

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Non-Competing Grant Progress Report**

**Submitted by: Center for Alcohol and Substance Education, University of Virginia
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A. Specific Aims

The goal of this grant project is to reduce the number of alcohol-related negative consequences experienced by the members of University of Virginia (UVA) fraternities and sororities referred to as "Greek students" and "Greek chapters." The intervention plan includes a social norms program to correct student misperceptions about drinking. An additional strategy is a brief, individualized personal feedback intervention to motivate students to reduce alcohol consumption. The project goal and intervention strategies have not been modified from those stated in the project proposal.

A steering committee, consisting of UVA project staff, U01 research partners and NIAAA staff collaborators was established after the project received funding. The responsibility of the steering committee is to jointly develop the study protocols, while maintaining the overall aim of the project. As a result, the project hypotheses and research questions were revised. The revisions have clarified the focus in an attempt to increase the likelihood of finding significant results.

The original proposal compared the effectiveness of two intervention strategies singly and overlapping. Due to the strong conceptual overlap between the two proposed interventions a control design was recommended. To further clarify the project, the design will not compare the effectiveness of providing gender-specific normative information. The revised study currently addresses the following hypotheses and questions:

- **Hypothesis 1:** Students participating in the Small Group Social Norms (SGSN) program will have decreased negative consequences compared to students who do not participate in SGSN.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Students participating in SGSN plus Online Personalized Normative Feedback (OPNF) will have decreased negative consequences compared to students who do not participate in SGSN + OPNF.
- **Research question 1:** Is SGSN + OPNF more effective in decreasing negative consequences than SGSN alone?
- **Research question 2:** What is the influence of moderating variables on effectiveness?
- **Research question 3:** What is the influence on mediating variables on effectiveness?

B. Studies and Results

The baseline survey was developed throughout the spring and summer of 2005, with the guidance of the steering committee, grant consultants and focus groups of Greek students at UVA. Focus groups specifically influenced the decision to administer the baseline survey online. Students felt a survey of this nature required the privacy only an online tool could provide. Project coordinators contracted with Application Development Services at UVA to create the web-based survey tool. The survey design incorporates the normative feedback components necessary for the interventions. Key measures include the Daily Drinking Questionnaire, the Readiness to Change Questionnaire

and items from the CORE survey. The instrument was submitted for review to the UVA Institutional Review Board and was classified as exempt. In addition, the research committee of the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) approved the survey and encouraged NPC affiliated sororities at UVA to participate. In August, Greek chapters, stratified by sex and council, were randomly assigned to either the intervention or control group.

Grant education and recruitment efforts began in early September when project representatives attended meetings of the four Greek governing councils. At these meetings, each chapter president selected a unique anonymous chapter code solely for the purpose of linking pretest data to posttest data. To further enhance education and recruitment, project coordinators and graduate interns scheduled and attended individual chapter meetings for all but one of the 49 chapters at UVA. The project goal, timeline and incentive structure was described in detail during these meetings. At the end of this semester, chapters will receive a monetary incentive based on their participation in the baseline survey. Focus groups and meetings with council presidents resulted in an increased incentive structure from that outlined in the original grant proposal. On September 20th a link to the project web-based survey became active. Three e-mail reminders were sent to chapter presidents before the survey ended on October 4th.

Intervention chapters will receive the SGSN program between mid-October and mid-November 2005. This experimental condition trains two members of each intervention chapter to deliver a scripted presentation including chapter-specific information on normative alcohol consumption, protective behaviors and chapter expectations related to hazing. In October, 50 chapter representatives attended one of three training sessions that included information on social norms theory, facilitation skills, a thorough review of the script, as well as a practice session. Intervention chapters must schedule and complete the SGSN program prior to November 18th. Additional monetary incentives are available for chapters who have 75 percent or greater attendance at the program.

C. Significance

At this early point in the project, the primary significance is to provide chapter-specific feedback for the SGSN program. The overall baseline survey response rate of 87 percent is a significant finding for the field. Three UVA Greek chapters did not accept the invitation to participate. Therefore, of eligible Greek students, the survey response rate was 91 percent. This large response rate is attributed to the involvement of Greek students directly in determining survey strategies and the incentive structure, as well as the anonymity of an online survey.

D. Plans

In the spring semester of 2006, students will be recruited from the target population to participate in focus groups. Students who participated in the SGSN program will assist the project staff in fine-tuning the strategies of the intervention. Greek students in either the intervention or control groups will be recruited to participate in focus groups that will provide input into the project design of the OPNF strategy. In April and September 2006, the baseline survey will be re-administered. In stage two of the project, during the 2006-2007 academic year, we will test the augmentation effect of providing individual-based social norms feedback following a group-level SGSN program.