

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
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DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AS AGENTS OF CULTURAL CHANGE: AN
EXAMINATION OF PENN STATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS' LIMITING EFFECT ON
BINGE DRINKING

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Abstract

Binge drinking is a pattern of excessive alcohol consumption which affects over two fifths of college students nationwide. Many universities, including Penn State, have implemented initiatives and programs to reduce consumption levels and related harms. Environmental management strategies focusing on limiting alcohol's accessibility, availability, and promotion have had little success at Penn State. As such, consumption and binge drinking rates at Penn State have remained nearly constant since 1999. Recent studies suggest that high levels of social capital, identified as voluntary activity and engagement among students, may have a positive risk-modifying effect on binge drinking. In a 2010 Student Affairs survey, 86% of Penn State students identified themselves as a member of a student club or organization. This statistic indicates that a high level of social capital exists on Penn State's campus. Although high levels of voluntary activity are proven to have a moderating effect on binge drinking, the type of involvement may matters to the effect on drinking behaviors at Penn State.

This thesis explores which type of Penn State student organizations are likely to engage in preventative efforts, thus having a limiting effect on binge drinking. The conclusions suggest that multi-purpose student organizations can become an integral part of alcohol prevention efforts at Penn State. Recommendations are made to the University and student organizations based on research and the study's outcomes.

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Introduction

Excessive alcohol consumption affects college campuses nationwide and Penn State is no exception. High consumption rates have been found to compromise the educational environment, the safety of students, town and gown relationships, and the university's reputation (Kapner, 2008). In a University administered study, 80.6% of Penn State students identified themselves as drinkers. Furthermore, 51.6% of students identified themselves as "moderate" to "heavy" drinkers. In response, University administrators have implemented environmental management strategies focusing on limiting alcohol's accessibility and availability. However, consumption and binge drinking rates at Penn State have remained nearly constant since 1999, suggesting that a new approach is needed.

The Harvard School of Public Health's College Alcohol Study offered two protective factors that limit binge drinking: a diverse undergraduate population and high rates of social capital on campus. Two separate studies concluded that high levels of student engagement and voluntary activity on campus, an indicator of social capital, had a moderating effect on alcohol consumption (Weitzman and Kawachi, 2000; Weitzman and Chen, 2005).

In 2010, the Penn State Division of Student Affairs issued a student satisfaction survey that indicated 86% of students have been a member of a student club or organization. This statistic indicated that a high level of social capital exists on Penn State's campus. Additionally, Penn State boasts the world's largest student-run philanthropy in the world, the IFC-Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON). Although the Harvard study found that campus levels of voluntary activities were limiters of binge drinking, I believe that the type of voluntary involvement matters at Penn State. Therefore I am interested in exploring which types of student organizations serve as limiters to the drinking culture.

This thesis examines the role of Penn State student organizations in alcohol prevention efforts. In my research, I examined the following factors using a survey of student organizations: (1) perceptions of binge drinking as a campus problem, (2) binge drinking as an organizational priority, (3) implementation of alcohol education programs for members, (4) participation in or support of campus and community initiatives that seek to curb dangerous drinking, and (5) perceptions of University administration's engagement of students to curb dangerous drinking.

This thesis draws conclusions about which types of student organizations are likely to engage in prevention efforts. The conclusions suggest that multi-purpose student organizations can become an integral part in alcohol prevention efforts at Penn State. Multi-purpose organizations support high levels of engagement through their missions, focusing on member development, high standards of scholarship, community service, and campus and community outreach. Lastly, recommendations are made to the University based on the results and literature review.

Literature Review

Binge Drinking: A National and Local Problem

Binge drinking is a common pattern of excessive alcohol consumption in the United States. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings a person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 percent or above (Kanny, 2009). Binge drinking is more commonly defined and measured as consuming five or more drinks in a row for men or four or more drinks for women. According to a national study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about 90% of all the alcohol consumed by youth under the age of 21 in the United States is in the form of binge drinks (Town, 2006). Additionally, the proportion of current drinkers that binge is highest in the 18- to 20-year old group at 51% (Naimi, 2003). Given these statistics, there is little doubt binge drinking affects college campuses nationwide. Many public health studies were conducted during the 1990s and early 2000s to learn more about college alcohol consumption. These studies revealed the prevalence and persistence of binge drinking at universities nationwide.

National Studies

The most comprehensive study of college alcohol consumption was conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health between 1993 and 2001. The College Alcohol Study surveyed students at a nationally representative sample of four-year colleges in the United States. Over 50,000 students at 120 colleges took part in the study (Wechsler and Nelson, 2008). The College Alcohol Study revealed that binge drinking rates vary by college, ranging from 1%-76%, but within colleges binge drinking rates remain stable over time (Wechsler et al., 2002). The first study conducted in 1993 found that two in five college students (44%) frequently engaged in

binge drinking (Wechsler et al., 1994). This rate of binge drinking remained stable over four administrations of the survey from 1993 to 2000, documenting the prevalence of the activity nationwide (Wechsler and Nelson, 2008).

The College Alcohol Study found that risk of harm for the individual is greatest at the highest levels of consumption.. However few drinkers consume alcohol at this extreme level (Wechsler and Nelson 2006). Most alcohol related harms experienced by college students occur at the five/four consumption level. This phenomenon, known as the “prevention paradox” is demonstrated in Table 1. Adapted from the Harvard School of Public Health’s College Alcohol Study, the data describes the relationship between the typical number of drinks consumed and self-reported alcohol related injury while drinking. The table illustrates that students who reported alcohol related injuries, 53% drank five or fewer drinks in a row and 21% had eight or more (Wechsler and Nelson, 2008). This paradox creates a complex challenge for university administrators. Targeting the highest consumption level drinkers, although intuitive, will not effectively curb the binge drinking and alcohol related harms. Therefore, university administrators must examine the extent and persistence of the problem in order to determine a plan of action.

Penn State Studies

The Penn State Pulse program was started by the Division of Student Affairs in 1995. The program is a web-based survey initiative designed to get a better understanding of student opinions on student issues. The student drinking report is one such survey administered to measure alcohol use at Penn State. First administered in 1999, the student drinking report surveys the student body on consumption rates, secondary effects of alcohol consumption, and

attitudes and opinions on University Administration's efforts. Conveniently, the Penn State Pulse studies were adapted from the Harvard School of Public Health's College Alcohol Study.

