View From The President's Office

The Leadership Of Change

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Table of Contents

Presidents And Administrators: Facing Up To College Drinking Problems

For Dr. Robert Carothers, president of the University of Rhode Island (URI), it was URI's being called the nation's number one "party school" in the infamous Princeton Review. For Dr. James Lyons, Sr., president of California State University (CSU) at Dominguez Hills, it was a commitment to taking on social issues that colleges and communities face together. For Dr. William Jenkins, former president and current chancellor of the Louisiana State University System, it was the phone call in the middle of the night. "This is the call every president dreads," Dr. Jenkins recalls. "During a fraternity drinking contest, one student had died on the floor of the house and several others had been hospitalized for alcohol overdose."

Reasons like these explain why many college presidents and administrators and community leaders have taken on the difficult task of reducing irresponsible drinking among college students. "Although the media focuses on the most extreme incidents, it is really a pervasive, everyday problem for most colleges," says Dr. Judith Ramaley, former president of the University of Vermont. "When you get down to it, underage drinking to excess has a negative effect on everything we're trying to do as a university. It compromises the educational environment, the safety of our students (both irresponsible drinkers themselves and other students hurt by their actions), the quality of life on campus, town/gown relationships, and our reputation. In light of all the harm alcohol can do, I believe that inaction may be the institutional equivalent of co-dependency."

While media and community critics often focus on their local colleges as "the problem," in fact high-risk college drinking is now a national concern. "It's an issue every college president has to face," notes Rev. Edward A. Malloy, CSC, president of Notre Dame University. "If a campus hasn't had an incident yet, it's only a matter of time."

This paper presents practical insights from college presidents and administrators about the process of implementing interventions to promote responsible alcohol-related behavior. While other background papers developed for the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's Task Force on College Drinking review the research on prevention approaches themselves, this one focuses on the practical issues that institutions face in launching and operating alcohol-related initiatives in the real world of people, politics, and problems. Approaching implementation issues from the perspective of organizational change theory and practice, the paper first discusses how institutions are addressing the organizational factors that can support—or hinder—alcohol program success. Then it describes the experiences of colleges and universities in working with key constituencies in changing college drinking patterns: campus and community groups that are change targets, change agents, or both. The paper concludes by listing the types of research presidents and administrators wish they had in order to develop the most effective possible programs to reduce college drinking problems.

To shed light on current practices in the absence of research on alcohol program implementation, this paper is based on interviews with college presidents participating in the NIAAA Task Force and some of its key administrators (see list below). This paper also includes information and insights from previous panels and groups addressing similar concerns. Those interviewed represent diverse college settings, situations, and programmatic directions. However, their experiences highlight common issues that will resonate on many campuses around the country. Although the implementation approaches presented have not been scientifically evaluated, other institutions may find them relevant, particularly when viewed in the framework of organizational change theory and practice.

College Presidents and Administrators Interviewed

Tomas A. Arcienega, President
California State University at Bakersfield

Robert L. Carothers, President
University of Rhode Island

John T. Casteen III, President
University of Virginia

Richard Culliton, Alcohol Program Director
University of Vermont

Edward T. Foote II, President
University of Miami

William L. Jenkins, Chancellor
Louisiana State University System

William Kirwan, President
Ohio State University

James E. Lyons, Sr., President
California State University at Dominguez Hills

Nancy Mathews, Project Director
Louisiana State University Community Coalition for Change

Edward A. Malloy, CSC, President
University of Notre Dame

Susan R. Pierce, President
University of Puget Sound

Judith Ramaley, former President
University of Vermont

David Williams, Vice President for Student Affairs and Community Relations
Ohio State University

Managing The Change Process:
Aligning Organizational Factors To Support Alcohol-Related Goals

On many campuses, a decision to reduce excessive drinking among students represents a major organizational change. Just as health-related theoretical frameworks underlie the individual and environmental interventions discussed in other background papers, organizational change management theory provides a useful construct for addressing implementation issues related to college drinking efforts.

Dr. Ramaley, who has led and written about major university change experiences, notes that four conditions must exist, or be set in place, to move an institution in a desired direction (Ramaley, 1995, 1996). These include a compelling reason for the change; clarity of purpose; significance of scale (i.e., efforts large and interconnected enough to produce the desired change); and a conducive campus environment.

"Given the impact of student alcohol problems, the compelling case is not difficult to make, and I don't believe a crisis has to occur before people can commit to this issue," Dr. Ramaley says. "But to be persuasive, the case must be specific to a college's own situation. Clarity of purpose is harder to approach, because we don't have all the facts about what works in reducing underage/excessive drinking, and we need more research to take steps with greater certainty. But we looked at our underlying purpose at the University of Vermont as changing attitudes and norms to create an environment characterized by civility and respect, as well as educational achievement. Regarding significance of scale, I'd say that every change creates ripples of response, and it's important to address all of them. In our case, that has meant paying attention to both the campus and community environments as well as collaborating with others facing this problem across our State and Nation."

Creating the fourth condition, a conducive environment, is the first step in the stages of intentional, large-scale change described by Michael Heifetz (Heifetz, 1993). Conceptual models of organizational change describe key factors that affect the environment and can enable or hinder the adoption of change, such as leadership mission and strategy, organizational culture and climate, management styles and practices, organization structure, job requirements, information and decision making, and recognition, reward and performance management (Burke, 1993; Carr et. al., 1996; Duck, 1993).

Business/management research shows that comprehensively addressing all relevant factors and aligning them strategically to support a change is important to success (Carr et al., 1996). This section discusses how presidents and administrators are dealing with these factors in their efforts to reduce student drinking problems.

Leadership

"The president and trustees must make the issue of alcohol abuse and its consequences a top priority."

Commission on Substance Abuse at Colleges and Universities, 1994

"Presidential leadership is key. This means putting the prevention of alcohol abuse at the top of the higher education agenda. It means speaking out and writing about the issue at every opportunity. It means reaching out to campus, community, and State-level groups to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for prevention. It means building support for new programs and policies, especially those with a focus on environmental change."

