

***REPORT OF THE ALCOHOL TASK FORCE
CLAREMONT McKENNA COLLEGE***

Claremont, California

May 4, 2010

Background

Drug Free Schools Act

Since passage of the Drug Free Schools Act in 1990, every college and university in the United States which receives federal funds is required to conduct a biennial review of substance use on campus.¹ Failure to conduct a review could result in the loss of federal funds, which is estimated at over \$4 million annually for CMC's work-study program, and other institutional support. At Claremont McKenna College, an annual review of alcohol and drug use has been conducted by the Dean of Students Office and the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees.

Amethyst Initiative

In July, 2008, there was a new, national movement to review the role of alcohol on college campuses. Emeritus President John McCardell of Middlebury College launched the Amethyst Initiative. The Amethyst Initiative proposed that colleges and community officials have open conversations about the effectiveness of the 21-year-old drinking age. McCardell's belief was that the 21-year-old drinking age may inadvertently cause more dangerous activity because of the secrecy involved with underage drinking on a college campus. McCardell argued that, because of the laws requiring people to be 21 years old to consume alcohol, colleges have been pushed into playing a disciplinary role, and unable to model safer uses of alcohol. Therefore, many of the tragedies, injuries, sexual assaults, and other negative outcomes from unsafe use of alcohol have occurred because of the secrecy used by students in their drinking, and the disciplinary role that colleges were forced to take.

Approximately 120 colleges and universities signed the Amethyst Initiative. Soon thereafter, the Amethyst Initiative encountered opposition from Mothers Against Drunk Driving ("MADD"). MADD argued that the 21-year-old drinking age had been very successful at reducing the number of highway fatalities and injuries from alcohol-related crashes. Support for the Amethyst Initiative slowed, with approximately 20 more institutions signing before stalling with a total of about 140 colleges and universities signing.

At Claremont McKenna College, the Student Affairs Committee reviewed the Amethyst Initiative and recommended to President Pamela Gann that she should not sign the Initiative. The primary reason cited for this recommendation was that the College did not need to be a signatory to an initiative in order to have conversations about the drinking age. It was also suggested that, as an elite institution of higher learning, our participation in the Amethyst Initiative may be seen from the outside as our joining a group of wealthy colleges in wanting to allow our students to drink alcohol at any age, without any concern for the world around us. Clearly, this impression was not desirable. Therefore, it was recommended to President Gann that she not sign the Initiative, and she accepted that recommendation.²

Public Perception

At the same time, it has been noted that, for the last several years, Claremont McKenna College has been included on the Princeton Review's list of campuses with

¹ The Drug-Free Schools Act was reauthorized by Congress in 2001 and is now known as the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Community Act.

² In April, 2009, CMC hosted a panel debate at the Athenaeum about the 21-year-old drinking age, demonstrating that we may still have meaningful conversations about alcohol without signing the Initiative.

the “most beer”. Coupled with CMC’s data from the National College Health Assessment, it would appear that drinking at CMC is a significant part of the social culture, in both healthy and unhealthy ways. There exists a perception that the social culture of the College is closely tied to alcohol.

Students and Alcohol

There are also students who have some very real problems with alcohol. One-time accidents and assaults do occur, and a few students develop unhealthy relationships with alcohol. Although it has never happened in CMC’s history, there have been fatalities from over-consumption of alcohol by students at various colleges around the country.³

Legal and Ethical Responsibilities

The College must continue to be vigilant about its legal and ethical responsibilities to ensure that the campus is safe. Because members of the Board of Trustees are concerned about the daily life of the College, some have voiced concern to President Gann and Vice President for Student Affairs Jefferson Huang that the College undertake a more extensive review of the culture of alcohol on the CMC campus. The goal was to go beyond the aggregate data that had been collected about alcohol on campus and try to understand more of the underlying social factors, as well as a review of best practices, and our relationship to other institutions within the Claremont Consortium.

Alcohol Task Force

Thus, in the summer of 2009, Vice President Huang initiated the formation of an Alcohol Task Force (“ATF”) in order to bring together several constituents at the College to discuss alcohol and campus life in greater depth than had been reviewed before. After a year-long review, the ATF would write a report, to be submitted to the President of the College, the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, ASCMC, the Alumni Association, and the Parents Network.

