



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

October 5, 2017

El Camino College to Open New Warrior Pantry *On-campus food bank to help support students facing food insecurity*

In an effort to assist students struggling with hunger, El Camino College will launch its first-ever food pantry this fall. A ribbon-cutting celebration for the new Warrior Pantry is set for 3:30 p.m. Oct. 16 in Physics Room 116.

One of the many food banks opening on college campuses nationwide to serve students, the Warrior Pantry will offer healthy food items to students in need so they can succeed in their classwork without distractions caused by food insecurity. Toiletries, access to a computer and access to additional resources will also be available in this supportive environment. These services can be used by all currently enrolled El Camino College students needing assistance. The Warrior Pantry will open for food distribution on Oct. 19.

A number of ECC students face serious financial challenges and often find it difficult to support themselves while also paying for college. Research indicates that students without proper nutrition can have trouble focusing on school work and often worry about where they will find their next meal.

“Food insecurity is a huge issue among college students nationwide, including right here on our own campus, yet many people aren’t even aware of this,” said student Andrew Leon, an environmental sciences/agricultural sciences major who helped launch the Warrior Pantry.

“Your lab partners may show up to class every day, but that doesn’t mean their meals are as predictable. Everyone deserves a shot at making something of themselves. It’s a lot easier not to go to school, especially when basic essentials such as food and toiletries aren’t obtainable. But these students are choosing to defy all odds and make it to class. The Warrior Pantry can help.”

The issue of food insecurity is gaining momentum throughout higher education statewide. The California State University and the University of California systems have both published studies that acknowledge the importance of addressing food insecurity in order to support student success. These studies are relevant for El Camino College given the proportion of food-insecure households in the South Bay.

A report from the County of Los Angeles shows that households in the South Bay with incomes less than 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level experience food insecurity higher than the county average. In addition, food insecurity within the South Bay has increased nearly 8 percent since 2002. These numbers are based on data collected in the recently released 2017 Los Angeles County Health Survey.

The Warrior Pantry was established through the leadership of the Student Equity Advisory Council, Associated Students Organization, and the Inter-Club Council, with support from the Student Development Office, Student Equity Program, and Food and Shelter Task Force. The pantry operates with assistance from food drives and monetary donations. The college community has generously donated healthy and nutritious nonperishable food items. Donations are continually accepted, in an effort to keep the shelves stocked.

For more information about the Warrior Pantry or to learn where to donate food and toiletry items, view: <http://www.elcamino.edu/student-services/warriorpantry/>. Monetary donations can be made via the following link: <http://www.elcamino.edu/foundation/donate.asp>.