

Food Insecurity at McCourt

by FaHRM
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Agenda

1. Food Insecurity at Georgetown
2. History of FaHRM Project
3. Food Insecurity at McCourt
4. Policy Recommendations



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What is Food Insecurity?

“ A lack of consistent access to enough affordable and nutritious food.”

[USDA](#)

Food Insecurity at Georgetown

In 2016, a Georgetown University Student Association (GUSA) survey found that:

- 54 percent of the 351 students polled had experienced food insecurity during their time at Georgetown.
- Two-thirds of those food insecure students were on financial aid, which means at least part of their meal plan was covered by the university

There has been no explicit research done at the Graduate student level. Response rate to the previous survey was 7.7%

[Source](#)

History of FaHRM Project



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Meeting with Student Affairs about best next steps

Survey Creation for Grad Schools (with McCourt as pilot)

Administering Survey

Data Analysis

Policy Creation

Food Insecurity at McCourt

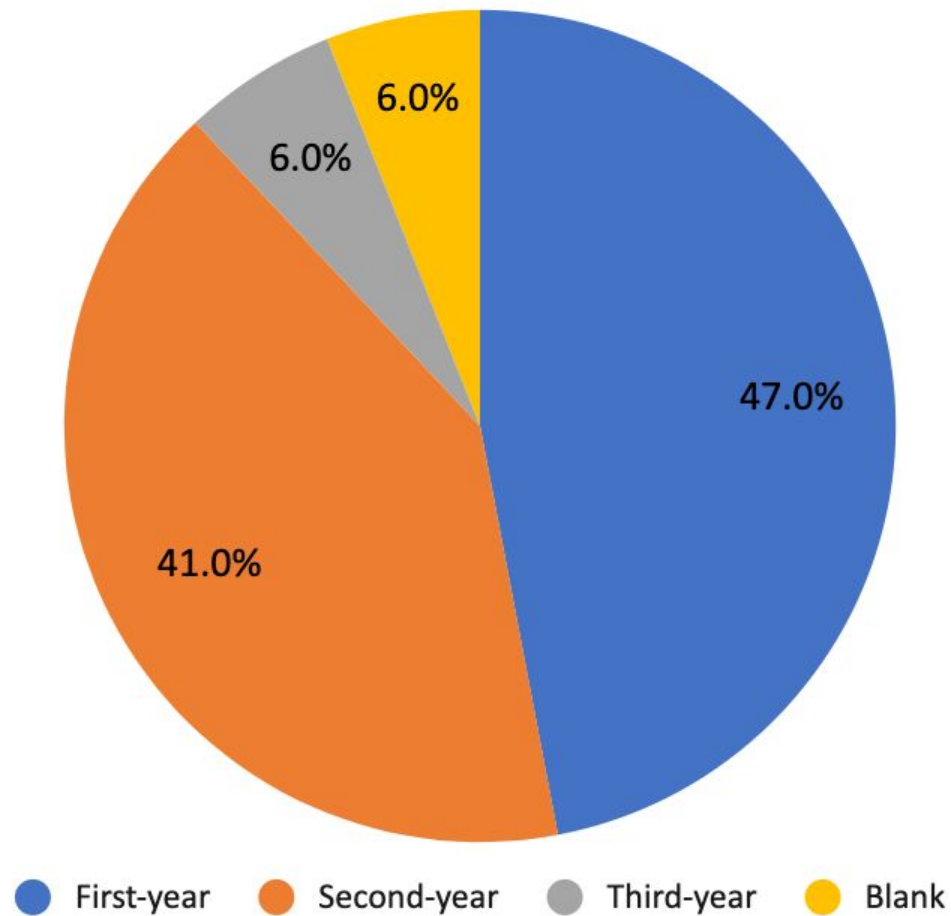
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Survey Basics

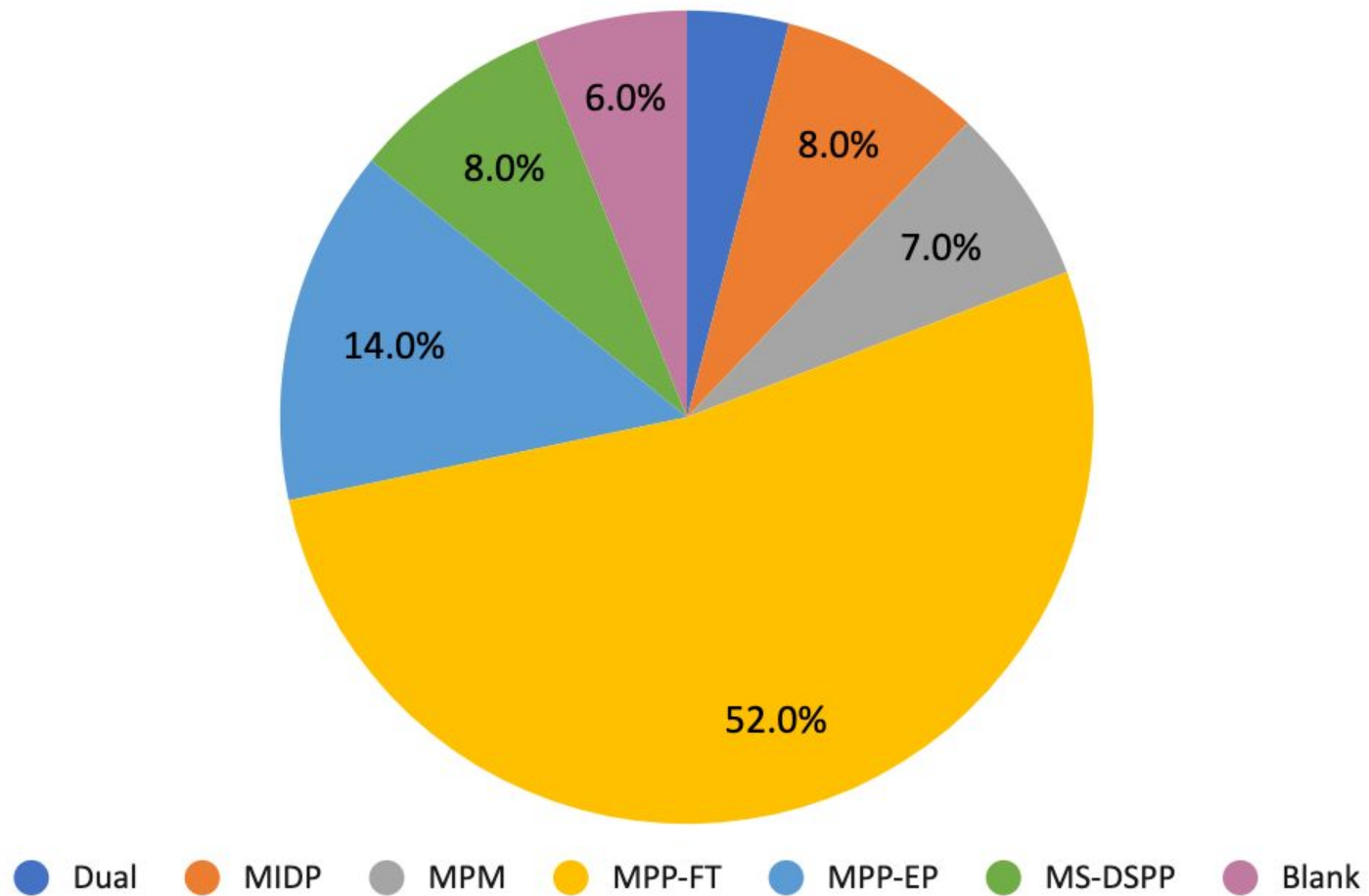
- 159 responses (out of ~400 students)
- This is a 39.75% response rate
- Demographics were relatively representative of the student body at McCourt:
 - Relatively equal first and second year representation
 - Relatively proportional representation by program
 - Slightly underrepresented male students (30% response rate compared to 44% in the [2019 class](#))
 - Slightly underrepresented International students (20% response rate compared to 35% in the [2019 class](#))

Please note, some McCourt demographic data were confidential so it was not possible to compare survey representation.

Year of Students Who Responded to the Survey



Program of Students Who Responded to the Survey



Food Insecurity

We asked three questions about food insecurity:

This is the definition of food insecurity: "A lack of consistent access to enough affordable and nutritious food." ([link here](#))

It is important to know, that though hunger and food insecurity are closely related, they are distinct concepts. Hunger refers to a personal, physical sensation of discomfort, while food insecurity refers to a lack of available financial resources for food at the household level.

Given this definition of food insecurity, in the SEVEN DAYS prior to social distancing, how often did this definition apply to you?

