

Confronting Violence Head-on

Nearly half a million U.S. college students become victims of crimes of violence every year (*Campus Violence White Paper*). This stark picture of the dark side of the U.S. college experience is confronting our institutions of higher education with the need for greater efforts to ensure the safety of their students.

Those attempting to measure the extent of campus violence and to take steps to reduce it face a significant obstacle: Surveys indicate that only 25 percent of campus crimes are being reported to campus or community authorities by their victims.

The cases of violence against students that come to public attention are no more than the tip of the iceberg.

Information on crimes of violence gathered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) also offers only a limited picture. While the Bureau's National Crime Victimization Survey reports crime rates involving 18- to 24-year-olds and classifies victims as students or nonstudents, the numbers are sketchy in terms of whether crimes occurred on or off a campus or were related in any way to student life. Despite its limitations, the *Campus Violence White Paper* published by the American College Health Association (ACHA) in 2005 used data from the BJS victimization study to estimate that college students are victims of 429,000 crimes of violence every year. The white paper urges colleges and universities to "conduct fresh analyses and create new paradigms for preventing and decreasing all campus violence."

Estimates from Ralph Hingson, Sc.D., professor at the Boston University School of Public Health and coinvestigator at the Center to Prevent Alcohol Problems Among Young People, suggest that the

ACHA report underestimates the number of crime victims by more than 170,000 annually.

Hingson and colleagues from the schools of Public Health at Boston University and Harvard University gathered information about drinking and its consequences among college students for the year 2001. Their analyses included data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, and the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, as well



Communication with students is key to violence prevention.

as studies of coroner reports on causes of death and census and college enrollment data for 18- to 24-year-olds.

According to Hingson, in 1998 and 2001, 600,000 college students were assaulted by other students who had been drinking. And that's only one piece of the violence picture, which also includes a range of incidents that may or may not be related to alcohol.

Sexual violence, which includes sexual harassment, stalking, and rape, ranks high among the offenses. More often than not, the victims know the offenders, and *date rape* is a term that speaks for itself. *The Sexual Victimization of College Women*, a 2001 report from the Justice Department's National Institute of Justice and BJS, says that 2.8 percent of the women in its survey had experienced either a completed rape (1.7 percent) or an attempted rape incident (1.1 percent). The victimization rate was 27.7 rapes per 1,000 female students. That means that a campus with 10,000 women could expect to see 270 sexual assaults in one academic year. Not surprising, about one half of sexual assaults on campus are related to use of alcohol, other drugs or both, among other factors.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Confronting Violence Head-on

Stalking, defined in *Stalking in America: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey* (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998) as the “willful, malicious, and repeated following and harassing of another person,” appears to be a greater problem among female college students than it is in the general population. And in this cell phone era, stalking includes a growing incidence of stalking by telephone. Stalking can result in emotional or psychological harm and may be a prelude to sexual assault.

Hate crimes also occur on campus. As defined by federal law, these acts of assault, physical threats, or property damage may be motivated by the victim’s race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, or disability. Some offenses of this type may not be hate crimes in the legal sense but consist of bias-motivated comments and harassment. Statistics gathered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the last decade indicate that more than half of on-campus hate crimes are motivated by race, and they range from inflammatory graffiti and telephone calls to bombing threats and actual bombings.

Hazing activities, an emerging target of crackdowns on many campuses in recent years, can run the gamut of criminal acts—forced consumption of alcohol or noxious substances, sexual violation and assault, and bodily attacks such as paddling, beating, burning, or branding. Hazing incidents that have led to serious injury or death of students have made these practices a particular target of the national offices of fraternities and sororities.

In a class by itself is the so-called celebratory violence that may erupt without warning on or near a campus, usually after athletic events and often growing out of parties conspicuous for the amount of alcohol present. What distinguishes celebratory violence from other violent behaviors is that the motive is more likely to be for recreation rather than for attacks against individuals.

Finally, the range of violence includes murder and suicide, along with those acts defined as “aggravated assault,” usually with a weapon,

leaving victims with serious injury. The U.S. Department of Education’s *Summary Campus Crime and Security Statistics—Criminal Offenses* for 2003 reported 3,050 assaults of this type on campuses, along with 1,060 cases of arson. One area that has attracted little formal study is attacks by students on faculty and staff.

Information about the prevalence of crimes on particular campuses or among higher education institutions as a whole is sketchy at best. One reason may lie in student attitudes like those uncovered in a study published in 1997 in the journal *Crime & Delinquency*. This study of 3,400 students randomly selected from 12 colleges and universities concluded that only 22 percent of rapes, 18 percent of sexual assaults, 50 percent of aggravated assaults, and 25 percent of burglaries were being reported to any authority.

“Every campus has its own problems and issues. People need to work on thoughtful, targeted, systemic, integrated programs and policies.”

