

## INTRODUCTION

It is currently estimated by national Hope Lab reports that 38% of students at 4-year institutions of higher education are experiencing food insecurity (Goldrick-Rab, 2020b and Nargi, 2020). Unfortunately, there has not been adequate research done on what these numbers look like at private non-profit universities, as only 6% of institutions participating in Hope Lab research are private colleges and universities (Goldrick-Rab, et.al., 2020b). The COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbated student food insecurity on college campuses, and campus food pantries have experienced difficulties meeting demand (Goldrick-Rab, 2020a; Nargi, 2020). These challenges are heightened by persistent patterns of racial and economic disparities among students and by social stigmas that limit discussions of potential responses. We conceptualize food security using the 5 A's framework of availability, access, adequacy, acceptability, and agency (Rocha, 2007; Diekmann, et. al., 2018).

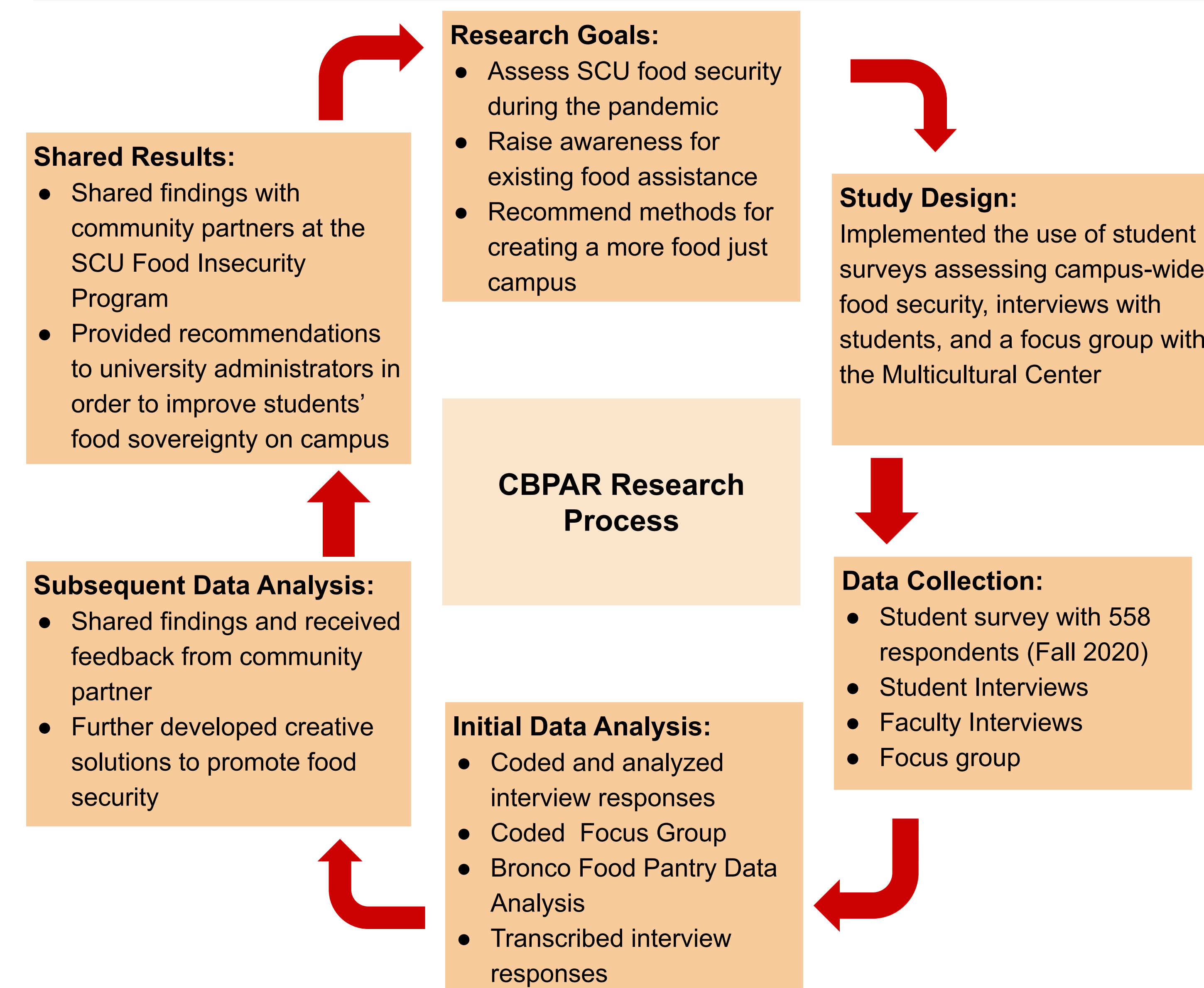
## BACKGROUND

Santa Clara University has yet to conduct a campus-wide assessment of food insecurity. The institution does have a Food Insecurity Program that works to ensure that all students are able to attend school without worrying about where their next meal will come from. This program houses the Bronco Food Pantry and provides direct food assistance to students in need through the pantry as well as gift-cards and referrals to government programs. We used CB-PAR methods, working directly with the Program in order to learn more about food security at SCU, with the goal of moving towards food sovereignty. Food sovereignty posits that students, farmers, and eaters should be able to strongly influence what foods they eat, find cultural meaning in their meals, and participate in broader agricultural and food systems that are