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Sociology of Deviance 2259: Food Insecurity in the London Community

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Food Insecurity in the London Community

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Introduction

The issue of food insecurity is widespread, impacting the lives of many across the world. In 2018, 9.2% of the global population, about 697 million people, were described as severely food insecure, with Sub-Saharan Africa reporting the highest rate of food insecure individuals (Roser and Ritchie, 2019). While international organizations such as the UN aim to eradicate hunger through their Sustainable Development Goals, the solution for ending food insecurity may vary based on the country being examined. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, lacking access to food may be a consequence of limited food supplies due to a drought. On the other hand, a country like Sri Lanka may suffer from the same problem as a result of war and political corruption. Both examples highlight one important presumption that is made about food insecurity: it only affects those in third-world regions. This notion is fair to assume that nations with higher levels of poverty face more disproportionate effects, but this belief should not operate as a means of downplaying the food insecurity in first-world regions.

In Canada, almost 4 million individuals — of which 1.5 million are children — face the social, economic, and health consequences of food insecurity (Tarasuk et al., 2014). Younger populations, in particular, experience the detrimental long-term impacts that extend well into adulthood, such as depression, diabetes, and heart problems (BC Food Security Gateway, 2020). To help combat this, the Canadian Community Health Survey began measuring household food insecurity in 2004, defining this problem as “the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints” (PROOF, 2019). However, this survey has not managed to capture the true reach of this matter. According to Buszard (2020), not all provinces and territories participated in the food insecurity module of the CCHS “as only select years [were] mandatory” (p. 2). Such a gap in data collection plays a crucial role in the importance given to food insecurity in Canada.

The reallocation of resources, new research studies, and policy reform all rely on data that attests to the seriousness of this issue. By failing to implement such meaningful tactics for change, food insecurity will not only continue to persist and remain unsolved, but harm groups of individuals that were never previously identified as food insecure.

Now, it is important to note that while low income is the strongest determinant of food insecurity, there are other populations who are likely to deal with this problem as well, including “renters or those precariously housed or homeless, woman, lone parents, unattached single persons, people who are disabled, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, Indigenous, and new immigrants or refugees” (Buszard et al., 2020, p. 2). In recent years, a new group of empirical interest has emerged: university students. This population was never studied in the past due to the positive correlation between food insecurity and poverty, but growing evidence suggests that universities now house an increasing number of students from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds (Silverthorn, 2016). Pairing this with the rising cost of tuition and living expenses, one can reasonably understand why the symptoms of food insecurity begin to sneak up on numerous students. In fact, a multi-site measure conducted by Meal Exchange (2019) found that approximately 40% of students in Canadian universities identified as food insecure, which is four times higher than the rate among Canadians in general. Unfortunately, this statistic is one of the few national details that exist surrounding food insecurity among university students; and as of today, there is no official nationwide measure.

In this research project, our general aim is to contribute to the developing body of research on food insecurity among university students. More specifically, though, we aim to highlight the prevalence of this issue within our own community at Western University. As Maynard (2016) explains, understanding the lived experiences of students battling food

insecurity is integral for constructing informed programs and policies that tackle this problem. By consulting with Western University's Housing and Ancillary Services and Food Support Services, as well as the London Food Bank, we gained greater insight into how pervasive this issue really is. Based on the research conducted and the information collected from secondary sources, this project will focus on four aspects of food insecurity at Western University: (1) the largest problems experienced by Western students today, (2) what Western has accomplished in the past to deal with this problem, (3) identifying areas that need improvement, and (4) macro-social explanations of why this issue persists. We will conclude with some future recommendations based on the research that has been gathered.

Food Insecurity Impacts & Effects

Food insecurity is a problem that negatively affects many people around the world. While it does not only affect students, it is worth noting a high percentage of affected individuals are students. Throughout the duration of this research project, our eyes have been opened to uncover all matters concerning food insecurity. It is quite difficult to provide one simple answer regarding who is affected. To say that everyone is impacted is somewhat accurate, but as we delve deeper, we realized that intersectional factors such as class, race, and gender play a role into who is impacted and why which makes the answer much more complex.

