

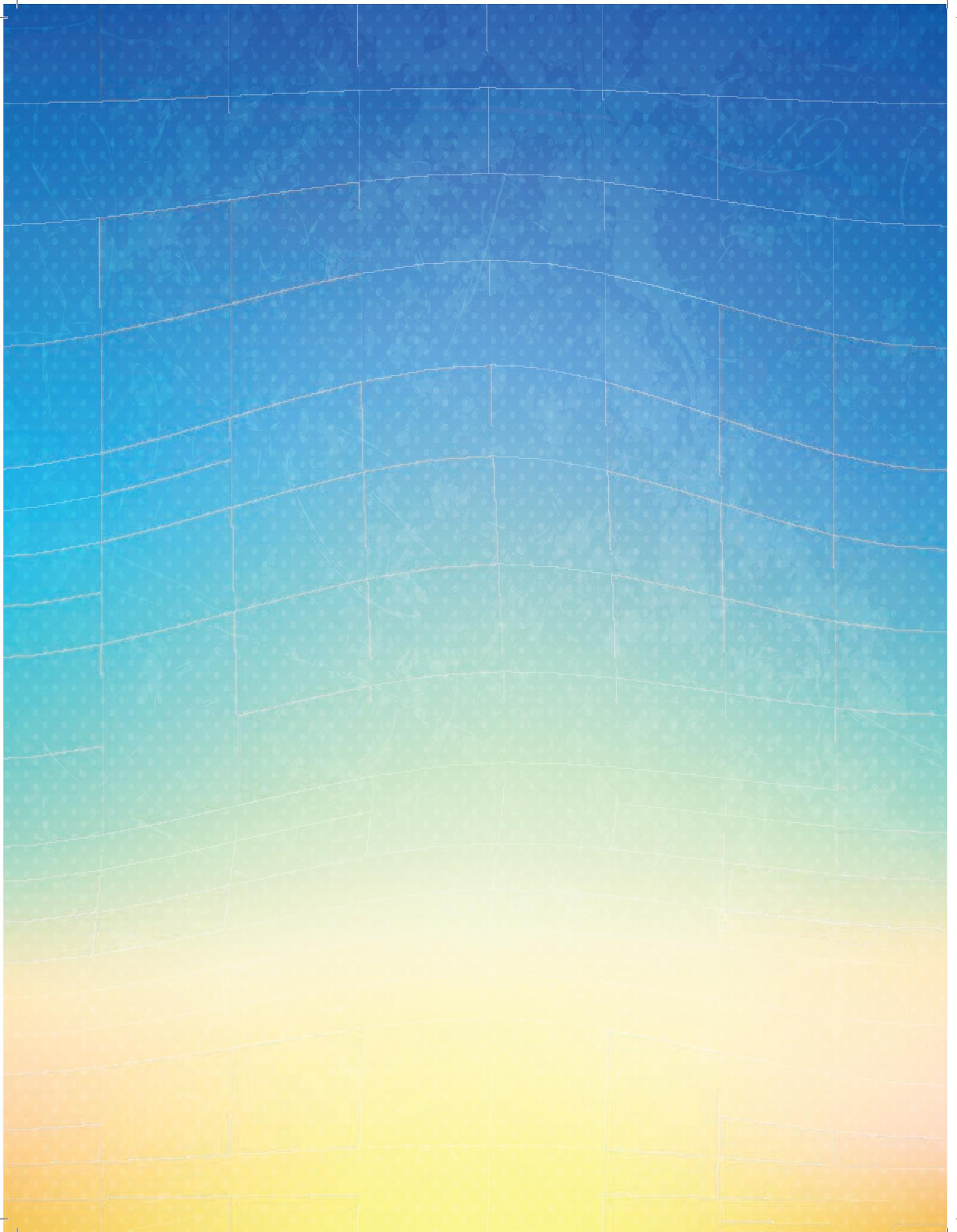
# SWIPE OUT HUNGER

**A Guide To Creating Your  
Campus Sustainable Meal  
Sharing and Recovery Program**



**Global Food  
Initiative**

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



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# INTRODUCTION

In July 2014, University of California President, Janet Napolitano launched the University of California Global Food Initiative (UCGFI). "Recognizing that UC is uniquely positioned to play a leading role in addressing the related challenges of nutrition and sustainability, President Janet Napolitano, together with UC's 10 chancellors, launched the UC Global Food Initiative.

The initiative will align the university's research, outreach and operations in a sustained effort to develop, demonstrate and export solutions – throughout California, the U.S. and the world – for food security, health and sustainability." (UC Office of the President)

The goals of the UCGFI include:

- Identifying best practices and sharing widely within UC, California, the nation and the world;
- Using the power of UC research and extension to help individuals and communities access safe, affordable and nutritious food while sustaining our natural resources;
- Deploying UC's research to shape, impact and drive policy discussions around food issues at the local, statewide, national and international levels.

Two innovative programs led by students at the University of California of Santa Barbara's (UCSB) and the University of California of Los Angeles (UCLA) enabling students to help alleviate hunger on their campus through meal sharing. This best practice guide is a partnership of the UCGFI subcommittee on Swipes for Meal and Swipe Out Hunger, formerly known as Swipes for the Homeless. The collaboration and support from Swipe Out Hunger have contributed to the ongoing successes of these programs. This along with the contribution of campus partners such as the Dining Services at UCLA, Dining Service at UCSB, and the Associated Students Food Bank at UCSB have shaped this guide.

This document is based on the campus structure and experience of only two campus programs. Each campus and services are different, and we would recommend you reach out to your campus partners and Swipe Out Hunger to find additional information that would best fit your campus.

It is our hope that this best practice guide will help students, staff, and anyone interested in food sharing and recovery gain more information to create change on their campus.

Sincerely,

***UC Global Food Initiative Subcommittee  
on Swipe for Meals***

**S**wipe Out Hunger, formerly known as **Swipes for the Homeless**, is a national hunger relief non-profit that allows students to donate the excess dollars on their meal plan towards fighting hunger in their community while raising young people's awareness of hunger through education and outreach. To date, we have engaged more than 10,000 students in giving and donated more than \$500,000 dollars.