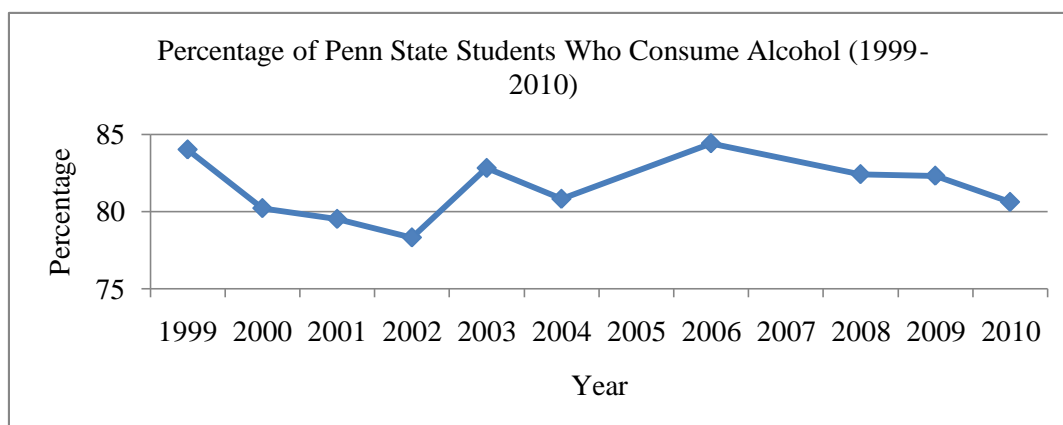
Therefore, all questions were worded similarly. One minor change is the span of time binge drinking was calculated. Prior to 2008, these studies defined binge drinking as five or more drinks in a row (four or more for women) in one night. Since 2008, binge drinking has been defined as five or more drinks for men (four or more for women) in a two-hour period.

Additionally, the student drinking surveys were not administered in 2005 and 2007. No data is available for these two years.

Consumption Rates

The Penn State Pulse surveys found that a majority of students consume alcoholic beverages, fluctuating between 78-84 percent of students since 1999 (Harper, 2010). Figure 1 illustrates the alcohol consumption rates of students between 1999 and 2010. This near constant consumption rate suggests that drinking is a prevalent activity among Penn State students.

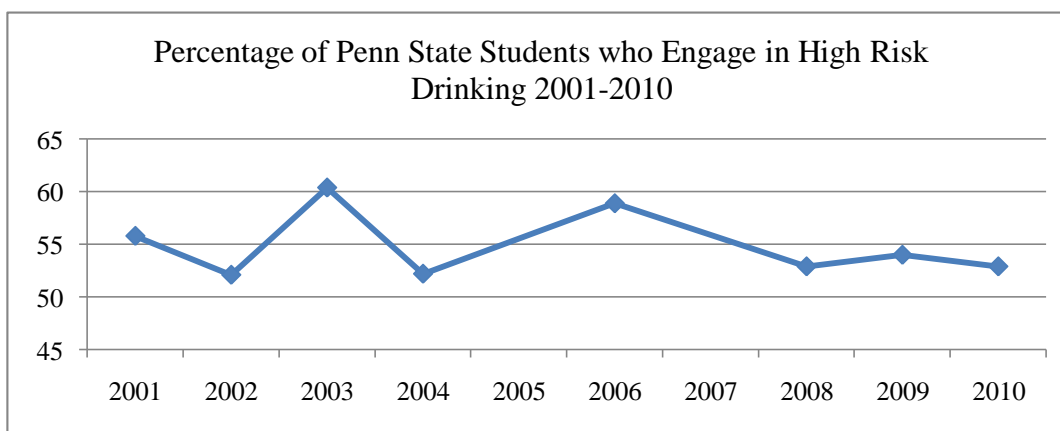
Figure 1: Prevalence of Alcohol Consumption



Binge or High Risk Drinking

High-risk, or binge drinking, was defined as having four or more drinks for women and five or more drinks for men at least once during the previous two weeks. More than half of the respondents in each survey year reported engaging in this high risk drinking behavior within the past two weeks (Harper, 2010). Illustrated in Figure 2, binge drinking rates have fluctuated between 52-60 percent between 2001 and 2010. It is important to note that Penn State's rates of binge drinking are above the national average of 44%. This may suggest that Penn State has demographic or environmental risk factors that contribute to the University's drinking culture.

Figure 2: Prevalence of Binge Drinking



Response to University Prevention Efforts

University administrators have implemented a number of preventative measures in response to student alcohol consumption and related harms throughout the years. The first prevention efforts were implemented in the late-1990s after University President Graham Spanier declared that alcohol was the most pressing issue facing the University (Spanier, 1998). These early prevention efforts focused on alcohol education, alcohol-free weekend

programming, and social norms marketing.

In 1999, students were asked how supportive they were of the recent University and community initiatives related to student drinking. Three-fourths of students said they supported the University sponsored programs that provided alcohol-free weekend activities for students. Approximately 59% of students supported the availability of educational materials and programs on alcohol. However, only 25% of students were supportive of measures to closely monitor underage drinking or increase media coverage of consequences (*Student drinking '99*, 1999). These results indicate that a majority of students were supportive of minimally-invasive methods of alcohol prevention. However, only one-quarter of students were supportive of more invasive prevention measures, such as close monitoring and media coverage.

In both the 2001 and 2002 Pulse Surveys, students were asked if they had seen various components of an alcohol awareness campaign implemented by University Health Services. A majority of students replied noting they had noticed the social media marketing. Additionally, 48% of students reported that the current campaign increased their understanding of responsible drinking (Moore, 2001). However, consumption and binge drinking rates remained nearly constant (Moore, 2002).

With the limited success of these early prevention efforts, the University sought to implement comprehensive environmental management strategies. Heavily based off of alcohol research, these newly developed strategies offered a new approach to curbing alcohol consumption and its secondary effects. The next section explains environmental management strategies in depth and the implementation of these strategies at Penn State.

Strategies for Change: Minimizing Risk through Environmental Management

Throughout the 1990s, college and universities endeavored to prevent alcohol abuse on their campuses. Early prevention efforts traditionally involved alcohol education and awareness campaigns. These traditional approaches had limited success nationwide and at Penn State. Between 1999 and 2002 new research on environmental management offered different strategies to combat dangerous drinking.

Environmental management is the employment of strategies to reduce high risk alcohol consumption by changing the physical, social, legal, and economic environment (Dejong et al., 1998). The approach is based on the fact that human behavior is powerfully shaped by the surrounding environment (Holder, 1999). In relation to alcohol consumption, this can include the messages and images delivered by the mass media, social norms of communities, and the availability of alcohol (Fisher, 2000).