Never

Once

A Few
Times

Almost
Every Day

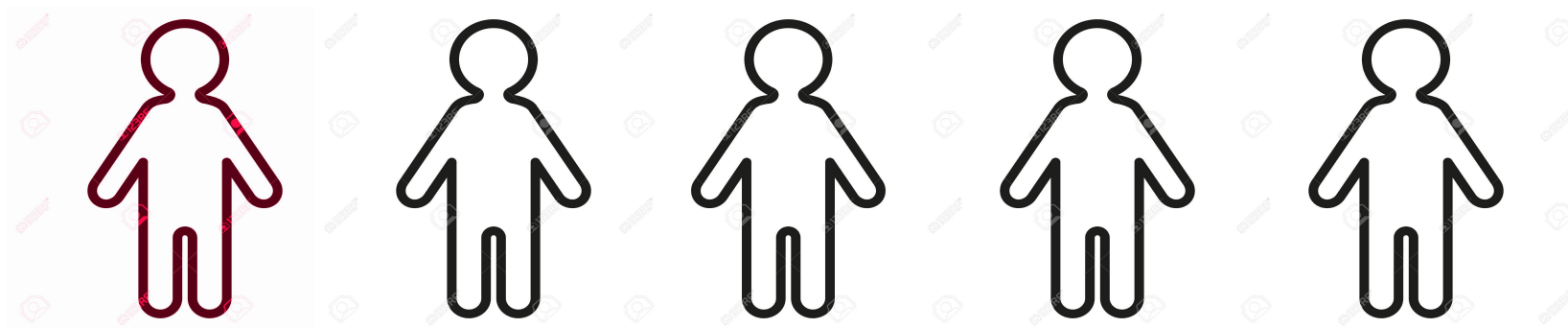
Daily

Don't Know



Food Insecurity

- **27 students** said that the definition of food insecurity applied to them at least once in the seven days prior to social distancing.
- That is 17.5% of students who responded to the survey -- almost 1 in 5.



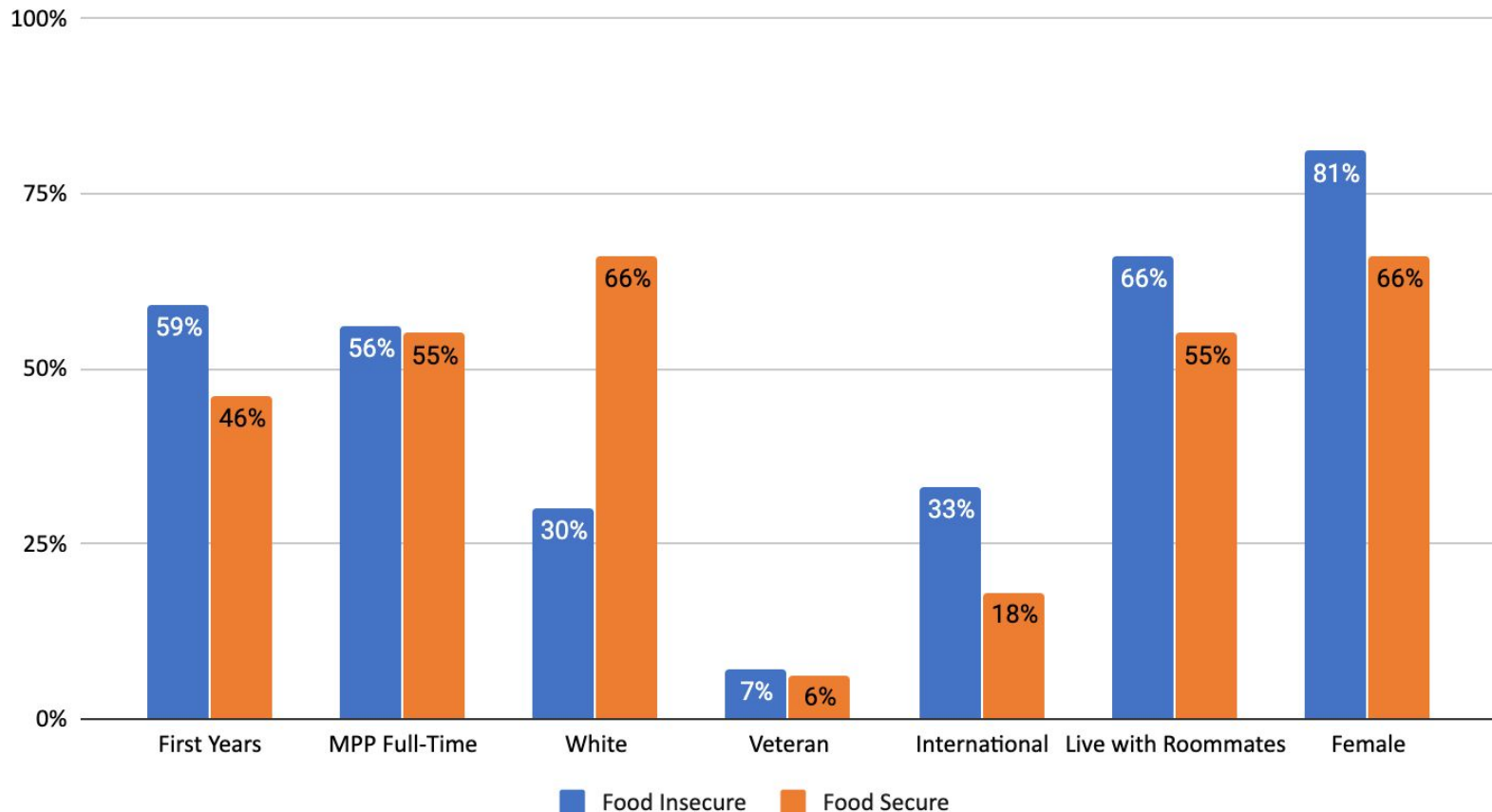
That is higher than the national average: In 2018, 11.1% of US households couldn't afford healthy food and 4.3% couldn't afford enough food ([USDA](#))

Food Insecurity Demographics

- **59%** of students who said that food insecurity applied to them at least once were **first year students**.
- **56%** of these students were **full-time MPP students**.
- The largest racial/ethnic group who identified as food insecure were **international students (33%)** of any race, followed by domestic students who self-identified as **white (30%)**.
- The top five sources of income were:
 - One or more part-time jobs (52%), private loans (44%), personal savings (41%), parent or family support (37%), and scholarships (33%)

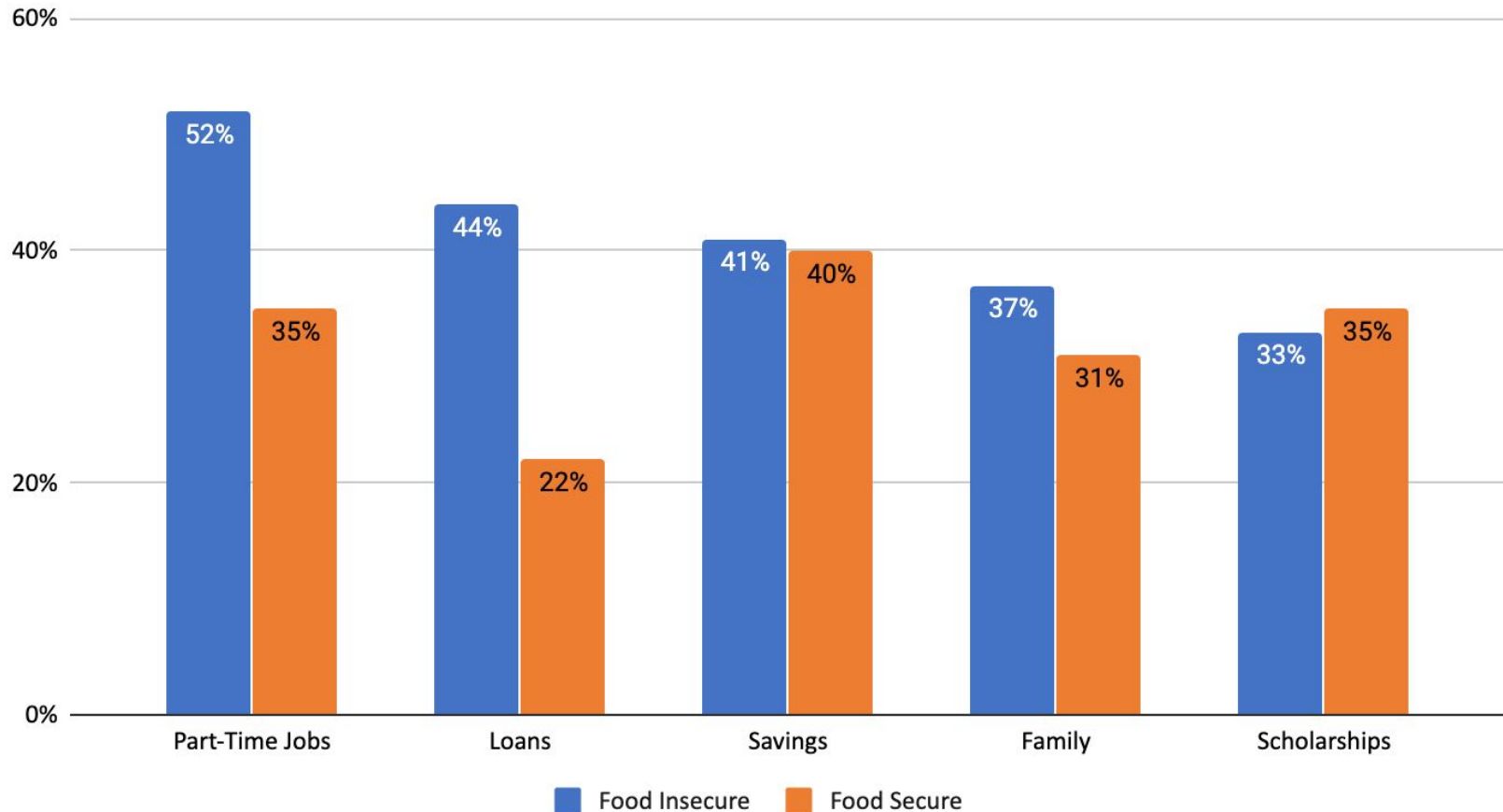
Food Insecure versus Food Secure Students

Differences between Food Insecure and Food Secure



Food Insecure versus Food Secure Students

Differences between Food Insecure and Food Secure: Sources of Income



The following are several statements that people have made about their food situation. Is the statement often true, sometimes true, or never true for you in the SEVEN DAYS prior to social distancing?

