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UNK food pantry supporting students, employees during crisis

KEARNEY – University of Nebraska at Kearney administration is committed to supporting the campus community during the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

To ensure no Loper goes hungry during this public health crisis, Chancellor Doug Kristensen allocated an additional \$10,000 to Big Blue Cupboard, a UNK organization that provides food and hygiene products to students, staff and faculty at no cost.

“UNK will do everything it can to assist students and employees as we continue to navigate these new challenges,” Kristensen said. “We want all Lopers to know there’s a place they can go for food and other resources during times of need.”

Located in the Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion on the first floor of the Nebraskan Student Union, Big Blue Cupboard will remain open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and 11:30 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays until further notice.

UNK students and employees can access the food pantry using their university IDs. The service is confidential.

With the additional funding provided by Chancellor Kristensen’s office, Big Blue Cupboard is able to keep its shelves fully stocked during a time when a larger number of people may face food insecurity. The food pantry has distributed more than 1,000 items since March 1.

“We want to make sure all members of the UNK community have access to food during this difficult period,” said Luis Olivas, diversity recruitment and leadership coordinator in the Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion. “Food insecurity shouldn’t be a burden for students as they continue their education.”

Big Blue Cupboard is also adding a second freezer, allowing the organization to store more TV dinners and other frozen items people can prepare quickly and easily in a microwave.

The food pantry offers both nonperishable and perishable items, as well as personal hygiene products such as deodorant, shampoo and sanitary pads. UNK staff shop at local stores three times a week to purchase supplies.

Donations can be dropped off at the Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion. Monetary donations, which are tax-deductible, can be made through the University of Nebraska Foundation by visiting nufoundation.org/fund/01149590.

High-demand items include microwavable meals, canned fruit and meat, hygiene products, boxed dinners, pasta, cereal, snack foods, peanut butter, instant oatmeal, fruit drinks and rice.

CUTLINE

Devin Koch, diversity programming and retention coordinator in UNK’s Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion, organizes the Big Blue Cupboard shelves Thursday after receiving donations from UNK Dining and the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Chancellor Doug Kristensen allocated an additional \$10,000 to the on-campus food pantry so it can adequately serve students, staff and faculty during the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. (Photo by Tyler Ellyson, UNK Communications)