Glen Pearson, who was a former member of the House of Commons of Canada and the Co-Executive director of the London Food Bank, talked about the different people who were coming into the food bank every day. To begin, we have learned that food insecurity typically affects those who are most socioeconomically disadvantaged. As we know, there are major problems of race and ethnicity inequality in our society today. Individuals who are white families

are typically more privileged, and therefore may have more opportunities than most people of different ethnic backgrounds. Similarly, when immigrants move to a different country, they often come empty handed, unable to speak the language, and have no knowledge of what everyday life looks like in the given location. Immigrants are often forced to start from scratch, working extremely hard to earn everything they receive. These individuals suffer from lack of financial resources, which may ultimately lead to food insecurity. In addition, Glen informed us that 40% of the people that go to the food bank are kids. It is believed that this is likely a product of their parents being food insecure, as it may affect the rest of the family. This shows that food insecurity typically does not just affect one person, and may be thought of as a chain reaction.

Individuals who are food insecure may be negatively impacted in many aspects of their life. Specifically, we learned that food insecurity can cause many physical and mental health effects. Some of these effects include a lower nutrient intake, lower sleep quality, possible depression, and a lower overall quality of life. Oftentimes, students who are insecure are ones that are forced into an independence role, where they have to provide for themselves. This causes a lot of stress on an individual, as they may have to focus on providing for themselves, while simultaneously trying to balance school. The student may have to budget their money, and sometimes, food is not at the top of their list of necessities. Being food insecure poses major negative physical health and mental health affects, leading into the discussion of the history and importance of food banks.

Background Information - Food Banks

To begin, it is important to understand when and why the food banks were created. Starting with the London Food Bank, Glen provided us with some insight on its past. We learned

that there were cutbacks in social assistance 15 years ago. Due to the recession, the food banks started. 40% of the people being helped were kids, as the recession created huge effects on post secondary students. Since, the governments were not coming back to the degree they were before, the food banks became more popular and continued to grow. This caused the community to develop more of a trust in food banks, however, the Governments had a distrust. This created barriers, as it affected the food bank's ability to grow. At first they did not provide fresh food, but this began to change. The city was going to be fined by the province for throwing away a lot of food in the landfill, so this food started going to the London Food Bank. The London Food Bank would be given food from the grocery store, before it went bad, and it became an official city effort. In addition, when the London Food Bank was first created, individuals agreed upon running it mainly through volunteers. Without all the volunteers, the London Food Bank would not be able to help the hundreds of community members who are food insecure. The London Food Bank continues to have many volunteers. Currently, it is made up of six full-time staff, and two part-time staff, who have contributed to the success of these organizations. The London Food Bank continues to flourish today specifically because of their "great volunteers, committed staff, and community that continues to donate supplies year after year." (*About. London Food Bank, n.d.*).

Moreover, Food Support Services, FSS, at Western University was created in 1986. In 1986, the University allowed FSS to utilize their facilities on campus. Food Support Services created campaigns and events to help educate individuals regarding global issues on food insecurity, hunger, and poverty. The goal of Western's Food Bank has been to ultimately reduce hunger among UWO students, by limiting the barriers students who are food insecure may face. FSS strive for a campus that is both supportive and inclusive, where students, faculty, staff, and

community members can access affordable and nutritious food. Western's Food Bank has always been run by student volunteers, in order to build a campus community that works to grow together. Students can apply online to be a volunteer, and applications are launched at the start of each semester. This provides students with a great opportunity to be involved with the University Student Counsel, while simultaneously directly helping others in need.

What Needs to be Worked on

This research project has brought us to a very important question, what needs to be worked on at Western? After numerous meetings, and outside research, it is clear that Western needs to work on a couple of important aspects in the food bank to improve. To begin, the food bank needs to be more accessible. What we mean by this is that the food bank is not convenient for all students, most notably, students who do not live on the main campus. Students may be living off-campus, living at King's, Brescia, or Huron, and the UCC is not necessarily convenient for them. If a student is hungry at the moment and did not plan ahead, they may not want to make their way to the UCC to get food, and may try to figure something else out. In addition, students may be hesitant to go into the food bank, as they do not want to be seen by others. This is due to the stigma around using FSS; this will be discussed later on in more detail. Students would likely prefer to have food delivered to where they are, however, delivery services are not currently offered.

