



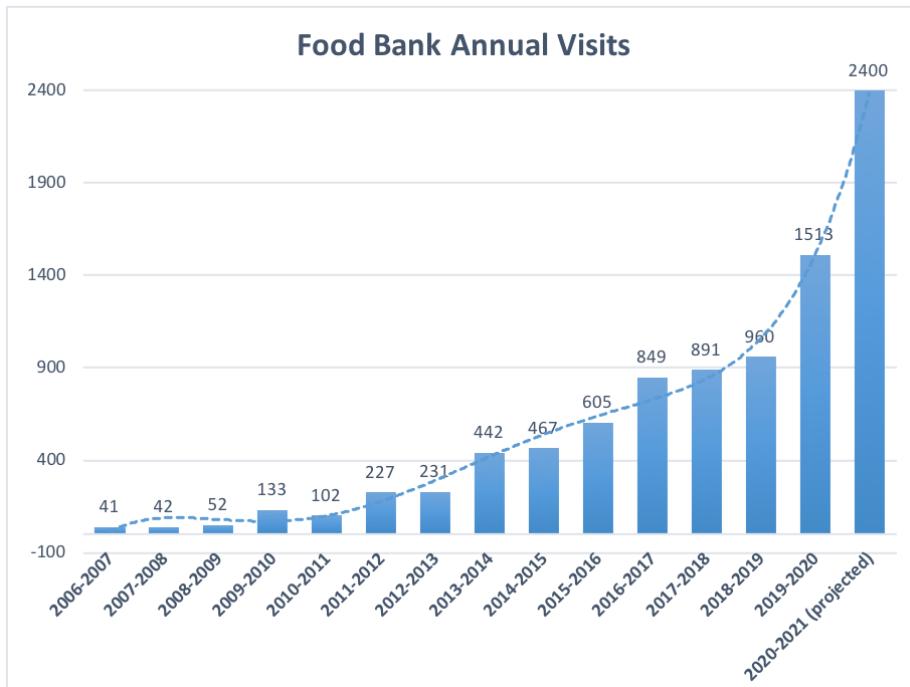
## Submission to the Board of Governors Regarding the Report on Food Insecurity Update

Dear UBC Board of Governors,

This letter is written on behalf of the Alma Mater Society (AMS) of UBC Vancouver to supplement the report on addressing rising food insecurity at UBC, at the People, Community, and International committee on November 20, 2020.

The AMS has been operating the AMS Food Bank on the UBC Vancouver campus since the 2006/7 academic year. The AMS Food Bank provides emergency food relief to any UBC student in need through perishable & non-perishable foods, and personal hygiene supplies. Students are able to access the AMS Food Bank up to sixteen times per semester, and are provided a bag of supplies upon visit, with students with dependents receiving two bags. These short-term support services alleviate stress and burden on impacted families who need emergency support; it is important to note that food banks are band-aid solutions towards solving food insecurity.

At the AMS Food Bank, there were a total of 826 visits between May 1, 2020 - Oct 31, 2020. This is a 47% increase from these dates last year, when we had 561 visits when still were gathered for in-person learning. One half of these visits this past year were family visits. It is evident that food insecurity issues have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the pre-existing student affordability crisis.





The 2020 AMS Academic Experience Survey (AES) shows that there has been an increase in both graduate and undergraduates who are experiencing food insecurity. More than two in five students (of both undergraduate and graduate) have been concerned about their ability to feed themselves in the past year, including one in five who experience this challenge at least monthly (AES 2020). 19% of both undergraduate and graduate respondents respectively report having monthly concerns about running out of food (AES 2020). 42% of undergraduate respondents and 44% of graduate respondents have ever had concerns about running out of food (AES 2020). The data collected from the AES emphasizes that students are consistently reporting food insecurity issues during their studies at UBC.

In September of 2020, the Food Security Initiative became informed of a rising food insecurity crisis affecting graduate students residing in Acadia Park by a faculty member. The faculty member quickly mobilized to create community food hubs in partnership with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank and has since served over 400 people.

We appreciate the Administration's current efforts towards recognizing and addressing rising food insecurity across UBC campuses, and providing increased financial aid. The President's Office has contributed funds towards the AMS Food Bank since 2018 and we hope to see this generosity continue as we continue to confront the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, financial aid and emergency food relief are retroactive solutions and do not address the core issues surrounding systemic injustices, income inequality, and poverty. We call on the UBC Board of Governors to take this opportunity to address the matter of rising food insecurity on UBC campuses through the creation of a directed strategic plan towards affordability. As the University continues to increase tuition, it is evident that the University pushes students towards a food insecurity crisis. We strongly support the calls to actions outlined in the Food Insecurity Update report, and call on UBC to take urgent upstream action.

The AMS will continue to stay engaged on this topic by providing reports on food insecurity through the AES and usage of the AMS Food Bank, as well as contributing to these conversations and advocating for affordability issues - increased subsidies available for food-insecure students. Operationally, as usage of the AMS Food Bank surges, the AMS Food Bank's current model is not sustainable and must have institutional support on upstream actions.



We thank the UBC Board of Governors and the Administration for their continuous work on campus issues that impact the UBC community, affordability issues, and for your consideration on this submission.

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