

Chapter 11: STUDENT AFFAIRS ASSESSMENT

Each year, important information about the student experience is collected through the Office of Student Affairs. For example, the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS) has been given at Truman for the past several years. In 2011-2012, several measures available from Educational Benchmarking Inc. (EBI) were also used, including the College and University Housing Resident Study, The Student Staff Assessment, the Campus-wide Student Climate/Diversity Assessment, and the Student Apartment Assessment. Rather than attempting to report all of the abundant assessment within student affairs, this chapter highlights some of those findings most directly related to student learning outcomes.

In 2012, 412 Truman students participated in the MCHBS survey. This survey allows comparison of Truman students to Missouri averages. One survey item examines various sources of their stress. The results include the following:

Which of the following are the main sources of your stress? (check all that apply)

Factor	Partners in Prevention Average, n=9151	Truman Average, n=412
School/Academics	77.2	85.0
Financial concerns	47.4	39.3
Time Management	43.1	49.0
Future Plans	43.9	47.1
Relationship with partner/Dating	26.2	28.2
Job	31.1	16.0
Outside Organization	17.7	28.4

Family	25.0	18.4
Friends	16.1	18.2
Physical Health	20.1	21.1

As the data show, academics are the biggest stressor across all participating institutions. Yet Truman students endorse this even more frequently. Truman students also more frequently endorse time management and participation in outside organizations. In contrast, financial concerns and jobs are less of a concern for Truman students than for students at other institutions. These results seem consistent with the mission of the university as a highly selective, highly affordable public liberal arts institution. The affordability of the institution presents students with fewer financial concerns and fewer students need to take on stressful jobs for pay. However, students engage with other highly capable colleagues, and feel great pressure to succeed in academics and to distinguish themselves through participation in other organizations. These data suggest that students continue to need support coping with stress in order to thrive academically.

Another interesting finding of the survey is to whom Truman students feel they can go to on campus when personal concerns arise.

Whom do you feel you can go to ON CAMPUS when personal concerns arise? (check all that apply)

Factors	National Average, n=9151	Truman Average, n=412
Friends or peers	62.2	76.5
University counseling center	22.3	31.1
Faculty/Professor	18.4	20.9
Academic Adviser	14.4	12.6

Res Life Staff	5.9	10.9
No one on campus	13.3	8.0

Truman students are more willing to go to peers, to the university counseling center, to faculty and to residential staff than students at other institutions. Most encouraging, fewer Truman students responded that there was no one on campus to whom they could go for support.

The EBI Resident Assessment Measure measures student satisfaction with their experience in the residence halls. In the 2011-2012 year, 2555 Truman students were invited to participate, and 1411 responded. This measure showed overall satisfaction with the residential experience, and responses near the goal on the summary learning indicator. The components of this measure with which Truman students indicated agreement include “fellow residents are tolerant”, “fellow residents are respectful”, and “sense of community”, “personal interactions”, and “diverse interactions”. “Personal growth” is near the goal, and “manage time, study, solve problems” is below goal, with a mean of 5.1 on a 7 point scale.

The EBI Apartment Assessment Instrument is similar to the Resident Assessment, but is limited to those living in campus apartments. Two hundred six Truman students were invited to participate in the survey, and 103 responded. EBI computes an overall learning indicator, intended to capture to what degree living in campus housing enhances the learning experience. The mean response for this question was 5.1 on a 7-point scale. This is below the level recommended by EBI. The components of this measure include “fellow residents are tolerant”, “fellow residents are respectful”, and “sense of community”, all of which show a mean above

EBI's benchmark goal. Components below the benchmark goal include "manage time, study, and solve problems", "diverse interactions", "personal interactions and personal growth."

The EBI student staff assessment targets students who are employed as staff on campus. For example, student advisors rate their experiences with residents. In 2011-2012, 92 Truman students were invited to participate, and 82 responded. Students are well above EBI goals on all of the NASPA/ACPA Learning Reconsidered goals, including practical competence, interpersonal and intrapersonal competence, persistence and academic achievement, cognitive complexity, and civic engagement. Means ranged from 6.2 for practical competence to 6.0 for civic engagement. Responses were also above goal on Leadership Reconsidered factors, including empathy, collaboration, competence, learning environment, self-knowledge, disagreement with respect, and shared purpose. Means ranged from 6.2 for empathy to 5.9 for shared purpose.

For the EBI Campus Climate Diversity assessment, 5225 students were invited to participate, and 1204 responded. The overall evaluation, indicating student views of how diversity is embraced on campus was above EBI's goal, with a mean of 5.83 on a 7-point scale. The survey indicated areas of institutional strengths and weaknesses, suggesting that contributions of diverse opinions are valued in the classroom particularly well, and that relationships among diverse peers are strong. An area identified as needing improvement was expressions of insensitivity and prejudice among students.