Presidents Leadership Group, 1997

Research in organizational behavior has shown that continuous, committed, active leadership is essential to creating change (Hall et al., 1993). Some organizational change experts believe that producing change is the primary function of leadership, and they distinguish between leadership and management. For example, while leaders set direction, develop vision and strategies, communicate goals and enable action, managers plan deductively and organize and staff activities. Both functions are critical to the change process (Kotter, A Force for Change, 1990a; Kotter, What Leaders Really Do,1990b).

The Presidents Leadership Group, which the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention convened in 1997 to recommend action steps for college presidents and administrators, recognized that many college presidents have not made student drinking problems a major leadership priority. Reasons range from frustration with the seeming intractability of the problem, fears that taking a visible stand will create bad publicity for the school, denial that a problem exists on their own campus, and time constraints (Presidents Leadership Group, 1997). Their report notes that, "Stemming alcohol abuse is not something that college and university presidents can do alone, but our active leadership is essential."

What Leaders Do

What does leadership mean in the context of college alcohol programs?

One element is making a visible, personal commitment to prevention efforts. "We have to lead; it's what we're here for, and we have to step out on issues other than fundraising," says President James Lyons. "(When I had) only been at Dominguez Hills for several months, but (I) made it clear that alcohol harm reduction (was) a major priority for me. I've spoken to all of the university's major constituency groups, both to educate them about the issues and to make my position clear as we review our needs and policies."

Dr. Edward Foote, president of the University of Miami, believes it is also essential to be able to justify the importance of college drinking efforts—to make the compelling case for change himself. His long-time involvement in substance abuse issues at the national and regional level helps give him credibility.

"The first challenge," says President Malloy, "is to have the courage to evaluate the situation on one's own campus… to make an assessment of the extent of alcohol abuse problems and the forms and patterns that it assumes. From then on, it's important to be alert, review the data, and respond to changes over time. The president can have a big impact on creating a fact-based system, by insisting on and providing resources for information collection and evaluation."

All the presidents interviewed also emphasized the importance of presidential involvement in developing the vision for alcohol programs, addressing strategic considerations (see section below), and communicating about the vision, values, and policies with key constituency groups. Being a leader on alcohol issues does not necessarily mean that the president must be actively involved in the day-to-day management of the effort, nor is he or she the only one playing a leadership role. However, presidents do have some unique advantages to bring to prevention efforts. "Both on campus and in the community, having my name on the letterhead gets a greater level of participation in our efforts," reports Dr. Susan Pierce, president of the University of Puget Sound. "I keep myself actively involved in the issue by raising it in my regular meetings with the university vice presidents. We'll talk about a problem globally, and then they figure out what they can do within their own bailiwicks and by cross-cooperation to get the job done." Dr. William Kirwan, president of Ohio State University, stressed the importance of leaders setting the tone for change while allowing the institution and the community to "own" this issue. "We have to be proactive and visibly associated with new values and strategies, but we also must look for ways to get everyone involved in solving the problem," he says.

Each of the presidents interviewed emphasized his or her ability to maintain active leadership without unrealistic time commitments through their influence on staff with direct responsibilities (and, in some cases, community stakeholders); their relationship to task forces and advisory groups established to plan and guide alcohol programs (see below); their regular review of program activities and progress; and their own continuous learning about alcohol issues and interventions.

Some of the presidents interviewed do get personally involved in selected decisions. For example, President Pierce resolves any conflicts among her direct reports by considering the issues and making the decision herself. Dr. Tomas A. Arcienega, president of the California State University at Bakersfield, has a policy of reviewing and making a decision on every request to serve alcohol at a university function. "Basketball is a major sport at our school," he says, "and despite the revenue loss, we made the decision not to sell any alcohol at games. We want to maintain a family atmosphere that involves our community in a positive way, and serving alcohol would not help us reach that goal. On the other hand, most of our students are of legal drinking age (the average age is 28), and commute to the university rather than being residents. I have signed off on allowing wine to be served at events whose audiences are mainly of legal drinking age, such as our annual jazz festival and a major business conference we run in collaboration with a community law firm."

Leadership: The Difficult Issues

President Arcienega, who rarely drinks alcohol himself, says he bends over backwards to ensure that he is not inadvertently imposing, or appearing to impose, his own values on his decisions. Many presidential leaders, however, have the opposite problem: the need to reconcile personal alcohol

use—or allowing alcohol to be served at some college events—with alcohol program goals and the desire to avoid mixed messages.

President Foote confronts this issue every year when he gives two large parties for students at his home. At a picnic for freshmen, who are mostly underage, no alcohol is served. At a coat-and-tie reception for graduating seniors, beer and wine are available, despite the strenuous objections of some on his staff. "Sometimes, yes, a student does drink to excess, although that has not been a major problem," Dr. Foote recalls. "But I believe that drinking alcohol in moderation is fine, and because our goal at the university is to promote legal and responsible behavior I see no inconsistency in serving alcohol in some situations."

Even when you are paying attention, some disconnects can occur. President Jenkins remembers the day he attended back-to-back events: an alcohol-free meeting celebrating successes in their alcohol program and a champagne luncheon celebrating success in a fundraising campaign. "It only struck me later that some could say we are not being consistent," he says. When Dr. Lyons was president of Jackson State University he experienced a similar conflict: while school policy forbade drinking alcohol at sports events, the university accepted money from a beer manufacturer to pay for a badly needed new football scoreboard. "When an alum pointed out this mismatch, I had to agree: yes, we are not sending as clear a message as we should. But at the same time, I did not give the scoreboard back."

Another leadership issue is dealing with alcohol-related tragedies that occur despite a university's best efforts. "Generally speaking, the families (of students who die) don't want to see me, but some do," President John T. Casteen of the University of Virginia told the New York Times Education Life magazine. "One comes into the family's life as an invader. You go into the family's home, and what you're dealing with is their awareness it will never be the same again… What I can say is, I feel sorrow. I offer whatever help. Mostly what I do is listen, often for a couple of hours."

These traumatic incidents can also take a toll on the presidents themselves. President Malloy believes that, "It's important not to get overwhelmed by these distressing events and not to feel unduly responsible. People make bad choices, and there's a real limit to what we can expect of ourselves, even in the context of making a major commitment to reduce alcohol harm."

