

SOURCEBOOK **2001**

2001 PROJECT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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PROMISING
PRACTICES
CAMPUS
ALCOHOL
STRATEGIES

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As documented throughout the pages in this Sourcebook, an abundance of widely diverse quality ideas have emerged from the three national solicitations. While certainly not an inventory of every initiative that has been undertaken to address alcohol abuse and related problems by colleges in this country, the Sourcebook does incorporate many individual initiatives as well as the current state of the art. As specified in the Introduction, this resource can be used in a variety of ways, such as conducting a review of a campus' own efforts or using the items as a stimulus for generating relevant campus strategies.

The project co-directors and advisory panel reaffirm the need for a comprehensive long-term perspective formulate strategies and approaches that are appropriate for the campus. Using the framework developed for the Task Force Planner, campus leaders can use this Sourcebook to help address needs and gaps.

In preparing these findings and recommendations, a 5-year perspective has been used. The findings, observations, and recommendations are based on the information obtained from the three national solicitations, as well as a wide range of ensuing conversations with professionals from campuses throughout the nation. These conversations occurred during follow-up activities with applicants, conducting interviews with campus leaders in a variety of roles, and conducting workshops about ways to incorporate the resources developed through the *Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies* initiative.

When the first edition of this Sourcebook was published in 1996, the findings and observations, as well as recommendations, were reflective of that initial solicitation. Illustrations and documentation of the ways in which the key elements were demonstrated through the materials review process were provided. The 5-year perspective reveals that the same key points are valid; that is, while shifts within the professional field are noted, the primary elements identified earlier are still the major points today. Emerging areas and changes that are noted are subsumed within the overall Project Findings and Recommendations, highlighted below. Thus, while the wording of

the ten findings and recommendations is the same as it was in the initial Sourcebook, the details are different. The elaboration within each of the findings and recommendations reflects all three national solicitations and 5 years of experience with the *Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies* project.

Findings and Observations

The following ten key elements reflect an overall perspective of the status of campus efforts in 2001:

- 1. The campus-based approaches manifest rich diversity and creativity.** Campus efforts demonstrate a wide range of strategies and approaches. Some topic areas, such as awareness and targeted, lend themselves to creative initiatives; others such as enforcement are less likely to incorporate innovative approaches. The multiple solicitation processes indicate that creativity and blending of approaches across categories occurs quite often. Campus leadership personnel are also continuing to design appropriate, campus-based strategies reflecting the unique and current needs and diversity found on their campuses.
- 2. Although comprehensive campus-based efforts are desired, a fully comprehensive approach is rarely achieved.** In the first two solicitation processes, comprehensive campus-based efforts were actively solicited. However, campus-based efforts, which demonstrated the comprehensive nature espoused within this project, were actually quite limited in number. Though campus personnel are increasingly acknowledging the need for a comprehensive campus-based initiative, they often find it difficult to garner the resources for full implementation. The important role that multiple constituencies can play in accomplishing the desired outcome of a comprehensive campus effort is acknowledged; however, campuses tend to implement a limited range of programs, policies, or other initiatives, many of which focus on a social norms marketing approach. This tends to both incorporate a range of previously unconnected program elements and use available resources. *(Continued)*

Project Findings and Recommendations *(continued)*

3. Campus initiatives often do not clearly articulate desired outcomes. With constraints on campus programs and personnel, having clearly established desired outcomes is extremely important. The emphasis upon “clarity of outcomes” has been a focus throughout the 5 years of this project. This emphasis upon results contrasts with the more common emphasis on the process. Though most of the initial applications in 1995 did not reflect a clear delineation of desired outcomes, the applications received in the following two solicitations demonstrate a clearer articulation of desired outcomes. Further, in workshops with campus and community personnel, a clearer understanding of the results desired from specific campus initiatives is evident.

4. Evaluation of campus initiatives is rare. Evaluation is quite limited throughout the entire range of applications received. However, the applications received in 1999-2000 demonstrate increased attention to evaluation. Further, the evaluation emphasis is much more focused on outcomes. While process evaluation is important, the emphasis upon outcome evaluation is parallel to the emphasis on clearly defined desired outcomes. Though many campuses use the Core Survey, many other campuses are developing instruments and protocols that are more directly associated to the goals of their project.