	Never True	Sometimes True	Often True
"I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"The food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

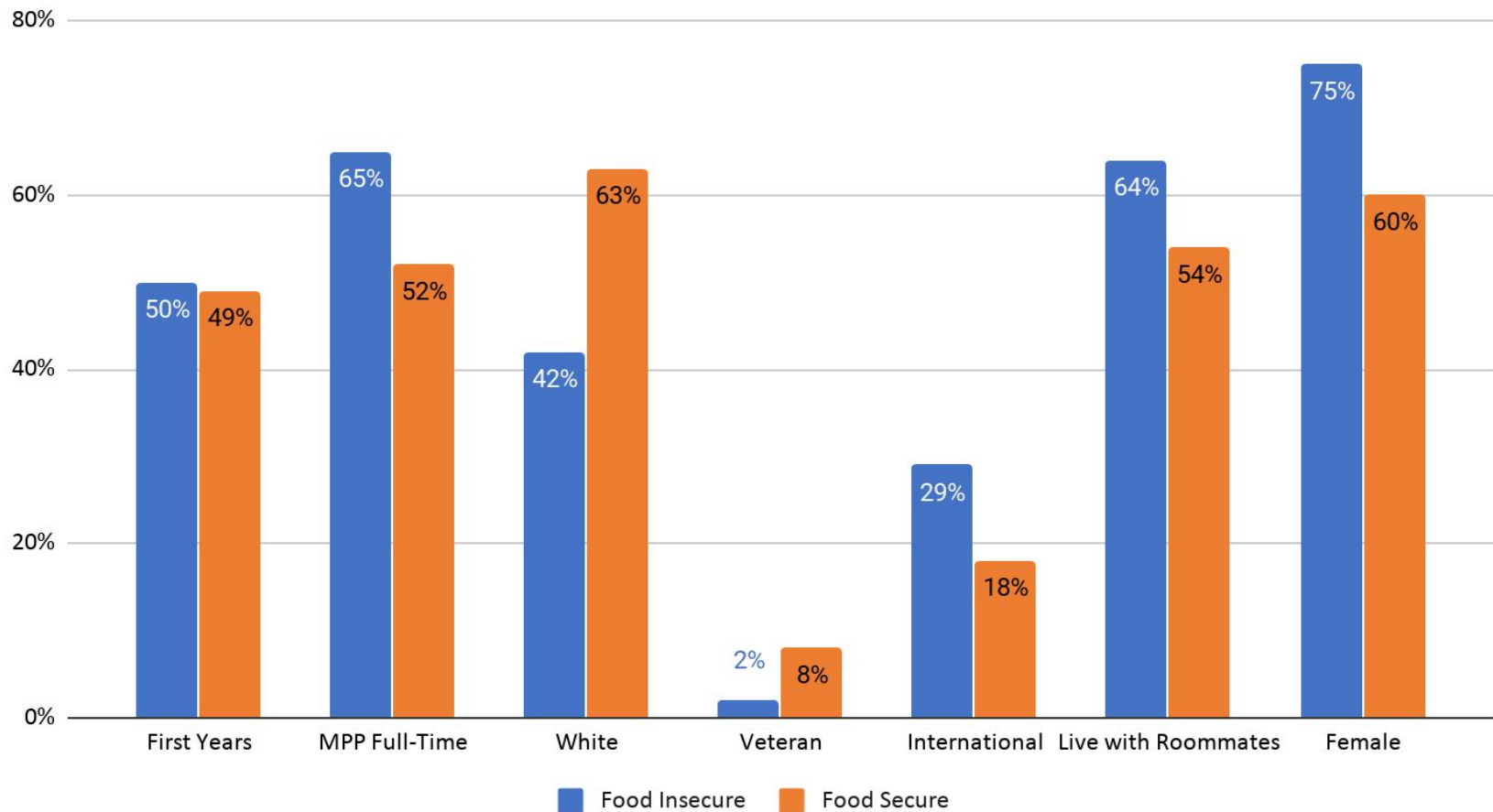
Food Insecurity

- **26 students** said that they were sometimes or often worried that food would run out before they had money to buy more.
- **19 students** said that sometimes or often the food that they bought did not last and they did not have money to buy more.
- **38 students** said that sometimes or often they could not afford to eat a balanced meal.
- There were **6 students** that said sometimes or often to all three questions, and **77 students** that said sometimes or often to at least one question.

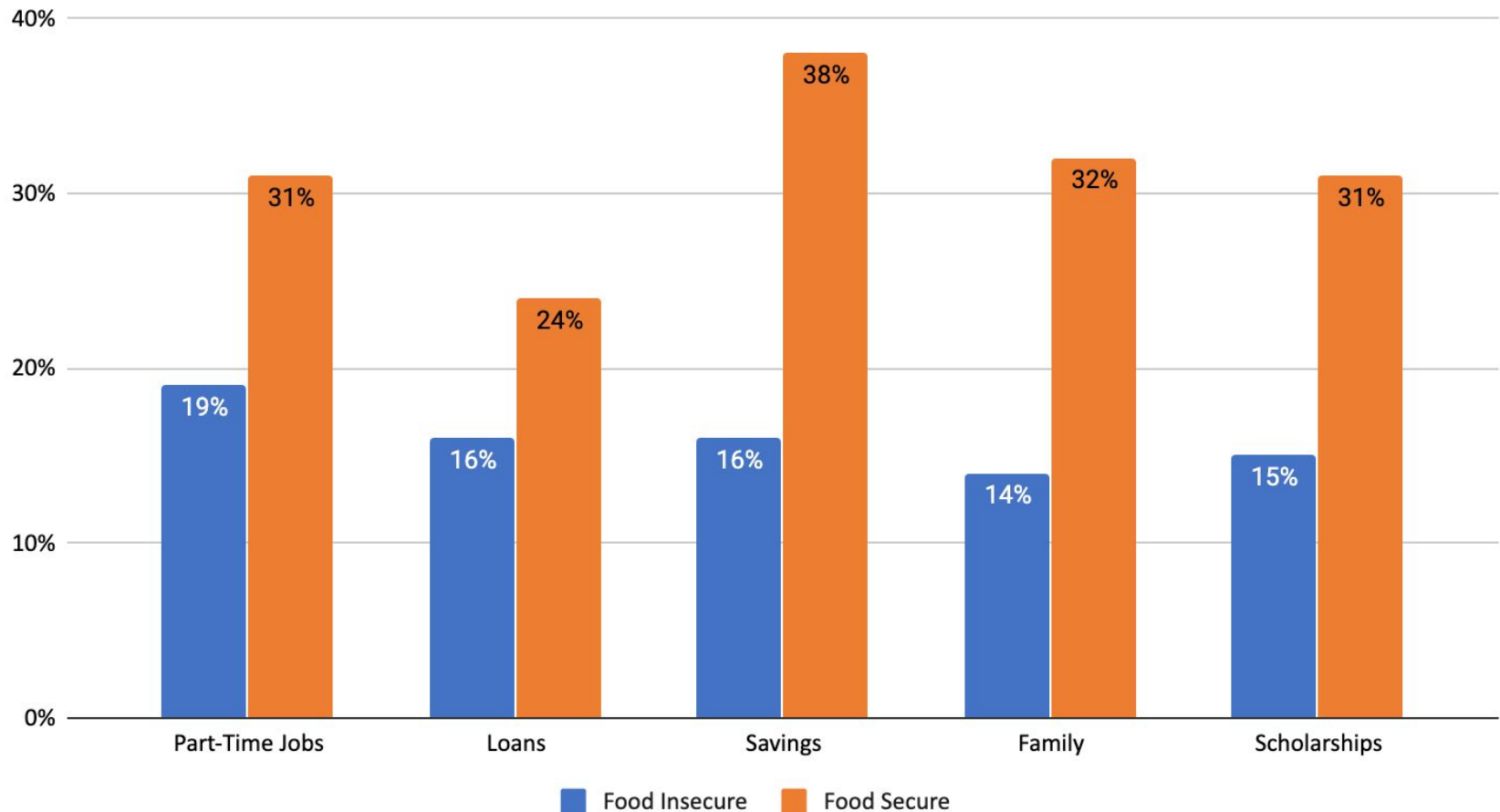
Food Insecurity Demographics

- It was equally split between first years and second years who said sometimes true or often true to at least one of those questions.
- **65%** of respondents who said sometimes true or often true to at least one of those questions were **full-time MPP** students.
- **43%** of these students identified as **white**.
 - Next highest groups were 18% other asian or asian american, 12% prefer not to answer, and 8% black.
- The top five income sources for people who said sometimes or often to at least one question were:
 - One or more part-times jobs (19%), personal savings (16%), private or federal loans that they have to pay back (16%), scholarships (15%), and family support (14%)

Food Insecure versus Food Secure



Income Sources for Food Insecure versus Food Secure



In the SEVEN DAYS prior to social distancing, how often did any following factors affect the amount or nutrient quality of the food you ate ON CAMPUS?

