

Data Report:
2003 New Hampshire Higher Education
Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Survey

UNH Results

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INTRODUCTION

The University of New Hampshire is extremely interested in the attitudes and behavior of its students in regard to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. With the help of the Student and Academic Services Assessment Center, the Office of Health Education and Promotion (OHEP), Health Services has assessed these attitudes and behaviors for a number of years. They currently use the New Hampshire Higher Education Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Survey on a bi-annual basis.

The 2003 New Hampshire Higher Education Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Survey results for the University of New Hampshire are representative of undergraduate students by gender and class. The results were obtained by using a sampled stratified by college, class, and gender. There were 677 responses which resulted in an 84% response rate of the listed enrollment in the courses surveyed.

Table 1: Demographic Proportions

	Sample
GENDER	
Men	45.1%
Women	54.8%
Transgender	.1%
CLASS	
Freshman	23.9%
Sophomore	25.8%
Junior	19.4%
Senior	27.3%
Grad	1.6%
Other	2.1%
STATUS	
Full-time	96.7%
Part-time	3.3%
PERMANENT RESIDENCE	
In-State	61.5%
USA, but out- of -state	38.5%
CURRENT RESIDENCE	
Residence hall	40.7%
On-campus apartment	12.9%
Off-campus apartment or house	35.7%
Off-campus fraternity/sorority	2.7%
At home with family	5.2%
Other	2.8%
TOTAL RESPONSES	
	677

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Attitudes (see Graph 1)

- The majority (83.9%) of students' personal attitudes about drinking and getting drunk are conservative ("Drinking is never a good thing to do" or "Drinking is all right but a person should not get drunk") to moderate ("Occasionally getting drunk is okay as long as it doesn't interfere with academics or other responsibilities").
- The majority (71.4%) of students believe that getting drunk, even occasionally, is not okay if it interferes with academics or other responsibilities.
- Students believe that almost half (48.8%) of their peers believe getting drunk is okay even if it does interfere with academics or responsibilities and that frequently getting drunk is okay if that's what the individual wants to do. Actual responses indicate that only 16.1% of students share one of those two attitudes about drinking.

Average Weekly Consumption (see Graph 2)

- The majority of students (52.0%) of students consume 6 or fewer alcoholic drinks in a week.
- Nineteen and a half percent (19.5%) or roughly one-fifth of students report that they don't typically consume alcohol weekly.
- There has been a slight decrease (57.9% to 52.0%) in the percentage of students consuming 0-6 drinks per week, but this decrease is not statistically significant.

Quantity & Frequency of Alcohol when "Partying" (see Graphs 3 and 4)

- The majority (55.8%) of students report that they party without alcohol or when they party their quantity is limited to 6 drinks or fewer.
- Students believe that the majority (69.4%) of their peers consume 7 or more drinks when they "party". Students are overestimating the amount their peers are consuming in party situations.
- The majority (60.7%) of students who do report partying with alcohol indicate that they limit this activity to one or two nights a week. Additionally, 20.9% of students report that they don't "party" leading one to believe that they either abstain from alcohol completely or limit their consumption to other types of settings (e.g. with a meal, among a small group of friends).
- Students believe that the majority (51.9%) of their peers "party" 3 or more nights a week. Students are severely overestimating the frequency with which their peers are "partying."
- There has been a slight increase (79.5% to 81.7%) in the percentage of students "partying" 0-2 nights per week, but this difference is not statistically significant.

Protective Behaviors (see Graph 5)

- Students are engaging in a number of protective behaviors when it comes to taking care of themselves or others in situations involving substance use.
- Listed below are some examples of protective behaviors that the majority of UNH students report employing either sometimes, usually or always: 98.4% report that they party with friends and people they know and 95.4% report that they watch over their friends who are consuming; thus, reducing the risk of crime or other consequences involving strangers. Additionally, 94.5% report eating before "partying" or going out, 89.4% report using designated drivers, 79.7% report consciously tracking the number of

drinks consumed, 58.3% report determining in advance and staying within a set number of drinks and 50.3% report choosing not to drink.

Consequences (see Graph 6 and Table 2)

- The majority of students do not experience consequences from their substance use.
- For 15 of 23 consequences students were asked about on the survey, the percentage of students reporting they had never experienced that consequence in the last 6 months exceeded 70%.
- For 21 of the 23 consequences students were asked about on the survey, greater than 50% of students reported that they had never experienced that particular consequence in the last 6 months due to their substance use.

Abstinence from Substance Use (see Graph 7 and Table 3)

