

Campus and Community Coalitions—Getting Organized for Prevention

Over the past decade the case has been made by researchers that campus and community coalitions are an important factor when it comes to implementing and sustaining effective alcohol and other drug abuse prevention efforts, including those that focus on environmental change (see sidebar on page 2).

Since students live in an environment that embraces both their campus and the surrounding community, a campus and community coalition is the obvious solution. Dealing with issues of organization and leadership in forming and working in coalitions can be a challenge for campus and community people who want to pool their energy and resources to work toward prevention goals. However, there is research on the experiences of colleges and universities in working in coalitions to show how to go about meeting this challenge.

Elissa Weitzman, of the Harvard School of Public Health, became an observer of coalitions in action when she served as principal investigator for A Matter of Degree (AMOD)—a 10-year program measuring the effect of campus and community coalitions aimed at reducing high-risk drinking at 10 university sites around the country. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provided support for the coalitions, with the American Medical Association in an administrative role.

All the successes at AMOD campuses and communities did not produce a blueprint for a “model” coalition, says Weitzman. “Communities and universities have their own tempo and personality

and strengths. In some instances there’s already a strong understanding of the problems and priorities

Since students live in an environment that embraces both their campus and the surrounding community, a campus and community coalition is the obvious solution.

and what is needed to be effective. But in another case there may be a less mature understanding of the problem, and the people forming the coalition may be at a different point in their readiness to undertake an activity.” What effective coalitions have in common, she added, is

clear leadership. “The leadership is credible and well reflects the university and the community. There needs to be a sophisticated appreciation for information and data, and a willingness to commit to and undertake what is pretty challenging work.”

Who emerges as the most effective leader for a coalition may depend on the extent of his or her commitment to the goal of reducing alcohol abuse by students, and the amount of time that person can devote to coalition activities. “There are many agencies and organizations that already have a stake in this issue, and it falls into their bailiwick,” says Weitzman.

(Continued on page 2)

Inside

Organizing Models for Prevention— A Roundtable Discussion	4
Exemplary, Effective, and Promising Programs at the 22nd National Meeting	7
Q&A With Karen Pennington	8
Organizing for Sexual Assault Prevention at Miami University	10
College Drinking: New Research From NIAAA's Rapid Response to College Drinking Problems Initiative	11

(Continued from page 1)

Campus and Community Coalitions—Getting Organized for Prevention

“They could be prevention-oriented, health promotion individuals on the staff of a central administration or a wellness office or a health service. They could be concerned with judicial affairs within the university. They could be school nurses or guidance counselors, or come from a parents organization or some other community-based organization, and the list can include police, landlord and housing associations, neighborhood associations, and community economic development groups.”

Traci Toomey, of the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, is another veteran observer of organized efforts to reduce campus drinking levels. She emphasizes the importance of assigning staff or leadership responsibilities to someone with a clear commitment to change. “I don’t think a campus and community coalition can work if the staff person wants to serve just one organization in the coalition and not what the coalition wants,” Toomey says. This can be a problem, she points out, if a goal of the coalition involves a change in university policy. If the university leaders or the president do not want to make such a change, it can be awkward for a university staff person participating in the coalition.

Toomey believes a coalition can fall victim to the notion that its very existence is sufficient to solve a problem. “So often we think that getting people together is a sufficient endpoint in and of itself,” she says. “Getting together to talk and understand each other is important to start, but if you stop there you’ll never be successful in reducing alcohol use. You have to move quickly to identify what you want to achieve and how to achieve it, and then move forward with a strategic plan.”

Weitzman sees another pitfall for a new coalition: ignoring the need for gathering data and establishing indicators in order to provide

a focus on areas with a higher probability for bringing about change. “Early on, you need to focus on what is doable, what is achievable—something that can provide the experience of success and build confidence and the capability for undertaking larger things.”

Getting the right people to serve on a coalition and keeping them engaged can be critical. Not that the members would suffer “burnout” from such an engagement or flagging interest from such an engagement, but their participation may be subject to positional and representational factors, Weitzman explains. She said tracking the activities of AMOD coalitions led to the concept of “congruence”—the degree to which the priorities of individual members matched those of the collective. Individuals

may be appointed to serve on the coalition because of other roles they fill—such as a student who participates because he or she is head of a student government group. “That’s a limited tenure by definition. That person has not opted in but is required to participate by virtue of another position. That person is not always your strongest member. There are special needs or issues associated with those representing a position as opposed to the optional or representational leadership member.”

