Evaluation of ASUCD Pantry Operations

Recommendations for Improving Sustainability and Work Experience

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Letter to the Team

The origins of this report began as a conversation between current and former Pantry leadership, who have grappled with many challenges operating a student-led organization that has rapidly grown in a few short years. Pantry leaders raised significant concerns about managing a vastly larger team with greatly expanded services while continuing a staffing model of part-time student employees and volunteers.

While students have managed the Pantry for the past decade, the surge in student food insecurity, coupled with urgent calls for reform among Pantry Directors and Assistant Directors in recent years, signaled the misalignment between students' circumstances and institutional support.

We began planning on October 28th, 2021 and presented our findings to different generations of Pantry teams on May 29th and September 11th, 2022. Through our meetings, we sought to understand the underlying causes where staff expectations fell short and where areas for improvement were most needed. This report represents a collection of new understandings synthesized over nine months from critical discussions with Pantry student staff.

We extend our deepest gratitude to 2021-2022 Pantry Director Jason Kwan and 2021-2022 Pantry Assistant Director Abigail Nonnarath for their advocacy and support of this work and Dr. Ko for her commitment to this cause and the creation of this project. This project was funded by the Department of Public Health Sciences at UC Davis.

With the knowledge and insights gained by this project, we hope this will equip the Pantry staff with tools to improve internal organizational management effectively.

In service,

Ryan Choi
Ryan McClintick

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Pantry at UC Davis, housed under the Associated Students of the University of California, Davis (ASUCD), is a student-run and student-led organization. This is unique relative to other food banks in higher education, which rely upon a mix of student staff and dedicated career staff. In recent years, the ASUCD Pantry has grown significantly, transitioning from a storage room in the student union basement to a newly renovated multi-facility storefront residing in a visible and heavily-trafficked student lounge. This rapid growth has been accompanied by ever-increasing complexity and breadth of administrative work. To bolster the sustainability of this significant expansion, we were asked to assess the work experiences of Pantry staff. Our objective was to produce practical organizational management recommendations centered around improving staff well-being, turnover, and workplace efficacy.

Methods

We conducted four focus groups with Pantry staff, discussing the following topics: experiences working at the Pantry, work-life balance, workplace culture, training and learning, leadership and management style, and recommendations for organizational improvement. Following an initial review of staff discussions, we then conducted individual interviews with the Pantry Director and Assistant Director. We recorded and transcribed all discussions, analyzed for themes, and developed recommendations based on major themes.

Findings

Our overall assessment of the Pantry identified a workplace that thoroughly embraces the role of staff as a student first, and an employee second. Staff are provided accommodations to ensure that their personal needs are met, with significant freedom in the scope and quantity of their work. Accountability and responsibilities are heavily self-determined by the individual staff member. While this is effective for promoting an environment that fosters creative freedom and collaboration, a greater degree of workplace structure may be warranted, given the increasing complexity of the organization. This workplace culture may unintentionally increase stress when staff lack the resources and support to perform their responsibilities to the extent needed.

Recommendations

We developed the following initial recommendations to address recurring themes within the participant discussions, strengthen existing work practices, and introduce new ones.

1. Define job responsibilities to be more explicit and comprehensive.
2. Develop historical and reference documentation to maintain institutional knowledge.
3. Utilize a document navigation system to ensure staff are connected to the appropriate documentation.

4. Develop systems for data collection & management with the assistance of a graduate student.
5. Develop metrics of success, and set long-term goals across teams and for the organization as a whole based on those metrics.

Completion of Deliverables and Release
Following a presentation to the 2022-2023 Pantry Staff Team of our findings and final recommendations, we provided all completed deliverables (summary, report, and presentation) to 2022-2023 Director Abigail Nonnarath and Assistant Director Sergio Bocardo-Aguilar for dissemination.

Introduction

Purpose

The ASUCD Pantry has exponentially scaled up its operations through the past three years, leading to the tripling in size of the student staff team and responsibilities. Given the rapid change in the Pantry's internal organization, the purpose of this evaluation was to examine current organizational practices, staffing, and training, to identify strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of this student-managed service.

Project and Report Timeline

1. **Setting Scope**
   a. Determined topics of interest with Pantry Directors
   b. Agreed on deliverables and timeline
2. **Fact Finding**
   a. Invited Pantry staff for focus groups and Directors for one-on-one interviews to collect qualitative data.
   b. Conducted 4 focus groups with 12 Managers/ Coordinators and 1 interview each with Unit Director/Assistant Director
3. **Transcribing**
   a. Cleaned auto-generated Zoom transcripts
4. **Coding**
   a. Marked transcripts for recurring topics and insights
   b. Aggregated quotes, topics, and insights
5. **Theming**
   a. Grouped quotes, topics, and insights into sub-themes and themes in an analytical memo
   b. Determined overarching themes to form initial recommendations
6. **First set of Presentations**
   a. Presented results of focus groups, interviews, and initial recommendations to 2021-2022 Pantry managers and directors
   b. Organized a workshop for Pantry leadership on metrics, data acquisition, and long-term planning
7. **Final Recommendations**
   a. Will present the final set of recommendations, solicit Pantry leadership feedback, and support staff in determining practical applications

Context

History of the ASUCD Pantry

The Pantry was founded by UC Davis students in 2010, with a team of six students (a director, assistant director, donations manager, and two interns) operating out of Lower Freeborn Hall. Each year, the student staff would determine how to train volunteers, coordinate donation drives, and grow program services to meet a growing need. Much of this institutional memory built up over a year-long employment term would be stored in a shared Google Doc and through photo documentation. In its early years, the Pantry served approximately 50-100 students per day and had an operating budget of roughly $6,000 annually.

In the past three years, the Pantry rapidly expanded to include two of the most sought after locations on campus. Since transitioning from the Memorial Union (MU) basement to the MU first floor (in 2020), the Pantry has had significant increases in its budget, team, scope of operations, and organizational space. Student users served per day peaked at 1050 and the volunteer team grew from 30-40 students in 2018 to over 100 in 2020. The paid student staff team expanded to include more managers (from 3 to 12) and coordinators (6 to 15), as well as the inclusion of specialized positions such as technology developers, and data scientists).

Paid staff, including the director and assistant director, are classified as non-exempt employees which are not permitted to work greater than 20 hours per week. To compensate, more staff and volunteers were recruited which required additional hours of supervision and planning. Throughout this expansion, the Pantry remained a student-led and student-run organization, and contended with the employment conditions common in a university setting, including regular turnover of student staff and leadership.

Methods

We identified our main focus group topics through meetings with the 2021-2022 Director and Assistant Director Jason Kwan and Abigail Nonnarath, informal conversations with former managers, and our faculty advisor, Michelle Ko, MD, Ph.D.

Our evaluation explored the following areas:

1.	General Perspectives and Expectations Working at the ASUCD Pantry
2.	Work-Life Balance, Duties, and Responsibilities
3.	Work Environment and Culture
4.	Staff Training, Learning, and Transitions
5.	Recommendations for Improving the ASUCD Pantry Work Experience
6.	Leadership Style & Organizational Management (Directors)

The full list of questions can be found in Appendix II.

We conducted four virtual focus groups on Zoom, each consisting of three to four Pantry Managers (12 participants total, out of 12 total Managers). We also invited Pantry Coordinators (10 total), of whom 1 participated. After completing the focus groups and transcribing recordings for preliminary analysis, we then conducted individual interviews with the Director and Assistant Director.

