

# Developing Student Engagement By Building a Community



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## University of California Global Food Initiative Fellowship



### R'Pantry: How it began

- 62.5% of UCR undergraduate students were found to be food insecure, as determined by the 2015 NPI survey
- R'Pantry provides non-perishable and perishable foods, as well as hygiene items to UCR undergraduate and graduate students
- Some students in need avoid visiting the R'Pantry due to the negative stigma associated with food insecurity

So, now, what can we do to mitigate the negative stigma and also expand services to include all basic needs since food insecurity is a multilayered issue many college students face:

- Resource fairs
- Workshop series
- Increasing fellowship opportunities
- Collaboration with Glocally Connected
- Campus Community Sustainability Cookbook
- Food Security and Food Justice R'Course



### Building Future Student Opportunities

- Percentage of food insecure students at UCR is 20.5% higher than the UC-wide average
  - Additional measures must be taken, particularly with student engagement, as it is the student community that will be able to assist their fellow peers in need
- 2018-2019 GFI Fellows cohort to include 2 additional fellows:
  - BLUM Initiative - Basic Needs
  - California Agriculture and Food Enterprise (CAFE) – Food Security

### AfghaniSTEM and NoRoos Celebration



- Through Glocally Connected – local non-profit serving refugee families in the Inland Empire
- Bridging the gap between the Afghan refugee population, R'Pantry, R'Garden, and STEM education
- Showcasing campus (and community) resources available to assist a population facing similar struggles
- Fostering cross-cultural communication



### Campus Community Sustainability Cookbook

- Laying the foundation for developing this cookbook in both a printed and online version
- To consist of:
  - Collection of recipes contributed by UCR students
  - Cooking tips provided by UCR Dining chefs and other professionals, as well as students
  - List of on- and off-campus resources
  - Nutritional benefits of recipes – incorporating UCR Seeds of Change principles
  - Environmental impact of recipes
- Plan to be developed with the collaboration of:
  - UCR Global Food Initiative
  - UCR Healthy Campus Initiative
    - Nutrition and Healthy Eating Workgroup – Nicole Collins and Karen Fiorenza
  - The WELL – Devon Sakamoto
  - R'Pantry – Grecia Marquez
  - R'Garden – Fortino Morales
  - Highlander Chefs

### Food Security and Food Justice R'Course

- R'Courses at UCR:
  - Student-led courses in topics not taught as indicated in the course catalog
  - Other UCR students may take for 1 unit (pass/no pass)
- Facilitated in Winter 2018 and Spring 2018
  - 8 students in Winter 2018
  - 21 students in Spring 2018
- Goals of course:
  - Educate students on statistics and resources available
  - Encourage student engagement
  - Engage with greater campus community
  - Learn about current studies and initiatives related to food and basic needs insecurity
  - Apply knowledge to assist in reducing food and basic needs insecurity among peers and campus community



- Learning objectives:
  - Define food security and insecurity through history, critical theory, and academic literature
  - Be able to list the different levels of food security and insecurity and what comprises each
  - Be able to read and critically analyze published research papers/literature on food security
  - Analyze the sources and potential mitigation of the stigma associated with food insecurity
  - Connect interdisciplinary scientific research to food security
  - Participate in community programs related to food security
  - Create a concrete project to increase food security
- Students required to complete 5 hours of service learning at the R'Pantry, R'Garden, or other on-/off-campus venue providing basic needs services and write short reflections on the experience
- Students completed a final project (individually or in a group)
- Projects needed to be able to be initiated on campus and be sustainable to:
  - Raise awareness of food/basic needs security/insecurity
  - Encourage students to take action to help their peers
  - Initiate a change to combat the issue
- Winter 2018 projects included:
  - Group Meal Prep
  - Cooking at Home
  - Increasing Student Involvement at the R'Garden
- Spring 2018 project included:
  - ASUCR Food Security Training
  - Food for Fun – change through media and entertainment while collaborating with ASPB and KUCR
  - Transfer Transition Program Food Insecurity Initiative
  - Green Roofs
  - Outside Resources for the UCR Community – specifically geared towards commuter students
  - Health Insurance Workshop Series and Peer Group Education
  - Nutritious and Healthy Meals for a Change
  - Online Recipe and Resource Website
  - Rivera Library Tea Station – with snacks to assist students on the weekend
  - Milk? Yes Please! – milk alternatives



### Results, Conclusions, and Future Goals

- Created an infrastructure from which future creative projects, as well as extensions of the many components of this project will continue
- Laid the foundation for additional students to become engage through projects initiated by their very own peers
- Began engaging several Riverside STEM Academy high school students in the conversation on hunger and homelessness among college students
- Built upon an interconnected network between:
  - The WELL, R'Pantry, R'Garden, and began to include:
    - Undergraduate Education
    - Biochemistry Department (through Dr. Stephanie Dingwall)
    - CNAS Deans Office (through Dean Kathryn Uhrich)
    - UCR Board of Trustees (through Susan Atherton – current Chair Elect)
    - And hopefully many more in the future!

### Acknowledgements

- Dr. Dana Simmons, UCR Assistant Professor of History, GFI Project Mentor, and R'Course Faculty Mentor
- Dr. Chikako Takeshita, UCR Associate Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies, R'Course Faculty Mentor
- Grecia Marquez, R'Pantry Coordinator
- And many thanks to all other UCR faculty, staff, and students who collaborated on the many aspects of this project and will be continuing this work at UCR in the years to come!

### Project Goals

- Increase student engagement on the UCR campus
- Increase knowledge and accessibility of resources both on- and off-campus
- Build a network and community among UCR students, staff, and faculty, along with off-campus partners to encourage collaboration and new ideas
- Foster the next generation of advocates through creating an infrastructure from which future projects will emerge



### Hunger and Homelessness Week Resource Fair

- Thursday, November 16, 2017 from 11am-2pm in the UCR HUB Upper Plaza
  - Center of campus to:
    - mitigate the negative stigma of food/basic needs insecurity
    - attract more UCR students to seek available resources
- On- and off-campus resources included:
  - R'Pantry
  - R'Garden
  - CalFresh
  - Associated Students Program Board (ASPB)
  - CALPIRG
  - Operation Safehouse
  - Riverside Food Co-Op/Gleaners for Good
  - California Room and Board Advisor Coalition