FAQs on CofC Student Substance Abuse

Below are some data on our student's substance misuse from both AlcoholEdu (freshmen only) and the CORE survey, freshmen-seniors. Consider that only 865 students completed the CORE, balanced across year groups, with 70% being females, and that the extent of substance abuse is likely under-reported as those most likely to abuse are not filling out this survey.

How Much or Often Do Students Actually Use Alcohol or Drugs?

Alcohol:
On average, 34% of incoming freshmen already drink in a high-risk/binging manner (4+ drinks for women per sitting, 5+ for men at least once in the last 2wks), compared to national comparison of 22%. 49% of incoming freshmen describe themselves as non-drinkers vs. 64% of the national comparison group. (AlcoholEdu)

75.9% of underage students consumed alcohol in the previous 30 days. Of this group:
• 30.8% drink 3Xs or more a week vs. 20.7% of nat. sample. Of those who binge drank 6+ times in the last two weeks, Men=10%, Women=3%
• 53.6% binge drank in the last 2wks vs. 44% of nat. sample.

Marijuana:
29% are current marijuana users (30 day prevalence) vs. 18% of a national comparison.
• 12% of these use marijuana 3Xs or more a week vs. 7.2% of nat. sample. These students are then almost constantly high. This link describes a recent study on marijuana smokers who smoke less than 4Xs a week, and found changes in the nucleus accumbens and amygdala. http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/04/15/marijuana-brain-changes/7749309/?sf25061593=1
• While many students report they smoke marijuana to relax or even to concentrate, studies have shown that marijuana interferes with the very parts of the brain students need most to do well in school. According to one study, an estimated 72.2 percent of
students who did not use marijuana in the past month reported an A or B average in their last semester or grading period, compared with 58.0 percent of those who used marijuana on 1 to 4 days and 44.9 percent of those who used marijuana on 5 or more days during the past month.

http://www.samhsa.gov/data/2k6/academics/academics.htm

Other Drugs:
11.3% are current users of other illegal drugs (30 day prevalence), including cocaine (CofC=6% vs. 2% nationally), amphetamines (CofC 5% vs. 3% nationally), and designer drugs (CofC=4% vs. 1% nationally), not including the number that illegally take other student's ADHD meds, or steal pain and anti-anxiety meds from their parents.

Are There any Gender Differences in Substance Abuse?

Men at the college abuse alcohol, marijuana and all other drugs more than women. Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any use of alcohol in past 30 days.</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any use of marijuana in past 30 days.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any use of illegal drugs in past 30 days besides marijuana.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had 6 or more binge drinking episodes In prior two weeks.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have driven a car while intoxicated In the past year.</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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What About Abuse of So Called “Study Aids” Like ADHD Medication?

- Stimulants: Here is a study that questions the frequent enabling/rationalization of student stimulant abuse as "just a study aid" and that students stop using when they are finished with school. Nonmedical Prescription Stimulant Use among College
Students: Why We Need To Do Something and What We Need To Do [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2951617](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2951617) "A growing number of studies published in the peer-reviewed literature call into question these widely held assumptions. Three findings in particular have important implications.

First, nonmedical prescription stimulant users typically have lower grade point averages than non-users, suggesting that academically successful students are not likely to use prescription stimulants non-medically.

Second, nonmedical prescription stimulant users are more likely than other students to be heavy drinkers and users of other illicit drugs. Table 1 describes the relationship between nonmedical prescription stimulant use and alcohol/illicit drug use from 15 separate studies. Moreover, even among those who only use stimulants non-medically to study or concentrate, nonmedical use is usually part of a larger problem of illicit drug use. Rather than being perceived as a benign behavior, the nonmedical use of prescription stimulants should be seen as a marker of underage and often excessive alcohol consumption and illicit drug use.

Third, academic enhancement is not the only motivation for nonmedical prescription stimulant use; many students use these drugs nonmedically to enhance their experience of partying and getting high on other substances. Compared to non-users, research has demonstrated that nonmedical users of prescription drugs are more likely to meet DSM-IV criteria for dependence on alcohol and marijuana, skip class more frequently, and spend less time studying. In summary, nonmedical use of stimulants as a “shortcut” to compensate for partying or not going to class does not appear to be an effective strategy to increase academic performance. There is growing evidence suggesting that nonmedical prescription stimulant use does not confer substantial academic benefit."
Do Students Really Drink and Use Drugs in the Residence Halls?

35% of students report drinking in the residence halls (often pre-gaming), and 13% report using marijuana. Year to year, 30% of students in the residence halls say that another student's alcohol or drug use interferes with their ability to study or do well in school.

What are Common Consequences of Substance Misuse for CofC Students?

- 41% reported some form of public misconduct (trouble with police, fighting, DUI, vandalism) at least once in the past year.
- 29.7% reported some kind of serious personal problem (ex. Suicidality, being hurt or injured, sexual assault) at least once in the last year.
- 7.5% had serious thoughts about suicide vs. 3.9% in nat. sample
- During the 2013-2014 academic year there were approximately 45 students who were at risk of alcohol poisoning and had to be transported to an emergency room via ambulance. This is the number/variable I worry about most.
- Alcohol misuse **significantly** increases the likelihood of many forms of harassment or violence:
  - Ethnic or racial violence 7.2%, if alcohol present by victim or perpetrator 16%
  - Actual physical violence 4%, if alcohol present 58%
  - Forced sexual touching or fondling 6%, if alcohol present 67%
  - Unwanted sexual intercourse 4%, if alcohol present 83%
- **Poor Academics:**
  - 30% of CofC students performed poorly on a test or important project vs. 20% in the national comparison group.
  - 40% of CofC students missed a class vs. 26% of the national comparison group.

How Aware Are Students of the Help on Campus for Substance Abuse Problems?

- Only 66.7% said the campus has an alcohol and drug prevention program.
• However, 94.4% know the campus has Alcohol and Other Drug policies.

Don’t All Students Drink or Experiment with Drugs While at College?

Most students are horrible at accurately estimating the real use of alcohol and drugs on campus, mostly because they estimate for the student body based on their particular peer group (people who use alcohol and drugs at the same level as they do). As an example, the chart below describes this misperception gap for marijuana use here at the college.