

CASE STUDY:

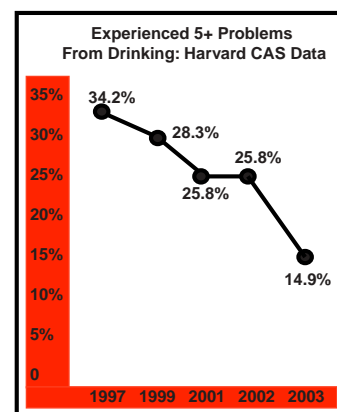
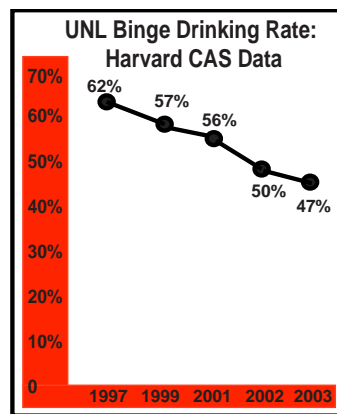
The University of Nebraska-Lincoln

In 1998, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to participate in a five-year effort titled "A Matter of Degree: Reducing High-Risk Drinking Among College Students." Participation required that the University utilize a campus-community coalition and develop a comprehensive strategy that focused on addressing the environment both on campus as well as in the community.

A coalition of forty community leaders, college administrators, students, parents, faculty, hospital-ity owners, police, medical professionals, and civic officials developed a strategic plan of 13 goals and 60 objectives, spanning across all three recommended levels of intervention (see page 2). Current policies and practices across the environment were reviewed and addressed.

Evaluated through the Harvard School of Public Health, the program sought to demonstrate successful models of environmental management while reducing student drinking rates and the incidence of primary and secondary problems. The project received a second round of funding in 2003, extending the formal work of the coalition through 2007. In 2004, a comprehensive evaluation of the "A Matter of Degree" program found that campus-community coalitions employing a comprehensive program across environmental factors demonstrated higher reductions in student drinking rates and problems caused by drinking among college students. The University of Nebraska was among those programs that had shown the greatest reductions.

In the process, NU Directions coalition members were able to develop a better understanding of the behavioral habits, traits, and motivations for college students who engage in high-risk drinking, the role of an inclusive process, and the types of interventions that best reduce harms. Their findings are chronicled in a five-year report available at their web site, www.nudirections.org.



This Information Briefing is provided to assist community members and leaders in understanding important aspects of the environment that impact high-risk drinking among college students. We believe that valid research and analysis can inform critical decisions about appropriate policies and activities. Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

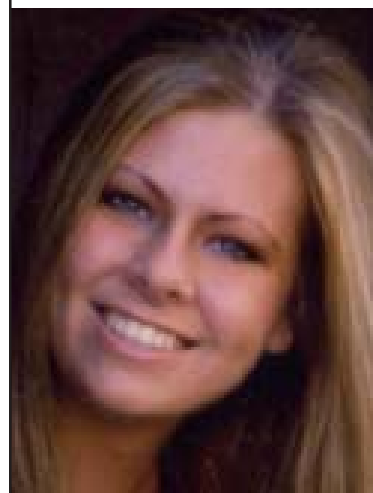
200 Nebraska Union, Lincoln, NE 68588-0453 (402) 472-2454 www.nudirections.org

INFORMATION BRIEFING



Reducing the Incidence of Alcohol-Related Harms Among College Students

Case Study:
Samantha Spady



Beatrice, NE
Sophomore,
Colorado State University

Among the many alcohol-related deaths of 2004, the alcohol poisoning of 19-year-old Samantha Spady has attracted a wide amount of attention about the harms caused by college student drinking. The Spady family has worked closely with NU Directions, developing a variety of ways to keep other college students from a similar tragedy. Samantha's parents, Rick and Patty, have spent countless hours communicating with the media, students, and community groups about the role the environment plays in encouraging the high-risk consumption of alcohol to young adults. "It's not just the students on that campus. It's not just the faculty. It's not just the bar owners. Everybody in the community has a responsibility for some changes to take place," Patty Spady said.

THE FACTS

Annual number of alcohol-related harms among college students:

Alcohol-related deaths	1400
Unintentional injuries	500,000
Assaults	600,000
Sexual Assault/Acquaintance Rape	70,000

Hingston, 2002

High-risk drinking among college students (national statistics, 2001):

Reported "binge" drinking within past two weeks	44%
Reported "binging" 3+ times in same period	23%
Reported drinking to get drunk	48%
Reported doing something they regretted while drinking	35%
Reported experiencing 5+ problems from drinking	20%
Reported unwanted sexual advance by drinker	20%
Reported having sleep/study interrupted by drunk student	60%

High-risk drinking among University of Nebraska-Lincoln students, 2003:

Reported "binge" drinking within past two weeks	47%
Reported "binging" 3+ times in same period	27%
Reported drinking to get drunk	45%
Reported doing something they regretted while drinking	39%
Reported experiencing 5+ problems from drinking	15%
Reported unwanted sexual advance by drinker	23%
Reported having sleep/study interrupted by drunk student	52%

College Alcohol Study, Harvard School of Public Health, 2001, 2003

THE RESEARCH

In 2002, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) released a comprehensive report by the Task Force on College Drinking. The group, comprised of distinguished alcohol researchers, college administrators, and students, conducted an exhaustive review of published research on the prevalence, causes, and consequences of drinking among college students, as well as all research evaluating the effectiveness of current and emerging interventions.

The Task Force concluded that a "culture of drinking" had developed among college and university students, supported by long-held customs and traditions, alcohol industry promotions and marketing, and lax policies and enforcement of laws. These elements, among others, have been identified as part of a sociocultural environment that, research suggests, encourages dangerous levels of consumption. Although reviewed in detail here, their general recommendations focused on implementing a comprehensive set of environmental and individual interventions that involve both the campus and the surrounding community.

A MODEL OF THE ALCOHOL ENVIRONMENT FACED BY COLLEGE STUDENTS

This model shows the relationship between environmental factors and individual choice for college students. It is based on multiple studies. These studies were most recently summarized for the NIAAA Task Force in a 2002 article written by Cheryl A. Presley, Ph.D., Director, Student Health Programs and Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs for Research, Executive Director, Core Institute, Southern Illinois University; Philip W. Meilman, Ph.D., Director, Counseling and Psychological Services, Courtesy Professor of Human Development, Associate Professor of Psychology in Clinical Psychiatry, Cornell University; and Jami S. Leichter, Ph.D., Behavioral Scientist, Division of STD Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

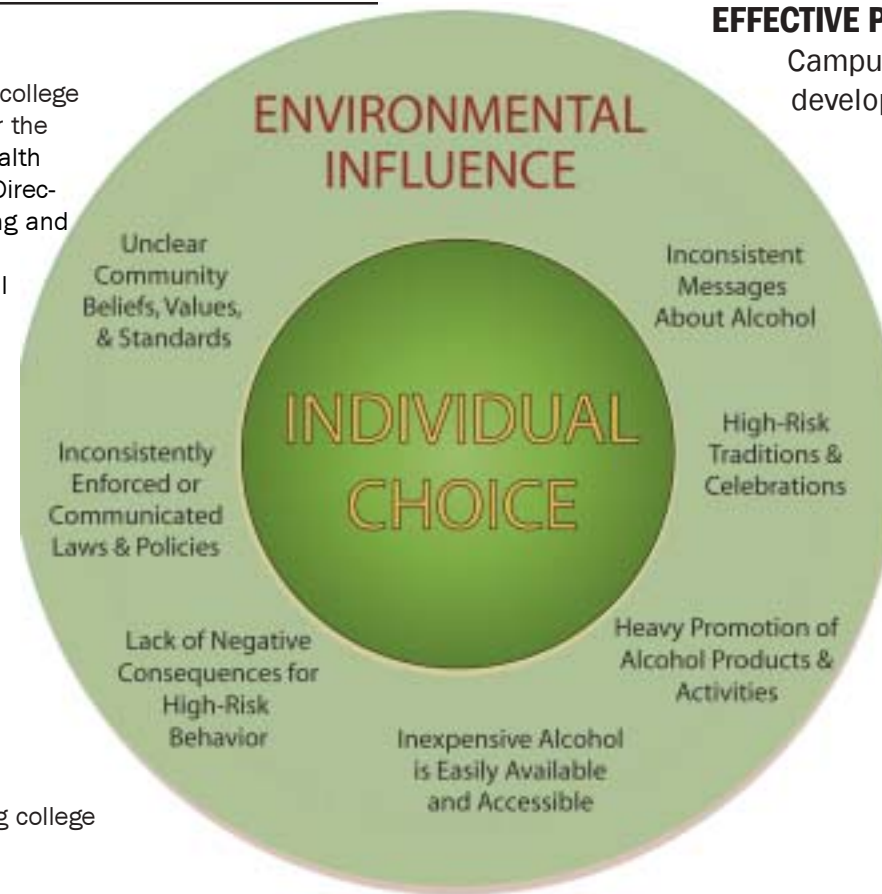
There are other factors that also prove important when completing the puzzle of college drinking. Research shows that students who share a family history of alcohol abuse or dependency, or have established a set of high-risk drinking practices prior to attending college tend to “cluster” in social groups. Dangerous drinking is also used by students as a coping mechanism for college-related stress or as a way for students to “fit in” when entering the college environment.

DEVELOPING A BALANCED APPROACH TO A COMPLEX PROBLEM

Researchers studying high-risk drinking among college students describe the problem as complex, requiring carefully devised and tested strategies that are applied consistently across the environment. Campus communities across the United States have learned the importance of a balanced approach to addressing the problem.

The NIAAA Task Force Recommends that a balanced effort to reduce high-risk drinking among college students occurs through interventions on three levels:

- Interventions that impact the entire student body, such as:
 - creating campus policies that restrict the availability of alcohol to students
 - limiting the aggressive marketing and promotion of alcohol to students
 - developing programs to assist students with recreation and social interaction
 - educating students about laws, policies and consequences
 - changing campus norms and perceptions about the use of alcohol
- Interventions that impact the broader campus and community or state environment, such as:
 - limiting the density of alcohol outlets near campus
 - regulating cheap liquor promotions at outlets near campus
 - creating and enforcing policies on the responsible sales and service of alcoholic beverages
 - coordinating efforts between local police and campus judicial affairs
 - coordinating efforts between the campus and community neighborhoods
- Interventions that impact the at-risk individual student, such as:
 - offering brief intervention/screening services through the campus health center
 - providing motivational feedback for students who violate campus/community policies
 - providing evaluation and treatment services and follow-up with students with high-risk habits



EFFECTIVE POLICIES TO REDUCE COLLEGE DRINKING HARMS : WHAT RESEARCH SUGGESTS

Campus policies, along with city ordinances and state laws, all play an important role in the development of a comprehensive and balanced approach to reducing the harms of alcohol use by college students. When combined with other interventions such as education, consistent enforcement, and programs that encourage and develop meaningful alternatives to dangerous drinking, policies can establish a clear set of values and norms for students at institutions of higher learning and in surrounding communities.

The NIAAA report identified strategies that showed evidence of effectiveness in one or more studies, placing them in descending tiers on the basis of evidence available to support or refute them. Items in normal (unbolded) type denote strategies that have been considered or implemented at UNL, the city of Lincoln, or the State of Nebraska.