In addition, the food bank suffers from a lack of awareness. We asked many students in our class, along with our close friends, if they are aware that Western has a food bank, and majority of them responded that they were not aware of this. There is very little advertisement about the Food Bank, which may explain why many people are unaware that Western offers this service. Similarly, students who responded that they were aware of this service offered, all

claimed that they were unaware of its location. As we are close with these students, we can confirm that they have indeed been in the UCC multiple times, and were not aware that there is a Food Bank there. There are not many signs in the UCC, or around campus in general, that direct you to the Food Bank and specify its location. Moreover, we found that students are not aware that you do not need to meet any criteria to use the food bank. After speaking to Naval Arshi, the Food Support Services Coordinator, we learned that you can simply walk into the Food Bank at any time, to grab whatever you need. For example, if you are on campus and you are hungry, you can walk into the food bank, and grab a snack, no questions asked.

Lastly, the Western food bank needs to work on what they offer. To begin, Naval expressed that there is a need for fresh food. Western's Food Bank cannot currently offer fresh food, as they only have a partial kitchen, and a full kitchen is needed. Naval explained that a lot of students come in asking for fresh food, and they do not currently offer this. It is important to note that other schools offer fresh food. For example, Queen's University offers a full meal service to students, and it has been found to be a great success. Similarly, Glen and Naval both concluded that a major weakness is the lack of diverse foods offered. One must consider that individuals come into the food bank from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, and they are all likely looking for different foods. In addition, the hygiene products run out very quickly, typically on the same day that the Food Bank receives them. It is Naval's prediction that hygiene products run out the quickest, as they are very expensive to purchase. When it comes to purchasing food, you can settle for a cheaper product, such as beans over chicken, but when it comes to hygiene products, this is not typically an option. For example, specific hygiene products are an essential, and one cannot buy one hygienic product as a substitute for another, such as body wash versus shampoo.

What UWO is Currently doing to Deal with These Issues

When considering the weaknesses, it is equally important to consider what the Western Food Bank is doing to overcome them. In order to work on accessibility, Naval expressed that they are currently trying to expand their services. For example, she explained that they are currently hoping to offer a version of the food bank on the north-side of campus, specifically in the Talbot Building. This provides students with the flexibility to access FSS in more than one location, based on its convenience. Likewise, they are currently using the Hamper System, to work on anonymity. The Hamper System provides students with a day or two worth of food, and there is no limit on how often students can do this, or how much food they can request. Students complete an online form where they request food, and they can select if they want to pick up their hamper in person, or in a locker. This system acts as a confidentiality system, as students do not need to sign-in at the food bank, and they can pick up their hamper in a locker located in the UCC basement within 48 hours. This way, students can avoid seeing someone they may know at the Food Bank, which has been found to be a concern of many. In addition, Western is working on increasing confidentiality through the free the dot. Program. free the dot. is a new menstrual program produced in collaboration with the University Student Council and Food Support Services, that allows Western students to order pads, tampons, panty liners, menstrual cups, condoms, and dental dams to be mailed to them directly. This service is confidential, and a student's information will only be shared with trained staff and volunteers.

Moreover, Western is working on spreading awareness regarding their Food Support Services. They are doing this by promoting themselves at various University events, as well as on social media. For example, information booths and events are held during O-week, to attract attention and spread awareness. In relation, they are working on expanding their social media.

They have developed a FaceBook page, as well as an Instagram page, to spread awareness and share information regarding their services. Both pages share the same username, @uscfoodsupport, increasing their reachability. Their FaceBook page involves information regarding their mission, location, hours, closures, and gives you the option to ask three questions that provide an automatic response. These questions involve, “Who can use the food bank?” “How does the anonymous food hamper service work?” “How can I help/get involved with FSS?” Students can also ask other questions as they please, but their responses will take a bit longer. Their Instagram page offers information that is extremely similar to their FaceBook page, and students have the option to send direct messages if they would like more information. Their pages spread information regarding upcoming events, food insecurity statistics, overall useful tips, and much more. Students can repost this information in order to reach other students as well. As the use of social media grows in our society, these are excellent and effective tools used to spread awareness amongst students.

