

# Promising Practices: Campus Alcohol Strategies

Promising Practices is a 2001 project authored by David Anderson, Ph.D. and Gail Milgram, Ed.D. and funded by The Century Council. As a result of the project *The Source Book*, a 400 plus page book highlighting program strategies and prevention initiatives at America's colleges and universities, was created from research at a wide range of institutions of higher education. The following is a brief summary of the project's findings and recommendations. To read these highlights in their entirety or to learn more information about Promising Practices and *The Source Book*, please visit [promprac.gmu.edu](http://promprac.gmu.edu)

## Findings and Observations

The following ten key elements reflect an overall perspective on the status of campus prevention efforts:

1. The campus-based approaches manifest rich diversity and creativity.
2. Although comprehensive campus-based efforts are desired, a fully comprehensive approach is rarely achieved.
3. Campus initiatives often do not clearly articulate desired outcomes.
4. Evaluation of campus initiatives is rare.
5. Awareness, peer-based, environmental, and targeted efforts dominate campuses efforts.
6. Many alcohol abuse prevention strategies are blended with health-oriented approaches.
7. New approaches appear to be emerging in campus efforts.
8. There is insufficient consistency in the delivery of the "message".
9. Insufficient marketing of approaches is common.
10. Personnel guiding these efforts have tremendous dedication but limited support.

## Recommendations

1. Integrate alcohol abuse prevention efforts into the fabric of the institution.
2. Ensure that efforts are clearly defined.
3. Create a comprehensive and long-term perspective.
4. Design campus initiatives to be multi-targeted and broad-based.
5. Allocate appropriate resources and staff commensurate with the task.
6. Build program connections on and off the campus.
7. Collaborate with other professionals.
8. Conduct and use on-going evaluation.
9. Clearly define the message and market the initiative.
10. Solicit support from the top and bottom of the campus hierarchy.

## Summary

It is our belief that the implementation of these recommendations will yield better results for the campus community. We believe that careful and thoughtful integration and incorporation of these recommendations will help campus professionals who are charged with alcohol abuse prevention, as well as others on the campus, to "work smarter, not harder". We recognize the efforts of our affiliates who implement the use of the best practices on their campus, and understand that the balance lies in being comprehensive, multi-component, integrated, sufficient in "dose" and follow-up, interactive, institutionalized, and always involving the students.

In March 2007 the Office of the Surgeon General released a Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking. This resource includes goals that relate to the college-age population. A copy of the Call to Action as well as additional resources can be found at [surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underagedrinking](http://surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underagedrinking)

## Correcting the Misperception

According to the Fall 2008 National College Health Assessment, college students believed that 94.3% of their peers drank at least once in the past 30 days; however, only 63% self reported drinking. The majority of those who did drink in the past month, drank on fewer than 10 days.