TIER ONE: EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

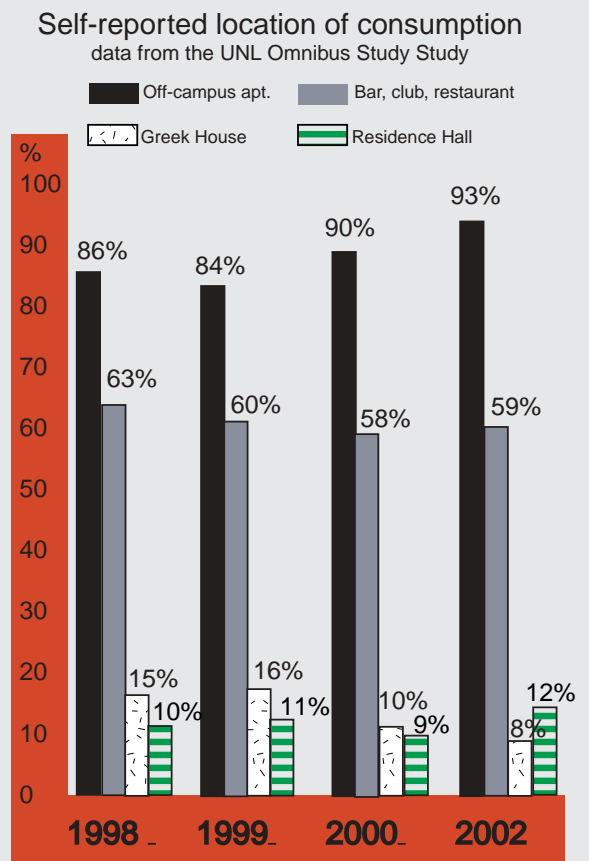
- Interventions that combine cognitive-behavioral skills with norms clarification and motivational enhancement
 - Brief motivational enhancements
 - Challenging alcohol expectancies

TIER TWO: EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS WITH GENERAL POPULATIONS THAT COULD BE APPLIED TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

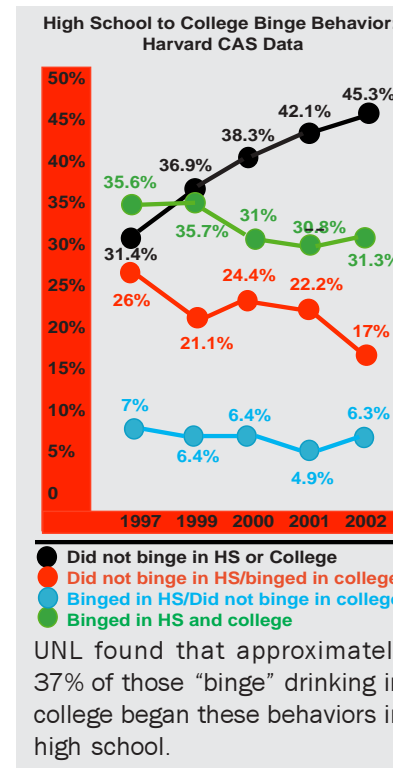
- The formation of campus and community coalitions
 - Restrictions on alcohol retail outlet density
 - Responsible beverage service policies in social and commercial settings
- Implementation, increased publicity, and enforcement of other laws to reduce alcohol-impaired driving
 - Increased enforcement of minimum drinking age laws
 - Increased prices and excise taxes on alcoholic beverages

TIER THREE: EVIDENCE OF LOGICAL AND THEORETICAL PROMISE, BUT REQUIRING MORE COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

- Campus-based policies, including:
 - Reinstating Friday classes and exams
 - Implementing alcohol-free, late night student activities
 - Eliminating keg parties on campus
 - Establishing alcohol-free dormitories
 - Employing older, salaried resident assistants
 - Controlling or eliminating alcohol at sports events
 - Prohibiting tailgating parties that include alcohol
 - Refusing sponsorship gifts from the alcohol industry
 - Increasing enforcement at campus-based events
- Increasing publicity about and enforcement of underage drinking laws
- Consistently enforcing disciplinary actions associated with policy violations
 - Conducting marketing campaigns to correct student misperceptions about drinking norms
 - Provision of “Safe Ride” programs
 - Regulation of happy hours and sales
- Informing new students and parents about alcohol policies and penalties during orientation.



Research on college student drinking patterns shows that the high-risk consumption of alcohol is rarely confined to the campus. The majority of dangerous student drinking occurs in area neighborhoods and in bars.



UNL found that approximately 37% of those “binge” drinking in college began these behaviors in high school.

“Recent scholarly reviews suggest that many state laws and local ordinances are effective or promising in addressing campus alcohol use. For example, several policies have succeeded in controlling the cost, sale, and distribution of alcohol. As the price of alcohol increases, for example, consumption decreases.”

Davidson & DeJong, The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, 2004