

A Public Health Approach to Combating Alcohol Problems on Campus: The Case for Moving Forward

William DeJong, PhD
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EverFi, Inc.

2014 Provost Conference
University of Denver

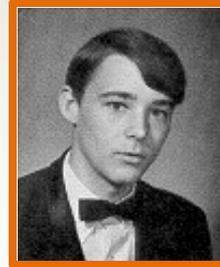
January 31, 2014

Why We Focus on This Issue

James D. Shaver IV

University of Texas

1971



Anthony Barksdale II

Boston University

2013

**Boston University frat under fire
after freshman dies at booze-fueled
welcome bash**

New York Daily News

Where Are We as a Field?

- We now know what works:
 - Researchers have learned a great deal about the types of policies and programs that are effective in reducing drinking-related problems on campus
- Only a few schools have implemented these evidence-based approaches (Nelson et al., 2010)
- Heavy drinking rates have remained virtually unchanged in recent years
 - And they are only modestly lower than they were 30 years ago (Monitoring the Future, 2009)
 - **But individual institutions have made significant progress**

Prevention: Not a Big Priority

- Most colleges and universities give the issue scant attention
- Budgets are usually just a few thousand dollars, even at major public universities (Anderson & Gadaletto, 2006)
- The job is often assigned to a lone staff member in the student affairs office
 - Entry-level staff member trained as a health educator
 - Little experience in strategic planning, community organizing, or media advocacy
 - Little (perceived) power to move the academic bureaucracy.
 - May work on several other health and wellness issues

Why have researchers made so little progress in selling alcohol prevention to college and university leaders?



Sources of Institutional Resistance

- Denial about the scope and severity of the problem
- Fear of bad publicity
- Competing priorities and responsibilities
- Fear of student resistance
- Concerns about alumni backlash
- Fatalism, due to:
 - Unfamiliarity with the research literature
 - Concerns about displacing the problem off campus
- Resistance to environmental management strategies
 - Failure to understand the “prevention paradox”
 - Preference for focusing on “problem drinkers”
 - Do not see a need to focus on off-campus behavior
 - Perceived difficulty of working with community coalitions

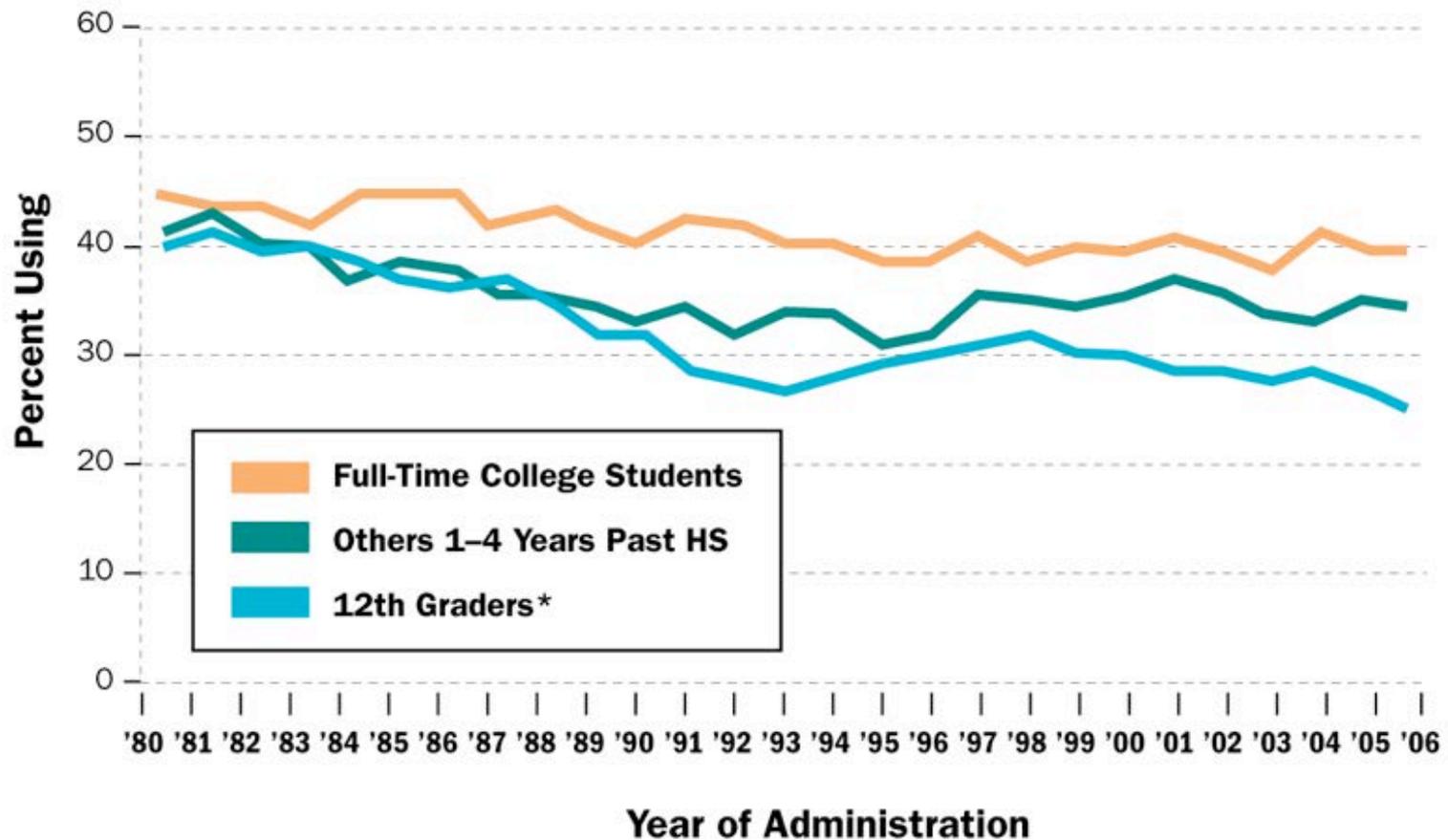
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Too often it takes a student death, a riot, or major lawsuit to prompt action

Scope and Severity of the Problem

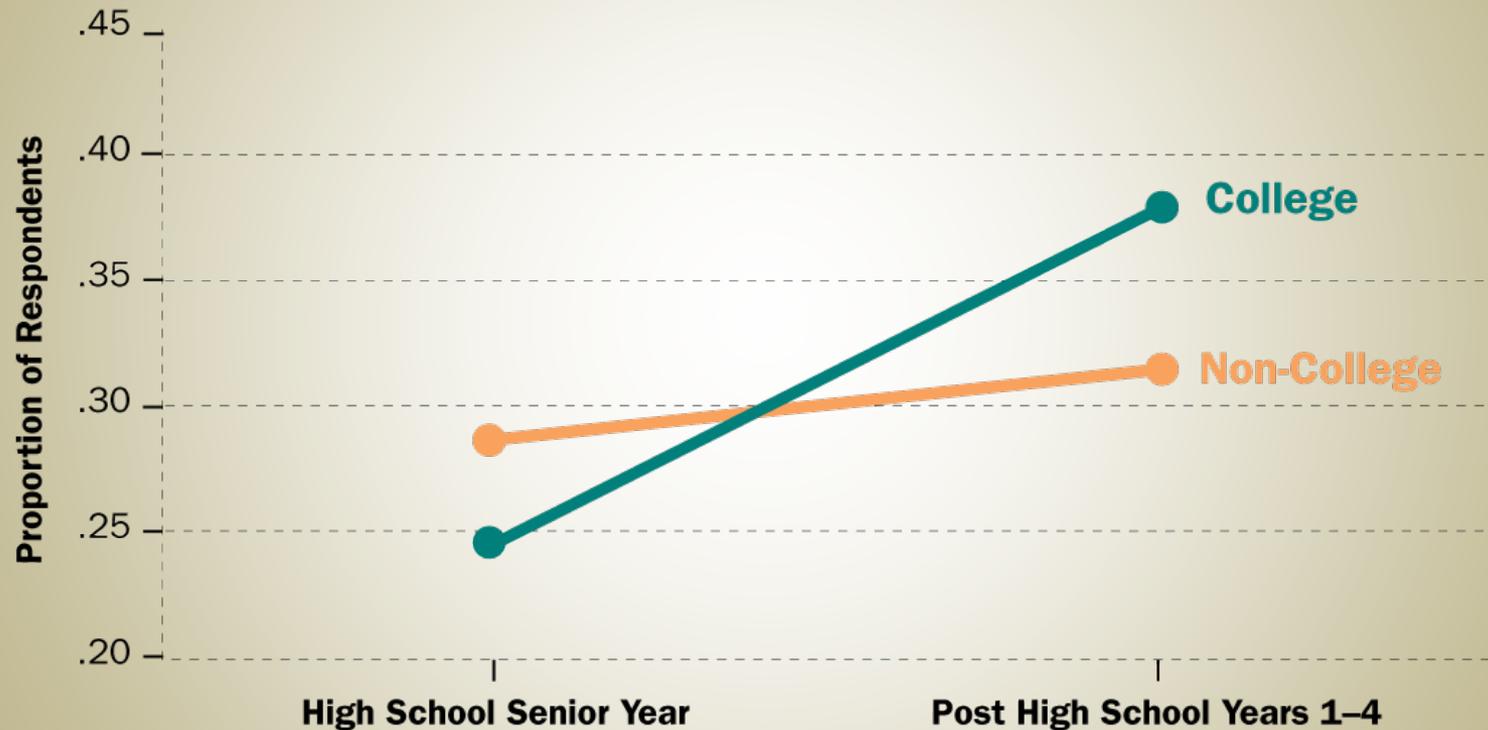
Monitoring the Future

Two-Week Prevalence: Five+ Drinks in a Row



College Students Drink More Than Their Non-College Peers

Measuring those who have 5+ drinks, 1+ occasions



Annual substance use survey of high school seniors, with a small post-graduation subsample

The Transition to College Life: *A Key Risk Period*



Time when many young people first experiment with alcohol, and when others move from experimentation to frequent use.

