

Student Resource Website Update Proposal

Submitted by the Social Justice Leadership Cohort of the Department of Women's and Gender Studies

External Research:

The Social Justice Leadership Cohort (SJL) reviewed the student resources available at several of UNH's competitor institutions including:

- [Dartmouth](#)
- [University of Rhode Island](#)
- [University of Vermont](#)
- [Howard University](#)
- [College of the Holy Cross](#)

We wanted to see how other universities with comparable resources to UNH handled food-insecurity on their campuses and within their student communities. To do this we decided to see how many clicks it took to navigate on each student resource website and find resources for food-insecure students. Each website was different, but the ones SJL cohort members found most useful all had a variety of resources meant for a diverse array of possible situations.

Among the institutions we reviewed, two were public land-grant universities, and the rest were specifically chosen for being similar to UNH. We found that universities with the easiest to navigate student resource websites typically shared several common factors. They typically included:

- Images
- Simple captions
- Diverse resources with consistent and recognizable language

Internal Research:

The SJL cohort explored the UNH student resource system for similar assistance and found several different student resource webpages with conflicting information. The [CFAR student resource website](#) includes resources for health care and health insurance but not for food or housing insecurity, the [A-Z campus resources website](#) doesn't have any search results for "food insecure," "swipe it forward," or "basic needs," but has some health care results and the [Beauregard Center student resource website](#) has no resources for food/ housing/ financially insecure students. The most accessible webpage was the [student life resources website](#) because it included captioned images for each resource and included a diverse selection of resources, but this webpage still does not include resources for food/ housing/ financially insecure students unless you know to navigate to the [basic needs support webpage](#).

Proposed Website Updates

In order to better address the needs of struggling students, the SJL cohort proposes that UNH consolidate student needs to a single online student resources [hub](#). This resource hub should include all financial hardship, food insecurity, housing insecurity, physical and mental healthcare, and academic assistance resources available to UNH students in order to circumvent

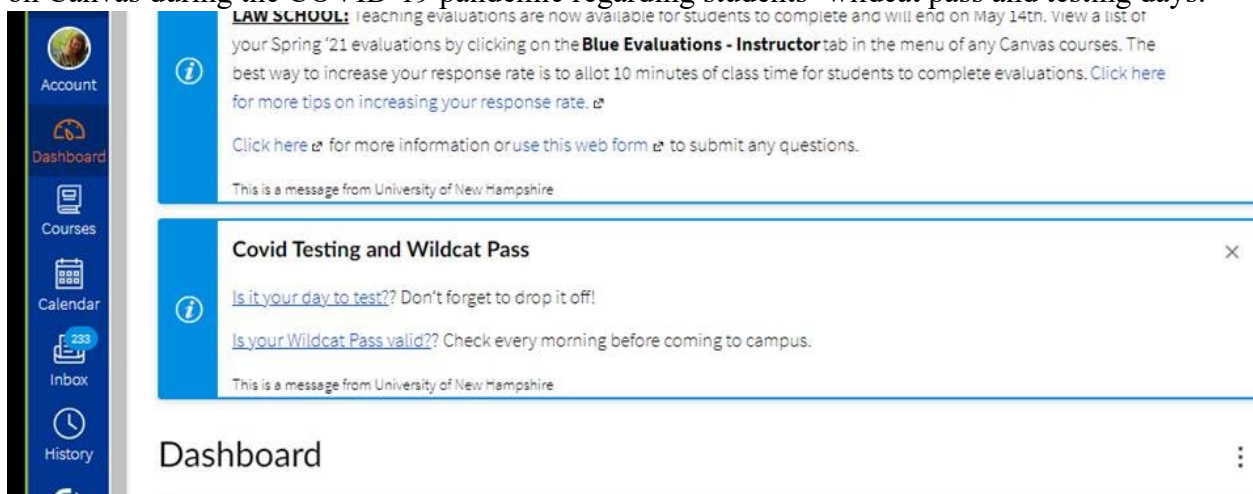
the issue of conflicting information on various webpages. This could be achieved by adding a bubble on the basic needs resources website that is linked to the basic needs support webpage and then informing professors, lecturers, or any other UNH employees engaging with students to recommend this website to students in need. The basic needs bubble would need to be clearly labelled so students know that basic needs mean food/ housing/ financial assistance, but then students would at least have an easier time navigating resources efficiently. Another way we could make navigating resources online simpler is to have IT update the basic needs website so that it is more likely to come up when students search “student resources” “financial assistance,” or other similar terms. The reason being students who are new to UNH or our community may not know what the language “basic needs” means, and this could hinder their search for resources if the basic needs webpage doesn’t pop up, or is ignored because at first glance it doesn’t seem relevant.

In order to make resources as accessible as possible, we ask that UNH faculty and staff be kept informed regarding where to direct students in need. To effectively communicate this information with students we propose that a link to basic needs resources be included in the required syllabus text along with a brief explanation of who and what the basic needs resources are intended for. For example:

Basic Needs Resources

Struggling with food or housing insecurity can have a significant impact on a student’s overall success. If you are struggling to meet these basic needs there are resources that may help you. Please contact (insert appropriate contact here, whether that is CFAR, or perhaps a student resource worker) or go to the basic needs website at <https://www.unh.edu/student-life/basic-needs> for more resources and information. Your personal well-being is critical to your success and the University of New Hampshire wants to offer you support any way that we can.

It may also be helpful to include this information on Canvas, similar to the flags that have been on Canvas during the COVID-19 pandemic regarding students’ wildcat pass and testing days.



This would be able to act as a pop-up reminder for students who may begin to struggle as the semester progresses and could allow UNH to help assist students before there is a more complex crisis type of a situation.

References

- 1) Key Informant interviews with: Center for Academic Resources, UNH Housing and Residential Life, UNH Athletics, Health and Wellness, and Waysmeet
- 2) Davidson AR, Morrell JS. Food Insecurity Prevalence Among University Students in New Hampshire. *J Hunger Environ Nutr* 2018.