Swipes began at UCLA in 2010 and by 2012, the organization was invited to the White House and recognized as a Champion of Change. The movement was entirely student lead and it was the passion and dedication of other grassroots students and administrators that led to the programs national growth.

Our premiere program is the Swipes Drive. This is the period during which students are able to donate meal swipes. These traditionally are held at the end of each academic term and last for one or two weeks.

In addition to donating food to local food banks and homeless shelters, many of our chapters have a hunger crisis on campus. Several of our schools have begun to donate their collected meal swipes to their on campus food bank or towards meal vouchers that give food insecure students access to their on campus dining hall. It is estimated that more than 20,000 meals have been provided to students at UCLA and UCSB.

## SWIPES PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES (UCLA)

Swipe Out Hunger, formerly known as Swipes for the Homeless, was established as an official student group at UCLA in 2010. A few idealistic friends set up a table outside a dining hall and asked students who passed by to purchase to-go meals so they could distribute on the streets. In their first week, the students collected 300 meals. Fast forward one year and the group was collecting thousands.

Before long, the founder, Bryan Pezeshki, realized the amount of hunger that his fellow peers face on campus. Thus, he established the Bruin Meal Voucher Program, the first ever student

funded effort to address on campus hunger. Now, Swipes at UCLA distributes thousands of meal swipes each year so that students can gain access to warm meals at their on campus dining halls. Since, the program has successfully been implemented at UCSB as well, known as Swipes for Us.

## SWIPES PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SANTA BARBARA (UCSB)

Swipe Out Hunger at UCSB, formerly known as Swipes for the Homeless at UCSB, was started by Shannon Mirshokri and Alexandra Guthy in the winter of 2013 due to the increasing urgency to assist the houseless community in the Isla Vista and greater Santa Barbara areas. Swipes collects meal swipes each week through an online donation form, until they reach their maximum cap of swipes for the quarter. After each successful drive, the Swipes team splits up the swipes bank between students on campus and the houseless individual in Santa Barbara. The current split is 80% to the students and 20% to the citizens outside of campus. To elaborate, when we collect 1000 swipes, 800 of them become vouchers for students, and the leftover 200 swipes are converted to money. Through the conversion rate of the swipe's food cost, the organization gets money to purchase non-perishable foods to donate to multiple shelters downtown.

Guchos are known to be very giving and passionate about giving back, so the two founders thought the Swipes program would be a great way to combine the extra swipes, houseless community, and altruistic students on campus. Swipes shows UCSB's dedication to maintain a level of respect and generosity toward a community Guchos are proud to call home. With a small effort and kind intentions, students will be able to positively impact their local community.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Swipes sets out to aid all people struggling with food security, and this starts by helping students within the institution. Not all students have the same opportunities as others and may have some issues stopping them from getting the adequate

# INTRODUCTION CONT'D

nutrition necessary to succeed. Many students may even be houseless and have limited resources to improve their well-being. This is where Swipe out Hunger comes in. They take swipes, which would already be wasted, and reuses them to aid a fellow classmate in need. Through this sustainable system, students who have a surplus of swipes can give one to someone in need and positively affect their stay on this campus. In the long run, this exponentially lowers, and may even eliminate, hunger throughout the campus. The program is necessary to ensure all students have a full stomach and mind to prosper within the university and make a difference in society.

## THE NEED FOR THESE PROGRAMS

According to Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), in 2013, there were more than 58,000 homeless students enrolled in university throughout the United States. (source)

All campuses across California, and essentially across America, are in need of a Swipe Out Hunger project. At UCLA alone, there are **an estimated 200 registered homeless students**. This does not include students who are:

- couch surfing;
- cannot afford healthy foods;
- from low-income families;
- those with health disorders and have to follow strict dietary restrictions;
- those who work multiple jobs after school to pay tuition;

...and therefore cannot get foods readily. These examples just scratch the surface of some of the underlying reasons for food insecurity at higher education institutions. As students and university staff, it is our responsibility to help others around us and make the campus as prosperous as can be. One main way we can do that is by eradicating hunger throughout the campus and help all students focus on academics.

## WHY DO STUDENTS EXPERIENCE FOOD INSECURITY?

There are various reasons why students **experience hunger**. Below are some factors that contribute to food insecurity.

