

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies seeks to identify campus-based approaches for preventing and addressing alcohol-related problems among the college student population. Initiated in 1995, this project has undertaken a range of initiatives to help address increasing apprehension and concern about college student drinking. College presidents, in a Carnegie report, cited student alcohol abuse as one of their top three areas of concern (Carnegie Report, 1990).

This introduction presents a brief overview of the conceptual underpinnings of this broad-based project. This section of the Sourcebook includes comments about the nature and scope of college student drinking, historical approaches to the problem and the goals of the *Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies* project. Further, the introduction includes the methodology undertaken which has resulted in this Sourcebook, as well as related resources and perspectives.

Nature and Scope of College Student Drinking

Alcohol use by college students has been an issue of special concern in the United States for many years. Although not sanctioned by college administrators, hard partying, drinking games, beer busts, and chugalugging are common behaviors on many campuses. Many young people who enter college already possess patterns of alcohol use, reasons for use, and well-developed attitudes toward drinking and intoxication (Milgram, 1990).

The fact is that the vast majority of students in American colleges and universities consume alcohol on a regular basis. Alcohol use within the previous year is reported by 84% of students, within the previous month (70%) and daily consumption is acknowledged by 4.5% of student respondents (Johnston et al, 2000).

Perhaps more disturbing than these overall rates is the data on the frequency of intense or heavy drinking. Consumption of five or more drinks in a row in the previous two weeks is reported by approximately 40% of students, a fairly consistent rate since the beginning of data collection by the University of Michigan in 1980 (Johnston et al, 2000). Comparable data comes from another review (Wechsler et al, 1994) that found 44% of students reporting "heavy" drinking

within the previous two weeks (defined as five or more drinks in a row by males, four or more by females). Further, the Core Survey shows this heavy drinking rate by 46.8% of students (Pressley and Meilman, 1999). Clearly, the general comparability of these three national studies, through the use of different methodologies, points towards similar findings of this student pattern of heavy alcohol use. Other subpopulations have been highlighted through the professional literature with higher rates of use and related concerns; often cited are first-year students, fraternity and sorority members, and student athletes.

Problems related to alcohol range from personal consequences cited by students, such as driving a car while under the influence (31%), been hurt or injured (15%), or been in trouble with police or other authorities (14%); each of these had occurred in the previous year (Pressley and Meilman, 1999). College administrators report alcohol's direct involvement in residence hall damage (67%), violent behavior (65%), and student attrition (30%) (Anderson and Gadaletto, 2000).

Data from multiple sources demonstrates alcohol's involvement with academics, an issue important to administrators due to the centrality of academics to the institutional mission. Heavier drinking is associated with lower grades (Pressley et al, 1996), performing poorly on a test or project (Pressley and Meilman, 1999), and decreased academic performance (Anderson and Gadaletto, 2000).

The concern held by college leaders regarding college student drinking is focused on negative consequences for individuals (such as the health, safety and academic concerns cited), as well as the viability of the institution; that is, campus leaders are faced with interests and concerns held by multiple constituencies, issues of legal responsibility and institutional liability, a long-term perspective of the institution and the institution's role. Within this context, college and university leaders have attempted to reduce alcohol-related problems on their campuses using a wide range of strategies. Documentation of the nature of policies, procedures, data collection, prevention, education, support services, and related initiatives illustrates the changing nature, scope and breadth of campus efforts (Anderson and Gadaletto, 2000).

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This longitudinal research demonstrates increases and decreases in policies, programs and services over the past two decades. While many people look for ways of addressing campus alcohol abuse issues, the prevailing attempt by campus leaders and policymakers remains one of trying to accomplish this in the simplest way possible with the lowest level of expenditure. Most campuses still seek low-cost solutions since the average annual allocation for alcohol abuse prevention on four-year campuses remains under \$14,000 (Anderson and Gadaletto, 2000).

It is within this background and historical setting that the initial effort to provide stimulation and assistance to colleges and universities, as well as state and national leaders, was initiated. In 1995, The Century Council provided a grant to develop resources for colleges and universities in their efforts to orchestrate comprehensive, needs-based alcohol abuse prevention initiatives. Under the leadership of the project co-directors and its independent advisory panel of experts, the design for the Sourcebook was established.