We cleaned and formatted Zoom auto-generated transcripts of discussions, and then independently reviewed audio recordings with the text to ensure accuracy in the participants' conversations. Utilizing a reductionist approach, we then compiled quotes into recurring themes and subthemes to be used in developing our recommendations. We conducted two rounds of independent coding, followed by discussion and resolution [R. Choi, R. McClintick] and then reviewed preliminary themes with Dr. Ko. Using a database, we tracked how we arrived at final themes from the original focus group recordings, ensuring that recurrent experiences were accurately captured.

Findings

Workplace Culture

The ASUCD Pantry Team of 2021 - 2022 embraces a workplace culture that is intentionally respectful of the staff's role as a student first. Leadership prioritizes setting a norm in that work obligations should not impinge upon academic and personal needs. To allow for this, staff have a high degree of autonomy and the ability to self-determine and self-regulate a significant portion of their work. This is also in synchrony with the Pantry's message of promoting the importance of basic needs of not only its patrons but of its staff.

All the teams have the freedom to do whatever they want with the stuff sent to them.

It's self-directed… kind of what you make of it… you can really grow the organization as a whole.

Furthermore, the Pantry work environment values creative freedom, such that staff are encouraged to initiate and pursue novel projects and program modifications. These factors reinforce staff autonomy and bolster trust among staff and leadership. The Pantry culture of welcoming and informality scaffolds these main features of autonomy, initiative, and independence. The majority of staff appreciate the aforementioned traits of the Pantry workplace culture, and participants noted multiple times that these cultural aspects are a highlight of working at the Pantry.

We have this ability to speak our own mind… everyone is able to contribute their own ideas.

We're trying to accomplish a mission here… not you have to do this, you have to do that, it's more like 'here's open freedom to explore'… as long as you are doing your job.

It's like we trust you to do what you want… to do the right thing… we'll support you along the way.

The welcoming and kind environment makes me excited to keep going.

Nevertheless, many participants felt that workplace culture could benefit from somewhat more structure. Excess staff autonomy was at times accompanied by a lack of directional guidance, which could lead to frustration and lack of clarity on their goals or accomplishments. Some also noted the workplace culture led to delays in inter-staff communications and downgraded accountability for individual projects.

Freedom is good but I do also appreciate it when the directors give us projects they would like to see… giving us different opportunities to see facets of their vision.

It was not what I expected because there was not as much direction… I was like, I guess I'll learn as we go.

A downside [to] the flexibility in terms of communication... it takes a while to talk to people.

In summary, Pantry staff appreciated the welcoming and friendly work environment, where staff are allocated significant freedom and autonomy to pursue creative goals.

At the same time, with the growth of the organization, our findings suggest the Pantry would benefit from greater procedural guidance and more explicit job responsibilities. While self-directed work can be empowering, participants also noted that lack of structure could also induce stress and reduce productivity when staff do not have the guidance, resources, or accountability procedures necessary to follow through.

Staff Transitions & Documentation

Participants reported staff turnover as a relatively frequent occurrence at the Pantry, which led to difficulties with transitioning students into new positions.

There's new people in and out a lot.

We're all students and we all can leave.

The high degree of turnover amplified existing challenges, such as lack of training, which emerged as one of the most prominent and recurring concerns. Upon starting a position, many explained they did receive sufficient training to understand or perform their roles well. Participants reported learning critical knowledge independently and by "word of mouth." Even managers who were previously volunteers or coordinators noted that the scope of work and degree of responsibility significantly increased at the level of manager, and did not feel prepared for managerial roles.

There's still a lot more that wasn't able to be covered (in training). A lot of it, like, I felt like I had to learn myself.

New managers come in and unless they have another manager already there, they're left to figure things out for themselves.

There wasn't any training at all... I was thrown into it.

Even going from coordinator to manager there's still a big jump because your responsibilities are so much broader.

Participants also explained that due to high turnover, they struggled to acquire and pass along knowledge. Some sought additional documented reference material, which was infrequently available; others wanted to consult their predecessors, who may have already left the Pantry, or UC Davis, by that time. As a result of difficulties with transferring knowledge between staff, participants reported that staff were frequently unfamiliar with relevant points of contact and engaged in redundant work at the start of their appointment.

If someone left their position without anything behind, the experiential knowledge we've gained throughout the whole year drops off... and then it's a real learning curve having to do that over and over again.

There wasn't that much information on what to expect and how [manager work] would look like... it's like you have to learn on your own what's really going on.

Knowing what people tried would be helpful so we don't repeat the same mistakes

Having to reestablish connections [predecessors] had before me... having to redo that process... is just inefficient.

Additionally, the Pantry programming itself is subject to constant change - both from external factors and internal student-led efforts - which in combination with staff turnover, added confusion to role responsibilities. Over time, newer staff lost confidence, as a result of not knowing what to prioritize and what to delegate to coordinators.

Things are always changing but maybe some of the turnover might make it harder... [to] stay on top of everything.

Sometimes I feel lost and lose the confidence and authority I feel I should have as a manager.

Student staff, by nature, tend to have short terms, which can cause disruptions as staff transition in and out. This is a particular problem when every employee is a student, and the organizational programming itself continues to evolve. Our findings highlight how in the absence of a reliable source, individual, or process to maintain institutional memory of the workplace, Pantry staff grapple with a lack of clarity on their roles and responsibilities and find themselves conducting redundant work. Proper documentation, transition procedures and training are all the more essential with rapid turnover and service changes, so that new staff do not experience a hard reset for the Pantry each term. Ideally, new staff would pick up where previous staff left off. Given the significant freedom with each role & the responsibilities, documentation is all the more important to help guide staff and understand what has been accomplished previously and what has been formally agreed upon as precedence moving forward.

Data & Metrics

Participants reported that data and metrics of success were not often utilized for Pantry program design or long-term goals and in lieu, "intuition" would be used. This could make it difficult for Pantry members to demonstrate and define what work or projects were effective.

We don't have any metrics of success... we don't know if what we are doing is productive.

We just use intuition.

Difficulty with operationalizing success could make it difficult to communicate program needs to stakeholders. One member believed that a lack of communicable data was the reason for the non-approval of a senate bill that would have benefited the Pantry program.

For our menstrual products [legislation], we could have worked harder towards getting data on what [the senate] needed to get that bill approved.

Team members reported that data and metrics are not generally used to guide Pantry program design or long-term goals. They felt the Pantry lacked a deliberate decision-making process in which leadership created metrics to reflect program goals, or what data to collect. The lack of structure emerged in discussions on the ambiguity of the data science team's goals and work.

We don't have any metrics.

The Data Science team of the Pantry exists to assess and evaluate Pantry programs through data collection and analysis. The Data Science team has had difficulty defining their role at the Pantry Program. Pantry members explained that it was particularly difficult to see the relationship between the work of the Data Science Team and other teams. Some felt this disconnect between the Data Science Team with the rest of the Pantry was due to differences in working knowledge on the topics. The Data Science Team objective and scope seemed "ambiguous."

I guess I sort of feel that it (data science) doesn't really have application for the pantry and that's why I just felt like Maybe it was a little bit difficult to mesh in with other teams.

Not many people are familiar with the data science topic itself... they're more hesitant to communicate with the team because, maybe they don't have knowledge of certain topics or like what the role is specifically doing and what the Data Science Team can do.

What the Data Science Team needs to do is still a little bit ambiguous.

There do not appear to be clearly defined metrics and trends for each team to track and review to determine if their work and the Pantry program itself are effective. Collection and review of both quantitative and qualitative data permit a program to assess and evaluate its efforts, as well as communicate effectively to stakeholders, such as the ASUCD Senate. The Data Science Team has the potential to facilitate data-guided assessment and evaluation, but the direction of this team does not seem clear. The importance of the Data Science Team is also not clear to other team members.