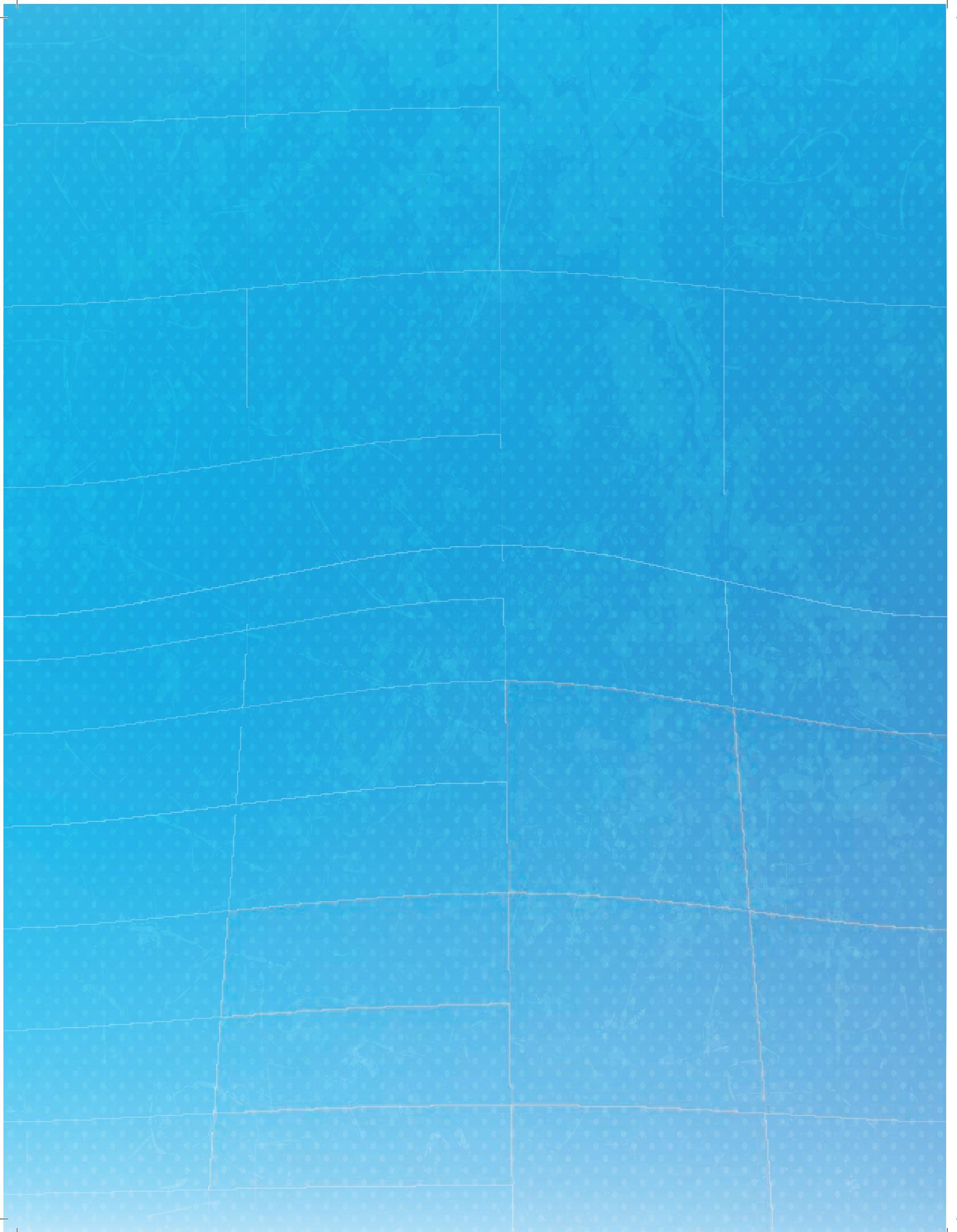
- Parents of students attending higher education can no longer contribute financially due to the economic downturn.
- Undergraduate financial aid loans do not cover tuition or living expenses.
- Graduate students are unable to attain enough financial aid, grants, or TA-ship
- Students cannot find employment.
- If students do have employment, they may be waiting on their next paycheck to be able to afford expenses.
- Students commute to campus and cannot afford lunch during the day.
- Some students are parents and have to support their partner and children.
- Students have emergency medical costs.

# GETTING STARTED

## HOW TO START A SWIPES PROGRAM

Are you interested in the program and don't know how to get started?  
Here is an overview to get you started!





# 1 RESEARCH AND BUILD SUPPORT

**I**nterested in bringing the Swipes program to your campus? Check out how below:

**A.** The first step is to notify nationals about your interest in starting a chapter by filling out a chapter development form at [www.swipehunger.org/start\\_a\\_chapter](http://www.swipehunger.org/start_a_chapter). Within 48 hours of emailing Swipes or filling out a chapter development form, someone from Swipes Headquarters will email you back. The following is included in that email:

- Swipes 101—a document outlining the 1-2-3s of starting a Swipes chapter
- Suggestion to set up a phone/video call in the future
- Additional questions? Email Rachel at [rachel@swipesforthehomeless.org](mailto:rachel@swipesforthehomeless.org)
- In the mean time, read through these FAQs of starting a new chapter: [www.swipehunger.org/faq](http://www.swipehunger.org/faq)

**B.** Successful programs need people who are committed to see a project through. One person



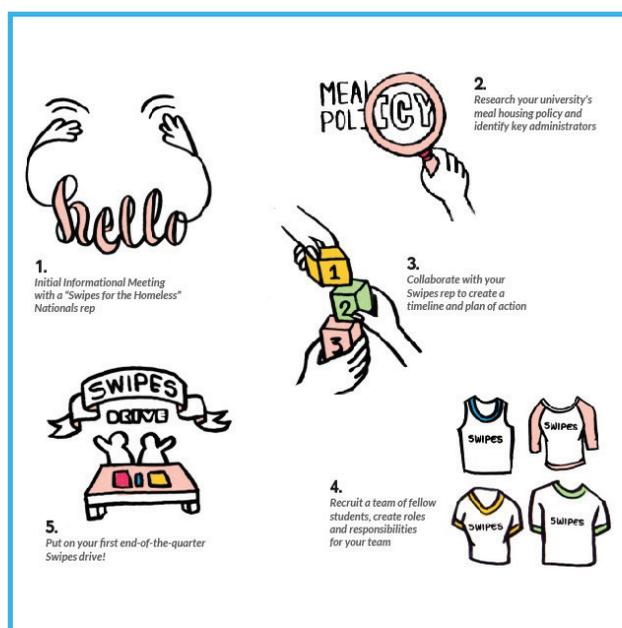
UCLA Swipes board members (FROM LEFT: Tiana Austel, Doreen Farahdel, AJ Jaramaz, Esther Lee, Emily Vargas, and Jeremy Eule) create hygiene kits to be delivered to the surrounding homeless population.

