

# A Virtual Cooking Class To Address UWT Student Food Insecurity

## Introduction

Students do not get the nutrition they need:

- “In Washington, about 1 in 7 people are food insecure at some time throughout the year” (TPCHD 2016).
- One-third of UWT students meet federal definition of food insecure (Fyall et al. 2019).
- “Food insecure respondents appeared to be accessing a poorer quality of food through greater consumption of takeaway and fast food” (Butcher et al. 2020).

Food banks are underused due to stigma:

- “Greedy”, “abusing the system”, “lazy”, “homeless” are common stereotypes (Waland et al. 2021).
- Food pantries are implementing strategies to overcome barriers, such as childcare and transportation to provide nutritional education to the community (Waland et al. 2021).

Students do not know how to cook:

- Students with greater confidence in their cooking skills have a better diet (Miller et al. 2023).
- University students had modest improvement in confidence to cook and consume fresh food after a cooking class (Margerison et al. 2024).

## Project Goals

This proposed project aims to address UWT student food insecurity, lack of cooking skills, need for nutritional education, and the need to overcome the stigma of using food banks.

- Creation of a virtual cooking class held on UWT Instagram IGTV.
- Increased utilization of NW Harvest, UWT pantry, UWT Giving Garden, and Nourish Mobile Food Bank.
- Reduction in financial hardship in accessing and preparing food.
- Education in nutrition value, food storage, food resource management skills.

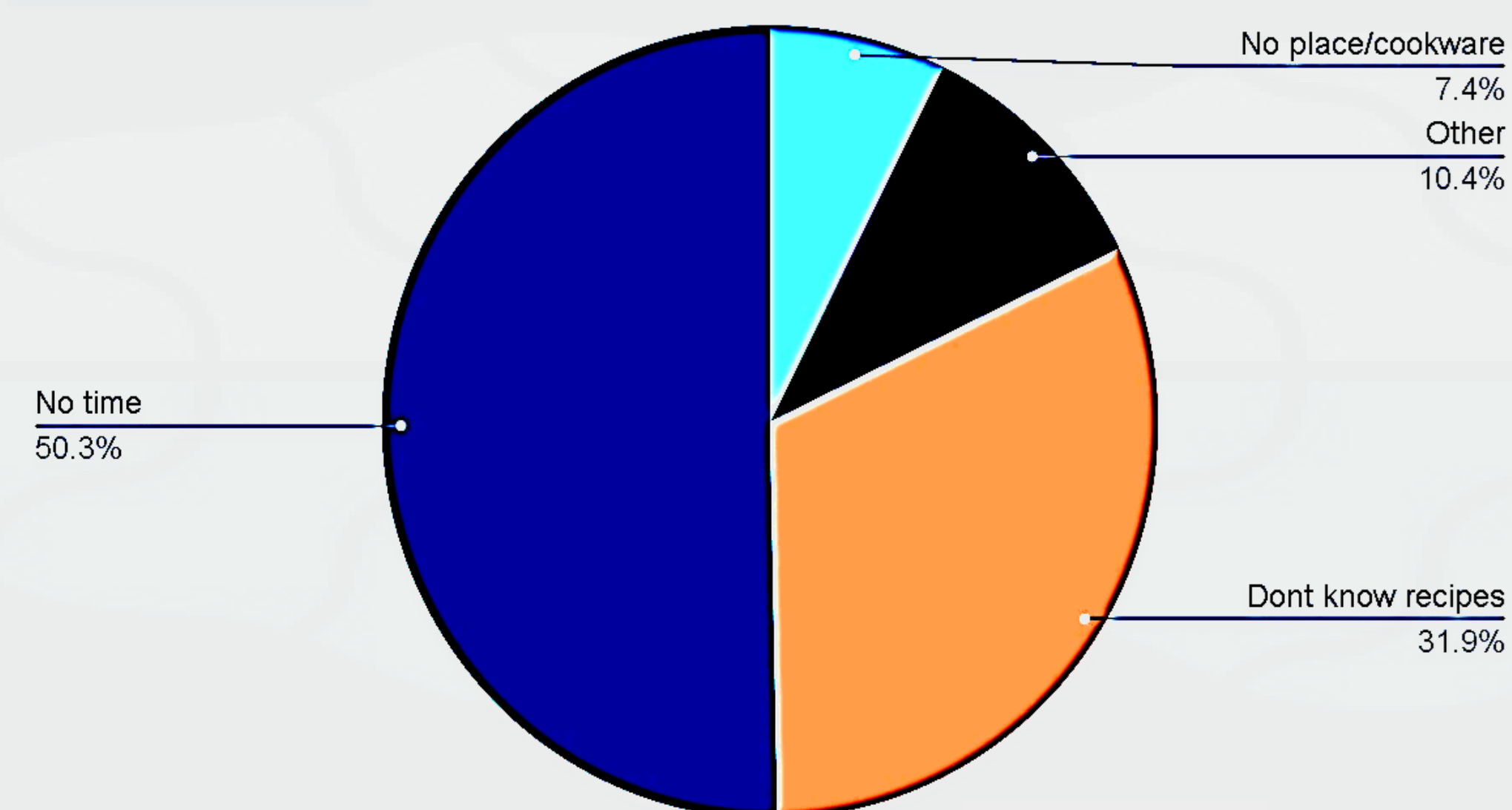
## Sustainability

- **Environment:** This project will help students cook for themselves, which will reduce packaging, energy usage, greenhouse gas emissions, and food waste (Mackie and Wemhoff 2020).
- **Equity:** This project will help students access fresh food and nutrition/dietary education, reducing food insecurity and increase community involvement (Waland et al. 2021).
- **Economy:** Improving students' cooking skills will reduce amount spent on fast and prepackaged food, reducing a source of financial hardship (Fyall et al. 2019). This project also helps create student jobs on campus and encourages community involvement.

