During the interview, I shared and identified my personal food insecurity experiences with participants, letting them know about my experiences as a food insecure college student offering comfort in communication and open dialogue during the interview process. Establishing a relationship is vital in narrative inquiry in order to create rapport and trust with the participants (Claudinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Reissman, 2008)

Initial Interview

Employing the use of narrative inquiry, participants’ stories were collected through semi-structured interviews. Interviews are one of the most frequently employed data collection procedures in qualitative research as the method is expressed to provide a deeper understanding when exploring the experiences, beliefs, and views of individuals on a specific subject (Gorden, 1975). The purpose of the interview was to collect data of the participants’ experience of being a college student with food insecurity during the COVID-19 global pandemic and economic recession. This study employed the use of two

semi-structured interviews will be conducted via online platform (i.e., Zoom). Per CDC (2020) suggested safety protocols, all interviews were conducted online to ensure the highest standard of safety for both the participants and me.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) defined a semi-structured interview as a balance between the interviewer and interviewee allowing discussion and further expansion of the interviewee's responses. Lincoln and Guba (1985) considered the semi-structured interview to be an appropriate method in that it provides the control of the interview to the interviewer, permitting them to probe and to ask for clarification of information as needed, potentially receiving a more extensive collection of data from the interviewee. For this study, the rationale for using a semi-structured interview is the ability to ask follow-up questions. The recording of interviews is highly suggested to capture interview data effectively and minimize potential disagreement between the researcher and interviewee(s) (Jamshed, 2017). Interviews were held online (i.e. Zoom), recorded, and the audio file downloaded for transcription. Video recordings through the online platform were not used to better ensure participant confidentiality. All interview procedures were outlined and discussed with each participant at the start of each online interview.

The interview protocol was pre-established and the same for every individual provided in detail the purpose of consent forms and what they are agreeing to, my role as the researcher, details of the interview (i.e., number of questions, projected length, the ability to clarify questions, etc.), including photo elicitation. Interview protocol and questions were followed, as outlined, with the addition of a few probing or clarifying questions based on interview respondents. Participants engaged in two semi-structured interviews, lasting 60 minutes in length. I began by explaining the study, participant

informed consent, recording procedures, and expected length of the interview. The interview started with my background of handling food insecurity while an undergraduate. By offering my experience to each participant, the intention was to display my vulnerability to express they are not the only person who has faced adversity with the same issue, helping each participant feel comfortable in talking about their experience. The initial interview conducted allowed each participant to explore their experience with food insecurity during the pandemic and provide an opportunity for each to reflect on the meaning of these events. I opened each interview with questions inquiring about the participant with the goal to learn and understand more about each individual and share my experiences with food insecurity during college to build rapport. Background questions for the interview were asked in the following order: (a) How would you describe your social identities (i.e., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and (dis)ability)?; (b) Can you discuss how each of these identities have impacted your life?; (c) Can you explain why you chose to attend this institution? (d) Can you tell me about your college experience so far?; (e) What has been your experience, if any, with food insecurity prior to attending college?; (f) Were you employed prior to and/or during the pandemic?; and (g) What financial support were you receiving prior to the start of the pandemic/what was your economic situation?

For the primary portion of the interview, thirteen open-ended and pre-constructed questions were asked in the following order: (a) What does food insecurity mean to you? (b) What was your experience with food insecurity, if any, prior to the start of the pandemic and economic recession?; (c) What has been your experience with food insecurity since the start of the pandemic and economic recession?; (d) How has your

institution's response to the pandemic influenced your experience with food insecurity?;

(e) How did your social identities influence your food insecurity? (f) How did your social identities influence resources you sought out? (g) How did you cope with the challenges brought on by the global pandemic?; (h) What support systems are you using to cope with food insecurity during the pandemic and economic recession?; (i) What methods or support systems, if any, have you heard about but not utilized during the pandemic specifically related to food insecurity and why did you not seek those services out?; (j) To what extent, if any, did support systems help you navigate these challenges?; (k) To what extent, if any, did food insecurity affect your academic performance during the pandemic?; (l) What barriers, if any, have you encountered related to using institutional resources related to food security, financial, and academic support?; and (m) Is there anything else you would like to share? As suggested by Kvale (1996) as a means to enhance the overall quality of the interview, I initiated probing questions to enrich the depth of the answers provided by the participants. According to Janesick (2004), the questions developed above would be considered basic descriptive as opposed to structural or contrast. Breaking down basic descriptive questions further into grand tour, mini-tour, example, experience, or native language questions (Janesick, 2004), all questions in this study were regarded as either experience (e.g., What was your experience with food insecurity, if any, prior to the start of the pandemic and economic recession?) or example (e.g., What methods or support systems, if any, do you use to help you cope with these challenges during the pandemic?).

Photo Elicitation and Second Interviews

An additional qualitative methodology employed in this study was the use of visual images. Photo elicitation is becoming a more prominent means of data collection in qualitative research. As noted by Harper (2002), “the difference between interviews using images and text, and interviews using words alone lies in the ways we respond to these two forms of symbolic representation” (p. 13). Incorporating visual methodologies, as opposed to only verbal, can uncover multiple layers of meaning and rich dialogue, enhancing data and knowledge. The purpose of photo elicitation is to immerse an individual into the student’s interpretation of their experience grappling with food insecurity during the COVID-19. The method of photo elicitation has been developed through the foundations of critical and feminist theories to encourage traditionally marginalized populations to participate in photography, offering participants additional space to interpret and make meaning of their lived experiences (Badry & Flaske , 2013; Keller et al., 2008; Latz, 2017; Strack et al., 2004) and “highlighting the voices of marginalized individuals and shifting the power of representation to individuals whose standpoints are seldom heard” (Christensen et al., 2020, p. 222).

When examining intersectional narratives, “photo elicitation offers a creative alternative to verbal-only methods of qualitative interviewing that is particularly suited to exploring intersectionalities” (Craig et al., 2020). Being the framework of this study is intersectionality, the point is to give a voice to marginalized groups to promote social change, as this type of visual methodology promotes the “empowering and emancipating of participants by making their experiences visible” (Christensen et al., 2020, p. 222) thus centering the participants’ lived experiences. Offering traditionally marginalized

populations the opportunity to document their lived experience through photography provides a space to communicate their lived experiences and perceptions to promote social change (Christensen et al., 2020; Hubbard, 1994; Wang, 1999).

This methodological strategy was chosen in an effort to achieve thoughtful reflection from participants associated with the interaction and engagement of others under similar circumstances centering on the participants' intersectional narratives. Photo elicitation provides an opportunity in allowing individuals a voice and space through visual capacity to express and share their experiences and perspectives (Foster-Fishman et al., 2005; Genuis et al., 2015; Latz, 2017). Photo elicitation as a methodology provides additional dialogue and critical reflection from the participant through the taking of original photographs selected by the participant and provides a context of the photos through dialogue as to what they represent and mean (Wang et al., 1998) as stated by Christensen et al. (2020):

To understand the influence of images, an analysis of the production of images, the reception of the images and meanings attributed to them by audiences, and the content of the images themselves. Images do not linearly shape policy, but rather, the images viewed by people influence each individual's worldview. By contributing to how we perceive the world and our place within society, images can influence community advocates and society. (p. 223)

College students today live and narrate their lives in a visual world. Therefore, photo elicitation research was deemed an appropriate method for this study as the use of visual methods will allow for the "actual observation of campus, practices, norms, and

behaviors” in seeking an understanding of the phenomena in hopes of influencing social change (Keller, 1998, p. 276).

Upon conclusion of the first interview, participants were asked to take and submit three original photographs. Photos may be taken by their cellular device or camera. The following are the prompts for each of the three photos: (a) take a photograph that represents what food insecurity has been like for you during the pandemic; (b) take a photograph that represents how your social identities have influenced your food insecurity while being a college student; and (c) take a photograph that represents how food insecurity has been influenced by your institution’s response to the pandemic. Photographs to be submitted were required to be an original single photo in a standard format. Photographic alteration was allowed (i.e., filters, black and white, blurring effects, etc.). Students were given two weeks to submit their three photographs as a joint photographic expert group (JPEG) file via email. Additionally, students were given a photograph consent form if they photographed an individual(s) and will submit those via email to me (see Appendix F). Participant consent forms were supplied to each participant if they chose to submit a photograph in which an individual appears in a photo (Appendix F).

Applying more than one qualitative data collection method allowed me to explore rigorously the perceptions and experiences of intersectional narratives of individuals grappling with food insecurity during the pandemic. Images have the power to induce strong emotions as people process visual data (Harper, 2002), which allows for in-depth reflections of the phenomena of inquiry. The use of photo elicitation provided and

empowered the voice of the participant using visual imagery (Creswell, 2003; Latz, 2017).

The second semi-structured interview was completed after the participant has submitted three photographs from the three previously listed prompts. Photo elicitation interviews are similar to the traditional interview process but incorporate the use of images and offer the participant flexibility in leading the interview with dialogue of the image(s) (Kapar, 2019). The interview was to specifically speak about the submitted photograph and also scheduled for 60 minutes in length. For the second interview, six open-ended questions were asked for each of the photographs in the following order: (a) Can you describe what the image is?; (b) How is this image symbolic to the prompt given?; (c) What is the importance of the image for you in responding to this prompt?; (d) Can you describe the feelings or emotions produced when capturing and selecting this photo?; (e) How does this image connect your social identities to your food insecurity?; and (f) Is there anything else you would like to share about this photo? Probing questions were asked (Kvale, 1996), and were regarded as either experience or example (Janesick, 2004).

Verification

Verification is the process of verifying by means of various methods to ensure true representation of the research process, and analysis of the data. Manning (1997) referred to member-checking as the active process of determining and confirming the accuracy and adequacy of the interviews. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe member-checking as “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314).

Transcription of the narratives was completed through Zoom, upon conclusion of each

interview. Once completed, I verified the transcription of the audio to the text and finalized the transcription document. As described earlier, I sought verification of the accuracy and adequacy of each participant's interview through member-checking (i.e., descriptive validity; Maxwell, 2002) by facilitating the review of the transcribed interview and observations to address any changes. If a participant deemed a correction was needed, I asked them to detail the correction needed and made the corrections requested and returned for final approval.

Data Analysis

Narrative analysis is an analytic approach that involves the interpretation of dialogue, texts, or visual data in order to understand *how* and *why* of an individual(s) lived experiences. (Riessmen, 2008). This particular form of analysis differs from other qualitative analysis in that it does not employ the use of categories and keeps the narrative intact instead of breaking it down (Sharp et al., 2019). Data interpretation within this analysis is a twofold layer: first participants interpret their experiences, and second the researcher interprets the construction of the participants' story. There are several analytic approaches within narrative inquiry. However, for this study I will employ Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional space approach: interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Dewey, 1938). First, interaction describes the personal and social interactions within the participant's narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Dewey, 1938). Data was analyzed from the perspective of both the participant's perspective of the experience (i.e., feelings, reactions, and dispositions), and their interactions with other individuals and social conditions in which experiences evolve (i.e., family, peers, cultural, and institutional).

Second, continuity or temporality is the consideration of past and present experiences and how actions are likely to occur in the future (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Dewey, 1938). Lastly, situational events are examined as place and time, and how they might have affected the experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Dewey, 1938). To perform this analysis, I re-reviewed the transcripts three times to identify context pertaining to interaction, continuity, and situation. Validation checks were continuous throughout the interviews, and I provided each participant their final narrative to ensure their stories are a reflection of their experience. Intersectionality theory aligns well with both interaction and situational analyses. Thus, special attention was proffered to examining the role of social identity, intersectionality, and social systems in analysis and presentation of data from these stories.

As previously stated, there were two semi-structured interviews along with three photographs submitted for analysis. Transcriptions were completed through the software Zoom and were read at least twice to ensure accuracy, to correct any errors, and clarify verbatim quotes. Each photograph submitted was numbered and marked accordingly in the associated transcribed interview. Both the transcribed interviews, along with the photographs, were used as raw data for the analysis of this research. Detailed, chronological, and individual narratives of each college student was co-created through narrative analysis, as collaboration between the participants' and myself will be present, and final narratives were provided to each participant to provide an accurate reflection of their experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Dewey, 1938). Narrative analysis aligns with the goals of this study to meet college students who may have similar struggles with food insecurity, but the intersection of their social identities and their

experiences within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic will highlight the heterogeneity of a diverse student population.

Trustworthiness

The criterion of rigor reflects the validity and quality of the qualitative research being performed. The importance of establishing validity and reliability within qualitative research has been well documented, as researchers (i.e., Eisner, 1991; Lather, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln et al., 2011; Mertens, 2015; Shenton, 2004) have implemented methods in an effort to evaluate the merit of qualitative analysis (Crewswell, 2012; Mertens, 2015). For my study, I will employ Lincoln and Guba's (1986) Four-Dimensions Criteria that recognizes four pillars of trustworthiness that are critical to qualitative research: (a) credibility; (b) dependability; (c) confirmability; and (d) transferability.

Credibility

This aspect of the model refers to the participant's experiences of the phenomena compared to the researcher's representation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Member checks, peer debriefing, and multiple data collection methods contribute to a study's credibility (Shenton, 2004). Manning (1997) referred to member-checking as the active process of determining and confirming the accuracy and adequacy of the observations and interviews. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe member-checking as "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Onwuegbuzie et al. (2008) suggested peer debriefing as a technique to reduce researcher bias through the use of the reflexive data. Using various data collection methods counterbalances for each method's

limitations and makes the most of their respective advantages (Brewer and Hunter, 1989). For my study I employed all three techniques to enhance the credibility of the research.

Dependability

This technique refers to reliability, and how the research can be repeated with similar settings and produce similar findings. Lincoln and Guba (1986) stress the similarities between credibility and dependability, and both can be achieved with overlapping collection methods. However, dependability refers more specifically to the research design and the ability to recreate the processes within the study for future researcher to repeat the study and obtain similar findings (Fidel, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Shenton, 2004). The use of interviews and photo elicitation in my study offers overlapping data collection methods in an effort to provide dependability. Also, in my study, I provide an in-depth description of my methodology to allow the study to be repeated for future research.

Conformability

Miles and Huberman (1994) associate conformability to the researcher's ability to acknowledge their own beliefs, dispositions, and bias. Therefore, the recognition of bias must be established by the researcher through triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015). To reduce researchers' bias and provide validity to the study, I reflected on my own experiences, perceptions, and interests throughout the research process, known as *reflexivity* (Ruby, 1980). Additionally, peer debriefing and member-checking also enhance conformability of the research (Mertens, 2015). Both were utilized in the research process to ensure the adequacy and authenticity of the study (Elo et al., 2014).

Transferability

While qualitative research does not aim to generalize findings, transferability is when findings of the research can be applied to other research settings (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1988; Yin, 1984). Offering significant background information to establish context of study and outlining key descriptions of phenomenon of inquiry allows for the comparison of findings and implications of my study. Providing in-depth descriptions of the findings and implications provides an understanding of the phenomenon enabling for the applicability to future research (Shenton, 2004).

Through the course of this study, several threats to internal and external credibility were exposed as the design and methods were considered to carry out the research developed. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) explained that threats to legitimization could limit a study's internal credibility or external credibility of the findings. Internal credibility refers to the trustworthiness of a researcher's findings (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). I employed the techniques of both member-checking (Manning, 1997) and debriefing of the researcher (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2008) to minimize bias. By utilizing the qualitative legitimization model (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), I sought to increase the internal credibility and external credibility of my findings. The threats and legitimization efforts are discussed in the following section. An additional limitation to the research is this will be a single institution study (Ross & Zaidi, 2019).

Threats to Internal Credibility

The potential threats to internal credibility of the findings included the following: (a) descriptive validity, or the accuracy, adequacy, and representativeness of the account as recorded by the researcher (Maxwell, 1992); (b) observational bias, or the extent to

which the researcher acquired a sufficient sampling of participants' behaviors or words, or the extent of analysis of the participants words or behaviors (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007); and (c) causal error, or the "causal explanations. . . for observed behaviors and attitudes without attempting to verify such interpretations" (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p. 237). One significant threat to internal credibility regarding this study concerns observational bias. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) described this threat to legitimacy as occurring when the researchers collect an inadequate quantity of data from participants, providing an incomplete analysis. The developed interview protocol is open-ended for the purpose of obtaining as much insight from the participants as possible in an effort to reduce observational bias. Asking follow-up questions ensures understanding and clarity of the participants' responses. Finally, the threat of descriptive validity (i.e., the accuracy and adequacy of participants' responses) is recognized as a threat to internal credibility. To combat this possible threat, the processes of member-checking (Manning, 1997) and debriefing of the researcher (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2008) will be utilized.

Threats to External Credibility

The greatest threat to the external credibility of the findings within this study concern interpretive validity. Maxwell (1992) described interpretive validity as how precisely the researcher captures the perspective of the participant. The risk to legitimacy in regard to interpretive validity in this study involves the researcher misinterpreting the interviewed participant's views, images, and/or experiences due to their own experiences. In addition, because I, the researcher, assigned meaning to the findings, and acknowledge the threat of interpretive validity of the data, I also must consider how the findings could sway the academic community (i.e., catalytic validity).

To enhance interpretive validity of the research study, I sought to include participants actual language and descriptions in analysis. The findings were germane only to the interviewed respondents. Further, as was described previously, member-checking was employed (Manning, 1997) to ensure accurate and adequate representation of the views and experiences of the participants (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the primary instrument within qualitative research and is the instrument of choice (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Kress & Shoffner, 2007). Researchers should make every effort to account for their biases through identification and acknowledgement, as some degree of bias is present throughout every research process (Gerhard, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994). As the researcher, I have worked with food insecure populations, both on and off campus, and along with my own experiences with food insecurity while an undergraduate in college, I understand the phenomena personally and seek to better understand it through an intersectional lens. I understand the context and culture of student food insecurity and know that some individuals may hesitate or struggle in providing personal details of experiences due to the social stigma that surrounds food insecurity (Palar et al., 2018; Purdam et al., 2016). Garthwaite (2016) agreed food insecurity social stigma could be overcome once an individual recognizes someone like them has received similar food assistance. My background allowed me to relate, build trust, and create rapport with the participants. To ensure minimization of any bias of the researcher in this study, the processes of member-checking (Manning, 1997) and debriefing of the researcher (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2008) were used. The application of member checking was employed (Manning, 1997) upon concluding both semi-structured

interviews with each participant. Member-checking was completed via email the same week as the interview and will allow participants to review the accuracy and completeness of their interviews (Harper & Cole, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Final narratives were provided upon completion to ensure an accurate reflection of their experience. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) found utilizing member checks within qualitative research assists the researcher in verifying the credibility of the findings which enhances the validity of the study. Prior to analyzing data, I underwent two debriefing interviews (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2008) approximately two weeks after interviews with participants. The debriefing interviews were conducted by a higher education individual not directly involved with the study and the debriefing interviewer developed the protocol of the interview. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2008), who suggested the debriefing interview as a technique to reduce researcher bias via the promotion of reflexivity, provided the framework for the questions to be asked in the debriefing interviews.