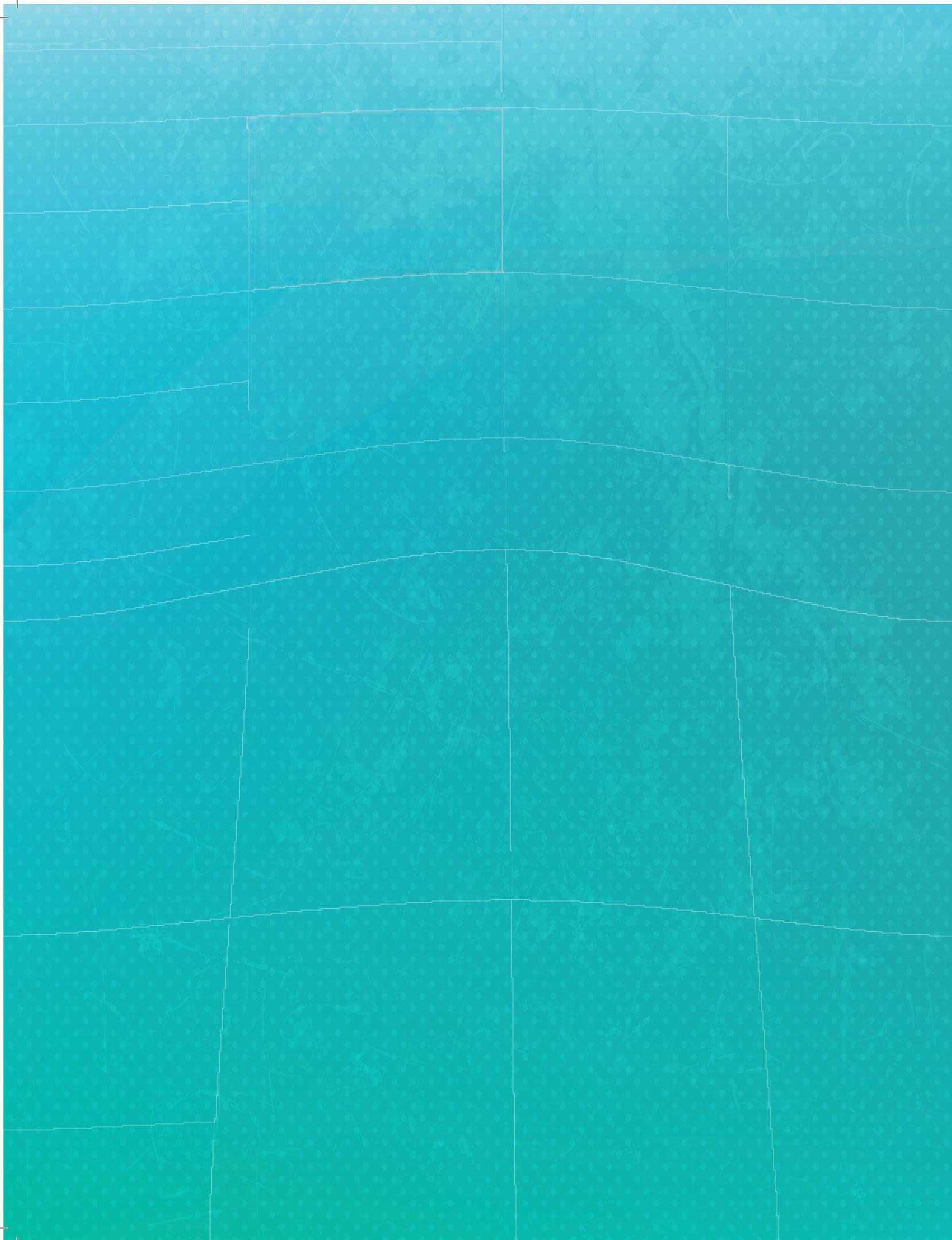
may have great enthusiasm to create Swipes on their campus, but they cannot do it all by themselves. That is why connecting with two or three other students who share the same interest becomes important. This small group of students are the founders of the organization.

When meeting with Dining Services, they represent a group of like-minded individuals. Also, it is less stressful if you go as a small group to help each other during the meetings. These students will be the ones that will help create the proposal to present to Dining Services.

**C.** Once the Swipe organization is approved on your campus, it is now time to begin expanding and recruiting more members to be part of your Swipes board! A registered student organization on most campuses enables you to request funding from campus sources, book meeting spaces, and more.

Take advantage of social media and create posts calling for students that are interested in swiping out hunger. If you are part of other organizations, talk to the members about also joining Swipes.





# 2

## IDENTIFY PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

**N**ow that you created a core group, it is time to identify partners and stakeholders who can help you moving forward. Here is a list of potential partners and stakeholders.

### WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

**Our Student Leaders:** Our on the ground heroes and heroines. They coordinate, plan and implement each swipes drive, host educational events and volunteer opportunities, and foster the incredible culture of Swipes and philanthropy on campus. They are the catalyst for each chapter's foundation. Each campus has between 5-25 members, including officers and volunteers.

**The University's Dining Services:** They are folks who manage the dining halls operations and in some cases most of on-campus-living facilities. They are great partners to explore how Swipes can be incorporated into their services. Once the program is approved, they manage the transferring of all donation funds and maintain strong relationships with our student leaders.

**Beneficiaries:** These are often local non-profits organizations that focus on hunger and or homelessness. Some examples include local homeless shelters or on-campus food closets. Student leaders of each Swipes organization choose a local organization at which they can also volunteer based on their interests as well as guidance from Swipes staff.

These three groups are the core to Swipes. As students plan the program, Dining Services provides the food and money, and the beneficiaries receive this food. In addition to these three main individuals, there are a few more people you want by your side.

### OTHER PARTNERS OR STAKEHOLDERS

While students leaders, Dining Services, and beneficiaries are the main stakeholders to be involved to promote long term support for Swipes on cam-

pus, other partners are also essential to the stability of your organization. Some of the stakeholders may not seem like the most obvious choices, but if you can build a connection with these people, the chance for expansion could be much more feasible than what you would normally expect. Reaching out to these stakeholders could also increase future volunteers and board members for your own organization, so the time you invest in exploring these partnerships could be well worth it.

### THE STUDENT BODY

Without students there is no Swipes program. Students donate the points and volunteer their time to deliver the food. Students are more financially conscious and want to find ways to maximize their financial resources. These students are attracted to the idea of saving their already paid meals from going to waste and want to maximize the value of these meals. Below are some suggestions to help you increase donations of swipes:

- Figure out how to leverage this voice and this power.
- Consider talking to student government, student groups with clout, or just spread the word about the organization and create a buzz. Dining is a collaborate force with the student organization, so they are open to changes in the Swipes program.
- If there is a comment box in dining halls, you could ask students to leave notes.
- If you find a passionate student, ask them to publish an editorial in the local newspaper. In addition, numbers can show support.
- Create a petition and spread it throughout the campus.