To combat dangerous drinking environmental management strategies focus on three elements within universities: institutional factors, community factors, and public policy. Typically, five assumptions about university students constitute the framework for environmental management efforts: (1) students have few responsibilities and have large amounts of free time at residential colleges, (2) alcohol is inexpensive and abundantly available, (3) students receive pervasive messages that binge drinking is a part of the college experience, (4) students have few social and recreational options, and (5) students who have greater risk for binge drinking are not easily identified and referred to early intervention services (Dejong et. al., 1998).

The environmental management strategy suggests three spheres of action to address

alcohol problems: the institution of higher education, the surrounding community, and state level public policy. Institutional factors such as campus alcohol policies and programs on campus can be generated by a campus task force. Community programs can be developed through a campus and community coalition. Lastly, state-level public policy can be addressed through an association of higher education officials, such as university presidents and administrators (Dejong et. al, 1998).

Penn State's Implementation of Environmental Management Strategies

Penn State and the Borough of State College have developed a comprehensive environmental management strategy through a joint coalition, The Partnership – Campus and Community United against Dangerous Drinking. The mission of The Partnership is to educate and support various sectors of the Centre Region as they work to change the Penn State and Community culture to reduce the high-risk behavior that can accompany the consumption of alcohol (Partnership). The Partnership developed and implemented its own environmental management strategy based on national research recommendations. Current initiatives of The Partnership's environmental management strategy include: (1) restriction of marketing and promotion of alcohol, (2) providing alcohol free options and alternative activities, (3) limiting the availability of alcohol, (4) intervention and treatment targeted to high risk groups, and (5) education and awareness. Each initiative of the Penn State environmental management strategy is discussed in detail below.

Restricting Marketing and Promotion of Alcohol

The Partnership established a ban on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug advertisements on campus and at University sponsored events. This ban is achieved through four targets: athletics,

residence life, fraternity and sorority life, and university. Currently intercollegiate athletics does not accept advertising money from alcohol companies. Alcohol is not advertised in Beaver Stadium or the Bryce Jordan Center. Additionally, alcohol is not advertised in Lubrano Park/Medlar Field during collegiate sporting events.

Restrictions on advertising and marketing on campus achieve the residence life and University targets. Currently residence life does not allow organizations or venues to promote alcohol-related activities in any residence hall or in the commons buildings. The University has banned flyers advertising local bars' drink specials on campus. Additionally, alcohol advertising is prohibited at student sponsored events. Fraternity and sorority chapters have developed policies that prohibit advertising the serving of alcohol at social events. These measures hope to shift the social norms of alcohol consumption by limiting messages that binge drinking is a part of the college experience.

Alcohol-free options or alternative activities

The student activities office operates the LateNight – Penn State program which has been in existence since 1996. The mission of LateNight is to provide students high-quality entertainment during prime social times, 9 p.m. through 2 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. Programming often includes arts and crafts, dancing, live music, movies, casino nights, games, and recreational activities. Residence life supports LateNight by promoting all events and activities in the residence halls. Additionally, resident assistants are required to provide programs throughout campus to give students alternative activities during evening hours. The LateNight program seeks to provide students with more alcohol-free social and recreational options.

Alcohol availability

Penn State's environmental management strategy has implemented a number of policies to restrict the availability of alcohol on campus and in the surrounding community. The campus alcohol policy prohibits the presence of alcohol at all on-campus functions and all campus residence halls are substance free. The University has prohibited the sale and consumption of alcohol at student athletic events. Additionally, limits on container size at stadium tailgate areas seek to reduce availability and excess consumption.

The Partnership has also worked with all State College establishments with liquor licenses to limit alcohol's availability. The Partnership has worked with the State College Tavern Association to create a 21st birthday initiative. To curb excessive consumption, the Tavern Association implemented a policy that encourages its members to not serve liquor to students celebrating their 21st birthday. Most but not all taverns honor this policy.

Furthermore the State College Borough has enacted two ordinances that outline responsibilities and restrictions on alcohol establishments. First, the Borough requires all liquor license establishments to participate in server training. Second, the Borough has adopted a policy to require all new licenses approved for transfer into the Borough to be primarily food service establishments. This restriction inhibits new bars from opening in the State College community.

Intervention and treatment targeted to high risk groups

Initiatives targeting high-risk individuals and groups seek to prevent alcohol abuse. Implemented in fall 2010, all students who have a first time alcohol violation (underage drinking, public drunkenness, or driving under the influence) or receive alcohol-related care at Mount Nittany Medical Center are required to complete the Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention

for College Students (BASICS) program. This screening tests students for alcohol use disorders. Students at risk for alcohol abuse are referred to the University's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

CAPS conducts various alcohol and other drug outreach programs annually. The Alcohol Intervention Program (AIP) is conducted by CAPs. This treatment program is for students with an existing alcohol use disorder. However, it is only in the form of brief (up to four sessions) or intermediate (up to ten sessions) counseling. This intervention ideally serves as a bridge to further treatment for students who have symptoms of alcoholism. Long term treatment is offered through an addiction specialist.

Education and awareness

Penn State's environmental management strategy focuses largely on education and awareness which is achieved through peer initiatives, workshops related to alcohol, policies, and orientation activities. Peer initiatives are mainly conducted through residence life. Residence assistants conduct alcohol education programming and disseminate information about university alcohol policy and state laws.

The University periodically sponsors workshops, speakers, and presentations related to alcohol. CAPS provides frequent programming on alcohol and its secondary effects. University Health Services conducts educational programs about alcohol for academic classes, sororities and fraternities. Additionally, UHS staff oversees the implementation of AlcoholEdu, an online alcohol education program that all first-year students are required to complete.

Although Penn State's adaptation of recommended environmental management strategies is comprehensive, rates of consumption and binge drinking have remained nearly constant.

Initiatives offered by The Partnership are targeted towards students without their input and acceptance.

The College Alcohol Study evaluated coalition based prevention efforts that focused on changing environmental conditions. Results showed that environmental prevention efforts can be implemented even with resistance from stakeholders, such as students and the alcohol industry (Weitzman et. al., 2003). However the extent to which these coalitions' efforts can be successful depends on the attitudes and degree of acceptance of the approach by all stakeholders (Wechsler et al., 2008).

