

Arizona Institutions of Higher Education [AZIHE] Network

Executive Summary and Report on the Status of College Student Alcohol and other Drug Use and Violence in Arizona May 2012

Executive Summary

Introduction

Problems associated with alcohol use on college campuses have been documented in the United States for at least 50 years. Research shows that the 19-24 year age range (typical age range of American college students) is the population most highly associated with periodic heavy alcohol consumption.¹ College student drinking patterns often represent a continuation of behavior that began during high school, or even earlier. The college experience may serve to identify, or in some cases, amplify excessive drinking.

In Spring 2002, the Task Force of the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (supported by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism [NIAAA]) issued a report titled, *A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges*.² The report reveals evidence that college student alcohol use is “a persistent and costly problem that affects virtually all residential colleges, college communities and college students, whether they drink or not.” This report was updated in 2007, with few positive changes in national trends noted. The authors continued to urge institutions of higher education to collaborate and work with their communities and local government to change the culture of college drinking.³

Arizona Institutions of Higher Education [AZIHE] Network Mission

The AZIHE Network is a statewide consortium that proactively addresses alcohol and other drug (AOD) use and violence issues among students attending colleges and universities in the state of Arizona. Through needs assessment, strategic planning, evaluation, information dissemination, professional development and training, and local, state and national collaboration, the AZIHE Network strives to assist Arizona colleges and universities in creating healthy and safe campus and community environments. This is done through reducing prevalence of heavy and high-risk student AOD use (including underage drinking and related negative consequences), violence and ultimately increase student retention and success.

¹Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M. & Bachman, J.G. (2013). Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use, 1975-2012. Volume II: College students and adults ages 19-50. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan.

²The entire reports can be viewed at <http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/Reports/>

³Toomey, T. L., Lenk, K. M., & Wagenaar, A. C. (2007). Environmental policies to reduce college drinking: An update of research findings. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 68(2), 208–219.

The Arizona Institutions of Higher Education (AZIHE) Network is a consortium of college/university substance use, mental health and violence prevention/intervention professionals. Our goals include:

- (1) To assist Arizona colleges and universities in creating healthy and safe campus environments that reduce the prevalence of heavy and high-risk student alcohol and other drug (AOD) use and related negative consequences, violence and ultimately increase student retention and success; and,
- (2) To encourage activities that bring colleges and universities together, working in partnership with communities, to create healthy and safe campus and community environments across Arizona.

College Student Drinking in Arizona

Prevalence of alcohol consumption among Arizona undergraduate college students, while below the national average (79%)⁴, is high – about 77% consumed at least some alcohol in the past year.⁵

Although the majority of these students consume in moderation and are opposed to drinking levels that would interfere with school or other responsibilities, at least one out of three is drinking to levels that can result in:

- Harm to themselves – physical injury, academic problems, trouble with authorities
- Harm to their peers – physical violence, sexual assault
- Harm to the campus and community – driving while intoxicated, vandalism, disruptive behaviors

The AZIHE Network Strategy

The AZIHE Network advocates a three-pronged approach for reducing heavy and high-risk AOD use, including underage drinking and related negative consequences, among college students:

- 1) Social Norms – using media, presentations, peer education, campus leaders to disseminate campus-specific student AOD and violence data to provide accurate information about student behaviors and dispel misconceptions about the prevalence of these among Arizona college students.
- 2) Early Intervention – using early intervention programming (both group and individual) that emphasizes harm-reduction strategies for students who get into trouble with alcohol and/or other drugs, or are caught in violation of AOD or violence policies and/or laws.
- 3) Environmental Management – shaping school and community policies, rules and enforcement practices to create an environment that supports the health and safety of students. This also includes bystander intervention training to change the campus climate around AOD use/abuse and violence.

Membership and Partnerships

Membership in the AZIHE Network is open and free to all institutions of higher education (both 2-year and 4-year IHEs) in the state of Arizona. By aligning with the AZIHE Network, member institutions agree to address heavy and high-risk AOD use (including underage drinking and related negative consequences) and violence on their campuses. Benefits of membership include up-to-date information about proven strategies in college AOD use and violence prevention, a strategic plan for preventing and reducing AOD use and violence on college campuses, networking and partnering with AOD and violence prevention professionals at institutions of higher education and other agencies and organizations

⁴ Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M. & Bachman, J.G. (2013)

⁵ Percent of students reporting at least some consumption of alcohol in the past year on the AZIHE Network Arizona College/University AODV Survey 2012.

throughout the state, professional development training opportunities, and inclusion in the AZIHE Network biennial statewide college/university student AODV survey.