Lastly, FSS have done an excellent job of working on the things they offer. When it comes to offering fresh food, as stated above, they are unable to do so at the moment. However, they are moving into a new space next year, where they plan on having a full kitchen that allows them to offer fresh food. Since they cannot offer fresh food, they recently started offering free prepaid frozen meals. Naval expressed that students have found this extremely helpful, because a lot of students come in searching for fresh lunch items, however, this is not currently available. Offering a free meal is beneficial as students can just grab it and go, rather than having to worry about preparing the items into a suitable meal. In addition, the food they get comes from the Centre Spot in the UCC, which would have otherwise been wasted. Therefore, this service benefits the students and the community simultaneously, by preventing food waste, and

providing substantial meals. To continue, one of their biggest limitations they faced regarding what they offer was that they could only offer the things donated to them, and buy a small amount of additional things using their yearly budget. However, this was not enough to get a diverse range of food, hygiene products, etc. Now, individuals can make online donations, allowing staff members and volunteers of the food bank to purchase whatever they feel is most necessary. This money has recently been used to purchase President Choice gift cards, which provides students with the freedom to purchase specific items they would like. President Choice gift cards can be redeemable at a large range of popular stores, including Fortinos, Loblaws, No Frills, Real Canadian Superstore, Value-mart, and more. This large range gives students the option to go to the store that is the most convenient to them, and has the specific items they are in need of.

Why are Students at UWO Food Insecure?

Research shows that university students are more susceptible to hunger than the general population. Studies conducted on campuses across Canada found that approximately 40 percent of post-secondary students in Canada are food insecure (Sing, 2021). Yet, what exactly is food insecurity? The USDA defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to food for an active healthy life. University students are often overlooked when addressing inequities in the food system due to them being associated as a group living in their own “bubble”. However, oftentimes being in this “bubble” makes it even harder to get access to or afford food when you are a full time student. It is difficult to understand how it is that a student can attend Western University and afford tuition, housing, textbooks etc, but yet still be food insecure. This issue is huge because people tend to forget that education is a privilege and that so many people can not afford to be there. Furthermore, even if they are attending a university, they may not be able to

afford to live and feel good about it there, which often impacts nutritional choices. Although Western provides many services such as community gardens (where students learn how to create and maintain gardens on their own), budgeting programs and food banks (Sebesta, 2019), students still are still struggling with food insecurity. In this research paper our group looked at why this issue of food insecurity is occurring among UWO students by addressing six fundamental themes, including root causes, stigma, the rising cost of living, how the traditional student is changing and the lack of awareness with the institution of Western University itself.

Root Cause

Our first theme that we are going to discuss tackles the root causes of food insecurity for Western University students. This can be looked at by taking into account the social economic status of their parents as a key predictor of their child's success. Glen explained that a lot of food banks focused on kids, which needed to change due to kids following the poverty that their parents do. Kids do not simply fall into poverty because they lost their job, therefore food banks should target families in order to address the root cause itself. Pearson also discussed how homelessness and poverty in London, Ontario is getting worse and worse and said that the system is looking as though it is not changing (Pearson, 2022). University students may not have the financial support of their families and may not qualify for financial aid when attending university, making it almost impossible for them to sustain stability financially. Therefore, for those who are born into a low socioeconomic status, they are highly vulnerable to falling into this vicious poverty cycle and Hence, struggling with food insecurity. Therefore, if we want to see change at Western university with its rise in food insecurity among students it is important that we first address these root causes that further the issue as a whole.

Stigma

Food insecurity on university campuses is a big problem, however, it is not talked about nearly enough because of the shame surrounding it. There is shame around the amount of social pressure in university students in general, as well as this idea that university students are supposed to be independent and not asking for help. With the idea that university students are supposed to be figuring things out on their own, a lot of students suffer in silence. As discussed in lecture, stigmatization's main impact is when you cannot hide it. Stigmatization is a process in which there is a distinguished difference that is undesirable, then there is a label that is assigned which places people into categories. Society further establishes an us vs them phenomenon, where we disassociate those who fall into the category as being “normal”. After dissociation, those who fall into the category as not being like “us”, it becomes easier and justifiable to discriminate against the undesired group (Barr, 2021). The label of being food insecure puts Western University students in a position of vulnerability for stigmatization. Therefore, the stigma creates barriers for students to address their own issues with food insecurity due to their fear of being discriminated upon. At Western University, there is a lack of support on keeping food banks anonymous, which leads to further insecurity due to the fear of stigma. For instance, the food locker program at UWO, where students pick up their food in designated lockers on campus, creates obstacles for students as fellow peers may see them collecting their food items (Pearson, 2022). To combat this stigma, students would prefer delivery to provide anonymity. However, Western University currently does not have the resources to provide delivery to each food insecure student. Western tries to keep it as anonymous as they can, but it is hard to do so because they can not deliver it to

students directly to make it completely anonymous (Person, 2022). Therefore, further financial support is needed in order to address this issue of fear of stigmatization among food insecure students at UWO.

