

CHARLES STURT
UNIVERSITY



CSU Alcohol Survey 2007

Students Living on Wagga Wagga Campus

**Division of Student Services
October 2007**

Background

In May 2007, the Division of Student Services conducted a preliminary survey on the consumption of alcohol of students living in accommodation on the Wagga Wagga campus at Charles Sturt University (CSU). 516 surveys were completed and returned out of a total of 1143 students living on campus. This is a return rate of 45%. The high rate of return shows the effectiveness of the distribution method and the possible relevance of the survey to the student population. The purpose of the survey was to gather data on alcohol consumption to be used in a Social Norms Media Campaign. Student Services would like to thank the Residential Support Staff and Residential Advisers for supporting the survey. Also, thank you to all of the students who participated in the survey. The information gathered is invaluable for the improvement and development of health and wellbeing services to students.

Table of contents

Summary	page 2
Table of contents.....	page 2
Introduction.....	page 2
Methodology.....	page 3
Social Norms Media Campaign.....	page 3
Survey Findings.....	page 3
Discussion.....	page 9
Recommendations.....	page 10
References.....	page 10
Appendix A.....	page 11

Introduction

The CSU Student Support, Health and Wellbeing Teams are attempting to clarify some of the misconceptions surrounding the amount of alcohol that is actually consumed by students. The social norms approach for alcohol use involves presenting accurate majority (normative) information that addresses drinking misperceptions on campus. Using a standardized survey to measure behaviour, attitudes and beliefs regarding alcohol use is an effective way to do this. The purpose is to develop a positive, inclusive and empowering social norms media campaign. The process involves analysing the collected survey data in ways that create positive messages about alcohol-related behaviours, beliefs and attitudes representing the majority of the target population. Then creating a variety of different multimedia messages so that the information stays fresh, and the target population gets the material from several different sources. For example, misperception that most university students are frequent heavy drinkers can be challenged not only by messages about how often and much the majority of students drink, but also where students draw the line between drinking and their study responsibilities, drinking and driving, and – if they drink – what they do to stay safe or lower their level of intoxication (The University of Arizona, 1999).

Methodology

The Residential Support Staff played an important role in this process. The Residential Advisers distributed, collected and explained the purpose of the survey to students more efficiently than other methods that could be used in a limited timeframe. Residential Advisers are ideally placed within the halls of residences to get the message out to all students living in CSU accommodation. Student Services researchers were after a sample of students to survey so a snap shot could be taken of what are current behaviours. This gave the researchers information they needed to start the campaign off. Researchers needed the assistance of the Residential Advisers and students to collect the initial survey data so at least five or six preliminary media campaign messages can be designed to correct key misperceptions in the student population. A copy of the CSU Health Services Alcohol Survey is attached in Appendix A.

Social Norms Media Campaign

The CSU Student Support and Health and Wellbeing Teams will rely heavily on student input when making decisions about format and placement of the CSU social norms media campaign. Future CSU social norms surveys will ask students where they typically get their information, and in what form they prefer to receive it. Using the information collected about where the target population gets its information – which channels are most/least believable, and what will provide adequate “dosage” of the messages on a regular basis. The CSU social norms media campaign will use ¼ page advertisements that are placed weekly in the student newspapers; posters that are hung regularly in residence halls and Student Service buildings; and perhaps a single page newsletter about health issues that are published and distributed directly to students on a monthly basis. The media design will be heavily influenced by current marketing design methods, review of magazines, design books and stock photography to see how commercial advertisers design for a university population. It will also be influenced by student feedback gathered in future years about what they liked and didn't like about past media campaigns (The University of Arizona, 1999).

Survey Findings

1) Gender

Gender	Male	Female
No: 516	182	334
%	35.3%	64.7%

The gender of the survey sample reflects the general enrolment patterns of students at CSU. Female students have been in the majority for a number of years at CSU both for internal and external studies and females are more likely than males to complete surveys. In 2004, 18.2% of females and 12.3% of males were enrolled at CSU as internal students (CSU Office of Planning and Audit, 2006).