Social Capital's Limiting Effect on Binge Drinking

Research of heavy alcohol consumption in the mid to late 1990s focused on risk and environmental factors such as the availability, accessibility, price, and promotion of alcohol. These studies demonstrated that environmental factors significantly influence alcohol consumption and its resulting secondary effects. Few studies focused on two protective factors of alcohol consumption identified in the Harvard School of Public Health's College Alcohol Study. The two environmental limiters of alcohol consumption identified were a diverse demographic composition of the university and the amount of social capital on a campus (Wechsler and Nelson 2008). Two studies specifically focused on the protective effect of social capital on college campuses.

These studies defined social capital as the social resources, trust, reciprocity, and mutual aid in a social group, measured as the aggregate level of student volunteerism (Weitzman and Kawachi 2000). Higher levels of social capital on a campus were associated with decreased risks for alcohol consumption and alcohol related harms (Weitzman and Chen 2005). The College Alcohol Study found that students with more involvement in productive college activities and voluntary service were less likely to be binge drinkers (Wechsler and Nelson 2008). These findings suggest that higher levels of student involvement in their campus and community through volunteer service may help limit overall campus alcohol consumption and harms associated with consumption. The purpose, scope, and results of these studies are explained in detail next.

Giving Means Receiving: Protective Effect of Social Capital on Binge Drinking on College Campuses (2000):

In this study, Weitzman and Kawachi sought to examine campus patterns of student

engagement in relation to binge drinking levels at colleges. They hypothesized that campuses with high levels of social capital may provide patterns of mutual obligation required for the collective regulation of deviancy (Weitzman and Kawachi 2000). In the study they identified binge drinking as consumption of five or more drinks in one night (four for women) at least once in the two weeks prior to the survey. Additionally, Weitzman and Kawachi defined social capital as an individual's average daily time volunteering the past 30 days.

Volunteerism was associated with a 5% reduction in individual risk for binge drinking. The study also found that students at schools with high levels of social capital were 26% less likely to binge drink than students at schools with low levels of social capital. The protective effect of social capital was only seen with binge drinking rates. Low risk consumption, between the zero to five drink threshold, was still prevalent regardless of the level of social capital (Weitzman and Kawachi 2000).

Overall, Weitzman and Kawachi's study attributed the protective effect of social capital as reflective of the social norms in communities where individuals are closely bound by social ties. In these communities, the risk of deviancy is lower because social controls curtail dangerous consumption. These findings recommend the implementation of coalition initiatives that seek to change the social fabric of college communities.

Risk Modifying Effect of Social Capital on Measures of Heavy Alcohol Consumption, Alcohol Abuse, Harms, and Second Hand Effects: National Survey Findings (2005):

This study examined the protective effects of social capital on a broader range of consumption measures, such as reports of primary and secondary effects of alcohol consumption. Weitzman and Chen predicted that communities rich in social capital will promote greater

attachment among youth for the larger community, norms that make heavy drinking and drunkenness unacceptable, and greater compliance with laws and campus policies regarding alcohol (Weitzman and Chen 2005).

Their results found that social capital is a modifier of campus drinking style. Exposure to high levels of social capital were associated with a lower individual risk for alcohol abuse. Additionally, higher campus levels of social capital was also associated with lower probability of experiencing drinking relating harms and second hand effects from other's drinking. This was attributed to social capital's moderating effect on consumption (Weitzman and Chen 2005).

The implications of these findings suggest that prevention strategies should incorporate a broader range of community strategies for preventing alcohol abuse (Weitzman and Chen 2005). Weitzman and Chen suggested the development of service learning and volunteer programs for students as part of their educational experience. As such, their analysis showed that each one hour increase in aggregate levels of campus volunteerism correlated to a 45% decrease in probability of having alcohol abuse disorder among college students (Weitzman and Chen 2005). Regardless of the exact approach, administrators should not focus on restrictions and punishment, rather promoting patterns of engagement among students and the surrounding community. Collaboration between students and community stakeholders should be a priority to tackle excessive consumption.

Penn State and Social Capital

The theories and findings of social capital's limiting effect on binge drinking surprised me. Penn State's undergraduate population demonstrates high levels of student engagement, even boasting the world's largest student-run philanthropy, the IFC-Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON). Furthermore, in a 2010 Division of Student Affairs' Student Satisfaction Survey,

86.0% of the undergraduate population identified as being a member of a student club or organization. Table 1 lists student involvement rates at Penn State over time. Additionally, 87.1% student that participated in a student club or organization indicated that their involvement contributed at least “moderately” to their overall satisfaction with their Penn State experience (Harper, 2010).

Table 1: Student Involvement Rates

Percentage of Students Who Have Been a Member of a Student Club or Organization	
2002	70.4
2004	75.0
2007	77.5
2010	86.0

The involvement rates suggest that Penn State has a high level of social capital considering the high percentage of student engagement and voluntary activity. However levels of consumption and binge drinking at Penn State are higher than the national averages. Therefore, I am interested in exploring if the limiting and protective effect of social capital applies only to certain types of involvement. In the next section, I study the different types of Penn State student organizations to determine which organizations serve as limiters.

Student Organization's Limiting Effect on Binge Drinking

The University recognizes 15 categories (Appendix 1) of student organizations. Each organization is classified by its mission and purpose. Prior to formulating my hypotheses, I sub-categorized the student organizations into three different groups based on the scope of their mission. The three sub-categories were multi-purpose organizations, intermediate organizations, and single purpose organizations. The classifications are designated in Table 2.

Table 2: Sub-categories of student organizations

Multi-purpose organizations	Intermediate organizations	Single-purpose organizations
Academic/Professional	International/Multicultural	Music/Performing Arts
Honors Societies	Philanthropic	Political
Sorority/Fraternity	Religious/Spiritual	Special Interest
Student Governance	Service	Sports/Physical Activity
Resident Hall Interest House	University Affiliate	
	Media/Publication	

The five multi-purpose organizations all represent voluntary activities that support high levels of engagement through their missions. These student groups focus on member development, high standards of scholarship, community service, and campus and community outreach. The six intermediate organizations vary in their specific internal missions; however they often have outreach elements. These organizations often support other entities (service, philanthropy) or sponsor campus and community outreach events (international/multicultural, religious/spiritual). The intermediate organizations represent campus activities that occasionally engage the greater campus community. Lastly, the four single purpose organizations focus solely on their mission and have little to no engagement with other campus and community entities. These sub-categories helped me craft more succinct hypotheses explained next.

Hypotheses

My general hypothesis is that student organizations that have multi-purpose missions will be more likely to engage in alcohol prevention efforts. Student organizations chartered with a single purpose or interest will be less likely to engage in alcohol prevention efforts. Table 3 summarizes my more specific hypotheses as described next.

I expect that alcohol education programs will be more common in multi-purpose organizations than intermediate and single-purpose organizations. These organizations have a greater emphasis on member education and development. Therefore, these clubs will be more likely to provide members with programming, speakers, and seminars on alcohol education. Since intermediate and single-purpose organizations have little emphasis on member development, they will be less likely to offer alcohol education programming.

I expect that the frequency of participating in campus and community initiatives that seek to curb dangerous drinking will be more common in intermediate and multi-purpose organizations than in single-purpose organizations. Both intermediate and multi-purpose organizations frequently interact with the campus and surrounding communities. Therefore, these organizations would be more supportive of campus and community alcohol prevention efforts.

Given the prevalence of alcohol consumption and binge drinking at Penn State, I hypothesize that all student organizations will agree that curtailing binge drinking and its secondary effects are campus-wide priorities. However, I believe different types of student organizations will internalize these priorities differently. I expect that the frequency of incorporating prevention initiatives into organizational priorities will be more common in multi-purpose organizations than intermediate and single-purpose organizations. The broad scope of multi-purpose organizations allows for higher levels of engagement. Additionally, I expect that

the frequency of organizations that agree that the University actively utilizes student organizations to help solve the binge drinking problem will be more common in multi-purpose organizations than intermediate and single-purpose organizations..

Lastly, following social capital theory, multi-purpose organizations will be more likely to support the statement that the University should give student organizations more responsibility in creating initiatives and programs to help reduce binge drinking. Since multi-purpose organizations have higher levels of campus engagement, these organizations will want to actively participate in initiatives to solve problems experienced by the campus community.

Table 3: Summary of specific hypotheses

	Multi-purpose organizations	Intermediate organizations	Single-purpose organizations
Hypothesis 1: Provides alcohol education	X		
Hypothesis 2: Participates in initiatives	X	X	
Hypothesis 3: Believes finding solutions to solve binge drinking is a campus priority	X	X	X
Hypothesis 4: Prevention of binge drinking is a priority of the organization	X		
Hypothesis 5: Believes university currently engages student organizations	X		
Hypothesis 6: Believes organizations should have an active role to curb binge drinking	X	X	
Hypothesis 7: Believes University should give student organizations more responsibility	X	X	

Methodology

In this section I will explain the design of my study including the participants, data collection, and analysis.

Participants

I obtained a listing of the 896 university recognized student organizations and their presidents from the Division of Student Affairs. I randomly selected 300 out of the 896 organizations to participate in an online survey. Emails were then sent to the presidents of the 300 selected student organizations inviting them to complete the survey.

Survey Structure

The survey questions (Appendix 1) were tailored to student organizations. The questions covered five main topics: (1) perceptions of binge drinking as a campus problem, (2) curbing binge drinking as an organizational objective, (3) implementation of alcohol education programs for members, (4) participation in or support of campus and community initiatives that seek to curb dangerous drinking, and (5) perceptions of University administration's engagement of students to curb dangerous drinking. I piloted survey questions with a student organization president who was not selected to participate prior to finalizing questions. The survey protocol and questions were approved by the Penn State Office of Research Protections.

Survey Administration

The emails sent to student organization presidents included information about the study's purpose and structure. A secure link embedded in the email provided access to the survey. A consent statement outlined that participation was voluntary and anonymous. The email was open during a two-week timeframe. Participants were reminded three days prior to the closing of the survey. 104 of the 300 organizations completed the survey for a 34.6% response rate.

Results

This section will share the results gathered from the student organizations survey I administered to student organization presidents.

The first survey item for participants stated, “My organization educates members on the effects of alcohol (examples include seminars, speakers, internal programming)”. Student organizations were able to respond with yes or no. Responses were recorded and “yes” responses were calculated into a percentage across each organization and sub-category. Responses varied by sub-category and student organization as seen in Table 4 and Appendix C. A majority, 53.8%, of multi-purpose organizations reported implementing alcohol education programming for their members. This finding supports my hypotheses that multi-purpose organizations are more likely to engage in member education and development efforts. These alcohol education programs suggest that multi-purpose organizations seek to empower members with information to make better choices regarding alcohol.

Table 4: Implementation of alcohol education programs for members

Sub-Category	Organizations that sponsor alcohol education	Total number of respondents	Percentage
Multi-Purpose	21	39	53.8%
Intermediate	3	34	8.8%
Single Purpose	0	31	0%

Second, participants responded to the statement, “My organization participates in current campus and/or community initiatives that seek to curb the drinking culture”. Again, student organizations were able to respond with yes or no. Responses varied by organization and sub-category as seen in Table 5 and Appendix D. Although single-purpose organizations responded

as having no participation in campus and community initiatives, intermediate and multi-purpose organizations participated at 38.2% and 56.4% respectively. This finding supports my hypotheses that both intermediate and multi-purpose organizations would participate in campus and community initiatives seeking to curb the binge drinking culture. These organizations frequently interact with the campus community and have a greater incentive to support coalition initiatives.

Table 5: Participation in campus and community initiatives to limit binge drinking

Sub-Category	Organizations that participate in initiatives	Total number of respondents	Percentage
Multi-Purpose	22	39	56.4%
Intermediate	13	34	38.2%
Single Purpose	0	26	0.0%

For the remaining survey items, participants were asked their opinions on different matters concerning binge drinking, student organizations, and the University. All remaining questions were answered on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 represented Disagree and 5 represented Agree. The responses were recorded and aggregated for each organization and sub-category. Averages were taken to determine a mean response.

The third statement administered to participants read, “Curtailing binge drinking and its secondary effects is currently a campus priority”. Responses varied by sub-category and organization as depicted in Table 6 and Appendix E. The findings showed that both multi-purpose and intermediate organizations believe that limiting binge drinking is currently a campus priority at Penn State. However, contrary to my hypothesis that all organizations would respond similarly, single-purpose organizations responded neutral to the statement. This could possibly represent the disconnect single-purpose organizations have from the larger campus community.

Table 6: Opinions that binge drinking is a campus priority

Sub-Category	Aggregated responses	Number of responses	Average Response	Consensus
Multi-Purpose	152	39	3.9	Somewhat Agree
Intermediate	121	34	3.6	Somewhat Agree
Single Purpose	84	26	3.2	Neutral

The next survey item asked organizations to respond to the statement, “Curtailing binge drinking and its secondary effects is one of my organization’s priorities.” Responses varied by sub-category and organization as depicted in Table 7 and Appendix F. The findings found that no sub-category responded that curbing binge drinking was a current priority of their organizations. I hypothesized that multi-purpose organizations would have embedded this mission into their purpose. However, these organizations responded with a mean response of 2.7 or neutral.

Table 7: Curbing binge drinking is an organizational priority

Sub-Category	Aggregated responses	Number of responses	Average Response	Consensus
Multi-Purpose	105	39	2.7	Neutral
Intermediate	63	34	1.8	Somewhat Disagree
Single Purpose	37	26	1.4	Disagree

Item 6 on the survey asked participants their opinion on whether they felt “the University engages student organizations to help alleviate the binge drinking problem.” Responses varied by sub-category and organization as depicted in Table 8 and Appendix G. My hypothesis was that only multi-purpose organizations would respond affirmatively, and the results support the hypothesis. With an average response of 3.6, or somewhat agree, multi-purpose organizations viewed a more collaborative relationship with University administrators.

Table 8: Opinions that the University currently engages organizations

Organization Sub-Category	Aggregated responses	Number of responses	Average Response	Consensus
Multi-Purpose	141	39	3.6	Somewhat Agree
Intermediate	72	34	2.1	Somewhat Disagree
Single Purpose	49	26	1.9	Somewhat Disagree

Next participants responded to the statement, “Student organizations should have an active role in creating initiatives and programs to help curtail binge drinking.” Responses varied by sub-category and organization as depicted in Table 9 and Appendix H. Multi-purpose organizations responded with an mean response of 3.8 or somewhat agree, which confirmed my hypothesis. However, intermediate organizations responded neutrally. This may indicate that intermediate organizations are unsure about their role in combating binge drinking.

Table 9: Opinions towards student organizations having an active role

Organization Sub-Category	Aggregated responses	Number of responses	Average Response	Consensus
Multi-Purpose	150	39	3.8	Somewhat Agree
Intermediate	100	34	2.9	Neutral
Single Purpose	58	26	2.2	Somewhat Disagree

Lastly, item 8 on the student organization survey asked respondents’ opinions on the statement that “the University should give student organizations more responsibility in creating initiatives and programs to help curtail binge drinking”. Responses varied by sub-category and organization as depicted in Table 10 and Appendix I. The findings demonstrate that no sub-category felt affirmatively that student organizations should be given more responsibility. These results do not support my original hypothesis that both multi-purpose and intermediate organizations would be willing to take on more responsibility.

Table 10: Opinions that the University should give student organizations more responsibility

Organization Sub-Category	Aggregated responses	Number of responses	Average Response	Consensus
Multi-Purpose	129	39	3.3	Neutral
Intermediate	90	34	2.6	Neutral
Single Purpose	63	26	2.4	Somewhat Disagree

Summary of Results

The survey results show these three sub-categories of student organizations have very different opinions and attitudes towards binge drinking even though they are all representative of voluntary activities on Penn State's campus. Multi-purpose organizations and some intermediate organizations currently engage in alcohol prevention efforts. My research shows that although Penn State has high levels of student engagement, only multi-purpose organizations demonstrate the high levels of social capital. Multi-purpose organizations are more likely to educate their members, participate in initiatives, and agree to have an active role in prevention efforts. Table 11 illustrates my original hypotheses compared with the post-survey results. X denotes my original hypotheses where Y denotes the survey findings.

Table 11: Summary of Post Survey Conclusions

	Multi-purpose organizations	Intermediate organizations	Single-purpose organizations	Conclusion
Hypothesis 1	X			Supported
Hypothesis 2	X	X		Supported
Hypothesis 3	X	X	X	Not-Supported
Hypothesis 4	X			Supported
Hypothesis 5	X			Supported
Hypothesis 6	X	X		Supported
Hypothesis 7	X	X		Not-Supported

*Statistical tests not conducted because of limited sample size

The implication for the University is to better engage student organizations interested in issues related to binge drinking to develop a comprehensive plan of action. Results suggest that multi-purpose organizations may be important limiters to dangerous alcohol consumption.

Conclusions

The objective of my study was to determine which types of voluntary activities have a limiting effect on binge drinking at Penn State. I explored which types of student organizations are likely to engage in alcohol prevention efforts. I hypothesized that student organizations with multi-purpose missions would be more likely to engage in alcohol prevention efforts. Results from my study support this hypothesis.

Limitations

One strength of my research is that it closely examines student organizations' attitudes toward binge drinking; however, the research is only applicable to Penn State. I did not collect data on student organizations at other colleges and universities, therefore this study may not be applicable at other schools. Another limitation is that not all student organizations selected to participate responded. I sent a follow-up e-mail to selected participants reminding them about the survey. I did not control for the non-response bias. The questionnaire was based on self-reported responses. Additionally, the listing of student organizations and contacts provided by the Division of Student Affairs is constantly updated. The directory listed a few incorrect contacts and defunct organizations, which may have limited the response rate. No tests for statistical significance were conducted because of the limited sample size.

Future research could consider social capital may reinforce pressure to drink if social controls and social norms favor drinking. If so, being a member of certain student organizations could increase pressure to drink. The survey was directed towards student organizations and did not account for social capital's impact on individual members.

Recommendations

The main implication of this research is that multi-purpose student organizations are interested in having an active role in the University's efforts to limit dangerous alcohol consumption. University administration should work with these willing organizations to craft new initiatives, policies, and programs. Multi-purpose organizations have the most involvement with the campus community than any other type of student organization. Therefore, these organizations have the potential to enact prevention efforts that impact both members and non-members.

For example, the University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) is Penn State's student government. Starting in the fall of 2010, UPUA distributed the S Book to incoming freshman at Penn State. The S Book served as an orientation and navigation guide for new Penn State students. The book included information about academics, on- and off-campus housing, campus landmarks and buildings, student involvement, and student services. In the future, UPUA can supplement the S Book by adding pertinent information about campus alcohol policy and the University judicial code. If this information is provided to freshman upon arrival to campus, it may help to alter excessive drinking patterns.

Additionally, student organizations can craft their own environmental management strategies to combat dangerous drinking. For example, in 2009 the Penn State Interfraternity Council created risk management policies to regulate the availability of alcohol at social functions. These policies regulated access, duration, and the type of alcohol served at events. The policies have been successful in moderating consumption and reducing alcohol related harms for both members and non-members.

Lastly, more student leaders need to be incorporated into the decision-making process

regarding the University's environmental management strategy. Currently, only 4 out of 51 board members of the Partnership are students. Furthermore, the students who do sit on The Partnership's board include the Interfraternity Council President and the UPUA President. These two student leaders are tasked with many other responsibilities and do not have adequate time to devote to enacting campus-wide prevention efforts. More student leaders with an interest in this issue should be appointed to the Partnership's board.

Without significant input from a representative sample of the student body, prevention efforts will continue to fail. The acceptance and support of preventative efforts by multi-purpose student organizations, coupled with previously established environmental management strategies, may serve as a vehicle for lasting change at Penn State.

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Appendix 1: Penn State Division of Student Affairs – Categories of Recognized Organizations

- a. **Academic/Professional:** groups that provide an opportunity to discuss and share information related to a specific academic discipline and/or career.
- b. **Sport/Physical Activity:** groups that provide opportunities for participation in recreational and/or competitive sports teams.
- c. **Honor Societies:** groups that recognize superior academic achievement and leadership qualities and are usually based on professions and/or academic programs.
- d. **International/Multicultural:** groups that provide an opportunity to increase campus understanding of a specific nation and/or culture(s), provide students with an avenue to explore and celebrate their own cultural heritage and provide programs and services designed to support students of various cultural heritages at the University.
- e. **Philanthropic:** groups that seek to raise funds and/or support for a particular charity or cause.
- f. **Political:** groups that provide a forum of support and debate involving political parties, political issues and/or candidates seeking office.
- g. **Media/Publication:** groups that provide opportunities for members to gain hands on experience through various means, including TV, radio, and print.
- h. **Music/Performing Arts:** groups that provide opportunities for involvement and exposure to the performing arts (music, dance, theater).
- i. **Religious/Spiritual:** groups representing diverse faith communities and belief systems that observe and follow religious and/or spiritual practices and traditions. These groups offer fellowship and outreach through a variety of programs, activities and services as well as provide resources and support for students seeking spiritual wellness.
- j. **Residence Hall Interest Houses:** Residence Life sponsored groups that provide a supportive residential environment that will strengthen students' overall collegiate experience related to special and/or academic interests.
- k. **Service:** groups that function mainly to provide service to the campus and/or community and surrounding areas.
- l. **Special Interest:** groups that provide communities for students to discuss and share information about specific topics and common interests, raise awareness about a variety of issues, and/or cover topics that are not included in another category.
- m. **Student Governance:** groups that serve as student governments/councils in various colleges, schools, departments and residence areas.
- n. **Sorority/Fraternity:** these are fraternal organizations registered by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life.
- o. **University Affiliate:** groups that are created and supported by the University.

Appendix 2: Survey Form

1. Under what category is your student organization recognized as?
 - a. Academic/Professional
 - b. Sport/Physical Activity
 - c. Honors Society
 - d. International/Multicultural
 - e. Philanthropic
 - f. Political
 - g. Media/Publication
 - h. Music/Performing Arts
 - i. Religious/Spiritual
 - j. Service
 - k. Special Interest
 - l. Sorority/Fraternity
 - m. Student Governance
 - n. University Affiliate
2. My club or organization educates members on the effects of alcohol (Examples include seminars, speakers, internal programming.)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. My club or organization participates in campus and/or community initiatives that seek to curb the drinking culture.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Curtailing binge drinking and its secondary effects is a campus-wide priority
 - a. Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neutral, Somewhat Agree, Agree
5. Curtailing binge drinking and its secondary effects is one of my organization's priorities
 - a. Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neutral, Somewhat Agree, Agree
6. The University actively engages student organizations to help efforts to solve the binge drinking problem
 - a. Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neutral, Somewhat Agree, Agree
7. Student organizations should have an active role in creating initiatives and programs to help reduce binge drinking
 - a. Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neutral, Somewhat Agree, Agree
8. The University should give student organizations more responsibility in creating initiatives and programs to help reduce binge drinking
 - a. Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neutral, Somewhat Agree, Agree

Appendix C: Penn State Student Organizations' Participation Rates in Alcohol Education

Sub-Category	Organization Type	# Providing Alcohol Education	# of Responses	Percentage
Multi-Purpose:	Academic Professional	5	18	27.8%
	Honors Societies	0	2	0.0%
	Residence Hall Interest House	2	2	100.0%
	Sorority/Fraternity	14	14	100.0%
	Student Governance	0	3	0.0%
Sub-Category Total	Multi-Purpose Organizations	21	39	53.8%
Intermediate:	International/Multicultural	1	7	14.3%
	Philanthropic	0	10	0.0%
	Religious Spiritual	2	6	33.3%
	Service	0	6	0.0%
	University Affiliate	0	5	0.0%
Sub-Category Total	Intermediate Organizations	3	34	8.8%
Single Purpose:	Music/Performing Arts	0	5	0.0%
	Political	0	2	0.0%
	Special Interest	0	13	0.0%
	Sports/Physical Activity	0	6	0.0%
Sub-Category Total	Single-Purpose Organizations	0	26	0.0%

Appendix D: Penn State Student Organization's Participation Rates in Campus and Community Initiatives to Limit Binge Drinking

Sub-Category	Organization Type	# Participating in initiatives	# of Responses	Percentage
Multi-Purpose:	Academic Professional	8	18	44.4%
	Honors Societies	0	2	0.0%
	Residence Hall Interest House	2	2	100.0%
	Sorority/Fraternity	10	14	71.4%
	Student Governance	2	3	66.7%
Sub-Category Total	Multi-Purpose Organizations	22	39	56.4%
Intermediate:	International/Multicultural	3	7	14.3%
	Philanthropic	3	10	0.0%
	Religious Spiritual	1	6	33.3%
	Service	4	6	0.0%
	University Affiliate	2	5	0.0%
Sub-Category Total	Intermediate Organizations	13	34	38.2%
Single Purpose:	Music/Performing Arts	0	5	0.0%
	Political	0	2	0.0%
	Special Interest	0	13	0.0%
	Sports/Physical Activity	0	6	0.0%
Sub-Category Total	Single-Purpose Organizations	0	26	0.0%

Appendix E: Question 4 Responses: Curtailing binge drinking and its secondary effects is a campus-wide priority

Sub-Category	Organization Type	Aggregated Responses	# of Responses	Average Response
Multi-Purpose:	Academic Professional	74	18	4.1
	Honors Societies	9	2	4.5
	Residence Hall Interest House	6	2	3
	Sorority/Fraternity	52	14	3.7
	Student Governance	11	3	3.7
Sub-Category Total	Multi-Purpose Organizations	152	39	3.9
Intermediate:	International/Multicultural	32	7	3.3
	Philanthropic	25	10	2.5
	Religious Spiritual	26	6	4.3
	Service	20	6	3.3
	University Affiliate	18	5	3.6
Sub-Category Total	Intermediate Organizations	121	34	3.5
Single Purpose:	Music/Performing Arts	13	5	2.6
	Political	4	2	2
	Special Interest	45	13	3.5
	Sports/Physical Activity	22	6	3.7
Sub-Category Total	Single-Purpose Organizations	84	26	3.2

Appendix F: Question 5 Responses: Curtailing binge drinking and its secondary effects is one of my organization's priorities

Sub-Category	Organization Type	Aggregated Responses	# of Responses	Average Response
Multi-Purpose:	Academic Professional	32	18	1.8
	Honors Societies	4	2	2
	Residence Hall Interest House	9	2	4.5
	Sorority/Fraternity	54	14	3.7
	Student Governance	8	3	2.7
Sub-Category Total	Multi-Purpose Organizations	105	39	2.7
Intermediate:	International/Multicultural	14	7	2
	Philanthropic	14	10	1.4
	Religious Spiritual	20	6	3.3
	Service	8	6	1.3
	University Affiliate	7	5	1.4
Sub-Category Total	Intermediate Organizations	63	34	1.8
Single Purpose:	Music/Performing Arts	8	5	1.6
	Political	2	2	1
	Special Interest	18	13	1.4
	Sports/Physical Activity	9	6	1.5
Sub-Category Total	Single-Purpose Organizations	37	26	1.4

Appendix G: Question 6 Responses: The University currently engages student organizations to help solve problems related to binge drinking

Sub-Category	Organization Type	Aggregated Responses	# of Responses	Average Response
Multi-Purpose:	Academic Professional	66	18	3.67
	Honors Societies	6	2	3
	Residence Hall Interest House	8	2	4
	Sorority/Fraternity	56	14	4
	Student Governance	5	3	1.7
Sub-Category Total	Multi-Purpose Organizations	141	39	3.6
Intermediate:	International/Multicultural	13	7	1.7
	Philanthropic	20	10	2
	Religious Spiritual	11	6	1.8
	Service	20	6	3.3
	University Affiliate	8	5	1.6
Sub-Category Total	Intermediate Organizations	72	34	2.1
Single Purpose:	Music/Performing Arts	10	5	2
	Political	2	2	1
	Special Interest	27	13	2.1
	Sports/Physical Activity	10	6	1.7
Sub-Category Total	Single-Purpose Organizations	49	26	1.9

Appendix H: Question 7 Responses: Student organizations should have an active role in creating initiatives and programs to help reduce binge drinking

Sub-Category	Organization Type	Aggregated Responses	# of Responses	Average Response
Multi-Purpose:	Academic Professional	32	18	1.8
	Honors Societies	4	2	2
	Residence Hall Interest House	9	2	4.5
	Sorority/Fraternity	54	14	3.7
	Student Governance	8	3	2.7
Sub-Category Total	Multi-Purpose Organizations	105	39	2.7
Intermediate:	International/Multicultural	14	7	2
	Philanthropic	14	10	1.4
	Religious Spiritual	20	6	3.3
	Service	8	6	1.3
	University Affiliate	7	5	1.4
Sub-Category Total	Intermediate Organizations	63	34	1.8
Single Purpose:	Music/Performing Arts	8	5	1.6
	Political	2	2	1
	Special Interest	18	13	1.4
	Sports/Physical Activity	9	6	1.5
Sub-Category Total	Single-Purpose Organizations	37	26	1.4

Appendix I: Question 8 Responses: The University should give student organizations more responsibility in creating initiatives and programs to help reduce binge drinking

Sub-Category	Organization Type	Aggregated Responses	# of Responses	Average Response
Multi-Purpose:	Academic Professional	46	18	2.6
	Honors Societies	7	2	3.5
	Residence Hall Interest House	10	2	5
	Sorority/Fraternity	56	14	4
	Student Governance	10	3	3.3
Sub-Category Total	Multi-Purpose Organizations	129	39	3.3
Intermediate:	International/Multicultural	22	7	3.1
	Philanthropic	16	10	1.6
	Religious/Spiritual	16	6	2.7
	Service	17	6	2.8
	University Affiliate	19	5	3.8
Sub-Category Total	Intermediate Organizations	90	34	2.6
Single Purpose:	Music/Performing Arts	13	5	2.6
	Political	5	2	2.5
	Special Interest	33	13	2.5
	Sports/Physical Activity	12	6	2
Sub-Category Total	Single-Purpose Organizations	63	26	2.4

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EDUCATION

The Schreyer Honors College, The Pennsylvania State University, 2011
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RESEARCH

Honors Thesis: Student Organizations as Agents of Cultural Change: An Examination of Penn State Student Organizations' Limiting Effect on Binge Drinking
Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Forrest Briscoe
Honors Adviser: Dr. Charles Snow

EXPERIENCE

PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP: Advisory Intern, Summer 2010

- Assisted the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Office of Chief Financial Officer with internal controls testing
- Supported a federal proposal effort to provide audit services to the U.S. Small Business Administration
- Collaborated with interns on a firm-wide project to assess the impact of healthcare reform on the Internal Revenue Service

Penn State Learning: Guided Study Group Leader, Spring 2010-Present

- Prepared and facilitated interactive review sessions for introductory macroeconomics students
- Served as a mentor to prospective business majors

The Heinz Endowments: Senior Intern, Summer 2008, 2009

- Coordinated the Youth Philanthropy Internship Program
- Supervised over twenty interns to award \$200,000 in grants to non-profit organizations
- Prepared press releases and other correspondence on behalf of The Endowments

North Hills Community Outreach: Intern, Summer 2007

- Participated in training on foundations and grant-making
- Collaborated with other interns to develop grant opportunity
- Publicized grant opportunity and encouraged local non-profits to apply
- Reviewed applications and awarded grant monies to worthy programs and projects

ACTIVITIES/LEADERSHIP

Penn State Panhellenic Council, 2010 Vice President of Programming

- Coordinated service, philanthropy, and educational programming efforts for 22 member chapters
- Represented the interests of all Penn State sorority women as a member of the governing Executive Board

Alpha Delta Pi Sorority, Delta Kappa Chapter: Fall 2007 - Present

- 2009 Vice President of Membership Education: Developed and executed an engaging curriculum that honored sorority's mission
- 2008 Philanthropy Chair : Planned fundraisers and organized service trips in support of the Ronald McDonald House Charities

Student Philanthropy Council, The Office of Annual Giving April 2008 – April 2010

- Educate student body on the positive impacts of philanthropic giving
- Market and implement fundraising campaigns
- Provide a student perspective to the University's Office of Annual Giving