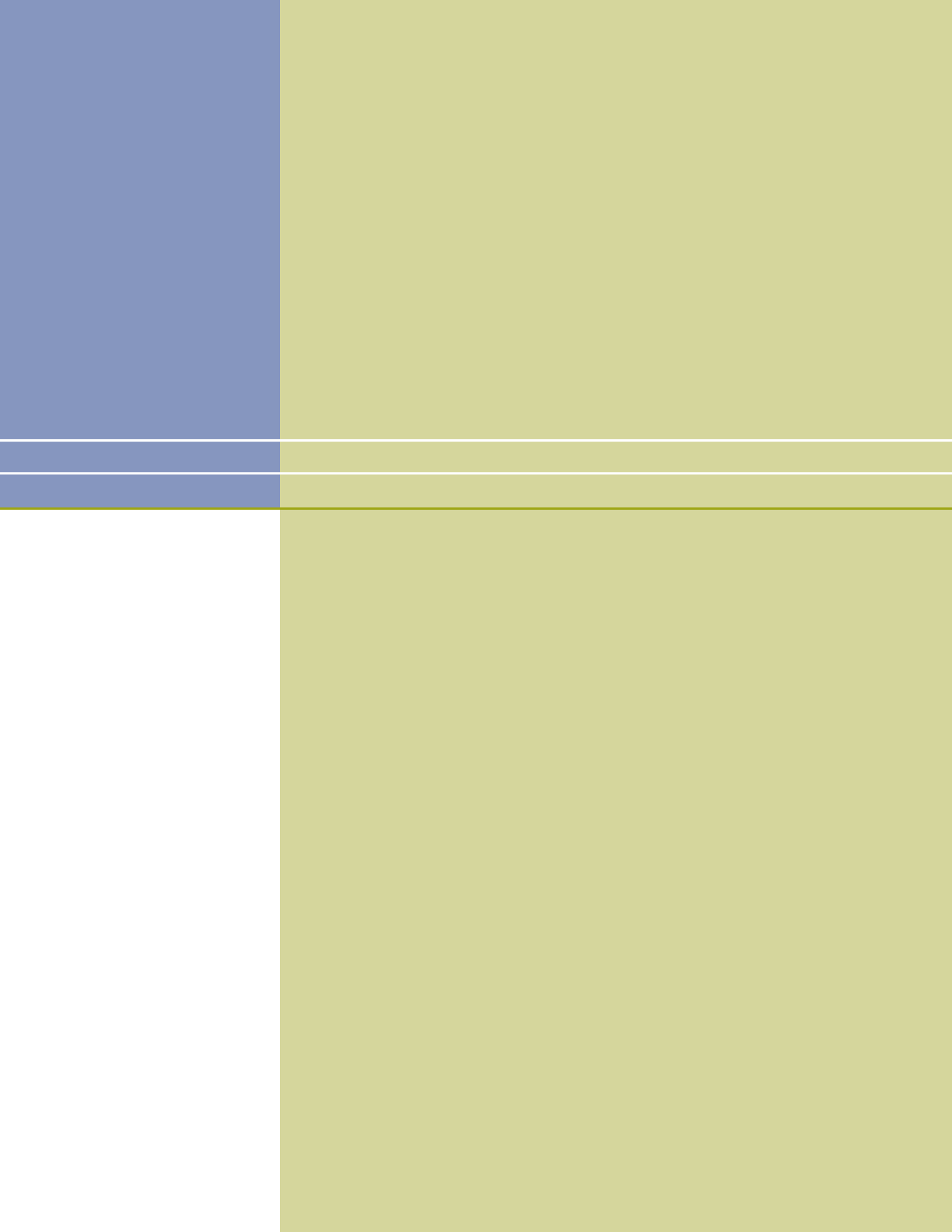


# **A MATTER OF DEGREE** **ADVOCACY INITIATIVE**

A Project of  
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The National Program Office of  
A Matter of Degree at  
the American Medical Association

October 2003



# Contents

■ Acknowledgments	2
■ Preface	3
■ Executive Summary	4
■ A Matter of Degree: Setting the Stage for Change <i>by Richard A. Yoast, PhD</i>	7
■ A Matter of Degree: The Advocacy Initiative Brief Overview of the Initiative's Purpose and Planning	13
■ The Advocacy Initiative Model and Emerging Themes	19
<b>CASE HISTORIES</b>	
■ Who Will Solve the Problem of High-Risk Drinking in Our Community? All of Us University of Delaware and the City of Newark	24
■ More Bars Than Streetlights: Stepping Up Changes Both Streetscape and Mindscape University of Iowa and Iowa City	38
■ NU Directions Advances on Solid Foundation and Solid Data University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the City of Lincoln	52
■ Improving the Quality of Life in Burlington University of Vermont and the City of Burlington	62
■ Appendix A: Pointers for What Funding Agencies, Consultants, Grantees, Advocates and Universities Need to Know about Conducting an Advocacy Initiative	76
■ Appendix B: Individuals Interviewed for the Advocacy Initiative Case History Report	79
■ Appendix C: Resources for Campuses and Communities	inside back

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- Charles Atkin, PhD, chair, Department of Communication, Michigan State University
- James Baker, president, Pan American Services
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- George Hacker, JD, director, Alcohol Policies Project, Center for Science in the Public Interest
- Linda J. Major, director, NU Directions, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- James F. Mosher, JD, director, Marin Institute for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention
- Penny Norton, director, FACE-Truth and Clarity on Alcohol
- Barbara E. Ryan, adviser, Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention
- John W. Smeaton, PhD, vice provost for student affairs, Lehigh University
- Lawrence Wallack, PhD, professor of public health, School of Community Medicine, Portland State University
- Tim Westerbeck, president, Westerbeck Communications

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- Building Responsibility Coalition of the University of Delaware and the city of Newark
- Coalition to Create a Quality Learning Environment of the University of Vermont and the city of Burlington
- NU Directions of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the city of Lincoln
- Stepping Up Coalition of the University of Iowa and Iowa City

We appreciate their candor in our interviews with them that sought capture the experiences of the Advocacy Initiative as well as the comments they provided to help assure that the report both accurately reflected those experiences and would benefit others working to prevent problems related to high-risk drinking by college students. To the extent that we achieved that goal, the credit is theirs. To the extent that we didn't, the fault is ours.

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## PREFACE

The A Matter of Degree (AMOD) Advocacy Initiative was a two-year project designed by National Program Office (NPO) staff members Lisa Erk, Richard Yoast and Sandra Hoover, with the assistance of a national technical resource group. The Advocacy Initiative's goal was to help the ten campus-community partnerships of AMOD more effectively test the environmental management model to prevent high-risk drinking among college students. This model seeks to alter the physical, social and economic environments that influence student drinking decisions through policy and enforcement measures. Four of the ten grantees were chosen to receive sustained, on-site technical assistance and training to broaden coalition members' understanding of the model and expand their capacity to achieve its objectives.

A key learning of this project is that a specific set of professional skills is vital to the success of a coalition's effort to change community policies and normative beliefs that create and exacerbate the entrenched and complex problem of college binge drinking. These skills include community organizing, media advocacy and strategic planning, which are discussed in greater detail in this report. The American Medical Association's (AMA) Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, the national program office of AMOD, contracted with Pan American Services (PAS) to provide this technical assistance and training.

An important goal was to help each coalition develop and implement strategies to broaden public awareness and understanding, not only of the problems associated with high-risk drinking, but also of policy solutions based on an analysis of those factors in the campus-community environment that encourage young people to drink to excess.

The AMA also contracted with Fenton Communications to create a national media strategy, designed specifically to provide national media coverage from which local media "hooks" could be developed to help drive policy change at the community level. Two major national media campaigns garnered more than 1,000 combined print and broadcast stories and catapulted the AMA into the headlines as a national leader in the effort to reduce high-risk and underage drinking. As part of these campaigns AMA chair J. Edward Hill, MD, was featured on the "Good Morning America" show declaring college binge drinking as a "major public health problem." Most importantly, this media coverage helped pave the way for dozens of local media stories in AMOD campus communities.

This case history report recounts the experiences of the following campus-community collaborations:

- University of Delaware and the city of Newark, Delaware
- University of Iowa and Iowa City, Iowa
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the city of Lincoln, Nebraska
- University of Vermont and the city of Burlington, Vermont

This report is a journalistic account of the experiences of the four campus-community collaborations. The case histories are based solely on interviews with campus and community representatives at all four sites conducted in fall 2001 and fall 2002 and interviews with AMA and PAS staff, as well as a review of written reports, meeting minutes, public documents and press accounts in national, local and campus media. Appendix B lists the names all of those interviewed for the case history report. All those interviewed agreed to be audio taped and quoted. In addition, the report compilers provided all those interviewed the opportunity to review and comment on the manuscript to ensure that it accurately reflected their accounts.

Under a separate grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study (CAS) is conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the AMOD initiative. Additional information on that project is available at [www.hsph.harvard.edu/cas/](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/cas/).

Delaware  
Iowa  
Nebraska  
Vermont

# A MATTER OF DEGREE ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation initiative A Matter of Degree: The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students (AMOD), started in 1996 as an \$8.6 million, seven-year program. The program is funded by the Foundation and administered by the project's National Program Office (NPO) at the American Medical Association's Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse. The program fosters collaborations among ten universities and their surrounding municipalities to jointly address issues of high-risk drinking, the resulting adverse consequences for college students and the surrounding community, and how to improve the quality of life for all community residents. The ten coalitions examine how the on- and off-campus environments affect student drinking and identify and implement science-based approaches to changing those environments to promote communities with healthier, safer conditions for all. The Harvard University School of Public Health independently conducts the program evaluation.

A major activity of the AMOD coalitions is to advocate for and implement science-based solutions to changing the environment that contributes to high-risk drinking, particularly policies and practices related to alcohol:

- Access and availability
- Price
- Service
- Advertising and promotion
- Social norms
- Policy enforcement

The program used a range of activities to create change: policy formation and advocacy, media advocacy, education of the public and decision-makers, development of new social norms, and broad-based community involvement.

During the first years of the project, activities centered around making changes in campus policies and improving enforcement of campus and community alcohol policies. As the program began to look more

at community (off-campus) influences, in 1999 the NPO provided additional support to four selected AMOD coalitions through a two-year Advocacy Initiative. The initiative provided intensive training and technical assistance in the areas of media advocacy, strategic planning and community organizing to help them change community policies. Additional national media materials were developed both to support those activities and to influence public perceptions of college drinking problems and what can be done about them.

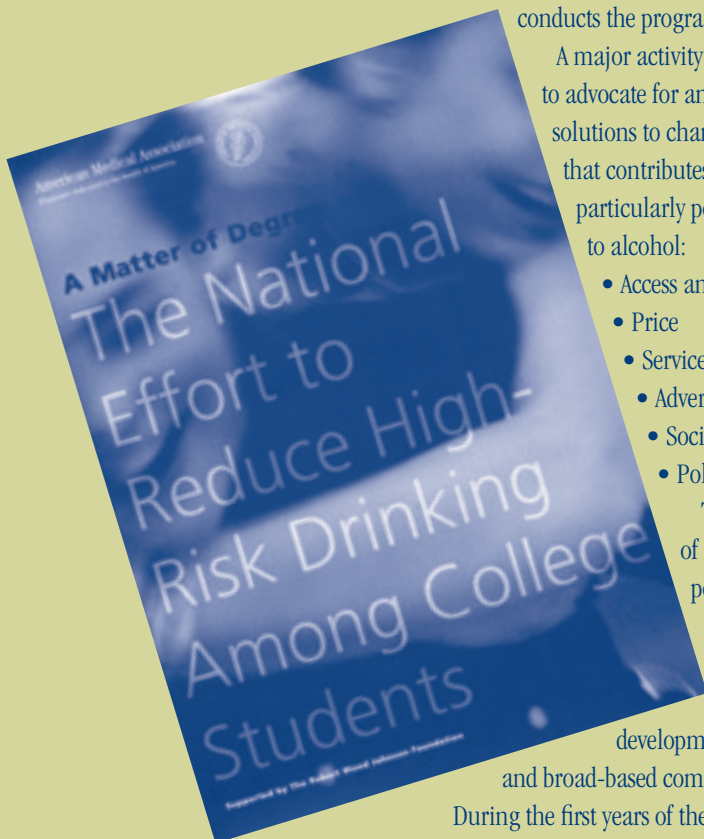
The four AMOD campus-community coalitions participating in this initiative were:

- Building Responsibility Coalition (University of Delaware and the city of Newark)
- Coalition to Create a Quality Learning Environment (University of Vermont and the city of Burlington)
- NU Directions (University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the city of Lincoln)
- Stepping Up Coalition (University of Iowa and Iowa City)

The NPO contracted with Pan American Services (PAS), based in Bozeman, Montana, to provide intensive assistance in strategic planning and media advocacy to the AMOD sites, to help them achieve community-based policy goals intended to reduce student high-risk drinking and its secondhand effects. A contract with Fenton Communications (New York, San Francisco and Washington) was used to develop national media strategies, media materials and campaigns to attract media attention.

PAS based its technical assistance to the AMOD sites on "building blocks of the environmental prevention model to establish an infrastructure that promotes policy solutions and community norm changes." They are the following:

- *Intentional organizing* builds support among necessary community members and organizations, businesses, law enforcement agencies and policy-makers by engaging them in creating positive change within their community. Intentional organizing develops the community leadership necessary to define and support the change process.



The theory underlying the Advocacy Initiative was that community policy decisions and public and decision-maker perceptions are greatly influenced by the mass media as well as by personal relationships.

- *Applied data and research* identify the magnitude of the problem and guide intervention planning throughout the campaign. Data collection supports the need for community interventions and can demonstrate that changes occur.
- *Policy* provides direction to develop an overall campaign strategy. The policy design is based on community data collection and citizen input.
- *Media advocacy* links individual components of the model into a cohesive whole. Media advocacy is a critical element that raises awareness of the problem on the public agenda, provides a vehicle for high-visibility community response, highlights project successes, demonstrates community support and promotes policy change.
- *Enforcement* ensures consistent application of new and existing policies.

Campus-community partnership is the heart of each coalition participating in the Advocacy Initiative. The Advocacy Initiative's community organizing training and technical assistance focused on helping project staff to approach and actively involve the surrounding community. PAS taught coalitions how to identify, build support for and implement science-based (that is, research-based) policy changes.

The Advocacy Initiative used data and research from a range of sources to show the nexus between problems and solutions. Throughout the project, all participants and the NPO staff expressed a need for research, synthesis and advice about various alcohol policies, alcohol-related problems and related data. PAS offered assistance through

- on-site training and mentoring adapted to the needs and skill levels of staff and volunteers. Participants were taught how to develop effective media messages, approach the media and decision-makers, research local alcohol-related problems, create advocacy that would capture media attention, and organize in the community;
- ongoing phone and electronic access to research, advocacy advice and communications materials; and
- development of strategic plans.

A private AMOD project Website (now part of [www.acholpolicysolutions.net](http://www.acholpolicysolutions.net)) was developed and contains an extensive, searchable research database accessible to all ten AMOD campus-community partnerships. In addition, the PAS staff conducted rapid response literature reviews and policy searches so that sites would have reliable data and research syntheses to back up proposed policy initiatives.

The Advocacy Initiative was designed to facilitate passage of local community policies that would create environmental change and ultimately reduce problems. Each site was asked to develop a strategic plan to implement one or two policy objectives of its choosing. The primary policy objectives differed across the sites. Nebraska chose a statewide policy regarding driver's licenses rather than local policies. Vermont chose improvement of local alcohol-server training. Iowa worked to reduce cheap drink specials and ads targeting students. Delaware sought to help the city undertake an examination of several alcohol policies and to implement strategies to reduce service to underage drinkers. PAS helped to define these objectives and identify activities and tasks needed to reach those goals. At first, it provided intensive assistance to the coalitions to help them carry out their plans; but as the coalitions gained skills and experience, less help was needed and was limited to addressing specific tasks.

The theory underlying the Advocacy Initiative was that community policy decisions and public and decision-maker perceptions are greatly influenced by the mass media as well as by personal relationships. To create policy and perceptual change requires development of relationships and the capture of media attention through new ways of looking at and solving problems. Media also can maintain attention and focus on alcohol-related problems and solutions. This helps build momentum for legislative change and assure policy-makers that such change has broad community backing. On-site training and assistance helped teach strategic use of the media to support policy goals in their strategic plans. Sites learned how the local media work and how to use media advocacy tactics to get media coverage on the issues from an environmental perspective rather than focusing on "problem students."

The initiative's national media component helped sites build local media capacity by providing a national news "hook" for them to join. It encouraged local reporters to be responsive to the local stories that the sites were pitching. The NPO and PAS worked with the sites to add local data, stories and policy goals to local coverage of the national story. Fenton Communications conducted research on public opinion, issue selection, strategic message development and national media contacts.

All four coalitions participating in the Advocacy Initiative made the publicity and enforcement of laws a central priority. Campus and police officials reported that the continued oversight by the coalition was an incentive to such enforcement. Through their oversight, the coalitions also affirmed expectations and norms that overservice of alcohol and sales and service to youths under the legal purchase age would not be tolerated or approved of by the community at large.

All four campus-community coalitions agreed that the effort was worthwhile. Their policy goals were achieved and the city councils involved in the policy efforts all began to develop their own broader alcohol policy agendas. They report that problems are going down, quality of life both on campus and off campus is improving, town-gown relations are less strained and the community as a whole has benefited from the changes that have taken place.

The experiences of these coalitions can be adapted by others who are considering embarking on a course of action to address student drinking and alcohol-related community problems.

## **LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE AMOD ADVOCACY INITIATIVE**

### **Take It Seriously.**

High-risk drinking and its negative effects on the community are serious problems requiring thoughtful and ongoing attention. Too often such problems have been approached with occasional Band-Aid solutions or viewed as something to be taken care of through public relations efforts. The high-risk behavior of students is the just concern of campus and community alike. Both suffer the adverse consequences of that behavior, both influence that behavior and thus both have legitimate interests in taking measures to curb it. Taking these problems seriously—and publicly acknowledging that we are going to address them—are first steps toward making progress.

### **Embrace the Environmental Model.**

Education, the business of the university, is an important component of alcohol problem prevention, but it is not sufficient to have a significant impact on problem reduction. While people on and off campus do not readily understand the environmental approach, the evidence shows that changes in the legal, social, physical, economic and communications environments can reduce problems related to high-risk drinking by students. This requires that all sectors of the community, not just the students, examine how they contribute to the problem and join in its reduction.

### **Look at the Environment—How It Is and How You Want It to Be.**

Effective solutions require a careful evaluation of how alcohol problems are influenced and affected by the on- and off-campus environments. This enables selection of appropriate solutions. Part of the analytical process will lead to consideration of what we want our communities to be like. How do we expect individuals, groups, government, businesses and other institutions to behave? What new relationships and collaborations do we need? What would an economically, socially and physically healthy community look like?

### **Think Long Term.**

The cultural environment surrounding student drinking did not develop overnight. Changing that environment takes time. Too often responses come in the aftermath of a crisis when pressure develops to do something right away. Thinking long term allows for strategic planning that considers problem definition, community norms and community values before implementing solutions.

### **Use Targeted Technical Assistance to Make a Difference.**

University student services staff typically lacks skills and experience in community change processes or in policy advocacy. Community citizens often lack access to the research and training needed to make their advocacy efforts effective. Technical assistance is often provided on a schedule without consideration of specific needs, local conditions or appropriate timing. However, the provision of on-site assistance as it is needed, with backup research and communications support, can enable coalitions to acquire the skills, experiences and information they need. Once taught, they can proceed on their own to effect the environmental changes they think are important.



# **A MATTER OF DEGREE**

## **Setting the Stage for Change**

*By Richard A. Yoast, PhD*

The Foundation's initiative, called A Matter of Degree:  
The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students  
(AMOD), started in 1996 as an \$8.6 million, seven-year program.

## SETTING THE STAGE FOR CHANGE

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation decided to address college binge drinking after reviewing a Foundation-supported 1993 Harvard University School of Public Health College Alcohol Study of more than 17,000 students at 140 four-year colleges. The highly publicized results of this study, responsible for placing the issue of college binge drinking on the nation's radar screen, found that 44 percent of students surveyed were binge drinkers (binge drinking is defined as the consumption of at least five drinks in a row for men or four for women in a single sitting during the two weeks before the survey). Binge drinking is also referred to as high-risk drinking in this report.

These binge drinkers were at substantially increased risk for alcohol-related problems such as getting behind in schoolwork, engaging in unplanned sexual activity or getting injured. The survey also showed that binge drinkers created problems for classmates who were not binge drinkers. Students at schools with higher binge-drinking rates were more likely than peers at schools with lower binge rates to experience problems such as being pushed, hit or assaulted,

- Citizen, including youth, empowerment through the organizing of coalitions or partnerships
- Media and policy advocacy and public awareness to highlight problems
- Policy advocacy of research-based solutions concerning alcohol price, services and availability; access by youths; and advertising, promotion and sponsorship
- Public activities augmented by targeted media strategies that influence norms supportive of policy changes and healthier behaviors

The Foundation's initiative, called A Matter of Degree: The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students (AMOD), started in 1996 as an \$8.6 million, seven-year program. The national program is funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and administered by the American Medical Association. Working with ten university-community coalitions, together they are leading a national effort to reduce high-risk drinking among college students. AMOD is designed to foster collaboration between participating universities



experiencing an unwanted sexual advance, or having study or sleep interrupted. Newspaper reports also indicated higher levels of alcohol-related problems in communities surrounding these colleges.

The Foundation also found that a growing body of research demonstrated that the common use of alcohol education as the main prevention strategy was costly and only produced insignificant outcomes. Other research, however, indicated that changing the policy environment showed the greatest potential for successfully reducing underage drinking and related problems. That research is summarized in the 2002 National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism panel reports on high-risk drinking in college ([www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov)) and the 2003 Institute of Medicine report *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility* ([www.iom.edu/report.asp?id=15100](http://www.iom.edu/report.asp?id=15100)). The scientific literature pointed toward a number of combined key features integral to this public health approach:

and their surrounding municipalities to address the important public health issue of high-risk drinking and its adverse consequences for college students, and to improve the quality of life for all community residents. The program is being evaluated independently by the Harvard University School of Public Health College Alcohol Study. Reports from this multi-method, multi-year study evaluation, which track the AMOD experience from its inception in 1996, are forthcoming.

AMOD awards were offered through an invitational process in which universities and their local municipal representatives were asked to apply on several criteria:

- Participation in the national Harvard University School of Public Health College Alcohol Study of randomly selected schools
- High rates of student binge drinking
- Willingness to publicly address their campus's alcohol-related problems and student drinking behaviors

- Explicit project support from the chief campus administrator and high-level community representatives (for example, mayors and police chiefs)
  - Demonstrated history of campus activities designed to reduce alcohol problems
  - Active student participation in the proposed project
- Six grants were awarded in 1996, four in 1998. The AMOD sites are the following:

- Florida State University—The City of Tallahassee, Florida
- Georgia Institute of Technology—The City of Atlanta, Georgia
- Lehigh University—The City of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
- Louisiana State University—The City of Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- University of Colorado—The City of Boulder, Colorado
- University of Delaware—The City of Newark, Delaware
- University of Iowa—Iowa City, Iowa
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln—The City of Lincoln, Nebraska
- University of Vermont—The City of Burlington, Vermont
- University of Wisconsin—The City of Madison, Wisconsin

All AMOD grants are overseen by campus divisions of student affairs and have easy access to the university president or counterpart. Structurally, the partnerships are organized as shared campus-community committees or as broad-based campus-community coalitions. Participants typically include high-level city and university officials and law enforcement, campus faculty, neighborhood associations, student and school district leaders, local prevention agencies, local and campus health care professionals, and, frequently, representatives of state government, liquor enforcement authorities and local alcohol retailers. Staffing includes a project manager teamed with a high-level university administrator, communications staff and a project evaluator.

The AMOD programs are governed by two underlying principles:

- Environmental factors such as alcohol advertising and marketing, institutional policies and practices, and local ordinances—even social and cultural beliefs and behaviors—converge to encourage high-risk drinking, but those factors are subject to change

through a range of policies and activities designed to prevent and reduce harm.

- Formation of broad-based campus-community coalitions and collaborations can create long-lasting environmental changes to support healthy lifestyle choices and discourage excessive alcohol consumption.

By the end of year two (the first year that plans were implemented), each campus reviewed and revised its alcohol policies and procedures and increased enforcement for greater consistency and effectiveness. Campus literature, recruitment and communications



were changed to reflect an intentional theme: Students who want to learn and enjoy all the campus and community offered would be sought—but students looking primarily for a party school need not apply. This message was repeated in staff education, letters to parents and interactions with alumni and media.

Most projects addressed campus issues first and thus helped convince skeptical community members that the universities were serious about change. Early actions to share campus police, emergency room, health care and other data and procedures fostered the idea of

a true campus-community partnership. Lehigh, Vermont and Iowa students and neighborhood groups began to develop projects to get to know each other, to communicate expectations and to jointly address concerns. The Delaware project staff and Newark's mayor increased their shared planning activities. Although the grants were awarded to the university, funds were commonly allocated to address community needs and student needs for alcohol-free special events, social activities and housing.

Most of the campuses also took steps to

- develop new student-faculty interactions to support better student integration with aspects of the campus



community and culture not focused primarily on drinking;

- involve Greek chapter leadership to bring fraternities back to their original mission of academic achievement, fellowship and community service; and
- use social marketing campaigns to counter pro-bingeing social pressures and pro-consumption messages.