	Yes	No
Not enough time to cook to bring food on campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The cost of food on campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Closing time of campus food options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of access to healthy food choices on campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of access to food I like on campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of access to food from my culture on campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of access to food for my dietary restriction(s) on campus (e.g., vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, food allergy)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of access to food for my religious or spiritual restriction(s) on campus(e.g., Halal, Kosher)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mental health (e.g., depression, anxiety, eating disorder)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't feel comfortable eating in a class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other: <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Food Insecurity

Out of all students who responded

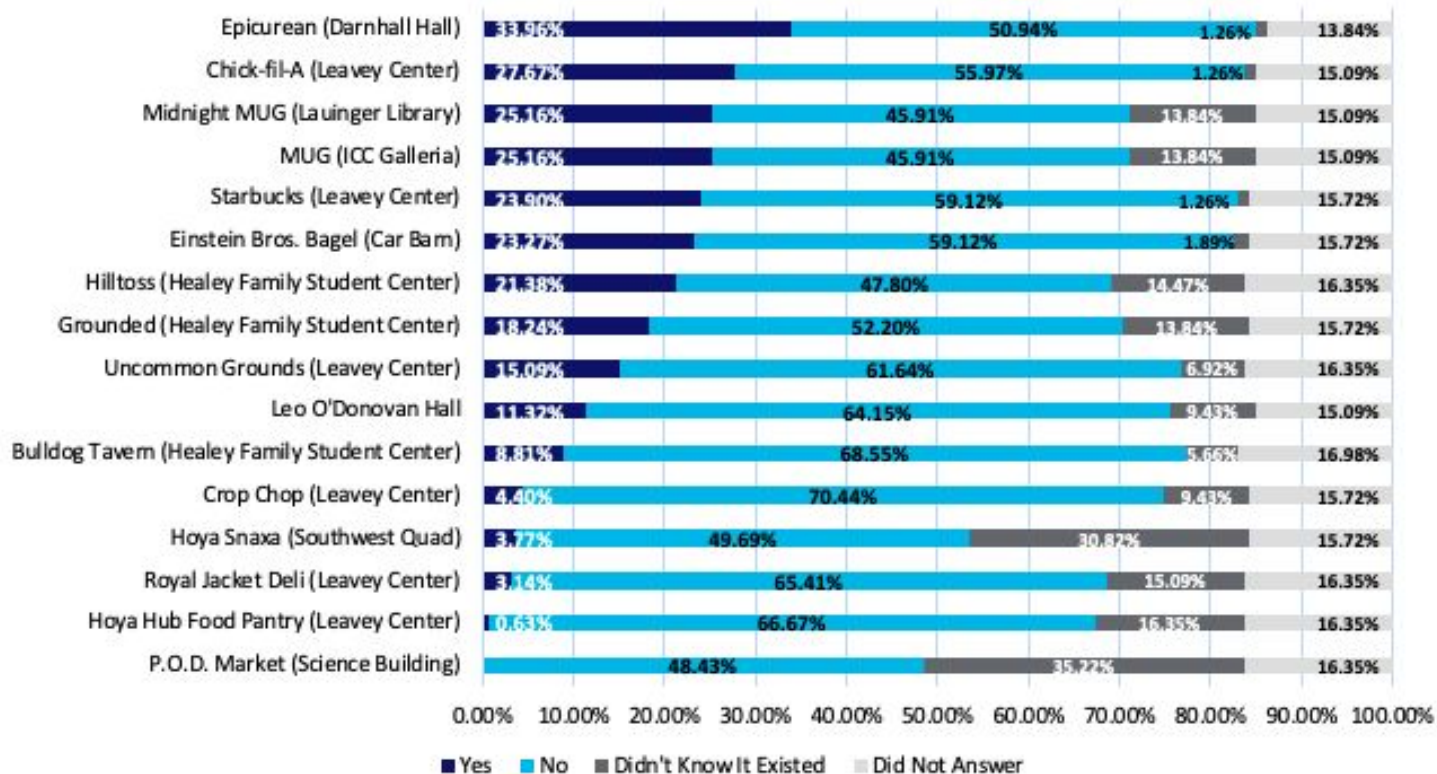
- **69%** of students said they **did not have enough time to cook food** to bring to campus (versus 25% who did not).
- **50%** of students said that the **cost of food on campus was prohibitive** (versus 26% who said it was not).
- **43%** said that they found the **lack of healthy affected their food access** (versus 43% who said it did not).
- **44%** said that the **lack of access to food on campus that they liked** affected them (versus 42% who said it did not).
- **18%** said that **lack of access to food from their culture was prohibitive** (versus 67% who said it was not).
- **16%** said that **lack of access to food for their dietary restrictions** was prohibitive (versus 70% who said it was not).
- **4%** said that **lack of access to food due to religious restrictions** was prohibitive (82% who said it was not).
- **23%** said their **mental health had affected their food intake** in some way.
- **30%** of students said that they **did not feel comfortable eating in class**.

Policy Recommendations

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Food on Campus

Utilization of on campus options in 30 days prior to social distancing



There are 16 on campus food options. There are quite a few that students did not know about.

Top 5 Most Attended	
On-Campus Eatery	% Answered Yes
Epicurean (Darnhall Hall)	33.96%
Chick-fil-A (Leavey Center)	27.67%
MUG (ICC Galleria)	25.16%
Midnight MUG (Lauinger Library)	25.16%
Starbucks (Leavey Center)	23.90%

Top 5 Most Unknown	
On-Campus Eatery	% Answered Didn't Know
P.O.D. Market (Science Building)	35.22%
Hoya Snaxa (Southwest Quad)	30.82%
Hoya Hub Food Pantry (Leavey Center)	16.35%
Royal Jacket Deli (Leavey Center)	15.09%
Hilltoss (Healey Family Student Center)	14.47%

Top 5 Least Attended	
On-Campus Eatery	% Answered Yes
P.O.D. Market (Science Building)	0.00%
Hoya Hub Food Pantry (Leavey Center)	0.63%
Royal Jacket Deli (Leavey Center)	3.14%
Hoya Snaxa (Southwest Quad)	3.77%
Crop Chop (Leavey Center)	4.40%

Food on Campus

Recommendation: Creating a resource of options on campus including:

- Create a list or map of all 16 on campus locations to highlight in orientation materials.
- Intentionally point out on campus food options during McCourt's orientation tours.
- Inform students about Hoya Hub, the food pantry on campus. There should be materials at orientation and throughout the year reminding people about this resource.
- Inform students about [Hoya Eats](http://hoyaeats.com) (hoyaeats.com), a list of what is open at any given moment for students who need options (nothing on campus is open past 8pm).

