



Urban &  
Environmental  
Policy Institute  
OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE

---

# Food Insecurity Among University of California Employees

---

## 2016

Peter Dreier  
Megan Bomba  
Rosa Romero

October 2016

## Table of Contents

<b>FIGURES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>DATA ANALYSIS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>WHAT FOOD SECURITY MEANS</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>HOW FOOD SECURITY IS MEASURED</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY: HOW UC CLERICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND SUPPORT EMPLOYEE DATA WAS COLLECTED</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>WHO WAS SURVEYED</b>	<b>10</b>
WORK LOCATION OF UC EMPLOYEE POPULATION AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS	10
GENDER OF UC EMPLOYEE POPULATION AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS	11
RACE AND ETHNICITY OF UC EMPLOYEE POPULATION AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS	11
WORK STATUS OF UC EMPLOYEE POPULATION AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS	11
<b>FULL REPORT</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA STUDENT FOOD ACCESS AND SECURITY STUDY</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>ABOUT THE CLERICAL AND ALLIED SERVICES UNIT</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>UC EMPLOYEE POPULATION SURVEY RESULTS</b>	<b>14</b>
COMPARING FOOD SECURITY STATUS OF UC EMPLOYEES WITH UC STUDENTS AND U.S. HOUSEHOLDS	15
GENDER AND FOOD SECURITY	17
HOUSEHOLD TYPE AND FOOD SECURITY	19
RACE/ETHNICITY AND FOOD SECURITY	20
YEARS OF SERVICE AND FOOD SECURITY	22
<b>CONSEQUENCES FOR FOOD INSECURE MEMBERS AMONG UC EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>APPENDIX: SELECT OPEN-ENDED SURVEY COMMENTS</b>	<b>28</b>

# Figures

- FIGURE 1 - FOOD SECURITY CONTINUUM ..... 8
- FIGURE 2 - USDA’S SIX-ITEM FOOD SECURITY MODULE..... 9
- FIGURE 3 - WORK LOCATION OF UC EMPLOYEE POPULATION AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS ..... 10
- FIGURE 4 - GENDER OF UC EMPLOYEE POPULATION AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS..... 11
- FIGURE 5 - RACE AND ETHNICITY OF UC EMPLOYEE POPULATION AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS..... 11
- FIGURE 6 - WORK STATUS OF UC EMPLOYEE POPULATION AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS ..... 11
- FIGURE 7 - FOOD SECURITY OF UC EMPLOYEE POPULATION ..... 15
- FIGURE 8 - LEVELS OF FOOD INSECURITY OF UC EMPLOYEES, UC STUDENTS, AND U.S. HOUSEHOLDS..... 16
- FIGURE 9 - FOOD INSECURITY AND GENDER OF UC EMPLOYEES ..... 17
- FIGURE 10 - FOOD INSECURITY AMONG SINGLE HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT CHILDREN, BY GENDER AMONG UC EMPLOYEES, UC STUDENTS AND U.S. HOUSEHOLDS..... 18
- FIGURE 11 - LEVELS OF FOOD INSECURITY AMONG UC EMPLOYEES, BY TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD..... 19
- FIGURE 12 - RACE/ETHNICITY AND FOOD INSECURITY OF UC EMPLOYEES..... 20
- FIGURE 13 - RACE, ETHNICITY, AND FOOD INSECURITY AMONG UC EMPLOYEES, UC STUDENTS, AND U.S. HOUSEHOLDS ..... 21
- FIGURE 14 - YEARS OF SERVICE AND FOOD INSECURITY AMONG UC EMPLOYEES..... 22
- FIGURE 15 - FOOD INSECURE SURVEY QUESTIONS ABOUT CONSEQUENCES ..... 23
- FIGURE 16 - FOOD INSECURE UC EMPLOYEES AND DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING AT WORK..... 23
- FIGURE 17 - FOOD INSECURE UC EMPLOYEES AND ASKING FOR HELP ..... 24
- FIGURE 18 - FOOD INSECURE UC EMPLOYEES WHO REPORTED CHOOSING BETWEEN BUYING FOOD AND OTHER NECESSITIES ..... 25

## Executive Summary

The University of California (UC) is the third largest employer in the State of California. It comprises ten campuses, five medical centers, and three national laboratories, all of which are anchor institutions in their respective communities. The entire UC system employs a total of 209,000 employees across the State — nearly 14,000 of whom are clerical, administrative, and support workers.

In July of this year, the University of California’s Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources’ Nutritional Policy Institute published the results of a Student Food Access and Security Study it conducted of UC students. The survey found that 19 percent of student respondents indicated “very low” food security, while an additional 23 percent reported having “low” food security.

Subsequently, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 2010, in conjunction with Occidental College’s Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, conducted a survey in September 2016 of UC’s clerical, administrative, and support employees to investigate the extent of food insecurity experienced by these workers. Similar to the study of UC students, the questions were based on the Six-Item Food Security Survey Module developed by researchers at the National Center for Health Statistics of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Unless otherwise noted, this report refers to these survey respondents as “UC employees.”

The survey was sent to 13,661 UC clerical, administrative, and support employees. More than twenty-one (21) percent of those surveyed – or 2,890 employees – responded to the survey over a two-week period. This represents an exceptionally high response rate, particularly over such a short period of time. In contrast, UC’s survey of students had a 13.5 percent response rate. Moreover, the characteristics of the employee respondents – with respect to gender, ethnicity, years of service, and campus location – largely mirror the characteristics of this UC employee population. Some key characteristics of the respondents include the following:

- 81 percent were women and 63 percent were people of color
- 73 percent report being the primary income earners in their households
- 96 percent reported working full-time (more than 30 hours per week)
- 58 percent of employees have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 38 percent did so at a UC campus
- The UC employee median wage was reported to be \$22.65 per hour

## Key Findings

- More than two-thirds (70 percent) of UC’s clerical, administrative, and support workers struggle to put adequate food on the table, which is considered *food insecure* according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture definition.

- One quarter (25 percent) of UC employees have “*low food security*” – defined as food insecurity without hunger or reduced food intake but with reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet.
- Another 45 percent of UC employees have “*very low food security*” – defined as food insecurity with hunger from skipping meals or reduced food intake due to a lack of resources.
- The findings stand in contrast to other populations. The level of food insecurity among these UC employees is one and a half times higher than the level of food insecurity among UC students, and is more than five times higher than that of California residents and among the nation as a whole.

Table 1 - Level of Food Security for Various Populations

Population	“Very Low Food Security”	“Low Food Security”	Total Food Insecurity
UC Employees	45%	25%	70%
UC Students	19%	23%	42%
California <sup>1</sup> (2013-15 Average)	4.5%	8.1%	12.6%
U.S. Households <sup>2</sup>	5.0%	7.7%	12.7%

- It’s worth noting that a number of subgroups of these UC employees had higher levels of food insecurity than the entire group. These subgroups are:
  - Employees with children (77.9 percent)
  - Employees with children headed by a single woman (88.8 percent) or a single man (91.7 percent)
  - Employees headed by Black/Afro-Americans (not of Hispanic origin) (83.3 percent) and Mexican/Mexican-American/Chicanos (80.7 percent)
  - Employees who work full-time (70.7 percent)

Food insecurity is experienced in much the same way across cultures, according to research findings. In its mildest form, individuals with food insecurity worry or experience anxiety over being able to acquire enough food for their households. In its most severe form, individuals with food insecurity restrict their actual food intake because they lack sufficient food resources. Persistent food insecurity can lead to hunger, undernutrition, and serious health consequences.

---

<sup>1</sup>Household Food Security in the United States in 2015, ERR-215, Washington, D.C.: Economic Research Service/USDA, September 2016.

<sup>2</sup>Household Food Security in the United States in 2015, ERR-215, Washington, D.C.: Economic Research Service/USDA, September 2016.

The survey of UC employees reveals these realities. Over the past 12 months, the food-insecure UC workers reported having to make difficult decisions and to sacrifice food to pay for necessities. Eighty (80) percent stated they had to choose between buying food and paying for their rent or utilities. One out of four faced that decision every month.

Further, food insecurity can lead to negative physiological consequences and can result in poor performance at the workplace. Sixty-nine (69) percent of food insecure employees reported having difficulty concentrating at work at least once during the year. Fourteen and two (14.2) percent reported having that experience every month.

## Data Analysis

Teamsters Local 2010, in conjunction with Occidental College's Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, conducted the survey over the course of two weeks in September 2016 to investigate the extent of food insecurity among the University of California's clerical, administrative, and support employees. This survey utilized the standard six-item module of questions developed by researchers at the National Center for Health Statistics of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).<sup>3</sup> Three researchers from Occidental College analyzed the survey results and wrote this report.