### **Establishment of Coalitions**

All the projects devoted much of the first year to building coalitions, developing action plans and cementing working relationships among participants. In almost every case, campus, local and state policy change opportunities arose during this planning phase. This prompted new connections among all of the AMOD

projects (via a listserv, training events and an annual meeting); among the projects and national advocacy groups; and with law enforcement (for example, city and campus police, highway patrol and liquor-licensing authorities), which all grantees recognized as playing a key role in project activities and success.

Universities provide ready-made infrastructures for discussion and problem solving and can serve as bases from which to speak out and effect change. Each campus has sophisticated communications, planning and political resources with easy access to the mass media and government officials. AMOD extended these resources into the community. Campuses typically have a great deal of control over their internal environments and student life. AMOD projects are thus able, to a great extent, to negotiate the terms and rates of change. The more politically and socially complex off-campus environments addressed by the projects have been primarily limited to the immediate campus vicinity with additional major impact on the entire community.

The campus administrations often moved cautiously at first so as not to alienate their constituencies and, in part, to establish a credible long-term commitment to addressing alcohol-related problems. They were able to integrate the projects into institutional strategic planning. Their activism increased as they had success in campus areas where they had the most control. They saw that it worked.

### **Collaboration with Law Enforcement**

In the AMOD sites, campus and community police were encouraged to be active partners—and often became leaders. Project staff consulted with those in enforcement to assess and alter campus policy. Coordination of campus police and community police was quickly identified as necessary to effective enforcement. City and campus participants supported the coordination by broadcasting new policies and enforcement measures to all key audiences. The universities brought parents onto the enforcement team—parents often pay the bills, are legally responsible for children who are minors and, most importantly, care about their children's well-being. Parent organizations were invited to join policy discussions. Some campuses informed individual

parents of policy changes, campus expectations and a son or daughter's infraction. Other steps streamlined student judicial and disciplinary processes and supported staff implementation of alcohol policies.

Through the AMOD collaborations, the community and campus police forces began regular meetings to share information about incidents and infractions, coordinate activities and explore ways to make their reporting mechanisms more compatible. Several universities were thus able to hold students accountable for off-campus alcohol infractions—knowing that the city police would share the information. Others explored whether campus–city police jurisdictional divisions were effective or counterproductive.

The cooperative tenor gave further support to active community enforcement of laws barring service and sales of alcohol to minors. This helped reduce student opposition to enforcement because they no longer felt singled out or treated unequally while servers of minors went unpunished. The campuses also began to bring their concerns (such as about bars serving minors or the negative impact of licensing large numbers of alcohol-serving establishments close to campus) to local alcohol control authorities. Local merchants who support project goals have been helpful in providing insights about how best to have their clerks and servers comply with state and local laws. A major change experienced in all the communities and universities has been a new recognition that alcohol-related problems, solutions and prevention are shared mutually.

### **A Renewed Understanding of the University as a Social Change Agent**

The AMOD policy partnerships set the stage for a renewed consideration of the university as social change agent and leader. As one would expect, until recently most campuses addressed alcohol problems through small-group and peer education, awareness campaigns and student counseling services. The university was perceived as a reactor or observer, limited to using persuasion and not fundamentally connected to the sources of student alcohol problems. Most campuses and surrounding cities treated alcohol problems separately—as a campus-student problem or as a city problem.

The AMOD environmental model was an eye-opener. It illustrated how the university was affected by and could influence external factors, such as parental expectations,

the presence of large numbers of bars surrounding campus and the availability and promotion of cheap alcohol. As the project progressed, staff members began to see change effected through policy and enforcement



collaborations of concerned people and through the university creating new expectations. For the first time campus administrators appeared before local liquor-licensing authorities to express what they had learned about the impact of licensing decisions on their students. Many community members welcomed their new collaborations and worked with students to reduce

conflicts between students and older neighbors. An often overlooked facet of university life also came to the fore—university staff live in the community, raise children and have the same concerns everyone else has. Similarly, university administrators have also recognized that they can play a more active role in shaping the public health environment on and off their campuses.

The AMOD model emphasizes the university as a dynamic community force—one that can positively or negatively affect the health of its students, its staff and the wider community. Change is found to come not just through discussion and persuasion but from active, purposeful changes in environments. But time spent listening to the community and engaging in dialogue with concerned residents has been a necessary precursor to identifying problems and setting explicit shared goals and strategies to reduce or prevent problems. If universities are to successfully engage with the community in addressing these problems, they need to reorganize how they think about what they do and the skills that they need to bring to these collaborations. They have to move from simply observing community life to being active partners and leaders. For universities this is as much a transformation process as it is an attainment of a specific goal. The AMOD experience has transformed the university from being an outside observer to an active political force in its community.

The experience has also required that in nonacademic activities the university needs to be willing to openly discuss and engage noncampus actors in problem analyses and solutions. Although campus and city administrators still have distinct areas of concern and responsibility, they have agreed to regularly and actively work together to solve problems in both realms. The common framework is now that alcohol-related problems are not seen as a student or a city or a campus problem but a shared problem and responsibility.

A clearly defined set of needed skills and understandings has emerged from this process. First, universities have had to learn media advocacy

techniques and how the local media work in order to get coverage of alcohol issues from their perspective rather than the adversarial perspective that often marks public discourse in surrounding communities. Second, universities need to have community organizing skills, much in the same way that student personnel need to have student personnel skills to deal with students. They need to understand that communities are systems with dynamics different from their campuses. This requires greater knowledge of state and local public policy formation and advocacy. Both sides need to gain a better understanding of how to collaborate in order to avoid the finger-pointing that so often arises when it comes to problems of student drinking.

Universities have a tremendously powerful platform to challenge the status quo and call for reforms. The AMOD project has seen what can occur when universities actively participate in changing the environments surrounding student drinking, both on and off campus. The lesson we have learned through the AMOD experience is that we can reconceive the role of the university in society and be an effective partner for social change. In fact, universities and communities mutually benefit from such a role.

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*Richard A. Yoast, PhD, is the director of the Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse at the American Medical Association and director of the AMOD National Program Office .*

# **A MATTER OF DEGREE**

## **The Advocacy Initiative**

Brief Overview

of the Initiative's Purpose

and Planning

The initiative was structured to provide on-site intensive training and technical assistance in media advocacy, strategic planning and community organizing to four selected AMOD campus-community coalitions.

## THE ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

The Advocacy Initiative was a two-year project designed in 1999 and implemented from 2000 through 2002 to help the A Matter of Degree (AMOD) college-community coalitions become more effective change agents in their communities. A goal of this effort was to help the coalitions shift their focus to the community environment, which was the source of alcohol and the location for much student drinking as well as the place where local policies have major impact in promoting or discouraging student high-risk drinking. The initiative was part of the original Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) funding of AMOD and was designed and managed by the National Program Office (NPO) at the American Medical Association's Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, under the direction of Lisa Erk, communications director from 1997 to 2002.

The initiative was structured to provide on-site intensive training and technical assistance in media advocacy, strategic planning and community organizing to four selected AMOD campus-community coalitions. It also developed national media materials and news stories aimed at both supporting AMOD site activities and influencing the public's perception of college drinking problems and what can be done about them.

Through these activities AMOD staff hoped to increase community understanding of the environmental influences on alcohol use, policies and strategies to reduce problems. Staff also hoped to increase community, citizen, decision-maker and media support to change and then enforce new policies. By engaging in the initiative, the participants also hoped to create resources and a model for providing technical assistance that may be used by other universities and community groups wishing to pass community policies.

The four AMOD campus-community sites selected for participation in this initiative are:

- Building Responsibility Coalition of the University of Delaware
- Coalition to Create a Quality Learning Environment of the University of Vermont
- NU Directions of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Stepping Up Coalition of the University of Iowa

Their selection was based on their readiness and their perceived need to engage more fully in community policy development, the policy changes they proposed and their ability to carry out the initiative. All ten original sites agreed that it would be better to focus the efforts and funds at a few sites rather than simply disperse the funds to all. However, although four sites would receive intensive assistance, all ten sites would have access to some resources and the materials produced for and by those four sites. According to Erk, the emphasis of the Advocacy Initiative was to provide all AMOD sites with the tools and resources needed to generate a broader awareness and support for environmental policy solutions that will lead to public engagement in advocacy activities.

Pan American Services (PAS), based in Bozeman, Montana, is a consulting firm providing leadership and strategies that support changes in public and private policy, community standards and norms. AMOD's NPO at the American Medical Association (AMA) contracted with PAS to provide intensive strategic planning, training, media advocacy and policy research assistance to the AMOD sites, with the aim of helping them select and achieve their community-based policy goals.

Through a subcontract with Fenton Communications, the NPO provided additional support to participating campuses and communities through a national communications campaign. The campaign was designed to help the public make connections between binge or high-risk drinking, its secondhand effects, and those factors in the environment that contribute to problems, in order to generate support for research-based policy solutions shown to reduce problems.





The initiative's technical assistance model was somewhat experimental—it had not been tried with universities or in many communities.

### Initiative Design

Sandra Hoover, deputy director for AMOD at the NPO through 2001, said that from the beginning environmental strategies were central to The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grants. “The understanding was that this was not going to be the usual college program focused on education. AMOD was really going to focus on changing policy and changing the environment.”

From the outset, the NPO provided a range of training and technical assistance to all the sites, bringing in consultants to train coalition spokespeople on the environmental approach to prevention. At each of the joint annual meetings of AMOD and Reducing Underage Drinking through Coalitions (RUDC), nationally known experts in the area of policy-based environmental prevention conducted workshops and sessions for campus and community representatives. RUDC is another RWJF national program with statewide coalitions in 12 states creating environmental change to reduce underage drinking.

While progress was being made in changing campus environments through policy changes and enforcement, most of the sites were not making as much progress in the surrounding communities. Part of the problem lay in the difficulty of getting people, both on campus and off campus, to understand that changes in the physical, social and economic environment can, in fact, influence drinking behavior and related problems. This goes against deeply held societal views that drinking behavior is solely a matter of individual choice and personal responsibility.

“While from the beginning the project has looked at this problem from that environmental perspective, even for us as an institution it took a while to really begin to get it. It’s a unique approach that doesn’t click with people immediately. It’s harder to wrap your arms around it when we’re talking about all sorts of factors that directly and indirectly influence drinking behaviors among the student population,” said Enrique Corredera, director of communications at the University of Vermont.

With Erk’s urging, the NPO received approval from the Foundation to use funds from the

communications campaign to test whether intensive training and technical assistance at some of the sites could help them more readily advance policies aimed at environmental change in a strategic manner. Such community policies included those that affect the practices of alcohol retailers and the enforcement of existing laws pertaining to alcohol licensing, sales and service. Some of the funds were used to provide on-site technical assistance from PAS in strategic planning, policy development and media advocacy.

The initiative’s technical assistance model was somewhat experimental—it had not been tried with universities or in many communities. A technical resource group of leading researchers, alcohol problem prevention advocates and communications experts (including representatives from the AMOD sites, the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention, and the RWJF communications and program liaison) was brought together to answer these questions: What was needed to help a community coalition learn the skills and gain the experience of planning an effective advocacy initiative that would result in local policy change and that would enable the coalition to run advocacy initiatives on its own? Could this be done with a coalition that was primarily based at a university? Could that coalition, as a result of this effort, become more community oriented?

The resource group helped develop the initiative’s objectives and strategic plan. In looking at research and their own experiences, the resource group felt all of this could be done, but not in the usual way. Typically coalition volunteers and staff receive some training at a workshop and some materials to help them afterward. Sometimes staff at a national agency can offer additional help. The resource group said that to really make changes requires a much greater commitment of on-the-ground help, over a longer period of time and with specific assistance and training designed to meet the specific needs and environment of the coalition. Unlike the technical assistance services usually provided (that is, a few training, consulting, advice and planning sessions) in

The media advocacy training taught staff and coalition members how the media works, how to get its attention in a way that focuses on the definition of the problem and how to promote solutions to those problems.

similar policy advocacy efforts, this one was intended to provide the following:

- ongoing, intensive support, both on-site and through access to national resources (electronic, media, consultant, and research);
- a combination of direct services to local advocates (training, feedback, problem-solving advice, background policy research and communications resource development);
- supportive professional media and communications services directly to local advocates; and
- national communications advocacy efforts to place these local projects in a more favorable national media context.

Once the initiative was under way, some members of the resource group occasionally served as consultants for problem-solving with individual grantees and the NPO.

As Ed Sypinski of PAS later said, “The larger role for us to play here is to develop the capacities and resources of the local coalitions and the project managers and the volunteers who work with those coalitions—to have them focus on policy change that will have long-lasting effects on the larger community and assist them in that process of change on a political, social and economic level.”

According to Erk, PAS played a role in the Advocacy Initiative in three areas. “One was community organizing. Some sites needed that more than others. The other areas were media advocacy and technical assistance—such as helping sites prepare for an actual media event or training coalition members in what media advocacy is. But the way I define media advocacy, it is also a political strategy. The two have to work together strategically to advance policy goals.”

PAS based its technical assistance to the AMOD coalitions on what it calls “building blocks of the environmental prevention model to establish an infrastructure that promotes policy solutions and community norm changes.” (See page 21 for a more detailed discussion.) The building blocks are the following:

- *Intentional organizing* builds support among necessary community members and organizations,

businesses, law enforcement agencies and policy-makers by engaging them in creating positive change within their community. Intentional organizing develops the community leadership necessary to define and support the change process.

- *Applied data and research* identify the magnitude of the problem and guide intervention planning throughout the campaign. Data collection supports the need for community interventions and can demonstrate change.
- *Policy* provides direction to develop an overall campaign strategy. The policy design is based on community data collection and citizen input.
- *Media advocacy* links individual components of the model into a cohesive whole. Media advocacy is a critical element that raises awareness of the problem on the public agenda, provides a vehicle for high-visibility community response, highlights project successes, demonstrates community support and promotes policy change.
- *Enforcement* ensures consistent application of new and existing policies.

Within that framework, PAS provided

- ongoing, on-site strategic planning and implementation assistance (PAS staff traveled to the four sites at least monthly to help drive local and state policy change, and weekly strategy calls were held with NPO staff to discuss challenges and problem-solve);
- ongoing training in community organizing, media advocacy, strategic planning and the environmental management model; and
- research and consultation on site-specific issues such as, driver’s license reform (Nebraska) and government land-use options for controlling alcohol outlets and linkages between alcohol and crime (Iowa, Vermont).

The media advocacy training taught staff and coalition members how the media work, how to get media attention in a way that focuses on the definition of the problem and how to promote solutions to those problems. It also showed how to do all this effectively without much money. Depending on individual needs, the training also included selecting a good spokesperson; coaching that spokesperson; using data to make the case; approaching

local media; using specific media tools (issue briefs, editorials, letters to the editor); implementing strategies to reach out into the community through the media; creating effective leaflets and newspaper ads; and learning how to get points across during media interviews.

In addition, general technical assistance by PAS staff, which was available to all ten AMOD sites, included the following:

- Daily Internet searches for media items relevant to policy work were provided to all AMOD sites.
- A private AMOD project Website was developed, which provided a daily media report, an extensive and searchable research database, bulletin board and training materials to support AMOD campus-community partnerships and facilitate communications among sites, and links to other organizations and resources. The idea was to build a one-stop resource to support policy change at the community level. The site was also a repository of all project-related materials. This Website, now closed, formed the basis for the current public access Website: [www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net](http://www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net).
- Media articles, as requested from the daily media report and media database, were provided.
- Advocacy materials produced by the campaign sites and by the national communications initiative were provided.

### Local Media Component

Some of the funds for the initiative were set aside to enable each of the ten AMOD grantees to purchase advertising space to promote the policies they were advocating, educate the public and use the ad templates provided by the national media consultants. Many of the sites advertised their policy agendas either by designing their own ads, using ad templates provided to them or working with PAS-provided background research and design copy.



### National Media Component

The national communications component of the initiative provided a wide range of services to help create an effective national media presence. Fenton Communications assisted in the development of a strategic communications plan; media targeting and selection; development of advocacy frameworks (that is, which issues to choose and how to frame responses); national and several site-specific public opinion surveys; focus groups; advertising templates and placement; media information kits; advice to staff in handling media relations; media contacts; and assistance to sites to enable their participation in the national efforts and to feature their local accomplishments. The AMA's communications office reviewed press releases, provided assistance to AMA officials serving as mass media spokespeople for the initiative, developed and disseminated video news releases, arranged press teleconferences and developed print advertising.

To gain a better understanding of what messages would have the greatest likelihood of getting people to

think differently about college drinking problems, the NPO contracted with Lake Snell Perry & Associates to conduct focus groups in August 2001. The focus groups explored attitudes toward binge drinking among college students and the environmental factors that contribute to the problem. They also explored attitudes toward community responsibility and solutions that focus on restrictions on bar owners and the alcohol industry to eliminate marketing practices that promote high-risk drinking.

The focus groups found that the first step was to make the public aware of the problem.

Using information from the focus groups and public opinion polls—one of which was conducted with Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the Center for Science in the Public Interest—Erk at the AMA and Fenton staff created national media campaigns strategically designed to provide local media “hooks” that the coalitions used to advance their specific policy goals. In advance of each national media event, Erk held conference calls with staff at Fenton and PAS to develop local media strategies with AMOD sites. For example, on August 29, 2001, staff at the NPO organized a national media event featuring then AMA chair-elect J. Edward Hill, MD, who emphatically called college binge drinking a major public health problem while reporting on a new survey of parents of college students.

According to the AMA survey, parents were not only worried about the drinking culture enveloping their children when they go off to college; they also supported a wide range of policy changes designed to reduce the availability

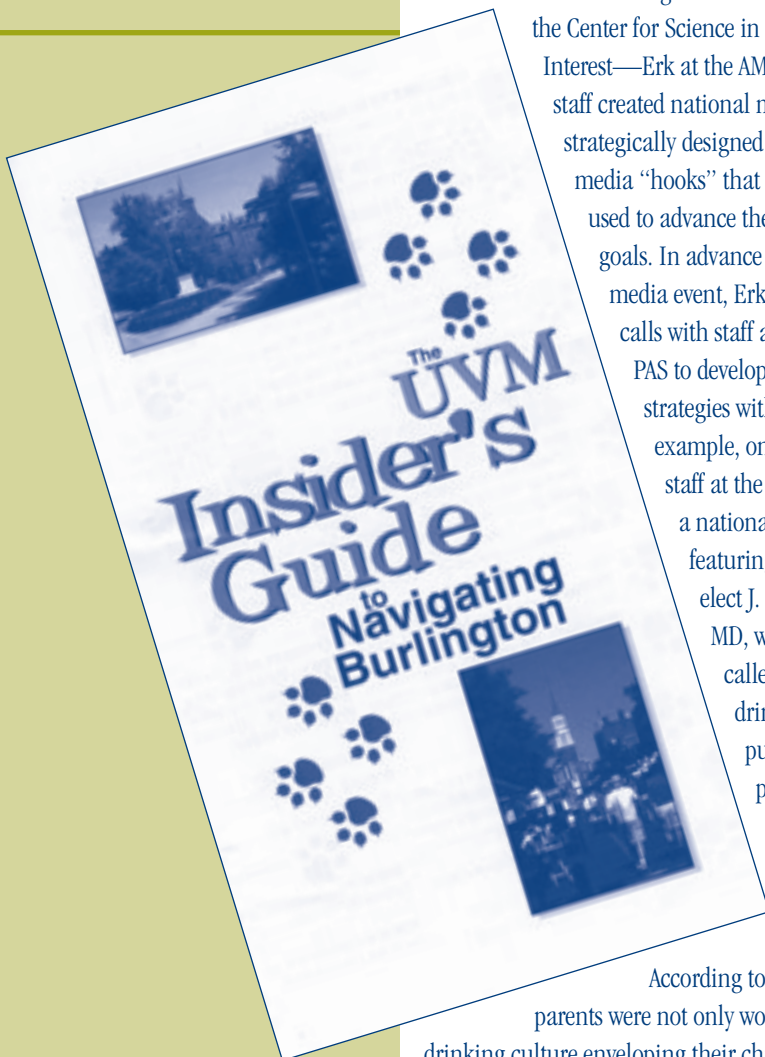
of alcohol on and around campuses. This media event generated a tremendous amount of coverage, including a major segment on the television show “Good Morning America.”

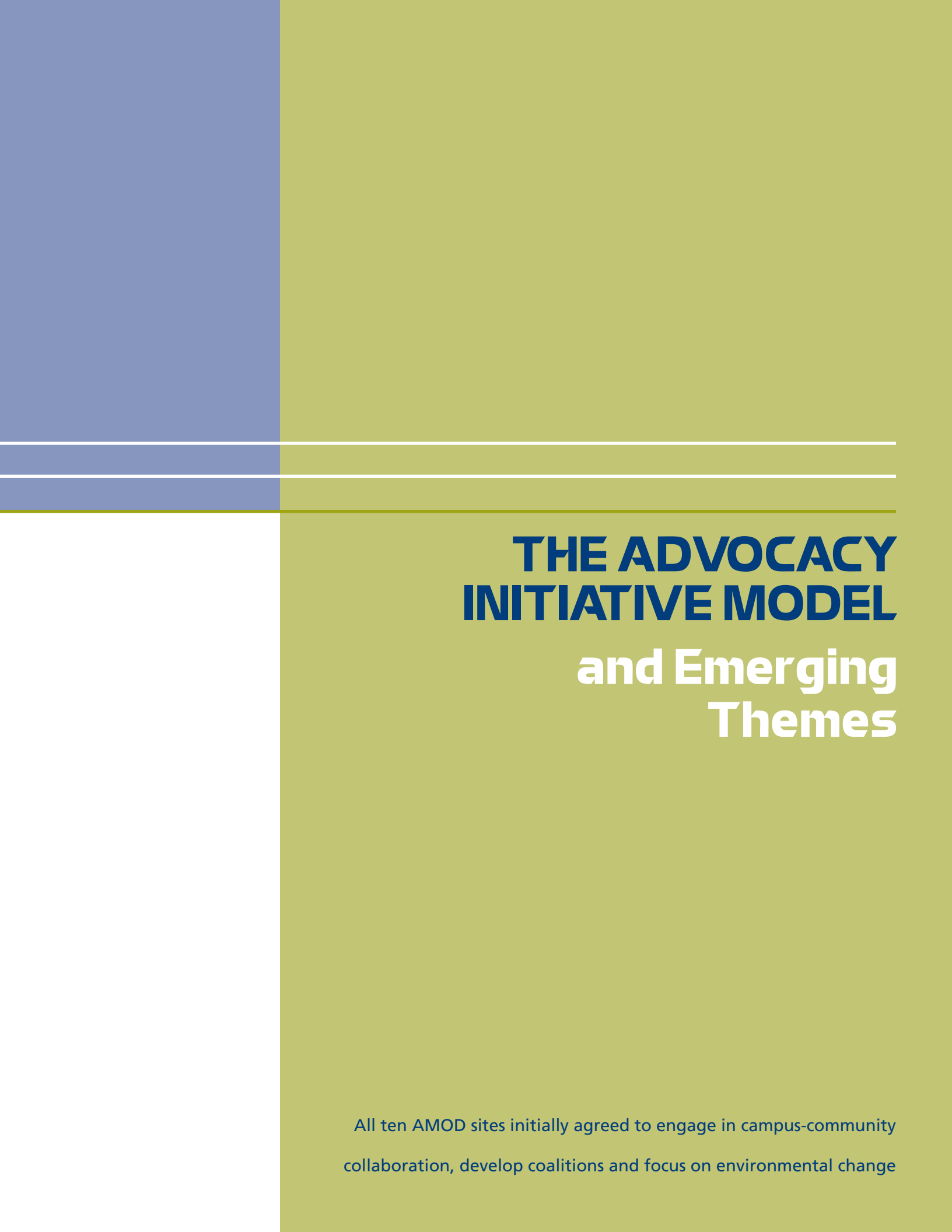
Newspapers in all AMOD communities picked up on the story, often including local information about the efforts of the campus-community coalitions and their successes in reducing problems related to college drinking. Both the University of Vermont and the University of Delaware received unprecedented media attention as a result of the national media event and used the opportunity to get the message out about actions they were taking to reduce problems.

While the media climate changed in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, other national media events garnered attention, but not to the same extent as the parents’ survey. Among them was the release of the AMA poll on Spring Break in March 2002.

“I think that we did a great job of demonstrating how coalitions can use national media to begin to question and challenge the role of alcohol in society. It got people thinking about the appropriateness of things such as Spring Break and drink specials and promotions. It demonstrated how national media could be used to drive change at the local level,” said Erk.

For James Baker, president of PAS, the national media campaign was extremely powerful in supporting the AMOD Advocacy Initiative because it helped tell the story of what the coalitions were doing. “It tied people together. It made project staff and others realize that they weren’t alone. It helped the whole community understand that dealing with alcohol issues on a structural basis is perfectly okay.”





# **THE ADVOCACY INITIATIVE MODEL**

## **and Emerging Themes**

All ten AMOD sites initially agreed to engage in campus-community collaboration, develop coalitions and focus on environmental change

## THE ADVOCACY INITIATIVE MODEL Emerging Themes

This project was a meshing of knowledge and skills and strategic planning. At all four sites it was a matter of bringing in somebody from outside the project to help strategically plan where it needed to go.

When The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and American Medical Association (AMA) launched A Matter of Degree (AMOD) to reduce binge or high-risk drinking by college students, it embarked on a grand, real-life experiment to test a prevention model that, while grounded in prevention research, had not been applied with rigor at any university. The model called for universities not only to publicly acknowledge the extent of high-risk drinking by students, but also to reach beyond their ivy-covered walls and engage the community in a collaborative process to address a complex problem that is a long-standing source of strained town-gown relations.

All ten AMOD sites initially agreed to engage in campus-community collaboration, develop coalitions and focus on environmental change, but campus-based staff often have little experience working in the community. In addition, the communities that are home to colleges and universities are often skeptical about what the campus is doing to address problems. That's especially true in smaller cities or towns with a large student presence, where the university can seem like the big gorilla on the block.

Problems related to student behavior cause much finger-pointing between communities and universities. Measures taken by campuses over the years had little impact on reducing problems. Community residents and city officials are frustrated because the university doesn't control its students when they are off campus. However, community environments that promote high-risk drinking behavior and provide students with easy and often illegal access to alcohol frustrate universities.

No one had gone down this road before, so many involved felt some level of discomfort as they engaged in this process of fostering community change. Most of the AMOD sites felt that before they could begin to call for changes in community environments, they had better "get their own houses in order." That meant taking a long, hard look at campus policies and environments, making changes to reduce problems, communicating those changes to the campus community, and then consistently enforcing policies to hold students accountable for their behavior.

This new approach appeared to have merit. Universities gained the confidence needed to engage the community in the often-rancorous dialogue that accompanies measures aimed at changing the status quo. Community members, including politicians, businesspeople and neighborhood residents, began to understand that there was much to be gained by the community and the university doing the hard work necessary to achieve meaningful change.

The training and technical resources brought to bear by the Advocacy Initiative were different from the traditional model of technical assistance, in which experts are brought in to train people on things that they don't know about. After the experts leave, projects may or may not use what they learned. According to Richard Yoast, director of the AMA Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and national program director of AMOD, the Advocacy Initiative model was to be a collaboration among the training and technical assistance staff at Pan American Services (PAS) and the four AMOD sites that volunteered to be a part of the initiative.

Yoast said that one of the lessons learned from the Advocacy Initiative experience is that the more the assistance is directed by the coalitions themselves in terms of assessing what they do and don't know and where they need to move, the more effective the technical assistance is. The Advocacy Initiative helped coalitions determine what they needed, but each decided how much assistance it needed, when it needed it and in what format. To some extent sites were also able to select which persons or organizations helped them.

"This project was a meshing of knowledge and skills and strategic planning. At all four sites it was a matter of bringing in somebody from outside the project to help strategically plan where it needed to go. In some cases the project said that was all that was needed. Others wanted more," said Yoast.

James Baker, president of PAS, describes the Advocacy Initiative process as "very participatory." Regularly scheduled site visits by PAS and NPO staff—and periodic visits by other consultants and resource group members—helped build personal relationships with

project staff, coalition members, city officials and so on. Those visits provided the base upon which the work could go on through phone calls, e-mails and other contacts.

“At some sites it was usual to have daily phone conversations. We even sat down at the computer with folks to help edit an op-ed piece or a news release. We worked with city officials and staff on potential laws or ordinances. At some of the sites we became a part of their family. And when sites experience staff turnover we are able to step in to help with the transition,” said Baker.

### The Advocacy Initiative Approach to Environmental Change

PAS based its AMOD training and technical assistance services on its Building Blocks of Effective Prevention model, which includes intentional organizing, applied data and research, policy, media advocacy and enforcement.

### Intentional Organizing

Campus-community partnership is at the heart of each coalition participating in the Advocacy Initiative. But achieving effective partnerships is more than just having people come to meetings.

“This isn’t about just bringing everybody in and hoping that you are going to get the right people at the table. You have to be strategic about it and bring the right people to the table at the right time,” said Lisa Erk, communications director for the AMOD Initiative from 1997 to 2002 “When you’ve not done it before, you need someone to help guide the way and to help you think strategically about who should be involved.”

According to Baker, for the most part the project staff at the sites had done organizing work for their projects within the campus community but not in surrounding communities. Therefore, the community organizing training and technical assistance focused on issues such as how project staff could approach the community beyond the campus walls.

“Whom do you talk to? How do you talk to them? Who draws people together? Should we as the campus draw these people together or should we encourage community people to invite us to their meetings? How does this work?” said Baker. “We provided specific skills building and examples from prior projects



around the country. However, a lot of it was simply having strategic conversations.”

Erk said that in community organizing it is important to have people at the table who understand community change—that is, people who understand the underlying model of the project as well as the political processes needed to implement the model. “Since there are different dynamics in communities, you can’t apply a cookie-cutter approach.”

### Applied Data and Research

Too often people jump to solutions before they are clear on what problems are most pressing and amenable to solutions. Data from a range of sources

can help show the nexus between problems and solutions. Throughout the project all participants and NPO staff expressed an ongoing need for research, synthesis and advice about various alcohol policies, alcohol-related problems and related data. PAS had the

capacity to quickly find policy information and provide assistance in conducting and synthesizing research on a particular policy or topic.

PAS developed a private AMOD project Website that included an extensive and searchable research database that was accessible by all the AMOD campus-community partnerships, not just those participating in the Advocacy Initiative. In addition, PAS staff conducted literature reviews and policy searches at the behest of sites so that they would have reliable data and research to back up proposed policy initiatives.

Ed Sypinski, a senior policy strategist with PAS, said that data and research provided to the sites armed them with the information they needed to respond to arguments from policy-makers and others who either didn't understand or were opposed to the policy solution being advanced.

### Policy

According to Yoast, the Advocacy Initiative was designed to facilitate passage of local community policies that would effect environmental change and ultimately reduce problems. One component of the PAS training and technical assistance was support to the sites for developing strategic plans that included two policy objectives.

Sypinski said that one of the roles PAS played was to help the coalitions understand that a number of the problems they identified actually had a nexus with some policy solutions. Secondly, "We helped the sites understand that they could have an impact on the problems they saw in their communities through policy change."

The policy objectives developed at the sites differed. Examples are restrictions on drink specials and other promotional activities and mandatory alcohol server training. Nebraska opted to focus on a statewide policy regarding driver's licenses rather than on local policies. The training and technical assistance provided by PAS focused on defining the objectives, activities and tasks needed to reach those different goals.

### Media Advocacy

The media can keep attention focused on alcohol-related problems, building momentum for legislative change and assuring policy-makers that such change has broad community backing. PAS provided sites

## Booze culture at university can be altered

**S**etting out to change cultural attitudes is a daunting task, but it can be done. One of the most cited successes is how attitudes toward smoking have changed in the United States in the past quarter century.

Now early trend lines at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln provide an encouraging sign that the same sort of change can take place in campus attitudes toward binge drinking.

The number of UNL students who reported drinking seven or more drinks at one sitting dropped from 21.7 percent in 1997 to 12.5 percent in 2000. The number of students who reported drinking four to six drinks in one sitting also dropped to 38.6 in 2000, down from 42.4 percent in 1997.

The validity of those self-reported statistics is buttressed by other findings. The number of students who reported they had to baby-sit a drunk student dropped from 66.2 percent in 1997 to 55.2 percent in 2000.

The statistics in part show the impact of measures coordinated and started by NU Directions, a campus-community coalition created in 1998 that put together an array of programs ranging from a police crackdown on off-campus parties to popularization of alcohol-free student events. The program is funded by a \$700,000, five-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Concern that binge drinking at universities had reached intolerable levels spread across the United States in the 1990s. Surveys conducted by Harvard University researchers documented that the problem was more than anecdotal. Nationally, about 44 percent of college students binge drink. About one in four binge drink frequently.

In Nebraska attitudes seem to be changing because the NU Directions program has succeeded so far in fostering a broad-based effort. On campus the cooperation of the Greek system has been important to changing attitudes. One indication of changing attitudes, Tom Workman, associate director for the program, said, is that the number of requests for medical aid related to alcohol — anything from aspirin for a hangover to acute intoxication — has dropped from 300 requests a year in fraternities and sororities to approximately 50.

But to truly succeed the program needed to be broader. "Congratulations go beyond the coalition to the community," said Workman. When the Lincoln City Council denied several requests for beer gardens during NU home football games, Workman said, that showed a commitment to reducing university alcohol problems.

People should not delude themselves that UNL students are on the verge of becoming neo-prohibitionists. But the student peer culture may at least be starting to recognize that binge drinking is not a mandatory rite of passage. That's an accomplishment that is worth celebrating.



The media can keep attention focused on alcohol-related problems, building momentum for legislative change and assuring policy-makers that such change has broad community backing.

with training and assistance on how to use the media strategically to support the policy goals adopted in their strategic plans.

Yoast said that this component of the Advocacy Initiative helped sites learn how the local media work and how to use media advocacy tactics to get media coverage on the issues from the AMOD project's environmental perspective rather than focusing on "problem students."

Yoast credits the national media component of the Advocacy Initiative with being a powerful tool as the storyteller. "It tied people together. It made not only the project people and their superiors realize that they weren't alone, but it made the whole community really support and understand that dealing with alcohol issues requires addressing the whole environment."

The national media helped the sites build local media capacity by providing a news hook for them to join in on. It encouraged local reporters to respond to the stories that the sites were pitching. The NPO and PAS also worked with the sites to add local data, stories and policy goals to local coverage of the national story.

"Because it was a national story, it was an opportunity to talk about what other communities in the AMOD system either had accomplished or were considering. All of those factors were very empowering," said Yoast.

Participants found that the college alcohol issue is much more palatable to a larger slice of the population when framed as a "public health and safety issue" as opposed to "reducing underage drinking" or "reducing binge drinking."

### Enforcement

All four coalitions in the Advocacy Initiative made the publicity about and administration of laws a central priority, with campus and police officials reporting that the continued oversight by the coalition has been an incentive for such enforcement. Continuous oversight by the coalitions affirmed expectations and norms that don't tolerate overservice of alcohol and sales and service to youths under the legal purchasing age.

### Some Observations

All four campus-community coalitions agreed that the effort has been worth the gain. They report that alcohol-related problems are decreasing, quality of life both

on campus and off campus is improving, town-gown relations are less strained and the community as a whole has benefited from the changes that have taken place. For example, sites report that neighborhood complaints about student house parties have declined, fewer students complain of disruption due to the drinking of others, and alcohol-related campus judicial cases have declined.

The experiences of these coalitions can be translated into recommendations for others considering embarking on a course of action to address student drinking and related problems.

### Take It Seriously

Serious problems require serious attention. Too often such problems have been approached with Band-Aid solutions or viewed as something to be taken care of through public relations efforts. High-risk drinking is a just concern of campus and community alike. Both suffer from the negative consequences of that behavior, so both have a legitimate interest in taking measures to curb it. Taking these problems seriously—and publicly acknowledging them—is the first step toward making progress.

### Embrace the Environmental Model

Education, the business of the university, is an important component of alcohol problem prevention, but it is not sufficient to have a significant impact on problem reduction. Although people on and off campus do not readily understand the environmental approach, evidence exists that changes in the legal, social, physical and economic environment can, in fact, reduce problems related to high-risk drinking by students. Changing the environment around drinking can make it easier for students to make healthier, safer decisions and harder to engage in unhealthy, high-risk behaviors.

### Think Long Term

The cultural environment surrounding student drinking did not develop overnight. Changing that environment takes time. Too often responses come in the aftermath of a crisis when there is pressure to do something right away. Thinking long term allows for strategic planning that takes into consideration problem definition, community norms and community values before implementing solutions.

**WHO WILL SOLVE  
DRINKING IN OUR**

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# **THE PROBLEM OF HIGH RISK COMMUNITY? All of Us**

CASE HISTORY AT A GLANCE:

**University of Delaware  
and the City of Newark**

## CHRONOLOGY

From 1996 to 2001 the number of alcohol licensees operating within walking distance of the University of Delaware increased by about 40 percent, but neither the city of Newark nor the university had grown in size. With all the additional alcohol outlets, prices fell as bars competed with one another, making it more affordable for college students to drink. In addition, student parties in the neighborhoods were causing problems for community residents, who complained of noise, vandalism and general bad behavior fueled by alcohol. The Building Responsibility Coalition (BRC)—made up of campus and community representatives—sought to reduce or eliminate high-risk promotional activities by bars on Newark’s Main Street and reduce the negative secondhand effects of high-risk drinking behavior on neighborhood residents.

# University of Delaware and the City of Newark

- 1996** University of Delaware and the community of Newark receive a five-year grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to address binge or high-risk drinking among students.
- 1997** At the instigation of President David Roselle, the university initiates a policy of sending letters to the parents of students found guilty for violations of campus policy—the first university in the nation to do so.
- 1998** University implements a five-star Greek chapter rating system that links the privilege of rushing first-semester freshmen to a chapter’s academic standing and social conduct.
- University increases staff surveillance of student drinking through harsher penalties, including stiffer fines and a three-strikes-and-you’re-out (suspension) policy, and makes the adjudication process in the student judiciary system more efficient.
- 1999** Students who are arrested in the community are reported to the university’s judicial system for additional disciplinary action.
- University begins to enforce a long-standing policy that requires tailgating to stop when the football games begin.
- 2000** University implements a “no pass out” policy, which prohibits fans from re-entering the stadium during the game.
- Newark City Council requires deed restrictions on some construction of retail space on Main Street to prohibit alcohol from ever being sold at these locations.
- City council lowers the Blood Alcohol Concentration level standard for DUI within the city of Newark to 0.08 (the state of Delaware maintains a 0.10 BAC).
- Advocacy Initiative begins in the fall.
- 2001** Building Responsibility Coalition develops a strategic plan with two policy goals.
- City council approves amendments to the zoning code governing the operation of alcohol outlets.
- Mayor appoints an 11-member alcohol commission charged with issuing a report in April 2002.
- 2002** Mayor’s Alcohol Commission issues report.
- City council adopts into the city’s municipal code the Delaware Alcohol Beverage Control rules, defining how alcohol licensees operate. Newark police now have the authority to take violators to local court for sanctions.
- City council increases the business license fees of alcohol sellers to fund three additional Newark police officers to enforce the new Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control (DABC) program.
- City council votes to restrict happy hours and discounted drink specials citywide from 4 to 9 p.m.
- Advocacy Initiative ends in the fall.

## COLLABORATION IN A SMALL TOWN WITH A LARGE UNIVERSITY

The University of Delaware has grown from its founding as a small private academy in 1743 to a major university with an enrollment of 16,400 undergraduates and nearly 3,200 graduate students.

The main campus of the university, situated in the northwest corner of the state in the town of Newark (pronounced “new ark,” as it was once spelled), offers a traditional small-town college atmosphere. Including on-campus students, in 2000, Newark’s population was 28,547.

In 1995 when the university prepared its proposal for The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) A Matter of Degree (AMOD) program, Ron Gardner was Newark’s mayor. He agreed, along with Roland Smith, university vice president for student life, to cochair the campus-community coalition called for in the RWJF application.

“It was an extension of my interests at the National League of Cities where I chaired a subgroup called the University Communities Caucus. It was formed by mayors of college towns to address the kinds of issues they face—namely the raucous parties that would not demand interest at a national-level convention with major cities. But for small towns and cities with a large university, it’s a problem. Every year we surveyed members across the nation to find out subjects they wanted to address at the next meeting. Without exception, every year at the top of the list was alcohol-related partying,” Gardner said.

Under the leadership of President David Roselle, the university was already discussing proposals for tightening up on campus and stressing sanctions including fines and suspension from the residence halls.

“Some community members complained these actions would just push problems into the community. In fact, they took their objections to members of the university’s board of trustees and the president. But we were able to alleviate most of their concerns by pointing out that this was a comprehensive approach—that we were not just solely concerned about the environment on the campus but the environment in the larger Newark community,” said Vice President Smith.

Nevertheless, during the first few years of the AMOD project the university did indeed focus on campus

issues. In 1997 with the encouragement of President Roselle, the university implemented a parental notification policy before it was permitted under federal law.

“We felt that before we could ask the larger community to join us in this effort, the university had to take care of these problems on campus. Early on it was the university administration leading the way. We got tough with student codes of conduct—notifying parents, fining people for violations and tightening the screws on tailgating practices at football games. We needed to show that we were willing to clean up our own act before we asked others to work on this problem,” said John Bishop, associate vice president for counseling and student development at the university and current cochair, with Gardner, of the Building Responsibility Coalition (BRC).

Students saw the changes as a crackdown aimed at taking away their fun. Many of them came to the University of Delaware because it was perceived as a party school. But, according to Bishop, parents loved the changes and “ultimately parental opinion was probably more important than student opinion. People from outside the university were impressed that the university was getting tough. We heard a lot of the comments that this was long overdue.”

### **Environmental Assessment at the Beginning of the Advocacy Initiative—Fall 2000**

In the year prior to the beginning of the Advocacy Initiative, James Baker, president of Pan American Services (PAS), provided technical assistance to the BRC. The technical assistance consisted of multiple training presentations made to the Community Outreach Task Group (COTG), one of the two coalition task groups focusing on community issues. The objective of this early training was to increase the knowledge of the task group regarding environmental prevention strategies and the use of media advocacy to effect policy changes.

The BRC includes representation from multiple sectors including university staff, community members, merchants, restaurant owners, religious leaders, students, and city and state officials. Although the total

The coalition's Policy and Enforcement Task Group addresses alcohol problems in the community through control, enforcement and alternatives to address behaviors associated with high-risk drinking.

number of individuals associated with the coalition was high, further increasing the level of active community involvement remained a key objective.

The coalition's Policy and Enforcement Task Group (PETG) addresses alcohol problems in the community through control, enforcement and alternatives to address behaviors associated with high-risk drinking. At the time the Advocacy Initiative began, the PETG had identified three general areas of focus but had not begun data collection or other preliminary planning steps. The areas of focus identified were

- state and local laws regulating the sale and use of alcohol,
- research on what has been done elsewhere to reduce consumption (including model legislation), and
- better training of servers.

Concurrent with the coalition's PETG activities, city policy-makers passed several alcohol-related ordinances. Although these policies were important, the initial impact on high-risk and underage drinking in Newark was not significant. Although the BRC develops an annual work plan, there was no comprehensive strategic policy plan for the community and the policies passed appeared piecemeal and ineffective. Relaxed enforcement also undermined the potential significance of these policy changes. Policies passed by the Newark City Council prior to the Advocacy Initiative included

- deed restrictions on recent Main Street projects, making it illegal to sell alcohol at new retail locations in the future;
- an amendment to the zoning ordinance to include dormitories as "protected use," thereby prohibiting future alcohol-licensed establishments adjacent to residence halls and placing restrictions on those within 300 feet of residence halls; and
- a lowered standard for DUI offenses of 0.08 BAC, taking advantage of local control options, while the state continued enforcing 0.10.

The COTG also identified issues intended to affect underage drinking and had begun to define strategies and tactics for each:

- Raising social awareness
- Empowering neighborhoods to be involved in the change process

- Involving the Main Street business community
- Building general community awareness through information and data
- Supporting selected public policy initiatives

Community leaders like Richard Waibel, chair of the COTG of the coalition, spearheaded efforts to discourage easy availability of alcohol. U.S. Senator Joseph Biden and other legislators had supported the university's efforts by passing an alcohol code of principles, which spelled out responsible behaviors on college campuses. Newark also had a Town and Gown Committee that focused on city and university relations that included alcohol-related issues.

The COTG discussed the need for collecting data to present to residents, businesses, parents and others to make them aware of the problems in Newark and to empower them to bring about community change. The task group identified the types of data it wanted (such as economic costs of alcohol problems) and the format for distribution. They had not, however, begun collecting the identified data prior to the Advocacy Initiative.

### **Building Community Support**

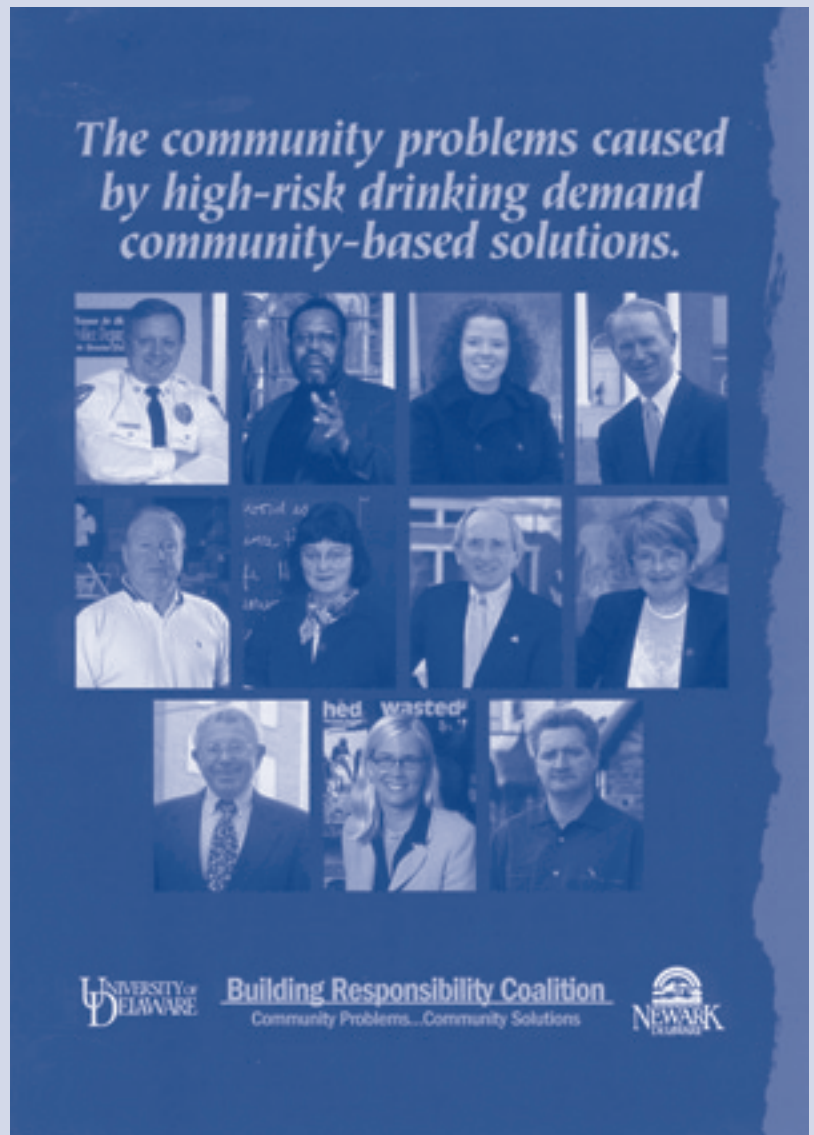
From the outset the BRC had broad campus and community participation. According to John Bishop, because of the expectation that these projects adopt an environmental model, "from the beginning we understood that we needed to have a coalition." The BRC has over 130 people involved in seven committees, councils and subgroups.

"We felt that people from the community should be involved. I learned very quickly that if you talk to people who live here about the city and the community, they are talking about two different things. The city is the governmental officials. The community tends to be the people who live here and are members of civic associations or neighborhood groups. We need community members. We need city officials. We need people whose businesses are affected. We need people who hold alcohol licenses and those who don't. We wanted to involve certain community organizations, such as the churches. There aren't very many people in Newark who are absolutely neutral on the topic of alcohol," said Bishop.

Waibel has been involved in the coalition since the beginning. He says that there are probably 150 people in the community who would say that they have been involved in the coalition. But in terms of people who are very active and regular participants, it's a smaller number.

Waibel recounted some insights provided by PAS's Baker, who said that large numbers are not necessary to be effective. "You do need people who understand what you are trying to do and how you are trying to do it and who are supportive of becoming involved and staying involved in that effort. If someone shows up with a different agenda and it's a single-approach agenda, Baker says it is like being on an airplane. The flight attendant says this plane is going to Atlanta. If someone wants to go to Chicago they are on the wrong plane. It's better that they walk out in a huff than to waste everyone else's time trying to advocate their particular agenda."

Waibel said that up until 2000 the BRC had done things in the community in terms of alternative student activities. "We had a cross section of community people involved but we hadn't up until that point focused on the supply side of the alcohol issue. Most of the work to that point had been focused on campus—dealing with policy changes there and implementing a number of different things. On the community side, one subgroup was active working with some ordinance changes. But alcohol wasn't on page one for anyone in the community. At that point we started working with Baker and his group."



In early 2000 the BRC developed a technical assistance plan with Baker to provide media advocacy and spokesperson training to community members who will hold "living room talks" in the neighborhoods surrounding the university. Baker and Sandra Hoover from the American Medical Association came to Newark on March 13 and 14, 2000, for a planning meeting with community members. The idea was to have Baker coach these community members as spokespeople and offer talking points for these chats. That arrangement expanded to a larger role for PAS as a support service to the BRC as well as to three other AMOD sites in the Advocacy Initiative.



## Progress During the Advocacy Initiative

With the support of PAS, BRC identified specific community policy goals and developed a strategic plan designed to achieve these goals. It was a focused campaign-planning process that defined specific activities and tools to achieve the identified goals. The environmental model served as the framework for developing the coalition's strategic plan.

Prior to this point, problems related to high-risk drinking had been portrayed as a student problem, not a community problem. Accordingly, most organizing and media focus had been directed toward students. A conscious decision to position high-risk drinking as a community problem required a different focus by the BRC. Technical assistance and training were effective in increasing the media advocacy skills of BRC members to support this shift in perception of alcohol problems and solutions.

An early strategy of the BRC was to develop support for its policy initiatives and activities by raising awareness about the relationship between reduced drink prices and drink specials, the overconsumption of alcohol, and negative effects experienced by the community as a whole. The BRC understood that an inordinate amount of city resources was expended in responding to problem alcohol establishments. To address these concerns the BRC considered various policies.

The coalition's PETG focused initially on changes to a city ordinance regarding facilities selling alcohol on premises, including

- prohibiting businesses licensed as restaurants from charging age-based covers (restaurants that converted to clubs after hours) and
- prohibiting businesses selling alcohol from hanging outdoor banners advertising happy hours, reduced-price drink specials and other alcohol promotions.

The BRC first considered identifying problem bars and approaching individual bars to develop voluntary agreements—or "community covenants"—to eliminate drink specials and happy hours. In general, local alcohol retailers responded negatively to this approach. The BRC then began working with the city's Planning Department and the Downtown Newark Partnership to draft a report revising several of the



An early strategy of the BRC was to develop support for its policy initiatives and activities by raising awareness about the relationship between reduced drink prices and drink specials, the overconsumption of alcohol, and negative effects experienced by the community as a whole.

city's regulations for alcoholic beverage promotions and live entertainment at downtown restaurants. After the required review and public comment process, the Newark City Council passed four amendments to the Facilities Selling Alcohol on Premises ordinance in May 2001, including revised versions of the two amendments first advocated by the BRC.

Responding to community concerns regarding high-risk drinking in Newark, in June 2001 the city council held a workshop to discuss responsible alcohol service, zoning and enforcement. The BRC, with PAS support, developed an issue-briefing position paper on the impact of alcohol outlets on the business environment and community development. BRC staff attended this workshop. To follow up on the ideas generated at the workshop, which included a package of potential ordinances and regulations to increase local control over alcohol promotions, the mayor appointed the Mayor's Alcohol Commission in November 2001 to review the city's existing alcohol beverage policies, regulations and ordinances. The commission was directed to issue a report by April 2002 with recommendations for policy changes. Five BRC members were appointed to this 11-member commission, providing an opportunity for the coalition to continue providing information on various alcohol policy recommendations being considered.

The coalition's PETG focused on two policies:

- A proposed Assessment for Excessive Municipal Services ordinance would define a mechanism for identifying businesses that made repeated and excessive demands on municipal services. (Most demands were related to problems associated with the overuse of alcohol.) The ordinance also would assess these businesses for excessive services via increased business license fees.
- Amendments to the city's Disorderly Premise ordinance would increase its effectiveness to address disturbances related to parties in the neighborhoods.

Working with the city solicitor and Newark Police Department, the PETG drafted recommendations related to the Disorderly Premise ordinance.

In fall 2002 the Newark City Council passed the change recommended by the Mayor's Alcohol Commission to adopt the state Alcoholic Beverage

Control rules, form a three-police-officer alcohol unit and increase business license fees for alcohol retailers in the city. In addition, happy hours and drink specials were limited to the hours of 4 to 9 p.m. to avoid peak student drinking hours.

### Intentional Organizing

Activities of the BRC's COTG were developed to broaden and strengthen the base of support for its efforts. Proactive steps included contacting various civic associations, community organizations, business groups, downtown business associations, religious leaders and landlords of properties both on Main Street and in the neighborhoods. During this period community organizing challenges included a lack of clearly defined roles and expectations for community members and a lack of adequate information on the BRC's work. Community organizing meetings frequently focused on reintroducing the environmental prevention approach and rehashing the effectiveness of various other prevention approaches. Little progress was made. These difficulties would later be resolved through application of the concept of intentional organizing—focused outreach activities for community members, groups and policy-makers most affected by the problems and thus likely to support the BRC's policy efforts.

The BRC needed to identify community voices to address the issues raised. Implementation of a longer-term community organizing strategy included targeted outreach and presentations to various neighborhood associations and civic groups, and a community education and public information campaign about the objectives of the BRC. The community organizing effort was enhanced by the BRC's intensified media advocacy activities in the community occurring at the same time. PAS and the AMOD National Program Office (NPO) provided workshops on the environmental prevention model and message development and spokesperson training, all of which were intended to increase the involvement and skills of more community members.

Through an expanded and better-defined message; greater visibility of BRC staff; the use of other community leaders to perform outreach activities; and the development of brochures, pamphlets, newsletters



and a Website to communicate to the public, the BRC attracted and recruited more community leaders. The *Newark Post* asked Tracy Bachman, BRC program director, to be a monthly opinion columnist.

### Applied Data

Data and research were applied effectively to define problems being experienced both in downtown Newark and in the residential neighborhoods. The coalition designed and conducted three surveys.

The first, a last-drink survey, was initiated in September 2000. Data were collected from individuals convicted of DUI violations and in a mandatory education class and from students convicted of university alcohol policy violations. The BRC used the data initially to identify problem bars, with the intent of approaching them to initiate efforts to organize a voluntary “community covenant” to eliminate discounted drink specials and happy hours. The BRC conducted a second survey in a neighborhood to collect information about the impact on residents from secondhand effects of high-risk drinking

behavior. The purpose of the third survey, conducted in spring 2001, was to characterize the downtown business climate. Data were collected on crime and vandalism experienced by local nonalcohol businesses, their perceptions about alcohol-related incidents and the impact on business operations.

Initially the BRC used these results to identify and articulate the problems being experienced in the community. Later it used them to build public support and demonstrate that the larger community is being

affected by alcohol-related incidents. Survey results served as the basis for various media events and other newsmaking to support the need for policy change.

In addition the BRC analyzed the results of literature searches, conducted by PAS, on outlet density, pricing effects on alcohol consumption and information of dramshop liability laws. The BRC used the information on alcohol density to develop talking points for a presentation before the city council vote on amendments to the zoning code to prevent proliferation of outlets.

### Strategic Plans and Policy Goals

In early 2001 BRC and PAS identified two policy areas in which to focus efforts: (1) control of alcohol access, availability and pricing in the downtown area and (2) reduction in the secondhand effects of high-risk drinking behavior on neighborhood residents.

The policy objectives were the following:

- Local control over marketing and promotional practices of retail alcohol establishments
- Reduction of the effects of house parties and strengthening of the enforcement process and procedures of disorderly premise ordinances
- Data collection establishing the nexus of alcohol-related problems and alcohol outlets
- Development of an ordinance for assessing excessive municipal services to businesses on Main Street

Under the new provisions, restaurants selling alcoholic beverages within 300 feet of “protected” uses like churches are permitted to have one-person, electronically amplified performances or any number of unamplified performers.

The strategic plan also called for a media plan to get the message out to the broader community through news stories on issues of economic development and downtown revitalization, editorials on issues of public and personal safety costs, and message development and talking points for spokespeople. Through inclusion of media advocacy in BRC’s strategic plan, members saw how this strategy supported the larger efforts of the project. Activities to intentionally reframe issues, to determine the most effective messages and to identify the right spokesperson for message delivery constantly reinforced the interdependence of policy passage and media advocacy. As the coalition experienced the efficacy of media advocacy for highlighting and supporting policy development, the initial perception of media advocacy as an insurmountable challenge changed.

The BRC formed a Media Task Group to provide media advocacy support to the Policy and Enforcement and Community Outreach Task Groups around their policy initiatives.

Mary Hempel, university director of public relations and assistant to the president, said that the university had very good editorial support with the Wilmington-based *News Journal* and the *Newark Post*, the city’s weekly paper.

“We met with the editorial boards of both papers before any announcements of the RWJF funds were made, and they were supportive from the beginning,” Hempel said.

One issue that played out in the press in spring 2001 occurred when Caffé Gelato, one of the new upscale restaurants on Main Street, started offering half-price wine on Tuesday nights. And it caused some conflict within the BRC, according to Bachman.

“The Zoning Code section 32-56.4 establishes protected zones when it comes to alcohol premises. The Policy and Enforcement Task Group worked on adding dormitories to that ordinance as one of the protected areas along with churches, residences, libraries, nursing homes and schools. First, you can’t have an alcohol license if you are adjacent to one of these protected areas. Second, if you are within 300 feet of one of these protected areas you can’t discount

the price of alcohol. We thought this would be a great way to reduce the number of places that could have high-risk promotions. Caffé Gelato was within 300 feet of the Methodist church, so they weren’t allowed to have discounted alcohol. BRC members Ron Gardner and Richard Waibel talked to the owner about it,” said Bachman.

The owner hung a big banner outside promoting half-price wine. “I got involved and sent an e-mail to the city manager. The building department then had to enforce the ordinance and gave Caffé Gelato a citation. The owner decided to fight it. Then Richard tried to work a deal to get a variance to allow him to have the promotion on that one night,” said Bachman.

“However, the owner didn’t want it and the Planning Department didn’t want it. The planning director wanted to change the ordinance. We worked out a new ordinance but didn’t feel comfortable with it. It seemed like it was the community on one side and the university on the other. We felt that the existing ordinance offered a lot of protections against proliferation. But, after a two-and-a-half-hour debate the city council voted four to three to change the ordinance,” said Bachman.

Under the new provisions, restaurants selling alcoholic beverages within 300 feet of “protected” uses like churches are permitted to have one-person, electronically amplified performances or any number of unamplified performers. These businesses can also have happy hours or offer drink specials that must be served only with orders of food. Further, age-based cover charges are not allowed in these full-service restaurants, which must serve food during all hours of operation. Finally, banners advertising any form of alcoholic beverage promotion are not permitted on the outside of any businesses selling alcohol for consumption on or off the premises.

The *Newark Post* (May 21, 2001) reported that District 2 council member Jerry Clifton said he could not support the happy hours amendment. “It’s somewhat hypocritical to approve that amendment and yet for years we have asked the University of Delaware to work on controlling their student population (off campus).”

The newsletter of the  
Building Responsibility Coalition  
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University of Delaware  
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Fall 2002

## The Community OUTREACH

### Reducing Alcohol-Related Problems in the Community: BRC Sponsors Newark Apartment Managers Meeting

The Building Responsibility Coalition (BRC) hosted a luncheon meeting on September 18 for Newark apartment complex managers. The group was brought together to discuss experiences and perspectives on handling the disorderly conduct and problems caused by irresponsible use of alcohol on their properties.

Each manager present began by listing the methods used at his or her complex to control alcohol-related disruptions. The discussion then turned to ways the situation could be improved and how the managers can best take advantage of their combined knowledge and experience.

Also in attendance were City of Newark police officers and building director, community leaders, UD students and BRC members.



Mid-Prattman, Karise DeFinney and Gene DiPasquale listen to the discussion among other apartment managers and landlords on how to deal with problems related to alcohol.

Some of the suggestions for improving the safety and environment for all tenants included:

- Better education and more involvement of parents;
- Making sure the tenants understand that alcohol violations are serious crimes and can remain on their permanent records;
- Better surveillance and security patrols and;
- Standard lease clauses that address city-wide behavior issues.

The BRC Community Outreach Task Group has invited the apartment managers and landlords to its next meeting to work on these issues.

For more information, please call 831-3115.

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#### Delaware Statewide Initiative Strategic Planning Meeting Held

The BRC, in conjunction with the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention (HEC), hosted a strategic planning meeting on September 25 to establish a statewide coalition to address the environmental factors, on campus and in the community, that contribute to high-risk alcohol consumption. Key stakeholders involved in alcohol abuse prevention and enforcement throughout the state were invited to attend.

Campuses represented included Delaware State University, Delaware Technical and Community College, Goddard College, Wesley College and the University of Delaware.

After an introduction to the strategic planning process and a discussion of current activities and challenges campuses and communities face in reducing the incidences of high-risk drinking statewide, the group decided to draft a mission statement and establish goals. An action plan will follow.

In early 2003, the HEC will offer training on establishing campus/community partnerships and implementing environmental strategies.

For more information please contact Tracy Bachman 302-831-3115 or e-mail tbaech@udel.edu.

#### BRC Sponsors Thursday Late-Night Bus

**Put your heels  
on wheels!**



Faced with the bleak fact that at least 37 percent of UD students report that they routinely drive after drinking, the Student Alcohol Use Committee of the BRC is sponsoring a late-night bus on Thursdays from 11 pm to 2 am. The route stops at several locations on Main Street and then travels to residence halls and apartment complexes in a 40-minute loop.

Bus drivers report that from 50 to 80 students have been taking advantage of the free service and one student was heard to say, "Thank you so much. This bus is a real life-saver."

The route is sponsored for a trial period ending December 12 and will be evaluated for future funding in November.

**Building Responsibility Coalition**  
Community Problems...Community Solutions

In the same article, Rick Armitage, University of Delaware director of government relations, said the university favored the changes regarding entertainment, banners and cover charges but not happy hours. "The university would prefer no drink specials," he told the council.

But Rob Hawkins, a resident of Maryland who has worked in Newark since 1989, said: "I can't say how delighted I am with the new atmosphere in Newark. My wife and I are willing to drive here to Caffé Gelato one or two times a month. The crowd there is not looking for cheap drinks—[the business] should be allowed to keep competitive with a happy hour one night a week."

"So, Caffé Gelato got to offer half-price wine on Tuesday nights. But another place moved in down the street and now they are discounting. And then another place and another place. Then a restaurant called the Italian Bistro moved into a property adjacent to Newark United Methodist Church, knowing that this was in a protected area. They wanted an alcohol license," said Bachman.

The controversy over whether the Italian Bistro should get an exception to the ordinance fueled more debate and media coverage about alcohol availability on Main Street.

"The turning point for getting these issues before the community was, in part, related to that request. Some people in the city were saying that you can't survive on Main Street if you don't have a liquor license," said Hempel. "Some of the media was planned, but some of it just happened. For example, when John Bishop remarked that Newark was now a 'party town,' it really riled people up," said Hempel.

She referred to the article "Drinking Habits Die Hard at UD" that appeared in the *News Journal* (May 29, 2001) when it looked like The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation project was coming to an end.

"The University of Delaware has found the affair between college students and alcohol is not easily soured. As its five-year, \$770,000 effort to curb binge drinking among students comes to an end, organizers can claim some success. The effort has put to rest UD's image as a 'party school' and won rave reviews from the community.

“The focus will shift to the community,” [Bishop] said.

“But UD is finding resistance to its call for tougher regulations on discount alcohol sales. The City Council this month allowed several restaurants near campus to offer drink specials. [Mayor] Godwin supports stronger liquor law enforcement in town but said he thinks the university has overstated the ‘supply’ problem in Newark and may be off-target by looking off campus for solutions to student drinking.

“Bishop said there are more than 20 establishments close to campus that serve alcohol, many with drink specials. ‘That is certainly a different message being sent than the one on campus,’ said Bishop, and it contributes to an environment that encourages students to binge drink. ‘I think people in the community are beginning to understand that,’ Bishop said, adding Newark is getting a reputation as a party town. ‘People are concerned about the character of Main Street.’”

There was also a lot of media coverage of an alcohol-related crash caused by a young man who drank at a Main Street pizza establishment for nine hours. After he left the restaurant, he crashed his car, killing four young people and himself.

“The sister of a young person killed by a drunk driver spoke at a city council special meeting on binge drinking. She was very moving. I think it sort of jelled in some of the council members’ minds that they could not just sit there and do nothing. It all contributed to a very loud buzz about these issues, and people started responding,” said Hempel.

Newark Chief of Police Gerald Conway credits much of the media coverage with helping people open their eyes to the problems. “Kids drank here 20 years ago when I went to the university, but I think they drink more now because there are more establishments on Main Street. We still have problems in the neighborhoods at the residences. The more publicity out there, the more people are educated.”

The Newark Police Department has a U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant to prevent underage drinking. “We give officers overtime to patrol the neighborhoods. When we find a party we go in and not only stop the party but also arrest those

who have consumed alcohol that are underage,” said Conway. “We have a lot of off-campus students living in the neighborhoods among residents. Two or three o’clock in the morning, as students are leaving the parties, we get the disorderly complaints. We get the criminal mischief complaints, littering complaints.”

When the BRC kicked off its Neighborhood Campaign, a joint effort between the university, Newark police and the community, it held a press conference in the front yard of city council member and BRC member Chris Rewa’s Prospect Avenue home.

“People who had lived in these neighborhoods—one of whom happened to be a city council member—spoke about the charm of living with students and what it meant. She spoke candidly about the problems but the message was that there is light at the end of the tunnel with these initiatives taking place,” said Hempel.

Rewa lives in a district where the student rentals are virtually taking over some of the formerly residential streets. “With the high density of student rentals, you end up with a lot of problems. Noise ordinance violations, public drunkenness, unsafe conditions caused by people who haven’t learned yet to behave responsibly, to drink responsibly. As a city council person I get calls from people who are frustrated because they feel that the police aren’t responding fast enough,” she said.

The Neighborhood Campaign seeks to improve the quality of life for students and long-term residents in Newark neighborhoods who are affected by the secondhand negative consequences of high-risk drinking. The campaign involves the distribution of a pamphlet developed by the Delaware Undergraduate Student Congress called “A Guide to Safe and Responsible Parties for Off-Campus Students,” as well as the Newark Police Department’s “Guide to Order Maintenance & Alcohol Laws.” In addition the police continued their enforcement efforts of parties that “disrupt the quiet and good order of the city of Newark,” and landlords and apartment managers who took proactive steps in addressing rowdy parties were highlighted and encouraged.

“The biggest problems are from lack of communication,” said Rewa, who has lived in her

downtown home for more than 20 years. She said some landlords do not tell students about Newark's policies on alcohol and noise. "Some 18-year-olds also are not aware that they need to consider neighbors who might operate on different schedules than they do," Rewa said. "At four o'clock in the morning, people are yelling up and down the street," she said in "Alcohol, Noise Problems Still Plague Newark: Neighborhood Campaign Aims to Stop Destructive Drinking by UD Students" (*News Journal*, September 7, 2001).

That article also reported on a last-drink survey of 113 UD students who violated a university alcohol policy. It showed that more than half had their last drink at an off-campus residence. About 67 percent of those students said they had four or more drinks on the night they were arrested.

### **Media Advocacy**

From May through November 2001 about 200 articles published in the *News Journal*, *Newark Post*, and *The Review* covered alcohol topics, ranging from accounts of alcohol-related problems to issues regarding alcohol regulations and ordinances, as well as news about new alcohol outlets.

"When James Baker first started working with us, he said that we needed to raise the consciousness of the community and talked about using the media to do this. After about four months of talking I woke up one morning and said, 'You know, this is a media thing.' We became more active with op-ed pieces and letters to the editors. We met with the editorial boards of the *News Journal* and the *Newark Post*. The net effect was a raising of community consciousness that this is an issue. We went out of our way to say we are not prohibitionists. We are not against a good party, but when that behavior infringes on the quality of life, the health and safety of other students or neighbors, then we are going to address it. We have been successful in making this a key issue for city council," said Richard Waibel.

"I found out early that no matter how succinct you might be or how clear the message is, telling it once isn't enough. In my political life as well as my working life I was amazed how difficult it was to get the word out. Unless people are looking specifically

for something, they are not listening to it. You've really got to get the message out again and again and again," said Ron Gardner.

John Bishop said: "In the last year, we have found that we are up to our necks in the politics of alcohol. It is very clear that we had significant opponents and significant opportunities. The mayor appointed a special commission to try to give some guidance to city council about what our overall philosophy about alcohol should be. He has asked for a report by April 1, 2002. I was appointed as a member of the commission along with ten others. But, the mayor wants this commission to find all the answers in three months. Our project has been working for now going into our sixth year. We certainly don't have all the answers. It's not that simple."

Bishop credits the BRC with constantly raising alcohol issues to the point that they could no longer be ignored. There is now a sense that the community has to do more about controlling alcohol and needs to take this problem more seriously.

### **Project Assessment at the End of the Advocacy Initiative—Fall 2002**

During the Advocacy Initiative, the BRC moved from engaging in isolated instances of activities that are part of the various components of the environmental prevention model to leading a comprehensive change project with strategies and activities integrated across the different components of the model.

Through coordinated and supportive efforts, the BRC developed an effective advocacy campaign intended to achieve sustainable community change. It developed a thorough understanding of environmental prevention in general and of effective use of the model as a framework for strategic planning.

The coalition also developed the ability to make strategic and highly focused news stories and successfully expanded the community voices representing the issues and carrying the messages. BRC staff members are now recognized as prominent experts in addressing alcohol issues locally, regionally and nationally.

Comprehensive data collection continues, and the BRC has a clear understanding of the use of research and its application to support its work.

Effective media advocacy is a powerful tool in making issues and policy solutions visible and shaping public debate within a community.

Enforcement has increased to be more proactive in addressing the problems associated with alcohol-related disturbances and crime.

### **Components of Technical Assistance Provided During the Advocacy Initiative**

PAS provided the coalition with the following:

- Assistance in developing a strategic plan to support the identified policy objectives
- Training and workshops on environmental prevention, advocacy campaign planning, Media Advocacy 101, spokesperson skills and techniques, and message development
- Identification of media opportunities as they occurred and the drafting of written media materials such as op-eds and letters to the editor
- Development of issue briefs
- Provision, on request, of research information to support policies on the following topics: economic costs associated with alcohol-related issues, relationship between outlet density and crime, alcohol advertising in college papers, model lease provisions, dramshop liability laws, local control, conditional use permits, price specials, women and alcohol, hours of operation, and happy hour laws

### **Key Learnings**

The BRC developed a list of principles to support its actions. After the Caffé Gelato incident, the BRC stayed out of individual fights and simply stood by its principles.

A strategic planning instrument that identifies project goals and objectives and defines supporting activities provides the focus necessary for undertaking a comprehensive environmental prevention project.

Building on small successes creates confidence in the project participants' capacity and abilities, which, in turn, supports the project team in being more aggressive in taking on larger issues over time.

Effective media advocacy is a powerful tool in making issues and policy solutions visible and shaping public debate within a community.

The various components of the environmental

prevention model are interdependent, working together to support successful policy-focused change. Collection of data provides content for media advocacy. Media advocacy increases the visibility of the issues, thereby facilitating community organizing. The most effective media advocacy uses authentic community voices. Media advocacy puts the issue and policy solution on the public agenda.

**MORE BARS THAN STREETLIGHTS:**



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# **STEPPING UP CHANGES BOTH STREETScape AND MINDScape**

CASE HISTORY AT A GLANCE:

**University of Iowa  
and Iowa City**

# University of Iowa and Iowa City

Sixty-two bars and nightclubs clustered in the compact Iowa City downtown sit within one mile of the University of Iowa Memorial Union. This abundance of drinking establishments does more than allow for a choice of where to drink on Saturday night. It contributes to a drinking culture and changes the character of downtown. The Stepping Up Coalition unites community and campus leadership to alter both the physical and cultural environment through alcohol-free leisure activities and enhanced enforcement of alcohol sales and service practices; through the enlistment of parents, local businesses, student organizations and police; through strategic use of the media; and through help from the state alcoholic beverage control authorities.

- 1996** University of Iowa receives A Matter of Degree five-year grant, engaging Julie Phye as first project director. Phye, with leads from university and Iowa City principals, invites others from campus and community to serve in the Stepping Up Coalition.
- 1997** University introduces a number of on-campus initiatives to promote alcohol-free, leisure-time options and reduce availability and consumption of alcohol.
- 1998** Community survey reveals little understanding of or support for environmental prevention measures. Iowa City Council enacts a noise- and nuisance-abatement ordinance with Stepping Up's support.
- 2000** Advocacy Initiative begins in the fall. City council takes up proposed ordinance to limit bar patronage to those 21 years old and above.
- 2001** Stepping Up advances two policy goals:
  1. Enact a city ordinance that will restrict drink specials, such as two-for-one drinks and all-you-can-drink for one price.
  2. Institute civil penalties to hold bars responsible for their customers by bringing them for a hearing before the city council if the bar sells to underage or intoxicated people; penalties would range from fines to license revocation.

City council adopts compromise ordinance by banning certain drink specials and giving the city broader authority to revoke or suspend alcohol licenses. Subsequent court tests question the legality of the ordinance.
- 2002** Police step up enforcement of underage possession and service laws in the downtown area, combining citations with consultation to owners regarding improved practices. Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division issues white paper on college and university alcohol issues. Advocacy Initiative concludes in August.

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

The University of Iowa grew up around the historic, 162-year-old Iowa State Capitol building, anchoring the southeastern edge of campus right where it adjoins downtown Iowa City. When the capital of Iowa relocated to Des Moines in 1857, the old Capitol building became the first permanent structure for the new university.

The campus and the downtown have coexisted since then. More recently, however, economic forces common in many U.S. cities have led to retailer flight to suburban malls and an in-filling by businesses able to operate on a lower margin.

In downtown Iowa City, many of those businesses have been bars. In Iowa the minimum legal drinking age is 21. However, it's up to cities to say whether 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds can enter the premises. Iowa City permits patrons between 18 and 21 to frequent its licensed premises. Even though they can enter the bars, the law expects those under 21 to abstain from consuming alcoholic beverages.

Iowa City bars not only permit under-21-year-old patronage, they market for it. Ads from downtown bars and restaurants that may also serve alcohol appear with frequency in the University of Iowa's student newspaper, *The Daily Iowan*, touting low prices and other attractions.

"There are more bars on East College Street in Iowa City than streetlights," Stepping Up newsletter reporter Amy Riekema wrote in 2002.

New bars coming into the downtown area mean more outlets competing for customers. The result is price discounting. Lynn Walding, administrator of the state Alcoholic Beverages Division (ABD), said: "What was happening in Iowa City was a lot of new bars. When they open and try to attract clientele, they market cheap alcohol to students. Once they build a base, they can go from there. But established licensees were having to match those lower prices in order to compete, setting off a market war with consequences adverse to the public interest."

Advertising for drink specials doesn't discriminate on the basis of age. Students over and under 21 years of age read *The Daily Iowan* and are exposed to such ads. If police reports are any indication, under-21-year-olds managed to obtain and consume alcohol in many downtown premises, whether due to crowded conditions, dim lighting or owner

attitudes that it's not the bar's responsibility to monitor what happens to alcohol that has been sold to legal drinkers.

As one third-year student told *The Daily Iowan* (June 21, 2000), "It's a problem. It's extremely easy to get alcohol. Bartenders and people who check IDs aren't that strict."

Replicating national studies, Iowa faculty member Peter Nathan and students in his psychology classes have conducted surveys of student drinking and its consequences. As reported nationally by the Associated Press in 2000, Nathan found that three out of five Iowa students who consumed high levels of alcohol (five or more drinks for men and four or more drinks for women) in a single occasion said that the episode led them to engage in behaviors they subsequently regretted, such as having unplanned sexual relations or fighting.

Students aren't the only victims of excessive drinking. The entire community is affected. The local daily, the *Press-Citizen*, said in a September 23, 2002, editorial, evidence mounts for the 21 law: "Our multi-million dollar pedestrian mall is routinely disfigured with vomit, urine and waste by people who choose to drink to the point that they disrespect other people's property—public and private."

The police have long recognized the problems created by large crowds of young adults concentrated late at night and early in the morning with plenty of alcohol on hand. Michael Brotherton, the Iowa City Police Department's public information officer and a 24-year veteran, said: "Most people in town probably don't realize what goes on downtown after midnight. There is quite a bit of fighting and public mayhem. If we were not down there to control things, it would be pretty wild and crazy."

"The clear, cold reality is that Iowa City downtown is in trouble because it's nothing but one bar after another after another. Businesses are closing. The only ones thriving downtown are the bars. Downtown has been declining anyway because we have this huge mall outside of the adjacent city of Coralville, which has attracted a lot of business," Iowa's Student Health Services director Mary Khowassah said.



20,500 undergraduates and 6,000 on-campus residents—to do?

Nor are downtown bars the only sources of alcohol for the University of Iowa student body. Students can find plenty to drink at parties hosted by social fraternities, at tailgate parties on football game days and at private parties on and off campus. Iowa students rank high in national studies of alcohol consumption and adverse consequences.

Leaders were concerned. So when The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) invitation came in, it was well received. Iowa City’s mayor, in 1995, agreed to enter into a coalition with the University of Iowa to examine ways of addressing problems associated with drinking. That year also marked the university’s appointment of Mary Sue Coleman as president.

Phillip Jones, vice president for student services, who was instrumental in securing the RWJF grant, said: “We were very concerned about the problems we were seeing in our student justice system related to alcohol prior to the surveys [by the Harvard University School of Public Health and Iowa’s own Student Health Services]. The surveys, of course, gave us hard data. We were clearly aware of the number of bars we have within a mile of our residence halls. It all came to a confluence because about the time we

got word for applying for the grant we had a death on campus. A student in a fraternity situation died of asphyxiation resulting from alcohol. He passed out and vomited in his sleep and died.”

### Setting the Stage for Community Change

Stepping Up proceeded, from 1997, to develop campus-community relationships and pursue a comprehensive mission consisting of multiple objectives and strategies.

Secondary effects became the principal argument advanced for changing the environment. Stepping Up used survey data from Harvard University and Iowa faculty to emphasize high-risk drinking consequences for others, even nondrinkers. The coalition used media to build support for an Iowa City noise and nuisance ordinance.

“We know what it used to be like and what it could be like again. It doesn’t have to be bar, bar, bar,” said Sarah Hansen, also with the campus health services.

Any talk of changing the law runs into criticism. Students say there’s nothing else to do and near-campus bars provide convenient venues for socialization, music and dancing and are safer settings than private parties without any supervision that are located farther away from campus.

Civil libertarians say that the government already overregulates too much of people’s lives. What’s a city—60,000 in Iowa City and another 40,000 in the adjacent Johnson County suburbs—with a large university population of nearly 30,000 students—

Hansen outlined the challenge in adjacent residential neighborhoods: “People in this community were not making the connection that why every Sunday morning they had to pick up trash off their lawn or why Saturday nights were never restful was not just because they lived by students per se, but because those students were using alcohol in a high-risk manner.”

Meanwhile the university, for its part, adopted measures to make the campus environment less tolerant of problematic drinking, as detailed at the Stepping Up Website ([www.uiowa.edu/~stepping/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~stepping/)):

- Funding of late-night social events. The *Press-Citizen* cited the university for enhancing student leisure-time options on campus in an April 20, 2002, editorial calling for action from the city council on the 21-and-over law. “There are and will be things for those students to do besides drink, but they won’t do them so long as alcohol is so readily available.”
- Mini-grants to student groups to assist them in producing their own alcohol-free social events.
- Stepped-up enforcement of the policy against underage drinking for students, especially during orientation.
- Outreach to parents. Stepping Up is now a regular feature of orientation and finds that parents (many of whom accompany their first-year students) are quite interested in potential restrictions at Iowa City bars to limit patronage to those 21 years of age and older.

### **Community Attitudes About Alcohol Policy**

Early on, Stepping Up Coalition members determined to get a sense of how the community perceived both the extent of alcohol-related problems and the types of environmental measures to which they were committed. The results were mixed, according to the summary released in 1999, and underscored the uphill battle facing Stepping Up in pursuit of its policy objectives. Among the findings were the following:

- Relatively few respondents attributed student drinking to the leniency of bar owners toward underage drinking, the number of bars or convenience stores selling alcohol, or low-priced promotions of alcoholic beverages by bars.

- Potential policies that received support from a minority of the respondents were registration of beer kegs, police “sting” operations, creating alcohol-free areas near the university’s football stadium, lowering the blood alcohol standard for drunk driving, and prohibiting underage patrons from remaining after 10 p.m. in establishments serving alcohol.
- There was little public support for policies aimed at restricting alcohol-related advertising or price breaks such as all-you-can-drink specials, happy hours and two-for-one specials.

Steve Parrott, the university director of community relations, described how these survey results prompted the group to seek media attention to help educate the public and policy-makers on secondary effects: “Alcohol use by college students was recognized by a lot of people as a problem in Iowa City. However, there was no majority of support for actually taking action. It was the classic case of ‘alcohol use is a matter of personal responsibility.’ We tried a number of different things—speaking to civic groups, writing editorials, pushing these ordinances—that got the whole issue into the news. I think we were successful in showing people that it truly is a problem that affects not only those who drink but those who don’t. We also said that people who drink too much shouldn’t be given free rein to do whatever they want to the rest of us.”

Undeterred by prevailing community perceptions and buoyed by on-campus policy and enforcement successes, Stepping Up also focused its early efforts on supporting an anti-nuisance ordinance favored by neighborhood groups. This victory became the impetus for further efforts.

Stepping Up representatives spoke in favor of a city council ordinance to allow police to intervene in loud parties without having to identify the neighbor who called in the complaint. Before the ordinance, neighbors, fearful of retaliation, were often reluctant to contact the police about large and bothersome gatherings often featuring copious amounts of alcohol. Each fall, Stepping Up also conducts a door hanger campaign. Stepping Up staff and volunteers place complimentary information packets

about alcohol laws on doorknobs in areas where students live.

### **Environmental Assessment at the Beginning of the Advocacy Initiative—Fall 2000**

When Pan American Services (PAS) began providing technical assistance to the University of Iowa in November 2000, the Stepping Up project was already involved in policy-based environmental prevention. The project had published a story about its work and underage drinking in Iowa City in the April edition of *Parent Times*, a UI publication, which mentioned that minors were allowed in bars in Iowa City. When concerned parents began calling the Stepping Up office, they were encouraged to express their concerns to city council members and through letters to the editor in the local papers.

Parents proved to be strong advocates, once mobilized. Downtown business owner and, since 2002, co-program coordinator Jim Clayton described the results of parents taking note of the easy bar access. “We had a very strong campaign on the part of parents writing to the city council saying, what are you idiots doing down there? ‘I send my kid to school. I send thousands of dollars along with him and you let him go in the bar. But he is only 19 years old so don’t let him in. It’s the law; he can’t drink until he is 21. He doesn’t have a fake ID, he just goes up to the door, pays his money and goes inside and his friend buys him a drink. You can’t do that to me.’ The city council listened to that.”

City administrators and city council members considered measures that would address these problems, such as banning minors from bars, banning drink price specials and penalizing bars for serving underage people. But because there was neither the political will nor perceived public support for prohibiting minors in bars, the Iowa City Council decided to consider an ordinance that would ban drink price specials and impose civil penalties on bars because there were no effective penalties on bars for selling to underage or intoxicated drinkers. The project adopted these measures as its policy goals.

Up until then, for some students, “part of orientation was going out and getting drunk. No

longer,” Clayton said, as the university communicated clear expectations that such conduct would not be tolerated.

However, the coalition of campus and community representatives was still limited at the time. The project had a 16-member executive committee made up of city and university officials, students, law enforcement and business owners, which acted in an advisory capacity to the project. Four task forces—accessibility, enforcement, outreach, and social activities—also advised the project on policies and activities. But little effort had been made to expand the coalition into the community, and executive committee members acted as spokespeople for the project.

### **Applied Data**

In addition to the 1999 community survey, the coalition also used data collection to support policy efforts. The police department widely publicized the number of citations for underage possession of alcohol, particularly in bars, which supported the notion that the city needed to do something about underage drinking. This information contributed to the debate about whether minors should be permitted in bars and led to proposed measures to restrict drink specials and penalize bars for serving underage patrons.

### **Progress During the Advocacy Initiative**

The policy objectives were now well defined and the issues were vigorously debated in the community. PAS also helped the project identify potential coalition and community members who would take an active role in newsmaking.

Stepping Up’s project director at the time, Julie Phye, described the results of PAS’s technical assistance. “They were great in helping us write opinion pieces for the newspapers and helping us define what we want to focus on toward reaching our policy goals. They helped us do background work on zoning as well as alcohol and crime and the interplay between the two.”

From November 2000 through May 2001 PAS staff helped identify media advocacy opportunities for framing the issues of underage and binge drinking and the need for policy solutions and worked with the project director to place related media advocacy pieces. The project developed a plan of action that included an op-ed and letter to the editor focusing on

We had a very strong campaign on the part of parents writing to the city council saying, what are you idiots doing down there. I send my kid to school. I send thousands of dollars along with him and you let him go in the bar.

downtown economics (written by PAS staff). The plan also included generating other letters to the editor, testifying at the state ABD hearing, holding a news event on the public health costs of underage and binge drinking, creating a radio call-in show, and pitching a TV news story on activity downtown at midnight on a weekend.

During this period progress on the proposed polices moved forward. The Iowa City attorney provided a draft ordinance to the city council that was reviewed at a work session in January 2001. Although there was no public testimony at the meeting, it did generate some news coverage that focused primarily on the content of the ordinance, which would prohibit

- selling two or more drinks for the price of one,
- selling unlimited servings for a fixed price,
- pouring alcohol directly into a person's mouth,
- increasing the quantity of alcohol in a serving without proportionately increasing the price,
- holding any contests in which alcohol is a prize, and
- selling more than one serving—including pitchers—of alcohol to one person at one time unless an employee verifies that the people drinking are of legal age.

The ordinance also, for the first time, authorized the city to enforce the state law that penalized bars for selling to underage and intoxicated patrons.

In early February 2001 the city council scheduled the first public hearing on the proposed ordinance, and a second hearing was scheduled for later that month. Representatives from the university and community provided testimony. Stepping Up project staff members were quoted in articles about the hearing in the local press.

As a result of these discussions in Iowa City, the Iowa ABD began debating the need for a state law to limit drink specials so that there would be uniformity in the state. In mid-February, the ABD conducted a public forum in Iowa City to hear comments on the scope of underage alcohol consumption and public intoxication on college campuses and on the merits of local ordinances versus the need for a state statute to regulate drink price specials.

To prepare for the forum and city council hearing, staff developed a plan of action that included op-eds, letters to the editor, press advisories, message development for framing the underage and high-risk drinking issue, a radio call-in show, and strategic planning assistance for these efforts. Assisted by PAS staff, project staff and volunteers from the university and community testified at both the hearings and forum, along with representatives from Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa.

The testimony focused on the number of states with laws regulating drink specials, the kinds and numbers of drink specials offered in college towns, the outlet density in Iowa City, and the need for a state law to restrict bar entry to those over age 21. Opposition testimony came from two local bar owners and a representative from the Miller Brewing Company. The forum was widely covered by local media. At that meeting, University of Iowa President Mary Sue Coleman also testified that she supported requiring people who enter bars to be age 21 or above, as did one bar owner. The local Iowa City newspaper also weighed in with an editorial supporting a local city ordinance as the preferred option.

### The City Council Acts

In early April the city council conducted the first reading on the proposed ordinance. The council amended the ordinance during a previous work session to allow the purchase of two drinks rather than one drink at any one time by any one person. In the final vote the city council approved it on the first reading by a vote of seven to zero. The second reading on the ordinance was scheduled for mid-April.

Responding to concerns raised after the first hearing about the impact of drink specials on drinkers of legal age, the city council removed from the ordinance happy hours and reduced drink prices as regulated price specials. The city attorney also recommended that the city council take no further action on the ordinance until it was in its final form.

As a result, the city council voted four to three to postpone further action on the ordinance until new language could be drafted. At the same time, two city councilors said that they would no longer support the

ordinance because they believed that an ordinance banning minors from bars was needed. The ordinance was rewritten, and, on May 1, the city council considered the revised ordinance at a second hearing.

The third reading of the ordinance was held June 12 and it was approved by a vote of four to three. The drink special ordinance without a ban on minors entering bars took effect August 1, 2001.

### **Another Local Opportunity Suddenly Arises—Saving Pearson’s**

A large corporation, the Hy-Vee grocery chain, announced plans to turn Pearson’s Drug Store, which is located just off campus, into a Regal Liquor store. Stepping Up formed an alliance with the Northside Neighborhood Association to protest the plan, and President Coleman issued a personal plea asking Hy-Vee to abandon its plans. Protest letters to Hy-Vee officials caused the corporation to rethink its options. Hy-Vee spokesperson Ruth Mitchell told *The Daily Iowan* (August 27, 2001), “After receiving 70 letters and e-mails, in particular the one from Mary Sue Coleman, we decided to take a step back and revisit the whole situation.” A local businessperson subsequently took over Pearson’s, preserving its deli and fountain service, and the coalition notched a victory.

### **New Policy Concerns**

With the success of the drink specials ordinance and saving Pearson’s, in mid-2001 the project shifted its focus to eliminating neighborhood problems related to high-risk drinking and restricting the growth of alcohol outlets downtown. The project director developed a broader strategic communication plan that included objectives to reduce access to alcohol by minors and related secondhand effects, to increase social activities for students, and to increase knowledge about the project and support for its work. The executive committee adopted this plan. At this point it was agreed that technical assistance would be used to help develop a timeline, specific strategies and media advocacy opportunities and to identify responsible persons to carry out the plan.

In February 2002 project director Julie Pbye moved to a different position within the university. The coalition executive committee chair, Carolyn Cavitt, assumed the role of interim director. From February

through May the political climate in Iowa City seemed to be changing in favor of a measure to restrict minors from entering bars. Although bars had been cited for violations of the drink specials ordinance, questions were being raised about the effectiveness of the ordinance in reducing underage and high-risk drinking. Moreover, several minors were injured in a downtown bar fire related to an alcohol stunt.

Stepping Up was becoming more vocal in its support of a policy to raise the age for admittance to bars to 21 and made outreach efforts to neighborhood associations to garner their support. The project was also interested in supporting city efforts to limit the number of bars downtown through zoning. During spring and summer 2002 the project engaged in discussions with neighborhood associations about their concerns related to high-risk drinking and how they could collaborate with Stepping Up to resolve these problems. There was also discussion about how local data could be used to support limiting outlet density downtown and restricting minors in bars. Some opinion pieces supporting these two policies were developed for local newspapers.

This use of media advocacy and data to support proposed policies and collaboration with neighborhood residents signaled a change in focus by Stepping Up. The new focus would help the project advance these policies and increase public support for use of environmental prevention strategies in Iowa City.

### **Project Assessment at the End of the Advocacy Initiative—August 2002**

Increased community awareness leads to community mobilization. One of the key successes resulting from the technical assistance provided through the advocacy project was the groundwork laid in the community by Stepping Up about the problems of high-risk drinking and potential solutions. Because of this work groups like the Northside Neighborhood Association were able to mobilize around the Hy-Vee liquor store proposal and elevate it in the eyes of both the public and policy-makers to make positive changes in their community.

“We’ve seen a general raising of community awareness about the problem of binge drinking and high-risk drinking. More and more people are aware

With the success of the drink specials ordinance and saving Pearson’s, in mid-2001 the project shifted its focus to eliminating neighborhood problems related to high-risk drinking and restricting the growth of alcohol outlets downtown.



of it through all levels of the community. I belong to two or three organizations. Some of them are recreational. Some of them are social service obligations. People want to talk about it. That wasn't the case even a year ago," said Jim Clayton.

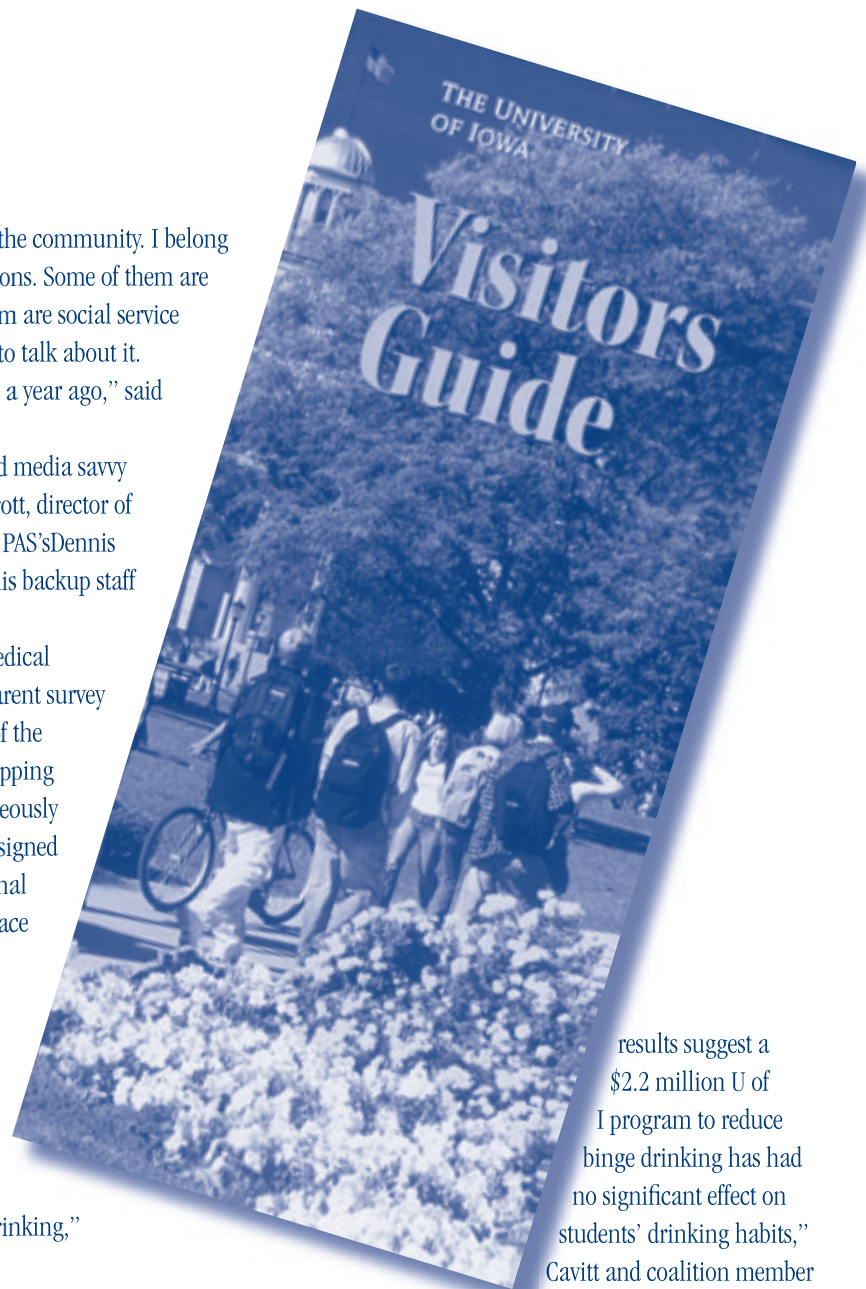
Stepping Up has gained media savvy with help from Steve Parrott, director of University Relations, and PAS's Dennis Alexander, supported by his backup staff in Bozeman, Montana.

When the American Medical Association released its parent survey results at the beginning of the fall 2001 school term, Stepping Up was ready. It simultaneously issued a media release designed to capitalize on the national media coverage and to place the Stepping Up project in the broader context of a problem affecting other universities. The release, titled "National Poll Supports Local Efforts to Reduce Harms From Excessive Drinking," began as follows:

"IOWA CITY, Iowa—National poll results released today by the A Matter of Degree (AMOD) program of the American Medical Association (AMA) support actions taken by the Stepping Up project, a community and campus coalition to reduce the harmful effects of excessive drinking in Iowa City and on the University of Iowa campus."

Carolyn Cavitt said: "When I became interim director, Dennis Alexander was an invaluable resource to me. We talked frequently. He did a lot of background research for me. When we had a bar fire we were on the phone the next day figuring out strategies. He helped the coalition write opinion pieces and letters to the editor."

When the *Des Moines Register* carried a major article ("Binge Drinking Alive and Well at U of I," November 23, 2002) on Iowa's efforts, saying, "The



results suggest a \$2.2 million U of I program to reduce binge drinking has had no significant effect on students' drinking habits," Cavitt and coalition member Jim Clayton penned a letter

to the editor to set the record straight. Although not published, the Stepping Up response pointed out the multiple ways in which the campus and city were altering the environment to offer leisure options for students and reduce underage service by Iowa City bars.

Media attention, prompted by a steady flow of letters from parents, op-ed contributions from Stepping Up Coalition members and media releases from the campus, has altered the community's mindscape about the problems associated with high-risk drinking. Media coverage has led not just to small triumphs, such as the preservation of Pearson's fountain in lieu of a liquor store, but also to readiness for larger achievements, such as the growing interest by the Iowa

City Council to transform downtown's environment into a more attractive landscape, perhaps with fewer bars than streetlights.

### **Parent power can help move a policy agenda.**

Stepping Up quickly recognized parents as allies in supporting policy change, in part because of President Coleman's communication with them, which was backed up further by what parents learned during orientations. The coalition produced the winter 1999–2000 *Parent Times* quarterly newsletter with an overview of the downtown bar scene and secondary drinking effects and advice for parents. The university's Website continues to provide alcohol-related tips for parents.

The university now communicates about alcohol concerns with parents of incoming students during the summer between high school graduation and first-year fall semester. A Stepping Up leader bluntly described that first letter in summer 2000: "Mary Sue Coleman wrote a letter to the incoming students and their parents in June or July after they've graduated from high school. The message was if you are planning to come here and drink, don't bother. That's not what we are about."

In fall 2002 the university started sending out letters to notify parents of students who violated alcohol rules. "The reason we chose to use that method of communication is that we are beginning to get complaints from parents about the safety of the youngsters in bars. We want to let them know that the university does not have the ability to enforce laws in those situations, and they need to talk to their youngsters ahead of time," Vice President Jones said.

Local media coverage of the new policy was favorable. "Parents of more than 100 University of Iowa students had received letters stating their child had been cited for underage drinking on campus. Let's see, classes started about a month ago. The university better start saving up for more postage" (*Press-Citizen*, opinion, September 23, 2002).

### **Policy changes can take time, and economic interests can create resistance.**

Stepping Up has not lost sight of the proposed 21-year-old minimum entry requirement for bars. Its members see a shift on the city council, favorable media coverage, and the results of heightened police enforcement as encouraging. Two of the councilors who voted against the 2001 compromise drink specials ordinance as not strong enough were handily re-elected that year. The city council has asked for a report in 2003 on the need for possible additional city regulation of bars. Stepping Up's board approved another community survey during its September meeting, with findings to be available in 2003.

Stepping Up has met with suspicion and outright hostility from local bar owners, although the lack of a cohesive trade group has dampened some of the opposition. One bar owner publicly threatened to take any proposed 21-year-old admission ordinance to a public vote via referendum and to lead recalls against consenting council members. Privately, however, many owners express support for restricting drink specials and reducing downtown bar density since the current proliferation hurts their profits.

"Some bar owners wouldn't mind seeing that kind of ordinance passed because it would level the playing field for them. They've said many times that if it is voluntary it will never work because there will always be somebody who is willing to let in the underage people to make the money," said Parrott.

"Most bar owners actually favor certain bar restrictions like outlawing all-you-can-drink specials. But given the free market economy we have, if a competitor does it, they have to do it. So they were all asking us for a level playing field. Just as long as everyone plays by the same set of rules they didn't have a problem," said Walding.

Will downtown broaden its appeal and provide for a wider variety of social and recreation venues for all ages? Twenty-year downtown business proprietor and Stepping Up Coalition member Jim Clayton sees a gradual effort to reduce outlet density, building upon city and owners' interest in

Most bar owners actually favor certain bar restrictions like outlawing all-you-can-drink specials.

downtown renewal by imposing minimal distances between bars and the library, churches and schools.

“We can’t limit the number of licenses, but we can limit the use of the land and say that we are going to allow 11 [bars] per acre, and if you close your business it is reduced to ten per acre, nine per acre, whatever. If you sell your business to somebody else, nothing happens. The buyer gets to operate as long as it’s a continuous use. But if you abandon it for a year and the license is lifted, we reduce the number by one until we get down to our goal of a limited number of alcohol licenses,” Clayton forecasts.

When the downtown Englert Theatre had been proposed for conversion into another downtown bar before the council, with the urging of Stepping Up, an arts group stepped in. Dale Helling, assistant city manager, recounted that the city supported restoration of the theater for live musical and theatrical performances and had invested \$18 million in downtown library expansion. The city is experiencing a growing market for downtown residential spaces and recently approved plans for a 14-story hotel and convention center. Helling said: “If we can change the identity from one of a place where students go to drink, to one of where you can take your family, you can find entertainment, you can find good restaurants, that will bring people downtown.”

### **After a policy is passed, enforcement is the next problem.**

Local enforcement of state alcohol regulations is virtually the only enforcement now taking place. A state official noted that recent fiscal challenges precluded the Iowa ABD from enforcing anything other than underage tobacco laws, for which special federal funding exists.

“We used to do actual enforcement. But with the [state’s] budget crisis, we got rid of our alcohol agents. And so at this point in time we don’t have it. But that’s a function we may restore at some point, if the economy ever turns.”

A one-time federal grant did permit the state’s Department of Public Safety, encompassing state policy, narcotics and gambling enforcement, and criminal investigations, to carry out compliance checks—bar checks and underage access—at alcohol retailers for three months in 2002.

“They were finding that roughly 50 percent of retailers were selling [to underage youths],” said the same official.

ABD administrator Walding is now seeking additional external funds to make statewide enforcement possible. “I am a big believer that enforcement equates to compliance,” he said.

Walding’s division also provides administrative support to the state’s ABC. As Stepping Up became more visible and began regular communication with Walding, the commission became interested in university communities across the state. The commission convened a series of public hearings, took testimony and released a report with recommendations in early 2002. A number of these recommendations incorporated the ideas generated by Stepping Up.

One of the six recommendations is that some of the state monies that already go to local governments (\$12.9 million annually, or 20 percent of revenue derived from ABD operations) and the profits the state makes from alcohol sales should be used toward enforcing alcohol laws. “We are generating a lot of money off this business. I think that it’s not good public policy to not divert some of that money toward regulating that business. The consequences of ignoring regulation are too important,” said Walding.

Meanwhile, in Iowa City the local police department is the only agency looking at bar compliance with underage drinking laws. Stepping Up’s pressure, multiple-year consideration of regulatory ordinances by the city council, significant media coverage and the involvement of the parents of Iowa students have led the police department to embrace this role.

In April 2002 Iowa City police stepped up underage drinking enforcement, citing both minors in possession and licensees who sell to underage decoys. Arrests for minors in possession went up by 70 percent during the first half of 2002 compared with the prior year. “For the same six-month period, vehicle accidents involving underage youth who had been drinking has dropped 42.5 percent, from 120 to 69, records show,” the *Press-Citizen* reported (July 22, 2002).

Bars are getting the message and fewer are selling to decoys, although there is a great disparity between



in the *Press-Citizen*: “The truth is that Iowa City bars now are paying more attention to the age of their customers because police have begun enforcing a law that they could have been enforcing—or enforcing more aggressively—several years ago.”

The police department credits Stepping Up for its support in the current enhanced enforcement, according to Sergeant Kelsay: “We get support for our efforts from the rest of the coalition and the individual people that make up that coalition. It’s been positive for us.”

Perhaps more important, what is what is the status now? Has that lack of political will now turned around? Will the council take steps recommended by Stepping Up and the *Press-Citizen*? State ABD administrator Walding credits Stepping Up for changing the political climate in Iowa City. “I think Stepping Up has done a great job of getting the council to recognize that there is political support in that community for enforcing it [the minimum drinking age law].”

In May 2003 the city council voted to require a minimum age of 19 to enter the bars to see if such a restriction would work or whether further measures would be necessary.

### Did the Advocacy Initiative Make a Difference?

The coalition demonstrated its vitality in the policy and enforcement changes being sustained on campus and in the growing political support for city council action on downtown bar density and for restricting bar entry for all under age 21.

Iowa City Police Department’s Michael Brotherton describes the difference: “I went to the university here and graduated. And over the years, particularly since the Stepping Up Coalition was established, I have

establishments. Sergeant Troy Kelsay, the officer in charge of the downtown bar beat, ticked off a list of good operators, some of whom pay bonuses to staff if police decoy operations come up empty-handed, while other bars continue to account for a disproportionate share of violations. Police communicate in writing with bar owners and conduct follow-up decoy visits to give feedback to owners about improving procedures.

Further evidence of change comes from the police department, as indicated in an October 2002 editorial

seen better collaboration, better communication, an establishing partnership and more attention drawn to the problem. It has gained momentum. All the agencies are involved and are making a more conscious effort to do their part. We are doing more enforcement to make the bars more accountable.”

But the most telling testimonials come from the two top leaders, the Iowa City mayor and the university’s outgoing president, whose comments also reflect the progressive nature of these efforts. Neither claims that a final outcome is at hand or even feasible. Changing the landscape, just as the mindscape, is always a work in progress.

Mayor Ernie Lehman told the *Press-Citizen* (February 1, 2002) that a University of Iowa student recently said students under 21 are finding it “a little tougher to get a drink than it had been,” and that “judging from some of the calls I’ve had from some of the bars, I don’t think there’s any question there’s a level of caution that is significantly greater. Overall, I think we’ve gotten the attention of the bar owners.”

Interviewed at the time of her mid-2002 appointment to preside over the University of Michigan system, Mary Sue Coleman was asked about her role in alcohol problem prevention at Iowa. She responded: “Have we had success? Well, I think we’ve changed the public perception. People view it as a much more serious issue than before. This is a national problem and it has to be viewed as systemic. And we’re going to have to keep working at it” (*Christian Science Monitor*, July 23, 2002).

### **Components of Technical Assistance Provided During the Advocacy Initiative**

PAS provided the coalition with the following:

- Assistance in developing a strategic plan to support policy objectives
- Recommendation on strengthening project linkage to the community to identify and increase support for policy objectives
- Training and workshops on media advocacy, working within a political system and spokesperson training
- Identification of media opportunities and the drafting of media materials such as op-eds and letters to the editor

- Development of a strategic plan, talking points, spokesperson preparation and other details in support of coalition participation in state and local hearings
- Fulfillment of requests to provide research to support policy passage on the following topics: relationship between outlet density and crime, zoning and alcohol outlets, economic impact of 21-plus service restriction, and impact of price specials

### **Key Learnings**

- Raising public awareness of alcohol issues enables community members to speak out and act on problems (such as a liquor store location) and encourages policy-makers to consider policy solutions.
- Effective community organizing helps build relationships with community members and broadens public support for changing public policy.
- Supplying policy-makers with information and data about the problem helps to support their decision making and sustain long-term policy solutions.
- Parent power can help move a policy agenda.

# NU DIRECTIONS

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# **ADVANCES ON SOLID** **FOUNDATION AND SOLID DATA**

CASE HISTORY AT A GLANCE:

**University of Nebraska-Lincoln**  
**and the City of Lincoln**

# University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the City of Lincoln

The NU Directions coalition builds upon the positive tradition of Lincoln's town-gown relationship with the University of Nebraska's flagship campus. Blessed with a founding project director who moved to the campus in the mid-1990s with impressive community prevention credentials, NU Directions has been able to galvanize public and political opinion, attract student support and align its environmental mission with downtown business interests and local law enforcement. Indicators demonstrate that NU Directions is reducing high-risk alcohol consumption.

**1992** Lincoln begins Responsible Hospitality Council.

**1998** Coalition (later to be named NU Directions) is already formed and composed of university administrators, students, staff and faculty as well as city officials, local businesspeople and concerned citizens.

**1999** NU Directions coalition adopts a 13-goal strategic plan.

**2000** Advocacy Initiative begins in the fall.

**2001** State legislature reforms driver's license system.

Advocacy Initiative ends in the fall.



## NU DIRECTIONS HAD A HEAD START

NU Directions had a head start in addressing high-risk drinking practices by students dating back to the formation of the Lincoln Responsible Hospitality Council in 1992, which still exists today. But, according to Linda Major, A Matter of Degree (AMOD) project director, the council mainly restricted itself to the sales and service of alcohol. And the University of Nebraska (with 18,000 undergraduates in fall 2002, 86 percent of whom live on campus) and the community of Lincoln (population 225,000 including Lancaster County) always had a strong town-gown relationship of working collaboratively, but not on alcohol issues.

“When The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s AMOD initiative presented itself, it was natural for the university and the community to come together to form a broader coalition. While the community had a coalition with university representation, it was not to the extent of the involvement we have today. In some respects we had a jump start on this model. We started functioning as a coalition during the planning stages of the project in 1996. Those involved in the planning stage have been fairly committed to the coalition since then. They were involved in the development of the goals and the objectives of NU Directions; and with the addition of two new goals, those are still our goals today. From that point it was a lot of forward momentum,” said Major.

In fall 1998 over 70 people from the university and Lincoln community developed a strategic plan aimed at reducing high-risk drinking among university students.

For its strategic plan, the project relied on both statistical and anecdotal data as indicators of the high-risk drinking culture at UNL. It also used these data to monitor the project’s progress. These indicators included

- general statistics from the Harvard University School of Public Health College Alcohol Study,
- number of neighborhood complaints,
- number of students and Greek organizations referred to alcohol education due to campus violations,
- level of cooperation from student groups, and
- editorial commentary and the amount and tenor of media coverage generated by the project.

In 1999 the coalition held a community forum with the Responsible Hospitality Council that brought retailers, government officials, police and community leaders together to discuss the problems and issues related to the use of false identification. At this forum, a critical partnership was established with the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles and its director, Beverly Neth. She found strong support among forum participants for changing the analog photo driver’s license and identification system in Nebraska in favor of a digital system. Of particular concern was the fact that, under existing analog technology, individuals seeking duplicate replacement licenses could easily offer false identification, as there were no digital files to check against documents and verify name, address and age. As a result, although unintended, false licenses and identification cards were being produced by the DMV and used by minors to obtain alcohol. A second concern was that the current license, made with a laminate pouch and typewriter, could be easily manipulated and altered by minors.

Addressing the problem of false identification was raised again in 2000 at a two-part policy symposium offered by NU Directions for communities throughout the state. At the second symposium Neth provided a specific plan for a digital driver’s license system. A statewide coalition to support the initiative was formed at that symposium. Key partners included the Nebraska Grocery Industry Association, which spoke at the community forum the year before and continued to provide testimony and resources in favor of the legislation. Advocacy support was also extended to groups concerned with other issues related to false identification. Many partners, including the Lincoln Police Department, the Nebraska Banking Association and the Nebraska Grocery Industry Association had multiple reasons for supporting a digital license system, including identity theft and organized check fraud.



### **Environmental Assessment at the Beginning of the Advocacy Initiative—Fall 2000**

At the time the Advocacy Initiative began, NU Directions was involved in a community process to create a vision and consensus model for identifying and mobilizing support for local alcohol policies and solutions. NU Directions used a comprehensive approach to address alcohol-related issues and problems that included environmental management, education and social marketing.

As in many states, Nebraska enforcement of laws regarding alcohol licenses and sales is a local concern, yet many enforcement powers are reserved for state

authorities. Over time NU Directions experienced a number of frustrations with the city's limited ability to enforce alcohol license and sales regulations. Furthermore, the ease of producing fake identification cards—an area under state purview—posed another obstacle in enforcing the state's underage drinking laws. Therefore NU Directions decided to develop state alliances in order to influence state policies that have direct impact on local alcohol policy enforcement issues.

### **Policy Goals**

For the Advocacy Initiative, NU Directions chose to pursue two specific initiatives from its strategic plan's policy goals. They were to:

- Improve the state driver's license system to reduce the prevalence of false identification used by underage students to obtain alcohol
- Revise the city's municipal code to provide local control over the permitting and renewal of liquor licenses and amend the Nebraska Liquor Control Act to strengthen the authority of local governing bodies.

The legislation regarding IDs became a goal for the technical assistance being offered to NU Directions by Pan American Services (PAS). Advocacy initiatives included a press conference featuring a bucket of false IDs and testimony from retail clerks, bar managers, and Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady; legislative committee testimony by coalition members and others; and information sheets for senators created by the Department of Motor Vehicles with assistance from NU Directions. The bill was passed and signed into law in 2001. The first digital licenses were produced in 2003.

One purpose of the driver's license system legislation was to reduce access of underage students to alcohol. Specifically the policy would centralize the Department of Motor Vehicle's production of driver's licenses using the most current technology. This would result in a high level of sophistication for official driver's licenses that would significantly reduce the ease of duplicating and manufacturing false IDs.

Other objectives of the new identification system included reducing the fraud that relies upon duplicate or falsified IDs and reducing the manufacture and

provision of fake IDs—a big business around large universities. Additional expected outcomes from this policy included enhanced law enforcement efforts in general and improved enforcement and compliance for age-sensitive sales of alcohol and other consumer goods.

### **Progress During the Advocacy Initiative**

Because the NU Directions coalition was well established and successful before the Advocacy Initiative began, its need for technical assistance from PAS was limited to specific topics and was of relatively short duration. During the six months that PAS provided technical assistance to the NU Directions project, the primary areas of support were in:

- developing a campaign plan to assist the passing of the legislation to improve the state driver's license system and
- compiling research on various policy-related issues.

A comprehensive package was developed for the policy goals, including defining the potential policy impact on the culture and environment, identifying the locations of problems to be addressed by the policy, defining a formal policy review process and defining an evaluation process to determine how the policy actually affected the problem.

### **Conducting an Advocacy Campaign**

NU Direction's methods of organizing by developing consensus around a broad range of ideas about solutions and approaches could be daunting given the number of members. However, this approach is consistent with the overall culture of Lincoln, and coalition leadership proved to be adept at bringing the membership to consensus. Various members of the coalition effectively articulated its position and provided visible leadership. The coalition also used outside experts to lead discussions on prevention efforts and alternatives.

The project had a full-time media-communication director who managed and developed the communication efforts of NU Directions. Numerous media pieces and newsmaking events were provided with trained spokespeople from the coalition. Leading spokespeople were NU Directions' chairpersons: Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen, Chief of

Police Tom Casady, and Project Director Linda Major. The communication campaign was professional and intentionally used all types of media outlets. It emphasized problem identification, newsmaking, building relationships through the local media, pitching positive stories about NU Direction's efforts and student activities, and a campaign aimed at correcting students' misperceptions of drinking norms.

In support of the driver's license system policy, the organizing efforts focused on identifying spokespeople to carry the message of those most affected by the problem and to coordinate political sponsorship of the legislative bill. Of particular note was the effort to identify, at this early point in the process, issues expected to be raised by the opposition. Spokesperson messages were crafted to reframe and address the opposition's issues and delivered as part of the media advocacy plan well before the opposition was able to present the issues themselves. Nebraska DMV director Neth credited NU Directions' role as "key to the swift passage of this initiative."

### **Media Advocacy**

NU Directions and PAS developed a media advocacy plan that identified goals and objectives intended to create positive public support and pressure to achieve the proposed policy initiative. This plan included strategies and timelines for newsmaking addressing the need for the driver's license legislation. It also included the development of supporting editorials and columns about the importance of the bill early on, news releases when the policy was introduced, editorials and feature columns on the importance of the policy and supporting graphics and images for newsmaking events. Other materials were message boxes, outlines and fact sheets to be used by all spokespeople regarding the need for the policy change. NU Directions and PAS conducted spokesperson training for individuals preparing to present testimony before legislative committee hearings on this policy.

A second key role of PAS technical assistance was in the area of research, specifically in the collection of statistics on fake ID use and information, case histories and model policies from other states that changed their identification systems. NU Directions

NU Directions and PAS developed a media advocacy plan that identified goals and objectives intended to create positive public support and pressure to achieve the proposed policy initiative.

used these research packets in developing messages to support the policy change.

### **Project Assessment at the End of the Advocacy Initiative—Fall 2001**

Key changes resulting from NU Directions’ activities and the technical assistance provided by PAS were the creation of an issue-based coalition centered around an identified policy objective, construction of a strategic plan for policy development and successful use of media advocacy techniques to achieve policy change.

The coalition employed strategies such as:

- communicating to the public the need for the policy,
- presenting information on who would be affected,
- detailing how changes would be implemented and the costs involved,
- implementing strategic media and newsmaking around the issues with defined solutions,
- forming a working coalition of community members and identified stakeholders, and
- effectively using these coalition members as spokespeople to articulate their personal stories and deliver the messages developed to support the policy.

The policy goal was accomplished, as shown in the following:

- A digital driver’s license system was signed into law in March 2001.

NU Directions actively engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process, guided by its core planning team, four work groups, a student advisory council and a business advisory council. The group produced a strategic plan that identified policy goals and objectives with a set of methods to accomplish its goals.

NU Directions was successful in having a significant impact on the public discourse about the effects of high-risk drinking in Lincoln. Progress was made both on the campus and in the community by

- working closely with the Lincoln Police Department, which conducted selective enforcement of the neighborhoods near the university campus and encouraged dialogue between students and residents to reduce the number of neighborhood complaints about house parties;

- collaborating with the Lincoln Responsible Hospitality Council to conduct enforcement compliance checks in all Lincoln off-sale establishments, such as liquor stores; and
- facilitating statewide symposia to educate state agencies, businesses and policy-makers on environmental management strategies and to create statewide consensus and support of policy and practices to reduce the high-risk drinking environment in Nebraska.

NU Directions has also been influential in forming and supporting further alcohol policy changes in Lincoln and in the state of Nebraska, illustrated by the following:

- The project director was appointed chair of a committee investigating mandatory alcohol-server training by the Internal Liquor Committee of the city council.
- Recommendations from the city of Lincoln may be used as models for other cities in Nebraska.
- The city council has since recommended new licensing conditions to the state, which subsequently incorporated those recommendations.
- Responsible beverage-service training for those who sell and serve alcohol in Nebraska is now available. NU Directions was the impetus for a state traffic safety grant to enable the university’s continuing education to develop this online, interactive training course, particularly valuable in a rural state. First available in spring 2002, more than 900 servers have registered for the training. The URL is [dscpp.unl.edu/rbst/](http://dscpp.unl.edu/rbst/).

### **Reinforcing Health and Safety Goals Through Media Coverage**

NU Directions consciously conducted outreach through print and broadcast media and its own creative use of handbills and publications. As evidence of that relationship, Major recalled in September 2002 the “four or five times in the last year and a half that the *Lincoln Journal Star*, unprompted, has published an editorial on the benefits of having the NU Directions campus-community coalition in existence. And they applaud the effort. That has just been tremendous.”

NU Directions' media efforts have had national reach. Lincoln Police Chief Casady spoke to a national audience in March 2002 when he was featured on the CBS television show "48 Hours." Part of the show titled "Spring Break Exposed" focused on controversial promotions for Spring Break in Panama City Beach, Florida.

Casady was featured during that segment voicing his opposition to the ethical practices of the Panama City Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau, which funded a 12-page advertisement insert in the November 17 and 27, 2001, issues of *The Daily Nebraskan*.

Panama City Beach Police Chief Robert Harding was quoted in the advertisement saying, "We are tolerant," followed by a paraphrased statement, "meaning that a lot of things will get overlooked."

Casady said he was interviewed for the show after a letter he sent to Harding received publicity on the East Coast. In the letter Casady wrote, "the insert is a thinly veiled invitation encouraging University of Nebraska students—legal drinking age or otherwise—to come drink with impunity in Panama City Beach." Casady said he received a prompt response from Harding, stating he was misquoted in the advertisement. During the show Casady said he was appalled by the high-risk alcohol marketing, which included the promotion of free beer and of "all the beer you can drink for \$5," *The Daily Nebraskan* reported on April 18, 2002. Lincoln's activities in this area were picked up and expanded by the National Advocacy Initiative. Soon colleges all over the country began following Nebraska's leadership.

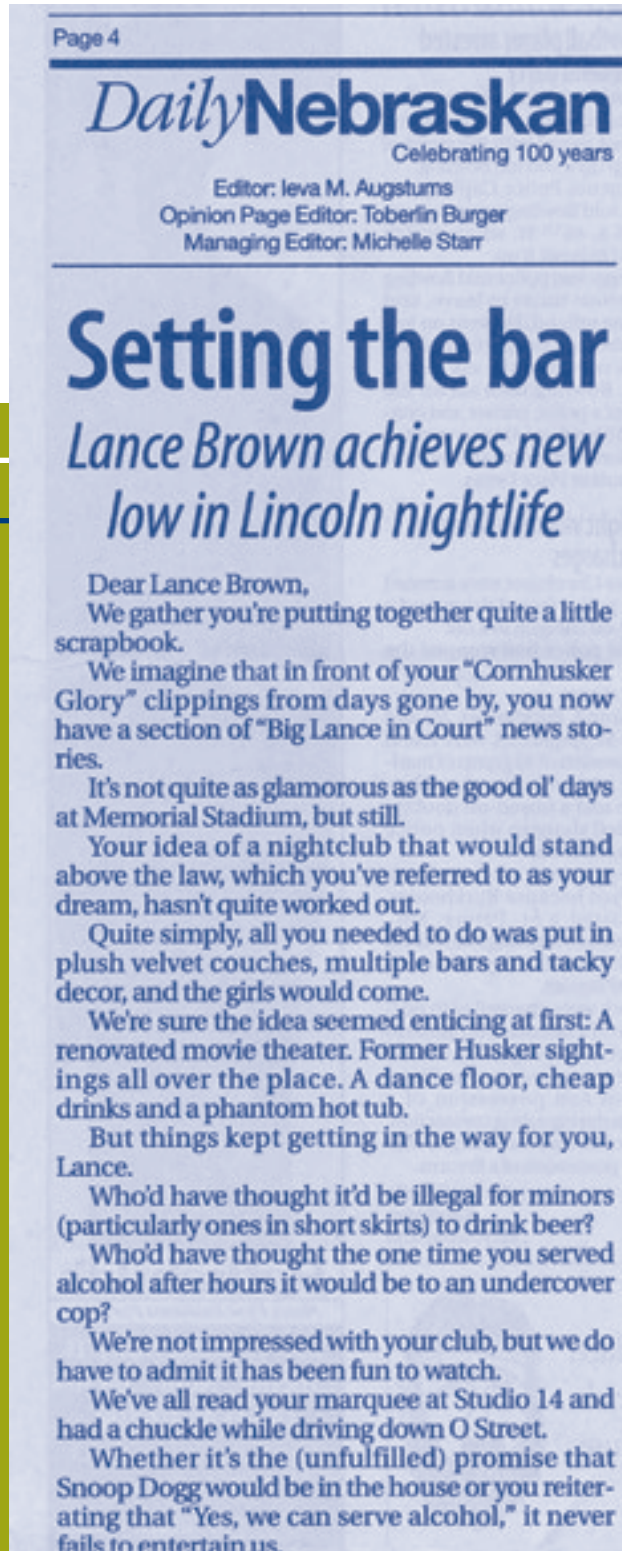
In April 2002 when the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism released *Call to Action*, a report from a two-year task force study of collegiate drinking, NU Directions was ready with local information to augment the national coverage. *The Daily Nebraskan* quoted NU Directions Associate Director Tom Workman, Police Chief Casady, Vice Chancellor Griesen, and Becky Wild, director of student services for Lincoln Public Schools and a coalition member. Wild emphasized articulation between secondary and postsecondary education and the relevance of NU Directions' ideas to the high



school level. Workman's remarks demonstrated how the NU Directions mission was consistent with the national recommendations: "The approach attacks high-risk drinking from three angles," he told *The Daily Nebraskan* (April 11, 2002).

"First, it targets individual students with potential problems through alcohol education, motivational feedback and a creative sanctions project. Although some students will be forced to comply with university sanctions, many participate on a voluntary basis—such as pledges in fraternities.

"Second, the approach widens its focus to the entire campus. An integral part of this area is dealing with how students perceive drinking. It aims to fight the 'misperception that everyone drinks all the time' through projects such as the norms campaign, which



advertises that the majority of UNL students do not binge drink.

"Third, a campus-community coalition, in which off-campus issues are addressed, is necessary. This involves participation by police, bar owners, citizens and the city council."

Even with coverage from the *Lincoln Journal Star* and *The Daily Nebraskan*, NU Directions publishes its own periodical, *NU Directions Update*, a quarterly summary of accomplishments and upcoming priorities, and a one-time spoof, *The Nquirer*, reminiscent of the *National Inquirer* and carrying the headline, "The amazing truth about alcohol and pleasure: Less = more!" Current and past issues of these publications are posted on [www.nudirections.org](http://www.nudirections.org).

Students have confirmed the perception that, where alcohol is concerned, the campus has become a safer place. Mitch Walden, president of Inter-Fraternity Council, reflected at the start of the 2002–03 school year that he noticed positive differences in both attitudes and behaviors within his fraternity brothers compared with his own first years on campus three and four years ago.

"We've seen a huge shift off of our campus with alcohol use," Walden said. "When I came in as a freshman in 1998, it was not unusual to have kegs and cases of beer at a party . . . That's dwindled down to nothing."

By 2002 Lincoln and the university could point to promising indicators of progress such as

- a drop in the number of students self-reporting consumption of four (for women) or five (for men) drinks in a single occasion within the previous two weeks (from 64 to 55 percent from the previous survey two years prior);
- an increase in moderate consumption among those who chose to drink (that is, 53.4 percent were consuming fewer than four drinks per occasion and that figure is now up to 70 percent in less than three years) and
- fewer students are reporting disruption related to the drinking of others.

The successes of NU Directions in altering the way both the campus and community view alcohol-related problems and responses to those problems have set the stage for even greater changes that are policy-based and environmentally focused.

## Components of Technical Assistance Provided During the Advocacy Initiative

PAS provided the coalition with the following:

- Assistance in developing a strategic plan to identify and support specific policy objectives
- Assistance in crafting various messages as part of the media advocacy campaign plan
- Fulfillment of numerous requests for extensive research and data collection on the following topics: process and cost of reformatting state driver's licenses; issues surrounding identity theft; various methods of producing false identification; information on local control, such as developing a conditional use permitting process and other zoning tools to control outlet density; information on the use of economic development incentives and the development of entertainment districts; locations of successful application of "use and lose" laws; and information on various methods of electronic age-verification processes

## Key Learnings

- The initiative demonstrates the importance of developing a strategic plan that includes media advocacy. Media advocacy places the issues high on the public policy agenda, enables public participation in framing the debate and ultimately provides support for policy change. The media advocacy plan needs to adapt to local cultural expectations and fit how business gets done in a community. For example, it may need to reflect consensus building values rather than confrontation or reflect an existing consensus of advocates (built up behind the scenes) rather than first introducing a new idea in the media.
- The use of data and research provides a foundation to model policies. The applied use of statistics helps define the problem and supports the need for policy change. For example, data suggested that licensed establishments were not a leading setting for underage drinking. Mindful that entertainment

venues that sell alcohol may have other leisure-time attractions, the coalition is focusing on overservice in licensed premises. It is also working with Greek chapters and other students to curtail underage service in noncommercial party settings.