2) Age

Age:	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
No:	10	135	131	112	63	33	16	5	3
%	1.9	26.1	25.3	21.7	12.2	6.3	3.1	0.9	0.5

Age:	26	27	28	30	31	35	42
No:	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
%	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.38	0.19	0.19	0.38

These findings are a reflection of the age group of the majority of students living in campus accommodation. With 93.5% of student surveyed being between the ages of 17 and 22 years.

3) Year of study at CSU

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	Hon	PhD
No:	217	144	103	44	4	0	2	2
%	42%	27.9%	19.9%	8.5%	0.7%	0%	0.38%	0.38%

These findings reflect the age group of the typical year of study for students living in on campus accommodation. It shows that 69.9% of students living on campus are in their first or second year of study.

4) Which accommodation do you live in?

Accommodation	Catered	Self Catered	South Campus	St Martins	St Francis
No:	191	201	58	36	30
%	37%	38.9%	11.2%	6.9%	5.8%

This finding showed that there was a good representation of students surveyed from all of the accommodation on campus.

5) Average number of drinks you consume in a week?

	Male	Female	Total Average No:
Average No: Per week	16.16	9.66	11.9

According to the Australian Alcohol Guidelines (2001), it states that for non-pregnant healthy women, Low Risk Drinking is: no more than fourteen standard drinks over a week. For healthy men, Low Risk Drinking is: no more than twenty eight drinks over a week. The survey shows that students fall well below this number on a weekly basis, but what needs to be considered is the daily consumption rate.

6) When you party, how many drinks do you usually have?

	Male	Female	Total Average No:
Average No:	10.75	7.55	8.68

The Australian Alcohol Guidelines (2001), state that for non-pregnant healthy women, Low Risk Drinking is: no more than four standard drinks on any one day. For healthy men, Low Risk Drinking is: no more than six standard drinks on any one day. As the survey findings show, both the male and female student surveyed are consuming on average more than what is recommended in the guidelines.

7) How many nights a week do you usually party?

No Of Times	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Male	70	111	2	0	0	0	0	0
Female	5	92	154	63	12	4	0	3
%	14.5%	39.3%	30.2%	12.2%	2.3%	0.7%	0%	0.5%

84% of CSU students go out and party 2 or less times a week.

8) Does the social atmosphere on the campus promote alcohol use?

	Yes	No
Male	124	58
Female	261	73
%	74.6%	25.4%

This finding was expected as many of the social events on campus are related to functions at the bars on campus.

9) How many drinks did you have the last time you drank?

	Male	Female	Total Average No:
Average No:	8.87	7.11	7.73

Once again the standard drinks consumed are higher than what is considered to be Low Risk Drinking for both men and women in the Australian Alcohol Guidelines (2001). The guidelines recommend that women consume no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day and men consume no more than 6 standard drinks on any one day.

10) Over the course of how many hours did you drink?

No of Hours	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No of Students	37	41	42	53	89	81	69	36	21	47
%	7.1%	7.9%	8.1%	10.2%	17.2%	15.6%	13.3%	6.9%	4%	9.1%

Average Hours are: 4:46

11) How recently was the last time you drank?

	Don't Drink	Within last Month	Within Last Year	More Than 1 Year
No of Students	15	468	25	8
%	2.9%	90.7%	4.8%	1.5%

9.2% of students are not regular drinkers of alcohol

12) Compared to the last time you went out, do you normally...?

	Don't Drink	Drink Less	Drink Same	Drink More
No of Students	63	84	263	106
%	12.2%	16.3%	51%	20.5%

12.2% of students don't drink alcohol when they go out.

16.3% of students drink less when they go out compared to the last time.

28.5% of students drink less or don't drink when they go out.

51% of students drink about the same.

20.5% of students drink more compared to the last time they went out.

13a) Looking back over the last two weeks, have you had 5 or more drinks in one sitting?

	Yes	No
Male	137	45
Female	203	131
%	66%	34%

According to these findings 66% of students have more than 5 standard drinks in one sitting. This is particularly concerning for females, as they are consuming more than the 'no more than four standard drinks on any one day' recommended in the Australian Alcohol Guidelines (2001).

13b) If so, how many times?