The work of the AZIHE Network cannot be done alone. Rather, successful accomplishment of the AZIHE Network's goals requires partnering with a number of agencies, organizations, coalitions, departments and individuals in the state of Arizona who also have a vested interest in the health and safety of our college students and the communities in which they live.

For more information about becoming a member or partnering with the AZIHE Network, contact:

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Please visit the Arizona Institutions of Higher Education [AZIHE] Network website at –
<http://azihenetwork.health.arizona.edu>.

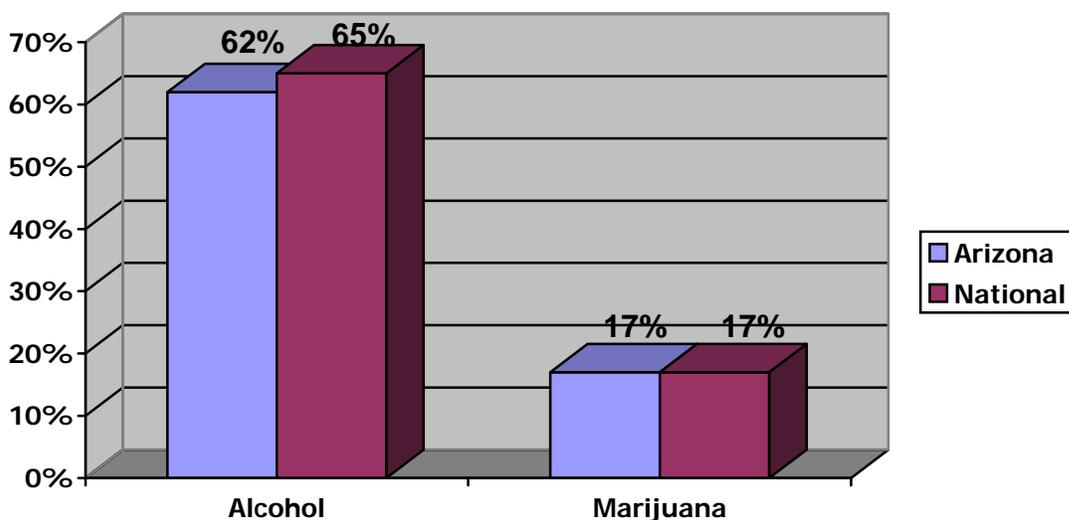
2012 Report on the Status of College Student Alcohol and Other Drug Use and Violence in Arizona

In February 2012, a random sample of undergraduate students enrolled at AZIHE Member Institutions were asked a number of questions concerning use of alcohol, other drugs and related behaviors, violence and mental health (see Appendix for complete demographics and sample size). The following is a summary of highlights gathered from their responses:

Alcohol and Other Drug Use

- Figure 1 compares Arizona students' 30 day prevalence of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use with college students nationwide. National data was taken from the National College Health Assessment Spring 2012 survey (*American College Health Association – National College Health Assessment: Reference Group Executive Summary Spring 2012. Baltimore: American College Health Association, 2012*).

Figure 1. Arizona and National Comparisons of College Student AOD Use (30-day prevalence)



- 3% of Arizona students reported using illegal substances (other than marijuana) in the past 30 days.
- Arizona students reported the following changes in their alcohol use in the past year:
 - 27% indicated they had quit or decreased their use.
 - 13% indicated they had increased their use.
- During their most recent drinking occasion, the average reported drinking rate was 3.00 drinks over 2.86 hours (1.26 drinks per hour).
 - Students under 21 years of age reported slightly higher rates of alcohol consumption (1.45 drinks per hour) than students 21 and older (1.11 drinks per hour).

- Freshmen had higher rates of consumption (1.61 drinks per hour) than any other class – sophomores (1.27 drinks per hour), juniors (1.25 drinks per hour) and seniors (1.13 drinks per hour).
- 23% of Arizona students indicated “hazardous drinking” behaviors according to the Fast Alcohol Screening Tool (FAST)⁶ utilized in the survey. Male students were more likely to be categorized as “hazardous” drinkers (26%) than female students (20%). In the past year...
 - 49% of males reported having 8 or more drinks and 40% of females reported having 6 or more drinks on at least one occasion.
 - 25% of students reported being unable to remember what happened the night before because they had been drinking.
 - 16% of students reported failing to do what was normally expected of them because of drinking.
 - 5% of students (7% male, 4% female) reported that a relative, friend, doctor or other health worker had been concerned about their drinking and/or suggested they cut down.⁷