Another battling issue with stigma around food banks at Western University, is students that are struggling with food insecurities have their own personal stereotypes around what it means to be food insecure. A lot of students that are food insecure believe they are not because they are able to afford to be at university in the first place or other financial necessities, such as housing or tuition. Naval explained that students also believe that they are not food insecure enough and believe that another student may need the services more than them and refrain from going. Students also feel as though there's a certain criteria that is needed in order to receive food at the food bank, Therefore students may be hesitant to come in because they may think they need to meet certain criteria. Thus, Western needs to provide awareness on the fact of the food banks not having any requirements in order to make students more comfortable with the idea of going. This issue of stigmatization around those who are food insecure creates this desire of non association towards the group because of the stereotypes that surround the group itself, which in turn increases food insecurity among students.

Rising Cost of Living

The third theme our group chose to discuss was the rising cost of living, such as housing, tuition and the student income gap. Glen Pearson had a lot to say about this topic and stated that the government's lack of help is the main issue here. He addressed that the government does not understand the impending fallout, the government is not engaged and therefore falls to address the issue of how the cost to live is increasing

significantly and the consequences that follow. When reviewing a report focusing on food insecurity at the University of British Columbia (Carry, 2020), I came across a quote given by one of the students on campus that stated; “The first thing that goes through my mind when I have financial troubles, it's always just like, ‘Well, I can eat less.’ Because you know everything else you need...you need textbooks. But food, you know, you can eat a little less, you won’t die.” (LGBTQ2IA+ student, UBCO). This statement supports the argument of how students are putting themselves last due to the rising cost of living.

Firstly, the cost of housing for students has been continuing to increase in London, Ontario, making it much more difficult for students at Western to afford the basic necessities. Renting in London for students at Western University continues to rise due to the high demand. A recent report from Rentals.ca in January 2022 found that for rent prices, the average asking price for all types of units in London is now \$1,820. That's \$750 higher than it was in 2018 and up 17.2 percent from December 2021 (Tustin, 2022). This report shows just how dramatic these prices are rising just over the past few years, making the issue of housing costs more prevalent than ever for addressing the problem faced for food insecure students.

Secondly, Tuition costs have been making it harder and harder for students to have enough money for things that are not mandatory to have to attend university, such as food. Tuition has risen dramatically compared to previous years, for instance the average cost per semester for an undergraduate degree in 1993/94 was \$3,192 compared to \$6,191 in 2015/16 (Statistics Canada, 2004; Statistics Canada, 2015). For Western University specifically, domestic tuition has been increasing steadily between 2-3% each year (Lancione, 2020). For those who are international students at Western, tuition fees rose

vastly during the 2020-2021 academic year, making tuition rise between \$2,000 and \$5,000 depending on their program of study (Goveas, 2020). In fact, international students' tuition has been increasing over the past three years, with up to 12% increases in 2020/2021 (Western University, 2022). Overall, tuition has risen drastically making it one of the most common reasons students report being food insecure at university (Silverthorn, 2016). With these costs it is hard for students to be able to afford food, due to tuition being mandatory and food being a secondary concern for UWO students.

Furthermore, As the cost of tuition has risen in Canada, so too has student debt. Whereas the average undergraduate student debt was \$20 500 in 2000, undergraduate students graduated with an average debt of \$26 500 in 2014 (Statistics Canada, 2014). Student debt is a huge issue and has been rising due to many factors, one being the student income gap. Students at university are at a huge disadvantage when it comes to their own income. During the academic year, it is safe to say that most students at Western university are not employed. Students are subject to many barriers that make it difficult to have a stable and sufficient income, such as their school load making it hard to find time to get or keep a job that supports them financially. Thus, even if students are employed, the amount of hours they receive/dedication they can put towards the job itself is compromised by being a student. This gap for students compared to nonstudents is massive and creates many concerns as for how students are supposed to afford food, especially if they are lacking in family support. Thus, with the rising cost of living and the student income gap combined it is merely impossible for students to be financially stable.

