

WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY



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

For the period of September 1, 1996 to August 31, 1998
As required by the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act

Compiled by
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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 are 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 (a) determine its effectiveness and implement changes if they are needed; and (b) ensure that the sanctions are consistently enforced.

This report is Wesleyan University's fourth documentation of its compliance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act.

Starting with the first such biennial review submitted in December 1992, various departments began to maintain files documenting alcohol and drug abuse incidents, courses and workshops offered, research conducted, papers presented, and conferences attended on substance use and abuse. The departments that were asked to contribute such information for this report were Academic Affairs, Dean's Office, Health Education, Human Resources, Physical Education, Public Safety, Residential Life, Student Health Center, Student Judicial Board, and Student Mental Health.

This report covers the period from September 1996 to September 1998. Information for this fourth biennial review was collected by the Department of Health Education and will be on file there and available to anyone interested. The other departments involved are expected to continue the practice of maintaining individual department files on alcohol and drug issues in order to facilitate the next biennial review in 2000. Additional procedures for facilitating and improving the fifth biennial review are discussed at the conclusion of this report.

WESLEYAN'S AOD POLICY

The first two of the several attached documents are copies of Wesleyan University's policies regarding alcohol and other drugs for students and employees.

Addendum A is a copy of a section of the 1998-1999 Blue Book. The Blue Book 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 standard's 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 distributed to each new employee at Wesleyan through **Addendum B**. 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.

AOD PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Addendum C is a listing of the classes, seminars, workshops, and programs offered at Wesleyan that deal with substance abuse and/or related issues.

In addition to the classes and programs outlined in Addendum C, there were a number of events aimed at engaging the Wesleyan community in substance-free activities. The University's Well-Being House, a substance-free residential space, offered several such events to the greater campus community. These events are outlined in **Addendum D**.

The Health Education Office's "Good Clean Fund" also played a major role in providing substance-free alternatives to the Wesleyan student community. This fund, started in the 1994-1995 academic year, provides money for student groups who put on substance-free events and activities. In the years covered by this report, the Good Clean Fund sponsored 38 events with grants ranging from \$25 to \$200. **Addendum E** lists these Good Clean Fund events.

Addendum F lists research completed, papers presented, and conferences attended on substance use and/or abuse by members of the Wesleyan staff, faculty, and administration. It also lists certificates earned and/or positions held in the areas of substance abuse prevention and treatment. This list represents the continuing efforts of University employees who are working to further educate both themselves and the community about issues surrounding substance use and/or abuse.

Addendum G is a copy of Wesleyan's new social event/party policy, which was reviewed by students and administrators during the 1997-1998 academic year and implemented on September 1, 1998. One of the aims of this new policy is to educate event/party hosts

around issues of alcohol use/abuse and safety by requiring any host or host group to attend a host training program. The new policy also clearly defines which events must be alcohol-free, and, for those events where alcohol is allowed, imposes conditions on its distribution and consumption (such as a definite method of identifying students of legal drinking age and the availability of non-alcoholic beverages). This new social event/party policy was created in the years covered by this review; the effects of the new policy on AOD incidents on this campus will have to be examined in the next biennial review in the year 2000.

OUTCOMES

As in the past, this report reviews alcohol and drug abuse incidents or referrals by department. No information was received from Academic Affairs and the Department of Physical Education. The members of the Dean's Office who did respond reported that they had no incidents or referrals regarding the abuse of drugs or alcohol, or that such incidents had already been reported by Public Safety.

The Office of Residential Life reported that they had no record of such incidents. They, like several University offices, have had recent changes in staff that interrupted the record-keeping process, resulting in incomplete or missing data.

The Director of the Office of Student Mental Health, Dr. Philippa Coughlan, stated for the last review that the information regarding incidents and referrals for drug and alcohol abuse to her office would remain confidential until the time when there is an official (government) request for such statistics. She maintains this position for the years covered by this review.

The following departments supplied detailed information concerning alcohol or drug abuse incidents and/or referrals: Human Resources (**Addendum H**), Student Health Center (**Addendum I**), Public Safety (**Addendum J**), Student Judicial Board (**Addendum K**), and Health Education. Information supplied by Human Resources and the Student Health center covers the entire period from September 1996 to September 1998. Information supplied by Public Safety and the Student Judicial Board covers the 1997-1998 academic year, but is limited for the 1996-1997 academic year due to the staff changeovers mentioned above. Details on referrals seen by

the Health Education office are not available, but a general description of what happens with these referrals can be found in the “Strengths” section below.

REVIEW OF INCIDENTS AND SANCTIONS

This report reviewed all the cases referred to the Student Judicial Board concerning violations of Wesleyan University’s standards of conduct concerning alcohol and drug use. This report also examined the sanctions imposed as a result of these violations.

During the 1996-1997 academic year there were 4 documented conduct code violations concerning unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol. The details of these violations were not available, but there is some information on outcomes. One student chose administrative disposition, in which the student talks with a dean or other University official to determine appropriate sanctions for his/her actions. In this situation the Student Judicial Board (SJB) does not document the case or its resolution. Of the two students sanctioned through the SJB, one was put on Disciplinary Probation through the end of the 1996-1997 academic year and the other was issued a written warning. The fourth student was on leave and no information was available regarding sanctions.

For the 1997-1998 academic year, the Student Judicial Board determined that there were 8 conduct code violations concerning alcohol and one violation regarding illegal drugs. Out of the 8 violations for alcohol, 7 were for unlawful (underage) possession, and the eighth was for unlawful distribution. The single violation for drugs was for use (consumption) of an illegal substance. The sanctions for the alcohol-related violations were 4 letters of warning, one instance of placing the student on Disciplinary Probation through the fall of 1998, and three instances of placing students on Disciplinary Probation for the remainder of the academic year combined with a requirement to contribute money (\$20-25 each) to the Health Education Office’s “Good Clean Fund.” The one drug violation resulted in the student being required to do 25 hours of community service, write a short paper on the illegal substance that the student was using, write letters of apology to the officers involved in the incident, and contribute \$50 to the Good Clean Fund. In addition, the student was placed on disciplinary probation for two years.

EFFECTIVENESS AND CONSISTENCY

It is difficult to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of Wesleyan University's policy and programs dealing with alcohol and other drugs or the consistency with which sanctions pertaining to violations of this policy are enforced. As mentioned above, some of the data needed for this year's review could not be obtained or was incomplete. This is due, in part, to continual office reorganization and changes in staff, which affect the continuity of the data-keeping process. However, even if complete and consistent records were kept from year to year, quantitative comparisons would still be problematic. The data collected consists mostly of descriptions of incidents and outcomes. At present there is no standard for assigning specific values to these descriptions in terms of severity of incident, nor are there methods for identifying overlapping cases and ruling out external factors. Therefore, tallies of incidents, without additional information, are meaningless.

Often surveys of students and employees regarding their use of and attitudes toward alcohol and other drugs are used to help contextualize such statistics. Beginning in 1990-1991, Professor Karl Scheibe of the Psychology Department has periodically conducted surveys of drug and alcohol use among students. In 1994 the Health Education Office worked alongside Professor Scheibe and administered surveys developed by the Core Institute, a center for alcohol and drug studies. Unfortunately, these surveys are labor intensive and reliant on external funding. Without the support of a task force it was not possible to coordinate new surveys and/or integrate information from previous surveys for this report. However, this report can attempt to give a qualitative evaluation of AOD policy, programming and sanctions at Wesleyan.

Strengths

On the positive side, this report counts the ongoing activities sponsored by the Well-Being 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 offenders to contribute money to the Good Clean Fund. 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 guidelines of the new social event/party policy (discussed above), with their emphasis on increasing community awareness of and responsibility for alcohol and safety issues, are viewed by this report as a major accomplishment.

Weaknesses

A major weakness found by this report is the fact that the University's overall policy on alcohol and other drugs, while unofficially reviewed as part of the biennial review process in 1994, has not been officially reviewed for a decade or more. Another weakness, as outlined above, is the biennial review process itself—relying as it does on data that is difficult to collect and analyze. In addition, since it was first required in 1992, the task of compiling this report has been taken on exclusively by the Health Education Program, which, while certainly invested in such a process, should not be the sole body responsible for it.

Both of these weaknesses rest in part on another, and perhaps even greater weakness—the lack of sufficient communication and cooperation among the various university departments and officials that are, or should be, concerned with AOD issues. This is due largely to the fact that each department, understandably, has its own agenda, and 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 (see below) 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. Unofficial guidelines for the review process as well as the past two biennial reviews themselves (1994 and 1996) 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.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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:

◆ **Create a committee on AOD policy/programming.**

This committee should ideally include representatives from the following departments: Academic Affairs, Dean's Office, Fraternity and Sorority Councils, Health Education, Human Resources, Office of the President, Office of Student Mental Health, Physical Education, Public Safety, Residential Life, Student Health Center, Student Judicial Board, and potentially University Counsel. This recommendation is based on unofficial guidelines for conducting AOD policy/program reviews at any institution of higher education, as well as on the report *Review of Wesleyan's Alcohol and Drug Policies A Perspective: 1985-1994*, produced by Francis Marsilli as part of a research internship in the Health Education Office in 1994.

◆ **Conduct an official review of the University's AOD policy.**

Once a committee has been formed, its initial task should be to conduct an official review of Wesleyan's policy on alcohol and other drugs. As cited above, an unofficial review of this policy was produced in 1994 and could be used as a starting point. After the completion of this review, the entire committee would probably not need to meet more than once or twice a year to appoint task forces (see below) and conduct minor policy reviews.

◆ **Appoint a task force to conduct the next biennial review.**

The committee should appoint a task force from among its members to be responsible for the next biennial review. This task force should meet as necessary to plan, conduct, and write up the next review. The discussion and implementation of measures to improve the type/quality of data collected should be included in the planning stage. The overall aim of these improvements should be to enable more accurate assessments of policy/program effectiveness.

◆ **Establish a communication link among all departments involved in AOD policy and programming.**

As the entire committee may not meet more than once or twice a year, it should establish a newsletter, Monday morning e-mail, 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 policy decisions. In the big picture, the entire Wesleyan community would reap the benefits of such a network.