

# Sexual Violence during Collegiate Internship or Study Abroad Programs

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance abuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition is comprised of 21 public and private colleges and universities in Missouri. Each year, PIP implements the MACHB (Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors), a statewide survey of college students designed to understand the role of alcohol, drugs (illegal and prescription), mental health issues, and power-based personal violence on student health and wellness.

## Discussion

18% of Missouri college students report experiencing non-consensual sexual contact in their lifetime, and 6% report experiencing non-consensual sexual contact in the last year. 34% of students indicate that the non-consensual sexual contact occurred while attending their college or university. 3% of students report that the non-consensual sexual contact occurred during a study abroad program and 1% indicate that it occurred during an internship through their

**34% of students indicate that the non-consensual sexual contact occurred while attending their college or university.**

college or university. While these rates are low statewide, on individual campuses students report experiencing non-consensual sexual contact at rates as high as 18% during study abroad and 5% during an internship.

These experiential learning opportunities place our students in environments where they may not recognize that they have access to the same services and resources that they would on campus. Additionally, for internship opportunities, there may be power differentials present that cause students to feel unsure about reporting the non-consensual sexual contact. In both situations students may feel

isolated from their support systems, not know of local resources that could help, and be fearful of reporting the assault (e.g. stigma of sexual assault in a foreign country, fear of termination from the internship).

## Summary

Institutions of higher education should be aware of the rates at which their students experience non-consensual sexual contact during internships or study abroad programs. Resources should be visible and available for students entering these programs so they know that their status as a university student will protect them even while not physically on campus. Faculty and staff should be aware of these

resources, as 45% of students report that they would go to faculty or staff for help. One new resource that will launch in August is the Intern Resource Network. Created in partnership with the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV), The Intern Resource Network can be used by campuses across the state to inform their students specifically about sexual harassment in the workplace.

**Faculty and staff should be aware of these resources, as 45% of students report that they would go to faculty or staff for help.**

For more information, visit [pip.missouri.edu](http://pip.missouri.edu)

# The Intern Resource Network

---

According to the Missouri Department of Higher Education, by 2018, approximately 60 percent of all jobs in Missouri will require some form of postsecondary education. Students often seek job-training opportunities to help build their resumes, and many are required to have an internship or externship as a part of their course credits. Additionally, employers look for applicants who have hands-on job experience.

The workforce can be a very different environment than a college campus though, a reality that can leave students vulnerable to an imbalance of power, and resulting actions of sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination. To this end MCADSV wants students to know their full rights under Title IX as they extend to internships and externships. In partnership with Partners in Prevention (PIP), MCADSV has just launched the Intern Resource Network, a web-based resource that will act as a clearinghouse of information for students, campus advisors, and site supervisors.

MCADSV made a concerted effort to address the sexual harassment of students by partnering with PIP to convene a workgroup of campus representatives to address this issue. The workgroup examined what resources currently exist for students and how colleges prepare students for internships/externships. Though colleges offer a variety of prevention programs and support services on campus, it can be difficult for a student to know what resources exist in the larger community. Insight from campus representatives, including students, assisted MCADSV and PIP in developing a resource to promote collaboration between campuses, local domestic & sexual violence organizations, and employers in the public and private sector.

University and college campuses can use the Intern Resource Network as an opportunity to connect with

local domestic & sexual violence organizations. Using the interactive map on the homepage of the website, staff on campus can find the contact information for local domestic & sexual violence organizations, and schedule a meeting to share information on services and prevention programs, as well as discuss the differences in advocate confidentiality and mandatory reporting policies for responsible employees on campus.

Gender-based and sexual harassment policies are inconsistently applied around the state, but the Intern Resource Network can be used as a starting place for best practices. Campuses can use information on the Intern Resource Network to educate students on the dynamics of sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace, and to enhance leadership opportunities for students to be prepared to engage in organizational change endeavors as they enter the workforce.

MCADSV received initial funding to develop this project through a personal donation by Missouri's U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill, who publicly spoke of being sexually harassed in the Missouri Capital as a student intern and subsequently as an elected legislator. The Women's Foundation of Kansas City then advanced the project with additional funding. To explore the Intern Resource Network visit [www.mointernnetwork.org](http://www.mointernnetwork.org). **For specific questions, contact Matthew Huffman, Prevention Director at MCADSV, by email at [mhuffman@mcadsv.org](mailto:mhuffman@mcadsv.org)**

Contact Partners in Prevention at (573) 884-7551.  
Report compiled 7/24/17 by Joan Masters, Project Director, Matthew Huffman, Prevention Director, MCADSV, and Margo Leitschuh, Communications Coordinator



## Intern Resource Network

Promoting student safety, respect, and equity across Missouri

To learn more, visit [www.mointernnetwork.org](http://www.mointernnetwork.org)

---

For more information, visit [pip.missouri.edu](http://pip.missouri.edu)

*Funded by the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health*