Data Source: *AlcoholEdu for College*®

- Online alcohol education course for first-year college students
 - Population-level administration
 - Implied or firm mandate
- Baseline (pre-intervention) survey
 - Attitudes and beliefs
 - Drinking behavior
 - Alcohol-related consequences



Drinking Behavior: 14-Day Calendar

DATA COLLECTION: July–October 2008

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS: 216

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 236,422

INSTRUCTIONS:

Think back over the past two weeks. Please enter how many alcoholic drinks you had on each day, or enter zero (“0”) for days that you did not drink.

Replace each question mark (“?”) with a number.

Note: A drink is defined as a 12-ounce beer, an 8.5-ounce malt beverage, a 12-ounce wine cooler, a 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5-ounces of liquor, whether in a mixed drink or as a shot.

SEPTEMBER

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	S
14	15	16	17 ?	18 ?	19 ?	20 ?
21 ?	22 ?	23 ?	24 ?	25 ?	26 ?	27 ?
28 ?	29 ?	30 ?	1 ?	2 SURVEY 1	3	4

Definitions

Abstainers

0 drinks in the past 14 days

All Drinkers

≥ 1 drinks in the past 14 days

Heavy Episodic Drinkers

Men: 5–9 drinks in the past 14 days, 1+ occasions

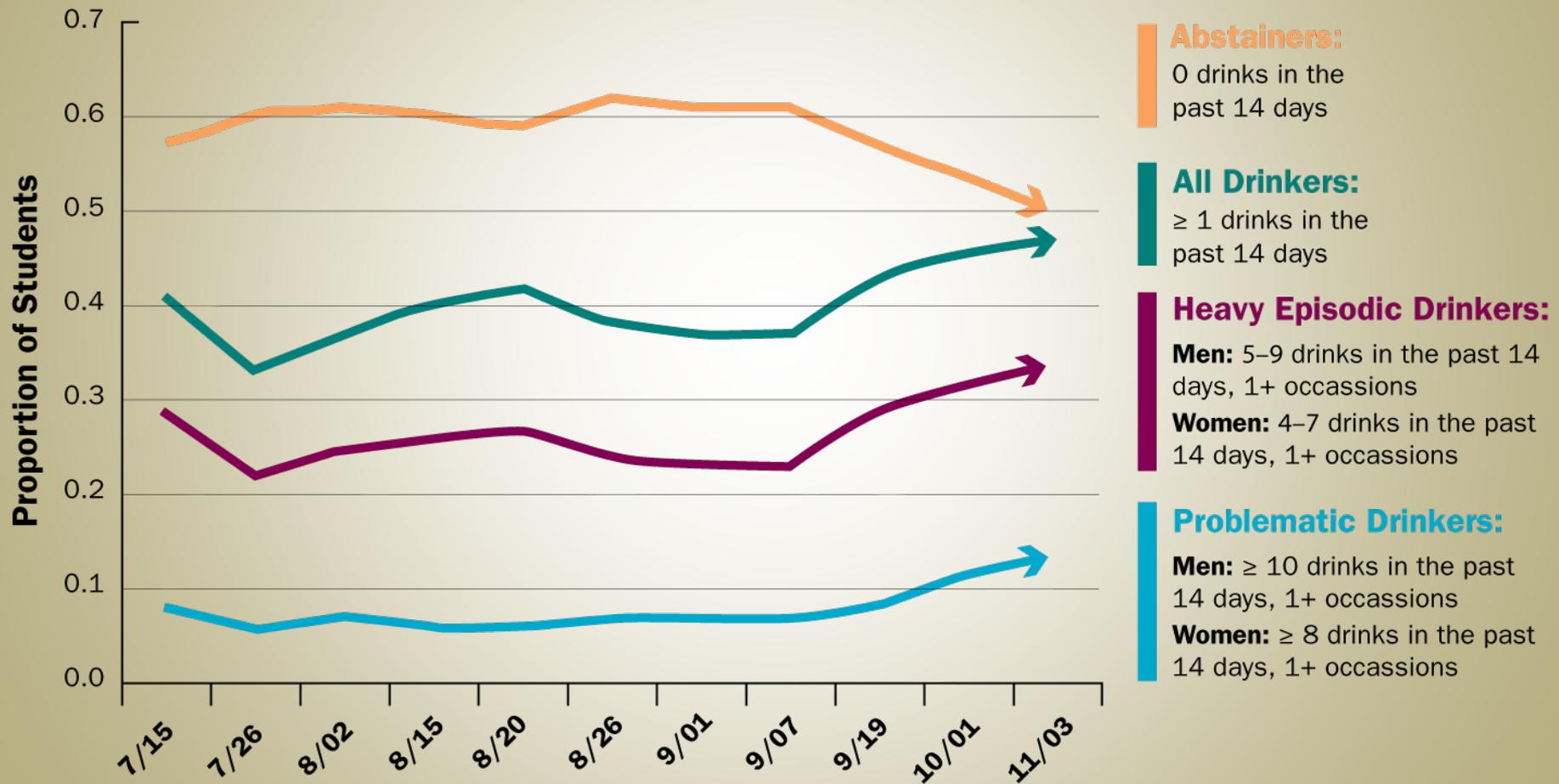
Women: 4–7 drinks in the past 14 days, 1+ occasions

Problematic Drinkers

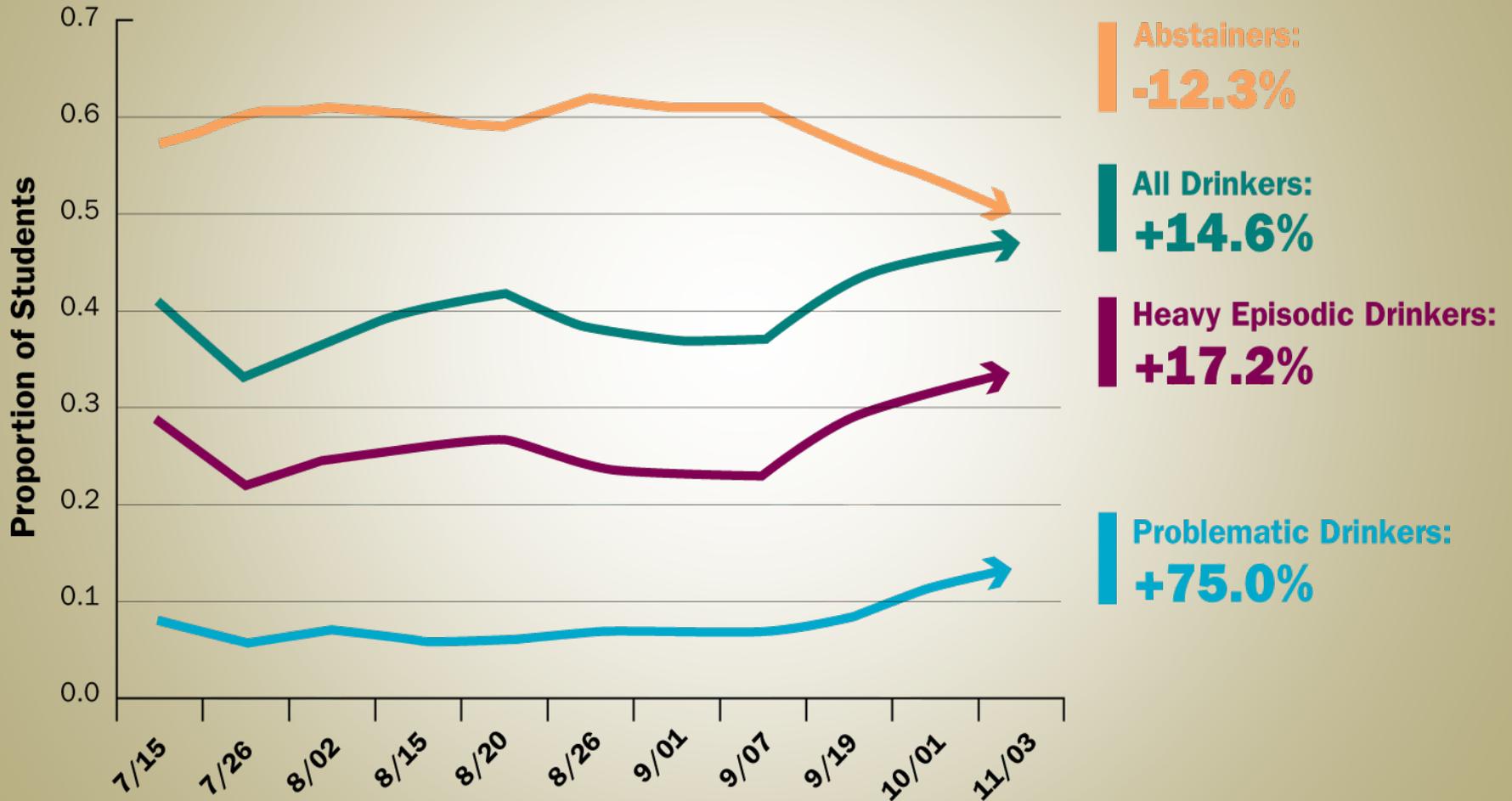
Men: ≥ 10 drinks in the past 14 days, 1+ occasions

