



What's the Problem With Alcohol and Other Drugs at College?

■ **What do you really want from a college experience?**

How will drinking and other drug use on campus affect your ability to reach your goals?

A 2006 study¹ of college freshmen found that the features students considered most important in choosing a college were its reputation and the job opportunities its graduates received. So, among other considerations, students may want to consider how a reputation for being a “party school” might be viewed by future employers.

In the same study, the students also reported believing that the educational experiences available on U.S. campuses today are among the best in the world.

Students' college experiences may, however, be affected by the choices they and their peers make about the use of alcohol and other drugs. Research has shown that drug use impairs the brain's ability to absorb and process information, and that students who drink heavily earn lower grades.²

Students also report the negative effects that other people's drinking and use of other drugs have on their lives, including having to deal with aggressive behavior, property damage, and even the annoyance of having to babysit intoxicated roommates.

College is not all work—students look forward to the fun and lively social atmosphere that a vibrant, diverse campus brings. But for many students alcohol and other drugs aren't part of that social atmosphere; in fact, the majority of college students don't engage in binge or heavy drinking and some don't drink at all.³

■ **What are colleges doing to help?**

Many campuses make special efforts to ensure that college will be the exciting, enriching experience their students expect and deserve. More and more campuses follow the experts' advice for creating comprehensive programs and policies to prevent the high-risk alcohol and other drug use that could detract from the students' experiences. For instance, many campuses:

- ◆ Ensure that the social scene doesn't revolve around drinking and that, if students decide not to drink, there are many alcohol-free things to do and places to go when looking for alternatives;
- ◆ Restrict alcohol advertising and promotions on campus, to make sure that a false sense of “everybody does it” doesn't dominate the campus atmosphere;
- ◆ Create and follow fair, clear policies that support students who abstain or drink legally and moderately, and discourage high-risk alcohol and other drug use; and
- ◆ Provide support and resources for those students who want to address and control their own drinking and other drug use.

■ **What is the U.S. Department of Education doing to help?**

Knowing what risks college students face in an atmosphere of drinking and other drug use, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools seeks out and recognizes campuses that take bold steps to improve the environment in which their students live and learn. One way the Department has encouraged effective programs is through its **Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Models on College Campuses**, restructured in 2008 as the **Models of Exemplary, Effective, and Promising Alcohol or Other Drug Abuse Prevention Programs on College Campuses**.

Under this program, campuses that have effective, comprehensive prevention programs are being recognized by the Department and awarded grants to help them maintain, improve, and further evaluate their programs. These grants also help the awardees to disseminate information about their programs to other colleges and universities that might follow suit.

The U.S. Department of Education has recognized a broad range of programs on 38 campuses through this grant competition (34 programs in the years 1999–2007; 10 in 2008–09).

On the reverse of this page are listed the institutions recognized by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools with grant awards as discussed above. However, in making these awards the U.S. Department of Education does not intend to imply that alcohol and other drug use or related problems at these institutions are any more or less pervasive than at other campuses.

For more information about model programs, visit the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools' Web site at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/dvpcollege/index.html>.

¹J. H. Pryor et al., *The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2006* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, 2006).

²J. S. Fowler et al., “Imaging the Addicted Human Brain,” *Science & Practice Perspectives* 3(2) (2007): 4–16; J. Williams, L. M. Powell, and H. Wechsler, “Does Alcohol Consumption Reduce Human Capital Accumulation? Evidence from the College Alcohol Study,” *Applied Economics* 35(10) (2003): 1227–1239.

³Office of Applied Studies, *The National Survey on Drug Use and Health Report: Underage Alcohol Use among Full-Time College Students* (Rockville, Md.: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2006).

Award-winning Campus Programs

The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools funded 10 campus programs in 2009 and 2008 under the **Models of Exemplary, Effective, and Promising Alcohol or Other Drug Abuse Prevention Programs on College Campuses** grant program. Awards were for three kinds of programs:

Exemplary Programs

“ ‘Exemplary program’ means a program that has a strong theoretical base and demonstrated effectiveness in reducing alcohol or other drug abuse among college students or reducing problems resulting from alcohol or other drug use among college students, using a research design of the highest quality.”*

Effective Programs

“ ‘Effective program’ means a program that has a strong theoretical base and has been evaluated using either an experimental or quasi-experimental research design, with the evaluation results suggesting effectiveness in reducing alcohol or other drug abuse among college students, reducing problems resulting from alcohol or other drug use among college students, reducing risk factors, enhancing protective factors, or resulting in some combination of those impacts.”*

Promising Programs

“ ‘Promising program’ means a program that has a strong theoretical base and for which evidence has been obtained, using limited research methods, that the program may reduce alcohol or other drug abuse among college students, reduce problems resulting from alcohol or other drug use among college students, reduce risk factors, enhance protective factors, or result in some combination of those impacts.”*

*Reprinted from *Federal Register* 73, no. 63 (Apr. 1, 2008): 17872. Available at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-6691.pdf>.

2009 Grant Awardees

University at Albany

State University of New York (SUNY)

Project Director: Dolores Cimini
Effective Program

University of California, Santa Barbara

Project Director: Merith Cosden
Co-Principal Investigator: Ian Kaminsky
Effective Program

University of Florida

Project Director: Virginia Dodd
Promising Program

University of North Carolina Wilmington

Project Director: Rebecca Caldwell
Promising Program

University of West Florida

Project Director: Debra Vinci
Promising Program



2008 Grant Awardees

University of Houston

Promising Program

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Exemplary Program

University of Pennsylvania

Exemplary Program

University of Wyoming

Promising Program

Virginia Commonwealth University

Promising Program

1999–2007 Grant Awardees

(Congress did not fund the program in 2002 or 2003.)

2007 Michigan State University

2006 George Mason University
Montclair State University
University at Albany, SUNY
University of Missouri-Columbia

2005 Gonzaga University
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Loyola Marymount University
The Ohio State University
The University of Arizona
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Virginia Commonwealth University

2004 Grand Valley State University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
The University of Chicago

2001 Auburn University
Boston College
Lehigh University
San Diego State University
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
State University of New York at New Paltz

2000 Rutgers University
Syracuse University
University at Albany, SUNY
University of Pennsylvania
Washington State University
Western Washington University

1999 Bowling Green State University
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
The Pennsylvania State University
The University of Arizona
University of Missouri-Columbia
University of Northern Colorado
Utah State University