

INITIALLY APPROVED BY ASUWT SENATE: AUGUST 2024

FOOD EQUITY & BASIC NEEDS TASK FORCE

STRATEGIC PLAN

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Food Equity & Basic Needs Task Force Overview

Beginning in the 2023-2024 academic year, ASUWT established the Food Equity & Basic Needs Task Force to advocate for improvements to existing student support programs at UW Tacoma. This strategic plan aims to build upon the foundational work of the 2023-2024 task force to further expand ASUWT's advocacy efforts on issues related to student food insecurity and basic needs.

With the passage of the 2024 ASUWT Constitution, ASUWT is mandated to have two task forces in operation each academic year, dedicated to advocating for the enhancement of specific aspects of the student experience at UW Tacoma. All ASUWT Task Forces, as mandated by the Constitution, are to operate under the guiding principles of data-driven advocacy to ensure that all initiatives are informed by accurate and relevant student data.

This strategic plan outlines the operations of the Food Equity & Basic Needs Task Force for the next three academic years, detailing key performance indicators (KPIs) that must be met for the Task Force's stated goal to be met. The ASUWT Senate approved the original strategic plan in August 2024 and retains the authority to amend the plan and its KPIs as needed, as outlined in the ASUWT Bylaws.

Demonstrated Need

Establishing the Food Equity & Basic Needs Task Force is imperative in addressing the severe and growing issue of basic needs access among UW Tacoma students. Research conducted by the ASUWT in Winter 2024 revealed that 44% of UW Tacoma students are experiencing low or very low food security.

This trend of increasing food insecurity is not a new issue concerning UW Tacoma students. Dr. Christine Stevens, Nursing & Healthcare Leadership faculty member, has found similar trends in her biannual research. Since 2016, the percentage of food-insecure students at UW Tacoma has been rising: 36% in 2016, 42% in 2018, and 48% in 2022. Nationally, student food insecurity rates are only 23% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020) putting UW Tacoma's food insecurity rates at **double** the national average.

Additionally, the stigma associated with utilizing free food resources on campus has shown to impact students' willingness to seek help. 55.6% of students at UW Tacoma report experiencing stigma that impact their willingness to utilize these resources on campus. Consequently, despite the high rates of food insecurity among students at UW Tacoma, between 71% to 91% of students report not having used the available free food resources on campus in the last 12 months.

Finally, anecdotal evidence has suggested that UW Tacoma students are facing broader issues related to affordable housing. The National College Health Assessment (NCHA) conducted in Spring 2023 indicated that approximately 2% of students live in temporary housing, suggesting that more data is needed.

In light of these metrics, the Food Equity & Basic Needs Task Force must exist to advocate and work towards campus, city, and state-wide programs to support students to ensure their success while attending UW Tacoma.

Task Force Mission and Goal

Mission

To address food insecurity and other basic needs concerns among UW Tacoma students to ensure their success.

Goal

Create a supportive campus environment that ensures all students have access to basic needs resources by June 2027.

Task Force Timeline

2024-2025

DATA COLLECTION, PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & AWARENESS BUILDING

Collect additional student data to inform advocacy efforts, further develop campus and community partnerships, and implement awareness-building initiatives with partners.

Prepare de-stigmatization campaign for 2025-2026.

2025-2026

EXECUTION OF CAMPUS-WIDE DE-STIGMATIZATION CAMPAIGN

Continue awareness and advocacy efforts to address student basic needs concerns.

Execute the planned year-long awareness campaign focused on de-stigmatization and increasing student support resource utilization.

2026-2027

EVALUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Continue awareness and advocacy efforts. Conduct evaluations of existing programs using surveys, gather student feedback to determine the effectiveness of taskforce's efforts.

Work with campus and community partners to make previous year's efforts continual and sustainable.

Evaluate overall progress, determine if the taskforce needs to continue, and create a new strategic plan with updated KPIs if necessary.



Timeline | 2024-2025

SUMMER QUARTER

- Develop Detailed Year-Long Plan with Tasks
- Develop Student Survey & Marketing Plan to evaluate KPIs
- Begin preliminary conversations with campus & community partners
- Train & Onboard Task Force Employees

FALL QUARTER

- Launch Student Survey
- Engage with students to increase student participation on survey
- Establish regular meetings with partners to coordinate efforts surrounding raising awareness & de-stigmatization of campus-wide resources
- Release Quarterly Report to Campus Community

WINTER QUARTER

- Support the Legislative Action Council (LAC) to advocate at the state legislature for funding to address student basic needs
- Prepare materials and strategies for 2025-2026 Resource Awareness & De-Stigmatization Campaign with partners
- Release student survey results to campus community
- Release Quarterly Report to Campus Community

SPRING QUARTER

- Continue & Conclude Resource Awareness & De-Stigmatization Campaign
- Conduct end-of-year review of Task Force; modify strategic plan if needed
- Release Annual Report to Campus Community

Timeline | 2025-2026

SUMMER QUARTER

- Have (re)introductions with campus & community partners
- Train & Onboard Task Force Employees
- Prepare ASUWT team for Resource Awareness & De-Stigmatization Campaign

FALL QUARTER

- Launch Resource Awareness & De-Stigmatization Campaign
- Continue awareness & advocacy efforts
- Monitor and evaluate the initial impact of the campaign
- Release Quarterly Report to Campus Community

WINTER QUARTER

- Support the Legislative Action Council (LAC) to advocate at the state legislature for funding to address student basic needs
- Continue executing the awareness/de-stigmatization campaign
- Adjust campaign strategies based on ongoing feedback
- Release Quarterly Report to Campus Community

SPRING QUARTER

- Finalize plans for Awareness & De-Stigmatization Campaign
- Work with partners to plan next year's awareness building efforts
- Conduct end-of-year review of Task Force; modify strategic plan if needed
- Release Annual Report to Campus Community

Timeline | 2026-2027

SUMMER QUARTER

- Have (re)introductions with campus & community partners
- Train & Onboard Task Force Employees
- Continue working with partners to plan upcoming quarter's awareness building efforts
- Plan comprehensive data collection campaign

FALL QUARTER

- Continue awareness & advocacy efforts
- Work with partners to determine how to make programmatic elements sustainable long-term (awareness/de-stig work)
- Conduct student survey collection
- Release Quarterly Report to Campus Community

WINTER QUARTER

- Support the Legislative Action Council (LAC) to advocate at the state legislature for funding to address student basic needs
- Continue work with partners to determine how to make programmatic elements sustainable long-term (awareness/de-stig work)
- Release student survey results to campus community
- Release Quarterly Report to Campus Community

SPRING QUARTER

- Conduct end-of-year review of Task Force
- Compare survey findings to KPIs; Decide whether to propose a new strategic plan to the Senate
- Release Annual Report to Campus Community

Task Force Goal KPIs

The Task Force's Goal will be considered as completed once the following KPIs have been met:

10%

decrease in student Food Insecurity as defined by the USDA by June 2027.

35%

increase in student utilization of Student Support Resources by June 2027.

15%

decrease in students reporting that basic needs insecurities negatively impacted their academic performance by June 2027.

85%

of reported students awareness across all Student Support Resources by June 2027.

85%

of students report feeling comfortable utilizing Student Support Resources by June 2027

The Food Equity & Basic Needs Task Force may amend these KPIs with approval from the ASUWT Senate