Conclusion

This chapter described the design and methodology used for my study. The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the experiences of food-insecure college students during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession. The two data collection methods, interviews, and photo elicitation are appropriate data collection techniques for answering each of the three research questions through an intersectional perspective. I also addressed analysis of the data through narrative analysis. Finally, concerns of trustworthiness were addressed through discussion of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) Four-Dimensions Criteria that recognizes trustworthiness through the application of credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Data

Within this chapter I will introduce study participants, detail their experiences through their narratives, and call attention to critical positions and how they make meaning of their experiences as college students grappling with food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. For purposes of analysis, identified in Chapter 3, three-dimensional space approach: interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Dewey, 1938) will be used and special attention will be proffered to examining the role of social identity, intersectionality, and social systems in analysis. The first dimension of the analytical construct, interaction, will analyze the participant's perspective of the experience of college student food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their interactions with other individuals and social conditions, noting the experience is both social and personal. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest individuals are independent and yet dependent on each other "and need to be understood as such... they cannot be understood only as individuals" (p. 2), meaning though individuals are independent, they are also shaped by social interactions and conditions. Second is continuity, in which the analysis of the narrative focuses on past and present experiences and how actions are likely to occur in the future (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Dewey, 1938). According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), continuity refers to "wherever one positions oneself in that continuum - the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future - each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future" (p. 2), implying future experiences grow from previous experiences that instantiate a cyclical nature of experiences. Finally, situation will be

analyzed as place and time, and how these might have affected the experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Dewey, 1938). For purposes of this research, situation is broken down between pre-pandemic and COVID-19 pandemic as there is a distinct shift in cultural norms, beliefs, and behaviors.

Each participant's narrative was captured over two semi-structured interviews, with photo elicitation prompts and collection of images occurring between the first and second interview. All interviews were conducted over Zoom, with zero interruptions or technical issues. Transcription of each interview was provided by Zoom software upon conclusion of the interviews with member checking taking place one week after the conclusion of each interview. Throughout the analysis of the narratives, I will use the participant's voice to encapsulate their experience to provide a complete understanding. The first section of this chapter will introduce each of the five participants under their self-selected pseudonyms: Colette, Juan, Anitra, Adrian, and Xiomara. Each of the participants' profiles provides background information, and their self-identified social identities. Offering detailed participant profiles will allow the reader to meet the participants and gain an understanding of who Colette, Juan, Anitra, Adrian, and Xiomara are to gain a better understanding into their experiences being a food insecure college student throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Context of each participants' background provides initial perspective and lays the foundation for the second section of this chapter that will provide a deeper analysis of the participants' narratives through photo elicitation. See Table 1 for the student self-identified demographics and profiles.

Table 1*Pre-Interview Self-Identified Participant Demographics and Profiles*

Participant	Gender	Sexual	Pell Grant	(Dis)ability	Race
	Pronouns	Orientation	Eligibility	Status	
Colette	she/her	heterosexual	Eligible	Yes	Chinese
Juan	he/him	heterosexual	Eligible	No	Hispanic
Anitra	she/her	heterosexual	Eligible	No	Hispanic
Adrian	he/him	heterosexual	Eligible	No	Hispanic
Xiomara	she/her	heterosexual	Eligible	Not Sure	Hispanic

Note. Information was self-identified by participants in the online interest form.

The first section of analysis will be each participant's narrative and how their experiences were shaped by their social interactions and conditions, continuity, and place and time (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Finally, the participant's photo elicitation piece will conclude each of their narratives. Descriptions and meaning of the three original photographs regarding the three photo prompts: (a) take a photograph that represents what food insecurity has been like for you during the pandemic; (b) take a photograph that represents how your social identities have influenced your food insecurity while being a college student; and (c) take a photograph that represents how food insecurity has been influenced by your institution's response to the pandemic, will be discussed by the participants. Each image provided was also captioned by the participants and the second interview consisted mainly discussion of the original photographs submitted by the participants.

The second section of this analysis will be the interpretation of findings related to each of the three research questions. I synthesized the data by generating an outline for each participant in chronological order. During the synthesis of the data I began noticing several similar patterns and events, including experiences related to food insecurity prior to the pandemic, social identity experiences related to food insecurity both pre and current pandemic, and experiences related to higher education's response, the participants food insecurity, and academic outcomes. Throughout the synthesis process I made note of language related to participants' self-identified social identities and experiences with food insecurity. Each of these narratives are independent from the others, yet interlaced with similar experiences across the participants, especially regarding interaction, continuity, and situation. This second mode of analysis offers a deeper understanding within the context of each of the participants' narratives.

Colette

Meet Colette, whose gender pronouns are she/her. Colette is a 19-year-old first generation college student majoring in education. She resides in an on-campus residence hall and is enlisted in a meal plan. She selected to attend the 4-year public institution for the teacher education program and, as one of the less expensive schools in the state, felt this institution met her educational goals while fitting within her budget. She is involved in several organizations, clubs, and volunteering opportunities. Her typical course load is between 16-18 course credit hours per semester since first enrolling. She is currently on track to graduate a semester early, which she describes as being financially beneficial as she self identifies as low socioeconomic status. While attending college, she has not received financial support from her family, nor did she receive many scholarships.

However, Colette was eligible for federal grants and loans which has been the main financial resource to cover her tuition costs. She recalls asking for money as gifts for occasions such as Christmas and birthdays with the thought of assisting her in covering tuition. She has been and is eligible for the federal work-study program and is currently employed working between 20-28 hours a week. She has enjoyed her college experience so far, describing it as “fun...busy.” She described having had some social issues when first enrolling in college but quickly dismissed them as something that everyone most likely experiences. Academically, she claims to be performing well in her coursework, and is looking forward to her upcoming graduation to fulfill her career goals as a teacher.

In the interview, Colette identified herself as a heterosexual female who held non-denominational Christian religious beliefs. She further identified as being of Asian heritage that was adopted by a white family in the United States when she was eight years old due to China’s one child policy, noting “I lived in China but don't remember much of my heritage, and it's like, oh, what am I doing here, who am I really, and I feel like a lot of adopted children feel like that.” In her demographic form, Colette identified herself as Chinese, while referring to herself as having Asian heritage during the interview process. She remembers some of her culture as she did reside in China until she was formally adopted before she was nine years of age. It was during her teenage years that she struggled with her identity, which impacted her mental health. The bullying and identity crisis has led to a clinical diagnosis of depression and anxiety and she struggles with social acceptance, stating “throughout high school and [sic] it was a [sic] very difficult trying to maneuver, those mental health issues throughout the general school system public school system.” Coming to college, Colette knew mental health resources would

be made available to her, and understanding the struggle throughout high school without those specific services, she stated she made it a point to seek those out right away and has maintained appointments with those services through her institution.

Pre-Pandemic

Colette participated in the free and reduced meal program at her high school prior to attending college. However, because of this program she did not feel food insecure growing up. It wasn't until applying to college that her mom revealed their financial instability:

I was very sheltered as a kid you know with all these difficulties. I didn't know how food insecure we were until my mom disclosed it recently. I didn't realize at the time, I knew I was on free lunches at school, but didn't realize we were on food stamps, and like some of our habits that we've come to do, were because it was to save money.

Colette spoke of her mom's inability to find stable employment since elementary school. Her mom is educated holding a degree in business and was employed throughout Colette's first year in high school, however, lost her job when the organization shut down, and has not held employment since. When discussing food insecurity prior to the pandemic, Colette discussed her and her family's 'habits' or learned behaviors. As she considers her upbringing and eating habits, she draws the realization that her learned behaviors could be a result of her family's food security status:

I'm just a picky eater in general, I guess that's something I do need to let you know so I don't eat very often in general, and I think that might have been part of my upbringing, thinking about it. But like, usually I don't eat more than two meals

a day usually most days only one. So, I've been doing that since middle school. So, even if I still like I'll eat lunch and sometimes I won't eat dinner when I'm at home. And, majority of the weekends I'll eat like something at three [in the afternoon], and then that's it for the day, I might snack a little throughout the day but that's about it.

Food insecurity for Colette means not knowing where her next meal would come from and choosing between paying bills or buying food: “ I recall my mom recently saying I can’t pay the phone bill this month because I have to buy groceries, so sometimes you have to choose, bills or eating.” How she defined food insecurity seemed to resonate with her upbringing and conversations with her mom, past and present.

Colette connected her self-identified low socioeconomic status to pre-pandemic food insecurity stating, “I think a lot of it is more just due to my childhood and a majority of my life being in a low-income family.” When asked if she considered her other social identities other than economic identity with food insecurity, she did not feel that those identities played any role or relevance, nor did she feel they overlapped. She placed low-socioeconomic status as an independent identity that did not overlap with any other social identity. She considers financial instability to have been the key driver when discussing her experiences with food insecurity, recalling her mom choosing between paying specific utility bills or choosing to put food on the table. Yet when first attending college, she felt her food insecurity subside due to her required enrollment in a university meal plan, stating:

I'm lucky I really was not food insecure my first few semesters in college, especially prior to the pandemic because I was forced to get a meal plan. So, with a meal plan I could get anything I want on campus.

To further alleviate any food insecurity, she frequently visited the institutions on-campus food pantry more as a supplemental resource than a main outlet for food. She claimed going to the pantry just a few times her first few semesters to stock up on foods such as snacks that the dining hall did not offer.

Regarding financial resources, her self-identified social identities, race and adoption, play a critical role into what resources she seeks out, specifically noting:

Because I'm adopted, for scholarships and financial aid I've been like, because I was a child of the one child policy in China. There are scholarships out there for children in that same situation. And I've looked into that before and I'm going to continue applying for some of those scholarships because I fit into those identity requirements to receive these possible scholarships.

Colette did not mention any barriers in receiving resources. Noted earlier, she felt her mom sheltered her in fully understanding the extent of financial instability or food insecurity she experienced. When she herself has sought out assistance she did not believe anything hindered her ability.

COVID-19 Pandemic

As COVID-19 spread a global shutdown took place. Higher education institutions closed and with that a lot of student resources halted as well. The institution's response to the pandemic did affect what resources Colette felt she could access related to her food security. When her university shut down, they closed one of the two dining halls and

limited the hours of operation, only offering a grab-and-go meal with limited food choices. The dining hall the university closed was the one closest to Colette's residence hall. The rate at which she utilized the on-campus food pantry increased. She stated specifically seeking out the food pantry for meals to supplement late weeknights or weekends. One noted barrier related to her identity as being female was of feeling safe on campus. Due to the closure of the dining hall closest to her and limited hours of operation of the only one open, she was having to walk across campus in the late evenings to pick up the evening meal and did not feel comfortable doing so. Colette described another issue with the one open dining hall and that is the limited hours of operation. The limited hours often resulted in students standing in line for over 30 minutes to pick up their meal. Additionally, the meal selection was limited to one or two options stating:

They still provided food, but it was at a very limited rate of how much food, and how you could get food and when you can get food. The dining hall essentially only stayed open for like an hour for each meal for you to pick up. I still had classes and couldn't always go during the time they allotted for, so I missed out. It was choice of eating or being present for class.

Colette's utilization of the food pantry went from a few weeks out of the year to every few days since once the pandemic began the campus responded by shuttering one dining hall and restricting operating hours. A few weeks into the pandemic the institution made the announcement they were closing residence halls and allowing students to move out by a specific date in order to receive a refund. Colette immediately took advantage of this and returned home. With the refund she was able to cover the remaining cost of her tuition owed. However, returning home, food insecurity heightened for Colette and her

mom due to many shelves of inexpensive food options being wiped out due to panic buying and hoarding. Colette also witnessed healthier food option prices increase outside of her family's budget, describing "I'm constantly aware of how much money I'm spending on food and reducing that amount as much as possible." Therefore, food availability was limited due to budget constraints as the pandemic disrupted supply chains. Colette was granted the ability to work from home under the work-study program which was a positive response attributed to the university in allowing some work-study students the option to work from home. She knew of some friends on campus not under the work-study option that lost their on-campus employment and struggled to find employment after the university shutdown. Once her work-study ended, she did try to seek additional employment, however, connected to the uncertainty of the pandemic was her inability to secure a position stating:

I applied to several jobs but because it was so new nobody wanting [sic] to hire me, they had no idea how it was going to play out so any jobs I applied to I was either rejected or ghosted.

One of Colette's greatest challenges during the pandemic was her depression and anxiety. Like so many, the feeling of hopelessness seemed to burden her as each day passed. The first six months of the pandemic seemed to have been the most difficult for her and her mental health. At the beginning of the pandemic, she claims, "I struggled a lot mentally because of my anxiety and depression. It's definitely gone, haywire." She maintained using the campus mental health resources through virtual means. She could not recall if the institution had sent messaging out to students about these services as the situation of the pandemic intensified, noting:

I think they sent an email at the beginning of the pandemic about resources such as mental health, and the food pantry, but I don't remember them continuing that notification that those resources were available, and the pandemic raged on. I think they thought most of us went home after they closed campus, so they didn't bother.

Colette linked the state of her mental health as part of a barrier in not seeking out additional resources for personal and academic needs. She has a deep concern for others and connects her anxiety to being stressed of others needs before hers. For example, when seeking out financial and food resources during the pandemic, she would not always take or apply for what she needed describing any barriers encountered related to her mental health:

I think a lot of the barriers are more mental wise it's like, like I said earlier, I don't want to take those resources from others so it's not like I couldn't have used those resources myself, I needed them, but mentally it prevented me from like applying for certain things because I thought, I'm not needy enough for those resources if that makes sense.

Even though Colette was unable to find summer employment, she states she did not seek CARES Act funding for this very reason. She has a sense of responsibility to not take more than she needs even though she knows she struggles financially and that influences her food security.

Other resources Colette sought out was the on-campus food pantry, that she contributes to her sense of food security at the start of the pandemic until she moved back home, and an on-campus student money management center. As previously described,

she was unable to secure employment after her work-study position ended. She sought these services to assist her in budgeting, saving, and financial aid information for upcoming semesters.

Colette's academic performance did suffer during the start of the pandemic. She relates this downward turn to her depression and anxiety as the pandemic generated upheaval and chaos due to shutdowns and isolation. She does not believe her increased food insecurity upon returning home had any part of her negative academic outcomes including missing classes, not turning in assignments, and reduced effort in studying. Regarding pandemic-induced food insecurity related to academic outcomes, she states:

I don't think it affected my academic performance. But I think it's more because I'm so used to the lifestyle that I've had growing up so I'm used to eating one meal a day or used to just like taking like snack tiny snacks and calling that as my meal. So, academically, my body is already trained for it, so I don't think it necessarily suffered because of my food insecurity brought on by the pandemic.

Colette related her identity of growing up in a low-socioeconomic status household as conditioning her for the effects of the pandemic and food security status related to her academic performance. When speaking of academic performance and food insecurity, regardless of the pandemic, she speaks of being familiar with the situation and feels confident in navigating the issue confidentially. Ultimately, she connects her poor academic outcomes to her mental health struggles generated by the pandemic.

Photo Elicitation

Three weeks after initially meeting and interviewing Colette she submitted her three original photographs. She describes enjoying this piece of the study, as it really made her consider her thoughts and feelings regarding her experiences leading her up to this point and time in her life. The first photo submitted is in reflection of the first prompt was to take a photograph that represents what food insecurity has been like for you during the pandemic. See Figure 1 for the submission of the photograph. This photo taken and selected for submission by Colette is that of her apartment pantry. In this photo are non-perishable foods that she currently has available to her. She narrates her reason for taking and selecting this photo:

I feel like this photo represents me, and more of my experience during the pandemic, just because especially like [sic] in early beginning of the pandemic I didn't have a stable job. I couldn't always work and I didn't have a steady income coming in. Then currently with just like, not just because the pandemic, but because of how my schedule is working out, I'm not having a consistent income. Eeither because some weeks I can work more than others. This image to me represents uncertainty, but the feeling of this is just my life.

Figure 1

Apartment Pantry



Note. This photograph was submitted by Colette and is a snapshot of what her college pantry typically looks like.

Capturing this image, Colette reflected as it being an eye-opening experience. The realization of how she calculates her meals, portions to dollars, analyzing every purchase she makes. She correlates this back to her upbringing, how she was taught by her mom, and how she has been conditioned to see food and money in this way. When considering how this image relates to her social identities, she considered her American childhood with her Asian heritage:

In Asian cooking you use a lot of chicken broth so I know a lot of different recipes or like I tend to make a lot of soup, and like and then with rice or noodles so because the carbs are filling so then having that as a meal and it's fast, and then I feel like our things you can find in a traditional American household a lot of times like the hamburger helper and like they [sic] can beans and vegetables, because those are cheap, easy, and fast.

For her second selected image the prompt I requested her to follow was to take a photograph that represents how your social identities have influenced your food insecurity while being a college student. See Figure 2 for the submitted image. The image is that of an almost empty rice container and pork ramen. Colette describes how this image is symbolic to the prompt and her experience:

I think again the ramen ties back to the college student because that's like a staple for any college student usually and then the rice is more for the Asian side of me because, you can make a small thing and rice, and it can be very filling. I lived in China until I was eight and I love authentic Chinese food and just I think that's

what I associate with a lot of my Chinese identity more than like the American heritage. This photo is my way of, well, it's me embracing more of like my Chinese identity, an Asian identity.

Figure 2

Ramen and Rice



Note. This photo titled by Colette is *Ramen and Rice* and is a representation of her college student and ethnic identities.