With a problem that has been around for centuries, it can also be hard for leaders and institutions to stay committed over the long term, especially if results are mixed or before outcomes are clear. "It took us a full 5 years to graduate all the URI students who had seen the old alcohol culture and aspired to it," President Carothers recalls. "It was tempting to moderate our approach at points along the way,

Presidential Leadership: Success Factors

- Make effective use of symbolism and the visible role ("bully pulpit") of the president's office.
- Be a model of responsible action, such as insisting on a "culture of evidence" when dealing with alcohol issues, learning from the experiences of other institutions, and sharing information about your program's experiences.
- Make it safe for leadership on alcohol issues to develop throughout your organization, such as creating a learning organization model that encourages informed action at all levels of the institution.
- Encourage the involvement of all members of the campus community in responding to the problems created by irresponsible alcohol use.
- Support strategic-based thinking and results-based planning.

Adapted from Ramaley, 2000

especially when many predicted dire consequences for fundraising and admissions. But staying the course has paid off in tangible ways: applications are up, student quality is up, and alumni giving has increased, for example. It's become clear to me that people are hungry for strong statements about values. Alcohol and drugs can be a place to begin that conversation, and it can ultimately lead to a greater university focus on issues like social justice, local economic development, and community service. I know that support for me personally has grown with my reputation for taking strong ethical positions and sticking with them."

Strategy/Strategic Vision

"An organization's strategy is both a starting point for change and a reference point for continuity. Any change an organization undertakes should be based on and congruent with its strategy."

Carr et al., 1996

Implementing strategy-driven alcohol-related programs involves taking two types of steps: aligning alcohol programs with a university's overall strategy and developing a strategic vision for alcohol efforts that clearly defines the goal(s).

At the University of Rhode Island and the University of Puget Sound, for example, reducing irresponsible alcohol use was fundamental to each school's strategy for improving the educational environment and increasing the university's academic standing. "When I came to Puget Sound, I had a mandate to clarify the university's mission and make major structural and academic changes to support our new direction," President Pierce explains. "We want to revitalize all aspects of our environment, and our alcohol initiatives are very consistent with this direction." At URI, strategic planners saw alcohol abuse as a major barrier to attracting better students and creating a culture of learning. "We knew we had to change both the reality and the image of URI as a 'party school,'" President Carothers says. "Our vision was to change the culture and attract a new kind of student, and getting a better handle on our alcohol problems has been an important factor in doing that. The results are already tangible. For instance, we now have more involvement in activities like music, library use is up, and dormitory vandalism is down."

An important element of Notre Dame's strategy is maximizing the quality of residential life. "We are deeply committed to our residential population," President Malloy explains. "About 85 percent of our students live on campus, and it is our greatest strength and source of loyalty to the university. I've lived in college dormitories for much of my adult life, so I know first-hand the impact irresponsible drinking has on the quality of residential life. About 90 percent of disciplinary problems are related to alcohol, so reducing alcohol-related harm is clearly central to our mission."

When it comes to establishing goals for strategically based alcohol efforts, two challenges arise. The first is clearly defining desired results on a topic fraught with subtext. "When our campus/community coalition began," recalls Rick Culliton, of the University of Vermont, "I was branded the coordinator of local antidrinking efforts on the front page of the local newspaper. This reflected the common fear in some constituencies that addressing alcohol problems is thinly disguised neo-prohibitionism. The reality is that we have carefully crafted our goal along with the community to maximize its

9

acceptability, as well as to reflect our strategic vision of a civil environment. We found that addressing `underage' drinking did not resonate with students, so instead we established the goal as reducing high-risk drinking in dangerous situations. This is something almost everyone can support, and it is measurable."

The national drinking age of 21 presents a dilemma for many colleges, President Malloy believes. "The more overtly that administrations get involved in promoting moderate drinking, the more susceptible they may be to legal action. Yet at Notre Dame, and I suspect elsewhere, there is not enough support from our constituencies to make a totally dry campus a feasible option. However, there is widespread support for strong action that encourages moderation."

The second challenge is establishing realistic aims for countering a complex, age-old problem. At Louisiana State University, for example, encouraging personal responsibility and emphasizing student safety are the focus of alcohol-related goals. "When I spoke this year to incoming rushees of fraternities and sororities, I explained that we are working to create a culture in which students are careful and moderate in their alcohol use, and in which they look after each other," Chancellor Jenkins says. "I see it as a mark of success that students who see peers in trouble get them to the hospital quickly, instead of worrying about recriminations. Student safety is of paramount importance, and if we save one life, our program is working."

"I think it is important to look at goals in this area as incremental steps, not as a radical revolution," President Malloy adds. "It is not realistic to expect that colleges can eradicate alcohol problems among students, given the complexity of the issues and the role of alcohol in the broader social culture. But we can work to prevent alcohol-induced behavior that violates our sense of peace and security and that makes us passive contributors to the degradation of student lives."

Structure

"It is vital that presidents form a campus-wide task force with a clear mandate to examine every aspect of the academic environment and how it might affect student alcohol abuse, and to recommend sweeping changes…Presidents should also launch a formal campus-community coalition to address community-wide issues."

DeJong, 1998

In the context of alcohol-related organizational change, addressing structure involves two elements: (1) establishing a mechanism for planning and overseeing the change and (2) aligning the organizational structure and/or relationships of the university as needed with the new priorities.

While specific structures vary to fit the individual situations of each university, most interviewees reported using some form of campus or campus/community task force to plan, steer, and assess alcohol initiatives. Schools that received grant support for their efforts, such as the University of Vermont and the Louisiana State University, have more intensive, ongoing task force activities. At Vermont, for example, the steering group meets every 3 to 4 weeks and includes Coordinator Rick Culliton; the Vice President for Student Affairs; the Directors of Residential Life, Student Life, and

Student Health Center; the Campus Chief of Police; representatives of student government and the faculty; representatives of the Burlington Police Department and Mayor's Office; and the Director of the State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division of the State Health Department.

"These folks are the main points of responsibility for implementing policies and programs, so it's been important to have them involved in planning and monitoring as well," notes Rick Culliton. "But we are also looking ahead to when our grant funding ends. Participating on the steering group has helped ground members in the issues and accustomed them to working together and understanding each other's needs. This preparation will facilitate the continuation of efforts after the grant."

In some settings, some members of a task force also report to campus administrators with key alcohol responsibilities. For example, Louisiana State has a large campus/community coalition with an executive board and five task groups that report to it. Coordinator Dr. Nancy Matthews is the director of the executive board, and she reports to the director of the Student Health Center, who has key responsibility for alcohol issues on the LSU campuses.