Toomey points out that representatives of various agencies and organizations can vary distinctly in their motivation to support a coalition’s activities. “Over the years I found that some people come to a meeting because they’ve been assigned to represent their organization. They’re there, they watch the clock, and have to leave after an hour. The real problem is to make sure that they are working

(Continued on page 3)

Getting the right people to serve on a coalition and keeping them engaged can be critical.

“The formation of a campus and community coalition involving all major stakeholders may be critical to implement these strategies effectively.”

—Task Force of the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. *A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges* (Washington, D.C.: National Institutes of Health, 2002).

“Community coalitions aimed at curbing underage drinking are valuable adjuncts to state and local government interventions. Such coalitions, which include people with diverse perspectives, interests, and responsibilities, can provide the political will and organizational support for implementing strategies that have been proven to work against underage drinking.”

—Bonnie, R. J., and O’Connell, M. E. (eds.) *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, 2003).

“Coalitions make it possible for a group of individuals to come together to bring about desired changes that the individual members could not achieve independently. Thus, a fundamental characteristic of effective prevention leadership is the ability to build and manage an effective campus and community coalition.”

—DeJong, W. *Experiences in Effective Prevention: The U.S. Department of Education’s Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Models on College Campuses Grants* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention, 2007). ■

(Continued from page 2)

Campus and Community Coalitions

with the coalition because it's part of their job and are also very engaged in the issue. Maybe one of the questions in seating representatives of various organizations and agencies on a coalition is this: What's the commitment of the organization in terms of the staff person representing the organization?"

She also emphasizes the importance of keeping the coalition focused on its stated goal, such as reducing student alcohol abuse and associated problems. "You might bring together a group of people and half of them want to do educational programs and the other half want to increase alcohol taxes. If you decide to try to raise alcohol taxes, it must be made clear to coalition members that you are trying to reduce alcohol use among students by making alcohol cost more." She adds that the coalition leader should be a "strategic thinker" who knows how to bring groups together in a common cause. "If you decide to put pressure on local law enforcement to crack down on the bars around a campus, you need to have someone in the coalition who can think through the strategy of creating a campaign to put pressure on an enforcement agency."

As academics, both Weitzman and Toomey see potential problems in weaving a university's administration into the fabric of a coalition with the surrounding community. "Universities seeking participation in a coalition need to put some priority on addressing their own shortcomings—you know, cleaning their own house," says Weitzman. "Otherwise they won't have credibility and legitimacy with the larger community. You need to review and amend any policies on campus that are relevant to the coalition's issues so you can demonstrate that you've waded in these waters yourself before you ask anybody else to do it." Toomey points out that if a coalition wants to focus on changing campus policies in one area or another, it can be awkward for a university

staff person serving on the coalition. "Can a university staff person put internal pressure on campus leaders? If the university is an equal partner in a coalition, is the staff person going to represent the interests of the coalition or the interests of the university?"

From the standpoint of a community organization, the participation of the university in a coalition can be a big plus, says Weitzman. "They need the support of a mandate from a coalition, and the university lends prestige to the coalition. These are political issues."

That's an important point, according to a publication on the lessons learned from the AMOD project, which states, "Coalitions need members who are willing to speak out and engage in the political processes. Because projects, such as these, are attempting to make significant changes, they require members with political skills and knowledge of how things work on and off campus." (*A Matter of Degree Initiative to Reduce Binge Drinking at Colleges and Universities: Lessons Learned*, Princeton, N.J.: The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2007.) ■

Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

If you would like more information about the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS), please visit the office's Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/OSDFS>. For more information about the office's higher education initiatives, please contact:

Phyllis Scattergood, Education Program Specialist, and Contracting Officer's Representative for the Higher Education Center

Phyllis.Scattergood@ed.gov;

202-245-7880

Amalia Cuervo, Education Program Specialist

Amalia.Cuervo@ed.gov; 202-245-7881

Message From William Modzeleski, OSDFS Acting Assistant Deputy Secretary

College and university campuses across the country have implemented a range of programs to address problems related to alcohol and other drug abuse and



violence among students. What are the best ways to organize these programs in order to be successful? Building on all we have learned over the past two decades about effective prevention models, campus prevention leaders continue to explore "best practices" for organizing and implementing prevention in ways that are effective and sustainable over time.

This issue of *Catalyst* addresses such topics as how to run a prevention organization, how to work across college and university sectors and connect with those who do similar work elsewhere, and how to develop an organization model that leads to sustained prevention efforts.

