

College of DuPage

DigitalCommons@COD

---

2021 Honors Council of the Illinois Region

Honors Program

---

2-27-2021

## Mitigating Basic Needs Insecurities at the College of DuPage

Samiha Syed  
*College of DuPage*

Zuhairullah Syed  
*College of DuPage*

Sofie Langan  
*College of DuPage*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.cod.edu/hcir2021>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Syed, Samiha; Syed, Zuhairullah; and Langan, Sofie, "Mitigating Basic Needs Insecurities at the College of DuPage" (2021). *2021 Honors Council of the Illinois Region*. 6.  
<https://dc.cod.edu/hcir2021/6>

This Conference Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at DigitalCommons@COD. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2021 Honors Council of the Illinois Region by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@COD. For more information, please contact [orenick@cod.edu](mailto:orenick@cod.edu).

# Mitigating Basic Needs Insecurities

College of Dupage (Glen Ellyn)

*Phi Beta Chapter, Phi Theta Kappa*



# Committee Charge

The **Phi Theta Kappa College Project** is an initiative by Phi Theta Kappa International for PTK Chapters to strengthen the relationship between PTK Student Chapters and administration by supporting the college vision and as a service to the college.

This year's focus: Basic Needs Insecurities

1. Conduct research on students' top 10 basic needs
2. Develop a proposal to present to administration



# Project Narrative

Enrollment rates at colleges and universities nationwide have decreased drastically over the last decade due to basic needs insecurities students are facing e.g. food insecurity, housing, healthcare, childcare, etc.

Conducting research on this topic regarding the needs of our students will not only help the students' wellness broadly speaking but will also enable students to continue their education.



# Literature Review - Hunger On Campus

**“Offering a campus food pantry is a signal to students that a college cares about their health and well-being, and recognizes that struggles with food insecurity are common.” (pg 12)**

- The importance of engaging with students to de-stigmatize seeking help is as important as recognizing their needs. This gives them a greater sense of community, culture of caring and support on campus. By highlighting just how common food insecurity and basic needs assistance are, we can take steps towards removing the social stigma of seeking help which will create a more inviting environment for students to further seek and accept any additional resources they need to succeed and stay healthy.



# Literature Review - Wisconsin Hope Lab



**“The Pell Grant, the nation's flagship Federal aid program to help low-income students cover college costs, was created in the early 1970's. At the time the program fully covered the costs of attending community college but today it covers just 60% of the total cost of attendance. In addition to this reduced support for students state supplied support for community colleges has declined sharply since the recent economic recession.”**

- With the cost of undergraduate education being on the rise and the importance of education being at the top of the list for most, many college students are struggling with food and housing insecurity. 50 years ago, grants were available that would fully cover community college education, and today some of the same grants cover only 60%.
- Amongst food challenges are also factors of general stability and wellness: eating balanced meals, food going bad, and not having the money to purchase food for themselves. Food insecurity is often coupled with housing insecurity as well e.g. not meeting rent costs, being homeless, and evictions.

# Literature Review - Hope4College

**“Most of all, leaders must remember that students are humans first and in order to focus in college they need basic needs security. ‘I attempted suicide in May. I am filling out this survey because I know even though other students are experiencing the same thing they may not have the motivation or may be too anxious to fill it out.”**

- The #RealCollegeSurvey was created in 2015 to help gain data on college students and their basic needs. However, with the recent events of the Coronavirus, student enrollment has decreased and the needs of students have increased.
- The Hope Center emphasizes that outside of attending school, students play several roles (e.g. parents and breadwinners) basic needs must be met. With campuses being closed, many are left without the security of daily routines from food and nutritional programs, and experiences to promote emotional wellness. One important conclusion is that although emergency aid is helpful, it is not easily available and should be made easier for people to access and find.