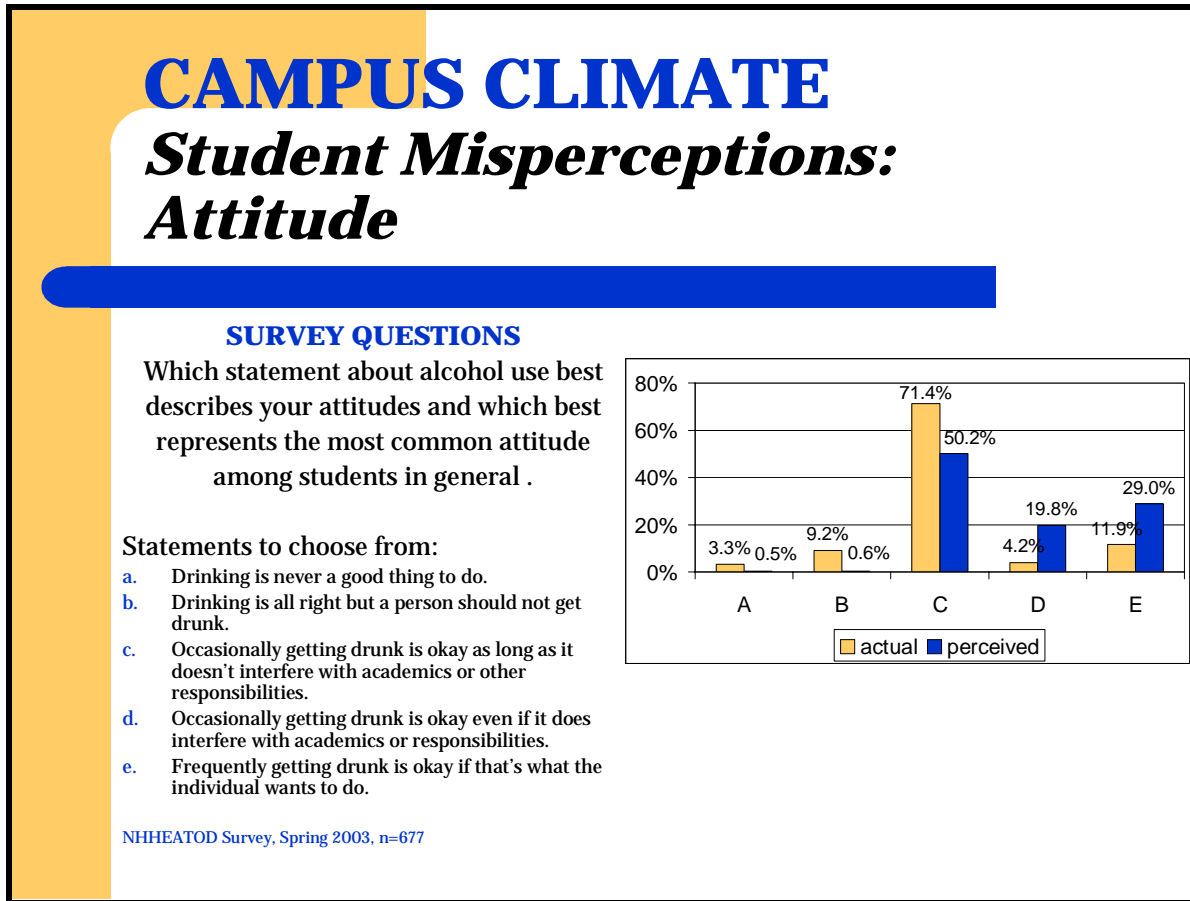
- The majority of students attending UNH do not engage in tobacco or other drug use, with the exception of alcohol.
- More than 8 out of 10 respondents reported that in the last six months they had not used smokeless tobacco, cigars, amphetamines, designer drugs, sedatives, cocaine, hallucinogens, inhalants, opiates, non-prescription drugs, prescription drugs for non-intended or “recreational” purposes, or other illicit substances.
- Approximately 71.8% of the respondents reported that in the last 6 months they had not smoked cigarettes and 54.4% had not used marijuana.

Substance Use – Actual vs. Perceived (see Graph 8 and Table 3)

- Students consistently over-perceive drug use among peers attending their own institutions. In some drug categories, the discrepancy between actual and perceived responses was tenfold.
- Students estimate that their peers use alcohol almost two times as often as that which is reported in a 6-month period.
- For most drug categories respondents were asked about, the mean number of days of actual use reported in a 6-month period was relatively small. Relatively small is one day or less. Exceptions to this definition were in the areas of cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana.

SELECTED DATA RESULTS

■ Graph 1: Attitudes - Personal vs. Perceived Attitude

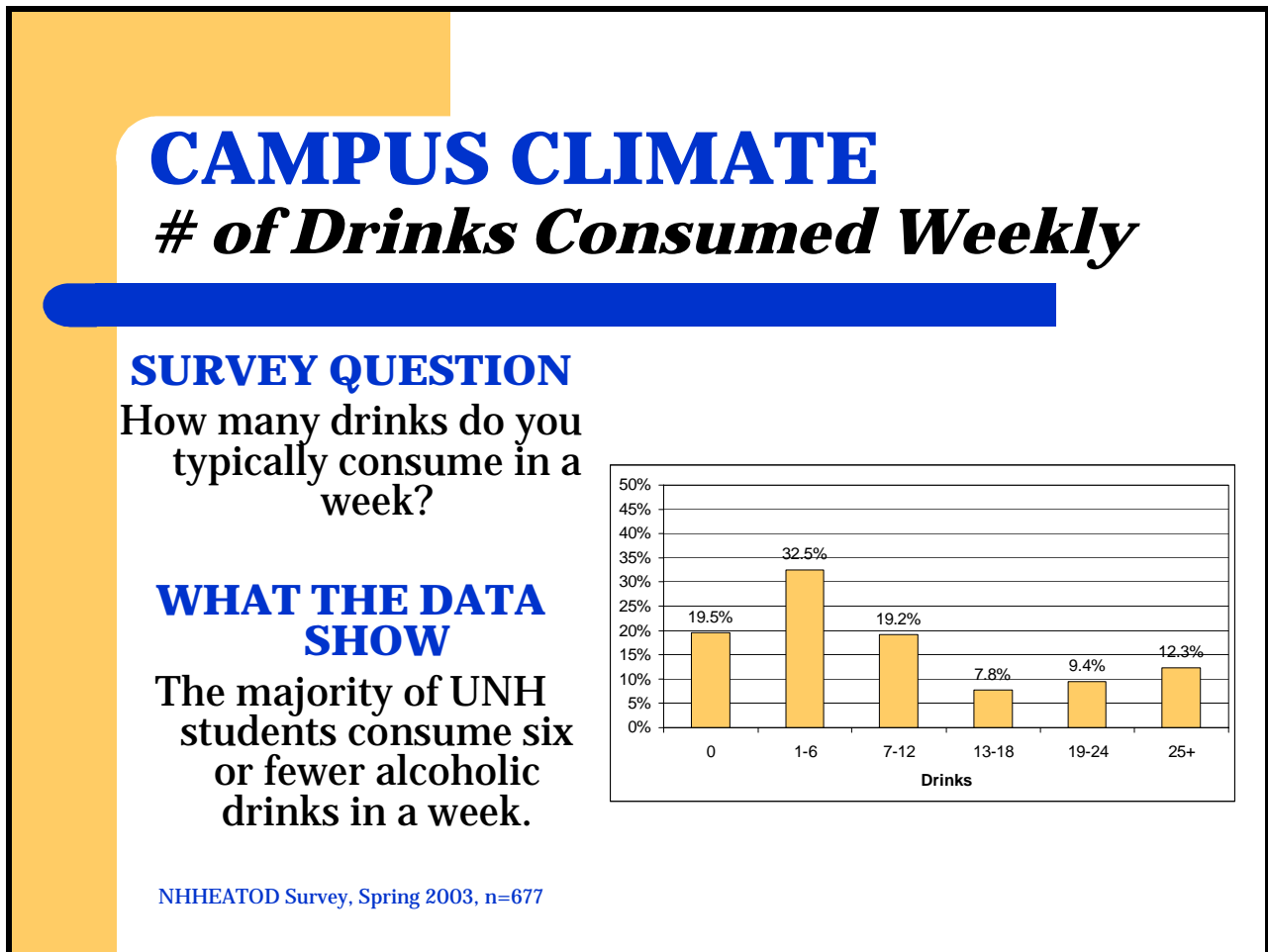


Results:

In general, the majority of students' own attitudes were conservative to moderate in nature with the majority of students believing that getting drunk is not okay if it interferes with academics or other responsibilities.

