

# Annual Campus Celebrations:

Changing the Environment of  
Alcohol-Fueled Celebrations Using  
Event-Specific Prevention

**Copyright & Confidentiality**

This document has been prepared for the exclusive use of EverFi Coalition partners. The information contained herein is the property of EverFi and should not be shared or disclosed by Coalition partners to third parties (including other institutions, consultants, contractors, advisors, etc.) except when these materials are explicitly required for such third parties to complete their work on behalf of the Coalition partner institution. Coalition partners are requested to ensure that third parties working on their behalf who have access to these materials are informed about their proprietary and confidential nature. In addition, third parties working on behalf of a Coalition partner institution may not retain these materials in any way for their own use (or with other clients) beyond their work with the Coalition partner institution that provided access to these materials.

Materials contained in this report may only be copied for internal use by Coalition partners, and must retain the copyright mark on all reproduced pages. In cases where Coalition research findings are referenced, partners are required to cite EverFi as the creator of these proprietary materials. Coalition partners are requested not to share Coalition research materials with the media and are requested to refer media inquiries to EverFi staff at [marketing@everfi.com](mailto:marketing@everfi.com).

**Warranties & Disclaimers**

The information contained in this report has been gathered from many sources. EverFi has strived to ensure the accuracy of all data, quotations, references, and other materials gathered in the research process. However, EverFi cannot guarantee the full accuracy of all research materials gathered and presented. Although EverFi has used its best efforts to produce the highest quality materials, it can make no guaranty, warranty, or representation as to the results institutions will experience through the implementation of ideas, strategies, recommendations, and tactics contained in these materials. Therefore, the company makes no warranty or representation, express or implied, with respect to these materials, which are provided "As is."

---

# Executive Summary

---

In spring 2011, The EverFi Coalition undertook an effort to uncover best practices for managing student behavior at annual campus celebrations. This examination of the research literature, campus case studies, and knowledge base of practitioner and police resulted in the following report.

## Key findings from our research include:

- Injuries, property damage, excessive noise, and severe intoxication that can result from students gathering in celebration can jeopardize students' health and safety and place a significant burden on campus police and emergency personnel. In addition, when alcohol-fueled celebrations run out of control, it can strain campus-community relations and bring negative publicity to the campus.
- An emerging strategy for curbing problems that occur during alcohol-fueled celebrations is event-specific prevention, a targeted and integrated approach to addressing drinking associated with peak times and events. Several institutions have successfully reduced alcohol-related problems during annual celebrations by employing a combination of the following approaches:

- 1. Communicating standards and encouraging responsibility** by educating students on policies and expectations during annual celebrations
- 2. Changing the drinking culture through environmental management** by employing specific policies, activities, and programs to create a healthier and more controlled atmosphere at campus celebrations
- 3. Reducing harm through health protection strategies** to reduce negative consequences of drinking and associated high-risk behaviors
- 4. Providing screening and referral for intervention and treatment services** to students who are issued citations during celebration events

## Guidelines for Addressing High-Risk Drinking at Annual Celebrations

Based on the research, institutions are encouraged to follow the guidelines below for addressing problems that occur during celebratory events on their campus:

**Assemble a task force to energize and focus your efforts.** Collaborating across multiple campus and community constituencies can help unify a campus, bring new energy to prevention work, and create a greater sense of shared responsibility for addressing problems.

**Collaborate with other campuses.** Invite staff from neighboring institutions to participate in the task force to develop a coordinated approach to reduce alcohol-related problems.

**Develop a comprehensive strategic plan.** Successfully reforming celebratory events requires a multi-pronged and tightly coordinated approach both on campus and in the surrounding community.

**Clearly, consistently, and frequently communicate the institution's expectations regarding student conduct.** With an appeal to the institution's educational mission and traditions and in the interest of student health and safety, students should be put on warning that high-risk drinking and unruly behavior will not be tolerated.

**Anticipate and head-off opposition.** Student or alumni backlash can be avoided by collecting and publicizing data on student and community concerns about the problems experienced during celebratory events.

**Share your campus experience.** Campus administrators can learn about effective strategies for addressing problems related to celebratory events by sharing insights and disseminating evaluation results of their efforts with one another.

# Table of Contents

<b>5</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Scope of the Problem</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Event-Specific Prevention</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Building a Comprehensive Prevention Strategy for Annual Celebrations</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Case Study: A Multifaceted Approach to Reducing Problems at Duke's Last Day of Class Celebration</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Case Study: Targeting Efforts to Improve Celebrations at the University of Illinois</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Addressing Common Challenges in Celebration Behaviors</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Guidelines for Addressing High-Risk Drinking at Annual Celebrations</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Acknowledgements</b>

---

# Introduction

---

Violence, property damage, impaired driving: the list of problems that result from annual campus events can seem endless. For years, annual campus celebrations ranging from holiday revelries to spring festivals and other campus-sponsored events, have presented prevention professionals with significant challenges. In the extreme, one campus's annual Spring Weekend turned into a full-blown riot, resulting in overturned police cars, fires, and several alcohol overdoses. Another campus was forced to suspend its annual festival after nighttime disturbances led to thousands of dollars in property damage and several arrests ("Prevention File," 2006). Not surprisingly, many campuses have resorted to canceling their decade-old celebrations indefinitely. The underlying problem is the high degree of student alcohol use associated with these events. The combination of large crowds and high-risk drinking can be a recipe for disaster.

Despite these challenges, a number of campuses have employed effective approaches to address the problem of high-risk drinking at annual events. For example, through policy enforcement and harm reduction strategies, one campus altered the atmosphere of its spring festival from an "all-you-can drink blowout" to a "well-regulated, low-risk and still popular celebration" ("Prevention File," 2006). The goal of this report is to outline how campuses can implement a proactive, multifaceted approach to reducing alcohol-related harms at their annual campus celebrations.

Specifically, the report intends to answer the following questions:

- ✓ **What is event-specific prevention?**
- ✓ **What does a comprehensive approach to reducing alcohol-related problems at annual celebrations look like?**
- ✓ **What are some common challenges faced by campuses when addressing drinking at annual events and how can they seek to overcome them?**

---

# Scope of the Problem

---

Research has found that students tend to consume more alcohol during specific periods of time and special occasions throughout the academic year. Students tend to confine their drinking to the weekends, drinking more at the beginning of the semester when academic pressures are minimal, but much less during the more academically intense periods before exams. Research examining drinking trends over time has also found that consumption is heaviest during Spring Break and during local and national holidays (e.g., Halloween, New Year's). More students are drinking during these events, and they are consuming much higher quantities of alcohol (Del Boca et al, 2004; Martell et al, 2006).

There are many reasons behind this increase in alcohol consumption at campus events. Increases in student drinking may be attributed to the cultural significance or personal meaning that students associate with these traditions (Neighbors et al., 2007). Research has found that if students have a vested interest in celebrating, they will be more likely to drink at heightened levels. For example, a recent study that examined the blood alcohol concentration levels of students on Halloween found that participants dressed in costume, and thus visibly celebrating Halloween, drank to higher levels of intoxication than those not in costume (Glindemann, Wiegand, & Geller, 2007).

High-risk drinking at celebratory events may also be linked to students' overestimation of alcohol use among their peers, which in turn leads students to drink more heavily on these occasions (Neighbors et al., 2006; Martell et al, 2006). For this reason, many campuses make an effort to correct these normative misperceptions in advance of events through communication campaigns or other educational initiatives.

## Are students to blame for celebration disturbances?

There is no doubt that students constitute a major source of the problems at campus celebrations. It is important to understand, however, that in many cases, a small group of students are causing the majority of negative incidents.

A survey of students who attended Cinco de Mayo street parties at the University of Cincinnati (UC) revealed that under 1% of students destroyed property during an outbreak of street riots and only 1.4% had a confrontation with Cincinnati Police.