Two eminent researchers, Elissa Weitzman, Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, and Traci Toomey, University of Minnesota School of Public Health, offer their perspectives on how to organize coalitions, and what we can expect coalitions to do. This issue of *Catalyst* also includes advice from Karen Pennington, vice president for student development and campus life at Montclair State University, on where such prevention efforts should be housed organizationally in order to be effective over the long haul. It also features a roundtable discussion on different organizing models for campus and community prevention efforts based on two large-scale research projects funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and other experiences from the field. ■

A Roundtable Discussion

Organizing Models for Prevention

Catalyst conducted a roundtable discussion with Robert Saltz, Michael Sparks, and Mark Wolfson about different organizing models for campus and community prevention efforts on Dec. 12, 2008. Saltz is associate director and senior research scientist at the Prevention Research Center in Berkeley, Calif., and is the principal investigator for Safer California Colleges and Universities, a five-year research project funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Sparks is an alcohol policy specialist and the former associate director of Free to Grow Program at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. Wolfson is associate professor and director of the Center for Community Research at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C., and is coprincipal investigator of the Study to Prevent Alcohol-Related Consequences (SPARC) research project funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, which used a community-organizing approach to implement environmental strategies on college campuses and associated neighborhoods.

Q: While senior administrator or presidential leadership is often cited as being critical for the success of prevention efforts on campus, is the organizational location of the prevention program important? For example, what differences might one expect if prevention is part of student affairs or judicial affairs or health services? Does it make a difference where the prevention program is located on campus when it comes to working with surrounding communities?

Robert Saltz:

These questions should themselves be subject to research, but rarely are. We need to examine how best to organize



Robert Saltz

prevention on campus. We do know that effective prevention needs to cut across all the different offices mentioned. But which one has the wherewithal to create partnerships with the others? For example, if someone in student affairs wants the campus police to take a role in a prevention effort, how will that happen? The trick for implementing effective comprehensive interventions on college campuses is to determine which level of authority is needed to initiate interventions even if the work might be done by offices at lower organizational levels.

Michael Sparks: There is a structural issue that, in some respects, is more important, and that is campus comfort or willingness to engage in alcohol and other drug abuse prevention work. If, for example, the administrator who oversees prevention does not believe that restricting alcohol availability is a factor that can reduce problems, then where prevention is located is, frankly, less important than whether there is a commitment to evidence-based prevention at a high level on campus.



Michael Sparks

Mark Wolfson: Based on our experiences with SPARC at Wake Forest University, it is important to view each campus as being potentially quite different. So, the question of where the base of authority and power is located is an important one. For example, in our experience, health services tends to be somewhat marginalized on campuses. While prevention issues may, to some extent, resonate with them, student affairs sometimes subsumes health services.



Mark Wolfson

In one sense, where prevention should be located also depends on whether you use a top-down model or an organizing model. If prevention is part of student affairs, in a top-down

model with upper administration buy-in, then you are home free. But if upper administration becomes uncomfortable with using environmental strategies or seriously engaging with the community, then there is a real problem. Nevertheless, in our experience, as long as there is upper-level support, locating prevention in student affairs seems to be an effective model.

Saltz: The president is not necessarily the first person to work with. If it turns out that the president is enthusiastic about prevention, that is terrific. However, some presidents may be reluctant, hesitant, or concerned about what these efforts will mean for the campus and community. But, midlevel staff

may actually have quite a bit of leverage that they do not even recognize. Often, they can recommend approaches that represent best practices or evidence-based strategies. Higher-level administrators tend to want to respect the expertise of people down the line.

Sparks: Midlevel managers' support of best practice prevention efforts can be very important in achieving prevention goals. But sometimes they are concerned that the

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Organizing Models for Prevention

president or higher-level administrators might not support prevention measures that are more controversial, including public policy strategies or other measures that affect communities, such as restrictions on alcohol availability. Midlevel staff are, at times, reluctant to move ahead without first determining which way the wind is blowing as it relates to higher-level administrators' support. It is disheartening to have efforts moving along and then suddenly find that a particular strategy is not viable because upper administration says, "If we had known you were doing that, we would have steered you in a different direction."

Saltz: Those who are more or less successful in this work do test the political waters before proceeding, but we could codify or systematize how to do that a bit better. I agree that sometimes the roadblocks are those midlevel

managers who are afraid to take on issues that they perceive would not be supported by upper administration. In fact, often their perception is incorrect. The difficulty, especially in university settings, is that often people do not even know who has the authority, and if they needed permission to proceed they are not sure from whom they need it.