Process - The ATF

ATF Members

Vice President Huang formed the ATF with the following 20 members:

Students

- Jesse Blumenthal ’11, Resident Assistant of the Student Apts (spring only).
- Andrew Cosentino ’11, Nominated by ASCMC.
- Elan Feldman ’10, Resident Assistant of Benson Hall.
- Cameron Hanson ’10, Resident Assistant of Stark Hall (spring only).
- Joycelyn Ho ’11 (fall only).
- Ben Kraus ’11, Nominated by ASCMC.
- Caitlin Latta ’11.
- Alex Mitchell ’11.

³ Compelledtoact.com, a watchdog website, reports 245 college student deaths that were from alcohol, drugs, or accidents related to substances, in the last 6 years. Some of the institutions the students attended are among CMC’s peer schools, including: USC, Kenyon, Middlebury, UC Santa Barbara, Yale, Northwestern, and Berkeley.

- Katie Walker '10, Resident Assistant of Fawcett Hall (fall only).
- Seth Winterroth '12.

Faculty

- Lisa Cody, Associate Professor of History & Associate Dean of the Faculty.
- Gary Gilbert, Associate Professor of Religious Studies.
- Shana Levin, Associate Professor of Psychology.
- Ken Scalmanini, Head Men's Basketball Coach.

Staff

- David "Fid" Castro '99, Assistant Dean of Students.
- Denise Hayes, Director of Student Health Services & Monsour Counseling and Psychological Services.
- Jeff Huang, Vice President for Student Affairs, serving as Chairperson.
- Mary Spellman, Dean of Students (spring only).
- Jim Nauls, Assistant Dean & Director of Student Activities.
- Colleen Wynn, Assistant Director of Institutional Research.

Meetings

The ATF met eight times, for 90 minutes per meeting, during the 2009-2010 academic year. All totaled, the College has invested at least 270 hours from students, faculty, and staff time dedicated to this project. This is above and beyond the normal work hours spent reviewing alcohol consumption on campus.

Materials

Members of the ATF were furnished with a 120-page spiral bound book which contained the following documents:

- A list of ATF members.
- CMC data on alcohol and other drug consumption from the 2008 National College Health Assessment.
- Selected data from the 2009 CMC Senior Survey, as coordinated by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA.
- Data from a 2009 ASCMC survey about parties and social life.
- Data on the number of courses that are offered at CMC each day of the week.
- Data from *Alcohol Wise*, the online educational program that has been implemented for the last two years.
- Sample letters from Vice President Huang regarding:
 - students who did not complete the Alcohol Wise online course,
 - information for parents of incoming students to talk to their sons and daughters about alcohol, and
 - an email to all CMC students about the end of Dry Week.

- A copy of the CMC policy on Alcoholic Beverages and an Event Registration Form.
- The Final Report of the Harvard College Committee to Address Alcohol.
- The Princeton University Alcohol Coalition Committee Strategic Plan.
- The Proposed Dartmouth College Alcohol Management Program.
- A report on the BASICS program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).
- Articles on the Amethyst Initiative.
- A sample email from an admitted student who decided to attend UC Berkeley because she perceived CMC to have a heavy drinking culture.

Topics

In the fall semester, the ATF discussed topics including:

- the Thursday night phenomenon,
- the balance of social life among the Claremont Colleges,
- the sexual “hook up” culture of students, and
- other administrative policy changes that have affected the social life of the College.

In the spring semester, the ATF heard presentations from

- John Schwartz, Chief Legal Counsel of United Educators (the College’s insurance company), and from
- Brandon Busted, President of Outside the Classroom, which specializes in campus efforts to reduce dangerous drinking.

Collaboration

The formation of the CMC ATF was followed by similar committees at Pomona and Scripps Colleges. So the CMC ATF met with the Pomona College Alcohol Task Force for a meeting on our issues as neighbors.

Finally, the ATF reviewed 79 strategies that other colleges and universities in the United States have used to address various aspects of campus alcohol culture. The ATF then discussed the 79 strategies, customized some of them, and came up with a list of “Affirmations and Recommendations”.