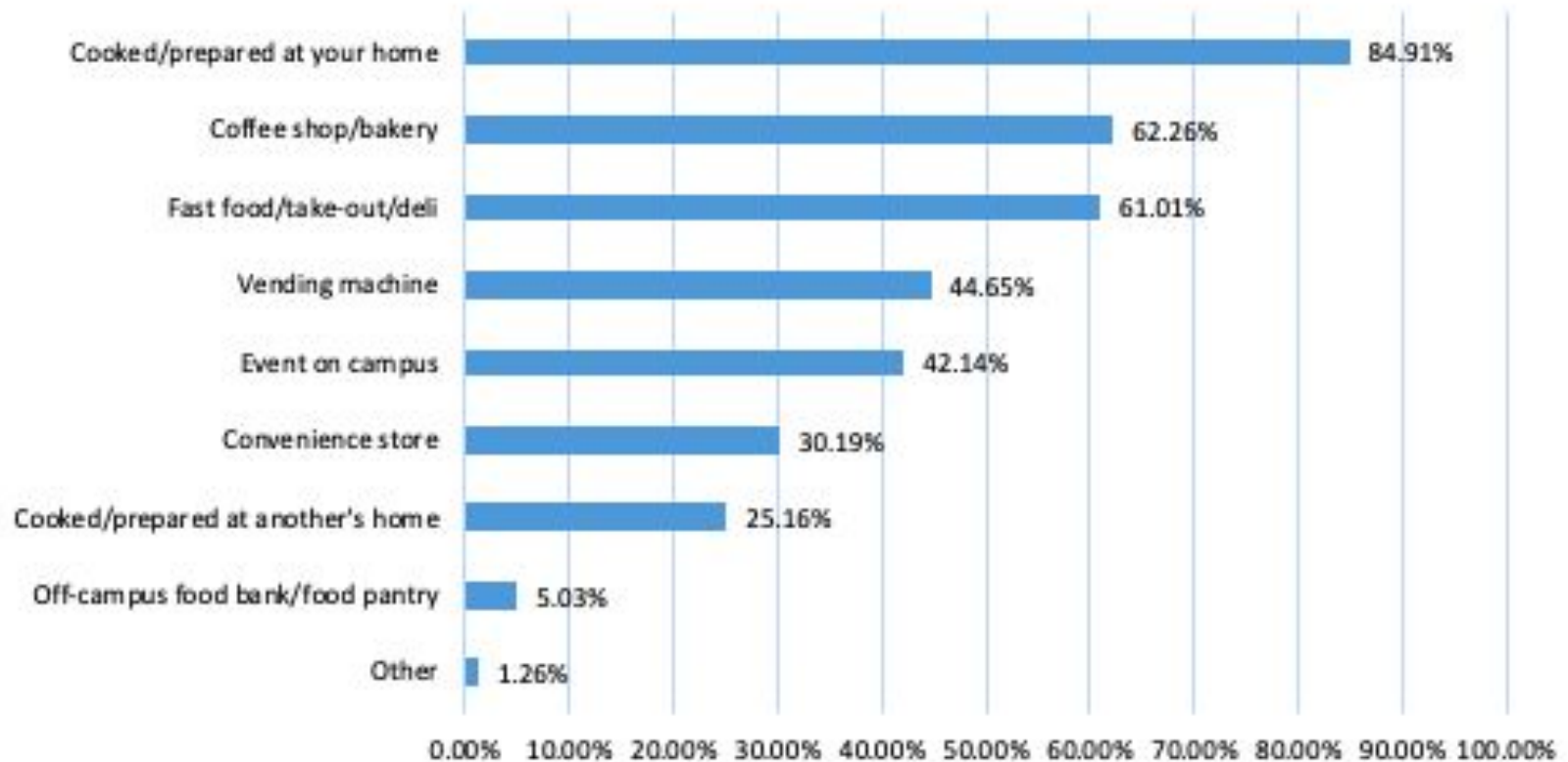
Food on Campus

Recommendation: Collaborate with other departments to build an off campus dining guide. Other groups, like Executive Institute, have created an off campus dining guide to list affordable and close-by food options.

- Coordinate with other graduate departments to create a shared resource.
- Build upon this resource and update regularly.

Food on Campus:

Source of meals during 7 days prior to social distancing



45% of student utilize vending machines in Old North and 42% got food from events on campus

Food on Campus: at McCourt

Recommendation: Healthier options in the vending machines. There were multiple requests for more affordable and healthier options in the vending machine. It would be helpful to work with Auxiliary Services to see what can be changed/offered.

Recommendation: Connect students to **@FreeFoodGU** which uses Twitter to list events on campus that offer free food.

- 67% of the students who were food insecure by the definition used food events on campus so this could be especially helpful.

Recommendation: On campus food events hosted by McCourt student groups may benefit from some guidelines on ratio of alcohol to food. Many student groups overspend on alcohol and run out of food.

Food on Campus: at McCourt

Recommendation: Create a resource of affordable vendors for on campus events.

Recommendation: More fridge space in the Old North Kitchen including stricter guidelines about cleaning up. One fridge can be for first years and one for other years to create more accountability.

Recommendation: More reusable cutlery in the kitchen (could be supplied by the students).

Recommendation: Professors should add more breaks (or extend breaks) to allow students to eat comfortably during the class time period.

Food on Campus: at McCourt

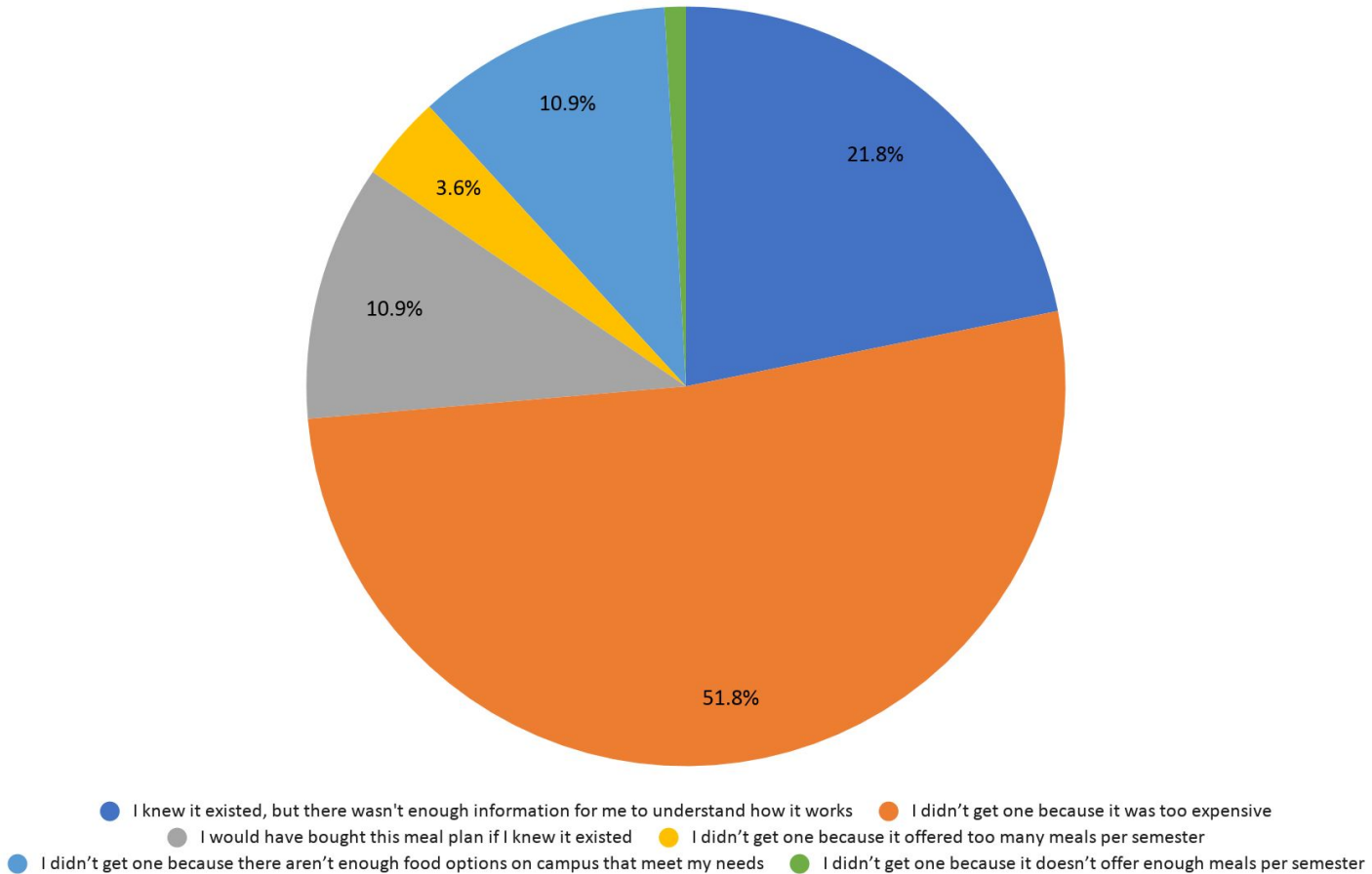
Recommendation: Create more events with food or more access to food on campus:

- Student groups can be required to host one food related event a semester that must be open to all students.
- Student groups can give a certain amount of money to MSA to create a communal meal fund that MSA can sponsor

Recommendation: An honor system snack sponsored by MSA. For example, MSA buys granola bars and leaves them in the kitchen. There is a jar to collect \$0.50 per jar from each person who takes one. If enough people leave money, MSA can buy more. If not, they cannot. But this may be a more affordable option for people who cannot afford quick food from the vending machine.

Meal Plan

Why students didn't get a meal plan?



Meal Plan

Most people did not get a meal plan either because there was not enough information for them to understand how it works or it was too expensive.

Recommendation: Students can buy meal packs (5, 10, 20 swipes) instead of the whole plan to make it more affordable (the current meal plan offers 25 meals and \$100 flex dollars).

Recommendation: Hoya Eats could visit during orientation to explain the meal plan options. Better information can be provided on the website about flex dollars and what meal plans include.

Recommendation: One orientation event could be held at Leo Hall so that students can see the options available there.

Food Off Campus

When late night (after 8 pm) options are closed on campus, off campus food is necessary.

Recommendation: Make off campus dining more affordable to students.