Sparks: From my perspective the decision of where to house a particular initiative is an organizing question. That means doing an analysis on campus to identify where there is support

and then building an infrastructure to move those who may not be onboard yet to be at least neutral if not openly supportive. Whether it is policy work in the community or on campus, there is an organizing approach that can help determine where best to locate prevention organizationally. This is opposed to thinking structurally about a place for these initiatives as one necessarily being better than another. For example, I work with campuses where the

campus police department has very strong relationships with community police. That environment seems to result in a lot of willingness on the part of the campus police to consider policy initiatives that focus on density of outlets around the campus. Where that relationship does not exist, placing prevention under campus police may not make any sense at all.

Q: Often a motive for a campus to get involved with prevention is community pressure to do something about unruly off-campus student parties. In terms of organizing strategies, is there an optimal way for communities and campuses to approach these kinds of problems in a joint effort, especially since many of the solutions or responses to problems are public policy based?

Saltz: Not every campus has strong support from the surrounding community. In the Safer

Concerned constituencies—parents, neighbors, businesses, or others—can drive a campus into participating in a collaboration to solve the problem.

to mobilize as readily as the second, which is made up of nonstudents and students. In that community there may be a great deal of support and a strong collaborative infrastructure ready to act. In the third community students are scattered widely around the campus and surrounding communities with little student concentration in any one neighborhood. There might be some mild support from community members, but it may be that there are really no pressing issues around which to organize.

Sparks: In the alcohol prevention field, identification of the key issues and the constituencies most concerned or affected by them helps define the strategy for moving ahead. Frequently those concerned constituencies—parents, neighbors, businesses, or others—can drive a campus into participating in a collaboration to solve the problem. In general, responses do not emanate from the university itself when it relates to community issues.

Wolfson: This is one of the biggest challenges for this kind of work. In SPARC we tried to encourage participating universities to work with the community by hiring a campus community organizer to build a true campus and community coalition. But, the organizer was

California Colleges and Universities project we found three types of surrounding communities. The first is made up entirely of students, which is not as likely

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Organizing Models for Prevention

always a campus employee, at least initially, so the focus tended to gravitate to campus issues even though community members were onboard and involved in the coalitions. There is a real challenge in creating a true partnership that spans campus and community. At the SPARC sites the communities often had a sense that they were the junior partner and the community members felt somewhat marginalized. The campus tended to drive the agenda. We did make a real effort to try to correct that, but when authentic partnerships are not formed at the outset, it can be a real challenge.

Q: One of the big issues that people are trying to address on campuses regarding prevention is sustainability. All too often prevention is a product of a grant or specific initiative and when the grant ends, the prevention effort dissipates. Are there ways to think about organizing models that would help to promote sustainability?

Wolfson: This is an area where we actually had some successes, although it is still an open question as to how much success. For SPARC, the process we followed in selecting and training organizers helped seed this approach as those people moved to higher levels within the university. This was a form of sustainability that did not involve getting new grants, but created positions that organizers moved into. The approach, at least in theory, ended up being woven into the fabric of the university with hard

funding. In some cases, those people continue to work on prevention using evidence-based environmental strategies. We saw some success in integrating the prevention approach into the university in a way that was not dependent on grant funding.

Sparks: What is being worked on has a lot to do with this issue of sustainability. Grants are obtained to support programs—a social norms campaign or something else. At the end of the grant, the staff who were hired for the program leave unless they can find some other funding. That is very different from building prevention work, which is predicated on changing both formal and informal systems and policies. Approaches that seek to change organizational structures, informal and formal campus policies, and the public policies in

the surrounding community have a much greater chance of sustaining ongoing effects than those that are predicated on conducting programs that live or die by grant dollars.

Saltz: From a research perspective, bringing outside funding to a campus to do interventions in order to evaluate them raises the risk of dependency on those funds. We designed our study so that there were no funds to hire anybody, just maybe to boost somebody's time. Part of the challenge of the intervention was how to accomplish things without money. If police agencies said they could not afford to

do something we recommended, we argued for a redirection of efforts by existing officers. Because it was a special project, they could agree to try it for a few years. Even those involved in the project could see that success in getting things done was not dependent on throwing a lot of money into it.

