

November 2, 2016

STARS Steering Committee
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
1536 Wynkoop Street, Suite 100
Denver, CO 80202

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to submit this letter of affirmation to share that Southern Illinois University Carbondale has officially opened the Saluki Food Pantry to support the nutritional needs of our students in need. The mission of the food pantry is to develop and sustain a food pantry on the campus at SIU Carbondale to serve food insecure students while providing an opportunity for SIU students to serve other students and engage in conversations around food insecurity.

The food pantry is located in the lower level of the Student Center and is designed to be easily accessible and centrally located for student convenience, yet situated so that students are able to discreetly secure food to meet their needs. The food pantry is currently operated by the Student Center team and is managed by a graduate student studying social work. In addition, we rely on volunteers to support operations and we are collaborating with faculty and student organizations to enhance the offerings of the food pantry. In addition to food, the Saluki Food Pantry also includes a holistic section, which helps students to identify other resources to support student success.

A cross functional advisory team oversees the strategic direction of the food pantry. This advisory committee is managed by the campus sustainability coordinator and includes team members from Student Health Services, Student Legal Services, Extended Campus and Student Center. The committee also includes stakeholders from outside the institution, including the manager of a local food pantry and a University of Illinois Extension Educator. While the food pantry is currently serving only non-perishable foods and personal items, the advisory committee hopes to expand the offerings to include fresh foods and other non-perishables. As a part of this process we plan to partner with internal and external stakeholders to recover food from nearby sources such as local farms and orchards or grocery stores. In addition, we hope to also recover food from our internal food service operations.

The Saluki Food Pantry relies on donations from staff, faculty, students, and the surrounding community. We are also partnering with the SIU Foundation for support with fundraising. The Saluki Food Pantry is a step forward in addressing food insecurity among the students in Southern Illinois University Carbondale. More information about the food pantry can be found here:
<http://studentcenter.siu.edu/services/saluki-food-pantry.php>.

Sincerely,

Kent Epplin
Associate Director of Operations
Southern Illinois University Student Center