### What Food Security Means

The USDA has conducted annual surveys of the general U.S. population using its indicators of food security and food insecurity for over 20 years.<sup>4</sup>

Food security, in the context of this study and others like it, refers to all members of a household having access to enough food at all times in order to live an active and healthy life.<sup>5</sup> Households with food insecurity lack access to adequate food based on financial and other resources over a period of time – typically 12 months.

See the footnote below for a detailed description of the different levels of food security, per the USDA's Short Primer on Terminology.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> The U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module: Six-Item Short Form Economic Research Service, USDA can be found on their website: [http://www.ers.usda.gov/datafiles/Food Security in the United States/Food Security Survey Modules/short2012.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/datafiles/Food%20Security%20in%20the%20United%20States/Food%20Security%20Survey%20Modules/short2012.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The USDA's annual report on Household Food Security in the United States. The latest edition, covering 2015, can be found on their website: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/2137663/err215.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> *An Introduction to the Basic Concepts of Food Security*. FAO Food Security Programme. 2008.

#### <sup>6</sup> A Short Primer on Terminology

**Food-secure** households have consistent access throughout the year to adequate food for active healthy living for all household members.

**Food-insecure** households, at some time during the year, lack that access. These are households with **low food security** or **very low food security**.

**Households with low food security** make up the majority of food-insecure households. These households manage to get enough to eat, but reduce the quality, variety, or desirability of their meals to do so. Members of these households are at elevated risk for a number of problematic health and developmental conditions, but because they do not substantially reduce the amount of food they eat, they are not likely to suffer from hunger in the sense of the uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food.

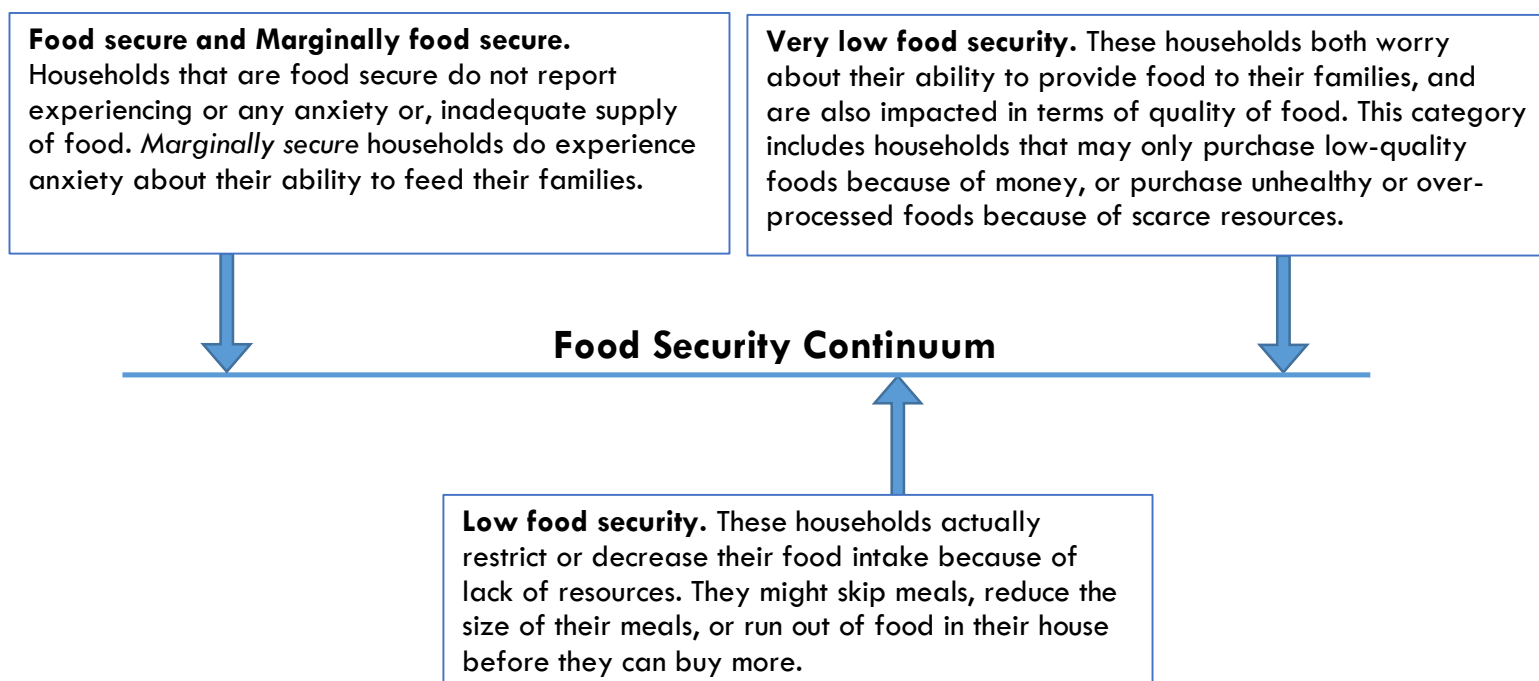
**Households with very low food security**—the more severe condition—make up slightly over one-third of food-insecure households. In these households, at least some members (usually only adults) reduce the amount of food they eat below usual levels and below the amount they consider appropriate. In most of these households, the adult respondent reports that in the past 12 months he or she was hungry and did not eat because there wasn't enough money for food. If these conditions extended to children along with adults, the household is classified as having very low food security among children, the most severe range of food insecurity reported by USDA.

## How Food Security is Measured

Food insecurity is experienced in much the same way across cultures, according to research findings. In mildest form, individuals with food insecurity worry or experience anxiety over being able to acquire enough food for their households. In its most severe form, individuals with food insecurity restrict their actual food intake because they lack sufficient food resources. Persistent or prolonged food insecurity can lead to hunger, undernutrition, and other serious health consequences. Further a population with high levels of food insecurity indicates higher risks of health and developmental problems among children.<sup>7</sup>

The U.S. Household Food Security Module is the most accepted measure of food security and was used for this study. The questions in the module are based on universal responses to food insecurity, and take the survey respondent through questions assessing increasing severity of food insecurity.<sup>8</sup> The questions indicate what level of food security a respondent is experiencing, which are categorized as: Food secure and Marginal food security, Low food security, and Very low food security.

Figure 1 - Food Security Continuum



<sup>7</sup> *Food Insecurity in Households with Children*. USDA Economic Research Service. 2009.

<sup>8</sup> *Guide To Measuring Household Food Security*. Gary Bickel, M. N. *United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service*. 2000.



Food security is assessed nationwide by using variations of a standardized survey instrument developed by the USDA. This study utilized the 6-question short form version of the survey, in which survey respondents are asked to answer the questions as they pertain to the previous 12 months.

Figure 2 - USDA's Six-Item Food Security Module

<b>USDA's Six-Item Food Security Module</b>	
1.	"The food that (I/we) bought just didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?
2.	"(I/we) couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?
3.	In the last 12 months, since last (name of current month), did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
4.	[IF YES ABOVE, ASK] How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?
5.	In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?
6.	In the last 12 months, were you every hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?

To evaluate a household's level of food security or insecurity, the sum of affirmative responses is used to generate a raw score, with a range of 0 to 6.

- Households that respond affirmatively to none or one of the questions are classified as "food secure."
- Households that respond affirmatively to two, three, or four of the questions are classified as having "low food security." This is characterized by reduced quality, variety or desirability of the diet.
- Households that respond affirmatively to five or six questions are classified as having "very low food security." This condition is characterized by disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

### Methodology: How UC Clerical, Administrative, and Support Employee Data was Collected

Over a two-week period in September 2016, 13,661 University of California clerical, administrative, and support employees across the system's ten campuses, five medical centers, and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory were invited to participate in the survey. This employee group works in the UC system's medical centers, academic departments, libraries, financial aid offices, bookstores, clinics, and laboratories.

A total of 2,890 employees completed the survey – a response rate of 21.2 percent. In contrast, the University of California’s student survey, administered as part of the National College Health Assessment II (NCHA) survey, achieved a 13.5 percent response rate. The typical NCHA response rate is between 10 percent and 35 percent. Participation in the UC employee survey was voluntary and all respondents gave consent to participate in the anonymous online study.

As described above, the survey included the six-item short form of the U.S. household food security survey module developed by researchers at the National Center for Health Statistics of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

At the conclusion of the survey, a final optional question was posed, “Is there any additional information, or experiences you would like to anonymously share with Teamsters Local 2010 regarding cost of living, pay, and food security?” Included as an appendix are select comments shared by respondents of UC employee survey.

### Who Was Surveyed

The characteristics of the respondents mirror the characteristics of UC system employee population in terms of work location, gender, race and ethnicity, and years of service.