aligned to their social and ethical values. Students are often prohibited from this kind of food access due to the cost or availability of culturally relevant foods. Additionally, marginalized students are most likely to experience food insecurity, making it an environmental injustice.

### Research Questions

1. What are current levels of student food security and are there demographic disparities?
2. Are students' basic needs being met while attending SCU?
3. What are student perceptions regarding the current campus food system?

## METHODS



**Figure 1: Diagram of the Participatory Action Research Process**

Each iteration of our research was done in close collaboration with the SCU Food Insecurity Program. This allowed us to best evolve our scope to best fit the needs of the pantry.

**CBPAR:** Community Based Participatory Action research is a collaborative approach to research that involves all stakeholders throughout the research process, from establishing the research question, to developing data collection tools, to analysis and dissemination of findings.

**Survey of SCU Students:** We designed a campus-wide survey in order to assess student food security across all undergraduate and graduate students during their time at SCU

**Focus Group:** We conducted a focus group with members of the Multicultural Center at SCU in order to understand the perspectives of BIPOC students on the issue of campus food security. We transcribed the focus group responses and coded the results, focusing on key words and phrases in the responses relevant to food insecurity, covid-19 and food sovereignty.

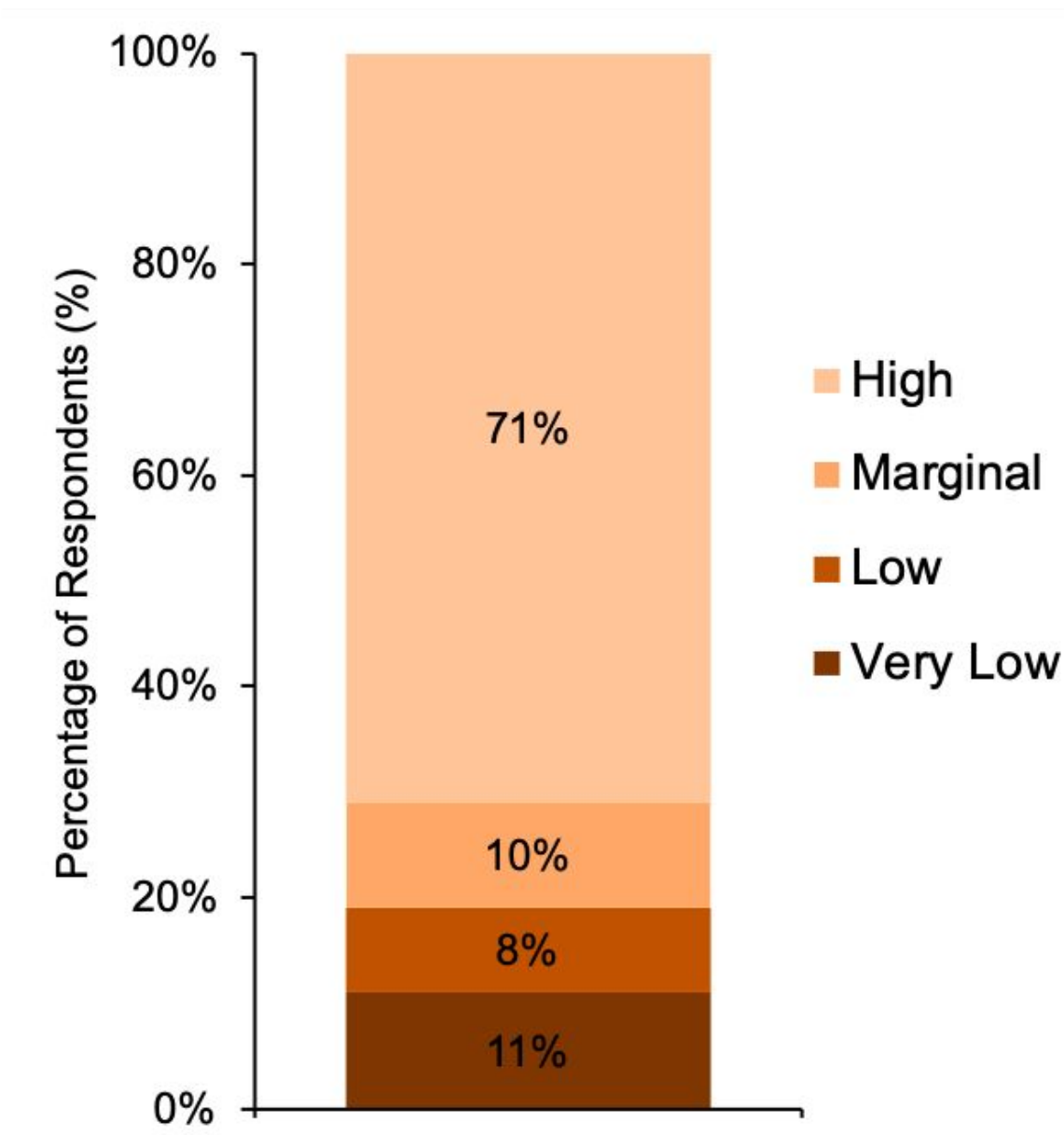
**Student Interviews:** We conducted interviews with SCU students in order to assess their experiences with food insecurity including potential causation, as well as effectiveness and awareness of current food insecurity programs