Why such a low report rate? Many students in the survey said they did not think the crime was serious enough to justify reporting. Others said they considered it a “private” matter. Some said they didn’t know that what happened to them constituted a crime. Findings like these feed the conclusion that the annual statistics on campus crime, which colleges and universities have been required by law to publish since 1998, are not a reliable barometer of what is actually happening on our campuses because they capture only those incidents that are formally reported through campus judicial systems.

The ACHA white paper suggests that victims of violence also may be victims of a campus environment that discourages them from reporting the crime: “The individual student may be too ashamed to report interpersonal violence or

to get help for her/his victimization. Students who are victimized can feel overwhelmed and need a great deal of support. If they do not sense that this support is there, they will be less likely to report and seek help.”

What Can Be Done?

Campus crime poses a challenge to those responsible for protecting the health and safety of students and for seeking effective prevention strategies in an area that has been neglected in prevention research.

“However, because of the support of the Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools in identifying best practices and model programs on campuses across the country, we are beginning to understand more about what works,” said Linda Langford, Sc.D., of the Department’s Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention. For example, the Department funded the development of one of the most recent publications on establishing campus violence prevention strategies, *Preventing Violence and Promoting Safety in Higher Education Settings: Overview of a Comprehensive Approach*.

“The best thing we can do is follow general principles of prevention,” Langford said. “Do an analysis of local problems and target solutions to those problems.” She said it is fruitless to look for a “generic” set of programs and policies that will work to reduce campus crime at every institution. “Every campus has its own problems and issues. People need to work on thoughtful, targeted, systemic, integrated programs and policies.”

An early step is to establish what the most serious local problems are and the factors that contribute to them, said Langford. “One campus may experience problems with fights outside bars in the local community, whereas another may be faced with high rates of sexual assault in on-campus fraternity houses. Such dissimilar problems require very different sets of intervention strategies.” ■

Taking Hazing Seriously

With 65 fraternities and sororities under its wing, Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., boasts one of the largest Greek-letter systems in the country. Pledging and “rushing” are a regular part of life at the institution.

Thus, it seems only fitting that the institution would become the first in the nation to launch a Web site specifically on the prevention of hazing.

“A survey showed that one in three of our students had participated in an activity that would be viewed as hazing,” said Tim Marchell, Ph.D., Cornell’s director of alcohol policy initiatives. “Interestingly, only a few of those students considered those activities to be hazing.”

Now Cornell is leading the way by not only educating its students about what hazing is but also by enforcing its anti-hazing policy, providing students with a means to report hazing anonymously, and publicizing hazing incidents and the groups involved in those incidents. It does this primarily through its hazing.cornell.edu Web site.

“Hazing is not only a violation of campus conduct, it is a public health issue,” said Marchell, who was behind the creation of the Cornell hazing Web site. “It needs to be dealt with on multiple levels.”

Marchell said that Cornell would like to stop the hazing cycle and break the code of silence. The institution’s hazing Web site was developed with help from administrators, faculty, students, and members of the Greek-letter community. It speaks directly to first-year students, noting that they could become the victims of hazing, not only through participation in fraternities, sororities, or athletics groups but also through other organizations. Hazing, it explains, “typically involves physical risks or

mental distress through, for example, humiliating, intimidating, or demeaning treatment.”

To help students understand better what hazing is, the Web site lists incidents that actually involved Cornell students, ranging from mild hazing to dangerous hazing. Among those incidents are the following:

- Members required new members to eat only peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for one week.
- Members required new members to perform extensive calisthenics, at times to the point of collapse.
- On a winter night, members pressured new members to consume large quantities of alcohol and then drove them to a lake.

Members threw sticks into the freezing water and told the intoxicated new members that they had to dive in and retrieve the sticks. In one case, a new member who had earlier taken a prescription medication for an injury had a life-threatening reaction after entering the water and required transport to an emergency room.

Although Cornell has not had any recent hazing incidents that were fatal or were serious enough to receive widespread publicity, the Web site notes that the second documented hazing death on a U.S. campus was at Cornell in 1873. Kappa Alpha Sigma pledge Mortimer N. Leggett fell into a creek gorge and died while trying to find his way home after being taken out into the woods at night.

Many other institutions of higher education and campus leaders are watching Cornell as they develop their own hazing prevention strategies. While the practice of hazing has gradually become recognized as a problem on college campuses, campuses are struggling to respond to a practice that is so ingrained in the college experience.

(Continued on page 4)

Message From the Center Director



Center Director
Virginia Mackay-Smith

The higher education field is talking about campus violence. The discussion ranges from individual violence—such as stalking, sexual assault, other assault, vandalism, and the most cowardly of violent behaviors, hate crimes—to group violence—such as hazing and celebratory rioting. And while our recognition of campus violence grows, so too does our realization of how seriously these incidents are underreported, perhaps by as much as 75 percent.

Naturally, we wonder why. Partly, students don’t see the incidents as violence that can be addressed, and partly, they don’t see their campuses as sources of support or amelioration.

