Missouri S&T is a part of a coalition comprised of 21 private and public higher education institutions in Missouri, dedicated to creating safe and healthy learning environments. This coalition, named Partners in Prevention (PIP), releases a 200+ question survey in the spring of every year, the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) survey, to be completed by students to assess their health behaviors. Because we have been involved in this process for nearly a decade, and continuously have a high rate of return (35% in 2019), we are able to follow trend patterns and identify levels of high priority. We are also able to compare our campus data to the PIP average, as well as national average. The following brief identifies some of the key findings from the 2019 MACHB survey.
Alcohol Use & Underage Drinking

Seventy-three percent (73%) of S&T students report using alcohol in the past year, and 63% report using in the past month. The percentage of students who report binge-drinking (consuming 5 or more drinks in a two hour period) at least once in the past two weeks increased to 28% in 2019 from 26% in 2018 and is below the national average of around 38%. Of students who binge-drink, approximately 8% are frequent binge drinkers, defined as binge-drinking 3+ times in the past two weeks. One critical behavior to monitor among college students is pre-gaming (or pre-partying), which is consuming alcohol before a social event. Pre-gaming is associated with higher levels of intoxication and a greater likelihood of experiencing negative consequences of alcohol use. Most students (57%) report pre-gaming and consume a mean of 2.84 drinks when pre-gaming.

Underage Alcohol Use
The majority of S&T students (67%) report that they first started drinking before age 21. Underage students report that they obtain alcohol in a variety of ways, the most common being from an over 21 friend (40%), from a fraternity or sorority (9.1%), or from parents (8.4%).

Concerning Alcohol-Related Behaviors and Consequences
The MACHB tracks negative consequences and related behaviors of alcohol use. Of S&T students, 13% report driving after drinking and 17% report riding in a car with someone who had been drinking at least once in the past year. However, only 0.5% of students report being arrested for DUI/DWI in the past year. Other concerning consequences of alcohol use include having a hangover (48%), experiencing a “blackout” or memory loss (28%), being forced, pressured, or coerced to drink more (14%), engaging in risky sexual behavior (7.5%), being hurt or injured (9.8%), and having alcohol poisoning (4.4%) at least once in the past year. Alcohol use also impacts students’ academics and 15% report missing class due to alcohol use and 5.2% report performing poorly on a test or assignment.
Marijuana

Marijuana is the most commonly used drug by S&T students after alcohol. The percentage of students who report using marijuana in the past year remained steady from 2018 to 2019 at 25%, but has risen from 20.7% in 2014. In 2019, approximately 5.7% of students report using marijuana at least once per week. Of students who report using marijuana, 28% report driving after use at least once in the past year. The majority of students (86.4%) perceive that their peers have used marijuana at least once in the past year, while the reality is that 75% of students have not. Among students who use, (21.6%) are currently trying to use less or quit using marijuana altogether.

75% of S&T Students Did NOT use marijuana in the past year

21.6% of current users are currently trying to use less or quit

S&T Marijuana Reported Use
Perception vs. Reality

Reality 2018
Perception 2018
Reality 2019
Perception 2019

Did Not Use
Illegal and prescription drug use are of concern among college students and are associated with adverse academic and health outcomes. S&T students report using illegal drugs at the following rates in the past year: hallucinogens/club drugs (ecstasy, LSD, mushrooms, PCP, etc.): 7.9%, cocaine: 2.8%, K2/synthetic marijuana: 2%, inhalants: 1.7%, methamphetamines: 0.8%, and heroin: 0.2%.

Approximately 7% of S&T students report prescription drug use without a doctor's prescription in the past year. Additionally, 2.6% of students with a valid prescription report using in a manner other than prescribed in the past year. Of students who report misuse of either type, 36% have combined them with alcohol at least once which can have serious health effects. Use of prescription drugs without a prescription were reported at the following rates: stimulants: 4.1%, pain medications: 3.1%, benzodiazepines/sedatives: 1.8%, and sleeping medications: 1.3%.

Of the 7% of students who reported using Rx drugs without a prescription, these are the most common.
Interpersonal Violence

Approximately 16% of S&T students have experienced non-consensual sexual contact in their lifetime, and 4% have experienced it in the past year. Of all sexual assaults, 41% occurred while the student was attending S&T. The majority of assaults occurred off-campus and not related to university events (53%) or on-campus in residence halls (33%). In the past year, 9.3% of students have experienced abuse in a relationship (e.g. verbal, physical, psychological, etc.).

Well-Being and Mental Health

23% of S&T students had thoughts of suicide in the past year

S&T students self-report experiencing issues related to mental health in the past year, the most common being anxiety (55%), major depression (30%), panic attacks (23%), and chronic sleep issues (22%). Of students who report experiencing a mental health concern, 42% did not seek assistance. The most common reported reasons for not seeking assistance were ‘I do not think I need assistance’ (73%), ‘I am afraid people will judge me’ (28%) and ‘the cost is too expensive/insurance does not cover it’ (13%).

In the past year, 23% of students have had suicidal thoughts and .9% attempted suicide. For those who had thoughts or attempts, 33% have sought assistance. Additionally, 47% of S&T students have been concerned about a friend having suicidal thoughts or exhibiting behaviors in the past year.
Positive Behavior Changes

The rate of students who report drinking and driving continues to decline (13% in 2019 vs 15.1% in 2013), as does the rate of students who have ridden with a drinking driver (17% in 2019 vs 20.9% in 2013). The rate of students who use prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription continues to decline as well (7% in 2019 vs 9.5% in 2013).

Summary

Missouri S&T and Miner Wellness continues to monitor the critical health issues of our students including high-risk drinking, marijuana and other drug use, mental health, interpersonal violence, and tobacco use, and works to change the high-risk behaviors of S&T students. Data consistently shows that student success and academic achievement is impacted by substance misuse, and prevention efforts are vital to the mission of institutions of higher education. We will continue to advance forward in our efforts to reduce high-risk behaviors in order to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all of our students.