The Presidents Leadership Group addressed the second structural issue in organizational change when it recommended that, "College presidents should 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" (Presidents Leadership Group, 1997). Among those interviewed, this has most commonly meant what former President Ramaley calls, "Changing our communication patterns—who talks to whom about what. Getting all the stakeholders talking to each other forges new administrative interactions and actions, because universities are fueled by ideas and data." The University of Vermont has also addressed infrastructure concerns by increasing the availability of substance-free housing and revising its approach to providing alcohol education and counseling to fit the new priorities.

Another aspect of the infrastructure that many universities are considering is their student activities programs. At the University of Puget Sound, for example, the directors of Dining Services and Student Affairs are reviewing alcohol-free activities available to students. President Pierce notes that, "We're considering making the dining halls a weekend, nonalcoholic destination by having them stay open through the early morning hours when students often socialize. The key will be getting student input to tell us what would appeal to them."

Shared Values

"It is crucial that all persons at all levels within the college community…promote a 'cultural transformation' within their community that makes it clear that excessive use of alcohol is unacceptable behavior."

Commission on Substance Abuse on America's Campuses, 1994

The Burke-Litwin model of organizational change distinguishes between two sets of organizational dynamics: the transactional and the transformational. Transactional factors create the climate for change, while transformational factors relate to the fundamental behavior changes (including value

shifts) that organizations are working to produce (Burke and Litwin, 1992). Having organizational values that support a change is critical to success (Carr et al., 1996).

In the context of college drinking efforts, values and culture are particular focal points for creating positive change; in some instances creating new values and culture are the stated goals. Other background papers in this series discuss alcohol-related values issues in detail and synthesize existing research on strategies designed to affect them. Like the organizational change literature, they emphasize that values can be measured and changed; can (and should) be affected by environmental as well as educational strategies; and should ideally be addressed by subgroups (although little guidance from the college alcohol literature is currently available to guide interventions with specific populations).

Staff/Skills

"Ensure that qualified personnel are designated to implement campus efforts… Ensure faculty and staff receive ongoing training through professional development…Hire staff with pertinent knowledge, skills, and experience."

Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies, 1998 (Anderson)

As with any program, implementing alcohol initiatives involves assigning responsibilities and creating accountability. In addition, universities often find that adopting alcohol-related priorities requires a change in or an addition to staff skills. Organizational change theory suggests that both these factors will be important to alcohol program success.

All of the schools represented in the interviews have assigned responsibilities for handling alcohol issues. While the most common overall "honcho" for alcohol programs is the Vice President for Student Affairs, other department heads have related responsibilities. These include directors of athletics, residence life and residence halls, Greek life, enforcement, judicial systems, student health, and dining services.

In addition to creating lines of staff responsibility, it is also important for colleges to ensure that they have the types of expertise they need to implement programs effectively. President Pierce, for example, hired a Ph.D. psychologist with previous college alcohol experience to help review their situation and set up programs. Several Puget Sound faculty members with topic-related specialties (one did his doctoral dissertation on the problem) have also been enlisted.

Institutions with grant funding have also been able to hire people with additional types of expertise critical to alcohol efforts. For example, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation "Matter of Degree" grants provide the half-time services of an evaluation specialist, emphasizing the importance the Foundation places on data collection and assessment. At Louisiana State, a communications director for the campus/community coalition has been invaluable in working with the press, the community, and educational materials development. "In my experience, a program coordinator, evaluation specialist, and communications director are key positions for making a campus/community coalition work effectively," notes Dr. Nancy Matthews.

The Presidents Leadership Group suggested that the campus prevention coordinator should act "as a change agent" on campus. Accordingly, that individual's skill base must go beyond education and program development to include political organizing, coalition building, and advocacy" (Presidents Leadership Group, 1997)—skills that might not intuitively be associated with this position.

President Malloy, who has hired three people with expertise in alcohol education at Notre Dame, cautions that hiring new staff should not be an automatic response. "The danger is that with the proliferation of staff we become an industry, which consumes time and resources. And we don't solve the problem by adding new job titles, so it's important to be selective in assessing skills needs."

Style

"Presidential leadership is about action, but it is also about establishing the right tone."

Presidents Leadership Group, 1997

In the context of organizational change, style refers to management and leadership style. While styles are somewhat intangible—and intensely personal—interviewees cited four elements of style they found important in dealing with college drinking issues.

Honesty

While presidents and administrators have understandable concerns about emphasizing alcohol problems, interviewees agreed that facing issues directly and without "spin" was critical. It may begin with a simple willingness to admit a problem exists on the campus, but it can extend to approaching other sensitive issues openly and encouraging staff to do the same. For example, at a recent meeting President Lyons tackled an issue everyone had recognized but no one had previously raised. "Does anyone feel hypocritical," he asked, "forbidding the use of alcohol in residence halls when 200 yards away at a reception wine is flowing freely?" While he and his staff are still grappling with such policies, a tone has been set that gives people permission to question and sets an expectation that being honest about concerns will not be punished.

Consistency

A style emphasizing consistency includes insisting on activities and policies that are consistent with an institution's overall strategy, avoiding mixed messages, and requiring uniform enforcement of policies. It also involves showing concern for fairness.

For example, when the decision was made to give top priority to reducing alcohol problems, the University of Rhode Island totally banned alcohol service at any university function. Yet President Carothers recalls that he was constantly bombarded with requests for exceptional treatment. "The first year, especially, was very rough, and I was tested by various constituencies all the time. Everyone felt their circumstances were 'special.'" I found that being tough and consistent helped me get the message across: this policy is here; it will be enforced; it is a priority.

"Perhaps the most visible test of consistency was when our football team was caught in a melee with a fraternity at a party where alcohol had been served. I suspended the entire football team and forfeited a game, which was the first time in NCAA history that a university had forfeited a game for disciplinary reasons. We got press coverage all over the country about this decision, and the principal response on and off campus was positive—people were tired of having their environment compromised by privileged treatment for substance-abusing athletes."

Another aspect of consistency is developing alcohol/substance abuse policies for staff, faculty, and administration—not just students.