The importance of this image is having and being enough. It also asks the question, is this enough? Can this last? The photo is symbolic of her identities in being who she feels and wants to be and is it enough. When taking and selecting this photo, she did describe not having strong emotions of feeling one way or another.

Finally, her last photo submission was to take a photograph that represents how food insecurity has been influenced by her institution's response to the pandemic. The photo selected was that of a grocery bag of items she received from her on-campus pantry during one of their distributions in which she received perishable and non-perishable items free shop style. See Figure 3 for the photo submission. She took this photo after a

shopping trip and selected it because she was grateful in how her institution has an on-campus pantry as she is aware many do not.

Figure 3

Groceries



Note. The photo is what Colette receives from her on-campus food pantry.

She explained her reason for this photo submission for this prompt:

I think that's where like the resource came from because this is the on-campus food pantry. Food pantry stayed open during the entire pandemic. That's where my connection came from, it's more of like that's how the institution responded to the pandemic to my food insecurity.

The feelings and attachment to this photo is one of gratitude and relief. She relates this photo to reducing stress, as shopping brought her calm and less worry about where food was going to come from during the pandemic. She also connected the photo to her low-socioeconomic status, she had grown up not realizing her family's economic situation and the photo reminds her very much of unloading groceries when her mom would return from shopping when she was younger:

Growing up I was oblivious to the fact we used outside resources like food pantries or food stamps, my mom felt like she had to hide the fact we were using them. Looking back when my mom would come home from shopping, looking at this photo this is what it was like for me growing up. I connect this photo, after learning we used food stamps, to my low socioeconomic status, before and after knowing, so I don't even think of anything being different, this is just how it was for me then and how it is for me now.

Juan

Meet Juan, whose gender pronouns are he/him. He is in his third year and a criminal justice major who identifies as a heterosexual male of Catholic faith. He lives off campus in an apartment in another town and drives approximately 30 minutes to attend classes. He enrolled with the campus dining hall meal plan his first year only. He grew up in what he describes as one of the leading school districts in his state located in a wealthy area, even though he notes he and his family as being "lower middle class, but I grew up at least in the educational system in a higher middle class." He distinguishes his educational opportunities as luck due to the sectioning of districts in relation to his neighborhood: "my neighborhood just got lucky, for some reason, because the way things are sectioned off, I could definitely have gone to much lower districts, because I am lower socioeconomic." Juan self identifies as a biracial male of Caucasian and Hispanic descent. In his demographic form, Juan identified himself as Hispanic, while referring to himself as having Caucasian and Hispanic heritage during the interview process. He chose to attend this institution because it is well known for its criminal justice programs, and he's enjoyed his educational experience at the campus, even though he does not

participate in anything outside of class and work, considering himself a minimalist. He has held some form of employment since high school, typically working several jobs while maintaining a full course load between 12-15 hours per semester. While attending college, his parents agreed to pay half of his tuition and rent. He has qualified for some federal loans and grants but has not received any scholarships.

In many instances during the primary interview, Juan would refer to himself as a White male, yet other instances as a Hispanic male, and only referenced himself as a biracial male three times during our conversation. Speaking about his years growing up, his biracial social identity did create struggles for Juan throughout his life. Family and peers often referred to him as “whitewashed,” with many pointing out that he did not speak what he referenced as perfect Spanish. Juan’s inability to speak like his family and peers often singled him out within his culture, along with his fairer skin tone. He continued in the interview speaking about racism from both the White and Latinx communities, both of which he belongs to, and the distrust he has acquired because of this:

In fifth grade my sister told me not take a teacher because she was racist against Hispanics. It was the first time I really had to learn about racism. Sometimes it comes from [our] own people, and I have a sense of distrust. I have been profiled by my own people, saying I’m the problem because I’m half white. So, it’s definitely a struggle between what to believe, and who to trust, if that makes sense.

Regarding Juan’s low socioeconomic status, he spoke to his educational journey and the financial hardships in paying for college. As described earlier, he felt fortunate for having

a quality educational experience growing up even though he believed his family to be of a lower socioeconomic class and peers in the neighborhood over did not have the same experience in their district. He also noted his financial status offered him an opportunity in meeting people of all different ethnicities and cultures that allowed him to learn many different perspectives, for which he was grateful. Furthermore, when talking about his financial status he referred to his experience of first applying for college and the reality of tuition expenses and what financial aid for which he did and did not qualify for:

If anything, it just makes it hard to pay for school because the middle classes, is too poor to pay for it but not quite enough to get real loans, or scholarships. So, everything pretty much comes out of pocket.

Pre-Pandemic

Juan expressed understanding and experiencing food insecurity at a young age. He recalls being eight or nine years of age when he noticed his parent's food buying habits. He remembers eating larger meals with a greater variety near his parent's paydays and as the week or month went by, meal selection and quantity reduced. During this same period is when Juan physically changed, noting his weight increased, and he began learning about food's nutritional value. He realized the food his parents could afford was a contributing factor to his weight gain:

Pretty much all we could afford we got spaghetti and macaroni and cheese. I first realized like I can't really eat anything else. And that was also when I first started realizing nutritional value to food, because it was at that same time that I got really fat.

Food insecurity for Juan meant more than not having enough to eat, it also meant not having the ability to afford healthy options. Not having healthy options was something he referenced when he was child, and equated that to the college diet, still unable to afford options that would allow him to feel and be healthier. When first enrolling in college it seems, nothing changed for Juan as he continued to work, live paycheck to paycheck, and purchase the same type of packaged and processed foods he was accustomed to, diet and budget wise. Juan discussed purchasing healthier options is a struggle due to working long hours, course load, and inconsistent work schedule with his concern being perishable items might spoil before he can use them. He referred to his meals and what he considers purchasing as being “efficient.”

Additionally, when first attending college and enrolling in a meal plan, he maintains he still had a sense of food insecurity. He purchased the cheapest available meal plan. He spoke to the nutritional value of food provided and the increase of his weight. During his first year at college, he gained over 30 pounds, affecting his physical and mental abilities to perform academically:

The freshman 15 is a real thing. I think I gained over 30 pounds my freshman year. I had a food plan at that time too and you would think it seemed the healthiest so it was either have some dry salad, on the other side of court, or have like a meatball sub with some fries or something. Obviously, I don't want to eat salad every day, but it would have been a better option to do that, but because of that I had very low self-esteem and I was pretty depressed I'm pretty sure at some most points my grades heavily declined after that fact.

He states his eating habits he established as a child carried with him into college and contributed to his weight. Meals outside of the meal plan continued to be packaged and processed foods that were easy to make and within his budget. He correlated this to his previous and current low socioeconomic status.

Juan's parents assist him financially with expenses related to school and housing. However, utility, gas, and essential items are left for him to cover. He has held employment since high school all being hourly, minimum wage positions, to "earn his keep." In seeking financial aid when first attending college, he referenced his "half white" identity stating:

There are really no resources for a straight white dude anymore, or I guess ever, but there was anything for that. The only thing that I could possibly get help from would be if, I [identify] am Hispanic American. And it's always kind of bothered me. The whole process of it. It makes me feel off if I were to receive benefits solely based on my social identities. I don't want to be just a tax write off solely because I have darker skin than some people, because I know, like in the, in the areas I grew up with, there was, there was white people who didn't get the same thing I did.

Being Juan is biracial, he struggles with each of those identities along with his gender identity in seeking and accepting resources. A barrier for Juan is his internal struggle with feelings, thoughts, and emotions related to his racial and gender identities. During our first interview, he would often reference himself as either a White male or a Hispanic male, but seldom combined the identities. What became evident is that either identity he identified with was an internal struggle in seeking assistance. Juan believed resources

were not meant for his use because he did not meet the racial or ethnic identity requirements to utilize the resources or being male it was looked down upon as being unable to provide for himself.

When first enrolling in college he spoke about seeking scholarship funding. His selected major entering college was within the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field, and an opportunity for financial funding presented itself to him through an outreach program at the institution in what he called Hispanics in STEM. He describes the experience of one that further deepened his identity struggle:

My freshman year, I signed up for a scholarship with Hispanics in STEM, it was like, you get \$500 from a family or something, and I went to the house to meet with them. And it was just these two random Hispanic people who were just pretty much writing off checks, and I didn't even ask me for my name, they're just like how did you hear about this or whatever, they didn't ask me like my aspirations or anything like that so it just kind of rubbed me wrong, I suppose, just wrote the check and I left. It makes me feel off. I received the benefits solely based on my social identities, nothing about who I was or what I thought I could accomplish. So, I guess I feel if there was white a person who didn't get the same thing I did and they are smarter than me but didn't receive anything just because they are white, it felt unfair to me.

Juan's experience entering college further deepened his identity struggle, which influences his ability to seek out and receive resources. One aspect of Juan's experience I noticed is he described how this made him feel both in past and present tense. In particular he stated the experience "makes me feel off" and later noting, "it felt unfair to

me.” This experience still resonates with Juan today and his ability to move past his identity struggle in accepting assistance. He has and will continue seeking out resources that do not target specific identities.

COVID-19 Pandemic

When Juan’s institution shut down due to the concerns of COVID-19, he was allowed to maintain employment, which was very impactful in his ability to maintain “status quo.” He noted increasing his usage of the on-campus food pantry as well as the money management center for students to assist with budgeting. He believed shutting the institution down made contacting professors and administrative offices (i.e., financial aid, academic departments, and academic resource centers) that much more difficult and required more of his time that he could have spent working rather than time trying to connect with those entities. When asked about his experience to the institution’s response to COVID-19 he spoke in regard to communications received regarding resources available, noting:

It did seem the most resources were targeted towards different social identities so I felt I wasn't allowed to apply or go because it was targeted to something that didn't seem like I fit into, if that makes sense.

However, he did not recall anything specific when asked for further clarification regarding this experience. Additionally, he referenced the CARES Act and claimed he did receive first round funding but was denied on subsequent applications without understanding reasons for the denial. The experiences described by Juan regarding his institution’s response and how that impacted his food insecurity were based on the decision of CARES funding. He was grateful for the maintained operations of the campus

food pantry and believed this positively impacted his food security status since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Juan felt the pandemic brought on many challenges, including the inability to go home due to his grandmother, loss of summer employment, heightened food insecurity, and anxiety. How he coped with the challenges was simply to just not think about it and work more to help him through his challenges. He related to his cultural Hispanic identity in describing how he coped:

I think that the try not to think about it and just keep working, though, that that Methodology, that ideology, kind of stemmed from my Hispanic background, because that's always what I've seen from my mother and my grandmother, because that's always what they've done they, they don't really care what's going on like with the rest of the world and they don't care like what other people think, like, what the situation is or what is going on they just do what they have to do and don't make a fuss about it. I use work and just keep moving forward, like saying that to myself in my head, to not worry about things and not try to pay attention to things that are happening that we have no control over, really.

When he speaks about using work as a method to cope it is to be understood the job is laborious and physically taxing. He alludes in his descriptions that he must be physically active in order to remove any thoughts or emotions regarding his experiences that he correlates to his cultural upbringing. Additionally, with his upbringing you do not seek out emotional or financial support, stating his family did not offer any further financial, emotional, or essential items throughout the pandemic being he held one job instead of two, with this family stating, “you have a job, you can take care of yourself.”

Juan sought off campus support for his food insecurity and he learned about two food distribution events through campus communication. He knew it was not run by the institution but the communication he received about the food distribution event he felt was misleading. The first food distribution he describes he was denied and did not receive any assistance:

As soon as I got there, they denied me because they wanted to check my finances or something. I entered what I made the previous year, even though I was without my second job right now and struggling, they denied me. I was so confused because that was not communicated at all. So, I wasted my time going there.

The second off campus food distribution event resulted in the same outcome and he was again denied. Juan notes the university communication did not provide adequate details of requirements. Being he is both low socioeconomic status and identifies as a minority he did not understand the reason why he was denied assistance based on the university communication he received.

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, summer of 2020, Juan's food insecurity was at its most severe levels. He typically works two jobs, however, he lost employment of one position due to shutdowns caused by the pandemic. As described previously he was unable to receive any additional financial support from family. On and off campus food banks were his only stable resource since the beginning of the pandemic. With the institution moving completely online, course work became increasingly difficult for Juan, stating reaching professors was exceedingly difficult and he had to teach himself the material. He had enrolled in summer courses, and he describes his experience

during the peak of the pandemic between academics and food insecurity as tiresome and the negative academic outcomes that followed:

The courses being online, seeking additional employment, and my food insecurity was at an all-time high, I really had to stretch you know meals to go farther. I had to stop myself from eating sometimes so I can have at least something tomorrow. So between that and school at the time actually was taking summer school at that point I completely failed that summer course. It was the lowest point for me since this all started.

He did not expand further as the conversation seemed to be difficult for Juan. He did share that from that point forward his experience with food insecurity and academic outcomes has improved.

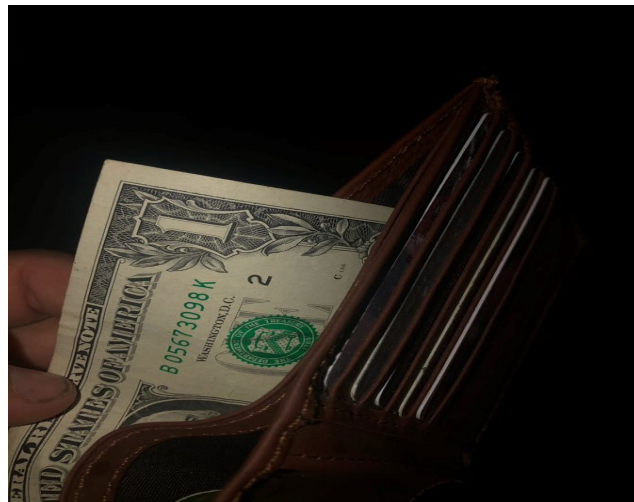
Photo Elicitation

Juan and I reconvened about three weeks after our first interview. At this point he had submitted all three original photos in one file. Asking him if he enjoyed the assignment of the photos, he stated he did and found it to be thought provoking. He made note he thought he would be able to take the photos quickly but reflection of the prompts he wanted to “do it right.” The first photo submitted related to the first prompt was to take a photograph that represents what food insecurity has been like for you during the pandemic. See Figure 4 for the submission of the photograph. This photo taken and selected for submission by Juan is that of his only dollar bill in his wallet. Since the beginning of the pandemic money has not been something easily obtained for Juan, which impacts his ability to provide food for himself. He chronicles his experience since the pandemic through the photo and why he captured it:

Well, ever since the pandemic started money's bit been a bit scarce, and I've had to run on very minimal money for meals through the week. I feel like a lot of other people's wallets are like this. I believe, if we can get the message around and try to get to people and they can receive help one way or another, the other people have the same wallets like me can get help with their food insecurity.

Figure 4

All I Have



Note. This photo is of Juan's wallet in which he titled the photo *All I Have*.

The capture and reflection of this photo left Juan feeling numb. It reminds him of all the bills and responsibilities that comes with being an adult but working two jobs he feels he should have more to show for it. The photo also produces a sense of sadness because he wants to be able to provide for himself better, such as healthier food items instead of cheap, packaged, and processed items. He narrated the photo connected to his Hispanic male identity and he explained, "Hispanic men who are you know working you know dawn to dusk they may have some money at the start of the week but, at the end of the week, it looks just like that."

The second photo submitted by Juan was based on the prompt to take a photograph that represents how your social identities have influenced your food insecurity while being a college student. See Figure 5 for the submitted image. The photo is that of protein (i.e., meat, canned meats or beans, and protein bars) on top of a calendar open to March 2020. Juan associated his male and college student identity to this photo. Being male he states he requires a significant amount of protein and being a college student, he has had to stretch out and meal plan the best of his ability.

Figure 5

Rationing



Note. The photograph is of canned goods, hamburger meat, and protein bars on top of a calendar. Juan entitled this as Rationing and his is interpretation of this act.

He further tells about meal rationing for weeks on end, measuring amounts to extend throughout the weeks and hoping for extra for the needed calories being he works two jobs, one more laborious than the other. He further described this photo as being a part of his Hispanic male identity. He states:

Going back to my social identities, a lot of people at my work and my other job pretty much come with containers full of food like that all day, every day, the week. At my job we are all Hispanic American, we all have this same Tupperware, and same food.

When asked what emotions this photo evokes, he proclaims a feeling of just being tired, “being food insecure is mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausting.”

The final photo submitted by Juan was an image that represents how food insecurity has been influenced by your institution’s response to the pandemic. See Figure 6 for the image. The image is of his coworkers at one of his two jobs, during a mid-day break after working just over six hours. Juan was immediate to state how this image represents the prompt:

My College has done not as much as most people would want, or think they have, so I have to work two jobs to pay for food, and it’s laborious since the pandemic has ceased many jobs. This is considered essential. I don’t feel they [the college] has [sic] been helpful. I’m struggling and food insecure.

Figure 6

Essential Work



Note. This photo is of Juan’s co-workers eating lunch. They continued to work throughout the pandemic as they were all deemed essential.

Further clarification from Juan as to why he feels the institution has not been helpful include the university shutting down and moving coursework online and charging the online fee even though it is not the choice of the student. The added online fee caused tuition to increase which in turn he had to work additional hours and another job to be able to afford these added costs during the pandemic. The photo produces the same emotion of exhaustion as the previous image he submitted. When speaking of the emotion of the image he proclaimed, “as a straight Hispanic cisgender man, we're pretty much tied to this laborious work that is breaking our backs every day, just so we can support ourselves and our family.”

Anitra

Meet Anitra, whose gender pronouns are she/her. She is a first-generation student whose first language is Spanish and identifies herself as a Catholic Hispanic female. She is a psychology major and is a few weeks away from graduating. She chose to attend this institution because her sister would also be attending during the same time, and she thought it would be better for them to attend together. She has loved her college experience at the institution, even though it was difficult to navigate at first (i.e., completing financial aid documents, course schedules, and connecting to student resources). She contributes her initial struggles attending the university to being a first-generation student and Spanish being her first language. She describes feeling overwhelmed her first few semesters until she was able to “understand the system” and believes had she come from a different background she would not have experienced these issues. However, she maintains she has really enjoyed the classes, professors, and the

entire college experience. She has maintained employment through on-campus positions during the long semesters throughout her college tenure.

