

The Impact of First-Generation College Student Perceptions on Engagement in Disordered Eating Behaviors at UC San Diego

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Introduction

- Food insecurity is a global phenomenon in which individuals experience inadequate access to food to support dietary needs.
- The University of California public school system in 2016 found that 4 out of 10 students experienced issues with food insecurity¹.
 - Being a first-generation student is a known risk factor for experiencing food insecurity⁵.
- As of 2019, 40% of undergraduates at UCSD currently identifies as a first-generation student^{2,3}.
 - According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 42% of Black students and 48% of Latinx students identifies as first-generation college students, compared to 28% of their white peers⁴.

Objective

- To examine the relationship between how being a first-generation college student impacts perceptions of engagement in disordered eating behaviors due to food insecurity among UC San Diego students.

Methods

- Data was collected through a cross-sectional online survey created through Google Forms and was disseminated via: online social media partnerships with campus community centers, FB class page postings, and BSPH email server outreach.

Results

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (N=222)

Racial/Ethnic Identity	N, %
African American/Black	44, 19.8%
Asian/Asian American	61, 27.5%
Latinx	62, 27.9%
White	41, 18.5%
2 or more Races/Ethnicities	27, 12.2%
Gender Identity	
Non-Binary	12, 5.4%
Female	163, 73.4%
Male	42, 18.9%

