

# The Fight Against Food Insecurity

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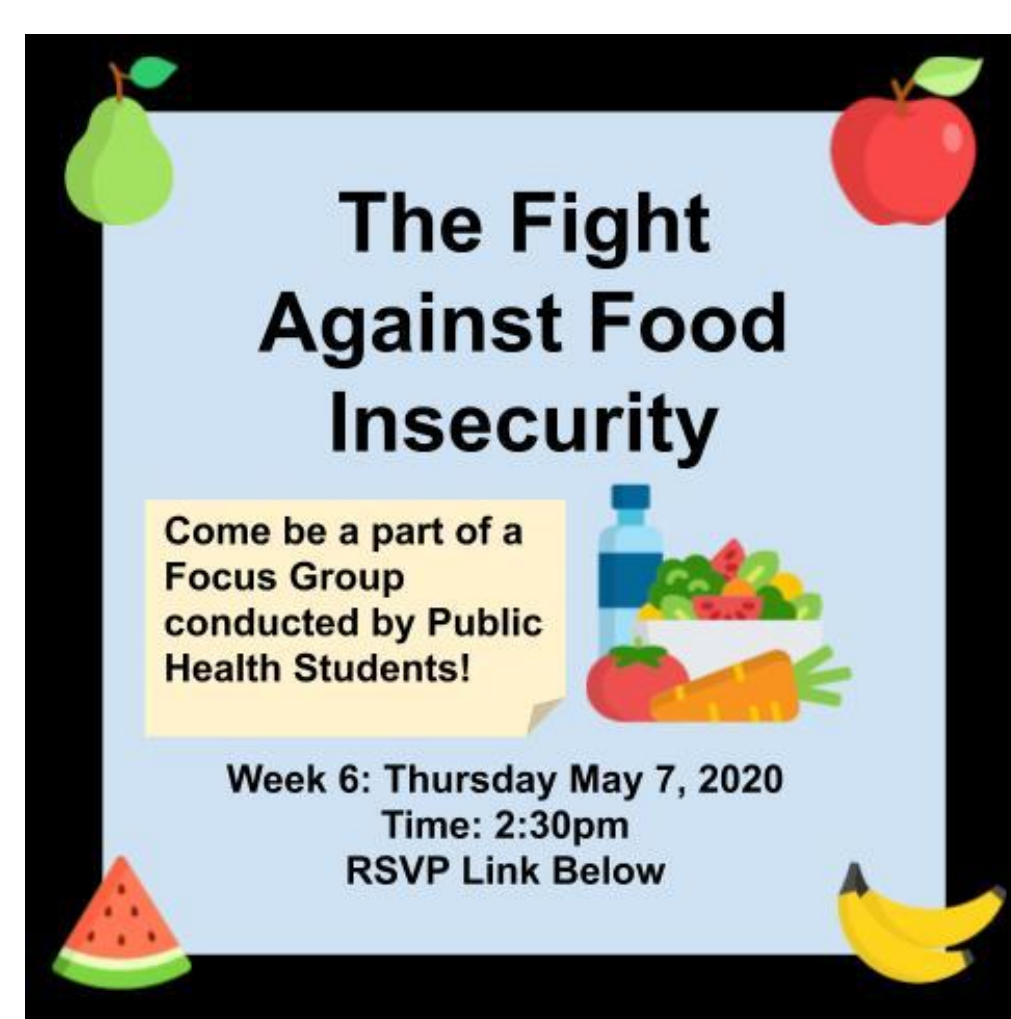
## Introduction

- According to the 2018 UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), 53% of the students in the University of California, San Diego were identified to be in the high or marginal food insecure category-- many of which are students of color from low socioeconomic backgrounds and first generation students.
- The creation of the Triton Food Pantry (TFP) was established to combat food insecurity at UCSD, but existing obstacles prevent underrepresented students from fully utilizing the resource.
- Identifying underrepresented students' perceived barriers to using the TFP could be the first step toward generating solutions to those obstacles.

## Objective

To conduct a focus group with underrepresented students to identify perceived barriers and potential solutions to increase accessibility to the TFP.

## Methodology



- Student participants were recruited with the help of the Office of Academic Support & Instructional Services (OASIS).



- The Focus Group discussion was held via Zoom and was led with a screen-shared powerpoint to facilitate a conversation about food insecurity and problems associated with accessibility to the TFP.

- The discussion was transcribed by the research team.
- Afterwards an anonymous survey, conducted through Survey Monkey, was administered to the participants to collect non-identifiable demographic information and opinions about TFP.

## Results

One of the critical points discussed was understanding how the institution can help end the stigma:

- collaborative efforts between OASIS mentors and volunteers at the food pantry.
- educate each other to create a safe space where underrepresented students voice their opinions



	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
The location is convenient to access			2	1		3
The food point system is understandable		1	1		1	3
The hours are convenient to me	1	2				3
They have a variety selection of food options	1	1	1			3
The food is nutritious and of good quality		2	1			3
The staff is helpful			1	2		3
The Triton Food Pantry satisfied my needs			1	2		3

## Conclusion

The participants in the focus group discussed feasible solutions to increase access to the TFP, illustrating the importance of creating safe spaces where underrepresented students must not only be at the forefront of future discussions, but also future solutions.

## Policy Implications

- A collaborative effort between student organizations would be necessary to establish a peer mentor system where students feel comfortable discussing issues about stigma and can visit the Pantry together.
- UC San Diego should invest more on expanding centers like Triton Food Pantry and The Hub.
  - The call to recruit more volunteers or paid staff to run the pantry to extended hours
  - Collaborate with other food banks to provide a variety of nutritious foods.

## Acknowledgements

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