

Public vs. Private Institutions in Missouri

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance abuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. Every spring, PIP administers the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) survey. This brief will examine the differences in college health behaviors between our 14 public and 7 private colleges and universities according to MACHB. Specifically, this brief will compare attitudes and behaviors about policy, alcohol usage, tobacco usage, drug usage, well-being and mental health, and sense of belonging. Among students that completed the MACHB in 2019, 75% attend public institutions and 25% attend private institutions; the institutions are listed below.

Public Institutions		Private Institutions
Harris - Stowe State University	University of Central Missouri	Columbia College
Lincoln University	University of Missouri - Columbia	Drury University
Missouri Southern State University	University of Missouri - Kansas City	Evangel University
Missouri State University	University of Missouri - St. Louis	Maryville University
Missouri University of Science & Technology	Southeastern Missouri State University	Rockhurst University
Missouri Western State University	State Technical College of Missouri	Saint Louis University
Northwestern Missouri State University	State Technical College of Missouri	Westminster College

Policy

Eighty-two percent (82%) of students who private institutions and 77% of students who attend public institutions believe that their campus is concerned about alcohol and drug prevention. At both public and private institutions, 88% of students believe that their campus is concerned about sexual violence. When asked about policy enforcement, 73% of students who attend private institutions and 69% of students who attend public institutions agreed that policies are substantially enforced (enforced to a moderate, great, or very great extent) on campus. Contrarily, 29% of students at a public or private institution agreed that policies are substantially enforced off campus.

Alcohol

Eighty-one percent (81%) of students who attend public institutions and 79% of students who attend private institutions have consumed alcohol in their lifetime. Note that 41% of students who attend private

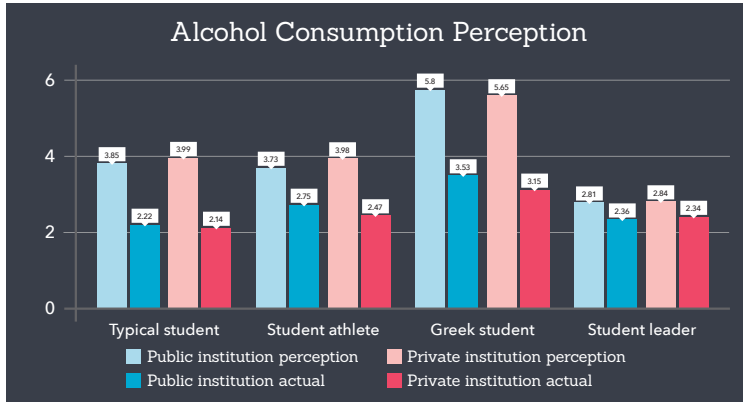
institutions and 39% of students who attend public institutions consumed their first drink before the age of 18. Seventy-six percent (76%) of students who attend public and private institutions have consumed alcohol in the past year. Twenty-four percent (24%) of students who attend public institutions and 23% of students who attend private institutions reported binge-drinking, which is defined as consuming 5 or more drinks in a 2-hour period in the past 2 weeks. The following table represents the average number of drinks students consume on a given day. Statewide, students consume the most alcohol on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Though students who attend private institutions have their first drink earlier than students who attend public institutions, their alcohol consumption patterns are similar in college.

Alcohol Consumption per Day		
	Public	Private
Thursday	0.64	0.44
Friday	1.68	1.65
Saturday	1.93	1.90
Typical week	4.92	4.60

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

Students were asked how many drinks they believed students in different categories consume on a typical night of drinking. They were also asked to self-report how much they believe they consume on an average night. The chart below displays students' perceptions of others versus what students in each category self-reported. At both public and private institutions, students perceive that their peers consume more alcohol than they actually do.



Overall, 30% of students who attend private institutions and 28% of students who attend public institutions are currently trying to consume alcohol in a safer way. Contrarily, 61% of students who attend private institutions and 64% of students who attend public institutions see no need to change the way they drink alcohol.

Drugs

Nearly ten percent (9.6%) of students who attend public institutions and 8.8% of students who attend private institutions have used prescription drugs in the past year without a doctor's prescription. Five percent (5.0%) students who attend public or private institutions have misused prescribed drugs. Forty percent (40%) of students who attend public institutions and 34% of students who attend private institutions have used marijuana in their lifetime; nearly one-third (32%) of students who attend public institutions and 27% of students who attend private institutions have used marijuana in the past year. The perception of student marijuana use varies from the actual amount used. However, the majority of students who attend a public or private institution believe that the typical student has used marijuana at least once in their lifetime (94% and 93%, respectively). Nearly ten percent (9.9%) of students who attend public institutions and 9.3% of students who attend

private institutions reported using illegal drugs other than marijuana at least once in the past year. Though prescription and illegal drug usage patterns are similar at both public and private institutions, we see greater marijuana usage at public institutions.

