Campaign against binge drinking shows success

Fewer Bowling Green students are engaging in high-risk drinking compared to two years ago, a new survey has shown. And the University’s program to combat this dangerous behavior has garnered a 2003 Ohio Exemplary Prevention Program Award from the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS).

The BGU Wellness Connection and the Student Health Service were presented the award in December at the annual Ohio Prevention Education Committee meeting in Columbus. Co-investigators on the ODADAS grant that helps fund the program are Barbara Hoffman, health promotion coordinator and Wellness Connection interim director, and Terry Rentner, journalism. Both have been involved with the program for several years.

Rentner, who compared survey findings from last fall’s American College Health Assessment survey of all current BGU students shows high-risk drinking has declined by 23 percent since the survey was last administered in fall 2000. Other changes from 2000 include:

• Among BGU students, 43 percent more reported not having drunk at all in the previous 30 days;
• A 2 percent increase in those who chose not to drink the last time they socialized and, of those who did drink, a 4 percent decrease in the number who consumed five or more drinks at a time;
• A 2.8 percent decrease in students’ letting alcohol affect their academic performance.

However, while the percentage who drank actually decreased, students’ perception of how much drinking was going on increased by 4 percent. Correcting these erroneous impressions of typical drinking behavior at BGU in order to keep the perception from becoming reality is the thrust of Bowling Green’s prevention program, Hoffman said.

High-risk drinking, defined as consuming four drinks on a single occasion by women or five in the same period by men, is implicated in many other undesirable incidents such as sexual assault, injury and low academic achievement. Research has shown that two of the contributing factors to binge drinking are: first, students’ perceptions of what is typical drinking behavior in college have a large impact on their own behavior and, second, their perceptions are far off base.

For example, Rentner, said, in a survey of high school seniors who are college bound, respondents estimated that 73 percent of college students engaged in binge drinking. In reality, 59 percent participate in this type of drinking.

Also, 25 to 40 percent of respondents said they planned to increase and drink more when they got to college.

“You know when you read these figures you’re inheriting a problem before the students ever step foot on campus,” Rentner said.

The American College Health Assessment administered to current BGU students also showed respondents overestimating how much their peers are drinking, and an attendant desire to keep up.

Part of Bowling Green’s approach to the problem is what is called “social norming.” That is, informing students about the true rate of drinking in an effort to reduce what they feel as

Muego produces Philippines guide for State Dept.

In preparation for being posted to international locales, all U.S. foreign-service officers are given a guide to read synthesizing the history and culture of the country in which they will be serving. Written by the best-known experts in the field, these guides are required reading and serve as a sort of “crash course.”

The guide for those going to the Philippines has been written by Benjamin Muego, political science and international studies professor. Muego, who has been an adjunct professor of Southeast Asian studies at the School of Professional and Area Studies in the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Va., since 1983, was asked last year by the school to develop the “self-study” for the course in which he is currently teaching. Administered by the U.S. Department of State, the National Foreign Affairs Training Center serves career foreign service officers and military officials as well as ambassadors and their spouses.

The current ambassador to the Philippines, Richard J. Rusk­hardone, took the preparation course last year, Muego said.

In his Self-Study Guide to the Philippines, Muego outlines information on the complex and diverse country, which has had a long and sometimes tumultuous relationship with the United States. Topics covered include the role of the Catholic Church in the country, foreign policy, key aspects of Philippine politics and the economy. “It’s the responsibility of the author to present accurate and unbiased information,” Muego said, whatever his or her own opinions might be.

A nationally known expert on Southeast Asia, Muego is a frequent speaker and holds several adjunct professor positions, including at Ohio University. On Friday (Jan. 31) he will deliver his annual lecture at O.U.’s Center for Southeast Asia Studies, as part of the Interna­tional Studies Forum. The topic will be presidential politics in the Philippines.

He also holds adjunct professor positions at the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School in Hurlburt Field, Fla., and at the Air Force’s Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management in Dayton.

Last September he was invited to give a presentation before an interagency policy panel on “Democratization and Political Islam in Southeast Asia,” attended by representatives of

Shift in Internet control is next lecture topic

The President’s Lecture Series continues with “The Social Transformation of Networks,” presented by David L. Passmore of Pennsylvania State University. The theme of this year’s lecture series is Technology, Society and Humanity.

Passmore will speak at 3 p.m. Feb. 3 in the Bowen-Thompson Student Union Theater.

According to Passmore, the Internet, especially the World Wide Web, has become largely a “read only” resource because control over content is held by an increasingly narrow band of content providers. However, the peer-to-peer computing movement, most commonly identified in products like Napster, is challenging the technologies, structure, control and ethos of the “consumer” Internet.

He will trace the revolution brought about by the peer-to-peer computing movement, which has caused a social transformation of the Internet through which such technologies as file sharing, distributed computing, instant messaging, load balancing, and collaboration are seizing control over content from a few content providers and allocating control back to individual Internet users. The result is increased collaboration and cooperation, but other consequences could include threats to authority, individual identity integrity and control.

Passmore received a master’s of education degree in industrial technology and education from BGSU in 1970. A professor of education in the Workforce Education and Development Program at Penn State, he holds joint appointments as professor of operations research in the interuniversity Operations Research Program, and as professor of mineral engineering management in the Department of Energy and Geoenvironmental Sciences in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences.

(Continued on back)
In brief

The Taped Presidency is forum topic

Noted historian and writer Stanley Kutler will be the next speaker in the Arts & Sciences Forum series, to be held Feb. 6 in 228 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

Author of Abuse of Power, Kutler will speak on "Understanding Nixon: The Taped Presidency," about the tragic presidency.

The $6.95 baked potato buffet will begin at noon. The 12:30 p.m. presentation is free. Reservations are due by Feb. 3 and may be made by calling 2-2017 or by emailing ajoyce@bgnet.bgsu.edu.

Student jobs now posted solely online

Student Employment Services has announced that student jobs are now posted only online at the Career Center Internet home page www.bgsu.edu/offices/ca/career.

Students will access WorkNet and create a user profile can then search the database of on-campus (and off-campus) jobs. Because students can now access job postings 24 hours a day via WorkNet, on-campus vacancies are no longer posted on the board on the third floor of Saddlemore.

Drinking (Continued from front)

peer pressure to binge drink, in addition to educating them about the laws regarding underage drinking.

The campaign is waged in the residence halls, through UNIV 100 classes and in peer education programs, which have been very successful, Rentner said. Students entering Bowling Green hear the message along with their parents in orientation and registration sessions and again in their freshman orientation programs.

Faculty, staff and parents have been brought into the campaign, as have local tavern owners and civic leaders.

The University is also seeking to "bridge the gap between high school and college" by reaching out to area high schools to begin the social norming before students arrive on campus, Rentner said.

The ODADAS award "gives kudos to everyone involved," said Jewel Neely of ODADAS Division of Prevention Services.

"One of the things we look for in our higher education prevention programs is that they have strong collaboration with community partners so everyone feels a sense of concern and responsibility."

Muego (Continued from front)

such organizations as the Heritage Foundation, the World Bank and the Carnegie Endowment, along with the State Department and Defense Department.

The author of Spectator Society: The Philippines under Martial Rule, Muego has contributed more than two dozen book chapters and articles on political and regional security issues in Southeast Asia. He is a former International Relations Fellow at the East-West Center in Hawaii. In the summers, he leads students from around the United States on a Vietnam field study program, during which they study at Hanoi University of Education and tour the country. This summer the trip will include for the first time visits to noted Vietnam War battle sites Khe Sahn and Quang Tri, as well as the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Currently chair of Faculty Senate for the second time, Muego previously held the position in 1993-94, as well as twice serving as secretary of the senate.