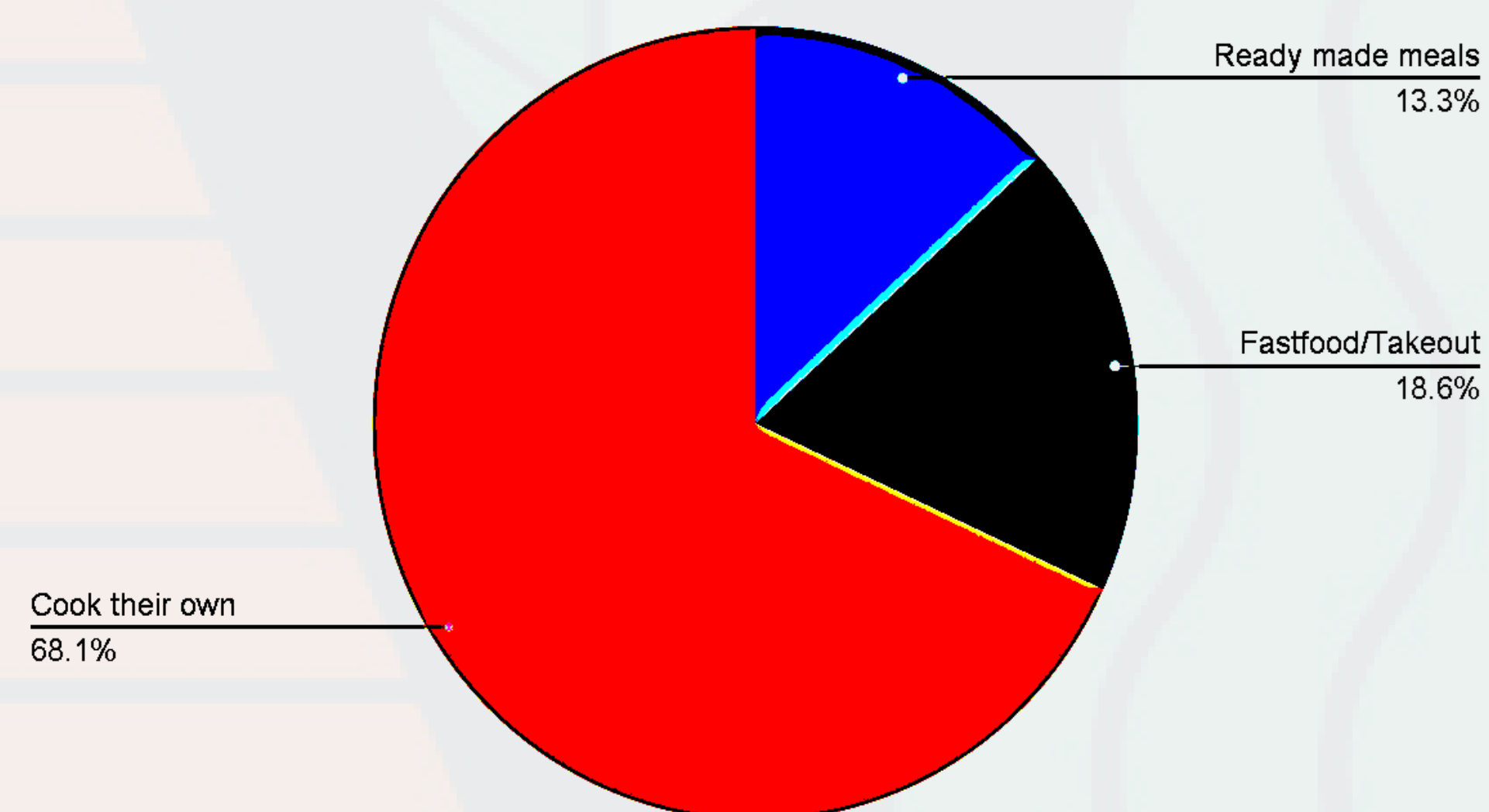
## Insecurity

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## Results



**Figure 1:**  
Why People Are Not Cooking More.



**Figure 2:**  
Students' Primary Source of Food.



## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Northwest Harvest for assisting with the planning process of this food security proposition.

We also would like to thank Jim Gawel and Peter Selkin for guidance, support and patience.



## Implementation

Completed:

- Conducted student surveys.
  - Students need fast and easy recipes (Figure 1)
  - Over 30% of students are not cooking for themselves (Figure 2)
- Contacted NW Harvest Food Bank (NWHFB) with food inquiries.

In Process:

- Advertise survey links/QR codes for students to sign in to participate in the class on UWT IGTV.
- Gather food from NWHFB.
- Email link to those signed up to receive food and meet in central gathering place.
- Students receive food.
- The team goes live and conduct class.
- Eventually will be taken over by UWT Pantry/student job.

## Assessment Plan

- Survey students' cooking experience.
- Gather qualitative data on the students' overall experience.
- Calculate cooking class overall effectiveness.

## Student Involvement Opportunities

- Opportunity for student employment.
- Jobs include supervising, editing/organization of videos.

## Future Resources Needed

- Food: Provided through Northwest Harvest.
- Part-time position: Conduct cooking class, supervisor, could fall under UWT pantry.
- Community involvement.

## References