Ideally, all teams would work in concert with the Data Science Team to plan, design and collect data to conduct critical assessment of program successes and set informed longer-term goals. Our findings suggest that at this time, the Pantry underutilizes data and metrics to support its program objectives, leading to challenges integrating the Data Science Team's work with the Pantry's day-to-day operations.

Long-Term Vision

Pantry Manager participants felt that they lacked sufficient dedicated time to review long-term goals. Meetings often focused on the short-term issues requiring their immediate attention, which then became a key internal barrier to establishing a long-term vision with shared goals and distinct roles for managers to fill. Participants also felt that in the lack of a shared vision, teams became isolated in communication silos and did not know what other teams were working on. Some managers also felt the Pantry's rapid growth in 2021 - 2022 alone warranted more time and space within the year to plan out multi-year initiatives.

We are constantly busy putting out fires.

Now that the Pantry has expanded, there's even longer-term goals... that aren't achieved within a one year time frame with the same people... continuity over the years so that this larger goal doesn't get lost, would be so impactful.

If we want to pursue something bigger and more ambitious, there's barriers to that because people don't prioritize or there's other [individual team] priorities.

Our findings suggest that developing a long-term vision would be readily supported because participants expressed a strong shared sense of mission and community with each other and Pantry users. Participants expressed a high value of trust in their peers.

You have that sense of community... accentuated because you have a connection to the people... the people you're working with and the people who use the Pantry

Staff have the passion to make sure this organization runs smoothly... I know everyone has that mindset.

In summary, participants identified several challenges due to the lack of a clearly defined long-term vision for the organization and the accompanying lack of goal-setting aligned with that vision. However, their strong shared mission suggests that the main barrier is the absence of dedicated time for these discussions.

ASUCD

Participants described several challenges related to the Pantry's parent department, the ASUCD. First, they reported frustration with delays in communication and of the communication received, it was insufficient. To avoid delays and circumvent waiting for ASUCD, managers reported modifying their goals for programs and services. Some chose to stop communicating with ASUCD altogether.

> *It just feels like it takes forever just for them to respond and even longer for them to actually do what we asked... we always try to put a lot of detail into what we're trying to do and [we get] a one sentence response or a one word response.*

> *[ASUCD working relationship] pushes [us] to work on programs that don't require much approval.*

Second, all participants agreed that they could benefit from learning how ASUCD influences the Pantry, particularly around program policy, operating budgets, and connections to the rest of the campus departments. Relevant tasks included invoice processing, inventory procurement, and donation drive coordination. Participants reported a spectrum of experiences: those who regularly completed specific ASUCD staff tasks could explain in greater clarity how ASUCD and the Pantry operated in conjunction, whereas others expressed confusion and reported having no understanding of this relationship.

> *I wish I'd known just how much cooperation with the higher-ups in ASUCD is vital... a lot of ordering goes through people higher up [who] have to approve... it's not just instantaneous, we have to come up with the budget for it and then the courage to make our case for why we need it.*

> *Even two quarters in I still feel there's things I don't understand about how our operations are tied to ASUCD... I wish I'd known how [to work] with higher-ups in ASUCD and how to push people to get the ball rolling.*

Pantry Directors and ASUCD

The Pantry Directors, who represent the Pantry to ASUCD staff, described their own unique challenges. Directors reported a lack of support, outright pushback, demeaning comments, and criticism from ASUCD. Frequent conflict undercut the directors' mental health and morale. The directors stressed the importance of interacting with the ASUCD Senate for annual budget meetings and the value of putting in the time weekly to advocate for the Pantry's issues, despite a volatile and stressful work environment. Their distress from several end of year meetings also began to spill over to negatively impact their interactions with Pantry Managers.

> *I got torn apart because they're [saying] 'obviously you know the answer to that is no, why are you even asking me...what makes you think you're special'.*

That made [us] sad and upset towards [budget meetings] because [we're] just getting grilled.

You don't want to go to them feeling dejected and upset... having [to] jump into another meeting [with] our managers... the energy you want to put in, you can't really put in because you are so upset... that has been constantly occurring.

In summary, Pantry staff and leadership interactions with ASUCD staff and the ASUCD Senate occasionally hampered operations, changed the scope of Pantry efforts to avoid ASUCD engagement, and depressed team morale. Participants recommended providing educational opportunities to learn how ASUCD works, finding effective communication styles in-person and in writing, and preparing conflict management strategies to address the work relationship with ASUCD.

Pantry Advisor

We also asked participants to imagine how their team and workload might change with the creation of a full-time university staff role: the ASUCD Pantry Advisor. Some anticipated benefits to organizational structure taking leadership tasks off of the directors, while others shared how the Pantry Advisor could provide mentorship and clearer explanation on how to work with ASUCD and campus entities. Participants also hoped that the Pantry Advisor could fill the gaps in staff availability during academic breaks and class schedule conflicts,

The turnaround time of responses from [the] people I contact doesn't always line up with my schedule... it's a good idea to have [a] career staff position opening up, that brings more formality and rigidity to [our] organization.

Participants felt that introducing the role of Pantry Advisor and integrating them comfortable within the team would make working at the Pantry a more fulfilling experience.

Recommendations

At a Glance

- ❖ **Anticipate and plan for staff transitions**
    - ➢ Create a comprehensive orientation and onboarding process.
    - ➢ Set aside time for long-term planning and goal-setting.
    - ➢ Tie goals to the onboarding process to build team motivation and cohesiveness.
- ❖ **Update and organize documentation**
    - ➢ Create and train employees in the use of a Navigational Records System ("Nav System").
- ❖ **Establish best practices for data collection and management**
    - ➢ Recruit a graduate student to conduct independent evaluations and research.
    - ➢ Develop a cross-agency data sharing (CADS) system.
- ❖ **Support existing workplace culture**
    - ➢ Increase frequency and intentionality of staff check-ins.
    - ➢ Use Discord and other online communication platforms effectively by setting expectations for use and creating space to discuss best practices at the beginning of the working term.
    - ➢ Improve the working relationship with ASUCD through education and check-ins.
    - ➢ Dedicate time to long-term planning and setting goals.

Anticipate and plan for staff transitions

Create a comprehensive orientation and onboarding process.

Onboarding is often confused with orientation. While orientation is necessary for completing paperwork and other routine tasks, onboarding is a comprehensive process — its goal is to reduce ambiguity over time. We sought guidance from a Director of People and Change at a local business who explained the impact of a well-crafted onboarding process: "*It creates understanding, which creates culture, which creates guidance, which helps people feel more productive and fulfilled in their roles. Nonprofit burnout happens when you don't feel you're meeting the objectives for yourself, or for your job, or if you don't understand what your job is. You want people to understand their positionality and impact on the larger picture. Then, with some truth, why does the small picture make a difference.*"

Onboarding begins at the time of hire and ideally continues through the first year of employment. It enables leaders to bring newly-hired staff up to speed with the processes, expectations, and day-to-day responsibilities of your department. All new employees are onboarded—but the quality of the onboarding makes a difference. Too often, onboarding consists of a single transition meeting with outgoing staff, being handed a pile of documents, and being introduced on an ad hoc basis. Effective onboarding requires feedback loops with repeated check-ins, such as 30-, 60-, and 90-day points. When onboarding is done well, however, it lays a foundation for long-term success for the staff member and the organization. It can improve productivity, build loyalty and engagement, and help staff become successful early in their terms.

How can the current team begin improving sustainability for new hires?
1. Plan an effective orientation, which is a formal event to introduce the new staff member to the Pantry's core.
2. Review the employee handbook and highlight major policies **together** and have new hires complete required employment paperwork.
3. Review pertinent administrative procedures and provide space and time to complete mandatory training. This process can overload a new hire with information and is therefore best done over a few days or a week, if possible.
4. Show employees how to use the navigational records system (see recommendation below) and assign a "buddy" for the new hire to stick closely with for the first month.
5. See [Appendix III](#) for a list of recommended orientation topics.

