

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1231

**TITLE: Behavioral Awareness & Legislative Advocacy for Necessary Clinical Education
(BALANCE) VOLUME I: DISORDERED EATING & EATING DISORDERS**

AUTHOR(S): Senator Hunter Monson

SPONSORS:

WHEREAS, disordered eating is a serious & common issue that young adults encounter & are not given adequate coverage regarding its impact on mental & physical wellbeing; and,

WHEREAS, some primary causes as to why disordered eating is so prevalent is due to food insecurity, trauma & abuse, societal norms & pressures, obsessive-compulsive tendencies, & family dynamics &/or environments [1]; and,

WHEREAS, disordered eating as described as “a spectrum between normal eating & an eating disorder & may include symptoms & behaviors of eating disorders, but at a lesser frequency or lower level of severity” [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the National Eating Disorders Collaboration states that “disordered eating may include restrictive eating, compulsive eating, or irregular or inflexible eating patterns” [2]; and,

WHEREAS, an estimated 9% of the U.S. population (28.8 million) will have an eating disorder in their lifetime [3]; and,

WHEREAS, 15% of women will suffer from an eating disorder by their 40s or 50s; however, only 27% will receive any treatment [3]; and,

WHEREAS, those who suffer from eating disorders with the highest symptom severity were found to be 11 times more likely to attempt suicide than individuals without eating disorder symptoms, & individuals with sub-threshold symptoms are 2 times more likely [3]; and,

WHEREAS, individuals with anorexia have a risk of suicide 18 times higher than those without an eating disorder [3]; and,

WHEREAS, black, indigenous, & people of color are 50% less likely to be diagnosed with eating disorders despite being affected at similar rates compared to their white peers, & Latinx patients were 50% less likely to receive the necessary treatment compared to their white peers [3]; and,

WHEREAS, Asian American college students reported higher rates of purging, muscle building, & cognitive restraint & higher levels of body dissatisfaction & negative attitudes toward obesity than their white peers [3]; and,

WHEREAS, “in a study of adolescents aged 11 to 25 who were suffering malnutrition from an eating disorder, only 40% received the recommended treatment” [3]; and,

WHEREAS, data from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R) found that the “median age of onset was 21 years-old for binge eating disorder & 18 years-old for both bulimia nervosa & anorexia nervosa” [4]; and,

WHEREAS, the role of the media has demonstrated that there is a “direct relationship between media exposure & eating pathology” where a large population of those that consume media are young adults [6][7]; and,

WHEREAS, in a research study where individuals with an eating disorder were hospitalized, 94% had a mood disorder, 56% had an anxiety disorder, 25% experienced post-traumatic stress disorders, personality disorders, OCD, & ADHD were also commonalities that those with an eating disorder experienced [8]; and,

WHEREAS, eating disorders increase the risk for developing health problems that can be a direct result of extreme food restriction or the result of binges & purging & can cause physical problems including feeling cold, poor concentration, sluggishness, heart problems, detrimental hormonal effects, gastroparesis, kidney failure, anemia, & neurological impacts [8][9]; and,

WHEREAS, based on data from the NCS-R, the lifetime comorbidity of eating disorders found that “56.2% of respondents with anorexia nervosa, 94.5% with bulimia nervosa, & 78.9% with binge eating disorder met criteria for at least one of the core DSM-IV disorders” [9]; and,

WHEREAS, substance use disorder was found to have the highest premature mortality rates of any mental illness, with anorexia nervosa having the second highest; “anorexia has the highest case mortality rate & second-highest crude mortality rate of any mental illness” [4][8]; and,

WHEREAS, the National Library of Medicine found that “eating disorders typically begin between 18 & 21 years of age” & “between 10 & 20% of women & 4 to 10% of men in college suffer from an eating disorder, & rates are on the rise” [10]; and,

WHEREAS, a study published in 2022 has also shown that death rates are significantly increased when people with eating disorders also use substances, & as mentioned prior, substance use disorder has the highest premature mortality rates of any mental illness, with anorexia nervosa having the second highest; therefore, the risk of premature death for patients with anorexia who also use drugs increases up to 22-fold [9][11]; and,

WHEREAS, while it is highly beneficial to lead an active lifestyle, it is important to maintain healthy guidelines, & as found in many studies, many of these individuals in peak-shape develop obsessive compulsive traits & habits [12]; and,

WHEREAS, even those who appear among being the most physically fit may actually promote unhealthy habits in their personal lives, which is supported by a survey that found 22% of the male & 59% of the female fitness instructors were classified as having disordered eating [13][14]; and,

WHEREAS, youth are among the most significantly affected by the rise of obsessive compulsive traits; thus, the negative impact by the hyper analysis of their macro nutritional intake can actually lead to detrimental effects regarding body image & mental wellbeing [11][12][13][14]; and,

WHEREAS, the rise of social media & its linkage towards both excessive dieting & eating disorders is another significant contributor to the rise of mental illness & eating disorders found within young adult populations [2][4][7][11], and,

WHEREAS, food insecurity is an issue that the University of Florida Student Senate & University of Florida Executive officers have already recognized as a pressing matter, which was discussed in the 2023 Student Government Executive Debate by former Student Body President Candidate Faith Corbett & current Student Body Vice President Clara Calavia [15]; and,

WHEREAS, additionally, former Senate President & current Student Body President Olivia Green authored *SSB 2022-1062 Resolution Supporting the Food Insecurity Task Force Collaboration with the Alan & Cathy Hitchcock Field & Fork Pantry* where she acknowledges that “hunger & food insecurity is a growing problem within our campus community” & states that “as a campus community, we have a responsibility to help students who are in need of assistance,” demonstrating that food insecurity was & still is a matter of the utmost importance for the University of Florida to address [16]; and,

WHEREAS, former Judiciary Chairperson Jonathan Stephens strongly emphasized the need to address this concern of food insecurity for University of Florida students, citing statistics that “40.8% of students are food insecure” [17]; and,

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2024, Senate President John Brinkman stated that he believes “that food insecurity is a huge issue that needs to be addressed,” which further demonstrates an

unanimous agreement within the highest of UF SG leadership that food insecurity is a problem that must be addressed [18]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2022, GatorWell found that 42.1% of cisgendered men experienced any level of food insecurity, 25.3% of cisgendered men experienced low levels of food security, & 16.7% of cisgendered men experienced very low levels of food security at the University of Florida [19]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2022, GatorWell found that 39.4% of cisgendered women experienced any level of food insecurity, 22.3% of cisgendered women experienced low levels of food security, & 17.1% of cisgendered women experienced very low levels of food security at the University of Florida [19]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2022, GatorWell found that 53.1% of trans/gender non-conforming individuals experienced any level of food insecurity, 25.0% of trans/gender non-conforming individuals experienced low levels of food security, & 28.1% of trans/gender non-conforming individuals experienced very low levels of food security at the University of Florida [19]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2022, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) found that 12.8% (17.0 million) of households experienced any level of food insecurity, 7.7% of households experienced low levels of food security, & 5.1% of households experienced very low levels of food security [20]; and,

WHEREAS, the USDA also found that 11.7 million adults lived in households with very low food security, 7.3 million children lived in food-insecure households, 783,000 children lived in households in which one or more child experienced very low food security [20]; and,

WHEREAS, the USDA found that Florida experienced a food insecurity prevalence of 11.4%, & the prevalence of food insecurity at the national level has gradually increased since 2020 [20][21][22]; and,

WHEREAS, while food insecurity is a significant issue of its own, “recent evidence consistently supports cross-sectional associations between food insecurity & ED pathology, particularly for bulimic-spectrum ED pathology among adults,” & it was also found that “adults who experience significant food deprivation on a regular basis are more likely to engage in several disordered eating behaviors” [23][24]; and,

WHEREAS, advocating for the effective treatment & accurate diagnosis for individuals suffering from eating disorders is one of the responsibilities bestowed upon the University of

Florida as it is the university's moral & ethical duty to protect & promote the wellbeing of its students, which thus encompasses creating effective solutions for combating against food insecurity; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes how prevalent of an issue disordered eating & eating disorders are for students at higher institutions; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for proper treatment to be administered to any student suffering from disordered eating &/or eating disorders; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate understands how marginalized groups face discriminatory medical treatment & diagnosis when needing attention to decline in their mental wellbeing; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate promotes equitable medical treatment for all students needing care at the University of Florida; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate acknowledges that University of Florida students still face the pressing issue of food insecurity, which is a strong contributor to disordered eating as well as potentially resulting in developing eating disorders; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate supports initiatives targeted to combat food insecurity at all levels (federal, state, local); and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the final week of February as National Eating Disorder Week; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for increased measures to properly evaluate the severity of food insecurity faced by University of Florida students & to carry out practical solutions for how to best remedy the issue of food insecurity & its resulting effects; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate calls upon the University of Florida to provide an effective plan of action on how to

properly combat the immediate issues of disordered eating & eating disorders that its students currently face.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to the University of Florida President Ben Sasse, University of Florida Provost J. Scott Angle, Vice President for Student Life Heather White, University of Florida Student Body President Olivia Green, University of Florida Student Body Vice President Clara Calavia, University of Florida Counseling & Wellness Center Executive Director Ernesto Escoto, University of Florida Counseling & Wellness Center Interim Director Rosa West, University of Florida Counseling & Wellness Center Associate Directors Jennifer Stuart, Natasha Maynard-Pemba, & Alvin Lawrence, University of Florida Counseling & Wellness Center Associate Director (Administrative Services) Marie Southern, University of Florida Counseling & Wellness Center Associate Director of Crisis & Emergency Services & Consultation & Referral Team Coordinator Olivia K. Pitkethly, University of Florida Counseling & Wellness Center Faculty Council Chair Ginamarie Russo.

[1] <https://nedc.com.au/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-explained/disordered-eating-and-dieting#:~:text=Disordered%20eating%20sits%20on%20a,irregular%20or%20inflexible%20eating%20patterns>

[2] <https://nedc.com.au/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-explained/disordered-eating-and-dieting#:~:text=Disordered%20eating%20sits%20on%20a,irregular%20or%20inflexible%20eating%20patterns>.

[3] <https://anad.org/eating-disorder-statistic/>

[4] <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/eating-disorders>

[5] <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/eating-disorders>

[6] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2533817/>

[7] <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/>

[8] <https://www.goodrx.com/conditions/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-and-health>

[9] <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/health-consequences/>

[10] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3721327/>

[11] <https://anad.org/eating-disorders-in-genz/>

[12] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5386595/>

- [13] <https://equip.health/articles/food-and-fitness/gum-culture-eating-disorders>
- [14] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4477507/>
- [15] <https://sg.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SG-Debate-Transcript-Spring-2023.pdf>
- [16] <https://sg.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/SSB-2022-1062.pdf>
- [17] <https://www.alligator.org/article/2023/06/student-government-senate>
- [18] https://sg.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/1_9_24.pdf
- [19] <https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NCHA-2022-GatorWell-Health-Promotion-Services.pdf>
- [20] <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/key-statistics-graphics/>
- [21] <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=107702>
- [22] <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:c1253fec-bd53-4aa3-ae52-b16a0a55908c>
- [23] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7596309/>
- [24] <https://psychiatry.duke.edu/blog/food-insecurity-and-disordered-eating>