

MGMT 1302

Assignment 2

Food Insecurity in University

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Group 2

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## Food Insecurity in Dalhousie University

### Introduction

According to a survey conducted by the national campus food organization Meal Exchange, 39% of the surveyed university students at five Canadian universities, including Dalhousie University, could not eat balanced meals and worried about their food supply (Lorinc, 2016). This survey indicates that many students are suffering from food insecurity due to the financial problem. Within Dalhousie University, the most helpful tool for students to against food insecurity—Food Bank is having troubles of food donation. Michael Davies-Cole (as cited in Burke, 2018), the manager of the food bank at Dalhousie University, said that even though they put restrictions on the number of items that one person can take out to ease the tight supply, the food usually empty out before the next supply gets in (Burke, 2018). More serious is the fact that only 16.8% of students who are experiencing food insecurity would like to use the campus food bank (Lorinc, 2016), which means more needy people do not know the existence of the food bank. The reason why the food insecurity is a big problem is that the financially unstable students usually choose to cut off their food cost to save money for books, tuition fees and rent (Burke, 2018). Meanwhile the food bank is experiencing supply shortages, which could cause serious damage to their health.

### Description and Reflection

#### Group Goal

Because of the severe situation of food insecurity at Dalhousie University, our

group wants to support the food bank to deal with it in two ways. On the one hand, we will use posters to raise the awareness the importance of the food bank and advise students to use this resource to afford food since it located in the corner of the student union building, which is hard to draw people's attention. On the other hand, we are going to post another kind of poster with a food collection box to encourage people to donate non-perishable food to the food bank. We are permitted to put on the poster and set up the box in Sheriff Hall, Howe Hall, Risley Hall, and Mini-residence. We plan to achieve the goal by collecting a full box of food to donate in one week since the awareness is unmeasurable. We successfully collected a whole cardboard box of items which is a good amount for four days.

#### Strategy of Implementation

At the very beginning, we spent a week, from Jan 30<sup>th</sup> to Feb 6<sup>th</sup>, to find out the best way for the group member to communicate, to share their opinion since we are a big group with members who do not know each other. We initially use the discussion page of Brightspace to post our plan since everyone can get access to it. However, limited by its non-immediacy, we finally gave up this way and used the Facebook group to communicate. Additionally, Facebook can create an event page to promote our activity to make more people aware of the serve situation of food insecurity in the university and get them involved in donation. The Facebook page was keeping edited from Feb 6<sup>th</sup> to Feb 14<sup>th</sup>. After that, we spent two days to design, print and post the posters from Feb 6<sup>th</sup> to Feb 8<sup>th</sup>. For the next step, we were collecting food donated by other students from Feb 8<sup>th</sup> to Feb 14<sup>th</sup> and donate them all to Food

Bank. We believe this activity could help people in need know and benefit from Food Bank to support them get rid of the food insecurity and bring this into the public concerns.

### Reflection on Strategy

Although we have successfully achieved our goal to collect a full box of food, with in-depth investigations, we found that what we did was only a drop in the bucket compared to the enormous demand. The time for our activities lasts only one week, and a large part of the donors are friends we ask to do so. In addition, even though the poster is placed at the front desk of the residence, it is still very inconspicuous. Next time, we should improve our method by cooperating with the university's official social media account to promote our well-edited article to get more people involved. As for the food donation collection, we should ask for the permit from residence managers to set the food collection box for long-term running. Moreover, in order to meet the enormous demand, it is not enough to rely solely on the food bank. We should initiate a proposal to advise the school to negotiate with the dining hall and make unsold food for sale at a low price 3 hours after dinner time.

### Experience of Teamwork

From my points of view, communication is one of the critical issues of teamwork. It took us a long time to get everyone in touch. Also, we do not have a chance to gather everyone together to do the work, except for the first discussion in class. Additionally, a leader is extremely important for a team, the reason why we can finish the event so quickly could all attributes to our leader. She is an autocratic style

leader, even though she did not force us to do anything, she anticipated everything in our group. No matter how insignificant the thing is, we can always find her figure. The type of leadership can bring us high efficiency. However, it limits the participation of other group members since there were not too many things that needs to be done. Therefore, many group members can only get involved by promoting our event to social media.

### Conclusion

Overall, the food insecurity of university students is a serious and long-lasting problem, and the reasons for its deterioration are many, including but not limited to the rise in tuition fees, the lack of social benefits, and the high-interest rates on student loans. Solving this problem requires the joint efforts of schools, governments, and society. Although we have done very little and it is difficult to change the situation, at least we have devoted our effort and made more people aware of the seriousness of this matter.

## References

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