Update and organize documentation

Create and train employees in the use of a Navigational Records System
This "knowledge-based" system will enable employees to efficiently navigate a wide range of historical documentation and to better manage complex issues. The Nav System will provide search capability, easy access to trouble-shooting data, and would allow employees to regularly contribute new information to the system. The result will be a system that becomes "smarter" and more valuable the more it is used.

When employees begin implementation of this system, the starting point will be building awareness around creating, maintaining, and retrieving documentation. Ultimately, employees will realize they are in control - they have the choice of whether to use the system or opt out (desire) but as the new system is deployed, projections, and assumptions (knowledge) about where to find documentation will grow surprisingly accurate. Over time, leadership will realize substantial savings in time spent searching for documentation and independently determining how to proceed with solving problems rather than relying on Directors to provide answers (ability).

Set aside dedicated time for current team members to identify and create documentation specific to their roles. Incorporate the use of the Nav system into team member onboarding. Directors can require maintenance and quality review of the Nav System on a routine basis and support outgoing staff by sharing their institutional memory through this system in addition to training incoming staff on usage and best practices. A template we created can be found in Appendix IV.

Establish best practices for data collection & management

1. Determine the value of existing data sources such as item inventory counts, food bank invoices, and swipe data.
   ➜ Ex: interviews, cross-campus visits, conversations with stakeholders and donors
2. Work with staff to assess the needs of the Pantry's internal and external processes.
   ➜ Ex: Efficiency of check-out system, volunteer training, donation tracking, etc.
3. Conduct independent research and impact/cost evaluation on nutrition-centric food distribution efforts similar to Yolo Food Bank.
   ➜ From [Katie S. Martin's Reinventing Food Banks and Pantries](): The SWAP System ranks food based on levels of saturated fat, sodium, and sugars. These nutrients are linked with an increased risk of chronic diseases. By ranking food nutritionally, staff can influence donors to donate healthier foods and can promote nutritious food for patrons, which contributes to the Pantry's mission.
4. Set metrics of success.
   ➜ Make informed decisions via data.
   ➜ Acknowledge that there will be a gray area where you won't have clear data.
   ➜ Set guidelines and procedures to test hypotheses and pilot programs.
   ➜ Set goals that can be evaluated utilizing data.

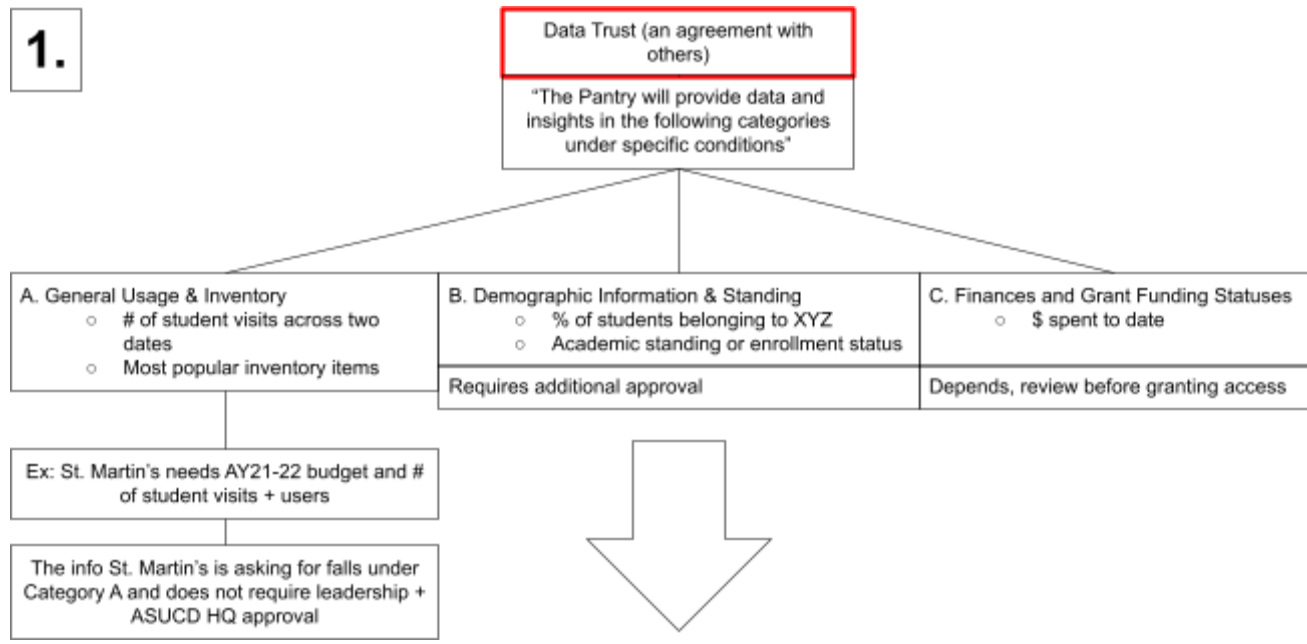*Hire a graduate student to provide guidance and training for the Data Science Team*
Examples of strengths identified for in graduate programs by the [University of Illinois Chicago]():
1. Students demonstrate depth and understanding in their specific area of interest and study.
2. Students are able to synthesize a large amount of material in a cogently argued thesis.
3. Students are able to analyze, interpret, and write about the findings of self-designed studies in a scholarly manner that focuses on issues related to meeting program needs.
4. Students possess strong writing skills and excel at teaching and program development thanks to their pedagogical training and hands-on course activities as graduate student instructors.
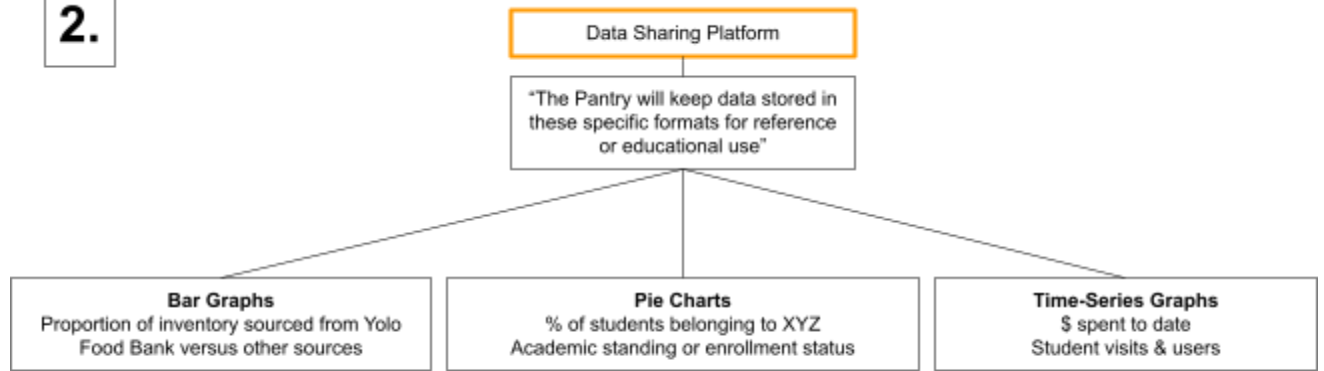
Develop a cross-agency data sharing (CADS) system.
In previous years, the Pantry has had to share swipe data, patron visit frequency, internal patron email listservs, and other forms of sensitive data with external bodies such as UC Basic Needs and Aggie Compass. While the ASUCD Director of IT oversees the team tasked with supporting the entire Association, historical ASUCD records show the ASUCD priority has been improving cloud storage infrastructure and replacing units' old hardware in the 2021-2022 academic year. It is unclear whether IT, UC Davis Student Affairs, or other external bodies have plans to map out how the Pantry will collect, store, and release its own data.
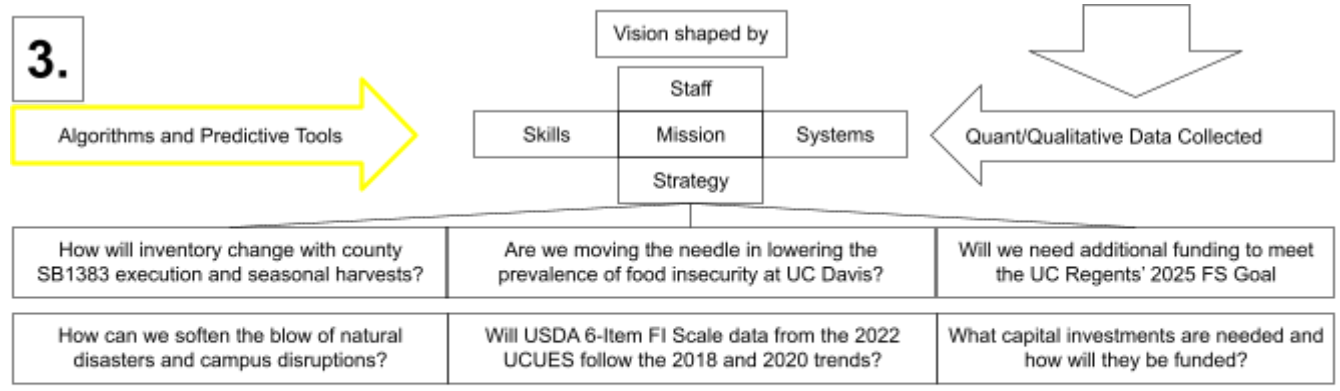
1.

