

## COMMITTEE FOR IMPROVING STUDENT FOOD SECURITY

Portland State University  
Portland, Oregon



Committee for Improving  
Student Food Security

### ABOUT THE CISFS

The Committee for Improving Student Food Security (CISFS) at Portland State University (PSU) was established after the first ever campus wide student food security survey conducted by Jessica Cole, the CISFS Co-Chair and Assistant Director for the Center for Student Health & Counseling (SHAC), for her graduate thesis. The survey revealed that a high rate of PSU students experienced some sort of food insecurity during the past academic year (see page 2). The Division of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs put forth a charge to identify drivers of student food insecurity, to educate the PSU community about this issue, and to create programs that help alleviate student hunger. The CISFS was formed out of that charge.

The CISFS is a volunteer committee comprised of PSU faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, community members, undergraduate and graduate students, and international students. The CISFS works collaboratively with other PSU departments, resource centers, and programs to serve as a bridge or liaison for students struggling to meet their basic human needs. There are currently seventeen (17) members on the CISFS.

The CISFS Mission Statement: Student food security is an integral element of a sustainable and equitable Portland State University (PSU) community. The Committee for Improving Student Food Security (CISFS) seeks to improve PSU students' ability to access affordable, nutritious, culturally relevant food. This will be achieved through fostering community partnerships, increasing awareness, addressing barriers through policy advocacy, and using data to inform and build capacity for action.

### ABOUT PSU

PSU is Oregon's public urban research university located in the heart of downtown Portland, Oregon. It is ranked as one of the nation's top 10 "most innovative" universities by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Current Enrollment: 27,229

- Undergraduate Students: 17,915
- Graduate Students: 4,847
- Non-Admitted Students: 2,155
- International Students: 1,944 (7.8%)

Tuition:

- Resident Undergraduate Tuition: \$6,598.00/year (based on 9-credit hours of per term enrollment)

- Resident Graduate Tuition: \$18,909.00/year (based on 9-credit hours of per term enrollment)

Average Student Age:

- Undergraduate, admitted: 26
- Undergraduate, non-admitted: 32
- Graduate: 33

Residency:

- Resident Students: 19,084 (76.6%)
- Domestic Non-Resident Students: 3,889 (15.6%)

**Gender:**

- Male Students: 11,278 (45.3%)
- Female Students: 13,639 (54.7%)

**Race/Ethnicity**

- Asian= 1,897 (7.6%)
- Black= 793 (3.25%)
- Hispanic/Latino= 2,882 (11.6%)
- International Students= 1,944 (7.8%)
- Multiple Ethnicity/Race= 1,376 (5.5%)
- Native American= 304 (1.2%)

- Pacific Islander= 142 (0.6%)
- White= 14,534 (58.3%)
- Declined to Respond= 1,045 (4.2%)

**Average Carrying Load (credit hours per term):**

- Undergraduate: 12.375
- Non-Admitted Undergraduate: 6.6
- Graduate: 8.6
- Non-Admitted Graduate: 3.8
- Post-Baccalaureate: 6.8
- Doctoral: 6.6

Source: Stats based on Winter term 2017 data from the PSU Office of Institutional Research & Planning (OIRP) [Student Fact Book](#).

**PSU STUDENT FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENTS**

IRB Approved Assessment Details	2014	2016
Study Parameters	Any student taking 1+ credit hours in F, W, Sp terms 2013-14 academic year	Any student taking 1+ credit hours in F, W, Sp terms 2015-16 academic year
Survey Method and Delivery	Confidential web-based survey	Confidential web-based survey
Number of Students Recipients	19,555	29,011
Number of Respondents	4,235 (22% response rate)	5,842 (20% response rate)
Respondent Snapshot	Majority of respondents were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Female</li> <li>▪ Age 18-34</li> <li>▪ Caucasian</li> <li>▪ Without dependents</li> <li>▪ Employed w/one job</li> <li>▪ Seniors</li> <li>▪ Enrolled full-time</li> <li>▪ Single</li> <li>▪ Domestic students</li> <li>▪ Earned less than \$10,000 in the 13-14 academic year</li> </ul>	Majority of respondents were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Female</li> <li>▪ Age 18-34</li> <li>▪ Caucasian</li> <li>▪ Without dependents</li> <li>▪ Employed w/one job</li> <li>▪ Seniors</li> <li>▪ Enrolled full-time</li> <li>▪ Single</li> <li>▪ Domestic students</li> <li>▪ Earned less than \$10,000 in the 15-16 academic year</li> </ul>
Overall % of Food Insecure	59%	54%

Source: Cole, J. (2014). 2014 Portland State University Student Food Insecurity Assessment. (Unpublished Master’s thesis). Mark O. Hatfield School, College of Urban and Public Affairs, Portland, State University; Portland, Oregon.

## NATIONAL, STATE, COUNTY FOOD INSECURITY STATISTICS

	Food Insecurity Rate	% Above SNAP/Other Nutrition Programs threshold of 185% poverty	% Below SNAP/Other Nutrition Programs threshold of 185% poverty	Average Cost of a Meal	Annual Total Needed for 3 Meals a Day for % of Food Insecure
<b>U.S.</b>	15.4%	26%	54%	\$2.89	\$24,558,800,000
<b>Oregon</b>	15.2%	26%	74%	\$2.84	\$303,833,000
<b>Multnomah*</b>	16.1%	27%	73%	\$3.15	\$67,869,000
<b>Washington*</b>	12.3%	34%	66%	\$2.97	\$35,307,000
<b>Clackamas*</b>	12.5%	39%	61%	\$3.11	\$26,484,000
<b>Clark (WA)*</b>	14.1%	30%	70%	\$2.89	\$31,595,000

\*These are the four biggest feeder counties into Portland State University.

