

A MATTER OF DEGREE initiative
to reduce **binge drinking**
at Colleges and Universities

LESSONS LEARNED



INTRODUCTION

In a 1990 interview with Time magazine University of Wisconsin Chancellor Donna Shalala said that alcohol was the biggest problem on her campus. That same year college presidents classified alcohol abuse as the campus life issue of their greatest concern in a Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching survey called *Campus Life: In Search of Community*.

The 1993 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study of more than 17,000 students at 140 four-year colleges found that 44 percent of students surveyed were binge drinkers (consumption of at least five drinks in a row by men or four by women during the two weeks before the survey). These binge drinkers were at substantially increased risk for alcohol-related problems such as getting behind in schoolwork, engaging in unplanned sexual activity or getting hurt or injured. The survey also showed that binge drinkers created problems for classmates who were not binge drinkers. Students at schools with higher binge rates but who were not binge drinkers were more likely than peers at schools with lower binge rates to report problems such as being pushed, hit or assaulted, experiencing an unwanted sexual advance, or having study or sleep interrupted. In addition, newspaper reports indicated higher levels of alcohol related problems in communities surrounding these colleges.

The A Matter of Degree comprehensive college and community environmental interventions, “if vigorously pursued, can reduce drinking problems specifically among college students.”

Ralph Hingson, Director of Epidemiology & Prevention Research, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

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Those findings prompted The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to launch an initiative called A Matter of Degree (AMOD): The National Effort to Reduce High-Risk Drinking Among College Students, which started in 1996 as an \$8.6 million program administered by the American Medical Association with evaluation by the Harvard School of Public Health. Working together with ten university-community coalitions, they led a national effort to reduce high-risk drinking among college students. Based on a growing body of research indicating that changing the policy environment showed the greatest potential for successfully reducing underage and binge drinking and related problems, AMOD was designed to foster collaboration between participating universities and their surrounding municipalities to address the important public health issue of high-risk drinking, the adverse consequences for college students, and to improve the quality of life for all community residents. Drawing from a decade of experience at AMOD sites, this guide will assist colleges and universities and surrounding communities to get a sense of what needs to be done through campus and community coalitions in order to reduce alcohol problems. Those results may not necessarily be reductions in binge drinking per se, but can also be reductions in alcohol problems related to drinking by students, i.e., harms to the drinker and second-hand effects.

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

and the Prevention Paradox

Often campus prevention activities are focused on the heaviest drinkers. The idea is that by getting the heaviest drinkers—generally termed binge drinkers, alcohol abusers or problem drinkers—to stop or cut back, alcohol problems would be eliminated or substantially reduced at colleges and universities. But the research literature doesn't support that assumption. While a small fraction of drinkers—the heaviest consumers—do account for a disproportionate amount of alcohol-related problems, this group does not account for the majority of problems.^{1,2}

That is the paradox for prevention. While it seems logical to focus prevention efforts on the heaviest drinkers—those who appear to be at the greatest risk for alcohol problems—to do so overlooks the source of the majority of alcohol-related problems.

The heaviest drinkers are individually at greatest risk for harm and cause a disproportionate number of problems (and often the most severe problems). But, more problems in total are caused by moderate drinkers because there are a lot more of them – even though individually they may cause few problems. Researchers estimated that, for example, in 2001 nationally there were 1.5 billion episodes of binge drinking and the highest rates were among 18 to 25 year olds.³ But over all during the period 1993-2001, 47% of the binge drinking episodes were among moderate (i.e., non-heavy) drinkers, and 73% of all binge drinkers were moderate drinkers. Compared to non-binge drinkers, binge drinkers were 14 times more likely to drive while impaired by alcohol. Thus, the risk of harm to self and to others is not zero among lower level drinkers in college. This paradoxical pattern suggests that by moderating consumption among the majority using environmental approaches, alcohol-related problems will decline.⁴ Furthermore, most environmental approaches will have an impact on both groups of drinkers.

A NEW, EVIDENCE-BASED

Environmental Approach to Prevention

For the AMOD initiative the scientific literature pointed toward a number of combined key features integral to a public health approach to prevention using comprehensive and environmental strategies. They include:

- Citizen, including youth, empowerment through organizing of coalitions or partnerships
- Media and policy advocacy and public awareness to highlight problems
- Policy advocacy to offer potential research-based solutions concerning alcohol price, service, availability, access by youths, and advertising, promotion and sponsorship
- Public activities augmented by targeted media strategies, to effect normative change in support of policy change and in support of healthier behaviors
- Active enforcement and publicity of policies

The goals of AMOD were to:

- Test the efficacy of environmental model to reduce high-risk drinking and its impacts
- Create sustainable campus-community partnerships to address the entire student environment
- Reduce secondhand effects of high-risk drinking for both individuals and the community, including injury and death, violence, campus and neighborhood disturbances, such as vandalism and noise.

The underlying principles guiding the AMOD projects were:

- Alcohol problems and solutions are shared by campus and community
- Campus and community interact within a shared environment. Universities are part of a larger community
- Identification, discussion and solutions for problems must therefore be collaborative involving city and campus governance, concerned citizens, law enforcement, and business
- As campuses take measures to change their environments communities could also play a lead role

Students are not the problem. The problem is their drinking behaviors and how these behaviors affect many factors in the environment: heavy drinking, low cost and availability of alcohol, weak and inconsistent policies and enforcement, and heavy promotion and advertising of alcohol.

The AMOD coalitions utilized strategies found to be effective with general populations that could be applied to college environments. Characterized by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism in its 2002 report A Call to

Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges⁵ as Tier 2 strategies, they include:

- Increase enforcement of minimum drinking age laws
- Implementation, increased publicity, and enforcement of laws to reduce drunk driving
- Restrict alcohol retail density
- Increase price and excise taxes
- Implement responsible beverage service policies and practices
- Form campus/community coalitions

*“It is not clear yet what combinations of environmental strategies is optimal...
But it is clear from the research that it takes multiple strategies to be effective.”*

Traci Toomey, Director of the Alcohol Epidemiology Program, University of Minnesota

The AMOD coalitions also utilized promising strategies needing evaluation in college environments, which are characterized by NIAAA as Tier 3. They include:

- Campus policies to reduce high-risk use, such as holding Friday classes, banning kegs, establishing alcohol-free dorms and activities
- Increase enforcement at campus-based events
- Publicity about enforcement and elimination of “mixed” messages
- Consistent disciplinary actions for violations
- Marketing campaigns to correct misperceptions
- Safe-rides programs
- Regulate happy hours and sales or restrict alcohol promotions
- Enhance awareness of personal liability
- Inform parents and new students about policies and penalties

Use of the environmental model was an eye opener at the AMOD sites. It illustrated how the university was affected by and could influence external factors, such as freshmen histories of high school drinking, parental expectations, and the presence of large numbers of bars surrounding campus. As the projects progressed, coalition members and the community began to see change effected through policy and enforcement collaborations of concerned people, and through the university creating new expectations. For the first time, campus administrators appeared before local alcohol licensing authorities to express what they had learned about the impact of licensing decisions on their students. Many community members welcomed their new collaborative practices and worked with students to reduce conflicts between student and older neighbors. An often overlooked facet of university life also came to the fore—university staff live in the community, raise children and have the same concerns everyone else has. Similarly, university administrators have also recognized that they can play a more active role in shaping the public health environment on and off their campuses.

