

Colleges Respond to Student Binge Drinking: Reducing Student Demand or Limiting Access

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Abstract. Administrators at 68% of 4-year colleges nationwide ($N = 747$) responded to a survey concerning the types of programs and policies they used in response to students' heavy drinking. Most schools conducted targeted alcohol education and invested in institutional prevention efforts; half conducted social norms campaigns; a sizeable minority restricted alcohol on campus. Schools that focused on demand reduction were less likely to ban alcohol use. One in 3 schools received funding for these programs from governmental agencies, and 1 in 5 from the alcohol industry. Such schools were more likely to conduct targeted alcohol education and social norms programs and were less likely to restrict alcohol use on campus or at college events. Colleges may want to reconsider prevention initiatives that focus exclusively on demand or supply. They may also want to examine the extent to which funding is the driving force shaping the direction of their alcohol initiatives.

Key Words: alcohol education, alcohol prevention programs, colleges, funding, social norms

Heavy drinking and the disruptive behaviors that accompany it have been part of campus life at American colleges since colonial days.¹ College responses to this problem have varied, ranging from a complete ban of all alcohol on college property to a complete denial that the problem exists. The *in loco parentis* role of colleges, prevalent at the beginning of the 20th century, began to diminish after World War II and disappeared at most colleges by the late 1960s, simultaneous with the lowering of the minimum drinking age to 18. In the 1970s, states began to increase the minimum drinking age as governments became increasingly concerned about the role of alcohol in motor vehicle fatalities and an antidrug sentiment replaced the more experimental attitudes of the 1960s. The

1989 amendments to the federal Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act required that colleges develop policies to prevent the illegal use of drugs and alcohol on campus. In the mid 1990s, student binge drinking became a subject of national attention, and following a number of highly publicized student deaths and subsequent litigation, most colleges reassessed their approaches to student alcohol use and developed more explicit guidelines and policies to address these persistent problems.

In 1999, the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study (CAS) survey of college administrators found that virtually all 4-year colleges and universities provided some form of alcohol education to their students and targeted special alcohol education programs at high-risk students such as fraternity and sorority members and college athletes.² Most school responses to student binge drinking have involved alcohol-demand reduction strategies. These are educational and motivational programs aimed at reducing students' alcohol consumption. However, we know of no published evidence that educational and motivational efforts have decreased student drinking levels, binge drinking, alcohol-related problems, or secondhand effects of alcohol use on American college campuses.³

Relatively few schools implemented policies and programs aimed at changing the regulatory environment in which alcohol is consumed. Drink specials, including the reduced pricing of alcohol^{4,5} and the availability and access to alcohol on campus,⁶⁻⁹ have been found to be associated with higher rates of binge drinking and associated problems, whereas the enforcement of a comprehensive set of minimum drinking age laws has been associated with lower rates.¹⁰⁻¹⁴

Recently, one particular demand-reduction program—the social norms marketing campaign—has gained popularity.^{15,16} In 1999, one fifth (20%) of schools reported

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conducting social norms marketing campaigns,² and in 2001, almost one half of the schools surveyed reported doing so.¹⁷ This approach has been encouraged and financially supported by public agencies, in particular the US Department of Education,¹⁸ as well as the alcohol beverage industry.^{1,19,20}

We conducted the present study to examine current alcohol prevention efforts and recent trends in combating student drinking and related harms. We wanted to learn how colleges view drinking by students on their campus, what they are doing about it, the sources of funding for prevention efforts, how the sources of funding may influence what schools are doing, and how successful colleges consider their efforts to be.

METHOD

Colleges and Universities Included in the Study

All 4-year colleges and universities accredited by the American Council on Education were eligible for the study if they were located in the United States (excluding US territories), offered baccalaureate liberal arts or sciences degrees (BA, BS, or both), and provided on-campus residences for at least 10% of their undergraduate student population. Specialized institutions such as seminaries, theological institutes, professional schools, and technical schools were excluded. A total of 1,118 colleges met these criteria.

The Questionnaire

The 36-item questionnaire developed for the study included many of the same questions as our 1999 survey.² We asked respondents to rate the severity of student alcohol problems at their institution, describe their alcohol policies and education or prevention efforts, list the sources of funding for their alcohol education-prevention programs, and rate the success of their education-prevention efforts. We also asked schools about fraternities and sororities at their institutions as well as institutional smoking regulations (a copy of the survey can be obtained from the lead author upon request).

Mailing and Response Rate

In April 2002, we mailed questionnaires with an accompanying cover letter to presidents at 1,118 colleges. Respondents were given the option to return the enclosed survey by mail or fax or to complete the survey online. Three weeks after the initial mailing, we mailed a second questionnaire and cover letter to nonrespondents. Nonrespondents were telephoned 2 weeks later to make sure that the survey had been received and to encourage them to complete it. Two weeks after the telephone calls, we mailed a third and final cover letter and questionnaire.

Administrators from 760 schools returned the questionnaire, which was a response rate of 68%. Two of 3 (62%) respondents returned the questionnaire by mail or fax; 1 in 3 (38%) returned it online. We removed 3 responding schools that could not be identified and 10 schools that no

longer met our inclusion requirement for on-campus residences, leaving an analytic sample of 747 schools.

Data Analysis

We analyzed data by using SAS version 8.2 executed on the SunOS 5.7 platform. We used chi-square tests to compare percentages between school groups, reporting differences p values less than .05 as significant.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

The 747 schools are representative of US 4-year institutions of higher education. Thirty-six percent of the schools in our sample were public, and 64% were private, resembling the national distribution of 34% public and 66% private.²¹ The sample is geographically similar to the national distribution, as well. Twenty-five percent of the responding schools were located in the northeastern United States, 28% in the North Central region, 35% in the South, and 12% in the West. Nationally, the distribution is 25%, 26%, 33%, and 15%, respectively.²¹ Likewise, 20% of the institutions in our study enrolled 1,000 or fewer students, 55% enrolled 1,001 to 5,000 students, 14% enrolled 5,001 to 10,000 students, and the remaining 11% enrolled 10,001 or more. Nationally, the distribution is 23%, 48%, 13%, and 16%, respectively.²¹

Fifty-five percent of the schools were not religiously affiliated, 30% were affiliated with a Protestant Christian denomination, and 14% were Roman Catholic. Schools rated as highly competitive by *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*²² made up 35% of the sample; 41% of these were rated as competitive; and 25% were rated as less competitive or noncompetitive. Fifty-eight percent of the schools were located in suburban or urban environments, and 42% were located in small town or rural settings. Four percent of the schools admitted only women, and 5% were historically Black colleges.

Is Alcohol Use Considered a Problem on Campus?

In 2002, 15% of respondents considered alcohol use to be a major problem at their institution; it was considered a problem by 66% of these, a minor problem by 17% of these, and not a problem by 3%. These responses differ from those of the 679 responders to our 1999 survey.² In 1999, 24% of respondents considered alcohol use a major problem on their campuses ($p < .0001$); 44% considered it a problem ($p < .0001$); 28% considered it a minor problem ($p < .0001$); and 4% considered it not a problem ($p = .14$). Although students' behavior with regard to alcohol use has not changed during this time period,³ schools' perceptions of the behavior have changed, with fewer respondents considering alcohol use to be a major problem, fewer considering it to be a minor problem, and more considering alcohol use to be a problem.

Respondents at large schools (more than 10,000 full-time undergraduate students) were more likely to consider alco-

hol use a major problem (26%; $p < .01$) than respondents at small schools (fewer than 5,000 full-time undergraduate students; 12%) or medium-sized schools (5,000–10,000 full-time undergraduate students; 22%). Respondents at highly competitive schools²² were more likely (19%; $p < .05$) than respondents at competitive (14%) and noncompetitive or less competitive (9%) schools to consider alcohol use a major problem. Twenty percent of respondents at Roman Catholic institutions and 16% at private nonreligiously affiliated schools considered alcohol use a major problem, compared with 10% of respondents at Protestant colleges and universities ($p < .05$).

Prevention Initiatives

Alcohol-Free Campuses

At 1 in 3 (34%) colleges, alcohol is not permitted on campus for any student, regardless of age. Small schools, schools located in the southern United States, noncompetitive or less competitive colleges, and historically Black colleges were all ($p < .001$) more likely to have alcohol-free campuses. By contrast, only 7% of women-only schools ($p < .01$), 16% of large schools ($p < .001$), and 17% of schools located in the northeastern United States ($p < .001$) had such restrictions (see Table 1).

In examining religious affiliations of private schools, we found that 62% of Protestant schools prohibited alcohol for all students on campus, compared with 8% of Roman Catholic schools and 13% of nonreligiously affiliated private schools ($p < .001$).

Alcohol-Free Residence Halls

Forty-three percent of all schools, including those that do not allow alcohol anywhere on campus, banned alcohol in all campus residence halls, and 81% offered at least some alcohol-free dorms or floors to students. In all, only 19% of colleges failed to provide any alcohol-free residences. Small schools ($p < .001$), southern schools ($p < .001$), Protestant schools ($p < .001$), noncompetitive or less competitive private schools ($p < .01$), and historically Black colleges ($p < .001$) were more likely than their counterparts to ban alcohol in all residence halls. Large schools ($p < .01$), northeastern schools ($p < .001$), highly competitive private schools ($p < .001$), and schools with more than 25% of their students belonging to fraternities ($p < .001$) or sororities ($p < .01$) were less likely to ban alcohol in all on-campus residences.

Public schools ($p < .01$) were more likely than private schools to offer at least some alcohol-free residences to their students. Women-only schools ($p < .001$) were less likely than other schools to offer alcohol-free residence halls or floors to their students.

Restrictions at College-Sponsored, On-Campus Events

We found a similar pattern of restrictions at major college-sponsored events. Forty-four percent of all schools

restricted alcohol use in 4 or more of the following events: home athletic contests, home tailgate events, home pre- or postgame parties, homecoming celebrations, on-campus dances or concerts, on-campus banquets or receptions, and alumni events. Nearly one half (49%) of all small schools restricted alcohol use in at least 4 of these events, compared with only one fifth (21%) of large schools. Similarly, historically Black colleges ($p < .01$), women-only colleges ($p < .05$), and Protestant schools ($p < .001$) were more likely to restrict alcohol in at least 4 of the 7 events.

Alcohol Education

Most schools offer alcohol education targeted at the high-risk drinking populations of freshmen, fraternity or sorority members, or college athletes. Eighty-four percent of all schools provided alcohol education specifically targeted toward freshmen, 72% for fraternity or sorority members, and 69% for athletes.

In the context of the widespread prominence of educational programs, differences—some comparatively minor though still statistically significant—were found. Public schools were more likely than private schools to provide alcohol education specifically targeted to freshmen ($p < .05$), fraternity and sorority members ($p < .05$), and athletes ($p < .01$). Protestant schools and schools located in the northeastern United States were more likely to provide alcohol education targeted specifically to freshmen ($p < .001$ and $p < .01$, respectively) and athletes ($p < .001$ and $p < .05$, respectively). Large schools ($p < .001$), highly competitive private schools ($p < .001$), and schools with a large proportion (>25%) of fraternity or sorority members ($p < .05$) were more likely to provide alcohol education targeted to Greek organization members. Small schools ($p < .05$) were less likely than medium-sized or large schools to provide targeted alcohol education. Both women-only schools ($p < .001$) and historically Black colleges ($p < .05$) were much less likely than their counterparts to provide alcohol education targeted to fraternity or sorority members.

Social Norms Marketing Campaigns

Nationwide, half (49%) of colleges and universities reported conducting a social norms marketing campaign to reduce problem drinking. Public schools, schools with more than 10,000 undergraduate students, highly competitive private schools, schools with fraternities or sororities, and schools located in the Northeast were all ($p < .001$) more likely to conduct a social norms marketing campaign than their counterparts.

Investments in Institutional Prevention Efforts

Most schools invest in institutional alcohol prevention efforts, with 90% of schools providing counseling and treatment services for students with abuse problems, 81% employing an assigned substance abuse official, 61% establishing a task force to deal with substance abuse issues, and 48% of schools having a cooperative agreement with community agencies to deal with substance

TABLE 1. Prevention Initiatives by College Characteristics

Prevention initiative	All (<i>n</i> = 747)	Sponsorship		Enrollment size		
		Public (<i>n</i> = 271)	Private (<i>n</i> = 476)	< 5,000 (<i>n</i> = 560)	5,000–10,000 (<i>n</i> = 105)	> 10,000 (<i>n</i> = 82)
Alcohol restrictions						
Alcohol-free campus	34.0	32.1	35.1	38.8***	22.9	15.9***
All dorms alcohol-free	42.8	44.3	42.0	46.7***	35.1	26.8**
Some alcohol-free dorms or floors†	81.1	87.1**	77.7	81.1	77.1	86.6
Home athletic events‡	79.8	77.8	81.0	82.6**	73.3	69.5*
Home tailgate events‡	53.2	41.1***	60.4	61.9***	39.1	14.6***
Home pre- or postgame parties‡	48.8	37.4***	55.5	56.8***	30.5	19.5***
Homecoming celebrations	40.4	42.1	39.5	42.7*	39.1	26.8**
On-campus dances—concerts	58.1	61.6	56.1	60.4*	51.4	51.2
On campus banquets—receptions	35.9	35.1	36.6	39.8***	25.7	22.0**
Alumni events	22.2	15.9**	25.8	26.3***	11.5	9.8**
At least 4 of these 7 events	44.2	40.6	46.2	48.9***	37.1	20.7***
Alcohol education specifically targeted to:						
Freshmen	83.6	87.1*	81.5	81.8*	90.5	86.6
Fraternity or sorority members§	72.0	76.2*	68.0	65.0***	81.0	87.7***
Athletes‡	69.1	75.6**	65.3	65.4***	81.0	78.1
Social norms campaign						
Conducted social norms campaign	48.5	62.4***	40.6	41.3***	68.6	72.0***
Institutional investments in prevention						
Provide counseling and treatment services for abuse problems	89.7	90.8	89.1	88.0*	96.2	92.7
Assigned substance abuse employee	81.0	88.6***	76.7	77.9***	89.5	91.5*
Task force to deal with substance abuse issues	60.5	70.9***	54.6	53.4***	74.3	91.5***
Cooperative agreement with community agencies	48.1	56.1***	43.5	43.8***	60.0	62.2**
At least 3 of these 4	64.5	75.7***	58.2	58.6***	77.1	89.0***

Note. NC = north central; WO = women only; HBC = historically Black college.

†Includes schools banning alcohol in all dorms.

‡Among schools with intercollegiate sports (*n* = 640).

§Among schools with fraternities and sororities (*n* = 469).

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

abuse issues. Overall, 65% of the responding schools invested in at least 3 of these 4 institutional prevention efforts. Large schools (*p* < .001), public schools (*p* < .001), coeducational schools (*p* < .05), highly competitive private schools (*p* < .001), schools located in the Northeast (*p* < .05), and schools with larger Greek membership (*p* < .01) were more likely to invest in at least 3 of the institutional prevention efforts.

Prevention Initiatives by Perceived Severity of Alcohol Problems

When we looked at prevention initiatives by the perceived severity of the problem of alcohol use on campus, we found that schools at which the respondent perceived alcohol use to be a major problem were more likely to provide targeted alcohol education, conduct social norms campaigns, employ a substance abuse professional, convene a task force to deal with substance-abuse issues, and have a cooperative agreement with community agencies (see Table

2). These schools were also less likely to ban alcohol from the campus or to restrict alcohol consumption at specific on-campus events. For example, only 1 in 5 (20%) schools at which the respondent perceived alcohol use to be major problem restricted alcohol use for all students, compared with 1 in 2 (54%) schools at which the respondent perceived alcohol to be a minor problem or no problem.

Social Norms Marketing Campaigns and Alcohol Restrictions

Schools conducting social norms marketing campaigns were less likely to restrict alcohol use on their campuses (see Table 3). These schools were significantly less likely to provide alcohol-free campuses, to ban alcohol from all dorms, and to restrict alcohol at college-sponsored, on-campus events. Only 20% of schools conducting social norms campaigns banned alcohol on campus, whereas 47% of all schools without such campaigns did so. Likewise, whereas 30% of schools conducting social norms

Northeast (n = 191)	Region			Coeducational		HBC	
	NC (n = 209)	South (n = 259)	West (n = 88)	Yes (n = 716)	WO (n = 29)	Yes (n = 40)	No (n = 700)
16.8***	35.9	47.9***	26.1	35.1	6.9**	87.5***	31.0
26.7***	41.7	55.8***	41.7	43.5	25.0	85.0***	40.2
80.1	84.2	78.8	83.0	82.4	48.3***	85.0	81.1
82.4	83.4	78.5	69.1**	79.9	75.0	67.6	80.3
55.6	54.2	51.2	51.2	53.4	43.8	54.1	52.9
51.9	48.3	47.6	46.4	49.2	31.3	56.8	48.1
31.4**	40.7	46.7	40.9	40.9	27.6	62.5**	39.1
52.4	61.2	60.6	55.7	58.7	44.8	77.5*	56.9
18.9***	40.2	44.8***	34.4	37.0	6.9*	75.0***	33.7
11.0***	23.4	27.0*	29.6	23.2	0**	40.0**	21.1
39.8	45.0	47.5	42.1	45.0	24.1*	67.5**	42.9
89.5**	81.8	81.9	79.6	83.2	89.7	75.0	84.3
69.9	69.5	73.6	76.1	72.8	22.2***	56.4*	73.7
74.9*	65.9	69.5	63.1	69.7	43.8*	64.9	69.6
60.2***	45.0	39.4***	58.0	49.2	34.5	15.0***	50.7
92.7	88.0	88.0	92.1	90.4	72.4**	77.5**	90.6
89.5***	75.6*	79.5	79.6	80.9	82.8	70.0	81.6
67.0*	59.3	53.7**	69.3	61.0	44.8	32.5***	62.4
51.3*	51.2	40.5**	55.7	48.9	31.0	32.5*	49.0
71.2*	63.6	57.9**	71.6	65.5	37.9*	50.0*	65.6

campaigns banned alcohol from all on-campus dorms, 55% of schools not conducting social norms campaigns did so.

Funding of Alcohol Education–Prevention Programs

Thirty-five percent of schools reported receiving public funding from the US Department of Education, a state health department, state alcohol beverage control board, or another state agency for their alcohol prevention or education programming. Twelve percent of schools reported receiving funding from a private foundation for their alcohol programs, and 21% of schools reported receiving funds from the alcohol industry. Of schools that reported receiving funds from industry sources, 63% reported receiving money from the NCAA Anheuser-Busch CHOICES program, 31% reported they received it from local beverage distributors or outlets, 21% reported receiving it from The Century Council, and 11% reported receiving

it from other national alcoholic beverage manufacturers or distributors.

Funding Sources by College Characteristics

Public schools ($p < .001$), schools enrolling more than 10,001 full-time undergraduate students ($p < .001$), and schools located in the northeastern United States ($p < .01$) were more likely than their counterparts to obtain public funds for their alcohol education–prevention programs (see Table 4). Schools located in the South ($p < .05$), small schools ($p < .001$), and historically Black colleges ($p < .01$) were all less likely than their counterparts to receive public funding for their alcohol programs.

A similar pattern appeared regarding alcohol-industry funding, with public schools and schools with more than 10,000 undergraduate students more likely ($p < .01$) and small schools and historically Black colleges less likely ($p < .01$) to receive funding from the alcohol industry for their alcohol education or prevention efforts.

TABLE 2. Prevention Initiatives by Perceived Severity of Alcohol-Use Problems

Prevention initiative	Major problem (n = 109)	Problem (n = 491)	Not or minor problem (n = 144)
Alcohol restrictions			
Alcohol-free campus	20.2***	31.2	54.2
All dorms alcohol-free	30.8***	39.9	60.7
Some alcohol-free dorms or floors†	71.8***	74.0	51.6
Home athletic events‡	76.6	78.5	87.3
Home tailgate events‡	40.2**	53.1	64.2
Home pre- or postgame parties‡	29.9***	49.8	60.5
Homecoming celebrations	25.7***	38.9	56.9
On-campus dances—concerts	45.0**	57.8	68.8
On campus banquets—receptions	22.9***	34.2	51.4
Alumni events	8.3***	20.2	39.6
At least 4 of these 7 events	28.0***	43.3	61.2
Alcohol education specifically targeted to:			
Freshmen	89.9**	84.9	75.0
Fraternity or sorority members§	82.0	71.3	63.4
Athletes‡	80.4*	68.4	63.4
Social norms campaign			
Conducted social norms campaign	64.2***	51.1	27.8
Institutional investments in prevention			
Provide counseling and treatment services for abuse problems	92.7	89.8	87.5
Assigned substance abuse employee	83.5*	82.7	73.6
Task force to deal with substance abuse issues	76.2***	62.9	41.0
Cooperative agreement with community agencies	52.3***	51.5	33.3
At least 3 of these 4	72.5***	68.6	45.1

†Includes schools banning alcohol in all dorms.
‡Among schools with intercollegiate sports (n = 640).
§Among schools with fraternities and sororities (n = 469).
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

TABLE 3. Social Norms Campaigns and Alcohol Restrictions

Alcohol restriction	Social Norms Campaigns	
	Conducted (n = 362)	Not conducted (n = 385)
Alcohol-free campus	19.9***	47.3
All dorms alcohol-free	29.8***	55.3
Some alcohol-free dorms or floors†	83.7	78.7
Home athletic events‡	74.9**	84.5
Home tailgate events‡	45.9***	60.2
Home pre- or postgame parties‡	42.3***	55.0
Homecoming celebrations	31.5***	48.8
On-campus dances—concerts	52.2**	63.6
On campus banquets—receptions	25.7***	45.5
Alumni events	11.3***	32.5
At least 4 of these 7 events	35.5***	52.9

†Includes schools banning alcohol in all dorms.
‡Among schools with intercollegiate sports (n = 640).
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

TABLE 4. Funding Sources by College Characteristics

Characteristic	Funding source		
	Public	Private	Alcohol industry
All (<i>n</i> = 747)	34.5	11.8	20.6
Sponsorship			
Public (<i>n</i> = 271)	50.9***	14.8	25.8**
Private (<i>n</i> = 476)	25.2	10.1	17.7
Enrollment size			
< 5000 (<i>n</i> = 560)	25.4***	9.6**	17.9**
5,000–10,000 (<i>n</i> = 105)	58.1	17.1	26.7
> 10,000 (<i>n</i> = 82)	67.1***	19.5*	31.7**
Region			
Northeast (<i>n</i> = 191)	42.4**	8.4	23.0
North central (<i>n</i> = 209)	30.6	14.8	19.6
South (<i>n</i> = 259)	29.0*	12.0	20.5
West (<i>n</i> = 88)	43.2	11.4	18.2
Coeducational			
Yes (<i>n</i> = 716)	35.1	12.2	20.8
Women only (<i>n</i> = 29)	24.1	3.5	17.2
Historically Black college			
Yes (<i>n</i> = 40)	20.0**	5.0	2.5**
No (<i>n</i> = 700)	35.6	12.1	21.7

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

In separate analyses of subsets of schools, 29% of schools with greater than 25% fraternity or sorority membership received alcohol industry funding, compared with 20% of schools with less than 25% fraternity or sorority membership (*p* < .05). Schools with fraternities (*p* < .001) or sororities (*p* < .01) were more likely to receive alcohol programming funding from the alcohol industry than schools with no fraternities or sororities. Nearly 1 in 4 Roman Catholic (23%) and nonreligiously affiliated private colleges (22%) received alcohol industry funding, compared with 12% of Protestant colleges (*p* < .01).

Correlates of Alcohol Education–Prevention Funding

Schools that receive public or alcohol industry funding for their alcohol prevention programming are more likely than schools that do not receive such funding to conduct alcohol education and social norms campaigns for their prevention efforts (see Table 5). They are also more likely to make institutional investments such as providing counseling and treatment services, employing dedicated substance-abuse employees, convening a task force to deal with substance-abuse issues, and establishing a cooperative agreement with community agencies to deal with these issues. For example, 93% percent of schools that receive public alcohol education monies and 97% of schools that receive alcohol industry funding have alcohol education programs specifically aimed at freshmen, compared with 79% of schools that do not receive such funding (*p* < .001). Similarly, nearly 3 out of 4 schools that receive public funding and 7 out of 10 schools

that receive alcohol industry funding conduct social norms campaigns on their campuses, compared with fewer than 1 in 2 schools that do not receive public funding or alcohol industry funding (*p* < .001).

At the same time, schools that receive public or alcohol industry funds are less likely to restrict alcohol use on campus. Seventeen percent of schools that receive alcohol industry funding for their prevention programming restrict alcohol use for all students on campus, compared with 39% of schools that do not receive industry funding (*p* < .001). Similarly, one third (34%) of the schools that receive public funding for their prevention programming restrict alcohol use in at least 4 of 7 on-campus venues, compared with one half (50%) of schools that do not receive such funding (*p* < .001).

Perceptions of Success

Overall, 4 in 5 respondents considered their prevention programs to have been successful (11%) or somewhat successful (71%). One in 5 considered their programs to be somewhat unsuccessful (15%) or unsuccessful (4%). Respondents who perceived that alcohol use at their school was a major problem were less likely to perceive that their programs have been successful (72%) than respondents who considered alcohol use to be a minor problem or not a problem (83%; *p* = .005). Source of funding was not related to perception of program success. Eighty-four percent of schools that received public funding for their alcohol education–prevention programming considered their programming a success, as did 80% of schools that did not receive

TABLE 5. Prevention Initiatives by Funding Sources

Prevention initiative	Public funding (<i>n</i> = 258)	No public funding (<i>n</i> = 489)	Alcohol industry funding (<i>n</i> = 154)	No alcohol industry funding (<i>n</i> = 593)
Alcohol restrictions				
Alcohol-free campus	22.9***	39.9	16.9***	38.5
All dorms alcohol-free	35.0**	46.8	25.8***	47.4
Some alcohol-free dorms or floors†	75.0	67.4	81.2**	66.6
Home athletic events‡	74.0**	83.0	76.3	80.7
Home tailgate events‡	42.1***	59.0	44.7*	55.2
Home pre- or postgame parties‡	37.4***	54.8	38.8**	51.3
Homecoming celebrations	30.2***	45.8	32.5*	42.5
On-campus dances—concerts	51.9*	61.4	50.0*	60.2
On campus banquets—receptions	26.4***	40.9	24.7**	38.8
Alumni events	12.8***	27.2	11.0***	25.1
At least 4 of these 7 events	34.1***	49.7	31.8***	47.6
Alcohol education specifically targeted to:				
Freshmen	92.6***	78.7	96.8***	80.1
Fraternity or sorority members§	80.9**	66.5	83.2**	68.4
Athletes‡	79.1***	64.6	84.2***	65.9
Social norms campaign				
Conducted social norms campaign	73.6***	35.2	69.5***	43.0
Institutional investments in prevention				
Provide counseling and treatment services for abuse problems	93.0*	87.9	93.5	88.7
Assigned substance abuse employee	90.7***	75.9	88.3**	79.1
Task force to deal with substance abuse issues	79.5***	50.5	72.7***	57.3
Cooperative agreement with community agencies	58.9***	42.3	57.8**	45.5
At least 3 of these 4	81.8***	55.4	79.9***	60.5

†Includes schools banning alcohol in all dorms.

‡Among schools with intercollegiate sports (*n* = 640).

§Among schools with fraternities and sororities (*n* = 469).

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

public funds. Eighty-three percent of schools receiving alcohol industry funding for their prevention efforts and 81% of schools that did not receive industry funding considered their programming to be successful.

COMMENT

The findings of this study indicate that colleges and universities are continuing their efforts to respond to heavy student alcohol use by using a variety of prevention measures. Currently, most respondents considered that alcohol use on their campus was a problem. Fewer respondents in 2002 than in 1999 considered alcohol use to be a major problem, but also significantly fewer considered alcohol use to be only a minor problem.

All schools were doing something to respond to the problem. The most popular actions included providing counseling and treatment services for students with abuse problems; conducting alcohol education targeted to freshmen; providing alcohol-free residences; employing a substance abuse official; restricting alcohol use at home athletic events; and conducting alcohol education targeted toward fraternity members, sorority members, or athletes. A majority of

schools had established a task force to deal with substance abuse issues, restrict alcohol use at on-campus dances or concerts, or restrict alcohol at home tailgate events. Half of all schools have conducted a social norms marketing campaign. This was an increase since 1999, when 20% of schools in the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study reported conducting social norms-style marketing campaigns on their campuses.² A minority of schools (34%) banned alcohol for all students on campus, and 43% of schools banned alcohol in all on-campus student residences. Forty-four percent of schools restrict alcohol use at several college-sponsored, on-campus events.

Although all schools were doing something about student drinking, there appeared to be a split among schools that restricted access by limiting alcohol use on campus and those seeking to reduce demand through alcohol-education and social norms marketing. Schools that were more likely to conduct targeted alcohol education, to invest in institutional prevention efforts, and to conduct social norms campaigns were less likely to restrict alcohol use on campus, in the residence halls, or at specific school-sponsored events. In particular, schools that conducted social

norms campaigns were much less likely to restrict on-campus students alcohol use.

The alcohol industry is a significant funder of alcohol education programs on college campuses.^{1,19,20} We found that 1 in 5 colleges and universities nationwide received funding for their alcohol prevention and education programming from the alcohol industry. One in 4 public institutions and nearly 1 in 3 large schools received alcohol industry funding.

Most schools that received public and alcohol industry funding conducted social norms campaigns. This is not surprising because both the US Department of Education¹⁸ and the alcohol beverage industry^{19,20} have awarded millions of dollars in grants to schools to conduct social norms campaigns. However, a recent national study found no evidence to support the effectiveness of social norms marketing campaigns in reducing college alcohol use.¹⁷

Given the limited financial and human resources for establishing alcohol-prevention initiatives on campuses, conducting a social norms campaign may decrease the likelihood that other efforts, such as restricting alcohol use on campus, are implemented. This would be unfortunate because there is no evidence from scientifically rigorous evaluations supporting the effectiveness of such student-oriented approaches as alcohol education and social norms marketing campaigns, but there is evidence that restricting access to alcohol may support abstinence and reduce heavy drinking and its associated effects.⁴⁻¹⁴ Another possibility is that, on certain campuses (eg, large public institutions, highly competitive private schools, and schools with large fraternity and sorority systems), the perceived costs (financial, administrative, and political) of limiting access to alcohol are too high, so that these schools limit themselves to the more palatable alcohol education and social norms approaches.

In any event, colleges may want to reconsider prevention initiatives that are one dimensional, focusing exclusively either on demand or supply. They may also want to examine the extent to which the pursuit of available funding is the driving force that shapes the direction of their alcohol initiatives.

This picture of prevention initiatives at US 4-year colleges and universities should be considered in the light of its limitations. Although we sent the survey to the president of each college and university, surveys were often delegated to others in the institution. The president or the chosen respondent may or may not have been aware of all campuswide policies, prevention program initiatives, and details about funding. Furthermore, although the survey responses were confidential, the survey was not anonymous—the identity of each college was known—and this could have influenced the respondent's candor.

Among the strengths of this study are its representative national sample, its high response rate, and the clear pattern of associations found across a number of prevention areas. For these reasons, the study provides an important nationwide picture of college alcohol prevention efforts. More-

over, because some *possible* causal interpretations of these associations have been suggested, it is important to state that, in the final analysis, this is a correlational study, and, as such, causality among its variables cannot be inferred.

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NOTE

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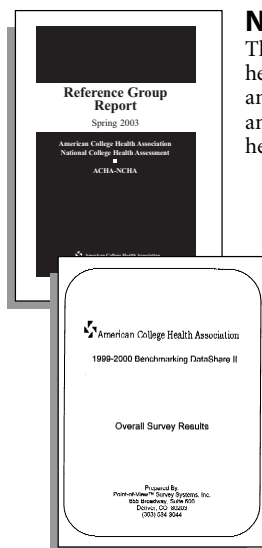
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