Sparks: When a campus recognizes that it needs to act, there are some key principles to keep in mind. One is a shared partnership between campus-related strategies and community-related strategies. That does not necessarily mean creation of a campus and community coalition, but rather a recognition that problems move on and off campus with relative ease. To me, focusing on one area or another is a mistake. Two, there needs to be a blend between population-level changes based on policy and systems work and individual strategies. Both are very important and reinforce each other. Where to locate prevention organizationally should be based on an analysis of where you can get the quickest uplift and the most support for that shared view of campus and community interventions. The individual charged with moving prevention along, whether it is a campus employee or someone else, has to have an activist bent. This is challenging work that requires a shared understanding of organizing principles, an understanding of policy, and knowledge of effective individual-based strategies. If a campus comes to prevention work with that kind of openness, it has an increased likelihood that at the end of the day—two, three, four, or five years out—it will have built sustainable efforts that have a chance of making a difference. ■

This was a form of sustainability that did not involve getting new grants, but created positions that organizers moved into.

Exemplary, Effective, and Promising Programs At the 22nd National Meeting

More than 450 prevention practitioners, higher education professionals, researchers, and local, state, and federal government officials came together for the U.S. Department of Education's 22nd Annual National Meeting on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention in Higher Education, Nov. 16–19, 2008, in St. Paul, Minn. It was an opportunity for the exchange of research findings, field practices, and other resources pertinent to the postsecondary alcohol and other drug abuse and violence prevention fields.

One highlight of the conference was the Department of Education's announcement of the awardees under its Models of Exemplary, Effective, and Promising Alcohol or Other Drug Abuse Prevention Programs on College Campuses grant program. Funds for this program are used to identify and disseminate information about exemplary and effective alcohol or other drug abuse prevention programs implemented on college campuses. The Department also recognizes colleges and universities whose programs, while not yet exemplary or effective, show evidence that they are promising. The funds also are used by grantees to enhance and further evaluate their exemplary, effective, or promising programs. Grantees announced during a plenary session at the 2008 national meeting were:

University of Houston for Campus IMAGE: From Intent to Impact, a promising program that has promoted self-protective behaviors consistently among high-risk groups (those in Greek Life, student athletes, and residence hall students) since January 2006. Such behaviors include abstinence from alcohol, prioritizing academics over alcohol, eating before drinking, drinking less, managing alcohol intake, and choosing friends who do not drink excessively. Additionally, the IMAGE intervention was evaluated using a quasi-experimental design with multivariate logistic regression analyses. Results indicated that students who attended an IMAGE session were statistically more likely to consume fewer drinks per week, drink fewer times per month, and experience fewer negative consequences than those who did not.

University of Massachusetts Amherst for Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS), an exemplary program that has resulted in significant reductions in high-risk drinking rates and consequences among students who participated in the program when compared with those who did not. BASICS was implemented as part of a larger comprehensive environmental management framework with campuswide data showing a 38 percent decline in binge drinking, a 26 percent decline in frequent binge drinking, and a 14 percent decline in underage binge drinking.

University of Pennsylvania for First Step, an exemplary program that provides brief alcohol and drug interventions for students who are experiencing negative consequences as a result of alcohol and other drug use or abuse. Through this effort, the university aims to increase research on group-specific interventions by identifying replicable strategies for working with high-risk groups, such as Greek members and athletes, and to exemplify the importance of data collection and analysis that can inform best practices.

University of Wyoming for Alcohol, Wellness Alternatives, Research, and Education (AWARE), a promising program that has more than three years of data on the university's students demonstrating the program's effectiveness in achieving its goals of reducing the frequency and quantity of alcohol use, reducing problems associated with alcohol use, reducing risk factors associated with alcohol use, and increasing protective factors among college students.

Virginia Commonwealth University for Technology Enhanced AOD Prevention, a promising program that uses audience response "clickers" to provide immediate small-group social norms feedback related to alcohol and other drugs. This project will allow the university to initiate alcohol and other drug abuse prevention efforts with new technology-based enhancements and to carefully evaluate and disseminate those efforts. ■

Q&A With Karen Pennington



Karen L. Pennington is vice president for student development and campus life at Montclair State University (MSU) in New Jersey and is a former member of the Review Group of the U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention. She has been instrumental in organizing the prevention efforts at MSU, a U.S. Department of Education 2006 Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Models on College Campuses grantee (now the Models of Exemplary, Effective, and Promising Alcohol or Other Drug Abuse Prevention Programs on College Campuses).

Q: Senior administrator leadership is often cited as being critical for the success of prevention efforts on campus. But how important is where, organizationally, the prevention program is located?