Problems can also be caused by visitors attending events. Interestingly, the same survey found that students believed that non-UC students were responsible for most of the disturbances at the Cinco de Mayo parties. For that reason, many campuses have made an effort to close events to the public or prohibit students from bringing in guests.

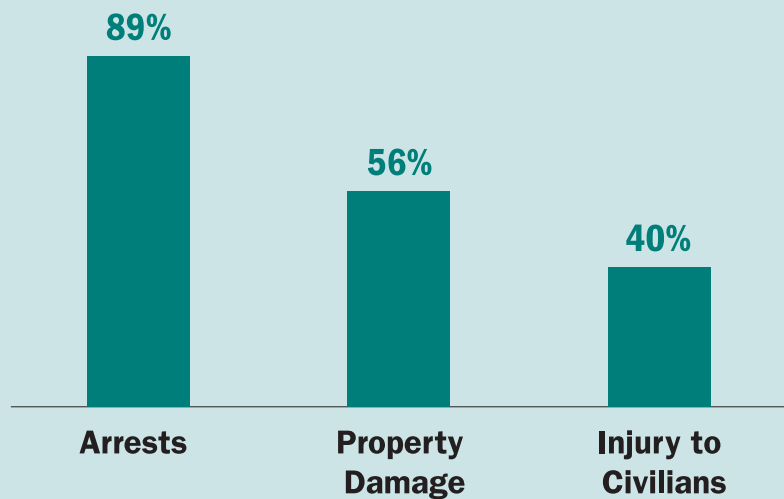
Source: Fisher et al, (2004); Medenson & Eck, (2006).

## Party Riots and Disturbances

Unfortunately, annual campus celebrations can easily spin out of control. Riot-like behaviors, including excessive noise, acts of vandalism, or severe intoxication, can result from large crowds of students gathering together in celebration. Although very few celebrations turn into large-scale riots, these disturbances jeopardize students' health and safety, while placing a significant burden on campus police and emergency personnel. For example, during Pennsylvania State University's (PSU) 2009 State Patty's Weekend, alcohol-fueled police incidents were higher than PSU's busiest football weekends during the prior fall, leading to 14 drunken driving arrests and 21 alcohol-related medical emergencies (King & Leonard, 2010).

Through an analysis of electronic newspaper archives between 1985 and 2002, researchers uncovered a total of 208 campus disturbances that occurred during convivial events on campuses, including annual campus celebrations. A close examination of these disturbances revealed that over half of these events were associated with injuries and property damage and that arrests were made by police at almost 90% of them (McCarthy, Martin & McPhail, 2007; "Prevention File," 2006) (Figure 1). Not only do these occurrences bring negative publicity to a campus, but they may also place a significant strain on campus-community relations.

**Figure 1: Incidence of Problems at Campus Celebrations**



Source: McCarthy, Martin & McPhail, (2007).

---

# Event-Specific Prevention

---

Many problems that arise from annual celebrations have much to do with the nature of the event and characteristics of the campus itself. For example, a campus with a larger student population may be at an increased risk of experiencing problems, due to the potential for large crowds. Similarly, having a convenient and central place for gathering (such as a college green or dense student neighborhood) can also be a risk factor. (“Prevention File, 2006”). Taking into account the various factors that may contribute to problems at campus celebrations, many campuses are adopting event-specific prevention, an emerging approach to tackling high-risk events based on a campus’s unique characteristics and needs. Event-specific prevention aims to address problems at a variety of levels—not only targeting the individual student with prevention messages, but also engaging other constituencies from the campus and local community in a variety of prevention efforts (Neighbors et al., 2007; DeJong & Langford, 2002). For example, a campus may use social marketing to target individual students and encourage responsible drinking during celebrations, yet also collaborate with the campus police to enforce underage drinking laws. By operating at different levels, prevention efforts can be more synergistic and produce a greater impact (Neighbors et al., 2007; Aab et al., 2004).

An institution should plan for effective prevention at events by pursuing the following steps:

**Step 1: Bring campus and community constituencies together.** Collaborating across a number of constituencies (e.g., student affairs, campus police, faculty, students, alumni) can unify campus groups around event planning. According to Neighbors et al., (2007), focusing specifically on alcohol problems tied to an event can seem less overwhelming to a campus-community coalition and help the group to better focus its efforts.

**Step 2: Assess the problem and establish goals.** When planning to prevent problems associated with an upcoming event, campuses ought to look to institutional data (e.g., judicial reports, medical transport data) or investigate problems at past events to set specific goals and target efforts. For that reason, it is important for campus police and judicial affairs to track student behaviors at celebrations and communicate this data to other campus constituencies. Collecting these data on an ongoing basis will help campuses officials to determine whether new efforts put into place are effectively reducing problems at events.

**Step 3: Identify appropriate resources.** Campuses might also consider a number of variables, such as the start time of the event or expected weather conditions, when allocating resources and making preparations. For example, an evening event may require increased police and medical presence due to higher rates of alcohol consumption that may be expected throughout the day. Similarly, if there is good weather on the day of an event, administrators might focus their efforts outdoors, where alcohol-fueled incidents might be more prevalent.

**Step 4: Choose evidence-based strategies.** As with selecting any alcohol prevention strategy, it is important to call upon the evidence base and past experience when choosing which approach to take. Choosing strategies that align with institutional goals and then implementing several efforts simultaneously to achieve them will yield the greatest impact.



---

# Building a Comprehensive Prevention Strategy for Annual Celebrations

---

There are a number of event-specific strategies for preventing and/or reducing alcohol-related problems at campus celebrations. These approaches fall into four broad categories identified in the research literature (Neighbors et al., 2007, DeJong & Langford, 2002):

1. **Communicating expectations and encouraging responsibility**
2. **Changing the drinking culture through environmental management**
3. **Reducing harm through health protection strategies**
4. **Providing screening and referral for intervention and treatment services**

## 1. Communicate Expectations & Encourage Responsibility

To deter student drinking at celebratory events, many campuses employ educational initiatives to build awareness of event policies and procedures. Below are objectives and strategies that The Alcohol Prevention Coalition recommends for communicating expectations and encouraging responsibility among event attendees.

### **OBJECTIVE: Encourage responsible celebrating at events**

Research demonstrates that promoting responsible behaviors at events through social marketing or educational outreach can help to set a positive tone for an event.

### **Strategies**

---

- ✓ **Launch social marketing campaigns to promote healthy behaviors.** The University of Virginia launched a multimedia social marketing campaign surrounding its annual steeplechase horse racing event in order to discourage hazardous drinking (see callout on p. 22).
- ✓ **Enlist prominent campus or community members to encourage safety.** Prior to Pennsylvania State University's (PSU) Saint Patty's Day event, PSU's police chief and captain wrote an editorial in the newspaper reminding students of the risks associated with high-risk drinking and urging them to pledge to be responsible with alcohol at the upcoming event (King & Leonard, 2010).
- ✓ **Use normative data to change attitudes and reduce misperceptions around events.** In an effort to improve Duke's Last Day of Class celebration, administrators communicated to student groups that 40% of Duke students are unhappy with the role that alcohol plays at the event (see case study on p. 3). Campuses have also had success with launching social norms marketing campaigns to educate students about the healthy decisions that most of their peers make while celebrating.
- ✓ **Remind students about the dangers of pre-gaming before events.** Given the prevalence of pre-gaming that often occurs before campus events, it is worthwhile to educate students about the risks of pre-gaming, as well as other high-risk drinking behaviors, including taking shots or chugging alcohol.

### **Enlisting Parents to Promote Responsibility**

---

Parents can play a valuable role in keeping students safe from the risks of high-risk drinking. In fact, many campuses reach out to parents before high-risk events through newsletter items, emails, or other avenues to make them aware of the increased risks inherent in these events. At Ohio University (OU), staff send an

online newsletter to parents highlighting the need for their involvement and support around specific events, such as its traditionally problematic Halloween Weekend. OU's message to parents stresses the need for parents to speak to their children about alcohol use and being safe.

