



Alcohol and Substance Abuse Newsletter

All About Alcohol

Issue I
December 2006

Letter from the Task Force Chair By Avi Zacherman

Alcohol abuse is the number one trouble making issue at college campuses across the United States. For this reason, the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force decided to tackle this issue first.

Alcohol abuse. We all have seen the horrors of too much drinking, whether it be the pile of vomit in front of the doors of our residence hall, the party in that loud room being broken up by RAs or the people stumbling back from the bars on a Friday night. We should be so fortunate if these embarrassing situations were the worst of college alcohol abuse.

According to the Core Institute, 300,000 college students will eventually die of Alcohol related causes. Another 159,000 first year students will drop out of college next year because

of alcohol and drug abuse. One in every three college students admits to missing a class due to alcohol or drug use.

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Alcohol also impedes our ability to make smart decisions. 70% of college students admit to engaging in sexual intercourse as a result of being under the influence of alcohol. And 90% of all acquaintance rapes occur when alcohol is involved.

Alcohol abuse was such a problem in NACURH, that in the 1980s, the National Board of

Directors instituted a 'no alcohol policy' for conferences. Before then, these conferences were not 'dry' affairs.

We have all come to college to learn. It was our choice to be in school, and it is supposed to be one of the smartest decisions of our lives.

As residence hall leaders it is our duty to explore these issues. Contained in this newsletter is

an example of a possible solution to the college drinking phenomenon, and an example of college drinking in the extreme. Further, you will find alternatives each of us as individuals can practice, instead of going out and 'having a couple of beers.'

At the end you will find a Case Study question, so that you can tell us your own thoughts on how to answer the riddle of college alcohol abuse. We will select the top 3 case studies and distribute them in a special edition newsletter.

With that, I hope you enjoy the 1st of the NACURH Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force newsletters.

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1-in-4 College Students report 'bombing' a test because of the after effects of alcohol or drug use.

The Alcohol & Substance Abuse Task Force

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Wet Campus vs. Dry Campus

By Bri Lewis

Think back to the year of 2004. How old were you? What were you doing? Well if you were a University of Oklahoma student, you were mourning the death of a schoolmate. A student at the Sigma Chi fraternity died from alcohol poisoning. After this event, Sigma Chi moved their fraternity off campus and the University of Oklahoma campus became completely “dry”.

The solution to problems like this one is exactly the approach that The University of Oklahoma took. The transition from a wet campus to a dry campus can be difficult, however it may save lives. According to Wikipedia, the definition of a dry campus is “the banning of alcohol at colleges and universities, no matter if the student who possesses the alcohol is above the legal age to consume it elsewhere”. Although this movement was greatly publicized in the United States, the switch began in many other countries.

A study conducted by Harvard University shows that one in three United States colleges are “dry”. The hardest time to enforce this policy comes during the first few days or weeks of the school year, known occasionally as “Frosh Week”. During this week, first-year students begin to test the water and test their newfound freedom

at school, away from their parents. It has been proven that consumption of alcohol during the time period is the highest of any other time during the academic year.

Despite the obvious positive aspects of the transition to a dry campus, some negative aspects have been revealed. Since students, whether or not they are of age or not, need to go off campus to partake in alcohol consumption there have been an increase in drunk driving incidents. The students go to a bar off campus, and once they leave, their options are limited. Should they flag down an expensive cab? Should they wait

for a sober friend to pick them up? These may be easily answered questions when thought about; however out of context, the decision may not be as obvious. The student may feel as if he/she is alright to drive, or simply be in a hurry to get home. After a decision like this is made, not only is the student in danger, but everyone else on the road as well.

It is up to you to decide which option is best for your school. Once the decision is made, it is necessary to make the transition. The first steps to take would be to talk to other student

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groups and get support from fellow students. After gaining this support, write a letter to the President or Vice President of Student Affairs of your school or the Residential Life Office. They may support your initiative and help with the transition. The students of the campus community need to be made aware of the transition and the new rules.

