

Recent events in higher education, perhaps most notably the launch of the Amethyst Initiative, have drawn attention to issues associated with high risk drinking on college campuses. This document is intended to inform the Council of Big Ten Presidents and Chancellors (COPC) about the issues and to provide a baseline of information to support consideration of potential action steps.

Background

Heavy drinking has serious negative consequences for college students. Heavy alcohol users are more likely to miss class and fall behind in their schoolwork, and drinking contributes to an estimated 1,700 deaths, 500,000 injuries, and 70,000 cases of sexual assault annually among college students in the US.¹ Heavy alcohol use can affect more than just the drinker. An estimated 600,000 students per year were assaulted by another student who had been drinking. Residents of neighborhoods near heavy drinking schools were more likely to experience noise disruptions, property damage, and police visits.

Current Research

In 1999, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) convened a Task Force on College Drinking comprised of expert researchers and college presidents to study the problem and identify strategies to address it. The results of these deliberations were released by NIAAA² in 2002 and included a series of research reviews published in the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, and a *Call to Action* aimed at changing the culture of drinking at US colleges. The *Call to Action* featured a “3-in-1 Framework” containing a set of recommended strategies and interventions aimed at reducing student drinking. The resources developed from this Task Force are available at <http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/>. The framework is attached to this memorandum.

A primary characteristic of the recommendations was to focus on the determinants of student drinking in their environment by engaging communities to implement comprehensive, multi-component, and empirically-based strategies. The Task Force recommended that strategies enacted should target both sub-populations of students at high-risk for heavy alcohol use and strategies that address the student population as a whole by influencing the conditions that help shape everyone’s behavior.

The panel also strongly recommended that University Presidents provide leadership to enact these strategies:

“In the Task Force's view, presidential leadership is essential to ensure that recommendations relevant to each college and university are incorporated into its alcohol abuse prevention program planning process.”

Since the release of the NIAAA College Drinking Task Force recommendations in 2002, there has been only modest progress nationally. However, where these efforts have been tried, there have been significant reductions in student drinking and related consequences.³

From a national perspective, there has been little change in college student drinking. Data from the Monitoring the Future Study and the National Study on Drug Use and Health show that drinking rates among college students have not changed over time.⁴

A recently published paper from the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study by Henry Wechsler of Harvard University and Toben Nelson of the University of Minnesota⁵ summarized findings from more than 80 studies on student drinking and intervention strategies conducted over 14 years. Their research pointed to:

Campus practices that include greater supervision of fraternities and sororities, policies to notify parents when students have trouble with alcohol, substance-free residence halls and more alcohol-free activities, especially on weekends.

Community measures such as limiting alcohol outlets near campus, mandatory training for beverage servers, a crackdown on unlicensed alcohol sales, and greater monitoring of alcohol outlets to curtail under-age drinking and excessive consumption by legal drinkers.

Legislative efforts associated with lower levels of drinking include strong state and local drunken-driving policies aimed at youths and young adults; state alcohol control policies like keg registrations; and laws restricting happy hours, open containers in public, beer sold in pitchers and billboards and other types of alcohol advertising.

The strategies supported by the Harvard findings are consistent with those identified in the NIAAA College Task Force recommendations.

Current Context

One reason there has been greater attention devoted to student alcohol use is the Amethyst Initiative. Launched in July 2008, the Amethyst Initiative⁶ is led by John McCardell, an historian and former president of Middlebury College. The goal of the Amethyst Initiative is to open public debate about the minimum drinking age. The initiative is supported by chancellors and presidents of universities and colleges across the United States who have signed their names to a public statement that the problem of irresponsible drinking by young people continues despite the minimum legal drinking age of 21, and there is a culture of dangerous binge drinking on many campuses. As of November, 2008, 130 presidents and chancellors have signed, including fewer than 10 AAU members. President Gee is the only Big Ten President to sign the public statement thus far.

The recommendations of the Amethyst Initiative to lower the legal drinking age differs from the NIAAA College Drinking Task Force recommendations, which supported increased enforcement of minimum drinking age laws and observed that it was the “most well-studied” and “successful” alcohol control policy. Nor does the Amethyst Initiative advocate for the other recommendations supported by the NIAAA College Drinking Task Force.