*Source: Alcohol Prevention Coalition interview*

### **OBJECTIVE: Clearly articulate alcohol policies and expectations**

Communicating event policies and procedures sends the message to students that they will be held accountable for their behaviors. Outlined below are a number of avenues for targeting students with these messages.

#### **Strategies**

---

- ✓ **Send out mass emails or letters to students in advance of celebrations.** Duke University (see case study on p.13) publishes policies for its Last Day of Class celebration online prior to the event.
- ✓ **Invite police to educate students about policies.** Many campuses invite police to meet and discuss policies with student groups, such as Greek chapters or student government.
- ✓ **Advertise event policies and associated penalties** by posting signage throughout campus and at the event's venue.

### **2. Change the Drinking Culture through Environmental Management**

Through a number of policies, activities, and programs, campuses can create a healthier and more controlled atmosphere at campus celebrations.

### **OBJECTIVE: Institute policies to control drinking**

Many campuses have found success with reducing student consumption by limiting student access to alcohol in and around annual high-risk events.

#### **Strategies**

---

- ✓ **Restrict student access to alcohol.** The University of Illinois (see case study on p.16) has a zero-tolerance policy for underage drinking during its St. Patrick's Day celebration and prohibits open containers on the streets. Where alcohol is sold by a third-party vendor, many campuses also place limits on the number of drinks purchased by each individual and make sure that of-age students are carded and/or given wristbands.
- ✓ **Require students to obtain a permit to host a party related to the annual event.** When students register for parties that fall on or near annual celebrations, authorities can better regulate gatherings and restrict students' access to alcohol. Some campuses have made the decision to ban parties on campus altogether during annual campus celebrations.
- ✓ **Place limits on who attends events.** Many campuses limit access to events to students only or turn away individuals who are visibly intoxicated. For example, Cornell University places a fence around its outdoor venue on Slope Day, with ID checkpoints at gates restricting entry to students and their guests ("Prevention file," 2006).
- ✓ **Encourage local bars to restrict their hours of operation and enforce underage drinking laws.** Keeping alcohol outlets open late during campus celebrations (or opening them at early hours) can contribute to high rates of drinking. Vendors should also be reminded to check student IDs in order to reduce the prevalence of underage drinking.
- ✓ **Collaborate with other local institutions of higher education to develop consistent and synergistic policies.** Several neighboring institutions have joined the University of Illinois' St. Patrick's Day task force, as many of their students attend this high-risk celebration. Such communication encourages collaboration among institutions who share the challenges of high-risk alcohol use among students at annual events.

## Best Practices for Partnering with Other Campuses to Reform Annual Celebrations

- Include other local institutions in your planning efforts (e.g., planning committee or task force)
- Encourage other campuses to host their own celebrations at the same time as your campus's event
- Eliminate mass transit of students from other institutions to your campus during annual events
- Ask neighboring institutions to publicize your event's policies on their campus

### OBJECTIVE: Increase enforcement of underage drinking laws

Increasing the rigor and consistency of enforcement of underage drinking laws sends the message to students that underage drinking will not be tolerated and may deter students from participating in rowdy behaviors.

#### Strategies

- ✓ **Increase police presence.** When police officers patrol events, especially student-run outdoor celebrations, party-goers are reminded that campus policies and state laws will be enforced. In large crowds, mounted police can be an especially powerful deterrent. Bike patrols can be effective in low-density gatherings that cover large areas, while foot patrols may be useful in dealing with high-density gatherings in smaller areas (Medenson & Eck, 2006).
- ✓ **Strategically station law enforcement.** It is important to station police in areas that are known to be problematic during celebrations. For example, to address the problem of students attending class intoxicated during the University of Illinois St. Patrick's Day celebration (see case study on p.16), the university stations administrative staff and police to monitor areas outside of lecture halls.
- ✓ **Be proactive in issuing citations.** During the University of Connecticut's 2006 Spring Weekend, three DWI checkpoints were set up on major roads leading to campus. The University of Illinois sends undercover police and citizen volunteers to attend student parties and notify authorities of violations of UI's party host regulations.

### OBJECTIVE: Offer alternatives to drinking

When campuses offer alcohol-free options for students during otherwise high-risk annual events, it sends a positive message to students about how to celebrate responsibly, while also reinforcing many students' decisions not to drink.

#### Strategies

- ✓ **Host an array of alcohol-free events and activities.** Many campuses offer a variety of activities that appeal to different interests, ranging from concerts, to athletic tournaments, to dance competitions, to free meals.
- ✓ **Host events throughout the day(s) of annual celebrations.** Offering activities at times of heightened risk may help discourage student drinking. For example, Duke University provides a campus barbeque from 4:30 to 6:00 pm to discourage drinking and encourage community during its Last Day of Class celebration.
- ✓ **Use entertainment to shift students' focus away from drinking.** In an effort to reduce drinking-related problems at Cornell's spring festival, Slope Day, the university made an effort to develop musical entertainment as the main attraction rather than drinking. With entertainment as the primary focus, along with other alcohol control efforts in place, Cornell has witnessed declines in consumption and an improved atmosphere on Slope Day ("Prevention File," 2006).

## Alcohol-free options reduce negative incidents at annual events

To address the problem of high-risk drinking during Purdue's annual "Grand Prix Race," a charity go-kart race, the university hosts up to fifty Grand Alternative alcohol-free events during the week prior to the event. Activities such as midnight breakfasts, concerts, and dances are sponsored by student organizations, with the majority of funding coming from their local Drug-Free Coalition of Tippecanoe County.

According to Tammy Loew, the Health Advocacy Coordinator at Purdue's Student Wellness Office, the events attract a variety of students. "It really just depends on the night, the activity, and on how the wind blows," she says. She

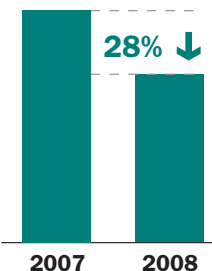
also points out that although some students may drink before or after an event, "it's not everyone." According to Loew, last year at least 17,000 students attended at least one Grand Alternative activity that week.

### Decrease in Arrests

Purdue has also seen a decrease of 28% in the number of arrests made during that week. According to Loew, "The fact that the number of arrests has decreased from previous years indicates that our prevention efforts are paying off, and it shows that students really do want alcohol-free options."

Source: Alcohol Prevention Coalition interview

### Decline in arrests made during week of Grand Prix



## 3. Reduce harm through "health protection" strategies

In addition to engaging in efforts to prevent high-risk drinking, there are a number of measures that campuses can employ to protect students from the negative consequences of drinking and associated high-risk behaviors.

### OBJECTIVE: Provide adequate medical care

Given the significant number of individuals gathering together in celebration, campus administrators should provide adequate access to medical care in the event it is necessary.

### Strategies

- ✓ **Collaborate with local providers.** It is advisable to have campus health center or local hospital staff onsite at events to ensure that students receive treatment when needed. Many campuses station Emergency Medical Service (EMS) tents in highly visible and central locations during events.
- ✓ **Provide emergency lanes for easy access to and from the event.** Limiting parking or closing streets can help expedite emergency response.
- ✓ **Train student volunteers and peer educators to identify the signs of alcohol poisoning.** During Cornell's Slope Day celebration, students and university staff members circulate the area to distribute water bottles and offer assistance to anyone in trouble ("Prevention File", 2006).

### **OBJECTIVE: Remove opportunities for physical harm**

There are a number of safety measures that can be put into place in order to reduce the likelihood that attendees will become injured or destroy property while intoxicated.