This *Catalyst* issue explores the range of violence on our campuses, some of the reasons for it, and some effective approaches to prevent it. The good news is that while attention to campus violence grows, so does the commitment of the campus leaders to confront it. They depend on the long-standing conviction and, increasingly, documentation that changing the environment is effective prevention—particularly if that environment, however unintentionally, contributes to the problem. Campus leadership is crucial at this stage, requiring commitment, certainly, but courage as well. In one of this issue’s articles, Ohio State’s Karen Holbrook says we need to take the “right but not necessarily popular” steps to change campus culture. In another article, Cornell’s Tim Marchell says that “our job . . . is to teach students skills that they can bring out into the world.” How better to do this than by teaching through example, as we take the hard steps to change our own campus environments so that they are safer for all. ■

(Continued from page 3)

Taking Hazing Seriously

Susan Lipkins, Ph.D., a psychologist from Long Island, N.Y., has been analyzing hazing from the psychological perspective and shares her work on the Web site www.insidehazing.com.

Part of the difficulty in dealing with hazing is that it is so steeped in secrecy, Lipkins said. The practice has been going on for centuries, and the code of conduct has always been the code of silence.

"You do not tell," Lipkins said. "And that has been made worse by the fact that even if you want to tell, anonymous reporting has not been available."

Lipkins said that hazing is a process, and that one individual often plays three different roles in that process at different times. One generally starts as a victim, a junior member of a group who is hazed as a rite of initiation. The victim then goes on to become a bystander,

watching others being hazed. Finally, the bystander becomes a perpetrator, hazing others.

Lipkins said that although hazing has been a phenomenon for a very long time, it is receiving more attention now, and rightfully so, because it has become more intense and more dangerous.

"It is probably a reflection of our culture, which has become more aggressive and more sexualized," she said. When an individual is the victim of hazing, "[t]he hostility is internalized. What we see is people who have been victims wanting to take things further when they become perpetrators."

Research Needed

As many in the alcohol and other drug abuse prevention field know, campuses need research-based prevention strategies, and, to date,

hazing has not been the subject of extensive study. Scientific findings about the nature, extent, and prevention of hazing are few and far between. That may soon change, however. In March 2003, the North American Interfraternal Foundation (NIF) convened a meeting at the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators annual conference to discuss broad-based support for a national research initiative to examine hazing in postsecondary education.

The NIF granted start-up funding for the project to StopHazing.org and further support has been provided by a number of Greek-letter and athletics organizations (for more information on the initiative visit www.nif-inc.net/about/hazing). The goals of the study are to investigate the prevalence and nature of hazing behaviors among students in U.S. colleges and universities

(Continued on page 5)



Myth: Hazing activities, like heavy drinking, bring the organization membership closer together.

Fact: Hazing is a primitive show of power that does more to instill resentment than to bring people together. Forcing or urging someone to drink as a condition of group membership or acceptance can lead to tragic consequences: hospitalization, sexual and other violence, and even death.

• Want information? Contact University Health Service at 734.763.1320 or www.uhs.umich.edu.

• Counseling and Psychological Services at 734.764.8312 or www.umich.edu/~caps.



(Continued from page 4)

Taking Hazing Seriously

and to offer research-based strategies for responding to and preventing the problem.

Many feel that one way to prevent hazing is to have laws against it, and most states now have those laws. Karen Savoy, who started the group Mothers Against School Hazing after her son was injured in a hazing incident, is taking things a step further by appealing for national legislation against the practice. Her efforts are discussed on the Web site www.mashinc.org.

The Cornell Web site explains that hazing may cause a student to feel like a member of the elite or to have a greater sense of belonging to a group, but that those two feelings can be generated in other, more positive ways. Leadership training and team-building exercises are two possibilities.

“Even when students desire not to haze they feel compelled to do it because they don’t see alternative means to creating group cohesion,” Marchell said. “Sure, hurricanes can bring

people together, but do we really need a hurricane to do that? Many groups create strong cohesion without hazing.”

Hazing is often “the easy thing to do,” Marchell said. “Our job at the university is to teach students skills that they can bring out into the world. We don’t want them to bring hazing out into the world. We’d prefer that they learn team building.”

As part of the Cornell Web site’s multi-pronged approach to hazing, campus groups that have violated the school’s hazing policy will be listed on the site’s Hazing Blotter. Besides causing a group’s embarrassment, such a listing could threaten a group’s survival.

“Being on the list could have a negative effect on a group’s ability to recruit new members,” Marchell said. “Membership is vital to these organizations.”

Several campuses have asked for Cornell’s permission to replicate its Web site.

Hazing Web Sites

www.stophazing.org is a comprehensive Web site on hazing that was started about six years ago by former members of a University of New Hampshire group that helped pass an anti-hazing law in that state in 1993.

www.mashinc.org is the Web site of Mothers Against School Hazing (MASH). The purpose of MASH is to eliminate hazing, bullying, and/or any abusive acts to children.

www.hazing.hanknuwer.com is the Web site of Hank Nuwer, author of a number of hazing-related books. This site also is self-described as an “Unofficial Clearinghouse to Track Hazing Deaths and Incidents.” ■

Resource for Violence Prevention

Colleges and universities aren’t without resources to develop prevention strategies aimed at reducing violence. Lessons learned from community-based prevention research point to a set of best practices to guide the development of interventions that can make campus life more safe and secure.