## Work Location of UC Employee Population and Survey Respondents

Figure 3 - Work Location of UC Employee Population and Survey Respondents

Work Location	UC Employee Population <sup>9</sup>	Survey Respondents
<b>Berkeley</b>	9.1%	9.0%
<b>Davis (Campus &amp; Medical Center)</b>	13.0%	17.0%
<b>Irvine (Campus &amp; Medical Center)</b>	7.9%	6.8%
<b>LBNL</b>	1.0%	0.8%
<b>Los Angeles (Campus, Medical Center &amp; OP)</b>	28.1%	22.5%
<b>Merced</b>	1.0%	1.5%
<b>Riverside</b>	3.5%	3.8%
<b>San Diego (Campus &amp; Medical Center)</b>	13.2%	11.7%
<b>San Francisco (Campus &amp; Medical Center)</b>	15.7%	17.8%
<b>Santa Barbara</b>	4.7%	4.6%
<b>Santa Cruz</b>	2.9%	4.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0%	100.0%

<sup>9</sup> “UC Employee Population” refers to the 13,661 employees in the Clerical and Allied Service Bargaining Unit exclusively represented by Teamsters Local 2010.

Percentages may not add to 100%, due to rounding.

## Gender of UC Employee Population and Survey Respondents

Figure 4 - Gender of UC Employee Population and Survey Respondents

Gender Identity	UC Employee Population	Survey Respondents
<b>Female</b>	81.0%	81.5%
<b>Male</b>	19.0%	17.8%
<b>Non-Binary Gender</b>	n/a	0.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0%	100.0%

## Race and Ethnicity of UC Employee Population and Survey Respondents

Figure 5 - Race and Ethnicity of UC Employee Population and Survey Respondents

Race and Ethnicity	UC Employee Population	Survey Respondents
<b>American Indian/Alaskan Native</b>	0.8%	0.9%
<b>Asian/Asian American (Chinese, Japanese, other origin)</b>	12.6%	8.9%
<b>Black/Afro-American (not of Hispanic origin)</b>	12.3%	13.3%
<b>Filipino/Pilipino</b>	7.1%	5.5%
<b>Latin American/Latino</b>	6.1%	9.9%
<b>Mexican/Mexican-American/Chicano</b>	18.0%	16.9%
<b>Other/ Unknown</b>	5.8%	6.9%
<b>White (not of Hispanic origin)</b>	37.4%	37.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0%	100.0%

## Work Status of UC Employee Population and Survey Respondents

Figure 6 - Work Status of UC Employee Population and Survey Respondents

Status	UC Employee Population	Survey Respondents
<b>Full-time</b>	85.7%	96.2%
<b>Part-time</b>	14.3%	3.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	100.0%	100.0%

# Full Report

## Introduction

Food security describes a situation in which individuals, families, communities, or nations have adequate food resources. The globally accepted definition of food security was developed at the 1996 World Food Summit to measure whether “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”<sup>10</sup> Food security can be assessed at the societal level, the community level, or at the individual or household level. At the household level, it measures the ability of heads of households to provide food for their families.

Rates of food security are important as both economic and health indicators. The presence of food insecurity in a population provides a meaningful picture of the impacts of poverty. It also reveals how outside factors, such as the cost of living, can impact family health. In fact, measures of food security supplement such indicators as measures of poverty or income in helping us understand the consequences of poverty and relatively low incomes. Food security paints a picture of the quality of life, rather than numerical comparisons to poverty lines or median income.

Food insecurity— is the lack of access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food necessary to lead a healthy life.

In the context of the United States— a prosperous country with overall food surplus— factors affecting food security largely involve household incomes and the competing costs of necessities such as housing and health care. Even in California, a relatively prosperous state with a large and steady food supply, food insecurity remains a serious problem, in part because of the gap between household incomes and the incomes needed to make ends meet.

- Nationally, 1 in 6 adults (15.4 percent) and 1 in 5 (20.9 percent) children experience food insecurity.<sup>11</sup>
- In California, 14 percent of the population is considered food insecure—about 5.4 million people.<sup>12</sup>
- Of the 10 counties in the U.S. with the highest number of food insecure individuals, two —Los Angeles County and San Diego County— are located in California.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> *An Introduction to the Basic Concepts of Food Security*. FAO Food Security Programme. 2008.

<sup>11</sup> *Map the Meal Gap 2015*. Feeding America. Chicago. 2015.

<sup>12</sup> *Map the Meal Gap 2016*. Feeding America. Chicago. 2016.

<sup>13</sup> *Map the Meal Gap 2015*. Feeding America. Chicago. 2015.

## About the University of California

The University of California is the largest public university system in the United States. The UC system consists of ten campuses, five medical centers, three National laboratories, and numerous health clinics and educational auxiliary sites. In addition to other funding streams, this public institution receives over \$3 billion in taxpayer support from the State of California. During the 2015-16 academic year, the UC system enrolled over 250,000 students. Given its magnitude and reach, the University of California's impact on the state economy, and on particular regions within the state, cannot be understated. It is the third largest employer, directly employing over 209,000 workers. Its economic footprint contributes \$32.8 billion to the gross state product, overall supporting 1 in 46 jobs in California.<sup>14</sup>

## University of California Student Food Access and Security Study

Following the launch of the UC's Global Food Initiative in 2014, the University of California's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources' Nutritional Policy Institute conducted a study to investigate and understand the issue of food insecurity among its students. The results of the survey were released in the report, "Student Food Access and Security Study," in July of 2016. The study found that the level of food insecurity among UC students is much higher than many people would have suspected – three times that of U.S. households.

Among the nearly 9,000 surveyed students, 42 percent of UC students were characterized as food insecure; 19 percent of the food-insecure respondents reported going hungry at times, and the remaining 23 percent responded they were able to eat but lacked steady access to a quality, varied, and nutritious diet.<sup>15</sup>

The survey found food insecurity had an impact on student academic outcomes:

- Nearly one-third (29 percent) of those in need said they had difficulty studying because of hunger and no money for food.
- About one-fourth (25 percent) said they had to choose between paying for food or educational and housing expenses.
- Students without consistent access to quality food reported lower GPAs, averaging a 3.1 GPA compared to 3.4 for students without such problems.

In response to the report's findings, University of California President Janet Napolitano approved \$3.3 million in funding to increase students' access to nutritious food. "Food security is a critical issue not only on college campuses, but throughout our country and the world," Napolitano said. "We undertook this survey, and are acting on its findings, because the University is serious about addressing real, long-term solutions to improve the well-being of our students."<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> *The University of California at a Glance*. University of California. October 2016.

<sup>15</sup> *Student Food Access and Security*. Nutritional Policy Institute, University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. University of California. 2016.

<sup>16</sup> *UC commits \$3.3 million to tackle food access issues*. Press Room. University of California, Office of the President. July 11, 2016

## About the Clerical and Allied Services Unit

The nearly 14,000 UC clerical, administrative, and support employees are exclusively represented by Local 2010 of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. These women and men, who make up the University's Clerical and Allied Services (CX) Unit, are responsible for a wide variety of tasks. They work in virtually every department and facility across the University of California system providing essential services that support the university's mission of teaching, research, and public service.<sup>17</sup>

In 2010, these employees voted to affiliate with International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Following almost four years without a contract or a wage increases, Local 2010 ratified its first agreement in 2011.

Today, the Clerical and Allied Services Unit's membership is comprised of 81 percent women, and almost 63 percent are people of color.<sup>18</sup> The lowest starting salary for Unit employees is \$15.39 an hour,<sup>19</sup> or an annual salary of \$32,134 for full-time employees. The average (mean) salary for full-time Unit employees is \$22.70 an hour, or \$47,398 per year. The median salary for full-time Unit employees is \$22.31 an hour, or \$46,583 per year.<sup>20</sup>

The employees are administrative assistants, collection representatives, childcare assistants, emergency dispatchers, and library assistants who provide critical support throughout the UC's campuses, medical centers, academic departments, libraries, financial aid offices, bookstores, clinics, and laboratories. Comprising 6.7 percent of all UC employees, these workers play a vital role in income-generating and mission critical enterprises such as student housing, food service operations, patient billing, and parking.

## UC Employee Population Survey Results

More than 21 percent—or 2,890 UC clerical, administrative, and support employees—responded to the food security survey. The characteristics of the survey respondents mirror those of the UC employee population.

Results of the food security survey of UC's clerical, administrative, and support employees show that more than two-thirds (70 percent) are unable to put adequate food on the table, which is considered food-insecure as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is more than one and a half times the food insecurity of UC students, and more than five times that of U.S. households.

