

## National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments



# Higher Education Webinar: Strengthening Campus and Community Collaboration to Address Student Health and Safety

## QUESTION AND ANSWER SUMMARY

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On Tuesday, September 12, 2017, the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSE), funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS), hosted a webinar to discuss collaborative efforts by the Town of Amherst, MA and the University of Massachusetts – Amherst. This collaboration strives to maintain a safe and livable environment in off-campus neighborhoods and sustain a focus on the health and safety of students.

During this webinar, the presenters—**Sally Linowski**, Associate Dean of Students for Off Campus Student Life and Community Engagement, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; **Tony Maroulis**, Executive Director of External Relations and University Events, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; **Sarah la Cour**, Executive Director, Amherst Business Improvement District; and **Bill Laramee**, Neighborhood Liaison, Amherst Police Department)—provided detailed examples of how the Amherst campus and community collaborative has approached the issues of off-campus alcohol consumption and student safety, and described outcomes realized as a result of the partnership. As a result of their success to date, Amherst and UMass Amherst recently joined a multi-site Responsible Alcohol Programs effort, through the International Town and Gown Association, to promote safer alcohol sales and service practices. Presenters discussed how the program will expand the efforts already underway by the city and university and answered participant questions. These questions and answers are provided below.

- 1. Many large campuses are experiencing housing crises. Some landlords are absentee and as long as their units are at capacity and the students pay rent, they really have no interest in what is happening in the community. How did your landlords initially get involved? How would you suggest we engage with and outreach to them?**

A: Our landlords initially got involved through an invitation. We invited one of the large landlords within the community who heads up the landlord association. He joined on very early and became a co-chair of the coalition more than once and was instrumental in helping us draft a number of our bylaws and student safety initiatives. So I think it’s all

about outreach. From the University's perspective, it was about making sure that we were sincere in what we're asking for and that the people we bring to the table truly have a voice. In the case of our landlord community, personal and intentional outreach has been embedded in our culture since 2005.

The initial invitation was to someone who was rather influential in that community and what we were able to do when we had our larger landlord meetings was to use that landlord to help us bring other folks in, and he invited us to his landlord meetings where we talked about strategies around certain issues. Like many people on the call, we've all had larger events that have caused fissures in the community and it was after such an event that we were able to bring those folks together through the help of that one significant partner. Now that's grown and any one of us in the coalition could call any one of those landlords and have a really meaningful dialogue and get to solutions where we need them.

**2. Can you expand on the details of the party registration program?**

A: It was implemented last fall, modeled after some schools in Colorado. Basically what it does is allow students who are enrolled at UMass to register their off-campus parties. After they successfully register, they will receive a courtesy call if a noise complaint is lodged against them. If someone calls in a noise complaint and it is identified as a registered party by the dispatcher, it gets forwarded to an officer who makes a call to the registered host and tells them that they have 20 minutes to end the party. It is up to them as to how they define "ending" a party. It could be shutting the whole thing down. It could be sending a few guests home. It has been very successful. From a law enforcement perspective, not having that show of force is really impactful for everyone, especially for noise complaints. In the past there would be two or three police officers coming and they got the message through that show of force that the party was over, but the community was impacted because people would jump out of windows and run around neighborhoods. We don't see that anymore, particularly around registered parties, but more generally as well. It has been a real win for everyone. In the first year there were 334 registered parties, 34 courtesy calls made, and 1 citation arrest. It really took off in a way that we were surprised by. The students like it. They feel like it gives them a safety blanket. It gives them more credibility with their peers. They are responsible and don't want to get in trouble and know that if they get the call, students will leave. For us it's been a huge asset to our student community and really well appreciated by our neighbors.

**3. How did you recruit the retailers and bar owners/managers to become involved?**

A: We began with a Retailer Roundtable, where all license holders were invited to learn about upcoming TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures) trainings, to share data on college student drinking, and to gather feedback from them on what challenges or successes they faced as alcohol sellers. After this well-attended event, we cross-promoted local responsible beverage service trainings and the Amherst Select Board made sure to strongly encourage new liquor license holders to join the CCC (our coalition). It was important to state clearly that the CCC is not a prohibitionist group, but rather focused on underage drinking and over-service issues. We had a local package store owner who was very supportive of the prevention focus, after we asked him to no longer advertise ice luges on his exterior signage. We gave CCC lamplighter awards to alcohol retailers who embraced best practices. We have learned that having a business owner at the CCC table has been instrumental in identifying areas of mutual concern.

Details on TIPS training can be found at: <https://www.gettips.com>.

**4. Can you talk about how you began the peer-to-peer engagement efforts? How did you recruit participants? Who was involved in training and implementation? Would this work on a smaller campus?**

A: Students are invited to participate on the CCC to assist with program planning. Their input is most helpful around program logistics and effective ways to reach other students with safety and prevention messages. They helped us develop marketing and outreach ideas for Walk this Way, and in envisioning what students could do to remind other students about the impacts of parties in residential neighborhoods. In general, we found that the best way to recruit peer leaders for Walk this Way and Team Positive Presence was to clearly identify what their role would be, how they would be trained, and what skills and abilities would be needed to perform the role. We created job descriptions and posted the positions as student employment opportunities for “community leaders/peer educators.” Once a program becomes visible and has a clear brand identity, recruitment is easier because students start to associate the logo or brand color with the program and start to ask our leaders about getting involved. Our team leaders recruit as well, and we encourage peer referrals to apply. Peer engagement works as long as the students feel some ownership over the programs, are clearly supported by their host department, are trained well, have accountability, and data are collected to show program impact. Effectiveness data can keep them engaged when it feels challenging to do the work. Smaller campuses can implement similar strategies, but the bottom line is to first identify the problem you are trying to address, to choose a strategy with evidence of effectiveness, or at least theoretical promise, and then to consider campus and community readiness.

**5. Can you provide examples of other communities and campuses that have done this kind of collaborative work? Are there national networks of similar collaborations with whom we might connect?**

A: Some that come to mind are University at Albany, University of Missouri-Columbia, St. Cloud State University, University of Nebraska, University of Vermont, Oregon State University, and University of Delaware. The International Town Gown Association (<http://www.itga.org>) has a resource library for members that includes helpful information and program contacts. The Maryland Collaborative to Reduce Drinking and Related Problems (<http://marylandcollaborative.org>) has a concise review of best practices, as does the NIAAA College Alcohol Intervention Matrix (NIAAA College AIM: <https://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/CollegeAIM/>).

#### NOTES:

1. Additional resources supporting Institutions of Higher Education can be found on the NCSSLE website at <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/training-technical-assistance/education-level/higher-education>. Content on the site includes resources from the former U.S. Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Violence Prevention and is organized by the five-step process of The Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF). The SPF is based on findings from public health research along with evidence-based prevention programs to promote resilience and decrease risk factors in individual students and on campuses and in surrounding communities.
2. The NCSSLE website address was incorrectly noted in the Chat Box during the webinar. It is <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>.