

Student Affairs and University Life Council
Minutes
October 20, 2009

Present: Vice-Chancellor Kim, Madeleine Charney, Erika Hamilton, Derek Khanna, Carolyn Cave

Guest: Sally Linowski, Director of the Center for Alcohol and other Drug Abuse Prevention (CADAP)

Sally Linowski gave a powerpoint presentation on university alcohol programs and policies along with an executive summary handout (see attached). The presentation outlined the nature of the alcohol problem on campuses and effective responses to the problem.

The university approach is around harm reduction and using methods empirically demonstrated to be effective in intervention. A central feature of the UMass approach is the BASICS program for students experiencing consequences of alcohol use.

Following the presentation there was discussion of how the alcohol programs might be better communicated to faculty and how to engage faculty as more effective partners in alcohol programs. The need for a revision of the code of student conduct was also raised along with the need for clear and enforceable alcohol policies.

There was not time to address the other items on the agenda, which were deferred until the November meeting.



Agenda: November 17, 2009

- 1:00 - 1:10 Fall Family weekend for 2010 -- Jean Kim
- 1:10 - 1:25 Co-curricular transcripts -- Jean Kim
- 1:25 - 1:45 ALANA support services -- Byron Bullock
- 1:45 -- Any other business



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Alcohol and Other Drug Use at UMass Amherst: Results from the 2009 Student Survey

Executive Summary

Since 2005, University of Massachusetts Amherst undergraduate students have taken part in an annual survey of alcohol and other drug use. In April, 2009, two different surveys were sent via e-mail to a random sample of 2,000 students each; one survey focused on alcohol use, the other focused on perceived use and environmental factors which contribute to high risk drinking. The response rates were 35% and 32% respectively.

While the survey samples are comparable to the general student body, both samples are overrepresented by females and may not characterize the campus population as a whole. However, as all surveys from previous years have also been similarly overrepresented by females, changes noted over time are not likely to be skewed by gender representation.

Consumption profile

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among UMass Amherst students, with 79% reporting drinking in the past 30 days. Significantly fewer students use marijuana (30%) or tobacco (27%). Over 88% of students report having had their first drink at age 18 or younger, the average age being 16.5 years. Of those who drink, 67% report doing so two days a week or less.

Heavy episodic drinking (HED), often called 'binge drinking', is among the high-risk behaviors measured by the survey. HED is defined for males as having five or more drinks in about two hours; for females, the threshold is four or more drinks. Survey results point to significant shifts in this important measure between 2005 and 2009:

- HED decreased 11% from 2005 to 2009; since 1999, the reduction is 21%.
- Among underage students, HED decreased 26% from 2005 to 2009 (from 64% to 47%).
- Frequent HED – binging three or more times in the past two weeks – has decreased 16% (from 33% to 28%) from 2005 to 2009. Since 1999, the reduction is 30%.
- Among underage students, frequent HED decreased 21% (from 35% to 24%) between 2005 and 2009.

Positive indicators

- 22% of students did not drink in the last 30 days. Among underage drinkers, the percentage has increased by 8.5% since 2005.
- 48% of students overall drink in lower-risk ways (no HED) or do not drink at all.
- 54% of students report they have not played drinking games on campus since the beginning of the school year.
- On average, students have four drinks when partying. If we include only those who drank recently (past 30 days), the typical number of drinks is five (four for women, six for men).
- Students of legal drinking age are more likely to report engaging in protective behaviors such as stopping drinking at a predetermined time, avoiding drinking games, avoiding shots of liquor, or drinking slowly rather than chugging.

Negative indicators

- 58% of men and 48.8% of women reported one or more HED experiences in the past two weeks. Nationally, 40% of college students overall have engaged in this activity – approximately 47% of men and 32% of women.
- Those over 21 reported significantly higher binge rates than underage respondents (59.2% vs. 47.9%).
- The number of drinks students report consuming in a typical week has increased by 15% from 2005 through 2009 (from 8.6 to 9.9 drinks).
- 49% of drinkers report engaging in "pre-loading" (drinking before going to an event that involves more drinking). The average estimated BAC after pre-loading was calculated to be .070, high enough to be considered drunk.
- Of those who drink, on average women have four drinks and men have 5.8 drinks per occasion when they party.
- Though 54% of students have not played drinking games on campus during the past school year, 21% have done so six or more times.