---

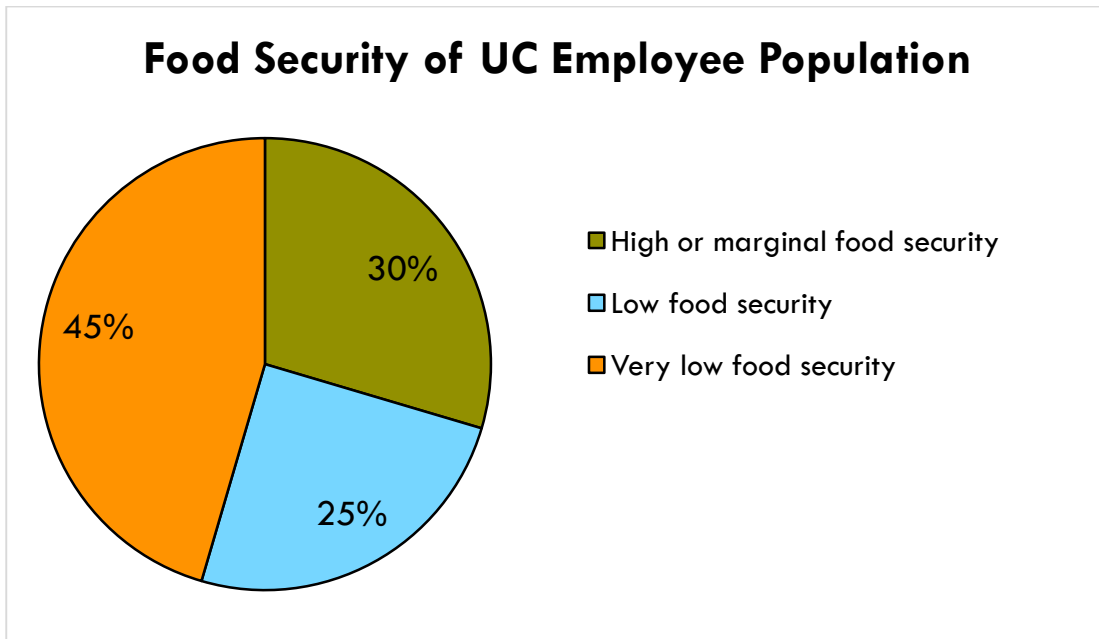
<sup>17</sup> *Clerical & Allies Services Unit*. University of California. UCnet. 2016.

<sup>18</sup> *CX Unit Aggregate Data by Location Gender & Ethnicity*. Corporate Personnel System. University of California. March 2014.

<sup>19</sup> *Article 45 - Wages*. Contract between the University of California and Teamsters Local 2010. UCnet. 2011.

<sup>20</sup> *Union Roster File –770 CX-Unit Dataset*. Corporate Personnel System. University of California, Office of the President. January 2016.

Figure 7 - Food Security of UC Employee Population



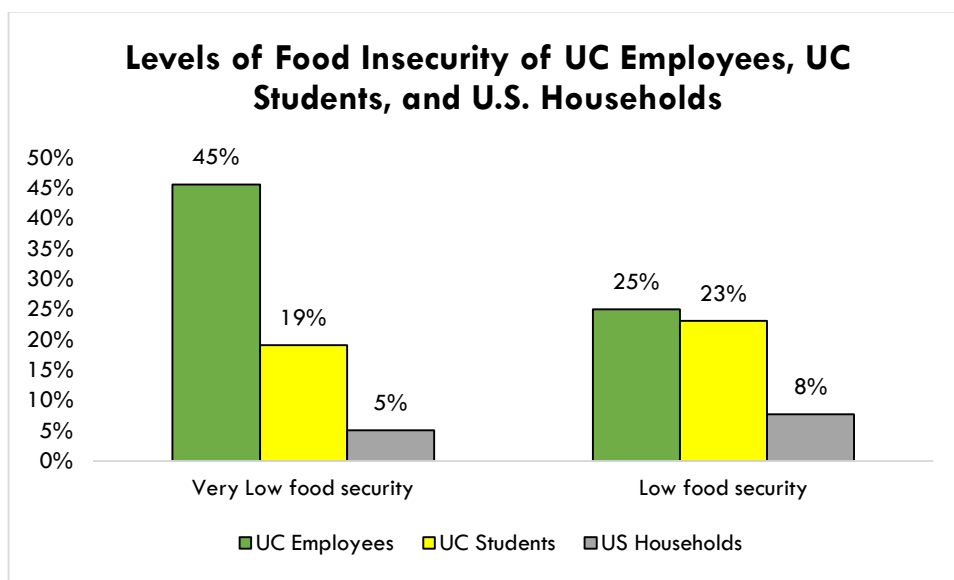
Twenty-five (25) percent of UC’s clerical, administrative, and support employee households were identified as having “low food security.” This is defined as food insecurity without hunger, or reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet, but little or no indication of reduced food intake.

Another forty-five (45) percent of UC’s clerical, administrative, and support employee households were found to have “very low food security,” defined as food insecurity with hunger, or disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

### **Comparing Food Security Status of UC Employees with UC Students and U.S. Households**

In 2015, the USDA estimated that one out of every eight (12.7 percent) U.S. households were food insecure. Earlier this year, the University of California found that two out of every five students (42 percent) were food insecure at least some time in the past year. In contrast to UC students, 70 percent of UC’s clerical, administrative, and support employee households were found to be food-insecure in the last 12 months—more than two times higher. Further, food insecurity for UC employees was more than five times greater than that of U.S. households.

Figure 8 - Levels of Food Insecurity of UC Employees, UC Students, and U.S. Households



### Food Insecurity

Households that are either uncertain about having or unable to acquire enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money, or other resources for food, are defined as food insecure. The umbrella term “food insecure households” include both those with “low food security” and “very low food security.”

- 12.7 percent of U.S. households were food insecure at some time during 2015.
- 42 percent of UC Students were food insecure at some time in the past year.
- 70 percent of UC clerical, administrative, and support workers were food insecure at some time in the past year.

### Low Food Security

Households with low food security avoided substantially disrupting their eating patterns or reducing food intake by using a variety of coping strategies, such as eating less varied diets, participating in Federal food assistance programs, or getting emergency food from community food pantries.

- 7.7 percent of U.S. households experienced low food security in 2015.
- 23 percent of UC Students experienced low food security at some time in the past year.
- 25 percent of UC clerical, administrative, and support workers experienced low food security at some time in the past year.



### Very Low Food Security

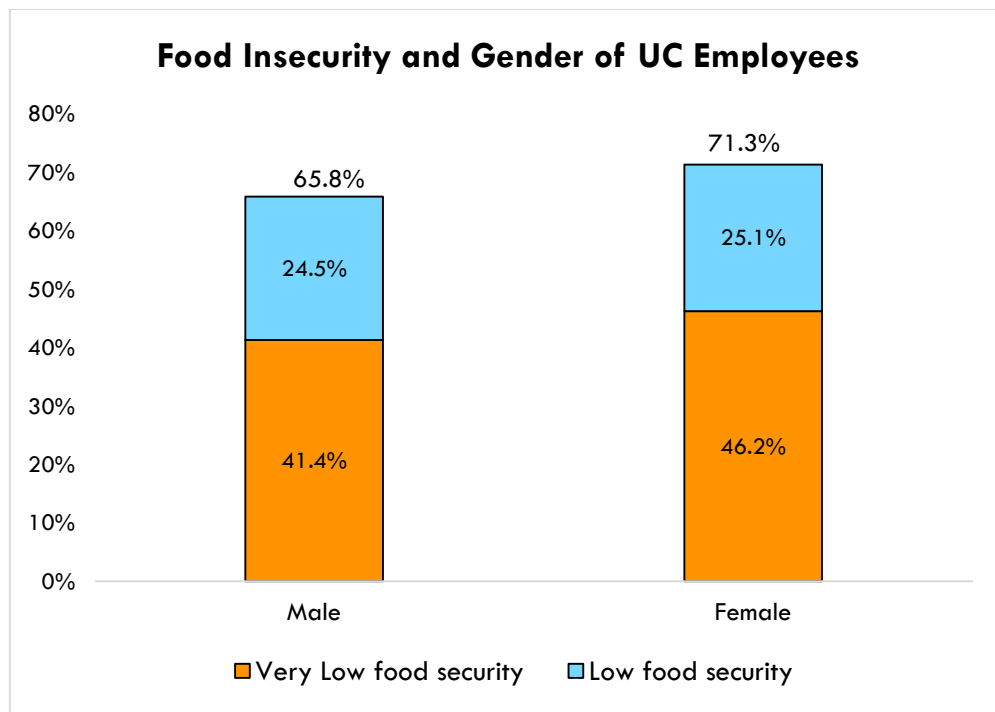
These food-insecure households include the most-severely affected employee population. Their behaviors and experiences include those described above in the “Low Food Security” section; normal eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake was reduced at times during the year because they had insufficient money or other resources for food.