Consistent with social norms theory, students perceive the attitudes of their peer group to be more liberal than their personal attitudes about drinking. This misperception, according to the theory, has an influence on one's personal choice to use alcohol and can lead to more high-risk behavior than the majority of students personally believe is acceptable.

■ Graph 2: Number of Drinks Consumed in a Typical Week

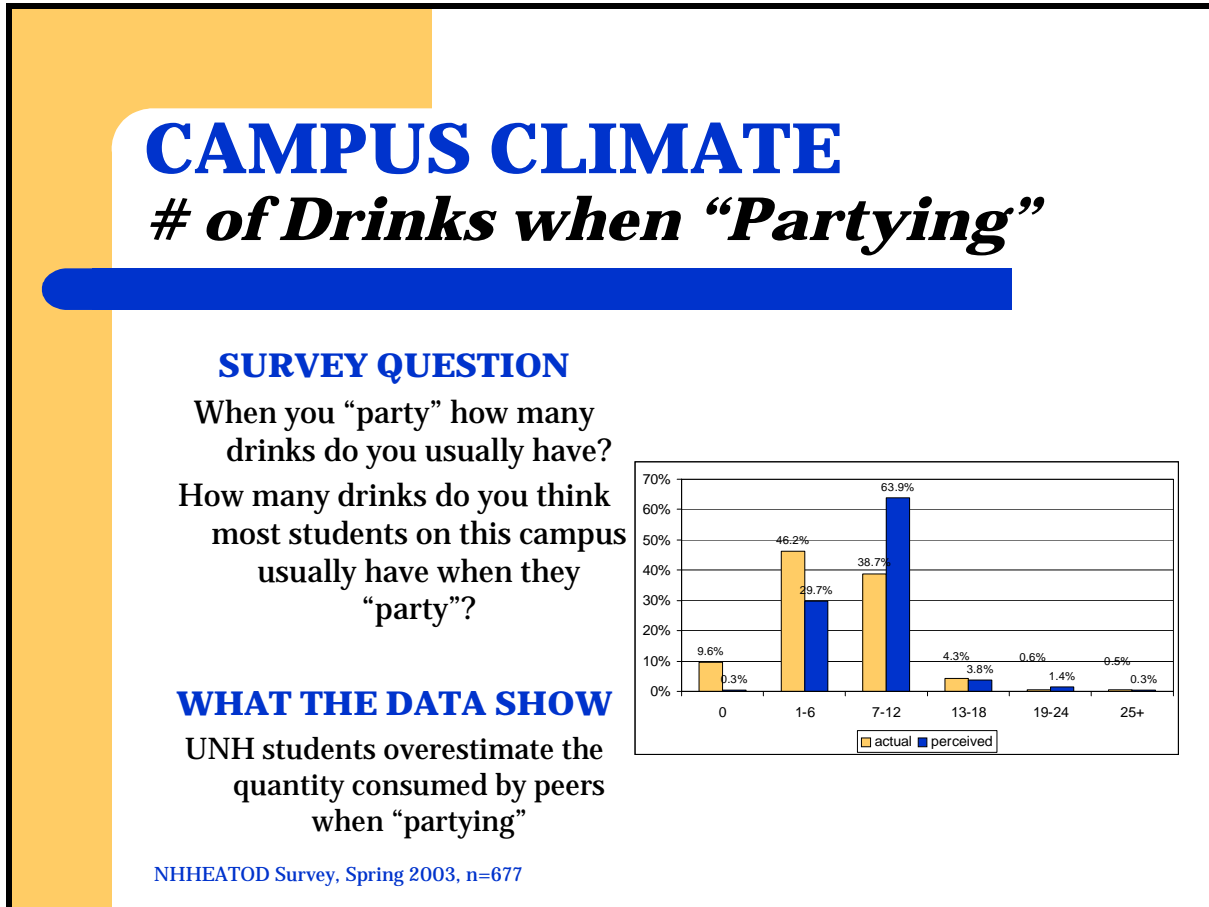


Results:

When asked to report on the amount of alcohol typically consumed in a week, 19.5% reported they had no alcohol and 32.9% reported that their intake was limited to 1-6 drinks. Consequently, one can conclude that the minority of students (48.0%) are consuming the majority of the alcohol in a typical week which exceeds 25 drinks for some students.

When the percentage of students consuming 0-6 drinks in a week is compared over the past two years, there is a slight increase from 2001 to 2002 and a decrease from 2002 to 2003. While there is a decrease from 2001 to 2003, this difference is not statistically significant.

- Graph 3: Number of Drinks Consumed when “Partying” – Actual vs. Perceived Norm

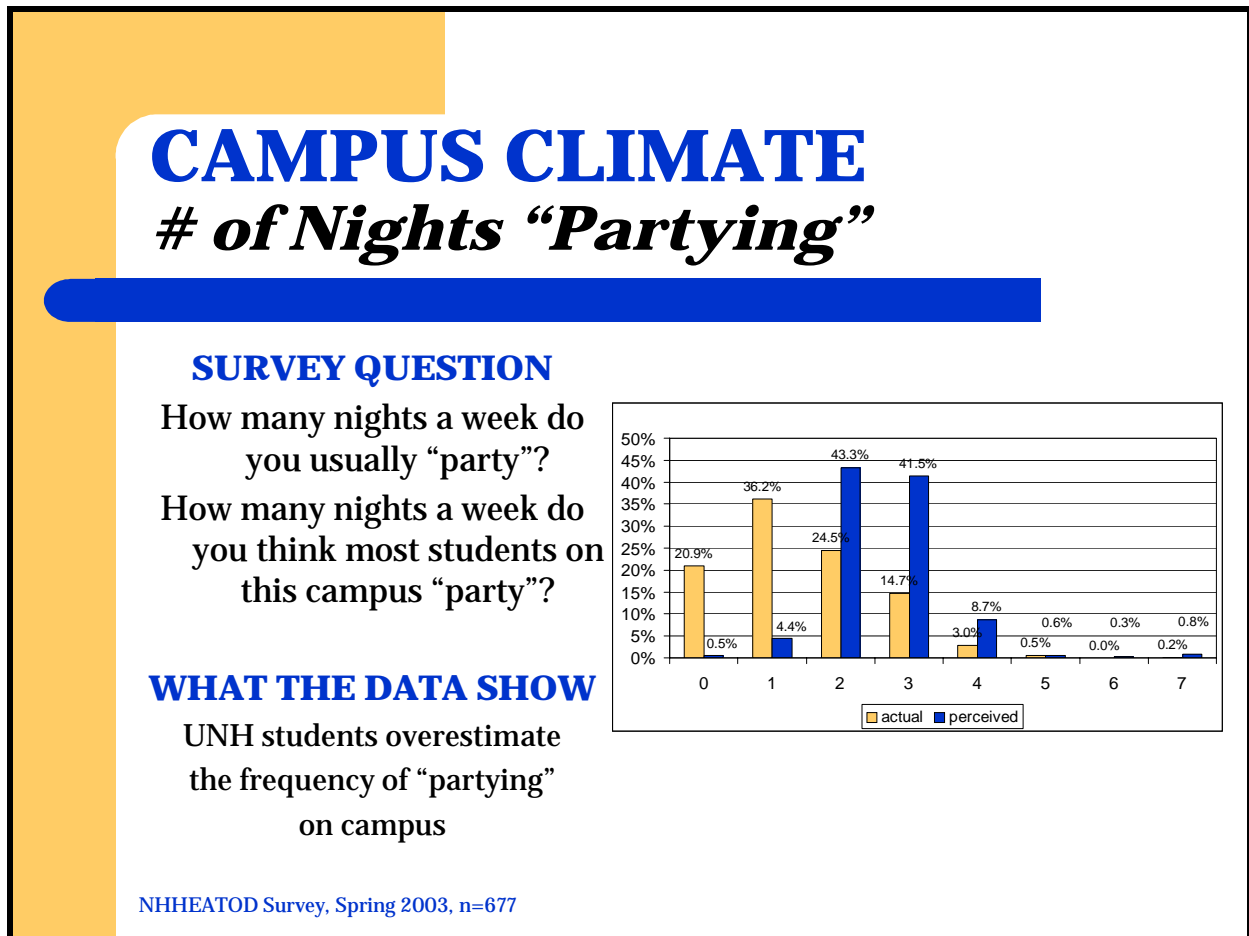


Results:

The majority (55.8%) of students at UNH either do not use alcohol when they party or consume six or fewer drinks. While that may appear to some to be a large quantity of alcohol, as compared to students’ perceptions of others use, it is quite low.

As social norms theory and the data suggests, students overestimate the quantity of alcohol their peers are consuming. The concern is that this overestimation can drive up use in “party” situations, a decision that often can result in negative experiences.

■ Graph 4: Number of Nights when “Partying” – Actual vs. Perceived Norm

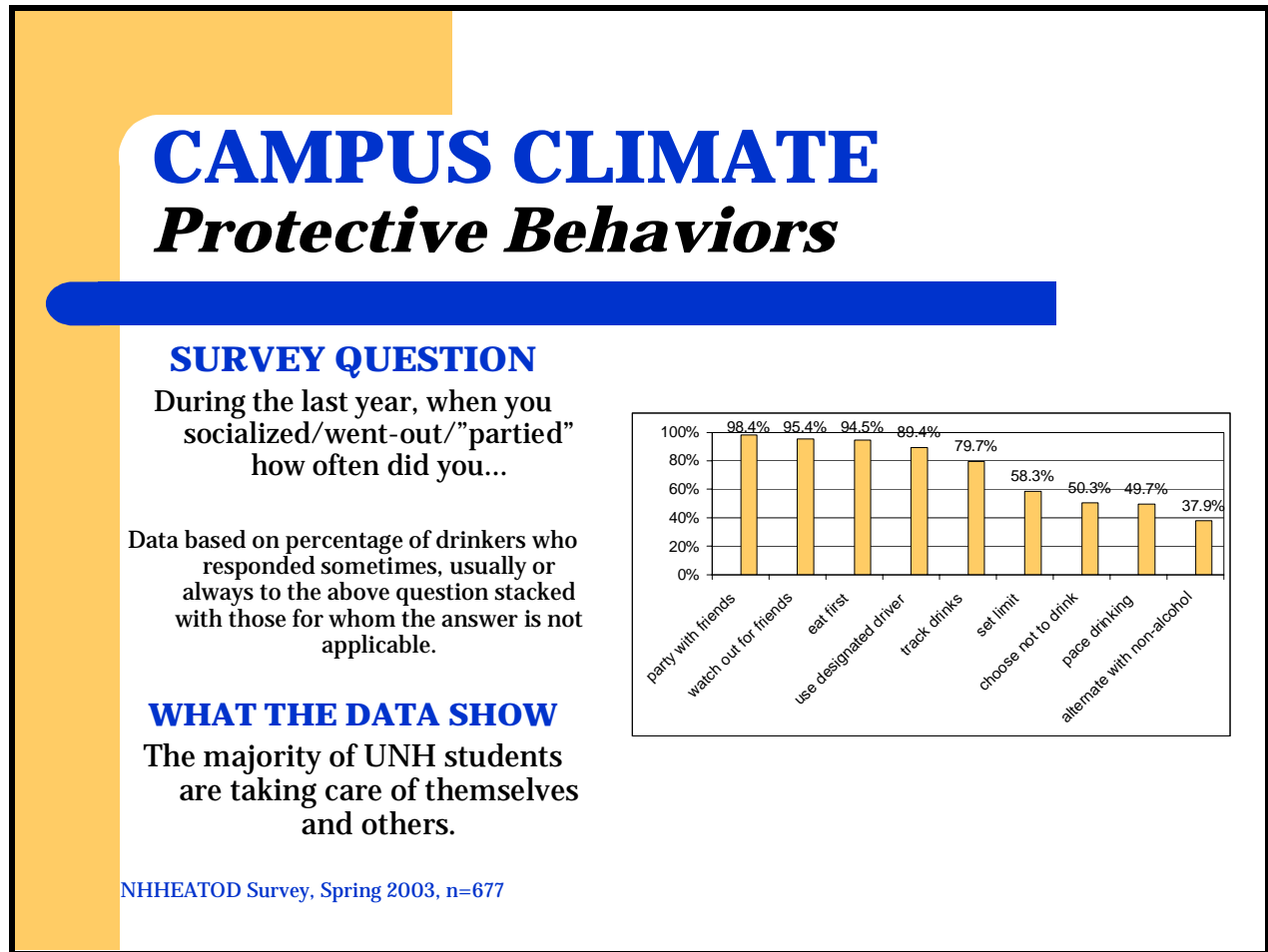


Results:

In addition to overestimating peers’ consumption when “partying”, respondents also overestimate the frequency of “partying” on campus. Twenty-one percent (20.9%) of students report not “partying” at all and an additional 36.2% report their “partying” is usually limited to one night a week. However, when asked about their peer group, they believe that 9 out of 10 students (95.1%) party 2 or more nights a week.

The percentage of students partying 0-2 nights a week rose from 79.5% in 2001 to 81.7% in 2003. This slight increase was not statistically significant.

■ Graph 5: Protective Behaviors

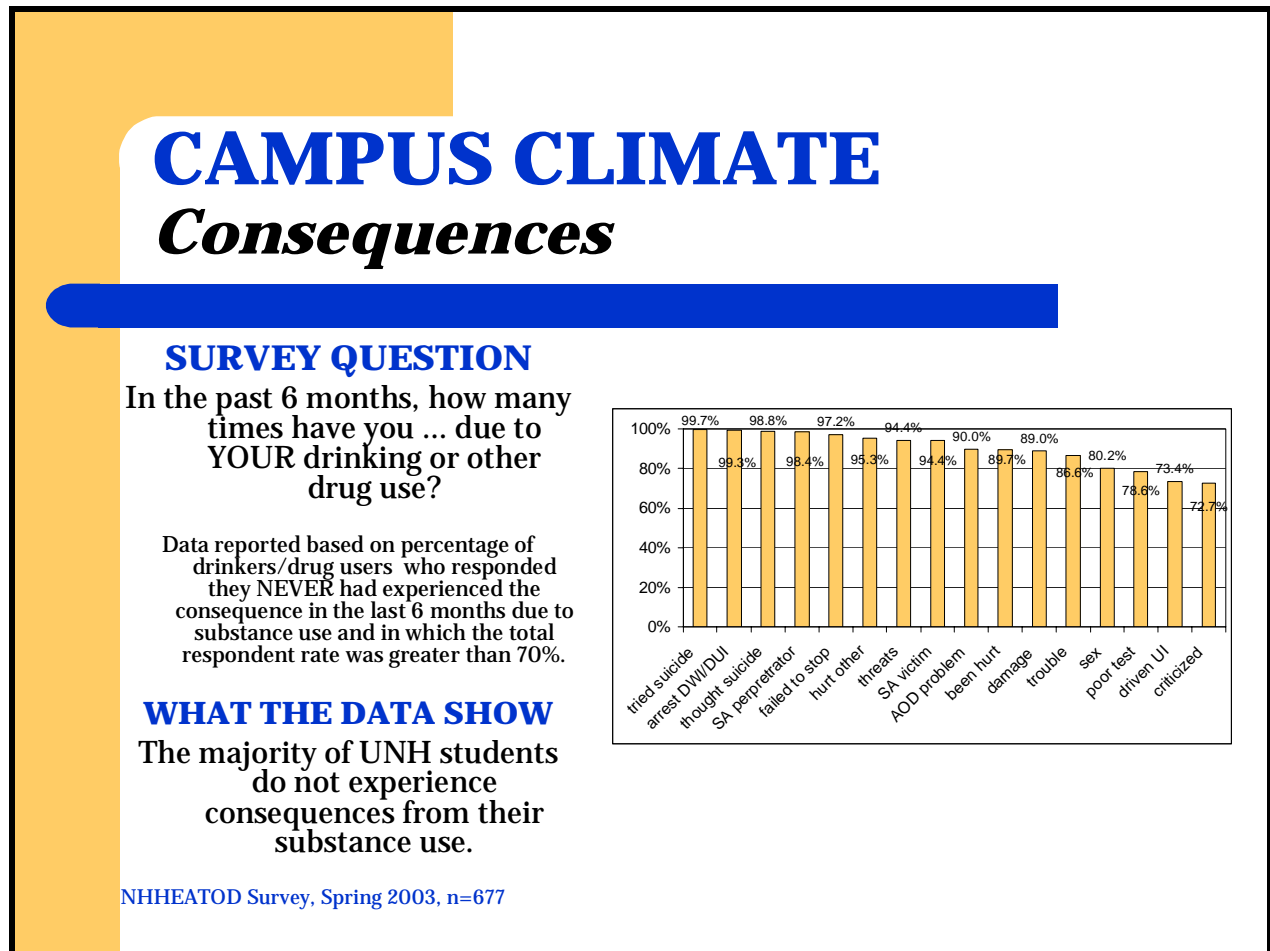


Results:

Students were asked nine questions pertaining to behaviors that would be considered “protective” when drinking including a decision not to use alcohol. For each question students were asked to respond whether they always, usually, sometimes, rarely or never engaged in the behavior.

Clearly, for UNH students who do drink, the majority do so in a way in low risk ways.

■ Graph 6: Consequences



Results:

Students were asked 23 questions pertaining to consequences experienced during the last 6 months as a result of their own drinking or other drug use. Responses were in terms of the number of times occurring. The categories are contained in Table 2 along with the percentage for each category reporting “0” to the question, and the corresponding codes used in the graph above (where applicable). Responses are reported only for students who stated that they drank or used drugs.

