

Who's Hungry? Observational Analysis of Food Availability at a PWI and an HBCU in Alabama

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Introduction

Accessibility to healthy food options is a prevalent issue for college students in American. Students that attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), have been known to experience food deserts, lack of healthy food options and grocery stores than students that Predominately white institutions (PWI). This observational study will explore the available food options located with a five-mile radius of PWI in Birmingham, Alabama (Institute A), and a neighboring HBCU in Fairfield, Alabama (Institute B).

Methods

The data collected will be observational as the data will be captured through viewing the restaurants available on and off the campuses and using maps to review the 5-mile radius of Institutes A and B.

The restaurants were deemed healthy if majority of the menu had options such as salads, egg whites, spinach souffles, and fruits. Non-healthy restaurants were categorized as such due to the limited options of healthy foods being mainly side salads or a side of leafy greens. Combination establishments included grocery stores and restaurants that sold or served healthy and unhealthy food options while also having a wide variety of fried and unhealthy food.

Results

The results of this observational study showed that Institute A (PWI) had more on-campus healthy food options than Institute B (HBCU) has on or off-campus.

Table 1: Institute A (PWI) On-Campus Food Options

Restaurant	Type of Place	Healthy	Non-Healthy	Combination
The C Store	Grocery Store			X
The Den	Diner			X
Panera Bread	Bakery	X		
Starbucks	Coffeehouse	X		
Mein Bowl	Asian Cuisine			X
Full Moon	BBQ		X	
Einstein Bagels	Bagels	X		
Moes	Tx Mex			X
WOW Café	American Cuisine		X	
Blenz	Smoothies	X		
The Grid	Grocery Store			X
The Commons	Café			X

Table 2: Institute B (HBCU) On and Off-Campus Food Options

Restaurant	Type of Place	Healthy	Non-Healthy	Combination
Urban Smoke	Bar & Grille		X	
D&D Soulfood	Restaurant		X	
Fairfield Seafood	Restaurant		X	
Waffle House	Diner		X	
Chick Fil-a	Fast-Food			X
East of the Mississippi River	Restaurant		X	
Q's Bar & Grille	Bar & Grille		X	
Red Pearl	Restaurant		X	
Miles Café	Café			X

Discussion & Conclusions

The food options available for Institute B's students are inadequate in comparison to the variety of food available for Institute A. The preliminary web search of the college campuses websites revealed that Institute A has multiple food options and proved to be a reliable source to view hours of operation and menus.

Institute B's website did not provide the name any food sources or have the college's café information available.

Future research should include how the lack of healthy food options affect college students compared to colleges with healthy food options.

Food accessibility has been an ongoing issue on college campuses but there is a disproportionate decrease in accessibility among HBCU's.

All colleges should have access to healthy, brain food options to improve the overall health and wellbeing of students and professors.