TEN KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

From The AMOD Experience

The Harvard College Alcohol Study collected data on the AMOD projects from their inception and found that some sites were more successful in reducing alcohol-related problems among students and in surrounding communities. The interim evaluation study published in 2004⁶ divided the AMOD program colleges into two groups based on their level of program implementation as of 2001. At the five program schools that incorporated more of the AMOD-recommended environmental policies and programs, significant changes were noted in drinking, related harms, and second-hand effects.

Examples of types of policies and programs found effective by the evaluation include:

- mandatory training for responsible beverage service
- expansion of substance-free residence halls
- requiring registration for purchasers of kegs
- promotion of alcohol-free activities
- prohibiting the selling of alcohol without a license
- keeping alcohol-related items out of student bookstores

“These initial findings show that when colleges and communities focus their prevention efforts on key environmental influences, they can produce measurable declines in alcohol consumption and harms among both drinkers and those around them. While the changes associated with the fuller implementation of the AMOD environmental program were

modest, this is the first empirical evidence that environmental prevention strategies can influence drinking among college students,” said Elissa Weitzman, co-principal investigator of the study.

The following key elements of success from the AMOD experience are drawn from the AMOD evaluation, AMOD site progress reports and interviews with individuals at the AMOD National Program Office at the American Medical Association and selected AMOD coalition directors and members (see page acknowledgments). Those elements are:

- > High level university and community leadership
- > Campus policy development and enforcement
- > Staff qualifications
- > Campus-community coalitions: structure and process
- > Education about the environmental change model
- > Data collection to support problem assessment and actions
- > Commitment to advocacy and policy change
- > Media advocacy and communication strategies
- > Shared responsibility for solutions
- > Long-term view and commitment

KEY ELEMENT #1

High-Level University and Community Leadership and Support

The first key element for campus-community coalitions to be successful is the involvement and support of the campus chief executive officer, whether that be a president or a chancellor. These chief campus administrators need to decide whether they want to be proactive or reactive when it comes to prevention.

Reactive support is often the result of a crisis that requires an immediate response from the university. That was the case at Louisiana State University in the aftermath of a highly publicized alcohol-related student death. LSU Chancellor William Jenkins felt that the incident put a black mark on the university and wanted to take action to address student drinking. He wanted the coalition to move forward and succeed.

“Significant leadership and vocal leadership from both the university and the surrounding community are essential to create an initiative and form an effective coalition.”

Annie Stevens, Assistant Vice President for Student and Campus Life, University of Vermont

Proactive motivations for high level support at colleges and universities come from the understanding that high-risk and underage drinking has a negative impact not only on the health and safety of individual students, whether they are drinkers or not, but also on the core mission of the institution, which is to foster the development and education of its students. No college or university president wants their institutions to be known as a “party school.” In fact, most colleges that become energized around this issue are those that want to transform their image into a top tier learning institution.

Another effective way to gain top level campus support is to convince the president that they can be a leader. College presidents are more likely to get engaged when these issues are placed in the context of grades, retention, litigation, and funding.

Top institutional leaders need a solid understanding of the issues, reassurance about the necessity of addressing the problem, and confidence in the nature and scope of the strategic action plan. Fundamental to securing their support was directly linking the AMOD goals to the overarching goal of improving the university’s living and learning environment.

“Having a vice-chancellor for Student Affairs involved in this initiative from day one, getting his hands dirty, as well as the chief of police on behalf of the city of Lincoln, was absolutely critical. Because of the leadership they provided everything else fell in place.”

Linda Major, Director of Student Involvement, University of Nebraska

Providing top-level campus administrators with good, local information about student drinking and related problems, both on- and off-campus, often gets their attention and leads to action. Such information can come from surveys of key informants, students, or community residents. Other information can be gained from incident reports from campus and local police departments or even reports from building and grounds departments on vandalism. Beginning the conversation with presidents by talking about the negative consequences experienced by students inevitably leads to discussions of strategies that focus on preventing such problems.

At the University of Delaware, its former president David P. Roselle was solidly behind the effort from the very beginning of the AMOD initiative. For example, he personally made the initial overtures to the mayor of the City of Newark, asking for a group of people to come together to work cooperatively addressing campus and community alcohol problems. An invitation from a university president carries more weight than one from a lower level campus administrator or staff member.

At the University of Iowa, former president Mary Sue Coleman was credited for her leadership in addressing problems associated with student drinking. In addition to attending the AMOD coalition meetings, she asked city and county officials and others to step up and take action. Coleman went to city council meetings, sat in the audience waiting until the public comment time, and delivered a consistent message about the need to respond to student drinking. That got a council member involved in the AMOD project. When he was elected mayor, he became a member of the coalition’s executive committee.

“Who is in charge of this process matters a great deal. If it is the director of nursing in the health center, there is a whole lot less chance of being successful than if it is a high-ranking officer in the university who has access to information and can shape opinions and can make a difference with resources.”

John Smeaton, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Lehigh University

As with campus chief executives, data was also a compelling motivation for community involvement. For example, Georgia Tech used a survey of 600 Atlanta residents on quality of life issues, extra fees for more police, and possible legislative changes to let the mayor, city council and police departments know what people in the city were thinking. That led to the development of several task forces to support the AMOD project.

Historically, problems related to student behavior have been the cause of much finger-pointing between communities and universities. Community residents and city officials are frustrated because the university doesn’t control its students when they are off campus. Campus and community environments that promote high-risk drinking behavior and provide students with easy, often illegal, access to alcohol frustrate universities. And measures taken by campuses over the years had little impact on reducing problems.

Cities that are home to colleges and universities have much to gain by collaborating with campuses to address problems related to student drinking. That’s because most student drinking occurs off campus in local bars or taverns, student apartments and neighborhoods, and at community events.

For Ron Gardner, former mayor of Newark, Delaware, agreeing to co-chair the AMOD coalition was an extension of his interests at the National League of Cities where he chaired a subgroup called the University Communities Caucus. It was formed by mayors of college towns to address the kinds of issues they face — namely the raucous parties and demands on municipal services to respond to problems related to student drinking. Every year the Caucus surveyed members across the nation to identify priority subjects to address at the next meeting. Without exception every year at the top of the list was alcohol-related partying.

Community leadership at the AMOD sites varied. In some cases, the mayor or a city council member exercised the necessary leadership to work cooperatively with the campus in addressing alcohol issues. In some cases it was the chief of police. But from day one everyone involved with AMOD felt that if the chief executive on the campus was not supportive, the project would not be successful.

Having leadership and support from the top is necessary because once coalitions begin to have some successes, they may encounter significant opposition. For example, some coalitions faced opposition from the alcohol industry when they to succeed in making policy changes that impacted alcohol retailers. If those who are running the coalition feel that the support from the top is wavering, they may withdraw their commitment to the initiative.

Without the president's backing, prevention will not be viewed as an institutional priority to which every academic department and administrative office must contribute. Lehigh had a presidential transition in the midst of its AMOD project, but both presidents had been ardent and vocal proponents. Project staff built this support by highlighting the link between preventing alcohol-related problems and achieving Lehigh's academic mission. The need for support to address alcohol problems was built into hiring the university presidents.

KEY ELEMENT #2

Campus Policy Development and Enforcement

The second key element for campus and community coalitions' success is for the campus to initially focus internally to address student alcohol problems before approaching the community for solutions. Campuses lose credibility in the community if they are seen as turning a blind eye to problems related to student drinking—especially since most student drinking takes place in the community, not on campus.

In many communities surrounding campuses, citizens blame the students and the university for the numerous negative effects of alcohol. Many universities had been inconsistent in their commitment to addressing alcohol problems and thus were mistrusted by the communities. Focusing on campus policy first convinced themselves and the community that they were serious about addressing the problem.

The AMOD sites that were successful started out by making certain that the rules were consistent and consistently enforced across campus - and crystal clear to the students. Regardless of where students are drinking, these are the rules governing what they can and cannot do. Before any meaningful changes can occur, the university needs to let students know that it is taking alcohol problems seriously and expects them to do so as well.

Each campus needs to ask if its policies regarding student behavior are consistent, clear, and communicated to students and parents? Is there an effective, consistent level of enforcement and handling of infractions?

"We needed to do something on the campus that would show both the campus and the community that at least the university was serious about this issue. Very early on in our project, we made some significant revisions to our judicial system and indicated that we were serious about enforcing the alcohol code of conduct on our campus."

**John Bishop, Associate Vice President,
Center for Counseling and Student Development, University of Delaware**

The process of policy review and reform will vary from campus to campus, depending up the nature of the institution and the kinds of alcohol-related problems it is experiencing. Most often AMOD campuses established a task force charged with examining existing policies and making recommendations for improvements.

At the start of Lehigh's AMOD initiative the campus community coalition established a Policy Issues Task Force to develop recommendations for campus policy changes, based on considerations of potential effectiveness and practicality. Its final recommendations for new school policies were designed to set clear expectations for student conduct, increase accountability for alcohol violations, and encourage strict and consistent enforcement of the university's alcohol regulations. The recommendations were the nucleus for a strategic action plan developed by the project staff and later endorsed by Lehigh's President.

Unlike some strictly campus-based task forces charged with examining campus policies, Lehigh included community members on its Policy Issues Task Force. Doing so sent a signal to the community that the university was taking a comprehensive approach—that was not just solely concerned about the environment on the campus but the environment in the larger community. That helped alleviate the concerns of community members that stricter campus policies would have the impact of pushing problems into the community. It also signaled the university's commitment to addressing alcohol problems related to student drinking through a collaborative process.

"You can't ask the community to solve a problem that the university refuses to address."

Jim Clayton, Business Owner and Member of the University of Iowa Stepping Up Coalition

The University of Vermont used its judicial system to get students' attention. It was very important for the university and the community to be aligned, share information and let students know that the campus and the community are handling things in a similar way so that there were fewer holes in the system. This helped reinforce consistent communication from the institution to the general community about UVM's position on alcohol.

In the first few years of its AMOD project the University of Delaware also focused on campus issues. In 1997, with the encouragement of President Roselle backed by the advice of university legal staff, the university implemented a parental notification policy before it was permitted under federal law.

The university also adopted a "three strikes and you're out" policy: when students are found guilty of a third alcohol offense, they are suspended. It revamped the judicial system to provide more support for resident assistants and a faster turn-around on judicial cases. It got tough with student codes of conduct. In addition to notifying parents, it starts fining students for violations, and clamped down on tailgating practices at football games.

Unless the university "steps up to the plate" and makes reductions in alcohol problems among students a campus priority and adopts and enforces policies aimed at student conduct, the community is not likely to be enthusiastic about joining in the effort. Despite criticism from some community members that get-tough measures would push problems off campus and into the surrounding neighborhoods, communities generally appreciate a university's crack down on student misbehavior. This also enables the communities to begin examining their own role in the problems.

KEY ELEMENT #3

Staff Qualifications

The third key element contributing to the success of the AMOD coalitions was the way project staff managed the coalition. Each AMOD site had a full-time project director, and it was strongly agreed that projects of this scope and nature warrant the commitment of a full-time director. Coalitions and projects wax and wane but having someone there to constantly think about what needs to be done, how to revitalize the coalition and project activities was crucial for maintaining a long-term effort.

Since projects targeting alcohol problems are usually administered through student affairs, it was not surprising that many AMOD sites initially hired directors with counseling and health education backgrounds. But, expecting traditional campus prevention coordinators, who typically focus on health education and awareness programs, to add coalition work to their duties will not work well unless they are trained and enthusiastic about trying this new activity. Moreover, the position of a project director for a campus-community coalition—with its focus on coalition work, political organizing, and media advocacy—calls for specific expertise not always found among health educators.

One important role of the project director is to help participants understand and participate in coalition processes, which includes decision making, work plan formation and consensus building. It requires the ability to build trust and develop effective communication among coalition participants. In fact, good communication skills and the ability to set up

"The job called for changes to the environment that aided and abetted high-risk drinking, whether in commercial—the downtown bar scene—or social settings—fraternity and other house parties. This was not to be a traditional health education appointment; it would be a tougher assignment. It's just too easy and attractive to try to focus on changing students instead of changing the environment in which they live."

Sarah Hansen, Associate Director for Education/Coordinator of Health Iowa, University of Iowa

structures and processes to facilitate communication among coalition members, the university and the community were the hallmark of successful coalitions.

In addition, a good project director facilitates, but does not try to run the coalition. It is important to allow people with passion to do what they want to do, rather than telling them what they have to do. The most successful coalitions had project directors that acted more like facilitators and good coaches. As community involvement increases, the position of the project or coalition director can shift from campus to community member. In addition, all projects had active participation of a high level administrator (vice president or vice chancellor) which assured regular project direct information and access to high level support that couldn't be buried in layers of bureaucracy. Project and coalition decision makers had more clout than typical projects led by lower level administrators.

“What made my being involved different was the advantage I had of being the only director that was from the city of Atlanta. The people who preceded me in this position came from different states. They had a strong learning curve in figuring out who is involved in the city. I had been the special assistant to the Mayor for five years as a community liaison, so when I stepped in, I didn't have to go through the process that a person that wasn't familiar with the city would have had to go through.”

Marsha Brinkley, Project Director of GT SMART, Georgia Institute of Technology

Project director facilitation and advice appeared to be more effective than project staff dominance. Having a project director who can support high level leadership within clearly defined structures and goals appears to help coalitions move more effectively and resulted in a more positive experience for members. If participants do not fully understand the coalition structures, or perceive how its processes work, and feel less positive about their participation or other participants, coalition progress becomes more difficult.

One recommendation from the AMOD experience is to hire a project director who is already involved with community issues—someone who is respected and understands how city government works. Then less time is spent trying to establish relationships to engage in partnerships with elected officials, the police department, and other community stakeholders. In a model that aims to change environmental policies, it is important to have a project director who knows how to engage in community organizing within a political process to get policies adopted and ordinances changed.

KEY ELEMENT #4

Campus and Community Coalition: Structure and Process

The fourth key element of success for AMOD projects was the structure and process for the campus-community coalition. While many campuses have a campus task force or committee to address alcohol issues, a campus-community coalition is something that is completely different. With a campus task force, the tendency at most universities is to focus on the students as the problem. But a campus-community coalition based on an environmental approach sees student behavior as a symptom of the problems.

All AMOD projects were housed in campus divisions of student affairs and reported directly to a university vice president or a vice chancellor who reported directly to the university president or other chief executive officer. Structurally, the partnerships were organized as shared campus-community committees and task forces or as broad-based campus-community coalitions. Participants typically included high level city and university officials and law enforcement, campus faculty, neighborhood associations, student and school district leaders, local prevention agencies, local and campus health care professionals, and frequently representatives of state government, liquor enforcement authorities, and local alcohol retailers. Staffing included a full-time project director teamed with a high-level university administrator, communications staff and project evaluators affiliated with the Harvard School of Public Health.

Each coalition was begun at the initiation of top campus leadership with agreement, from the start, of top leadership of the city. In many cases these people already knew each other and had been collaborating on some activities or committees to address common problems. A professional staff director with some media skills was also a key factor. The lion's

share of the work, however, took place through coalition members working in committee or task force fashion and in their primary campus or community roles. Each coalition took on a life of its own and, as trust developed, sustained itself through its accomplishments and visibility. The prevention of alcohol-related harm warrants a broad partnership able to muster the will and momentum to address the economic, political, and legal bases for such problems.

“In order to move forward, at the very beginning there needs to be very strong relationships and understandings between the campuses and the cities in order to develop an effective campus-community coalition.”

Richard A. Yoast, AMOD Director, Office of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse Prevention, American Medical Association

The most successful AMOD coalitions were those that were very thoughtful and deliberate in determining the membership. Rather than just establishing a checklist of campus and community stakeholders and inviting them to participate, project staff engaged in a strategic process to identify those individuals who would be helpful to meeting the goals for the project.

Before undertaking a project of this kind, those involved should have a clear understanding of their environment and the student body, appreciate the opinions and readiness of the local community to make changes of various kinds, be willing to adhere to a data-driven mode, and seek to establish interim and long-term goals.

For the most part the AMOD sites adhered to a structured process that flowed as follows:

- Identify potential coalition members and engage them in the project
- Conduct a mix of focus groups and one-on-one interviews with students, parents, alumni, faculty, staff, and community residents to explain project objectives to key constituencies, solicit ideas from different campus and community stakeholders, and identify individuals who might be able and willing to participate in a campus-community coalition
- Conduct an environmental assessment and compile a database on the prevalence and consequences of high-risk drinking by students
- Develop a work plan that specifies short- and long-term objectives, project activities, and needed resources

The characteristics of the most successful AMOD campus-community coalitions included:

- Shared city-campus leadership (co-chairs) by high level administrators
- Detailed, extensive work plans with clearly articulated goals, objectives, responsibilities, roles and time lines
- Staff serving to facilitate and organize the project but with decision making resting within the coalition
- Activity sequenced so that the project first addressed campus issues and policy. There was ongoing campus and community discussion of issues and solutions that built trust, and resulted in campus credibility and shared work experiences. Coalitions subsequently addressed community issues.

Long-term voluntary participation by members also played a role in the more successful AMOD coalitions. Such members included broad, diverse representation from the campus and the city, such as officials, concerned citizens and staff, those affected by problems, those with power to reduce problems, other key stakeholders, and formal and informal leaders (especially among student members).

“Don't try to get anything done immediately. Put time and effort into going to community meetings, meeting people and conducting research to find out what the community issues are. Find out who are the true leaders and establish a relationship with them.”

Marsha Brinkley, Georgia Tech University

Students played varying roles at the AMOD sites. At some they were active participants in coalition work. Motivations for student involvement in prevention work included concern about the health and safety of fellow students, a desire to improve the quality of life on campus by reducing the secondhand effects of binge drinking, increasing the availability of social and recreational activities that do not involve alcohol, and in some instances to try to assure that their rights to party were not curtailed.

It was also very important to make a concerted effort to get people involved with the coalition who were concerned about alcohol issues and could take a comprehensive view of the problems and potential solutions—not those who focused on a single issue. One way to identify those people is through a process of watching, listening, and discussing to identify those who really care about the city and are committed to changing the alcohol environment.

Another important element of successful coalitions was to develop a structure where everyone knew what their role was, with regular communication about what was taking place. In addition, successful coalitions had members who felt that changes could occur in the community to improve the health and safety of all community members—not just students.

No two AMOD coalitions looked the same structurally. In fact, the coalition size ranged from 16 to over 100. Most coalitions operated on a task force or subcommittee model. But key to the successful coalitions was having people work on the issues that they were interested in. Those coalitions did not routinely convene large, formal coalition meetings, with some meeting only once a year. This approach reduces the trap of members arguing over what everybody else should be doing and allows people to work on the issue that they are most interested in.

KEY ELEMENT #5

Education and the Environmental Change Model

The fifth key element in the success of AMOD coalitions was gaining broad support for environmental approaches to prevention. The field of public health recognizes that health-related behaviors are influenced by multiple factors: individual factors, peer factors, institutional factors, community factors, culture, the media and public policy. Successful alcohol problem prevention programs address all of these factors in a comprehensive approach. For campuses and surrounding communities, it is especially important to complement existing efforts by addressing the physical, social, economic, and legal environment in which students make decisions about alcohol use, which can be accomplished through a mix of institutional, community, and public policy change. This is environmental management.

“We really did embrace the environmental model and attacked high-risk drinking among UNL students from a whole variety of different angles. That broad approach—focusing on off-campus drinking parties, retail enforcement, alcohol-free events, a social norms campaign, policy issues at the state and local level—helped us.”

Tom Casady, Chief of Police, Lincoln, Nebraska

As a first step in organizing a coalition, it is important to educate stakeholders about what is known about the nature and causes of alcohol-related problems within the context of public health principles and environmental management. To be effective in advancing environmental change to reduce problems, stakeholders and leaders of the AMOD initiatives had to be both convinced and convincing about what should be done. In many cases members and staff sought advice and training from others who had been working on this issue – especially in the areas of policy and media advocacy.

An educated leadership can speak clearly and simply about what it wants to accomplish in terms of the goals of the initiative, how those goals might be achieved, and what it is going to take in terms of time and resources. One important message of the AMOD projects is that it is not just about reducing alcohol consumption, but also impacting the harms and secondhand effects that are associated with those consumption patterns. Keeping the message on those harms helps to contextualize college drinking problems as those amenable to environmental interventions.



When it comes to alcohol problem prevention, environmental management is not a concept that people leap to and readily embrace. Environmental change models run counter to how universities view the world. Two primary functions of colleges and universities are, of course, education and research. So it is not surprising that they turn to education strategies to respond to student drinking problems. But research and examples of how changes in environments can affect student behaviors can lead to an appreciation of the value of environmental strategies. It is not just about educating students about alcohol use and related problems; it is also about examining and changing the environments that contribute to those problems. In addition, an environmental management process became more appealing because education and awareness approaches were not getting the desired results.

“The whole notion of environmental model was something that I learned as a part of this process. I came out of psychology and higher education; I didn't come out of public health. The public health model turned a light bulb on for us in terms of looking at the root causes of the behavior rather than just treating the symptoms”

John Smeaton, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Lehigh University

Not surprisingly, campus and community police officials were often the first to understand and embrace environmental management approaches to prevention. They are the ones who bear the brunt of the worst aspects of binge drinking—violence, public disorder, vandalism, and so on. They are often familiar with the data needed to drive their decisions. Police officials can be effective allies in promoting environmental strategies and policy change. In fact, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the Lincoln Chief of Police co-chaired the AMOD coalition.

Law enforcement officials quickly grasp that this issue is not about a bunch of students and young people violating minor-in-possession of alcohol laws or just getting drunk. This is about violent crime as well. Every police officer knows that. Many of the crimes they respond to are connected with high-risk drinking and the environments in which those behaviors occur. They understand that something really can be done to reduce those risks. In addition, people listen to the chief of police and officers. They speak with authority and credibility.

As the Stepping Up Coalition web site at the University of Iowa says: “Environmental factors include alcohol advertising and marketing, institutional policies and practices, and local ordinances. These factors are often beyond the control of the individual, but they are not beyond the control of a determined group of community advocates.”

KEY ELEMENT #6

Data Collection to Support Problem Assessment

The sixth key element of success in the AMOD coalitions was data collection to support problem assessment and strategic interventions. All ten AMOD sites participated in the Harvard College Alcohol study, which provided the coalitions with information on student alcohol use and related problems. Each site also contributed to the funding of a half-time, on-site evaluator affiliated with the Harvard School of Public Health AMOD evaluation team. These on-site evaluators collected information for the national evaluation but also helped the staff at each AMOD campus to interpret and utilize local and Harvard data for project and coalition activities.

Having good, local data on student alcohol use and adverse consequences is very helpful in securing the broad-based support necessary for coalitions to be effective. It helps move the discussion about alcohol problems beyond the “dueling anecdotes” that so often muddy rationale discourse on what is to be done. Instead of alumni telling their drinking stories, students talking about how great things are, and campus officials recounting incidents of trips to the emergency room, student surveys provided a database on what was actually occurring among students. It then became a matter of facts—so what needs to be done?

“Anybody wanting to undertake this kind of program and be effective should have a clear understanding of the environment and the student body, appreciate the opinions and readiness of the local community to make changes of various kinds, adhere to a data-driven model wherever possible, and establish interim and long-term goals.”

Elissa Weitzman, Research Scientist, Department of Society, Human Development, and Health, Harvard School of Public Health

While student surveys are important in determining the nature, extent and consequences of student drinking, they are only one piece of the comprehensive campus-community assessment needed for coalitions to be successful. AMOD based its strategies on an environmental change model. But before steps can be taken to change an environment it is important to understand that environment. At most AMOD sites, the environmental assessment started on campus and then moved into the surrounding community.

“Strategies based on good analysis of data have been important for us. We have not operated on acts of faith. We have had good data about what our problems are and where our problems are. Our strategies have been based on that data. On some occasions, we have discarded strategies because the data was not showing that we were having an impact.”

Tom Casady, Chief of Police, Lincoln, Nebraska

Data and research identified the magnitude of the problem and guided intervention planning throughout the AMOD initiative. Data collection supported the need for community interventions and demonstrated change that occurs. Data sources for environmental assessments at the AMOD sites included:

- **Key informant data.** Information from key informants or stakeholders was obtained through formal and informal processes. In addition to administering structured questionnaires, project staff conducted focus groups and attended various kinds of community meetings—from neighborhood associations to city council meetings. Stakeholder information helps in understanding the quality of life issues facing the community, whether or not coalition management is effective and how the community feels about the project and its impacts.
- **Public opinion surveys.** Getting the opinions of the members of the public about alcohol problems, policies and problem solutions, provided AMOD sites with data to gain the attention of policymakers. For example, Louisiana State University collected attitudinal information through public opinion surveys for each of the Baton Rouge council districts to counter arguments that alcohol problems were not occurring in specific districts. At Georgia Tech, a survey of 600 Atlanta residents led to a City Council review of existing alcohol ordinances and changes within the Police Department to give more attention to the License and Permits Division, which handles alcohol issues.
- **Issue-specific surveys.** A number of AMOD sites used various types of surveys to get more information related to specific problems. For example, the University of Vermont conducted “last drink” surveys (where individuals had their last drink before they were arrested or cited for an alcohol violation) with individuals convicted of drunk driving who attended mandatory education classes and with students in violation of university alcohol policy. The coalition and police used the data initially to identify problem bars. The coalition also surveyed a neighborhood near campus to collect information about the impact on residents from the second-hand effects of high-risk drinking behavior. Another survey aimed to characterize the downtown business climate. Data were collected on crime and vandalism experienced by local non-alcohol businesses, their perceptions about alcohol-related incidents and the impacts on business operations.
- **Social indicator data.** Information on alcohol-related incidents from student health services, campus and community police departments, local hospitals and neighborhood complaints helped AMOD sites paint a picture of the alcohol environment on and off campus. For example, using GIS (geographic information system) mapping of alcohol-related incidents reported to the police in Lincoln, Nebraska, helped the coalition pinpoint problem environments. In Madison, Wisconsin, the coalition used GIS to correlate problems with bar density and drink specials.
- **Qualitative and observational information.** Not all data collection has to be in the form of formal surveys. Often times just taking a look around and talking to folks helped AMOD sites get a better sense of the alcohol environment. At Louisiana State University a faculty member organized a group of students to observe and report on alcohol use in the stadium. In Lincoln, Nebraska, observational data on bar overcrowding was brought to the Fire Chief. Over time the city council approved a new fire inspector position charged with monitoring bar occupancy. At each site staff and evaluators looked at the amount and types of alcohol advertising that was targeting students – drink specials flyers, newspaper ads, advertising for local bars and national beer brands. They also looked at local news coverage of the issues and of the coalition, how the issues were looked at in reporting, and changes in editorial perspectives.

- **Research information.** While local data helps support coalition work, AMOD sites also reviewed policy research on issues such as zoning and alcohol control measures to provide policymakers with information to support their decision-making and sustain long-term policy solutions. Along with the use of local data, a review of policy research gives advocacy arguments greater credibility and draws greater levels of community attention.

Because the most successful AMOD coalitions operated through a strategic planning process, it is important from the outset to collect data from every perspective. That problem and environmental assessment sets the stage for the focus of the coalition’s work. It also provides a baseline of information to measure against to determine whether changes are occurring in the intended direction. A number of AMOD coalitions monitored data routinely and altered strategies when the data indicated that the strategies were not having an impact on reducing problems.

KEY ELEMENT #7

Commitment to Advocacy and Policy Change

The seventh key element for the success of the AMOD coalitions was a commitment to advocacy and policy change. From the outset it was important to identify and recruit coalition members who would be willing to speak out and engage in the political process and to use their influence to help the coalition in their professional and community citizen roles.

Because of the political nature of policy change, it was important for the project director and coalition members to get to know the local elected officials that represent the area immediately surrounding the campus and meet with those individuals outside of a formal public process or public meeting. That generally was the best way to articulate university issues and get a sense of who the policy leaders were in the community and how they might react to those issues. Establishing those relationships before engaging in political processes that are very public helps to minimize opportunities for conflict and misinterpretation of the projects goals and objectives.

“Before I started this I don’t know if I ever attended a city council meeting in the 30 years I have been here. Now I am at home standing in front of the City Council. That was all new for me. If I had known at the start of this time some of the things I would have to do, I probably would have tried to avoid it, although I now realize that it is an important part of the process”

John Bishop, Associate Vice President, Center for Counseling and Student Development, University of Delaware

For example, the University of Wisconsin-Madison coalition decided early on that it wanted to provide input into the alcohol licensing decisions, particularly for those licenses that were in close proximity to the university, or might impact our student population. The Alcohol License Review Committee, which is appointed by the mayor and includes elected officials and citizens, makes decisions about liquor laws ordinance as well as licensing of individual establishments. The coalition decided that that might be a leverage point to start to work on some of its policy efforts. Coalition members began regularly attending Committee meetings and talked about policy issues, such as zoning and license density issues. The idea was to move the focus from the individual licenses to a policy discussion.

The coalition was such a constant presence at the Alcohol License Review Committee meetings that a non-voting seat was added to the Committee for a coalition representative, currently the special assistant to the university’s chancellor. The Committee which had previously not fully considered the impact of their licensing decisions on student drinking, now took that impact into account and, for example, agreed not to grant more licenses in the neighborhood surrounding a new university sports facility.

“The AMOD policy partnerships set the stage for a renewed consideration of the university as social change agent and leader.”

Richard A. Yoast, Director of the Office of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse Prevention, American Medical Association

At Louisiana State University coalition staff along with key members actively pursued policy changes at both the city, parish and state levels and forged relationships with community leaders in support of these initiatives. The coalition’s approach to interventions has been to identify areas and issues that are critical to LSU students using student survey outcome data; to carefully develop relationships with other relevant community stakeholders; to build credibility; and to progress steadily toward more difficult and sometimes controversial community issues.

Creating a core group of stakeholders who could articulate the coalition's vision and support its position is especially helpful. One AMOD coalition brought in neighborhood organizations with an interest in specific topics or a specific license to speak before the liquor license board or city council. It is hard to turn down citizens who want to have a voice in city business.

“As I go across the state, many of the local coalitions across the state aren't aware of the impact they can have at a local level on licensing and policy issues. Our experience with this kind of intervention has been quite successful.”

Susan Crowley, Director of Prevention Services and Community Relations, University of Wisconsin-Madison

When attempting to change public policy, ultimately some governmental body is going to take a vote or make a decision as to whether something is even allowed to come up to a vote. Successful AMOD coalitions recognized that politics are an essential part of an environmental approach to prevention for good, bad or indifferent. Because projects such as these are attempting to make significant changes, expect significant opposition. Part of it is political, so political strategies need to be developed and played out all the time.

KEY ELEMENT #8

Media advocacy and communication strategies

The eighth key element to the success of the AMOD coalitions was the use of media advocacy and communication strategies to raise both public awareness and support for environmental approaches to prevention. It was very important for the success of the AMOD coalitions to get people, both on campus and off campus, to understand that changes in the physical, social, and economic environment can, in fact, influence drinking behavior and related problems. This goes against deeply held societal views that drinking behavior is solely a matter of individual choice and personal responsibility. Very early on in the project universities had to learn media advocacy techniques and how the local media work in order to get coverage of alcohol issues from their perspective rather than the adversarial perspective that often marks much of the public discourse about alcohol problems.

Media advocacy is the purposeful and planned use of mass media to bring problems and policy solutions to the attention of the community and local decision-makers. Media advocacy seeks to broaden the "frame" of the news presentations in the public debate. Media advocacy acknowledges and accepts that the mass media creates simple pictures of real events in the minds of the audience. Individuals using media advocacy do so believing that the picture that the press presents can be improved, altered, and used to redefine the understanding of an important issue. To accomplish this requires that community members become skilled in working with the mass media to present a clear "frame" of the issue so as to focus on the public health problem and solutions.

“Doing a lot of media advocacy around the issues helps the general public see the role that excessive drinking plays in their community and how it impacts them. Ultimately, it is local citizen involvement that will impact public opinion and lead policy leaders to make substantial changes.”

Susan Crowley, Director of Prevention Services and Community Relations, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Media advocacy uses media to raise awareness of the problem on the public agenda, provide a vehicle for high-visibility community response, highlight project successes, demonstrates community support, and promote policy change. Media can keep attention focused on alcohol-related problems, building momentum for legislative change and assuring policy-makers that such change has broad community backing.

The University of Iowa coalition used student survey results to obtain media attention to help educate the public and policy-makers on secondary effects of student drinking. A lot of people already recognized student alcohol use as a problem in Iowa City. However there was no majority support for actually taking action and many argued that "alcohol use is a matter of personal responsibility." The coalition used a number of communication and media strategies to change that view, such as speaking to civic groups and the city council, writing editorials, and pushing for ordinances that got

media attention. The coalition was able to demonstrate that it truly is a problem that affects not only those who drink but also those who do not.

At the University of Vermont, getting media coverage helped bring attention to these problems. Both campus and community coalitions members agreed that the media coverage was very important in moving policies forward and had a big impact on the perceptions of the problem. When the coalition started, the media's perspective was that students had a binge drinking problem and it was up to the university to solve it. The project's environmental approach and work over time with media resulted in a shared understanding that student drinking is much larger, more complex problem involving more players than previously thought. Data showed the newspapers and mayor that problems in the bars involved non-students and students from other campuses. This persuaded them that they needed to look at what the bars themselves were doing that encouraged alcohol-related incidents – and then what the city could do about it.

“Thoughtful strategic communications and use of the media has been an invaluable lesson.”

Linda Major, Director of Student Involvement, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

In addition, coalitions used communication strategies to inform students, parents, and community residents about the risks and consequences of drinking and to set behavioral standards. Such strategies included newsletters, mailings, web sites, social norms marketing campaigns, and so on.

For example, the University of Iowa AMOD coalition quickly recognized parents as allies in supporting policy change. The coalition produced a Parents Time quarterly newsletter with an overview of the downtown bar scene, secondary drinking effects, and advice for parents. The University's web site also provides alcohol-related tips for parents. At one point parents were even recruited to help advocate for passage of a local ordinance. The University also communicates about alcohol concerns with parents of incoming students during the summer between high school graduation and their first year fall semester.

“An educational evolution that has occurred was a result of a lot of the tactics that we tried through media advocacy and through some of our marketing and advertising programs that actually got the message across to people.”

Jim Clayton, Business Owner and Member of the University of Iowa Stepping Up Coalition

The most successful AMOD coalitions understood the power of the media and used media advocacy and communication campaigns around different themes related to alcohol use to gain attention to both problems and solutions. It also helped coalitions with the political process necessary to effect policy change.

KEY ELEMENT #9

Shared Responsibility for Solutions

The ninth key element of successful AMOD coalitions was an understanding at both the university and in the community that responding to student alcohol problems is a shared responsibility. Historically, problems related to high-risk drinking had been both portrayed and perceived as a student problem, not a community problem. Accordingly, most prevention activities had been directed toward students. But the conscious decision by AMOD to position high-risk drinking as a community problem as well required a shift in the perception of alcohol problems and solutions.

The most successful AMOD coalitions were those that used data collection and environmental assessments to make the argument through media advocacy and communications campaigns that the community played a role in student drinking behavior and shared in the responsibility for developing solutions.

“We had a lot of people who then came to the table because of the cooperative nature of the campus and the community and because of the leaders who had publicly announced their support.”

Linda Major, Director of Student Involvement, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

For Louisiana State University, especially, the community was truly "part of the problem." It is well known that south Louisiana fosters a seriously entrenched drinking culture. The coalition experienced first hand the extent to which this environment increases the challenges of reducing college binge drinking. But through the use of data, the coalition was able to get the attention of local policymakers.

“There is no simple solution or silver bullet. If there were, we would have shot that bullet long ago. It takes a concerted effort to engage the community and city government working in partnership with the university—and not only its administration but the students as well.”

Peter Clavelle, former Mayor of Burlington, Vermont.

In Burlington, the coalition’s focus on an environmental approach led people to see connections they did not see before. For example, they gained an understanding that the alcohol industry has a significant role to play in behaviors previously thought to be problems solely of individuals. The message about how over-consumption of alcohol affects the quality of life for all in the community resulted in a greater focus on community health issues and measures to change the drinking culture.

While the AMOD coalitions started out on campus, in the successful coalitions the main agenda for the project moved to the city, with the campus engaged in maintenance activities. For example, in Madison, Wisconsin the city started developing its own activist agendas coming from the City Council or the Mayor’s office. The cities recognized that alcohol is sold, promoted, served and consumed (and the laws developed and enforced) primarily in the community – whether at commercial venues or in off-campus student housing. They could act on this far more effectively than could the campus administrations and recognized the need for ongoing, long-term municipal strategies and activities to address alcohol problems.

“Over time we managed to increase the awareness that there are other components to this problem and that a solution is going to require some level of involvement from all of those key players.”

Enrique Corredera, Director of University Communications, University of Vermont

Indicators of AMOD shared responsibility for developing solutions include:

- Shared coalition leadership and action plans
- University participates in local liquor licensing discussions
- University holds students accountable for off campus alcohol violations
- University develops activities to promote responsible behaviors by local bars
- Collaborative, public efforts to identify problems, collect data, propose solutions, have common expectations on and off campus
- Propose and advocate community policy change in partnership with community leaders
- Active support for development of community capacity to identify and create change affecting campus and community
- Shared information, activities and policies to remove campus/community barriers (law enforcement, new social environment, alcohol control)
- Community sees university as local player
- Open, free community discussion of issues with campus administration based on trust and growing history of collaboration
- Community accepts its role in student alcohol problems—can’t just leave it up to the university

KEY ELEMENT #10

Long-term view and commitment

The tenth key element of successful AMOD coalitions was the ability of both the campus and the community to take a long-term view of the process of changing the culture surrounding student drinking and commitment by both to a collaborative process. The general consensus among the AMOD coalitions was that changing the culture of drinking is a long-term, community-wide process. Coalitions learned not to expect results right away and to be prepared for resistance and opposition to efforts to change the status quo.

Knowing that the problem of student alcohol abuse will never disappear completely, Lehigh officials recognized that coalition-based prevention must be a permanent part of the university’s operations. Key to building support for a sustained effort is broad recognition that changing a college’s drinking culture does not lend itself to quick fixes.

Most people agreed that this process needs a long time frame and commitment—far longer than any imagined. In addition, changes that do get made can be undone fast, so ongoing diligence and maintenance of effort is important.

At a number of the AMOD sites, the environmental management approach of the AMOD projects helped support community commitments to downtown redevelopment. Engaging in dialogue on how to improve the quality of life for community residents and students alike helped to advance policy measures regarding the nature and density of alcohol outlets in downtown areas and neighborhoods surrounding campuses.

“It didn’t happen overnight, but the coalition is a force to be reckoned with. For the next several years, people such as reporters, city council members, state senators and their staffers, liquor control commission members, will want the NU Directions coalition to give testimony or offer an opinion on an issue.”

Tom Casady, Chief of Police, Lincoln, Nebraska

Police Chief Tom Casady said that changes in the political climate in Lincoln over time influenced regulatory bodies like the City Council, the Liquor Control Commission and the state legislature and resulted in their making dramatic changes in the retail environment. However, it is something that has to be watched constantly. “This is an ongoing, career-long struggle to do what you can to tamp down high-risk marketing practices.”

In Madison, it took years five years of attending Alcohol License Review Committee meetings before the university was granted a seat on the committee. The key, according to Susan Crowley, was persistence.

Jim Clayton, a downtown business owner in Iowa City, pointed to a referendum placed on the November 2007 municipal ballot asking voters to enact an ordinance to make 21 the minimum age to be in a licensed establishment. A group of downtown professionals and top university personnel (including the football coach), calling itself the Committee for Healthy Choices, gathered 4,000 signatures to qualify the measure. Clayton believes the work of the AMOD coalition empowered this effort to change permanently the downtown Iowa City environment by prohibiting bar access by 19 and 20 year olds, who while legally unable to purchase and consume alcohol, still managed to do so. If successfully passed, this ordinance would complement such other long-term changes as keg registration and a ban on drink specials in bars.

The Lincoln College Partnership, comprised of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and two other area colleges (Southeast Community College and Nebraska Wesleyan University), formed as the AMOD supported coalition was winding down, is indicative of a continuation and, indeed, a community-wide expansion of the town-gown commitment to manage risks associated with the sale and service of alcohol.

“I don’t know if AMOD recognized how hard it was going to be and how long that it might take from the beginning. I don’t think that university administrators and city officials had a sense of how important this is and how long it would take us to really get some alignment. One of the great outcomes of this work is that alignment has to be there and we’ve got to work hard at it.”

David Nestor, Associate Vice President for Student and Campus Life and Dean of Students, University of Vermont

The work of the AMOD coalitions was not a one-time effort. It is not just getting everybody on board to understand environmental prevention. These efforts require constant maintenance in order to do be effective. In addition, behavior change takes time, and doesn’t instantly respond to community and campus environmental change.

Successful AMOD coalitions had the commitment of resources by both the university and the city—and not just financial. During the grant period, financial resources were provided by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. But as the grants ended, the work of the coalitions at a number of AMOD sites had been institutionalized at both the university and in the city. That continued commitment to a collaborative process in the absence of external funding reflects the success of the AMOD projects in changing the culture of student drinking to improve the quality of life for students and community members alike.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The AMOD experience has demonstrated that through the formation of broad-based campus-community coalitions and collaborations, participants in such efforts can create long-lasting changes in the environment that support healthy lifestyle choices and discourage excessive alcohol consumption.

The key elements of successful AMOD coalitions are the bases for the following recommendations for colleges and universities and surrounding communities that want to change the culture surrounding student drinking and improve the quality of life for students and community members alike.

Enlist the support of university and city top level leaders. Everyone involved with AMOD felt that if the chief executive on the campus was not supportive, the project would not be successful. In addition, active support from community leaders was an essential element of successful AMOD coalitions.

Engage in campus policy development and enforcement. Colleges and universities gain credibility in the community by demonstrating that they are serious about addressing student drinking and related problems.

Recruit and support qualified staff. Projects of this scope and nature warrant the commitment of a full time director. The position of a project director for a campus-community coalition—with its focus on coalition work, political organizing, and media advocacy—calls for specific expertise.

Pay careful attention to the structure and process of the campus and community coalition. By engaging in a strategic and deliberate process in determining the coalition structure, the members will more likely be individuals who will be helpful in meeting the goals for the project. The structure should be formal, with clear role definitions and an open flow of communication to keep members informed about coalitions activities.

Embrace the environmental model. While people on and off campus do not readily understand the environmental approach, the evidence is in that changes in the legal, social, physical and economic environment can in fact reduce problems related to high-risk drinking by students.

Collect data to support problem assessment and responses. Local data on student alcohol use and adverse consequences is very helpful in securing the broad-based support necessary for coalitions to be effective, for selecting the appropriate targets and activities for change, and for monitoring the effectiveness of activities to reduce problems – and to not waste valuable time doing things that don't work.

Commit to advocacy and policy change. Coalitions need members who are willing to speak out and engage in the political processes. Because projects such as these are attempting to make significant changes, they require members with political skills and knowledge of how things work on and off campus

Engage in media advocacy and use communication strategies. Media advocacy and communication strategies can raise both public awareness and support for environmental approaches to prevention.

Share responsibility for solutions. High-risk drinking is both a campus and a community problem requiring a shift in the perception of alcohol problems and solutions. The campus and the community play a role in student drinking behavior and share in the responsibility for developing solutions.

Think long term. The cultural environment surrounding student drinking did not develop overnight. Changing that environment takes time. Too often responses come in the aftermath of a crisis when there is pressure to do something right away. Thinking long term allows for strategic planning that takes into consideration problem definition, community norms and community values before developing effective policies and implementing solutions.

RESOURCE LIST

Extensive information (descriptions, articles, findings) about the "A Matter of Degree" program and a similar AMA-Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program, "Reducing Underage Drinking through Coalitions," may be found at: <http://www.rwjf.org>.

Publications and data based on the AMOD Evaluation and the national College Alcohol Survey (CAS) may be found at the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study website: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/cas/>

The following online resources provide additional information and resources for the development of campus and community initiatives to reduce high risk drinking among college students and to address other alcohol policy issues.

A Matter of Degree Advocacy Initiative: The National Effort to Reduce High Risk Drinking Among College Students
<http://www.alcoholpolicy.com>

Alcohol Policy Information system (APIS)—National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism data base of state laws on all aspects of alcohol with background descriptions of types of policy
<http://alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/>

Alcohol Epidemiology Program, University of Minnesota—Research to discover effective community and policy interventions to reduce alcohol-related social and health problems.
<http://www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol/>

Campus-Community Partners for Health—Nonprofit organization that promotes health (broadly defined) through partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions.
<http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/>

Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)—Alcohol policy projects including alcohol-free sports.
<http://www.cspinet.org/alcohol/index.html>

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)—Environmental Strategies for Prevention resources web page with links to numerous sources.
http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/ev/ev_references.htm

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – National data and facts on excessive alcohol use; on-line Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI) software (to estimate alcohol-related deaths and Years of Potential Life Lost/YPLL. The broader CDC pages include research and recommendations on preventive services, fetal alcohol effects and alcohol-related injury.
<http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/>

College Drinking: Changing the Culture—National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's one-stop resource for comprehensive research-based information on issues related to alcohol abuse and binge drinking among college students.
<http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/>

Ensuring Solutions to Alcohol Problems (George Washington University)- Resources, cost calculators and action tools to assist communities, universities, businesses, families and individuals understand and increase access to effective, affordable screening and treatment.
<http://www.ensuringsolutions.org/>

FACE® Resources, Training & Action on Alcohol Issues—National non-profit organization that supports sensible alcohol practices through the development of messages, strategies, and training. [http://faceproject.org/FACE® community Action Kits:](http://faceproject.org/FACE%20community%20Action%20Kits)
<http://faceproject.org/Resources/CommunityActionKits.html>

Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention—U.S. Department of Education's program to help college and community leaders develop, implement, and evaluate programs and policies to reduce student problems related to alcohol and other drug use and interpersonal violence.
<http://www.higheredcenter.org/>

Join Together – Web based resource to keep abreast of all areas of alcohol-related news, research, policies, funding resources, and advocacy activities. Also links to on-line alcohol risk assessment/feedback tool. Free daily, weekly and monthly electronic news service subscriptions.
<http://www.jointogether.org>

RESOURCE LIST *continued*

MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)—National organization devoted to preventing drunk driving and its social causes.
<http://www.madd.org/>

Marin Institute—National alcohol industry watchdog organization; monitors industry commercial and political activities, provides local alcohol policy and underage drinking prevention resources.
<http://www.marininstitute.org>

Prevention Enhancement Protocols (PEPS)—SAMHSA/Cap’s systematic evaluation of research and practice evidence on alcohol availability with recommendations “Preventing Problems Related to Alcohol Availability: Environmental Approaches: Community Guidelines, Practitioners’ Guidelines, Reference Guidelines.”
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/bv.fcgi?rid=hstat5.part.13409>

Prevention Research Center—NIAAA supported research center with college and community prevention resources.
<http://resources.prev.org/>

Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center (UDET)—Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (within the U.S. Department of Justice) center to support its Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Program.
<http://www.udetc.org/>

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A MATTER OF DEGREE Coalitions

Florida State University - The City of Tallahassee, Florida

Georgia Institute of Technology - The City of Atlanta, Georgia

Lehigh University - The City of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Louisiana State University - The City of Baton Rouge, Louisiana

University of Colorado - The City of Boulder, Colorado

University of Delaware - The City of Newark, Delaware

University of Iowa - Iowa City, Iowa

University of Nebraska at Lincoln - The City of Lincoln, Nebraska

University of Vermont - The City of Burlington, Vermont

University of Wisconsin - The City of Madison, Wisconsin

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