Women: ≥ 8 drinks in the past 14 days, 1+ occasions

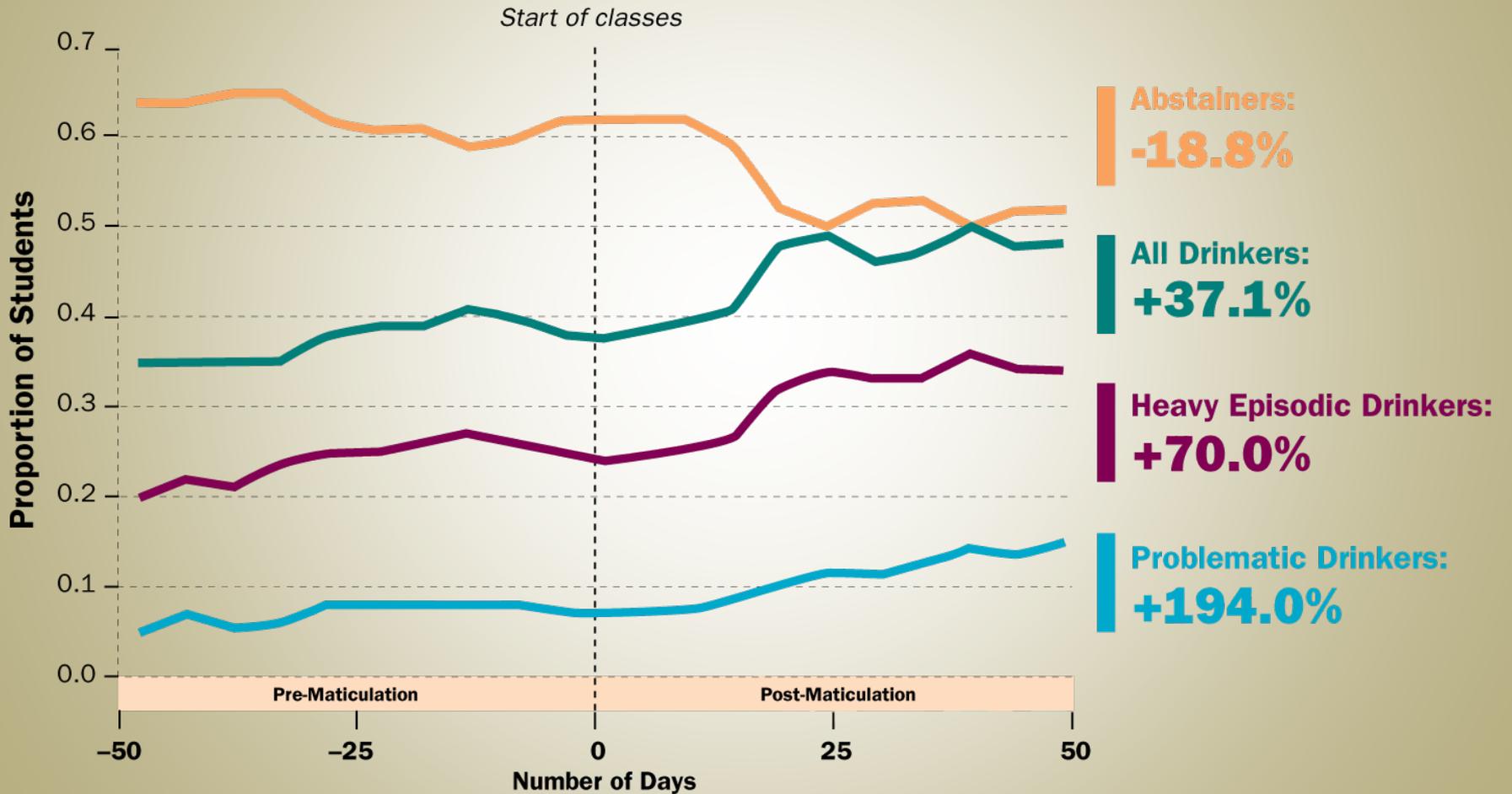
Proportion of Incoming First-Year Students



Percentage Changes in Drinking Status



Percentage Changes in Drinking Status



Consequences of College Alcohol Use

- Death: 1,825 alcohol-related injury deaths among 18-to 24-year-olds
 - 1,357 from motor vehicle crashes
- Injury: 599,000 unintentionally injured (18-24)
- Assault: More than 696,000 assaulted by another student who had been drinking
- Sexual Abuse: More than 97,000 victims of sexual assault or date rape
- Drunk Driving: 2.1 million students drove under influence
- Academic Problems: About 25 percent of students report academic problems due to alcohol

Contributing Factors

Expectation that drinking will help bolster confidence and ensure social success

Increased responsibility and stress

Students face major decisions that will direct the course of their academic, professional, and personal lives

Culturally transmitted expectation that young people will drink heavily while in college