5. Awareness, peer-based, and environmental/targeted efforts dominate campuses efforts. The overwhelming majority of applications received in the first two solicitations were in one or more of these topic areas; they illustrate the diversity and creativity found in alcohol abuse prevention programming efforts. Many of these three types of approaches overlapped with other areas such as enforcement and support and intervention services. Knowing of the importance of targeted efforts, the third solicitation specifically requested applications with an emphasis on targeted and stakeholder audiences. The specific request for these focused efforts identified a wide variety of approaches, demonstrating the existence of directed initiatives and the growing awareness that broad brushed, generalized approaches, while helpful, are not sufficient to adequately reach specific audiences. The need for programs which emphasize the unique needs and circumstances of populations within the overall university campus and community framework is being acknowledged.

6. Many alcohol abuse prevention strategies are blended with health-oriented approaches. A review of strategies from the three solicitations indicates that though the vast majority of approaches are directly focused on alcohol abuse prevention, this attention is often within the context of related health issues. Alcohol abuse prevention was found to be incorporated in a range of strategies and approaches, demonstrating that prevention efforts can be included within a range of strategies and approaches overall. The infusion of alcohol abuse prevention messages is found increasingly throughout institutions in a range of approaches through targeted and stakeholder efforts, as well as through enforcement and curricular initiatives. Topical linkages of alcohol abuse prevention have been found with impaired driving, academic performance, overall human development, acquaintance rape, violence, and healthy living.

7. New approaches appear to be emerging in campus efforts. Through the 5 years of gathering approaches designed to reduce alcohol-related problems on campus, it is clear that they are becoming more sophisticated. While curricular infusion was more widespread than anticipated during the first solicitation, other new approaches for alcohol abuse prevention are currently found. Innovative initiatives for enforcement, scientifically grounded strategies, and an increased involvement of Task Forces have been found. Further, a respect for and involvement with the community surrounding the campus is emerging. As noted already, social norms marketing has increased substantively in campus programming efforts, the preliminary findings of positive results have helped to fuel the momentum toward embracing this approach. Also, particularly encouraging are the emerging approaches within the value conflict resolution category; they are thoughtful and philosophically grounded and merit further examination and review.

The dominance of the Alcohol 101[®] CD-ROM, prepared by the University of Illinois with a grant from The Century Council, in the third solicitation indicates the desire for high tech approaches such as is found with this resource. However the sparse results obtained for other technology-based approaches points to an area that demands further attention.

8. There is insufficient consistency in the delivery of the “message.” As noted after the first solicitation, the messages about alcohol abuse being communicated to the campus community are often unclear. Through the review of applications as well as discussions with campus personnel, campuses often lack clarity about

what is to be communicated, what is to be measured, and what the desired outcomes are. Programming efforts appear disconnected and individualized, resulting in limited consistency

Project Findings and Recommendations (*continued*) and clarity about the message being communicated to the student population. Some campuses even expressed concern because targeted approaches have different messages for different audiences. The processes undertaken through this project indicate that what the campus is promoting or preventing – whether it is harm reduction, risk avoidance, environmental change, individual self determination, or personal understanding of consequences – is often not articulated and discussed. The project's co-directors believe that program goals should emerge from the philosophical underpinnings of the college, which form the philosophical foundation of the program.

9. Insufficient marketing of approaches is common. The marketing of the campus-based efforts has improved significantly over the 5 years of gathering insights and materials from campuses. The biggest factor believed to have helped marketing efforts has been social norms marketing efforts that emphasize correcting misperceptions of campus norms. It is hoped that the emphasis upon creative and enticing approaches for marketing will be expanded to the range of themes, orientations, messages, and methods incorporated through this project. This area of emerging marketing is a domain that will certainly benefit from close attention.

10. Personnel guiding these efforts have tremendous dedication but limited support. The interactions with campus leadership personnel, whether student affairs personnel, police officers, health center personnel, coordinators of campus efforts, or faculty, continue to reaffirm their dedication. They report that they value sharing resources and ideas and strive to identify ways of addressing, in an efficient way, alcohol abuse problems. Campus personnel who are actually guiding the efforts are typically hampered by limited resources and attention from the campus' senior administrators. The challenges they face are so widespread and infused in to the societal and institutional framework that it makes change difficult. With the assistance and support of other professionals and para-professionals, these individuals shape the campus effort; they are the spirit and glue that hold the programmatic efforts together. Typically their status on campus and the resources provided for their efforts are quite limited. Their accomplishments are achieved

through hard work, perseverance, patience, good will, and dedication to the quality of life for students and for their campuses.

