

## WHY FACULTY?

Faculty members on college campuses are not only instructors, but also advisors and role models for students. Students trust you. Faculty spend concentrated time with students—encounters that have a lasting impact. College is a crucial time of development for young adults. Your guidance can be of great benefit, not only to their academic lives, but also their daily lives.

**MANY FACULTY MEMBERS WOULD LIKE TO HELP, TO MAKE THE EXTRA CONNECTION WITH STUDENTS BUT DO NOT KNOW HOW. THIS PAMPHLET WILL HELP.**

## RESOURCES

**The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention**  
higheredcenter.org

**National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse**  
collegedrinkingprevention.gov

**The Network: Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Issues**  
thenetwork.ws

**National Social Norms Resource Center**  
socialnorms.org

**The BACCHUS Network**  
bacchusnetwork.org

**For further information on wellness issues facing college students, contact:**

**Missouri Partners in Prevention**  
Columbia, MO 65211  
(573) 882-4634  
pip.missouri.edu

*Data from the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey, Spring 2010, n=7813 Missouri college students*

# FACULTY INFLUENCE

**CORRECTING MISPERCEPTIONS AND CHANGING THE CULTURE OF ALCOHOL ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES**

# WE ALL WANT STUDENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

AS A FACULTY MEMBER, YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT FIGURE IN STUDENTS' LIVES. WHY, THOUGH, SHOULD YOU HELP ADDRESS STUDENT ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE USE?

## WHY ALCOHOL IS A PROBLEM

Though most Missouri students practice lower risk drinking behaviors, alcohol is still a problem on campus. Each year preventable incidents occur, including alcohol poisoning, unwanted sexual contact, and violence. Many academic issues also arise as a result of excessive alcohol use, such as missed classes, poor study habits, and academic probation. Addressing these issues requires assistance from the entire campus community.

**MOST (9 OUT OF 10) MISSOURI COLLEGE STUDENTS DON'T REGULARLY USE ALCOHOL (3+ TIMES PER WEEK).**

## ADDRESS MISPERCEPTIONS

College is a time to develop and exercise critical thinking skills. This can certainly be applied to everyday issues, particularly alcohol. The common belief is that all students drink heavily as part of "the college experience." But is that true? It turns out that most Missouri college students do not engage in binge drinking, and most students do not use alcohol more than three times per week. *(Data from the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey, Spring 2010, n=7813 Missouri college students)*

As misperceptions take root, students are more likely to behave in ways that reinforce the incorrect norm, such as drinking to excess. The social norms approach has been effective at decreasing risky drinking behaviors through the promotion of actual norms. Faculty can help correct misperceptions by challenging students' notions of what campus norms are. Ask them to think critically about those perceptions, rather than simply accepting them. Also, be careful about making comments or jokes that reinforce the notion that students drink to excess. This pamphlet contains several key social norms statistics for Missouri. If you would like more information on social norming or on how to integrate the statistics into your class, please contact your campus health promotion/wellness office.

**MOST MISSOURI COLLEGE STUDENTS HAVE USED A DESIGNATED DRIVER IN THE PAST YEAR.**

## CREATE A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT

### ▶ SET EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR CLASSES

In the syllabus for each class, clearly outline norms and policies related to class attendance and academic performance. Schedule exams and due dates for the day after typical "party nights." This will give students a reason to abstain or drink moderately.

### ▶ UTILIZE TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Often, an incident arises on campus, in the community, or in the news that relates to alcohol. Use these times to relate the topic back to your subject area and engage the class in a discussion. This can be a good time to reinforce your expectations related to balancing school and social life.

### ▶ DON'T CANCEL CLASS

If you know you will be away during a regularly scheduled class, ask the campus health promotion department to conduct an educational program instead. The staff has trained professionals and peer educators that can provide valuable health and safety information in an interactive format.

**MOST MISSOURI COLLEGE STUDENTS HAVE NOT PERFORMED POORLY ON A TEST DUE TO ALCOHOL.**

### ▶ INFUSE INTO THE CURRICULUM

Look for ways to infuse the alcohol topic into the material you teach. Many subjects have some connection to alcohol. Examples include analyzing marketing strategies, discussing the effect of substances on personal creativity, or researching public policies related to alcohol licensing. These conversations can be excellent ways to reinforce concepts through the application to real-world issues.

### ▶ DISCUSS DURING ADVISING

Many faculty members also advise students on class schedules and graduation requirements. This can be a time to reinforce positive behaviors related to alcohol moderation and maintaining focus for completing all coursework on time.

## HOW TO HELP AN AT-RISK STUDENT

If you notice a student having difficulty with class and assignments, feel free to ask how things are going. The behavior is not necessarily alcohol related, but it is usually indicative of a larger issue. Emphasize that you care about the student as a person and as a member of the campus community. Express your concern and recommend the student speak to someone such as a counselor or academic advisor. If you are not familiar with these services on campus, make a point to introduce yourself to the counselors and advisors. This will make it easier to refer students should the need arise.



**EXPRESS YOUR CONCERN AND RECOMMEND THE STUDENT SPEAK TO SOMEONE SUCH AS A COUNSELOR OR ACADEMIC ADVISOR.**

## CHANGING THE CULTURE

Utilizing these and other environmental best practices, campuses can begin to change the culture. Over time, perceptions of high-risk drinking yield to strong academics and a safe environment in which students can learn.

If you have not done so, familiarize yourself with the student services on campus related to alcohol and substance abuse. Ask them what else you can do to help make the campus a healthier place. Again, everyone has an important role in the development of college students.

**MOST MISSOURI COLLEGE STUDENTS HAVE NOT MISSED CLASS DUE TO ALCOHOL.**