A: The answer depends on the institution and the institution's culture and what makes sense for that particular context. For example, here at MSU our health promotion programs had been located in the health and counseling area, but recently moved to the recreation center. It is a new center built with the intention of being more than just for exercise programs. It is intended to be a second student center that would house a lot of other programs as well. The thought was that if we placed the health and wellness portion of our programs in the center we would reach a broader audience. We moved the programs in September 2008 and have noticed a real change in visibility. The recreation center is very popular—with 30,000 swipes of student IDs per month in the facility. Now all these students also see the information disseminated by programs such as the Great American Smokeout Challenge campaign. Students who might not have noticed such programs' information before now do. The hope is that they are spreading the word to others. In order to measure the effect of this visibility, we will look for an increase in attendance at events, an increase in response to the programs, and, most important, whether or not students stop smoking, drink less, and eat better.

But also the *who*, not just the *where*, is crucial; the person running the program can often be more important than the placement of the program. You need someone who can carry out the program. Institutional leadership remains important, too, because how effective someone can be often depends on the institution. Sometimes the person may not be the right fit or simply does not have good support. Support is crucial. If prevention is not an agenda item for an institution, then the individuals running the program are not going to be successful. Prevention programs need the emotional and financial support of the institutions.

Q: Institutions vary in the way that prevention programs are organized on their campuses. How do you think such programs should be run in order to maximize their effectiveness in reducing alcohol and other drug problems?

A: Before anything, you have to have institutional support and priorities behind the program. How can a program director or coordinator foster support? University presidents are very practical people and want to have good things said about their institutions. So when it appears that things are not going well—for example, wild parties, students getting drunk, events getting in the news, and so on—that director can say to the president, “If we had an effective social-norming program, which I

could do, we could stop this negative publicity.” It is important to play to the needs of the opinion makers on campus—whether the president or vice president—and to make a case based on what will make a difference to them. Everyone has that *thing* that will win over him or her. It may be as simple as playing to pride and ego. This may sound crass, but you need those leaders on your side. It takes an understanding of the individuals at the top. You need to play to their need, whatever it might be, and find ways to win them over. Institutional support has to be there at the top.

Second, you need interest from students. There has to be a cadre of individuals for whom these issues are important and who are willing to take information back to their peers. These are the two most critical pieces. After that, it takes the individual or group that is running the program to learn the school's culture, understand the different camps involved, and implement programs that fit. It is easy to look at what other schools are doing, but you have to be willing to ask yourself, “Will that work here? Or is that something that because of size or affiliation or other factors would be a problem?” You have to be willing to reject other models that won't work. You can't fit a square peg into a round hole.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Q&A With Karen Pennington

Q: Can you give an example of how to read the institutional culture?

A: A good example at MSU is our interest in doing more about smoking. One of our main issues is how to get people to stop smoking right outside of a door or underneath a classroom window. Now, we have a large campus that is very spread out. Do you say, “This is a nonsmoking campus.”? That sounds great, but how do you enforce that? Do you take away ashtrays and trashcans? Then what happens? The ground is littered with cigarette butts, and you don’t want that. We have to work toward changing the culture. We have to make it so that smoking is not a good thing for the campus—for who we are. Then we have to figure what approach is going to work. Will faculty buy into it? Will students buy into it? How do we get that key group of students who can have an effect on the smokers and make the change seem like it is not a big deal? This is a crucial step we have to think about in order to change the culture and ensure that students do not have to walk through clouds of smoke. We do not have smoking police, so we have to look at environmental factors.

Another important point is that the statewide culture also affects the campus culture. Here in New Jersey smoking is part of the culture. We are in the most densely populated state in the nation and in the most densely populated area of the state. People report being more stressed, more on edge here, than people do in other parts of the country. How does that contribute to smoking, drinking, and drug use as escape mechanisms? We also have to consider this broader culture when developing an effective prevention program.

Q: How can those with responsibility for organizing prevention on campus best work across university sectors and link with those who do similar work elsewhere?

A: By talking, talking, talking, and getting out of your silo! Make the first effort. Sometimes we

expect that others on campus will come to us, but the reality is that they might not know what we are doing, particularly faculty members. Faculty might be working in similar areas, but don’t know about our efforts. One great strategy is to plant a seed with the dean or provost that you are looking to connect with faculty working in the prevention area. Then when individual faculty meet with the dean, the dean can help make a connection. It is important to make those first moves and communicate that you are willing to partner, that you want to do more, and that you want to work together, so that when someone new arrives you can make a connection. It is really about laying the groundwork.