Campus environment that facilitates the choice to drink heavily



The Prevention Paradox

Highest number of negative consequences happen to the moderate drinkers

But 80% of institutional resources are spent on the high-risk drinkers

20% of students are abstainers

60% of students are moderate or light drinkers

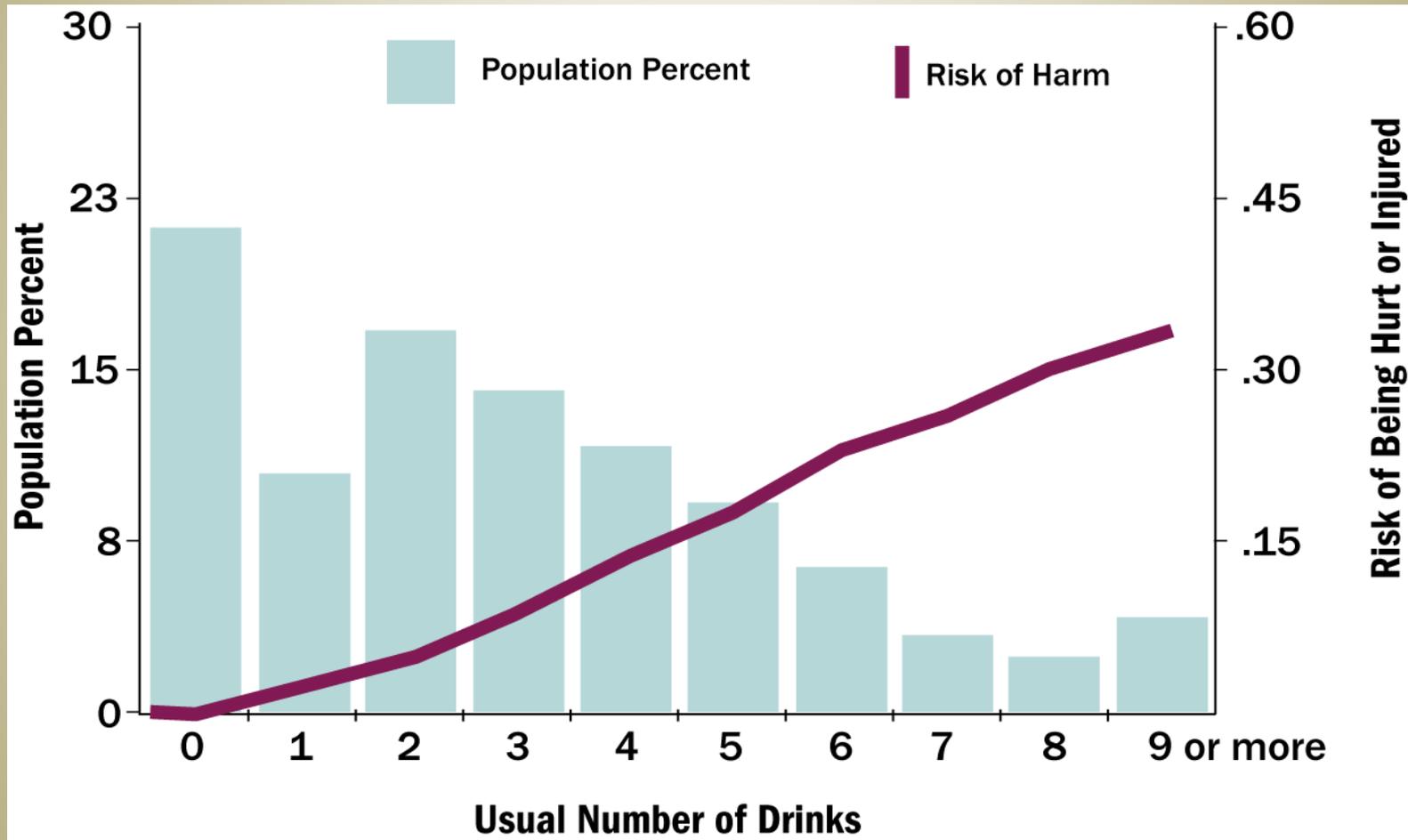
20% of students are high-risk drinkers



Weitzman, E.R. and T.F. Nelson. (2004). College Student Binge Drinking and the "Prevention Paradox": Implications for Prevention and Harm Reduction. *J Drug Education*, 34(3), 247-263.

Prevention Paradox

The Case for Population-Level Prevention



Number of Injuries

Number of drinks usually consumed	% Drinkers	Risk of Injury	CAS Number Injured	Projected National Number Injured
1	13	2	90	11,832
2	21	4	366	47,421
3	18	9	598	76,884
4	15	14	791	101,760
5	12	18	804	103,515
6	8	23	731	93,440
7	4	26	441	56,659
8	3	30	360	46,160
9+	5	33	700	90,663
TOTAL	100	13	4882	628,334

Population-Level Prevention

- Educational Approaches
 - *AlcoholEdu for College*
- Normative Approaches
 - Social Norms Marketing
- Policy and Enforcement Approaches
 - Safer California Project

AlcoholEdu for College



- Online Alcohol Prevention Program
 - Guided by NIAAA Task Force’s program recommendations
 - Grounded in behavior change theory
- Cornerstone of a Comprehensive Prevention Approach
 - Only program designed specifically for *ALL* students, including abstainers
 - Helps set the stage for environmental management strategies
- Teaches Basic Facts about Alcohol
 - Impact on brain development and learning
 - Factors that affect blood alcohol concentration (BAC)
 - State alcohol and DUI laws: minimum drinking age law, “zero tolerance” law, .08% BAC *per se* law



AlcoholEdu for College

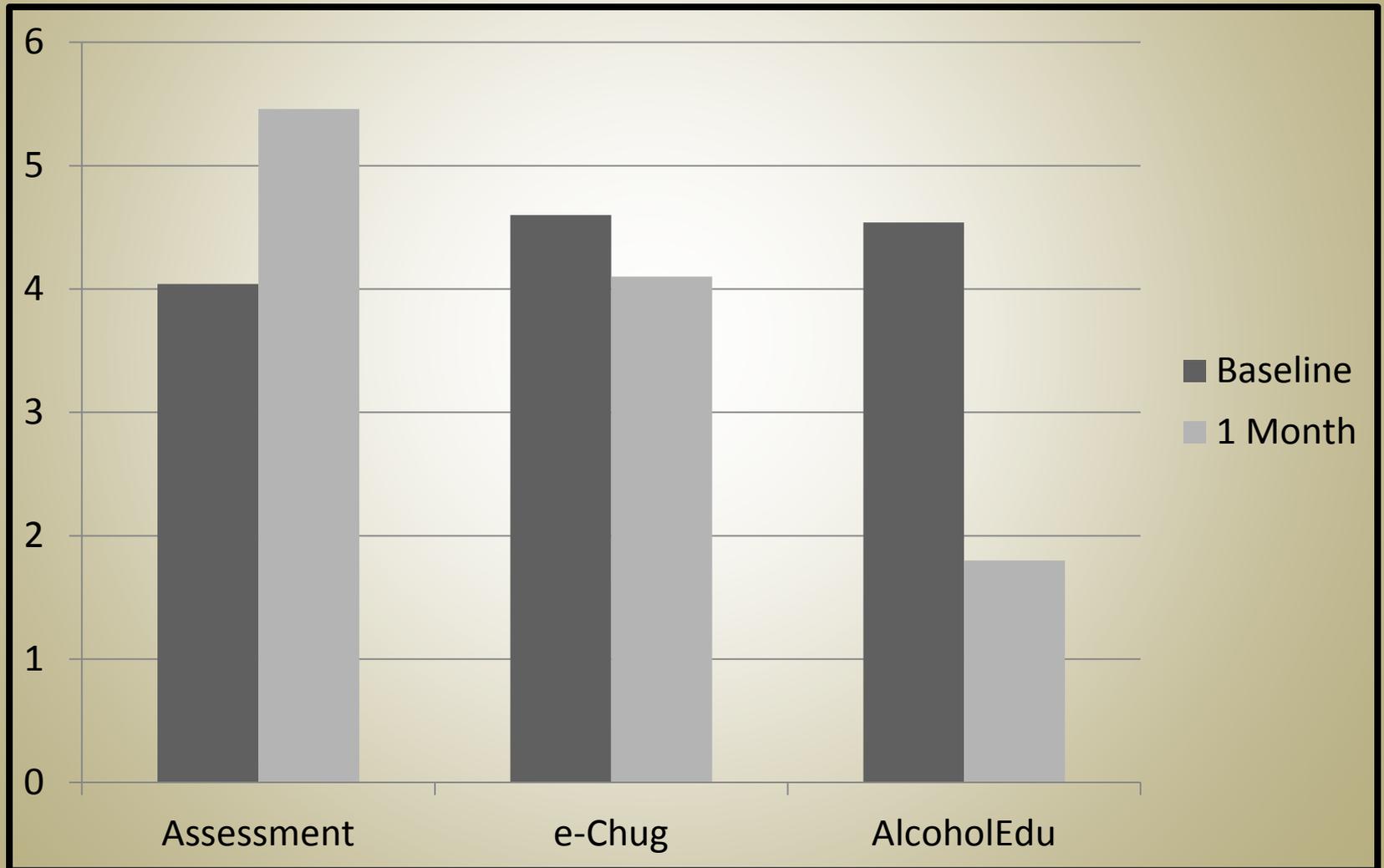


- Motivates Behavior Change
 - Resets unrealistic positive expectations about the effects of alcohol
 - Outlines the negative consequences of elevated BAC
 - Links choices about drinking to academic and personal success
- Promotes Developing a Personal Plan
 - Strategies to encourage safer decision-making
 - For drinkers, strategies to reduce alcohol consumption and drinking-related harms
- Promotes Bystander Intervention
 - Respond to possible alcohol poisoning
 - Prevent drinking and driving



Independent Evaluation of AlcoholEdu

Number of Negative Alcohol Consequences, Past Month



Evaluation of *AlcoholEdu for College*: A Randomized Multi-Campus Trial

Mallie J. Paschall, Ph.D.