Tobacco

Thirty-two percent (32%) of students who attend public institutions and 30% of students who attend private institutions have used a tobacco product in the past year. In addition to e-cigarettes, JUULs, the best-selling brand of e-cigarettes, were added to the 2019 MACHB to determine student usage. It is important that JUUL is distinguished from e-cigarettes because some students do not view JUULs as a form of tobacco. Eleven percent (11%) of students who attend private institutions and 10% of students who attend public institutions reported using an e-cigarette in the past year. Twenty-two percent (22%) of students at private institutions and 19% of students at public institutions reported using JUULs in the past year, which is the most commonly used tobacco product statewide. Though e-cigarette use is higher at private institutions, students who attend public institutions use their e-cigarettes more frequently. Among students who use tobacco products at public and private institutions, people use their JUULs (47% vs 41%, respectively) and e-cigarettes (46% vs. 42%) at least once a week.

Well-Being and Mental Health

When problems arise, 96% of students who attend private institutions and 93% of students who attend public institutions have someone on-campus that they can go to for help. Below are the different people and resources that students would use.

	Public	Private
Friends	79%	81%
University Counseling Center	42%	50%
Religious/Spiritual Advisor	14%	15%
Residential life staff	16%	25%
University Health Center	13%	9.9%
Law Enforcement	15%	14%
Academic Advisor	29%	35%
Faculty	33%	39%
Staff member	14%	17%
No one	6.9%	4.0%

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In the past year, 60% of students who attend private institutions and 57% of students who attend public institutions experienced anxiety. Thirty-two percent (32%) of students who attend public institutions and 30% of students who attend private institutions reported experiencing major depression. Public and private institutions have similar rates of panic attacks (27% vs. 29%, respectively) and chronic sleep issues (20% vs 19%). The prevalence of mental health concerns is very similar among both public and private institutions.

Twenty-four percent (24%) of students who attend public institutions and 23% of students who attend private institutions reported having suicidal thoughts in the past year. Nearly two percent (1.8%) of students who attend a public or private institution have attempted suicide in the past year. Among those students, 39% of students who attend private institutions and 36% of students who attend public institutions have sought assistance for their suicide ideation and/or attempt. Students who have considered or attempted suicide at both public and private institutions use on-campus resources nearly equally. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of students who attend private institutions and 26% of students who attend public institutions who sought assistance went to their University Counseling Center. Two percent (2.0%) of students at both public and private of institutions sought assistance from their University Health Center.

Sense of Belonging

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of students who attend private institutions and 68% of students who attend public institutions are involved in at least one campus organization. Seventy-three percent (73%) of students at private institutions in Missouri agreed or strongly agreed that they felt a sense of belonging on campus, compared to 65% of students at public institutions. Seventy-nine (79%) of students at private institutions and 77% of students at public institutions agreed that if they could start college over, they

would attend the same school. The percentage of students who thought about transferring is similar between both types of institutions: 26% of students at private institutions and 27% of students at public institutions. Nineteen percent (19%) of students at public institutions thought about discontinuing their college education in the past year, compared to 13% at private institutions. Among the students that thought about transferring or discontinuing their education, their top five reasons are listed below:

	Public	Private
Difficulties keeping up with academic expectations	31%	21%
Don't feel as if I belong on campus	28%	34%
Don't have enough money to pay for school	28%	40%
Lack of entertainment in town	29%	24%
Lack of friends/loneliness/homesick	40%	42%

Summary

Though the differences among public and private institution student behaviors are small, we see the largest differences among sense of belonging and well-being/mental health. For example, the reasons why students at both types of institutions considered transferring or discontinuing their education varied. Students at private institutions are also more likely to be involved in at least one campus organization. In addition, the extent to which students used different on-campus resources when problems arose varied among public and private institutions. Though JUUL and e-cigarette usage is slightly higher among students who attend private institutions, students who attend public institutions are more likely to use their JUULs or e-cigarettes at least once a week. Alcohol and drug use is relatively similar at both public and private institutions.

Contact Partners in Prevention at (573) 884-7551.

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