



Undergraduate Student Experience in the Research University 2021 Food and Housing Insecurity

The Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) is a consortium of research institutions in the Association of American Universities that administer a common survey to generate knowledge and help further the goals of higher education in general and at the member institutions specifically. The SERU/Your Voice survey is a comprehensive survey of all undergraduate students at Texas A&M University (TAMU) intended to give faculty, students, and administration in-depth insights into the undergraduate experience. SERU was most recently administered to TAMU undergraduate students at all locations in spring 2021. A total of 12,799 undergraduates completed at least part of the survey, representing 25% of the overall undergraduate population. This report addresses the College Station campus, over 10,000 students. Respondents were asked a variety of questions about food and housing insecurity.

Figure 1 indicates that more than one-third of undergraduate respondents worried about the cost of food and housing in the last academic year. Men and women answered similarly for all of these questions, as did students of all classifications. Black and Hispanic students seemed to encounter these situations more than students of other ethnicities. Half or more of the Black and Hispanic respondents worried about the cost of housing and that their food would run out before getting more money to buy more.

Figure 1: Often or sometimes true in the current academic year

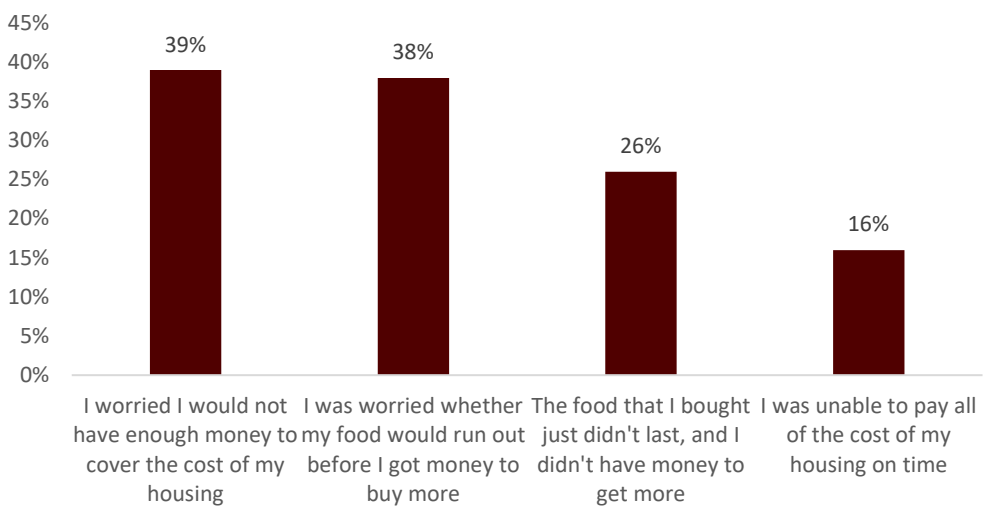
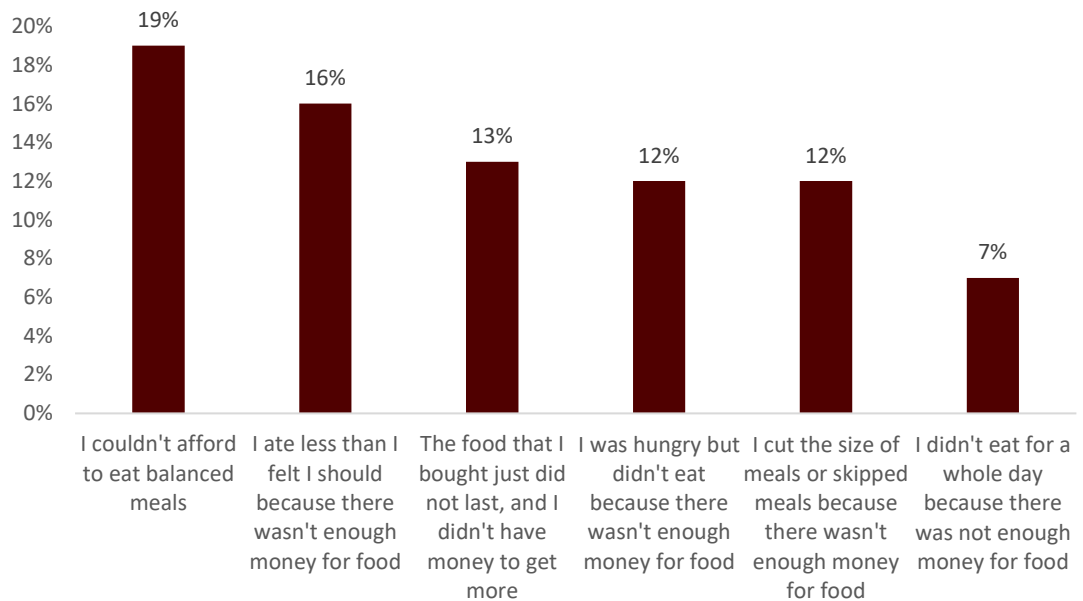


Figure 2 shows that 7-19% of students experienced some aspect of food insecurity due to finances. Men and women answered similarly. Juniors and seniors seemed to have slightly more food insecurity than freshmen and sophomores. For example, 15% of freshmen could not afford to eat balanced meals compared to 21% of seniors. Black and Hispanic students indicated more food insecurity for all of these questions when compared to other ethnicities. For example, 25% of Hispanic and 29% of Black undergraduates could not afford to eat balanced meals.