Accessibility

A common theme among presidents interviewed was their availability, despite time constraints, to discuss alcohol issues and address needs and concerns. Dr. Nancy Matthews, the project director of the Louisiana State University Campus Community Coalition for Change, notes how important this leadership style is for program and administrative staff. "It is essential, " she says, "for day-to-day program leaders to have direct access to the top. I've been here 17 years and seen more hierarchical approaches; they can really slow down progress." In addition, however, many show accessibility by being available—and taking the initiative—to talk to students, parents, and alumni, as well as community leaders about alcohol issues.

Systems

"Allocate resources and high visibility space…Establish mechanisms that evaluate program implementation and effectiveness…Promote awareness of enforcement practices and consequences…Monitor extent and consistency of enforcement efforts."

Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies, 1998 (Anderson)

Another important consideration for college alcohol initiatives is aligning the organization's systems to support alcohol-related goals. Some examples include budget/resource allocation, information systems, and college policies and procedures, as well as elements already discussed in the "Structure" and "Staff/Skills" subsections.

The Presidents Leadership Group felt strongly that budgeting sufficient resources for alcohol programs is critical to success. However, they recognized that university finances can be tight and that finding resources could require long-term planning (Presidents Leadership Group, 1997). "It is a resource issue any time you elevate an issue to prominence," notes President Lyons. "Even if I don't hire new people, I am allocating resources by using the time of staff already on board." "If it's important, you find the resources," adds President Malloy.

Situations varied among those interviewed. Among schools where alcohol problems are limited (for example, universities whose students are primarily older than traditional college age and who commute to campus), resource requirements are manageable. Where a greater resource commitment is needed, schools used ad hoc financing mechanisms, regular budget procedures, and grant funding to meet their needs.

One approach is charging students for related services. For example, at the University of Vermont, alcohol education had been subsidized through the student health fee. As part of the new proactive strategy, the director of the Center for Health and Well-Being recently hired additional certified alcohol counselors and revised the alcohol curriculum. To recover related costs, she instituted a fee-for-service plan for those mandated to receive education and counseling because of alcohol-related infractions.

Ohio State University charges another alcohol-related constituency: alcohol sellers. "Many of our students wanted to have alcohol-free events, but our resources were limited," President Kirwan recalls. "We also needed more resources for alcohol education and staff training related to alcohol initiatives. So we created a fund dedicated to these needs by requiring all those who sell alcohol at any university function or facility to pay into the fund." Ohio State also found an industry partner for alcohol education. Coca-Cola, which has a 10-year contract with the university to provide soft drinks, is also funding a major new campus campaign to encourage responsible behavior and discourage alcohol abuse.

Alcohol-related policies are another "system" factor in efforts to reduce college drinking problems. Other background papers review the types of policies universities have enacted and what is known about their effectiveness. As an implementation issue, however, most institutions review and update their policies when they begin proactive new initiatives. David Williams, Vice-President for Student Affairs and Community Relations at Ohio State University, says that a critical first step at his school was compiling all the bits and pieces of related policy into one document. "We had elements of alcohol policy all over the place—in dormitory regulations, in judicial affairs, in security procedures," he notes. "Until we brought it all together, no one could really say what our existing policy was or envision what it ought to be now."

Once policies are in place, systems for enforcing them are also critical. The Presidents Leadership Group reported that lax enforcement of campus policies, local laws, and state minimum drinking age laws sends a mixed message to students and undermines program effectiveness (President's Leadership Group, 1997). Recognizing the importance of enforcement, the University of Rhode Island alcohol task force recommended a strict punitive program that requires fines and community service for the first two offenses and expulsion for the third.

Of course, enforcing policies and laws requires commitment and collaboration, often among stakeholders with competing agendas. President Pierce, for example, has enlisted the directors of the athletic department, student affairs, and security at the University of Puget Sound to review disciplinary policies and enforcement regarding drinking at university sports events. She is also trying to collaborate with the other schools in their athletic conference to promote uniformity of rules and their enforcement. As part of a cooperative effort with the local community, students who live off campus are now liable to disciplinary action for breaking university alcohol regulations. "This caused a big flurry of student concern and media attention at first, but it has died down," she reports. "While I think it is important to be consistent in our treatment of on- and off-campus students, we've had very few problems reported by neighbors or others in the community setting."

Perhaps no system is more important to overcoming student alcohol-related problems than information. Collecting and reviewing data is the only way to understand the nature and extent of problems, assess progress, improve efforts, maximize the use of resources, and be able to share experiences with others facing similar concerns. Another background paper in this series discusses evaluation issues and provides guidelines for presidents and administrators.

15

Among those interviewed, common approaches to getting needed information included completing the CORE survey initially and at regular intervals thereafter and systematically collecting data on indicators related to alcohol problems from the campus judicial system; on and off campus police; the student health center; local emergency rooms and detox centers; and local jails. Some schools also developed their own process-related and attitude surveys and conducted focus group discussions to determine attitudes of key constituencies to facilitate developing alcohol policies and initiatives that would be relevant to their needs and concerns.

"Now that the spotlight is on alcohol problems, we've asked those who keep the data to tell us whether alcohol is involved in the situations they report on, and whether it is a primary or secondary cause," Rick Culliton says. "We collect alcohol-related data monthly, when we used to do it annually, and we do separate reports broken out by gender and class year. This focus has increased the effectiveness of reporting systems and increased the number of reports we receive. As a result, we now know, for example, that we have had an increase in the number of suspensions from the university for alcohol-related offenses, a decrease in the overall number of judicial cases, and a decline in the overall number of alcohol-related offenses."

Another aspect of being informed is learning what is happening on other campuses with similar concerns. Some institutions have formed ongoing networks with other colleges and universities specifically to exchange alcohol-related information, or they raise alcohol issues before existing roundtable groups. At Ohio State, three different kinds of statewide public college and university councils provide opportunities for the President, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Wellness Director to interact with peers about alcohol problems and solutions. "Right now each school in my group is developing a brochure about what we are doing in alcohol education, policies, and parental notification," David Williams says. "We're all interested to see what the other schools are doing, and the State legislature has also expressed interest."

Information Systems: Network Assessment Standards

Network members shall…

1. Assess the institutional environment as an underlying cause of alcohol abuse and other drug use.
2. Assess campus awareness, attitudes, and behaviors regarding the cause of alcohol and employ results in program development.
3. Collect and use alcohol information from police or security reports to guide program development.
4. Collect and use summary data regarding health and counseling client information to guide program development.
5. Collect summary data on related disciplinary actions, including violent and other counterproductive behavior and use it to guide program development.

From: The Network Standards, Network of Colleges & Universities Committed to the Elimination of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 1999

Setting-Specific Issues

While the organizational change factors discussed above are universal, each college and university will view and respond to them from the unique perspective of its setting and situation. Currently, it is an open question whether prevention intervention approaches work equally well in different campus settings. The appropriateness and effectiveness of implementation approaches may also be affected by setting-related differences, including public or private, 2-year or 4-year, and different student body sizes, geographic locations, local cultures, student populations (e.g., age, gender, ethnic and socioeconomic background) and social profile (e.g., active Greek system or none, high-profile athletic program or limited sports).

For example, California State University at Bakersfield has limited problems with alcohol. According to President Arcienega, setting-related factors may largely be responsible. "We are a commuter school, with an ethnically diverse population, mostly women who are first generation college attendees," he describes. "Because we have only about 225 residential students, we have no real active Greek system. We also have a very positive community situation, in that we have a legal mandate to review all development proposals within a nine-mile surrounding area, and particularly within the one-mile, high-impact zone. So we have very few bars in the area, which makes our alcohol-free campus easier to maintain. In addition, the Bakersfield community has traditionally supported efforts to avoid college drinking problems that could affect their environment."

In sharp contrast, the University of Vermont is located in one of the heaviest drinking States in the country, and the campus is surrounded by 120 community bars. Former President Ramaley likens the situation to "being in a corral in the wild west." In southern Louisiana, where Louisiana State University is located, the alcohol culture is pervasive. Chancellor Jenkins notes that, "Our students come to us from an environment in which alcohol is central to social life. Mardi Gras, tailgating parties, a strong alcohol industry, and students who have been drinking since age 12 are the backdrop for our harm reduction efforts."

What implementation issues do presidents and administrators see related to setting differences? "Having older students who are commuters represents a different problem at Dominguez Hills than I faced at Jackson State," President Lyons notes. "It's not so much a quality of life issue for us as it can be an educational issue. If our students are having problems with alcohol, they go home and punch their own walls, not ours. But we need to identify and refer such students to counseling or treatment, because drinking problems can have an impact on our educational mission."

Other interviewees felt that it was more difficult for presidents and administrators at large universities to be as directly involved in implementing alcohol efforts as those at smaller schools. Communication systems disseminating alcohol messages must also be different. Dr. Carothers pointed out that State schools have an advantage over private schools in implementing tough policies in that they are tied more closely to State law and can involve State troopers in enforcing it.

At Ohio State, the sheer numbers of students and community members complicates dealing with "football Saturdays," which are a regular source of alcohol-related problems despite an alcohol-free stadium policy. "As a large school with a nationally prominent football program, we're a magnet for all types of people around the community and even the State," President Kirwan says. "Alcohol retailers around the university and the stadium are plentiful, and alcohol is very easily accessible. However, as a large institution with a very supportive Board of Directors we also have some advantages. For example,

17

our board has given us the resources to change our retail environment. With the support of the city, we've bought four blocks on our eastern boundary that had a heavy concentration of bars and liquor stores. With the help of the private sector, we're doing an exciting renovation to offer cafes and bookstores and restaurants that will be a positive place for students to spend time and a good neighbor for the university."

Implementation-Related Elements of a Successful Alcohol Program

1. Support from the top (i.e., the president, trustees)
2. Commitment to a permanent program
3. Shared ownership among a full range of campus constituencies, including students and faculty
4. High visibility and clear goals
5. A prevention program staff
6. Programs tailored to the needs of a specific campus

Adapted from: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1997

Working With Campus Constituency Groups

"Understand that the campus is a community and deal with the alcohol issues presented by each segment…Work with multiple audiences on campus and in the surrounding community…Communicate campus priority about alcohol issues to faculty, staff, students, and parents…"

Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies, 1998 (Anderson)

One of the challenges of implementing programs to reduce college drinking problems is the variety of groups and subgroups to be addressed and their diverse needs and agendas. Key campus constituencies for alcohol efforts include students; specific student subgroups such as Greek organizations, athletes and student leaders; faculty; alumni; and parents.

Students

"Many students respond to alcohol policies with resistance," President Malloy says. "Some identify alcohol with the freedom to make their own mistakes. We try to stress that decisions about alcohol consumption are not just individual—they can affect the common life of the university."

"For a subgroup of students, it's always about their 'rights,' and never about their responsibilities," former President Ramaley reports. "They feel this is their time to sow wild oats and that it is 'part of the college experience' to drink to excess. There is also this strange myth that they can drink irresponsibly and be held harmless—that the only record that exists of their college days is their transcript—which, of course, is not true."

18

How are colleges working constructively with students on alcohol issues? Interviewees offered the following approaches.

- Involving students in alcohol program efforts. At Louisiana State University, for example, students are an active part of the task forces that direct program efforts and are developing approaches to promote cultural change in student organizations. They are also a visible part of the campus-community coalition, helping to clean up the local bar scene, working with media representatives, and having the authority to interact with community leaders. "Our student members are just terrific," Dr. Matthews notes. "Students must apply to be part of the coalition, and we're selective about whom we choose. Because the chancellor has been so vocal in his support and so actively involved in our efforts, it is considered an honor to participate. We reinforce that perception through rewards and recognition."
- At Ohio State University, students are part of ad hoc task forces, but in addition all students are invited to review and respond to suggested new policies before they become official. This input helps administrators see where students actually stand, and it makes policies more credible. For example, the no-alcohol policy at football games has strong student support. Students are also on the front lines of Ohio State's judicial review through the dormitory councils that review cases of first alcohol infractions.
- Interestingly, no pattern emerged from those interviewed about which types or groups of students get involved or should be recruited into alcohol efforts. For example, student government leads the drive for responsible behavior on one campus, while leading the resistance at another.
- Recognizing that "students" are not homogeneous regarding drinking issues. The University of Vermont, for example, focuses heavily on freshmen, because statistics have shown them to be particularly problem prone. Others note that nondrinkers and responsible drinkers are important audiences for program efforts and an important source of support. "Part of our approach is to create an environment where students don't feel they have to be tolerant of abusive drinking," Rick Culliton says. "It's empowerment for those who are acting responsibly."
- Starting immediately, if not sooner. Schools are informing students of alcohol policies and modeling cultural goals in admissions literature, pre-application site visits, and orientation week activities. Presidents Carothers and Arcienega have developed relationships with high school personnel, recognizing that many of the drinking problems they see began during the high school years. The University of Rhode Island has particularly focused on communicating with high school guidance counselors about the school's goals and strict alcohol policies, encouraging them to recommend serious students and debunk outdated "party school" expectations.
- Communicating clearly and often about alcohol policies and punishments. Engaging residence hall staff is central to this effort, since they can be a source of mixed messages if they are lax in enforcement or project tolerance of irresponsible behavior.