Q: How can campuses best develop an organizational model that leads to sustained prevention efforts?

A: This may go a bit against what I said earlier, but at MSU it is not as much about the person, but the broader culture. You have to get programs ingrained in the institution. Beyond any individual, you need to have institutional support and priority setting from the top. The director could leave, but the program has to continue. If it is not institutionalized, it will not continue when that person leaves. You have to embed the programs into the campus structure and culture, which means that programs cannot be fly-by-night, one-time fixes.

You also cannot put yourself and the programs into a silo. You have to integrate them into the campus by bringing in other people and utilizing other campus sectors. The programs need to be bigger than one individual or one department. The more people you can get involved and connected, the better off the program will be.

Oftentimes, you get insulated and caught up in the day-to-day activities and forget to

look outside the program to see who could support you. Support can come from places that you wouldn’t anticipate. For example, we had a situation where we received an anonymous phone call about hockey students having wild parties. We called a police officer who also was involved in the hockey club as a part-time coach,

and we said, “We have a problem.” We didn’t for long, because he went over to the house and talked to the students as a coach. He told them that this [behavior] is not who they are as a team and as a university. It was about changing the culture of athletics. We now know that we have a new ally to change student behavior. We did this by reaching students in a way that was important to them. Sometimes we make solutions more complicated than we need to. Solutions often lie in this kind of commonsense thinking that we instinctively know but sometimes forget to implement.

Q: Environmental prevention that focuses on policy change both on campus and in surrounding communities is often controversial. How important is political savvy when it comes to advancing prevention agendas?

A: It is extremely important. You have got to know your allies and you have got to know *who* can be useful to you *when*. Who’s going to be a person who can put an immediate stop to things, and who can carry the torch? You have to know the culture and have a sense of the key players. You also have to think hard

It is important to make those first moves and communicate that you are willing to partner, that you want to do more, and that you want to work together, so that when someone new arrives you can make a connection.

(Continued on page 10)

Organizing for Sexual Assault Prevention at Miami University

In 2006, when Miami University (Oxford, Ohio) decided to establish a staff position to coordinate sexual assault programming, policies, and services it engaged in a thoughtful process to decide where to locate those services. This position would have multiple responsibilities, including acting as the first responder for students in need of assistance in the aftermath of a sexual assault and for convening regular meetings of staff with sexual assault program or service responsibilities. Other responsibilities would include overseeing peer-delivered sexual assault programming and programming for first-year students, sorority and fraternity members, student athletes, and other targeted groups, as well as sexual assault information dissemination, sexual assault training, and overall coordination of services. This position serves as the university's primary contact and resource for sexual assault survivors and liaison among campus, community, regional, state, and national networks, in addition to seeking and securing grant funding for program expansion and staying current on federal and state legislation and public policy related to sexual assault.

The university's 2006 task force report on the need for sexual assault prevention services points out that at institutions with dedicated offices or staff, the administrative location of the office or staff position varies, but most offices and positions are located in student affairs divisions.

"Because sexual assault is primarily a student issue and because most offices currently providing sexual assault programs and services at Miami are located in the Division of Student Affairs, we believe that this division is the most appropriate university home for a sexual assault coordinator position. We further believe that, for such a position to be credible, it should be housed in a high-level, centrally located unit that has the authority to hold offices accountable and that is widely perceived as advocating for all students. For these reasons, we believe the Office of the Dean of Students should be considered as an administrative location for the proposed sexual assault coordinator position.

"While other units might also be considered, we have concerns about housing the position in a unit that either has a specific

topical or constituency focus or that focuses on survivor support. For example, housing the position in the Office of Health Education, with its current emphasis on alcohol prevention, could signal that sexual assault is simply a result of alcohol misuse. In addition, all too often when alcohol is discussed as a contributing factor in sexual assault, the emphasis is placed on the sexual assault survivor's, rather than the perpetrator's, behavior. Placing a sexual assault coordinator position in a unit (e.g., Student Counseling Service) whose services are geared toward the victim-survivor risks suggesting that it is the victim-survivor's responsibility to fix the problem of sexual assault. The same can be said for housing the position in the Women's Center. The emerging emphasis on preventing perpetration also argues against locating a sexual assault coordinator position within an office whose focus is on survivor support."

