

WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY



Biennial Review of the Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Program of Wesleyan University

For the period of September 1, 1998 to August 31, 2000
As required by the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act

Compiled by
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Introduction

On August 16, 1990, the Department of Education published final regulations that implemented the Amendments to the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989. This Act requires all higher education institutions that receive federal funds to certify to the Department of Education that they have adopted and implemented a program to prevent the illicit use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol by students and employees. At a minimum, such a program must include the annual distribution of the following to each student and employee of an institution:

1. Standards of conduct that clearly prohibit, at a minimum, the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of drugs and alcohol by students and employees on your institution's property or as any part of your institution's activities.
2. A description of the applicable legal sanctions under local, State, and Federal law for unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol.
3. A description of the health risks associated with the use of illicit drugs and the abuse of alcohol.
4. A description of any drug and alcohol counseling, treatment, or rehabilitation programs that is available to students and employees.
5. A clear statement that your institution will impose sanctions on students and employees (consistent with local, State, and Federal law) and a description of these sanctions up to and including expulsion or termination of employment and referral for prosecution for violations of the standards of conduct.

This Act also requires that an institution of higher education conduct a biennial review of its program to provide:

1. descriptions of the AOD program contents
2. a statement of AOD program goals and a discussion of goal achievement
3. summaries of AOD program strengths and weaknesses
4. procedures for distributing AOD policy to students and employees
5. copies of the policies distributed to students and employees and
6. recommendations for revising AOD programs.

This report is Wesleyan University's fifth documentation of its compliance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. This report covers the period from September 1998 to September 2000. Information for this biennial review was collected by the Office of Health Education and will be on file there and available to anyone interested. Additional procedures for facilitating and improving the sixth biennial review in 2002 are discussed at the conclusion of this report.

Review of the Alcohol and other Drug Prevention Program

This report will cover the six areas, listed above, which are required elements of the Biennial Review.

Section 1: Description of AOD program elements

Wesleyan University has many alcohol and other drug prevention program elements in place, to its credit. A challenge exists as these elements are not coordinated in any particular fashion, or housed under an umbrella committee. Further discussion of this concern appears later in this report.

- **WellBeing House and Hall Floors**
Within Residence Life, students may elect to live in a WellBeing area. The WellBeing House is a program house available for sophomores and above to live in and the WellBeing Floor is housed in a residence hall, above the Health Education office. These residential options provide a living space which is substance-free and which is a viable option for students in recovery from alcohol or other drug addictions.
- **WesWELL, the Office of Health Education**
The Health Education office provides outreach programming and serves as an information and referral source for students on a variety of health issues, including AOD issues. However, during the 1999 – 2000 academic year, the office was virtually vacant as the previous director had retired in 1999, and the part time health educator and the administrative assistant left their positions. This left a serious gap in the AOD outreach efforts on the campus for an entire year. The current director assumed her role in July 2000, though staffing levels are half of that under the previous director, limiting the ability of the office to provide comprehensive outreach services.
- **Good Clean Fund**
The Good Clean Fund (GCF) provides students with “mini-grants” of up to \$150 to defray the costs associated with providing alcohol-free social and educational events to the campus. In 1998 – 1999, the GCF sponsored 43 alcohol-free events, with a total of \$3,414 awarded to various student organizations. A lack of accurate records (due to the Health Education office being virtually vacant) prevents numbers from being shared for the 1999 – 2000 academic year.
- **Alcohol Policy and sanctioning**
The Student Judicial Board has been increasingly interested in making the sanctions for alcohol policy violations educational and proactive, rather than simply punitive. This has been reflected in their increased referrals for community service hours or one-on-one consults with Health Services or Health Education staff for alcohol violations.
- **Orientation Presentations**
In recent years, the New Student Orientation committee has scheduled a speaker on AOD issues during Orientation. Jim Matthews has been this speaker for the past several years. In addition, the Health Education office, along with the Coordinator of the Campus Center, were responsible for presenting “WesSquares”, an educational program on AOD issues disguised in a game

show format. As the grand prize winners were awarded a pizza party for their residence halls, it has become a great tradition. Many returning students request to be part of the “Hollywood Squares” style panel of presenters and enjoy sharing information in this way with the incoming students.

- **Host Training**
Host training was developed in 1997 – 1998 in response to the need for students to have a stronger understanding of their responsibilities and requirements as a host of social events on campus. Students are now required to attend a 90-minute training session if they plan to host a registered social event on campus; topics covered include campus AOD policy, liability concerns, available resources, and the event registration process.
- **Event Staff**
Event Staff, a group of trained students, was created to assist social event hosts with maintaining order at their events and intervening should problems arise. Paid by the Dean’s Office, Event Staff are available at no charge to event hosts and assist greatly in creating a more responsible environment, particularly when alcohol is being served. Event Staff are now TIPS for the University trained, which provides them with intervention skill training and the opportunity to role-play potential situations they might encounter.
- **Student-driven programming and social options**
One of the strengths of Wesleyan’s student body is its interest and ability to create a wide variety of social programming for itself, often on a shoestring. Many of these events are alcohol-free and benefit from other components of the AOD program, including the Good Clean Fund, Host Training, and the availability of Event Staff. It is hoped that funding can be increased for these events, through the Wesleyan Student Assembly, the Good Clean Fund and other funding sources.
- **Student Activities Director hired**
Wesleyan created the position of Director of Student Activities and Leadership Development in the 1999 – 2000 academic year. The creation of this position should facilitate the planning and execution of late night social options and other programmatic efforts that provide students with alternatives to drinking and drugging.
- **Health Services and Office of Behavioral Health**
Currently, students have 24 hours, 7 days per week access to the Student Health Services, with an on-call psychiatrist available on a 24-hour basis as well. While the schedule may be changed in the future due to low service utilization in the late night hours, each office does provide students with strong contact points to address AOD issues on a physical or mental health level.
- **Residence Life Staff training**

There has been an increased interest on the part of Residence Life to provide their student staff (Resident Assistants, Head Residents, House Managers) with greater knowledge of alcohol and other drug issues and how they may be of assistance within the limits of their job. Therefore, the Residence Life staff now receives training on recognizing overdose situations, particularly with alcohol, and more in depth information on AOD prevention efforts on campus.

- Core Survey Administrations
Dr. Karl Scheibe of the Psychology Department has historically administered the Core Survey every four years, with the assistance of the Health Education office. Last administered in 1998 – 1999, Dr. Scheibe intends to replicate the survey in 2002 – 2003 to continue to provide the campus with current data on student alcohol and other drug consumption.

Section 2: Statement of AOD program goals and a discussion of goal achievement

The AOD program, as it is highly decentralized, does not possess a clearly defined set of goals. Many different offices are responsible for implementing a variety of activities that ultimately contribute to AOD prevention, but are not part of a coordinated effort. Examples of this include the programming offered by Health Education, Student Activities, and student groups – all could be considered valuable parts of an effective prevention program but are typically created without any specific AOD-related goals or outcomes in mind.

As a result of this lack of defined goals, qualitatively evaluating goal attainment and effectiveness of prevention efforts is virtually impossible. Quantitative measures, such as tallies of policy violations and consumption survey results, are collected regularly, though this is of limited use if not utilized to further improve the campus' prevention efforts.

Section 3: Summaries of AOD program strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

This report counts the ongoing activities sponsored by various offices and student groups, WellBeing House, and the Good Clean Fund as evidence of continuing interest of the student community in creating and participating in substance-free spaces and events. In addition, there has been an increasing effort to make sanctions for policy violations educational and proactive, rather than simply punitive. For example, the SJB can now require students to participate in community service projects, coordinated by the Health Education Office and to meet with the medical director and the health educator after being transported to the hospital for intoxication.

And in the past few years, rather than performing general community service requirements, students have often been sent to talk one-on-one with a health educator; together they then determine a project that is tailored to the student's violation as well

as his/her educational needs. Finally, the continuation of Host Training is cited as an excellent ongoing practice that assists students in hosting more responsible and less problematic social events.

Regular Core Survey administrations occur every four years through the collaboration of Karl Scheibe of the Psychology Department and the Health Education office. This has been useful in providing a picture of current student consumption patterns and provides an opportunity to further enhance prevention efforts.

Weaknesses

- AOD policy needs review

A major weakness found by this report is the fact that the University's overall policy on alcohol and other drugs has not been officially reviewed for a decade or more. This raises concerns that the campus is not in compliance with state and/or federal laws. The lack of a recent review may be indicative of the fact that a task force or oversight committee for AOD issues does not exist, in spite of past recommendations for the creation of such a body.

- AOD efforts lack coordination

There exists a lack of coordination of the efforts of the various university departments and officials that are, or should be, concerned with AOD issues. This is due largely to the fact that there is at present no unifying body or common forum through which to address these issues. This is why Wesleyan University desperately needs a standing committee on alcohol and other drugs.

This committee would be a place for representatives from various University departments to share information regarding AOD programs, policy and incidents. This committee would also be responsible for reviewing the University's AOD policy, for planning upcoming biennial reviews, and for putting a task force together to produce the review. Past two biennial reviews and year-end reports from Health Education have strongly recommended such a committee, but current proposals to establish a committee have so far been unsuccessful. Yet, until such a committee is formed, there is little hope of improving the biennial review process or ensuring that Wesleyan's AOD policies are appropriate and effective.

- AOD program not being evaluated effectively

Due to the lack of goals and coordinated effort, it is virtually impossible to effectively evaluate the effectiveness of the University's AOD-related policies and programs. Violations and sanctions are tallied annually and surveys on student consumption are conducted regularly, which only provides quantitative data on the current state of affairs. This does not offer a qualitative assessment of progress or create a springboard for further revisions.

- Biennial Review should be completed by committee

Historically, the task of compiling this report has fallen exclusively to the staff of the Health Education Office, which, while certainly invested in such a process, should

not be the sole body responsible for it. Complicating the current review process is the fact that the current Director of Health Education assumed her position in July 2000, after the position, and in fact, the Health Education office as a whole, was vacant for one year.

Given the fact that the Health Education office holds a great deal of responsibility for addressing AOD and other health issues, and sole responsibility for compiling this report, this year long vacancy created serious gap in the campus' AOD efforts. With the office being staffed at half its previous level, this reduces the ability of the Health Education office to effectively address prevention efforts.

Section 4: Procedures for distributing AOD policy to students and employees

The Student Handbook is distributed to each student, faculty, and staff member at the start of each school year. It clearly meets the Federal Act's guidelines for the annual distribution of the following information to each student, faculty, and staff member:

1. The University's standards of conduct concerning drugs and alcohol.
2. A description of all applicable local, State, and Federal laws concerning drugs and alcohol.
3. A description of the health risks associated with the use of drugs and alcohol.
4. A description of the drug and alcohol counseling, treatment and rehabilitation programs available at Wesleyan University.
5. A clear statement of the University's sanctions up to and including expulsion or termination of employment for violations of the standards of conduct.

The information listed above is also distributed to each new employee at Wesleyan. The Human Resources Department gives this packet to each new employee at the start of his/her employment. This packet is also in compliance with the Federal Act's guidelines.

Lastly, all policies that pertain to students and employees are available through the Wesleyan University website at www.wesleyan.edu for easy access throughout the year. The Dean of the College's website includes information on academic and non-academic codes of conduct, which includes AOD policies. The Human Resources office maintains an extensive site on policies, procedures, benefits and resources with apply to and are available to employees.

Section 5: Copies of the policies distributed to students and employees

See Appendices A and B for copies of AOD policies distributed to students and employees.

Section 6: Recommendations for revising AOD programs

While Wesleyan University's educational and substance-free programming continues to be a strong presence on campus, and while policies and sanctions are moving away

from being simply restrictive and/or punitive toward being educational, proactive, and aimed at community responsibility, there is still much to accomplish regarding AOD policy and programming at Wesleyan. In order to improve such policy and programming and to be in more complete compliance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, this report gives the following recommendations:

- Convene an AOD standing committee to complete a comprehensive review of the current AOD program and the campus environment on an ongoing basis to determine if sound prevention procedures are in place. Areas to review would be policy and enforcement, educational strategies, environmental strategies and intervention services and procedures.

Ideally, the membership of this committee would include representatives from the following departments: Academic Affairs, Dean's Office, Greek Council, Health Education, Human Resources, Office of the President, Office of Behavioral Health, Physical Education, Public Safety, Residential Life, Student Health Center, Student Judicial Board, University Counsel, as well as the Middletown community. This recommendation is based on guidelines for conducting AOD policy/program reviews at any institution of higher education from the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and other Drug Prevention.

- Hire a dedicated AOD Prevention Coordinator, whose sole responsibility would be managing the AOD prevention efforts on campus. This position could report to the Director of Health Education or other appropriate position. One responsibility of this position would be to maintain a standing AOD committee.
- The standing AOD committee, under the direction of the AOD Prevention Coordinator, should complete future Biennial Reviews. The compilation of this report is an arduous task for one person or office to complete and should be carried out in committee.
- The standing committee should also be responsible for the update and revision of the campus alcohol policy, as this has not been revised in over a decade and most likely is not in compliance with Connecticut state law.
- Establish a communication link among all departments involved in AOD policy and programming. As the entire committee may not meet on a regular basis, it should establish a listserv, newsletter, or some other such communication device that would enable committee members to keep each other informed about incidents, events, projects, concerns, etc. This would serve to tie all the departments involved in AOD policy and programming together into a network better able to educate, better able to prevent incidents, better able to respond to incidents when they do occur, and better able to make informed decisions. In the big picture, the entire Wesleyan community would reap the benefits of such a network.