That’s the underlying theme of the 2004 publication *Preventing Violence and Promoting Safety in Higher Education Settings: Overview of a Comprehensive Approach* by Linda Langford, Sc.D., an associate director of the U.S. Department of Education’s Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention.

The publication reviews the scope of campus violence problems, describes the wide array of factors that cause and contribute to violence, and outlines a comprehensive approach to reducing violence and promoting safety on campus. It also provides specific recommendations that administrators, students, faculty, staff, and community members can follow to improve their policies and strengthen their programs and services.

While studies have found that no single factor causes violence, Langford identifies influences that affect behavior in a campus community—individual factors, such as attitudes and beliefs about violence; interpersonal or group factors, such as norms regarding

appropriate behavior; institutional factors, such as campus policies that may contribute to high-risk settings and high levels of alcohol consumption; factors in the surrounding community that influence campus life; and broad public policies and societal influences.

Langford provides step-by-step advice for analyzing violence problems, creating a program plan, and developing partnerships, collaborations, and institutional support for implementing and evaluating prevention programs and policies.

The publication can be downloaded from the Higher Education Center’s Web site at www.higheredcenter.org/pubs/violence.html. ■

No Way to Celebrate

It can start with spectators swarming onto a playing field at the end of a game. It can grow out of tailgate parties in a parking lot. It can erupt from a drinking party in a frat house or as part of an on-campus event to celebrate spring. It can even be considered a time-honored tradition.

It's called "celebratory rioting," and no matter how it starts, the outcome is often the same. Students crowd local jails, perhaps grumbling about police brutality. Or they show up at hospital emergency rooms with injuries or dangerous levels of intoxication. Property damage may run into thousands of dollars. Police and fire departments are saddled with overtime payroll costs. Community residents say they're fed up with the drunkenness and rowdy behavior of students and their friends.

Faced with embarrassing demands for an explanation, many colleges and universities are now searching for effective ways to head off the kind of partying that often spins out of control.

Myles Brand, president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), has called celebratory rioting "the most pressing problem facing universities." The NCAA convened a Sportsmanship and Fan Behavior Summit in 2003 to assess the problem and identify prevention strategies. One finding was that there is no one-size-fits-all strategy. Colleges and universities need to base their approaches on the "historical, social, and economic contexts" of their own institutions and communities.

There is a scarcity of research about celebratory rioting. What is emerging, however, is some practical experience in figuring out what can lead to out-of-control partying and what seems to work to prevent it. At Cornell University, N.Y., for example, a series of policy and procedural reforms in recent years has taken the sting out of "Slope Day," an annual, spring end-of-school-year celebration that in the past led inevitably to property damage and injury of students.

The Ohio State University (OSU) and the city of Columbus, Ohio, have been among the leaders in efforts to develop preventive measures for

rioting. Karen Holbrook, Ph.D., president of OSU, received the 2004 Leadership Award from the Center for College Health and Safety's Presidents Leadership Group in recognition of her role in creating and energizing a campus and community task force in Columbus after a major riot in the wake of an OSU football



Police in riot gear respond to a celebratory riot.

victory in 2002. Since the task force went to work, there have been no major disturbances on and around the Columbus campus.

In accepting the award, Holbrook said it was necessary for her university and the community to take steps that were "right but not necessarily popular" in the effort to reduce the likelihood of student rioting. "It will take time to be confident that the culture of excessive drinking in conjunction with college athletics and activities really has changed," she said. "But we believe we have turned the corner."

Much of OSU's experience in dealing with rioting was summarized at the National Conference Addressing Issues Related to Celebratory Riots, held in November 2003 at OSU.

Studying celebratory rioting has led to some general conclusions. Riots usually develop late at night and in early-morning hours. Setting fires often occurs, along with overturning and torching of cars. Most participants in riots are white males in their early 20s, although onlookers often include some females. When

confronted after a riot, participants are unlikely to think they've done anything wrong or caused much harm.

Their parents may agree and blame the disorder on overreaction by police rather than student behavior. Cell phones are making it easier for students to inform each other where the "action" is, accelerating the formation of big crowds. Finally, and perhaps most obvious, high-volume alcohol consumption has a major role in setting the stage for celebratory rioting.

David Andrews, Ph.D., dean of the College of Human Ecology at OSU, said the OSU-Columbus task force looked at 15 institutions that had reported riots in recent years and compared them with 15 institutions with similar demographics that had not had any riots. Interviews with campus and community officials indicated that the place where students drink was an important factor in whether a party would turn into a riot.

"There was much more drinking in off-campus residences at the schools that have experienced riots, versus more drinking in local bars at schools that had not," Andrews said. "It seems that more of the disturbances had happened in residential areas close to campus characterized by relatively run-down housing, a dense student population, and a culture of high-volume alcohol consumption."

