

**Data Report:**  
**2009 New Hampshire Higher Education**  
**Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Survey**

*Presented by the New Hampshire  
Higher Education  
Alcohol and Other Drug  
Committee*



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The New Hampshire Higher Education Alcohol and Other Drug (NHHEAOD) Committee is comprised of representatives from higher education institutions across the state of New Hampshire. Members meet monthly to discuss important issues and develop action plans related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use on college campuses in the state.

In the fall of 2000, the NHHEAOD committee collaborated with the University of New Hampshire's Student Affairs Research and Assessment Center to develop a survey that could be administered at the various membership schools in the spring of 2001. This survey was then revised and re-administered in the spring of 2003 and then further revised and re-administered in the spring of 2005, 2007 and 2009 a copy of the instrument used in gathering the data can be accessed at [www.nhheaod.org](http://www.nhheaod.org)

The purpose of this survey is to assess students' attitudes, behaviors and perception of use regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drug uses. Furthermore, this statewide survey allows individual schools and the NHHEAOD Committee to track and evaluate data consistently, to monitor trends, and to provide assistance in the development of alcohol, tobacco and other drug programs and services.

The survey was administered to 4058 students at seven higher education institutions in the state during the spring of 2009. This report provides a summary of key aggregate data from this survey, with an emphasis on data results that illustrate the gap that exists between actual and perceived norms among New Hampshire college youth. Social norms theory, a concept receiving a lot of national attention, is based on the premise that students over-perceive harmful behaviors and under-perceive protective behaviors among their peers and that those misperceptions have an impact on decisions to use substances. As such, the aim of a social norms approach is to reduce misperceptions of substance use with a resulting decrease in use and consequences. For more information regarding social norms theory, please consult The National Social Norms Resource Center at [www.socialnorm.org](http://www.socialnorm.org).

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

### Attitudes (see Graph 1) (from 2007 data -3691 students from eight schools)

- The majority (90.23%) of students' personal attitudes about drinking and getting drunk are conservative ("Drinking is never a good thing to do" or "Drinking is all right but a person should not get drunk") to moderate ("Occasionally getting drunk is okay as long as it doesn't interfere with academics or other responsibilities").
- The majority (68.16%) of students believe that getting drunk, even occasionally, is not okay if it interferes with academics or other responsibilities.
- Students believe that over half (55.36%) of their peers think getting drunk is okay even if it does interfere with academics or responsibilities and that frequently getting drunk is okay if that's what the individual wants to do. Actual responses indicate that only 9.78% of students share one of those two attitudes about drinking. This demonstrates a decrease in the number of students with the highest risk attitudes and an increase in misperceptions regarding these high risk attitudes.

### Average Weekly Consumption (see Graph 2)

- The majority of students (63.1%) consume 4 or fewer alcoholic drinks in a week compared to 50.32% who consumed four or fewer alcoholic drinks in a week in the 2007 survey? The 2005 and 2003 data showed that the majority of students consumed six or fewer alcoholic drinks in a week.
- Thirty Two percent (32.8 %) or approximately one-third of students report that they don't typically consume alcohol weekly.
- Sixty Five percent (65.3%) of students reported that they started drinking before they came to college.

### Quantity & Frequency of Alcohol when "Partying" (see Graphs 3 and 4)

- The majority (54.1%) of students report that they "party" without alcohol or when they party their quantity is limited to 4 drinks or fewer.
- Students believe that the majority (50.4%) of their peers consume 7 or more drinks when they "party" however this shows a significant decrease from the 2007 survey when students believed that 71.89% of their peers consumed 7 drinks or more when they partied. Students continue to overestimate the amount their peers are consuming in party situations but this belief has shifted in a positive direction.
- The majority (53%) of students who do report "partying" with alcohol indicate that they limit this activity to 1 or 2 nights a week.. Additionally, 36.8% of students report that they don't "party" leading one to believe that they either abstain from alcohol completely or limit their consumption to other types of settings (e.g. with a meal, among a small group of friends).
- Students believe that only 2.1 % of their peers don't party which is a significant misperception. However they also believe that 46.6 % "party" 3 or more nights a week when the reality is that only 10.2 % "party" at that rate. Students continue to overestimate the frequency with which their peers are "partying."

### Binge Drinking (see Graph 5)

- The overall rate of binge drinking among college students in New Hampshire is reported at 50.6%. However, upon examining the frequency of binge drinking episodes among respondents, one finds that 29.5% of that 50.8% ( more than half) reported limiting this

type of high-risk drinking to 1 or 2 times in a 14-day period. A binge drinking episode is nationally defined as 5 or more drinks in a sitting in a 2 week period.

- The minority of students (21 %) is engaging in the majority of the frequent binge drinking episodes. Frequent is defined as 3 or more episodes in a 14-day period.

#### **Protective Behaviors (see Graph 6)**

- Students are engaging in a number of protective behaviors when it comes to taking care of themselves or others in situations involving substance use.
- Listed below are some examples of protective behaviors that the majority of students attending New Hampshire institutions report employing either sometimes, usually or always: 83.7% report that they party with friends and people they know and 83.4% report that they watch over their friends who are consuming. Additionally, 79.1% report eating before “partying” or going out, 61.4% report using designated drivers, 73.7% report consciously tracking the number of drinks consumed, 57.9 report determining in advance and staying within a set number of drinks and 52.2% report they abstain when taking a medication that has a warning label about use. These figures do not include those students for which the question was not applicable because they do not drink at all.

#### **Negative Consequences (see Graph 7 and Table 3)**

- The majority of students do not experience negative consequences from their substance use.
- For 20 of the 24 negative consequences students were asked about on the survey, the percentage of students reporting they had never experienced that consequence in the past school year exceeded 70%.
- For 23 of the 24 consequences students were asked about on the survey, greater than 50% of students reported that they had never experienced that particular consequence in the past school year due to their substance use.

#### **Abstinence from Substance Use (see Graph 8 and Table 4)**

- The majority of students attending colleges in New Hampshire DO NOT engage in tobacco or other drug use, with the exception of alcohol.
- More than 9 out of 10 respondents (90% or higher in each drug type category) reported that in the last 30 days they had not used smokeless tobacco, stimulants, designer drugs, sedatives, cocaine, hallucinogens, opiates, steroids, or prescription drugs for non-intended or “recreational” purposes.
- Approximately 7 out of 10 respondents reported that in the last 30 days they had not smoked tobacco products [cigarettes, cigars, pipe] (78%) or marijuana (72.4%).

#### **Substance Use – Actual vs. Perceived (see Table 4 and Graph 9)**

- Students consistently over-perceive drug use among peers attending their own institutions.
- Students estimate that their peers use tobacco products more than twice as often as that which is reported.
- For most drug categories respondents were asked about, the mean number of days of actual use reported in a 30-day period was 2 days or fewer. Exceptions to this definition were in the areas of smoking tobacco products, alcohol, and marijuana.

## PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

Since the early 1990's the *Core Survey - Short Form*, a national survey coordinated by the University of Southern Illinois, had been the instrument used by many of the schools in the state to gather data on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use behaviors. Early in the summer of 2000, the Core Institute made the decision that it would no longer support the short version of its survey and it would only scan and report on the long version of the survey. The longer version took approximately 45 minutes to complete versus 20 minutes for the short form.

Concerned about the time needed to administer the Core Survey – Long Version, members of the NHHEAOD Committee made a decision in August 2000 to create their own survey. Their goal was to have an instrument that could be completed in approximately 20-25 minutes. In addition, the committee wanted a survey that higher education institutions in New Hampshire would use so that institutional data could be compared to a statewide reference group. In the past, comparisons such as these were not always possible. A statewide survey would also allow for consistent tracking of data and monitoring of trends. The Student Affairs Research and Assessment Center at the University of New Hampshire was asked to assist in this process. This center had staff with experience conducting this type of project, the ability to create and scan the survey, and the means to report the results.

The NHHEAOD survey items were derived from three national surveys: the *Core Survey* (short form), the *Campus Survey of Alcohol and Other Drug Norms*, and the *1999 Annual Student Health Behavior Assessment*. There were a few reasons for this decision. First, the higher education institutions wanted to use questions that they had used from surveys in the past so that they could maintain trend data. Secondly, NHHEAOD members thought that questions from these national surveys solicited the type of information they wanted. Thirdly, since the questions from these instruments had been used on national surveys, committee members were confident that they were reliable and valid. Where possible, all response categories were constructed to solicit interval data for easier analysis and significance testing. In January of 2001, the instrument was drafted, pre-tested, and finalized. Due to time constraints reliability and validity was not determined for the instrument.

The survey was then revised and re-administered in the spring of 2003 and further revised and re-administered in the spring of 2005 and 2007. The Centers for Disease Control and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Community and Public Health worked with the NHHEAOD Committee in the revision of the 2003 instrument and DHHS contracted in both 2003 and 2005 to include questions regarding tobacco use for statewide data collection with college-age students.

### ■ Sample

Eight higher education institutions in New Hampshire participated in the study. These institutions varied in affiliation (e.g., private/public, religious/secular, two/four year), mission, and size. Each school used an on line survey instrument and chose its own sampling method. A total of 4058 students participated in the survey. Weights were not assigned to compensate for disproportionate representation of each college in the sample analyses (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1: SAMPLE AND SIZE FOR EACH INSTITUTION**

	Sample Size	Percent of Sample
Colby-Sawyer College	305	7.5
NEC	258	6.4
New Hampshire Technical Institute	325	8.0
Plymouth State University	608	15.0
Rivier College	261	6.4
Southern New Hampshire University	782	19.3
University of New Hampshire	1519	37.4

**TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROPORTIONS**

	Sample	Percentage
<b>GENDER</b>		
Men	1,586	39.2 %
Women	2,456	60.5 %
Transgender	3	.1%
Other	4	.1%
<b>CLASS</b>		
Freshman	1,109	27.4%
Sophomore	937	23.1%
Junior	980	24.2%
Senior	973	24.%
Grad	14	.3%
Other	39	1.0%
<b>STATUS</b>		
Full-time	3911	96.4%
Part-time	135	3.3%
<b>AGE</b>		
20 or younger	2,355	58.2%
21 or older	1,690	41.9%
<b>PERMANENT RESIDENCE</b>		
In-State	2,369	58.6%
USA, but out- of -state	1,631	40.3%
Country other than USA	45	1.1%
<b>RACIAL/ETHNICITY</b>		
Black/Non Hispanic	53	1.3%
American Indian/Alaskan	22	.5%
Asian	78	1.90%
White/Non Hispanic	3,461	86.1%
Hispanic	63	1.6%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	16	.4%
Non-resident Alien	328	8.2%

## ■ Method

Prior to administration of the survey each institution received approval from their Institutional Research Board (where applicable) or an appropriate administrator at the institution. All schools implemented an administration method to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants.

The UNH Office of Institutional Research and Assessment recommended that the survey be administered beginning in mid-to late February and collecting all surveys prior to spring break vacation. Choosing to end the survey prior to spring break would help ensure a uniform experience that was generally typical of usual use and not colored by spring break activities. Each campus decided its own administration method. A description of each institution's methodology is detailed below.

### Colby-Sawyer College

The campus survey was administered to full time matriculated student using a web-base survey (Survey Monkey.com). Participation was voluntary. Students received an e-mail with informed consent explaining purpose and rights to privacy.

Using the Registrar's spring 2009 semester total number of full time matriculated students of 857, determination was made that a minimum participation of 214 students or 25%. See targeted population proportions vs actual respondents listed below.

CSC Population	Survey Respondents
Male 35%	25%
Female 65%	75%
Freshmen 30%	39.7%
Sophomore 29%	23.3%
Junior 23%	17.4%
Senior 18%	19.7%
Target Response: 214	305

### NHTI

The NHTI Office of Institutional Research and Grants created the survey on a software survey builder called Chumpsoft (previously purchased by the college). The survey was then offered online, via student e-mail, to all students registered for 6 or more credit hours (the minimum # credit hours needed to live in Residence Life – hence all Res Life students had the opportunity to respond to the survey). The survey was available for a 2 week period of time prior to Spring Break from Friday February 13<sup>th</sup> thru Friday February 27. An e-mail distribution list of the proposed sample was obtained by the Public Information Office which then e-mailed these students an invitation to participate in the study. Students accessed the survey from a link on the invitation, and if they clicked agreement to the Informed Consent page they were presented with the survey. 2 control questions were embedded in the NHTI Survey to control for validity; students who did not answer the control questions correctly were not included in the survey

results. The survey was e-mailed to 2700 students, with 325 valid responses received. Students who chose to complete the survey were given the opportunity to be entered into a raffle drawing for two \$50 gas cards.

#### New England College

The entire undergraduate student body was sent an email inviting them to take the survey at Survey Monkey. On the same day the survey was launched all faculty and staff were sent an email explaining the survey and how the data would be used. Faculty and staff were asked to encourage students to participate. Incentives for participation included four \$25 gift cards to Sports Authority, two \$50 Visa check cards and one \$50 gas card. The survey period was conducted during the beginning of March and lasted two weeks. Two email reminders were sent out encouraging participation and advertizing the incentive prizes. 258 Students started the survey with 247 completing it. Prize winners were selected randomly.

#### Plymouth State University

All undergraduate students were sent an electronic version of the 2009 NHHEAOD Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Survey, which remained “live” for two weeks, with one “reminder” email sent to all students after the first week. Participation in the survey was voluntary and incentives were offered in the form of a drawing for those who chose to complete the survey. Responses were confidential, with no connections between the names submitted for the drawing and survey data.

#### Rivier College

Using the campus wide distribution list an email containing a link to the survey was sent to all undergraduate day students. An additional email was sent to all faculty requesting faculty members to encourage students to take the survey. The two incentive prizes included a Nintendo DS Bundle (\$180.00) and a Visa Gift Card (\$100.00). One reminder was sent out to students using the distribution list. Five days into the survey the VPAA forwarded an email from the survey administrator to faculty and staff throughout the College requesting support to encourage students to take the survey. To further increase the survey response number the survey administer sent out an email to undergraduate day time faculty (total of 7 faculty) who taught classes in the computer lab. Faculty was requested to allow students to complete the survey while in the computer lab. Directions regarding online classroom administration of the survey were provided to these 7 faculty members

#### Southern New Hampshire University

The campus administrator obtained an e-mail list of all undergraduate students. The administrator then e-mailed the survey to all students with an incentive of being entered into a drawing for 8 \$100 VISA gift cards and being given smaller gift cards for being the correct number respondent. Two reminder e-mails were sent asking students to complete the survey.

#### University of New Hampshire

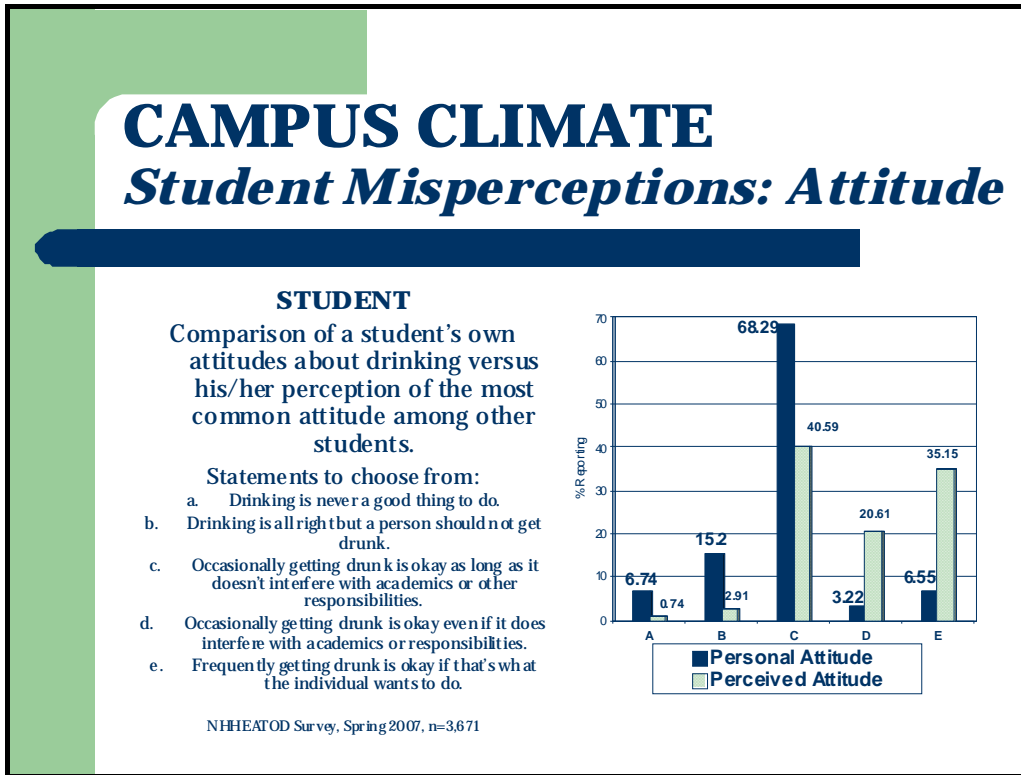
A random sample of 4500 students was obtained through the Registrar’s Office. Fifteen hundred (1500) of these were specifically drawn from men in classes sophomore to senior, to increase the respondents from this area. Students were sent an email invitation with an informed consent attached. Students had approximately two weeks to complete the survey using an on-line program, *Survey Monkey*. Students who did complete the survey could elect to be entered into a

raffle. Every 10<sup>th</sup> respondent won a \$10 gift certificate to either the Bagelry or Breaking New Grounds (local establishments). They also could have won: \$100 at Best Buy (1 winner), \$100 from the UNH Book store (2 winners), and 3 massages from the UNH Health Services (1 winner). Students received 2 follow up reminder emails. A total of 1520 students responded to the survey.

Data was submitted from all participating institutions to the Director of Instructional Support at Southern New Hampshire University who compiled it into an aggregate.

**SELECTED DATA RESULTS**

■ **Graph 1: Attitudes - Personal vs. Perceived Attitude**



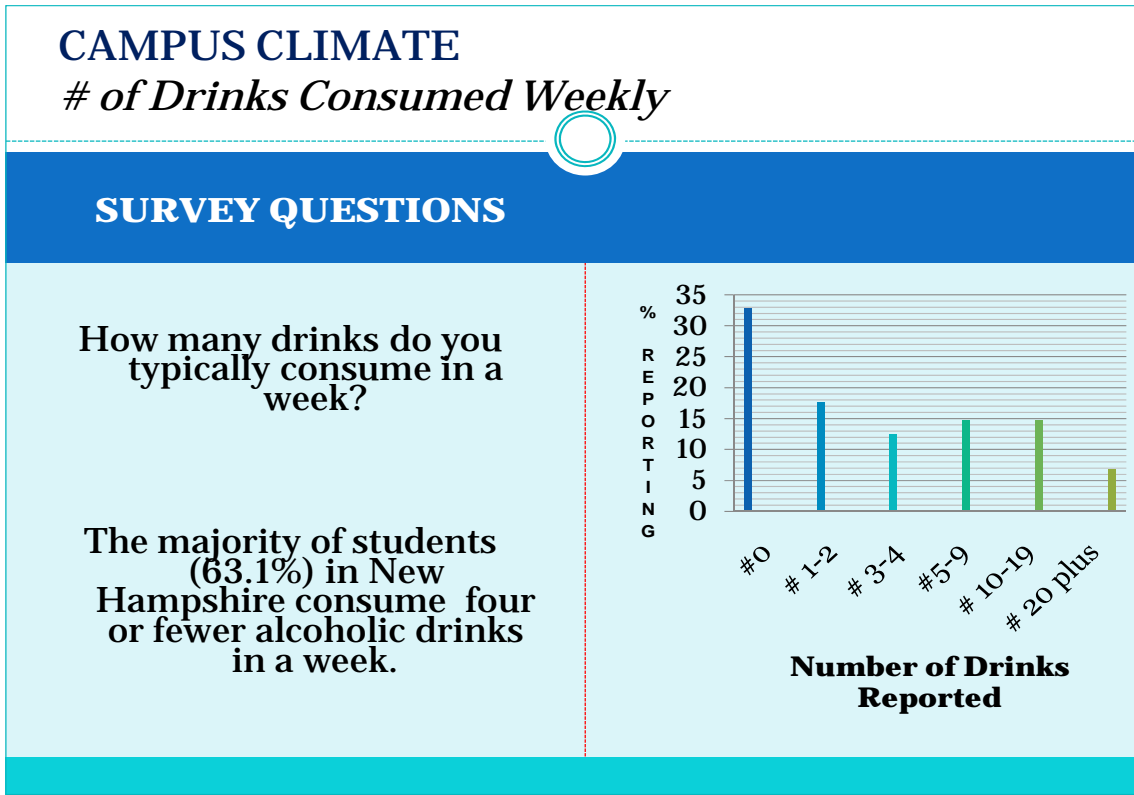
**Results:**

In general, the majority of students' own attitudes were conservative to moderate in nature with the majority of students believing that getting drunk is not okay if it interferes with academics or other responsibilities.

Consistent with social norms theory, students perceive the attitudes of their peer group to be more liberal than their personal attitudes about drinking. This misperception, according to the theory, has an influence on one's personal choice to use alcohol and can lead to more high-risk behavior than the majority of students personally believe is acceptable.

Note: Perception data for "E": dropped from 30.4% to 25.5% between spring 2003 and spring 2005 data but increased to 35.15 between spring 2005 and 2007. The greatest increase in data to correspond was "C" and "D".

■ Graph 2: Number of Drinks Consumed in a Typical Week

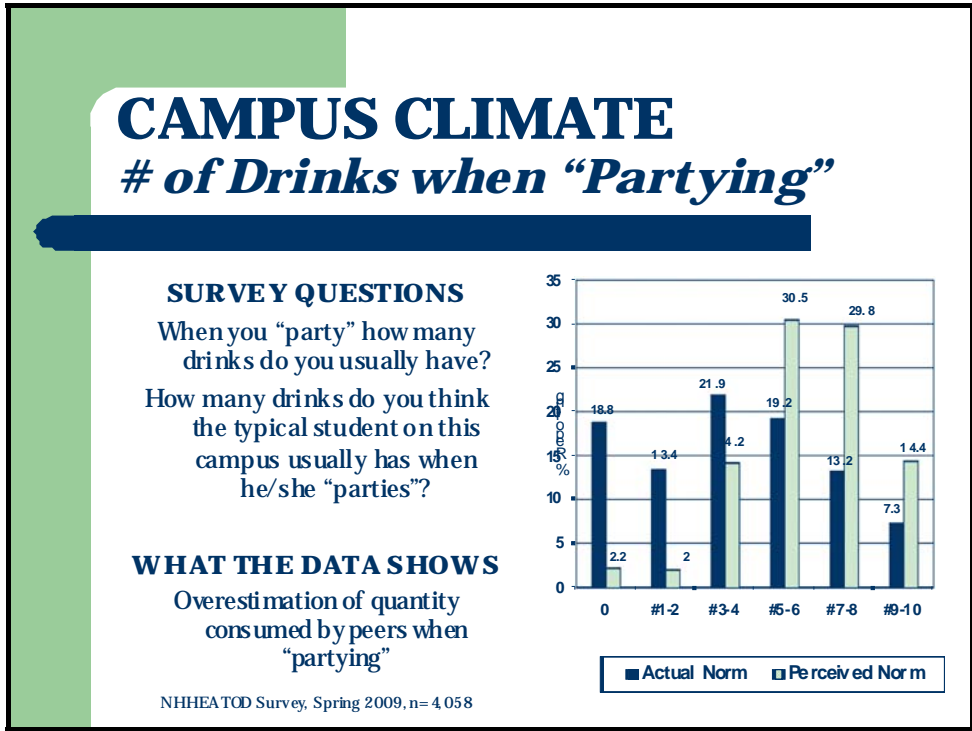


**Results:**

When asked to report on the amount of alcohol typically consumed in a week, 32.8% (slightly less than one third) reported they had not consumed alcohol and 29.9% reported that their intake was limited to four drinks or less. Consequently, one can conclude that the minority of students (37.3%) are consuming the majority of the alcohol in a typical week.

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■ Graph 3: Number of Drinks Consumed when “Partying” – Actual vs. Perceived Norm

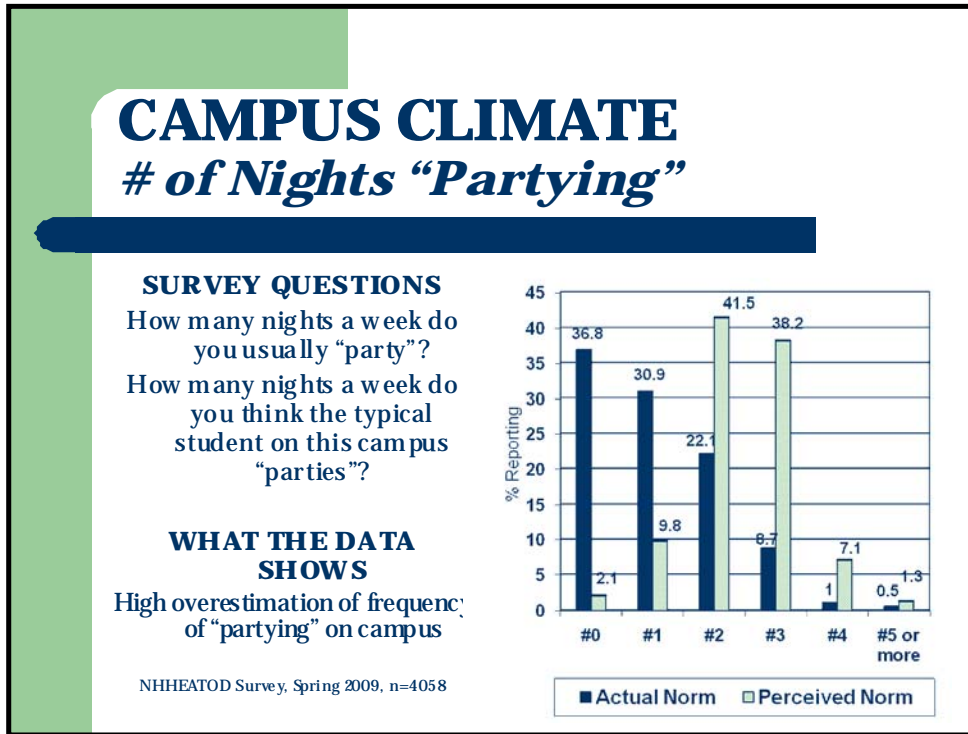


**Results:**

The majority (54.1%) of students at New Hampshire schools either don’t use alcohol when they party or consume 4 drinks or less. The perception is that a majority of students (51.1 %) consume 7 or more however this is a significant decrease in misperception from the last survey.

As social norms theory and the data suggest, students overestimate the quantity of alcohol their peers are consuming. The concern is that this overestimation can increase use in “party” situations, a decision that often can result in high-risk use and negative experiences.

■ Graph 4: Number of Nights when “Partying” – Actual vs. Perceived Norm



**Results:**

In addition to overestimating peers’ consumption when “partying”, respondents also overestimate the frequency of “partying” on campus. Thirty Six percent (36.08%) of students or more than 1/3 report not “partying” at all and an additional 30.9% report their “partying” is usually limited to one night a week. However, when asked about their peer group, they believe that a minority of their peers (11.9%) limit their “partying” to one n night a week or less. **Graph 5: Binge Drinking – Rate of Incidence in Two Week Period**

# CAMPUS CLIMATE

## *Student Binge Drinking*

### SURVEY QUESTION

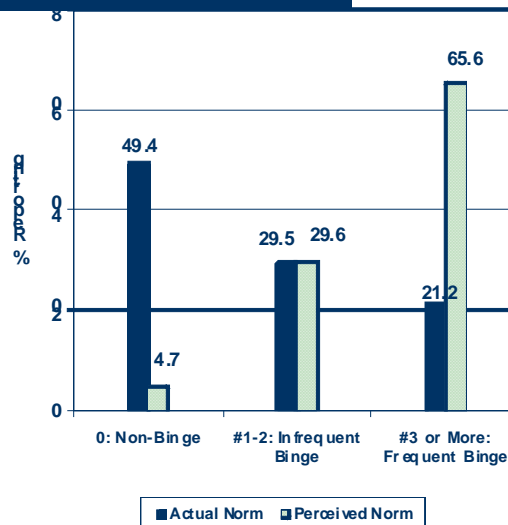
Think back over the last two weeks. How many times have you had 5+ drinks in one sitting (defined as a binge episode)?

How many times in the last two weeks do you think the typical student on this campus has had 5+ drinks in one sitting?

### WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

A minority of students (21.2%) are engaging in the majority of the frequent binge drinking episodes and there is strong misperception of frequency.

NHHEA TOD Survey, Spring 2009, n=4058



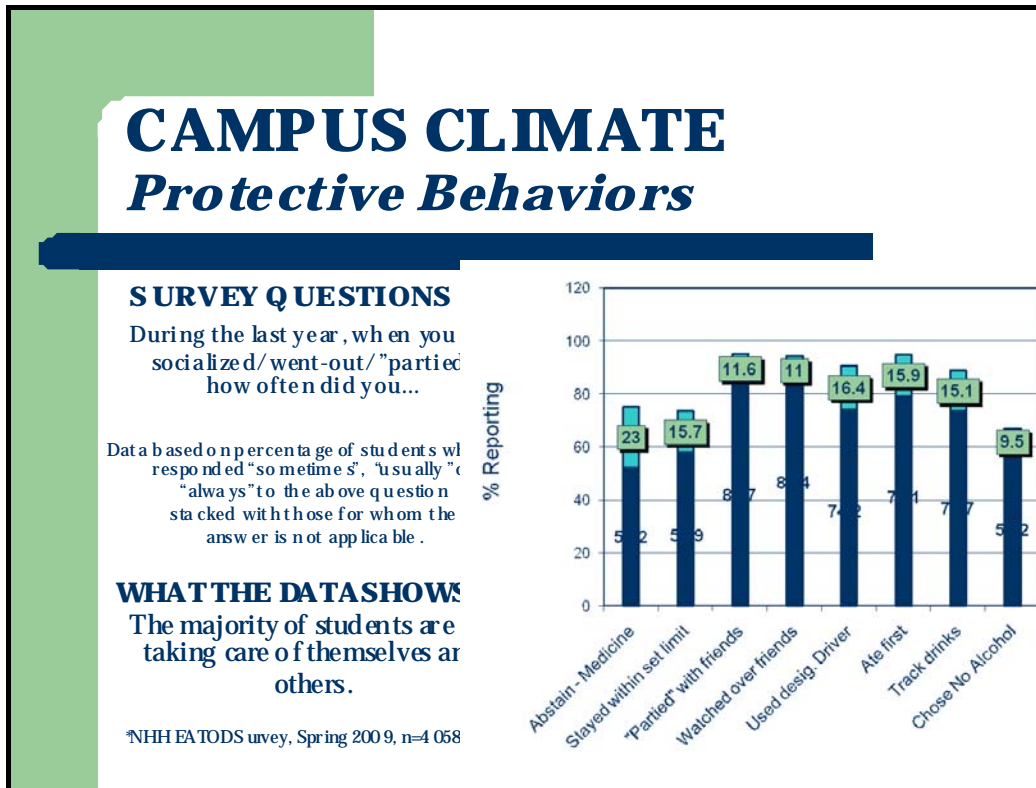
### Results:

Binge drinking, defined nationally as five or more drinks in a single sitting, is a concern on college campuses across the country. In general, the Northeast region has a rate of binge drinking higher than other regions of the country.

In reviewing this data, the following categories of binge drinking were defined: Frequent binge drinkers answered 3 or more to the question, "How many times have you consumed five or more drinks in one sitting?"; Infrequent binge drinkers answered 1 or 2, and non-binge drinkers answered 0. The breakdown of respondents was as follows: Non-binge drinkers 49.4%; infrequent binge drinkers 29.5%; frequent binge drinkers 21.2%.

If left to examine only the overall rate of binge drinking (50.7%) in New Hampshire, one would be left with a distorted view of the data and a suggestion that the majority of students are engaging in frequent, high-risk behavior. Instead, it is important to look more closely at the number of episodes as reported to realize that most students are not engaging in frequent binge drinking episodes. As indicated on the chart, the data suggest that a minority of students (21.2%) is doing the majority of the frequent binge drinking.

■ Graph 6: Protective Behaviors

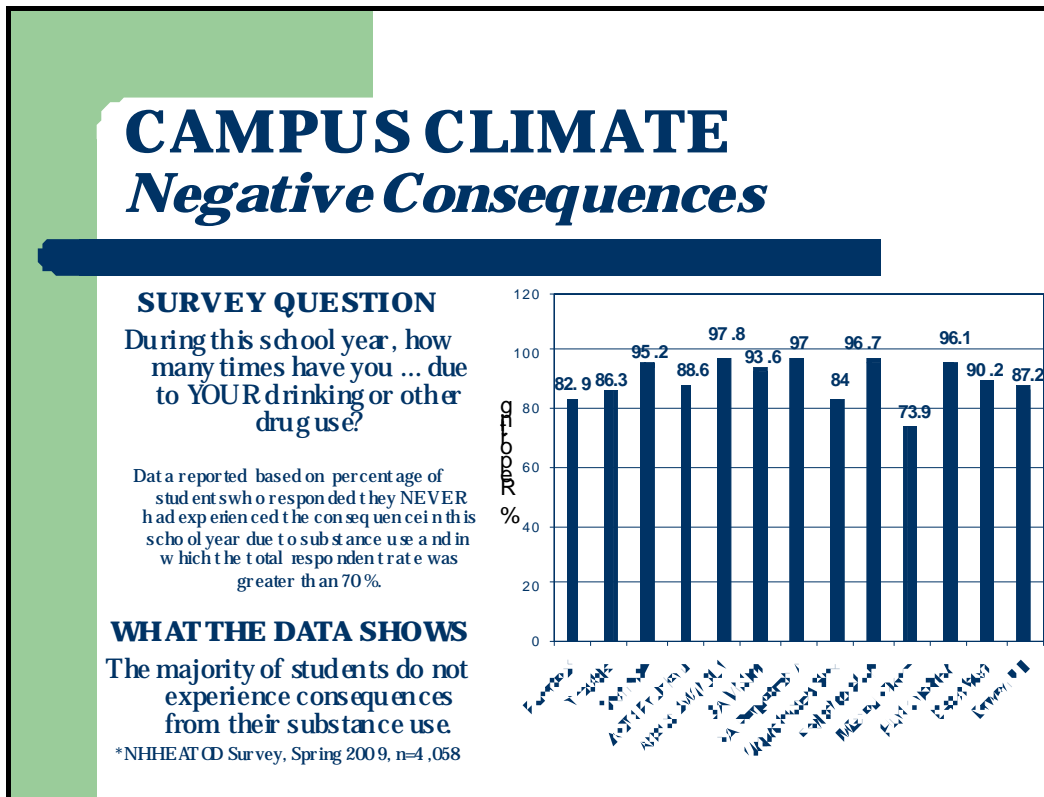


**Results:**

Students were asked 10 questions about behaviors that would be considered “protective” when drinking including a decision not to use alcohol. For each question students were asked to respond whether they “always”, “usually”, “sometimes”, “rarely” or “never” engaged in the behavior.

Responses above are for the 8 questions in which the cumulative percentage of students who responded that in the last school year they had engaged in the protective behavior sometimes, usually or always equaled or exceeded 52% and then stacked with the percentage of students who reported that the behavior was not applicable because he/she doesn’t drink. The majority of students in New Hampshire regularly make decisions that involve abstaining from drinking while taking medications that include a warning label, determining in advance a set number of drinks, “party” with people they know, watching out for friends who may have had too much to alcohol, using a designated driver, eating a full meal before drinking, tracking how many drinks they are having and choosing not to drink alcohol when “partying. In addition, 51.3% were alternating non-alcoholic beverages with alcoholic beverages and 51.2% reported the same with regards to pacing drinking to one or fewer per hour.

■ Graph 7: Negative Consequences



**Results:**

Students were asked 24 questions pertaining to negative consequences experienced during this school year as a result of their own drinking or other drug use. Responses were in terms of the number of times occurring. The categories are contained in the following table along with the percentage for each category reporting “0” to the question, and the corresponding codes used in the graph above (where applicable).

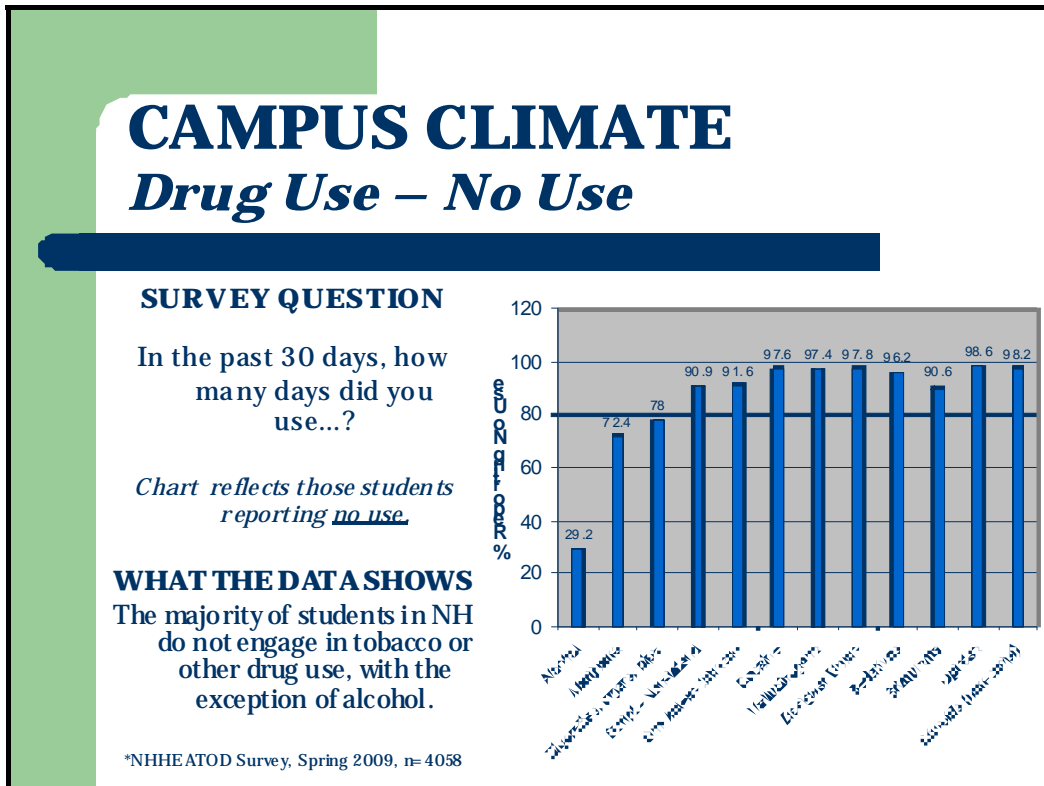
For 21 of 24 categories, the response rate was greater than 70% as indicated in Graph 7. For 22 of 23 categories, a majority of students (greater than 50%) responded that they DID NOT experience that particular consequence in this school year due to substance use.

This information is important to staff members who have responsibilities for sanctioning policy violations as it points out that experiencing negative consequences isn’t normative and therefore when such incidents occur we should be treat them seriously. Too often, negative consequences are just seen as a normal college experience and are generalized when; in fact, survey data from students indicates that these behaviors are far from normal for many types of incidents.

**TABLE 3:  
Negative Consequences by Category and Code**

<b>Negative Consequence In the past 6 months, how many times have you ... due to YOUR drinking or other drug use?</b>	<b>Percentage reporting "0"</b>	<b>Graph Code</b>	<b>Mean # of Times Consequence Occurred</b>
Been arrested for DWI/DUI	97.8	Arrest DWI/DUI	
Taken advantage of another person sexually (unwanted touching, intercourse, etc.)	97.0	SA Perpetrator	
Tried unsuccessfully to stop using	96.0	Failed to stop	
Hurt or injured another person	96.1	Hurt another	
Damage property, pulled a fire alarm, etc.	95.2	Damage	
Been taken advantage of sexually (unwanted touching, intercourse, etc.)	93.6	SA Victim	
Thought you might have a drinking or drug problem	88.6	AOD Problem	
Been hurt or injured	90.2	Been hurt	
Been in trouble with police, residence hall staff, or other college authorities	86.3	Trouble	
Driven a car while under the influence	87.2	Driven UI	
Had unprotected sex with someone	84.0	Unprotected Sex	
Performed poorly on a test or important project	82.0	Poor test	
Ridden with someone who was drunk or used drugs	76		
Criticized by Someone I knew	73.6		
Missed a class	73.9	Missed Class	
Got into an argument or fight	71.8		
Had a memory loss or blackout	64.4		
Done something you later regretted	67.8		
Got nauseated or vomited	45.4		
Hangover	33.5		

■ Graph 8: Drug Use – No Use



**Results:**

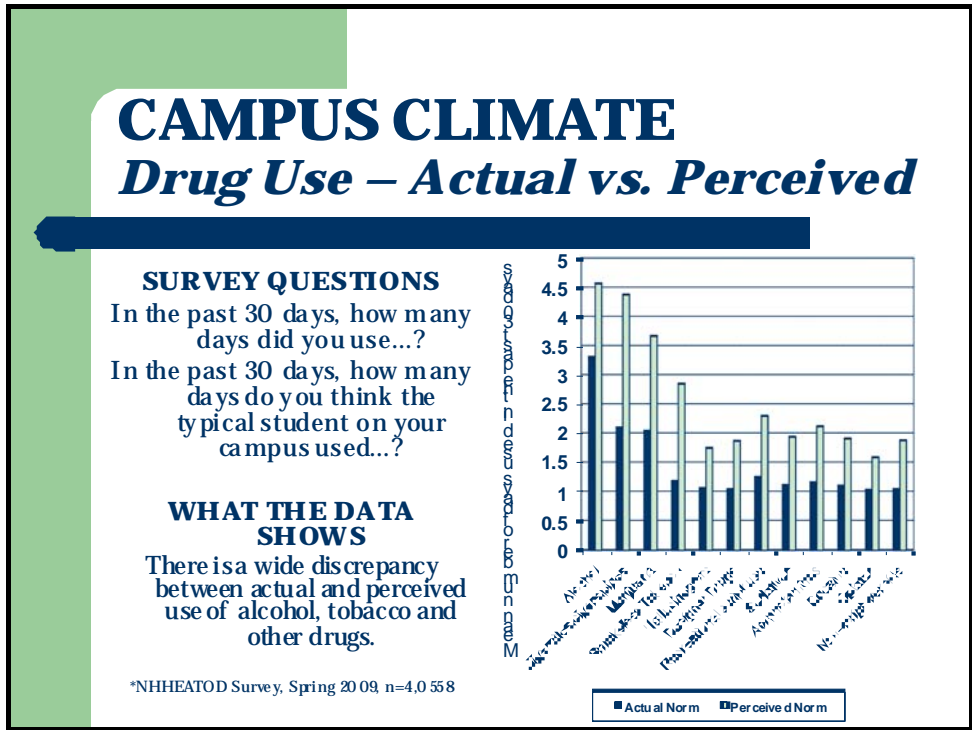
Table 4 (see below) provides specific data figures for Graph 8 and 9.

As the data shows, the majority of students in New Hampshire do not engage in tobacco or other drug use, with the exception of alcohol use. And while it is of concern that we have students engaging in use of illicit substances and we need to address those matters, it is critical not to lose sight of the fact that it is far from the majority of students who are making those choices. And as the data points out for alcohol, even though the majority of students use alcohol; overall, it is a minority of students who are engaging in the types of high-risk, frequent use that may result in academic and social consequences.

**TABLE 4: DRUG USE**  
**Abstinence and Actual vs. Perceived Use**

	<b>Actual Use: % reporting no use</b>		
...alcohol (beer, wine, liquor)?	29.2%		
...cigarettes, cigars, pipe?	75.01%		
...marijuana (pot, hash, hash oil)?	75.65%		
...prescription drugs for recreational or "non-prescribed" use?	90.77%		
...smokeless tobacco (chew, snuff, dip)?	94.07%		
...non-prescription/illicit amphetamines (diet pills, speed, crystal meth)?	95.67%		
...sedatives (downers, ludes)?	95.90%		
...cocaine (crack, rock, freebase)?	96.11%		
...hallucinogens (LSD, PCP)?	97.55%		
...designer drugs (ecstasy, MDMA)?	98.18%		
...opiates (heroin, smack, horse)?	98.49%		
...non-prescription steroids?	99.09%		

■ Graph 9: Drug Use – Actual vs. Perceived



**Results:**

Students were asked to respond to questions regarding their own use of substances over a 30-day period and their perception of others use in the following categories: alcohol, smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, marijuana, prescription drugs for non-intended or “recreational” purposes, sedatives, illicit and non-prescription amphetamines (speed, diet pills, crystal meth), cocaine (coke, crack, rock, freebase), hallucinogens (LSD, PCP), designer drugs (ecstasy, MDMA), opiates (heroin, smack, horse), and non-prescription steroids.

From Table 4 and this graph, it is apparent that the mean number of days of actual use for most substances is very small; however, perception of others’ use remains consistently higher. With regard to tobacco use, students estimate that students smoke cigarettes, cigars and pipes more than twice as often than what is reported. There have been some notable improvements since the 2003 data collection in that the gap between actual and perceived use seems to have been reduced in many categories; however, the questions was changed from a 6-month to a 30-day usage pattern, which may account for the improvements.

## **EFFORTS TO ADDRESS USE OF ALCOHOL BY STUDENTS**

The Higher Education Center ([www.edc.org/hec](http://www.edc.org/hec)) has identified the use of multiple prevention strategies as a best practice in impacting the campus community. Best practices have to be implemented as appropriate to the uniqueness of institutions as well as available resources. Though not every school implements every program, the colleges and universities of the New Hampshire Higher Education Alcohol and Other Drug Committee implement some of the following best practices and prevention efforts.

### **■ Environmental Management**

*Social Norms Strategy* ([www.socialnorm.org](http://www.socialnorm.org)): The use of the social norms approach to education is based on theory and research showing that students misperceive their peers' attitudes and behaviors regarding alcohol, and students tend to drink according to these misperceptions. The social norms approach provides information on these misperceptions by challenging the perception that high-risk use is the norm and by supporting lower-risk use of alcohol. By informing students of the accurate norms about alcohol use on campus, it is anticipated that students will change their drinking behaviors to be consistent with the true campus norm.

*Policies and Enforcement*: Post-violation prevention efforts on the college and university campuses include individual sessions/assessments by counseling staff for students who are admitted to the hospital or taken into protective custody due to alcohol or other drug use, parental notification, stiffer sanctioning for repeat violations of alcohol or other drug policies, and/or sanctioning that includes mandatory alcohol or other drug counseling.

*Campus and Community Alcohol or Other Drug Task Force*: The work of these teams is to make changes on the campus and in some cases the community as well.

*Substance Free Events*: The campuses sponsor many activities with an intentional substance-free theme; these events may take place in an area specifically designated for substance-free programming.

*Substance Free Housing*: Campuses provide housing for students who choose to live free of substances and to students who are in recovery for alcohol or other drug addiction.

### **■ Educational Efforts**

*Campus-Wide programs*: The colleges and universities offer a number of large group programs on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

*Orientation programs*: The colleges and universities offer sessions during first year and transfer student orientation of alcohol, tobacco and other drug issues, policies regarding use as well as efforts to address high-risk use.

*Curriculum infusion*: The colleges and universities present information on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs through a variety of in-class curricula: first year courses, courses specific to alcohol

and other drug use from a psychological or sociological perspective, courses designed to teach low-risk alcohol use, etc.

*Targeted (or Across the College) programs:* The colleges and universities offer programs targeted to specific smaller audiences such as class visits or residence hall programs.

*Prevention programs specifically for athletes:* These programs provide information about the effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use on athletic performance.

*Prevention programs specifically for fraternities and sororities:* Fraternities and sororities are required to present a number of educational programs to their members. One of the requirements calls for an educational program on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.

*Information training for faculty and staff:* The colleges and universities provide information for faculty and staff on recognition and referral for alcohol and other drug issues.

### ■ **Counseling and Support Services**

*Counseling:* The campuses provide short-term alcohol and/or other drug counseling. Students in need of long term or in-patient care are referred to off-campus agencies.

*Support Groups:* The colleges and universities offer support groups for students who are currently questioning their alcohol and other drug use as well as a group for students early in their recovery process. Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held either on the campuses or locally and are available for students.

*Information adapted from The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Education. Environmental management: A comprehensive strategy for reducing alcohol and other drug use on college campuses. Retrieved January 7, 2002 from the World Wide Web: <http://www.edc.org/hec/framework/>*

## **OBSERVATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE**

This study has provided the NHHEAOD Committee with comparative data to utilize in developing institutional-specific and statewide prevention efforts. In general, the data continues to clearly show that students in New Hampshire consistently over-perceive their peer group's substance use and the ensuing consequences and under-perceive protective behaviors, such as choosing not to drink or alternating between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. The 2009 survey also shows that in some areas the misperception is getting smaller although it is still far from reality. In addition, the data suggest that while New Hampshire students do engage in substance use, it is a minority of students engaging in the majority of high-risk use (e.g. binge drinking, illicit substance use).

This year's administration also clearly provides additional evidence that students with higher GPA's participate in less high risk alcohol use.

Based on these findings and their consistency with social norms theory, the New Hampshire Higher Education Alcohol and Other Drug Committee is committed to (1) reducing misperceptions that exist about students at New Hampshire colleges and universities, (2) educating key state leaders on social norms theory, and (3) continuing to develop and refine prevention efforts that support a social norms campaign and a comprehensive approach to substance abuse prevention

Specific activities to reach the Committee's goals and market itself include the following:

- Implement a statewide social norms campaign aimed at reducing high-risk alcohol use, tobacco and illicit drug use on our campuses. The campaign will promote positive behaviors that most New Hampshire college students are engaging in and celebrate decisions our students are making about substance use that are low-risk and consistent with strong academic performance.
- Develop a PowerPoint presentation to promote the NHHEAOD Committee and its activities in campus and community education efforts.
- Sponsor workshops periodically to further discussions about social norms theory and its implementation within New Hampshire.
- Initiate contact with SPF grant Coalitions about developing a survey and potentially a social norms campaign designed to reach the parents of middle and high school students. This campaign would center on dispelling myths that "other parents" permit their high school children to consume alcohol.
- Develop an evaluation plan to measure outcomes of the aforementioned activities.
- Continue to work with the New Hampshire College & University Council, the Higher Education Center, New Futures, the New Hampshire Bureau of Liquor Enforcement, and the Bureau of Prevention Services to provide effective prevention programs to our students and to pursue grant funds to assist with prevention activities
- Continue to research and evaluate evidence based practices such as CHOICES and BASICS for use on our respective campuses.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

*This report can be found at the following URL sites: [www.nhheaod.org](http://www.nhheaod.org)*

*The production and dissemination of this report is a project of the NHHEAOD Committee. Committee members are available to individuals wishing to arrange for a presentation of the findings of the study. Please direct requests for presentations, comments about the report, or specific questions about the report to one of the following committee members:*

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