Pre-Pandemic

Growing up Anitra was on the free/reduced lunch program and does not feel she or her family experienced food insecurity. She stated of always having plenty to eat and enough to share. She does recall visiting food banks when she was younger due to her family's financial instability but maintains never experiencing food insecurity. When asked what food insecurity meant to her, she stated, "not knowing where your next meal would come from, and if it would be healthy." She connects food insecurity to the inability to purchase healthy foods due to her family's low socioeconomic status and inability to purchase healthier options due to costs. Additionally, she did not learn from her family or in school how to make healthy choices for herself, noting:

I didn't really learn anything about it [healthy eating]. I mean they give us that little pyramid with the things that say like a dairy and whatever, but then they never really like focus on it and then with my parents it's just that's the cultural part. My mom cooks whatever she knows how to cook because we moved here from Mexico, but also my parents, didn't go to college they didn't finish elementary school they're not educated in health.

Her first experience with food insecurity stems back to her first semester enrolled in college. In high school, she relied on the free/reduced lunch program and when she transitioned to college, she did not have that support to fall back on:

In high school I was getting the free lunch thing, and you have a break for lunch and you go to the cafeteria and get lunch, but then, when I transferred into

college, I had to start doing that, on my own, but I had to start spending money for it, and so, sometimes it was like I had to get gas and so I'd rather do that or other times I just I was doing like I was in school, so it didn't have time to go somewhere else.

She did not enroll in the institution's dining meal plan. Anitra has received financial support from her family throughout her time in college, though it has not been consistent, and can travel home on weekends to have her family provide meals.

Anitra feels being a first-generation student was a significant disadvantage in understanding what resources were available. When she was first accepted at her institution, she was unaware about how to "navigate the system," nor did she receive communication from the institution as to what resources (i.e., financial, student services, and support services) were now available to her. She states:

Just the whole being first generation, because my parents couldn't really help me. Whenever I first enrolled, this is the financial part of it, I didn't know of a lot of resources that were available to me. I didn't know how or what to apply for, I didn't apply to different scholarships that I would have been able to get every semester, because I didn't know about any of it and I didn't know how to ask for help either because I didn't know who to ask. They [the institution] didn't tell me anything, I'm not sure I would have known about some of these things if it wasn't for my friends.

After her first two semesters, Anitra believes she has learned all that the campus has to offer. She feels she did this on her own through connecting with different academic departments and student service areas, such as the on-campus food pantry on social

media. Once connected on social media, specifically the on-campus food pantry, she attended their food distributions regularly which has greatly alleviated her food insecurity.

COVID-19 Pandemic

When the pandemic began, Anitra believed her institution communicated and transitioned to the best of their ability given the situation. She again described how she has learned to connect to resources on campus through social media, therefore, she knew of resources such as the on-campus pantry, CARES funding, and exactly how the university continued to shift and respond as updated information regarding COVID-19 became available. She described becoming more aware of food insecurity in general once the pandemic began, stating:

I think I'm more aware of it now because before it was more of like if there ever was food insecurity, I would only think about myself; for now I think about like everybody else like if I'm going through this. I'm lucky enough to know about this [the on-campus pantry] because there's probably a lot of people that aren't and then I also I found out that it's like a really big thing [food insecurity] for students.

Since the pandemic I think about food insecurity a lot more, than prior.

She is grateful that the university had a food pantry and it maintained operations throughout the pandemic as she credits the food pantry as alleviating food insecurity for her as well as the student body. Since the start of the pandemic she has received a significant amount of her groceries from the on-campus pantry. Regarding CARES Act funding, again, she credits being aware and connected to university communications via social media. She considered others who are first-generation and their first semester here

as not being fully aware and shared a concern for those who may not know how to “navigate the system.”

I think they communicated fairly well, what resources we had like the pantry, but because what happened in the beginning [first semesters enrolled] where they [the institution] didn’t really tell me about things, I just know more now, but others like me [first-generation] may not have known.

Overall, Anitra’s food insecurity did not reach peak levels due to the availability of food at the on-campus pantry. During the start of the pandemic she was not employed but was able to secure work-study employment months later. Between living close to her family receiving their assistance, the institution’s response of maintaining the on-campus pantry, and some savings, Anitra did not experience severe food insecurity.

Food insecurity prior to the pandemic was not considered a significant challenge to Anitra, and even though she did experience slight food insecurity since the start of the pandemic, the on-campus pantry was a significant resource in combatting that challenge reducing her stress levels:

The food pantry for sure helped me a lot with stress because I wasn’t working for a while, I didn’t really have a job. So, it was a pretty stressful time in the beginning, but I could put my focus on school instead of food, because in the beginning of the pandemic, it was like kind of mentally hard for me.

Anitra knew of mental health services available but did not utilize them. She is close with her family, especially her siblings, and was able to receive emotional and at times financial support from them. Other than the food pantry she did not seek out or utilize additional institutional resources. She claimed to be well aware of these services and felt

comfortable seeking them out if needed. There were no barriers described or related to any of Anitra's social identities directly, but she considered being first-generation and newly enrolled an issue for others as it was for her. The only challenge noted at the start of the pandemic was transitioning online, as it was not her preferred method of learning. This seemed to delay her in seeking employment.

For Anitra, the struggle from the start of the pandemic was the transition of face-to-face courses to online. This modality is not her preferred method of learning; therefore, she cites any negative academic outcomes related to the pandemic as being related to the institution's response closing campus and moving courses online, and not food insecurity, noting:

I don't feel like it [food insecurity] really affected my academic performance, I mean not really. Making the courses all online I had to work a lot harder, I had to focus on school lot more.

She exclaimed the move of making courses online she had to spend more time on online than usual ensuring she reached the outcome she wanted. She did not describe missing assignments, study sessions, or classes, and has maintained a positive academic record. She contributed her positive academic outcomes to her support system, her family, for being there when struggling with food insecurity.

Photo Elicitation

I reconnected with Anitra about four weeks after our initial interview. School and personal matters had prevented her from reaching out to me earlier, but she had fun thinking of the prompts and taking photos. The first photo submitted regarding the prompt to submit an image that represents what food insecurity has been like for you

during the pandemic. See Figure 7 for the submission of the photograph. The photo Anitra captured is that of some of her pantry items, all non-perishable items that are “easy to assemble” quickly. This photo represents how she has been sustaining herself throughout the pandemic, foods that are processed, long shelf-life, and fast to eat. She selected these items because of the health scare of the pandemic and not wanting to interact with people to reduce her risk of contracting COVID-19.

Figure 7

Efficient Meals



Note. These are all items from Anitra’s pantry that she buys on a regular basis because the meals are quick to make.

She noted the importance of the image to her is this food is not nutritious in content. Additionally, she described the food content is not something to sustain an individual and be something people live off on a continuous basis. The emotions produced with this photo were very neutral, and not something she felt she could really describe, much like when she reaches for one of the foods in pantry when she is hungry, “it’s just food to get her through and nothing exciting, just fast and efficient”. She found these foods she

selected relates to her college identity which she described as immature and childish, based on the selection of foods in the image.

The next image based on the prompt of an image that represents how your social identities have influenced your food insecurity while being a college student, and Anitra captured the image of her Abuelita cooking soup for her. See Figure 8 for the submitted image.

Figure 8

Abuelita's Home Cooking



Note. This is Anitra's grandmother cooking for her one evening during the pandemic. As she spoke in her first interview with me, family has been a huge role in ensuring her needs are met. Being a college student, her grandmother is one of her biggest supporters, and as Anitra smiled stated "she feeds me every chance she can cooking some of my favorite dishes, even when I'm not hungry." But the photo also speaks to her Latina heritage as she addresses it:

My social identity of being Hispanic or Latina and coming from very traditional family, we're very protective of each other, and I think that's what is described through the picture like protection during insecure times.

In her final photo submission for the prompt of how food insecurity has been influenced by your institution's response to the pandemic Anitra submitted a photo of canned items (i.e., vegetables and protein) from the campus food pantry she received. See Figure 9 for the image.

Figure 9

Campus Pantry Items



Note. These are items picked up from Anitra's on-campus pantry during a food distribution during the pandemic.

In speaking with Anitra her response to the image was enlightening to her experience:

As you see there is only canned food and it's like the institution has helped, but there's still some stuff missing, as well as in the other picture and it's next to the stove because really this food doesn't need to be cooked, but I wanted to show that that's what I mean there's something missing still I think I think the importance is to show that there is help but there's still more help that can be done.

Anitra is grateful for what she did receive from the on-campus pantry and verbalized understanding they only give out what they receive as donations. The photo she states

does make her feel gratitude for what the university did do for her and others, but still feels more could have been done.

Adrian

Meet Adrian, who's gender pronouns are he/him. Adrian describes himself as a straight, Christian Hispanic male. He is also a first-generation college student who chose to attend the institution because it was just close enough to home, where he could be independent yet still call home if he needed. He and his family moved to the United States from Mexico and he and his siblings were born here. His mother has a sixth-grade education, and his dad graduated high school and has taken some coursework in basic accounting. Growing up in the United States, he and his siblings attended the public-school system and were on the free/reduced lunch program during his elementary school years but reaching middle school his father's hard work placed them outside of the programs income threshold. So far, Adrian has very much enjoyed his college experience and described at first being timid and shy dealing with imposter syndrome, to thriving, outgoing, and a confident individual who "found his voice on campus." Being the first in his family to attend college he describes feeling guilt during his first year attending simply because of the cost and leaving his family. But once he started engaging more with the curriculum and his peers his guilt subsided, and he sees how his family really supports and motivates him to be successful in college. He also spoke about his experience with contracting COVID-19 and the status of his health pre-and post-COVID-19 diagnosis. He has had issues with high blood pressure and has had to watch his health status due to his family history of diabetes. To date he is still dealing with the effects of contracting COVID-19.

Pre-Pandemic

Adrian believes food insecurity is when there is nothing on your shelves, or the quality of food product is poor for your health. Adrian grew up in a one income household as his mother cannot legally work in the United States, so his family was very dependent on his father's earnings. He remembers his father working, sometimes excessively, earning overtime in order for the family to not require assistance. Adrian states he was on free/reduced lunch programs due to their income. Because of the free/reduced lunch program and his father's work ethic, he never considered himself or his family as being food insecure stating:

Food insecurity wasn't at the top of my mind at the time, growing up, so my parents always found a way or we always had someone who was a close family friend who would help, that sort of thing, so I never really worried about food. Upon entering college, he still received family support, financial aid, and income starting his second year, describing:

I had as far as resources counted, my father, I had grants and scholarships and then my income coming in from my job, and I believe that [sic] about it, I would occasionally go into the food bank and get some food every now and again.

However, it was Adrian's first year in college when he began understanding and experiencing food insecurity with the expense of college as a driving factor. His first year, he had the least expensive dining meal plan offered, which was about 30 meals per semester, and rather expensive. Putting his upbringing aside, he quickly learned how to seek out resources offered by the college describing:

Coming to campus and then seeing a lot of resources everywhere, free food, free clothes, that sort of thing, free events and all that was really able to put me in a position where I was able to get what I needed.

Realizing the cost of college and the added expenses being placed on his family, he acquired employment his second year at the institution as a resident advisor for one of the residence halls. His position has reduced his room costs significantly, allowing his financial aid to extend farther, but still not enough to sustain his basic needs. Upon his second semester enrolled at the institution however, he did begin to use the on-campus food pantry more frequently, noting it became one of his prominent resources for food.

Prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Adrian expressed never being a fan of accepting assistance, even during his hardest times of dealing with food insecurity. He contributes his hesitance to him being a Hispanic male, noting his family, specifically his father, was never one to accept what he called “handouts.” He did not speak of any additional resources he utilized either on or off-campus. His greatest barrier in seeking resources was an internal struggle. He mentioned not seeking out services from the on-campus pantry at first, because of his Hispanic male identity, and his childhood upbringing, narrating, “being a Hispanic male has probably impacted significantly me seeking out help. My parents have never been the type to accept what they consider “handouts.”

When discussion about off campus resources came up, he spoke to his religious identity as a barrier. Adrian does not have a church he belongs to within the city limits or on campus. He did not feel comfortable seeking out community resources stating:

My identity as far as Christian probably played a good part into not getting community resources. I'm not going to go to the churches, simply because I don't have a church here in [the city] so there was nowhere near that I saw as a place where I could go for help. Those places never even came into mind when I was thinking, hey where can I go to help or go to get help, so like they were never an option in my head.

On campus resources were the only type ever considered by Adrian. Once getting past the stigma, he felt more comfortable and confident with himself in seeking out assistance when needed, regardless of the concern.

COVID-19 Pandemic

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, Adrian narrated his unique personal and professional experience being a Resident Advisor. When the institution shut down, he described the situation as being somewhat chaotic, not knowing what was going on, and communication was intermittent. He followed the institution's social media and thought the communication was lacking at the beginning but has improved as the pandemic continues. A university organization he is a part of for Hispanic males in leadership distributed meal vouchers. He stated that many of the members were first-generation and unemployed (i.e., prior to or caused by the pandemic) and was the first type of assistance he recalls receiving from the university.

However, one particular concern he described is the institution not refunding pre-paid monies in an account to purchase items at certain on-and-off-campus dining locations. At the beginning of the Spring 2020 semester, he had deposited several

hundreds of dollars into the account, but once the pandemic began, the majority of on and off campus dining locations shut down, and his money was never returned. He narrated:

The way the account works is you either use it, or you lose it basically if you get to the end of the semester and you haven't used your \$200 - \$300 it doesn't matter, the situation you're not getting the money back there's no refund. And I don't think that the initial pandemic semester made any difference to that, that's just their policy. They never reached out to me to say hey here's your money back or hey you know, would you like your money back or would you like it for this next semester.

He felt this was an oversight by the institution, and a strict policy that does not take into account the various scenarios that students often face, but the fact the institution shut-down the dining halls and other on-campus eateries, financial accounts should have carried over to the following semester or refunded per the choice of the student. This instance and university response impacted Adrian's food insecurity immediately. Adrian does not have a vehicle, so getting to an open eating establishment across town that accepted the use of this account was not an option for him. Also, he like others, rationed the use of this account throughout the semester, with the inability to use the funds and then ultimately lose them was very difficult for him stating "everything went downhill, very quickly." His position as a Resident Advisor drastically changed as well at the start of the pandemic. At the beginning, the institution offered those living in residence halls refunds if they moved out at a certain date, and a majority of students took advantage of this option according to Adrian. However, a couple of hundred students still remained,

and he was not provided any personal protection (i.e., mask, gloves, cleaning supplies, or sanitizer) as he continued to be employed by the institution noting:

I had to go out of my way and find a way to not only get masks but get enough to where I don't use the same one over and over again for health reasons, like I can't just sit here and use the same mask every day because that's dirty and just unhealthy.

He described using the same two disposable masks for several weeks before his girlfriend was able to make additional ones for him. Being considered essential and still required to engage and interact with residents, attending to their needs or concerns, the lack of personal protection equipment has been a very difficult situation for Adrian to handle. Especially as other Resident Advisors chose to move out, his workload increased. He quickly became responsible for other residence hall during the start of the public health crisis and was required to check on residents and ensure buildings were secure.

Furthermore, even though his workload and working hours increased, he was instructed to continue to only clock 20 hours of work. As previously described, Adrian is a part of the federally funded work-study program in which departments do not pay for the student salaries until the money allotted for the student runs out, then the department either picks up the student on payroll or the student no longer is allowed to work. Not only does this affect his finances, working unclaimed hours, but impacts his ability to seek out food. He narrated this experience:

I was working almost 15 hours per day. And then things get incrementally worse because, on the weekends, which for us are Friday and Saturday I'm [primary responsible individual for residence halls] and your hours go from 15 to 24. I'm

on duty and stuff in the building until the next day at 5pm so that makes food very scarce item warm food a very scarce item...Being paid 20 hours, and then working almost 60 and then also food not being close enough during the time [during pandemic] the job progressively has starting to look less and less like something I want to stay in.

Working long hours, he wasn't being paid for, along with the shutdown of both on-campus dining facilities were significant factors in Adrian's food insecurity, specifically at the beginning of the pandemic. He had never felt this form of moderate to severe food insecurity prior to the pandemic, and the institution's response expedited this issue for Adrian. He was grateful the on-campus pantry-maintained operations and claims the pantry quickly became a major source of food for him. Without this he wasn't sure how he would have made it through the beginning of the pandemic.

Adrian then quietly suggested he did not handle challenges brought on the pandemic well. He isolated himself as "it wasn't fully intentionally it was more mentally." The stress of the pandemic, an unhealthy relationship, contracting COVID-19, dealing with aftereffects of the illness, his job, coursework, finances, and friends leaving was very overwhelming for Adrian. The time he spent in quarantine was one of his most challenging times. Not only was he struggling with COVID-19, but the stress that comes with isolation. He spoke of his experience of the struggle of dealing with COVID-19, isolation, and dealing with the effects of the virus upon returning to work:

During the time that I spent being sick were the worst two weeks of my life and the month and afterwards were extremely difficult because I couldn't move around the way that I used to. I had a very, very limited amount of air during that

time, because my legs just couldn't accept the air. At first, and I would see spots.

And I would almost pass out from the effort and, mind you, this is a very different place health wise than where I was at the beginning.

He unknowingly had contracted the virus and had went home for a weekend prior to having symptoms. Ultimately his family contracted the virus from this visit, and he narrated the challenges experienced and the aftermath that pursued from that visit:

I was the one that gave that to my family like I was the entry point for my family and my dad. He was sick for much longer than he should have been, and him being sick he was unable to work and was laid off, not because he was sick but the shutdown. This financially impacted my family in a bad way. During this part of Adrian telling his story it was apparent he still struggles with being the entry point for his family contracting the virus. As this led to not only his family grappling with the virus but no source of income stating, “my actions led to my home being sick and losing our major source of income that major source of income was responsible for making sure that I was fed.” His father contracting COVID-19 exacerbated their economic situation as he had been out of work and had just recently found employment. This continues to be a difficult challenge for Adrian to navigate emotionally and mentally. This is in part why Adrian went back to work so soon after recovering from COVID-19. He attempted to seek out additional financial resources through the institution to help cover tuition and living expenses. He was not made aware by the institution how to apply and receive the first round of CARES funding until after the fact, so when the second round was made available, he applied and was denied because he was told he had not used all available financial aid means. The only financial aid not accepted by Adrian were student loans. This was very discouraging

for Adrian, as he did not understand why he should have to apply for student loans to place himself in further debt, when the funding was put in place for individuals in need. He and his family were living week to week with food insecurity, but the burden of student loans with high interest rates were not ideal and he narrates his experience of being denied by financial aid for CARES funding:

You shouldn't have to put yourself in a bad situation. As far as having hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of loans to receive help if the help is out to help people who need money for like not just school like, if I had taken out those loans that money would have ended up in their pockets already. And a lot of what they were taking into account were things that aren't really relevant at the moment, so things like my family's contribution is nonexistent at the moment.

Adrian was dealt multiple challenges throughout the pandemic. He sought resources, and some he was able to receive such as food from the on-campus pantry, but other than that he has struggled with how the university has responded regarding financial aid and his employment. The only method of coping Adrian spoke of has been seeking support from family, and his newfound relationship. He internalizes much of his struggle with challenges which he ties to his cultural identity stating:

As far as my identity goes, regarding this, I am more likely to use vocabulary that minimizes it because I don't want it to be a problem in my head, and so I project it that way. I don't know if you've noticed it, but when I talk about certain things I'll add like very little or something like that and that very much is me minimizing it personally, because if I say it out loud and acknowledging that would make the situation so much worse.

When speaking of coursework and the transition to online, Adrian expressed he did experience negative academic outcomes at the start of the pandemic. The cause was results of varied factors, but a major contributing factor was food insecurity. He chronicles his experience:

I will say, since the pandemic began, and like my food insecurity got more insecure. My grades have kind of faltered. A larger array of reasons, but that has played into it. Like being hungry and having to move online has kind of caused our schedules to become less understanding of our eating habits and more likely to schedule things that are unnecessary. But I've had to skip class to be able to get food because of the online scheduling now.

Moving courses online proved to be an issue for Adrian's modality of learning and scheduling purposes. Often the new limited dining hall hours conflicted with his now online schedule. Adrian has not failed any coursework, but he is disappointed in his overall GPA taking a decline, especially since it is not for lack of effort. Currently, he has stabilized his course schedule, which has allowed for more flexibility regarding his ability to obtain the necessities he needs and allow for time to do so.

Photo Elicitation

Adrian reconnected with me at exactly two weeks from our first interview. When we began our meeting, he noted his lack of energy and exhaustion as working and school had been rather difficult the previous weeks. When asking if he enjoyed the photo part of the research, he stated he did and took more photos than what he should have as it was difficult selecting just one image per prompt. His first image for the prompt what food

insecurity has been like for you during the pandemic is a current photo of his residence hall room fridge. See Figure 10 for the submission of the photograph.

Figure 10

A Weeks' Worth of Groceries



Note. This photo of Adrian's fridge depicts what he buys in a week for meals.

The photo is not just what he currently has but what it has been since the pandemic. In his fridge is lunch meat, cheese, fruit, and milk. Every day he eats a sandwich for lunch and possibly dinner depending on his work and course schedule. He buys inexpensive lunch meat and cheese and notes the milk is what he received from his on-campus pantry that as a long shelf life. He has chosen fresher items as opposed to packed and processed throughout the pandemic to "be as healthy as possible with as little access to healthy foods as I have." The image depicts the quality and quantity of food that keeps him going day in and out and has been his typical source of nutrition. After taking this photo he stated he felt worried, simply because reflecting on the prompt he realized how little was in his fridge and how few calories he was consuming daily. He also is particular in his shopping list not just due to budget restrictions, but he wants to limit his shopping to reduce his exposure to COVID-19. He currently hesitates to go to the grocery stores as he described how society is currently responding to the pandemic:

I like just to go to the grocery store right so though they'll show up without a mask you'll hear someone a couple aisles over coughing and so it's very much a nerve wracking place and so to look at this and then think I have to go grocery shopping, it's panic inducing, both because I have so little and also I'm scared for my health.

Speaking about his health, the milk in the photo reminds him of when he was a boy growing up, he was always told to be a big strong man one day he had to drink his milk. To this day he still buys and drinks milk but is conscientious of the fat content purchasing reduced or low fat. He being the first-born child and a son, his parents always reminded him to drink milk, he laughed as he recalls the interactions with his family, his two younger sisters were never made to drink as much milk as him, and as he grew older and getting out on his own in college he states, "I've learned a growing boy doesn't need that much milk."

The second photo submitted by Adrian is a photo of over-the-counter health remedies for various ailments in a ramen cardboard box. This photo was for the prompt to take a photograph that represents how your social identities have influenced your food insecurity while being a college student. See Figure 11 for the submitted image. The items in this image were all purchased by Adrian's parents to assist him during the pandemic. The Emergen-C was purchased at the beginning of the pandemic in an effort to ward off the virus by maintaining a healthy immune system, and the Theraflu and sleep aid were for his recovery efforts when he had contracted COVID-19, and the box was the chicken noodle ramen his parents has also purchased for him as he healed.

Figure 11

Get-Well



Note. The photo represents what Adrian’s parents sent him during the COVID-19 pandemic and he was ill with the virus. He called it his *Get-Well* supplies.

The photo represents the anxiety he has endured prior to and during the pandemic.

Interestingly, COVID-19 is now a part of his identity and who he is:

Especially after having COVID, and dealing with the isolation of the pandemic, I’ve become more and more aware of how my mental health affects things in my life. You know before I would have this feeling of like everything is closing in on me and I’ve learned that that that is symptomatic of like having an anxiety attack, you know, having a panic attack. And this is very much a picture of like me accepting help where I have found it and me allowing myself to be given help like, and accept my mental health as part of who I am.

His family prefers homeopathic remedies as opposed to going to a physician, in part due to lack of insurance and lack of affordable healthcare. Taking and showing me this photo, he described as being a “relieving process.” These items are hidden from the view of his

peers, because he sees it as a sign of weakness on his part, in needing and accepting help, and displaying his health issues, the photo he interprets as:

It makes me feel like you can see everything that has happened up until now, all this help that I've received and personally having someone who can see that I've received help kind of makes me very self-conscious.

It was evident in speaking with Adrian his sense of relief and embarrassment in speaking of the photo as he struggles with anxiety and letting others in. As noted in the self-identified demographics in Table 1, Adrian selected *unsure* regarding (dis)ability, as he has not been clinically diagnosed with anxiety attacks, and due to his lack of health insurance does not think he will seek out testing, but does believe he suffers for anxiety and panic attacks triggered by various health and isolation issues.

In the final photo, Adrian took and selected a photo of his pantry. This is in response to the prompt of how food insecurity has been influenced by your institution's response to the pandemic. See Figure 12 for the image. The photo contains food items, and empty boxes he leaves on his shelves of mainly non-perishable items. He quickly points out he opened the boxes for the photo to point out, "when people see my shelf of food, they don't see the real story behind it." He continued that the boxes are empty or almost but keeps them closed so there is an illusion to him having more than what he does. Also, the coffee has been there for over year, he stated the caffeine seemed to add to his mental health concerns, so it remains untouched in the back, but doesn't know why he hasn't thrown it out yet.

Figure 12*Not What You Think*

Note. This photo titled *Not What You Think* shows many empty boxes in Adrian's pantry that he would otherwise have closed emulating there was something in the boxes. The illusion would make it seem his pantry is full when in fact majority of boxes are empty.

Majority of these items are items he picked up during the on-campus pantry distributions, stating "the food that I've received [in this photo] that is a direct impact of the school providing for me," and had his institution not had this resource he doesn't think his cupboard would be even half full at this point, it would have more likely been pretty empty. The photo further represents emotion of sustainability, in the sense of calories. Reflecting on the photo he notes the food being protein-centric, as being male he feels prefers protein over vegetables, and that it has a higher caloric content to sustain him through the day.

Xiomara

Meet Xiomara whose gender pronouns are she/her and is a 23-year-old graphic design major. Xiomara is a first-generation Latina college student, whose parents came from Mexico, and considers she and her family to be of lower middle class. While attending the public education system, she was enrolled in the free/reduced lunch program, as her father's income was the only steady source. Once graduated she attended a nearby community college and transferred into the 4-year institution and is very pleased with choosing this path as she feels it prepared her for the academic rigor and college experience. She chose to attend this institution because her cultural background is about being close to family, and the institution was her best option to go to school and remain close. She felt confident during her first semester at the institution as she could already navigate the system (i.e., financial aid, blackboard, payments, etc.). She was fortunate enough to secure a full ride at the institution, covering her tuition and books. She has held a job since coming to college and sends money home after she covers her day-to-day expenses to assist her family.

Pre-Pandemic

Xiomara defines food insecurity as having no idea as to where your next meal is coming from, and not having a steady means of obtaining nutritious and filling foods. Her first experience dealing with food insecurity happened when she was in high school, shortly after her parents' divorce. Her mother and siblings moved out and went to live with her mother's sister. When her parents' divorce was final, her mom became head of

household and her family fell below the poverty line and she chronicles her first-hand experience with food insecurity:

That's when things started getting tough and we didn't have that secure income at first anymore, when we got to go live with some of my aunts. And that was terrifying because they would ask us to pay for rent and my mom had just gotten a job and we were in high school, so we didn't have jobs. So, we relied on my aunts to give us food and it was a lot.

Once her mom's income stabilized her household food insecurity did as well. Prior to this instance she had never felt she experienced food insecurity. At school she was enrolled in the free/reduced meal program and with her family together there was always plenty to eat. The experience led Xiomara and her siblings to seek employment to assist their mom with expenses.

However, entering community college then the 4-year institution she did not have a meal plan to fall back on. Her financial aid, and academic record have allowed her to earn financial aid grants and scholarships to cover college tuition costs. However, she struggles with paying for rent, utilities, and necessities even though she is employed. She has worked on-campus through the federal work-study program earning just above minimum wage. She learned about the on-campus pantry and attended food distributions regularly, at times, sending food back home.

Besides the free/reduced school meal program, Xiomara remembers visiting food pantries after her parent's divorce. One barrier brought up in discussion, her mom came to the United States illegally, her father legally and once married her citizenship was granted on that basis. However, the divorce was a concern for her citizenship and her

mom finding a job as she speaks very little and broken English. Xiomara being bilingual has been a significant resource for her mom, especially when seeking assistance at food pantries. Some pantries they visited did not have individuals on staff to be able to communicate with her mom, so she often went with her to ensure they were able to secure food items needed. She also speaks of the stigma of low-income families employing the use of food pantries describing it as being seen as a shameful act in society, but being Latina and female, she speaks of pushing past this stigma:

Being Latina right, and a woman, means sticking close to my family I think that's a big part of it is that whenever I think of food insecurity, I don't only want to help myself; I also want to help everybody else in my family so, I think that makes us more accepting of help, like we have to do this [visit a pantry] to provide for our family, and whatever the resources are and whatever we have to do, I think that is how my identity has shaped me.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Once the pandemic began, Xiomara recalls the institution responded as best they could. She explained receiving emails about the shift of coursework via online, residence move-outs, however, she did not feel the institution communicated resources such as the on-campus food pantry or CARES Act funding appropriately, recalling the experience: I don't think they [the institution] did a good job by communicating not in the first round, at least for CARES Act or food pantry. They didn't advertise any of it very well. As time went on, I think it has gotten better, maybe it was the chaos of the situation at the beginning, but too many people, like first-generation students, who really needed it didn't know about these opportunities. Xiomara did receive CARES Act funding both times she

applied for it, which assisted not only her but her family in paying for necessities. In relation to the shutdown, she did feel institutional services were less accessible as questions she needed answered regarding payroll, or financial aid, took a longer response time than pre-pandemic times. An issue Xiomara had with the institution's response was the expected continued academic rigor of the institution when so much was taking place, especially at the beginning of the pandemic. She described the struggle of maintaining the institution's expectation and what her reality was:

You know it's a question of like what I am even doing this [coursework] for, why does it even matter right now. Because there's like bigger problems, you know there's my family couldn't get enough food and I'm supposed to be learning about rationalism, doesn't make sense to me.

She did have some professors who were empathetic to students, and it did seem the institution was putting out messaging that faculty and staff were to accommodate students to the best of their ability during these challenging times and transition. It was still the expectation of some professors to maintain the same rigor as pre-pandemic that was the issue for Xiomara.

According to Xiomara, being Latina means leaning on your family for support, and as the pandemic heightened, that is what Xiomara did. Additionally, she poured herself into her work-study position claiming the maximum number of hours each week to assist others in her family who had lost employment or reduced hours. She also attended every distribution held by the on-campus pantry, often sending home items to her family to lift the burden off her mom. She expressed her gratitude for her campus having a pantry and believes this is what sustained her as the pandemic lingered on. She

did not seek out any other resources at the institution and claims the mental toll the pandemic took did cause her to sleep a lot more. She did not know how to process the events taking place and the mental exhaustion she experienced from the events of the pandemic, sleeping was the only other form of release enabling her to handle the stress.

As the pandemic began mid-spring semester of 2020, Xiomara experienced negative academic outcomes related to the onset of food insecurity enhanced by the pandemic. She narrated this experience of the struggle of the reality of the pandemic in relation to maintaining the rigor of academic coursework and grappling with food insecurity:

I think food insecurity affected my motivation for school. Sometimes I did skip class to work a few more hours, but it was because of the pandemic, we were on Zoom anyway, so it wasn't really like I was missing a lot it's just that but focus my thoughts were always the world issues and feeding my family.

The online modality was not a preferred method of learning for Xiomara. She described feeling disconnected from her professors, and not being taught material as professors were just going through the motions. Her attention was focused on attending to the needs of her family, and herself. Besides skipping class to work more, she struggled with completing all assigned coursework. Her grades were negatively impacted but not to the point of failure of any course.

Photo Elicitation

Xiomara and I were able to interview about five weeks after our first interview. She only completed two of the three photos, her reason being she had not captured the photo that she felt spoke to the prompt. The first of two prompts she submitted photos

was a photo that represents how her social identities have influenced her food insecurity, while being a college student. See Figure 13 for the submitted image.

Figure 13

Dad's Fridge



Note. This photo submitted by Xiomara is of her dad's fridge when she visited him during the pandemic.

The submitted photograph is that of Xiomara's dad fridge, whom she visits and has not claimed residence with for years. She described the photo of random and various food items, some leftovers of cooked meals from weeks ago, expired items, and few items still edible. Her family has always told her to keep a full fridge, for herself and family and friends. She sees nothing worth or able to eat is in his full fridge. This is how she recalls growing up, prior to her parents' divorce, her fridge always resembling this, full but with non-edible items taking up majority of the space resulting in her experience of food insecurity. The importance of this image to Xiomara is:

To show that quantity is not the same as quality, I mean there's always this conversation I have with my best friend about food insecurity that society is really

like poor people don't deserve to eat healthy, because of the cost. For example, a burger is much cheaper than a salad.

The food items in this fridge are what Xiomara describes as cheap and unhealthy items. Yes, the fridge is full but with poor quality and nutrition. Growing up with a low economic status, the photo reflects on her eating habits related to this identity and reflecting on the image:

You know growing up we looked healthy, my dad looks healthy now, but taking a peek into this and reflecting on how this is how we grew up because of our income, it's just sad, and it's not fun to think about. I mean this shows how I established my eating habits; this is how they developed and why.

She further denoted the image shows the cyclic nature of low-income households and food insecurity. Without education and income, she would reproduce this cycle and she thinks her fridge would look just like this had she not enrolled in college to better herself in hopes of gaining employment with a higher income.

The second photo resonates with the prompt how food insecurity has been influenced by her institution's response to the pandemic. See Figure 14 for photo submission. The photo is that of her mom preparing dinner for her and her sister in her apartment. Her mom went out and either purchased or received fresh groceries from a community food bank along with items Xiomara and pick up from her campus pantry to prep a big meal to spend time with her daughters. They coordinated what they each had to determine the meal she would prepare.

Figure 14*Mom's Cooking*

Note. This photo is Xiomara's mom cooking for her and her sisters in her apartment one day with items from the on-campus pantry and food she brought with her.

She selected this photo because she feels it shows that her institution did provide her with some items, she needed but not everything. That's how she equated the university's response to the pandemic in general, they did what they could, but they missed opportunities to support their students when they needed it the most. In relation to her food insecurity, without her mom's ability to also seek assistance, they would not have been able to coordinate this meal. Meal planning like this is a privilege for Xiomara. Nonetheless, the photo evokes hope for Xiomara, that her contribution to this study will illustrate the need for higher education reform policies and practices for student services. When we ended this interview, she had requested an additional week; however, I have not been able to communicate with her about submitting and interviewing for the final photo.

Cross Cutting Narrative Themes

In this section, I present nine cross cutting themes that emerged from the narrative data simultaneously for participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. The nine themes include a) survival tactics, b) unhealthy eating, c) normalization of food insecurity, d) religious values, e) racialization of food insecurity, f) mental health, g) gender, h) communication patterns, and i) campus safety. Each theme presented itself across the intersections of participants' identities and their experiences of food insecurity during the pandemic.

Survival Tactics

To mitigate their heightened food insecurity, participants allude to survival tactics. They sought support from the on-campus pantry, some outside resources, meal planning, and family support. All students expressed that they frequently took advantage of the on-campus pantry to assist with the strain of food insecurity, for themselves and at times their families. Juan and Xiomara spoke of seeking out community wide resources. None spoke of the personal utilization of SNAP benefits which relates to previous research (GAO, 2018; USDA; FNS, 2019), indicating many college students are often unaware that SNAP benefits may even be an option and, if they are, may still be unwilling to apply due to the stigma (Diamond et al., 2019). Skipping meals and meal planning benefitted in moderating fear in the sense of being without food in the near term. However, Juan, Anitra, Xiomara, Colette, and Adrian would meal plan, and still find themselves limited. This was evident in Juan's photo response and Adrian's initial interview. Participants in this study noted their inability to prepare meals typically results in hunger. Meal planning assists them in maintaining a budget, which typically never

allows for the purchase of high priced healthy food options. Juan describes his experience:

So it just kind of you know resonates that you're only limited to so much food a week, so that you have to prepare it, and make sure that all the food that you have during the week gets you through each meal or, if you have to skip meal. Because you can only spare so much food you have to make sure that none of that goes to waste, you can only have one big meal during the middle of the day and that's pretty much it.