**Data analysis:** Responses were transcribed and coded for key words and phrases relevant to our research.

## FINDINGS

### Campus-Wide Food Security Assessment: Survey

- We found that about 20% of students self-reported having experienced food insecurity while attending SCU.

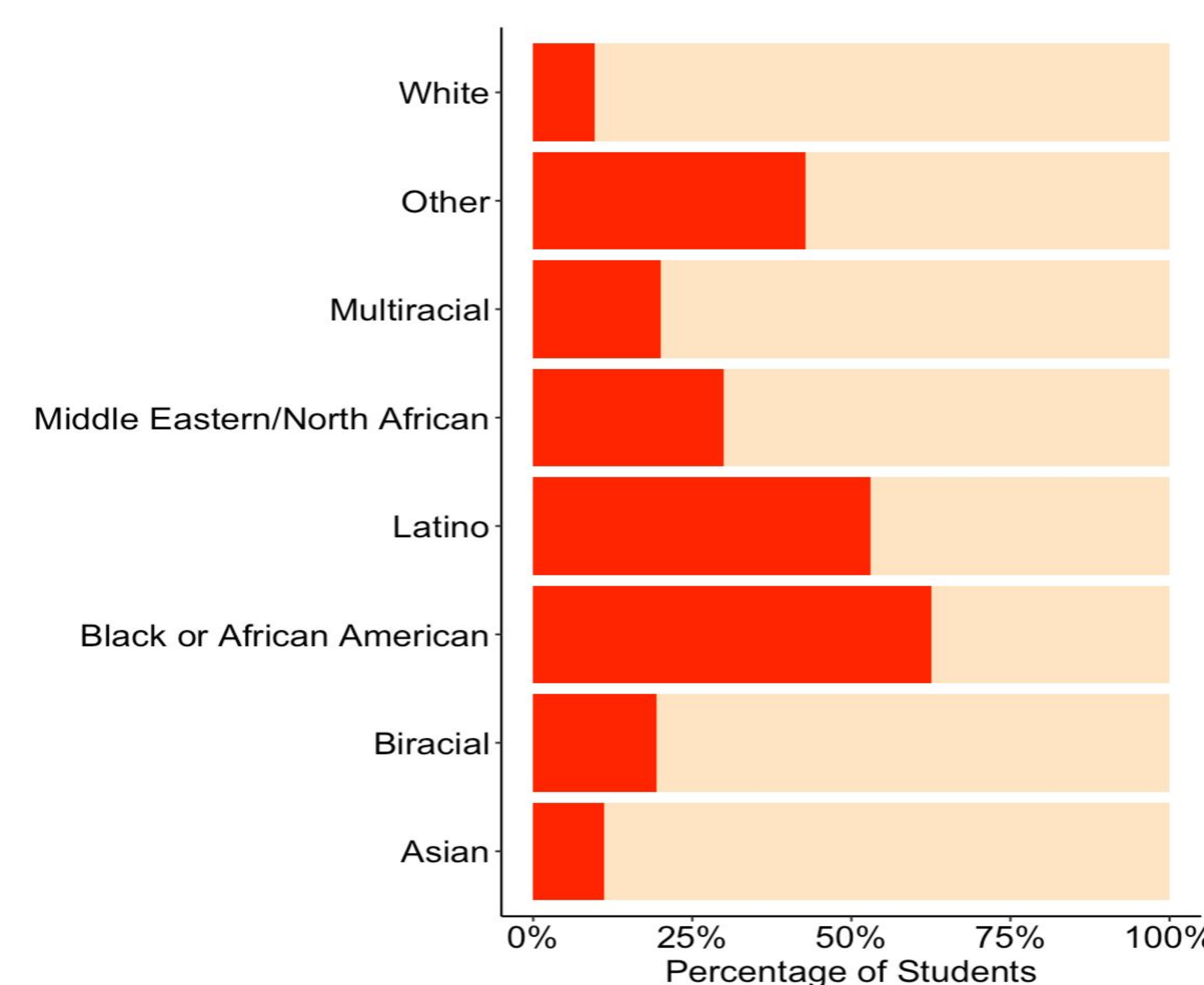