The establishment of a campus-based comprehensive program was deemed to be essential to address alcohol abuse and related problems on the college campus. The mission (or ultimate impact) for the *Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies* project focused on the promotion of behavioral health in the college student population by reducing health threats related to alcohol abuse. The outcome sought and project goal was to increase effective options to better accomplish alcohol abuse prevention and hopefully to replicate promising practices. The immediate project objective was to define, assimilate, and disseminate information on the most helpful and current efforts to reduce alcohol abuse on the college campus. With this framework, the project co-directors and advisory panel determined, based on their reading of the professional literature and their detailed understanding of college initiatives, the overall framework of a comprehensive campus-based effort. This framework incorporated ten elements believed to be central to campus-based alcohol abuse prevention initiatives:

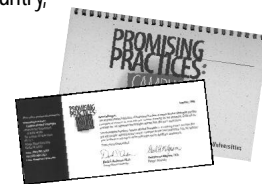
1. Awareness and Information – media campaigns, public information, large-scale events.
2. Environmental and Targeted Approaches – focus on the campus atmosphere, emphasis on specific audiences including subpopulations or high-risk groups.
3. Curriculum – courses, modules and syllabi, lectures, lesson plans.

4. Peer-based Initiatives – student-led initiatives, peer education, peer advising.
5. Training – training efforts for faculty, staff, students, campus leaders, and others.
6. Support and Intervention Services – alcohol risk screening, counseling and referral mechanisms interventions with high-risk drinkers, support groups.
7. Staffing and Resources – qualified professional and internship personnel, relevant library resources.
8. Policies and Implementation – policy review, policy development, appropriate procedures, policy dissemination.
9. Enforcement – police role delineation, discipline process, campus judicial system.
10. Assessment and Evaluation – needs assessments, development of appropriate measurement tools, quantitative and qualitative approaches to program effectiveness.

The incorporation of these ten elements in an orchestrated and organized manner, consistent with the unique needs of an institution, comprise a comprehensive campus-based program. The advisory panel and co-directors established criteria to be used for the review process. These include:

1. Replicability – how easily done by others.
2. Cost Effectiveness – making the most of limited funding.
3. Specific Focus – appropriate targeting of groups/populations.
4. Student Involvement – in planning, participation, and determination of acceptability.
5. Context – background, rationale, appropriateness for campus environment
6. Clarity and Appropriateness of Desired Outcomes – clarity of emphasis or focus; articulation of success criteria.
7. Evidence of Program Success – achievements, consequences, reports, documentation.

To identify the “pockets of excellence” from around the country, an extensive solicitation was undertaken in 1995-96. The solicitation process included direct personalized mailings to key leadership personnel at all 2-year and 4-year institutions in the United States, including the institution's president, chief student affairs officer, chief of police, director of health services, alcohol/drug



prevention coordinator, and dean of students. In addition, press announcements were distributed to state and federal organizations and agencies that deal with higher education or alcohol abuse prevention issues. Through an extensive multi-staged and independent review process over 100 approaches were selected for inclusion in the resulting publication, the Sourcebook.

Based on the overwhelming success of the process and the positive reception given the Sourcebook, a second national solicitation (1997-98) was implemented. This was accomplished using the same ten categories and criteria developed for 1995-1996 solicitation. In addition, the solicitation requested examples of comprehensive campus-based efforts which demonstrated the orchestration and connectedness of the overall campus effort. Using the same solicitation process, over 400 applications were received and again reviewed; nearly 150 were selected for inclusion with either full or brief abstracts.

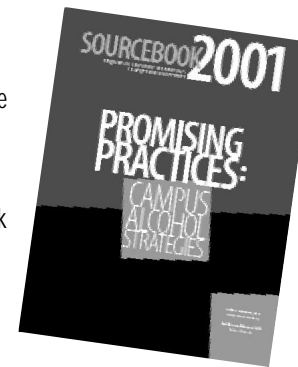
In 1999, the advisory panel and co-directors determined that a third national solicitation was again timely and appropriate. However, based on their professional assessment that significant changes in each of the ten initially defined areas had probably not occurred, new categories for solicitation were identified. Thus, this solicitation encompassed six areas: Community, Task Force, Targeted Audiences, Technology, Value Conflict Resolution, and Stakeholders.

Using the same extensive personalized mailing to campus leaders and state and national officials, the solicitation focused on areas where progress had been observed or where progress was anticipated. This solicitation process, too, resulted in over 400 applications with over 100 records selected for inclusion in the Sourcebook.

These three national solicitation processes identified a tremendous number of resources and insights about the state of the art of college-based strategies to address alcohol-related problems on the college campus. While greater attention is given to this in the findings and recommendations section of this resource, suffice it to say at this point that the project co-directors and advisory panel are quite impressed with the diversity of approaches. This is not to suggest that these professionals are fully satisfied with the current state of the art. The intent throughout this process has been to provide resource assistance and motivation, as well as inspiration, to help campuses move forward in their individual and collaborative efforts to address alcohol-related problems.