Alcohol-related consequences

UMass Amherst students reported experiencing a wide range of negative alcohol-related consequences since the beginning of the school year. The more common include:

- hangover (67%);
- have said or done something embarrassing (63%);
- felt sick or thrown up (48%);
- have not been able to remember large stretches of time while drinking (28%); and
- driving after drinking (29%).

The harmful effects also extend to the classroom, with 24% of students reporting they missed a class because of drinking. 10% felt the quality of their work was compromised by drinking.

In addition, students say they have been negatively impacted by others' drinking. These secondhand consequences include:

- 'babysitting' someone who was drunk (63%);
- interrupted sleep or study time (59%);
- being insulted or humiliated (39%);
- getting into a serious argument (31%);
- unwanted sexual contact (26%);
- had property damaged (21%);
- witnessing acts of sexual harassment (18%);
- experiencing an unwanted sexual advance (16%);
- witnessing an act of physical violence (16%); and
- been pushed/hit/assaulted (15%).

Access and environment

Alcohol is readily accessible to students both on- and off-campus.

- 57% of underage students report having gotten alcohol from a student 21 years or older; 35% have gotten alcohol from an underage student.
- 38% of legal age students have bought alcohol for an underage student at a bar, liquor store or convenience store; 49% have given alcohol to an underage student at a social gathering.
- 61% of students have attended off-campus parties in the past 30 days (a 15% decrease from last year). 89% of those who went to off-campus parties drank there. 93% of students believe it is "easy" or "very easy" for underage students to get alcohol at off-campus parties.

- 54% of students have attended residence hall parties in the past 30 days. 65% of those who went to residence hall parties drank there. 72% of students believe it is “easy” or “very easy” for underage students to get alcohol at residence halls.

A surprisingly low percentage of underage students (less than 8%) have gone to liquor or convenience stores, local bars or restaurants with the intent to buy alcohol. This may be due to the increasing rigor with which these establishments are verifying age. Respondents reported that bars are checking ID at a 92% rate, convenience stores at 96%, liquor stores and restaurants at 88% each. It appears that they get alcohol from students 21 or older (38% of 21 plus students admit buying for underage students) and from other underage students.

In conjunction with more rigorous ID verification at local bars, there has also been a drop in on-campus advertising. In 2007 about 48% of students reported frequent advertising on campus by local bars, compared to 21% in 2009. Signs in front of establishments advertising low-cost alcohol and student-targeted promotions were the most commonly reported, with 46% of students seeing these marketing tactics.

Perceptions and policies

Though most students (57%) believe that the social atmosphere on campus promotes excessive alcohol use, this decreased 24% since last year. The percent who consider the social atmosphere to be a major problem has remained about the same at 9% vs. 10% in 2008.

About two-thirds (66%) of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement: “Drunken riots affect the value of my UMass degree in a negative way.” Though 62% disagree that out-of-control parties make UMass more fun, there is a belief that the overwhelming majority (82%) of peers think the opposite.

Awareness of campus alcohol and other drug policies appears high. Of those surveyed, 51% say they've read the alcohol policy, and a majority of students knew about prohibitions against:

- an on-campus central source of alcohol (86.1%);
- alcohol consumption in a residence hall room when someone under 21 is present (86.4%); and
- drinking games (70%).

Despite being aware of the policies, the majority of students report violating them at least once during the past academic year, with 52% drinking from a central source on campus, 55% drinking in a residence hall with an underage student present and 67% having played drinking games on campus. Only 18% were either given a warning or cited for alcohol policy violations. The perceived likelihood of getting caught violating campus policies has dropped. In particular, only 7% of students say it is very likely that one will get caught playing drinking games, and 4% for underage drinking in residence halls.

Though reporting an awareness of alcohol policies, 20% of respondents said they do not understand judicial policies related to alcohol, while another 35% said they were not sure they understood them.

Students generally agree with the campus alcohol policy, with a majority (64%) saying the rules are “about right”; only 20% believe the policies are too strict. In addition the majority of students support:

- prohibiting kegs on campus (59%);
- stricter disciplinary sanctions for repeat alcohol policy violators (55%);
- stricter disciplinary sanctions for students engaging in alcohol-related violence (81%); and
- stricter penalties for using fake IDs to buy alcohol (51%).