**Figure 2: Food security scores were calculated using the number of affirmative answers provided by the respondents to 10 questions regarding food in the past 30 days. Each score corresponds to a food security level, with low and very low levels indicating food insecurity. (n=484)**

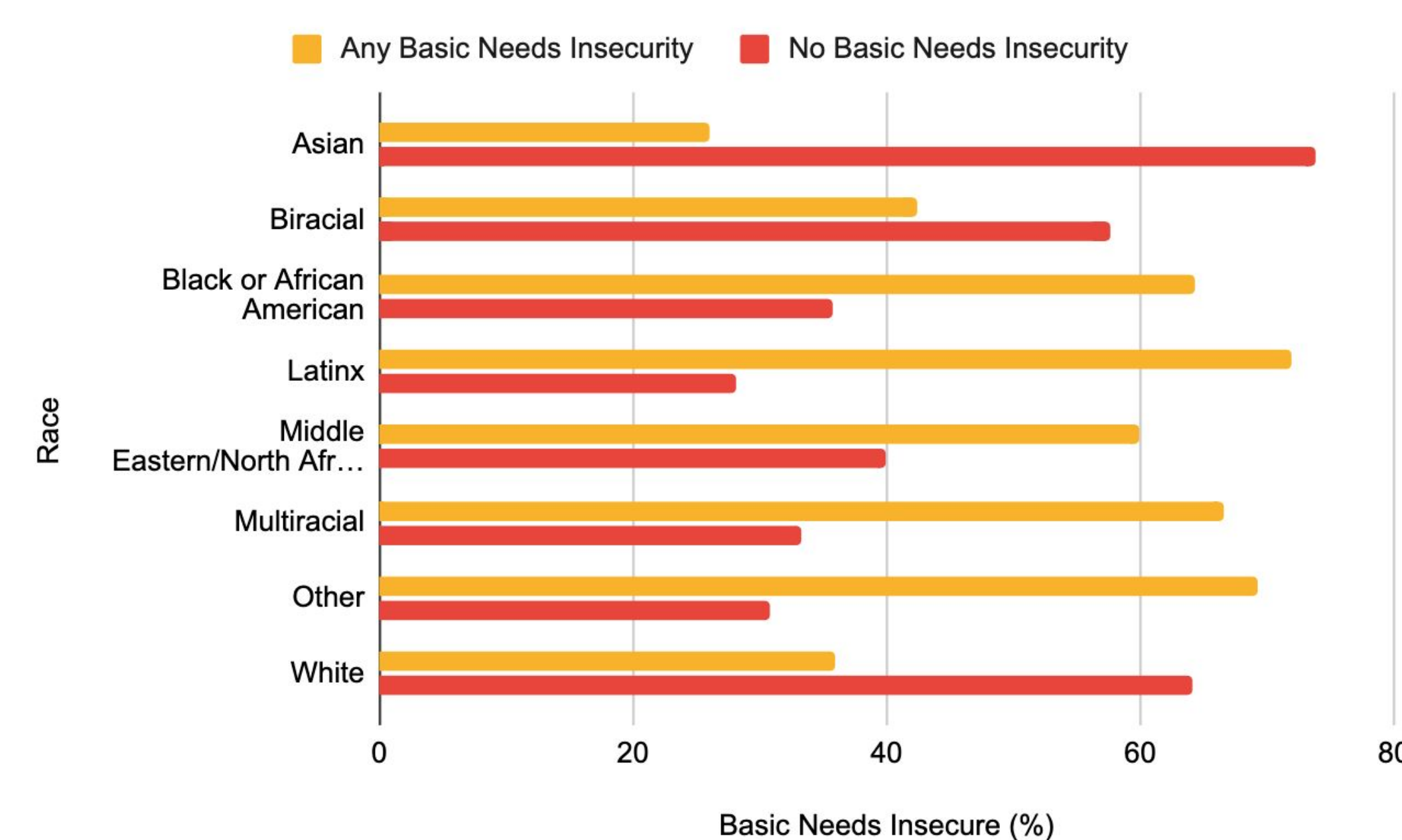
### Demographic Disparities Relating to Food Security