Meal planning was a common theme in combating food insecurity. Each meal is carefully thought about in regard to cost, quantity, nutrition, preparation time, and mobility (i.e., can food be easily transported across campus).

Unhealthy Eating

Another point of discussion in review of the narratives is the tension students must mitigate between their health, finances, and convenience. COVID-19 emphasized the need for a healthy immune system, which relates to a healthy and nutritious diet. All five participants maintained that establishing healthy eating habits was among their top priorities; however, due to financial constraints or panic buying caused by the pandemic, this was not feasible. All students indicated that eating unhealthily was attributed to the lack of access and lack of consumption of perishable items such as fruits and vegetables. Regrettably, fresh perishable items typically are not budget friendly. Xiomara illustrated this in her narrative comparing prices of fast food to fresh salads, noting a significant price increase for the latter. Unanimously, all participants described being a college student meant being on the 'ramen diet'; many depicted the image of the noodles in their

photos. The concern for Adrian, Juan, Colette, Anitra, and Xiomara was the lack of nutrition and high sodium contents they had and the impact on their health, especially during a pandemic. Adrian spoke of his health concern eating low nutritional value foods:

I know it has been [college student experience] looking over at like my food shelf and seeing I'm running low on Ramen. It's bad for my health but it's something that I can eat for calories. But sometimes I do have to consider what is healthy because I have a family history of high blood pressure, and diabetes, so things like Ramen, and even canned vegetables can't always be on my menu, as I have started having issues with high blood pressure. So they might be calories but they might also put me in a hospital bed. I must be very forward facing in the sense that I don't want to be 30 years old, and then have to constantly be on medication because of my bad diet in college.

In struggling with finances and purchasing healthy foods, if available, often finances took precedence. Both Adrian and Juan provide in their narratives the tension between purchasing healthy foods, their health, and food insecurity. Juan described:

I think not being able to buy healthy foods because your box mac and cheese is \$1 and a salad is \$5, what are you going to choose if you only have \$20 for the week to yourself? It's those choices you must make between health and your financial situation, like can I have lunch today or am I going to just drink water and suck it up and not eat one or two days. We always talk about college kids being on the ramen diet, and I suppose a big part of what people don't understand, unless they are going through college right now going to college is different than it was back in the day.

Both articulated the emotional and physical burdens associated with being unable to afford to a healthy lifestyle while in college is ever-present, both echoing the financial straits of prioritizing health over financial security could result in their inability to pay for their education.

Normalization of Food Insecurity

All participants unanimously expressed that they perceived enrolling in college as a timeframe in their life that they would be financially strained and would at some point deal with food insecurity by being on the ‘ramen diet.’ Identifying as both low socioeconomic status and first generation, food insecurity was generally anticipated by all five participants. At this intersection, Juan, Colette, Adrian, Xiomara, and Anitra’s food insecurity identity was not only expected, but normalized. Both Colette and Juan spoke to the normalization of food insecurity in respect to the overlap of these identities stating, “I think again the ramen ties back to being a first time college student because that's like a staple for any college student,” and “coming to college you are on the ramen diet, but I’ve lived off it already,” respectively. Connecting back to the literature, first-generation low socioeconomic status students have been more likely to experience food insecurity (Cady, 2014; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020; Payne-Sturges et al., 2017), and society has normalized this average college student diet of cheap and easily accessible processed meals that significantly impacts minority first-generation low socioeconomic students more than other student populations. Now with the COVID-19 pandemic students have been responsible for managing their food insecurity with fewer resources. Each participant had internalized food insecurity as a college student as a normal expectation, therefore, the enhanced struggle of these food insecure students did

not raise any additional concerns for them as they deemed their experience as normal based on their social identities as low socioeconomic college students.

Religious Values

Additionally, all participants in this study suggested their identity as a Christian, and their religious values undermine help-seeking behaviors, as they believe it is a community responsibility to support others in need. Not specifically noted as a barrier, however, to understand students' compassion and concern for others undermines their own needs result in a reduction of resources. Early American social policies were focused around Judeo-Christian principles in that community members who had the means (i.e., financial resources) had the responsibility to care for those who did not (Hudson & Coukos, 2005). All five participants self-identify as Christian's of various denominations. Juan described his religious values impacting his food security because he felt it necessary to assist others who were also struggling:

When I say to people, I'm Catholic, especially in college, a lot of people are like that's like the worst type of Christianity. But I don't see it as that, I help people just like others do. I knew of some people who were also struggling, and I was trying to help them. So I did, I mean it didn't break the bank on me, but it definitely did lower like what kind of foods I can get, I went back to cheaper items and cut back on stuff. I also would help my parents and other people so they can get through the week also.

Additional examples were, Adrian, who would attend pantry distributions, "making sure to get what I need and don't overdo it, and use up others resource," and then Colette expressing "if I can get food on my table, I don't want to take resources from others, so I

just hold off.” Even as these students struggled during the pandemic, due to their religious beliefs and values, they at times would not take additional support from the various means in fear they take too much and decrease the support for others.

Racialization of Food Insecurity

Furthermore, the results of this study suggest that food insecure students interpret their marginalization as connected with their racial identities. Juan is biracial, identifying as both a Hispanic and White male, and Colette is of Asian racial identity but holds a White cultural identity from her adoption, both declaring an identity crisis that inhibit their food security status. These students attempted to break down stereotypes they perceived to be held against them in relation to their White identities. Colette’s narrative offers and unique perspective:

I was bullied as a kid, but it was more because I'm adopted, than me being Asian, but then also, just knowing I'm also Chinese, but growing up in a White family is very different and I had like a mini-identity crisis. I question all my actions and situations I am in, because I look Asian, but I grew up in a White family.

The identity crisis relates Colette to being a part of a marginalized demographic but feeling as if her upbringing is part of the dominant narrative; thus, she struggles internally with her food security status.

Juan’s struggle is, as he states throughout his interviews, that he is “half and half.” Juan’s salient identity, as either a White male or Hispanic Male, was often defined by the social interaction in which he would be allowed to perform that identity. As noted in intersectionality theory, the “likelihood of a given identity being played out in social interaction will be significantly impacted by the salience of the identity relative to the

salience of other identities the person holds” (Brenner et al., 2014, p. 231). His biracial social identity generated internal conflict. When identifying himself as a White male he felt food assistance programs were not meant for him to utilize. Yet when seeking services, he identifies himself as a Hispanic male, but expressed shame due to the cultural aspect of receiving benefits.

There aren’t really any resources for a straight white dude anymore, or I guess ever, but there was anything for that. The only thing that I could possibly get help from would be if, they see me as my other half a Hispanic American. And its always kind of bothered me.

An additional unique perspective on identity and food insecurity was evident in Juan’s narrative. Consequently, Juan made it a point to emphasize that his identity as an employed individual did not fit with the rhetorically built identity of individuals who struggle with food insecurity even though the pandemic has been an unusual time for all, stating “when the school shutdown I still worked on campus, and I know I wasn’t going to lose any money I had income you know, but I’m dealing with it [food insecurity] like those on unemployment.”

Mental Health

Mental health was a topic discussed by all in the study. Xiomara, Juan, Colette, and Adrian expressed experiencing higher levels of stress and anxiety throughout the pandemic. Colette specifically addressed her increased levels of anxiety and depression:

At the beginning, when I had to return home, I got really depressed after I left work and school, I did not have that social interaction with other people. I wasn’t eating right or at all, and the stress of not having food added to my mental health.

I wouldn't get out of bed, I started getting behind on schoolwork because school was still in session at that time, I was literally sleeping for 16-17 hours a day, because I just could not pull myself out of bed. I had a lot of anger which played into my depression, my anxiety was off the charts.

The economic pressures created by COVID-19 pandemic experienced by participants also contributed to the exacerbated increase in mental health disorders including depression and anxiety.

For Adrian, even with a purchased meal, COVID-19 still heightened food insecurity because of the additional stress placed on his mental health. Researchers van Woerden et al. (2019) describe the connection between meal plan usage and mental health as connected. Stress, anxiety, and depression all affect daily life, and individuals who are experiencing these variables withdraw from the dining hall experience directly reducing meal plan usage. With the need to limit social interaction because of spreading COVID-19, Adrian expressed his withdraw from visiting the dining hall for the grab-and-go meal and grocery stores as, “worrying mixed with a little bit of anxiety,” as his fear of contracting the virus again or passing it on caused his mental health to decline and in turn he withdrew from seeking out food at times. Adrian spoke to withdrawing from society because of the COVID-19 pandemic as a struggle between food security and mental health:

Everything has changed. And it's not going to go back to the way that it was before, and they don't think it can ever go back so until there is some sense of normalcy I will have to remain in survival mode to keep myself not only fed but

mentally stable. Because of the pandemic I don't feel like I can leave my room, and I have to tell myself, I can leave if I need, especially for food.

Adrian, along with other participants, reduced seeking out and obtaining food for mental health reasoning increasing their food insecurity status throughout the pandemic. As Colette mentioned, her anxiety and depression dramatically increased at the onset of the pandemic, so much that she was often unable to get out of bed, and she credits barriers to seeking out resources were because of the state of her mental health.

Gender

All participants placed identity salience regarding gender. Most notably Juan and Adrian, who both identified as male, established concerns of food insecurity correlated with their gender. Both described being male, intersecting with their Hispanic ethnicity, as highly impacting their ability to seek out resources for their food insecurity. Adrian, as previously described, noted that growing up a Hispanic male impacted his ability to accept handouts. Further, he stated his male identity was “coming to a place where I require assistance and coming to terms with asking for help has been a big portion of why at first, I didn't go a lot to the food pantry.” Adrian contributes much of his male identity in likeness of his father, who is the sole provider for the family and being male he finds the same responsibility placed on him noting:

[My dad is] my motivation in the background because my father is my motivation and I'm his motivation as well. Kind of feeds into the whole, like, why are you here, sort of the [sic] also but as far as like who I am now.

Juan, being biracial and male has had a significant impact on Juan's life. In the beginning of the interview, he describes the overlap between these two identities, and his reality of being a "half white-half Hispanic male:"

To be honest, being a male actually ties in with my Hispanic Mexican side as well because as soon as Hispanic men are able to lift heavy things we pretty much are working for the rest of our lives, and trying to provide for our family in any way possible, with little rest.

Juan continued throughout his narrative describing how his biracial and gender social identities have caused internal conflict regarding his food security status. Juan eludes to his gender as meaning constant labor, and constant labor equated to financial resources in providing for one's self, stating:

Almost every male, that is in my family works full time jobs and is almost never home, and they do hard labor, and not to say that, you know, the women don't work for themselves either; they usually work as well. But being male you work dusk till dawn, coming home tired, I've had to bring home money since high school...being a male I know pretty much deep down, like, I'm a laborer. So, I don't know if it's just been ingrained into me, or if it's just instinct.

Anitra, Colette, and Xiomara, whom all identified as female, did not express any concerns in seeking assistance related to their gender. However, it seemed expected and normal behavior of females to seek out resources. Xiomara describes her gender as being more accepting:

Being a woman, right, makes us more accepting of health [responsibilities], and I we feel so strongly about like, having the resources to provide for our family and it's more like we need to provide the resources that can help us, you know.

Anitra described her gender as part of her culture. For example, it is her mother who cooks as opposed to her dad. In regard to seeking resources, she believed she “sought them out even more” because she was female. Each of the three participants who identified as female, were less concerned with any form of stigma in seeking out resources as compared to the male participants of the study. Gender was a significant identity portrayed throughout all the narratives related to food security and resources.

Communication Patterns

All participants of the study asserted inadequate communication from the university as among issues related to financial, academic, and food resources heightened their risk of food insecurity. However, each participant credited their institution’s on-campus pantry as a significant resource reducing their food insecurity during pre and current pandemic periods, insisting multiple times through each narrative the maintained operations of the on-campus pantry reduced their level of food insecurity. Still, each contemplate at some level of conclusion that their institution of higher education has not developed effective services to meet the needs of all students. Assumptions by higher education and society suggest all students benefit from financial privilege of being college students, and those who do not are predictably suppressed by the dominant narrative (Sifferlin, 2014).

Every participant of the study is a first-generation student and the majority did not understand how to, in their words, ‘navigate the system.’ Communication, especially in

emergency situations, is critical. Each of these participants had utilized the pantry prior to the start of the pandemic, therefore, knew of their services. However, as described by Adrian, communication by the university was “a little rough, I didn’t really receive a lot of information at first everything sent out was chaotic, but as the semester had gone on information got a little bit better more streamlined.” The main source of communication received for each of the participants was through the university’s social media. This is how many learned of resources such as the on-campus pantry food distributions. However, CARES Act funding presented confusion between the participants in how they were made aware if at all. Anitra and Xiomara stated they recall seeing information via social media for the first round, however, Juan and Adrian recall seeing communication for the second round through email and not social media. Message alignment across all communications platforms was not visible to every participant, therefore undermined the university’s effort in effectively communicating resources and operations.

Campus Safety

Two participants, Colette and Adrian, spoke to campus safety as being a concern that impacted their food security. The closure of one of the two dining halls and limited operations was the university’s response to the pandemic which created issues for both participants. Colette narrated:

Because I don't trust some people on campus, I would have been going to the pantry more often and I had to grab some food I could keep in my residence hall to eat. I was not willing to go outside alone because on the weekends and Friday nights the only cafeteria open was across campus. I am not going to walk across campus in the dark, to go get food.

Being the only open dining hall was across campus, Colette deemed this as a safety issue for her, and would not go for meals depending on time of day. Adrian also was concerned visiting on and off-campus dining options before and during the pandemic stating:

Being an RA, I thought I was going to be free to like [sic] go and buy something whenever, but I can't leave the building till five, and it's dark by five. And I don't want to walk off campus because there's very few like [sic] intersections where I can cross at and I don't want to get hit, or the food is like a mile away, and I don't think I can make it across campus and back, because of no crosswalks, it's just unsafe.

Adrian also spoke to personal safety in terms of health once the pandemic began. Holding employment at the university as an RA, he was not provided proper PPE, which was a huge cause of concern for Adrian. He describes:

Our position wasn't as valued as we thought and then at the start of the pandemic being told you're going to have to provide your own personal protection equipment and make sure that you tell us when you get sick. I just kind of felt even more like a slap in the face. We ended up having to provide everything for ourselves.

Adrian was really discouraged by the university's response to his personal safety as an employee. He was expected to maintain and even increase his job duties without personal protection equipment. Not only did he not feel safe navigating the campus after dark, but also as the pandemic began, he was fearful for the safety of his health due to the university's response.

Conclusion

Within this chapter I have introduced the participants and outlined their lived experiences through their narratives and original photos. The introductions offered an opportunity for the reader to meet each participant and learn a little about their backgrounds. Secondly, participant narratives portrayed their experiences with food insecurity pre and current pandemic timeframes while enrolled in college, sharing insights of challenges encountered, resources expended, how their institution responded, and perceptions of how their personal and social identities influenced their food security status. Second, original photos provided by each participant are displayed and discussed in how they currently view through their lens their experience of food insecurity while being a college student throughout a pandemic. Finally, I discussed cross-cutting themes within each of the participants' narratives.

CHAPTER V

Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to explore food insecurity experienced by college students during the COVID-19 pandemic utilizing an intersectional framework, and how intersecting social identities of students influenced internal and external campus support systems, perceptions of food insecurity on academic performance, and higher education's general response to the twin crises of a global pandemic and college student food insecurity. In chapter four, I presented the experiences and perceptions of Colette, Juan, Anitra, Adrian, and Xiomara regarding their food insecurity during COVID-19 and the role their social identities played on the meaning participants attached to their experiences with the phenomena. Grounded in narrative inquiry along with photo elicitation, the following research questions guided this study:

1. How did college students experience food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession?
2. How did college students experience of intersecting oppressions (institutional, social, and cultural) arising from their social and personal identities (i.e., age, race, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, religion/religious beliefs, international students, non-US citizens, and social class/socioeconomic status) shape the experience of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How did an institution's response to the COVID-19 pandemic influence a college student's food insecurity status and shape their academic performance?

Intersectionality was the theoretical lens informing this study, as discussed in chapter two. Intersectionality theory examines overlapping systems of privilege and oppression. It challenges the dominant discourses by placing an emphasis on the contradictory narratives illuminating marginalized voices through the “material, structural, and political realities that co-construct lives/narratives” (Chadwick, 2017, p. 15). The experiences and perceptions of the marginalized voices compared with dominant narratives demonstrates how knowledge construction and individual meaning making is dissimilar (Harding, 2004). I employed the following broad tenets of intersectionality for analytic insights: a) social identities are not singular and independent from another but various and intersecting; b) individuals from historically marginalized populations are the primary point of attention; and c) social identities at the local level (i.e., intersections of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, religion/religious beliefs, international students, non-US citizens ,and social class/socioeconomic status) intersect with prominent structural factors (i.e., economic, racism, residential, and sexism) to illustrate segregated and oppressive outcomes.

Discussion of Findings

Participants in this study began telling their narratives chronologically from the time they were young children in elementary or middle school, to first entering college, to present time. In this study, the participants disclosed varied events in their lives, their experiences with food insecurity pre and during pandemic while enrolled in college, challenges and barriers they encountered, how their social identities influenced their food security status, and how their academic outcomes were influenced. Photo elicitation was employed in the second interview process to elicit an understanding created from the

participants' narratives and to open space for the expression of thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Discussion of findings will be outlined in answering each of the three research questions.

Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In this study, each participant had a unique understanding and definition of food insecurity but shared the common theme of not knowing where their next meal would come from. Participants related their past experiences with food insecurity to current times that were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. One thing of importance, in participant introductions, is all five participants had been previously qualified and took part in the national free/reduced lunch program prior to entering college. Each of the participants credit this program as to why they did not experience or feel they experienced food insecurity at a more extreme level prior to college. As cited in previous research (Arteaga & Heflin, 2014; Bartfeld & Dunifon, 2006; Gundersen et al., 2012; Huang & Barnidge, 2016; Kabbani & Kmeid, 2005) households with students who participate in the free or reduced meal programs are less likely to experience food insecurity than households whose students do not participate, and this was expressed by each of the five participants of this study. Being there is no college equivalent to free or reduced meal programs (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017), each of the five participants experienced new levels of food insecurity during their first semesters enrolled in college. This study suggests participants respond to their situation using two distinct time periods, pre and current pandemic status, with situation and continuity of the three-dimensional space narrative structure central to each of their narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, 2000; Dewey, 1938).