- 5.0 percent of U.S. households experienced very low food security at some time during 2015.
- 19 percent of UC Students experienced very low food security at some time in the past year.
- 45 percent of UC clerical, administrative, and support workers experienced very low food security at some time in the past year.

### Gender and Food Security

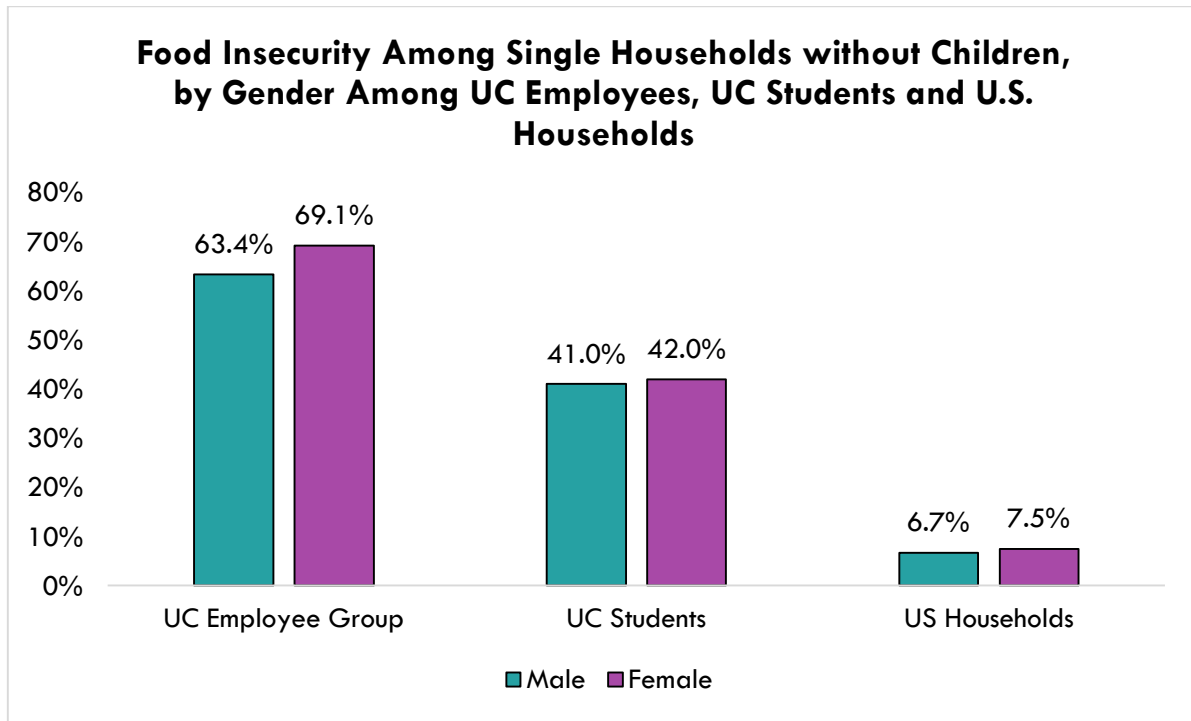
Among UC employees, women have higher rates of both “low” and “very low” food security than men. Seventy-one (71) percent of female respondents among UC employees reported experiencing food insecurity, compared to 66 percent of male employees.

Figure 9 - Food Insecurity and Gender of UC Employees



Sixty-nine (69) percent of female UC employee respondents who live alone and without children experienced food insecurity, compared to 63 percent of men. This finding stands out in contrast to the results from the UC Student survey and the U.S. household survey where there is little difference in food insecurity between women and men. Among UC students, 42 percent of females and 41 percent of males reported “low” or “very low” food security.<sup>21</sup> As for U.S. households, the 2015 survey found that 7.5 percent of women and 6.7 percent of men reported “low” or “very low” food security.

Figure 10 - Food Insecurity Among Single Households without Children, by Gender Among UC Employees, UC Students and U.S. Households

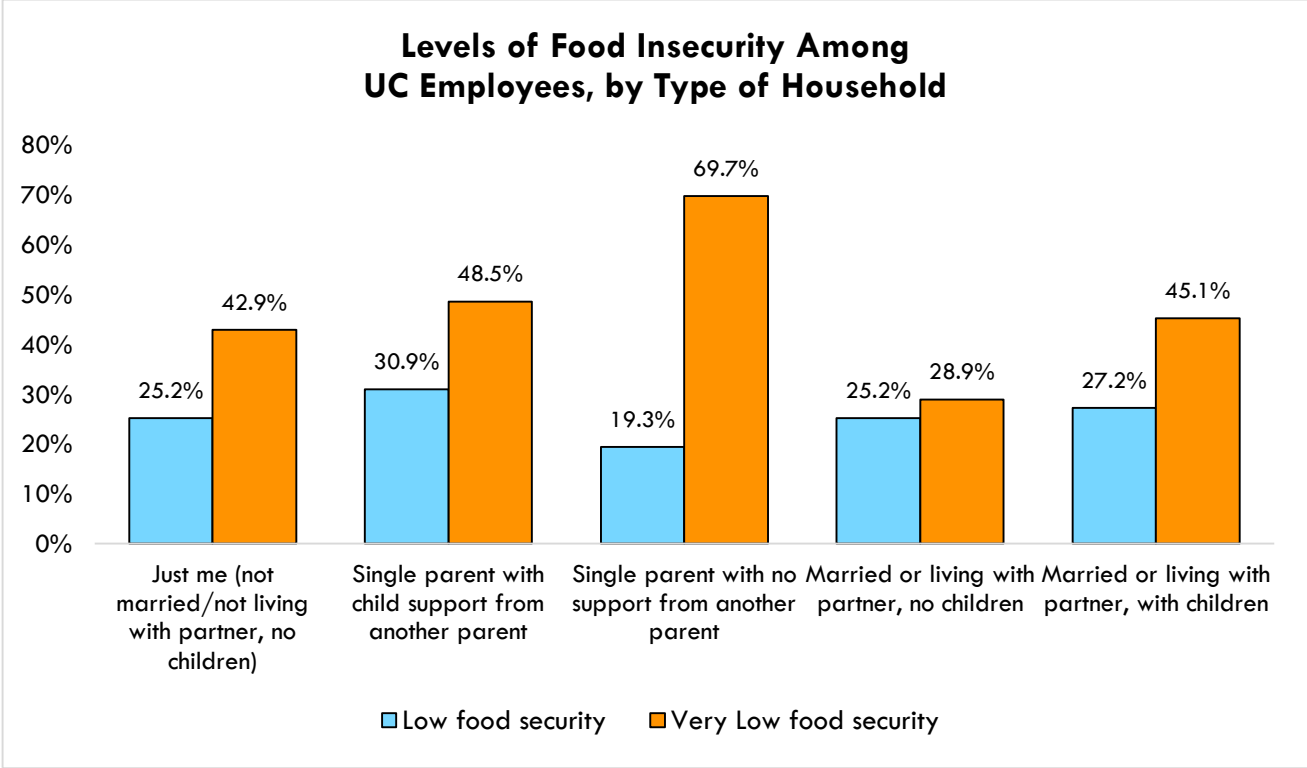


<sup>21</sup> *Student Food Access and Security*. Nutritional Policy Institute, University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. University of California. 2016.

## Household Type and Food Security

The food security profiles of UC employees reflect the greater financial burden faced by single parent households. Food insecurity is widespread across all UC employees but it is particularly high at 89 percent among single parents who do not receive any child support from the other parents. Among UC employees who are married or living with a partner and have no children, 54 percent experienced food insecurity. While there is a considerable delta between the two bounds, it is still important to note that even the most food secure CX-Unit household composition is still four times greater “food insecure” than the US average, and 12 percent more food insecure than UC students.