#### **Strategies**

---

- ✓ **Limit parking at or near celebrations.** Restricting parking or having a no-parking zone may reduce the risk of cars being vandalized in the event of disturbances (Madensen & Eck, 2006).
- ✓ **Offer and advertise free transportation home for students.**
- ✓ **Prohibit the use of glass bottles.** Many campuses restrict the sale of alcohol to cans or plastic bottles only.
- ✓ **Institute safety ordinances to discourage rowdy behaviors.** The University of Illinois's city municipal code fines individuals for throwing objects off of balconies or out of windows, which has been a trend during campus celebrations (Ibrahim, 2010).
- ✓ **Enforce guest limits at student parties.** These limits can reduce the likelihood of crowd-fueled disturbances and injuries. For example, at Duke, gatherings held outside the main event are restricted to 25 or fewer guests.

### **4. Provide Screening and Referral for Intervention and Treatment Services**

It is wise for campuses to follow up with students that are issued citations for underage drinking or associated negative behaviors, as these students may be demonstrating early signs of having a serious problem with alcohol.

#### **Strategies**

---

- ✓ **Provide students with resources, such as online or in-person screening for alcohol problems and dependency.**
- ✓ **Refer students to alcohol education classes or treatment services when appropriate.**

Routine alcohol screenings are commonly administered prior to an educational or counseling session that is mandated for students found in violation of alcohol policies.

---

# Case Study: A Multifaceted Approach to Reducing Problems at Duke's Last Day of Class Celebration

---

Duke University implemented a comprehensive plan to reduce alcohol-related problems at its 2010 Last Day of Class Celebration (LDOC). The celebration, which originated as an outdoor concert, had developed into an all-day outdoor drinking festival, yielding a number of alcohol-related medical emergencies and heightened rates of underage drinking. At the 2009 LDOC, the event resulted in \$25,000 of property damage and more than 36 EMS calls (Russell, L., 2010).

According to Tom Szigethy, Associate Dean and Director of Duke's Substance Abuse Prevention and Health Promotion Center, prevention implementation is a very deliberate process. In preparation for the 2009 LDOC event, a few meetings were held throughout the year with the chair for the event to discuss prevention options. A survey was also offered to all students, and a separate survey was developed for faculty. The survey had two purposes: uncover people's opinions about the event (regarding safety, enjoyment, etc.), and to initiate a shift in community attitudes regarding LDOC.

According to Szigethy, the survey helped community members to define whether LDOC was an alcohol event with some music, or if it was a concert with an alcohol problem. Szigethy states that this differentiation was extremely important in the event planning with students so they could advocate for the concert and not for the alcohol. The results of the survey also helped students understand the necessity of having prevention meetings early and often in the academic year to plan for the following LDOC in 2010.

For the 2010 LDOC, several prevention efforts were put in place to improve the celebration, including alcohol-free activities, new policies and procedures, and additional measures to ensure student safety. The event had become so popular with both Duke students and others from the outside community that attendance had grown beyond what the Duke security force could safely maintain. As the event is paid for, scheduled, and planned by Duke students and is an occasion for celebrating Duke students, a new policy was initiated for the 2010 LDOC to restrict the event to Duke affiliates only. Szigethy states that this provided an additional level of student ownership and accountability for the event—if negative behavior occurred, it would be the Duke students who were responsible.

## Advanced Planning

In fall 2009, a LDOC Committee met weekly to plan for the event. Members of the committee consisted of Szigethy, a team of students, police, EMS personnel, and the Dean of Residence of Life. According to Szigethy, "It was important that the committee met early and often," to ensure adequate time for planning.

## Increased Education and Outreach to Promote Safety

A number of education and outreach efforts were employed to promote healthy behaviors and safe decision-making during LDOC:

- **Dissemination of normative data.** Upon surveying students about LDOC, data revealed that 40% of Duke students were unhappy with the role that alcohol played at the event, believing that the level of drinking at LDOC was a disgrace to Duke's reputation. Administrators facilitated discussions with



student groups in order to share these perspectives more broadly and to shed light on students' negative attitudes towards the role of alcohol at LDOC.

- **Enlisting faculty to send a positive message.** Due to the prevalence of drinking that occurred before or during class time on LDOC, students on the LDOC Committee sent faculty members an email encouraging them to promote positive standards of behavior to their students.
- **A student safety pledge.** Duke launched a safety pledge—a statement of commitment to making healthy and responsible decisions while at LDOC—to set behavioral expectations for LDOC and to encourage safe partying among students. The pledge pamphlet also included an overview of the signs of alcohol poisoning and directions for getting help in the event of an emergency. Students who signed the pledge were also entered into a raffle for prizes from the LDOC Committee.
- **Strength-based messages.** According to Szigethy, all the messages to the community were written to be inclusive. Messages explained what “we” want as a Duke community rather than what “you” ought not to do. Szigethy states that the intent was to leave no student on the fringe of the event, stating clearly that all students represent Duke’s campus.

## New Policies and Procedures

Students played a key role in the establishment and enforcement of rules and procedures for the event. In order to foster buy-in for the new policies, students worked to convey the message that the event was a concert to celebrate the successes of Duke Students—not a drinking event with some music. According to Szigethy, each policy was written with the intent to increase the community feel for the event. Students also worked with a team of faculty and staff to enforce rules and monitor the event in shifts.

### New policies for the 2010 LDOC included:

- Limiting the event to Duke University students and affiliates only
- Requiring students to carry their Duke cards and to wear an identifying wristband
- Limiting students to carrying six beers or fewer
- Restricting containers to 24 ounces
- Prohibiting drinking games and unsafe drinking behaviors (e.g., beer pong, chugging)
- Banning the use of glass containers



## Safe Pledge

I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge to:  
enjoy the last day of classes in a responsible manner.  
To do so, I will abide by the following safe behaviors:

- I will respect the right of other people to celebrate as long as they are not harming themselves or others.
- I will respect all EMTs, Duke police and state police.
- I will respect all public, personal and University property.
- I will follow all state laws regarding driving and alcohol. I will only be a passenger in vehicles where the driver is following those laws.
- I will immediately contact emergency personnel if someone is injured or has signs of alcohol poisoning.
- I will remember that impairment starts with the first drink and that my body can only process approximately one drink per hour, so if I choose to drink alcohol, I will pace my drinking to reduce dangerous consequences, such as alcohol poisoning, injuries or fights.
- I will recognize the impact that alcohol has on my ability to make sound decisions. Therefore, I will make decisions, before drinking, about my intentions around sexual activity and the need for protection against pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infections.
- I will ensure that I have clear consent for any sexual activity that I choose to participate in, recognizing that individuals cannot legally give consent while intoxicated. I will intervene to ensure the safety of my fellow community members.

**I will have fun and celebrate all the hard work  
I have done this year as a Duke student - safely.**

### Symptoms of Alcohol Poisoning

Eyes roll back in the head \* Skin is clammy  
Skin color changes \* Breathing is shallow  
Heart rate slows \* Vomiting while passed out  
Cannot be wakened from a passed out state

**TAKE ACTION! GET HELP!**

**CALL 911 or take your friend to the EMS tent!**

### RAFFLE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Above: Duke University's 2010 Safety Pledge

## Providing Alternatives to Drinking

The LDOC Committee planned an array of activities throughout the celebration, such as a free breakfast, a Chapel Climb, a sing-along, movie showings, and a campus-wide barbeque funded by the Student Wellness Center. Szigethy explained that the idea was to get students moving and, wherever possible, to have students participate in activities that would not be as fun while intoxicated.

