

Alcohol and substance abuse are significant problems on college campuses across the country. UNC campuses are no different, and the Campus Security Initiative took particular care to assess the role of drugs and alcohol in our communities. No approach to campus safety can be successful without also addressing substance abuse.

Only a minority of UNC students engage in high-risk drinking, but they have a major impact on campus culture and safety.

Studies and surveys clearly indicate that most students do not regularly engage in high-risk drinking. But those who do are involved in a disproportionate share of safety incidents.

Alcohol plays a major role in campus crime and many serious accidents involving students.

Every year, more than 1,800 college students across the country die from alcohol-related injuries. Almost 700,000 students are assaulted by a fellow student who has been drinking. To address these and other serious safety problems, we have to address substance abuse.

A culture of alcohol abuse undermines our core educational mission.

Heavy drinking leads to poor student performance, lower retention, and a host of other ills that get in the way of pursuing an education and earning a degree.

The nature of substance abuse among students has changed in recent decades.

The rise of 'pre-gaming' — consuming large quantities of alcohol *before* an event or outing, then continuing to drink over the course of the night — has fueled an increase in binge drinking.

The decision to engage in high-risk drinking is influenced by a host of different factors. We can work to address many of them.

An individual student's decision to engage in high-risk drinking can be influenced by the size of the campus, whether it's urban or rural, the proximity of bars and liquor stores, the prevalence of fraternity and sorority events, campus athletics, academic rigor, class timing and attendance policies, and — of course — the clarity and consistent enforcement of alcohol regulations.

Nationally, we have a culture that too often encourages high-risk drinking.

Heavy drinking is frequently depicted as rite of passage for college students. We must work to combat that message.

Alcohol is by far the most prevalent drug on our campuses, but there are others.

Marijuana is the second-most prevalent drug abused by students. And nationally, the misuse of prescription medications by college students is on the rise.

Substance abuse is a public health issue.

Tackling alcohol and substance abuse from a public health perspective is more effective than treating it simply as a criminal or disciplinary matter. Evidence-based approaches that seek to alter the campus culture and student environment should complement better enforcement of campus alcohol policies.

The University can do more to help combat high-risk drinking and other substance abuse problems. Among the most important steps:

- ▶ All University officials should work to eliminate any institutional messages that might encourage or be seen to condone a culture of alcohol abuse.
- ▶ Adopt a systemwide policy that requires regular reporting on alcohol and substance abuse issues to campus and system-level policymakers.
- ▶ Each campus should create a committee of faculty and staff from multiple departments to adopt evidence-based approaches to curtailing substance abuse.
- ▶ Every campus should adopt policies that encourage students to report serious incidents.
- ▶ Every campus should compile and report consistent data on incidents involving alcohol.
- ▶ The University system should explore shared, online training to combat substance abuse.
- ▶ UNC General Administration should coordinate annual training and collaboration opportunities for campus officials working to combat substance abuse.
- ▶ Every campus should have at least one substance abuse counselor.
- ▶ Identify and publicize resources available both on and off campus to those struggling with substance abuse.

