Wake Forest University Q & A

Q: What's the big deal about drinking on campus?

A: Most students living on campus are under the minimum legal drinking age. No student under 21 is legally allowed to possess or drink alcohol. Besides the legal concerns, alcohol misuse poses a serious threat to your health, safety and success at Wake Forest.

Still not convinced?

- About 25 percent of college students report academic consequences of their drinking, including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams and receiving lower grades overall (Engs et al., 1996; Presley et al., 1996a, 1996b; Wechsler et al., 2002).
  - The STAMP (Substance Misuse Prevention) Program has found that 10% of Wake Students report missing a class or being hung-over in class and 15% report that their drinking reduced their performance in a class.
  - A national survey of nearly 94,000 students from 197 colleges and universities conducted over a three year period found in the third year that students with an 'A' average consume a little more than 4 drinks per week, 'B' students have 6 drinks per week, 'C' students average almost 8 drinks per week, and students with D's or F's consume almost 10 drinks per week (Underage and College Age Alcohol Prevention Tool Kit: www.cdhs.state.co.us/.../UnderageCollegeAgeAlcoholPrevention.pdf).
- 30-50% of college attrition is related to alcohol (Outside the Classroom, Executive Summary, 2009)
- Nationally, more than 599,000 students (between the ages of 18-24) are unintentionally injured under the influence of alcohol (Hingson et al., 2009).
  - At Wake Forest, 27.8% report being injured in the last 12 months because of their drinking!
- Each year, 1,825 college students (between the ages of 18 and 24) die from alcohol-related unintentional injuries (Hingson et al., 2009).
- More than 97,000 students (between the ages of 18 and 24) are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape (Hingson et al., 2009).

Q: Don't all college students drink? Is there such a thing as a non-drinker?

A: While movies like "Animal House" and "Old School" have promoted the idea that college students get drunk constantly, don't be fooled. Binge-drinking is less common on college campuses than you might think.

- According to the Association of College and University Housing Officers (ACUHO) survey distributed last Spring to Wake Students:
  - 75% drink 4 or less drinks when they go out (only 5% have 8 or more drinks!)
  - 75% drink once or less a week
  - 65% believe that alcohol impacts the quality of life on the dorm floor.
- Students tend to overestimate their peers use of alcohol. In a recent National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey, Wake students believe 75% of students smoke cigarettes when only 12.6% actually do and that 82% smoke marijuana when only 20% do in the last YEAR!

Just know this: You are not alone if you choose NOT to Drink or Do Drugs!

Q: What happens if I get caught drinking on campus?

A: Students and student groups who violate university policy on alcohol or other drugs either on or off campus are subject to penalties, depending on the severity of the violation and previous history of drug and alcohol use. Refer them to the student handbook for details.
Sanctions, determined on a case-by-case basis, may include:

- Alcohol education class – Play Smarter Seminar
- Alcohol assessment and counseling – Motivational Session, BASICS, AA Meetings, or off campus referral
- Community service
- Parent Notification (for all violations)
- Fines
- Suspension and/or expulsion from the university.

**Q: What is low-risk drinking?**

**A:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services advises no more than 1 standard drink per day for women and no more than 2 standard drinks per day for men who are of legal age.

It has been established that college students do not drink “standard drinks” but Solo Cup Drinks - a standard drink size is any alcoholic beverage that contains ½ ounce pure alcohol. That would equal ONE:

- 12oz. Domestic Beer
- 4oz. of Wine
- 10 oz. Microbrew
- 10oz. Wine Cooler
- 8oz. Ice Beer or Malt Liquor
- 1.25oz. 80-proof liquor

**FOUR LOKO’s** – have 5.6 standard drinks and the equivalent caffeine of a red bull and espresso. **PUNCH** – 4-12 standard drinks – depending on which alcohol was use.

Other students who may also have a high risk or potential of drinking problems:
- Students who have family members who struggle with addiction and dependency issues
- Students who drink to cope with negative experiences and moods.
- Students from families with disordered eating or have disordered eating.
- First year students, athletes, fraternity and sorority members, white students

**Q: What is the extended hangover?**

- Most of us already know that alcohol has an immediate effect on the brain and abusive use can cause memory loss such as blackouts (not remembering events while drinking). 50% of Wake Students report a blackout in the last month.
- Memory formation is a complex process that takes a long time. Alcohol in the system can inhibit the brain’s ability to learn and store new information as it compromises the hippocampus, the structure deep in the brain vital to the formation of memories. In addition, memories are solidified during the REM sleep stage. Drinking alcohol disrupts or inhibits this stage of sleep. This disruption reduces the brain’s ability to learn and retain information. Even drinking up to six hours before you go to sleep can negatively affect the sleep cycle.
- Consuming five or more alcoholic beverages in one night can affect brain and body activities for up to three days.
- Two consecutive nights of drinking five or more alcoholic beverages can affect brain and body activities for up to five days (taken from [http://oade.nd.edu/resources-for-faculty-and-staff/](http://oade.nd.edu/resources-for-faculty-and-staff/)).

**Q: Why are alcohol and sex linked?**
As many as 70% of college students admit to having engaged in sexual activity primarily as the result of being under the influence of alcohol, or to have sex they wouldn’t have had if they had been sober. 

90% of all campus rapes occur when alcohol has been used by either the assailant or the victim.

One in twelve college males admit to having committed acts that meet the legal definition of rape or acquaintance rape.

60% of college women who are infected with STDs, including genital herpes and AIDS, report that they were under the influence of alcohol at the time they had intercourse with the infected person (taken from www.factontap.org/collexp/collmain.htm).

At least ONE out of FIVE Wake students abandon safe sex practices when they’re drunk, even if they do protect themselves when they are sober (NCHA, 2010)

Q. How do you know if someone has a problem?

Alcohol problems are complex and no single behavior means a person has a problem. However, when someone’s drinking has created a physical dependency and/or is leading to problems in his/her life, a person would benefit from examining his/her alcohol use.

- You have a drink containing alcohol 4 or more times a week
- On a day when you are drinking, you typically have 6 or more drinks.
- Negative consequences are happening to you because of your drinking such as getting in trouble, performing poorly, or getting into fights with friends.
- You are neglecting your other responsibilities because of your drinking.
- You have not been able to stop drinking once you started.
- Your needed more to drink to feel the same effects (tolerance).
- You needed a drink in the morning after a hard night drinking.
- You had feelings of guilt or remorse after drinking.
- You were unable to remember what happened the night before because of drinking – full or partial blackouts included.
- A relative, friend, doctor, or health care worker expressed concern and suggested that you cut down.

Q. What do you do if you know someone with an alcohol problem?

- During informal surveys at Wake Forest about 85% of student report knowing someone who they think has a problem with alcohol but less than 20% ever express concern to that person.
  
  - Barriers to expressing concern are often that the student does not want to upset the friend; they believe that behavior is normative; or they don’t want to seem hypocritical.
  - It may actually be more hypocritical to express not express concern for a friend than to express concern. What you would want a friend to do for you?


Teachable Moments through Informal Conversations

- Use accurate information and data
- Use open-ended questions that will engage students in meaningful dialogue and confront the misperception that most students are drinking excessively
- Speak out boldly – you will be the voice for the majority of students who select not to drink but are nervous to say anything.
- Actively become messengers of a Wake Forest culture that normalizes the choice to drink low risk or the choice not to drink at all

Discussion Starters Adapted from BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students)

- How do you define the drinking culture at Wake Forest?
- How can students be involved in changing the drinking culture at Wake Forest?
- How would Wake Forest be different if all students who drink chose 3 drinks or less on any given night?
- Most students know how to define low-risk drinking limits. On any given night, what contributes to a student going well beyond these limits?
- What prevents students from intervening when it is clear that another student has had too much to drink?
- If you were a parent with a son or daughter in college, what advice would you give them about the use of alcohol? Do you find that you are following the advice that you would give someone you care about?

Ad Campaigns:

http://www.centurycouncil.org/other/initiatives/nsac
http://theotherhangover.sjmc.umn.edu/media.html#sidewalk
