

INTRODUCTION



The United Nations defines food security as: *“When all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.”*

The group became interested in the issue of food insecurity on campus after engaging with fellow students and (for some in the group) experiencing the life of a college student for the first time.

The issue is one that is more prevalent than many of us would be aware of, and most likely affects other college campuses in the same way.

OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this study were:

- ❖ To measure the awareness of food security on campus.
- ❖ To measure the perceptions of the issue of food security on campus.
- ❖ To measure knowledge of resources available to food insecure students.

The hypothesis of the study was that a relatively large percentage of Penn State students struggles with food insecurity, and that most Penn State students are unaware of issues of food security on campus and the resources available to combat it.



METHODOLOGY

An online survey was administered to approximately 200 participants, 165 responses were received.

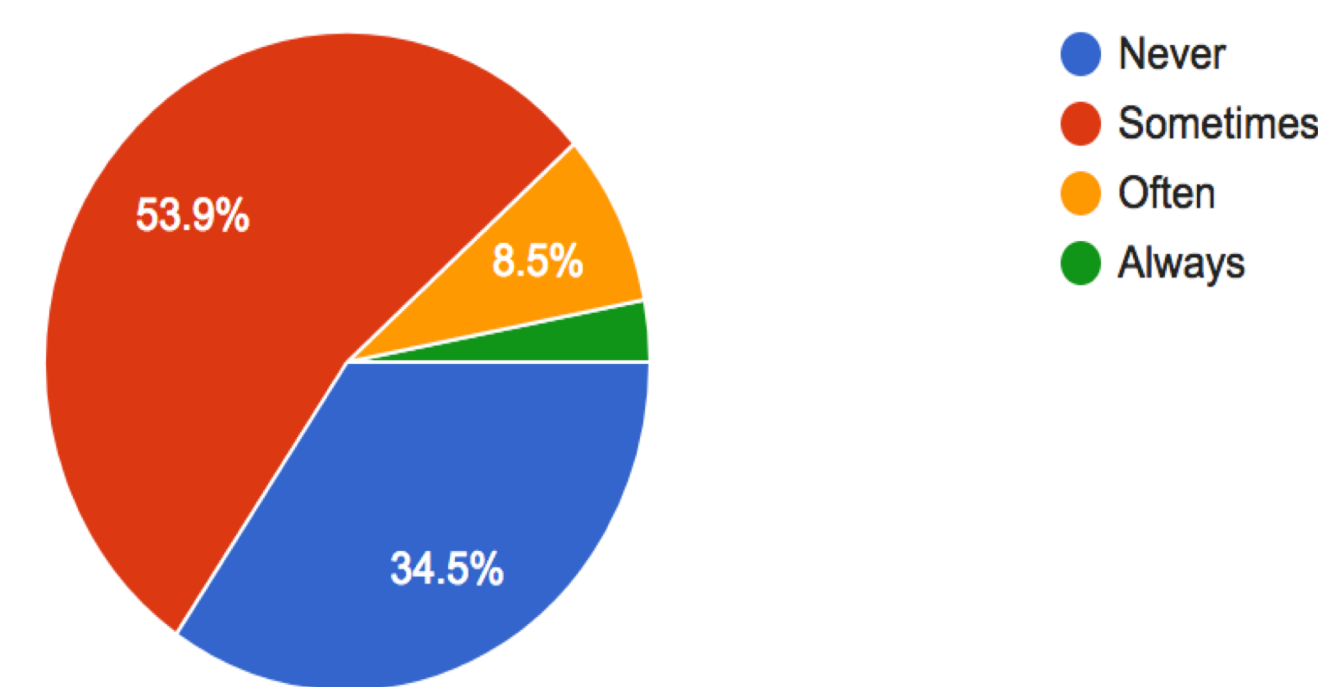
- ❖ Approximately 82.5% response rate
- ❖ Questions were framed using definitions of food insecurity from the UN and the December 2016 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (USDA)

