

Document prepared by Sboniso Ngcobo

Department of Food and Nutrition: Consumer Sciences

Durban University of Technology

Tel: 0845968831

Email: vibrantcampuses@gmail.com

Regarding any comments, suggestions or offers please email the above mentioned person.

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The views and interpretations contained herein are solely those of the authors.

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Sincerely

Sboniso T Ngcobo (Student at the Department of Food & Nutrition: Consumer Sciences)

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A MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR N. GWELE (DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR: TEACHING AND LEARNING—DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY)

Food (in)security is a reality to which higher education can no longer turn a blind eye. The start of the 2019 academic year for a number of South African universities was severely affected by student protests. Top among the complaints raised by protesting students all over the country were psychosocial and economic hardships that students had to endure in pursuit of education. Inability to secure food, accommodation and other basic needs among university students is not peculiar to South Africa.

Globally, literature abounds with accounts of the pervasiveness of food insecurity among postsecondary students throughout the world. Citing Ferguson, Frank (2018) points to the difficulties related to the existence of mismatch between available student financial aid/assistance with regard to allowances and cost of food and other basic needs. It is no coincidence that invariably, students from poor homes – whose parents can hardly afford food for those left at home – let alone the ones who are at university often feel the burden of hunger and/or inappropriate eating habits the most.

Faced with a limited budget, if any at all, with a multitude of competing basic needs, students will often buy the cheapest food, irrespective of its nutritional value. A booklet such as the one written by a Food and Nutrition student at the Durban University of Technology will greatly assist students in making decisions about how best to spend the little money they have, in their efforts to eat healthy, and thus improve their chances of paying sustained attention in class. Being hungry in class is not an experience that any student should go through. The reality, however, is that for a huge number of students this is their university experience. Hopefully, this booklet, will go a long way in assisting students stay on track, both academically and nutritionally.

Frank, L. 2018. "Hungry for an education": Prevalence and outcomes of food insecurity among students at a primarily undergraduate university in rural Nova Scotia. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 48(2): 109-129.

A MESSAGE FROM ZWAKELE NGUBANE (DIRECTOR: ADVANCEMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS—DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY)

As the director of Advancement and Alumni Relations at the Durban University of Technology, I am very proud to be associated with an initiative that seeks to understand more about the nutritional and eating habits of our students as well as the factors that may be contributing to poor or undernourishment among some of our students. It is well understood that students must be well-nourished in order to perform academically since nutrition contributes significantly towards cognitive development and function.

Food security has become an increasingly growing concern for many as high levels of poverty and unemployment leave many South Africans unable to provide themselves and their families with regular nutritious meals. This has also become a growing concern amongst universities as an increasing number of students struggle to access regular and nutritious meals due to the difficult financial backgrounds they come from. It is for this reason that the Advancement and Alumni Relations Office assists with the fundraising efforts for the Food Security Programme at the University. The Food Security Programme is an initiative that was established by the former Dean of Students, Mr Amar Singh, and aimed to provide students with support in as far as accessing regular meals.

This project aims not only to understand the extent to which students are able to access regular meals but also to understand the extent to which these meals are nutritious and then educate students on how to make smarter food choices by understanding the basics as well as the importance of good nutrition.

This, I believe, is the beginning of a much needed nutrition movement at DUT. If students can be armed with knowledge and information so that they are in a position to make smarter food choices, the chances of healthier and better performing students are increased significantly. We therefore fully support this initiative as it tries to educate our students on this important aspect of life.

After all, it is often said, “you are what you eat”

SUBMIT YOUR STORY

STUDENT VOICE — IT'S YOUR TURN TO TELL YOUR STORY

Step 1: Decide how you want to tell your story: you can film it with video, or submit it in writing. Instructions for each are below.

Step 2: However you choose to start, make sure you provide your name, your campus name.

Step 3: Get to the point. Tell your story as concisely as you can, so people will take the time to hear it. Stick to the relevant details and please do not share the names of other people. Not sure how to begin? Start here:

- What's really happening in University/Campus/ Students residence that most people don't know about?
- What do you wish Siyaphulela project at DUT knew about what's holding you back?
- What are you working on to make your Campus/ University/ students residence a better place to be? Why?

Step 4: If you have any trouble sharing your story, just let us know! You can find us in this email address: vibrantcampuses@gmail.com or WhatsApp: 0845968831

How to submit your story?

1. Make a video using your camera (making sure that the video you shared is of good picture and audio quality) or tell your story in writing.
2. Email it to us in this email address: vibrantcampuses@gmail.com.
3. In the message itself, please give us your name and a way to contact you and/or confirm we got it!

What happens next?

We hope that sharing your story will help create more resources for students like you. Your story will only be used with that purpose in mind. All eligible submissions will be included in a booklet called "Ubugqabavu" that can be accessed by the DUT community for educational and advocacy purposes.

Most submissions will be integrated into training/workshops/roadshow that will inform the Food security task team, Student success task team, DUT stakeholders, and policymakers. In order to develop suitable interventions that effectively benefits' students.

Some students will be invited to share their story in person at student success task team workshops and/or students focus group discussions.

Ineligible submissions

A submission will be considered ineligible if it contains any of the following:

- Hate speech or depictions directed at others (but if a student sees or experiences hate speech and chooses to make this part of their submission that is considered eligible)
- Graphic violence
- Depictions of drug or alcohol that glorify its use or abuse
- Naming people who have not given permission to be used in the story. Other people should be identified by the relationship, such as “my lecturer” or “my aunt.”
- Inaccurate portrayals, dishonest content or plagiarism