

Emerging Data on Student Hunger & the Role of IR

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The Problem

- States and university systems are increasingly assessing student hunger on their campuses (Dubick et al., 2016; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015; Savchuk, 2016).
- Collecting data as part of a larger survey provides institutional researchers with a less invasive way to ask sensitive questions.
- IR staff are also able to provide context related to the transition to college, campus climate, or the student experience as a whole.
- Further analyses are necessary to examine the relationship between experiencing hunger while in college and academic experiences and outcomes related to student success.

Research Purpose

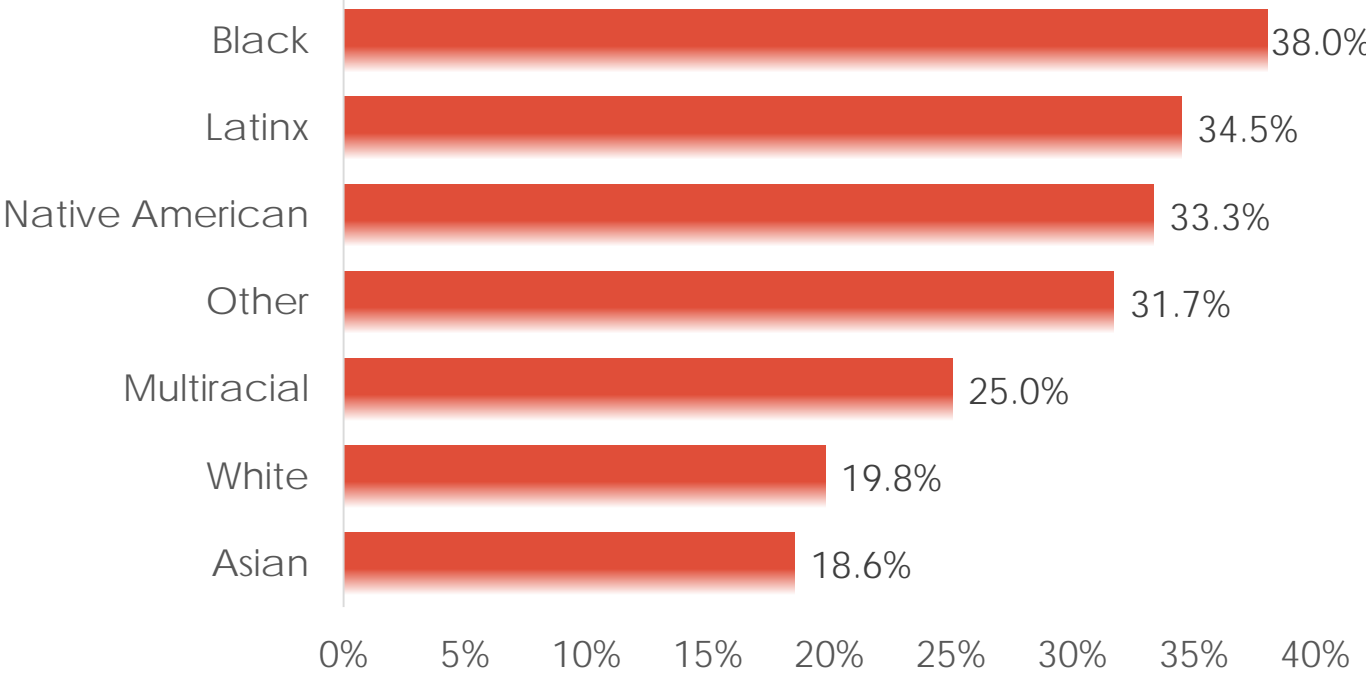
- The purpose of this study is to use national survey data to explore academic transitions and students' experiences with hunger at two transitional time points: the end of the first year and upon graduation from four-year institutions, guided by the following research questions:
- How do demographics and background characteristics vary by students' experiences with hunger?
- How does adjustment/transition over the first college year vary by students' experiences with hunger?
- How do key academic experiences and outcomes at graduation vary by students' experiences with hunger?

Sample & Analysis

- **2018 Your First College Year Survey**
 - n = 5,652 students at the end of their first year
 - 23 institutions
 - 22.1% felt hungry but didn't eat because they didn't have enough money for food.
- **2018 College Senior Survey**
 - n = 12,825 graduating seniors
 - 64 institutions
 - 27.8% felt hungry but didn't eat because they didn't have enough money for food.
- *Descriptive Analysis:* Frequencies, Crosstabs, T-tests.

Findings

Felt hungry but didn't have enough money to buy food (YFCY)



Academic Adjustment & Selected Activities (YFCY)

	Felt hungry	Did not feel hungry
Mean academic disengagement score*	54.04	48.87
Mean academic adjustment score*	48.22	50.51
Mean sense of belonging score*	47.44	50.81
Definitely would enroll at current college again	38.6%	49.3%
Worked off-campus	31.6%	19.5%
Performed household/childcare duties	39.6%	25.8%

*All mean differences are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$.