The OSU report noted that alcohol consumption contributes to celebratory riots but does not necessarily cause them. Preexisting psychological factors in young males, such as risk-taking and disrespect for authority, may have as much to do with rioting as alcohol use. Heavy drinking occurs at other times but does not lead to rioting.

The OSU task force compiled a series of recommendations that are being implemented in Columbus and have served elsewhere as a guide to campuses and communities trying to deal with the riot problem. Heading the list is better enforcement of underage drinking and open container laws, and emphasizing for students (and their parents) the consequences for illegal behavior.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

No Way to Celebrate

Andrews indicated that cultural change lies at the heart of an antiriot program. In the past, he said, OSU sent signals that normal laws and rules of civility would be suspended on football game days—that these would be “anything goes” days. For example, it was okay on those days to stack cases of beer in the middle of the street and “pull beers out from between your legs to drink.” It was understood that “things will be different today.” Now, OSU is sending the word that responsible behavior is expected on game days as well as on all other days. For example, OSU mails letters to parents spelling out the consequences of alcohol violations and riotous behavior.

Andrews told the conference that many students say they feel it is their responsibility to deal with the riot problem, but they don’t know how. “There is currently no mechanism in place for them to do that well,” he said. “We need to explore ways for students and administrators to get together with community members to address problems.”

While rioting crowds may look large on a television screen, the number of students actually participating may be relatively small—1 percent of the student body, or even less. Often nonstudents are a big part of the crowd. A Community Building Task Force at Northeastern University in Boston, studying postgame violence, made the observation that bystanders may actually contribute to a riot by not doing anything to indicate they disapprove of the behavior they’re watching.

There are indications that attempts by campus or city police to tone down high-spirited partying can be the trigger turning a party into a riot. The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD) Oversight Committee noted in a 2003 report that “the population of the university community is so disproportionately young that the UTPD may face special problems associated with the greater tendency of young adults to react adversely to authority.” ■

Violence Prevention and the Department of Education

Since 1994, the U.S. Department of Education has been providing financial assistance for violence prevention activities at institutions of higher education (IHEs), along with funding for alcohol and other drug abuse prevention efforts. But, according to William Modzeleski, associate assistant deputy secretary at the Department’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS), meaningful success in reducing violence on college campuses also will require colleges and universities to look at what they can do for themselves and to work with their surrounding communities, including local and state agencies.

“We see violence prevention as a collaboration between the Department and a lot of other organizations that are involved in higher education,” said Modzeleski. “OSDFS wants to help highlight the major problems on college campuses relating to alcohol abuse and violence and identify ways to help campuses solve those problems.”

The Department does this by identifying what’s working and getting that information out to campuses.

“Once IHEs have the information the Department provides, they can look at their own resources and other resources within the community available to solve such problems, rather than say ‘we can’t do anything because we don’t have any money,’” said Modzeleski. “While money is a part of the solution, it’s only a small part.”

Modzeleski said that the first step that campuses need to take in addressing violence is to recognize exactly what their problems are.

“If you don’t know what your problem is, then it doesn’t make any difference what type of program you implement—it will probably be the wrong one. My advice to administrators is to get a handle on the violence issues on their campuses,” said Modzeleski. “To do this, administrators need to talk to students, faculty, and staff, as well as the community. We know that violence does not stay on the campus—it

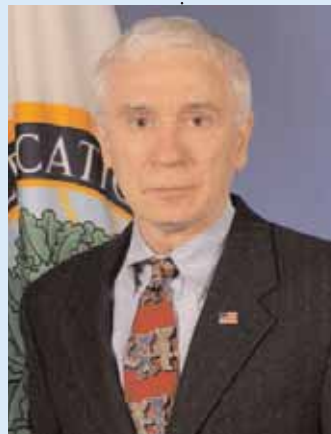
often spills over to the community. Once a campus makes an honest appraisal of its problems, it can begin to work on solutions.”

While the first place people look to when it comes to violence prevention is law enforcement, Modzeleski said that students have some important roles to play.

“When it comes to violence, students are victims, offenders, and bystanders. As bystanders,

they can get involved in campus crime watch or escort programs. There are a lot of things students can do to help make their campuses safer and more secure. As victims, they can work with law enforcement and college officials to help stop the victimization. When students are the offenders, we need to take a strong stand with law enforcement, campus security, and campus judicial procedures to make sure the proper sanctions are applied,” Modzeleski said. “No campus can be successful in its violence prevention program without the active help and participation of students.”

Editor’s note: Catalyst invites readers’ comments on this and other articles. Please e-mail comments to Catalyst@higheredcenter.org. ■



Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary
William Modzeleski

The Role of Alcohol and Other Drugs in Campus Violence Prevention

In recent years, a number of studies have been published that document a connection between alcohol and other drugs, and violence. This has prompted some discussion on campuses about whether alcohol and other drug abuse prevention and violence prevention work should be connected. Catalyst spoke about this issue with Linda Langford, Sc.D., associate director for violence prevention initiatives at the U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention.

