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**The Store – GW’s Food Pantry**  
<https://students.gwu.edu/store>

**A National Issue**

Across the country, college students are faced with an incredible number of choices every single day. For many, these choices revolve around whether to work out or not, go to class or sleep in, but for some students, they are forced to choose whether they can afford to eat or not. Nationally, this problem is coming to light more and more and studies have shown that over 30% of students surveyed stated that they have gone hungry due to a lack of funds during a college semester (Wisconsin Hope Lab Food Insecurity study 2016). The number of food banks on college campuses has grown from 4 in 2008 to over 300 as of June 2016 at institutions including:

- Michigan State University
- Syracuse University
- Seton Hall University
- Georgetown University
- Cornell University
- University of MD
- and most of the
  - CUNY
  - SUNY
  - CA State
  - NC State systems

**A GW Issue**

Two surveys have recently been completed in order to better understand this issue within the GW context. One survey was sent out to students in April of 2016 and of the 720 respondents, 44% said that there has been a time when they did not have enough food to eat. Half of those students stated that this has occurred 4 or more times per semester and 83% of the students who expressed that they need this type of resource said they would use it if we create a food pantry. The 2016 Graduation Survey included a question regarding food insecurity with our students and 59% of students stated that they struggled to have enough to eat at least once a month. 12% of students noted that this was a reality for them three or more times/week. Additionally, 67% of first generation students did not have enough to eat at least once a month and 19% faced this challenge three or more times/week. This is a real issue for our students and we hope to be able to take some of the pressure off of our students so they can focus on their chief responsibility as students.

## **Our Plan**

We will be opening “The Store” this Fall to provide food for students in need. The Store will be located on the B1 level of District House in a discreet location so that students can access it without having to make their need known to others. Students will be able to self-identify their need for this resource and we will trust that students who apply are in need and provide them access to the Store.

The food for the Store will be provided through a partnership with Capital Area Food Bank and we will be paying \$.19/pound for the estimated 12,000 pounds of food we will give away each year. We recently received a four year gift from a pair of GW parents that will cover the costs of the food as well as the van rentals we will use to pick up the food at the Capital Area Food Bank. We will be able to select what we want for the Store prior to each pickup and we will base our requests on what students have requested and what they have previously picked up. The Store will be managed jointly by the Center for Student Engagement and GW student organization, Class Council. The staff in CSE will oversee the logistics and financial aspects of the Store and Class Council will recruit, train, and manage volunteers. The Store will use GW students and student organizations as volunteers to handle day to day tasks including cleaning, stocking shelves, and keeping inventory.

The Store will launch on October 1<sup>st</sup> so that we can have the first few weeks of the semester to educate students and sign up those who may need this resource. This will be a site for Freshman Day of Service where student volunteers will stock the shelves for the first time and prepare the space for its opening a few weeks later. We plan to re-stock on the first and third Fridays of each month but will monitor usage regularly and adjust the amount of food we are getting based on student need.