### STUDENT GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Having a person with governmental power in support of your organization can cause subsequent success. An example of this person is the President, Vice President, Senators on the school's

student government, or the President and Vice President of the Residence Halls Association. These groups represent the student body and their job is to serve you! They can aid Swipes by lobbying administration in favor of the program, passing resolutions in support of a larger cap, or even just marketing to students with meal plans to encourage donations.

### **TENURED FACULTY MEMBER ENDORISING THE PROGRAM**

Research different departments or administrators and professors who you think would be interested in the venture. Shoot them an email or stop by their office hours and explain the program and ask for their support by:

1. Allowing you to use their name/department when you present
2. See if they have any contacts or people whom they think would be interested and could help you

This member can also be a valuable resource when it comes to meetings with Dining Services and others on-campus. Faculty have expertise and research that are well respected and appreciated on the campus. They can help to establish the importance of your program with campus stakeholders. When a faculty member accompanies you in a meeting, they can vouch for the program and establish a more collaborative atmosphere between the student organization, Dining Services, and other school departments. For stakeholders to agree to collaborate with your program they will want to feel like their organization is receiving something in return from the efforts, and faculty members may be able to better articulate how that campus stakeholder can benefit from partnering with Swipes.

### **SUPPORT FROM OTHER STUDENT GROUPS**

Working with similar and other motivated groups on campus will allow you to improve and expand your program. You will be able to reach out to more people, have more supporters, and plan joint events.

# 3

## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS OR CAMPUS PARTNERS

In order to successfully initiate and implement a Swipes program, it is important to build strong relationships with stakeholders who can help and support your program. Here are our dining partners' insights into relationship building with dining services and potentially other staff, faculty, and administrators on your campus.

Through these conversations, dining services directors recommend that you utilize them as a resource to better understand their service and how you can create a mutually beneficial partnership and program to support their residents and students at large.

Below are the interviews with Jill Horst, UCSB Dining Director and Kare Hedges, Jeff Berman, Calvin Farr, and Charles Wilcots, UCLA Dining Services Team.

### 1. What would you recommend for students seeking information regarding Dining & Residential services?

#### Jill Horst, UCSB Dining Director:

- *Campus needs to understand how the dining services works as a whole before tapping into launching a program. Get knowledge.*
- *Is the program residential only or like UCLA where the dining team overlooks retail and residential? What type of dining program is on each campus, understand the ins and outs. Types of meal plans: swipe based, declining balance, dining dollars.*
- *Know what the program entails and what the campus is offering in terms of meal plans.*
- *Find alternative means for unlimited meal plan holders to participate in the program.*
- *Understand the basic fundamentals of what dining is about.*

#### UCLA Dining Services Team:

- *Have an understanding of what each meal swipe gets the student. Do the research behind the value of one meal.*

- *Ask questions regarding the legality behind the food industry. Many universities are bound to certain restrictions that many students do not know about so it's good to have a general understanding.*
- *Don't be shy. We want to hear about your proposal, we want to know why you are so passionate about the cause. Help us see why the program is imperative to the campus.*

### 2. What questions should students ask when inquiring about feasibility of a project?

#### Jill Horst:

- *Ask about how the dining program works on their campus and completely understanding what it entails.*

#### UCLA:

- *Ask logistical questions such as: how many students are we trying to reach, what is our source of funding, where will the collected food be stored, will there be someone available to sponsor the program?*
- *Many students forget this but it is important to think about what parents are going to think about this program. Will they be in accord with their son/daughter donating their meal swipes? Is there a way to introduce the parents to the Swipes program?*

### 3. What are some of the challenges that face Dining and Residential Services when considering a meal donation program?

#### Jill Horst:

- *The work on the back end: what will it take for dining services team to implement and be a part of it.*
- *Understanding the marketing aspect of Swipes for Meal program. Make sure the vouchers are meeting the people who actually need it.*

- *Making sure the people who get the meal vouchers are actually follow the dining common rules because they are not meal plan holders.*

- *What does the Swipes program do to your missed meal factor: it comes out of your cost. When a meal you do not have is being donated, what financial burden is coming to the dining services?*

- *Make sure the balance is even so you do not have to raise meal plan price. Dining wants to keep cost as low as possible for residents but still be able to give to the people in need food as well.*

- *Students should keep in mind that dining services can be a part of solving the problem, but they cannot solve it all. The whole campus should be involved in solving hunger on campus. Do not ask for everything, start small and work up to it by getting the campus involved. For example, in UCSB's pilot drive, Dining provided 75 meals and Residence Halls Association & Community Affairs Board sponsored another 125 for the residents of Casa Esperanza Homeless Center.*

- *Partnership and collaboration across campus: not getting one unit to solve the problem. Brings more awareness to the program and external outreach. Keep in mind to work with more than just dining.*

#### **UCLA:**

- *Determining the value of each swipe: What can we get for the each of the student's swipe.*
- *The availability of products that can be*



UCSB Swipes team (FROM LEFT: Erica Oren, Niki Bina, Leila Hakim) buys non-perishable foods for shelters downtown.