Discussions

During the course of the year, the ATF discussed alcohol-related “current events” on campus. Some of the negative events that were discussed by the ATF include: a freshman who went to the hospital for over-consumption of alcohol and reported that his blood-alcohol level was near .40%, and an admitted prospective student who went to the hospital because he consumed too much alcohol that was provided to him by members of a varsity sports team.

On the positive side of things were: the success of the dressy “Wedding Party”, where alcohol was present but not central to the event, and large concerts in Bridges Auditorium like the recent Russell Peters comedy show.

Among the things learned from the documents and discussions were:

- Only 4.3% of CMC classes meet on Fridays, contributing to a “Thursday night phenomenon”. For most students, the weekend begins on Thursdays.

- The main party nights at CMC are Thursdays and Saturdays. Friday nights are a relatively “mellow” night on campus.
- The phenomenon of “front-loading” or “pre-gaming”, where students consume alcohol before going to a registered party, is common at CMC.
- Alcohol is, by far, the drug of choice on campus. Other substances are relatively rare, and they are usually obtained and used in secretive ways.
- More than 96% of freshmen in the Class of 2013 completed the online alcohol education course. This online course has now been offered to two entering classes of students.
- There are approximately 5 weekends in the fall and 4 weekends in the spring when heavy drinking is most likely to occur. These weekends are somewhat predictable, occurring at the beginning of each semester, and immediately after mid-terms.
- It is perceived by CMC students that there are very few parties at the other Claremont Colleges where they feel welcome.
- There is a culture of care among students at CMC. When a student needs medical attention, most students do not hesitate to call for help.
- In recent years, the average number of people transported *from* the CMC campus to a local hospital for an alcohol-related issue is about 10. Of these, half are CMC students and half are visitors (including students from the other Claremont Colleges, and guests).
- Prior to this year, there was concern about community people who have no affiliation with the Claremont Colleges coming to campus. Sometimes these people caused trouble while they were on campus. However, this phenomenon appears to have subsided in 2009-2010.
- As always, there is concern about the health and safety of our students. Some colleges have experienced student fatalities related to over-consumption of alcohol, and we want to avoid this.
- There are some actual problems with alcohol on campus, but there are several perception problems with alcohol on campus. The actual problems can be addressed, but the perception problems are harder to address.
- Having a vibrant social life is an important part of campus life, particularly for students and alumni. In selecting CMC as their college, students expect that the academic experience will be matched by an enjoyable and engaging co-curricular experience.

During the course of the ATF’s work, no ideas were considered out-of-bounds. Ideas were discussed and analyzed, ranging from the notion of an entirely “dry” campus to the notion of opening a campus pub. Some ideas were studied more carefully than others, but none were excluded from consideration.

Based on all of this information (and much more that cannot reasonably be detailed here), the Alcohol Task Force has come up with a series of affirmations and recommendations about the place of alcohol in campus life at CMC.

Affirmations and Recommendations

Having studied many perspectives and analyzed them carefully, the CMC Alcohol Task Force is *prepared to affirm* several aspects of life at the College.

Affirmations

1. The **institutional focus** on safety and harm reduction is the right overall strategy for the College to pursue.
2. Granting **amnesty from formal disciplinary action to those students who need medical help** (and have not broken other College rules) is the appropriate response to ensure that students call for help when other students need it. Informal aftercare actions, like completion of the Alcohol 101 course and/or psychological counseling, are preferred responses and to be determined at the discretion of the Dean of Students.
3. Drug use other than alcohol appears to be minimal on campus, and the ATF wants to underscore that this is important. **Those caught with drugs should be required to appear before the College Judiciary Board and/or directed to a criminal process**, at the discretion of the Dean of Students.
4. There is a general **culture of care** among students at CMC. This should be encouraged, partly by the medical amnesty granted in Affirmation 2 (above), and also through messages that are communicated to new students and through all students by the Resident Assistants.
5. The **social life of the College is important** for making lifelong friendships and developing social skills among students. The Alcohol Task Force appreciates that having a vibrant social life is important.
6. The **online educational course about alcohol**, which began two years ago, **should be continued** and strengthened. (This will come up again in Recommendation 14, below.)
7. **Communication from the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Dean of Students to the parents of incoming students**, encouraging them to have family conversations about alcohol before coming to college, is useful, and should be continued.
8. The College **should not attempt to go “dry”**. The dangers of having students go off campus to drink, either by walking or driving, are enormous. In addition to monitoring the safety of parties and other events where alcohol may be present, the College has opportunities to model moderate and responsible use of alcohol on campus.

These eight affirmations are considered by the Alcohol Task Force to represent appropriate and effective strategies that the College has been using.

Recommendations

On the issue of recommendations, it is worth noting that the Alcohol Task Force cannot identify a single, “magic bullet” to solve all the problems of alcohol on our campus. Every college in the United States struggles, one way or another, with alcohol issues because they are societal issues; concerns about alcohol are not confined to college campuses.

However, rather than throw up our hands in resignation over these societal problems, the ATF has managed to sift through several ideas and identified ones that we think are right for CMC. The ATF also believes that CMC may use its position as an educational institution to address some of the issues. Therefore, the Alcohol Task Force recommends the following steps be adopted for the future. The names of the individuals who will be responsible for these items are identified in parentheses.

Immediate

1. **Designate the reduction of high-risk drinking as an institutional priority** by all groups at Claremont McKenna College. This includes: the Board of Trustees, the President and Senior Staff of the College, the Faculty, Students & ASCMC, Parents, Alumni, and the CMS Athletic Department. This commitment to reduce high-risk drinking should be well-known throughout the College. By taking a well-promulgated position and showing a commitment to it, this may be one of the single most effective strategies for establishing community expectations, encouraging safety, and unifying the College's stance on alcohol. (Gann, Huang, Hess, Faranda, Phan, and Sutton)
2. **Designate at least one Athenaeum speaker** per year to address substance use or abuse. This is one very clear way we can use our position as an educational institution to deliver an important message. (Huang and Snortum)
3. **Designate occasional guest speakers through CMS Athletics** to discuss alcohol, drugs, performance-enhancing drugs, or hazing. The ATF believes that athletic teams play an important part in the social life of the College(s), and it is helpful for the Athletic Department to take the lead in organizing a program for its student-athletes. The ATF does not have a particular recommendation for how often this should happen; it may be annual or semiannual, as deemed appropriate by the CMS Athletic Director. (Sutton)
4. **Coaches of sports teams articulate expectations** with regard to alcohol. The ATF would like the coach of every varsity team to speak candidly about alcohol use: during the season, out of season, around high school recruits, and how it reflects upon the team when a team member loses their better judgment. The Athletic Department may discuss this item internally to decide the best way to implement this recommendation. (Sutton and Scalmanini)

Medium Term (AY11)

5. **Re-implement "Responsible Event Planning" workshops** as a requirement for hosting a registered event on campus. From 2005 to 2007, students who hosted social events on campus were required to attend a one-hour course, offered through Health Education Outreach. Due to some staff changes in 2007, the program was discontinued. However, Health Education Outreach is now prepared to resume these workshops, and the ATF believes they should be required. (Nauls, Hayes, and Mares)
6. **Extend the hours of operation at Ducey Gym.** In the absence of a state-of-the-art Campus Center, Ducey Gym is a great place for students to socialize, exercise, and hang out. The facility does require some supervision in order to remain open. Extending the hours of the main and auxiliary gyms to at least midnight, if not 1am, will give students healthy social options at night. In order to do this, the ATF recommends additional funding for work-study and non-work-study jobs at Ducey Gym. (Sutton and Scalmanini)
7. **Extend hours of operation at the Hub.** Since spring break, the Hub has become a very popular hangout again. The Hub may serve as a great social alternative to parties at night. Thus the Dean of Students should pull together the management team from Bon Appetit and student

representatives from ASCMC to discuss fine-tuning the hours of operation. ASCMC has expressed a tentative commitment to co-fund any expenses that may come from this. (Huang, Franco, Phan, Jones, Winterroth, and E. Watkins)

- 8. Position a dedicated safety officer on campus on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights.** Especially to address the concerns about non-Claremont Colleges people wandering into CMC looking for a party, a uniformed safety officer may be helpful to divert these people away from our students and parties. (Note: This was just launched in early April on a trial basis for the spring semester with funding from the College's emergency planning budget. It appears to be going very well so far.) (Huang, Bibbens, H. Watkins, Aspinall, and Tudor.)
- 9. Form a Student Leadership Summit.** The ATF believes that better communication among student leaders at the Claremont Colleges, particularly about the shared social experience in Claremont, would be very useful. CMC may organize the first leadership summit. Modest resources may be necessary to rent a retreat center and meals. (Spellman, Phan, Winterroth, Nauls, and E. Watkins)
- 10. Change "Dry Week" dates.** The Claremont Colleges are not aligned when it comes to the end of Dry Week at the start of the academic year. While Dry Week shows symbolic support from the institution to foster social relationships in ways that do not involve alcohol, it may also have the consequence of sending drinking into closed rooms, where there is little supervision. Many people at CMC question the effectiveness of Dry Week. It also marks the beginning of a relationship between students and the College which may encourage dishonesty; students learn that they can get around the rules if they hide. It is also incredibly difficult for those who are charged with enforcing Dry Week until the first weekend. Therefore, the ATF recommends that Dry Week continue through new student orientation, but end on the first day of classes. Evaluation of this strategy should occur annually. (Huang)
- 11. Investigate ID card checking alternatives.** CMC is currently the only campus in Claremont that allows students to check ID cards at the point of alcohol distribution. The ATF would like the Director of Student Activities to explore different models, including the possibility of well-trained graduate students. (Nauls)
- 12. Implement the BASICS program** with the staff at Monsour Counseling and Psychological Services. BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening & Intervention for College Students) is a relatively new therapeutic approach to help students who have been identified as having trouble with alcohol. Students attend two sessions with a counselor who has been trained on the program. The Director of MCAPS will explore the staff training needed for this program. (Hayes)
- 13. Strict enforcement of ban on glass alcohol containers at social events on campus.** The Alcohol Task Force is particularly concerned about the safety issues presented by broken glass, but also the large quantities of hard alcohol in glass containers. Thus the Resident Assistants will be asked to continue discouraging glass containers with alcohol. Campus Safety may be needed as well. (D. Castro and Spellman)
- 14. Require new students to complete the online alcohol education program.** Although only about 3-4% of the new students do not

complete the online alcohol education class, the Dean of Students Office has not had a way to compel those students to complete the class. Therefore, the ATF recommends that the Dean of First-Year Students warn the new students who do not complete the online class that they will get Room Draw numbers at the bottom of their class (instead of randomly generated within their class) next April. Exceptions may be made for exceptional cases at the discretion of the Dean of First-Year Students. (Jimenez-Maraña)

15. **Expand College-sponsored, non-alcoholic activities as organized by the Director of Student Activities.** Although the ATF did not complete a study to analyze the College's funding of Student Activities relative to our peer institutions, we believe that we are significantly underfunded in this area. A vibrant schedule of on-campus activities is highly desirable. (Nauls)
16. **Create a Resident Assistant's programming budget.** Currently, funds for activities in the residence halls come from ASCMC and are directed to Dorm Presidents. The ATF would like to make available a small budget of approximately \$200 per Resident Assistant so that they may offer a few educational programs in the residence hall lounges with snacks. (E. Watkins and D. Castro)
17. **Encourage faculty and staff to attend events where alcohol is present, to model responsible consumption.** Events at the Athenaeum and the Winston Churchill Society were cited as positive events, where people do not engage in high risk drinking. (Hess, Cody, Appel, and Snortum)
18. **Impose more severe punishments for those who vandalize and break property.** In 2009-2010, there has been an increase in damage to common areas in the residence halls. For those who have been identified as responsible for the damage, the Dean of Students Office needs to pursue heavier fines or punishments beyond simple restitution. (D. Castro and Spellman)
19. **Conduct additional research.** There are questions that the ATF was unable to study because the research needed does not exist. The ATF wonders about the relationship between alcohol and: sex, ethnicity, and hazing. This research does not necessarily have to come from CMC if there is existing research from other institutions which might indicate whether others have found anything worth looking into. The ATF requests that the Office of Institutional Research perform some Internet research on this topic. (Wynn)

Longer Term (post-AY11)

20. **Explore and evaluate the Hall Director model** for residential life. Many colleges employ graduate students or entry-level professional staff to help oversee the residential life of the campus, particularly after 5pm. Scripps, Pitzer, and Pomona Colleges currently employ Hall Directors, and Harvey Mudd College will have one non-student in residence beginning next year. While there is not uniform support among the ATF to immediately hire these staff members, there is agreement that the College ought to explore and evaluate these models more carefully. (Spellman and D. Castro)
21. Request the Dean of the Faculty to **consider offering more Friday classes**, but only if there is pedagogical support from the Faculty. The

erosion of Friday classes follows a national trend. Many faculty members are using Fridays as a day to work on their research, complete administrative tasks, and serve on committees. It may be insufficient to make minor adjustments to the Friday schedule, and therefore, it would be a massive undertaking to re-engineer the academic schedule of the College. If the Dean of the Faculty believes that there are pedagogically sound reasons for attempting this re-engineering on Fridays, then the ATF supports that effort. But if there is no support from the Dean or the faculty on this, the ATF does not believe that piecemeal efforts will be worthwhile. Instead, we should embrace the realities of the Friday situation by directing resources to address the social climate on Thursday nights, mainly through Student Activities and Athletics. (Hess, Cody, Appel, and Huang)

- 22. Schedule activities for “high risk” weekends strategically.** As mentioned earlier, there are about 5 weekends in the fall and 4 weekends in the spring when high-risk drinking are likely to occur. The activities suggested above (including items 15 and 16) should be concentrated into these 9 weekends. (Nauls)
- 23. Streamline the formal disciplinary process.** The College’s Judicial Board process is cumbersome, and in some ways, prevents a quick response. However, the process gives considerable time to students who are accused of breaking College rules so that they have time to mount a defense. Therefore the ATF recommends that this item be reviewed by College legal counsel to see if there are any ways that the process can be expedited without compromising the rights of the accused. (Bibbens and Huang)
- 24. Schedule athletic events at night.** At the discretion of the CMS Athletic Director and the coaching staff, the ATF recommends the scheduling of as many home games and contests as can realistically occur at night. The ATF would like the coaches to know how much of a service it is to the social life of the entire College when night games take place on campus. (Sutton)
- 25. Fitness and Athletic Center planning.** Some of the recommendations contained here involve keeping Ducey Gym open for extended hours. As the College plans for a new Fitness and Athletic Center, it would be helpful if the design of that facility takes into consideration the desire to stay open to students into the late evening. (Bibbens and Sutton)
- 26. Continue Planning for a Campus Center.** One student said, “There is nothing higher on my priority list for the Alcohol Task Force than a new Campus Center.” The ATF sees the Campus Center as a facility which has the ability to transform the life of CMC students and the College more generally. We hold much hope that this facility will remain a priority for the future. (Huang)
- 27. Renovate the Emett Student Center.** Because a new Campus Center will not happen overnight, it would be useful for the Vice President for Student Affairs, working in conjunction with students, Bon Appetit, the Master’s students, and the Facilities Office to plan a modest renovation of the Emett Student Center after the Faculty Support Center moves out. The Frazee Room will be vacated and returned to student space in 2011-2012. (Huang, Spellman, Phan, Winterroth, Kraus, Franco, Arnold, Dennis, Worley, and Aspinall)

- 28. Re-visit these ATF recommendations in 3 years.** After many of these recommendations have been implemented and had a chance to settle in, the Vice President for Student Affairs should convene a new ATF in 2012-2013 to evaluate this report, and to begin the process anew.
(Huang)

Again, because the Alcohol Task Force does not believe that there is one solution to the reduction of high-risk drinking on campus, each of these 8 Affirmations and 28 Recommendations will help ensure that the College is moving in the right direction.

The Alcohol Task Force should take much pride in their work. It has not been an easy process to evaluate this aspect of CMC's campus, as it runs in so many different directions with so many competing pressures. Because we have been able to get through this with a series of affirmations and recommendations that are appropriate for our future, we should also consider making this document available to other institutions who may benefit from the things we have learned.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Alcohol Task Force,

Jefferson Huang

Vice President for Student Affairs