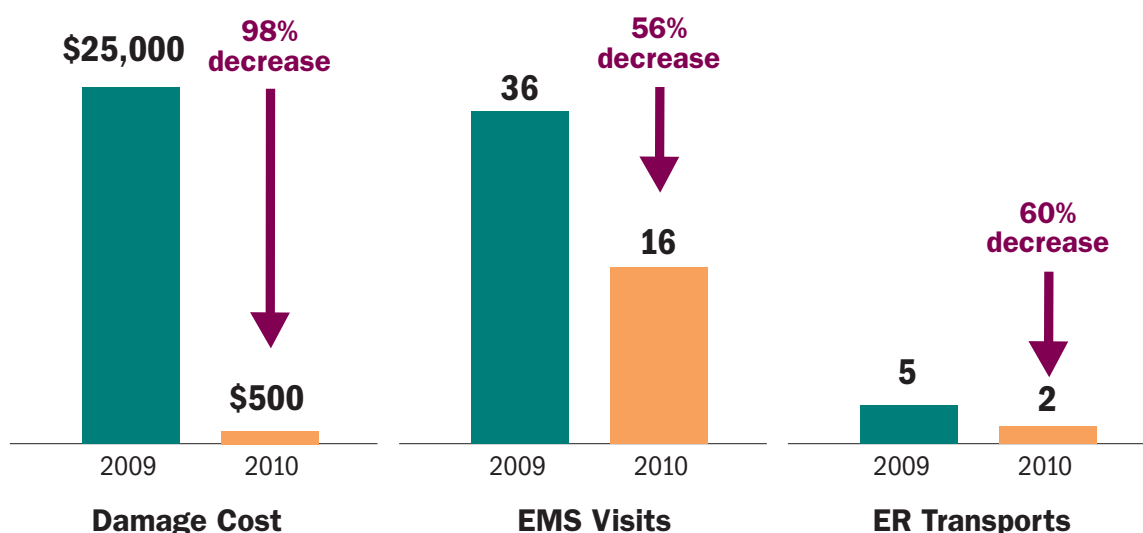
## Health and Safety Measures

At previous LODCs, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) stations were set up in a residence hall. For the 2010 event, administrators decided to move the station to a tent in the Chapel Quad. According to Szigethy, this location had a greater impact due to its central location at the entrance of the outdoor venue, sending a message to arriving students to be safe and look out for one another. The public setting of the tent also made EMS services more accessible to students and, according to Szigethy, shifted students' attitudes towards more responsible behavior. Szigethy explained that with the tent, there was less "babysitting" by emergency personnel. Students were less apt to use the service as an infirmary or to "sleep off the alcohol," but rather for true alcohol-related emergencies. More students also sought services on their own or with friends rather than mainly through administration assistance, as on previous occasions.

## Decreases in Negative Consequences

Duke University administrators saw significant improvements in the 2010 LDOC as a result of their various prevention efforts. In addition to reduced rates of student drinking, university administrators witnessed sharp declines in visits to EMS services and ER transports (See Figure 2), while at the same time there was increased training of all personnel on recognizing the signs of alcohol poisoning. Notably, costs incurred from residence hall damage fell from \$25,000 in 2009 to only \$500 at the 2010 LDOC. This represents a 98% decrease, which, in effect, paid for the cost of prevention efforts for the event.

**Figure 2: Declines in Negative Incidents During LDOC**



Source: Alcohol Prevention Coalition interview



---

# Case Study: Targeting Efforts to Improve Celebrations at the University of Illinois

---

In 1996, bar owners in Champaign, Illinois created an event called Unofficial Saint Patrick's Day (commonly known as "Unofficial") to make up for lost business during the week of Saint Patrick's Day, when most University of Illinois (UI) students are out of town on spring break. Typically, as part of Unofficial, Champaign bar owners would promote the event and start serving alcohol as early as 7 a.m.

In 2004, Unofficial had grown in popularity among UI students and had become highly problematic due to excessive student alcohol use. According to Jeff Christensen, Deputy Chief of Police at UI, students typically flooded bars to begin celebrating as early as 7:00 a.m. and continued drinking the entire day. The problems penetrated the classroom environment, with students coming to class intoxicated, bringing alcohol into lecture halls, and inviting intoxicated guests to sit with them in the classrooms. The surrounding community also experienced the fallout from this event, with streets littered with trash and vomit, multiple noise complaints, and paying police overtime to keep order on the streets.

## Successful Planning

In an effort to address the many problems stemming from Unofficial, a few years ago the city and UI decided to take an "all hands on deck" approach, according to Christensen. A variety of campus and community partners formed a task force to review the number and types of incidents occurring in previous years. Task force members represented the state liquor board, the City of Champaign, City of Urbana, local hospitals, state and university police, faculty, university facilities and services, the university health center, student government representatives, and judicial affairs. Key campus administrators also participated, including the Dean of Students.

## Targeted Enforcement and Surveillance

UI's Unofficial prevention efforts rely heavily upon the development of policies, targeted enforcement, and initiatives examining campus and police accounts of negative incidents from prior Unofficial events. UI's task force continually refines and refocuses its policy and enforcement efforts to reduce problems associated with the event. Over time, UI administrators have focused their efforts on the following three environments:

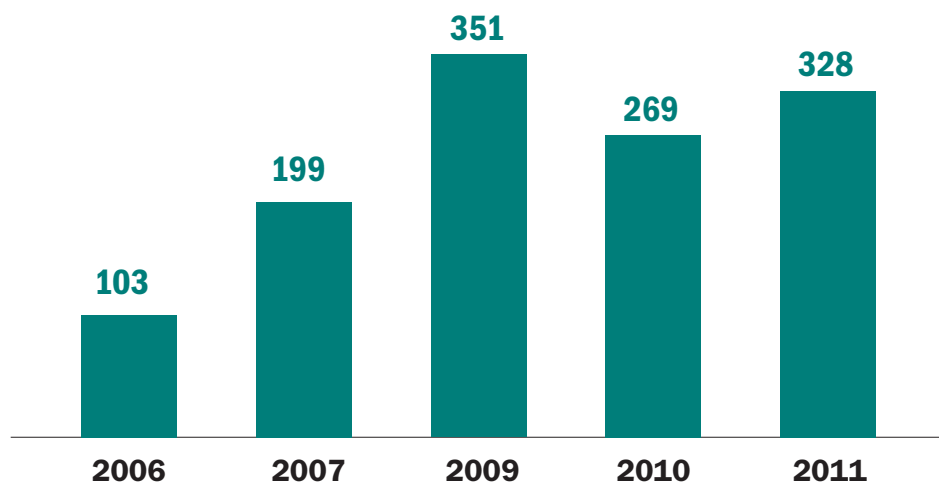
- 1. The academic environment:** In order to curtail the behavior in academic settings, UI administrators took a firm stance that any classroom disruptions caused by Unofficial celebrations would be unacceptable. The Provost and UI Police worked together to enforce a zero-tolerance policy to prevent alcohol from being brought into classrooms. They also stationed teams of Student and Academic Affairs professionals to monitor areas outside of lecture halls and charged faculty with monitoring behavior inside their classroom. The provost sent a letter to faculty and staff before Unofficial with advice on how to handle unruly student behavior in the classroom. The letter encouraged faculty to avoid confrontation with disorderly students and to seek assistance from teams stationed outside their lecture hall. Meanwhile, police patrolled the quad and other academic areas to monitor student behavior and enforce the new policy, stopping intoxicated students or visitors from entering into the academic facilities.

**2. Alcohol establishments:** In an effort to restrict student access to alcohol during Unofficial, several policies were implemented at campus bars, restaurants, and retail outlets. These included:

- Prohibiting bars and liquor stores in the campus area from serving or selling alcohol before 11:00 a.m.
- Requiring drinks be served in paper or plastic cups
- Prohibiting the sale of pitchers and shots of hard liquor
- Mandating a system for checking identification of patrons upon entry to the bar
- Limiting each residence to one keg sale
- Requiring that kegs be registered with a completed “adult responsibility form” to indicate the address where the alcohol will be served. This form must be kept on file by the alcohol retailers.