- Ethnicity and self-identified food insecurity were found to be dependent variables. Hispanic students are more likely to self-report food insecurity while having attended SCU ( $\chi^2$  GOF, df=1, n=484, P<0.001).
- More than 25% of students that self-identified as food insecure were unaware of the SCU Food Insecurity Program

### Campus-Wide Basic Needs Security Assessment: Survey



**Figure 3: Racial disparities of students experiencing food insecurity while at SCU (n=484)**



**Figure 4: Racial disparities of students basic needs insecurity at SCU (n=453)**

## STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

**Table 1. Most prevalent food security and campus food system related theme and corresponding quotations coded from the focus group conducted with the Multicultural Center in November, 2020 (n=11).**

Code	Description of Code	Frequency	Exemplary Quotes
Food access and agency	Students referred to or mentioned issues pertaining to food access, availability, or lack thereof, to a variety of foods, and their (in)ability to choose foods themselves.	10	<p>"I have like a number of like <b>vegetarian slash vegan slash gluten-free friends</b>. Who'd like, just, yeah. Like I don't, I forgot who mentioned this, but like <b>just can't eat at Benson</b>. So just definitely more options for them to, to like, Get sustenance and to like actually be able to eat would be amazing. <b>Cause it's a struggle for them for sure.</b>"</p> <p>"I think I would define food security as just like being able to have <b>access</b> to, um, like healthy and affordable food <b>when you want it</b>. Um, and like, you know, in a, in an adequate quantity, um, and for food insecurity, it would just like not being able to have that. And I think especially a big part of it is like affordability."</p>

## COMPARISON TO NATIONAL AVERAGES

**Table 2: Comparison of SCU Food, Housing and Basic Needs Insecurity by Race or Ethnicity, 2020.**

	Total Number of Students	Percent Food Insecure past month	Percent Housing Insecure past month	SCU Percent Any Basic Needs Insecurity	National Average Any Basic Needs Insecurity
<i>Racial/Ethnic Background</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>percent</i>	<i>percent</i>	<i>percent</i>	<i>percent</i>
Asian	88	9.09%	25.00%	26.14%	55* %
Biracial	59	28.81	28.81	42.37	-
Black or African American	14	50	50	64.29	70
Latinx	64	46.88	68.75	71.88	64
Middle Eastern/North African	10	40	50	60	62
Multiracial	9	33.33	66.67	66.67	-
Pacific Islander	2	100	50	100	66
White	195	9.74	33.33	35.9	54
Other - Racial or Ethnic	11	45.45	54.54	63.64	64

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

- SCU students are experiencing basic needs insecurity
- Pre- and post-COVID analysis was difficult to pinpoint due to lack of student food security data at SCU prior to this assessment
- Major shifts must be made in order to secure food sovereignty for all SCU students

### Recommendations

- Form student-led and mixed administration/faculty/staff/student task forces to follow-up
- Increased and permanent funding to the SCU Food Security Program and Bronco Food Pantry in order to increase support to students in need
- Awareness campaign to increase student awareness of food-related assistance available
- Educational programs regarding student-food relationships
- Re-evaluate current use of meal point system for SCU campus food system
- Lower prices in campus dining halls
- Increase diversity of foods available and access to culturally-relevant foods

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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