



For College, Community, and Justice

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## #RealCollege Student Leadership Advisory Council Student Quotes for Testimony

### How A Student Experienced Food Insecurity During College:

Heather Atherton, member of the #RealCollege Student Leadership Advisory Council

Heather Atherton is an undergraduate student at Lake Forest College, a private liberal arts institution in Illinois. Originally from Chicago, Heather believes in the power of community colleges, having graduated from City Colleges of Chicago, and wants to see all of higher education better serve its students. Heather advocates for change in higher education based on her experiences as a first generation, low-income student with a daughter.

"I attended college in an attempt to increase my economic mobility with a degree. One year I worked full-time and picked up overtime when I could, attended evening classes full-time, and managed to attend as many of my daughter's school events as possible. I was also averaging about two hours of sleep each night and eating one meal every two or three days.



These days, I eat one meal a day, rather than every two or three days, partly to conserve groceries and partly because it has become an ingrained behavior. I know exactly where and how to discreetly push on my stomach to quiet it when it begins to growl in one of my morning lectures. I tell my classmates that I'm eating lunch at work and I tell my coworkers that I grabbed food at school on my way in. If you pack your schedule tight enough, no one knows any better. But this way of going through life is dangerous, unhealthy, and the worst example I could be setting for my daughter.

It is refreshing to know that these issues can be remedied, and those in the position to enact the changes we seek are allowing us the space to speak truth to power. I hold much hope that my daughter and those that come after her will not have to risk their lives and well-being— in the ways that so many of us have— in pursuit of knowledge. Hunger is far from the only burden students carry today, but eradicating it is a phenomenal place to start in constructing equitable and accessible college campuses."

*About the SLAC:* The Hope Center is the leading national organization putting students' basic needs front and center on the agenda. We created and lead the [#RealCollege Movement](#), driving changes to institutional practices and policy around the nation. The #RealCollege Student Leadership Advisory Council (SLAC) gives students causing "[good trouble](#)" in postsecondary spaces a key to the room where it happens. #RealCollege SLAC members help set The Hope Center's agenda by bringing new issues and interests for discussion to the table.