Consequences of Alcohol Use

Students were asked to indicate any negative consequences they experienced during the school year due to drinking. Students were given the following items from which to select: physically injuring self, physically injuring another person, getting in trouble with authorities, experiencing academic problems, involvement in a fight, driving under the influence, using marijuana or other drugs while drinking and having unprotected sex (without a condom). Following is an abbreviated summary of responses:

- 28% of Arizona students indicated experiencing at least one negative consequence during the school year. Most consequences were experienced by a fairly small percentage of students. The only consequence higher than 10% was “using marijuana or other drugs while drinking” which was indicated by 15% of students.
- Significantly more male students (31%) experienced negative consequences due to drinking than female students (26%).

Students were also asked to indicate any negative consequences they experienced in the past 30 days due to other students’ alcohol use. Students were given the following items from which to select: took care of someone who drank too much, took someone for emergency medical care, had their sleep interrupted, had their studying interrupted, been pushed or hit or assaulted, been threatened with or experienced physical violence, been taken advantage of sexually, had their personal property or residence trashed or damaged, been made to feel unsafe, and got in trouble with authorities. Following is an abbreviated summary of responses:

- 51% of Arizona students indicated experiencing at least one negative consequence during the past 30 days.
 - Taking care of someone who drank too much ranked highest (38%) followed by having their sleep interrupted (32%) and having their studying interrupted (23%).

⁶ Developed by Hodgson et al, the FAST instrument is a derivative of the AUDIT and assesses for alcohol abuse. FAST has been tested across numerous populations and is considered a highly valid and reliable instrument.

⁷ These four items comprise the FAST instrument described in footnote #6.

- Students under the age of 21 (55%) experienced significantly more negative consequences due to other students' drinking than students 21 or older (46%).

Drinking and Driving Behaviors

- 17% of Arizona students reported driving after consuming any amount of alcohol during the past 30 days. 5% of these students drove after consuming three or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting.
 - Males were significantly more likely to drink and drive (21%) than females (14%), and were also more likely to drive after consuming 3 or more drinks (7%) than females (3%).
 - Students age 21 and older were significantly more likely to drink and drive (27%) than students under the age of 21 (8%), and were also more likely to drive after consuming 3 or more drinks (7%) than students under the age of 21 (3%).

Protective Behaviors (usually or always do the following when consuming alcohol)

- 99% of Arizona students indicated using at least one protective behavior. Protective behaviors and their usage rates are as follows:
 - Refuse to ride with a driver who has been drinking (77%)
 - Eat before and during drinking (75%)
 - Have a designated driver (73%)
 - Protect a friend's drink while he/she is gone (73%)
 - Keep track of the number of drinks they have (64%)
 - Stop drinking 1 to 2 hours before going home (61%)
 - WOMEN: Pace drinking to one or fewer drinks per hour (53%)
 - Hang out with friends who drink less or more slowly (53%)
 - Alternate with non-alcoholic beverages (50%)
 - Determine in advanced not to exceed a set number of drinks (47%)
 - MEN: Pace drinking to two or fewer drinks per hour (44%)
 - Avoid drinking games (40%)
- Overall, female students reported higher use of protective behaviors than male students (significantly more females used 9 of 11 protective behaviors).
- Students under the age of 21 were less likely to report use of the most effective protective behaviors with regard to reducing consumption/intoxication than students 21 and older – eat before and during drinking (67% vs. 84%), pacing (43% vs. 64% for women, 34% vs. 52% for men), determining not to exceed a set drink limit (40% vs. 54%), avoiding drinking games (30% vs. 49%). All differences were significant.

Attitudes About Alcohol and Related Issues

- Arizona students' attitudes about laws, ordinances and policies pertaining to alcohol consumption were largely positive. Figures 2, 3 and 4 portray students' levels of awareness and support:

Figure 2. Student Attitudes about Campus AOD Rules and Regulations

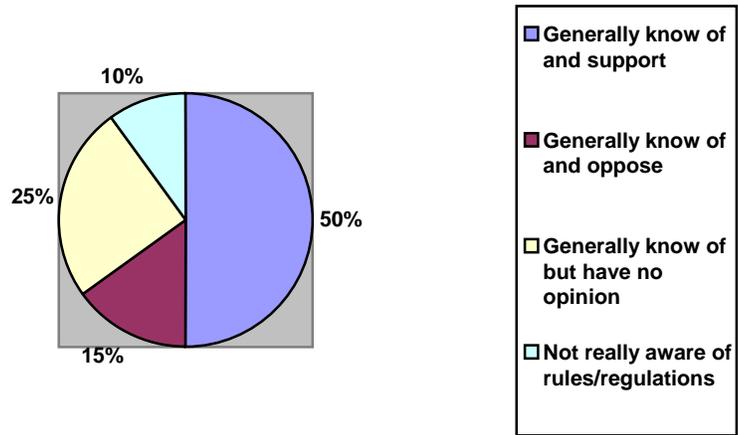


Figure 3. Student Attitudes about Drinking and Driving Laws and Ordinances

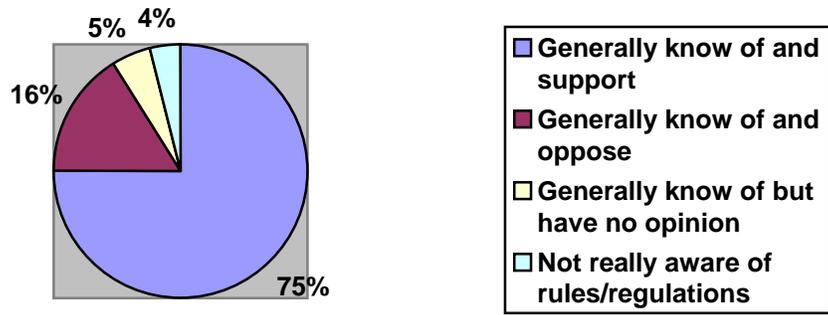
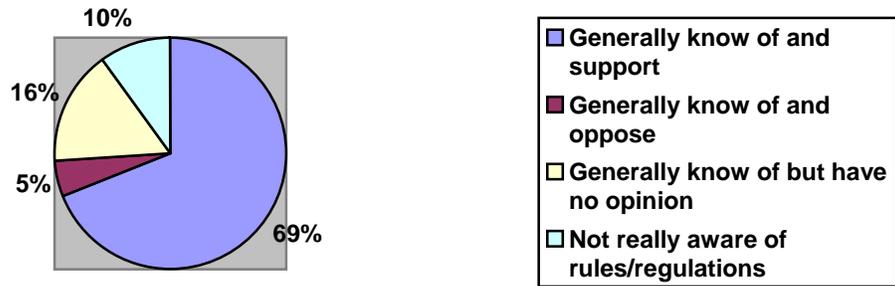


Figure 4. Student Attitudes about Laws and Ordinances that Maintain Quiet, Safe Neighborhoods



Violence:

A series of questions were added in 2008 to measure violence on campus. These items were expanded in 2012.

- 17% consider violence to be a serious issue on their campus
- 88% feel safe walking alone on their campus (92% males, 85% females)
- 69% feel safe walking at night on their campus (88% males, 53% females)
- 85% feel preventing violence should be a priority on their campus
- 18% of students experienced at least one of the following types of violence in the past 3 months: bullying, emotional/verbal abuse, hate crimes/discrimination, hazing, physical assault/abuse, sexual assault or stalking.
 - More females (21%) than males (15%) reported experiencing at least one form of violence
 - The most common type of violence experienced in the past 3 months was emotional abuse – 13% (10% males, 17% females)

Mental Health:

In 2012, a series of questions were added to measure mental health:

- 15% have ever been diagnosed with depression
 - 13% males and 18% females
 - 12% of those under 21 and 18% of those 21 and older
 - 19% of seniors compared to 13% of freshmen, 14% of sophomores and juniors
- 14% have ever been diagnosed with anxiety
 - 11% of males and 17% of females
 - 12% of those under 21 and 17% of those 21 and older
 - 19% of seniors compared to 12% of freshmen and juniors and 13% of sophomores
- 3% have ever been diagnosed with bi-polar disorder
- 21% indicated that anxiety or depression made it somewhat or very difficult to do their work, study, go to class or get along with people.
 - 19% of males and 23% of females
 - 19% of those under 21 and 24% of those 21 and older

Comparisons Between 2004 and 2012 Arizona College Student AOD Use

February 2004 marked the initial launch of the AZIHE Network's biennial Statewide College/University Student AODV Survey. In general, trends from 2004 to 2012 show that many behaviors related to alcohol and drug use among Arizona students are improving.