Q: Alcohol is the most commonly used substance on campuses. What are some of the issues that are being discussed on campuses regarding the link between alcohol and violence?

A: The connections between alcohol and violence play out in a variety of complex ways. Alcohol involvement in a sexual assault where the victim had been drinking, for example, may result in questions about the victim's responsibility for the assault. Such questions arise much less often for victims of other types of assaults. And press accounts about sexual assault that focus on the victim's drinking reinforce the idea that the victim's behavior led to the assault. As a result, sexual assaults where both parties had been drinking are often more difficult to adjudicate or prosecute successfully, which can be frustrating for everyone involved.

In an effort to highlight the array of factors that contribute to assaults and other violent acts, some violence prevention advocates minimize the role that alcohol can play in violence. But others contend that alcohol is the primary factor when it comes to violence and that eliminating it on their campuses would stop the violence.

On the other hand, in hazing or riot prevention, alcohol is generally viewed as an important factor. So, depending on the topic and context, views about the links between alcohol and violence vary widely.

Q: Has there been much research on alcohol and violence?

A: Yes, there has been a lot of research, and a great deal of this research consistently finds a

relationship between alcohol and violence. The Harvard School of Public Health's College Alcohol Study found that heavier drinkers had far greater problems related to violence than students who drank less. By their own report, frequent heavy drinkers are several times more likely to argue with friends, get hurt or injured, damage property, and get into trouble with campus or local police.

In addition, environments that promote high levels of alcohol use also have greater levels of crime and violence. One study found that lower beer prices in a state were associated with higher rates of its college students getting into trouble with authorities, damaging property or pulling a fire alarm, getting into an argument or fight, taking advantage of another person sexually, or having been taken advantage of sexually ("The State Sets the Rate: The Relationship of College Binge Drinking to State Binge Drinking Rates and Selected State Alcohol Control Policies," Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, 2005).

Q: Is it just students who drink who are at greater risk for violence, or are other students on campus also affected?

A: In the Core Institute and Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study (CAS) surveys, students reported widespread problems related to others' alcohol consumption. These so-called secondary effects are far more common on campuses with large numbers of high-risk drinkers. The CAS surveys also found that on campuses with higher overall drinking levels, nondrinkers reported having property damaged; being pushed, hit, and assaulted; experiencing

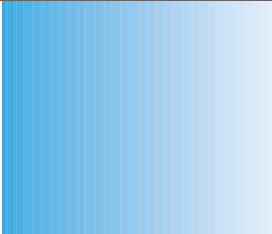
sexual advances; and experiencing sexual assault more than nondrinkers on campuses with lower numbers of high-risk drinkers.

Q: How strong is the connection between alcohol use and violence?

A: Research, such as that of the CAS, shows a strong association between alcohol use and campus violence. One estimate from a literature review published in the Journal of College Student Psychotherapy (Vol. 8, No. 1/2) is that 50 to 80 percent of violence on campus is alcohol-related. A recent literature review in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol (2002, supp.14) concluded that at least 50 percent of campus sexual assaults are associated with alcohol. The alcohol-violence link is not limited to campus settings. The 10th Special Report to the U.S. Congress on Alcohol and Health (June 2000) concluded that, in both animal and human studies, alcohol, more than any other drug, is linked with a high incidence of violence and aggression.

Q: Given that, why is there some disagreement about the alcohol-violence link?

A: The issue is not whether or not there is a link, but what the nature of the link is and what it means for prevention work. In my experience, people often interpret the research showing that alcohol and violence are associated to mean that alcohol *causes* violence—and in some cases to conclude that alcohol use is the only cause. But the research demonstrates clearly that violence is caused by a combination of factors, not any single factor.



Violence Goes to College Conference

by Sally Spencer-Thomas

From hate crimes to hazing, rape to rioting—most college violence occurs in the middle of the night among people who know each other, with alcohol involved. For these reasons, much of campus violence has flown under the radar of the public eye. With the enactment of the 1990 *Jeanne Clery Act*, campuses must report publicly all violent crimes; and violence prevention and intervention are becoming pressing issues.

On May 23–25, 2005, more than 150 law enforcement officers, prevention professionals, judicial affairs coordinators, counselors, students, and administrators spent two and a half days together at Regis University in Denver, Colo., to strategize

and share best practices in violence prevention on our campuses. Although these groups care deeply about these issues and are essential for responding to them, they are rarely in the same room together sharing views and collaborating. Very often they see the same violent act through divergent lenses, and this

discrepancy can exacerbate the problems. The Violence Goes to College conference provided an opportunity for them to hear each other and work together.