**3. Off-Campus Residences:** One of UI’s most recent initiatives aims to reduce off-campus problems, specifically private parties that are associated with Unofficial. In order to help police control unruly behavior in student residences, the task force created a tougher nuisance ordinance. The new ordinance allows police to order termination of a party and clearing of the location in the event of repeated complaints about a residence. From 2006 to 2011, the number of tickets issued by police has more than tripled, sending a clear message to partiers that rowdy behavior will not be tolerated (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Number of Tickets Distributed by Police**



Source: The News Gazette, 2011

In 2010, in order to keep residences safe, firefighters began to monitor balconies at apartment complexes for overcrowding. After police reviewed video footage of students throwing items off twenty-foot balconies in 2009, a new ordinance prohibiting items from being thrown off balconies or out windows was implemented by the city of Champaign. The penalty for violating the ordinance is \$165. Some apartment complexes fine students up to \$1,000 for a second offense.

Other enforcement efforts to address private parties have included zero-tolerance laws for underage drinkers, a ban on open containers of alcohol on the streets, and an increase in the number of street sweep and raid teams that visit private parties during Unofficial. Police are hopeful that strict enforcement will discourage private parties and deter visitors from traveling to campus to participate in Unofficial.

In addition to issuing citations for student violators, law enforcement personnel have a working relationship with campus prevention personnel and refer these students to the Alcohol and Other Drug Office.

### Increased Education to Promote Safety

UI police have met with Greek letter organization chapter presidents to explain the risks of Unofficial weekend in an effort to further reduce problems associated with private parties. In these meetings, police explain why hosting guests at Unofficial weekend is a potential liability and present solutions for avoiding trouble. The police demonstrate that out-of-town visitors—students or otherwise—account for two-thirds of the alcohol citations at Unofficial and suggest that if students plan to host a party, to keep it small and limited to invited guests. Further, UI's Interfraternity Council prohibited all Greek letter organizations from hosting social events during Unofficial weekend. The Assistant Dean of Students sends a letter to each chapter house clearly outlining this policy and setting the expectation of close monitoring by police during the weekend. Additionally, the Interfraternity Council enforces the policy by conducting a morning and afternoon check of each chapter house.

UI has also made an effort to partner with parents to improve student behavior during Unofficial by sending parents multiple communications prior to the event. For example, the Parents Program office sends a letter to encourage parents to talk with their students about acting responsibly during the Unofficial weekend. The letter, signed by the mayors of Urbana and Champaign, details safety efforts set in place by the campus and surrounding community (Baurer, 2008).

### The Challenge of Social Media

A recent challenge faced by the city and UI is the marketing of the event. When Unofficial started in 1994, bar owners advertised the event, but now students promote the event among themselves through social networking sites like Facebook. Jeff Christensen, Deputy Chief of Police at UI, and other campus administrators worry that the number of private parties and the number of non-UI revelers will grow as students market the event through social media. In response to student Facebook pages, a Facebook page from local law enforcement agencies was created to provide information on policies and procedures in place for the event.

**facebook** Search

**Campus District Safety**  
Champaign Police  
University of Illinois Police  
Urbana Police

**Unofficial St. Patrick's Day**  
Maintaining a Safe and Orderly Community.  
March 4, 2011

Official Public Safety Page on Unofficial's Notes  
Notes About: Official Public Safety Page on Unofficial

Browse Notes  
Friends' Notes  
Pages' Notes  
My Notes  
My Drafts  
Notes About Me

**Unofficial St. Patrick's Day**  
by Official Public Safety Page on Unofficial on Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 12:48pm

+ Write a Note

"Unofficial St. Patrick's Day," an event primarily centered on drinking, is expected to take place March 4, 2011 on and around the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus. The event is not sanctioned by the University or the cities of Champaign and Urbana.

Eight agencies will be taking an active role in making sure that disruptive, disorderly and illegal activity will be addressed:

- Champaign Police
- Urbana Police
- University of Illinois Police
- Illinois State Police
- Champaign County Sheriff
- Parkland College Public Safety
- Champaign County State's Attorney
- Illinois Liquor Control Commission

**Campus District Safety**  
Champaign Police  
University of Illinois Police  
Urbana Police

**Unofficial St. Patrick's Day**  
Maintaining a Safe and Orderly Community.  
March 4, 2011

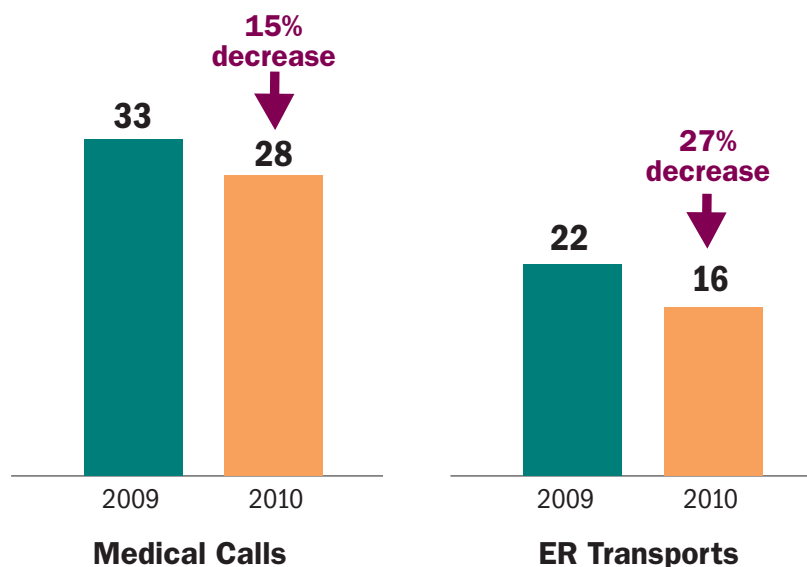
## An Improved Atmosphere During Unofficial

According to UI's Christensen, the overall atmosphere of Unofficial has improved over time, though challenges still exist. Christensen attributes many of the improvements to the targeted enforcement and policy efforts employed by UI police. In 2010, UI administrators' focused their efforts specifically on reducing problems associated with private parties and witnessed progress on this measure. In a memorandum created by Lieutenant Yohnka of the Champaign Police Department, several positive outcomes are cited, including:

- **Greater adherence to party regulations among students:** Greek-affiliated students have been adhering to police requests to limit parties to invited guests only, as 75% of police covert teams reported being denied entry into parties.
- **Fewer citations at private parties:** Enforcement efforts to curb high-risk behavior at private parties, covert police teams, and educational messages about responsible party hosting resulted in fewer citations in 2010 compared to 2009. Additionally, police reports noted that parties were smaller and more orderly compared to previous years.
- **Reductions in public police calls:** The strict policy measures in place at campus bars allowed bar staff to keep better control of unruly patrons and allowed police to focus more time on monitoring private parties. As a result, the number of police-initiated calls for service increased 43% in 2010 while the number of public calls for service decreased 55% from 2009.

In addition to improvements witnessed at private parties, Yohnka cites fewer alcohol-related emergencies and violations as a result of UI's targeted efforts. For example, an ordinance that prohibited bar and liquor stores in the campus area from serving alcohol before 11:00 a.m. rather than 7:00 a.m. correlated with a reduction in the number of hospital calls. Specifically, the number of alcohol-related transports decreased from 22 in 2009 to 16 in 2010 (see Figure 4). Similarly, city Notices to Appear (NTAs) declined substantially from 2009 to 2010. Police on foot patrol noted a decreased level of activity after midnight, observing that by 1:00 a.m. the level of activity was comparable to a week day (Alcohol Prevention Coalition Interview).

**Figure 4: Declines in Medical Emergencies During “Unofficial”**



Source: Alcohol Prevention Interview

---

# Addressing Common Challenges in Celebration Behaviors

---

In addition to the best practices and lessons learned presented in this report, Alcohol Prevention Coalition researchers have identified several logistical and financial challenges associated with addressing problems at high-risk annual celebrations. Detailed below are some of the top challenges faced by administrators, along with suggested strategies for overcoming them.

