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A Virtual Cooking Class to Address UWT Student Food Insecurity

College students on non-residential campuses often suffer from limited access to culturally relevant and healthy foods. Commuter campuses often lack food services while requiring more travel time and transportation costs. This leaves students with little time or money for cooking meals; commercial restaurants can be expensive and unhealthy. At UW Tacoma, a primarily non-residential commuter campus, a third of students meet the federal definition of food insecurity, over 25% skipped meals, and over 10% lost weight according to a 2019 survey report (Fyall et al. 2019). To learn what prevents UWT students from cooking healthy meals, we devised a student survey as part of our class (TESC 301 Sustainability in Action). We found that over 50% of UWT students don't have time to prepare a meal and at least 31.9% rely on ready-made meals or fast food as their primary source for a meal. Using these results, we propose a virtual cooking class, where we will (1) assist students in retrieving ingredients from local food sources such as the UWT Giving Garden, UWT Pantry, and Nourish Mobile Food Bank, (2) introduce them to quick, healthy, and culturally relevant recipes, and (3) inform students about meal prep and storage. We will recruit students to record and share their cooking on UW Tacoma's IGTV account. This proposal will also make available training to create culturally relevant foods not found on campus. We expect that this resource will improve student health and help students manage time and money.