Source: Feeding America, <http://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2014/overall/oregon/county/multnomah>. Referenced on 10/21/2016.

### CISFS INITIATIVES TO COMBAT STUDENT FOOD INSECURITY

- Outreach and Education:
  - Participate in, or table at, major community outreach events to educate students, faculty, and staff: Party-in-the-Plaza, Party-in-the-Park, the Nourish Wellness Fair, new student orientation, etc.
  - Meal-in-a-Mug: an outreach to students that provided each patron with a mug, the ingredients to make a simple meal in a mug and a microwave, along with recipes and additional information such as where to find microwaves on campus. Over 220 mugs and meals were distributed.
  - Guest lecture in PSU classrooms and departmental meetings, as well as to alumni and community groups.

- Created, and mass printed, a resource bookmark listing food and other human services-related resources. Distributed across campus departments and other student resource centers.
- Created a website for students, faculty, and staff to access containing information and resources on more than food assistance (housing, financial assistance, child care, and health; as well as scholarly articles and research for academic purposes): [www.pdx.edu/student-access-center/](http://www.pdx.edu/student-access-center/).
- Created a general email account for those in need including concerned or needy faculty and staff, for those interested in volunteering, for departments or groups to request in-services, general information, etc.: [foodhelp@pdx.edu](mailto:foodhelp@pdx.edu). Monitored by CISFS member volunteers.
- Created an email list for subscribers (currently just under 600) in the PSU and greater Portland communities to stay informed about items in the news, upcoming outreach events, new or changing resources and policies, and more.
- Created a food insecurity blurb for faculty to include on course syllabi.
- Created a D2L Widget: Desire2Learn is PSU's online learning platform. The CISFS widget is optional for faculty to place on their D2L course page. The student will be directed to the CISFS website for resources.
- Established [Harvest Share](#), a partnership between the CISFS and the Oregon Food Bank that provides free fresh fruits and vegetable to PSU students and to greater downtown Portland (see stats below). In the 2014 PSU Student Food Security Assessment, the majority of student respondents stated that their biggest concern when accessing emergency food resources is the ability to obtain fresh fruits and vegetables. Harvest Share was intended to address that concern and bring healthy food options to campus.
- Established Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility determination and enrollment assistance on-campus for student convenience and de-stigmatization:
  - The CISFS partners with Impact NW & Multnomah County Department of Human Services to provide drop-in office hours twice a week at the PSU Learning Center (Millar Library). Benefits can include utility assistance, pet food assistance, free tax prep, cell phone benefits, tuition savings match, Arts for All, and more.
- Continually working towards policy level change such as testifying before the Oregon State House Committee on Higher Education, Innovation, and Workforce Development at the State Capitol in June 2015 regarding student food insecurity and the work of the CISFS at PSU.
- Increased awareness through media marketing in Virtual Viking, Currently, Facebook, and other avenues including off campus media opportunities with OPB, KEX 1190 radio, and KATU news.

- Ongoing partnership with [University Studies](#) course instructors (e.g. Food Security: PSU and Beyond) to be a part of their course curriculum. University Studies incorporates a service component to their curriculum, creating a mutually beneficial relationship.
- Collaborated on 1,3,5 YR Strategic Plan for the PSU Food Pantry, a student operated service providing emergency food resources to PSU students taking 1 (one) or more credit hours per term.
- Secured IRB approval for the second campus wide food insecurity survey to assess impact of food security efforts on campus. Administered late Spring term 2016 to any student enrolled in at least one credit hour during any term in 2015-2016 academic year. Received an impressive 20% response rate. Plan to assess every two years.
- Partnered with the OFB to host, and present at, their 2016 Annual Regional Partner Conference. Over 320 partner agencies attended.
- Nominated for the Mary H. Cumpston Award for Service to Students, for the CISFS's work in the 2015-2016 academic Year (<http://www.pdx.edu/studentaffairs/mary-h-cumpston-award-for-service-to-students>)
- Recently established a Foundation account thanks to the start-up funds of a generous donor. The CISFS is currently planning a fundraising campaign.

## HARVEST SHARE, A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CISFS AND THE OREGON FOOD BANK (OFB)

**Total Served as of February 2017** (March 2017 is being tabulated)

- Households: 8,426
- Individuals: 22,649
- Students: 6,955
- Faculty/Staff: 950
- Community Members: 1,234
- Average New/Unique Patrons Per Month: 161 (based on 15-16 academic year)
- Total Pounds Food Distributed: 141,589
- Average Volunteers Per Month: 45.5 (based on 15-16 academic year)

### Harvest Share Partnerships for a "Village" Approach

- Schools (Cedar Park Middle School)
- Businesses (Elemental Technologies)
- PSU academic programs (University Studies) and departments (Office of Information Technology)
- Learning Garden Laboratories
- OFB's cooking demos and Seed to Supper
- PSU Student Sustainability Center's Seed Library
- PSU Student Financial Services' Financial Wellness Center
- Volunteer hours for student conduct