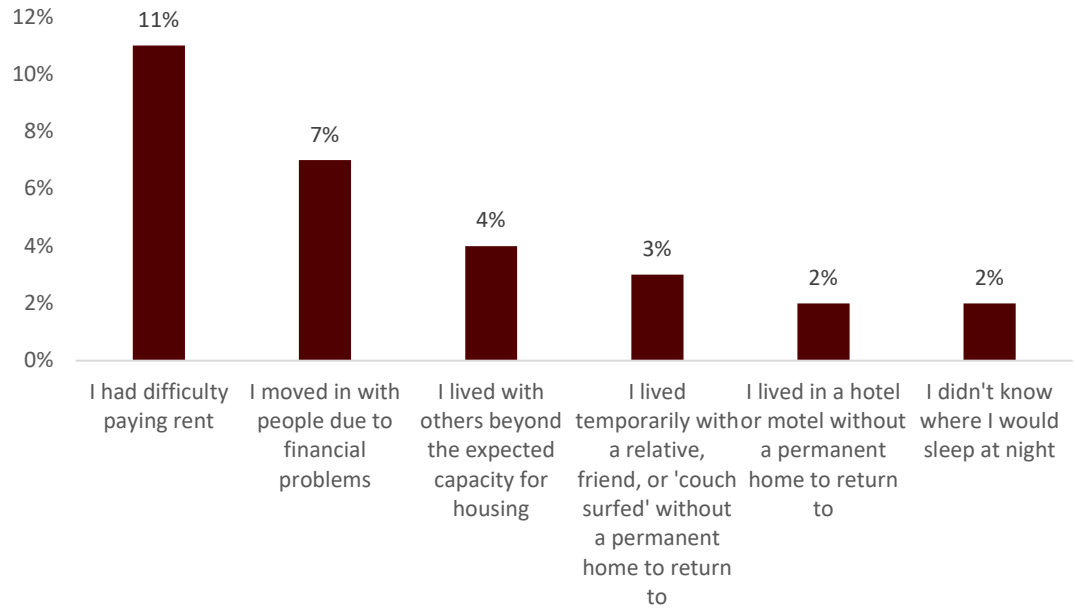
Figure 2: Experienced somewhat often, often, or very often in the last 12 months





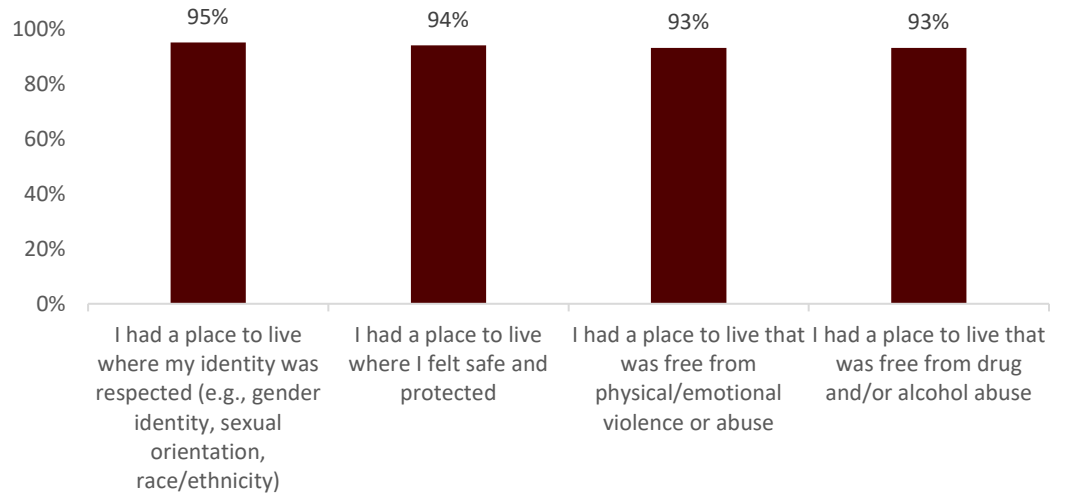
Regarding living situations, Figure 3 illustrates that 2-11% of undergraduates experienced housing insecurity in the last year. There was no difference between men and women. Juniors and seniors indicated more experience than freshmen and sophomores with difficulty paying rent, moving in with others, and exceeding expected housing capacity. As an example, 13% of juniors and seniors had rent difficulty, compared to 7% of freshmen. Black students experienced housing difficulties more than other ethnicities; 17% indicated difficulty paying rent.

Figure 3: Experienced *somewhat often, often, or very often* in the last 12 months



While not about the cost of housing, Figure 4 demonstrates that the vast majority of students felt like they had a safe place to live. There were no differences by gender, classification, or ethnicity.

Figure 4: Living situation (always and often true)



Conclusion

More than one-third of respondents worried about their financial situation related to food and housing. Some students had significant money issues related to their living situation and ability to eat enough healthy food. Many of the issues were similar across different populations, although there were some differences based on classification and ethnicity.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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