Greek Organizations And Athletes

The alcohol program literature provides little guidance on effectively addressing members of Greek organizations and athletic teams, who have traditionally been associated with alcohol problems. Among those interviewed, this trend held true. Only Ohio State reported few, if any, recent problems

with athletes. After a football player was killed in an alcohol-related car crash about five years ago, the institution made some changes that David Williams believes have made the difference.

"Coaches in all sports began the 'Champs' program, in which athletes receive a great deal of counseling and support from the coaches themselves about responsible behavior and avoiding alcohol use. In addition, our head sports physician is the former doctor for the Cleveland Cavaliers. He was the architect of a new alcohol policy for athletes based on the policy of the National Football League, in which penalties go up sharply after a first offense. Since these approaches were adopted, we've only had one athlete suspended for alcohol infractions, and athletes here are now among the most responsible of student groups."

Presidents and administrators reported three approaches to working with Greek organizations that have shown some positive potential: a formal assessment process for chapters, strict enforcement of strict alcohol policies, and risk management.

Louisiana State University has implemented an annual assessment process for all Greek organizations, with fraternities and sororities being evaluated against standards regarding academic and behavioral goals, including alcohol-related behaviors. A task force on Greek life (whose student and faculty/administration members almost all had current or past Greek affiliations) recommended this approach. "The process will expose chapters to public scrutiny because we feel that public information is critical as an external pressure for change," the Task Force Report explained (Office of the Chancellor, Report of the Task Force on Greek Life and Related Issues, 1998).

In addition to public accountability, LSU's assessment process includes strong penalties such as expulsion of a fraternity or sorority from the campus. Several interviewees felt that consistent enforcement of strong sanctions was the key to changing Greek culture and reducing the negative impact of irresponsible drinking on the campus. "We take a multiple approach," President Foote notes. "We have a dry rush. We enforce the drinking age at Greek events, and police attend fraternity parties to oversee responsible beverage service. We have educational programs, and we communicate our policies. When Greek groups commit violations, we are quick to prosecute. We have kicked fraternities off our campus, and when one sued us, we fought back and won. Now we have people's attention, and they know we are serious."

When the University of Rhode Island adopted its "no alcohol on campus" stance, "The change was perceived as an anti-Greek policy, although this was not the case," President Carothers says. "We had opposition from unexpected sources, including the police who had moonlighted as 'enforcers' of drinking age laws at fraternity parties. Two nearby town councils expressed concern that we would be driving wild Greek parties into their communities. Over time, however, it became clear that this fear was unwarranted. We have now closed seven fraternity houses for disciplinary violations, and one closed for financial reasons. Without heavy drinking, membership has declined drastically, and it's an open question now whether the fraternities that remain will reshape around different values or fade away altogether."

At the University of Puget Sound, working with Greek houses on risk management has been an effective approach to reducing drinking problems. "When they understand the liability issues involved, the Greeks themselves become cautious. We've had alcohol-free parties simply because no one in the house was willing to be legally responsible as a 'host' for the drinking behavior or outcomes of guests. As part of our goal of renewing campus life, we've helped the Greeks renovate their houses, and we

20

feel it's now up to them to do their part. The President of the Interfraternity Council has said publicly that they are dedicated to moving away from an 'animal house' culture, and I believe our risk management efforts have helped bring about this change."

Faculty, Alumni And Parents

The experiences of interviewees in working with faculty, alumni, and parents have also been mixed. Some faculty members, particularly those involved in research related to college drinking efforts, have become a valuable source of support and implementation expertise. On some campuses, the Faculty Senate or faculty committees get involved in alcohol issues and policy. Overall, however, few faculty have become directly involved in one-on-one or classroom discussions with students. In some cases, faculty are a source of resistance whose attitudes reflect nostalgia for their own college party days. Being able to relate academic performance to alcohol use may be important to gaining faculty interest and reducing faculty contribution to the drinking culture (e.g., not scheduling exams—or even classes—on Fridays because of Thursday night parties, and being lenient with students who miss academic deadlines or cut classes).

Alumni can also be a source of resistance to alcohol-related change, and colleges continue to struggle with irresponsible drinking at tailgate parties and homecoming events. Alums who favor reducing alcohol problems may be less visible to students, although some administrators reported alumni support for their efforts. President Arcienega believes that learning how to work effectively with alumni could have big payoffs for alcohol programs. "Most campuses have alumni networks to support career initiatives," he notes, "and alumni associations are an established vehicle for relating to this group."

Parents, another potential source of support for responsible student behavior, are also a diverse constituency with whom many schools have little experience regarding alcohol issues. With new laws allowing public universities and colleges to notify parents when their children commit alcohol and drug infractions, institutions are now weighing the issues and deciding whether and how to involve parents. Will they be supportive? Do they have influence over their children once they are in college? Will a parental notification policy make students hesitate to get help for friends with signs of alcohol poisoning? Answers to these questions should become clearer in the years ahead.

Former President Ramaley initiated a parental notification program that she believes may be contributing to a decline in alcohol-related problems. However, she points out that it is difficult to separate out the effects of this strategy from others in the university's multifaceted effort.

At the University of Virginia, President Casteen also began a parental notification policy. He sent all parents a copy of the policy in a letter that talked about the "partnership linking students, parents, and the university" and described other university alcohol policies and programs. He also writes to the parents of all incoming students, stressing the value the university places on "a culture of responsible behavior within the law," and he urges parents to discuss values and expectations with students before and after they leave for college.