Data Trust (an agreement with others)

"The Pantry will provide data and insights in the following categories under specific conditions"

A. General Usage & Inventory	B. Demographic Information & Standing	C. Finances and Grant Funding Statuses
○ # of student visits across two dates ○ Most popular inventory items	○ % of students belonging to XYZ ○ Academic standing or enrollment status	○ $ spent to date
	Requires additional approval	Depends, review before granting access

Ex: St. Martin's needs AY21-22 budget and # of student visits + users

The info St. Martin's is asking for falls under Category A and does not require leadership + ASUCD HQ approval

2.

Data Sharing Platform

"The Pantry will keep data stored in these specific formats for reference or educational use"

Bar Graphs	Pie Charts	Time-Series Graphs
Proportion of inventory sourced from Yolo Food Bank versus other sources	% of students belonging to XYZ Academic standing or enrollment status	$ spent to date Student visits & users

3.

Vision shaped by

Staff

| Skills | Mission | Systems |

Strategy

Algorithms and Predictive Tools →

← Quant/Qualitative Data Collected

How will inventory change with county SB1383 execution and seasonal harvests?	Are we moving the needle in lowering the prevalence of food insecurity at UC Davis?	Will we need additional funding to meet the UC Regents' 2025 FS Goal
How can we soften the blow of natural disasters and campus disruptions?	Will USDA 6-Item FI Scale data from the 2022 UCUES follow the 2018 and 2020 trends?	What capital investments are needed and how will they be funded?

4.

Education for all team members: why do we ask these questions, how can we safeguard our knowledge, and what student info do we protect?

1. Data Trust: A framework between key partners for defining and sharing relevant data while maintaining FERPA Compliance
    ➔ Ex: by sorting pieces of internal data into categories for effective storage/retrieval and assigning privacy levels, leadership can have peace of mind when staff are asked to provide information for Aggie Compass, Student Affairs, OSSJA, Basic Needs Advisory Committee, grant proposal review committees, etc.
2. Data Sharing Platform
    ➔ A secure, scalable data repository that houses all shared data
        i. Bar graph form
            1. Quarter-by-quarter visits vs users counts.
        ii. Time-series graph
            1. How many students utilize the Pantry?
            2. How frequently do students utilize the Pantry?
        iii. Pie chart or histogram
            1. What items are students choosing the most frequently?
            2. What are the self-reported food security levels among Pantry users?
3. Predictive Capability Algorithms
    ➔ Predictive models and analytics regarding data trends
4. FERPA + Data Sharing Principles Training
    ➔ A series of education modules for internal staff and volunteers, prospective graduate student researchers, or undergraduate students interested in completing projects on the Pantry for academic coursework to independently complete on protecting confidential student records and appropriately sharing findings.

Support existing workplace culture

Increase frequency and intentionality of staff check-ins
1. Consistently schedule supervisor-supervisee sessions, and create space to learn more about one another. Ask questions pertaining to hopes, perspectives, and motivations.
2. Set healthy communication expectations by creating and sharing a "How to work with Me" document that encompasses preferred face-to-face and virtual interaction styles, work habits and workspace needs, and tips on how to best work together.
3. Supervisors should meet regularly together to discuss how team structures or hierarchies are impacting their working relationships. Supervisors can share strategies on how to support needed accommodations or discuss potential structural changes for the future.

Use Discord or other online communication platforms effectively for operations, including setting expectations for use and creating space to discuss best practices at the beginning of the working term.

1. During onboarding, experienced employees should work with new staff through the Pantry Discord server or other platforms to practice navigating the platform. This will both increase familiarity as well as offer regular opportunities to check the existing system. .

Build a stronger relationship with ASUCD

1. At the beginning of the term:
   a. Introduce the team to ASUCD's hierarchy and working structure through a visual medium like PowerPoint, printed manual in a shared binder, or recorded video. The complexity of the Pantry's umbrella organization warrants clear and concise visual aids to map out working relationships and reporting lines as well as groups of staff that typically work together to support Pantry-related operations. Examples can include:
      i. Pantry Budget (ASUCD Controller/ASUCD Vice Controller and ASUCD Business Manager, then ASUCD President)
      ii. Pantry Fundraising (ASUCD Business Manager, Student Affairs Director of Development)
      iii. Pantry Accounts (ASUCD Office Manager, then ASUCD Business Manager)
      iv. Pantry Facilities (ASUCD Business Manager, ASUCD Office Manager, Memorial Union Director, Memorial Union Director of Operations and Events Management)
      v. Pantry Payroll (ASUCD Office Manager, ASUCD Personnel Manager)
      vi. Pantry Legislation (Adopted Senator(s), ASUCD Internal Vice President, ASUCD President, ASUCD Controller/ASUCD Vice Controller)
2. Before starting a project or exploring program changes:
   a. Gather documentation on what the Pantry team is currently doing. It is important to not assume ASUCD staff know what is happening on the frontlines, instead opt to clearly summarize what problems exist and explore solutions together.
   b. Staff should discuss what resources, tools, and guidance they think they need to complete their tasks in advance.
   c. If ASUCD staff need time to make decisions and assess risks, Pantry staff should plan ahead by mapping out project timelines.

Dedicate time for long-term planning and setting goals

   d. Establishing clear shared goals will help connect the issues outlined above, from communication between staff to identification, the use of data and metrics, to advocacy with ASUCD.
   e. The Pantry can maintain student autonomy and support student-driven programs and modifications while ensuring that staff are clear on how these efforts contribute to a longer-term vision for the Pantry.

