

### ***Hunger Banquet: Pre-Event Logistics at the College of Wooster***

The Hunger Banquet at the College of Wooster was coordinated by two students (including the second author of this article), one each from Pueblo de Esperanza and the Wooster Volunteer Network (WVN). While the cost of this event was minimal, advertising charges were absorbed by the WVN. Campus Dining Services agreed to open up a dining hall that is otherwise closed on a Friday night. They donated all of the food that was used for the banquet and provided employees to serve the meal itself and clean up afterward. While this was undeniably generous, groups interested in offering such an event at their institutions need not rely on the sheer graciousness of food providers. It should be noted that it was in Campus Dining Services' self-interest to participate. Approximately 1/6 of the student body (310 out of about 1750 students) signed-up to attend this event. Serving rice to 170 students (the lower class, bottom 55%), rice and beans to 93 students (the middle class, 30%) and a four-course meal to 47 students (top 15%) was far less expensive than preparing the average Friday night dinner for 310 students.

Having secured a location and date (the date chosen for the event occurred approximately one week before Thanksgiving Day), the students planning the event were then faced with the task of publicizing, signing people up for the event, and arranging specific details. Because the types of food distributed were based on overall proportions of attendees, it was important to know how many persons would be coming in advance. Total numbers had to be submitted to Dining Services well before the dinner so that they could prepare accordingly. As a result, the event planners decided that students would have to sign up for the event at least a week in advance, in order to provide an accurate count.

Three weeks before the event members of the two student groups began posting announcements about sign-ups. The student planners compiled a short fact sheet about the banquet itself as well as appropriate hunger and poverty statistics to be used in publicizing the event. Arrangements were made for an article to be written in the student newspaper notifying the campus about the Hunger Banquet. The second author then secured the first author as the Master of Ceremonies for the event.

Two weeks before the event the groups posted a weeklong announcement on the college's electronic news service inviting students, professors, and administrators to attend the free event. Students were able to sign up for the event at tables (staffed by volunteers) that were set up outside the cafeterias during lunch and dinner. In addition, professors were given a Hunger Awareness fact sheet, and were asked to announce the Hunger Banquet to their students. The sign-up period was intended to be weeklong, from Monday through Friday, but the maximum capacity that the dining room could hold, 310 persons, was reached midweek, by Wednesday.

The week of the Hunger Banquet the student groups calculated the class percentages and met with Dining Services to decide on specific choices for the meal. The students groups printed tickets and made posters with hunger statistics to display in the room during the dinner. Another group of volunteers was identified to help set up and break down the event.