

## Chapter 7: Student Affairs Assessment Summary

The Office of Student Affairs administers several surveys each year to better understand student experiences in the areas of student life, achievement, and well-being. This chapter will highlight a small portion of the results from a few of those instruments. We have selected data that identifies a potential major challenge to the Truman community and a potential opportunity. We have also provided some longitudinal and/or comparative data to better understand trends and context.

### **The Challenge:**

Student Affairs gathers many sources of data regarding student health and wellness. We administer two surveys that provide useful information regarding a variety of health-related issues. These instruments are the American College Health Association (ACHA) National College Health Assessment (NCHA) that is administered every other year and the Missouri College Mental Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS), recently renamed to the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behavior (MACHB), that is administered annually. The data below provides items from these survey that address mental health.

### **ACHA NCHA**

2013 Truman n= 672 Reference Group n = 123,078

2015 Truman n=754 Reference Group n = 93,034

2017 Truman n =808 Reference Group n = 63,497

<b>Item</b>	<b>2013 Truman %</b>	<b>2013 Survey %</b>	<b>2015 Truman %</b>	<b>2015 Survey %</b>	<b>2017 Truman %</b>	<b>2017 Survey %</b>
Percentage of students reporting being diagnosed or treated for a psychiatric condition in the last 12 months	6.8%	5.7%	8.4%	7.1%	10.8%	9.1%
Percentage of students reporting that anxiety negatively affected their academic performance in the last 12 months	19.9%	19.7%	24.0%	21.9%	32.2%	24.2%
Percentage of students reporting that depression	12.7%	12.6%	14.8%	13.8%	22.5%	15.9%

negatively affected their academic performance in the last 12 months						
Percentage of students reporting that sleep difficulties negatively affected their academic performance in the last 12 months	18.9%	19.4%	20.3%	20.0%	23.9%	19.7%
Percentage of students reporting that stress negatively affected their academic performance in the last 12 months	32.3%	28.5%	32.7%	30.0%	40.1%	30.6%
Percentage of students who report having never used alcohol	26.5%	21.3%	28.2%	21.3%	24.8%	19.3%
Percentage of students who report having never used marijuana	73.7%	62.1%	75.6%	60.9%	70.3%	69.1%
Percentage of students who report experiencing feelings of hopelessness during the last 12 months	47.5%	45.0%	51.9%	47.7%	56.8%	51.1%
Percentage of students who have felt overwhelmed with all they had to do during the last 12 months	90.3%	83.7%	91.9%	85.6%	92.8%	87.0%
Percentage of students who report feeling very lonely during the last 12 months	63.2%	55.9%	68.2%	58.8%	71.1%	62.2%
Percentage of students who report feeling very sad during the last 12 months	63.7%	59.6%	69.3%	63.9%	72.9%	67.3%
Percentage of students who report feeling so depressed during the last 12 months that it was difficult to function	29.7%	31.3%	36.0%	34.5%	45.3%	39.1%
Percentage of students who report feeling overwhelming anxiety during the last 12 months	54.9%	51.0%	62.5%	56.9%	65.8%	60.8%
Percentage of students who seriously considered suicide during the last 12 months	7.2%	7.4%	11.9%	8.9%	14.7%	10.3%
Percentage of students who attempted suicide during the last 12 months	1.1%	1.5%	0.8%	1.4%	2.0%	1.5%
Percentage of students who report that academics have been traumatic or very difficult to handle during the last 12 months	53.1%	44.7%	54.5%	45.1%	57.1%	47.5%

These data from the ACHA survey indicate some positive health behaviors such as the numbers of students who have not used alcohol and marijuana. However, the pattern of increasing mental health problems within the college student population reflected in these data is of concern. There is a pattern of Truman students demonstrating mental health problems in greater percentages than students in the reference groups and that pattern has persisted over time. In addition to the large number of Truman students who cite depression and anxiety as interfering with their academic performance, many students feel overwhelmed, helpless and hopeless. The higher percentages of Truman students who have considered or attempted

suicide, particularly in the 2017 data, are a significant concern. Many students appear to be seeking help for their concerns. University Counseling Services reported (unique clients – unduplicated headcount) seeing 550 clients during FY 2013, 581 clients during FY 2015 and 752 clients in FY 2017.

It is difficult to identify the cause or remedies for the discrepancies between Truman students and other college students when it comes to mental health issues. University Counseling Services participates in the data gathering efforts of the Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH). This organization collects data from counseling centers at many colleges and universities. The CCMH tracks students who seek services at college and university counseling centers on many variables including the percentages of these clients who received mental health services prior to the services they were receiving at colleges and universities counseling centers. In 2012, 48% of the 77,411 clients receiving services at 115 participating institutions reported receiving prior counseling services compared to 63% of the 350 UCS clients. In 2013, the 48% held steady for 80,529 students receiving counseling at 107 participating institutions, while 64% of the 266 UCS clients reported previous counseling. Sixty-nine percent of UCS clients reported previous counseling in 2014 compared to 48% of the 77,838 clients from 109 participating institutions (more recent data is not yet available). These data might suggest that a higher percentage of Truman students come to Truman with pre-existing mental health challenges and expectations of continuing therapy and mental health support.

Data from the MCHBS survey, in many ways, supports the ACHA data. The following chart reports responses to similar questions on this Missouri-only instrument. The MCHBS data allows us to compare Truman student responses to a sample of student responses from 21

Missouri institutions who participate in the Partners in Prevention program. The ACHA survey compares Truman student responses to a national sample.

In addition to the mental health questions, we included information about student participation in organizations and leadership activities as that information will be relevant to data found later in this chapter.

### MCHBS/MACHB

2013 Truman n =527 PIP 21 n = 9599\*

2015 Truman n=470 PIP 21 n = 11,178

2017 Truman n=450 PIP 21 n = 10,781

\*PIP 21 refers to the twenty one institutions of higher education in Missouri who are a part of the Missouri Partners in Prevention Program and participated in the survey

Item	Truman 2013	Pip 2013	Truman 2015	Pip 2015	Truman 2017	Pip 2017
Thought of leaving school in past year	27.3%	25.4%	26.4%	26%	30%	25%
Not involved in a campus activity/organization	11.6%	31.6%	11.1%	33.2%	10%	30%
Held a leadership position in any of the above activities	40.4%	28.2%	45.5%	28.8%	50%	60%
Never used alcohol	23.0%	17.5%	20.0%	18.9%	24%	20%
Experienced major depression in the last year	19.1%	17.6%	23.4%	21.4%	29%	25%
Experienced chronic sleep issues in the last year	18.0%	18.1%	18.5%	18.2%	19%	17%
Experienced anxiety in the last year	41.0%	39.4%	49.0%	45.0%	60%	49%
Experienced suicidal thoughts in your lifetime	not asked	not asked	43.8%	40.9%	47%	39%
Experienced suicidal thoughts in past year	19.0%	13.6%	20.7%	15.3%	22%	18%
Attempted suicide in the past year	1.5%	0.9%	3.3%	1.5%	1.9%	1.2%
Been concerned about a friend having suicidal thoughts or behaviors in the last year	29.1%	20.5%	40.9%	30.9%	49%	36%

These data provide additional evidence for the mental health challenges of Truman students. The top reason cited by Truman students for considering leaving Truman was “Difficulties keeping up with academics.” For example, in 2017, 20% of the PIP sample indicated that “Difficulties keeping up with academics” contributed to their consideration of leaving while 40% of Truman students cited difficulties keeping up with academics as a factor in their consideration of leaving Truman. Truman students, in the ACHA data, reported considering academics traumatic or very difficult to handle in the last 12 months at higher levels than the national reference sample.

These data indicate that academic challenges at Truman may also be a contributing factor to the differences between Truman students and comparison groups in reported mental health concerns. The CCMH data suggests the possibility that more Truman students come to college with a history of seeking mental health services. For some students, the stress of academics might contribute to symptoms. For other students, mental health issues might result in more stress attributed to academics. In either case, Truman faces a significant challenge if current trends continue. Limited Truman resources, including faculty and staff, may be inadequate to support students experiencing symptoms. The numbers of students thinking about and attempting suicide are of particular concern. Our faculty and staff will need to be trained for these challenges. Academic policies may need to be reviewed in light of the changing characteristics of our students. Curricular and co-curricular experiences at Truman may need to change significantly to ensure students have the information and resources they need to engage in appropriate self-care to maintain retention rates and ensure persistence to graduation.

**The Opportunity:**

Student Affairs has participated in the Skyfactor (formerly Education Benchmarking, Inc.) surveys as we could afford to do so for several years. This organization partners with professional organizations in a variety of areas in order to produce assessment instruments that institutions of higher education can use to evaluate their programs longitudinally and also against benchmarks such as other institutions and professional standards. All of these instruments allow students to respond to a number of questions on a seven point scale with one representing the lowest level of satisfaction, etc. and seven, the highest. Responses at five or above will typically meet professional standards. Responses below five are indicative of the need for changes. Statistical methods were used on all of these instruments to create factors. Below you will find a

summary of Truman’s results from these instruments in three areas: Residence Life, Greek Life, and Campus Activities. These data will include a longitudinal perspective as well as comparison data using all college students who participated in the Skyfactor survey for any given year. We will begin with data from Residence Life.

### Skyfactor ACUHO\* Benchworks Residence Life

2015 Truman n= 1,166 (All 262 institutions n= 275,252)

2016 Truman n= 1,222 (All 296 institutions n = 335,132)

2017 Truman n= 1,151 (All 262 institutions n= 283,144)

\*ACUHO = Association of College and University Housing Officers

Factors	2015		2016		2017	
	Truman	(All)	Truman	(All)	Truman	(All)
Factor 1: Satisfaction: Hall/Apt. Student Staff	6.01+	5.87	5.96+	5.88	6.08+	5.92
Factor 2: Satisfaction: Hall/Apt. Programming	5.26	5.20	5.27	5.22	5.26	5.23
Factor 3: Satisfaction: Hall/Apt. Environment	5.56+	5.42	5.53+	5.43	5.63+	5.47
Factor 4: Satisfaction: Facilities	5.91+	5.42	5.86+	5.39	5.96+	5.43
Factor 5: Satisfaction: Services Provided	5.47+	5.19	5.38+	5.20	5.44+	5.25
Factor 6: Satisfaction: Room Assignment or Change Process	5.50+	5.14	5.40+	5.12	5.60+	5.16
Factor 7: Satisfaction: Safety and Security	6.28+	5.95	6.27+	5.95	6.23+	5.98
Factor 8: Satisfaction: Roommates	5.98+	5.85	5.92	5.87	5.97	5.90
Factor 9: Satisfaction: Dining Services	5.01+	4.69	5.02+	4.71	5.08+	4.78
Factor 10: Satisfaction: Community Environment	5.74+	5.61	5.78+	5.64	5.87+	5.68
Factor 11: Learning: Personal Interactions	5.31	5.30	5.27	6.27	5.42+	5.27
Factor 12: Learning: Sense of Community	5.71+	5.62	5.68	5.63	5.71	5.67
Factor 13: Learning: Diverse Interactions	5.12	5.15	4.97-	5.11	5.09	5.16
Factor 14: Learning: Self-Management	4.86-	5.10	4.74-	5.02	4.83-	5.04
Factor 15: Learning: Alcohol and Drug Use	4.70-	5.09	4.58-	5.05	5.08	5.18
Factor 16: Learning: Sustainability	4.47-	4.77	4.36-	4.71	4.55-	4.79
Factor 17: Learning: LLC Connections and Support	4.79	4.73	4.82	4.77	4.94	4.69
Factor 18: Overall Satisfaction	5.49+	5.38	5.51+	5.35	5.62+	5.38
Factor 19: Overall Learning	4.86-	5.09	4.82-	5.05	5.15	5.16
Factor 20: Overall Program Effectiveness	5.10	5.10	5.12	5.07	5.28+	5.12

+ = statistically significant above mean of all institutions

- = statistically significant below mean of all institutions

In many areas, our residence life program has done very well compared to other institutions and professional standards. We have, however, scored consistently lower than desired on learning variables. Given Truman’s mission, the Kirksville community, and the importance of our residential campus to the Truman experience, we believe we can and should do better in these areas. Partnerships between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs such as the

new seminar proposal that may include residence hall based discussions is an example of a powerful step to improve the learning potential of our residence halls. The new TruSTAR program includes soft skill career ready programming in the residence halls and may have an impact on these factors over time.

We require students to live on campus during their first year at Truman with relatively few exceptions. We have an opportunity to further engage our students, early in their Truman experience, with learning activities in and out of the classroom. Student Affairs will continue to provide an extensive and comprehensive programming experience in our residence halls. We have used the residential living situation very effectively during Truman Week (Days) activities and welcome additional opportunities to partner with colleagues from Academic Affairs to enhance and grow the learning potential of our residential environment.

An area where we appear to be doing better in utilizing out-of-class activities to enhance learning opportunities is in the area of Greek Life as the following data demonstrate:

**Skyfactor AFA\*/Benchworks Fraternity Sorority Assessment**

2016 Truman n = 860 (76 institutions n = 69,820)

2017 Truman n = 761 (70 institutions n=57,047)

\*AFA = American Fraternity Association

Factors	Truman 2016	All 2016	Truman 2017	All 2017
Factor 1: Satisfaction: Housing	5.25+	4.95	5.03	4.89
Factor 2: Satisfaction: Safety and Security	6.17+	5.83	6.14+	5.87
Factor 3: Satisfaction: Fraternity/Sorority Programming	5.55+	5.25	5.44+	5.27
Factor 4: Learning: Sense of Belonging	6.11+	5.96	5.97	5.96
Factor 5: Learning: Diverse Interactions	5.93+	5.70	5.83+	5.70
Factor 6: Learning: Interpersonal Relationship Skills	6.25+	6.08	6.16	6.09
Factor 7: Learning: Interpersonal Skills	5.86+	5.58	5.73+	5.60
Factor 8: Learning: Leadership Skills	5.62+	5.41	5.59+	5.44
Factor 9: Learning: Personal Development Skills	5.64+	5.37	5.51+	5.40
Factor 10: Learning: Healthy Behaviors	5.89+	5.65	5.74	5.67
Factor 11: Learning: Self-Worth	6.01+	5.88	5.97+	5.88
Factor 12: Learning: Intrapersonal Competence	5.87+	5.65	5.74	5.65
Factor 13: Learning: Principled Dissent	5.69+	5.40	5.51+	5.39
Factor 14: Learning: Collaboration	5.87+	5.57	5.66+	5.56
Factor 15: Learning: Effective Chapter Leadership	5.86+	5.62	5.74+	5.62

Factor 16: Overall: Satisfaction	6.14+	5.82	5.94+	5.83
Factor 17: Overall: Learning	5.86+	5.67	5.72	5.69
Factor 18: Overall: Program Effectiveness	5.96+	5.73	5.80	5.75

+ = statistically significant above mean all institutions  
 - = statistically significant below mean of all institutions

In the 2016 data, Truman scored significantly above the national sample on all of the factors. This survey includes twelve factors related to student learning. In 2017, we scored above the mean of the national sample in all areas, although five of the factors did not reflect a statistically significant difference. Many of the members of our Greek community had a difficult year in 2017 due to three completed suicides within their community. Nevertheless, the data is positive and of particular interest when compared to the following data regarding learning factors in our student activities area:

**Skyfactor ACUI\*/Benchworks Student Activities Assessment**

2010 Truman n = 674 (29 institutions n = 13,089)

2017 Truman n = 1,356 (50 institutions n = 21,131)

\*ACUI = Association of College Unions-International

Factors	Truman 2010	All 2010	Truman 2017	All 2017
Factor 1: Learning Outcomes: College Enhanced Practical Competencies	5.26	5.34	5.02-	5.28
Factor 2: Learning Outcomes: College Enhanced Personal Competencies	5.09-	5.21	4.96-	5.18
Factor 3: Learning Outcomes: College Enhanced Personal and Relationship Skills	4.94-	5.07	4.70-	4.99
Factor 4: Learning Outcomes: College Enhanced Appreciation for Diversity	4.63	4.74	4.79	4.85
Factor 5: Learning Outcomes from Student Activities Participation (Participants Only)	4.64	4.63	4.74	4.77
Factor 6: Social Outcomes from Student Activities Participation (Participants Only)	5.34+	5.18	5.41+	5.29
Factor 7: Student Activities Well Advertised and Executed	5.21+	5.01	4.94	5.02
Factor 8: Evaluation of Student Government and Programming Board	4.16	4.05	3.85-	3.99
Factor 9: Importance of Offering Educational Student Activities	4.94	4.98	4.85	4.88
Factor 10: Importance of Offering Social Student Activities	5.07	5.08	4.69-	4.83
Factor 11: Satisfaction with Publicizing and Promoting Student Activities	4.98+	4.73	4.86+	4.76
Factor 12: Impact of Student Activities and Organizations on Enrollment	3.39	3.40	3.42	3.47
Factor 13: Future Plans: Participation in Student Activities and Organizations	5.08+	4.40	4.99+	4.64
Factor 14: Future Plans: Graduation and Alumni Participation	4.88+	4.78	4.84+	4.75
Factor 15: Overall Program Effectiveness	5.98	5.99	6.00+	5.85

+ = statistically significant above mean all institutions  
 - = statistically significant below mean of all institutions



The MCHBS data demonstrates that more Truman students are involved in student activities than at the 21 PIP institutions. A larger proportion of our students have held leadership positions in those student organizations and activities. These high levels of participation present great opportunity to use campus organizations as a powerful learning opportunity. Not all student organizations and activities will find it possible or desirable to emulate social Greek organizations. It does appear, however, that there may be characteristics of the social Greek experience that positively affect perceived learning outcomes. Student learning activities may be embedded in the social Greek culture in ways that other organizations might consider. The national organization associated with these social Greek organizations may have learned effective ways of incentivizing and disseminating important information that might be instructive for other organizations. The roles and expectations of advisors in facilitating learning might be better defined in social Greek organizations. As with Residence Life, there may be opportunities for Student Affairs to partner with Academic Affairs in examining how transformative and high impact learning experience may become a more intentional benefit of student organization leadership and participation. We are also hopeful that the new TruSTAR program that involves soft skill career ready programming within the student organization structure might improve the learning potential of our student activities area.