So What Is an Administrator to Do?

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Introduction

Headlines such as these are a college administrator's worst fear. Despite the fact that college drinking is down from a decade ago (Presley, et al., 1996), all of the major studies on college students' drinking habits show that binge drinking is still a serious problem. At least 40% of college students are reported as binge drinkers, consuming at least 5 drinks in a single sitting some time during the past two weeks (Wechsler, 1995; Presley and Meilman, 1992; Meilman, 1999). And while half of the binge drinkers in college had already binged when they were seniors in high school (Wechsler, 1995), the environment of a college is known to be associated with the prevalence of binge drinkers.

The problem is a serious one. In a 1989 study sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation, college presidents nationwide viewed alcohol abuse as their number one campus life problem (Cited in Wechsler, 1995). The problem is no longer confined just to those who abuse alcohol themselves and the problems they may face, like unplanned and unsafe sexual activity, injuries, crime, poor academic performance, etc. Now the concern extends to the well-documented secondhand effects—assault, damaged property, interrupted studying, etc.—which touch the lives of most every student.

And if the interest in creating a campus environment conducive to learning and growth were not enough of a motivator for a college executive to take action, the laws now require it. Starting with the basic requisites outlined in the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and its amendments of 1989, institutions that receive any Federal funds must meet several requirements. Among them are the adoption of an alcohol and other drug program, and definition of a policy that prohibits the unlawful possession, use and distribution of illicit drugs. (Epstein, 1998b) So whether moral or intellectual leadership or legal requirement is the motivator is immaterial. Simply put, action is required.

What is it that university administrators must do? They must define and articulate the institution's culture, values and philosophy. They must develop and enforce clearly articulated policies relating to alcohol use and abuse. They must take specific action based upon those policies, in areas such as the allocation of resources, program design and delivery, and coalition building. And they must act on their basic mission as an educational institution by building and using an institutional research agenda. While all of these steps cannot guarantee that such headlines will not appear for a given school, they can help create a supportive and healthy campus environment and culture.

Defining An Institution's Culture And Values

Fundamental to addressing the issues of alcohol use and abuse is a clear understanding of the mission and philosophy of a given institution. While all schools must comply with State and Federal laws, no single policy can cut across the 3,000+ institutions of higher learning; they simply are too different (Gulland, 1994).

For example, colleges and universities founded upon religious principles will naturally draw upon different philosophies than publicly supported research universities. Those institutions that are

residential in nature and focus on the social, personal and emotional development of students as well as their intellectual growth will differ from those commuter institutions that primarily serve the academic and vocational development of their students. Schools serving the traditional college-aged population (i.e., 18-22) will face different challenges and environments than those institutions with students mostly older than 21.

Schools with academic programs closely associated with the hospitality field will of course include the topic of legal beverages as part of their curriculum just as colleges of agriculture may have viticulture in their course of studies. Some schools will permit no information about alcohol in the curriculum, especially in a positive context, yet those with majors in food science or nutrition may have a serious body of research to report.

Aside from these clearly defined differences of history, mission or demographics, to name but a few, schools will differ in their basic approach to student life. Those with a philosophy of 'freedom with responsibility' will naturally differ from those with a strict orientation toward discipline. Such philosophic differences often include approaches to parent involvement in the academic lives of their children and their awareness of judicial matters and inclusion in addressing behavioral concerns, with the range being from considerable involvement to virtually none. Those institutions whose judicial codes are grounded in an educational approach will differ from those whose disciplinary orientation is one of punishment. It is in the context of such philosophic approaches that a policy addressing alcohol use must be defined. For if the alcohol policy is to have true meaning, and be accepted by the campus community, it must be seen as consonant with the mission and fundamental values of the school and the general orientation to other policies and programs.

Developing Institutional Policies

Once an institution is clear about its own culture, values, mission and population, it is ready to move beyond the simple recitation of Federal, State and local law and develop an institutional policy that can be tailored to the specific school. As a baseline, the policy must comply with the Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 that require:

1. The annual distribution, in writing to each employee and to each student who is taking one or more classes for any type of academic credit except for continuing education units, a policy that includes:
    1. the standards of conduct that clearly prohibit, at a minimum, the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees on its property or as part of any of its activities;
    2. a description of the applicable legal sanctions under local, State and Federal law for the unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol;
    3. a description of the health risks associated with the use of illicit drugs and the abuse of alcohol;
    4. a description of any drug or alcohol counseling, treatment, or rehabilitation or re-entry programs that are available to employees or students; and

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5. a clear statement that the institution of higher education will impose disciplinary sanctions on students and employees (consistent with local, State and Federal law), and a description of those sanctions, up to and including expulsion or termination of employment and referral for prosecution for violations of the standards of conduct; …a disciplinary sanction may include the completion of an appropriate rehabilitation program.