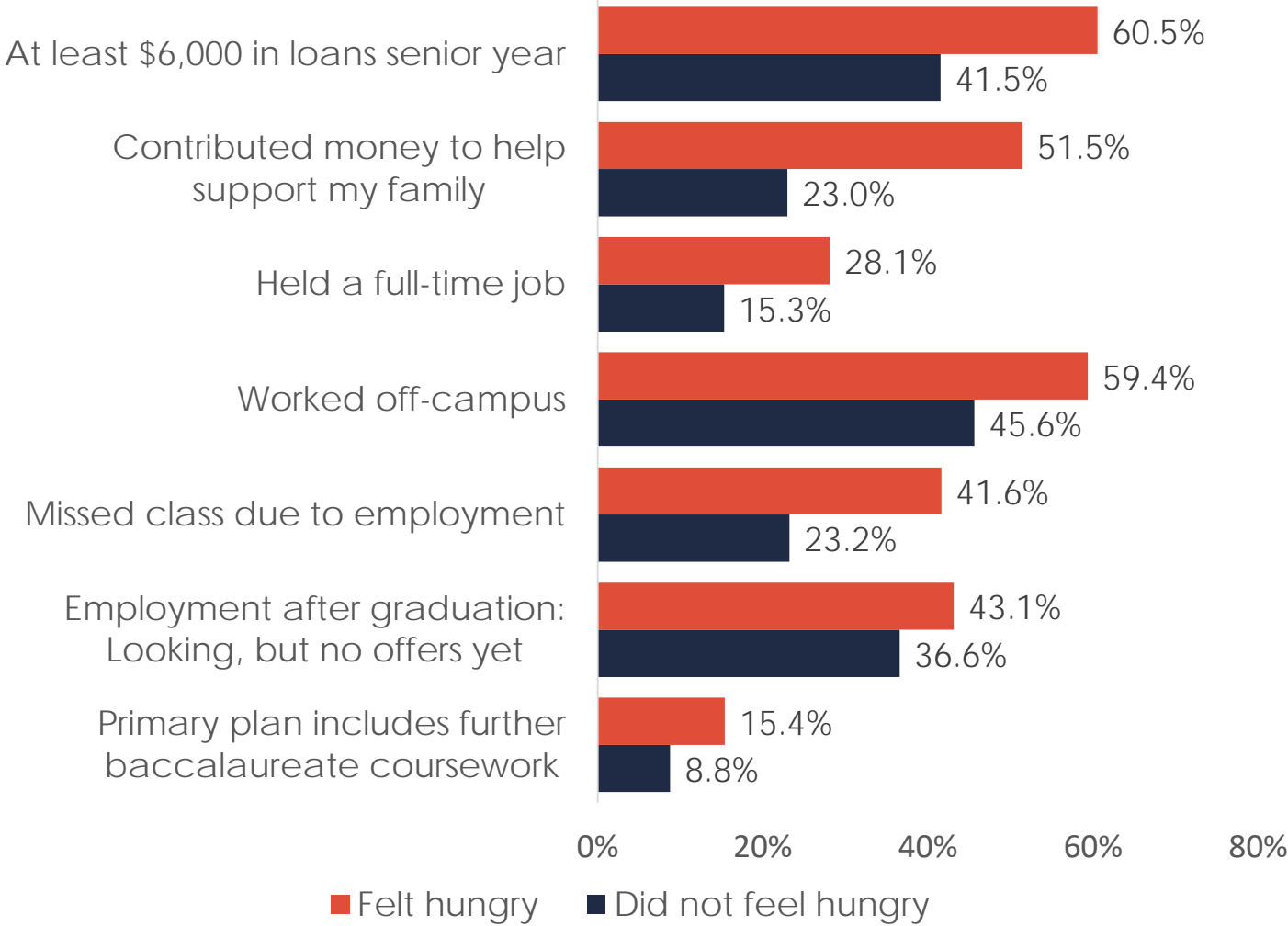
College Experiences (CSS)

	Felt hungry	Did not feel hungry
Mean academic disengagement score*	53.35	48.37
Mean academic self-concept score*	48.61	50.78
Mean sense of belonging score*	47.21	51.31
Participated in an internship	61.1%	66.5%
Participated in study abroad	27.0%	37.3%
A-, A, or A+ College GPA	38.5%	55.2%
Overall loan amount	\$37,681	\$27,480

*All mean differences are statistically significant at $p < 0.01$.

Findings (continued)

Finances & Future Plans (CSS)



Discussion & Conclusion

- Food insecurity is difficult to measure and rates vary (Smith, 2019).
- Research and action plans such as those initiated by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019) are key.
- The question is new to the surveys so data presented here represent two separate cohorts. Future research will track cohorts longitudinally.
- Academic self-concept and positive academic behaviors are similar across groups.
- Academic disengagement (missing class, turning in homework late, etc.) is more of a concern, often exacerbated by working off-campus.
- End of the first year: Students who experience hunger have more difficulty adjusting to college and are less likely to feel like they belong on campus.
- End of college: Students who experience hunger have lower grades, more debt, and are less certain about future plans.

Presenter

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