Conclusion

The Pantry is a fast-growing and large-scale student operation that is currently facing a future of uncertainty within the context of continued growth in services. The work culture is supportive, friendly, and respectful, with attention to staff needs as students. The Pantry promotes a high level of creative freedom and autonomy among its staff. We believe the workplace culture is one of the greatest strengths of the Pantry and what has permitted the organization to grow and expand beyond what many would see as possible relative to the historical budget.

Student food insecurity has continued to balloon, increasing the need for expanding Pantry services and greater annual budgets, the complexity of the organization has grown without compensatory parallel changes in workplace culture or principles of operation. As a result, new organizational challenges have emerged, in the context of the limitations of an all-student team with short, part-time employment terms and priority for their academic obligations. Our participants identified difficulties due to a lack of ambiguity in position responsibilities, which are also tied to shortcomings in historical documentation, training, procedural guidelines, deadlines, and accountability. While the Pantry workplace culture is one of accommodation and freedom, in some circumstances this may increase stress when guidelines and goals are ambiguous, or there is not a clear way how to execute said work. It can also result in incomplete projects and undeveloped long-term visions. The absence of ASUCD guidance, mentorship, and support, is also compounding Pantry team challenges.

We believe that the Pantry has many areas of opportunity that can be addressed to overcome current organizational challenges. We recommend that the leadership can invest in the following areas: preparation for staff transitions, documentation, data collection and management, and workplace culture. One of the Pantry's greatest assets is the strong shared mission among its staff - we believe each of these recommendations will draw upon this asset and enrich the Pantry work experience.

Appendices

Appendix I: Scope of Work

<div align="center">

ASUCD Pantry Organizational Sustainability Evaluation
SCOPE OF WORK

</div>

Contractors: Ryan Choi, Ryan McClintick ("independent contractors")

Site: ASUCD Pantry ("the Pantry"), University of California, Davis, Main Campus, UC Davis

Time Period: December 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

Purpose:

The ASUCD (Associated Students of the University of California, Davis) Pantry is the University of California, Davis' largest and longest-running food security resource with the mission to aid all UC Davis students in obtaining basic needs resources. The student-run, student-led organization exists under the umbrella of ASUCD which provides financial, programmatic, and staffing support to facilitate the day-to-day operations. The Pantry Team consists of over one hundred student volunteers led by a board of twelve student staff. These student staff manage the three key aspects listed above (budget, policy, hiring & training) that other organizations typically delegate to full-time career staff. In response to campus demand for increased resources made available to food-insecure students in 2018, the student-run Pantry has exponentially scaled up its operations through the past three years, warranting the tripling in size of the student staff team and its subsequent burden of responsibilities. In Fall 2021, the Pantry served approximately 1,430 patrons per week. Given the rapid change in Pantry organization, the purpose of the proposed evaluation is to examine current organizational practices, staffing and training, with the aim of identifying strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of a critical student support service at the UC Davis campus.

Services:
To meet evaluation objectives, the independent contractors will perform the following:
  (1) Develop discussion guides and conduct interviews of ASUCD Pantry leadership: directors and managers on current challenges, strategies, and recommendations for improvement
  (2) Develop discussion guides and conduct focus groups with current ASUCD Pantry supervisors and coordinators current challenges, strategies, and recommendations for improvement
  (3) Develop discussion guides and focus groups or brief email surveys (depending on availability) with former ASUCD Pantry leadership and staff
  (4) Develop discussion guides and conduct interviews with student leaders of: a) other UC campus food pantry leadership; b) other UC Davis student-run services organization leadership
  (5) Review national documentation on organizational management strategies and practices for campus-based food pantries

(6) Synthesize findings of Activities (1)-(5) and work with the Pantry Director and Assistant Director to develop recommendations

Deliverables:

The independent contractors will prepare an executive summary and final report for the Pantry Director and Assistant Director.

Rate: The independent contractors will each receive $2500, for a total of $5000 for the services provided.

Appendix II: Focus Group Questions

Topic 1: General Perspectives and Expectations Working at the ASUCD Pantry
- Is it what you expected and how does it compare to other positions you have worked or volunteered in?
  - F/U: Why do you think this is? Do you think these are common things or different across other student organizations?
  - F/U: Can you share a little bit more and describe your experiences working at the Pantry?

Topic 2: Work-Life Balance, Duties, and Responsibilities
- How would you describe the workload at the Pantry?
  - F/U: Do you find yourself working more or less hours than expected? Why do you think this is?
  - F/U: Do you think the time invested is productive? When is it and when is it not?
- How do you balance your position at the ASUCD Pantry with school and other obligations?
  - F/U: In terms of your ASUCD Responsibilities, how does this workload fair in comparison to all your other responsibilities in college?

Topic 3: Work Environment and Culture
- How would you describe the Pantry work culture? What is your preferred work culture across a spectrum of professional versus casual?
  - F/U: Is it the same across all working groups of the Pantry?
- What is your preferred work culture across a spectrum of professional versus casual?
  - F/U: How would you shift the Pantry work culture?

Topic 4: Staff Training, Learning, and Transitions
- What do you wish you had in preparation for this job?
  - F/U: Is there anything you did beforehand that prepared you for this job well?
  - F/U: What would you say to the person taking your job?

Topic 5: Recommendations for Improving the ASUCD Pantry Work Experience
- Do you have any recommendations for the Pantry to better train and prepare team members?
- Do you have ideas for how the Pantry could be organized or how leadership could better support you and other staff?

Directors: Assisting Staff, Conflict Management Approach, Personal Growth as a Leader

Appendix III: Orientation Topics List

1. Structure
   - ☐ Org Chart
   - ☐ Direct/Indirect Supervisors
2. Vision, Mission, Values
   - ☐ What is Food Insecurity/What is Basic Needs Insecurity
   - ☐ Addressing Hunger in Yolo County
   - ☐ Addressing Hunger at UC Davis/Higher Education
3. History
   - ☐ Creation
   - ☐ Partnership Building
   - ☐ Move to MU154
   - ☐ Wildfires
   - ☐ Move to MU167/Pandemic
   - ☐ 10-Year Anniversary
4. Culture
   - ☐ ASUCD ↔ Pantry
   - ☐ Basic Needs ↔ Pantry
   - ☐ Patrons ↔ Staff
5. Employee Handbook
   - ☐ Documentation
     - ☐ Team Drive
     - ☐ Paper Files
   - ☐ Communication
     - ☐ Discord
     - ☐ Email
     - ☐ Meetings
   - ☐ Facilities/Campus Floor Plans and Map
   - ☐ Work Environment (Physical)
     - ☐ Determine designated space (locker, workbench, cubicle, office)
     - ☐ Arrange for keys or other means of access to the designated space (building, lab, office, locker room)
     - ☐ Order name badge
     - ☐ Order business cards
     - ☐ Address clothing and equipment requirements
     - ☐ Label mailbox
   - ☐ Work Environment (Electronic)
     - ☐ Arrange for computer access and accounts (hardware, software applications, email, network connectivity, shared folders, online time reporting system)
     - ☐ Update phone lists, department directories, organizational charts
     - ☐ Add new employee's name and contact information to shared directories,

distribution lists and email/calendaring systems
- [ ] Safety Plans
  - [ ] Disaster and Evacuation Procedures
  - [ ] Injury & Illness Prevention
  - [ ] Protective Clothing and Equipment
  - [ ] Warn Me Emergency Notification Service
  - [ ] UC Ready
  - [ ] Reporting a work-related injury or illness

6. Employment Policies
- [ ] ASUCD Constitution/Bylaws
  - [ ] Pay Periods, Backpay, Direct Deposit
- [ ] Resignation/Termination
- [ ] Employment Verification
- [ ] Transcript Notation
- [ ] Work-Study Eligibility