The theme of the 2005 Violence Goes to College Conference was From Denial, Beyond Enabling, Toward Empowerment, with specific emphasis on the complicating role substance abuse plays in campus violence. Speakers varied vastly in their approaches and

violence expertise. For example, John Nicoletti, Ph.D., a police psychologist and coauthor of *Violence Goes to College* (2001), spoke about assessing, de-escalating, and dealing with the aftermath of workplace violence. H. Wesley Perkins, Ph.D., professor of sociology at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, discussed social norms marketing and its role in violence prevention. Jackson Katz, cofounder of the multiracial, mixed-gender Mentors in Violence Prevention program, held the audience's attention with images from the media that promote alcohol abuse and male

violence. Stephen Wessler, executive director for the Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence, discussed the effect of hate crimes, especially those targeting GLBTQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex—when the sexual anatomy is unclear) populations. Eugene Ferraro, corporate investigator for more than 23 years, explored in-depth the role that substances play in fueling campus violence.

Cosponsors included the U.S. Department of Education's [Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues](#), Colorado's [Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Division \(ADAD\)](#), [MySafeCampus](#), [Nicoletti-Flater Associates](#), [Security On Campus](#), and [CAMPUSPEAK](#).

For information on the Violence Goes to College Conference, contact Spencer-Thomas at sspencer@regis.edu.

Sally Spencer-Thomas is a health psychologist and director of Leadership Development & Behavioral Health, Wellness Center at Regis University. She also is the Network regional coordinator for Colorado/New Mexico/Wyoming. ■

The Network Statement on Violence and Alcohol and Other Drug Use/Abuse

"The consumption of alcohol and other mind-altering drugs can present a significant threat to the safety and well being of students, staff, faculty, and other members of college and university communities. Intoxication by these drugs not only increases the likelihood of personal injury due to accidents such as falling or the consumption of

toxic amounts of various substances, but also introduces the equally threatening problem of violence, against self, others, or property. Consequently, the Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues recognizes that addressing the impact of alcohol or other drug-related violence falls within the

purview of its mission statement and organizational goals and objectives."

Position statement adopted by the Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues at the Nov. 8, 2001, fall meeting of the regional coordinators. ■

California Update

by Tom Colthurst

Heather Dunn Carlton, the newest regional coordinator for the Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues, was introduced to the nearly 200 participants at the 2005 California State University Alcohol Conference held in San Jose.

Dunn Carlton also distributed informational postcards to conference participants, encouraging them to update their Network online directory entries. Dunn Carlton is the director of the Alcohol Education Program in the Division of Student Affairs at California State University, Sacramento.



Renee Twigg, outgoing Network regional coordinator for California/Guam/Hawaii, and director of health services at Cal State University, Long Beach, introduced Dunn Carlton. Twigg has stepped down after a seven-year stint. During her tenure she recruited all 23 California state universities as Network members, advised the Cal State system in alcohol policy development, led the Network's California chapter into the California Prevention Collaborative, and launched one of the first regional Network Web sites.

Twigg also walked away with the conference's Campus Leadership Award. She accepted on behalf of Cal State University, Long Beach, drawing laughs from the audience by telling them that her boss, Vice President Doug Robinson, had told her not to come back unless she brought an award with her.

"This will be hanging on his wall first thing Monday morning," predicted Twigg.

The Cal State conference, now in its fourth year, featured plenary and breakout sessions focused on effective prevention strategies, including an online responsible beverage service training module, impaired driving reduction,



and assessment of alcohol-related data from off-campus partners. The organizers also presented a leadership excellence award to Rand Link, Sonoma State University, for—among other accolades—leading campus efforts that successfully imposed early closing hours and other controls on two new alcohol outlets recently opened across the street from campus residence halls.

Allison Jones, Ph.D., assistant vice chancellor from the Cal State systemwide headquarters, briefed the conference on indicators of progress in addressing alcohol-related harm within the system. He also spoke about the chancellor's interest in reviewing the status of campus policies on alcohol advertising and the trustees' desire



to facilitate an extension of student judicial jurisdiction in off-campus settings. Jones also said that his office is drafting a second biennial report for the trustees on implementation of the systemwide alcohol policy that took effect in 2001.

For more information about the CSU Annual Alcohol Conference, visit www.calstate.edu/conferences/aec; for more on the Network, visit www.thenetwork.ws.

Tom Colthurst is an associate director with the U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention. ■

Join the Network!

Welcome New Network Members

Developed in 1987 by the U.S. Department of Education, the Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues is a voluntary membership organization whose member institutions agree to work toward a set of standards aimed at reducing alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems at colleges and universities.

The Network welcomes new members from across the nation, representing all types of institutions of higher education, from community colleges to universities, such as Santa Barbara City College in California, Wheaton College in Illinois, and University of the Cumberlands in Kentucky. A full list of new members who have joined since the last *Catalyst* was published, along with contact information for those campuses, is available [here](#).

The Network develops collaborative AOD prevention efforts among colleges and universities through electronic information exchange, printed materials, and sponsorship of national, regional, and state activities and conferences. Each Network member has a campus contact who, as part of the constituency of the region, helps determine activities of the Network.

As of April 2006, Network membership stood at 1,575 postsecondary institutions.