Miami University decided to locate its Sexual Assault Prevention Program in the Office of the Dean of Students. For more information, go to <http://www.units.muohio.edu/saf/sexualassault>. ■

(Continued from page 9)

Q&A With Karen Pennington

before you go out there and set your sights on getting bars to close at 2 a.m., for example. You've got to know the lay of the land and what the bar means to the community and what other factors might be involved. Does the bar establishment cause problems for the local area—maybe lots of trash? If so, then you can

reach out to local community members using that angle. You have to evaluate the situation and think first before you try to take it all on.

We can't deny that [prevention] is hard work, but we also can't forget the importance of it. We're talking about people's lives. And this work not only affects our country, but the

world. Our piece of the puzzle, coupled with all the other factors that students have to face, is a very important piece of how they are set up for the future. Establishing good behaviors now—in college—is so important. It's not too late and not too early. The struggle will never end, but we have to keep at it. ■

College Drinking New Research From the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's Rapid Response to College Drinking Problems Initiative

Alcohol is sometimes seen as part and parcel of college life, but there are programs that can significantly reduce students' risky drinking, according to a series of studies in a special college-drinking supplement of the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*.

Problem drinking among U.S. college students is a long-standing problem and, by some measures, is getting worse. According to one study published in the supplement, drinking-related accidental deaths are on the rise—from 1,440 deaths among 18- to 24-year-old students in 1998 to at least 1,825 in 2005. In this study, researchers led by Ralph W. Hingson, of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), found that heavy episodic drinking (sometimes referred to as “binge” drinking) and drunk driving have also increased among 21- to 24-year-olds in the same period.

“College students are being swept up in the same societal problems as the rest of the

population, and that's discouraging,” says William DeJong, a professor in social and behavioral sciences at the Boston University School of Public Health. DeJong is a special editor on the supplement and the lead author of a review article summarizing the research in the supplement.

But what is encouraging, DeJong says, is the growing evidence that college prevention programs do help reduce heavy episodic drinking and other alcohol-related problems.

Fourteen studies published in the supplement detail results of projects funded by NIAAA's Rapid Response to College Drinking Problems initiative. Between 2004 and 2005, NIAAA selected 15 college campuses with serious student-drinking issues to work with the agency and other experts in developing programs to combat the problem.

The resulting programs ranged widely—from counseling for individual students with

drinking problems to programs that involved the neighborhoods surrounding college campuses. Researchers found that all of these approaches had some benefits in addressing college drinking. ■





Catalyst is a publication of the U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention.

Editor: Barbara E. Ryan
Production Manager: Anne McAuliffe
Graphic Designer: Shirley Marotta

Center Director: Virginia Mackay-Smith

Other Staff: Olayinka Akinola, Kellie Anderson, Tom Colthurst, William DeJong, Elisha DeLuca, Tracy Downs, Kathie Gorham, Rob Hylton, Linda Langford, Julie Lapham, Anne O'Neill, Michelle Richard, Lance Segars, and Lani Shumway

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.

Get in Touch

The U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02458-1060
Web site: <http://www.higheredcenter.org>
Phone: 1-800-676-1730; TDD Relay-friendly, Dial 711
Fax: 617-928-1537
E-mail: HigherEdCtr@edc.org

How We Can Help

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

This publication was funded by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools at the U.S. Department of Education under contract number ED-04-CO-0137 with Education Development Center, Inc. The contracting officer's representative was Phyllis Scattergood. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government. This publication also contains hyperlinks and URLs for information created and maintained by private organizations. This information is provided for the reader's convenience. The U.S. Department of Education is not responsible for controlling or guaranteeing the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. Further, the inclusion of information or a hyperlink or URL does not reflect the importance of the organization, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered.



Resources

For resources on related topics, click on the following publications in the Center's publications collection:

[Building Long-Term Support for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Programs](#)

[Catalyst](#), Fall 2008, Vol. 10 No. 2

[Catalyst](#), Summer 2007, Vol. 9 No 1

[Environmental Management: An Approach to Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention](#)

[Experiences in Effective Prevention: The U.S. Department of Education's Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Models on College Campuses Grants](#)

[Preventing Violence and Promoting Safety in Higher Education Settings: Overview of a Comprehensive Approach](#)

Photo Credits

Page 3: File photo: U.S. Department of Education

Page 4: Clockwise: Courtesy of Bob Saltz;

Photo courtesy of NM Sparks;

Creative Communications WFUBMC

Page 8: Mike Peters / MSU

Page 11: Alcohol Research Documentation, Inc.
(Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies)