The Coalition is charged with identifying key issues associated with alcohol abuse, which include an inventory and environmental scan, with the intention of creating a strategic plan to mitigate such high risk behavior among our students.
Our Philosophy
A caring, safe, and well-informed community fosters an environment in which we can all live and learn. To that end, the Northwestern community shares responsibility for promoting healthy behavior. In supporting each individual’s health and wellbeing, we assist students, staff, and faculty in understanding the risks associated with consuming alcohol while seeking to minimize the harm to self and others caused by the misuse and abuse of alcohol.
Introduction
Northwestern University (NU) formed the Community Alcohol Coalition (CAC) in October 2013 to address student alcohol use and the behaviors associated with its misuse and abuse. Representation was sought from across the University, and local community members were invited to serve. Because issues surrounding alcohol impact both the University and its community partners living near campus, stakeholders’ input was critical to effectively address current and emerging trends. Similarly to their peers nationally, NU students have a wide variance of experiences with alcohol, with some choosing not to drink, many who do consume (even to excess), and others who have not yet been exposed to alcohol.

The CAC employed an Environmental Management approach with a health and wellness lens, focusing primarily on harm reduction while engaging students, staff, and faculty as a community of care.

Strategic Areas for Environmental Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy and Enforcement</th>
<th>Early Intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Codifying and enforcing community standards, consistent consequences when standards are violated.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Providing support for at-risk and high risk individuals, occurring as early as possible to prevent or reduce further harm.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Environment</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Increase skills, knowledge and awareness necessary to comply with community standards.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Increase availability of attractive living spaces, social activities, and venues. Address other factors which influence and support high risk consumption.</strong></td>
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Key Observations
The Coalition reviewed and analyzed data from a number of sources, and it considered these data when discussing evidence-based practices and contributing environmental factors. Through its review, the CAC made three key observations:

1. The negative impact of alcohol on first-year students:
   - Approximately one month into the fall quarter, 32% were classified as high risk drinkers, which was well above the national average (25%) and a remarkable 68% increase since arriving on campus.
   - Approximately one month into the fall quarter, a 67% increase occurred in problematic drinking (eight or more drinks for women and 10 or more for men, in the last two weeks) among first-year students.
   - First-year students accounted for 55% of the total NU alcohol-related transports to the hospital from 2012-2014.
   - First-year students accounted for 47% of the total conduct cases involving alcohol-related charges during that same period.
   - More than one in four (28%) first-year students experienced negative academic consequences (missed class, got behind, performed poorly) due to alcohol use.

2. The social environment and drinking culture have academic, mental/physical health and wellbeing, and conduct implications for all students.
   - Nearly three in four undergraduate students said alcohol facilitates bonding and conversation, facilitates sexual opportunity, and allows people to have more fun.
   - More than eight (8) in 10 students saw drinking as central to the social life, and 81.4% said the social atmosphere on campus promotes alcohol use.

1 AlcoholEdu College Survey, CORE Survey on Alcohol and Other Drug Use, the George Washington University Survey, Off Campus Life, Student Conduct, and the National College Health Assessment
2 AlcoholEdu College Survey, Class of 2016
3 Student Conduct, 2012-014
4 Core Survey
14% of first-year students reported being taken advantage of sexually, which was 16.7% higher than the national and NCHIP averages, and 40% higher than COFHE peers.

More than 40% of NU students reported doing “something (they) later regretted” due to drinking/drug use, which was 17.6% above the national average.

3. The lack of a uniform narrative and institution-wide approach.

- The Responsible Action Protocol (R-A-P) is often cited as confusing and inconsistent in its communication and application, which may lead to lower levels of referral by students during medical emergencies involving alcohol.
- Beyond Student Affairs, other staff and faculty members receive little, if any, training and, in some cases, have limited experience working with alcohol-related matters involving students.
- Many data are available about student behavior and use, but they require more timely analysis, while few data exist around other University populations (e.g. faculty, parents, and alumni).
- No institutional “owner” exists of the narrative and direction for NU’s approach to alcohol that can oversee and ensure messages are consistent, aligned, and clearly delivered.
- Parents and alumni can serve as partners but are currently not widely involved in trainings nor often asked to assist in reinforcing messages.

5 George Washington University Survey
6 Student Conduct, 2012-2014
7 AlcoholEdu College Survey, Class of 2016
Goals and Recommendations

Central themes emerged as the Coalition discussed how the University should address alcohol-related issues. These themes translated into five goal statements, with specific recommendations underpinning each goal.

1. Northwestern will articulate a clear vision and deliver consistent messages about alcohol

The Coalition determined that the Alcohol Policy requires revision in both its content and presentation in order to increase clarity and accessibility. This work should commence immediately with changes implemented as soon as is practical. The policy’s content and presentation should be revised to:

- Incorporate the philosophy statement that appears in the inside front cover of this report
- Provide clearly delineated sections, including campus and community resources
- Define relevant terms throughout a centralized alcohol policy with appropriate headings and subheadings, to allow quick identification of relevant material
- Simplify the Responsible Action Protocol and consider a name change to enhance its use and understanding
- Add medical amnesty for whom assistance is being sought to the Responsible Action Protocol
- Investigate the “in the presence of” clause by benchmarking peer and Big Ten institutions and determine its value in the alcohol policy.
- Incorporate case examples which illustrate frequent incidents.

To support this clarified policy, in the longer term, messages on alcohol should include references to health/wellness, the harm reduction approach, and creating and sustaining a community of care, which is consistent with the philosophy statement included at the top of this report. Additionally, the University, and particularly the Coalition, should utilize press releases and other information-sharing mechanisms to inform the NU and Evanston communities about our efforts and progress being made.
2. Northwestern will employ data-driven, evidence-based practices and harm reduction approaches for long-term sustainability

To ensure these efforts are sustainable and based in the most effective methodologies, the collection of various forms of data on an ongoing process is essential. To that end, the Coalition will create a “dashboard” of metrics to monitor behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes around alcohol. This dashboard will be utilized to inform senior administration and the broader NU community on progress toward our goals.

In the longer term, the Coalition recommends that NU:

- Collect data from student, staff, and faculty trainings using pre- and post-training surveys regarding perceptions of student alcohol use, harm reduction approaches, campus alcohol culture, and effectiveness of trainings
- Review high-risk events/traditions to identify environmental management strategies and develop prevention plans to enhance student and campus safety
- Implement campus-based marketing campaigns to address social norms and second hand effects, which include harm reduction messages, and which are appropriately aimed at identified student populations

3. All community members will be equipped with the knowledge and tools to help and refer

Creating a community of care is an essential element of our philosophy and all members of the university play a role in addressing alcohol-related issues. In its discussions, the Coalition sought opportunities to engage a wider range of students, faculty and staff in developing the knowledge and skills needed to help and refer students in need.

The Coalition recommends in the near term that NU:

- Enhance the centralized Alcohol and other Drug Resources website to more effectively aggregate resources, policies, and guidelines (www.northwestern.edu/alcohol-resources)
- Create education and marketing materials to highlight the provisions of the revised alcohol policy (e.g. “Call, Stay, Cooperate”, IL - Social Host law)
Goals & Recommendations con't

In the longer term, NU should:

• **Engage students** in the development and delivery of positive messaging, including bystander intervention, especially those who are opinion leaders, positional leaders, and/or widely influential
• Implement “QPR-Style” baseline training for faculty/staff to **improve recognition of alcohol-related problems** and refer students appropriately
• Implement screening and a brief intervention model at NU Health Services to **identify problems early**
• **Implement Brief Motivational Intervention training** for staff and interested faculty who have high levels of student interaction

4. All community members will uphold university expectations around alcohol

To further enhance the role all students, faculty, and staff play in our community of care, the Coalition considered aspects of the campus environment that require additional focus in order to reduce high risk drinking and support low risk choices.

Upon revision of the alcohol policy, the Coalition recommends that NU:

• **Communicate changes** to the policy, enforcement practices, and adjudication procedures with the goals of increasing transparency and building trust
• **Apply the policy as uniformly as possible** across the University, including undergraduate and graduate/professional students, alumni, facilities and grounds, schools and colleges, and campus and community partners

The Coalition desires a campus environment that **supports lower risk decision-making around alcohol**. To that end, NU should:

• Explore the **creation of on-campus social venues** where alcohol could be served and consumed responsibly
• Develop and **implement a student group event registration process** to ensure appropriate program management
• Bolster staff and other resources in university-owned campus residences that do not have live-in staff or faculty
5. Students will engage in low(er) risk drinking behaviors or refrain from drinking

To better support the low-risk use and non-use of alcohol, and to create a more supportive campus social environment, the following recommendations are offered by the Coalition.

In the next year, NU should:

- **Expand capacity and resources** within Health Promotion and Wellness for providing motivational enhancement interventions, such as BASICS and various group-based programs, to support growing demand
- Increase student engagement in the **design and delivery of peer-led alcohol education efforts**

In the longer term, the Coalition recommends that NU:

- Increase parental engagement around alcohol-related student issues utilizing tools such as webinars, AlcoholEdu for Parents, parent normative feedback interventions, and **ongoing communication featuring consistent messages**
- Increase resources which **support student-led social options** by expanding NU Nights to occur every weekend and implementing a grant program to support other student organizations in offering weekend programming after 10pm
- Explore **the enhancement of substance-free housing** options with the launch of the residential living requirement
- Identify needs for **increased support for students in recovery**
How Can I Get Involved?

Students

• Take a leadership role in changing messages students receive that suggest high-risk drinking is a normal or necessary part of the college experience.
• Stay informed about evidence-based practices in alcohol harm reduction. Share the information with peers to debunk myths about what works and what does not.
• Be engaged in the University’s Community Alcohol Coalition to give student input and perspective on how to create a healthy campus and community environment that supports student success. Email us at dos@northwestern.edu.

Faculty, Teaching Assistants, and Staff

• Become engaged in the Community Alcohol Coalition to learn more about and provide input into efforts to create a healthier campus and community environment that support student success.
• Share the Coalition Summary Report with your colleagues and encourage them to get engaged.
• Invite members of the Community Alcohol Coalition to present information about simple approaches faculty, TA’s, and all University staff can employ to change the culture of high-risk drinking on a college campus.
• Learn about evidence-based practices in alcohol prevention that pertain to your functional area and determine how to implement them appropriately.

Parents and community members

• Learn about the Community Alcohol Coalition so you can support efforts to create a healthier, safer, and even more vibrant campus and community environment for all of us to live, learn, work, and play.
• Visit the “Parents” section on the Alcohol and other Drug Resources website to learn about how you can effectively engage your student in an ongoing conversation about their alcohol use and to learn about campus resources, including AlcoholEdu for Parents.
Resources

For more information about this plan or to learn more about how you can become engaged in alcohol harm reduction efforts contact:

Alcohol and other Drug Resources website
www.northwestern.edu/alcohol-resources

This site provides Northwestern students, parents, faculty, staff, and neighbors with a centralized 'hub' for information on the University’s policies, programs, and services on alcohol and other drugs.

Dean of Students Office
847-491-8430
www.northwestern.edu/studentaffairs/dos

The Dean of Students Office oversees student policies and the conduct process, and it offers Student Assistance & Support Services to help students and their families identify resources and navigate the University.

Health Promotion and Wellness
847-491-2146
www.northwestern.edu/hpaw

Health Promotion and Wellness is the primary provider of health promotion, education, and prevention programs and services on alcohol and other drug issues for Northwestern students.
Coalition Representation

Associated Student Government
Athletics
Counseling and Psychological Services
Dean of Students Office
Evanston Police Department
Fraternity and Sorority Life
Health Promotion and Wellness
Interfraternity Council
Kellogg School of Management
New Student and Family Programs
Off Campus Life
Panhellenic Association
Residential Services
Student Conduct
Student Involvement
Students for a Sensible Drug Policy
Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences