



## PREVENTION UPDATE

### Planning Alternative Campus Events

#### Overview

In its 2002 [report](#), foremost among the recommendations of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's Task Force on College Drinking is that "to achieve a change in culture, schools must intervene at three levels: at the individual-student level, at the level of the entire student body, and at the community level. Research conducted to date strongly supports this three-level approach. Within this overarching structure, schools need to tailor programs to address their specific alcohol-related problems."

According to "[Environmental Policies to Reduce College Drinking: Options and Research Findings](#)," one strategy at the level of the student body to "de-emphasize alcohol and create positive expectations on campus is to create positive environments that students can enjoy without alcohol use. For example, campuses can offer recreational sports later at night and on weekends or, instead of having a campus pub, campuses can establish a coffeehouse."

The 2007 report [Experiences in Effective Prevention: The U.S. Department of Education's Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Models on College Campuses Grants](#) describes five environmental management strategies, including "Offer and promote social, recreational, extracurricular, and public service options that do not include alcohol and other drugs. Substance use should not be the easiest and most readily available social and recreational option. Many campus administrators are now investing additional resources to create and promote substance-free events and activities; provide greater financial support to substance-free student clubs and organizations; open or expand a student center, gym, or other substance-free settings; and develop student service learning or volunteer activities."

#### What the Evidence Tells Us

While there is little research on the extent and effectiveness of alcohol-free alternative events on college campuses as a component of a comprehensive prevention approach, anecdotal evidence suggests that this is an increasingly popular approach. According to a 2011 [Wall Street Journal](#) article, "As more schools offer increasingly creative alternatives to shots and beer pong, they say they see noticeable declines in drinking." A 2010 Web-based [study](#) by researchers at Brown University found that the "lack of association between attendance at alcohol-free parties and alcohol use indicates both heavy and light drinkers attend these parties. The lower drinking and intoxication on alcohol-free party nights suggests alcohol-free programming should be investigated to determine if it may reduce alcohol use on college campuses."

Results of a 2010 [study](#) of LateNight Penn State Alcohol-Free Programming (LNPS)—LateNight Penn State was a 1999 awardee under the U.S. Department of Education's Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Models on College Campuses Grants competition—indicated that "students drank less on days they attended LNPS and on days they stayed in (rather than going to bars/parties, other campus events, or entertainment), both especially among women. These results suggest that alcohol-free social programs may be an effective strategy for decreasing alcohol use on days when students attend alcohol-free events rather than going to other events or gatherings."



## Lessons Learned From Colleges and Universities

[Aztec Nights](#) at San Diego State University (SDSU) was implemented in fall 2008 to “provide (a) vibrant campus nightlife and social opportunities” for students, primarily students new to campus (freshmen and transfers) “to become fully engaged in positive, substance-free social and educational activities.” Optimally, Aztec Nights serves as an alternative introduction to campus life at SDSU by showing incoming students that friendships could be made, enjoyment could be had, and bonds could be forged without relying on alcohol or other drugs to lessen the personal and social anxiety that attends being new in a university setting. Events draw thousands of students. An [evaluation](#) of the first year of Aztec Nights found that comparing September 2007 and September 2008, alcohol violations decreased by 56 percent, and drug violations were down 46 percent.

The University of Iowa encourages students to develop nonalcoholic late night programs on Fridays and Saturdays funded through the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Vice President for Student Services through its [Late Night at Iowa](#) program. Students develop an event proposal and apply for funding out of a \$50,000 pot. Past events have included a soccer tournament, karaoke, game night, and dances.

According to [The Times of Trenton](#), “It’s more fun when you remember what you’ve done” has been “the long-time slogan for [LollaNObooza](#), an event held each fall at The College of New Jersey [TCNJ] with the goal of promoting healthy choices by providing entertainment and socialization without the presence of alcohol. . . . The large carnival-like event is meant to be an alternative to a night of partying. . . . This year’s event drew well over 1,400 students, who were joined by faculty, staff and community members.” Capt. Timothy Grant of the TCNJ Office of Campus Police Services told [The Times](#) “that while individual sports teams and student organizations have a great deal of spirit, this is the type of event that breeds the same mentality among the entire campus community.”

At [North Dakota State University](#) (NDSU), “Campus Live provides Saturday Night entertainment on-campus for NDSU students. An event at the Wallman Wellness Center and Club NDSU at the Memorial Union are held once a month. During the rest of the Saturdays throughout the semester, [students] enjoy extended hours at the Wallman Wellness Center and free bowling and billiards in the Memorial Union Recreation Center. . . . The Campus Live program is funded by the President's office. A campus committee oversees the program and individual departments coordinate weekly events.”

## Higher Education Center Resources

### Case Studies

- [Grand Valley State University](#); [Missouri Partners in Prevention: A Statewide Initiative](#); [San Diego State University \(SDSU\)](#); [University of Chicago](#)

### Publications

- [Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention on College Campuses: Model Programs](#)
- [Experiences in Effective Prevention: The U.S. Department of Education’s Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Models on College Campuses Grants](#)
- [Prevention Update: First Few Weeks on Campus](#)

### Web Page and Related Links

- [Offering Substance-Free Social, Extracurricular, and Public Service Options](#)

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