

Set and Prioritize Goals and Objectives

In listing goals and objectives, specificity is key.

The problem — student drinking — is obvious, but exactly which goals and objectives should guide campus prevention efforts is not. Is the goal to eliminate college student drinking? Limit excessive consumption of alcohol? Eliminate alcohol-related behavior problems? Protect student drinkers from harm? Should the prevention effort focus on student drinking on campus, or should it also cover off-campus behavior?

How you answer these questions will depend on several factors: the philosophy and academic mission of the institution, the nature of the student alcohol problem, the level of prevention resources available, the views and opinions of key constituencies, the characteristics of the surrounding community, and the cultural and political context in which the school operates.

Goals are general statements of what the campus wants to accomplish. Objectives state the specific outcomes the campus wants to accomplish in a given timeframe.

When establishing goals and objectives, aim for specificity. If a goal is too broadly stated, it could mean different things to different people. For example, a typical goal might be “to reduce student alcohol problems.” Some of your partners might interpret that to mean abstinence, while others may think it means protecting students from the consequences of their high-risk drinking.

Your objectives will help clarify your goal. Stating an objective of “more underage students will abstain from alcohol use” is too imprecise. Instead, a better objective might be “to increase by ten percent the number of underage students who abstain from alcohol within three years of launching this program”.

Completion of the **Campus Self Study** will give you a better understanding of the scope of the problem for your campus, the policies and programs you already have in place, and perhaps the broader social, economic, and physical context that might shape both the problem and the range of appropriate strategies to address it. You may want to communicate its results to achieve agreement among key campus stakeholders, including the students.



Action Items:

- A. Conduct Team Meeting. Use the Step 4 Sample Agenda (page 25) or other agenda to identify and prioritize goals and objectives with your team.
- B. Record Goals and Objectives. Use the Step 4 Worksheet (page 27) to record your goals and objectives. This worksheet will feed into a larger planning document in subsequent steps.

If you did not enlist an evaluator during Step 3, now would be a good time to do so.

“Set and Prioritize Goals and Objectives” is adapted from DeJong, W. and Saltz R.F., Reducing Alcohol Problems on Campus: A Guide to Planning and Evaluation. NIAAA Publication 02-5011, 2002, and Langford, L. and DeJong, W. (2008). Strategic Planning for Prevention Professionals on Campus. Downloaded 5/21/14 from:

<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/hec/product/strategic-planning.pdf>



Sample Agenda: Set and Prioritize Goals and Objectives

Use these questions to lead a discussion with your planning team. The overall aim is to identify and prioritize goals and objectives — in other words, to decide what it is you want to change. The discussion questions are provided as examples of how you might focus the planning team, so choose the questions that make the most sense to you, and determine how long you want to spend on each.

→ As you agree to goals and objectives, record them in the Step 4 Worksheet.

Introduction: Review progress to date.

“In Steps 2 and 3, we assembled a team and then gained an understanding of the problem of student alcohol use, examined what programs already exist, and identified gaps. Now we are in Step 4, where we will decide which problems we want to address, and from that will come our goals and objectives.

In our last meeting, we discussed the results of the Campus Self Study. Summary points from that meeting include [list].”

Discuss Part 1 of the Campus Self Study

Q: What problems do you see from the data that will need to be addressed?
Consider both the individual and the environment.

ENVIRONMENT: Where and when is problem drinking occurring? (At or before athletics events? In the residence halls? At bars? Are students drinking and driving?)

INDIVIDUAL: Are there high rates of heavy drinking among specific groups of students? Are you seeing significant underage drinking?

Discuss Part 2 of the Campus Self Study

Q: What strategies and activities are currently being implemented?

Q: What’s the mix of environmental and individual strategies and activities? Is there a bias toward strategies targeting the individual student?

Q: How definitively and consistently are existing policies being enforced?

Q: Are the goals of strategies and activities clearly stated? Is there data on their effectiveness?

Step 4 Sample Agenda



Identify and prioritize goals and objectives

Consider what you think are the key findings from the Campus Self Study.

Q: What does our data tell us? What has been done in the past to address these problems and groups?
What are our strengths? What are we lacking?

Consider the environment, student groups, and the individual student.

Q: What aspects of the academic, residential, and extracurricular and surrounding community environments seem to be promoting high-risk alcohol use? Which groups of students show the heaviest drinking rates and/or negative consequences? Are the students who need help most receiving effective interventions?

Q: What more do we need to know to set goals and prioritize them? Does our data and review of what's currently being done provide us enough information? Do we need to know more about the causes and contributors to high-risk drinking on our campus?

Q: Which problems seem the most significant or urgent?

Q: Where is the most significant impact? On which groups of students?

Q: What might be easily achieved? Where is there an opportunity to make a simple or quick change to give the planning team an early "win"?

Discuss the next planning steps

Q: Who should participate now, at the start of your planning process, and who should be brought in only after a supportive base for action is established?

Q: Who should participate in developing strategies?

Adapted from What Colleges Need to Know: An Update on College Drinking Research, NIAAA, 2007. Original source: Toomey, T.L. and Wagenaar, A.C. Environmental policies to reduce college drinking: Options and research findings. Journal of Studies on Alcohol (Suppl. 14):193-205, 2005, Updated January 2005 for NIAAA.

Step 4 Worksheet



As the planning team agrees to goals and objectives, record each one here.

GOALS reflect long-term, positive aspirations for change, based on your understanding of the strengths, gaps, and problems identified by the Campus Self Study and other information you may have available.

OBJECTIVES are designed to help achieve goals. There may be any number of objectives to support a given goal.

Objectives should use SMART criteria: they should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound.

<p>Example Goal: Reduce the negative consequences of high-risk alcohol use on individual students and the campus at large.</p>	<p>Goal:</p>	<p>Goal:</p>	<p>Goal:</p>
<p>Example Objective: To reduce by 10% the percentage of students who self report blackouts. (e.g., 30% reduced to 27%).</p>	<p>Objective:</p>	<p>Objective:</p>	<p>Objective:</p>
<p>Example Objective: Move towards a 0% rate of students self reporting driving under the influence.</p>	<p>Objective:</p>	<p>Objective:</p>	<p>Objective:</p>
<p>Example Objective: By the end of their first year, at least 75% of students will be able to identify the campus policy on possession of alcohol.</p>	<p>Objective:</p>	<p>Objective:</p>	<p>Objective:</p>
<p>Example Objective: To decrease by 15% the number of students who report having five or more drinks the last time they consumed alcohol within three years of launching 360 Proof.</p>	<p>Objective:</p>	<p>Objective:</p>	<p>Objective:</p>