President Malloy says that Notre Dame, a private university, has long had a parental notification policy. He reports that, "We get a mixed reaction from parents. Some clearly support our efforts, but others don't see alcohol as a serious problem. We often hear, 'Oh, I'm just glad he's not using cocaine.' And when their children are punished for violations, many parents want us to make an exception for them."

Collaborating With The Community

"College presidents should appoint other senior administrators, faculty, and students to participate in a campus-community coalition that is mandated to address alcohol issues in the community as a whole."

Presidents Leadership Group, 1997

Because factors outside the campus have major effects on student attitudes and behaviors regarding alcohol, many believe that working cooperatively with community organizations is essential to reducing college drinking problems. Another background paper in this series provides details about the potential goals and roles a campus-community collaboration can encompass and what is known about the effectiveness of such partnerships. While the literature provides little guidance about effective approaches to implementing campus-community efforts, presidents and administrators interviewed offered the following insights from their own practical experiences.

- Be inclusive in creating community-campus coalitions. In addition to local political leaders, consider involving interests such as local law enforcement, high schools, religious organizations, media, and alcohol-related groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving, as well as State attorneys general, health departments, or highway safety commissions.
- Take time to find out what the community's priorities are, and be willing to help them with their issues. For example, the mayor of the town in which the University of Puget Sound is located was not interested in focusing on alcohol abuse among college students. However, when the issue was broadened to include other youth audiences, common ground emerged.
- Have the campus-community coalition or task force address campus policies, enforcement processes, and reporting systems before tackling community-related issues. This shows community representatives that the college is willing to do its part and is serious about the effort, while educating them about key issues and needs.
- Be sensitive to political concerns. For example, while the policies of local bars may be hindering campus efforts, no community leader will want to be perceived as antibusiness. Instead, it may be more acceptable to focus on shared goals, such as helping businesses avoid liability problems by providing training for managers and employees.
- Be supportive and create a win-win environment. "It's easy to point fingers around this issue, and any group identified as 'part of the problem' will feel defensive," Dr. Matthews notes. "To work together, everyone has to feel like they can be part of a solution they can live with. Creating shared goals takes time and a commitment not to offend any of the players."
- Integrate alcohol concerns into broader campus-community collaboration. For instance, the University of Vermont worked with the local chamber of commerce to provide a year-long series of leadership seminars for members; topics included alcohol issues. One result of the project was a manual for businesses on how they can support schools and young people in positive ways.
- Pick your first coalition project carefully, after testing the waters to be sure it will be successful. Starting with success builds credibility and momentum; starting with the most difficult problems could lead to early failure and discouragement.

- Make sure campus and community reporting systems for alcohol-related incidents are linked and use comparable indicators.
- Consider involving State or local representatives of the alcohol beverage industry. President Arcienega notes that this group is usually viewed as the opposition. Yet other health-related initiatives have found common ground with business, and Penn State University has recently received support from the beer industry for a campaign to promote responsible drinking among people of college age.
- Provide rewards and public recognition to community groups that take part.

Success Factors: Campus-Community Partnerships

- Base partnerships on the academic strengths and philosophy of the university and the needs and capacities of the community.
- Recognize that there is no such thing as a universal "community." It takes time to understand what elements make up a community, how people experience membership in it, and who can speak for it. Often campus-community partnerships are fragmented by competing interests in the community itself.
- Spend time bringing everyone up to speed on the issues. Involve local experts, including faculty, in educating coalition members about alcohol topics.
- Focus on what the university can and should bring to the partnership, such as its strengths in teaching and learning.
- Allow the time and face-to-face interactions needed to build successful collaboration. Allow all parties to participate in decision making based on mutual learning, not just cooperation.
- Don't over-partner. A university or college shares many areas of concern with its local community. Getting involved in too many collaborative efforts can strain resources and credibility. It's important to focus on cooperative efforts that relate to the university's strategic goals.

Adapted from: Holland and Gelman, 1998; Holland and Ramaley, 1998

Future Research Directions

"Without information on what strategies are effective with which groups, we're taking a.22 rifle shot approach to delivering messages," President Arcienega believes. "The real challenge for us is that nobody knows what works," adds President Pierce. "It is hard to mobilize people's time and energy for selecting and implementing programs of uncertain efficacy."

All those interviewed agreed that more research and information sharing was essential to reducing alcohol problems on their own campuses. What types of information would be most helpful? As alcohol researchers and government officials consider future research priorities, presidents and administrators identified the following questions as information gaps that affect their efforts.

- Which university policies are most effective in creating an environment that discourages student alcohol abuse?
- What strategies are most effective in working with local governments?
- How can the results of alcohol research be effectively disseminated to community audiences, such as chiefs of police?
- What are today's "best practices" for different types of institutions?
- How much confidence can we have in the strategies of increasing the number of non-alcohol focused events and educationally engaging new students in alcohol issues? What events most appeal to students?
- What is the relative effectiveness of different accountability structures for managing alcohol programs?
- What is known about the differences and/or relationship between on- and off-campus drinking and the effects of alcohol-free campus policies on each?
- What is today's state of the art in addressing the youth alcohol culture on campuses around the country? Who and what types of media most effectively influence students to be responsible (e.g., campus administrators, their peers, celebrities, billboard campaigns)?
- How can colleges address the students who arrive with problem drinking behaviors formed in high school? How can higher education and secondary education work together?
- What interventions are effective in working with athletes? Alumni who drink heavily at university events?
- What is most effective for harm reduction: to prohibit drinking, promote responsible drinking, or enforce underage drinking laws?
- Does parental notification have more positive effects than negative?
- What strategies are effective in increasing the support and involvement of faculty and administrators?
- What are the legal responsibilities of institutions today regarding alcohol-related issues such as the duty to protect the community from inappropriate student drinking?
- Does the public support efforts to reduce high-risk drinking among college students? If so, how can we best use public opinion research to gain support from local leaders and State legislators (re: alcohol industry issues)?
- Which types of community ordinances are effective in reducing college drinking problems?
- Does keg registration work?
- What situations motivate students to drink when they come to college?
- What strategies are effective in helping incoming students decide not to get involved in underage drinking?
- How can the support of national organizations be harnessed to enable college and community efforts to receive public support and not be viewed as outliers?

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