ABSTRACT

A group of ten students at The Pennsylvania State University studied the issue of food insecurity on the Penn State campus. The research was conducted through a survey containing questions based on a past USDA survey, and other questions regarding what students knew of food resources on campus. Approximately 45% to 60% of students surveyed reported experiencing some form of food insecurity at some time while on campus. It was also found that many students are not aware of what resources there are on the Penn State campus to help those who are food insecure. These findings generate the conclusion that the Penn State campus (and likely other college campuses in Pennsylvania) suffers from a higher level of food insecurity than expected, and many are unaware of resources currently available to those that are food insecure. There can be much more done to raise awareness for this issue on the Penn State campus and attempt to aid efforts that are currently ongoing to reduce this problem.

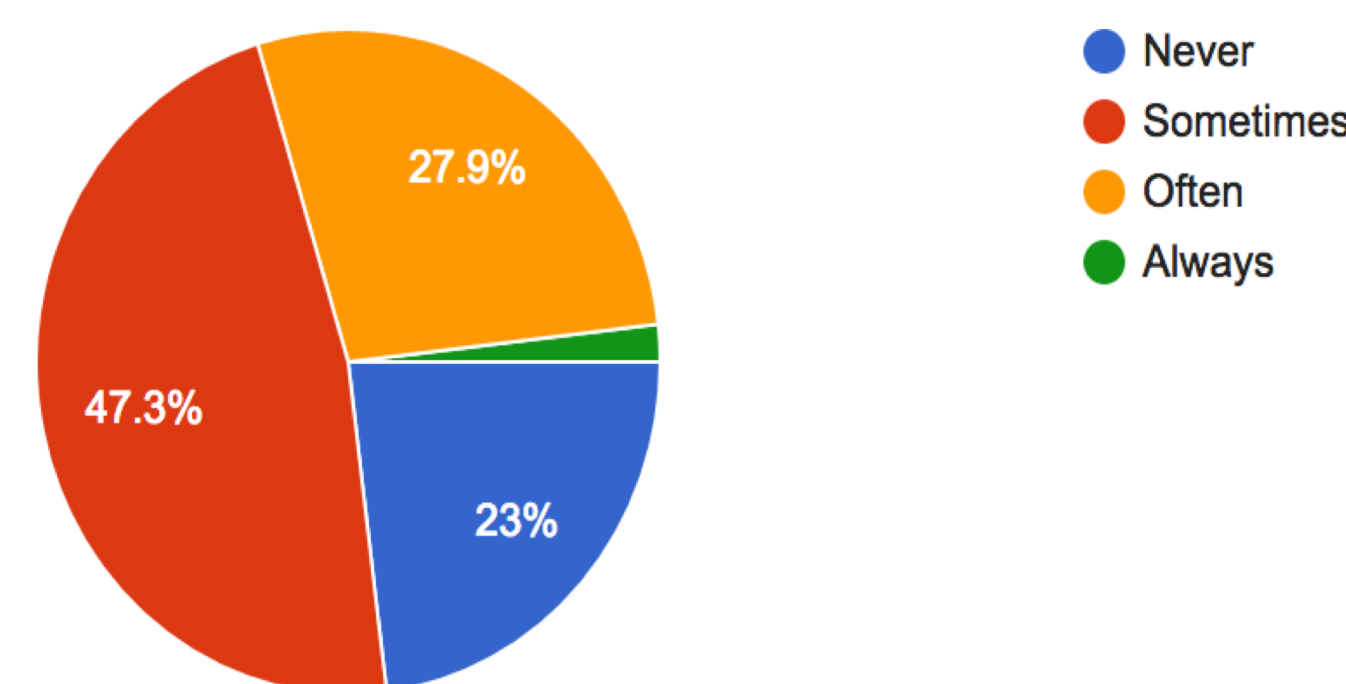
How often do you, or someone you know, not have access to nutritious food?