- The coalition must include key leadership and individuals affected by the problems, as well as support from various community, business and educational sectors in order to get campaign messages to decision-makers.
- Understanding and working within the political process allows coalition leaders to anticipate opposition and to identify compromise and other tenable positions.
- Strategic use of the media gets the project message across. Having someone with specific communication skills to coordinate communications can assure consistency of messages throughout a campaign and professional tailoring of messages for the public and for decision-makers.
- Use of information technology is important. NU Directions is noted for its use of Websites to reach students, retailers and the entire campus community environment with leisure time options, responsible host training and extensive coverage of accomplishments and plans.

**IMPROVING THE**



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# **QUALITY OF LIFE IN BURLINGTON**

CASE HISTORY AT A GLANCE:

**University of Vermont  
and the City of Burlington**

# University of Vermont and the City of Burlington

Within a one-mile radius of the University of Vermont in Burlington there are 22 bars and restaurants and 55 stores selling alcohol. It has been estimated that there is one bar stool or seat for every three residents of Burlington. The state of Vermont has an above-average binge drinking rate and ranks seventh in the nation per capita in drunk-driving deaths. The Northeast in general has high rates of alcohol use, and the majority of UVM students grow up in the Northeast. At UVM, as in society, high-risk drinking is a complex problem defying simple solutions.

The University of Vermont and the city of Burlington were selected as a site in the A Matter of Degree (AMOD) Initiative in 1996. The application centered on alcohol-incident response and prevention, development of a sense of belonging to a community, improved communication and environmental change. The name selected for the project—Coalition to Create a Quality Learning Environment—underscored the project focus on quality-of-life issues for students and community members alike.

**1996** Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's A Matter of Degree grant begins.

**1998** University of Vermont Athletic Department stops accepting alcohol industry advertising and support.

Burlington city council passes a liquor-license enforcement policy in an effort to hold licensees more accountable for overservice and liquor law violations.

Coalition publishes a guide for students and resources for staff and faculty aimed at raising awareness and changing assumptions about the role of alcohol on campus.

**1999** University starts notifying parents about alcohol and drug violations on campus.

City council approves an ordinance allowing city police to send notices to parents when students violate city alcohol laws.

**2000** State law is enacted making first-time possession of alcohol by a minor a civil offense with a mandated referral for screening or treatment.

City council requires responsible-alcohol-service training of all licensees.

City council limits the number of roommates allowed in residential homes as a means to reduce problems with party houses.

Advocacy Initiative begins in the fall.

**2001** Bill to strengthen local control over alcohol outlets is introduced in the state legislature.

Department of Motor Vehicles begins issuing licenses for people younger than 30 with an encoded magnetic strip on the back that contains the person's birth date, height and weight.

University of Vermont is ranked 18 among *Princeton Review's* "Top 20 Party Schools," down from 13 in 2000.

City charter is changed so that mayor becomes a member of the Liquor Control Board.

Responsible-alcohol-service training in the city of Burlington becomes a condition of license renewal.

Under-21 regulations for bars are enacted.

Burlington Nuisance Property Committee addresses problem houses in the residential neighborhoods adjacent to the campus.

**2002** City launches Alternative Justice, a project that allows direct referrals from the Burlington Police Department to the Restorative Justice Panel for first-time criminal and civil offenses.

City of Burlington and University of Vermont issue the "Joint Statement on Student Off-Campus Behavior and Quality of Life Issues."

Advocacy Initiative ends in the fall.

**IMPROVING  
THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
OF STUDENTS  
AND RESIDENTS**

Founded in 1791, the University of Vermont is the fifth-oldest university in New England. Known as UVM for *Universitas Viridis Montis*, Latin for “University of the Green Mountains,” the campus is located atop a hill in Burlington, Vermont’s largest city.

Peter Clavelle has been Burlington’s mayor since 1990. He said that UVM is an “incredible asset to this community. Burlington would not be the dynamic, livable city that it is if it were not for the University of Vermont. The university brings immense cultural, educational and economic benefits to the community. However, a university with a student population of approximately 9,000 students in a community of 40,000 is a large presence.”

Clavelle also said that the university and its students have some negative impact on the city of Burlington. “When you scratch below the surface, much of the negative impact is connected to the use and abuse of alcohol. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s A Matter of Degree [AMOD] project presented an opportunity for Burlington and UVM to work together as a community to address issues of overconsumption, binge drinking and unacceptable student behavior.”

Tom Perras, director of the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs with the Vermont Department of Health since 1993 and a UVM alumnus, says that in the early 1990s UVM, like other universities, was not willing to admit that it had a problem because doing so was bad for recruiting students. He wrote a letter to UVM’s president urging the campus to follow the example of Johnson & Johnson, which, in 1982, responded to the seven deaths related to Tylenol product tampering by quickly acknowledging the problem and taking steps to fix it.

“I said that UVM could market itself as a healthy place for parents to send their children and protect their investment. It could stop being known as a party school. I was very angry about the lack of acknowledgment of the problem. So, when the opportunity presented itself to become involved with the project I was optimistic,” said Perras, who is a lifelong resident of Burlington.

For Perras, a member of the coalition, the university needed to ask itself: Are we going to allow

alcohol advertising at sporting events? What kind of information are we going to give out? What are the penalties going to be? What are we going to allow or not allow in student dorms? How are we doing in freshman orientation about setting the boundaries and expectations? What kind of prevention and treatment services should we have? Do we support recovering students?

“The coalition brought the multiple dimensions of looking at those problems. That was very important,” said Perras.

According to Rick Culliton, assistant to the vice president for student affairs and project manager for the RWJF grant until 2001, the key word in UVM’s Coalition to Create a Quality Learning Environment is *coalition*. More than anything else, the project is about building a coalition, rather than merely designing and implementing programs that may be cut when the grant money expires and wither away unless they’re actively supported by all the parties involved (*Vermont Quarterly*, Winter 1999).

Judith Ramaley, who served as UVM’s president from 1997 to 2001, put herself at the forefront of dealing with student drinking problems at both the local and national levels. Under her leadership the university shed a long-standing practice of denying the pervasive alcohol problems at UVM. In addition to her support for UVM’s AMOD initiative, she worked with the National Advisory Council subcommittee on college drinking convened by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

David Nestor, UVM’s vice president for student affairs, said that in 1996 at the start of the project there was a lot of finger-pointing between the city and the campus. “We were doing it ourselves. But it was very clear then—and it continues to be clear in too many parts of our community—that this is about college-age kids who are out of control. And UVM had the biggest problem.”

According to Nestor, town-gown relations had been strained for a number of years. As a result, the coalition’s early initiatives focused on the campus community with the idea that “we needed to ‘clean up our own house’ before looking to change the surrounding community.”

By 1998 UVM had strengthened its student alcohol and other drug policy, increased enforcement of policies for the fraternities and sororities located off campus, maintained collaborative law enforcement strategies with the Burlington police and provided information to the Burlington City Council about the impact that the number of bars has on the quality of life. Provisions prohibiting intoxication, drinking games and other dangerous drinking behaviors were added to the student alcohol and other drug policy. A new relationship was created with Greek chapters to outline minimum standards that all chapters must meet in order to be recognized by the university.

### **Parental Notification**

Changes in the federal Higher Education Act in 1998 allowed universities to notify the parents of underage students about any alcohol and drug violations on campus. After securing approval and buy-in, starting in fall 1999 the Office of Judicial Affairs, with the support of AMOD project staff, began sending letters to parents or guardians when such infractions occurred. Dean Batt, then vice president for student affairs, said that the intent was to “stimulate conversation between students and their families.” In the first year of the new policy, UVM sent 790 letters to students’ parents.

The new policy quickly started paying off, according to Batt. “I see about a 20 percent reduction in alcohol problems on campus because we’ve notified students of the policy,” he said. “I’m getting fan mail from parents. They’re extremely supportive of being notified” (*Rutland Herald*, December 7, 1999).

In addition to parental notification, campus offices, including UVM police, used a more effective reporting mechanism (university violation notices) in an effort to consistently enforce university policies in a timely manner. At the same time that enforcement was stepped up, all campus alcohol and drug offenses were routinely referred to UVM Alcohol and Drug Services for follow-up with appropriate educational or treatment intervention. The cost of these services is borne entirely through fines paid by those students receiving alcohol and drug intervention.

Andrew Flewelling, program manager for the AMOD project since fall 2001, said that these measures helped reinforce consistent communication from the

institution to the general community about UVM’s position on alcohol. “All the policies are in place. The judicial structure is in place both in residence halls and through the student affairs office.”

### **Community Environment Becomes a Focus**

While much of the coalition’s initial work focused on campus policies, enforcement, intervention and elimination of mixed messages, over the past three years the project has become much more involved in working with the community toward changing the off-campus environment.

Assistant City Attorney Gene Bergman said: “We have a very high density of bars in the downtown area. State law does not allow the city council, which acts as a local liquor control commission, to limit the number of bars in the city of Burlington. Instead it has to engage in an individualized and particular assessment as to whether an establishment should be licensed or not.”

In August 1999, project staff and a steering committee member from the Burlington Police Department agreed to shift resources to focus on providers of alcohol and on stepped-up efforts to enforce the 21-year-old drinking age. Commander Glen Button from the Burlington Police Department modified staffing patterns and committed resources to undercover stings at bars and liquor stores. Undercover stings were used in a more concerted way to confront the illegal purchase and sale of alcohol.

### **Environmental Assessment at the Beginning of the Advocacy Initiative—Fall 2000**

When the Advocacy Initiative began in Vermont, the project had focused most of its efforts on changing campus alcohol policies. These included increasing enforcement and disciplinary efforts by the UVM Judicial Affairs Office and UVM Police Services and supporting enforcement of city and state laws by the Burlington Police Department. Although enforcement is a key element in the environmental prevention model, the project staff gave little emphasis to community organizing, data collection to support efforts, or media advocacy.

Changes in the federal Higher Education Act in 1998 allowed universities to notify the parents of underage students about any alcohol and drug violations on campus.



The coalition membership consisted of a project steering committee of university staff, law enforcement, and professionals from the field of alcohol prevention and treatment. Little effort had been made to include the broader community in the coalition.

Policy strategies for reducing student binge drinking were limited to increased disciplinary actions, enforcement of campus alcohol policies and some actions by the city to improve operating practices of bars. Dennis Alexander, a senior policy strategist with Pan American Services (PAS), worked with project staff on a strategic plan aimed at achieving two policy goals:

- Support increased local control over alcohol licensing and outlet density
- Develop a comprehensive, mandatory and frequent responsible-alcohol-service training for bar owners, managers and employees

Although there was an understanding of the importance of data collection to support policy efforts, there was no concept of how to use that data. The

data available from the Harvard University School of Public Health College Alcohol Study were used in press accounts to criticize the university and the binge drinking rates of its students. Other data from the Burlington Police Department showing that alcohol-related problems had decreased due to heightened enforcement were not effectively used to advocate for more policy change. Consequently most of the media coverage on the binge drinking issue in Burlington was negative, focusing on problems that students caused, with little discussion about possible solutions.

### **Intentional Organizing**

The key challenge at UVM was to broaden the base of support in the community for the project's efforts. This would serve the dual purpose of placing more of the responsibility for the problem and its solutions on the community and deflecting criticism away from the university and its students. The other challenges were to get the media to move away from problem-focused coverage toward addressing policies and changing

community norms—and for UVM to become less concerned with improving only its public relations.

### Advancing Policy Measures

Policy measures advanced in the city of Burlington did have a degree of success. One ongoing issue that the community was grappling with was the so-called

18-and-over nights at local alcohol establishments.

“In the past it was a common practice to bring together legal drinkers and the 18-to 20-year-old group. It inevitably created problems. It also sent out a message to the young people that if they wanted to have a good time, they needed to go where the booze is. But also it put both the owners of the establishments and the servers as well as the city enforcement personnel in a very challenging situation in terms of enforcement. It was very difficult to enforce. Once folks entered the establishment, if they were so determined, they would find access to alcoholic beverages,” said Clavelle.

“Some under-21 events at bars got out of hand. One had 500 people in a bar with a capacity of 290. There were 65 citations for underage

drinking. This underage party was sponsored by a university group or at least by university students.

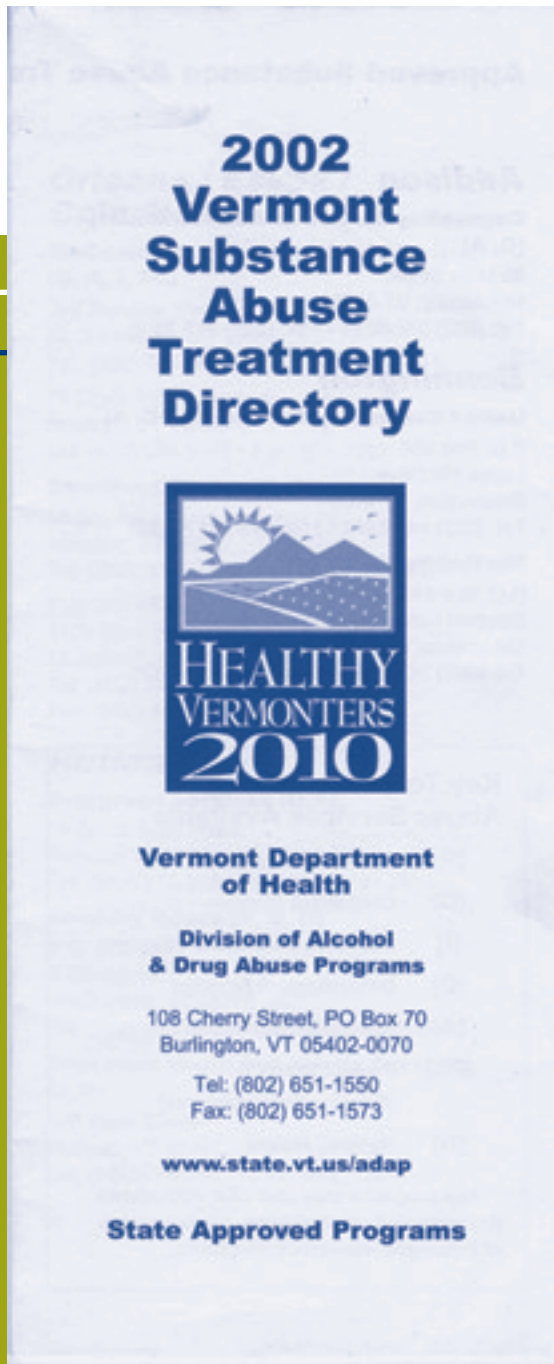
We just happened to stumble upon it. Do we just eliminate these events? Or do we say that if you have people under 21 in your establishment, you can't serve alcohol?” said Bergman.

In 2000, AMOD project staff, bar owners and city and state officials formed a Training and Guidelines Work Group to come up with standards and guidelines for the sale and service of alcoholic beverages in Burlington. One of the first issues it tackled was the under-21 events.

Paula Niquette, of the Vermont Department of Liquor Control and a member of the Training and Guidelines Work Group, said: “We invited the bars, UVM and Burlington PD and a few other people from the community to meet and talk this issue out. The bars wanted to keep the 21-and-under nights going. The bars were interested in the money and in keeping the crowd downtown. The city was concerned about the dangers associated with underage drinking. . . . After about eight months of meetings, the group, including the bar owners, agreed on what we thought would work and passed a recommendation packet on to the city council.”

The city council adopted the recommendations, which took a middle ground to mitigate the problem of bars serving under-21 patrons by placing special conditions on entertainment permits for under-21 events. These include minimum staffing requirements to monitor the crowd, no entry after 11 p.m., no re-entry into the event, and registration of the event with the police department.

The Training and Guidelines Work Group was also charged with developing a comprehensive training program for liquor licensees in Burlington that would be in addition to the once-every-three-years training mandated by the state. As a result of the efforts of this group, two trainings were conducted in fall 2000 for Burlington bar owners. In January, under a subcontract with the AMOD project, Marian Novak, director of the San Diego Responsible Hospitality Coalition, conducted training for bar owners and staff that was well attended and well received. Starting in summer 2001 the city started offering a training program that focuses on specific problems in Burlington. The city council requires that all



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cabaret licenses have 50 percent of the establishment's employees go through training. Kitchen and janitorial staff are excluded, but all other employees fall under this provision, including door persons, bouncers and security personnel, who are excluded from the state's training requirements.

Although some improvements have been made in the downtown district, according to Clavelle, problems continue, particularly related to noise. "But I will say that the city's elected officials are paying more attention to the behavior of bars and the management of the liquor-serving establishments," he said.

### Neighborhood Disruption

Not all the town-gown tensions in Burlington are related to the downtown bar scene. Approximately 4,000 students live off campus. According to Bergman, there are issues of noise and house parties in neighborhoods where students have to "coexist with families with children and just regular working people who have to get up in the morning."

In addition neighborhoods are often disrupted by the late-night and early-morning walk-through by students returning to campus after partying downtown. UVM's Flewelling said: "More than anything it's noise, property damage and the physical threats that occur when intoxicated college students interact with residents at three o'clock in the morning. Some neighborhoods have been more of a problem than others have. Just that transportation on foot with ten friends was creating some significant problems, such as slamming on stop signs or breaking things," he said.

In October 2000 the Burlington City Council voted to limit the number of roommates allowed in residential homes. "Councilors hope the law will give residents a weapon in the war against party houses. The measure limits to four the number of unrelated people allowed to live together in residential areas. Families and groups that are functioning like families are exempt. Large homes can have more than four people in them if a special permit is granted" (*Burlington Free Press*, October 17, 2000).

In a joint effort to improve the quality of life for all in the parts of the city where many students live, UVM and Burlington have worked together on the

Noise Task Force and the Good Neighbor Program. The Noise Task Force is a cooperative effort between the Burlington Police Department and UVM police to put officers out on the hill and in the student apartment areas where noisy parties occur, one of the most commonly reported alcohol-related community nuisances. In 1993 UVM students proposed the Good Neighbor Program. During two sessions in the fall and spring, a uniformed BPD officer and a UVM student volunteer to canvas the neighborhoods door-to-door to explain the noise ordinance (among other things), listen to complaints and comments and begin a conversation among the community, the students within the community, the police and the university. It also offers a community phone line to address neighborhood concerns.

Another effort called the Neighborhood Action Project started in 1998 as a collaborative effort among residents, landlords, city government, city police and UVM. It sponsors neighborhood walks as an opportunity for residents to meet students, pass out community resource and city code information and help police patrols keep an eye out for potential problem spots.

In 2002, UVM instituted an Office of Conflict Resolution to deal with student infractions on and off campus. The office offers group conferencing and mediation services to deal with problems such as noise, vandalism and parking disputes. It is dedicated to providing services to the university community on campus and to UVM students and their neighbors off campus. The office grew out of two other programs—the Good Neighbor Program and the Community Support Program, a collaboration between UVM and the Burlington Police Department that deals with student offenses occurring off campus.

Gail Shampnois, who directs city relations for the university and is a community organizer with the AMOD project, said the Office of Conflict Resolution is different from the other programs in that it features more education and prevention components. It follows the principles of "restorative justice" programs, which bring together offenders and harmed parties to seek solutions. Also, as in most such programs, a large

percentage of the offenses tend to involve alcohol or drug use.

“I meet with residents and city police officers and other city staff to explore how to address the underlying alcohol issues that we often find when we intervene in conflicts involving noise and vandalism,” Shamnois said.

Restorative justice is a popular method for dealing with low-level crimes and disputes in Burlington. The Community Justice Center there, a project of the city of Burlington, features a program called Restorative Probation. Under this program, offenders, victims and community members are brought together to deal with nonviolent misdemeanor offenses.

### **Progress During the Advocacy Initiative**

The primary focus of the Advocacy Initiative in Burlington was to expand the coalition’s outreach into the community and generate news and opinion pieces to support the project’s policy objectives. The first approach was to expand the coalition by making links with the Vermont Department of Health’s New Directions project. Under a grant from the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the health department funded 23 local coalitions to work on preventing and reducing alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among 12- to 17-year-olds. Although it was first thought that these coalitions both understood and employed environmental prevention strategies in their efforts to reduce alcohol and drug use, it became clear to PAS staff that their focus was on individual interventions. PAS, working with UVM staff, provided coalition members with training on the environmental model and on how to present themselves and their issues to the media.

Coalition development improved when the project was reorganized as part of UVM’s process for reapplication of AMOD funding. New staff members were hired, including a new project director and another individual with experience and skills to serve as a liaison to the community. The university felt that the project would be helped by hiring someone with more community experience so that he or she could focus on some of the off-campus issues. The change in project leadership caused some delays, and there

were missed opportunities when a few stories came up in the media. However, the reorganization of the project and new staff opened the door to meetings with neighborhood associations and other residents. A new dialogue began about their concerns related to alcohol use in their neighborhoods by UVM students and how those concerns could be addressed.

### **Advancing Community Relations**

In 2002 the city launched Alternative Justice, a project that allows for direct referrals from the Burlington Police Department to the Restorative Justice Panel for first-time criminal and civil offenses. Importantly, victims must agree for the case to be referred to the project; but when they do, the case can be handled quickly and directly by the community, without ever going to court.

The university’s new president, Daniel Mark Fogel, wanted to underscore UVM’s attention to quality-of-life issues for students and residents alike. (Fogel was formerly provost of Louisiana State University, another AMOD site.) One of the first things he did was join members of the Neighborhood Action Project for a neighborhood walk from midnight to 2 a.m.

According to an article in the UVM publication *The View*, “He was making good on a promise pledged his first week on the job while visiting the student-dense blocks bordered by Pearl, Willard, North and Union Streets. Fogel told residents then that he would return in the ‘wee and perilous’ hours to get a first-hand look at the challenges neighbors face from noise and rowdy behavior.

“For Fogel it was an opportunity to see the issues that motivated a recent city/university initiative furthering efforts to protect the quality of life in neighborhoods adjacent to UVM. And as the Neighborhood Walk debriefed in Pomeroy Park at 2:00 a.m., the president’s work still wasn’t done for the day. A UVM Police Services cruiser picked him up for a ride-along to get a look at the on-campus scene during those ‘wee and perilous hours’” (*The View*, September 10, 2002).

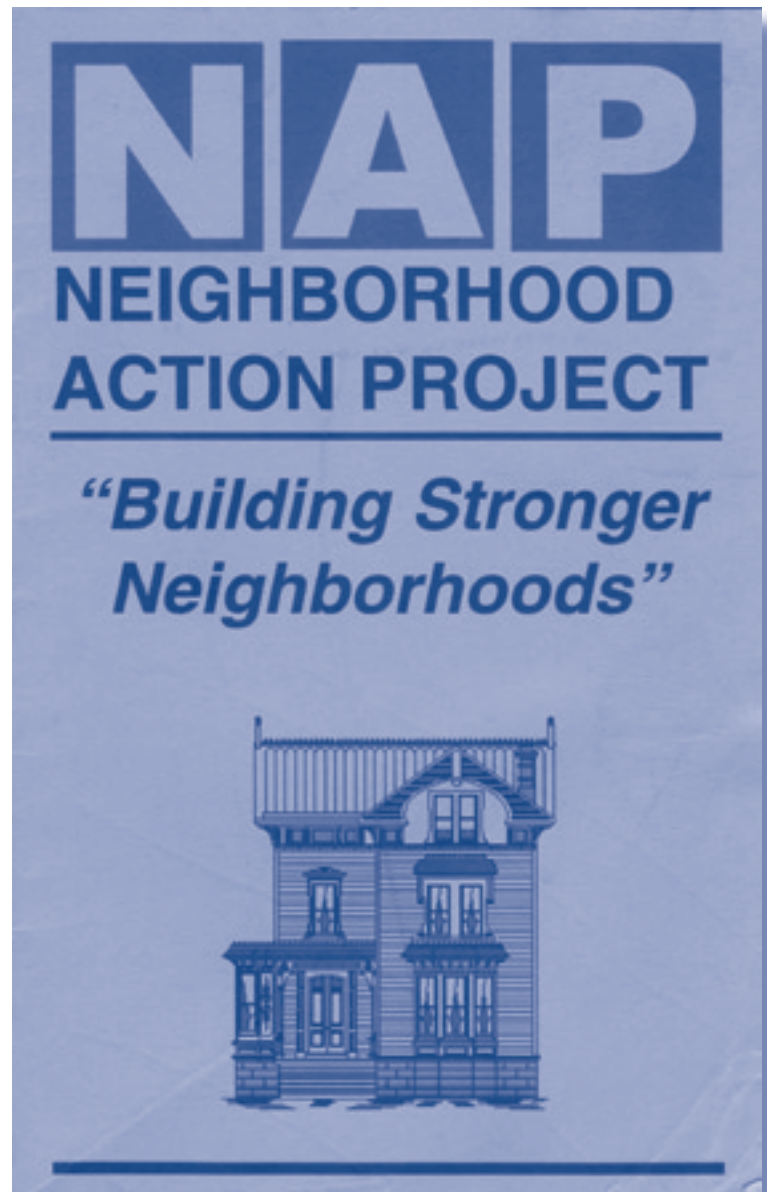
On August 23, 2002, the city of Burlington and the University of Vermont issued the “Joint Statement on Student Off-Campus Behavior and Quality-of-Life Issues.” This statement outlined nine new initiatives

In 2002 the city launched Alternative Justice, a project that allows for direct referrals from the Burlington Police Department to the Restorative Justice Panel for first-time criminal and civil offenses.



to be launched in the Fall 2002 semester, “all designed to tackle our mutual problems directly and expeditiously.” They are:

- “In close cooperation with the mayor and with Burlington police, the university will expand its follow-up program to include an immediate contact with every student receiving a quality-of-life–related citation, rather than waiting for that violation to be adjudicated. UVM will place students on notice that administrators are aware that a violation has been issued and that university disciplinary action may follow.
- To make sure that this policy of early intervention is as effective as it can be, the city will improve its police protocols to provide UVM with the information it needs to hold students accountable for their behavior.
- Once citations are adjudicated UVM will initiate disciplinary action when appropriate within its code of student conduct. The outcomes of a disciplinary proceeding may range from a warning letter to dismissal from the university. This represents an unprecedented level of university commitment to taking institutional action directed toward off-campus student behavior.
- The city will strengthen its Noise Ordinance, increasing fines, particularly for violations involving noisy house parties.
- The university will also use other means at its disposal to deal with problem behavior, including early and direct intervention with ‘problem houses’ by university officials in cooperation with city officials and notification of parents for student



alcohol- and drug-related violations, under protocols of federal student privacy law.