2001 Sourcebook

This 2001 Sourcebook combines all of the abstracts gathered through the three national solicitation processes. Based on how campuses have used the Sourcebook in the past and report their desires for the future, the preparation and organization of this document is to provide a single resource in one volume, representing the range and diversity of strategies, each of which is appropriate for consideration for a campus-based effort.



Following the Project Overview, the abstracts from the most recent solicitation are incorporated and grouped according to the six major thematic areas within which programs and strategies were solicited. This section is followed by the abstracts from the previous two solicitations within each of the eleven topic areas (beginning with Comprehensive and ending with Assessment and Evaluation). Within each area, abstracts are organized alphabetically by program title. The abstracts included are as previously published. While contact information for individual campuses may have changed, the identity of the person(s) who initially submitted the program which was approved for inclusion in the Sourcebook is cited, along with the publication date. To assist campuses in keeping up to date with the revisions to campus programs, as well as networking with campus personnel, the *Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies* project, maintains revisions and current contact information on its Web site (www.promprac.gmu.edu).

These abstracts are then followed by the Project Findings and Recommendations emerging from the years of the *Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies* initiative.

How to Use the Sourcebook

The value of the Sourcebook, both in its written and electronic form, is that it can be used for review, for reflection, for revision, and for rejuvenation. Campus leadership personnel committed to tackling alcohol misuse on their campus may review their campus's efforts by determining the extent to which each of the ten components of

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a comprehensive campus-wide initiative is being addressed. Since a range of strategies is included in each of these ten component areas, campus personnel are able to examine the implementation of their efforts in each of the areas from multiple perspectives. For example, in the Staffing and Resources area, questions might be raised regarding campus use of space, services, personnel allocations, and funding.

Another approach is to use the strategies in a component as an “idea bank” for individuals or groups interested in pursuing a specific direction. They may look at the variety of strategies in that segment and determine ways in which some of them might be implemented on their campus. A third approach is to identify creative ways of blending strategies currently found in different areas (e.g., a curriculum-based approach might benefit from targeting a different population through the use of awareness and peer-based strategies, thereby blending approaches from several areas).

Through dissemination and diffusion efforts, campuses can keep various individuals and groups informed of the ways in which they might implement specific strategies on their campus. Sections of the Sourcebook can be “cut and pasted,” either electronically or in written form, and distributed to campus groups and organizations.

Finally, the Sourcebook can be used as an institutional “self-audit.” The ten findings and recommendations serve as a standard against which an institution can assess itself. An interesting technique is to ask various groups what their perception is of the extent to which each of the findings and recommendations either already exist on the campus or have the potential to be addressed. Such groups might include faculty, staff, administrators, students, alumni, parents, and community members. In a similar way, within an existing group such as a fraternity/sorority or athletic team, the perception of new members might be distinguished from those who have been involved for several years, as well as those in leadership positions.

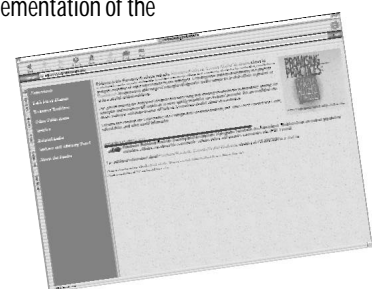
Related Resources

In addition to the range of strategies identified through the three national solicitation processes which resulted in this Sourcebook, the project co-directors and the advisory panel have undertaken two other major initiatives to provide resource assistance and motivation for campus leadership personnel. Each of these is designed to help provide a framework and concrete tools for implementation and adaptation by individual campuses.

The Task Force Planner and accompanying Task Force Planner Guide were designed to help campuses more fully understand the “shared responsibility” necessary for implementing a comprehensive campus-based program. This shared responsibility demonstrates that a range of personnel must be engaged in a wide variety of different processes and approaches for any meaningful results to be achieved. That is, while there may be a designated coordinator such as is found on approximately 70 percent of college campuses, it is unrealistic to expect this single individual to implement and orchestrate all campus-based efforts. The importance of institutionalization within an overall campus-wide framework was fundamental to the development of this Task Force Planner. Also inherent in the development of this resource is the growing emphasis upon task forces to help organize and implement campus-wide efforts.

