

Coalitions and partnerships created to address alcohol abuse on campus



In our society today, we are seeing a budding new development where campus wide coalitions are being created to address key issues related to alcohol abuse and underage drinking amongst students. These coalitions are geared towards preventing and enhancing efforts to undercut the hype associated with alcohol usage. Underage students are often faced with significant peer pressure to partake in drinking alcohol in order to fit in. Furthermore, such students find themselves faced with the difficult task of “saying no” when associating with fellow students who have accepted the peer pressure and chosen to drink alcohol in large quantities, i. . binge drinking, during peer functions.

This research paper shall emphasis how the coalitions are addressing such issues related to alcohol abuse as well as how partnerships are being formed with school faculty members to expand and form “ learning-living environments” which establish open communication and mentorship for students in dire need of support. Of foremost importance, is the recognition that campus coalitions are being formed to address issues of alcohol abuse and underage drinking among students. These coalitions predominately focus on how to curb the desire or limit the accessibility to alcohol by underage drinkers.

The article on the University of Portland reflects one such university which sought to instill a spiritual as well as practical approach to its direction to enhance its housing / residential life of its students. The University of Portland created a task force delegated with the responsibility for deliberating and presenting recommendations for making change to its residential/housing units. The recommendations were obtained by <https://assignbuster.com/coalitions-and-partnerships-created-to-address-alcohol-abuse-on-campus/>

subcommittees which obtained individual and group interviews and surveys from students. These suggestions compared the current practices and strategies to newly suggested ones.

Research was then presented to the university's President which entailed how improvements could be made and what was being done well. The executive summary reflects how the committees explored a variety of alternatives including new hall designs, potential for off-campus housing from a financial perspective, various recruiting strategies and processes designed to get great residence hall directors, strong safety and security measures for residence hall members, and ongoing training for residence hall directors and assistants.

These various suggestions reflect that the university was considering a wide variety of processes which directly affects the life of students. It also shows that they are considering both the aesthetic appearances as well as the practical requirements for committing to good student relations. The surveys taken by students show that they desire to take in the input of their residence hall students as well as potentially future ones. This reflects the due diligence of the campus community to have students focus on other things besides alcohol.

From a programming, events, and policy recommendations the University of Portland is seeking to include students in a variety of events. These suggestions include having faculty members volunteer their time and efforts for events, incorporate a spiritual aspect into residence hall lifestyles via Chapel services, encourage students to take on leadership roles or serve in

religious capacities, and focus more on diversity programs. These events and programming recommendations reflect the outreach efforts of the coalition to include many different personality types, cultures, and religions into the campus life.

This allows students to not feel alone or isolated. Hence, they do not turn to alcohol to feel included in other activities. This is beneficial for the university as well because it curbs the possibility for poor class attendance and substance abuse. It also encourages open dialogue between students and the faculty members outside of the classroom setting. By enlisting the efforts of faculty towards a common task or purpose, the university brings students and faculty together to become involved in activities which are in the best interests of the university.

Students see that such efforts are promoting diversity, academic opportunities, and open communication. Studies like " Magnitude of alcohol-related mortality and morbidity among U. S. college students ages 18-24: Changes from 1998 to 2001" by Hingson R, Heeren T, Winter M, and Wechsler H. have shown that " The proportion of 18 24-year-old college students who reported driving under the influence of alcohol increased from 26. 5% to 31. 4%, an increase from 2. 3 million students to 2. 8 million" from 1998 to 2001 which is why such efforts on various fronts are important to combat this rise in alcohol consumption.

One way to curb the desire for underage drinking to occur is to educate the youth in the consequences of alcohol abuse. Some major consequences of alcoholic abuse include drinking and driving, psychiatric disorders, risky

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behavior and victimization, suicidal behavior, and sexual behavior. In terms of drinking and driving, The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, determined statistically “ nearly 8, 000 drivers ages 15 to 20 involved in fatal crashes in 1995, 20 percent had blood alcohol concentrations above zero. This large percentage reflects that alcohol had a chief role in the accident and lead to the death of the underage drinker (<http://www.rwjf.org/reports/npreports/rudc.htm>). This statistic should show youth that drinking can have fatal consequences and the numbers have proven that the slogan: “ So do not drink and drive! ” holds true with potential dire consequences if ignored. From a potential for psychiatric disorders drinking, leads to conduct problems or risky behavior or even victimization.

For young people learning how to master their often turbulent emotions during their growth spurts, alcohol can lead to poor judgment and rowdy behavior. Such risky behavior might beget victimization because of impaired judgment or the inability to make informed decisions due to substance abuse. For instance, those displaying such behavior might be further coerced to bully or steal from others. They might also lend themselves to thievery and break curfews or societal rules.