Another source of support would be through the on campus resident assistants. The resident assistants would need to have more programs throughout the year to create alternate activities for the students. If the students have other options for the weekends, there would be less of a desire to drink alcohol.

It is easy to see that the transition from a wet campus to a dry campus is a campus-wide effort, however it is possible. A tragedy does not need to occur in order to enact this policy. No one wants anyone to get hurt or killed from alcohol consumption, therefore the need for prevention is apparent. Let’s help to keep our students safe and switch to a dry campus.



1-in-3 campuses in the US are considered 'dry'



Welcome to the Zoo

By Richie Kenny

It's just about that time of year when high school seniors are handing in, or have handed in, their applications to the colleges and universities of their choice. These seniors have spent the better part of their junior year and the summer following, looking at and visiting schools that they might want to attend. Small or large, private or public, religious affiliation or none, whatever they are looking for, there is a school out there that fits them. Unfortunately, some schools have bad reputations as party schools; the Princeton Review, as well as other various groups, ranks these schools every year. This year the University of Massachusetts Amherst was ranked number 7 on that list, advancing by two spots from a number nine ranking last year. Many prospective students see that ranking, and decide that they have to go somewhere where drinking and partying is the main objective, not education. It is sad to say but many in-state residents, currently enrolled at UMass Amherst, if asked, would say they came here because of its reputation. "Zoo-Mass Slamherst," as it has been called by many within the state, has a long-standing history with alcohol and wild parties. That history has been around for way to long.

The Residence Life staff has been hard at work trying to control the issue here on campus, with many new residence hall policies to inhibit and hinder the use of alcohol within the residence halls. UMass Amherst has just over 12,000 students living on campus, in 45 residence halls. A lot of the majors at UMass Amherst offer courses that do not have Friday classes, because of this a lot of students are finding that Thursday is a common and popular night to go and

get inebriated.

However, the problem is that students are not drinking within the safety of the residence halls; often, students will have a few drinks in their rooms with their friends, then go out to the bars, and finish the night there. This is every weekend, every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night. They drink, drink, and drink all weekend, but why?

When asked, the first year residents within UMass Amherst's First Year Experience program, called Epoch, respond with "everyone else is doing it," or the most popular response, "why not?"

It is almost ironic that the First Year Experience program is titled Epoch, which means the beginning of a distinctive period of time. To Residence Life staff, this means the first steps into the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the educational opportunities that those steps bring. To first year

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students within the residence halls, it means "OK, I'm here, where's the party at?" Resident Assistants at UMass Amherst are given the training and knowledge to try and prevent this way of thinking from forming, but it is nearly impossible to change the first year students' views if their peers are all going out and getting smashed. All the programs and activities in the world can not change it; it takes a deeper personal situation to get not only first year students, but all the students, to



44% of College Students binge-drink at least once every two weeks

realize that they do not have to drink alcohol all the time, or even drink to get drunk.

Binge drinking has been the cause of many of the problems faced here at UMass Amherst as well as other institutions. If students could figure out how not to abuse the situation, or even how to have a good time without it on a weekend, than universities would see a safer situation created. The

whole week can go by without them consuming alcohol, so why is it that once Thursday, Friday, and Saturday hit, that "30 rack" of whatever has to be finished, or the keg must be "killed?" Already this year there have been way too many ambulances on campus to tend to alcohol-related issues.

What can you do to help this growing problem? Become educated, read, and learn all you can about the subject. Learn what alcohol abuse resources your respective campus has to offer, and what alcohol education is available to students. The more you know, the more you can have a positive impact on your community at your institution. After all, it is your community, it is your home nine months out of the year, and would you want your campus referred to as "Zoo-Mass Slamherst!?" Didn't think so. Do the colleges and universities a favor, and educate yourself and your friends. The school can give out so much information, but the ones who will make the most impact are the students on campus, and that impact will be made by them changing their current actions, and showing that alcohol does not have to be invited to the next party.



Alternatives to Drinking

By Avi Zacherman

Every Thursday night, millions of college students flock to local bars, parties or even each others rooms to get drunk. In fact, over 40% of students report that they drink specifically to get drunk. So what can we do instead of drinking?

