

Appendix W - NCHA_ExecutiveSummary_IE

The National College Health Assessment (NCHA): Survey Results Analysis Conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Executive Summary

In Spring 2016, Humboldt State University (HSU) participated in a California State University system-wide initiative to gain insight and a better understanding of student health at California State Universities. Using the National College Health Assessment-Second Edition (NCHA-II; 2008), this initiative was instigated by the Chancellors Office, in partnership with the CSU Student Mental Health Services Advisory Committee and this research effort was further supported by the Student Affairs Council. The NCHA is a nationally recognized survey tool for assessing various health topics in college students. These topics include: alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; sexual and reproductive health; weight, nutrition, and exercise; mental health; personal safety and violence; general health. The research agenda outlined four specific research goals for the CSU system. Goals one and four are in bold below because they are of particular interest to this report and survey analysis.

1- Identify health-related behavior risks for all students, as well as by target populations

2-Prioritize programs goals and objectives, as well how to invest operation/personnel resources

3- Develop compelling funding proposals; demonstrate need to extramural grant applications

4- Assess the impacts of health behaviors on students' academic and personal success

These research goals were accompanied by three more objectives for the entire CSU system and include; a) Develop a reliable database on student's health related knowledge, attitudes and behaviors; b) Link data to important student outcomes, including student engagement, student learning and student retention; and c) Compare data between campuses as well as benchmark against a national sample. By the end of the fall semester, the Chancellor's Office will provide each university a system-wide summary of survey results and comparisons between institutions within the CSU system.

Every semester, the American College Health Association (ACHA) provides survey data and results summaries on all of the data from every campus who administered the instrument during that semester. This huge group of survey respondents serve as a national reference sample that colleges can

Appendix W - NCHA_ExecutiveSummary_IE

benchmark against and see how their students compare to a large representative and national sample.

This report used the national reference sample from Spring 2015 (one year before). This sample was comprised of over 74,000 survey respondents and included over 100 post-secondary education institutions. Group differences were examined to assess if HSU students have similar experiences and/or identify risk areas for specific groups of students. HSU plans to administer the NCHA to students every other year and Spring 2016 is being used as a baseline to measure against for the future.

Highlighted here is a summary of survey results, but can be found in greater detail in the full report.

Humboldt State University

Overall, 75.8% of HSU students reported being in good, very good or excellent health. The survey showed there is a substantial difference in what health related resources are provided to students versus what students are actually interested in. The biggest finding for HSU students as a whole was the very large differences between what students think the “typical HSU student” does in regards to substance use and behaviors versus what students are actually doing. For example, 81% of students think the “typical HSU student” uses marijuana 10 or more days out of every month. The actual number of HSU students who reported using at least 10 days out of the month was only 26%. This same trend was present for cigarettes and alcohol use. This trend was present for the total sample and at every group aggregation (gender, URM status, and housing type).

HSU students reported that they practice a variety of protective behavioral strategies to try and prevent negative consequences related to drinking alcohol. Although the majority of students practice at least one of these protective strategies, one third of HSU students reported at least one negative consequence directly related to alcohol consumption: 36.4% did something they later regretted, 29.6% forgot where they were or what they did (aka Blacked Out) and 28.3% had unprotected sex. Another finding of interest to the institution is how safe or unsafe students feel on campus and in the

Appendix W - NCHA_ExecutiveSummary_IE

community. Only 12% of students reported feeling very safe in the community at night and 31% reported feeling safe on campus during nighttime hours.

Humboldt State vs NCHA Reference Sample

Compared to the national reference sample, HSU students reported higher rates in multiple areas. First, academics were negatively impacted by the same factors as the national reference sample, but the percentage of HSU students who reported negative academic impacts were higher on all possible factors compared to those of the national sample. Stress (40.9%) and anxiety (32.4%) were cited as the most common factors having negative impacts on academics at HSU. Second, HSU students reported using marijuana more than the national sample. In fact, HSU student rates for marijuana use were higher than any other statistics found using government websites and higher education/college periodicals or magazines. Forty-seven percent of HSU students reported using marijuana at least once in the last 30 days compared to the national sample of 19%. Humboldt State students reported higher rates of mental health issues on all eleven mental health factors and more difficult to handle or traumatic situations compared to the national sample. HSU students also reported higher rates of disabilities, either diagnosed or treated. Although HSU scored higher than the national reference sample in multiple areas, this is not the case in all areas. For example, HSU students reported getting more physical exercise than the national sample in all three areas: moderate cardiovascular exercises, intense cardiovascular exercise and strength training.

Gender differences. Results revealed a few areas where there are significant gender differences. First, males reported feeling safer both on campus and in the community, during both the daytime and nighttime compared to female students. Males also reported more frequent marijuana use during the last month compared to females. Males had more physical attack/physical assault instances than females, but females reported higher rates on all sexual assault items in the last 12 months at almost 3 times the rate of males. Females also reported higher instances of difficult to handle/traumatic

Appendix W - NCHA_ExecutiveSummary_IE

situations, higher instances of mental health diagnoses and a greater desire to lose weight compared to their male counterparts.

URM differences. There were not many sections where URM differences exist. One finding was that students who identified as URM reported that they never wore a helmet (52%) more than any other group and had the lowest number of students who reported that they always wore their helmet (19%) when riding a bicycle. These rates were based on the sample of students who reported riding a bike within the last 12 months. There were also a couple of differences in the academic impediment section but there wasn't a single or uniform trend. For example, more URM students reported that stress negatively impacted their academics compared to NURM or unknown/other students, but reported lower levels of anxiety than the other two groups (see page 30 in full report).

Housing differences. A few survey sections revealed differences in experiences depending on whether students live on campus or off campus. Students living off campus reported higher rates on all academic impediment factors. Students living off campus reported more problems with finances, career related issues, death of family member or friend and intimate relationships while students living on campus reported higher rates of overwhelming emotional trauma (feeling very lonely, sad and hopeless).

It is hoped that HSU will use this information about its students as an opportunity to make positive changes for the university and its students. These changes can take many different forms and range from passive interventions (provide students with social norm national data on substance abuse) to more active and direct interventions (various safety initiatives). And lastly, HSU differed from the national reference sample in multiple subject areas. Some of these areas highlight the potential need for further investigation due to the focus of these areas: student academic outcomes, mental health issues, and thoughts/behaviors surrounding substance use.