Prior to entering the pandemic, every participant expressed experiencing some level (i.e., mild, moderate, or severe) of food insecurity when first enrolling in college. Assessing the types and amount of support they received determined the severity of food insecurity experienced. However, with the onset of the pandemic, Colette, Juan, Anitra, Adrian, and Xiomara all expressed heightened food insecurity. Colette was the only one to return home when the university shut down and still expressed experiencing an atypical experience with food insecurity. Juan, Anitra, Adrian, and Xiomara all remained living on or close to campus and continued in work their work-study positions either remotely or on location. Juan, Anitra, and Xiomara did not speak of reduced hours from their on-campus employment; however, Colette experienced lack of employment opportunities. Colette's experience is in line with current data. Nearly 53% of students occupying work-study positions either lost employment or had a reduction in wages due to university closures (Soria & Horgos, 2021). Colette and Juan were the only two to seek out additional employment. Juan was able to secure additional employment; however, Colette was unable to find a position, noting the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, shutdowns, and recession she was "either rejected or ghosted" in her application process. Students who were employed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic described job insecurity as a relevant concern (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017). Now, as the unemployment and underemployment rates for the college age demographic remain elevated what continues to follow is reduced income to afford food.

Intersecting Oppression Related to Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The results of this study suggest the participants are internalizing intersecting oppressions regarding overlapping social and personal identities. To reiterate,

intersectional research centers marginalized voices, often suppressed within power systems (i.e., economic, social, and cultural), and their correlation to unequal social outcomes (International Encyclopedia, 2015). As a result of inequitable balance of power in society, individuals who do not align to the dominant narrative are cast to the margins of society. Oppressed and marginalized populations must overcome the stigma associated with their identities before they consider the authority to speak of their experiences (Solorzano & Yosso, 2000; Sue, 2003; Sue, 2010).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, previous research (Bruenig et al., 2017; Cady, 2014; Coleman-Jensen et al., 2016; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015; Martinez-Aleman et al., 2015; Wilson & Conron, 2020) had identified students with marginalized identities are more likely to experience food insecurity. Understanding these inequities would only worsen due to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession, higher education should have adjusted their response to support students beyond health and safety precautions. Current data (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020; Gundersen et al., 2021; Mialki et al., 2021; Owens et al., 2021) demonstrates the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the health and financial wellbeing of BIPOC populations. These disparities call on researchers to reexamine the intersections of student social identities and how higher education is addressing and serving BIPOC students and other marginalized identities experiencing food insecurity by dismantling stigma and expanding access for students of all identities experiencing food insecurity.

In current (Chirikov et al., 2020; Soria & Horgos, 2020) and prior research (Kroenke et al., 2003; Kroenke et al., 2007; Soria, 2015) students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were significantly more likely to be diagnosed for anxiety

and depression compared to students from middle and upper-class backgrounds. Every participant in this study noted this overlap of identities and experienced heightened stress, anxiety, and depression. The pandemic only increased this physiological response, in turn negatively influencing each participant's food security status. As examples, Colette noted her inability to get out of bed, Anitra slept more often, and Adrian feared leaving his residence hall room. Additionally, Soria et al. (2020) reported in their study that a majority of first-generation college students were more susceptible in experiencing one or more forms of financial setbacks (i.e., lost employment, reduced wages, or increased living expenditures) caused by the COVID-19 pandemic than continuing-generation students, thus increasing the likelihood of food and housing security. Results of this study clearly fall in line with this current research as each participant indicated experiencing some form of financial hardship because of the pandemic, which increased their level of food insecurity to some degree.

Intuition Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Participatory research in this study through photo elicitation offered a safe space for marginalized individuals to reveal their struggles and frustrations with navigating institutional complexities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific university responses, such as shuttering campus and moving course work online, posed unique challenges to students with food insecurity. Pre-pandemic research (Alaimo et al., 2001; Jyoti, et al., 2005; Winicki & Jemison, 2003) denotes food insecurity among marginalized students were much more likely to have experienced negative academic outcomes due to food insecurity, and current research (Osborne & Hogarth, 2021; Son et al., 2020) indicates the performance gap increased because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Juan did not feel the university shutting down was the correct response stating, “the response from the campus of the University was to just shut everything down. I mean that really isn't going to help anybody.” He narrated his experience grappling with food insecurity as exhausting, which he also included in his photo elicitation. He, along with Anitra, Adrian, Xiomara, and Colette all experienced some form of negative academic outcomes (i.e., failing grades, missing assignments, or skipped classes) related to their institution’s response to the pandemic and their food insecurity.

The findings of the study resulted in each participant contributing access to their institution’s on-campus food pantry as a significant resource prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic assisting them in keeping their food insecurity from progressing to a more severe level.

Limitations, Implications, and Future Research

Limitations

As with any research, this study has limitations that provides opportunities for future research. The first limitation of this study stemmed from collecting data from only two ethnic groups (i.e., self-identified as Chinese and Hispanic). Expanding the sampling of other racial and ethnic populations (i.e., Black, Native American, White, etc.) would further diversify narratives collected, offering important insights within intersectionality theory in understanding race along with other identities including but not limited to age, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, dependent status, religion/religious beliefs, international students, non-US citizens, and social class/socioeconomic status. The exclusion of populations was not intentional; the study simply did not generate interest among certain populations.

Second, the small sample size prevented significant conclusions on experiences surrounding food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic through various intersectional lenses (i.e., sexual orientation, religion, race, (dis)ability, gender, socioeconomic status, citizenship status, and age). A larger sample size would offer a more representative range of the student body experience of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. A third limitation is the selection of only one location for data collection. As COVID-19 generated a global shutdown, in the United States different states approached shutdowns differently, inherently affecting economic and higher education's response. Furthermore, some regions were more afflicted with higher positive rates of COVID-19 that could also influence responses.

Higher Education Policy and Practice Implications

Multiple considerations for stakeholders should be contemplated when employing this research to assist the development and assessment of more inclusive and equitable student support services, policies, and practices (e.g., Gooden, 2015; Patel, 2016). Policy and practice implications include: a) enhance counseling services to remove stereotypical internalized oppression; b) addressing campus culture that intensifies impostor syndrome (i.e., stereotype threat, lack of visible community, and racism); c) employing a basic needs security assessment tool; and d) addressing inequalities in financial practices and policies. In addition to these strategies, policymakers and executive educational administration as social justice leaders should focus on addressing multiple forms of structural oppressions perpetuated by their institutions and society, which inhibit students of diverse social identities from an equitable college experience.

Enhancing Counseling Services

Previous research studies have underscored the influence of individual, institutional, and societal dynamics that adversely affect an individual's well-being (e.g., Sue & Sue, 2013). Adjusting to college life is a complex process that requires an individual to adapt and cope to the various demands of higher education. Students of marginalized identities are no exception to this, and must adjust while encountering additional challenges (i.e., oppression, discrimination, and exclusion). This research suggests that food insecure students of marginalized identities were at an increased likelihood of mental health concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic due to their associated identity. "Mental health practitioners must realize that racial/ethnic minorities and marginalized groups in our society live under an umbrella of individual, institutional, and cultural forces that often demean them, disadvantage them, and deny them equal access and opportunity" (Sue and Sue, p. 120). Pandemic induced stressors of this research included anxiety concerning health, relocation, online learning, and isolation. Disparities are often increased during crises and universities should be proactive in their outreach of students with pre-existing conditions, marginalized populations, and first-generation status (Liu et al., 2020). Offering telehealth options, and virtual delivery of therapy options, could improve access and reduce stigma of seeking services. Implications of this study suggest institutions must be intentional with establishing counseling outreach and services for vulnerable populations. Universities should assess mental health services, education, and healthcare practices through an intersectional lens to facilitate a more equitable and informed approach in addressing diverse student needs.

Address Campus Culture

Universities have an opportunity upon reopening of campuses in building a culture of caring based on a deep understanding of diverse student needs and acceptance. Policy and culture change are critical in addressing student food insecurity. When discussing campus culture, we must consider the current climate of events taking place on a national level. Racial tensions were at a peak during the onset COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. One example, Anti-Asian hate crime increased 149% in 16 of the United States largest cities during 2020 (CSUSB, 2020). Universities must acknowledge their current climate pertaining to inclusivity and acceptance of differences. Acquiring a knowledge base involving this issue begins with universities focusing on data pertaining to campus hate crimes, discrimination cases, and assaults on a national, state, and local level to become fully aware of the prevalence of the issue. Institutions are called to increase the level of racial awareness and inclusiveness enhancing campus culture through educational campaigning, for students, staff, and faculty. Institutions must focus on engaging with their campus community regarding diversity, equity, inclusion, and acceptance in curriculum, programming, and campus life activities.

Second, institutions must be intentional with offering institution-wide capacity building opportunities to address socially mediated oppressions (e.g., eradicating the stigma of visiting food-banks, mental health, or money management services) within their campus culture. Societal beliefs, attitudes, and actions often condone and perpetuate this form of oppression. Educational campaigning bringing awareness to and the dismantling of these beliefs and actions would further enhance campus culture. Additionally, the need to reduce the stigmatization of utilizing the pantry. Many students

hesitate utilizing resources for fear of the societal belief that use of these resources are shameful and embarrassing. In relation to this stigma, is the fear of taking away from others. In this study, several of the participants expressed fear of taking items from the food pantry as it would take away from others in need. Participants of this research expressed not wanting to go to the food bank, or take as much as they were allowed because they didn't feel they really needed the assistance in the manner in which food banks are portrayed, that is only individuals who are in desperate situations attend food distributions. Food banks at institutions, and in general should consider how marketing efforts of their visual identity must do more in reducing the stigma of who and why food banks are utilized. The existence of food pantries alone cannot end food insecurity if individuals will not take advantage of the resources offered. Societal stigma is the number one related barrier reported in college student food insecurity (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). College food banks' marketing campaigns should focus on normalizing the usage of resources such as food pantries and develop marketing strategies and verbiage that debunk myths and stigmatization of college student food insecurity.

Basic Needs Security Tool

Though this research study focused on food insecurity, there are resources available and a need to support general basic needs security. A basic needs security tool should be developed and administered to assess the level of basic needs security of the university student body. In addition, the present findings could be utilized to explore ways to expand the reach and impact of existing emergency food distribution and to inform decisions about restructuring residential dining programs. However, implications of the current crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores the systemic foundation of the

college student hunger crisis, and the challenges with higher education relying on one or two emergency support systems (i.e., food pantries, emergency funding, or free meal programs) in combating student food insecurity. The pandemic brought forth significant structural and social injustices that require policy solutions. As research scholars (Freudenberg et al. 2019; Phillips et al., 2018) have suggested and advocated for a policy change in that institutions offer free/reduced lunch programming similar to what is provided in primary education settings. Such policies could significantly reduce food insecurity. Resources, such as on-campus pantries, are only meant for short term, temporary relief, and the employment of a basic needs security tool can indeed assess an institution's greater need in addressing causes of resource deficits (i.e., financial aid).

Addressing Financial Inequalities

The overarching concern regarding food insecurity was related to financial challenges pertaining to the university's response and limitations at the state and federal level regarding CARES Act funding. These two issues were prominent federal responses enacted at the institutional level which a few participants in the study had to battle. Pre-pandemic research had previously noted the most reported inequality that intersects with the experience of food insecurity for college students was low-socioeconomic status (Bowleg, 2012), shaping student experiences to the point of normalization of food insecurity while in college (Cady, 2014; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020; Payne-Sturges et al., 2017). Now, higher education's financial based policies and practices (i.e., tuition, housing, financial aid, etc.) demonstrate the disproportionate impact COVID-19 had on students with marginalized social and personal identities leaving them with progressively grim academic and financial choices and the pandemic

lingers on (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020; Stebleton et al., 2020). Specifically, distribution of CARES Act funding was based on 2019 FAFSA eligibility, which failed to capture current pandemic financial situations for many students. The FAFSA is dictated by federal law and relies on individual and family tax information from two years prior to demonstrate their financial need (Dynarski & Scott-Clayton, 2013; Sanders, 2021). The formula employed to determine a family's expected contribution is fixed by Congress. Therefore, modifications to FAFSA policies would involve legislative amendments that may come too late to alleviate the financial stress that students are currently experiencing. Pre-pandemic financial challenges were identified as a common concern for all participants related to the cost of tuition, residence, transportation, food, and other miscellaneous items (Cady, 2014), and as the pandemic began and continued these challenges exacerbated the financial hardships and a new reality of living and providing basic necessities came into existence for Adrian, Juan, Colette, Anitra, and Xiomara. Structural oppression is entrenched within higher education's financial aid policies and maintaining them will continue to be unsuccessful in equalizing the landscape for marginalized populations, especially during life altering events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Federal and state policy relating to funding during the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be problematic at an institutional level in accordance to Adrian and Juan's experience in being denied funding based on pre-pandemic financial need levels. Adrian spoke to current COVID-19 CARES Act funding distribution practices as not reflecting the current dire financial experiences had by students. Unlike the FAFSA, no appeals process was evident in student's seeking CARES Act funding who were denied, leaving

little ability for students to request an institution to reevaluate the decision. Unmet financial need has serious implications for college access, persistence, and degree attainment, specifically as marginalized student populations are forced to choose between tuition or food security (Fletcher et al., 2021). Pre-pandemic policies and practices had long demonstrated to price out low-socioeconomic students (Goldrick-rab, 2016), now the financial gap of college affordability will continue to widen for marginalized student populations who have encountered the brunt of economic hardships generated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Goldrick-rab et al., 2020).

Theoretical Implications

On the theoretical level, this study suggests implications concerning the responsibility of intersectional research and abolishing oppressive constructs through the dismantling of dominant power structures. Intersectionality as a theoretical framework enables research-informed policy change. As the predominance of current research on college students who experience food insecurity is that of the dominant narrative (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020), this study expanded upon the collective understanding of students with oppressed and marginalized intersecting social and personal identities who are experiencing this critical phenomenon. The findings of this study do suggest that college students of marginalized intersecting social and personal identities not only have been deeply affected by food insecurity throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in their institution's response. Furthermore, it was evident several of the participants still struggle to make meaning of their intersecting axis of identities in relation to their food insecurity pre and current pandemic. What was also made evident is that access to an education does not equal access to resources exposing the lack of equality perpetuating

the marginalization of some students while privileging others during the COVID-19 pandemic (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Roland, 2018; Simkins, 2005). This study contributes to the growing body of research through the employment of intersectionality theory and the inequitable educational and financial policies and practices of an ever-growing diverse student body within the higher education setting (Dickler, 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2016).

Most of the research conducted on college student food insecurity primarily conceptualize the experience through quantitative and demographic frameworks (Dubick et al, 2016; Patton-Lopez et al., 2014). As a predictable result of this methodology, the voices of marginalized populations most inflicted with food insecurity are missing in the very research intended to represent them. Different perspectives outside the dominant discourse suggest the need for targeted educational campaigning toward engaging with and providing resources for students. Different social and personal identities warrant different needs. Providing marginalized food insecure students, the platform to convey the actuality of their experience via narrative and photo elicitation, this study offers an understanding of student food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic to encourage real organizational and policy changes.

Future Research

There are gaps within this study that future research might benefit through the exploration of intersectionality as a framework to further explore college student food insecurity and the influence of COVID-19 on higher education policy and practice. Additional research in intersectional policy frameworks could address intersecting systems of inequity and influence student food insecurity outcomes. Moreover, it is

essential for student support services (i.e., campus food pantries, money management centers, and academic centers) to be identified and evaluated in determining current policies and practices that either support or inhibit marginalized student populations and ability to utilize these services, specifically in times of emergency or crisis. Future research should include the intersectional lens regarding college populations and basic needs security in an effort to emphasize institutional change to support marginalized populations. In addition, inquiry exploring other basic needs security areas with the use of photo elicitation and how systems of oppression work in line to either encourage or prevent marginalized college student populations in assistance seeking behaviors during a crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, is warranted.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I reiterated the purpose of the study and discussed the findings of the study through the lens of intersectionality pertaining to each of the three research questions and how they contributed to the existing body of literature. In addition, I provided theoretical implications of intersectionality theory to the phenomenon, policy institutional implications from this study for key stakeholders and future directions for higher education in the establishment of equitable and inclusive policy and practice.

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APPENDIX A

Interest Email

Dear (Name of student),

I hope this message finds you well. You are invited to participate in a study to learn about experiences of college student food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession. To participate in this study, you can fill out an online interest form [here](#) (include hyperlink).

I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education Leadership Program at Sam Houston State University and am conducting this dissertation research under the supervision of my advisor, Dr. Paul Eaton. This research has been approved by the Sam Houston State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). You can learn more about the benefits, risks, and procedures for participating in this study in the attached informed consent document.

You have been asked to participate in the research because you utilized the on-campus food pantry at your institution at least once during the March 15, 2020 - December 15, 2020 time period. Your participation in this study will address these central research questions:

1. How did college students experience food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession?
2. How did college students experience of intersecting oppressions (institutional, social, and cultural) arising from their social and personal identities (i.e., age, race, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, religion/religious beliefs, international students, non-US citizens, and social class/socioeconomic status) shape the experience of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How did an intuition's response to the COVID-19 pandemic influence a college student's food insecurity status and shape their academic performance?

Students with diverse backgrounds are highly encouraged to participate in this study.

In order to help answer these questions I would like you to participate in two one-on-one interviews, along with submitting three original photographs (prompts will be provided to you). The interviews will take approximately 60-90 minutes and be audio taped and then transcribed.

You will not be identified by name when information is analyzed or in any findings that come from the study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all or withdraw your participation and data from the study up to a month following your interview by emailing one of the researchers. Your participation will be kept confidential.

Once again, if you are interested in participating in this study, you can fill out an online interest form [here](#) (include hyperlink).

I look forward to hearing from you and hope you will consider participating in this important study.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Gilbert

APPENDIX B

Consent for Participation in Research

COLLEGE STUDENT PERSPECTIVES OF FOOD INSECURITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A PHOTO ELICITATION NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Why am I being asked?

