NUML - Student Hunger Policy

Year 2020

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Student Hunger Policy

1. **General**

   The accessibility to nutritious, balanced and healthy food is counted amongst the basic human requirements of human beings. With no exception all government resources should be directed and channelized for the fulfillment of this basic need of the people. Having established this fact, the Universities also share a burden of this responsibility and need to lay out a road map wherein the affected students are identified and then adequately taken care of. It is in this backdrop that a policy on following lines has been formulated.

2. **Definition**

   It can simply be defined as inaccessibility of students to nutritious, and affordable food, leaving them potentially at risk of being food insecure.

3. **Causes**
   a. Studies suggest that a higher than expected percentage of students might not be eating enough because they can't afford, which means they are not able to eat nutritious and safe foods consistently.
   b. The problem is fueled by the escalating cost of higher education, low-paying jobs, barriers to welfare programs, and a lack of awareness.
   c. Besides tuition and other fees, families have to pay for housing, food, books and supplies. They also have to cover any additional fees and living expenses, such as transportation costs etc.

4. **Effects**
   a. Compared with students who have easy access to enough food, students who are food insecure experience significantly higher rates of depression, loneliness and anxiety.
   b. They also have lower self-esteem and lower grade-point averages and are more likely to withdraw from the university before earning their degrees. Academic research shows that a substantial percentage of college students experience “food insecurity,” a lack of access to adequate amounts of food, especially healthy foods.
   c. The research also suggests that students who don't have enough food are more likely to have low grades and poor health.
   d. Children experiencing hunger are more likely to have problems with memory and concentration because they do not have the requisite energy to carry out these functions.
   e. Malnutrition can tamper with sleeping patterns as well, making a child too tired to get anything out of a full day at campus.
   f. Hunger delays development on the cognitive, social and emotional levels. This includes reading, language, attention, memory and problem-solving capabilities.
   g. Hunger hinders our ability to focus and study.

5. **Assessment of Food Insecurity**

   Before initiating the interventions food insecurity needs to be assessed on the campus. This can be done by tracking/ interviewing all students seeking scholarships or other financial aids.

Their records must be maintained which will greatly help in formulating a reliable database in this regard.

6. **Interventions/Measures**

By considering following measures, we can develop programs aimed at fighting food insecurity, which will help ensure that all staff and students have the basic necessities to thrive on campus:

a. **Opening of Cafeterias**

Two Cafeteria have been opened up in the University to provide students with a balanced food and considerably low cost items than the market. Their quality and prices are controlled by a team of administrative committee working under Director Student Affairs. Moreover, student's feedback, on-spot checking and monitoring also help in ensuring quality and economy.

b. **Food Kiosks**

In addition to the above-mentioned cafeterias, four food kiosks have also been established in different prime locations of the university which are managed by students in all respects. They have proved to be a great help in providing low cost, nourishing and quality food to all in the campus.

c. **Preparation of Menus**

Well thought out menus have been placed at Cafeterias and Kiosks. They not only cater for the students' demands but also help in monitoring the standards and prices. Efforts will be made to provide items on discount price to those students who are in need.

d. **Additional Measures**

Following additional measures may also help in handling this issue:

i. Food pantries: A food pantry or bank is the most common response to food insecurity on campus.
ii. Establish programs that promote food security among staff and students.
iii. Food and financial literacy programs: Many students come to campus with little financial literacy since they have never lived on their own. However, food-insecure students tend to have even less literacy around subjects like budgeting healthy meal.
iv. Campus Food Waste: Measure the amount of food waste generated from food served within the campus.
v. Preference will be given to locally produced products from sustainable sources.

7. **Conclusion**

A systemic, long-term approach will help in addressing food insecurity on campus. By examining the Financial affordability, measures be considered to provide greater access to programs for at-risk students. For example, expanding aid, such as emergency grants, book grants, or loaner laptop programs, may provide financial relief to students in need.