

# Using Public Health Coursework to Reduce Harms Related to College Student Drinking



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## Introduction

- Harm related to alcohol consumption is widespread on college campuses. Experts estimate that over thirty percent of the 8 million college students nation wide abuse alcohol annually (Borsari, 2017).
- Carroll College used the issue of alcohol abuse as an educational opportunity for students who were studying theories and methods for public health promotion. This promotion was through students and by students, reaching the target population as directly as possible.

## Methods

- Students enrolled in an upper division public health course studied methods to plan, implement, and evaluate health promotion programs. They were then asked to apply their knowledge to the issue of alcohol use by their peers.
- Students completed a literature review, a readiness assessment, 20 interviews, 2 focus groups, 20 environmental scans, and an outlet density scan. With this input, they then created marketing campaigns and community educational events.



Educational flyer students created to educate their peers

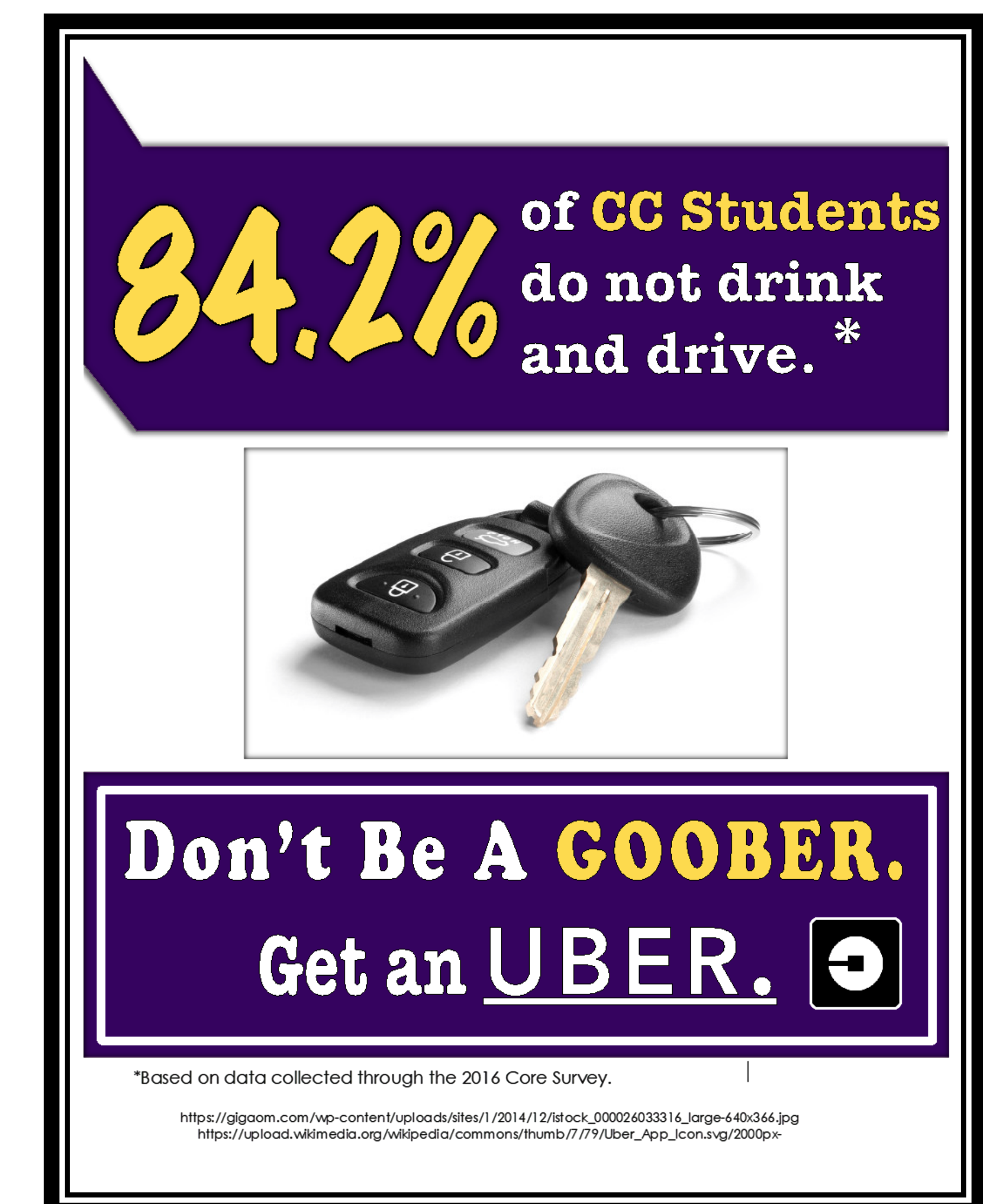
## Results

- Students enrolled in the course increased their knowledge of the harms related to alcohol abuse, and because of their hard work their peers (students outside of the class) also show declines in harmful behavior directly related to alcohol consumption.
- Using the National Core Alcohol and Drug Survey, the percentage of students who self-reported binge drinking fell from 46.5% in 2009 (the year the academic program began) to 42.9% in 2016 (National Average 43.1%). This resulted in total change of -3.6%.
- The number of students who self-reported having memory loss related to drinking decreased from 34.1% in 2009 to 31.3% in 2016 (National Average 32.3%). This resulted in total change of -2.8%.
- Students who reported doing something they later regretted as a result of alcohol significantly decreased from 39.5% in 2009 to 32.3% in 2016 (National Average 33.1%). This resulted in total change of -7.2%.
- More importantly, the number of students who self-reported drinking and driving fell from 25.6% (2009) to 15.8% in 2016 (National Average 17.6%). This resulted in total change of -9.8%.

National Core Alcohol and Drug Survey Results						
	The School's 2009 data	The School's 2016 data	Change in School's %	National Average 2009	National Average 2016	Change in School's %
Self-reported Binge Drinking (4-5 drinks at one event)	46.5%	42.9%	-3.6%	43.9%	43.1%	-0.8%
Self-reported memory loss due to drinking	34.1%	31.3%	-2.8%	33.9%	32.3%	-1.6%
Self-reported doing something they later regretted after drinking	39.5%	32.3%	-7.2%	36.3%	33.1%	-3.2%
Self-reports of drinking and driving	25.6%	15.8%	-9.8%	24.9%	17.6%	-7.3%

## Public Health Implications and Recommendations

- This study suggests that effective strategies for reducing college alcohol use may require more than student life administrators or local police action; it may require faculty commitment and inclusion in curricula.
- Seeing alcohol use and abuse as solely a student life or campus police issue limits the success of programs to reduce alcohol-related harm.
- For effective long-term success, campuses and law enforcement may want to incorporate classroom learning and experiences as an additional tactic to reduce harmful drinking behaviors.



Social Norms Flyer students created to educate their peers

## Acknowledgements

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## References

Borsari, Brian, James G. Murphy, and Nancy P. Barnett. "Predictors of Alcohol Use during the First Year of College: Implications for Prevention." *Addictive Behaviors*. U.S. National Library of Medicine, Oct. 2007. Web. 01 Feb. 2017.

Core Alcohol and Drug Survey 2009 Long Form. Southern Illinois University SIUC Core Institute. [http://core.siu.edu/\\_common/documents/report09.pdf](http://core.siu.edu/_common/documents/report09.pdf)