“I just knew that you get out of high school and you go to college. That’s what you do, and that’s what I did ... It just feels like you can’t get a decent job ... I knew I had to get an education.”

— Chloe
“I don’t want to see myself where my mom is. I don’t want to ever have to depend on a guy to take care of my daughter and me. I look at people who don’t go to college and I know I’ve got to do something. Without a college education you can’t get a good job anywhere.”

— Alicia
“I want to have a good job and enough money to support my family. To have everything paid, all of their bills, and help my parents and my family in Nepal.”

— Nima
Most community college students never get to graduation. **Our hypotheses about why are often wrong.**
The New Economics of College

- College prices are higher than ever
- Most family incomes are stagnant
- The safety net is shredded
- Work doesn’t pay
- Most public colleges are underfunded
“I’m having trouble providing for my mom. At times she needs help so I’ve been helping with her bills... Yeah sometimes I feel like I don’t want to pay for this, but at the same time, when I look back and I needed this when I was younger, she worked hard for me.”
Official college costs often understate true living expenses.
Prices rise over time:

- As students don’t re-file FAFSA
- As state aid runs out
- As institutional aid is removed
- As academic requirements trip students up
CASH RULES EVERYTHING AROUND ME
It’s easy to forget Maslow
I couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.

Did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money for food?

Did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?

3 or more days: Did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?

Did you lose weight because there wasn’t enough money for food??

I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.

The food that I bought just didn't last and I didn’t have money to get more.

Were you ever hungry but didn’t eat because there wasn’t enough money for food?

Did you ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food?

3 or more days: Did you ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food?
Housing Security & Homelessness

- Moved in with other people
- Did not pay full amount of utilities
- Moved two or more times
- Did not pay full amount of rent
- Had a rent increase that made it difficult to pay
- Lived with others beyond the expected capacity of the housing
- Thrown out of home
- Stayed in an abandoned building, car, other place not meant for housing
- Evicted from home
- Stayed in a shelter
- Not knowing where you were going to sleep, even for one night
33,000 students
70 community colleges
24 states (including CA)
56% food insecure
51% housing insecure
14% homeless
• 20,000 students
• 35 universities
• 14 states

• 36% food insecure
• 36% housing insecure
• 9% homeless
Homeless Prevalence
Last 12 Months

- White & non-LGBTQ: 4%
- Black & non-LGBTQ: 7%
- White & LGBTQ: 8%
- Black & LGBTQ: 16%
Homeless Prevalence
Last 12 Months

- Parent & Community College: 11%
- Veteran & Community College: 14%
- Pell & Community College: 15%
- Former Foster Youth: 24%
Students experiencing basic needs insecurity spend as much time on college, but more time working & less time sleeping.
Without their basic needs secured, students feel ashamed, alone, and unable to focus on learning. They often feel hopeless.
We can and must do better.
Step 1:
Remember, students are humans first.
Step 2:
Commit to a culture of caring that goes beyond charity. Change systems, policies, and practices.
Step 3:

Ask questions. Your college has resources both on and off-campus to help students.

- Emergency aid, food pantry, SNAP access, and more. Find out where they are and who can help.

Your job is **not** to be a social worker— but you do need to know one.
Help students connect to every resource:

- Use every dollar to promote completion, including Pell
- Host SNAP sign-up fairs on campus
- Push for free tax prep to get the EITC
Help students connect to every resource:
• Create a “Swipe Out Hunger Program”
• Ensure the food pantry has fresh produce
• Fund gas cards and SEPTA passes
Poor communication is a barrier:
Examine all student-facing material and redesign it if needed.
Grow an emergency aid fund and make sure it functions *FAST* and without red tape.
Step 4: Offer support on the syllabus.

“Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.”
Step 5: Share the data. Share the stories. Humanize. Destigmatize.
Advocate

- For access to public benefits for college students
- For expanding the national school lunch program
- For affordable housing
- For work that pays
- For a financing model for public higher education that is inclusive and effective.
Pass the mic.
Help students speak out.

RealCollege.org
Launching 9/29/18

THE hope CENTER
FOR COLLEGE, COMMUNITY, AND JUSTICE

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