In review, the findings that were generated by the first two solicitations remain much the same today; however, the illustrations which document their existence include an expanded view of the campus.

Recommendations

The recommendations that follow have emerged from the findings. Though each of these was cited in the initial publication of the Sourcebook, they warrant additional attention today. Many of the recommendations made in the initial publication of the Sourcebook appear to have been taken to heart by campus leadership personnel and policy makers, as well as by those involved in similar roles at the state, consortia, or national level. Just as with the findings, the documentation for each of these is based on current perspectives.

1. Integrate alcohol abuse prevention efforts into the fabric of the institution. Alcohol abuse prevention will be best served when it is integral to the operations and activities of the institution. Just as these efforts need to be grounded in the overall mission of the institution, it is similarly important that they be viewed as a shared responsibility among the institution's personnel. The project's Task Force Planner illustrates this concept extremely well by focusing on the range of ten categories of groups or organizations in the campus effort. The Task Force Planner further illustrates the wide variety of approaches to incorporate alcohol abuse prevention efforts into campus life, from policies and enforcement to support services and curriculum. This can be viewed as a "ganglion" effect whereby the prevention efforts are throughout the institution and not viewed as distinct activities or events. It is hoped that each campus and each organizational unit within a campus consider how it can be involved in the prevention of and response to alcohol-related problems. Further, acknowledging the academic mission of institutions requires that clear and direct attention be placed upon ways of relating alcohol abuse prevention efforts with academic success and academic performance. By working closely with faculty members in particular, clearer directions can be gained for the future of alcohol abuse prevention efforts.

2. Ensure that efforts are clearly defined and well grounded. There is an increased call for science-based efforts in college alcohol abuse prevention. The growing emphasis upon evaluation and quality results demands that campus prevention efforts adhere to this set

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Project Findings and Recommendations *(continued)*

of standards. Clearly defining the desired outcomes and specifying the assumptions surrounding student behavior and growth will further enhance the prevention initiatives. By combining efforts with other resource personnel from the campus and the community, leadership personnel can better ground their efforts and also extend the reach of these initiatives. Clearly defining needs and articulating goals helps with the design, implementation, evaluation and ultimate institutionalization of the campus effort.

3. Create a comprehensive and long-term perspective. As specified in the initial days of the *Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies* project, a comprehensive approach is integral to making a significant change with alcohol abuse issues on the campus. Since it is widely known that initiation with alcohol generally precedes attendance at college and that alcohol issues are societal issues, colleges must undertake a wide variety of approaches and sustain these over time to be able to have meaningful results. This comprehensive perspective is best exemplified by the Task Force Planner which clearly illustrates the shared responsibility essential for implementing the campus- and community-based approach. While progress can be noted, substantive change will occur only after a sustained effort over time; the long-term perspective also means that it is unrealistic to expect changes promptly. Changing the campus culture goes hand in hand with changing the culture of the community surrounding the campus as well as the general societal culture.

4. Design campus initiatives to be multi-targeted and broad-based. The diversity of campus populations and sub-populations indicates the essential need to have targeted efforts. Approaches for different subpopulations on and off the campus as well as those who are not students, are both appropriate and necessary. Attention to the range of drinking patterns, prevention efforts, and intervention and support are needed along with movement towards lower risk behaviors and lower risk environments to establish the broad foundation of the campus initiative.

5. Allocate appropriate resources and staff commensurate with the task. To adequately implement a comprehensive campus effort, it is critical that sufficient resources and personnel be assigned to this long-term and comprehensive effort. The variety of tasks inherent in a comprehensive program requires a range of skills. It is not reasonable to expect a single individual to be proficient in student counseling, group workshops, lectures, interactions with the media, marketing, evaluation design, interpretation of data, research, public

interactions, course preparation, policy development, enforcement, administration and more; however, all too often it is precisely this range of tasks that is expected of one person. Further, this one person—a campus coordinator—often serves in this role in addition to other roles and responsibilities on campus; a range of personnel involved in a Task Force that shares the responsibility and engages expertise from throughout the campus and community will help to facilitate this. The investment with resources and personnel, when grounded within the comprehensive and theoretically based and evaluated campus efforts, is an investment highly recommended.

