

UMass Lowell College Student Hunger Discussion W/ Chancellor Chen and Elected Officials

Discussion and press conference on Tuesday, November 15 at UMass Lowell campus will discuss the crisis of food insecurity among college students and advocate for the passage of the legislation, "Hunger Free Campus Act,".

Lowell, Massachusetts Nov 14, 2022 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - With 37% of public university students in Massachusetts food insecure and only 20% of food, insecure students utilizing [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#) benefits before the pandemic - lawmakers will join student advocates, community organizations and, [UMASS Lowell Chancellor Julie Chen](#) on in a tour of the universities [Strive Pantry](#) along with a discussion of student food insecurity and the need to pass the "[Hunger Free Campus Act](#)" this session to provide Massachusetts institutions of higher education the funding they need to end college student hunger across the commonwealth.

In recent months the high costs of food (8% increase), gas, and other utilities caused by inflation are further choking the budgets of those struggling most. Investments in nutrition and basic needs security have never been more essential to student success.

Community organizations such as Dwelling House of Hope, MA Legal Reform Institute, Swipe Out Hunger, Greater Boston Food Bank, Mill City Grows, Community Teamwork Incorporated, and Merrimack Valley Food Bank will join students and staff from UMass Lowell, Middlesex Community College, and Salem State College along with elected officials in a conversation about how state legislators can end college student hunger across MA.

WHAT: Press Conference, Discussion, and Tour of UMass Lowell's student food pantry in support of the Hunger Free Campus Act.

WHO: Speakers and Attendees include –

- Chancellor Julie Chen, UMass Lowell
- State elected officials from Lowell and surrounding communities
- Student leaders from UMass Lowell and Salem State College
- Ann Ciaraldi, *Associate Dean-Student Affairs, Compliance & Violence Prevention* at UMass Lowell
- Levenia Furusa, *Executive Director* at Dwelling House of Hope
- Katie Kelly, MA Legal Reform Institute
- Zoe Duffield, *Advocacy and Organizing Manager* at Swipe Out Hunger
- Kate Adams, *Policy Manager* at Greater Boston Food Bank
- Jonathan Crockett, *Essential Needs & Community Resources Office* at Middlesex Community College
- Maggie Montoya, *Community Education Coordinator* at Mill City Grows
- Nicholas DiGiammo, *Youth Services Program Manager* at Community Teamwork Incorporated
- Nancy Goss, *Member Services Coordinator* at Merrimack Valley Food Bank

WHEN:

- Tuesday, November 15, 2022 -
 - 3:00 PM - 3:15 PM Student testimonies on college student hunger and legislative

briefing by UMass Lowell administrators.

- 3:15 PM-3:25 PM Comments by UMass Lowell Chancellor Julie Chen
- 3:25 PM -3:45 PM Discussion between student leaders, elected officials, and school administrators.
- 3:45 PM - 4:00 PM [Strive Pantry](#) tour and press statements with elected officials.

WHERE: UMass Lowell, Saab Emerging Technologies & Innovation Center (ETIC) Atrium [40 University Ave, Lowell, MA 01854](#)

About The Hunger-Free Campus Bill:

This visionary bill ([S.2811](#) and [H.4697](#)) aims to reimagine how college campuses tackle food insecurity. The legislation creates an Office of Capacity Building Services at the [Massachusetts Department of Higher Education](#) to provide funding, technical assistance, and grant opportunities to campuses aiming to address food insecurity.

The bill incentivizes campuses to leverage existing resources and maximize enrollment in federal nutrition programs. Additionally, the bill urges campuses to create student-led food insecurity task forces to explore instituting anti-hunger initiatives to be considered for grant funding. These initiatives include student meal-sharing programs, emergency funds for students to address their basic needs, campus food insecurity surveys, on-campus Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) vendors, and more.

This bill offers an intentional menu of options for schools to have the resources and capacity to tackle food insecurity on their campuses.

Kate Adams, Policy Manager, Greater Boston Food Bank said, “There is a critical need to empower the community and public colleges and universities to meet the basic needs of their students. Hunger-Free Campus legislation will create a framework to provide targeted hunger relief resources like funding for SNAP outreach coordinators on campus. We’re grateful to UMass Lowell for hosting this event, and to legislators across the state who continue to lift up this issue and will fight for the right solutions on Beacon Hill.”

Jaime Hansen, Executive Director of Swipe Out Hunger said, “Massachusetts students returned to campus this school year after enduring the physical, emotional, and financial challenges of the pandemic. The inflated cost of food and other basic needs has tens of thousands of Bay State students on the brink of dropping out of higher education. Last year, leaders in Boston made the first bold move to address this crisis head-on and have the opportunity this legislative session to take the next step in ending college student hunger in Massachusetts.”

About The Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Coalition:

The Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Coalition was formed in the fall of 2019 to address food insecurity among high-need populations enrolled in Massachusetts public colleges and universities.

Collectively, the coalition is working to leverage and expand existing resources and services including maximizing student enrollment in federal nutrition programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), supporting meal swipe options with campus food vendors, ensuring that campuses work with Massachusetts food banks to expand food pantries, and other initiatives designed to address food insecurity among the student population. Our goal is to ensure equity and incorporate

student voices as we work to make Massachusetts college campuses hunger-free.

Media Contact

Swipe Out Hunger

Robb@swipehunger.org

718-218-4823

Source : Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Coalition

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