*donated such as raw food items vs. non-perishable food items.*

- *Legal aspects to keep both the Swipes organization as well as the university, UCLA, safe.*
- *Is the timeline that has been set up reasonable? Swipes is a program that provides immediate help but sometimes, for multiple reasons, the process can be delayed and that is where it becomes tricky to remember that both the student group and Dining Services is giving their best effort to create results.*

#### **4. What other considerations should students keep in mind when approaching a Dining & Residential Services manager?**

##### **Jill Horst:**

- *Have good communication and collaboration between the two entities. Start small with a pilot program, see what worked and what didn't then build on that*
- *Have a loose outline in what you are looking for, put something in writing (memo of understanding) so there is documentation that both parties follow. Dining wants to make sure the program will be reliable and there are equal terms that each person is following.*

**UCLA:**

- *Students should be able to answer questions regarding storage and transportation of the food items that are delivered from the swipes donations. Dining services are not able to accommodate the extra items so being prepared for these sort of questions will make the student group look extra prepared.*

**5. Based on your experience, what has made an interaction with students challenging?****Jill Horst:**

- *Since most students have a lot of energy and passion, they often want to move faster than dining is ready to move.*
- *Students may not understand the whole complexity of dining services. To avoid challenges, make sure there is face-to-face communication, trial and error, and the partnership is not one ended. You must channel the energy from both sides to find a medium.*
- *The Dining Services' schedules are busy and finding time may be a challenge. It can be overcome, but students should be mindful of that.*

**UCLA:**

- *Some student groups lose their passion early on so all the hard work and time ends up being wasted. We like to create meaningful relationships and contracts with groups so it becomes difficult when the student group does not have that continuing drive.*
- *There are a lot of behind the scenes work that happens with Dining Services. Many times, students don't know about these so students who haven't done their research will come in with false assumptions. That is why we always, always recommend to ask questions and not be shy about what it is you want to see accomplished.*
- *The yearly transition of the Swipes board becomes a little tough. Since it is a student-group, the Swipes board changes as students graduate so we get a set of fresh faces every year to work with. During this transition, it helps both sides if the new presidents are already aware of their responsibilities entail.*

**6. What have you seen worked with past projects and programs?****Jill Horst:**

- *If both entities have the right dedication, understanding, and communication, then anything can happen. Understand where each side is coming from—then the student voices and administration/dining can figure out how to come together*
- *Both sides must be open-minded. Must not come in and demand things to go one way.*
- *Building a relationship and doing it in a soft manner. Having that personal connection is important. Make sure student is able to articulate their cause. Have open dialogue and people work together face to face. If this happens, then they can evolve together.*

**UCLA:**

- *If the organization is driven by leaders who are passionate about their work, the sky's the limit. Over a period of about 5 years, Swipes has grown immensely and their name is now more recognized. However, this would not have happened if their board of leaders were not as driven. This becomes a key aspect if you want your organization to have a lasting impact.*
- *If a program starts off with formulating a strong plan then they are more likely to continue in the long haul.*
- *Reaching out to multiple contacts such as other student organizations, staff, campus leaders, etc. and creating strong relationships really help the program become more recognized.*

**7. What are some myths or misconception that students might have regarding Dining & Residential Services?****Jill Horst:**

- *People think that they are wasteful of food. This is not the case.*
- *People also assume that Dining does not care about anything outside of their dining program, which is false.*
- *People may not fully understand dining and think all they do is feed students. In reality, they care about student's well-beings. UCSB's*

dining commons uphold the values of sustainability and provide the students with organic and grass fed food. Dining Services plays an important role in the student's well-being. It teaches people healthy eating habits and gives students fuel to work in the classrooms. Also, they employ a great number of students in their Dining Commons and teach them life skills in their jobs.

- Students may think that the price of guest meal is how much they are playing for their bundled meal plans. There is a concept called the missed meal factor, which allows student's meals to be less expensive than the guest meal rate.

#### **UCLA:**

- Students think that Dining Services and Residential Life are blockers, meaning they don't want to see the Swipes program grow. This is false. We want to help as much as we can but students also need to understand that we have certain limitations to the amount of help we can provide.
- Students believe that we dislike meeting with them. Again, this is not the case. We very much like to hear what the students have to say and how we can work together to see a result.
- One of the biggest myths about a meal swipe is that it only goes towards food when in reality a portion of each meal swipe goes to paying for workers' salaries, paying the lighting bill, and many other things.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

##### **Jill Horst:**

- Overall, Dining Services wants everyone to have the ability to have a healthy meal. They are here for us!

##### **UCLA:**

- If a student group is fueled by a cause and they want to see changes in their campus, they need to reach out and make it happen. Whether it has to do with dining, financial, or overall campus life, start sending out emails and speaking to administrators. We are here to help and work with students, we are not blockers!

# 4

## CREATING A SWIPES PROPOSAL

**O**ver several weeks, the student contacts the Director of Dining Services to set up a meeting. In the meantime, the student begins to connect with a few other students that are interested in being part of the Swipes organization. Then, this group of students put together a “Swipes Proposal” to present to their dining administration formally asking for the Swipes program. To begin this process, the student leaders must do in-depth research into the campus’ meal plan. Once they understand the best way to mesh Swipes with the school’s meal plan, they are ready to prepare a proposal for Dining Services. Important points for the proposal includes:

- The option to donate meal points
- Which meal plans can donate
- How/when drives will happen
- What they want to be donated (food vs. money)
- Options of where to donate the food
- Statistics about hunger in the area

All of this is in the “Swipes 101” tool kit online. Swipes Headquarters also helps refine the proposal before submission to Dining Services.

There are often a few weeks of back and forth and eventually the program is adopted or denied.

If you need additional information regarding how to work with your campus dining services or stakeholders please email Swipes for more information.

### IF APPROVED:

Once Proposal is approved:

- Recruit a larger team of students
- Begin hosting quarterly Swipes drives
- Once the Swipes are collected, distribute them to the students and/or nearby shelter

### IF DENIED:

We move past our heartbreak and encourage students to troubleshoot and try “the ask” again with a new proposal and/or more campus support.



UCSB Swipes co-founders Ali Guthy and Shannon Mirshokri present a proposal to administration.

1. Sit down with the Dining Services Director and ask about any changes that need to be made or challenges that are facing dining services
2. If you cannot come to a mutual agreement and it becomes challenging, consider increasing public support to show dining how important the program is:
3. Engage other student leaders and faculty members to show encouragement for the program.
4. Publish an opinion editorial in your school’s newspaper about the program and how it could improve the campus and surrounding community.
5. Engage the whole campus by sending out a petition for the implementation for Swipes.

Many campuses face challenges when getting started. There is important feedback to consider and then use to move forward with an updated proposal.

