



Summary:

It has been a full and fruitful year at the UVSS Food Bank and Free Store. As usual, we welcomed a friendly and hard-working team of volunteers, with coordinators Jasmine Robertson and Courtney Striker continuing in their roles. Over 70 people volunteered their time to drive



around town picking up food, keep the FBFS running smoothly, promote events, support the referendum campaign, and more. This summary includes some of the highlights of our year, as well as an empirical analysis of our food bank usage data.

Community Connections:

One of our focuses this year was to expand our connections to our broader community, both in the capital region and across Canada. We participated in events by the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CRFAIR) and had the pleasure of attending the Annual Gathering of the BC Food Systems Network in July. Both of these opportunities were educational, inspiring, and helped establish our organization in the food security community. We also participated in a Meal Exchange committee working to change food for university students across Canadian campuses.

Closer to home, the Community Garden continues to be a key partner for the FBFS. In the summer, we co-hosted a movie night at the garden that showed a variety of short films about growing food justice. We had a bountiful harvest from the three garden boxes outside the SUB, including kale, strawberries, mint, beans, and edible flowers. Almost every day of the summer, we were able to harvest fresh produce right outside our door! The garden staff kept us stocked with veggies from their Giving Gardens well into October. We also harvested some yummy pears, apples, and plums from fruit trees on campus, thanks to Edible Campus and UVic Facilities.



September brought an exciting new development: the creation of the UVic Food Hub! The FBFS led the way on bringing together student-led, food-focused groups on campus to collaborate and share resources. The Community Cabbage, the Community Garden, Edible Campus, and the UVic Sustainability Project formed the UVic Food Hub had a successful year of collaboration. Creating an environment of support meant that we were able to celebrate each other's successes, work together on projects and events, and tackle different areas relating to food security.

While the past couple of years have focused on increasing food access for students, we know that developing food literacy is equally important. To that end, we joined the Food Skills Connection, a collaborative that runs food skills programs in the Gordon Head Area. Working with the Shelbourne Community Kitchen, Community Living Victoria, and UVic Community Cabbage, we have held four successful food skills workshops throughout the year and created numerous resources for community members and other organizations. To fund this work, we received a grant from the UVic Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability, which enabled us to run our programs without putting stress on any organization's budget. The Food Skills Connection's work is being recognized by CRFAIR and has been very popular with the community!



Not only did we make new connections in the wider community, but we also collaborated within UVic to create opportunities and resources. A group of students from EPHE 253 (Program Planning) took the lead on our spring clothing swap, which was a huge success. In addition to supporting UVic students and the WIN Thrift Store, the event provided education on the ecological impacts of the fashion industry and polled students about sustainability. A team of GEOG 355 (Coastal Communities) students created two amazing, informative videos for newcomers to the food bank. One of them is a how-to guide and the other goes into more detail about the behind-the-scenes of the FBFS. It was rewarding to work with such motivated students who fulfilled their academic requirements while also supporting the FBFS in important ways!

Donations:

This year we brought in an unprecedented amount of donated food from three main sources. Cobs Bread at Shelbourne Plaza donated bread and baked goods on a weekly basis, which always made Mondays a little brighter. When Whole Foods opened in November, we started receiving weekly donations of produce, baked goods, and non-perishables, many of which are organic. Finally, the Food Share Network launched its Food Redistribution Project that has been bringing in huge amounts of wonderful produce that might otherwise be wasted. These donors have been an integral support for students, in addition to the items that we purchase from Gordon Food Services and our dear friends at the Good Food Box/Fernwood NRG.



In February, the FBFS ran a referendum campaign to increase funding by 75 cents per full time student and 37 cents per part-time student. While the referendum gained a majority support, voter turnout did not make quorum at only 14.3%. It was a hard loss for the FBFS; however, this year was particularly successful in terms of fundraising. We raised \$6800 in additional revenue thanks to the support of many kind donors! In particular, we want to thank Hoyne and Phillips Brewery, Food for Fines (UVic Library), Save-On-Foods (Shelbourne Plaza) and Stocktober (UVic Student Affairs & other departments) for their continued support.



The Free Store:

October was the two-year anniversary of the Free Store, and it only keeps growing! Thanks to UVic Surplus, we were able to secure some sturdy shelving from our storage room to help during the months when we have a lot of donations. One of the Free Store's greatest successes is with international students who "borrow" kitchenware and other household items for a semester or two, and then return it to the Free Store. Like the Food Bank, the Free Store is used every day and many people have found their new favourite something there.

Conclusion:

With the foundation of our hard work to establish a regular and reliable operation committed to creating community, we were able to expand our focus to broader food security needs for students. It is now a critical part of our organization to work towards long-term goals in addition to meeting immediate needs. We more than met our goals this year to solidify our financial strategy, to promote food security, and to build community connections. However, we know we are not meeting the needs of the many students facing food insecurity. We can run out of milk in as little as 17 minutes after delivery. The next section will tackle some of those questions about who is using the food bank, how much, and who is not getting what they need.

Data Analysis:

The Food Bank logged 10912 visits from May 2016-April 2017, compared to 12066 from May 2015-April 2016. In recognition that we are not fully stocked every day of the week, we do allow students to come more than once in a week if they are taking different items. We have tried to stress that they should only fill out the form once per week, to avoid wonky data. That said, some of our numbers may be inflated due to students filling out the form twice in one week.

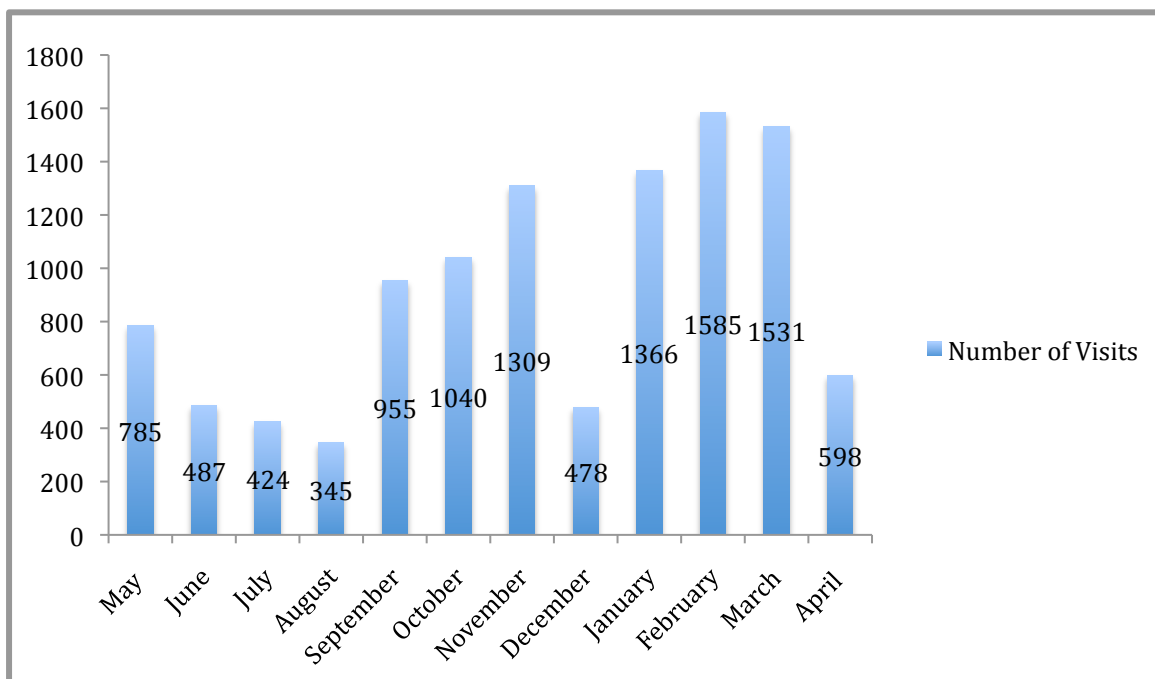
We estimate that we are meeting about a third of demand, with many students only getting a few of the items they need or none at all. While it may seem that use has decreased by 1104 this year, we do not know how many students are coming into the food bank but leaving with nothing. This is a weak point in our data collection.

Single undergrads continue to make up the bulk of student users. However, families make up as much as 20% and graduate students as much as 30%. This year, we have solidified who is eligible for the family amount in an effort to clear up confusion and prioritize to whom we can give extra support. To this end, only students with children or who are supporting at least two non-students are eligible for the family amount.

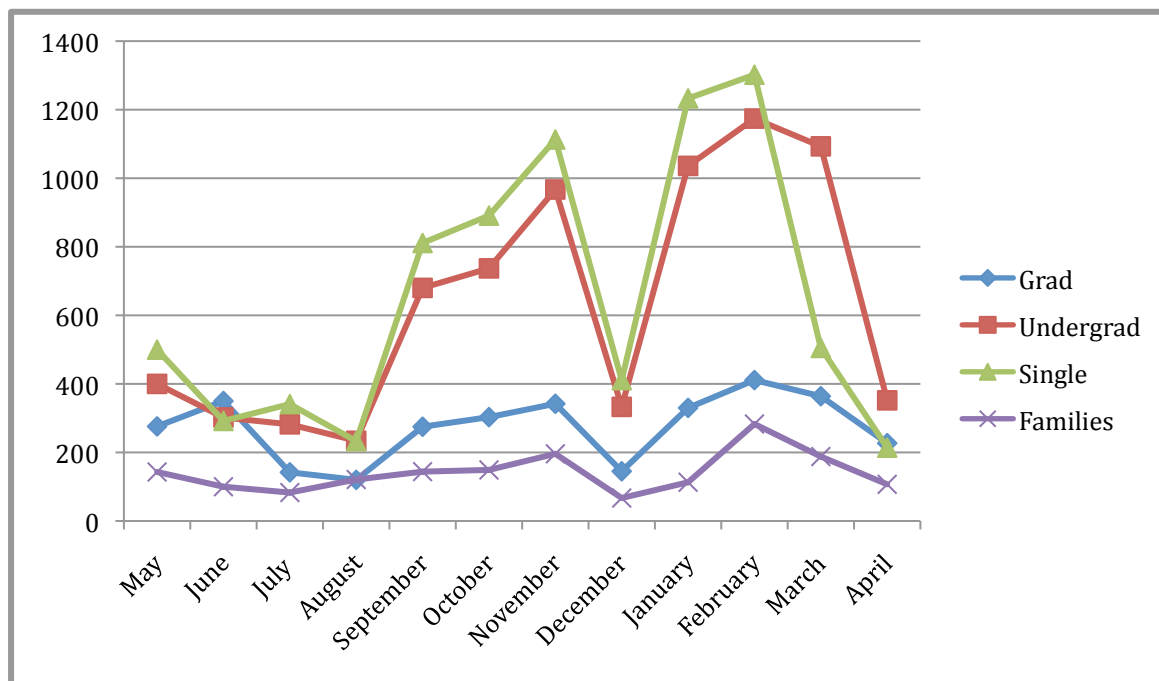
Notes:

- We are only open for 2 weeks in December
- We are only open for 3 weeks in August, February, and April (due to end-of-semester, reading break, and exams, respectively)
- One week's data tracking sheets for Nov. 21-25 were misplaced

Graph 1: Overall Usage



Graph 2: Breakdown of usage by demographics



Prepared May 2017 by Jasmine Robertson, Food Bank & Free Store Coordinator