The framework of the Task Force Planner is an 8 x 10 grid for which specific strategies are identified for each of ten groups. Using the foundation of the elements of the program and strategic approaches identified in the Sourcebook, the project co-directors and advisory panel developed a grid with both programs and services (on one axis) and groups and organizations (on the other axis). The resulting 8 x 10 grid provided an opportunity for the project leaders to identify specific strategies appropriate for each of the ten specified clusters of groups or organizations. Resulting from this is a large overview which includes 311 distinct strategies for active consideration by campuses. While it is certainly not realistic for a campus to implement all of the strategies, what is realistic is to extend the thinking about “who can do what” in the implementation of the campus-based effort.

This Task Force Planner, while available on the project's Web site, is also prepared in a large 2' x 3' poster. Accompanied by the Task Force Planner Guide in booklet form, this guide includes the same content elements as is found in the Task Force Planner; however, it also includes examples, from the project's Sourcebook, which illustrate the strategies identified. These strategies are included where they had been implemented and previously identified. On the project's Web site, these strategies are linked to the abstract in the Sourcebook and, where feasible, directly to the campus project's Web site.



The Task Force Planner and Guide illustrate the broad scope of a comprehensive campus-based effort. While somewhat overwhelming and daunting at first glance, this resource provides an overview for campuses as they consider ways of implementing a thoughtful and truly comprehensive alcohol abuse prevention initiative.

To assist in this planning process, project personnel undertook the development of an Action Planner. This resource provides specific steps for implementing the campus-based alcohol abuse prevention program. Eight distinct steps are identified in this resource which can be helpful in the planning and implementation processes for campus leadership personnel.

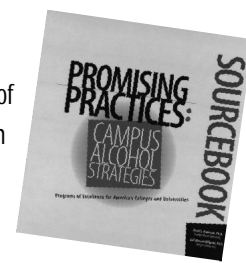


Beginning with the Task Force, the campus planners establish guiding principles and set the overall goals and vision for the campus effort. Once the goals are set, the campus needs are clarified and resources are assessed. The Task Force then prioritizes actions and effectively communicates the messages. The effective implementation and coordination of these efforts provides the foundation necessary to institutionalize the overall alcohol abuse prevention program.

These resources complement those available through the wide variety of other national, state and local initiatives designed to help colleges and universities in their campus-based efforts. Noteworthy among these national initiatives are those undertaken by the U.S. Department of Education (grants programs and Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Prevention), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (grants programs, training and print materials through the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information), the U.S. Department of Justice (underage drinking initiative), the U.S. Department of Transportation (resource services and grants) and a range of professional associations, such as the American Council on Education, the American College Personnel Association, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the North-American Interfraternity Conference, and the American College Health Association. College and university leaders will benefit from many of these resources which are directly related to college alcohol abuse, as well as other resources which are less directly related to college alcohol issues but which have some direct relevance for them.

The project co-directors and the advisory panel believe that it is through the effective incorporation and utilization of a range of processes and a range of resources that the most appropriate campus-based effort can be designed and implemented. Again, there is no single approach that is appropriate for all campuses – no “magic bullets,” no “cookie cutters,” no “quick answers.” Through use of the Action Planner, the Task Force Planner, and strategies found in the Sourcebook (as well as from other national, state and local resources), campus-based leaders can indeed “work smarter” in their efforts to address problems related to alcohol on the campus.

Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies includes ongoing strategies to help accomplish the original goals of focusing on the promotion of behavioral health in the college student population by reducing health threats related to alcohol misuse. At its onset, *Promising Practices:*



Campus Alcohol Strategies identified as a project goal increasing effective options for accomplishing alcohol abuse prevention by assisting campus staff to share practices deemed promising for their campuses. To help maintain this momentum, continuing efforts of *Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies* include focused resource packets, general publications, public presentations, and articles in numerous academic and related journals. The aim of these multiple and varied resources is to provide assistance and support to those committed to addressing alcohol misuse on college campuses. Though ready-made answers and “magic bullets” do not exist, the to providing leadership, inspiration and resources to colleagues throughout the country. Continuous and focused attention will be paid to the long-term problem of alcohol misuse on campus and the promising programs developed nationwide to address it.

The project co-directors and the advisory panel members firmly believe that sustained and heartfelt action is necessary to reduce risks related to alcohol misuse on campus. The relevant information gathered through the 1995-96, the 1997-98, and the 1999-2000 solicitation processes and incorporated in this Sourcebook provide helpful insights for all those committed to preventing alcohol misuse. Active engagement of key personnel, and use of a range of resources, is essential to redirect our campuses toward a healthier and safer future.

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