7. Training on LMS
- [ ] UC Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention
- [ ] UC Ethical Values and Conduct
- [ ] UCD FERPA: Student Privacy, Confidentiality and Data Security
- [ ] UCD Cybersecurity
- [ ] UCD Safe Driver Awareness Training (+DMV Pull)
- [ ] ServSafe **and**/or UCD Food Safety Online Training

8. Administrative Procedures to Review with Staff
- [ ] Practice Completing TRS/Timesheets
- [ ] Practice Reporting An Issue/Concern
- [ ] Practice Submitting General Feedback
- [ ] Practice Team Member Recruitment Pitch

9. Miscellaneous for Directors
- [ ] Announce the hiring of your new employee. Let everyone, including the management team, know when he/she is starting and in which position. Ask others to welcome and show support for your new employee. Include information about your new employee's background (previous employment, education, experience, interests).
- [ ] Develop an itinerary for the first week so your new employee hits the ground running with meaningful work. The schedule should include a balance of time with others and time alone to read introductory materials and complete orientation-related tasks.
  - [ ] Plan and schedule any training critical for your new employee to receive within the first few weeks on the job.
  - [ ] Select an employee on your team to be a "buddy" — a go-to resource for your new employee during the first few months.
  - [ ] Set up appointments with individuals whom your new employee should meet early on.

10. Here is an example of a New Employee Checklist from UC Davis: link to file.

Appendix IV: Navigational Records System Guide

We used Scribe, a Google Chrome Extension, to make this workflow in less than 5 minutes. These are the links to the templates on Google Forms and Google Sheets referenced below. The director@thepantry.ucdavis.edu account has been added as an editor to both and has the capacity to make a copy of each of the documents by clicking "Make a copy" on each file in Google Drive.

2 Determine who this document's audience should be.

Link

Link to Doc/Youtube Video/Spreadsheet

Who is this for?

☐ Any
☐ Unit Director/Assistant Director
☐ Managers
☐ Shift Leads
☐ Volunteers

Who will a person following these instructions need to work

3 Select who might need to modify or be responsible for updating/maintaining this file.

Managers
☐ Shift Leads
☐ Volunteers

Who will a person following these instructions need to work

☐ All
☐ Unit Director/Assistant Director
☐ Managers
☐ Shift Leads
☐ Volunteers
☐ ASUCD President
☐ ASUCD Controller
☐ ASUCD Business Manager

4 Determine what external systems or software might be needed in conjunction with your file. If something requires an account and separate login, this is the place to note that.

ASUCD Senators

Other:

What system(s), software(s), etc. will you need access to in or task?

ASUCD Budget Website

ASUCD Pantry Website

Mailchimp

Trello

Discord

Salesforce

Other:

5 Click "Submit"

ASUCD Budget Website

ASUCD Pantry Website

Mailchimp

Trello

Discord

Salesforce

☑ Other: Swipe System or other system

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This form was created inside of UC Davis. Report Abuse

Google Forms

6   Don't forget to link your live spreadsheet here.

Navigational Records System Input

Your response has been recorded. Link to sheet:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1OY9HAkzZ3pPMPQKRT0mIRhsVH9a2OWSOae
46hSTByl/edit#gid=1491171685

Submit another response

This form was created inside of UC Davis. Report Abuse

Google Forms

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7   To link your live spreadsheet, re-open the form and click this icon on the bottom right corner.

- [ ] ASUCD Budget Website
- [ ] ASUCD Pantry Website
- [ ] Mailchimp
- [ ] Trello
- [ ] Discord
- [ ] Salesforce
- [ ] Other:

Submit   Clear form

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This form was created inside of UC Davis. Report Abuse

Edit this form

Google Forms

8 Click here.

ns   Responses **12**   Settings

📗   ⋮

Accepting responses ⬤

Question   Individual

🖨   🗑

s System Input

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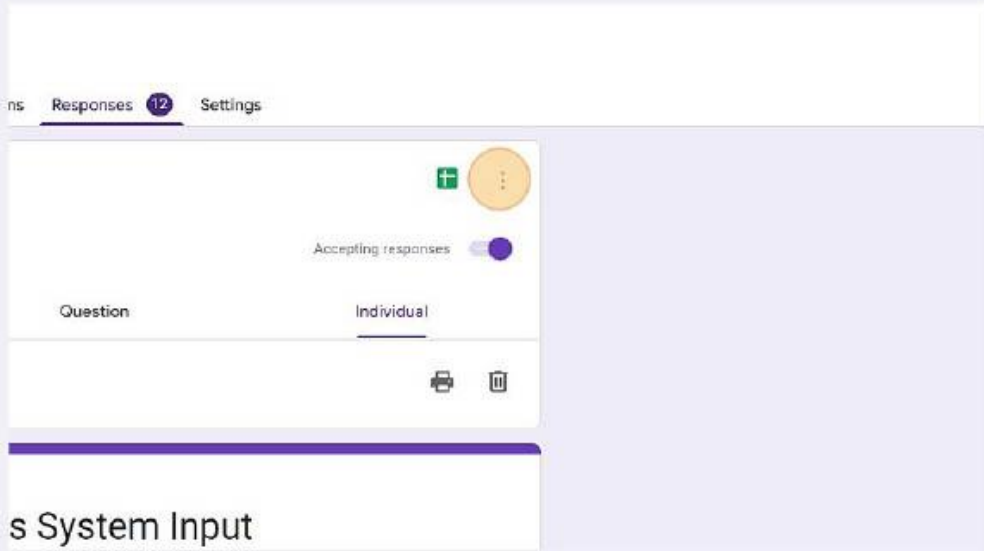
9 Click "Select response destination"

Questions   Responses **12**   Settings

Get email notifications for new responses

Select response destination

🔗 Unlink form

⬇ Download responses (.csv)

🖨 Print all responses

🗑 Delete all responses

ords System Input
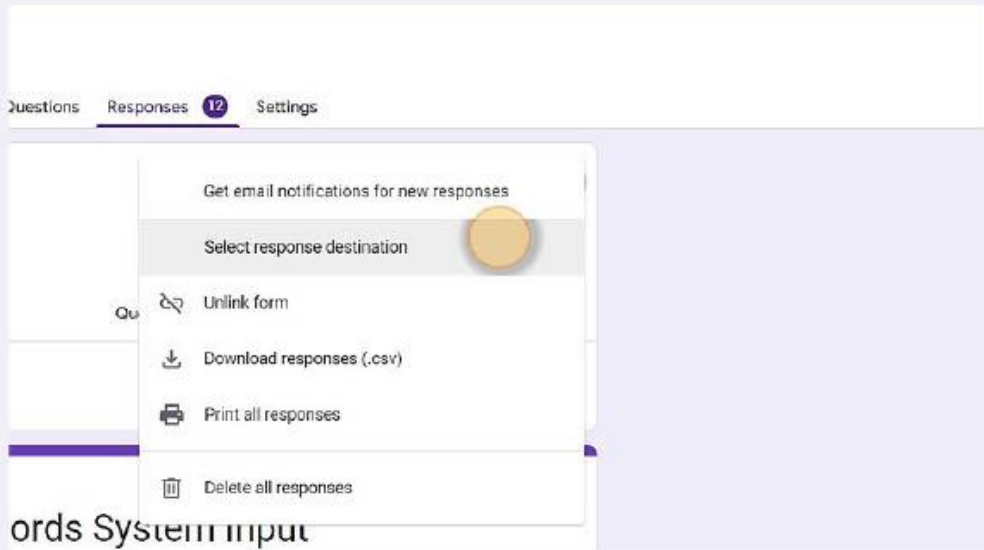
10 Click "Select existing spreadsheet"

Select response destination ✕

Responses are currently being sent to   this spreadsheet.