## IMPLEMENTING YOUR PROGRAM: YOU HAVE SWIPES, NOW WHAT?

As it has been mentioned before, the beauty of the Swipes program is that it can be molded to fit the needs of every campus. Going along with this, distribution of Swipes to the students and surrounding community can also be decided by each campus.

The first step is to think about locations where these meal swipes are needed the most. Examples include:

- School's food pantry
- Financial aid office
- Meal vouchers distribution
- Community food shelter
- Direct distribution to surrounding homeless population

Once that has been decided, the next step is to begin thinking about the number of swipes that will go into each of the programs selected. Although this does not have to be an exact amount, it is helpful to have a rough estimate of:

- number of available swipes for the quarter
- amount that will be used for food pantry
- amount that will be converted to meal vouchers
- amount that will be used given to shelter

As mentioned above, there is a lot of flexibility within the Swipes program to allocate the swipes according to the needs of that quarter. What this means is that if there is a higher demand for meal vouchers from the financial aid office than swipes at the food pantry, then the Swipes team is able to readjust the number of swipes being accommodated to each location. This way, the meal swipes collected are being used to their maximum potential every quarter.

- Learning lessons from implementation:
- Have a plan
- Project number of swipes for the quarter
- Figure out where they will be allocated
- Figure out how many swipes each program will receive
- Readjust game plan (if needed) for next quarter



UCSB Swipes raises awareness by tabling to the campus community. PICTURED FROM LEFT: Amani Alameddin, Shannon Mirshokri, and Niki Bina.

## UCSB IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE

Distribution of meal tickets to students Swipes at UCSB is allocated a set number of meal vouchers per quarter to distribute to students through the Swipes for Us program at the Associated Student's Food Bank on campus. A liaison between the Swipes team and Food Bank team works with both organizations to come up with an application process for allocating swipes.

UCSB uses a short, honor-based application that asks for the applicant's name, year in school, and other demographic questions for collecting statistics. In addition, there is a checklist including statements like, "I certify I am a currently enrolled UCSB student and that the information I have submitted on this form is true and secure" and an open-ended response section with statements such as "I would have a need for additional meal tickets if they become available because \_\_\_\_\_."

Swipes for Us is launched in the middle of each quarter. The AS Food Bank reaches out to students in need who regular the Food Bank in advance of the program to ensure the correct people are receiving the meal vouchers.

During our first quarter launching Swipes for Us, leadership of the Swipes chapter and the AS Food Bank decided to have the option for students to fill out a longer application for the possibility to receive up to an additional ten meal swipes to the

normal one swipe each student can receive. A huge number of applications were submitted and the leadership team had to spend multiple days to read over the applications and decide who was most in need.

After the first quarter of distributing Swipes for Us, the leadership team determined that the regular need for just one swipe was so high at our campus that we would no longer keep the extended application option. Servicing more people while distributing less swipes per person was valued more than servicing fewer people while distributing a higher number of swipes per person.

As of winter 2015, Swipes for Us has distributed over 3,200 meal vouchers to fellow Gauchos in need!

## UCLA IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE

- Distribution of meal vouchers to students.
- Swipes at UCLA allocates a certain amount of the swipes donated by students to be converted to meal vouchers after every quarter's swipes drive. With the assistance of both the dining administration and the head of Economic Crisis Response Team (ECRT) at UCLA, these meal vouchers are then distributed to the students of UCLA.
- These vouchers are converted from swipes at a 2 swipes : 1 meal voucher ratio. Each meal voucher is equivalent to one Swipe at any of the UCLA Dining facilities found on the residential side of campus.
- The meal voucher program at UCLA uses a very specific system to distribute these meal vouchers. Any student can request five meal vouchers by filling out a small application, these vouchers are available to any student whether they are dealing with food insecurity or not.



UCLA students (FROM LEFT: James Blancaflor, Emily Vargas, Benjamin Boodaie, Arian Ghadiri, Divya Mowji, and Rachel McCrystal) make a home-cooked meal for the residents of the People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) Westside Center in Los Angeles.

- If a student decides to follow up, they must fill out a longer application that requests more personal information including financial information, living information, and financial aid information. If a student has indeed exhausted all resources that the UCLA institution has provided to them (loans, aid, grants) then they are presented with the opportunity to take more vouchers. Specifically, they are given 14 more vouchers to use for the entire school year.
- The Meal Voucher program is a year-long program at UCLA and is always running through the ECRT. This ECRT program has been running since 2009 and UCLA Swipes has been affiliated with this program since 2012. From the beginning of this partnership, to the current date, UCLA Swipes has donated over 10,000 meal vouchers to the ECRT Meal Voucher Program.



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## SUSTAINING AN ORGANIZATION

**S**ince students only spend an average of four years on their campus, it is imperative for them to create an influential organization that will carry on for years on end after they leave. Once the establishing of the Swipes program is complete, the organization can expand and flourish without boundaries from there on. But how can you assure that the program you spent your whole college career forming will sustain after you leave?

### STRONG LEADERSHIP

The leader of the organization is the person the members look to for support and guidance. The President(s) of Swipes should be well versed in the history of the organization and have a clear-cut vision for its future. They should be able to adequately offer mentorship while delegating tasks to each member. The leader should create a personal relationship with all of the members to learn more about their strengths, weaknesses, and to make meetings a comfortable, safe space for everyone to give their ideas and participate.

### CREATING A DRIVEN BOARD OF MEMBERS

The main way people can connect with one another and be the most productive is by having the same mission, values, and goals. When you are choosing your board members, you should make sure they are there to accomplish the Swipes' mission of alleviating hunger on campuses while raising awareness of homelessness and hunger. These students must be motivated to make a difference on campus and influential enough to make certain changes happen.

### STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH DINING SERVICES

At the end of the day, Dining Services is the one who has the main say over the whole program. If you are not seeing eye to eye with the Dining Director, then Swipes will not have a successful



UCLA Swipes board member Benjamin Boodaie hard at work making a salad to feed homeless residents at PATH Westside Center.

future. The current leader must be able to treat the Dining Services staff with the utmost respect and put their needs before your own. By doing this, Dining will appreciate your courtesy and it will create an environment for negotiation. It is important to see change and growth within your program, thus understanding the dining system and the staff members will allow you to make that change happen.