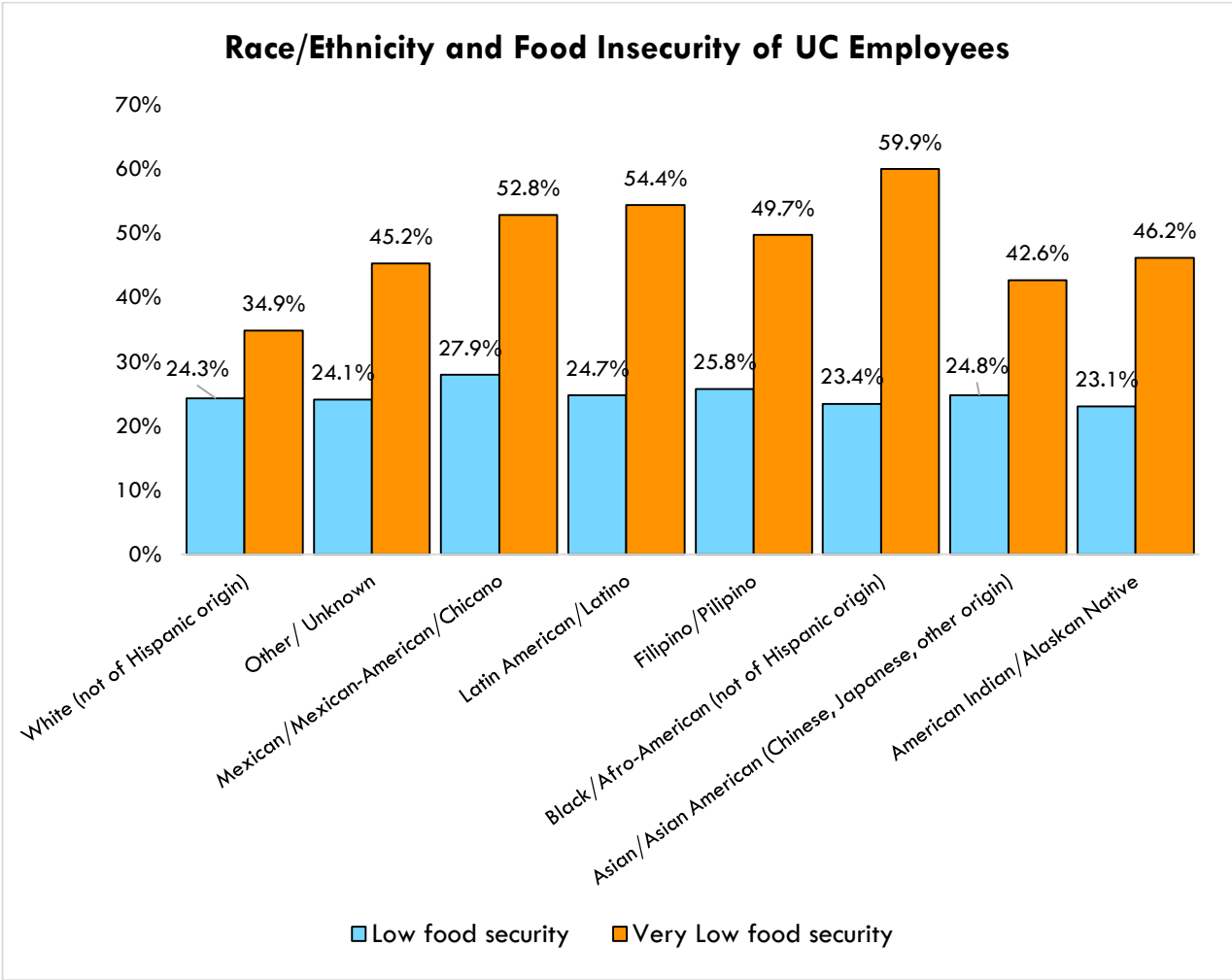
Figure 11 - Levels of Food Insecurity Among UC Employees, by Type of Household



## Race/Ethnicity and Food Security

When looking closer at the relationship between the ethnic identity and food insecurity of UC employee households, we can see trends emerge. Four ethnic groups—White (59.2 percent), Asian (67.4 percent), American Indian (69.2 percent), and Other/Unknown (69.3 percent) —are less food-insecure than the average UC employee population. The four groups that suffer a higher incidence of food insecurity are Black (83.3 percent), Mexican (80.7 percent), Latin American (79.1 percent), and Filipino (75.5 percent).

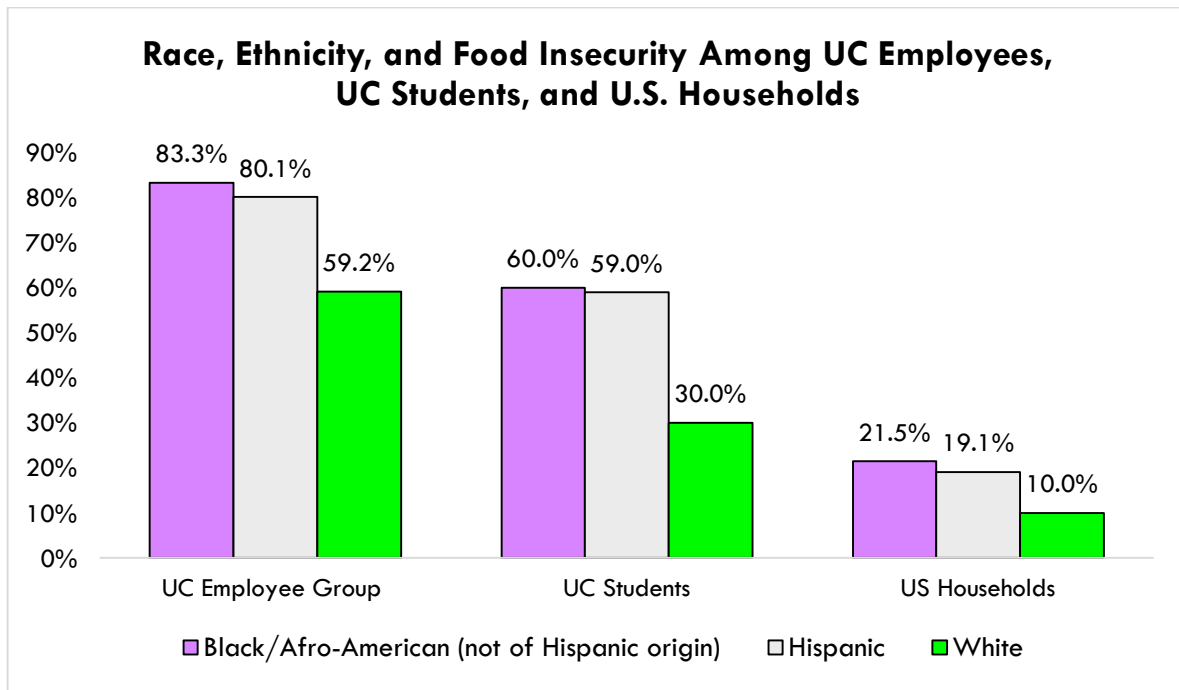
Figure 12 - Race/Ethnicity and Food Insecurity of UC Employees



To compare the relationship of race/ethnic identity and food insecurity among UC employees, UC students, and U.S. households, we collapsed two separate groups, “Mexican/Mexican-American/Chicanos,” and “Latin American/Latinos,” to “Hispanic,” as used in those two studies.

We see a very similar trend emerge among the three groups. Blacks and Hispanics experience more food insecurity than whites in all three groups. However, UC employees have much higher levels of food insecurity than UC students and the U.S. population regardless of race and ethnicity.

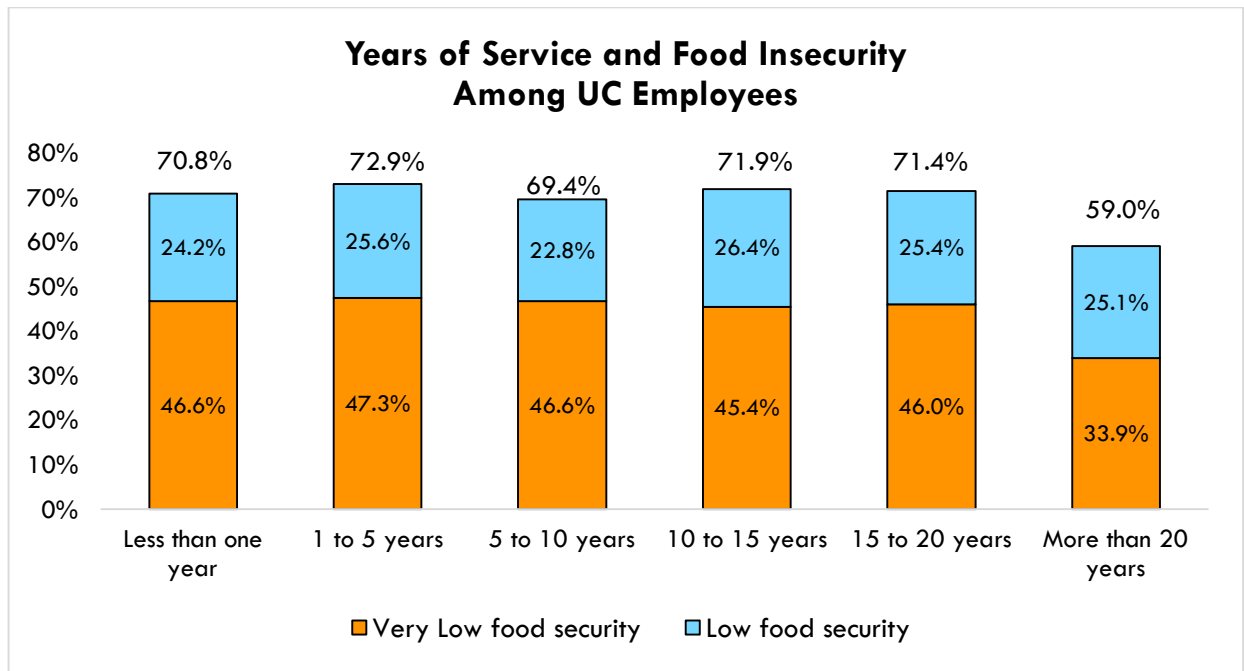
Figure 13 - Race, Ethnicity, and Food Insecurity Among UC Employees, UC Students, and U.S. Households