- All UVM students will receive a direct communication from the university president notifying them of their responsibilities both on and off campus and outlining the serious consequences of problem behaviors.
- On a pilot basis for the fall semester, UVM’s Campus Area Transportation System will provide a service between campus and downtown Burlington until 2:30 a.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights in an effort to reduce late-night student foot traffic through neighborhoods.
- For the first time, police officers from the university and the city will work in concert—via joint

patrols—to address student off-campus behavior issues, with Burlington police issuing citations if necessary. The teams will patrol targeted neighborhoods on high-activity nights, especially in early fall and late spring.

- The city will file public nuisance actions in Chittenden Superior Court against landlords and tenants when notices and tickets fail to stop disruptive behavior or blighted conditions.”

The joint statement concludes by saying: “The quality of life in Burlington is important not only to city residents, but to the University of Vermont as well. UVM students are positive aspects to the community, and the vast majority are good and productive citizens. As in most university towns, though, conflicts inevitably arise. The steps outlined today represent effective strategies for addressing chronic problems, and both Mayor Clavelle and President Fogel look forward to working closely with city officials, local residents and students to improve and strengthen this vibrant community.”

### **Communications and Media Advocacy**

Enrique Corredera, director of university communications, has been involved with the AMOD project in one way or another since the beginning. He says that media have an important role to play in furthering the work of the Coalition to Create a Quality Learning Environment.

“Media coverage has a big impact on people’s perceptions of the problem. The biggest accomplishment of this project is that we have, to some extent, successfully changed the primary perception of student alcohol problems. When we started, the media’s perspective was [that] the university and UVM students have a binge drinking problem and that it is up to the university to solve that problem. They saw it as something that was fairly well contained on campus. The project’s philosophy and approach and work over time with media has resulted in a much better understanding today that this is a much larger, more complex problem involving many other players than previously thought.

“Our focus on an environmental approach is really paying off and it’s really registering. People are beginning to see now that there are connections where

they didn’t see connections before. For example, there is an industry that has a significant role to play in the behaviors that heretofore were previously thought to be self-contained problems. Over time, we managed to increase awareness that there are other components to this problem and that a solution is going to require some level of involvement from all key players,” Corredera said.

But it wasn’t always that way. Mayor Clavelle said that despite a fair amount of media coverage about alcohol issues, “a few years back, there was a so-called student riot that got a lot of attention. When a particular bar gets shut down or there is an enforcement action, that gets the attention. What doesn’t get the attention—and what I think is important—is an ongoing message about how overconsumption of alcohol affects the quality of life for all of us in this community. There needs to be more focus on both personal and community health issues. We need to change the culture. I think we are making some inroads but it’s a long haul.”

Corredera said that he couldn’t blame the media for the time it’s taken them to focus on the broader environmental factors affecting student drinking. “From the beginning, the project looked at this problem from an environmental perspective. But even for us as an institution it took a while to really begin to get it. It’s a unique approach that doesn’t click with people immediately. It’s harder to wrap your arms around it when it’s all sorts of factors that directly and indirectly influence drinking behaviors among the student population.”

According to Corredera, the key ingredients for changing the media’s perception of the problem were patience and diligence. “We recognized early on that it was not going to be possible to change that perception overnight. Our best hope was to give ourselves some time, but to be very deliberate and very consistent over the years, hitting people with the same set of messages. It’s sort of planting the seeds and nurturing them. In every interaction with the media we looked for story angles that would give us the opportunity to highlight the role that one of these other players had with this issue. We did it story by story.”

Our focus on an environmental approach is really paying off and it’s really registering. People are beginning to see now that there are connections where they didn’t see connections before.

## DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

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**CITY OF BURLINGTON**  
7 WARDS

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT AN NPA IS?



That communications strategy was helped by the Advocacy Initiative of the AMOD National Program Office at the American Medical Association. For example, in August 2001 the AMA held a press conference to announce the findings of a parent survey that found that 95 percent of parents believe that binge drinking is a serious threat to their children and 85 percent say that easy access to alcohol contributes to too much drinking. All the AMOD sites received early notification about this national press event. With help from PAS, UVM put together a local version of the news to highlight the survey results for local media.

“We used it as an opportunity to fold in background information about our project and highlighted some of the progress on campus thanks to UVM’s participation in this project. We distributed a local version of the press release to local media and followed up with phone calls. The media focused primarily on the local story, using the national survey as the peg,” said Corredera.

The *Burlington Free Press* (August 30, 2001) reported:

“University of Vermont officials say they and the

community are fighting binge drinking on campus, including the following efforts:

- Since 1995–96, campus judicial cases decreased by 30 percent while alcohol and drug interventions and suspensions have increased.
- The UVM athletic department removed alcohol industry sponsorship from its sports events media guide.
- Substance-free campus housing has been expanded.
- Alcohol education courses were expanded to address all alcohol and drug violations on campus.
- UVM notifies parents of students involved in drug and alcohol incidents. The university sent out 700 notices in 1999–2000, the first year of the program.
- The Burlington City Council approved an ordinance allowing city police to send notices to parents when students violate city alcohol laws.”

Although there has been progress in getting the message out about the environmental approach to addressing alcohol problems, UVM’s Nestor said, “Unlike the enforcement and judicial measures, that message hasn’t gotten into the fabric of our communications structure. The communication piece

is critical for getting support for environmental strategies.”

In addition to communication strategies aimed at the broader media, according to Nestor, UVM is going to spend much more time communicating with this youth audience. Flewelling says that the message to students “needs to be simply ‘We care about your health and safety. Here are some ways to help you.’”

In his convocation as UVM’s president in September 2002, Fogel said: “Please don’t ever put me in the position I was in one August morning just five years ago of interrupting my morning exercise at 5:30 a.m. to take a call from the dean of students informing me that a student had died of alcohol poisoning. Had his friends intervened sooner, before he passed out or afterward, he would have made it. Please take good care of yourselves and of each other. Seek to elevate the value of moderation and good sense. Expect high levels of citizenship from yourselves and each other. Expect yourselves to respect our neighbors, the good people of Burlington. Respect their property and their right to a night’s sleep.”

### **Project Assessment at the End of the Advocacy Initiative—Summer 2002**

The key success resulting from the technical assistance provided through the Advocacy Initiative was a shift in focus from campus policies addressing student behavior to more of a focus on community outreach as a means to identify related problems and solutions. Three factors contributed to this shift:

- Continued emphasis on reaching out and involving community members in the project
- Reorganization of the project at the time of grant reapplication to include a staff person responsible for community outreach
- Hiring of new staff along with the reapplication

In terms of community readiness, the project has moved from recognizing that there were local problems and that something should be done about them to the stage where environmental prevention work in the community has begun. Staff and key coalition members are in place. There is general knowledge about the principles of policy-based

environmental prevention and the need to support the efforts with data. With an overall strategy for addressing the binge drinking problem now in place and an elevated level of community awareness and discussion of the issue, UVM and Burlington are well positioned to engage in a policy-based environmental prevention campaign.

### **Components of Technical Assistance Provided During the Advocacy Initiative**

PAS provided the coalition with the following:

- Assistance in developing a strategic plan to support identified policy objectives
- Development of a plan to engage the broader community and establish community support for policy objectives
- Training and workshops on environmental prevention, media advocacy, working within a political system, spokesperson training, and message development
- Hands-on assistance in working with local media to maximize use of the national parent survey in 2001, which ensured that local project information and data were released to local Burlington media
- Development of materials for a news event regarding a city council vote to allow alcohol in Town Hall City Park; this included a press release, talking points for speakers, a visual information board, and a news advisory (unfortunately the event was called off at the last minute but the preparation helped give coalition members some experience in how to prepare for such an activity)
- Recommendations on media campaigns to support the policy objectives of responsible-alcohol-service training
- Identification of media opportunities and the drafting of op-eds and letters to the editor

### **Impact**

The coalition’s efforts have had an impact on community policies, as shown in the following observations from key participants:

The key success resulting from the technical assistance provided through the Advocacy Initiative was a shift in focus from campus policies addressing student behavior to more of a focus on community outreach as a means to identify related problems and solutions.

Assistant City Attorney Bergman said, “We have seen a dramatic decrease in the number of incidents downtown, which I believe is directly attributable to the multitude of initiatives that we have put forward. One of the things that we have done in general is to say, ‘You can come down in Burlington and have a good time but you can’t go run amuck. We will not allow that.’ There is a police presence. Our police officers go into bars and count patrons and monitor for underage drinking and they cite people. I prosecute bars.”

Marty Mathison, co-owner of Rasputin’s Bar, a popular nightclub on certain nights for college-age people, agrees that progress has occurred when it comes to downtown. He was involved in the Training and Guidelines Work Group that made recommendations to the city council on responsible-alcohol-service training and under-21 event guidelines. “Through that, we have taken some very large steps in preventing some problems,” he said.

According to Mayor Clavelle, Burlington and UVM have taken big steps in the right direction, especially when it comes to holding all citizens, including students, accountable for their actions. “It’s a monumental shift when the university really says that it’s prepared to hold students accountable for off-campus behavior. That has not always been the case. UVM has made that statement publicly and is implementing methods and protocols and holding students accountable.”

In addition, there is general agreement that since the AMOD project began there has been a much higher level of collaboration and coordination of city and university efforts. “Meetings take place on a regular basis where open and frank discussions take place. And town-gown relations in this city are as good as they have been in recent history,” said Nestor.

Clavelle agrees. “This project is well positioned to truly make a difference in terms of town-gown relations, particularly as they relate to the drinking habits of college students.”

UVM has seen decreases in alcohol-related judicial cases despite increased enforcement levels that often catch more infractions. It has also seen decreases in problems related to student binge drinking, especially

in the so-called secondary effects of alcohol use that students report. Fewer students reported having their sleep or study interrupted, having their property damaged or having been insulted by someone who had been drinking.

### Key Learnings

- Broad-based support, which includes various sectors of the community, is needed for an issue to have an impact in the media and on policy-makers and to deflect criticism away from any one supporter of the issue.
- It is difficult to do community organizing only in reaction to individual incidents unless networks of supporters are mobilized and readily available.
- Community organizing skills are a prerequisite for project staff to develop an effective coalition that includes community members. They are also required to move the project’s focus from campus policies and enforcement to include community policies.
- Staff and coalition members need to quickly respond to a media story or local issue even if someone else raised it. Once an opportunity to capitalize on a story is missed, it is often too late to develop a plan, especially when the story has focused on perspectives that are not helpful to the cause (for example, when the story focuses on blaming someone instead of promoting the solutions).

## Pointers for What Funding Agencies, Consultants, Grantees, Advocates and Universities Need to Know About Conducting an Advocacy Initiative:

### Lessons Learned from Managing and Providing Technical Assistance

#### Central Planning and Implementation

- As is the case with any national or local campaign, this project was complex and involved many independent players, consultants, coalitions, volunteers, participant sites and interactions among national and local media and local policy-makers. Recognizing this, the A Matter of Degree (AMOD) National Program Office (NPO) assigned its communications director to work full time on the project with a full-time assistant to coordinate the many contracts, conference calls, project meetings and staff site visits and to distribute information to participants and the media. The project would not have been possible without this central allocation of staff time and resources.
- Full implementation of the environmental management model requires significant technical assistance in strategy development and execution. This demands more resources than are typically allowed in most foundation or governmental advocacy programs. Development of media skills and resources and political experience are often underfunded or left out of technical assistance. Particularly regarding alcohol issues, these resources are generally not available in most communities or even states due to the limited size of the existing alcohol advocacy network, limited number of communications firms that understand advocacy and limited use of media advocacy.
- Although other advocacy areas (for example, tobacco control, antiviolence activities, environmental protection, and political campaigns) use similar skills, there has been little transfer of such skills from one area to the other at the local or national level. Attention needs to be paid to how activists can get beyond subject matter differences to identify and apply their skills in other areas.
- The package of skills provided by the technical assistance provider, Pan American Services (PAS), included political campaigning, working with the business and political communities, community organizing, research analysis, media advocacy and strategic planning. The staff they hired and allocated for this project were selected to have these competencies. They proved the effectiveness of using these skills for alcohol policy advocacy.
- Preparation time and resources to adequately prepare for advocacy activities are also rarely accounted for or funded. More time was needed to prepare the consultants (PAS) and site participants for their work within this prevention model. It is very challenging to bring outside consultants into a community and to expect them to know how that community operates (for example, how decisions are made, who the key people are and what the social interaction norms and rules of behavior are). Significant time must be devoted to help client, community and consultant foster a solid working relationship built on trust and common assumptions. Given the two-year scope of this project and its ambitious goals, there was not enough time allocated for this process.
- Furthermore, while there needs to be, and to some extent was, a group or projectwide process (that is, common discussion of plans, progress and problems), it also needs to occur within each site. The project would have benefited from more time spent with each site to create a clearer vision of how the initiative would play out. For example, one site did not at first understand that the consultants would be available if and when the site wanted them—that consultants were expected to adjust to site needs and schedules. (Normally, technical assistance recipients have to accommodate their activities to the consultant's schedule—whether it fits local timing or not.) Another site realized that many of the services to be provided by external technical assistance were already available locally (for example, coalition and staff members had many of the requisite skills). There may have been an even better outcome if each understood from the beginning the assets and capabilities of the other.
- All parties need to accept that the process of planning and conducting an advocacy initiative is developmental and therefore subject to differences of opinion about strategies, outcomes and required levels of participation. It became clear early in the process that a project needs frequent, open communications among the parties, (the grantees, central staff and consultants) to discuss what is working, what needs to be changed, and what

the mutual expectations are. This enables all parties to learn a great deal about the processes being developed through the project.

- A clear delineation of tasks and how all components interact is required for effective operation of such a complex initiative. This includes consultants, central program and site staff and participant organizations (for example, the funding agency or universities). How far each group can and will go (that is, politically, in allocation of resources) is important for all to know. Staff turnover also requires time for new relationships and common understandings to develop.

### Site Planning and Preparation

- It is critical that grantees possess or gain the skills necessary to move policy goals forward in the community. Familiarity and comfort with operating within a community political system as well as solid strategic thinking skills are requirements (in this case that was especially true for many university staff). A lot of attention should be paid to identifying the types of skills and orientation to social change before staff are selected. Many of the skills and tasks required by this initiative were new and often uncomfortable for existing university staff. Traditional health education, advertising and student services skills are not sufficient for this type of university-community work. Some dived in and learned the necessary skills; others remained uncomfortable but recognized that university and community policy arenas operate quite differently. Consultants, central and site staff and community volunteers have all agreed that we need new tools for the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers to work in environmental change, especially advocacy projects. Training can help new staff, but the most effective advocates come with a pre-existing, fundamentally sympathetic understanding of what needs to be done and why. Trying to train those with a different professional orientation takes a great deal of time and is often not effective.
- It is vitally important that recipients fully understand the model of technical assistance being provided and its implications for their work and that of their coalition partners. Greater grantee involvement in the development of the technical assistance package would have ensured better understanding of what the assistance involved from the start.
- Technical assistance must be flexible to address the local capacity of participants and the local community environment. Initial assumptions in this project that all sites receiving intensive technical assistance needed similar support and that all were equally ready to work with their respective communities were quickly corrected. In addition, whereas an intense, in-person form of assistance was needed initially, most sites quickly moved to fewer on-site contacts with consultants and more assistance via electronic means, faxes and phone calls. Whereas early services focused on broader strategic planning and basic advocacy skills training, later assistance centered on specific needs. A specific need might be assistance in improving communications resources (such as press releases or issue briefs), or it might be explaining how to reach new population targets (such as certain neighborhoods or specific community groups). Throughout the project, all participants and central staff expressed a need for research, data, synthesis and advice about various alcohol policies and alcohol-related problems. No national resource currently has the capacity to make this readily available.
- The whole process would have been significantly enhanced if the technical assistance providers had conducted a formal readiness assessment with each site as the first order of business. It was a mistake to assume that all sites were at about the same place relative to moving forward and, therefore, that all were equally ready for media advocacy and broader policy work within the community. Sites had varying understanding of fundamental environmental prevention and how various components, such as media advocacy, can support policy passage. Some were ready to be or were already engaged in media advocacy, while others needed to develop broader community involvement as a first step. A project timeline is needed that allows the consultants to become familiar with each site before beginning formal readiness assessment and the technical assistance process. Site project staff must be open to working with consultants.

## Planning and Implementing Public Communications Activities

- Few media firms have the media advocacy and collaborative skills necessary to develop and execute a national or even local media campaign to support the environmental management work around high-risk college drinking. Even fewer firms are free of alcohol-industry clients who could compromise their effectiveness on this issue.
- It is very difficult to define a national media campaign that will also support all or most of the local policy activities in a timely manner without interfering with them. While the national media campaigns conducted under this project dovetailed well with the local activities of several grantees, the content was not applicable to all grantees. To create a national communications initiative that reaches down into the local media requires very careful selection of issues that raise controversy (that is, create a “buzz”) at the national level but are relevant to local advocates. Usually this means a broader, more fundamental selection of issues at the national level (for example, alcohol advertising, Spring Break, or concerns of parents) that can then be massaged or interpreted for local media and policy objectives.
- To create such an impact requires taking chances—on issues and by organizations—and being aware of what other organizations are doing (to better collaborate and to avoid competing issues). This can reap huge rewards, even if it is not consistently done. For example, the use of a highly visible and expensive *New York Times* advertisement to pressure NBC to decline liquor ads, accompanied by a dedicated Website for activists, was a major tactical change for the initiative’s national staff. The staff intensely debated this tactic as well as its content and the political impact and fallout. As it turned out, the tactic reaped huge rewards and contributed to a national policy victory. In addition, NPO staff closely collaborated with a wide range of policy, parent, and religious groups in this campaign. All participants actively shared their resources, took individual actions in coordination with other groups and willingly shared the credits for victory. A similar effort, rushed into without building alliances, consulting with allies, or having a carefully thought-out strategic plan, resulted in much more limited impact and some negative consequences.
- Initially the project assumed that university communications offices would provide media advocacy support for local community policy changes. This proved to be difficult for several reasons, including public relation concerns by the university. Many university and consulting communications offices are experienced in managing and reducing conflict, to make their clients look good but not in being advocates. The most successful media advocacy ultimately came from grantees with well-established campus-community coalitions that could “own” the media advocacy output.
- Communications and media advocacy consultants need a great deal more information about the capacities, skills and willingness to participate of the groups they are hired to help. This would enable the consultants to better tailor their services and products and to have more reasonable expectations of what the likely outcomes will be. For example, consultants were not always sure that the site participants had the media savvy needed for a particular effort or how much risk the participants were willing to take.
- Substantial resources were allocated in the central technical assistance budget to design an interactive Website for communications between all participants (central office, consultants and site staff) and to enable the project to share its experiences initially with other sites not participating in the advocacy initiative and later with other groups. The experience, however, showed that despite the availability of such tools, time for using them was not available and often not a high priority for most sites. In some cases, using these resources created time and work pressures (that is, it was perceived as another task or another writing task). This confirmed what a number of participants had observed in other settings:
  - Listservs appear to be more effective for fostering sharing among a group of geographically and institutionally dispersed staff and advocates.
  - Only a few individuals have or are willing to commit the time to actively participate in a more participatory communications format.
  - The primary users expressed a need to quickly find policy information and a need for assistance in conducting and synthesizing research on a particular policy or topic.



## Individuals Interviewed for the Advocacy Initiative Case History Report

### Building Responsibility Coalition of the University of Delaware and the City of Newark

Bob Ashley, owner, The Deer Park, Newark

Tracy Bachman, AMOD program director, University of Delaware

John Bishop, associate vice president for counseling and student development, University of Delaware

Jerry Clifton, city council member, Newark

Gerald Conway, chief of police, Newark

Cynthia Cummings, associate vice president for campus life, University of Delaware

Rick Francolino, student, University of Delaware

Ron Gardner, former mayor and cochair of the Taking Responsibility Coalition Coordinating Council, Newark

Mary Hempel, director of university public relations, University of Delaware

Casey O'Brien, student, University of Delaware

Chris Rewa, city council member, Newark

Roland Smith, vice president for student life, University of Delaware

Larry Thornton, director of public safety, University of Delaware

Richard Waibel, chair of the Building Responsibility Coalition Community Outreach Task Group, Newark

### Stepping Up Coalition of the University of Iowa and Iowa City

Michael Brotherton, sergeant, Iowa City Police Department

Carolyn Cavitt, interim director,<sup>1</sup> Stepping Up Project, University of Iowa

Jim Clayton,<sup>2</sup> owner, Soap Opera, Iowa City

Sarah Hansen, campus health administrator, University of Iowa

Dale Helling, assistant city manager, Iowa City

Phillip Jones, vice president, student services, University of Iowa

Troy Kelsay, sergeant, Iowa City Police Department

Mary Khowassah, director of student health services, University of Iowa

Keith McCoy, graduate student and resident assistant supervisor, University of Iowa

Steve Parrott, director of community relations, University of Iowa

Dan Patterson, graduate student, University of Iowa

Julie Phye, director,<sup>3</sup> Stepping Up Project, University of Iowa

Lynn M. Walding, administrator of the state Alcoholic Beverage Division, Iowa Department of Commerce, Ankeny

J. Patrick White, Johnson County attorney, Iowa City

### NU Directions of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the City of Lincoln

Tom Casady, chief of police, Lincoln

Jesse Goodsell, vice president, Pan-Hellenic Council, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2002–03

James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Bob Jergensen, owner, P.O. Pears, Lincoln

Linda Major, director for student involvement, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Polly McMullen, executive director, Downtown Lincoln Association, Lincoln

Beverly Neth, director, Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles, Lincoln

<sup>1</sup> Ms. Cavitt became codirector in 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Clayton became codirector of the Stepping Up Coalition in 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Ms. Phye served through the 2001–02 academic year, then was promoted to another position on campus.

Joel D. Pedersen, attorney, City of Lincoln Law Department

Joel Schafer, president, Association of Students at the University Nebraska-Lincoln, 2000–01

Mitch Walden, president, Inter-Fraternity Council, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2002–03

Tom Workman, associate director, NU Directions, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

### **Coalition to Create a Quality Learning Environment of the University of Vermont and the City of Burlington**

Dean Batt, former vice president for student affairs, University of Vermont

Gene Bergman, assistant city attorney, Burlington

Peter Clavelle, mayor, Burlington

Enrique Corredera, director of university communications, University of Vermont

Andrew Flewelling, AMOD program manager, University of Vermont

Marty Mathison, co-owner, Rasputin's Bar, Burlington

David Nestor, vice president for student affairs, University of Vermont

Paula Niquette, investigator, Vermont Department of Liquor Control, Burlington

Tom Perras, director, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, Vermont Department of Health, Burlington

Gail Champnois, director of city relations, University of Vermont

### **Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, American Medical Association (National Program Office for The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's A Matter of Degree Initiative)**

Richard A. Yoast, director

Donald Zeigler, deputy director

Danny Chun, director of communications

Sandra Hoover, deputy director (1996–2002)

Lisa Erk, director of communications (1997–2002)

### **Pan American Services**

James Baker, president

Dennis Alexander, senior policy strategist

Edward Sypinski, senior policy strategist

## **Resources for Campuses and Communities**

### **American Medical Association's A Matter of Degree**

[www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net](http://www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net)

This extensive Website includes information on all the AMOD sites and archived materials from the initiative, including policy briefs, press releases, polls, studies and papers. It also has direct links to all the AMOD sites as well as a number of other resources, such as alcohol control boards, the Center for Alcohol Marketing and Youth and the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention.

### **Building Responsibility Coalition of the University of Delaware and the City of Newark**

[www.udel.edu/brc/](http://www.udel.edu/brc/)

### **Stepping Up Coalition of the University of Iowa and Iowa City**

[www.uiowa.edu/~stepping/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~stepping/)

### **NU Directions of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the City of Lincoln**

[www.nudirections.org](http://www.nudirections.org)

### **Coalition to Create a Quality Learning Environment of the University of Vermont and the City of Burlington**

[www.uvm.edu/~ccqle](http://www.uvm.edu/~ccqle)

### **Other Resources**

#### **U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention**

[www.edc.org/hec](http://www.edc.org/hec)

#### **College Alcohol Study, Harvard School of Public Health**

[www.hsph.harvard.edu/cas/](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/cas/)

#### **College Drinking: Changing the Culture National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

[www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov)