**HUMAN  
RIGHTS**

# Survey questions

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yxEo0-xv8yCqDoRJtZsdFYn2BSevpxrH/view?usp=sharing>

**Survey Group** - College of DuPage Students

## Survey Question Themes

- Which basic necessity is urgent, sometimes urgent, or not an issue
- If they know other students who are struggling with basic needs
- Who they would contact for assistance on-campus with basic needs
- How the stress of dealing with these needs affects their daily lives, whether that be academically, physically, or mentally
- Asking if the student would like to receive resource information & be interviewed for additional research





# Data Trends & Impact

- **125 Responses to date**
- **Common trends with the data:**
  - Mental and physical health struggles
  - Financial implications
  - Educational sacrifice to fulfill basic needs
- **Impact - Where we are making a difference with this data:**
  - Sharing and centralizing resource information and protocol on basic needs in addition to proposing new basic needs supports be established based on data



## **How has the stress of dealing with these needs affected your daily life? Check all that apply.**

**I considered dropping out from school → 29 (23.2%)**

**My physical health has been impacted → 36 (28.8%)**

**My mental health has been impacted → 79 (83.2%)**

**I haven't been doing well in school → 29 (23.2%)**

**I've been unable to attend lectures/classes I'm enrolled in → 22 (17.6%)**

**I haven't been able able to excel in other areas of my life in addition to school → 41 (32.8%)**

**I've been struggling financially → 51 (40.8%)**

**I've dropped courses → 19 (15.2%)**

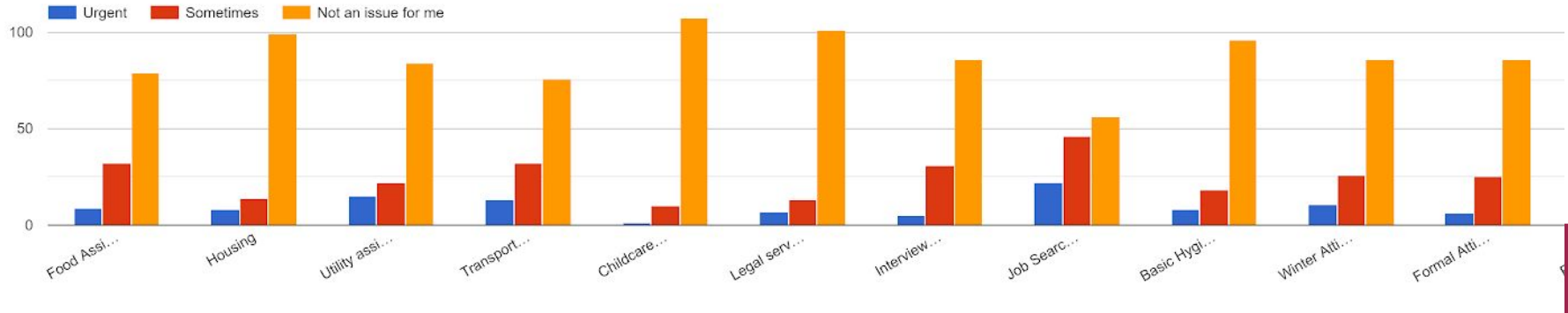
**I haven't been able to complete my assignments on time → 40 (32%)**

**I don't have time to seek help and utilize student success services and resources (e.g. Office Hours, Mentoring, Tutoring, etc) → 40 (32%)**

# Top Basic Need Insecurities Data Break-Down

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pTEHflXs0cyc3i3GexnhpFrwyX8Jzl1aWgB2TohbkX4/edit#responses>

Please select relevant boxes as per your degree of need for each category (urgent/sometimes/not an issue)



# Interviews



## 40 Interviews conducted of faculty, staff, and students

- Methods: via ZOOM one-on-one, two-on-one with note-taker, group and e-interviews
- Topics of discussion included:
  - Top ten basic needs
  - Students or peers the interviewee encounters struggling with basic needs
  - Basic Needs Project proposal support
  - Distribution of Basic Needs Interview survey
  - If there is a particular basic need support they'd like to see at the College of DuPage
  - Student Success & Wellness Fair with a basic needs focus interest

# New Data

Students were asked if they had any concerns that weren't covered in the survey. Additional concerns included:

- Addiction Recovery Services - "What about if the student needs help on coming out with an addiction?"
- Financial & Healthcare Support i just wish i had more money for insulin
- Home Safety and Stigma around BNI - "Although I like the idea of a virtual interview, some people like myself may not be in a position to talk freely in their current locations."
- COVID-19: "I've been struggling with PTSD before COVID happened and I lost my job. I've had several bad years."