### SET PROGRAM IN PLACE

Essentially, the Swipes program will sustain as long as there is already a program set. After all of the

trial runs, pilot programs, and allocation adjustments, there will come a time when Dining Services and the Swipes team will be satisfied with how the program is working. This is an achievement on its own because it allows the organization to dedicate more time and energy into other activities and ideas. All you can do from here is expand.

## NEVER-ENDING IMAGINATION

Swipes works differently at every campus and that is because the innovators who created the program thought of a way to include it in their unique dining system. This creative innovation does not have to stop after you implement the program. Think of new ways to get the members involved with the program, interacting with the donation recipients, and fundraising to outreach to multitude of places. Partner up with other organizations and see where they need help. Offer up creative ideas and see where you can take your Swipe Out Hunger Chapter.

## CHALLENGES/SUCCESSSES

Here are some ongoing challenges and successes shared by each campus.

### SWIPES PROGRAM AT UCSB:

#### Challenges:

Raising the donation cap! The program started at a cap of 75 swipes donated, which did not accommodate all 200 residents of the shelter we were donating to. We managed to raise the cap to 100 by the end of the year and had to re-propose the program, to include Swipes for Meals, to new stakeholders to get to a cap of 1,000.

Having enough volunteers to aid with tabling in the initial stages. For the first year and a half, the organization would table every Monday through Wednesday during lunch and dinner to provide a place for eager students to donate their meals. Our board of eight students was not adequate manpower, so we had to be creative to get volunteers.

Outreach to the student body. With limited funds, it was difficult creating marketing tools that



Fundraisers are a great way to engage the students and give back to your local community.  
PICTURED: Niki Bina (UCSB)

would reach the wanted audience. The group utilized social media to overcome this problem by creating a Facebook page and posting in multiple groups about the program.

#### Successes:

Dining Services adopted the program after one meeting proposal. The group launched the first pilot program after a few months of figuring out the logistics. After much stress over whether it would be successful, the 75 meal cap was reached only after one hour of tabling!

The student body was supportive of the Swipes program. They wanted to find a way to donate multiple swipes per week to Santa Barbara's hungry citizens, as well as participate in the donation day at the shelters. The program successfully educated many students about the food insecurity epidemic around the area and encouraged them to give back to the community.

Having multiple recipients of the swipes donations. Initially, the donations from the Swipes program only supplied half of the food donated to one shelter for one lunch meal. The program now donates non-perishable foods to two shelters in downtown Santa Barbara that house over 250 residents, as well to 800 UCSB students per quarter!

## SWIPES PROGRAM AT UCLA:

### Challenges:

Expanding our work off-campus is currently one of the challenges we are facing. Every university has its own restrictions so for us it has been hard dealing with the legal aspect of this situation. However, as our program continues to grow we are coming up with ways to better handle this and have began speaking with Dining about contracts that could be made in the near future.

A challenge we are facing is finding a way to collect more data about the campus' population that is currently dealing with food insecurity. In order to reduce stigma, our food pantry is anonymous so it becomes hard to get an accurate number of students that are using/need the resources. For this reason, we have been working closely with the Economic Crisis Response team on campus to figure out a way to continue our anonymity policy but also get some data collected.

One of the challenges that we as a chapter have faced is a rise and fall in motivation and activity of board members. As time passes and people's availability changes, it is easy to see activity fall for members of the group and this usually occurs because of diffusion of responsibility. Board members often don't realize how essential they are to the team and sometimes they need a personal reminder.

### Successes:

Swipes began a program called Sandwiches for Smiles about a year ago. It started off as the board members making 40 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and then passing them out to the homeless population in Westwood. Now, it has grown to making over 300 sandwiches with the help of students on campus who have taken the time to attend this event. Also, we are now able to help not only the Westwood homeless community but also the greater Los Angeles community by donating the sandwiches to a homeless shelter nearby.

One of things Swipes is proudest about is having such a strong board of individuals that keep the organization running year after year. It's an on-going success to recruit students that are passionate about helping not only fellow students but also the surrounding community. There is truly a difference in the work and ideas that come out of a group that is mutually unified by a cause.



UCLA Swipes board members (FROM LEFT: Savannah Gardner, Jeremy Eule, Doreen Farahdel, Aaron Masjedi, and Arian Ghadiri) enjoy their time volunteering at the local homeless shelter.



UCLA students, dorm residents, and staff come together to create hygiene kits for the homeless.

One recent success that we have seen is the new implementation of a personal one-on-one evaluation system where each board member meets with the president(s) to both receive feedback on themselves as a board member as well as give feedback to the current president(s). This system is a great way to boost the overall spirit of the organization by remind members how important they really are and how strong of an asset they are to their swipes team.

# CONCLUSION

**S**wipes is a program that has been proven to be successful over the past five years to meet the need of alleviating food insecurity on college campuses around the country as well as their surrounding communities. There is an ever-increasing number of students in need of food attending higher education institutions and the ability to bridge these students out of poverty and into the world with a college degree is invaluable. Student hunger is a microcosm of many larger societal issues and cannot be solved through any one specific program or organization. Swipes is one of these programs that noticed a need and an ability for students to partner with their respective university's dining services to meet this need. This best practice guide was designed to show the support that prospective campuses will be able to receive from staff and students who are a part of this organization and have had past experience, while still allowing new campuses to be able to specialize their Swipes program to best cater to their own campus community. We hope that this best practice guide will help you evaluate your own university's climate as it relates to food security and open up dialogue to better service students and the community they belong to throughout their college career, whether it be advancing an already established Swipes program or creating one from scratch!



UCLA students living on the dorms helping to create hygiene kits for the homeless.



UCLA board members Tiana Austel, Aaron Masjedi, and Benjamin Boodaie get ready to transfer the food items to the food pantry.

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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**SWIPE OUT HUNGER**

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**FOODBANK**

*Fighting Hunger. Feeding Lives.*

