

Drug and Alcohol Task Force End of Year Report

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Reviewed and approved by Task Force members

The Task Force was established in the fall of 2007 and met on a monthly basis throughout the year. The Task Force was charged with reviewing the results of the Core survey and the focus groups on drugs and alcohol, evaluating how to best address the concerns raised, and recommending next steps to the Dean's Office. The Task Force had many productive conversations, which have resulted in the recommendations described below. I also wanted to reflect on a couple of the challenges the Task Force faced in its first year.

Challenges

Membership: Soliciting committed and consistent members from a broad spectrum of constituencies proved to be very difficult. From the beginning I encountered barriers to identifying and recruiting potential faculty participants, and faculty were not represented at most of the meetings. Currently we have one motivated faculty member who joined towards the end of the year. There were also a number of students, staff and one faculty member who expressed interest and agreed to participate, but then did not attend meetings regularly. Of those who did attend over the fall semester, we lost two students due to scheduling conflicts, and a staff member due to maternity leave. While scheduling changes from one semester to the next may always create some turnover, it is our goal to develop more established and consistent membership next year, and to ideally have at least 3 student, faculty and staff representatives. The Task Force has identified several new people to invite to join in the fall.

Limitations: The sheer vastness of the issues was daunting, and the Task Force was pulled in multiple directions. We did not want to be a group that talked indefinitely about the issues without making any tangible progress, so we chose to focus on very specific areas. While this was effective, it also barely touched upon the tip of the iceberg, and it was frustrating to leave so many pressing needs completely unaddressed. The Task Force recognizes its own limitations in the amount that can be accomplished in monthly meetings and believes that more must be done. To this purpose, the Task Force has recommended the development of a half time staff position, specifically to address substance issues on campus (see proposal). In addition, the Task Force is entertaining the possibility of devoting longer blocks of time to discussing these issues, such as by having a day-long retreat over Jan-term.

Recommendations

Proposal for 20 Hour, Benefited Staff Position to Address Drug and Alcohol Issues

The results of the 2006 Core survey and the 2007 focus group report outline a number of areas of serious concern that need to be addressed on this campus. The Task Force has had valuable conversations and has made progress in several areas, particularly regarding alcohol policy. However, this progress barely touches the enormity of the problem, and the Task Force has been unable to even begin discussion about a quantity of issues, including the use of substances other than alcohol. It has become overwhelmingly clear the issues raised through the survey and focus groups require a time commitment beyond the scope of both the Task Force and The Community

Health Collaborative. The Task Force deems that the gravity of these issues warrant the creation of a 20 hour a week professional staff position specifically devoted to addressing drug and alcohol issues on campus. The responsibilities of such a position would be:

- To hold individual meetings with students, including both self-referred students, and “mandated” students.
- To develop supports for students with drug/alcohol problems and for sub-free students (groups, social networking, etc)
- To provide student, faculty and staff education on alcohol and other drugs, including health and safety issues, and training on how to intervene when concerned about someone’s use.
- Facilitation of a Task Force on alcohol and perhaps a second Task Force on other drugs.
- Review current policies and protocols
- Work to increase conversation, awareness and engagement in these issues among various student, faculty and staff factions on campus.
- Work with specific offices (e.g. Admissions, Communications) to develop strategies to change Hampshire’s public image.

Proposed Changes/Additions to Alcohol and Drug Policy

Introduction to Current Policy:

Preamble

Hampshire’s drug and alcohol policy is guided by 3 primary concerns: the health and safety of all community members, upholding state and federal laws, and promoting positive Hampshire values, such as awareness and respect for self and others, accountability, and informed decision-making.

Hampshire is committed to providing support and assistance to students struggling with issues related to alcohol or other drug use, and students who come forward to actively seek help, for themselves or others, will not face disciplinary action related to their drug/alcohol use. Similarly, if someone seeks help for another student, that student will not face disciplinary action for their substance use. Students *will* still be expected to work with the college to develop a plan to address these issues, and to take responsibility for any negative impact their behaviors have had on others or the environment (e.g. property damage, noise complaints etc). Both on and off-campus support and informational resources are listed at the end of this policy for students seeking help for substance use issues.

Hampshire recognizes that substance use on this campus is a reality, and encourages productive community dialogue about drug and alcohol related issues. Hampshire further recognizes that this is a complex topic that needs to be addressed in its full complexity and not dichotomized into “Substance use is bad” vs. “Students should be able to do whatever they want.” A number of particularly relevant issues were highlighted through the 2006 Core survey on drugs and alcohol and a 2007 series of focus groups with students, faculty and staff, the results of which can be viewed at: <https://intranet.hampshire.edu/cms/index.php?id=9969>. In order to address some of the concerns that were raised, the drug and alcohol policy seeks to promote the following:

- ❖ Moderation, safety and individual accountability for those students over 21 who choose to drink.
- ❖ A safe, comfortable and enjoyable social environment that is free from pressure for those students who choose not to drink.
- ❖ Information and education for all students to encourage responsible and informed decision-making.
- ❖ Information on confidential resources, to encourage students to seek help for themselves and their friends.
- ❖ The involvement of community members to help alleviate the problems associated with alcohol and drug use (these include: addiction, hospital transports, sexual assaults, damage to property, noise problems, concern for friends, unpleasant living environment, etc).

What Does it Mean to be Moderate, Safe & Responsible?

For students who choose to drink, it is important to be aware of how alcohol affects you, as everyone has a different tolerance level and responds differently to varying amounts or types of alcohol. A good general guideline to follow, especially until you become familiar with your own limits, is to keep to one drink or less per hour, which in many people maintains BAC (blood alcohol content) at around 0.05, although individuals may experience higher or lower BAC as a function of weight, eating habits, etc. At this level, you may experience a “buzz” while also avoiding many of the more negative effects of alcohol consumption. Other suggestions for drinking safely include:

- Eat before you drink
- Stay hydrated (with water)
- Set a limit for yourself ahead of time
- Watch out for your friends and ask them to watch out for you
- Have a designated driver, a place to stay, or a plan to get home (if applicable)

When Drinking may be a concern...

While drinking can be social and enjoyable, it can also become problematic for some individuals, and/or have a negative impact on those around them. If you have questions or concerns about your own drinking, or someone else’s, you are encouraged to seek confidential assistance from Health Services x5458, The Community Health Collaborative x5743, or one of the other resources listed at the end of this policy. You may also take a ten minute anonymous screening and get feedback on your drinking at alcoholscreening.org. The behaviors listed below *may* indicate unhealthy alcohol use. If an intern, house staff, or anyone else, becomes concerned about your drinking, please be aware that they may have a conversation with you based on these behaviors, violations of law or policy, or other concerns.

- Frequent drinking (i.e. several times a week)
- Excessive, or ***Binge drinking***, as defined by reaching a BAC of 0.08 or above, which for most adults corresponds to consuming 4 or more (if you’re female-bodied) and 5 or more (if you’re male-bodied) drinks in a 2 hour period. This is based on a ***standard drink*** equivalent of one 12oz. beer, one 5oz glass of wine, or one 1.5oz shot of spirits.
- Vomiting, blackouts
- High risk, destructive or out of the ordinary behavior when drinking
- Expressed craving for alcohol, drinking in the morning, plans center around drinking, etc

- Negative impact on academic work, attendance, relationships, work, etc.
- Storage of large amounts of alcohol for personal use (e.g. more than a 12-pack of beer, bottle of wine or bottle of hard alcohol)

For more information about these or other topics relating to substance use, you may visit or call The Community Health Collaborative at x5743.

Change to Current Policy:

Alcohol Consumption in Mod Living Rooms:

The Task Force recommends that the current policy be changed to allow the consumption of alcohol in mod living rooms for students 21 years and older. The Task Force believes that the designation of mod living rooms as “public space” is inappropriate, and that a new designation along the lines of “semi-private” or “communal space” would be more suitable. The Task Force is concerned that the current policy, in which students are only permitted to consume alcohol in the privacy of their rooms, may foster unhealthy drinking behaviors. The position of the Task Force is to promote student responsibility, health and safety, and does not believe that deterring moderate, social drinking necessarily furthers these goals.

The Task Force would like to assess the impact of this policy change (if it is made), prior to reviewing the alcohol storage policy, i.e. alcohol would continue to be stored in personal rooms.

Topics to Address Next Year

- 1) Clarify policy on faculty and staff drinking with/in the presence of students, at campus events, school meetings, off campus, etc. *The Task Force has discussed this, and is in agreement that we should develop policy on this issue, but does not have a clearly defined position and would like to get more community input on this issue. We intend to conduct a survey of faculty, staff and students.*
- 2) Evaluate and clarify the College’s response to policy infractions.
- 3) Evaluate and clarify how the College addresses student’s with drug or alcohol problems.
- 4) Review current policy & bring it into alignment with the stance outlined in the “preamble.”
- 5) Review EMT protocols & confidentiality issues, and address student concerns about calling EMTS due to the ramifications of doing so.
- 6) Alcohol at campus sponsored events (e.g. beer garden)
- 7) Party registration process.

Larger Topics with multiple sub-topics:

- 8) Drugs: marijuana, hard drugs, prescription drugs ... etc.
- 9) Cigarette smoking.
- 10) Look at causes of use and abuse and how to address them.
- 11) Cultural change.