

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 regularly 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 Assessment of College Health Behavior (MACHB) that is administered annually.

Truman State also collaborated with the JED organization in early 2018 to administer the Healthy Minds study. The results of that study confirmed once again that emotional or mental difficulties negatively impact the academic performance of Truman students with 24% of students reporting that these difficulties impacted their academic performance at least 3-5 days, and 16% reporting such an impact of 6 or more days, over the 4 weeks preceding the study.

An indicator not measured in the NCHA or MACHB study that was measured in the HMS was that of positive mental health. The Flourishing Scale, which measures self-perceived success in important areas such as self-esteem, purpose, and optimism, showed that only 37% of Truman students exhibited positive mental health using the pre-determined threshold.

Like the other studies, the HMS demonstrated a positive in student behavior related to drug use with 83% of students reporting that they had used NO drugs over the past 30 days.

The data below provides items from surveys that address mental health.

ACHA NCHA II (2017 data is the most recent available.)

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

Item	2013 Truman %	2013 Survey %	2015 Truman %	2015 Survey %	2017 Truman %	2017 Survey %
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 negatively affected their academic performance in the last 12 months	12.7%	12.6%	14.8%	13.8%	22.5%	15.9%
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. These numbers continued to rise in FY 2018 to a record 816 unique clients - unduplicated headcount and amounting to 4067 attended appointments.

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 college and university counseling centers. In the past this data has shown that Truman students seeking services at UCS are more likely to have had previous counseling before enrolling at Truman and that trend has continued. In 2016, 53% of clients receiving services at participating institutions reported receiving prior counseling services compared to 72% of UCS clients on our campus. That percentage is up from 2015 data indicating 50% of students receiving counseling at participating institutions, while 69% of UCS

clients reported previous counseling. 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 Titanium's Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS) indicates that our UCS clients' average change, following therapy, on the various subscales (depression, generalized anxiety, social anxiety, eating concerns, hostility, alcohol use, and overall distress index) are greater than the change achieved by 75-93% (depending on the individual subscale) of the counseling centers in the national sample. The quality of our counselors and their frequent collaboration with medical providers in the Student Health Center strengthen the services and support available to students. The only area of concern identified in this data is that UCS clients with elevated and moderate distress related to academics, have the lowest average change (31.9% - 52.2%) and this is the most difficult for our clinical areas to have a direct impact.

Data from the MACHB survey, in many ways, supports the ACHA data. The following chart reports responses to similar questions on this Missouri-only instrument. The MACHB 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.

MACHB

2016 Truman n = 439 PIP 21 n = 10,379*
 2017 Truman n = 450 PIP 21 n = 10,781
 2018 Truman n = 506 PIP 21 n = 9,357

*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 2016	PIP 2016	Truman 2017	PIP 2017	Truman 2018	PIP 2018
Thought of leaving school in past year	29%	26%	30%	25%	32%	25%
Not involved in a campus activity/organization	11%	33%	10%	30%	13%	31%
Held a leadership position in any of the above activities	3%	3%	50%	60%	49%	33%
Never used alcohol	25%	21%	24%	20%	25%	21%
Experienced major depression in the last year	26%	23%	29%	25%	27%	27%
Experienced chronic sleep issues in the last year	23%	19%	19%	17%	20%	19%
Experienced anxiety in the last year	52%	47%	60%	49%	51%	52%
Experienced suicidal thoughts in your lifetime	50%	28%	47%	39%	44%	41%
Experienced suicidal thoughts in past year	26%	17%	22%	18%	24%	20%
Attempted suicide in the past year	2%	2%	1.9%	1.2%	1.8%	1.8%
Been concerned about a friend having suicidal thoughts or behaviors in the last year	47%	36%	49%	36%	54%	42%

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 2018, 37% of the PIP sample indicated that “Difficulties keeping up with academics” contributed to their consideration of leaving while 63% of Truman students cited difficulties keeping up with academics as a factor in their consideration of leaving Truman. Truman students, in the 2017 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. The numbers of students thinking about and attempting suicide are of particular concern.

Students reporting increased mental health concerns is present in data at the national, statewide and local level and it is likely this trend will continue. In recent years the University has hired additional staff at University Counseling Services in order to assist the mental health needs of our students. We are also providing online and in-person training to help faculty, staff and students to provide support for each other. Campus organizations are implementing strategies to support the mental health of their members. The University will need to continue to provide resources to support the mental health of our students. 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 two areas: Residence Life and Greek Life. 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.

Residence Life

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.

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)
 2018 Truman n = 1,126 (All 259 institutions n = 239,776)
 *ACUHO = Association of College and University Housing Officers

Factors	2016		2017		2018	
	Truman	All	Truman	All	Truman	All
Factor 1: Satisfaction: Hall/Apt. Student Staff	5.96+	5.88	6.08+	5.92	5.94	5.93
Factor 2: Satisfaction: Hall/Apt. Programming	5.27	5.22	5.26	5.23	5.24	5.26
Factor 3: Satisfaction: Hall/Apt. Environment	5.53+	5.43	5.63+	5.47	5.59+	5.46
Factor 4: Satisfaction: Facilities	5.86+	5.39	5.96+	5.43	5.86+	5.41
Factor 5: Satisfaction: Services Provided	5.38+	5.20	5.44+	5.25	5.49+	5.27
Factor 6: Satisfaction: Room Assignment or Change Process	5.40+	5.12	5.60+	5.16	n/a	n/a
Factor 6: Satisfaction: Room Assignment	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.64+	5.30
Factor 7: Satisfaction: Room Change	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.74+	4.91
Factor 8: Satisfaction: Safety & Security	6.27+	5.95	6.23+	5.98	6.28+	6.02
Factor 9: Satisfaction: Roommates	5.92	5.87	5.97	5.90	5.91	5.94
Factor 10: Satisfaction: Dining Services	5.02+	4.71	5.08+	4.78	4.68+	4.75
Factor 11: Satisfaction: Community Environment	5.78+	5.64	5.87+	5.68	5.81+	5.70
Factor 12: Learning: Personal Interactions	5.27	6.27	5.42+	5.27	5.18	5.25
Factor 13: Learning: Sense of Community	5.68	5.63	5.71	5.67	5.67	5.67
Factor 14: Learning: Diverse Interactions	4.97-	5.11	5.09	5.16	5.00-	5.14
Factor 15: Learning: Self-Management	4.74-	5.02	4.83-	5.04	4.85-	5.03
Factor 16: Learning: Alcohol & Drug Use	4.58-	5.05	5.08	5.18	5.04-	5.17
Factor 17: Learning: Sustainability	4.36-	4.71	4.55-	4.79	4.50-	4.77
Factor 18: Learning: LLC Connections and Support	4.82	4.77	4.94	4.69	4.56	4.77
Factor 19: Overall Satisfaction	5.51+	5.35	5.62+	5.38	5.44	5.36
Factor 20: Overall Learning	4.82-	5.05	5.15	5.16	5.01-	5.15
Factor 21: Overall Program Effectiveness	5.12	5.07	5.28+	5.12	5.11	5.09

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

opportunities that 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 Days activities and welcome additional opportunities to partner with colleagues from Academic Affairs to enhance and grow the learning potential of our residential environment.

Skyfactor AFA*/Benchworks Fraternity Sorority Assessment

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

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

2018 Truman n = 906 (56 institutions n = 34,814)

*AFA = American Fraternity Association

Factors	2016		2017		2018	
	Truman	All	Truman	All	Truman	All
Factor 1: Satisfaction - Housing	5.25+	4.95	5.03	4.89	5.24	4.96
Factor 2: Satisfaction - Safety and Security	6.17+	5.83	6.14+	5.87	6.19	5.90
Factor 3: Satisfaction - Fraternity/Sorority Programming	5.55+	5.25	5.44+	5.27	5.61	5.30
Factor 4: Learning - Sense of Belonging	6.11+	5.96	5.97	5.96	6.11	5.94
Factor 5: Learning – Diversity Interactions	5.93+	5.70	5.83+	5.70	5.85	5.15
Factor 6: Learning – Interpersonal Relationship Skills	6.25+	6.08	6.16	6.09	6.30	6.10
Factor 7: Learning – Interpersonal Skills/Competence	5.86+	5.58	5.73+	5.60	5.89	5.66
Factor 8: Learning – Leadership Skills	5.62+	5.41	5.59+	5.44	5.66	5.51
Factor 9: Learning – Personal Development Skills	5.64+	5.37	5.51+	5.40	5.68	5.49
Factor 10: Learning – Healthy Behaviors	5.89+	5.65	5.74	5.67	5.94	5.72
Factor 11: Learning – Self-Worth	6.01+	5.88	5.97+	5.88	6.07	5.93
Factor 12: Learning – Intrapersonal Competence	5.87+	5.65	5.74	5.65	5.86	5.70
Factor 13: Learning – Principled Dissent	5.69+	5.40	5.51+	5.39	5.70	5.43
Factor 14: Learning – Collaboration	5.87+	5.57	5.66+	5.56	5.85	5.59
Factor 15: Learning – Effective Chapter Leadership	5.86+	5.62	5.74+	5.62	5.89	5.66
Factor 16: Overall – Satisfaction	6.14+	5.82	5.94+	5.83	6.08	5.82
Factor 17: Overall – Learning	5.86+	5.67	5.72	5.69	5.87	5.75
Factor 18: Overall – Program Effectiveness	5.96+	5.93	5.80	5.75	5.95	5.78

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. 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. The 2018 data is again above the national mean in all areas, demonstrating a pattern of positive experiences and high impact for our students.

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 emulating. The national organizations 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 experiences 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.