165 responses



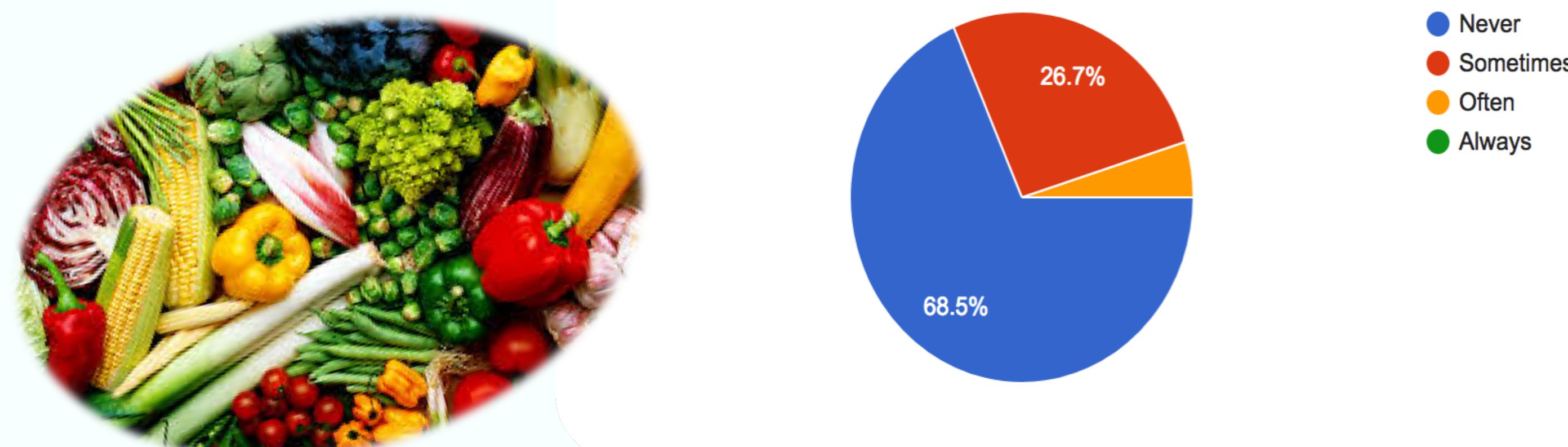
How often have you chosen to avoid nutritionally valuable foods and instead eaten more processed and less balanced food because of affordability?

165 responses



How often have you cut the size of your food or skipped a meal because you were unable to buy necessary food products in the last three months?

165 responses



DISCUSSION

We have determined from our sample that 45.1% to 60.3% of Penn State students have experienced some form of food insecurity. We have hypothesized that on campus, financial means are the primary contributor to this issue.

- ❖ Many cannot afford to buy fresh food
 - ❖ must resort to eating cheaper, more processed, less nutritious meals instead
- ❖ Campus meal plans range in cost from \$1,986 to \$2,550 for a full academic year
- ❖ Combined with cost of tuition and other expenses, amount can be too much.
- ❖ These students are classified as food insecure
- ❖ Portion of students that simply skip meals or reduce their portions in the name of affordability also experience food insecurity,
 - ❖ Potentially leads to nutrition deficiencies



IMPLICATIONS

With the findings of this study, we believe that:

- ❖ We must recognize that this issue is not isolated
 - ❖ Widely experienced
 - ❖ Must work to reverse the negative stigma surrounding this problem
 - ❖ Take action to help ourselves and others
- ❖ We have resources on campus to mitigate food insecurity
 - ❖ The Lion's pantry
 - ❖ State College Food
 - ❖ Students can freely access to get food, should they not have the financial means to buy it from a grocery store

Overall, the Penn state community needs to actively utilize the resources that are available



About Youth as Researchers

- ❖ UNESCO initiative, partnering with Penn State
- ❖ Project was entirely student-led
 - ❖ Minimal advising by advisors listed above
- ❖ No funding received
- ❖ Empowered to study whatever we desired to study