# Students Success & Wellness Fair

## Focus: Basic Needs Insecurities

- The Basic Needs Fair was a three day event that we called the Student Success & Wellness Forums.
- It lasted from Dec. 1st through Dec. 3rd with each individual day lasting 2 hours from 1-3 pm. The forums were held *via* ZOOM where COD students were able to attend at no cost.
- Each day had a different topic while the first hour consisted of presentations; the second hour consisted of a Q&A session.

*Phi Theta Kappa College-wide Project Committee*

## STUDENT SUCCESS & WELLNESS FORUMS AGENDA

- DEC. 1ST - (1) OFFICE OF COUNSELING, ADVISING & TRANSFER SERVICES AND (2) FOOD PANTRY  
PRESENTATIONS 1-2 PM Q&A 2-3 PM

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED INCLUDE: COUNSELING & ADVISING RESOURCES/SERVICES, STRATEGIES TO MANAGE STRESS, MENTAL HEALTH DROP-INS AND FOOD PANTRY ACCESS AT NO COST TO COD STUDENTS

- DEC. 2ND - OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
PRESENTATIONS 1-2 PM Q&A 2-3 PM

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED INCLUDE: FINANCIAL AID AND LITERACY RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT NO COST TO COD STUDENTS

- DEC. 3RD - CAREER SERVICES CENTER  
PRESENTATIONS 1-2 PM Q&A 2-3 PM

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED INCLUDE: JOB SEARCH, RESUME REVIEW & CAREER PREP RESOURCES/SERVICES AVAILABLE AT NO COST TO COD STUDENTS

Zoom Meeting on Dec. 1st, 2nd & 3rd: <https://cod.zoom.us/j/85862515262?pwd=Nnpkd2pVYIRuQ0FIUFVHRzNYs3NFdz09>  
Meeting ID: 858 6251 5262 Passcode: 035765  
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)



# Future Plans - Ongoing Research & Proposal

Our hope is that the efforts made by our project spark a newfound awareness surrounding the prevalence of basic need insecurities in our community. Basic needs of not just food, water, clothing, and shelter, but also of barriers to education broadly such as healthcare and childcare. With this awareness, we hope to initiate and inspire actionable protocols to address these insecurities.



# Projected Proposal Initiatives

In creating a proposal, we endeavor to help:

- Develop ongoing programming to support basic needs e.g. a permanent basic needs committee
- Build on current online resources available to students
- Suggest ways to integrate basic needs support into college culture
- Expand partnerships with community organizations who support basic needs





# Works Cited

Cady, C., Conroy, E., Goldrick-Rab, S., & Rosen, M. (2019). *Beyond the Food Pantry: Faculty-Run Emergency Aid for Student* [PDF]. Philadelphia: The Hope Center.

Dubin, J., Matthews, B., & Cady, C. (2016, October). *Hunger on Campus: The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students* [PDF]. Madison: National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness & College and University Food Bank Alliance.

Goldrick-Rab, S. (2018, July/August). *Guide to Assessing Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education* [PDF]. Philadelphia: Hope4College.

Goldrick-Rab, S., Broton, K., & Eisenberg, D. (2015, December). *Hungry to Learn: Addressing Food & Housing Insecurity Among Undergraduates* [PDF]. Madison: University of Michigan-Madison.

Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., Schneider, J., Hernandez, A., & Cady, C. (2018, April). *Still Hungry and Homeless in College* [PDF]. Madison: Wisconsin Hope Lab.

*Hope4College #RealCollege During the Pandemic: Preview of Fall 2020 Survey Findings* [Scholarly project]. (2020, December). Retrieved from <https://hope4college.com/realcollege-during-the-pandemic-preview-of-fall-2020-survey-findings/>