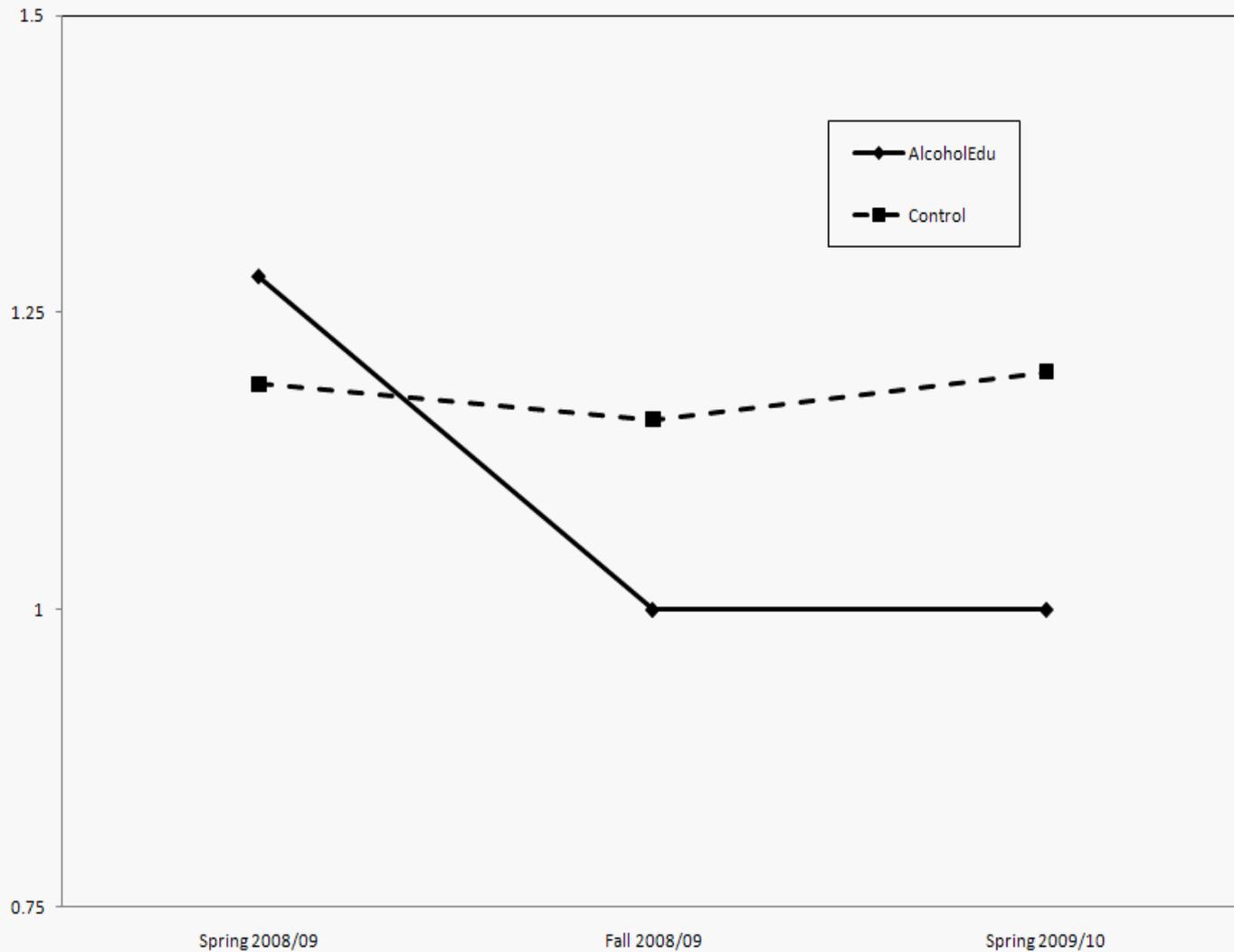
Prevention Research Center, Berkeley, CA
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

Funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

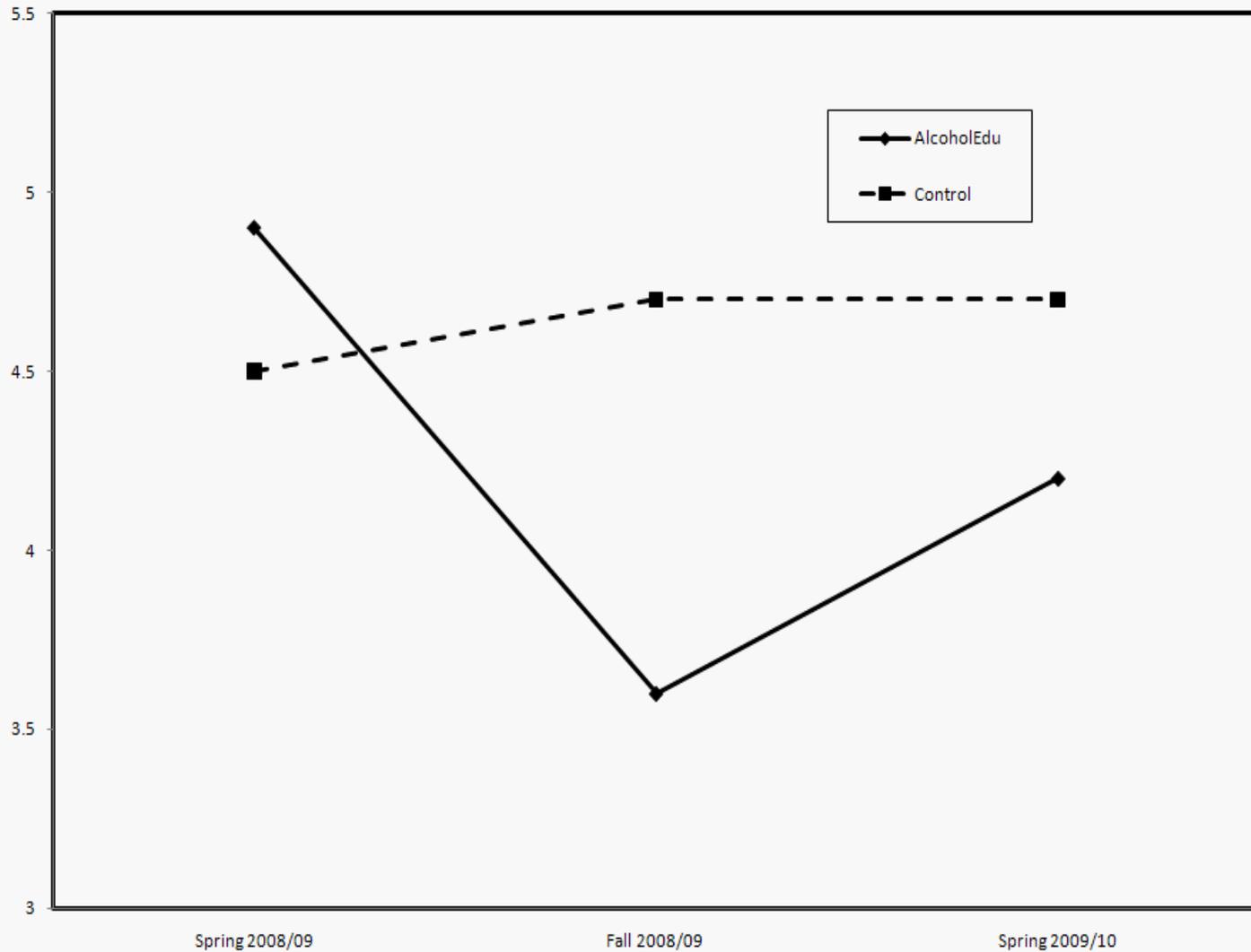
Study Design

- Random assignment of 30 universities to intervention and control conditions (15 each)
 - All intervention group colleges were kept, even if they did not properly implement the course
- Cross-sectional web-based surveys of randomly selected freshmen
 - Baseline (spring), Post-Intervention (fall), and Follow-Up (spring)
 - Approximately 90 freshmen per campus per survey
- Surveys included past 30-day measures of:
 - Frequency of alcohol use
 - Heavy episodic drinking (“binge drinking”)
 - Alcohol-related problems

Frequency of Heavy Drinking in Past 30 Days



Total Alcohol Problems in Past 30 Days



Conclusions

- *AlcoholEdu for College* reduces the frequency of alcohol misuse and the most common types of alcohol-related problems among freshmen, especially during the fall semester
- *AlcoholEdu* is more effective for schools with the highest rates of course completion. Mandating *AlcoholEdu* is likely to yield the greatest benefits.
- *AlcoholEdu* effects appear to be mediated through student changed perceptions of drinking norms on college campuses.
- *AlcoholEdu* effects were underestimated due to the variability in course completion rates.

High Praise from Students...

(Considering the Circumstances)

“It seemed to go by quick, which meant it wasn’t boring.”

“It was not as boring and painful as I thought it would be. I actually enjoyed it. It’s not all text. It’s interactive. It’s very cool for a subject that would otherwise just be annoying to people my age.”

“...it let me know not everyone in college is a huge drinker...I never believed all those statistics until now.”

“AlcoholEdu surprisingly motivated me to make changes in my alcohol use...The program showed me that the world won't end if I don't get wasted all the time. It's much easier than I thought to change.”

Population-Level Prevention

- Educational Approaches
 - *AlcoholEdu for College*
- Normative Approaches
 - Social Norms Marketing
- Policy and Enforcement Approaches
 - Safer California Project

Social Norms Marketing



Use campus-based media to report accurate drinking norms

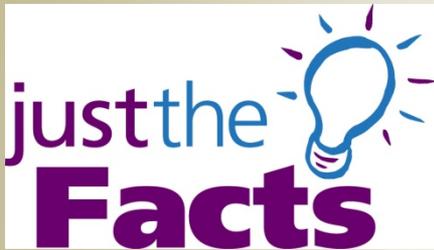


Decrease perceived normative expectations to drink



Decrease alcohol consumption

Social Norms Marketing Research Project



William DeJong, Ph.D.
Boston University School of Public Health

Funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
and the US Department of Education



Most U of A (69%)
students
have

4 or fewer
drinks

1 drink = one 12 oz. beer = 4-5 oz. wine = 1 oz. liquor



*Based on survey data collected by
Campus Health Service (1998) from 317
U of A students in a randomly selected
mailing.

Funded by the US Dept. of Health and Human Services.

when they party

Study 1 Procedure

- AOD prevention coordinators received open invitation
- Applicants completed questionnaire
 - Never had a social norms campaign
 - Willing to be in control group, if assigned
 - Demonstrated a commitment to the project
- Matched schools into pairs (based on region, size, governance, student demographics)
- Randomly assigned one school from each pair to the treatment group (n = 9), and the other to a control group (n = 9)

Study 1 Timeline

Year 1

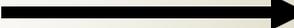
Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5+

All Schools

Survey of College Alcohol Norms and Behavior 

Contextual data collection 

Treatment Group Schools (9)



Control Group Schools (9)

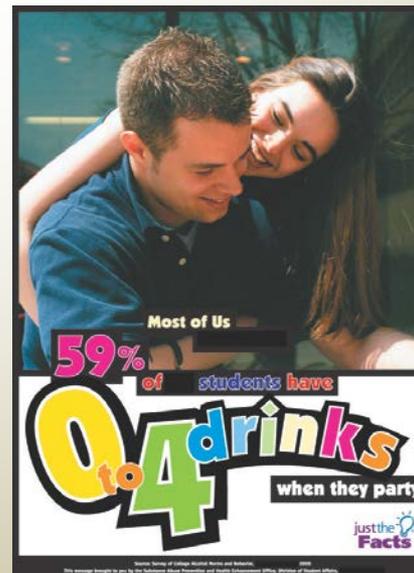


Media Channels

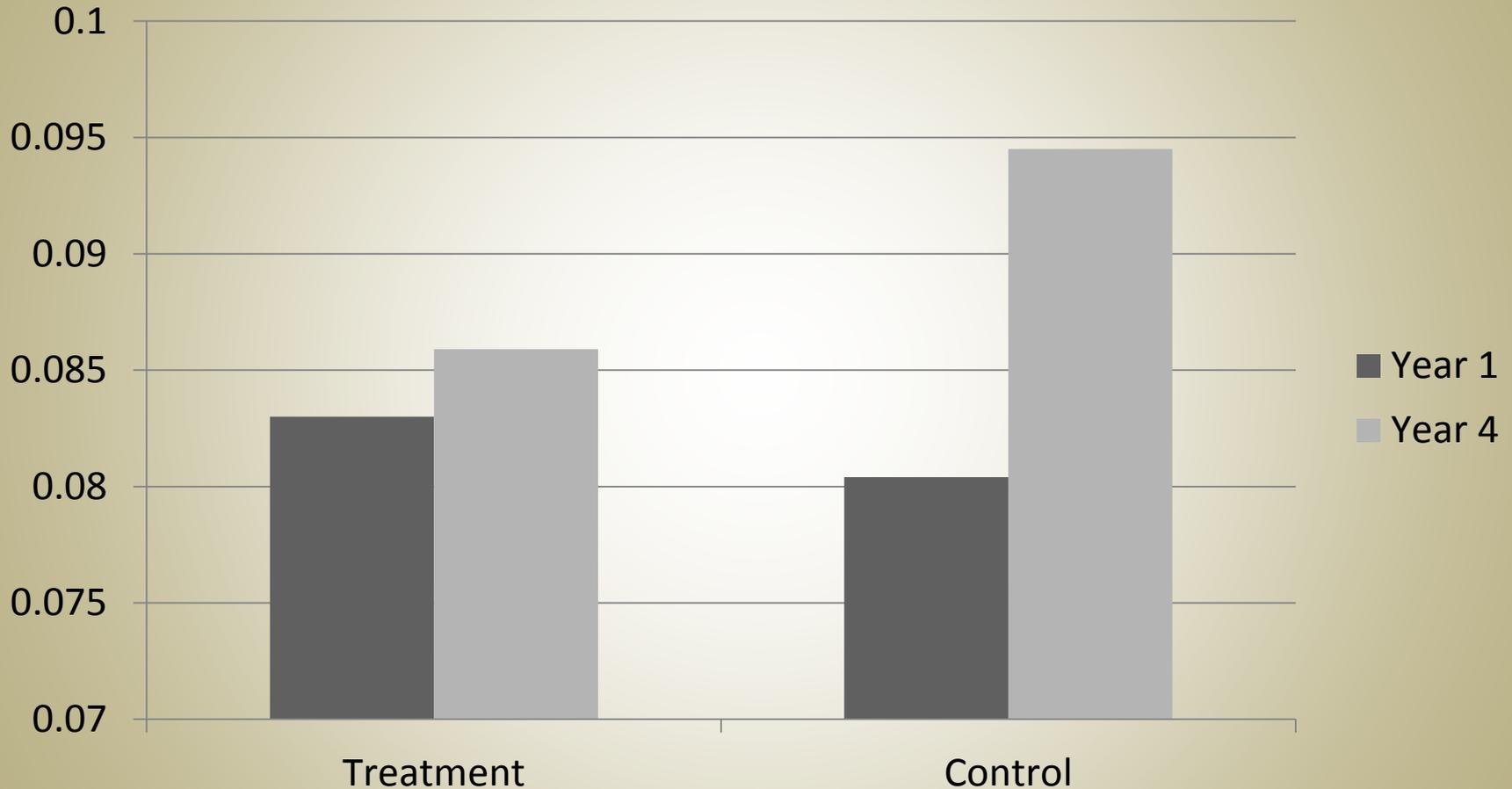
- Newspaper Ads
- Radio and TV ads
- Flyers/Posters
- Billboards
- Table Tents
- Mailing Inserts
- Item Giveaways
- Talks/Presentations
- Student Orientation
- Email Messages

\$2,000 per year (3 years)

\$300-\$1,650 per year
supplements (2 years)



Estimated Maximum BAC in Past 2 Weeks



Core Institute data suggest a national trend for increased heavy drinking between Year 1 and Year 4

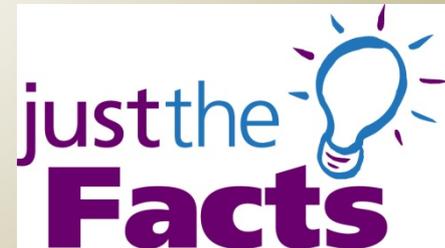
Summary

Study 1

Students attending an institution with a SNM campaign had a lower relative risk of heavy alcohol consumption

Study 2

Replication failure



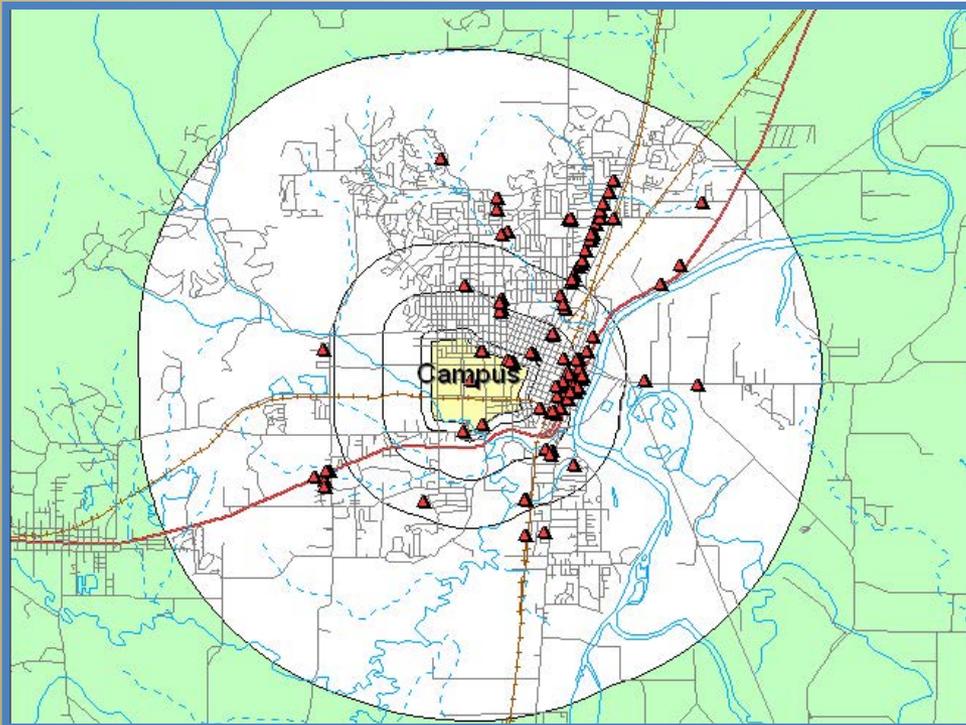
Social norms marketing campaigns are less likely to work in campus communities with high alcohol outlet density.

— Richard Scribner, LSU



Alcohol Outlet Density

Number of on-premise alcohol outlets
within 3 miles of the campus boundary,
per 1,000 total students enrolled



Range = 2.3 to 128.0

Median = 10.78

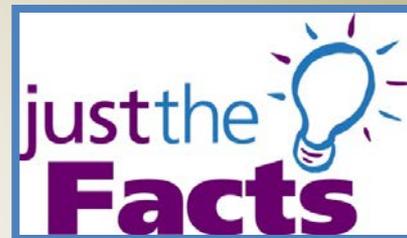
High Density

10.78+ outlets per
1,000 enrolled

Summary of Findings

Significant interaction between alcohol outlet density and the intervention effect

– Low density communities:



– High density communities:



Study 1: Intervention Effect

– 18 sites, only 5 at or above the median

Study 2: No Intervention Effect

– 14 sites, 11 at or above the median

Possible Explanatory Mechanisms

High density of alcohol outlets:

- Increases alcohol access, which drives up consumption
- and/or*
- Counters the social norms campaign's normative message



Study Implications

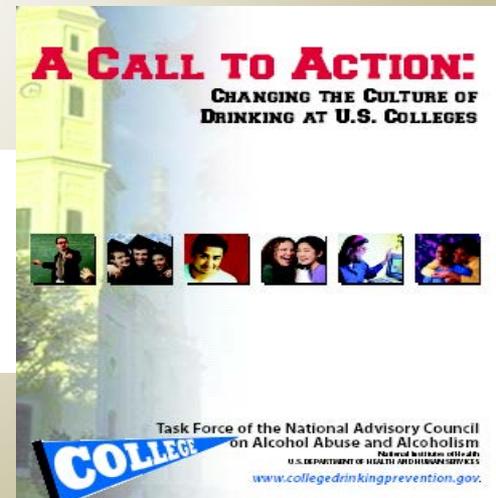
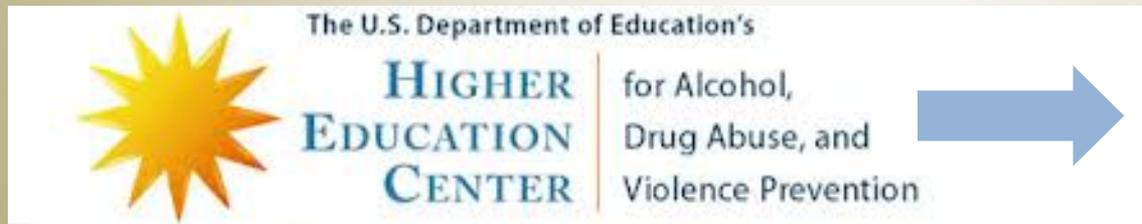
- Social norms marketing can work to reduce student alcohol use
- In this study, it did *not* work as well in alcohol-rich environments
 - Need an even more intensive social norms marketing campaign to compete effectively with messages in the environment
 - Need to work to change the campus community's alcohol environment

Population-Level Prevention

- Educational Approaches
 - *AlcoholEdu for College*
- Normative Approaches
 - Social Norms Marketing
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 - Safer California Project

Environmental Management

College officials should take an active role in giving shape to a campus and community environment that will help students make healthier decisions about drinking



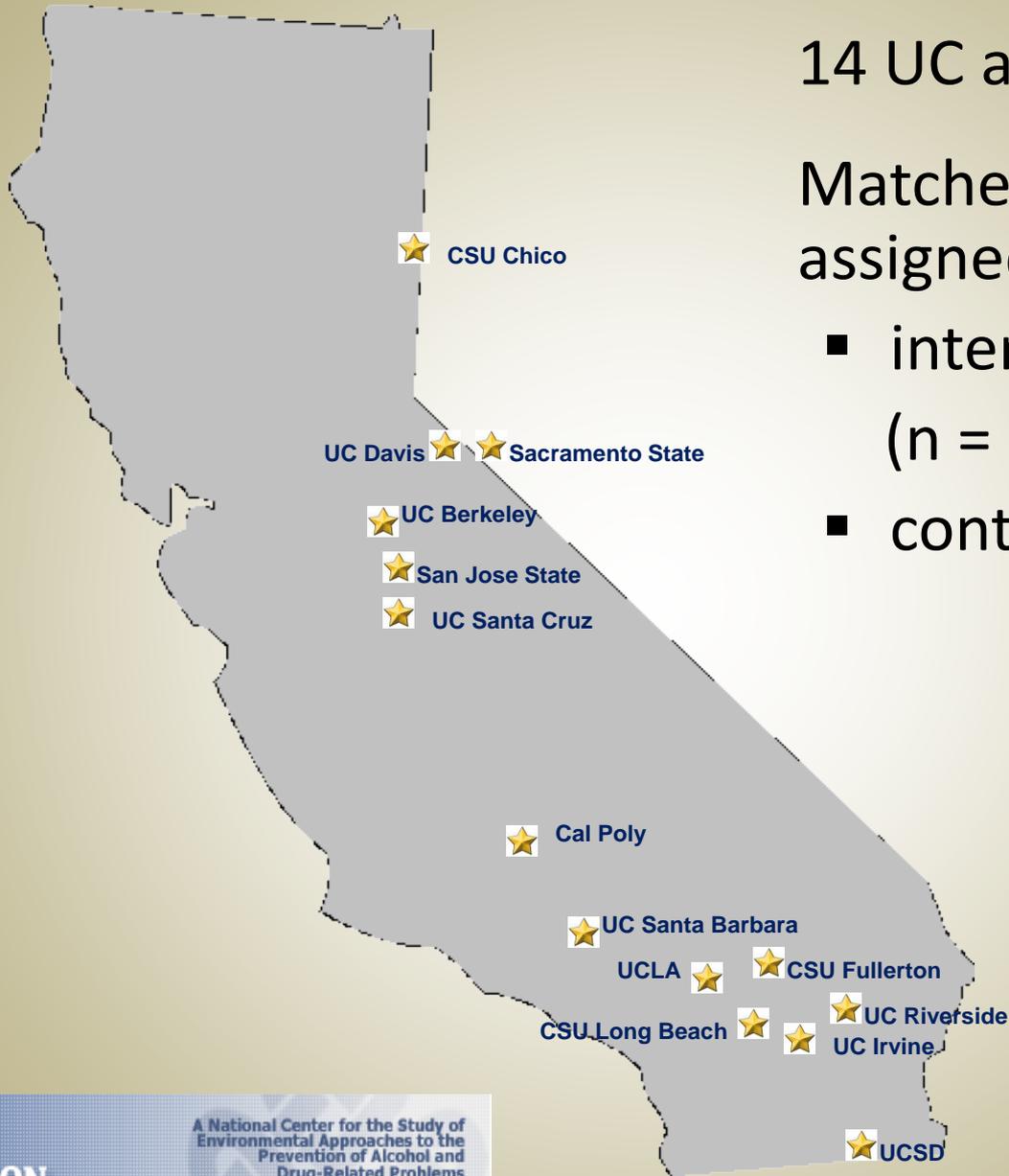
Environmental Strategies

- Create an environment that supports health-promoting norms
- Restrict marketing and promotion of alcoholic beverages
- Offer social, recreational, public service, and other extracurricular options
- Develop and enforce campus policies and local, state, and federal laws
- Limit alcohol availability and access

Safer California Universities Project: A Randomized Multi-Campus Trial

Robert Saltz, Ph.D.
Prevention Research Center, Berkeley, CA
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

Funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism



14 UC and CSU campuses

Matched and randomly assigned:

- intervention group (n = 7) *or*
- control group (n = 7)

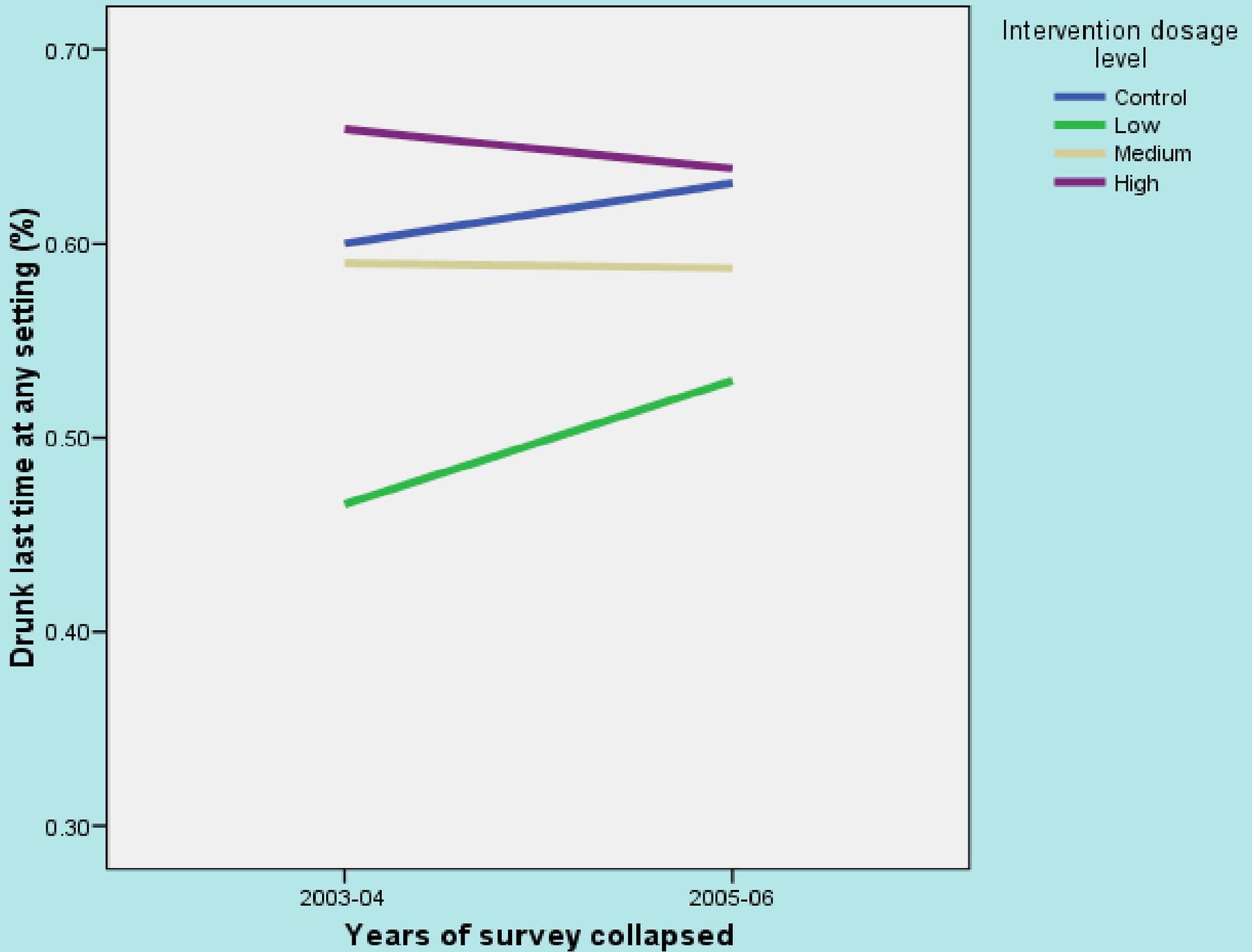
Integrated Intervention Strategies for Off-Campus Parties

- Compliance Checks
- DUI Check Points
- Party Patrols
- Pass Social Host “Response Cost” Ordinance
- A Social Host Safe Party Campaign

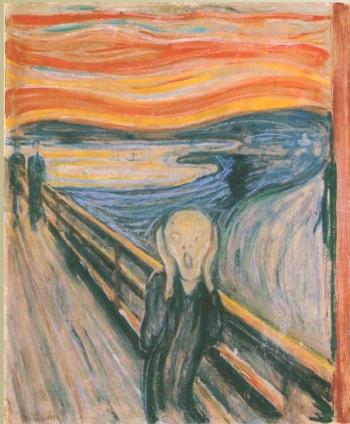


Safer California Universities Project

- Decrease in heavy drinking at targeted drinking sites
 - Off-campus parties
 - Bars and restaurants
- No increase at non-targeted drinking sites
 - *No displacement effects*
- Stronger effects at universities with more intensive interventions



Many College Administrators Fear Student Resistance to Environmental Prevention Strategies



- “If we crack down, we’ll have a harder time recruiting new students.”
- “We can’t run the risk of having a riot.”

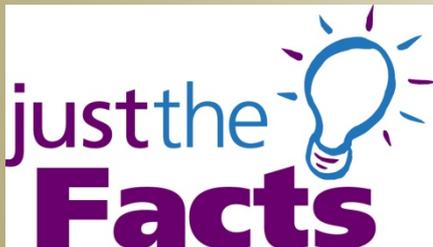
Survey Questions

(32 Colleges and Universities)

To what extent do you support or oppose the following possible policies or procedures?

* * * * *

To what extent do you think other students at this school support or oppose the following possible policies or procedures?



Perceived Support: Strict Enforcement

(% of Respondents: Other Students Support)

65.2	Use stricter disciplinary sanctions for students who engage in alcohol-related violence
40.9	Use stricter disciplinary sanctions for students who repeatedly violate campus alcohol policies
24.2	Apply stricter penalties for the use of false IDs to purchase alcohol illegally
16.3	Conduct undercover operations at bars, restaurants, and liquor stores to increase compliance with underage laws

Perceived Versus *Actual* Support: Strict Enforcement (% of Respondents)

65.2	90.1	Use stricter disciplinary sanctions for students who engage in alcohol-related violence
40.9	72.6	Use stricter disciplinary sanctions for students who repeatedly violate campus alcohol policies
24.2	59.5	Apply stricter penalties for the use of false IDs to purchase alcohol illegally
16.3	45.8	Conduct undercover operations at bars, restaurants, and liquor stores to increase compliance with underage laws

Perceived Versus *Actual* Support: Campus Management (% of Respondents)

21.8	52.1	Restrict advertising that promotes alcohol consumption at on-campus parties or events
17.8	40.0	Ban alcohol industry sponsorship of school events
14.3	34.6	Make all residences on campus alcohol-free
6.6	16.5	Require more early morning and Friday classes to discourage alcohol use during the week

Perceived Versus Actual Support: Alcohol Availability (% of Respondents)

24.0	56.1	Prohibit kegs on campus
14.6	38.4	Increase taxes on alcohol to help pay for programs to prevent minors from drinking
10.8	32.8	Eliminate low-price bar and liquor store promotions targeted to college students
9.6	28.1	Limit the days or hours of sale for alcohol outlets near campus

Student Majorities

- Use stricter disciplinary sanctions for students who engage in alcohol-related violence: 32 colleges
- Conduct undercover operations at bars, restaurants, and liquor stores to increase compliance with underage laws: 12 colleges
- Eliminate low-price bar and liquor store promotions targeted to college students: 8 colleges
- Require more early morning and Friday classes to discourage alcohol use during the week: 0 colleges

Conclusion

- A majority of students support environmental management policies, especially stricter enforcement
- College administrators and community officials should *not* assume a lack of student support for policy change
- Students should be invited as partners in community-based prevention

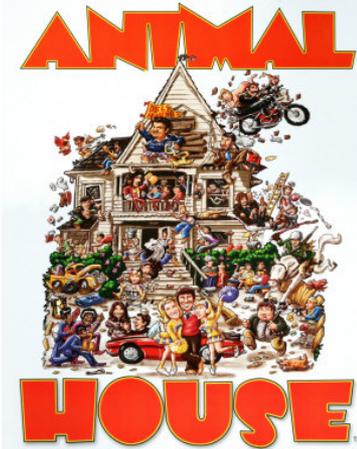
Progress *Is* Possible

Even where the drinking culture
seems most entrenched...

Dartmouth College



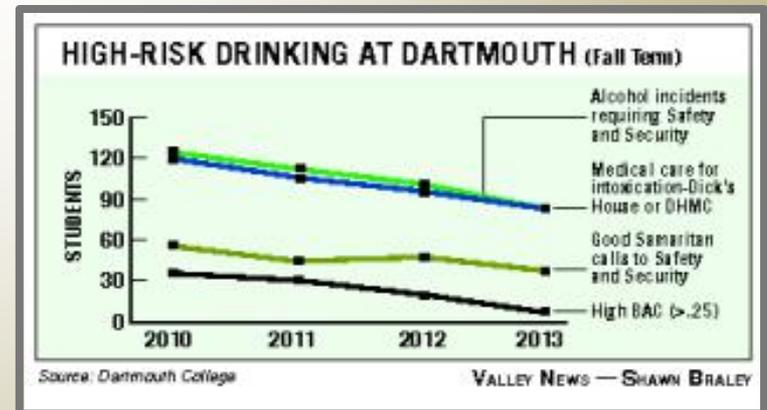
BILL W. and Dr. BOB



I read it in the **Valley News** January 29, 2014

For the third straight fall term, there was a decline in reported alcohol-related incidents on campus:

- Fewer alcohol-related calls to the Safety and Security Office
- Fewer student “medical encounters for intoxication” at either the infirmary or the local hospital
- Fewer students registering blood-alcohol content readings of above 0.25% BAC



Cited Prevention Efforts

- Greek Leadership Council instituted a prohibition on first-year students attending fraternity parties where alcohol was present during the first six weeks of the academic year, through Homecoming Weekend
- Students presenting at the infirmary with an alcohol-related injury are given a brief motivational interview
- Students cited for violating alcohol consumption rules are screen and referred for treatment as necessary
- Sanctions for campus organizations serving alcohol irresponsibly are applied more consistently “Good Samaritan” policy allows students to report dangerously intoxicated peers to Campus Security without fearing disciplinary action

Imagine...

... how different things would be if all college and university leaders were to make alcohol prevention a top priority

Imagine...

- Student health and wellness would be a key priority in the institution's strategic plan
- Alcohol prevention would be linked to mission-critical priorities (retention, student engagement, student success, financial performance)
- The institution would articulate specific, measurable goals for improving student health and wellness
- Funding for alcohol prevention would a dedicated line item in the budget

- Alcohol prevention would no longer be viewed as the responsibility of a single individual, or even a single department
- There would be a permanent campus-wide task force that reports directly to the vice president for student affairs, if not to the chief executive
- Every office and department would be required to submit a plan for how it could help meet this challenge.
- Faculty no less than administrative staff would have to do their part, giving a boost to academic reform
- There would be more initiatives to help students become better integrated into the intellectual life of the school

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