- Dynos, an app created by Georgetown students, works with local Georgetown restaurants to provide students discounted food during off hours. McCourt students should know about this app (perhaps in the compiled off campus resource documents).

Food Access during Shelter-in-Place

- 40% of respondents said that shelter-in-place has affected their access to food.
- Of those who said it affected their access, 76% said that it **DECREASED** their access to food.
- The most common ways, people have been affected are:
 - Financial restrictions: less money to spend on food and only more expensive food available.
 - Physical restrictions: fewer options open.
 - Safety concerns: fewer trips to stores.
 - Eating habits: more time to cook BUT some are eating smaller meals to make food last longer, or eating less healthy options because they are cheaper.

Given this, it is possible that that more students may be food insecure next year.

Food Insecurity Students

Food insecure students are more likely to rely on part-time jobs and loans.

Recommendation: Career Services can direct students to jobs at McCourt and on campus (some students may not know when and how to apply for jobs through GU when they get here).

Recommendation: Scholarships that are available throughout the year (Whittington and Dean's) should be advertised earlier.

Recommendation: Long-term, there should be plans to offer needs-based scholarships throughout the year.

Food at the New McCourt Location Downtown

As McCourt plans to move to its new location, considerations should be made as the building is being planned. These include:

- Affordable and healthy vending machine options.
- Dining options in the building that meet all dietary needs and are available later into the night.
- Sufficient fridge, microwave, eating space.
- A food pantry in this option since Hoya Hub will not be easily accessible.
- Collaborative work with the Law School to ensure enough resources for both schools.
- Partnering with local businesses in the area for discounts for Georgetown students.
- Considerations of the off-campus options (or lack thereof).

Future of the Food and Nutrition Survey

We hope that this survey will be administered every two years with a new cohort of students. This will allow for longitudinal comparison.

We also hope that other graduate programs will administer the survey. We hope to share it with them and be able to compare results across programs and, in the future, compile datasets to represent graduate students as a whole.

Finally, we hope to work with MSA and the future FaHRM leaders to continue implementing these recommendations.



Thank you!
Questions?



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Thank you!

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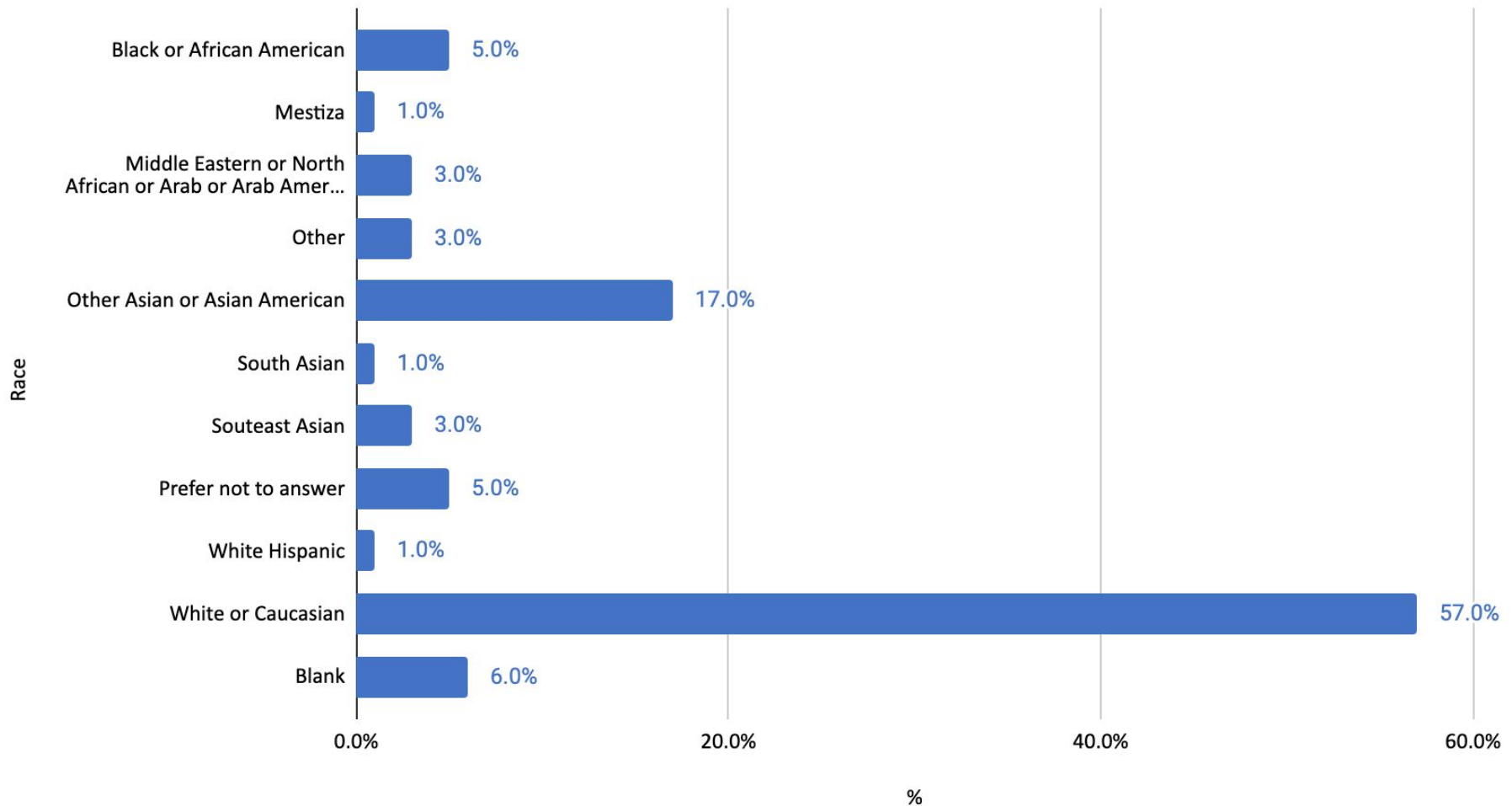