You are being asked to be a participant in a research study about the experiences of college student food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession. Kathleen Gilbert is conducting this research, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Leadership at Sam Houston State University, under the direction of Dr. Paul Eaton. You have been asked to participate in the research because you utilized the on-campus food pantry at least once at your institution during March 15, 2020 - December 15, 2020 time frame.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

Why is this research being done?

Few researchers have explored the intersecting social identities of students who experience food insecurity, specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession. This study aims to gain awareness into how the intersecting social identities of students who experience food insecurity impacted college students during these two historical events. The study has the potential to inform college and university administrators, legislators, food programs, and non-profit groups on the experiences of food insecurity during one pandemic for this specific sub-population of college students. Insights may help inform policy, practice, and preparation for future pandemics and disasters.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to gain awareness into how the intersecting social identities of college students impacted the experience of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession. The research seeks to understand what internal and external campus support systems were utilized to meet food insecure college students needs, higher education's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how college students perceive food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic influenced their academic performance.

What procedures are involved?

Participants will be interviewed twice, individually, through an online application (i.e., Zoom). Prior to each interview, students will be asked to provide their consent to participate (via consent form). Following their consent to participate, students will be asked to participate in two brief interviews. Each interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes. During the interviews, students will be asked about their experiences with food insecurity, what internal and external campus support systems were utilized to meet their needs, higher education's response to the pandemic, and how they perceive food insecurity during this time has influenced their academic performance. The interviews will be audio-recorded, and the researcher may take notes as well. Following the completion of each interview, students will be debriefed.

After the initial interview, participants will be asked to submit three original photos, with the assistance of three prompts. Participants will have two weeks to take and submit the photos via email. Students will be asked to provide their consent for the submission of their photos (via consent form). Students will also be given a photo consent form should their photographs contain human subjects. No photos will be accepted depicting human subjects without their signed and submitted consent. Identifying information (i.e., faces) will be blurred. The second interview will be to examine the submitted photographs.

Approximately 10 subjects may be involved in this research. Participant interviews and the submission of photos will be the only methods of data collection in order to be consistent in data collection techniques and analyses.

What are the potential risks and discomforts?

Participants may experience some level of discomfort, stress, or anxiety related to describing their experiences with food insecurity, social identity, academic achievement, or the COVID-19 pandemic. There are no known physical risks to participation in this study.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

Participation in this study will allow the researchers to explore how diverse population of college students experience food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession. The study has the potential to inform college and university administrators, legislators, food programs, and non-profit groups on the experiences of food insecurity during one pandemic for this specific sub-population of college students. Insights may help inform policy, practice, and preparation for future pandemics or disasters.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

The only people who will know that you are a research participant are members of the research team. No information about you, or provided by you during the research, will be disclosed to others without your written permission, except:

- if necessary, to protect your rights or welfare (for example, if you are injured and need emergency care or when the SHSU Protection of Human Subjects monitors the research or consent process); or
- if required by law.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. If photographs, videos, or audiotape recordings of you will be used for educational purposes, your identity will be protected or disguised.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Participants will be directed to not include any identifying information during the interview process. All participants will select a pseudonym for the purpose of this study. Verbiage of the location will be generic. Audio files will be stored on the principal investigator's password protected computer on campus. Any physical records will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's office at the Lee Drain Building for a period of three years, after which time they will be destroyed. All files, including audio files, will be encrypted and kept in a password-protected file on the principal investigator's personal laptop. Said files will be permanently deleted after a period of three years.

What if I am injured as a result of my participation?

In the event of injury related to this research study, you should contact your physician or the University Health Center. However, you or your third-party payer, if any, will be responsible for payment of this treatment. There is no compensation and/or payment for medical treatment from Sam Houston State University for any injury you have from participating in this research, except as may be required of the University by law. If you feel you have been injured, you may contact the researcher (a) Kathleen Gilbert at 936-294-2309.

What are the costs for participating in this research?

Participants will incur no costs for participating in this research study.

Will I be reimbursed for any of my expenses or paid for my participation in this research?

Participants will not be paid or otherwise compensated for their participation in this study.

Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and remain in the study. The

investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The researcher conducting this study is Kathleen Gilbert. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at:

Phone: Kathleen Gilbert 936-294-2309 or e-mail kgilbert@shsu.edu.

Additionally, you can contact Dr. Paul Eaton via email: pweaton@shsu.edu or by phone at 936-294-2651.

What are my rights as a research subject?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs – Sharla Miles at 936-294-4875 or e-mail ORSP at sharla_miles@shsu.edu.

You may choose not to participate or to stop your participation in this research at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

As a student participating in this research study, your participation will not affect your class standing or grades at SHSU. The investigator may also end your participation in the research. If this happens, your class standing, or grades will not be affected.

You *will not* be offered or receive any special consideration if you participate in this research.

Agreement to Participate

I have read or someone has read to me the above information. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research.

Consent: I have read and understand the above information, and I willingly consent to participate in this study. I understand that if I should have any questions about my rights as a research subject, I can contact Kathleen Gilbert at 936-294-2395 or by email at kgilbert@shsu.edu I have received a copy of this consent form.

Your name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

AUDIO RECORDING RELEASE CONSENT

As part of this project, an audio recording will be made of you during your participation in this research project for transcription purposes only. You have the ability to review your recording at any time during the research process. Audio files will be permanently deleted after a period of three years. You may request to stop the recording at any time or to erase any portion of your recording.

Your name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Photo Reproduction Consent Form

This consent form concerns the submission of three photographs that you provided and/or agreed to participate in, to Kathleen Gilbert as part of her dissertation research, College Student Perspectives of Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Photo Elicitation Narrative Inquiry. Submitted photographs could be used in the form of reports, presentations, or publications from the research. Please read the statements below, and sign one of the statements to indicate the level of consent to which the photographs can be utilized. Under no circumstance will photographs be used without your consent.

Please read, and sign one of the statements below:

1. I give my consent for these original photographs to be viewed, reproduced for educational purposes, in reports, presentations, and publications related to the research, College Student Perspectives of Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Photo Elicitation Narrative Inquiry. I understand NO identifiable information or images will be used with the photographs.

Your name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

OR

2. I would like to give permission to publish some, but not all, of the photos submitted. I give my consent for photo(s) (check the photograph):

____ Photo 1

____ Photo 2

____ Photo 3

to be viewed, reproduced for educational purposes, in reports, presentations, and publications related to the research, College Student Perspectives of Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Photo Elicitation Narrative Inquiry. I understand NO identifiable information or images will be used with the photographs.

Your name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

OR

3. I do not wish any photographs to be published related to the research, College Student Perspectives of Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Photo Elicitation Narrative Inquiry.

Your name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for participating this research. If you have any questions or concerns about this form or about the study or your participation in it, please do not hesitate to contact Kathleen Gilbert at (936)-294-2309 or kgilbert@shsu.edu

APPENDIX D

College Student Perspectives of Food Insecurity During the COVID-19 Pandemic Interview Protocols

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on College Student Perspectives of Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic. You have been selected to participate based on your utilization of the on-campus food pantry at your institution at least once during March 15, 2020 - December 15, 2020 time period. I look forward to learning more about your experiences and perspectives, and I appreciate your time and willingness to be involved in the study.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to gain awareness into how the intersecting social identities of students who experience food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession, what internal and external campus support systems were utilized to meet their needs, higher education's response to the pandemic, and how they perceive food insecurity during this time has influenced their academic performance. The study is being conducted for a dissertation in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Ed.D. for the Higher Education Leadership program at the Sam Houston State University. Feel free to communicate your experiences and perspectives, as you feel comfortable.

Guidelines

Based on the informed consent document we have reviewed, and you have signed, each interview will be audio recorded and will remain confidential. When you signed up for the study you selected the pseudonym [Name.] Is this still ok? Furthermore, it is suggested that you try to avoid, to the best of your ability, mentioning any identifying information of yourself and others (i.e., names and locations). Instead, please consider using pseudonyms, and using generic terms for locations. During the interview process, please notify me if you would like to take a break, halt the interview, or prefer not to answer any questions. You are able to add or clarify any experiences throughout the interview process. After each interview, you will be presented with my transcription of all of your interview responses, which you may review to provide further clarification or correct for any errors.

Note: The two interviews are semi-structured. While the following questions will be used, they are seen as probing or for clarification. Questions will be adjusted, or additional follow-up questions will be asked depending on how each participant discusses their experiences and perspectives.

First Interview

Background Questions

1. How would you describe your social identities (i.e., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and (dis)ability)?

2. Can you discuss how each of these identities have impacted your life?
3. Can you explain why you chose to attend this institution?
4. Can you tell me about your college experience so far?
5. What has been your experience, if any, with food insecurity prior to attending college?
6. Were you employed prior to and/or during the pandemic?
7. What financial support were you receiving prior to the start of the pandemic/what was your economic situation?

Primary Questions

1. What does food insecurity mean to you?
2. What was your experience with food insecurity, if any, prior to the start of the pandemic and economic recession?
3. What has been your experience with food insecurity since the start of the pandemic and economic recession?
4. How has your institution's response to the pandemic influenced your experience with food insecurity?
5. How do your social identities influence your food insecurity?
6. How did your social identities influence resources you sought out?
7. How did you cope with challenges brought on by the global pandemic?
8. What support systems are you using to cope with food insecurity during the pandemic and economic recession?
9. What methods or support systems, if any, have you heard about, but not utilized during the pandemic for food insecurity and why did you not seek those services?
10. To what extent, if any, did support systems help you navigate these challenges?
11. To what extent, if any, did food insecurity affect your academic performance during the pandemic?
12. What barriers, if any, have you encountered related to accessing or using financial and academic institutional resources?
13. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Photo Elicitation

Upon conclusion of the first interview, participants will be asked to take and submit three original photographs. Photos may be taken by their cellular device or camera. The following are the prompts for each of the three photos:

1. Take a photograph that represents what food insecurity has been like for you during the pandemics
2. Take a photograph that represents how your social identities have influenced your food insecurity while being a college student.
3. Take a photograph that represents how food insecurity has been influenced by your institution's response to the pandemic.

Photographs to be submitted are required to be an original single photo in a standard format. Photographic alteration will be allowed (i.e., filters, black and white, blurring effects, etc.). You will be given two weeks to submit the three photographs as a joint photographic expert group (JPEG) file via email. You will be given photograph consent forms should you photograph an individual(s) for them to give their consent in the use of

their photo and will submit those via email to me. No photograph showing an individual will be allowed if the consent form is not submitted. Their photograph will be altered to de-identify any identifiable information.

Interview Two

1. Can you describe what the image is?
2. How is this image symbolic to the prompt given?
3. What is the importance of the image?
4. Can you describe the feelings or emotions produce when capturing and selecting this photo?
5. How does this image connect your social identities to your food insecurity?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share about this photo?

APPENDIX E

Online Interest Form

Thank you for interest in participating in this research study about the experiences of food insecure college students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from this research will inform college and university administrators, legislators, food programs, and non-profit groups on the experiences of college students facing food insecurity during a global pandemic. Insights may help inform policy, practice, and preparation for future pandemics and disasters.

You will not be identified by name when information is analyzed or in any findings that come from the study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all or withdraw your participation and data from the study at any time. Your participation will be kept confidential and will not impact your academic standing for participating. If you have any questions about this research, you may contact Kathleen Gilbert (kgilbert@shsu.edu or 936-294-2309).

Please complete the form below and I will be in contact with you to set up your interview.

1. First and Last Name:
2. Gender Pronouns (i.e., he, she, they, zi):
3. Email:
4. Phone:
5. What is your preferred method of contact (email or phone)?
6. Please provide a pseudonym (alias/name other than your own to which you wish to be called in research analysis/presentation)?
7. What is your
 - a. race?
 - b. ethnicity?
 - c. gender?
 - d. sexual orientation?
8. Are you an international student?
9. Are you a DACA recipient?
10. Are you eligible for federally funded financial aid (i.e., Pell Grant, work-study, or supplemental educational opportunity grants)?
11. Do you identify as having a (dis)ability (i.e., health, learning, or emotional)?

APPENDIX F

Authorization and Release for Use of Image, Voice, Performance, or Likeness

I _____ (printed name)
have agreed to have my photo taken and submitted as part of the dissertation: *College student perspectives of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic: A photo-elicitation narrative inquiry* at Sam Houston State University.

I permit, authorize and release (Insert Study Participant's Name), Kathleen Gilbert (principle investigator), and Sam Houston State University, a component institution of The Texas State University System, and each entity's employees, agents, representatives, volunteers, contractors, successors and assigns (the "RELEASED PARTIES") to create and/or obtain and use my photograph, voice, written or verbally expressed words, name, a video and/or audio recording or other likeness of myself ("My Likeness") for use by the RELEASED PARTIES in facilitating and completing the course assignment.

I authorize the RELEASED PARTIES to make one or more photographs, audio recordings, videotape or disk presentation, or other electronic reproductions of My Likeness in accordance with this Authorization for Use of Image, Voice, Performance, or Likeness ("this Authorization"). My Likeness may be copied/recorded and distributed by means of various media, including, but not limited to, public exhibitions, video presentations, news releases, mail-outs, e-mails, signs, brochures, placement on websites and/or other electronic delivery, or promotion on any and all other media. I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product or material in which the RELEASED PARTIES may eventually use My Likeness.

I understand that, although the RELEASED PARTIES will endeavor to use My Likeness in accordance with standards of good judgment, once published or distributed, My Likeness is no longer under the control or supervision of the RELEASED PARTIES. Accordingly, I release the RELEASED PARTIES from any and all liability related to use of My Likeness in print, exhibition, or any and all other media. I also understand that any withdrawal of my permission for use of My Likeness is not effective for actions already taken upon this Authorization and Release.

I have read and understand the conditions of this Authorization.

Signed:

Printed or Typed Name:

Date:

APPENDIX G

IRB Approval



Date: Mar 9, 2021 11:23:29 AM CST

TO: Kathleen Gilbert Paul Eaton

FROM: SHSU IRB

PROJECT TITLE: College Student Perspectives of Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Photo-Elicitation Qualitative Study

PROTOCOL #: IRB-2020-378

SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial

ACTION: Approved

DECISION DATE: March 9, 2021

ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK-IN DATE: March 9, 2022

EXPEDITED REVIEW CATEGORY: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Restart 2020 (COVID-19 update): The IRB has released specific guidelines for easing or transitioning existing IRB-approved studies or any new study subject to IRB oversight to in-person data collection. Please be advised, before ANY in-person data collection can begin, you must have IRB approval specifically for the conduct of this type of research. Please see the IRB response page for COVID-19 here.

ATTENTION RESEARCHERS! Have IRB questions and want to meet? Here's my scheduling link . Go ahead and choose a time/date that works for you.

Greetings,

The above-referenced submission has been reviewed by the IRB and it has been Approved. This study received expedited review, and the IRB determined that a renewal submission is needed, but only in the form of an administrative check-in submission. You will receive an email notification on the anniversary of this study approval, which will be on March 9, 2022. This study approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Since Cayuse IRB does not currently possess the ability to provide a "stamp of

approval" on any recruitment or consent documentation, it is the strong recommendation of this office to please include the following approval language in the footer of those recruitment and consent documents: IRB-2020-378/March 9, 2021/March 9, 2022.

Modifications: Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please submit a Modification Submission through Cayuse IRB for this procedure.

Incidents: All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please submit an Incident Submission through Cayuse IRB for this procedure. All Department of Health and Human Services and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Study Administrative Check-In: Based on the risks, this project does require a renewal in the form of an Administrative Check-In procedure. This means you are required to administratively check in with the IRB on an annual basis. March 9, 2022 is the anniversary of the review of your protocol. **To get started with your next Administrative Check-In procedure, you will submit a Renewal Submission through Cayuse IRB. A reminder email will be sent to you on the anniversary of your most recent approval of *College Student Perspectives of Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Photo-Elicitation Qualitative Study*.**

Please note that all research records should be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project. If you have any questions, please contact the Sharla Miles at 936-294-4875 or irb@shsu.edu. Please include your protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Chase Young, Ph.D.
Chair, IRB
Hannah R. Gerber, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, IRB

VITA

KATHLEEN CROWLEY GILBERT

Sam Houston State University

EDUCATION

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas Ed.D. Higher Education Leadership	2021
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas M.A. Health Education	2015
Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas B.S. Health Sciences Minor: Biology	2008

AWARDS

College of Health Sciences - Staff Excellence	2020
Staff Council Staff Award	2020
SERA Graduate Student Paper Award	2019

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

College of Health Sciences – Sam Houston State University Administrative Associate II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisor to the Food Pantry • College Assessment • College Program Development 	2018 – Present
Communications Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator of College Events • Marketing and Media Coordinator for the College • Web Coordinator for the College 	2016 – 2018
Internship Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and maintain MOU's with various internship locations. • Developed online instruction for course 	2016 – 2016
Administrative Associate I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing of various degree programs • Student medical application advisement 	2014 – 2016

Correctional Management Institute of Texas

Program Specialist

2011 – 2014

- Develop corrections trainings
- Provide program support: develop and maintain budgets
- Secretariat for the Texas Probation Association

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Professor

2015 – 2017

- HLTH 3390: Family Life & Sex Education
- HLTH 1360: Foundation Health Promotion & Health Careers

GRANTS

College of Health Sciences – Sam Houston State University

- **\$25,000** – PI – Powell Foundation funding for Community and College Food Insecurity Initiatives, 2021
- **\$20,000** - PI – Joint Admissions Medical Program (JAMP) 2017
- **\$20,000** - PI – Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP), 2016
- **\$150,000** Co-PI – Collegiate Hispanic and African American Mentoring Program (CHAAMP), 2016

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Walling, M., Van De Walker, D., Gilbert, K., Olmstead, M., & Lane, F. (2020). Student experiences in an online first-year seminar paired with remedial mathematics. *Journal of College Orientation, Transition, and Retention*, 27(1). <https://doi.org/10.24926/jcotr.v27i1.2442>

PRESENTATIONS

“What happens if I can’t pay?”: Interdepartmental Perspectives on Supporting International Students Facing Financial Insecurity During COVID-19

Co-Presenter

Universality of Global Education Conference

2021

Student Experiences in an Online First-Year Seminar Paired with remedial Mathematics

Co-Presenter

Southwest Education Research Association Conference

2019

OTHER COMPETENCIES

The Grapevine Newsletter

Editor in Chief

2014

Texas Probation Association Journal

Co-Editor

2011-2014