

Dear Class,

My dad often packed an extra sandwich with my lunch when I was younger. He told me someone was hungry with whom I could share that extra sandwich. He was right and such a wise man. This is why I started bringing breakfast for my teaching assistants (TAs) on exam days. After all, proctoring an 8 a.m. class is challenging work. On those exam days, when I would bring breakfast for my TAs, some students would come up to me and tell me they were hungry and ask if I could share that food with them. I didn't realize how many of my students were hungry or even how hungry they were. This hunger has a name; it is called **food insecurity**. As I began investigating it, I was saddened and shocked to see how their hunger could adversely affect their exam scores and overall college performance. When looking into the problem of food insecurity, I was heartbroken to discover that upwards of 40% of college students nationwide are food insecure. Food insecurity means difficulty in affording books, tuition, and, of course, food. :(This article discusses how, in some regions of our country, almost half of college students go hungry while in school <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/02/nyregion/hunger-college-food-insecurity.html>

No one knows how many students are food insecure since it requires students to report their status accurately and honestly, and many students may be too embarrassed to admit that they can't afford nutritious meals. **When I realized what a colossal problem food insecurity is on college campuses, I began bringing breakfast for all my students on exam days.** I recognize bringing breakfast bars during your exam may not change the world, but every positive act we do impacts our world. As the saying goes, think globally and act locally. I shared breakfast bars with you this semester to plant a tiny seed of altruism that will encourage you to think about performing a kind act for others to change their lives. :) By sharing breakfast with you throughout the semester, I know that, minimally, you wouldn't take my exams on an empty stomach and that you will hopefully do that much better on the exams. More importantly, you will also be reminded to pay that kind of act forward, just like my dad instilled in me by packing an extra sandwich all those times years ago.

Also, please consider helping a fellow Terp, as that hungry Terp could have sat next to you all semester. We are all in this together. If you have extra time this break or next semester, you can change the world around you and do much good. I'm telling you the "extra sandwich story" to inform you of the food insecurity on college campuses (including ours) so you can effect change. I hope you will pay it forward by **donating** to our Campus food pantry <http://campuspantry.umd.edu> or **volunteering** at our campus food pantry. Or, if you need to use the campus food pantry to obtain food, it is an excellent resource for a struggling Terp. Remember, that's why it is here. Other great local places you may consider volunteering are **So Others May Eat (SOME)** <https://www.some.org/volunteer> and DC Hunger Solutions <https://www.dchunger.org/> My office door is always open if you ever want to stop by for a cup of tea or lunch. Please stay in touch.

Thank you for your time,
Tammatha