



Success Stories

Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

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College and Enforcement Team to Curb Alcohol Promotions on Campus

Many underage drinking problems on college campuses can be traced to inexpensive drink specials offered by local bars. The low-priced drinks serve as an incentive to draw clientele, but also lead to out-of-control college crowds in and around the bars. Alcohol problems on the campus of the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) in San Antonio, Texas, became enough of a concern in 2002 that the university decided to team with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) to do something about curbing underage alcohol use.

University leadership spearheaded by Dr. Renee Moore, Dean of Campus Life and Marveen Mahon, BSN, Director of Health Services, enacted a policy to ban alcohol promotions and advertising on campus and developed an enforcement strategy that proved to be an innovative but effective approach to reduce underage drinking on campus. When alcohol advertisements and promotions appear on campus, university police promptly remove them. All ads are forwarded by the University's Department of Health Services, which, in turn, faxes the ads to the local TABC office. The evidence is assigned to a TABC agent who personally visits the local alcohol retailer, bar, or club and informs the vendor about the illegality of promotion and advertising on college campuses.

This approach to alcohol promotions has tremendously decreased the number of alcohol ads placed on the UIW campus. Moreover, the innovative enforcement approach has been presented to 40 other colleges in Texas and has been incorporated into each college's strategic plan for combating underage and hazardous drinking. The approach also has been shared at several State and National conferences.

The UIW effort, *Sharing Our Support: A Campus/Community Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking*, is a coalition that uses comprehensive, science-based strategies to curb illegal and hazardous drinking. Other elements of its comprehensive approach include providing alcohol-free options to students, alcohol assessment and treatment, and social marketing. The coalition's goal is to strengthen the physical, social, legal, and economic environments so that students are more likely to

make healthy decisions about underage and hazardous drinking as well as use of illicit drugs.

Specific accomplishments of the UIW effort include the following:

- Using CORE survey data to establish a baseline measure of underage drinking and related problems among the student population.
- Developing a science-based, data-driven strategic plan to change campus culture.
- Restructuring the university law enforcement and judicial system to achieve swift enforcement and adjudication of laws and policies.
- Implementing a Parental Notification Policy for alcohol offenses involving students.
- Creating four substance-free residence halls.
- Sponsoring student-planned and student-led alcohol-free options for students.
- Banning alcohol promotion and advertising on campus and reporting all illegal advertising on college campus to State authorities.

UIW has a model campus/coalition because all key staff and student leaders of UIW are involved and attend each session. Community leaders representing TABC, the San Antonio Police Department, and the assistant District Attorney are involved in coalition efforts. The Dean of Students is an active member of the coalition and makes sure all of the key stakeholders on campus are involved.

CORE survey data show reductions in the percentage of underage students who consumed alcohol in the previous 30 days and reductions in binge drinking. Way to go UIW!

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