Appendix Slides

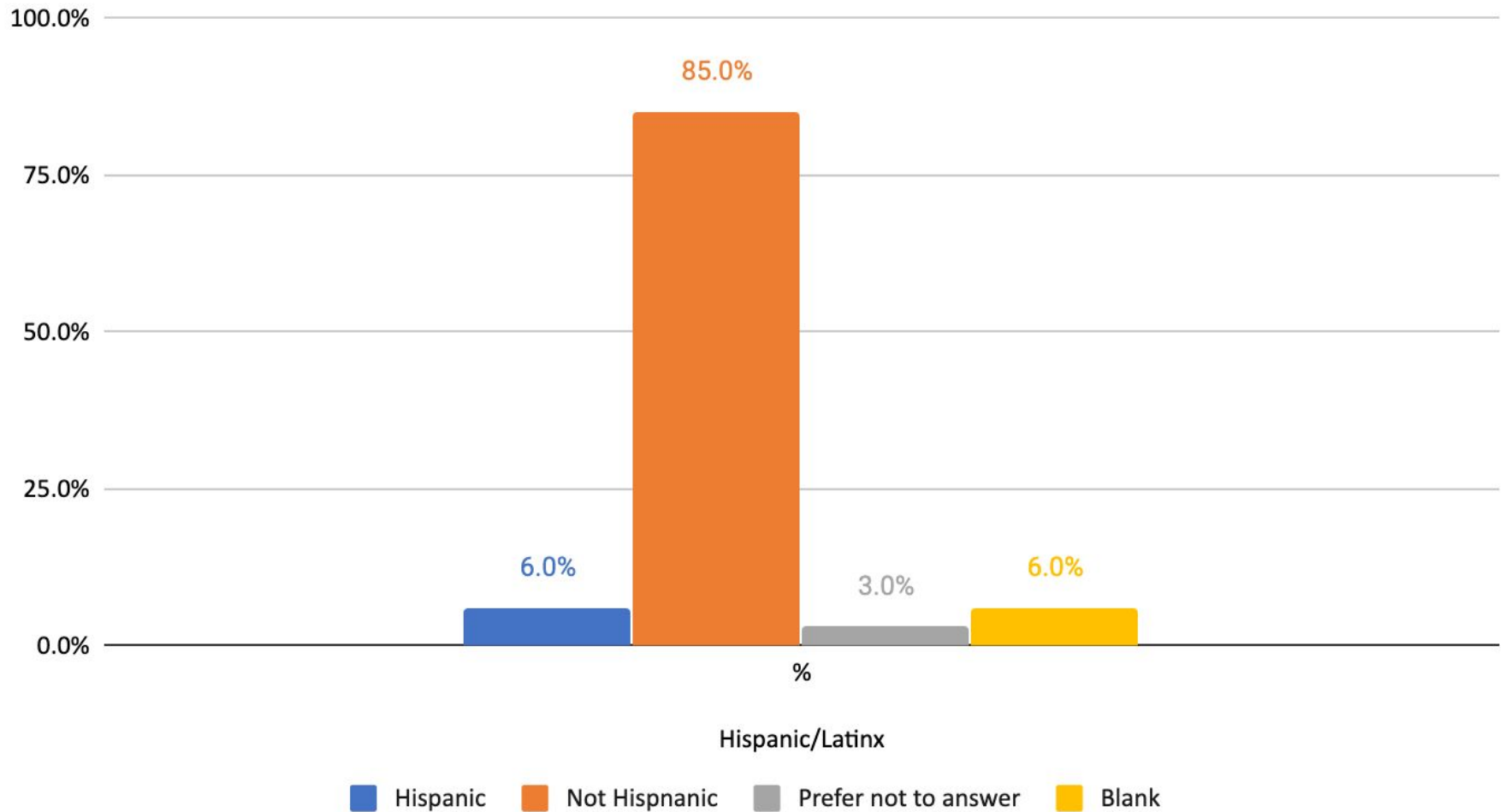
Survey

Demographics

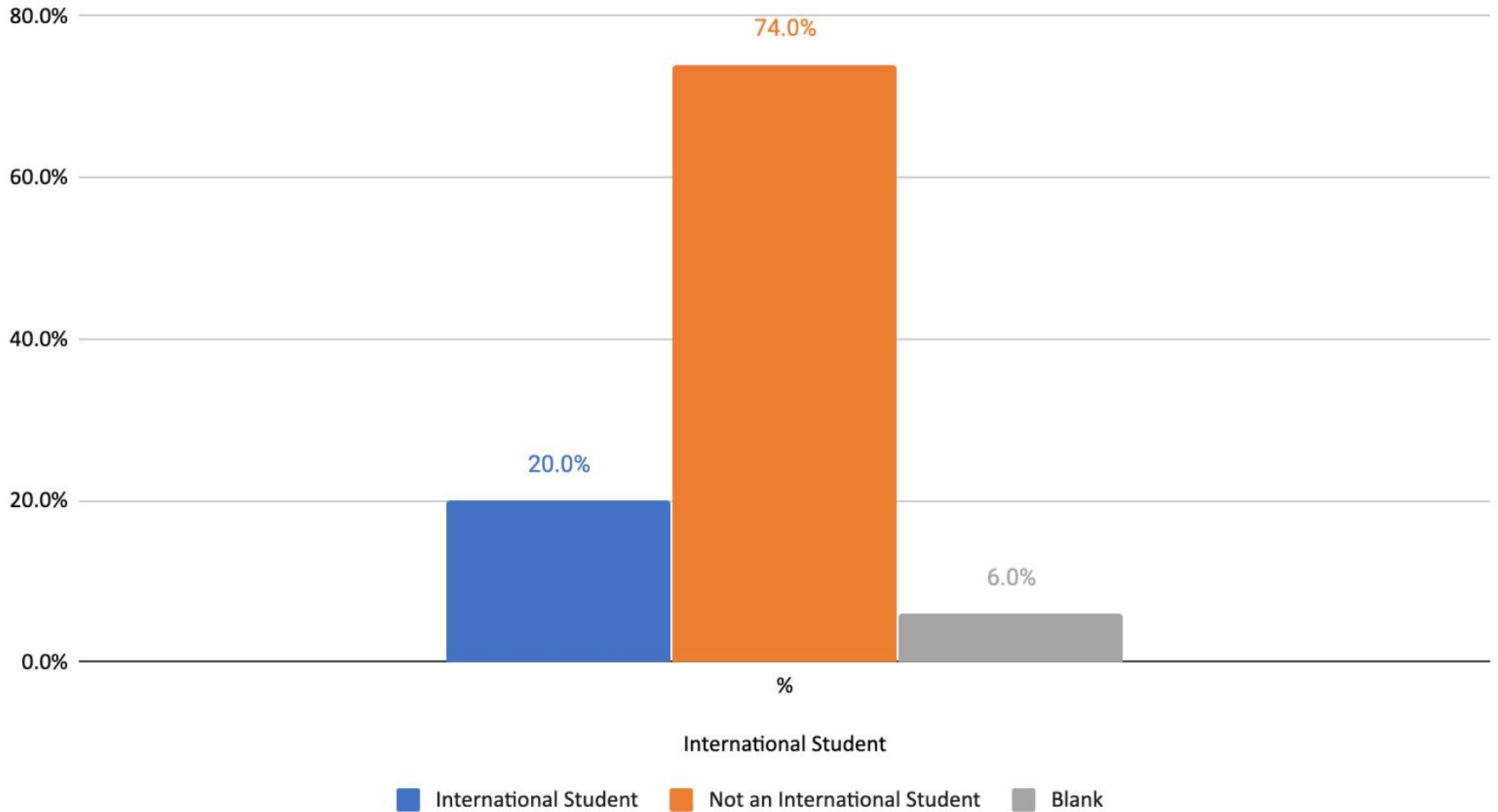
Race of Students Who Responded to the Survey



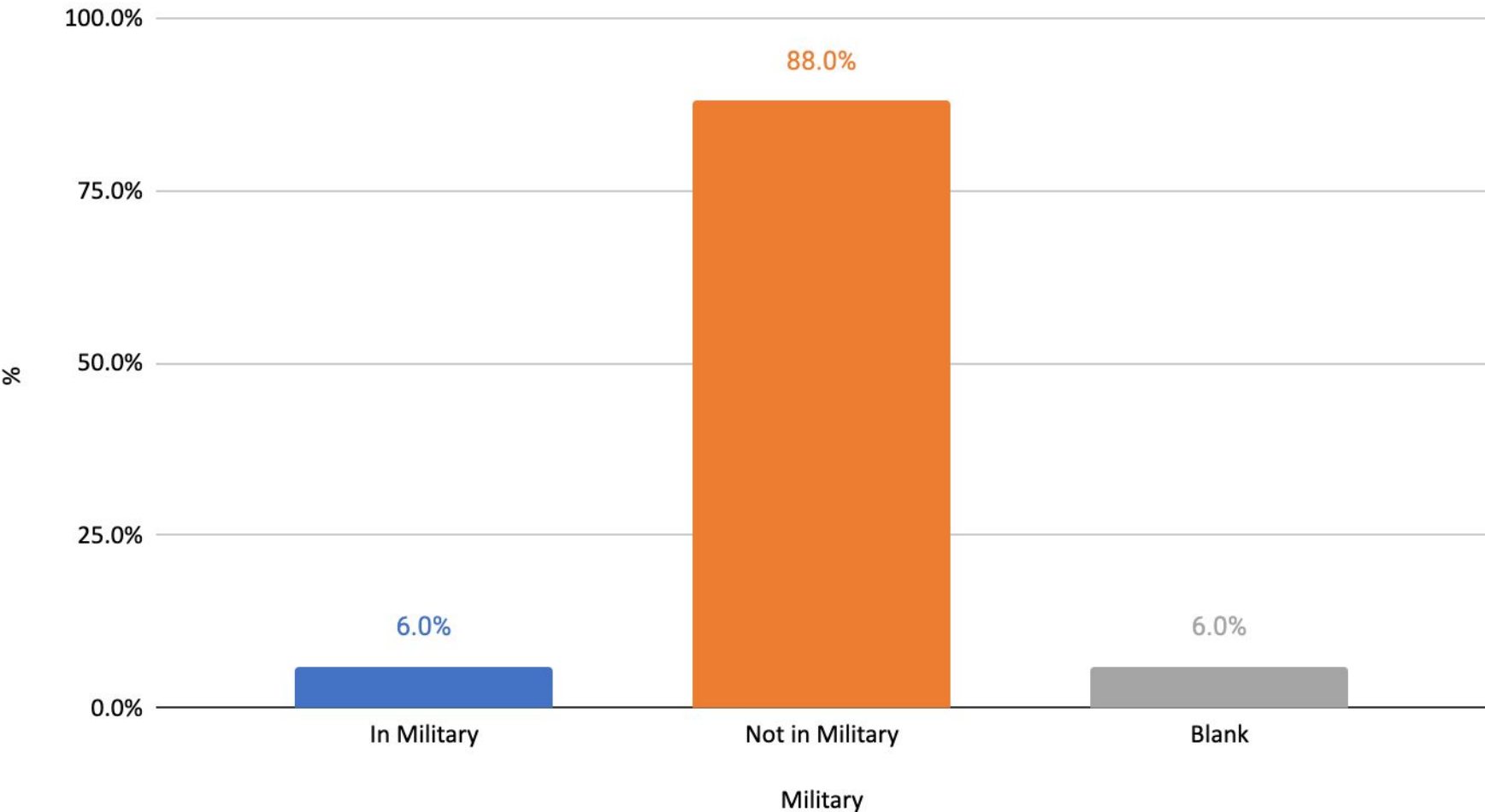
Ethnicity of Students Who Responded to the Survey