Teenagers should be informed that this would lead to jail time which could forever tarnish their reputations and create a police record which will accompany them for life. This could affect their college enrollments and further job opportunities. The Journal of Research on Adolescence determined that there are associations between substance abuse and teenagers who might plan, attempt, or successfully commit suicide. This study and article found that “ 37 percent of eighth-grade females who drank <https://assignbuster.com/coalitions-and-partnerships-created-to-address-alcohol-abuse-on-campus/>

heavily reported attempting suicide compared with 11 percent who did not drink (Journal of Research on Adolescence, 1992). Lastly sexual behavior is adversely affected because teenagers or underage drinkers find themselves with impaired judgment and might become coerced to have unprotected sex or sex with multiple partners. This can also lead to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS, etc.. The learning-living environment has been created to form partnerships with faculty members to enable strong communication and foster a unique learning experience to encourage an understanding of personal choice versus peer pressure.

These partnerships promote academic achievements and opportunities for students to elect to not drink alcohol until they are of legal age and only in limited quantities. These efforts to foster such developments show students that there are support units on campus who they can approach if needed. By advancing such partnerships between faculty members and students, the campuses can push for educational programs, support groups, and clubs which take the pressure of turning to alcohol.

Coalitions themselves can be formed by following the directions presented in the Building Successful Coalitions to Address Underage Drinking: A Step-by-Step Guide (2006) to reduce underage drinking: 1) form a coalition by recruiting individuals highly interested in the task 2) form a board of members who support and will aid in plans to address the problem 3) select a director who is used to facing conflicts and is aware of the legislative process 4) optionally select a host agency which can act as a funding agent or can operate in the capacity to help raise funds 5) involve youth and give them real responsibilities in the project 6) perform a needs assessment
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which looks at data and assesses current laws in place to deal with the problem.

7) via strategic planning goals will then be set and undertaken until completion 8) involve the media in efforts 9) remain away of any legislation that might be changing and keep in contact with key figures in that change 10) make sure to keep coalitions active and engaged in real work 11) sustain the coalition via ongoing funding options. These steps will keep a coalition active and effective in its purpose. This also persuades students to cheer on fellow students who are deciding to discontinue alcohol usage. The article, "Taking up Binge Drinking in College: The Influences of Person, Social Group, and Environment" shows that students who take up binge drinking of alcohol are doing so because they are following the example of fellow students who have exposed them to such bad influences. Furthermore, this is a means towards giving confidence to students who are unsure of if they should use alcohol or not.

From a campus perspective, these living-learning environments serve to consistently provide outreach programs to students who have become overcome with alcohol usage and it advances the efforts of non-users to show that alcohol is neither the answer to problems nor a requirement for fitting in. Students are becoming enabled and motivated to discourage alcohol usage. They are instead fostering the learning environment by attending class, dealing with personal problems via support groups, focusing on academic performance, and volunteering on-campus and off-campus for extracurricular activities which broaden the scope of their achievements.

Such efforts are vital to the living-learning environment and the partnership <https://assignbuster.com/coalitions-and-partnerships-created-to-address-alcohol-abuse-on-campus/>

with faculty members because everyone should be involved in efforts to eliminate alcohol dependency and associated behavioral consequences.

Findings like those presented in the journal article, "Reducing drinking and related harms in college: Evaluation of the "A Matter of Degree" program" indicate that "where program implementation emphasizes changes to alcohol availability and larger cultural factors, college communities experience significant reductions in levels of heavy alcohol consumption including binge drinking and related harms as well as reductions in secondhand effects. Changing the conditions that shape drinking-related choices, opportunities and consequences for drinkers and those that supply them with alcohol, appear to be key ingredients to an effective public health prevention program." These partnerships serve as a model for communities suffering from the same alcoholic dilemmas. The actual formation of the partnerships starts with faculty willing to take an active stance towards resolving and facing that there is an actual problem.

Faculty members should be from various departments and programs so that students from various disciplines will see that it is a campus wide effort. Students who see that their future or current professors are interested in their personal and academic successes will feel further encouraged to support these developments. These students richly deserve to see that campus wide partnerships address their concerns, dilemmas, and questions. In fact, when students see that the faculty understands the pressure to drink but introduces an alternative they are influenced, even when doubtful, to attend a few meetings. This initial activity will sway students to see that

many fellow students might similarly be experiencing some of the same convictions against alcohol usage.

In turn, this influences their friends and family members to come along to such meetings and ignore peer pressure to go to bars and clubs and get drunk. Faculty members can use this time to convince students that the consequences to underage drinking and alcoholic dependency are dire. They can educate students about the consequences and statistics associated with high exposure to alcohol. They say that by educating the youth about the costs and detriments of such activities you can show them that it is not a rational or logical decision. In fact, they can show that students can sacrifice their education, job opportunities, friends, family members, and even their lives to alcohol. This expense is not worth it!