## Challenge # 1: Not everyone seems onboard with change

Some campus administrators struggle to obtain support for prevention efforts among various campus constituencies, including faculty and students.

### Recommendations:

---

- 1. Prepare yourself with data.** Have data on hand to demonstrate the fallout from previous annual traditions gone awry. Be prepared to share these data to foster buy-in for your proposed changes.
- 2. Do not underestimate community support.** Members of the community often suffer the most severe consequences of annual celebrations and thus have a vested interest in partnering with campuses to bring about positive change.
- 3. Give voice to students.** Many students may be opposed to the high-risk drinking that occurs at celebrations and would be grateful for an opportunity to help improve the atmosphere at these events. Calling upon student input early in the process can help administrators understand students' perspectives and mitigate backlash from students once new policies are announced.
- 4. Consider reaching out to faculty.** Faculty members who are fed up with students skipping class or arriving to class intoxicated during annual celebrations might be interested in working with administrators to address this problem. For example, faculty members might assist with communicating event policies and standards of behaviors to students. Faculty might also consider increasing class assignments and workloads to keep students focused on academics during events.

## Challenge # 2: Students see celebrations as their tradition

### Recommendations:

---

- 1. Do not underestimate student support of policies.** Despite strong student support for some traditions, a silent majority may be uncomfortable with the degree of alcohol use that occurs during celebrations. For example, survey data revealed that students who attended the University of Cincinnati's Cinco de Mayo street parties were generally embarrassed by the disruptive behaviors of their peers, and many were in support of enforcement strategies to reduce the problems (Fisher, Eck, & Madensen, 2004). Gathering and publicizing such data can help to garner student support for new policies to curb outrageous student behavior.
- 2. Enlist student groups to send a positive message to students.** After several increasingly dangerous State Patty's Day events, the PSU Interfraternity Council and the University Park Undergraduate Association made it a priority to reduce and denounce excessive drinking during this event (King & Leonard, 2010).

## When Traditions Lose Their Value

It is important to recognize that when sufficiently managing an event becomes impossible, the safest solution may be to simply cancel the event altogether. Many campuses have decided that preserving their annual traditions is just not worth the risks that these events place on students' health and well being. The University of Connecticut canceled its Spring Weekend in 2011 due to a tragedy that resulted in the death of a student the prior year. Similarly, Tufts University canceled its problematic annual Naked Quad Run.

Other campuses discontinue events out of recognition that these celebrations can harm the campus's academic reputation, and may ultimately reduce the value of the institution's degree. For example, after destructive riots occurred during the University

of Albany's Fountain Day celebration, the university received letters from employers declaring that they do not plan to hire Albany graduates as a result of their behavior at the event.

Although some degree of student backlash to such measures is inevitable, some campuses have found that many students will get behind such decisions, recognizing the potential these events have to harm their school's reputation. In some cases, students have taken to using social media to voice such support, as evidenced by the Facebook page below with over 400 members showing support for UConn's movement towards ending its Spring Weekend event.



The image is a screenshot of a Facebook page for a group named "End Spring Weekend". The page has a blue header with the Facebook logo and a search bar. Below the header, there is a cover photo showing a crowd of people at night with a large red "NO" overlaid. To the right of the cover photo is the group name "End Spring Weekend" and a "Join" button. Below the cover photo is a post that says "Do the right thing and support the movement for UCONN to take the necessary steps to end Spring Weekend." To the right of the cover photo is a "Basic Info" section with fields for Name, Category, and Description. The Name is "End Spring Weekend", the Category is "Common Interest - Health & Wellness", and the Description is "It's kind of hard to make an argument that Spring Weekend is a good thing." Below the "Basic Info" section is a "Contact Info" section with fields for Office and Privacy Type. The Office is "UCONN" and the Privacy Type is "Open: All content is public." Below the "Contact Info" section is a "Recent News" section with a list of recent posts. The first post is dated 4/28/10 and says "Holy crap, over 200 people. Awesome." The second post is dated 4/24/10 and says "Created the group."

facebook

Search

End Spring Weekend [Join](#)

[Wall](#) [Info](#) [Discussions](#) [Photos](#) [Video](#) [Events](#)

**Basic Info**

Name: End Spring Weekend

Category: Common Interest - Health & Wellness

Description: It's kind of hard to make an argument that Spring Weekend is a good thing.

I mean, think about it. UCONN students manage to get drunk and have large parties pretty much every weekend of the academic year. It's not unusual for a university this size. However, there is only one weekend a year that requires door access to buildings to be shut off, a massively increased police presence, and constant helicopter patrols.

In 2009, over 90 people were arrested during Spring Weekend, easily... [\(read more\)](#)

Privacy Type: Open: All content is public.

**Information**

Category: Common Interest - Health & Wellness

Description: It's kind of hard to make an argument that Spring Weekend is a good thing.

I mean, think about it. UCONN students manage to get drunk and have large parties pretty much every weekend of the academic year. It's not unusual for a university this size. However, there is only one weekend a year that requires door access to buildings to be shut off, a massively increased police presence, and constant helicopter patrols.

In 2009, over 90 people were arrested during Spring Weekend, easily... [\(read more\)](#)

Privacy Type: Open: All content is public.

**Contact Info**

Office: UCONN

**Recent News**

News: 4/28/10 Holy crap, over 200 people. Awesome.

4/24/10 Created the group.

Source: Grasgreen, A. (2011); <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=111713662197908&v=wall>.

**3. Include students in planning for events early on** so that they feel included in the process. Solicit ideas from a diverse group of students (e.g., Greek life, student government, peer educators) to ensure input from multiple perspectives.

## Challenge # 3: Visitors often cause many of the problems

### Recommendations:

- 1. Monitor students' use of social media to promote events.** In many cases, the public hears about events through online outlets such as Facebook or Twitter. Such monitoring can signal the need for increased police presence and event management.
- 2. Partner with neighboring campuses.** Consider inviting nearby institutions to join your event's task force. To reduce problems caused by visiting students, many campuses ask neighboring institutions to discourage their students from attending their events, and to help communicate their policies.
- 3. Host separate celebrations for alumni.** Understanding that alumni can often fuel alcohol-related problems at student events, many campuses host separate celebrations for young alumni.
- 4. Implement and enforce a "no guest" policy.** Many campuses restrict access to students only and enforce these policies by requiring student wristbands or IDs for admission.

## Challenge # 4: Prevention efforts can be costly

As for many campus events, annual celebrations can be costly. With the variety of policies and programs implemented to mitigate problems during celebrations, campus administrators may struggle to garner sufficient resources (staff, supplies, etc.) for these efforts.

### Recommendations:

- 1. Enlist the support of student groups or volunteers** to help monitor alcohol access and reduce negative consequence by distributing wristbands, carding students, or handing out food/water at events.
- 2. Pool funding for alcohol-free activities** from a variety of government or residence life.
- 3. Recruit marketing students or interns** to create promotional items and social marketing campaigns that support healthy drinking behaviors.
- 4. Collect data to demonstrate return on investment.** Having data on hand regarding costs related to events (e.g., cleanup, damages, etc.) prior to comprehensive prevention efforts can serve as a helpful comparison once efforts have been implemented. For example, administrators might examine changes in such measures as the number of bags of trash, the amount of staff time devoted to adjudication, or compare the costs of prevention to treatment (e.g., the number of water bottles handed out vs. medical staff time devoted to treating injuries).

### Students Launch a Campaign to Promote Safety

As part of a class project at the University of Virginia (UVA), one group of students created a social marketing campaign to reduce problem drinking at the Foxfield Race, an annual steeplechase horse racing event that is traditionally associated with hazardous drinking and negative behaviors such as drunk driving. Students carried out every component of the campaign—they completed IRB training, conducted data analysis, developed and ran focus groups, designed and pre-tested posters, implemented the campaign, and developed and administered the post-campaign survey.

