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Drinking average high at UNL

By Mindy Leiter
Staff Reporter

Drinking and partying may be an inherent aspect of college life, but according to a recent survey, UNL students may drink more alcohol than their nationwide peers.

A nationwide survey compiled by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research showed that 86.9 percent of 1,409 students surveyed drank alcohol at least once within a year.

In a study conducted by Drs. David Hunnicutt and David Bower of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Dr. Joe Davis, a University of Nebraska at Omaha counseling professor, 88.1 percent of Nebraska students reported they drank alcoholic beverages at least once a year.

Nebraska students also topped their national peers in heavy party drinking and smoking. Michigan's study said 41 percent of students nationwide had at least five drinks in a row on one occasion within a two-week time frame, while 46.5 percent of 4,512 Nebraska students said they consumed a similar amount of alcohol in the same period.

One in seven college students, or 37.3 percent, are smokers nationwide. In Nebraska the rate is 49.4 percent.

But UNL was below the national rate of illicit drug use. Nationwide, 27.7 percent of college students smoked marijuana compared to 17.7 percent of Nebraska students. Use of hallucinogens was 6.7 percent nationwide, while in Nebraska the rate was only 2.7 per cent.

Hunnicutt said the legal and social acceptance of alcohol and tobacco boosted their use among college students in Nebraska. Drinking, he said, had long been considered an acceptable rite of passage.

"I think alcohol has been ingrained in the fabric of college life for the last four or five decades," he said.

He said rates of alcohol use were higher in agricultural colleges of Midwestern states, probably because of the strong traditions of alcohol use on those campuses.

The only region higher in alcohol

use than the Midwest is the Northeast, he said.

Davis agreed with Hunnicutt and said campus drinking traditions fostered larger consumption.

"College students by far consume more alcohol than other people their age who are not in college. And you would think that there would be more judgment amongst our best and brightest," he said.

He said drinking was regarded by many youths as a part of growing up, but professors and teachers play a part in reinforcing that idea.

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—Davis
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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"I think some professors teach the wrong values," he said.

"I know some professors who don't give tests on Thursdays anymore because their students are out partying on Wednesdays. It just enables that kind of behavior," he said.

Alcohol has been a part of college for a long time, Hunnicutt said, which was understandable because most college students are 21 or older.

"Half of the population of college students is over 21, and that makes drinking a legal, socially acceptable behavior," he said.

"Alcohol-related incidents are some of the top four causes of death among young people," he said. "Whether it's alcohol-related auto accidents, alcohol-related suicides, alcohol-related homicides or alcohol-related drownings."

To counter the high smoking and drinking levels among Nebraska's

youth, a support group, Students Taking A New Direction, was created last year at the university for students who want to socialize and have fun without getting drunk.

David Bower, the organization's adviser said the group grew from five to 60 members within one year.

Bower said STAND had four objectives:

- serving as a support group for students who don't want to drink or who want to drink only in low risk ways.

- fulfilling community service
- providing a group for education
- sponsoring alcohol-free activities on and off campus

Hunnicutt said the group was needed on campus as a source of accurate information about alcohol use. He said the number of misconceptions about alcohol were almost as serious as the problem itself.

"I have known students who before a night of heavy drinking take five aspirin and think that they will just pass out and be fine in the morning," he said. Aspirin and alcohol mixtures form an acid that can burn out stomach lining and cause permanent ulcers.

"That's as far away from a hang-over cure as anything I have heard of," he said.

Davis said many students thought they couldn't become an alcoholic if they drank only wine or beer.

"It's only beer' is a common thing I hear," he said.

But he said students were still dealing with alcohol no matter what form they consumed.

Hunnicutt said inexperienced drinkers needed to know what they were taking in.

Especially when police and prosecutors are developing a get-tough attitude toward drug and alcohol-related violations.

Smoking is also of concern to Hunnicutt. Despite all the information on cigarette use and the difficulty of quitting, more people are picking up the habit that could lead to an early death.

Smoking-related deaths are at about 450,000 a year, he said.

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Students still can alter schedules

By Brad Simmons
Staff Reporter

Students who haven't registered for classes can do so Thursday and students who need to drop or add classes will have to wait until Tuesday, said Dr. Anthony Schkade, assistant director of registration and records at UNL.

General registration will take place in the Nebraska Union from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday. Students must pay a \$25 registration fee that will be credited to their tuition bill, Schkade said.

Before going through general registration, students who had any holds on their registration for financial or disciplinary reasons should go to the student judiciary office to make sure that the holds have been removed, Schkade said.

Also, any returning students who have been absent from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for two or more semesters (including summers) should go to the admissions office before going through general registration, Schkade said.

After general registration is over, students can still register for classes

by going through late registration in the administration building from Tuesday until Aug. 30. Those students must pay a \$25 late fee in addition to the \$25 registration fee.

Drop/add will take place Tuesday through Aug. 27 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The last day to add a class will be August 30. No fee will be charged to drop or add a class.

Schkade said that students used to be able to drop or add a class on the first day of school, but that many freshmen dropped classes that they had never attended on the basis of advice from friends.

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