## Years of Service and Food Security

Longevity does not appear to have a significant relationship to food security. Employees who have worked at UC for less than one up to 20 years show equal rates of food insecurity. Only among employees serving more than 20 years was there a higher rate of food security.

Figure 14 - Years of Service and Food Insecurity Among UC Employees



## Consequences for Food Insecure Members Among UC Employees

Many of the UC employees who were classified as food insecure reported difficulty performing at work, or making tough decisions around their diet throughout the year, to cope with their lack of resources. These consequences were manifested in different ways for different employees.

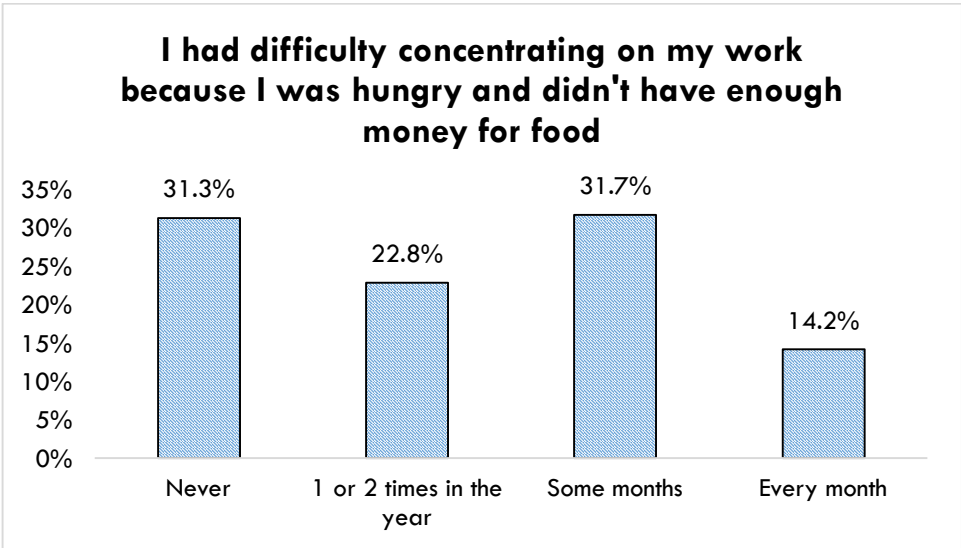
In the survey of UC employees, five questions were asked to the 1,770 food insecure employees to get a better understanding of the effect of food insecurity on their lives.

Figure 15 - Food Insecure Survey Questions about Consequences

28) For the following statements, please tell us how often each of these things happened to you <u>in the last 12 months</u> .	Every month	Some months during the year	1 or 2 times in the year	Never
a. I had difficulty concentrating on my work because I was hungry and didn't have enough money for food.	○	○	○	○
c. I asked family or friends for help so that I had enough money to cover my costs.	○	○	○	○
e. I had to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care.	○	○	○	○
f. I had to choose between paying for food and paying rent/mortgage or utilities.	○	○	○	○
g. I had to choose between paying for food and paying student loans/debt.	○	○	○	○

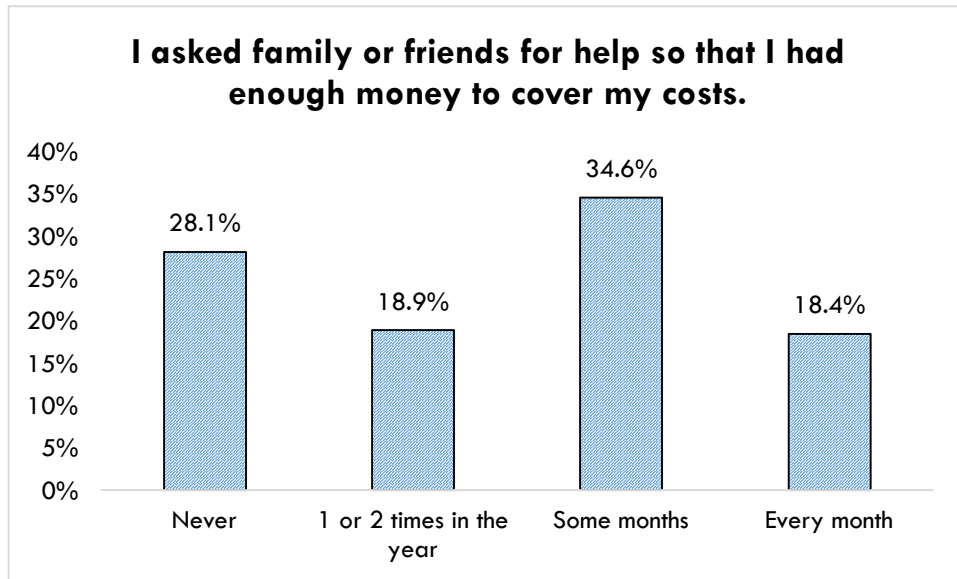
Food insecurity can lead to negative physiological consequences, and result in poor performance at the work place. Sixty-nine (69) percent of food insecure employees reported difficulty concentrating at work at least once during the year. Among food insecure employees, 45.9 percent reported that they had difficulty concentrating at work three or more months in a year, while 14.2 percent reported having that experience every month.

Figure 16 - Food Insecure UC Employees and Difficulty Concentrating at Work



The survey asked UC employee if and how often they had to resort to asking family or friends to help them put food on the table. Seventy-two (72) percent reported asking for help at some point during the past year. Over half (53 percent) had to ask for assistance three or more months out of the year. Among the UC employees, 18.4 percent reported asking for help each month.

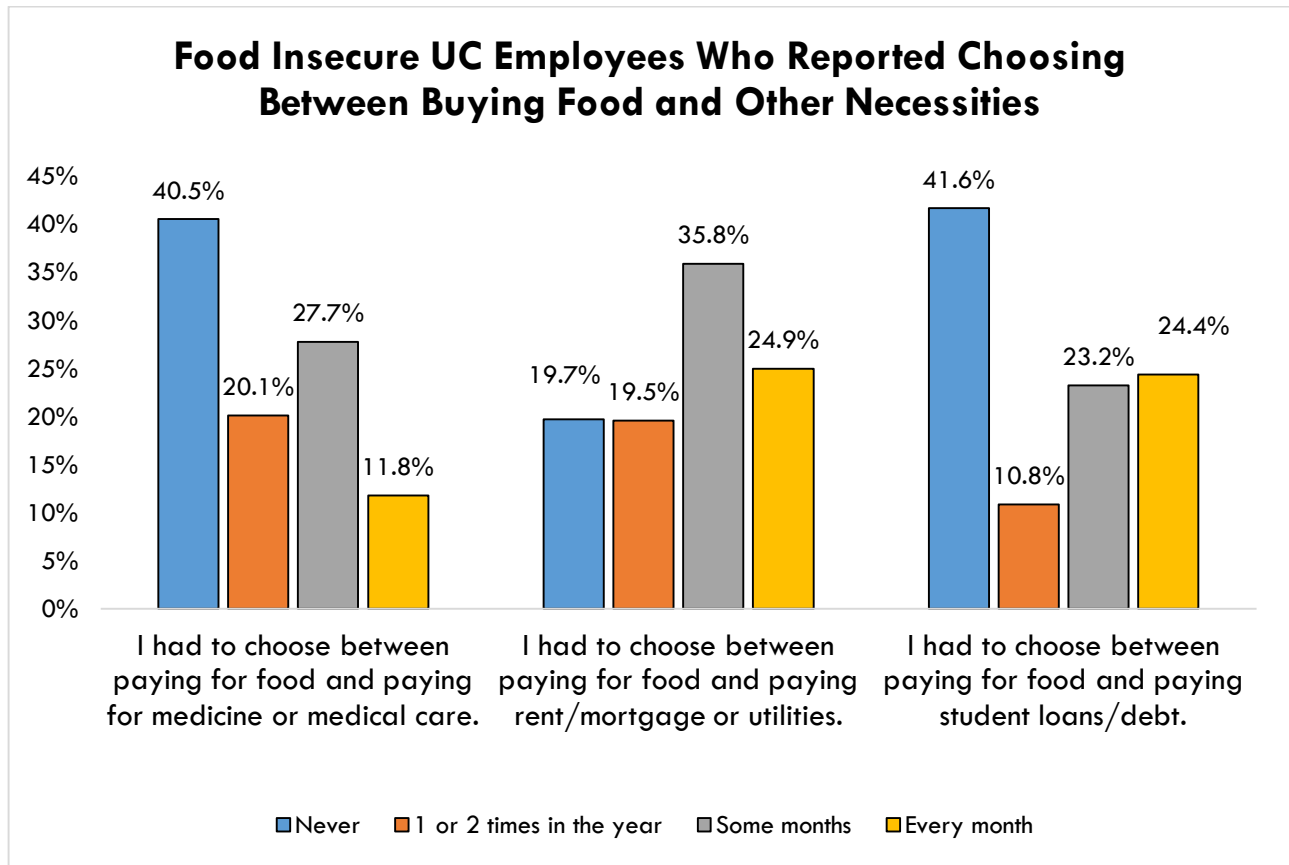
Figure 17 - Food Insecure UC Employees and Asking for Help





Food insecure UC employees often had to make difficult decisions with regard to paying for medicine or medical care, paying rent, paying bills, and providing food for their household.

Figure 18 - Food Insecure UC Employees Who Reported Choosing Between Buying Food and Other Necessities



Over the past 12 months, the food-insecure UC workers had to make difficult decisions and sacrifice food to pay for necessities.

- Eighty percent (80) stated that they had to choose between buying food and paying for their rent or utilities. One out of four faced that decision every month.
- Six out of ten said they have had to choose between buying food and paying for medicine or medical care.
- Nearly 60 percent reported choosing between buying food and making their student loan payments. One in four were faced with that decision each month.

## Conclusion

This study found that 70 percent of the University of California's clerical, administrative, and support workers face food insecurity.

After surveying nearly 14,000 employees asking the same questions developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that the University of California used to evaluate food security amongst UC students, this study finds that the vast majority of UC employees lack consistent access to adequate food and struggle to avoid hunger.

The prevalence of food insecurity among these UC employees is more than one and a half times greater than that found among UC students, and more than five times greater than that found among U.S. households.

We can conclude that the lives of the vast majority of these UC employees, and many of their children, are seriously impaired as a result of food insecurity.

The people of California, the UC Board of Regents, and administrators at the University of California, need to decide whether this situation at a public institution is acceptable. If it is not deemed acceptable, then they need to decide what actions to take to address this problem.

## Authors' Biographies

**Peter Dreier** is the E.P. Clapp Distinguished Professor of Politics and chair of the Urban & Environmental Policy Department at Occidental College. He earned his B.A. from Syracuse University and his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

**Megan Bomba** manages community food and nutrition programs at the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College. She studies food security and community nutrition in both the global and domestic context, and holds a M.S. degree in International Agricultural Development from U.C. Davis.

**Rosa Romero** is the co-founder and current Director of the Farm to Preschool Program at the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College. She studies and organizes for healthy food access in schools and communities and works to create regional food systems that support the local economy. She is a UCLA alumna and received her Masters of Education from the University of Hawaii, Manoa.

## Appendix: Select Open-Ended Survey Comments

- *"I can't recall the last time I was able to shop at a large grocery retailer for food items. I depend on 99 cent stores and food pantries to eat."*
- *"It brings me to tears answering these questions and realizing how often my husband and I go without so that our children have enough food to eat every month. I work very hard every day and go above and beyond my job description but yet I don't earn enough to live!"*
- *"I can only make it through the month if I skip a meal daily."*
- *"I'm grateful for my wages but sometimes it just isn't enough. Recently the cost of rent, my student loans, and medical/dental expenses have gone up so I have had to worry more about food and make decisions on when I'm able to buy groceries. This is happening more often in the recent months so I've been very concerned and stressed out."*
- *"I'm supporting a family of four on my salary. I'm on food stamps and WIC - it's extremely frustrating because I work hard."*
- *"I get depressed and truly feel like my life is worthless for not being able to pay my bills and buy enough groceries. I feel like I am failing in my life because I am always broke. I eat ramen noodles for lunch everyday, just to make sure that I am not spending money to feed myself. I am sad about this and I feel so disappointed that I have worked here for 16 years and don't make enough to survive and live life comfortable without worry. I am continually crying."*
- *"We supplement our food budget with regular visits to a food bank."*
- *"It is terrible that every month I have to ask for assistance at food banks, from family members, friends, and churches. I am horribly embarrassed."*
- *"I find myself going without to just to provide and make sure that my son has what he needs."*
- *"Every month I have to make a tough decision: do I pay the Water Bill or PG&E bill or not? I can only afford to eat one meal per day (I have to skip breakfast and lunch) and I'll be honest - a bag of microwave popcorn does not make for a healthy meal."*
- *"It's very hard to explain to your kids we don't have enough money to buy more food."*
- *"Santa Cruz landlords continue to raise rents beyond affordability. It currently requires 76% of my paycheck just to pay rent. I use credit cards to buy groceries, which becomes a vicious circle of higher rates due to interest. I've begun fasting twice a week to reduce expenses."*
- *"We buy meat from the soon-to-expire discount bin at the grocery store and some days we just don't really eat dinner."*
- *"I have become ill and diagnosed with an autoimmune disease due to the lack of vitamins being absorbed by my body. My physician told me it is due to the lack of nutritional food and brought on by stress."*
- *"I generally skip dinner every day to avoid the extra expense."*

- *“Stress is affecting my health. My stress comes from not knowing how will I pay for what I need. I am always one month behind. If I pay for one thing I cannot pay for another. Every month it is like this. Then to have to tell your children we can't buy meat because it is too expensive and we will have to wait and see what money is left. This is so heart breaking for me.”*
- *“I have to work a second job to afford to keep food on the table and shoes and clothes for my kids. It's very hard to work all the time and never have time for my kids.”*
- *“The cost of living is extremely high. We are falling further and further behind, despite working full time. Both my husband and I work for the University of California and we have a hard time making enough money to raise three teenagers. They eat a lot and it is a struggle. We eat a lot of pasta, beans and rice.”*
- *“The only reason I can afford to work at University of California is because I have subsidized housing. Several times a year, I have to skip buying groceries, paying a utility bill, or receiving medical expenses in order to make ends meet. Financial insecurity is stressful and counterproductive to work. Part of my job at the UC involves keeping a departmental budget, which I am successful at, so the shortfalls in my personal finances are not budgeting issues - it's a pay issue.”*
- *“I make \$4.00 too much to qualify for food stamps.”*
- *“I have always heard that stress can make you sick. Well I'm now walking proof it does. I hear managers talk about how they just can't make it with their salaries of \$80,000 to \$120,000. It makes me even more upset to hear this because I only make approximately \$40,000 a year and I am a single mother with three children. This is poverty and I am barely able to feed my children. I go without breakfast or lunch at least 3 times a week so there is more for my family. I am stressed, sad and sick.”*
- *“In order to secure enough to eat, I've taken advantage of buying multiples of the same things for lower prices. Such as cold cereal for \$2 a box. It's not a balanced diet but provides for breakfast, lunch and dinner.”*
- *“We have food most of the time because I only buy food that is on sale, or expired and some times from the trash can. I am also receiving CalFresh (food stamps).”*
- *“Our pay is too high for the free lunch program at my child's school, yet because of bills we can't afford to pay the hot lunch fee. He doesn't like sandwiches so I found out he is eating from the "Share lunch" table where kids leave food they don't want. It makes me sad. I can't pay simple bills, yet I can't get assistance.”*
- *“I barely can pay rent because I don't make enough after taxes. Most places won't consider me a renter due to the fact that I do not make enough to cover the average rent in the Bay Area. I then have to choose between buying my son diapers and me eating, or making sure he has food.”*
- *“Working at the University of California is harming my child's education. We barely qualify for any financial aid and even though she was an exceptional student, we could not afford a UC education.”*
- *“I've had to pick between medical prescriptions and food sometimes. It's really sad. I've even had to not go to a doctor visit because I can't pay the copay.”*



Urban &  
Environmental  
Policy Institute  
OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE