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**‘SURVIVAL OR SUCCESS**’ **STUDY: LARGE PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS STRUGGLE TO MEET BASIC NEEDS INSTEAD OF CLASSROOM SUCCESS**

San Diego — (Monday, December 5, 2016) A new study finds that approximately **one-third of community college students experience the threat of homelessness and housing instability** and **twelve percent face the threat of hunger**. More than 70% of these students are in remedial math courses.

“The findings are just common sense, if you are more concerned about where your next meal is or where you can lay your head at night than classroom success, it will impact your grades. That's the collegiate experience for a significant portion of college students, much more than we anticipated.” said Dr. Luke Wood. “**When faced with the real threat of hunger or homelessness their focus is survival before success**.”

These findings are among many new insights featured in a new report that is helping to create awareness of the challenges that many college students face during the holiday season and throughout the academic year. The report, *Struggling to survive: Striving to succeed: Food and housing insecurities in the community college,* released by the Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL) at San Diego State University is among the first research efforts to show who is adversely exposed to food and housing insecurities in California.

“Our report shows that our college campuses are food and housing deserts” said J. Luke Wood, Co-Director of CCEAL and report co-author. “And while many students face these concerns, we find that nearly half of Black collegiate men face homelessness or other housing instabilities and nearly a quarter deal with hunger”. The report also shows that high concentrations of Southeast Asian and Multiethnic students also experience these insecurities.

In response to these challenges, “many colleges are now creating food pantries, clothing closets, and connecting students with community housing organizations’ said Wood. However, an understanding of who faces these issues has inhibited targeting of resources and services.

According to the report, students with food and housing insecurities are significantly overrepresented in developmental education.  This is particularly pronounced in developmental math. In fact, the report demonstrates that students in developmental math account for 74% of students facing housing insecurity and 71% of those facing food insecurity. “These students face added challenges and have goals of transferring or earning a degree that may seem even more distant to them than for other students” said Nexi Delgado, CCEAL researcher and report co-author.

Other key findings about students experiencing food and housing insecurities included:

* Nearly a quarter (23.7%) of students who were exposed to housing insecurity also faced food insecurity.
* Insecurities caused high levels of stress among students with housing (at 37.9%) and food (48.9%) insecurities.
* Students with food and housing insecurities tended to be older than their peers who did not experience these challenges
* Students with housing insecurity were more likely to have goals of updating their job skills or starting a new job while those with food insecurity were more likely to have a goal of achieving a certification.
* Students with food insecurity are less likely to report being on track to achieve their goals and more likely to indicate their intention to drop out of college than those who do not experience this insecurity.

Despite these challenges, the report provides recommendations for college leaders on how to address insecurities. “We highlighted a number of recommendations for improving these conditions, the good news is, there is a lot that campuses can do about these challenges, but the first thing is to know who is affected and how it influences their success, so we addressed many concerns that deal with basic campus awareness of the issue” noted Frank Harris III, Co-Director of CCEAL and co-author of the report.

Beyond this, the report highlight colleges such as San Diego Mesa College, Napa Valley College, and Cańada College that are actively making strides to curb barriers that students with insecurities encounter. “Our work with these colleges and many others tell us that there is hope is the fight against homelessness and hunger” said Harris III.