

# Student Drinking

February 1997



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## Purpose

The goals of this survey were to follow up on earlier data from Penn State students reflecting their experiences with drinking, to note trends or changes, and to determine student awareness of responsible drinking educational messages.

## Highlights

The overall results are consistent with the two previous administrations of this survey although there seems to be a general trend toward more moderation in drinking consumption. More students reported they did not drink at all, drank on fewer occasions, and drank less on average per occasion.

More students in this 1997 survey (57%) than in the 1996 survey (52%) or the 1995 survey (44%) thought that drinking is a problem at Penn State.

Students under the age of 21 drank on fewer occasions (4.9 times) within the past 30 days than did those age 21 or older (6.3 times) but consumed more drinks per occasion (4.4) than did those 21 or over (3.8).

## Participation Rate

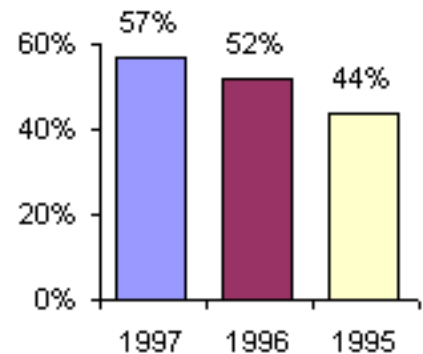
- N = 697 (73%) agreed to participate
- N = 255 (27%) did not agree to participate



## Findings

- More of the students in this year's survey than in the prior two years reported that drinking is a problem at Penn State.

**Problems at Penn State**



- Women (63%) were more likely than men (52%) to indicate feeling that drinking was a problem here.

(Statistically significant at the .01 level)

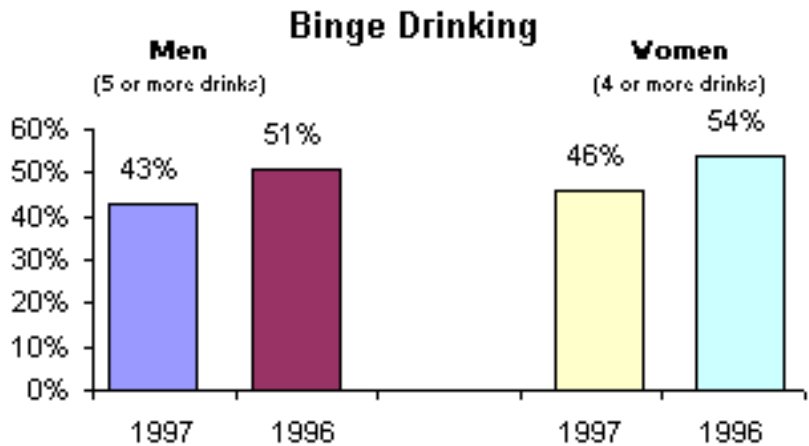
- A fifth of the students (22%) stated that they had **consumed no alcohol** in the past 30 days.

	1997	1996
All students	22%	19%
Men	17%	14%
Women	27%	26%

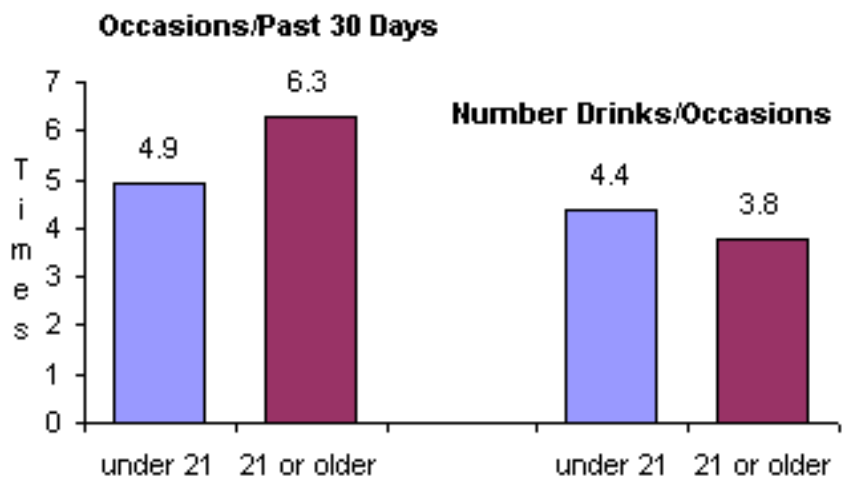
- Women continue to be more likely than men to say they did not drink at all within the last 30 days.
- Those who drank did so on average 5.6 times within the past 30 days and consumed an average of 4.1 drinks on each of those occasions.

	Number Times		Drinks Per Time	
All students	5.6	5.9	4.1	4.6
Men	6.4	na	4.6	7.6
Women	4.7	na	3.6	6.8

● Fewer students this year than last reported they had met the criteria for "binge drinking" which for men is 5 or more drinks at one time and for women is 4 or more drinks at one time.



● Students under 21 years of age differed from students 21 and older in the number or times they drank within the past 30 days and the average number of drinks consumed each occasion.



(Statistically significant at the .01 level)

● Students were asked to describe the frequency of their drinking **last semester**.

- 16% did not drink at all
- 22% drank infrequently
- 18% drank monthly

41% drank weekly  
1% drank daily

● Students were asked about their anticipated alcohol consumption this current semester.



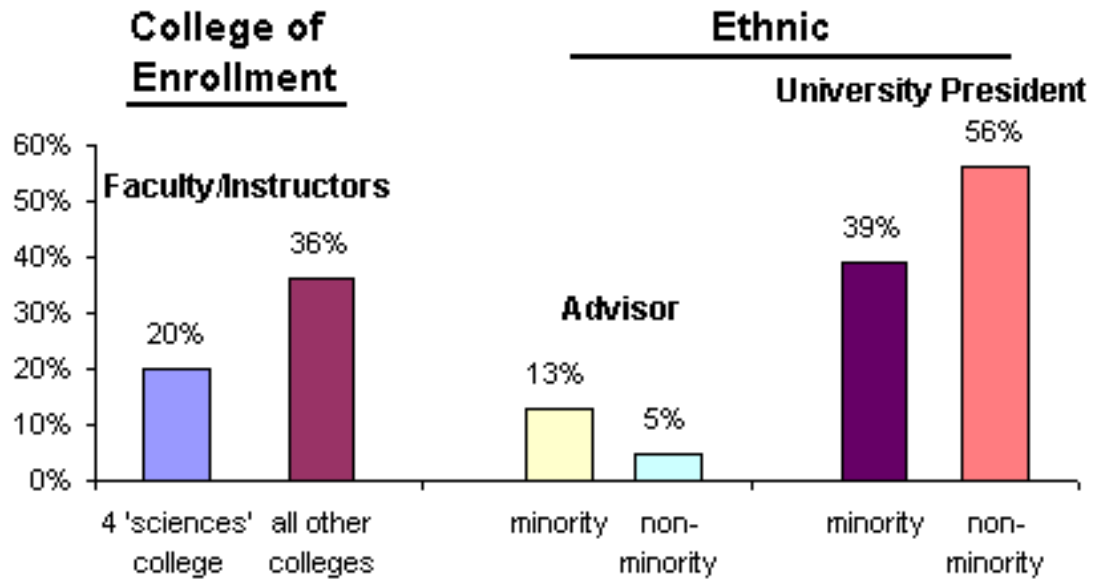
● Students who stated that they drank on a weekly basis last semester consumed more drinks on average each time they drank (n=5 drinks) and drank more frequently (n=10 times) during the past 30 days.

(Statistically significant at the .001 level)

● Many students had heard or seen **alcohol education messages**.

79% poster/flier in residence hall or classroom building  
74% Daily Collegian  
52% Communication from President Spanier  
38% An RA  
33% Athletic Event Announcement  
28% Faculty/Instructor  
15% Course or Class Project  
15% A Staff Member  
13% Peer Health Education/University Health Services  
8% Nurse/Physician/University Health Services  
8% An Athletic Coach  
6% An Advisor

● Students differed in recalling the source of some alcohol education messages.



● Having to babysit or take care of another student who was drunk continues to affect two fifths (45%) of Penn State students. Underclass freshmen and sophomores (33%) were more likely than were upperclass juniors and seniors (20%) or graduate students (5%) to have had to take care of another student.

(Statistically significant at the .001 level)

● Other students' drinking was reported to have interrupted sleep or studying for 44% of students. Non minority students (34%) were more likely than minority students (20%) to say that their studying or sleep had been interrupted twice or more by other students.

(Statistically significant at the .01 level)

● The 1997 survey results indicate fewer students stating that they encountered negative behaviors as a result of other students' drinking.

● Having a hangover continues to be a problem for a majority of students. Twenty percent said they had experienced at least one hangover and 34% had a hangover twice or more since the beginning of the school year. Non minority students (38%) were more likely than minority students (14%) to report having a hangover twice or more.

(Statistically significant at the .001 level)

● Men (13%) were more likely than women (9%) to have forgotten where they were or what they did twice or more as a result of their own drinking.\* Men (15%) were also more likely than women (9%) to have done something at least once that they later regretted.

(Statistically significant at the .05 level)

- A fifth (19%) of the students reported missing class at least once because of their drinking.

Penn State was a participant in the 1993 College Alcohol Study conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health who granted permission to replicate a series of questions related to the overall impact of drinking behaviors. Effect of Other Students' Drinking

Permission granted to replicate these questions from the 1993 College Alcohol Study coordinated by the Harvard School of Public Health.

### Effect of Other Students' Drinking

Behavior	1997 Penn State Pulse	1996 Penn State Pulse	1995 Penn State Pulse	1993 Havard Study Penn State Data
Been insulted or humiliated	18.3%	27.6%	32.0%	36.6%
Had a serious argument or quarrel	20.4%	28.2%	40.0%	31.7%
Been pushed, hit, or assaulted	7.9%	13.0%	15.8%	20.1%
Had your property damaged	11.4%	15.2%	16.7%	19.4%
Had to babysit drunken student	44.6%	54.9%	69.4%	60.0%
Had your studying/sleep interrupted	43.7%	54.6%	57.1%	63.5%
Experienced unwanted sexual advance	12.6%	20.7%	26.5%	29.0%
Been a victim of unwanted sexual experience	1.8%	3.1%	2.6%	2.1%

### Effect of Own Drinking

Behavior	1997 Penn State Pulse	1996 Penn State Pulse	1995 Penn State Pulse	1993 Havard Study Penn State Data
Have a hangover	54.2%	65.1%	69.2%	71.9%
Miss a class	19.3%	33.7%	26.9%	46.1%
Get behind in school work	17.1%	27.3%	24.3%	29.7%
Do something you later regretted	24.0%	34.9%	38.2%	43.8%
Forget where you were or what you did	22.2%	29.0%	29.7%	45.3%

Argue with friends	20.2%	31.5%	37.0%	27.3%
Engage in unplanned sexual activity	8.1%	12.8%	19.2%	25.8%
Not use protection when you had sex	2.9%	8.0%	6.9%	13.3%
Damage property	4.6%	8.5%	9.4%	13.3%
Get into trouble with the campus or local police	3.9%	5.2%	6.9%	7.0%
Get hurt or injured	9.7%	10.6%	14.1%	16.4%
Require medical treatment for an alcohol overdose	-	0.6%	0.7%	0.0%

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