- Decrease in those who have used tobacco (26% vs. 19%) and alcohol (68% vs. 62%) in the past 30 days.
- Increase in those who have decreased their alcohol consumption or quit drinking in the past year (22% vs. 27%)
- Decrease in the mean number of drinks the last time they drank alcohol (4.5 vs. 3.0) and drinks per hour the last time they drank (1.51 vs. 1.26)
- Decrease in those who scored in the hazardous range on the FAST scale (29% vs. 23%)

- Decreases in those who experienced the following negative consequences due to drinking alcohol:
 - Injury to self (12% vs. 7%)
 - Got in trouble with authorities (7% vs. 3%)
 - Had academic problems (8% vs. 2%)
 - Got into a fight (6% vs. 3%)
 - Drove while under the influence of alcohol (22% vs. 7%)
 - Had unprotected sex (without a condom)(15% vs. 10%)
- Decrease in those who drove after consuming any amount of alcohol (2006 – 2012)(27% vs. 17%) and drove after drinking three or more drinks (8% vs. 5%)

Negative trends include a decrease in almost all protective behaviors

In 2008, a series of questions was added to address the issue of violence.

- Few (24% in 2008 vs. 17% in 2012) consider violence a serious issue on their campus
- Most feel safe walking alone (84% in 2008 vs. 88% in 2012) and walking at night on campus (60% in 2008 vs. 69% in 2012).
- However, most (83% in 2008 vs. 85% in 2012) feel that preventing violence should be a priority on their campus.

CONCLUSION

From a comprehensive viewpoint, findings from the 2012 Arizona Institutions of Higher Education (AZIHE) Network statewide online survey reveal encouraging results. In general, Arizona students are reporting similar or lower rates of alcohol or other drug use than college students nationwide.

On closer inspection, the results portray a troubling phenomenon of high-risk use among Arizona’s youngest university students. Students under the age of 21 reported higher rates of alcohol consumption (drinks per hour) than their 21 and older peers. Freshmen, in particular, reported a greater increase in alcohol consumption over the past year than other classes. These younger students also experienced more negative consequences due to their own and others’ drinking than students 21 and older. While students under the age of 21 were less likely to drive after consuming alcohol or ride with an intoxicated driver than their 21 and older peers, they were also less likely to use other proven protective behaviors while drinking.

Male students also demonstrated greater risk with regard to alcohol consumption. They were more likely to be classified as “hazardous” drinkers on the FAST instrument and experienced significantly more negative consequences due to their drinking than their female peers. Additionally, male students reported greater frequency of drinking and driving, and were more likely to drive after consuming 3 or more drinks.

Violence tends to be underreported in all surveys of these behaviors. Therefore, the 18% who indicated that they have experienced at least one type of violence in the past 3 months is probably much higher. Females were significantly more likely to indicate that they had experienced violence.

Mental health issues among students also present a troubling pattern with 15% having been diagnosed with depression and 14% with anxiety. In addition, 21% indicate that depression or anxiety have made functioning somewhat or very difficult.

The results of this survey reveal the need for further prevention efforts – especially those targeted at our AOD use among the state’s youngest population of university students and our male students. Through the knowledge this study has created about Arizona’s university population, the AZIHE Network plans to continue and increase its work with campus stakeholders, community leaders, and institutional and statewide administrators to enhance the safety and health of our students.

APPENDIX

In February 2012, email messages were sent to 13,418 randomly selected undergraduate students enrolled at five of Arizona’s public institutions of higher education – Arizona State University, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Northern Arizona University, University of Arizona – inviting them to participate in the AZIHE Network College Student Alcohol and Other Drug Use Survey. A total of 1,921 students responded, resulting in a final survey sample of 1,892 usable surveys. Table 2 provides demographic information about survey respondents.

Table 1. Demographical comparison of students enrolled at the participating universities and students who responded to the survey.		
Demographic Categories	Survey Respondents - 2004	Survey Respondents - 2012
Gender		
Male	46.0%	45.5%
Female	54.0%	54.3%
Transgender (added in 2010)		.1%
Other (added in 2010)		.2%
Classification		
Freshman	22.4%	23.0%
Sophomore	20.3%	20.2%
Junior	25.4%	25.5%
Senior	31.9%	24.1%
Ethnic Origin		
African American	1.8%	3.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.6%	6.3%
Caucasian	73.1%	67.6%
Hispanic/Latino	10.1%	14.6%
Native American	2.5%	3.3%
Interracial	2.1%	4.5%
Other	3.8%	.4%
Age		
Under 21	47.7%	50.9%
21 and Older	52.3%	49.1%
Average Age (Mean)	22.3	21.9
Average Age (Median)	21.0	20.0

This survey was conducted with permission from the Human Subjects Protection Institutional Review Boards at Arizona State University, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Northern Arizona University and The University of Arizona.