

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Ian Kaminsky

UCSB Awarded Federal Grant To Expand Successful Alcohol-Education Effort

UC Santa Barbara has been awarded a \$300,000 grant by the U.S. Department of Education in support of its program to prevent high-risk drinking among college students.

The grant, which covers a two-year period, will enable the campus's Alcohol and Drug Program and its Gevirtz Graduate School of Education to expand and enhance the College Alcohol and Substance Education (CASE) program developed at UCSB. The grant also includes funds to prepare a comprehensive manual on the program and conduct additional research on its effectiveness.

Combining alcohol education and counseling, the CASE program targets underage drinking and aims to help students develop the skills needed to reduce drinking and make safer choices.

In accordance with federal, state, and local laws and ordinances, UCSB's policies prohibit "unlawful drinking, excessive drinking, and drunkenness" in campus residence halls. Participation in the CASE program is mandated for UCSB students who violate the residence halls' "no use" alcohol policy and those who are cited or arrested in Isla Vista for public intoxication, minor in possession of alcohol, or possession of fake identification. The program utilizes a psycho-educational

approach delivered to groups of students over the course of five sessions. CASE clinicians use educational strategies to address key developmental issues associated with college-age students and alcohol use.

Ian Kaminsky, a psychologist at the UCSB Student Health Service who directs the Alcohol and Drug Program, said the CASE program was designed to help students "appreciate the risks involved in alcohol and drug use and equip them with effective strategies for reducing risk and harm."

With the new grant funding, he added, UCSB will increase both the size of the CASE counseling staff and the number of group programs conducted per year, and reduce the size of the groups to a maximum of 10 participants. In addition, the grant will fund the development of a manual on the program that will be made available to other colleges and universities. The manual will include information on the program's strategies, assessments, and logistics. It also will suggest ways to obtain institutional commitment for a mandated program, and recommend policies that can maximize the effectiveness of such a program. "We hope that, through the manual, this program will serve as a model that other colleges can use to address the challenging issue of underage drinking," said Kaminsky.

The new grant will also support additional research on the program's effectiveness in reducing high-risk drinking. An initial evaluation found that students who had completed the CASE program significantly reduced the number of drinks consumed per week and the number of incidents of intoxication.

"Our preliminary studies of the CASE program suggest that it decreases alcohol use and increases use of harm-reduction strategies by students," said Merith Cosden, a professor in the Department of Counseling, Clinical and School Psychology at UCSB's Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, who heads the program's research and evaluation component. "Assessments used as part of the program have also been able to identify those students whose drinking is more severe, and provide alternative services to them. I am looking forward to being able to study the impact of the program in greater depth."

More information about UCSB's Alcohol and Drug Program can be found at <http://alcohol.sa.ucsb.edu>.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.