The Traditional University Student is Changing

Over the years, the traditional idea of a typical university student has changed. In the past, a typical university student was someone who had just graduated high school and was being financially supported by their family. However, in recent years there seems to be more “nontraditional students” attending university than traditional, such as students who are financially independent, enrolled part-time in school while working full-time, or did not receive a traditional high school diploma, etc. For example, currently the average age of university students is 26 (Thoelke, 2021), this is unlike the traditional view of a student's age which would be around 18-22. With the view of a traditional student being so off from reality, we forget to acknowledge other factors that students may be dealing with. At 26 you are most likely to have way more financial responsibility as compared to a student that had just graduated high school and moved out of their parents place. Payments such as mortgages, weddings, etc, or responsibilities such as children and elders, making it very difficult for these students to be able to afford and access healthy foods. Research further shows that 1 in 5 students is caring for a child (many being single parents as well) (Thoelke, 2021). With obstacles such as working full-time and parenting, the already difficult task of being financially stable enough to be food secure is that much harder.

Western Does Not Know Students Are Food Insecure

As stated earlier, people tend to forget that university students are struggling. There is so much pressure put on university students about gaining weight and about what happens in the “Freshman 15”. However, when you are put in an environment where you may not have access to a kitchen, refrigerator or in so many cases a car/any

transportation to get to a local grocery store, it makes options really tough and small. What is accessible is what is on university campuses or given in university bucks, which are often unhealthy. With that being said, the options are not always what people may want to choose, it is what they have to choose. After speaking to Naval, the food support services coordinator with the UWO food bank, she explained that most complaints for the food bank at UWO from students were the lack of healthy food options. The lack of nutritional foods that are provided by food banks, such as the one at western, may be a factor of the high rate of food insecurity. Nutritional food has many benefits, such as higher brain functioning, staying full for longer, less sugar (less addictive) and improving wellbeing. Therefore, the lack of these foods could easily lead to further food insecurity by only having a low nutrition based diet. Additionally, she added that there was a huge lack of culturally diverse foods within the foodbank (Arshi, 2021).. This makes it even more difficult for international students to find options at the food bank that suit their needs and fit to their culture preferences.

Western's lack of recognition of food insecurity among its students gives reasons for an increase in food security for students as it fails to aid the given food services accessibility issues. Naval mentioned how Westerns need to make the food bank more accessible for its students. With the foodbank being located in the UCC, it may not be easy for students living on main gates, kings, brescia, etc. However, Western has been recently addressing this issue and is trying to expand food bank services, such as a version of the food bank through the north side of campus (Arshi, 2021).

Furthermore, the university forgets that their students are struggling altogether. Students that are food insecure face many health issues that impact not themselves but

also their capabilities to do well in school. Students tend to engage in cost-saving strategies in order to stretch their money for food, which means purchasing non nutrition options that can adversely impact health. A 2010 study at Brescia University in London, Ontario found that students often turned to processed convenience foods as a coping strategy for dealing with the high cost of whole foods (Garcia, Sykes, Matthews, Martin, & Leipert, 2010), suggesting that students have to make financial and health tradeoffs in order to cover for their financial expenses that are non-negotiable for university such as textbooks or tuition. Overall, UWO has tended to overlook this issue because the university forgets that although students may be able to afford tuition and housing, they can still be financially unstable and not have enough income to afford nutritional food. Nevertheless, although so many students struggle, Western University still sees food insecurity as an uncommon exception among its students. Therefore, we need the university's administrators to recognise just how prevalent this issue has become, in order to fully address the problem.

Conclusion

Going forward, it is imperative that more funding is allocated towards research efforts. In order to raise more awareness for such a widespread concern, there must be a sufficient amount of evidence that one can refer to. In particular, we contend that more research should focus on the root causes of food insecurity among university students. By identifying the origin of this problem, researchers and policymakers can undertake a more preventative approach. Today, most of the resources available for food insecure individuals function as temporary solutions. Although helpful, such resources will not always act as a solution for those who experience food insecurity on a chronic or seasonal basis. In this scenario, one must strive to deconstruct the

cyclical nature of food insecurity, which demands an understanding of the root causes that create this predicament. Once this is accomplished, the creation of a national survey targeted at food insecurity will help further identify who the most vulnerable students are, leading programs and policies to emphasize the needs of those most impacted by this issue. Ultimately, the problem of food insecurity among university students is a complex matter that deserves more attention. As Canada's labor market becomes increasingly specialized and more emphasis is placed on formal educational credentials, students are expected to focus on paying off student debt while sacrificing their physical and mental wellbeing.

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