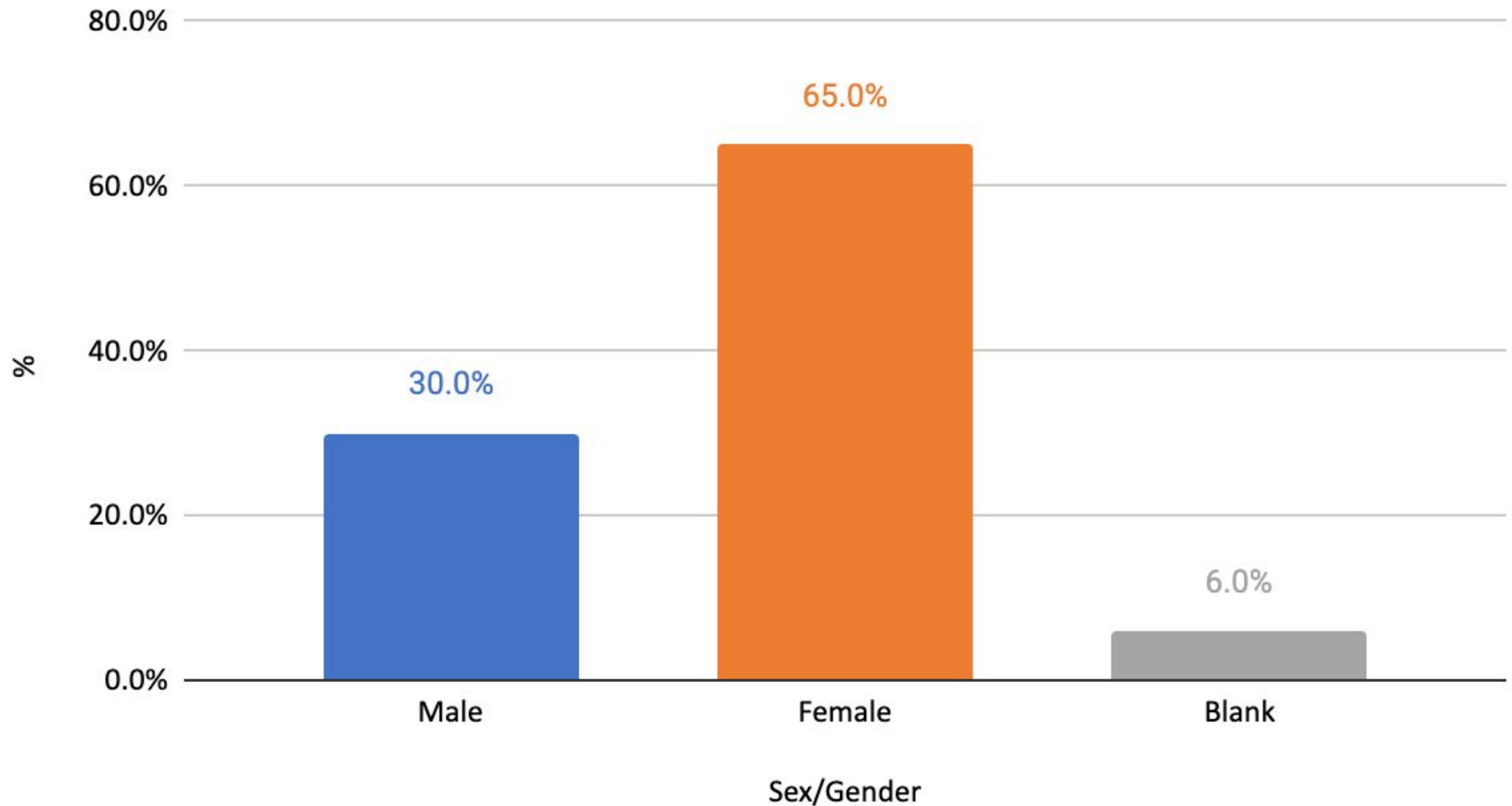
International Student Status of Who Responded to the Survey



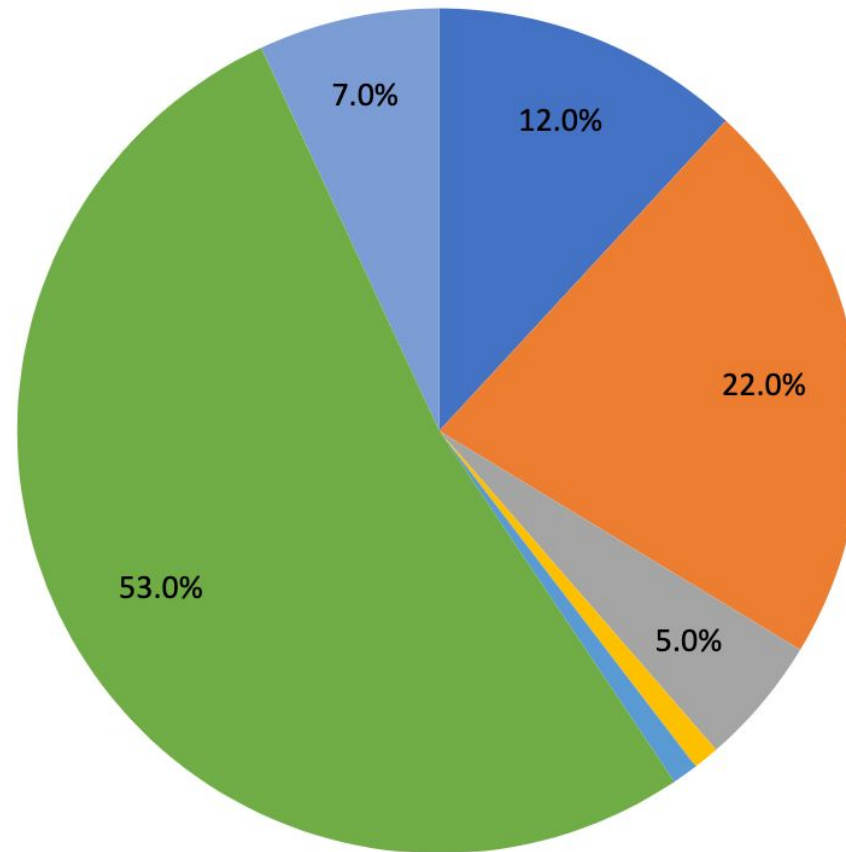
Military/Veteran's Status of Students Who Responded to the Survey



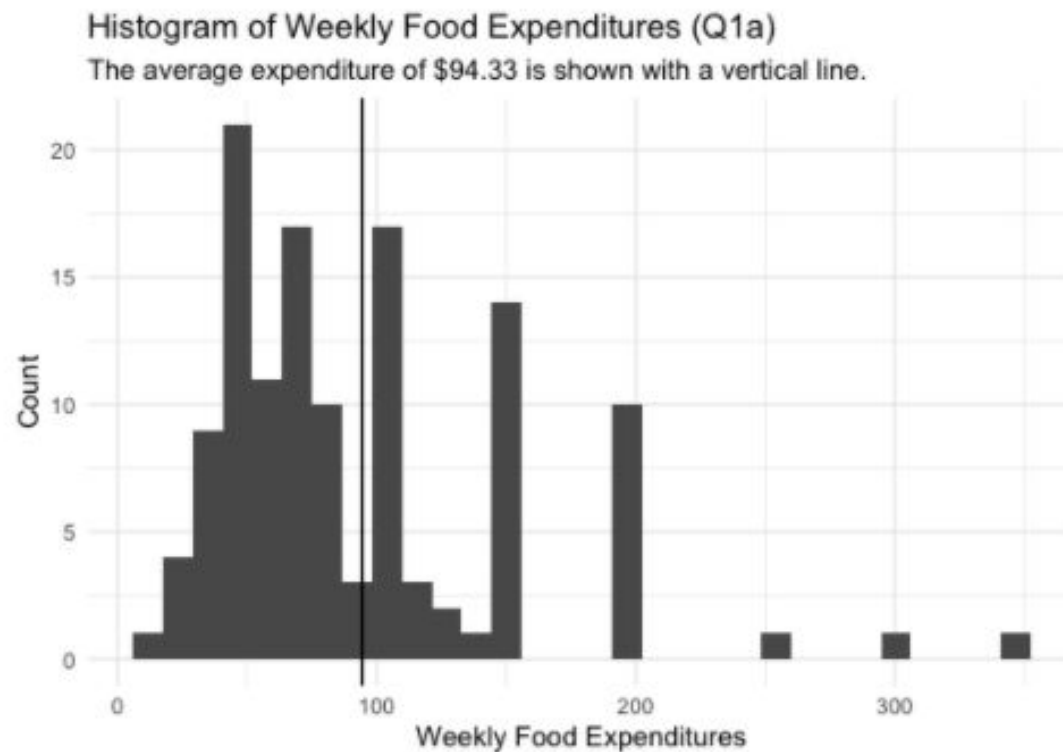
Sex/Gender of Students Who Responded to the Survey



Living Situation of Students Who Responded to the Survey



● Live alone ● Live with a spouse/partner/significant other ● Live with a spouse/partner/significant other and child(ren)
● Live with parents ● Live with family ● Live with roommate(s) ● Blank



- Students who said the definition of food insecurity applied to them at least once, average budget: \$86.04
- Students who worried about next meal, average budget: \$79.48
- Average overall budget: \$94.33