	No	1-2 times	3-5 times	6 or more times
Male	40	70	56	16
Female	124	142	52	16
%	31.7%	41%	20.9%	6.2%

This finding shows that the 66% of students who have more than 5 standard drinks in one sitting do so one or more times in a two week period. With 61.9% having more than 5 standard drinks in one sitting between 1 and 5 times over a two week period.

14) When going or hanging out with friends, I prefer to be around people who...

	Don't Drink	Drink Moderately	Drink Heavily
Male	17	136	28
Female	30	281	24
%	9.2%	80.8%	10%

90% of students prefer to go out with friends who don't drink or drink moderately.

15) When going out on a date, I prefer to be with someone who...

	Don't Drink	Drink Moderately	Drink Heavily
Male	25	153	4
Female	61	265	8
%	16.7%	81%	2.3%

97.7% of students prefer to go out on a date with someone who doesn't drink or drinks moderately.

16) During the past 30 days, have you used any of the following substances?

	No of Students	%
None	69	13.3%
Alcohol	447	86.6%
Tobacco	115	22.2%
Marijuana	51	9.8%
Speed	11	2.1%
Ecstasy	28	5.4%
Other Drugs	11	2.1%

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), Statistics on drug use in Australia 2006 (2007), persons 14 years and over, who consumed

alcohol in the Australian population, was 83.6%. The alcohol consumption rates were slightly higher for our survey group, with 86.6% students' surveyed consuming alcohol in the last 30 days.

The AIHW statistics on persons 14 and over who smoke tobacco were 17% of the Australian population. The student survey found that it was 22.2%. This is a slight increase compared to the general population.

The overall use of illicit drugs was much lower; with 19.4% of students' surveyed using at least one illicit drug compared to 31% in general population as show in the AIHW statistics.

17) How many nights a week do you think a typical CSU student usually party?

No Of Times	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	0	37	233	203	35	5	1	2
%	0	7.1%	45.1%	39.3%	6.7%	0.96%	0.19%	0.38%

52.2% of students think that the typical CSU student goes out to party 2 or less nights and week. The actual survey findings showed that 84% of CSU students go out and party 2 or less nights a week.

92.63% of students think the typical CSU student goes out to party 2 or more times a week.

91.7% of students think the typical CSU student goes out to party 3 or less nights a week.

47.5% of students think the typical CSU student goes out to party 3 or more times a week.

The table below is the average number of times students think CSU students go out to party. As an average it is closer to the actual reported times students go out to party a week.

	Male	Female	Total Average No:
Average No:	2.43	2.54	2.50

18) How many drinks do you think the typical CSU student has when they party?

Average No:	Male	Female	Total No:
	10.11	9.63	9.80

This finding shows the misconception some students have about their fellow students drinking behaviour. Question 9 asked, how many drinks did you have the last time you drank? The male average was 8.87% and the female average was 7.11% and the Total average was 7.73%. The answers to the above question shows that students believe CSU students drink more than they actually do.

19) Have you driven after drinking any amount of alcohol?

	Yes	No
Male	71	111
Female	68	266
%	27%	73%

This finding shows that 73% of students do not drive after drinking any amount of alcohol. This would be a reflection on the type of driving permits the students hold. Those students on Probationary Licences are not allowed to consume any amount of alcohol whilst driving.

Discussion

There have been several findings in this survey that have been encouraging for the health and wellbeing of students. Students’ weekly consumption of alcohol is lower than the Australian Alcohol Guidelines (2001), and there are a significant proportion of students that either don’t drink or drink rarely when they go out to party. The finding also showed that 84% of students go out to party two or less times a week. Almost 90% of students prefer to go out or hang out with friends who don’t drink or drink moderately, and 97.6% of students prefer to date someone who doesn’t drink or drinks moderately. The overall use of illicit drugs is considerable lower than the national average.

There were some findings related to the drinking behaviour of some students that were a concern. As the survey findings showed, both the male and female students surveyed are consuming on average more when they go out to party than what is recommended in the Australian Alcohol Guidelines. According to Australian Alcohol Guidelines (2001), there is a risk of alcohol related harm in the long term and short term. Long term risk can be defined as the level of risk associated with regular daily patterns of drinking, measured by the total amount of alcohol consumed per week. Short term risk can be defined as the risk of harm (particularly injury or death) in the short term that is associated with given levels of drinking on a single day. According to the AIHW statistics (2007), both tobacco and alcohol usage rates for the students surveyed were slightly higher than in the general population.

Recommendations

- To develop a comprehensive survey that covers alcohol and drugs as well as sexual health, mental health and other relevant issues to students.
- To conduct a Health and Wellness survey of students on all campuses that live in CSU accommodation on a yearly basis.
- To use data collected in the survey for use in a social norms media campaign.
- To use a social norms media campaign during the Orientation Program to get positive messages about what is normal behaviour on campus across to commencing students.
- To do health and wellbeing promotions on campus that covers alcohol and drugs, sexual health, mental health and other relevant issues.
- To seek research funding and operational funding to continue surveys and media campaigns over at least 5 years.

References

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2007, Statistics on drug use in Australia 2006, Drug Statistics Series No 18. Cat. no. PHE 80. Canberra: AIHW.

Australian Alcohol Guidelines: Health Risks and Benefits 2001, National Health and Medical Research Council, Canberra, ACT.

www.alcoholguidelines.gov.au

Charles Sturt University, Office of Planning and Audit, 2006, *Pocket Statistics 2004*
<http://www.csu.edu.au/division/plandev/summary/>

The Division of Student Services would like to acknowledge the following reference source for their permission to use their copyrighted material in this document.

The University of Arizona 1999 The Social Norms Approach at The University of Arizona, Campus Health Service.

<http://www.socialnorms.campushealth.net/>

Appendix A

CSU Health Service Alcohol Survey 2007

Date: _____

This survey has been put together to assess a number of issues related to the consumption of alcohol by students. The CSU Health and Wellbeing Teams are attempting to clarify some of the myths surrounding the perceptions of the amount of alcohol that is actually consumed by students. Even if you don't drink alcohol, we still want you to complete the survey. Please take the time to complete the survey and answer the questions as honestly as you can and return it to your RA. The survey is anonymous and the results of this will be available sometime later in the semester.

1) Gender

- Male
 Female

2) Age ___

3) Year of study at CSU

- 1st 2nd 5th
 3rd 4th 6th
 Hons PhD

4) Which accommodation do you live in.

- Catered Self Catered
 South Campus St Martins
 St Francis

5) Average number of drinks* you consume in a week?

— —

6) When you party, how many drinks* do you usually have?

— —

7) How many nights a week do you usually party?

- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

8) Does the social atmosphere on this campus promote alcohol use?

- Yes No

9) How many drinks* did you have the last time you drank?

— —

10) Over the course of how many hours did you drink?

- ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ Hours

11) How recently was the last time you drank?

- Within the last month
 Within the last year
 More than one year ago

12) Compared to the last time you went out , do you normally....

- I usually drink more
 I usually drink less
 I usually drink about the same
 I usually do not drink

***NOTE: One standard drink = 285ml Beer or 100ml Wine or 30ml Spirits**

13a) Looking back over the last two weeks. Have you had 5 or more drinks* in one sitting?

- Yes
- No

13b) If so, how many times?

- 1-2 times
- 3-5 times
- 6 or more times

14) When going or hanging out with friends, I prefer to be around people who...

- Don't drink
- Drink moderately and stay in control
- Drink heavily and get out of control

15) When going out on a date, I prefer to be with someone who...

- Does not drink
- Drinks moderately and stays in control
- Drinks heavily and gets out of control

16) During the past 30 days, have you used any of the following substances?

	Yes	No
Tobacco	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alcohol	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marijuana	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Speed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ecstasy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other illegal drugs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17) How many nights a week do you think the typical CSU student usually party?

- ① ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

18) How many drinks* do you think the typical CSU student has when they party?

— —

19) Have you driven after drinking any amount of alcohol?

	Yes	No
During the past 30 days	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
During the past year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***NOTE: One standard drink = 285ml Beer or 100ml Wine or 30ml Spirits**

Thank you for completing the survey. Please return it to your RA.