◉ Create a new spreadsheet   Navigational Records System...   Learn More

○ Select existing spreadsheet

12 resp

Su

‹   1

Cancel   Create

Responses cannot be edited

Navigational Records System Input

11 Click "Select"

sponse destination ✕

are currently being sent to   this spreadsheet.

a new spreadsheet   Navigational Records System...   Learn More

existing spreadsheet

Cancel   Select

Records System Input

12 Click "Settings"

Questions   Responses 12   Settings

esponses   ⊞   ⋮

                               Accepting responses ⬤

Summary   Question   Individual

1 of 12   >   🖨   🗑

s cannot be edited

igational Records System Input

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13 Click the drop-down arrow for "Presentation (Manage how the form and responses are presented)"

nd automatically provide feedback   ⬤

ed and protected   ⌄

es are presented   ⌄

ew forms   ⌄

14 Click "Edit"

ses are presented

ded. Link to sheet:
adsheets/d/1OY9HAkzZ3pPMPQKRT0mIRhsVH9a2OWSOae
'685

er response

espondents. Important details

---

15 Paste your live spreadsheet link here and press save.

FORM PRESENTATION

Show progress bar

Shuffle question order

AFTER SUBMISSION

Confirmation message
QKRT0mIRhsVH9a2OWSOae046hSTByl/edit#gid=1491171685   Save Cancel

Show link to submit another response

View results summary
Share results summary with respondents. Important details

RESTRICTIONS:

Disable autosave for all respondents

16 You can also get email notifications each time someone submits this form. Click here.

Responses **12**   Settings

Accepting responses

Question   Individual

s System Input

---
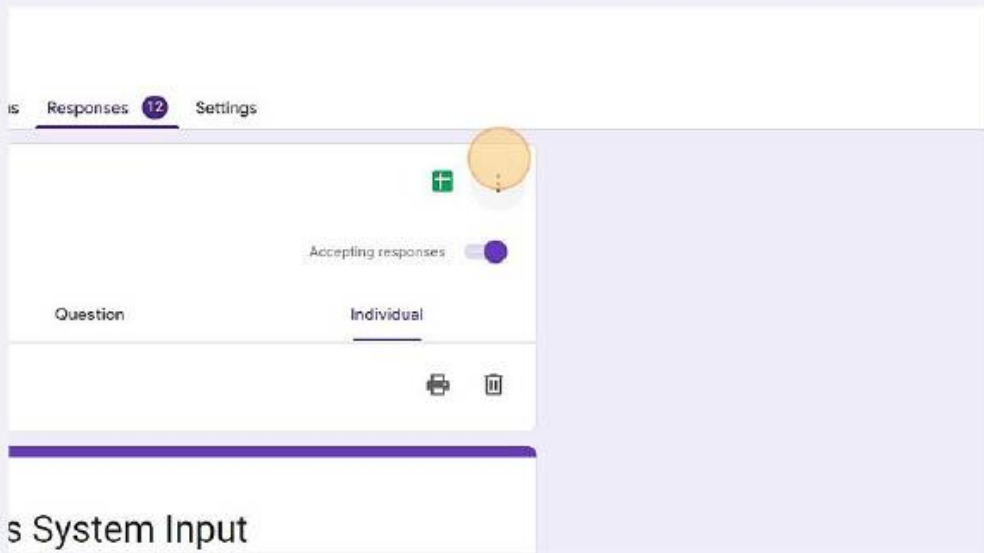
17 Click "Get email notifications for new responses". Note that this will only turn on notifications for the email you're currently logged into when you are toggling this setting.

Questions   Responses **12**   Settings

Get email notifications for new responses

Select response destination

Unlink form

Download responses (.csv)

Print all responses

Delete all responses

ecords System input
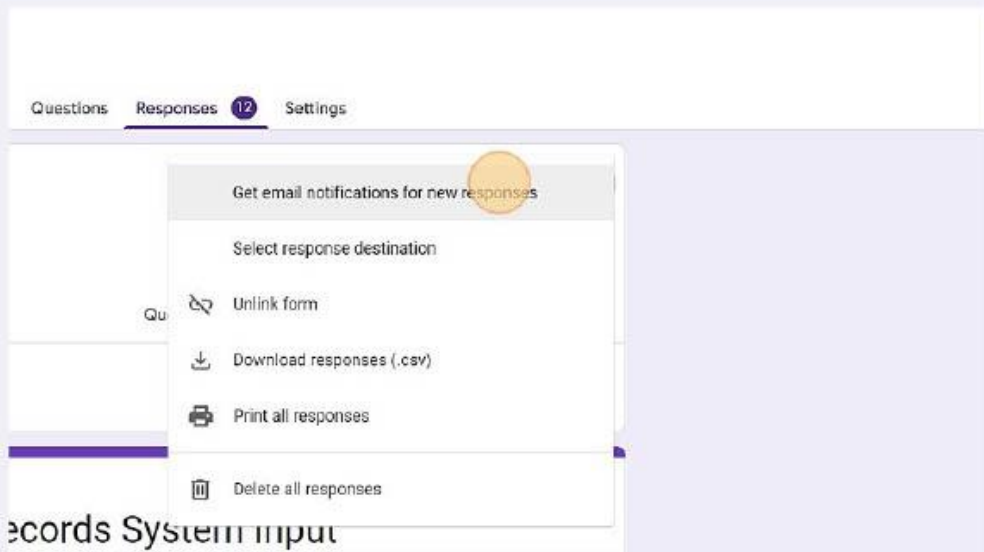
18 How would a team member look up these files?
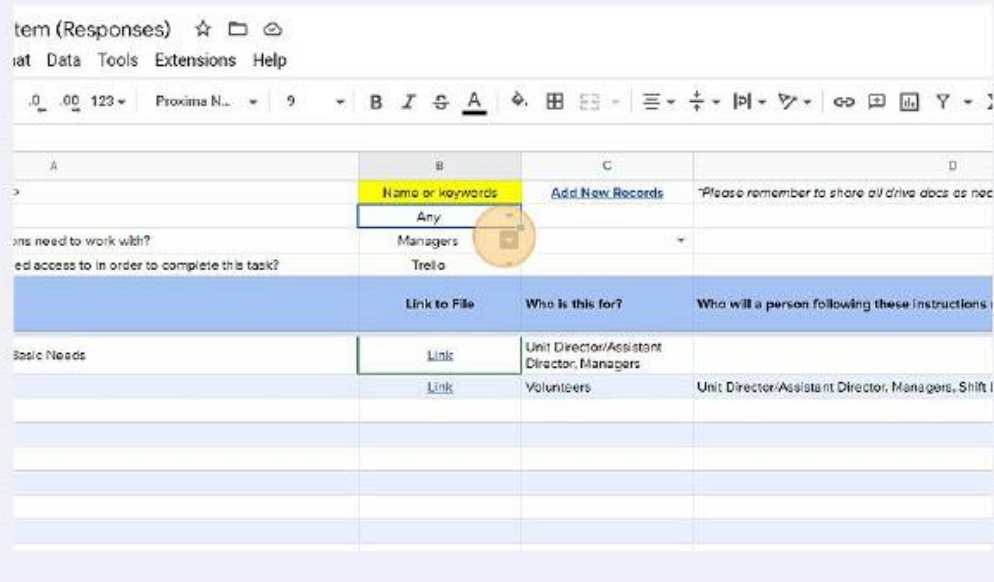
19 Open the live spreadsheet.

20 Search for one or two words that describe what you're looking for. Ex: Produce inspection

21 The other search functions help narrow down the search and are optional.

22 In the blue section, files will show up depending on your keywords!

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