6. Build program connections on and off the campus. Not only are more resources necessary on the campus, but linkages with off campus personnel, both in the surrounding community and in the larger realm of off-campus (such as alumni, parents, and state officials) can be extremely helpful. These individuals and groups are increasingly selected as partners in the process of defining and implementing appropriate campus-based strategies. This collaboration and support helps to not only share resources, but also share perspectives and insights and also resources. The range of community partnerships, as well as sharing that occurs through other resources, helps in the building of relationships and interactions.

7. Collaborate with other professionals. Through the solicitation processes, the Sourcebook has captured the voluntary sharing of quality work designed and implemented by professionals throughout the nation. This has been in written form through this Sourcebook as well as, increasingly, through technological forms such as Web sites and e-mails. This willingness to offer insights and approaches is precisely the collaboration desired when this project was initially undertaken. Collaboration can further be enhanced through training, consortia, workshops, publications, and on-going dialogue. By sharing the insights, successes, and gaps, professionals can continue their quest for higher quality and more effective approaches. Collaboration also helps to offset the all too prominent sense of isolation faced both on and off the campus. It is also recommended that this collaboration occur with those for whom alcohol abuse prevention is not a specialty: this may include parents, students, community members, and others. Further, collaboration may occur with professionals whose areas of expertise may offer insights; these may be found in business, marketing, public policy, ethics, organization development, and technology.

8. Conduct and use on-going evaluation. Evaluation is an integral part of any campus-based effort. From the needs assessment process to the development of sound outcome and process evaluation methodologies, it is critical that evaluation be incorporated at all phases of the alcohol abuse prevention initiative. Evaluation can be incorporated for the overall campus-based initiative with its generalized goals and objectives. It is also appropriate to include evaluation with individual programs. Having an on going “feedback loop” is central to continuing the improvement and design and delivery of the campus effort. Sharing the results of evaluation findings will further help not only the campus initiative but also other professionals in their efforts on their campuses and in their communities.

9. Clearly define the message and market the initiative.

As noted, campus based efforts are increasingly marketing the messages about their overall alcohol abuse prevention effort. This is helpful in changing the awareness of campus norms as well as correcting misperceptions on the campus. A clear focus with a well defined message and clearly articulated philosophies and perspectives will help increase buy-in and understanding by the range of constituencies involved with the campus program. Marketing the positive results obtained from the campus efforts can be helpful in further generating support and ultimately a positive assessment of the campus programs.

10. Solicit support from the top and bottom of the campus hierarchy.

The growing awareness of the shared responsibility for alcohol abuse prevention supports the understanding that all groups and organizations have a role to play in a comprehensive campus-based prevention effort. However, the need for support from the leadership at the top of the institution is critical; this includes the chancellor, the board of trustees, the president, and chief administrative officers. Each of these key leadership individuals and groups significantly shapes the direction and scope of the campus efforts. Commitment from the top is essential to shape, direct, and help sustain campus alcohol abuse prevention; without it, efforts are viewed

as relatively insignificant and may even be seen as token. Further, support is essential from other aspects of the campus hierarchy, whether it is law enforcement personnel, student health center nurses, student organization members, or other students on campus. Garnering support from a range of constituencies is critical. Again, with the “ganglion” analogy, it is important for institutionalization of the campus-based effort that a wide range of personnel and individuals are involved

It is our belief that the implementation of these recommendations will yield better results for the campus community. We believe that careful and thoughtful integration and incorporation of these recommendations will help campus professionals who are charged with alcohol abuse prevention, as well as others on the campus, to “work smarter, not harder.” Though the task ahead is significant, we have identified outstanding programs and a range of resources that we believe will help for campus, community, state and national personnel in their efforts to address alcohol-related problems. We hope that campus professionals will network with those who developed these individual programs to create programs for their campuses.

The family of resources – this Sourcebook, the Task Force Planner and Guide, and the Action Planner – all help to promote a sustained effort. It is our belief that these resources, particularly when grounded within the other resources on the campus, will be helpful in promoting sustained initiatives for the campus. Clear foundations, an organized plan, an eye toward institutionalization, and a use of personnel and resources are critical.

As we stated at the conclusion of our first Sourcebook and feel all the more strongly today, it is our belief that change is possible and a positive future can be reached:

“The goal of making our campuses healthier and safer living and learning environments is attainable; sharing our strategies and resources will enable us to more quickly maximize our students’ potential. We are confident that vision, patience, and perseverance will help us to minimize alcohol abuse on campuses.”

