To: Dr. Erika Paterson

From: Helen Zhou

Date: February 23, 2023

Subject: Increasing access and awareness to the AMS Food Bank for UBC students

**Introduction**

As cost of living continues to rise in Vancouver, many UBC students are developing increasing affordability concerns as they are faced with the challenge of meeting their basic needs for food, shelter, etc. With UBC being an institution that promotes excellence in learning and engagement, it is important to ensure that student health and wellbeing is prioritized through the availability of resources, such as the AMS Food Bank. However, recent discussion among students suggest that many individuals have faced or currently faced food insecurity. Moreover, there continues to remain a stigma among the student population on accessing food insecurity resources, which creates barriers for access and awareness.

**Statement of Problem**

In the recent months, funding for food security programs at UBC, including the AMS Food Bank, have decreased. This lack of funding creates greater challenges in providing support for food insecure students and in finding ways to increase awareness on the availability of a food bank on campus.

**Proposed Solution**

A potential solution to addressing access and awareness on the AMS Food Bank is to increase funding and assist in initiatives for greater advertising of this food security program. This will provide the food bank with more stability and confidence in supporting students as well as decrease the stigma and barriers for access by encouraging understanding.

**Scope**

To evaluate the feasibility of increasing access and awareness on the AMS Food Bank, the following area of inquiries will be explored:

1. What proportion of UBC students are already aware of the AMS Food Bank and know how to access it?
2. How many UBC students have faced or currently face food insecurity? What percentage of these students have a difficult time reaching out due to current stigma?
3. How large is the current demand for the AMS Food Bank?
4. What are the potential benefits and drawbacks for increasing funding for the food bank?
5. How do students gain awareness on the resources available to them at UBC?
6. What are the most effective ways to reach UBC students and let them know about this resource?

**Methods**

The primary data source will be through survey responses from UBC students regarding their experience with food security on the UBC Vancouver campus. Results from this survey will be useful in providing insights, guidance, and perspectives on current awareness of the AMS FoodBank as well as knowledge surrounding access.

Secondary sources will include past UBC campus-wide student experience surveys which include topics that cover food security and accessibility. Additional sources include publications on the importance of increasing access and awareness on campus food banks.

**My Qualifications**

As a previous Food, Nutrition, and Health student in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, I have extensive experience studying the prevalence of food security issues in various capacities. Additionally, I was previously involved with a student-run initiative, Agora Cafe, which offers low-cost meals for UBC students and aims to promote accessibility and nutrition. Therefore, I am very familiar with the food security initiatives on campus as well as the challenges surrounding access and availability.

**Conclusion**

Overall, addressing this specific area of food insecurity at UBC is an essential first step in promoting student health and wellbeing. It is also an opportunity for students to connect with one another regarding a common challenge and reduce the stigma in seeking assistance. By further exploring and expanding on the proposed areas of inquiry, I will be able to determine the possibility of increasing access and awareness on this vital student resource. With your approval, I will begin research immediately.