To learn more about the Network and how your campus can become a member, visit the Network's [Web site](#). ■

(Continued from page 8)

The Role of Alcohol and Other Drugs in Campus Violence Prevention

Factors that contribute to violence on campus include individual beliefs and attitudes about alcohol consumption and violence among students, faculty, and staff; group-level factors such as perceived peer support for aggressive behaviors and “groupthink” dynamics; and campus policies and their enforcement—for example, are there rules about alcohol consumption and violence on campus, and are they enforced?

Additional factors include community factors, such as high rates of violence, drug selling, the density of alcohol outlets in the surrounding community, and the extent to which laws are enforced off campus; and general societal factors, such as socialization and media influences.

These are complicated further by the fact that, in interpersonal violence, more than one individual is involved: perpetrators, victims, and, often, bystanders. The characteristics of each of these individuals need to be considered, as well as the setting in which the violence takes place and the broader environment.

We also know that alcohol can contribute to violence in multiple ways. Alcohol causes physiological changes, changes social and cultural expectations, reduces behavioral constraints, affects the processing of information, and makes it more difficult to fend off an attack. Alcohol also is found in higher-risk settings that attract individuals predisposed toward violent acts. It is indeed a complex relationship.

Q: If the connection is so complex, why not just treat alcohol abuse and violence as separate issues?

A: Because they are so often interrelated, forging research partnerships on these issues has the potential to improve both alcohol and other drug and violence prevention efforts.

For example, science tells us that an individual needs to be exposed to prevention messages multiple times before he or she receives and understands those messages. If every drug abuse or violence prevention professional is

doing his or her own program on these topics without talking to each other, he or she is missing the opportunity to reinforce the same message again and again. Worse, everyone may be giving inconsistent or confusing messages.

Also, there are never enough resources for prevention, and these efforts are often fragmented. Since professionals in these fields share similar goals regarding student health and safety, by working as allies they can share ideas, information, and resources.

Q: Do you believe that violence and alcohol abuse prevention partnerships could actually advance both fields?

A: Partnerships do have the potential to advance both fields through sharing of concepts and approaches. Some sharing is already taking place. For example, violence prevention professionals have begun to adapt social norms marketing approaches that originated in the alcohol prevention field, using them with students to correct misperceptions that their peers have attitudes that support or tolerate violence. Likewise, the violence field has a long tradition of advocacy efforts that can inform and benefit the environmental management efforts of alcohol prevention specialists, such as measures to improve lighting on campus and other safety measures.

Q: What about the role of other drugs in violence? Shouldn't that also be considered?

A: While alcohol is the drug of choice for college students, other drugs also pose risk factors for violence. In the community prevention literature, for example, many studies find that perpetrators of violence are more likely to be drug users.

Also, while alcohol is still the most widely used so-called date rape drug, in the past several years sexual assault programs have been dealing with an increase in predatory drugging by people using substances such as Rohypnol and GHB [gamma hydroxybutyrate].

Assessing the extent and nature of both alcohol and other drug involvement on a campus can help ensure that prevention and intervention efforts address the full range of issues faced by students.

Q: How do you think campus professionals in drug and violence prevention can best join forces?

A: It is important for prevention professionals to grapple with the alcohol and other drug–violence connection head-on by putting it on the table, creating an open dialogue, and learning about how it affects each person's work. Try to find a common language for talking about these links.

It doesn't have to be a big formal outreach effort. Lunch or coffee with staff or students from those programs would be a great start. I also think it's interesting to ask people what they are worrying about or what they need. The goal is to listen and try to understand. If relationships are in place, it's easier to take advantage of new opportunities to work together to advocate for prevention on campus.

For example, while alcohol use is addressed routinely in hazing and riot prevention, it may be more difficult when it comes to other forms of violence, such as sexual assault. I think it can be done. The key seems to be to find a balance between acknowledging and addressing the role of alcohol and other drugs, but without portraying it as the sole or primary cause.

Q: How could professionals on campus and in the surrounding community address these problems better?

A: They could employ a public health approach to violence that includes identifying and addressing the array of individual risk and protective factors that contribute to violent outcomes. This model suggests that campuses undertake prevention efforts designed to reduce the number and strength of multiple risk factors while enhancing protective factors. Because alcohol is a significant risk factor in so many incidents of campus violence, ignoring the role of alcohol would be a grave error. ■



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Our Mission

The mission of the U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention is to assist institutions of higher education in developing, implementing, and evaluating alcohol and other drug abuse and violence prevention policies and programs that will foster students' academic and social development and promote campus and community safety.

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How We Can Help

- Training and professional development activities
- Resources, referrals, and consultations
- Publication and dissemination of prevention materials
- Support for the Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues
- Assessment, evaluation, and analysis activities

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Resources

For general resources and more information on the following topics, visit the Violence Prevention in Higher Education page on the Higher Education Center's Web site (www.higheredcenter.org/violence):

[Emergency Preparedness](#)

[Hate Crimes](#)

[Hazing](#)

[Rape and Sexual Assault](#)

[Riots and Campus Disturbances](#)

[Stalking](#)

[Suicide](#)

[Vandalism](#)

[Victims/Survivors](#)

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