The materials created for this campaign consisted of posters around campus, newspaper ads, bus ads, electronic bulletin board ads, and handed out plastic cups at the horse race. A map at the racetrack highlighted locations with water, first aid, and transportation. Information about the signs of alcohol poisoning was also included. A post-intervention survey found that students were more aware of services (e.g., safety tents, first aid, water, and transportation) as a result of these efforts. The survey also found that students had more accurate perceptions of drinking and that those who were exposed to the ads reported drinking less and having fewer negative consequences.

Source: Alcohol Prevention Coalition interview



---

# Guidelines for Addressing High-Risk Drinking at Annual Celebrations

---

We encourage institutions to consider the following suggestions as they begin or continue to plan for celebratory events on their campus:

**Assemble a task force to energize and focus your efforts.** Collaborating across multiple campus and community constituencies can help unify a campus, bring new energy to prevention work, create a greater sense of shared responsibility for alcohol-related problems, and mobilize synergistic efforts.

**Collaborate with other campuses.** Students from other colleges and universities will attend well-known celebratory events. For that reason, it is important to invite staff from those institutions to participate in the task force to develop a coordinated approach to reduce alcohol-related problems.

**Develop a comprehensive strategic plan.** Successfully reforming celebratory events requires a multi-pronged and tightly coordinated approach that combines education, new programs, tougher policies, and stricter enforcement, both on campus and in the surrounding community.

**Clearly, consistently, and frequently communicate the institution's expectations regarding student conduct.** With an appeal to the institution's educational mission and traditions and in the interest of student health and safety, students should be put on warning that high-risk drinking and unruly behavior will not be tolerated.

**Anticipate and head-off opposition.** Student or alumni backlash can be avoided by collecting and publicizing data on student and community concerns regarding problems at celebratory events.

**Share your campus experience.** Sharing insights and disseminating evaluation results with other campus administrators allows them to learn about effective strategies for addressing problems related to celebratory events.

---

## Conclusion

---

Although many annual celebrations were founded on the best institutional traditions, overzealous celebrations can easily morph into alcohol-fueled revelries, leading to assaults, injuries, property damage, and other severe problems. The high-risk drinking associated with these events can not only jeopardize students' health and safety, but also burden institutions financially and strain campus and community relations. Ultimately, this destructive behavior can place a campus in a negative spotlight and sour its reputation. In response, many campuses have made strides in improving their annual celebrations by implementing a mix of educational and environmental approaches that focus on high-risk student groups, the entire campus, and the broader community. By implementing an array of event-specific strategies, these campuses have successfully transformed rowdy and alcohol-filled gatherings into occasions of responsible and joyous celebration.



---

# References

---

- Baurer, Steve. (2008). "UI sends out letter to parents on Unofficial St. Pat's." *The News Gazette*. Retrieved February 1, 2011 from <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/university-illinois/2008-02-11/ui-sends-out-letter-parents-unofficial-st-pats.html>.
- Del Boca, F. K., Darkes, J., Greenbaum, P. E., & Goldman, M. S. (2004). Up close and personal: Temporal variability in the drinking of individual college students during their first year. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 72, 155–164.
- Fisher, B., Eck, J., & T. Madensen, T. (2004). "Cinco de Mayo student disturbance report." Cincinnati (Ohio): University of Cincinnati.
- Glindemann, K.E., Wiegand, D.M., and Geller, S. E. (2007). Celebratory drinking and intoxication: A contextual influence on alcohol consumption. *Environment and Behavior*, 39 (3), 352-366.
- Grasgreen, A. (2011). Colleges fling spring parties. *Inside HigherEd*. Retrieved March 24, 2011 from [http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/03/23/illinois\\_state\\_and\\_suny\\_albany\\_universities\\_clamp\\_down\\_on\\_spring\\_parties](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/03/23/illinois_state_and_suny_albany_universities_clamp_down_on_spring_parties)
- Ibrahim, N. (2010). Champaign ordinance forbids throwing items off balconies. *Daily Illini*. Retrieved January 21, 2011, from <http://www.dailyillini.com/news/campus/2010/02/11/champaign-ordinance-forbids-throwing-items-off-balconies>.
- "Keeping celebrations from becoming riots" (2006). *Prevention File*. Retrieved January 21, 2011 from <http://www.higheredcenter.org/files/product/prevfile0603.pdf>.
- King, T. & Leonard, D. (2010) "We must work together to curb drinking." *Centredaily.com*. Retrieved January 22, 2011 from <http://www.centredaily.com/2010/02/22/1807501/we-must-work-together-to-curb.html>.
- Lee, C. M., Maggs, J. L., & Rankin, L. A. (2006). Spring break trips as a risk factor for heavy alcohol use among first-year college students. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 67, 911–916.
- Lieutenant Yohnka, personal communication, March 15, 2010.
- Martell, D., Atkin, C., Hembroff, L., Smith, S., Baumer, A., & Greenamyre, J. (2006). College students and "celebration drinking," *The Social Norms Review*, 1 (4).
- McCarthy, J., Martin, A., & McPhail, C. (2007). Policing disorderly campus protests and convivial gatherings: The interaction of threat, social organization, and first amendment guarantees. *Social Problem*, 54(3), 274-296.
- Medenson, T. & Eck, J. (2006). Student Party Riots. Problem-Oriented Guides for Police. Problem-Specific Guides Series. Guide Number 39. *United States Department of Justice*. Retrieved January 20, 2010 from [http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/ric/Publications/student\\_party.pdf](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/ric/Publications/student_party.pdf)
- Neighbors, C., Spieker, C. J., Oster-Aaland, L., Lewis, M. A., & Bergstrom, R. L. (2005). Celebration intoxication: An evaluation of 21st birthday alcohol consumption. *Journal of American College Health*, 54, 76–80.
- Neighbors, C., Walters, S. T., Lee, C. M., Vader, A. M., Vehige, T., Szigethy, T., & DeJong, W. (2007). Event-specific prevention: Addressing college student drinking during known windows of risk. *Addictive Behaviors*, 32(11), 2667-2680.
- Russell, L. (2010). "Duke's LDOC celebration now exclusively for Blue Devils" *The Daily Tar Heel*. Retrieved January 21, 2011 from [http://www.dailytarheel.com/index.php/article/2010/04/dukes\\_ldoc\\_celebration\\_now\\_exclusively\\_for\\_blue\\_devils](http://www.dailytarheel.com/index.php/article/2010/04/dukes_ldoc_celebration_now_exclusively_for_blue_devils)
- Schenk, M. (2011). "Police issued 328 notices for offences at Unofficial" *The News Gazette*. Retrieved March 10, 2011 from <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/courts-police-and-fire/2011-03-06/police-issued-328-notices-offenses-unofficial.html>

---

# Acknowledgements

---

The Alcohol Prevention Coalition is grateful to the following individuals for sharing their time, knowledge, and experience with us. Their contributions to our research and to advancing the field of collegiate alcohol prevention are invaluable.

**Susan Bruce**

Director Alcohol and Substance Education Center  
University of Virginia

**Deputy Jeff Christensen**

Chief of Police  
University of Illinois Police Department

**Beth DeRicco**

Director of Wellness & Prevention Services  
University of Connecticut

**Jim Hintz**

Director of Off Campus Student Services  
University of Connecticut

**Terry Koons**

Associate Director of Health Promotion  
Ohio University

**Tammy Loew**

Health Advocacy Coordinator  
Purdue University

**Timothy Marchell**

Director of Mental Health Initiatives  
Cornell University

**Tom Szigethy**

Associate Dean of Students and Director of Alcohol  
and Substance Abuse Prevention  
Duke University

**Lieutenant Brad Yohnka**

South District Commander  
Champaign Police Department