Drinking has seemingly become more of a 'eh, there's nothing else to do' activity in college. But there are plenty of other things to do. We don't have to drink to have a good time. You just have to know where to look to find alternatives.

On a college campus, there are programs going on every single night. Surely something must be going on that would be interesting. Check facebook, or the local flyer boards, or even ask around. You'd be surprised what kinds of fun activities are going on.

You can even pull some of your friends into your 'non-drinking fun.' Perhaps get together to play one of the many fun games we all learn at conferences, such as silent football or mafia. Just because you're not at a conference doesn't mean they aren't still as fun.

College can be an extremely stressful environment. Many times, people drink to

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relieve stress. This is a dangerous cycle though. Studies show that amount of drinks consumed and poor grades have a positive correlation. That is, the more you drink, the worse off you are in school. As such, as you may drink to relieve stress, you only can potentially give yourself even more to worry about.

There are plenty of ways to alleviate stress, other than through alcohol. Listening to some soothing music, taking a walk, or even some aromatherapy can all help relive some pent up stress. If all else fails, get a stress ball and start squeezing.

As residence hall leaders, it is our job to be a good example. We need to set the bar for healthy actions, and allow others to follow that example. Other students look up to us, and we must help set them on the right path. By

showing that we can keep from drinking heavily, others will follow that lead, and the movement will grow from there.

Obviously this is where things are a bit tough. While NACURH does claim its strict no alcohol policy at conferences, very few college students can claim to be completely sober all the time. Studies show that 88% of high school seniors have tried alcohol at least once, and that 66% of youth are frequent drinkers by the time they

graduate high school.

If you are going to drink, do it in moderation. This is the first step. If everyone who drank, did so in moderation, the amount of alcohol related deaths would decrease exponentially.

Most important of all, do not, under any circumstances, take a car if you plan on drinking. If it's raining, cold, whatever, do not EVER drink and drive. 33% of all deaths in all persons of the ages 15-20 involves a car accident. And two out of every five of those involve alcohol.

So obviously the best course of action is to find alternatives to drinking alcohol. But if you are going to drink, do so moderately.

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While drinking starts off as a way of coping with stress, it only leads to more stress in students.



NACURH Mission Statement

NACURH is the leading national organization advocating for the interests and welfare of residence hall students, while also providing opportunities for their personal growth and development. It is an organization of students committed to developing leadership, honoring diversity, recognizing achievement, as well as stimulating engagement and involvement among students who reside in college and university residence halls. Through regional and national programs and services, NACURH provides leadership opportunities for students, shares residence hall programming resources and best practices, and coordinates activities with appropriate professional associations and business partners.

It's Your Turn! Alcohol Case Study

Each month, a different task force will create a different case study question. This month, the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force is distributing its case study question. Answers will be due on December 28th, 2006. You may work alone, or in a group. Answers are to be in essay form, between 500-750 words. They will be judged by the task force, as well as Mike Marshall, the NACURH National Chair. The top three will be distributed in a special edition newsletter. Without further ado the question:

About the NACURH Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force

The NACURH Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force is one of four issue based task forces established by the NACURH National Board of Directors. The mission of the task force is to provide a monthly newsletter (which you are currently reading), write articles for the NACURH Link, create national case studies and implement a half-day program at NACURH 07.

The Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force currently consists of three members:

- Avi Zacherman, Task Force Chair - Associate Director of Administration and Finance for the NEACURH Region
- Richie Kenney - Vice President of Administration and Finance for the University of Massachusetts—Amherst Residential Leadership Association
- Bri Lewis - NCC for the Ithaca College Residence Hall Association and NEACURH 2007 Regional Conference Chair

If you are interested in contributing, e-mail adafneacurh@gmail.com

At your school Thursday night has become just another drinking night. Your RHA Executive Board has decided to make a stand against this. In 500-750, explain what steps you would take to keep students on campus on Thursday. Be thorough, and explain all the details of your solution. It can be a program, event, anything you can think of. Submit all answers in the form of a Microsoft Word Document to:

adafneacurh@gmail.com