

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2023-1161

TITLE: Resolution Calling on University Administration to Donate Unused Flex Bucks to the Field and Fork Pantry

AUTHOR(S): Senator Julia Seifer, Senator Matthew Reich

SPONSORS: Judiciary Chair Jonathan C. Stephens, Judiciary Vice-Chair Joaquin R.C. Marcelino, Senator Samantha Kinggard, Minority Party Leader Bronson Allemand, Senator Owen Lekebusch, Senator Laurie Wang, Member at Large Isabel Ponce, Senator Monish Vijayaraghavan, Senator Saketh Damara

WHEREAS, food insecurity is defined as lacking consistent access to “enough food for an active, healthy life,” largely resulting from inadequate financial resources for food. Food insecure individuals struggle with a multitude of overlapping issues, such as low income, lack of affordable housing, and health problems (consuming a nutrient-poor diet may contribute to obesity, hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes) [1]; and,

WHEREAS, Alachua County struggles with food insecurity on a large scale, with 12.4% of individuals qualifying as food insecure, compared to the Florida average of 10.6% [1]. This corresponds to low economic status, as 20.7% of Alachua County was at or below the poverty line as of 2021 [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the Hitchcock Field & Fork Pantry is a University of Florida initiative to combat food insecurity and provide supplementary pantry staples to anyone with a Gator 1 card - including students, faculty, and staff - free of charge [3]; and,

WHEREAS, while its fresh produce is sourced from the Field & Fork Gardens, the Hitchcock Field & Fork pantry is always looking for donations from individuals or local businesses - whether it be food or monetary - to further help the University of Florida community [4]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida has several meal plan options for students, including Flex Bucks, which is “included with all Meal Plans” and can be used “at all Gator Dining locations and campus convenience stores” [5]; and,

WHEREAS, oftentimes students do not use all of their Flex Bucks by the end of the semester, so they end up either trying to buy everything at once at the end of the semester, or let the money go to waste; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the need for an alternative solution to the wasting Flex Bucks, which should entail giving students the option to donate to the Field & Fork Pantry.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that this extra money can be put toward food and supplies to help food insecure students and faculty, alongside the Gainesville community as a whole.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to University of Florida President Ben Sasse, Interim Provost J. Scott Angle, UF/IFAS Senior Vice President Dr. J. Scott Angle, the Food Service Advisory Committee, Florida Fresh Dining, Field & Fork Gardens, and the Hitchcock Field & Fork Pantry.

[1]

<https://www.flhealthcharts.gov/ChartsDashboards/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=NonVitalIndRateOnly.Dataviewer&cid=9910>

[2] <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/alachua-county-fl>

[3] <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>

[4] <https://studentlife.ufl.edu/2022/02/16/field-fork-pantry-recognized-for-efforts-against-food-insecurity/>

[5] <https://orientation.dso.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2018/05/G1C-18-1.pdf>