2. A biennial review (of the policy and educational program)…to
    1. determine its effectiveness and implement changes if they are needed; and
    2. ensure that the disciplinary sanctions...are consistently enforced (DeJong and Langenbahn, 1995).

In addition, policies should extend beyond this specific requirement to address the issues of student conduct and institutional responsibility, while minimizing the risk of liability. Ideally, the institution will define the outcomes it seeks in relation to alcohol use and even determine how it might measure such outcomes. For example, is the desired outcome a complete ban on the presence of all alcohol among undergraduate students or is the focus on responsible behavior and mitigation of serious offenses? Will successful implementation of the policy be determined by a total elimination of behavioral problems or will a steady reduction be viewed as success? Will the focus be solely on the individuals involved in alcohol abuse or will attention be paid to those affected by the secondary effects? Determining such measurable goals a priority helps define the parameters for the institutional policy while also defining the kinds of data that need to be collected.

Numerous publications exist to assist administrators in the creation and review of these policies (See, for example, Gulland, 1994; DeJong and Langenbahn, 1995; Pittayathikhun, Ku, et al., 1997). To effect the balance of concern for students with protections against institutional liabilities, some lawyers (Gulland, 1994) recommend the following:

- Adopt only rules and sanctions that the school is willing (and able) to enforce. There is much greater risk of liability for failure to enforce strict supervisory rules and regulations than there is for conscientious implementation of policies that emphasize student responsibility and that impose sanctions when students fail to fulfill their obligations.
- Enforce the policy consistently while respecting students' rights to privacy to fair hearing procedures.
- Emphasize education, both as a general means of acquainting students with the dangers of substance abuse and as a response to violations of the school's policy.
- Focus on circumstances that present the greatest danger and risk of liability—situations in which the school is involved in selling alcoholic beverages or acting as a social host …and recurring patterns of alcohol abuse during particular events or by repeat offenders.

Other concrete recommendations have been put forward by those who insure universities against such liabilities (United Educators, 1993).

- Draft policies that encourage responsible behavior, but avoid policies that seek to prevent specific types of harm or prescribe narrow types of behavior with alcohol.
- Do not sell alcohol unless the institution is prepared to handle the responsibilities imposed by social host or dram shop laws.

- Educate groups that host parties—fraternities, 'dormitories,' alumni—about their 'host' liability for serving alcohol to underage drinkers and ways to detect over-consumption.
- Run programs about drinking and driving.
- Deal immediately with known violations of institutional policies and be consistent and firm with discipline.

Increasingly, the environment in which these policies are being defined is being complicated by legislation beyond just the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. The amendments to FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) now permit schools to disclose to parents any violations of local, State and Federal laws and school policies and rules related to alcohol. Indeed, several States (e.g., Massachusetts, Virginia) now require public institutions in those States to do just that. Such legislation makes institutional decision-making more limited and raises complicated questions about consistency of discipline, and involvement of parents in the college student's education and the rights of students to privacy and confidentiality. For example, if an institution now discloses a student's violation of the alcohol policy to his/her parents, what expectations does that create on the part of the parents regarding violations of the academic code of conduct? Will the school also involve parents in disciplinary matters related to residential life? These questions need to be thought through carefully as schools respond to the expectations established by the Federal legislation and public discussion of the issue.

Once the general institutional policy is defined, attention should be turned to the consistent enforcement of such policy and the development of education programs related to it. In addition, administrators should focus on specific areas of the institution in which alcohol abuse may be more likely. Among these areas are a focus on residence life, the fraternity and sorority system and athletics. In addition, decisions need to be made relative to the involvement of donors associated with the alcohol industry, alcohol industry sponsorship on-campus and how the university will deal with alcohol and alumni events.

Residence Life

It goes without saying that alcohol is prohibited in public rooms of residence halls (e.g., lounges, lobbies, community spaces) in which underage students reside and it also is a basic tenet of any policy that underage students are in violation of the law if they possess or consume alcohol. However, a number of more complicated issues emerge if one just scratches below this surface.

For example, how should an institution respond to the request of students desiring a substance free residence when the only students they house are under legal age? Is the institution putting itself in greater risk of legal action if it designates one or more halls as substance-free when it would be assumed that all the residences should be filled with students who do not possess or use alcohol?

How does the institution write policies and train resident advisors regarding the oversight of public spaces and private bedrooms? What is the proper role of peers—mentors? advisors? disciplinarians? At what point is the student's right to privacy violated because of concern about alcohol abuse? What is the correct disciplinary response for someone whose only violation is the use of alcohol—administer punishment? refer to treatment? both? And how is the institution prepared to respond vis à vis residential accommodations for a recovering alcoholic (whose rights are protected under ADA)? These are just some of the questions needing to be addressed in an alcohol policy that includes residence life. The answers must flow from the basic institutional philosophy, not some generic directive.

Fraternities And Sororities

If the situation is complicated with respect to residential life, it becomes even more so when dealing with Greek life. The intense correlation between membership/residence in a fraternity or sorority and alcohol abuse makes it essential for the institution, and the governance bodies for fraternities and sororities, to work together to define very clear policies and enforcement mechanisms involving the Greek system. Inherent in that definition needs to be a respect for the fundamental principle of self-governance that defines many fraternity/sorority systems; yet, there also needs to be a recognition that these organizations exist as part of the university environment, and thus, they also must comply with that campus culture.

The issue is further complicated by the involvement of the national fraternity or sorority systems that set their own policies in this domain. Given the considerable liability many chapters face because they host events with alcohol and some own their own houses, it is not surprising that national organizations are promulgating policies that cover all of their chapters, regardless of institutional location. While such action meets their individual organization needs, it can add severe complications for a specific campus.

The urgency of this issue for the Greek system, however, is evident. The prevalence of binge drinking among fraternity and sorority members is undeniable when one reads any of the surveys (Wechsler, 1995; Presley and Meilman, 1992; Meilman, et al., 1998). Fraternity and sorority residence or membership was found to be the strongest predictor for high-risk drinking behavior. Eighty (80) percent of women living in sorority houses and 86 percent of men living in fraternity houses qualified as binge drinkers (Wechsler, 1995). Sorority members were found to be nearly twice as likely to be binge drinkers compared to other female students (62% vs. 35%, respectively) and the same held true for fraternity members (75% vs. 45%) (Wechsler, 1995). What is in question is whether fraternities and sororities simply attract those who are more inclined to abuse alcohol or whether such behavior is directly caused by participation in that system (Borsari and Carey, 1999).

The answer to that last question appears more mixed between fraternities and sororities. Among fraternity members, 60 percent of those living in the houses had binged in high school; 75 percent of those who did not binge in high school did so when they moved into the fraternity house. Among sorority women, only one-third had binged in high school, but 75 percent of those who did not binge in high school did become bingers while in college (Wechsler, 1995). Both fraternities and, to a lesser extent, sororities attract students who are inclined to be binge drinkers while both have an atmosphere to promote binge drinking (Borsari and Carey, 1999).

The enormous liability taken on by fraternity and sorority members has caused many of the national fraternities to move toward the policy long adopted by sororities, that is, banning the presence of alcohol in the fraternity house (Williams, 1996; Boston, 1998; Budoff, 1998; *Peer Educator*, 1999; Burke, 1999). Just this past summer, seven members of the National Panhellenic voted to restrict their social commitments in fraternity houses to those chapters that offered only alcohol-free events in their houses. Any event that included alcohol would necessarily be off campus.

While such policies address the social host liability concerns raised by most chapters, and also prevent the sororities from being the enablers to alcohol abuse and damage in fraternity houses, they seem shortsighted in their fundamental impact on the culture of drinking. Without fundamental change, the drinking behavior is likely to move off-campus with the same tragic consequences that can happen on

campus. One such example was the tragic death, in 1997, of a Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity member at the Louisiana State University, a campus that does not permit alcohol on its premises, including fraternity houses (Cohen, 1997). To effect any substantive change in the alcohol culture requires just that, a cultural and environmental approach to change. Inherent in such an approach are the required leadership and participation of local chapter members themselves (Arnold and Kuh, 1992). National fraternity staff, college administrators and even alumni lack the knowledge and skills to intervene in the complicated system of rewards and sanctions used by fraternity members to socialize newcomers to the group norms and values.

Arnold and Kuh (1992) draw upon research related to culture change to make the following recommendations to members of the Greek system and campus administrators related to policies and practices in fraternities and sororities:

- Conduct cultural audits of local chapters using insiders and outsiders.
- Adapt culture change strategies and tactics.
- Hold members of the local chapter responsible for bringing about culture change.
- Defer rush until the end of freshman year or the second year (so students have exposure to a broader culture than just that of the Greek system and so they establish themselves as members of the university community first, Greek community second).
- Redouble efforts to recruit new members from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups (for whom alcohol is not such a primary focus).
- Select live-in advisors committed to institutional mission and culture change.
- Eliminate organizations that are unwilling/unable to change.

Several campuses are attempting to work with their Greek systems to effect change in light of the known dangers and challenges (*Fraternity and Sorority Strategic Plan*, 1997) and have adopted rush and membership policies and social responsibility guidelines that clearly place the responsibility on the students. The success of such endeavors remains to be seen.

One policy issue that touches on the Greek system, as well as the overall residential system, is that of a Good Samaritan rule. If an institution's judicial system includes strict punishment for violations of the underage drinking law, or lack of adherence to party registration rules, some students refuse to call for help for a fellow student who is in trouble as a result of alcohol abuse. They are afraid of putting that student, themselves or their friends who may have organized the party, in harm's way if the police arrive in response to their call for help, because they know that a rule has been broken. At the same time, police have an obligation to uphold the law, so it is unfair, if not unlawful, to ask them to ignore violations they see just because the student involved needs assistance. Trying to find the balance between appropriate regulation and encouragement to seek help when it is needed is the goal of campus Good Samaritan rules. Each institution needs to work carefully and collaboratively in finding that proper balance.

Athletics

Athletics is another area that deserves special focus in the development of campus policies on alcohol use and abuse. It is a venue that requires focus both on the behavior of the students involved and on the environment that surrounds the athletic experience. The involvement of the alcohol industry in providing financial support for big-time athletic programs and the presence of large-scale events and up-scale venues, both of which include alcohol, contribute to the many dimensions of this issue.

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According to presentations at a symposium in March 1999, sponsored by the Higher Education Center of Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, college athletes are more prone to alcohol and other drug use and adverse consequences than are nonathletes on campus. And college athletics can contribute to a range of alcohol and other drug problems for campuses and surrounding communities (*Catalyst*, 1999).

Perhaps surprisingly, weekly alcohol consumption goes up as a student progresses from noninvolvement in athletics, through being a team member to being in a leadership position. A similar pattern is evident in rates of binge drinking and also in use among those participating in recreational athletics (Leichliter, et al., 1998).

While it is difficult to know why athletes engage in such behavior differently than their peers, it is apparent that alcohol is closely associated with the athletic enterprise in this country. Pro-drinking advertising and sports sponsorships by the alcohol industry are common in professional sports and are not unknown in collegiate athletics. The alcohol industry still provides considerable financial support to collegiate athletics; alcohol is still served in some college arenas and many new college stadiums include luxury boxes for alumni and other supporters where alcohol is served (even if the students in the stands cannot purchase alcohol). As collegiate athletics becomes more 'professional' in its approach, the influence of alcohol seems to permeate the entire atmosphere.

A number of recommendations for reducing problems of alcohol abuse and athletics emerged from the 1999 symposium on collegiate athletics and alcohol (*Catalyst*, 1999):

1. The NCAA should reassess its policies for accepting alcohol advertising and sponsorship.
2. Schools should enforce consistent alcohol control measures for public events (e.g., pregame tailgating and in-stadium alcohol availability) to avoid double standards.
3. Schools should engage their surrounding communities in collaborative prevention activities.
4. Schools should reduce risks posed by postgame celebration and consolation occasions by hosting social gatherings that do not involve alcohol.
5. Schools should examine the pros and cons of acceptance of support from the alcohol industry. Finally, symposium participants agreed on the importance of reaffirming the educational mission as the top priority of colleges and university. Mitigating the impact of entertainment or business ventures often associated with big-time sports is an important step.

Alumni Events And Fund-Raising

As campuses confront the issues of alcohol abuse and other drug use and define policies that will mitigate such behavior, one area of challenge that often emerges relates to alumni programming. While all of the alumni are of legal age to drink, the extent to which they abuse alcohol, especially upon their return to the campus, can be measurable and have serious consequences for the university. There also is a concern among students that a double standard exists for donors and the rest of the community. When the President of the University of Rhode Island announced that institution's policy change, banning alcohol from all functions on campus, some of the most vocal resistance (besides from the fraternities) came from the development office and deans, worrying that the lack of alcohol could inhibit their development activities (Schroeder, 1999). Once the policy change was announced, however, the university reported little actual resistance from the alumni and no negative impact on development.

The issue of accepting gifts or sponsorships from the alcohol industry poses a different set of challenges. An active debate exists among those involved in this issue (Catalyst, 1999). Is it 'accepting blood money' or giving the industry free advertising, or is it requiring the alcohol industry to be part of the solution? President Edward H. Hammond of Fort Hays State draws the analogy with the automobile industry or chemical companies or other companies producing legal products. "Every time a legal product is abused in our society, we demand the producers of the product take ownership and be a part of the solution" (*Catalyst*, 1999).

For institutions that have hospitality programs or food-related curricula, or alumni who have entered the alcohol industry, the two issues (alumni giving and industry support) come together. The university must be clear in articulating its position, especially about alcohol advertising on campus, accepting gifts and allowing support from the industry. It certainly is possible to prohibit the direct advertisement or official sponsorship yet still permit gifts from the Busch family, or Coors, or Sebastianis. What fits for any given institution, however, must flow from the basic philosophy and policy guidelines.

Taking Concrete Action

With the institutional culture defined and the policies in place, the focus must move to concrete action plans. One hopes that the focus of the activity can be forward looking and proactive, not simply reacting to all of the negative behavior and bad consequences. Moreover, institutional resources should be directed toward education, intervention and active programming as well as enforcement.

The most successful strategies to changing student behavior are likely to be multidimensional. As decisions are made about the allocation of resources (time, money, people), the leadership of the institution, together with the expert staff and faculty, should determine how much will be directed toward prevention or harm reduction or direct intervention. They also should consider how much to focus on the needs of students abusing alcohol compared to addressing the needs of those affected by the secondary effects of alcohol abuse. They also will need to balance attention to individuals versus the overall campus environment. These decisions cut across such topics as the involvement of key stakeholders; staffing levels and assignments; program design and delivery; communication campaigns; and event management.

Involving Stakeholders

Addressing the culture of alcohol and changing the behavior of students in relation to their use and abuse of alcohol requires the involvement of virtually the entire campus. The students are key to the process and must be integrally involved; the president must take a leadership role; faculty need to be engaged in many ways; and a coalition of staff is critical.

Perhaps the key stakeholder in all of this effort is the student. Individually, and as a group, they have the opportunity, if not obligation, to be advisors, advocates and activists in bringing about change. In fact, the most successful and sustainable change seems to occur when it is student—dash;driven-led by the students and based on their own self-generated code of behavior—and then, administratively supported (Wechsler, 1995).

There are many ways in which students can engage with this issue (Join Together, 1998). Among the first is holding themselves accountable for complying with the community standards of behavior that have been determined. Having students monitor their own behavior, particularly in the context of student organizations, is not an abdication of the institution's obligations, but rather the basis for them

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to exercise self-governance and accept their own responsibilities, especially when they serve as social hosts (Gulland, 1994).

Students also can serve as key communicators on this topic through their writing for campus newspapers (Gomberg, 1999). Administrators may wish to reach out to encourage them to adopt an environmental approach to their reporting. By doing so, they will help convey the message that alcohol abuse is not just the problem of the individual student but rather the entire campus community.

And finally, students can be and need to be the initiators of much of the programming offered that does not include alcohol. They know better than any college administrator what type of activity will engage their peers, when and where that activity needs to take place and how best to advertise it to make sure that students are aware of its existence. They can be particularly influential in the first year, or even first semester, in setting the tone for their fellow students. The type of activities they plan for orientation and the environment they create in that critical first month can have a significant influence on the behavior and expectations of the entering students (Upcraft, 1999). Trying to make change without the leadership of students is almost a guarantee of failure.

The key role of the chief executive has been outlined in a most articulate fashion by the Presidents Leadership Group (1997). As colleges and universities move toward implementing the environmental management approach, the role of the president becomes even more important. If basic change at the institutional, community and public policy level is needed, beyond just the education and intervention strategies for individual students, the president must be seen as an involved party. As outlined by the Presidents Leadership Group, presidents must Be Vocal (by openly and publicly acknowledging the problems that exist), Be Visible (by taking an active stand, conveying clear expectations and standards) and Be Visionary (by making alcohol and other drug abuse prevention a priority). In fact, there are 13 specific recommendations for leadership needed from presidents (Presidents Leadership Group, 1997; DeJong, 1998). They should:

1. Work to ensure that school officials routinely collect data on the extent of the alcohol and other drug problem on campus and to make this information available.
2. Frame discussions about alcohol and other drug prevention in a context that other senior administrators, faculty, students, alumni, and trustees care about—excellence in education.
3. Define alcohol and other drug use not as a problem of the campus alone, but of the entire community, which will require community-level action to solve.
4. Use every opportunity to speak out and write about alcohol and other drug prevention to reinforce it as a priority concern and to push for change.
5. Work to ensure that all elements of the college community avoid providing "mixed messages" that might encourage alcohol and other drug abuse.
6. Demonstrate their commitment to alcohol and other drug prevention by budgeting sufficient resources to address the problem.
7. Appoint a campus-wide task force that (a) includes other senior administrators, faculty, and students, (b) has community representation, and (c) reports directly to the president.
8. Appoint other senior administrators, faculty, and students to participate in a campus-community coalition that is mandated to address alcohol and other drug issues in the community as a whole.
9. Lead a broad exploration of their institution's infrastructure and the basic premises of its educational program to see how they affect alcohol and other drug use.

10. Offer new initiatives to help students become better integrated into the intellectual life of the school, change student norms away from alcohol and other drug use, and make it easier to identify students in trouble with substance use.
11. Take the lead in identifying ways to effect alcohol and other drug prevention through economic development in the community.
12. Be involved, as private citizens, in policy change at the State and local level, working for new laws and regulations that will affect the community as a whole.
13. Participate in State, regional, and national associations to build support for appropriate changes in public policy.

It is naïve, however, to assume that just by having presidential leadership on this issue fundamental change can occur. Faculty members also have a key role to play (Ryan and DeJong, 1998) in areas that traditionally fall to the faculty to determine: the setting of the academic calendar and curriculum design. Engaging faculty may not be as difficult as it could otherwise seem. A survey conducted by the Core Institute showed that more than 90 percent of faculty and staff are concerned about the impact of students' alcohol and other drug use (Cited in DeJong, 1998).

One of the first steps that faculty can take is to make sure the academic calendar supports the full engagement of students in the intellectual life of the institution. Classes should be held Monday through Friday, not ending by Thursday; exams should be given throughout the week, including Friday, to keep students fully engaged in their academic pursuits. Similarly, the structure of orientation for new students and commencement week activities for seniors should be examined in the context of the social scene that may emerge.

Faculty also can infuse their curriculum with information related to alcohol and other drug use. While faculty must remain free to determine the content and structure of their courses, there are many ways in which curricula examples can be tied to the topics of alcohol and other drug use. There are a variety of pedagogical techniques, as well, that can actively engage students in this area (Ryan and DeJong, 1998). While it may be obvious to see how alcohol topics can be infused in many curricula (e.g., hotel administration, nutrition, and food science), there are many ways in other areas of study as well to include specific topics or use examples that may help educate students.

Finally, faculty can be involved in this issue through their engagement with students beyond the formal setting of the classroom. Many campuses now have faculty and their families living in residence (Shroeder, 1999), permitting them to bridge the gap between the intellectual and social environments on campus. Increasingly, campuses are realizing that faculty need to be involved with students beyond the classroom to provide the positive support and guidance many students need at this critical developmental stage of their lives.

Staffing

One of the key decisions college administrators face is the amount and level of staffing to direct toward the university's efforts. Too often the issue is confined only to health education professionals, or residence life staff or perhaps deans of students. In fact, a coalition of staff is needed for effective action, especially if the institution is taking a multifaceted or environmental approach in addressing it. Health education professionals are essential to the effort, but they need linkages with student activity professionals and Greek and residence life staffs to successfully impact the way students spend their time. They also need to connect with clinical staff in their health centers to be able to identify those

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most in need of intervention. And they need to link with campus police and judicial staff to connect appropriate interventions with those who identify students with alcohol problems because of their campus violations.

In addition to forming a coalition to address this issue, it is important that the leaders of any campus-wide effort have direct access to the president as well as control of or access to financial resources to effect change. Often this requires a person to be in a nontraditional reporting position; but if institutional change is to happen, it cannot be led by a staff person buried deep in the organization.

Programming

The type and amount of social programming play a significant role in students' use and abuse of alcohol. One of the most contentious issues is the creation of a campus pub, especially on a residential campus that mostly serves students of a traditional age. While one can argue that offering such a program on campus provides greater oversight to the environment in which students will drink, one also must recognize the host liability the institution is assuming with this role (Gulland, 1994). In addition, such program support raises real issues about allocation of resources, especially when only a quarter of the students may be able to take advantage of such a facility. On the other hand, many programs are supported (intercollegiate athletics could be cited as one; campus theatre another) in which only a small portion of the students participate directly. The final decision of offering a campus pub must result from the full understanding of the campus climate and approach to alcohol use and abuse.

Less controversial, perhaps, is the institution's support for social activities for students that do not involve alcohol. In fact, most institutions offer scores of such activities any given week; however, what the students appear to be seeking is a high-energy, social and recreational program that follows their biological clock, not that of the staff who must oversee it. Several institutions (e.g., West Virginia, UNC) have been very successful in offering all-night activities (Lofstead, 1998) or different venues to attract student interest. Key to the success in any of these social programs is the role that students play in taking the lead and sponsoring such events (Schroeder, 1999).

Communication Campaigns

One of the areas undergoing the greatest debate in the field of alcohol and other drug prevention is the direction and philosophy underlying media and communication campaigns. The traditional efforts featuring the egregious results of alcohol abuse (e.g., death, serious injury, rape, etc.) are being countered by the social norms approach (e.g., emphasizing behavior that is typical of the student population, not the worst-case examples). Moreover, some institutions still focus on first-hand effects of alcohol abuse while others are trying to motivate change by empowering those who are victims of the secondary effects. Understanding the fundamental principles of these various approaches is important to determine how compatible various communication campaigns may be.

For example, some professionals wonder if all the attention to the negative effects of binge drinking, and the constant discussion about those students who consume 4-5 drinks in a single setting establishes a false norm among the broader student body (Gose, 1997). Instead, some will argue (Perkins and Berkowitz, 1986; Berkowitz, 1998; Johannessen, 1999) that more change can result from emphasizing the moderate behavior demonstrated by most students. For example, in 1989, 45 percent of the undergraduates at Northern Illinois University indicated they consumed five or more drinks the

last time they 'partied.' Yet, when asked about their friends' drinking patterns, students pegged the proportion that drank five or more drinks at 70 percent (Gose, 1997). After an extensive campaign informing the students what in fact was the level of alcohol consumption, Northern Illinois experienced two changes. The students' perception of the degree of campus drinking had dropped by more than a third in six years. Moreover, their actual consumption also fell by more than a third.

Students tend to overestimate other students' use of alcohol. While only 2 percent of students perceived that the average student abstained altogether from alcohol use, in fact 16 percent abstained (Join Together, 1998). Similarly, surveys at the University of Arizona found that 65 percent of students thought their peers consumed six or more drinks in a typical night, while only 32 percent reported drinking at that level. Exposing students to the actual drinking norms resulted in significant decreases not only in the percentage of students who reported having five or more drinks in a single sitting, but also in 30-day use rates. Perhaps most important, the survey found substantial declines in almost all reported negative consequences related to alcohol consumption (Johannessen, 1999).

Indeed, at a conference in the summer of 1999 where campus administrators and health educators and others discussed various campus intervention programs, it appeared that the only measurable change in student behavior related to alcohol consumption came as a result of the social norms campaigns (Marchell, personal communication, 1999).

Another trend in communication campaigns that administrators should investigate and understand thoroughly is the move toward environmental approaches to the issue rather than simply focusing on individual behavior. Advocated by the Presidents Leadership Group of the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, the environmental approach moves beyond the traditional focus of education and intervention strategies for individual students and focuses, instead, on institutional, community and public policy levels (DeJong, 1998). At the core of this approach is the fundamental belief that people will make decisions about alcohol and other drug use because of the physical, social, economic and legal environment, not just because of personal or physiological needs. Such a conclusion results in a much broader approach to policy development and program delivery and creates the necessity for coalitions when addressing the management of special events that involve alcohol or the definition of an action plan for the campus.

Managing Special Events

Many campuses today are plagued with large campus gatherings often centered on alcohol. Whether they are football tailgating, fall-fest celebrations, end-of-semester gatherings, homecoming, special weekends or senior celebrations, these large events often develop into traditions in just a few short years. Trying to change these activities requires the highest level of support within the institution, significant resources and a commitment to long-term efforts. Simply mandating that they will not occur can have disastrous results (Cohen, 1997; Zimmerman, 1999). Instead, one must involve students from the very beginning and also be willing to share openly the statistics associated with these large gatherings so people can begin to see for themselves the results that occur. Candid discussion of the effects of such gatherings at least provides the beginning of an understanding about why change is necessary.

Such public discussion of the injuries and judicial actions that result from these un-sponsored, though known, events can make most college legal counsel very nervous, not to mention those in charge of

public relations, or even admissions. Yet, without honest assessment of the damage that results, and honest commitment to change, nothing really can happen.

Building Coalitions

A similar risk exists with the development of a campus/community coalition. To partner effectively with the community, the institution needs to talk honestly about the effect of unmonitored serving in the local bars, or the impact of special advertising for alcohol specials, or the overall campus drinking culture. Again, such candor can expose the campus to potential litigation or bad press; yet without it, the attention of the community is almost impossible to obtain.

And the impact of such coalitions is too strong to ignore. In one experiment, two communities in California and one in South Carolina organized citizen-led programs for more effective control of alcohol sales. Involving four key elements (a DUI campaign, a responsible service program, an emphasis on decreasing underage access to alcohol and zoning law reform) these programs had demonstrable impact. Alcohol sales to minors were cut in half and there was a 10 percent reduction in single vehicle accidents in those communities participating in the experiment, compared to three comparison communities serving as control groups (DeJong, 1997). Thus, while the risk for public exposure and distrust exists, the positive impact of taking a stand, reaching out and partnering to make a difference can have a positive outcome (Schroeder, 1999).

Building and Using a Research Agenda

One of the most important steps university administrators can take in this field of alcohol use and abuse is the development and use of research related to their own campus and community. Through existing data sources, surveys and focus groups, and program evaluations, much can be learned about the culture of the campus vis à vis alcohol use and abuse and whether that culture is consistent with the institution's mission and goals. Moreover, information can be gathered about the effectiveness of program interventions and the particular vulnerability of certain populations.

Among the existing data sources, two critical ones exist with admissions and retention. Colleges with high binge drinking rates are more likely to attract students who binged in high school compared to institutions with low binge rates (Wechsler, 1995). Institutions have seen measurable improvements in the academic talent and preparation of their students when they take strong stands to create a campus climate that takes seriously the health and welfare of their students (Schroeder, 1999). It is important then to monitor the academic background, and social experiences, of incoming students to see what type of community is being assembled on a given campus. It also is important to monitor the image that is being presented about the institution through recruitment materials, campus tours and other promotional activities. Direct or indirect clues about the campus atmosphere may be contributing to the types of student being attracted as applicants.

Similarly, monitoring student academic performance, in cohorts or as individuals, can help identify problem areas. It is common knowledge that more frequent involvement with alcohol is accompanied by lower grade point averages (Presley and Meilman, 1992; Presley, et al., 1998). Close examination of individual academic data can help identify students who may be needing help, while monitoring grades and retention data for cohorts of students can help identify student groups, living situations or other factors that may be having deleterious effects.

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A third source of existing data exists in many different places on campus, which may prevent its effective use in assessing the campus environment. This data tracks the incidents related to alcohol use and abuse, incidents that may result in judicial actions (institution-wide or within a specific unit), legal or police response, or medical intervention. Developing some method to consolidate this information, while providing appropriate levels of confidentiality, is critical to understanding the true picture of alcohol use and abuse on a campus.

A fourth source of data is the cost related to alcohol abuse. This data also is dispersed across the campus, but can be found in areas related to lost revenue from attrition, physical damage to the facilities, increased expenses in the health center if many students are serious abusers. Very little research is evident in this arena, but some guidance may be available from national studies that are beginning to emerge (Levy, et al., 1999).

Institutions also need to be engaged regularly in assessing their campus environment. Survey research provides a vitally important benchmark, not only for understanding the current state of affairs on a campus, but also as the foundation for any work in social norm campaigns (Perkins, 1999). Campuses need to be able to draw from their own student data to portray an accurate picture related to alcohol use and abuse through this form of communication. Such data should be as specific as possible to the event, or environment, for which change is being sought.

In addition, focus group research can add depth to the trends that are identified in the base-line survey research (Stewart and Shamdasni, 1990; Greenbaum, 1993). This information can be especially important if new programs are being designed or communication strategies are being developed. It will be valuable to go beyond the basic description of behavior or attitudes or consequences to understand the context and influences and motivations that surround such outcomes. That type of understanding can best be gained through focus group research.

Finally, ongoing program evaluations are critical to assess the success and impact of any of the interventions or activities that are developed. It is essential to have the feedback from the students directly, hearing both from those who may have participated as well as those who did not. Through such evaluations, modifications and improvements can be made to the activities to make them better for those who found them of interest already. Changes also can be defined that may allow such initiatives to reach broader audiences. Such program evaluations also are necessary because the interests and attention of student cohorts change within the four years they may be on campus. To design a program once, and assume it will continue to be relevant for years to come, is simply naive.

Through all of the research activities, the institution can develop a factual basis upon which to address this issue, helping to counter institutional denial that a problem exists (if indeed, one is present). The school also can model the type of inquiry and analysis it hopes its students will take forward in their own professional lives and demonstrate the impact of such research on policy development and program design.

Conclusion

The role of the university administrator is critical to this complicated issue of changing the campus culture of alcohol. The president, in particular, must be a visible and vocal spokesperson on the issue and articulate the fundamental mission of the university and how alcohol abuse runs counter to that mission. The president also must be comfortable in being honest about the specific situation on his/her campus and set forth realistic, but visionary goals.

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Often these goals will not be for total prohibition—in fact, one could argue that such policies have already failed miserably in this country. Yet, at the same time, a call for moderation should not be seen as an acceptance that the alcohol culture is intractable and simply a 'rite of passage.' In fact, change can occur and has occurred in several different ways. The true success is found when campus and community members come together to form solid coalitions and all key stakeholders, especially students, see that such change can be an improvement.

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