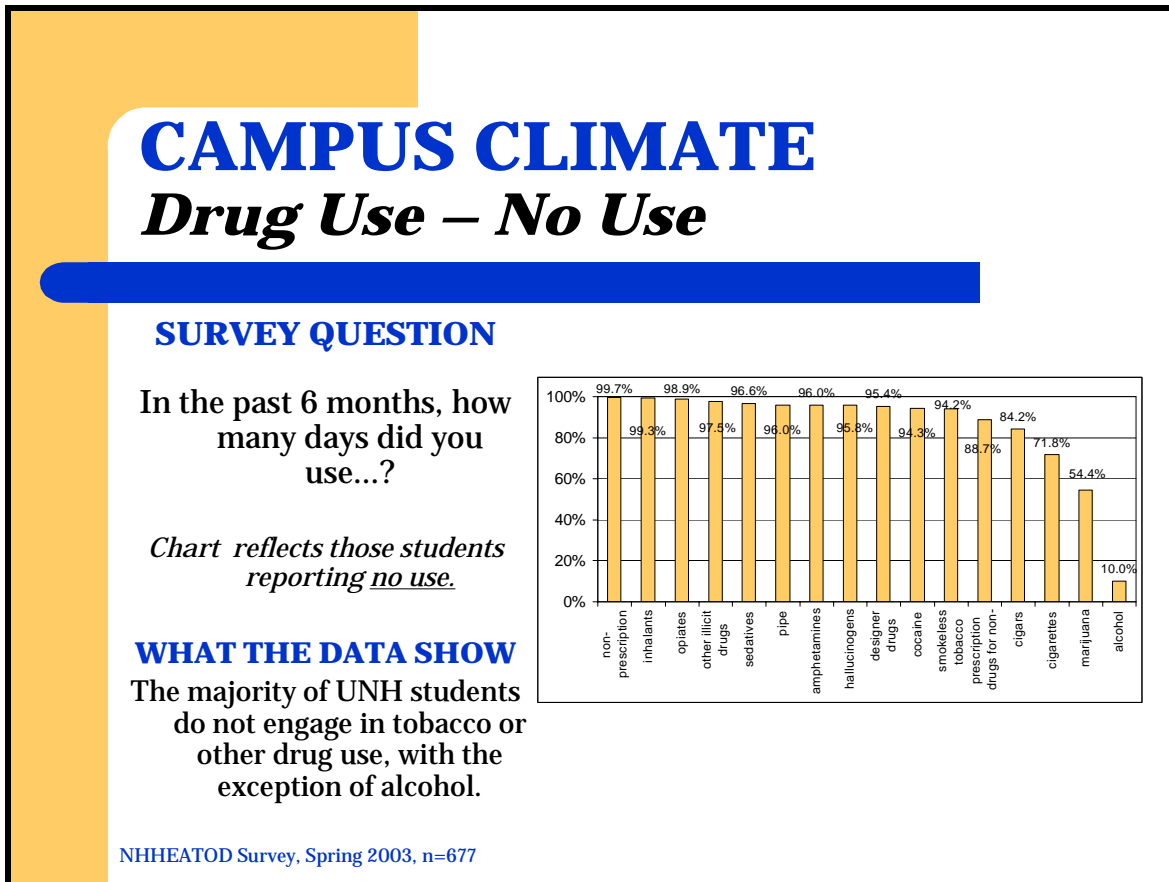
For 15 of 23 categories, the response rate was greater than 70% as indicated in Graph 7. For 21 of 23 categories, a majority of students (greater than 50%) responded that they had NEVER experienced that particular consequence in the last 6 months due to substance use.

This information is important to review in the context of those who are experiencing consequences and realizing that such incidents are not “normal” and therefore should be treated seriously. Too often, consequences are just seen as a normal college experience and are generalized when; in fact, survey data from students indicates that these behaviors are far from normal for many types of incidents.

Table 2: Consequences by Category and Code

Consequence In the past 6 months, how many times have you ... due to YOUR drinking or other drug use?	Percentage reporting “0”	Graph Code	Of those reporting a consequence, mean # of times
Hangover	15.9%		8.60
Performed poorly on a test or important project	78.6%	Poortest	.62
Been in trouble with police, residence hall staff, or other college authorities	86.6%	Trouble	.40
Damage property, pulled a fire alarm, etc.	89.0%	Damage	.40
Got into an argument or fight	60.8%		1.44
Got nauseated or vomited	34.4%		2.60
Driven a car while under the influence	73.4%	Driven UI	1.42
Missed a class	63.9%		1.61
Been criticized by someone you knew	72.7%		1.08
Thought you might have a drinking or drug problem	90.0%	AOD Problem	1.42
Had a memory loss	54.2%		2.68
Done something you later regretted	56.4%		1.54
Been arrested for DWI/DUI	99.3%	Arrest DWI/DUI	.01
Ridden with someone who was drunk or used drugs	60.8%		2.94
Been taken advantage of sexually (unwanted touching, intercourse, etc.)	94.4%	SA Victim	.23
Taken advantage of another person sexually (unwanted touching, intercourse, etc.)	98.4%	SA Perpetrator	.03
Had unprotected sex with someone	80.2%	Sex	1.67
Tried unsuccessfully to stop using	97.2%	Failed to stop	.14
Seriously thought about suicide	98.8%	Thought suicide	.03
Seriously tried to commit suicide	99.7%	Tried suicide	.00
Initiated threats of physical violence	94.4%	Violence threat	.22
Hurt or injured another person	95.3%	Hurt another	.10
Been hurt or injured	89.7%	Been hurt	.31

■ Graph 7: Drug Use – No Use



Results:

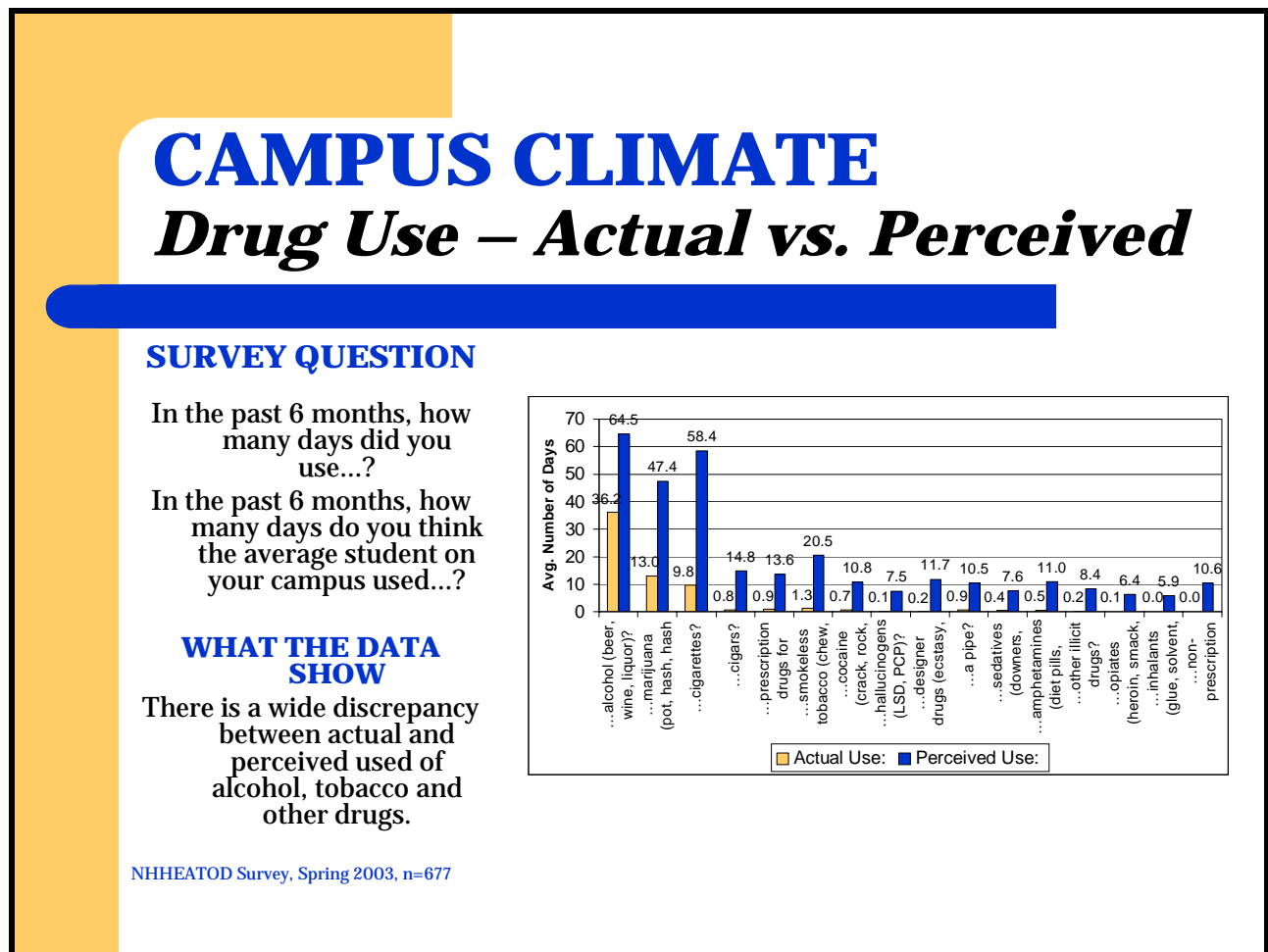
Table 3 (see below) provides specific data figures for Graphs 7 and 8.

As the data shows, the majority of students at UNH do not engage in tobacco or other drug use, with the exception of alcohol use. And while it is of concern that we have students engaging in use of illicit substances and we need to address those matters, it is critical not to lose sight of the fact that it is far from the majority of students who are making those choices. And as the data points out for alcohol, while the majority of students use alcohol (80.5%), it is a minority of students who are engaging in the types of high-risk, frequent use that may result in academic and social consequences.

Table 3: Non-Use and Actual vs. Perceived Drug Use

	Actual Use: % reporting no use	Actual Use: Mean # of days of actual use	Perceived Use: Mean # of days of perceived use by the average student on campus
...alcohol (beer, wine, liquor)?	10.0%	36.16	64.51
...marijuana (pot, hash, hash oil)?	54.4%	13.03	47.40
...cigarettes?	71.8%	9.78	58.38
...cigars?	88.4%	.76	14.84
...prescription drugs for recreational or “non-prescribed” use?	88.7%	.90	13.64
...smokeless tobacco (chew, snuff, dip)?	94.2%	1.31	20.54
...cocaine (crack, rock, freebase)?	94.3%	.71	10.82
...hallucinogens (LSD, PCP)?	95.8%	.13	7.53
...designer drugs (ecstasy, MDMA)?	95.4%	.17	11.67
...a pipe?	96.0%	.87	10.47
...sedatives (downers, ludes)?	96.6%	.41	7.60
...amphetamines (diet pills, speed)?	96.0%	.50	10.99
...other illicit drugs?	98.9%	.24	8.43
...opiates (heroin, smack, horse)?	98.4%	.05	6.42
...inhalants (glue, solvent, gas)?	99.3%	.02	5.86
...non-prescription drugs?	99.7%	.03	10.55

■ Graph 8: Drug Use – Actual vs. Perceived



Results:

Table 3 (see below) provides specific data figures for Graphs 7 and 8.

UNH students were asked to respond to questions regarding their own use of substances over a 6-month period and their perception of others use in the following categories: alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, prescription drugs for non-intended or “recreational” purposes, pipes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, sedatives, amphetamines (speed, diet pills), cocaine (coke, crack, rock, freebase), hallucinogens (LSD, PCP), designer drugs (ecstasy, MDMA), non-prescription drugs, opiates (heroin, smack, horse), inhalants (glue, solvents, gas), and other illicit drugs.

From Table 3 and this graph, it is apparent that the mean number of days of actual use for most substances is very small; however, perception of others’ use remains consistently higher. With regard to alcohol use, students estimate that students use alcohol almost twice as often as what is reported. In addition, students perceive that their peers are smoking cigarettes almost six times as much and marijuana almost five times the actual use reported. With the remaining substances,

the gap between actual use and perceived use is even more exaggerated. In some cases the discrepancy is much, much more.

EFFORTS TO ADDRESS USE OF ALCOHOL BY STUDENTS

The Higher Education Center, a federally funded agency providing resources for high-risk alcohol reduction to the higher education community, has identified the use of multiple prevention strategies as a best practice in impacting the campus community. Best practices have to be implemented as appropriate to the uniqueness of institutions as well as available resources.

■ Environmental Management

Social Norms Strategy: The use of the social norms approach to education is based on theory and research showing that students misperceive their peers' attitudes and behaviors regarding alcohol, and students tend to drink according to these misperceptions. The social norms approach provides information on these misperceptions by challenging the perception that high-risk use is the norm and by supporting lower-risk use of alcohol. By informing students of the accurate norms about alcohol use on campus, it is anticipated that students will change their drinking behaviors to be consistent with the true campus norm.

Unfortunately, there has not been the decrease in alcohol use (amount and frequency) and the decrease in negative consequences that other schools such as Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Northern Illinois University, and the University of Arizona have witnessed. As a result the social norms team engaged in a comprehensive critical analysis examining each step of the social norms approach in an attempt to identify the problem areas so effective alterations could be made to the approach. Social norms is an approach that must be tailored to each campus. Change cannot be expected at UNH simply by mirroring what was done at Northern Illinois University. It does take a few years to fine tune the approach to a specific campus.

The social norms team invited in Dr. Alan Berkowitz, an independent consultant and co-founder of the social norms approach, to talk with people on campus and help isolate our problem. He echoed the inferences by the team. There are three issues that are barriers to an effective social norms campaign at UNH. The first, and most important, is the lack of synergy of messages. Students get their information from a variety of sources including peers, media, administrators, faculty, and of course the social norms team. While the social norms team is creating and publicizing messages that describe the low-risk alcohol use by the majority, there are other messages that counteract that. Faculty not giving tests or quizzes on Friday and stating that they are doing this because students will be hung over or absent diminishes the social norm messages. Administrators in the media stating that alcohol is a huge problem that needs immediate attention counteracts the message that most UNH students are using alcohol in low-risk ways. The riots have also played a role. The impression is that the riots involved all UNH students and all of the students at the riots were drunk and acting violently. The social norms team doesn't want to downplay the seriousness of the riots, but the fact is that most of the students were not part of the riots, and of those present most were not acting violently. But the reality is different from the perception.

Another issue is the believability of the message. Data demonstrates that students are seeing the messages but these are not changing perceptions. As a result behavior is not changed either. The social norms team believes that part of this reason is that students don't believe the messages.

This makes sense. People have particular perceptions which they base on their senses although this can often be wrong. When someone attempts to change their perceptions people experience cognitive dissonance - the two pieces of information, what they experience and the message that they are being told by the social norms team, are not consistent. The person has to make a choice as to what they will believe. Often times, the person will trust their inaccurate own senses over accurate information someone else tells them. This is an inherent challenge in the social norms approach. The riots help to reinforce the personal experience over scientific data. The image and talk of the riots are vivid and powerful, thus it is easier to believe that as the norm rather than a message seen on a poster. The social norms team needs to find a way to make our messages more believable.

Another barrier is the salience, or relevancy, of the messages. Although UNH has a very homogenous student body, it is relatively large. Our campus doesn't have a high level of UNH-identify. Students don't necessarily define themselves as a "typical" UNH student. When the social norms team posts messages students see them, but don't identify with them. Students don't say, "Hey, that stat is for people like me, my friends." This is not the issue with other schools. Recent research suggests that students are more influenced by the perceptions regarding use and attitudes they hold of their close friends than the perceptions they have of the campus population. Thus we need to find a way to make the messages more salient which can be done by focusing on small groups. These groups could be Greeks, 1st year students, students living in a particular residence hall.

In order for social norms to work at UNH we need to facilitate a paradigm shift. Traditionally, colleges and universities deal with high-risk alcohol use in a reactive, problem-centered way. Our prospective needs to change to one that is focused on the positive behaviors and low-risk alcohol use. This positive-centered approach needs to happen with other issues as well. When the campus community approaches issues by focusing on the positives and discussing the majority behavior that behavior is empowered. Currently, the campus is empowering the minority by focusing on their behavior. Sharing the reality, positive behavior, corrects misperceptions which in turn facilitates behavior change. Students will then begin to act in a way that is consistent with the majority of the students, in reality not consistent with what they misperceive to be the majority of students.

Policies and Enforcement: UNH Police, the Town of Durham Police and Residential Life staff worked to ensure that federal, state, local and campus policies are enforced and dealt with appropriately through the Judicial Program Office and/or local court system.

Post-violation prevention efforts on the college and university campuses include individual sessions/assessments by counseling staff for students who are admitted to the hospital or taken into protective custody due to alcohol or other drug use, parental notification, stiffer sanctioning for repeat violations of alcohol or other drug policies, and/or sanctioning that includes mandatory alcohol or other drug counseling.

Campus and Community Alcohol or Other Drug Task Force: The work of these teams is to make changes on the campus and in some cases the community as well.

The New Hampshire Higher Education Alcohol and Other Drug Committee: This committee is made up of representatives from various colleges and universities in the state to conduct

research, work on state wide initiatives to address alcohol and other drug use, and provide support to campus efforts.

Substance Free Events: Through the Memorial Union, Campus Recreation, student organizations, and residence halls, the campus sponsors many activities that are intentionally substance-free.

Substance Free Housing: UNH provides housing for students in Engelhardt Hall who choose to live free of substances and to students who are in recovery for alcohol or other drug addiction.

■ Educational Efforts

Campus-wide programs: The Office of Health Education and Promotion at Health Services offers a number of large group programs on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Orientation programs: The Office of Health Education and Promotion at Health Services offers sessions during first year and transfer student orientation of alcohol, tobacco and other drug issues, policies regarding use as well as efforts to address high-risk use.

Curriculum infusion: Information on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is presented through a variety of in-class curricula including courses specific to alcohol and other drug use from a psychological or sociological perspective, courses designed to teach low-risk alcohol use, etc.

Targeted (or Across the College) programs: The Office of Health Education and Promotion at Health Services offers programs targeted to specific smaller audiences such as class visits or residence hall programs.

Prevention programs specifically for athletes: These programs provide information about the effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use on athletic performance.

Prevention programs specifically for fraternities and sororities: Fraternities and sororities are required to present a number of educational programs to their members. One of the requirements calls for an educational program on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.

Information training for faculty and staff: The Office of Health Education and Promotion at Health Services provides information for faculty and staff on recognition and referral for alcohol and other drug issues.

■ Counseling and Support Services

Counseling: Through the Office of Health Education and Promotion at Health Services and the Counseling Center, UNH provides short-term alcohol and/or other drug counseling. Students in need of long term or in-patient care are referred to off-campus agencies.

Support Groups: The Office of Health Education and Promotion at Health Services sponsors support groups for students who are currently questioning their alcohol and other drug use as well as a group for students early in their recovery process. Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held either on the campuses or locally and are available for students.

Information adapted from The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Education. Environmental management: A comprehensive strategy for reducing alcohol and other drug use on college campuses. Retrieved January 7, 2002 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.edc.org/hec/framework/>

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