Potential Action Steps

The Big Ten Presidents, like many of their peers, face significant challenges regarding drinking among their students. The Presidents are also in a position to demonstrate needed leadership in this area. A great deal is known about what to do. Less is known about how to do it. On a cooperative level, the Presidents might consider a large-scale, coordinated research effort across the Big Ten; a coordinated public service campaign that might be launched on the Big Ten Network; and/or the development of a framework for engaging legislative and community leaders as partners on a state-by-state basis throughout the Midwest.

A coordinated effort across The Big Ten Universities (or the region) would require an investment in management and content development with several components. An important feature of such an initiative would involve a method for facilitating the change process. One process that has been successfully employed to enact a wide range of changes to the healthcare system is the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Breakthrough Series (BTS) (<http://www.ihl.org/>). This model for change is facilitated by a learning collaborative that is specifically designed to close the gap between what is *known* about a given problem and what is typically *done* in practice.

The Big Ten Universities are well-positioned to close the gap between empirically-based recommendations to reduce student alcohol use and what is occurring. A learning collaborative process could draw upon considerable expertise located within the Big Ten community to address the problem of student drinking, and demonstrate the commitment of The Big Ten Universities to transfer existing scientific knowledge into best practice.

Call To Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges

3-in-1 Framework				
Tier	Strategy	Level of Operation		
		Individuals, including At-Risk and Dependent Drinkers	Student Population as Whole	Community
1: Effective among college students	Combining cognitive-behavioral skills with norms clarification & motivational enhancement intervention	Yes	No	No
	Offering brief motivational enhancement interventions in student health centers and emergency rooms	Yes	No	No
	Challenging alcohol expectancies	Yes	No	No
2: Effective with general populations	Increased enforcement of minimum drinking age laws	No	Yes	Yes
	Implementation, increased publicity, and enforcement of other laws to reduce alcohol-impaired driving	No	Yes	Yes
	Restrictions on alcohol retail density	No	No	Yes
	Increased price and excise taxes on alcoholic beverages	No	No	Yes
	Responsible beverage service policies in social & commercial settings	No	Yes	Yes
	The formation of a campus/community coalition	No	Yes	Yes

3: Promising	Adopting campus-based policies to Reduce high-risk use (e.g., reinstating Friday classes, eliminating keg parties, establishing alcohol-free activities & dorms)	No	Yes	No
	Increasing enforcement at campus-based events that promote excessive drinking	No	Yes	No
	Increasing publicity about enforcement of underage drinking laws/eliminating "mixed" messages	No	Yes	Yes
	Consistently enforcing campus disciplinary actions associated with policy violations	No	Yes	No
	Conducting marketing campaigns to correct student misperceptions about alcohol use on campus	No	Yes	No
	Provision of "safe rides" programs	No	Yes	Yes
	Regulation of happy hours and sales	No	Yes	Yes
	Enhancing awareness of personal liability	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Informing new students and parents about alcohol policies and penalties	Yes	Yes	No
4: Ineffective	Informational, knowledge-based or values clarification interventions when used alone	N/A	N/A	N/A

Reproduced from: A Call To Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges. Task Force of the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. National Institutes of Health. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov

All members of the Big Ten Athletic Conference are members of the CIC. The CIC initiated a survey of the CIC Student Affairs Officers (including the VPs from the Big Ten campuses, plus the VPs from the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois at Chicago). *

The survey was used to gather data on policies and practices on CIC campuses. These data suggest that CIC universities have taken numerous steps to address the issue of binge drinking and alcohol abuse in general among students, drawing upon national models as well as local initiatives in their efforts. A summary of the survey results indicates the following:

- All campuses reported adopting one or more strategies in an effort to curb binge drinking
- All reported initiating research activities related to binge drinking
- All reported having a coalition or task force to address the issue
- All reported using one or more instruments to assess high-risk drinking rates & behaviors
- All reported tracking a variety of parameters to assess the extent of the alcohol problem on campus

Perhaps it is of particular interest that on November 12, the University of Wisconsin-Madison announced a comprehensive approach to addressing high risk drinking in the state of Wisconsin. AWARE (All-Wisconsin Alcohol Risk Education) is a UW Health-led coalition to improve the health and safety of Wisconsin residents in the fight against alcohol abuse. This \$12 million initiative will focus on the following three initiatives to help remedy Wisconsin's problem drinking:

- Reduce drunk driving
- Decrease underage drinking
- Prohibit health insurance companies from denying claims for accident victims who test positive for alcohol and other drugs

** Respondents included: University of Chicago, University of Illinois-Chicago, University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign, Indiana University, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Penn State University, Purdue University, University of Wisconsin-Madison.*

Do you allow possession of alcohol/drinking by those over 21 in the following venues?

Answer Options	Yes	No
Campus housing	7	4
Student-sponsored events held on campus	4	7
University-owned athletic facilities	6	5
University-sponsored non-sporting events held on campus	9	2
Parking lots/parking ramps, or other on campus locations for tailgating purposes	8	3
Greek-owned property/organizations	8	2
In sports facilities during games	3	8

Comments

Some athletic events allow alcohol in the boxes. Not for general consumption. (UW-Madison)

Sororities prohibit alcohol in their facilities. All but four fraternities claim to be dry. (Northwestern)

A University permit must be approved in advance for any alcohol to be served at an event held on campus or in a University-owned facility. (Purdue)

Only those students who are 21 and older may possess or consume alcohol in their rooms with the doors closed. Alcoholic beverages are served at the club level during athletic events. (Ohio State)

We allow alcohol in certain sections of the football stadium. It is not allowed in any other sports venue, including the basketball arena. Those over 21 may use alcohol in their room of a fraternity house if everyone present is over 21. No alcohol is allowed in sorority houses. Student organizations holding events in our student union may request permission for alcoholic beverage service only if all present are 21 or older. Alcohol is not permissible if anyone present is under 21. (Iowa)

Students of age in graduate, apartment, and designated housing for upperclassmen can possess and consume alcohol. Catered events in university facilities can serve alcohol if the caterer is licensed and if university approval is obtained. (Indiana)

We have no Greek owned property. We do not have tailgating. (UI-Chicago)

** We do allow alcohol to be served in the new boxes in our football stadium, but the Chancellor and President have elected not to serve alcohol.*

** Regarding student organizations, a staff or academic department can serve as a sponsoring unit to allow a student group to serve alcohol on campus. This is approved by the Chancellor and the sponsoring unit must pay the bill. Student organizations may petition the Associate Vice Chancellor to have alcohol at their own event, but these are typically denied. (UIUC)*

Most student events organized by the office for student activities are non-alcoholic event. Also the University of Chicago has no direct relationship with the fraternities and sororities. (UC)

Who enforces the policies/laws in these venues?

Answer Options	Campus police	City police	Both
Campus housing	9	0	1
Student-sponsored events held on campus	9	0	1
University-owned athletic facilities	10	0	1
University-sponsored non-sporting events held on campus	10	0	1
Parking lots/parking ramps, or other on campus locations for tailgating purposes	4	0	6
Greek-owned property/organizations	1	4	3
In sports facilities during games	9	0	1

Comments

Most of the time, the student affairs staff enforces policies in housing and at campus events. (NWU)

Our University police work closely with Iowa City police. In addition, our University police can make arrests outside of the campus proper. They typically patrol the campus and its periphery. (Iowa)

The first line of enforcement in residence halls is our RA staff. At tailgates, Indiana Excise Officers also enforce state alcohol laws. At catered events the caterer is expected to observe state law. In Greek houses, the chapter leadership and the house corporation are expected to uphold university regulations and state law. (Indiana)

Campus Housing is enforced by the Residence Hall Staff and it is exceptionally rare that police would come to the halls for an alcohol enforcement issue in isolation. (UIUC)

Student affairs office - programming as well as facilities staff manage the events and situations that arise. We they to be in need of assistance they would contact our University Police and may involve city police. That would however be a rare occasion. (UC)

Do you accept sponsorship or gifts from the alcohol industry for university events?

Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes	18.2%
No	81.8%

Comments

Typically no; some local distributors purchase commercial time around football. (Iowa)

Local restaurants/bars that serve alcohol have supported athletic department promotions - ex. fan towels at games. (Indiana)

However, registered student organizations are allowed to accept sponsorship from the alcohol industry for their events. There are very specific restrictions on how these sponsorships are to be promoted and they must be approved by the RSO office. As student organizations, they are affiliates of the university. (UIUC)

Limited funding has been accepted from the Distilled Spirits Council for a social marketing campaign, but otherwise the response has been negative. (PSU)

Do you accept advertising in university publications from the alcohol industry?

Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes	9.1%
No	90.9%

Comments

Campus newspaper is not an official OSU venue. (Ohio State)

The school newspaper does accept alcohol/bar advertising; the newspaper is run by an educational non-profit corporation. (Iowa)

The student newspaper does accept ads from local bars and retail liquor stores. (Indiana)

Our student newspaper called the Maroon is independent and does accept advertising. (UC)

Have you implemented any of the following strategies in an effort to curb binge drinking? (check all that apply):

Answer Options	Yes	No
Increasing the number of Friday classes and exams	2	9
Developing and promoting alcohol-free, expanded late night student activities	8	3
Establish alcohol-free residence halls	7	4
Banning marketing and promotion of alcoholic beverages	8	3
"Social norms" marketing campaign	10	1
Mandatory alcohol education (e.g. Alcohol.edu)	9	2
Working with local authorities on ordinances or other policy initiatives to reduce access to alcohol	7	4

Other (please describe)

We have had a community relations task force in place for many years to confront off campus behavior, especially party houses. We have extended the jurisdiction of university police and the code of student conduct into a defined area in the community. We have seen some improvements with loud party complaints. We have attempted to educate students who live off campus on how to be a responsible neighbor, safety and security. (NWU)

We tried social norms marketing about 10 years ago, but it does not work well for a campus such as ours. (Iowa)

BASICS; My Student Body; Presentations at Orientation and Parent Orientation (Michigan)

Alcohol peer educators, alcohol educations for targeted groups (ex Greeks, athletes, new freshmen), late night alternative transportation, mandated alcohol assessment/counseling for students violating our alcohol and drug regulations. (Indiana)

** Recent revisions to the student code have further restricted how organizations may promote and include alcohol as a function of their events.*

** All students transported to the hospital for alcohol incapacitation are required to undergo a drug and alcohol evaluation with our Alcohol and Other Drug Office.*

** The Alcohol and Other Drug Office does frequent outreach through presentations to the campus community. (UIUC)*

Peer health educators have a newsletter with information about alcohol - "Think before you Drink" (UC)

Comments

Weekends begin on Thursdays for most students. Students tend to stay on campus during the week to study and/or engage in student activities until late evening, then go off campus to bars. (NWU)

Our recreational sports staff does mandate that sport club leaders attend alcohol education sessions. This is a small population of our total student population. (Ohio State)

Undergraduate orientation programs have a component on alcohol use and abuse. The skits, presentations and discussions also explore issues of compromised decision-making as a result of alcohol use. (UC)

Have you initiated any research activities related to binge drinking on campus?

Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes	90.9%
No	9.1%

Comments

Several faculty members have conducted research on alcohol; we are currently partnering with the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation to evaluate the Friday class intervention. We have a Center for Research on Undergraduate Education in the College of Education and they conducted the RISE (Research on Iowa Student Experiences) Study which has provided extensive data on high risk drinking among our students. (Iowa)

Federally funded research initiated by a faculty member. (Indiana)

Does your campus have a coalition or task force addressing these issues?

Answer Options	Response Percent
Yes	100.0%
No	0.0%

Comments

OSU has three coalitions/committees that address alcohol issues. These are: Campus and Community Alcohol Coalition; Campus and Community Safety committee; and Wellness Collaborative. (Ohio State)

We have a Campus Alcohol Task Force and a Campus Community Bar Retail Coalition, a collaboration with the local community. (Purdue)

We have had a campus-community coalition for over 10 years as a part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded "Matter of Degree" program. Currently, a coalition is being re-formed to include more campus and community stakeholders. (Iowa)

The Champaign-Urbana Campus Community Coalition (CU-CCC) is a broad based coalition of local colleges, drug treatment agencies, prevention agencies, and police agencies. It has no formal reporting structure.

The Alcohol and Other Drug Office has an Alcohol intervention team with representatives from all local police agencies, housing, Greek life, dean of students, and student discipline. (UIUC)

A group of student affairs staff, counseling services and health services meets quarterly. (UC)

If so, to whom does the task force report? (e.g. President, Provost, other)**Responses**

Two exist. One reports to the Dean of Students and the other reports to the Chancellor. (UW-Madison)

VP Student Affairs (NWU)

They are overseen by the Vice President for Student Life (Ohio State)

Tammy Loew, Health Advocacy Coordinator in the Student Wellness Office, gives leadership to the Campus Alcohol Task Force, and she also coordinates the work of the Campus Community Bar Retail Coalition, a collaboration with the local community. (Purdue)

Provost/President (Iowa)

Vice Provost for Student Affairs (Indiana)

Dean of Students (UIC)

Dean of Students/Vice President for Student Affairs/Chief Health Officer (Michigan)

The Alcohol and other Drug Intervention Team reports to the Director of the Counseling Center. (UIUC)

Dean of Students in the Undergraduate College (UC)

President (PSU)

What instruments do you use to assess high risk drinking rates and behaviors (check all that apply)?

Answer Options	Response Percent
CORE alcohol and other drug survey	54.5%
National College Health Assessment	63.6%
None	0.0%
Other (please describe)	63.6%

Other (please describe)

E. Chug (UW-Madison)

Student Drinking Survey in partnership with Penn State University (Ohio State)

Student Life Survey (Michigan)

Purdue Wellness Survey; Student Focus Groups (Purdue)

Research on Iowa Student Experiences (RISE) study (Iowa)

On campus screening days for alcohol problems organized by the student counseling and resource center. (UC)

Penn State Pulse Student Drinking Survey, Penn State Student Health Survey (PSU)

Comments

We recently (2007) began using the NCHA. The RISE instrument, developed here, will most likely be readministered in 2009. (Iowa)

Which of the following parameters do you track in order to assess the extent of the alcohol problem on your campus (check all that apply)?

Answer Options	Response Percent
Self-reported binge drinking frequency	81.8%
Campus policy violations	100.0%
Arrests	100.0%
Hospitalizations	72.7%
Self-reported negative effects (e.g. assaults)	90.9%
Reported negative effects of others' drinking (e.g. having to care for a roommate)	72.7%
Other (please describe)	18.2%

Other (please describe)

Recidivism through campus substance abuse services (Iowa)

Emergency room visits and contact made by to the on-call student affairs staff. (UC)

Comments

The Dean of Students in the Undergraduate College asks and/or summons to her office any student who has had a serious alcohol related incident. (UC)

¹ Magnitude of alcohol-related mortality and morbidity among U.S. college students ages 18-24: Changes from 1998 to 2001. Annual Review of Public Health. Vol. 26, pages 259-279, 2005 Hingson, R. Heeren T, Winter M, Wechsler H.

² What Colleges Need to Know Now: An Update on College Drinking Research. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Institutes of Health. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

³ Weitzman ER, Nelson TF, Lee H, and Wechsler, H. Reducing drinking and related harms in college: Evaluation of the "A Matter of Degree" program. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Volume 21 Issue 3 Pages 187-196, 2004; Newman I, Shell D, Major L, Workman T. Use of policy, education, and enforcement to reduce binge drinking among university students: The NU Directions project. International Journal of Drug Policy , Volume 17 , Issue 4 , Pages 339 – 349, 2006.

⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2007. *Results from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings. Rep. NSDUH Series H-32, DHHS Publication No. SMA 07-4293*, Rockville, MD. Johnston LD, O'Malley PM, Bachman JG, Schulenberg J. 2007. *Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975-2006. Volume II: College students and adults ages 19-45. Rep. NIH Publication No. 07-6206*, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Bethesda, MD.

⁵ "What We Have Learned From the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study: Focusing Attention on College Student Alcohol Consumption and the Environmental Conditions That Promote It." Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs. Pages 481-490. July, 2008.

⁶ <http://www.amethystinitiative.org/>