First-Generation College Student Summary

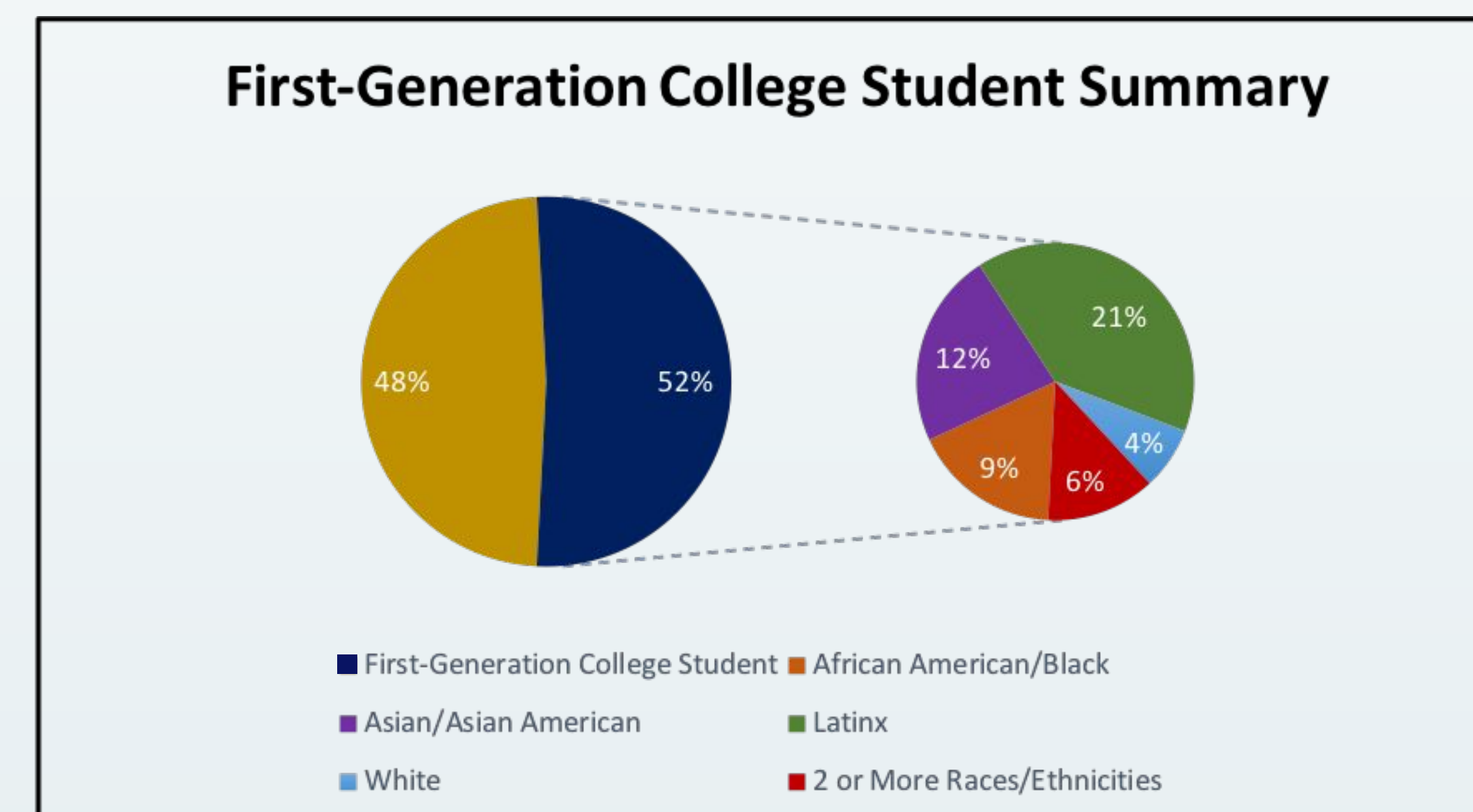


Figure 1. Racial and Ethnic Breakdown of First Generation College Students

Engaged Eating Behaviors

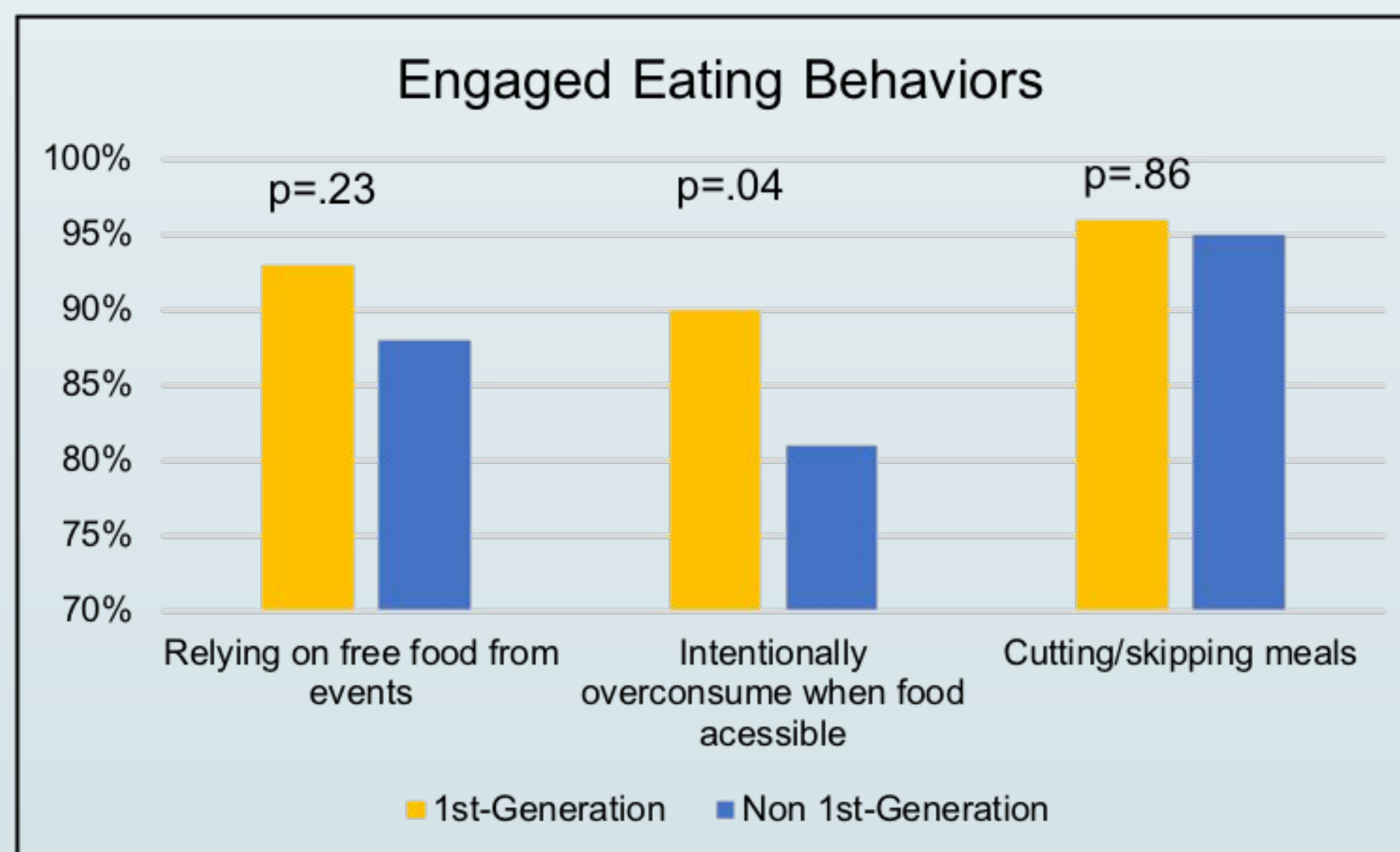


Figure 2. Engagement in Disordered Eating Behaviors amongst First and Non First Generation College Students

Conclusion

- There is a higher perception of engagement with intentional overconsumption of accessible food among first-generation students.
 - Given the association of this behavior, further research must be done to examine the relationship between potential negative health outcomes among first-generation students experiencing food insecurity.

Policy Implications

- Policy measures must address the serious health complications from recurrent engagement with said behaviors and increase access for food security and basic needs services for first-generation students.

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References

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