Funds for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education

University of Southern California
1989-1991

Nancy Pederen, Project Coordinator
Carol DeGroot, Project Evaluator
849 W. 34th St., Rm 221
Los Angeles, CA  90089-0311
(213) 740-WELL
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON
DRUG AND ALCOHOL PREVENTION

The University of Southern California holds general purposes in common with other universities: to foster the creation of knowledge; to transmit knowledge to students and scholars; and to serve the improvement of society. Within the framework of these aims USC has an opportunity to create a culture and climate which promotes a drug and alcohol responsible environment through education, prevention, and intervention in the areas of alcohol and other drug abuse.

This commission recognizes the significance and influence of the faculty and administration commitment to the establishment of this kind of environment. The document "Drug-Free Schools and Communities" is a first step in realizing this goal. We believe, however, that campus leaders should continue to promote such a climate through personal example and greater fiscal support for education, prevention, intervention, and treatment programs for the University-wide community.

The Commission for the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse developed as part of a grant from the Fund for Improving Post-Secondary Education. The Commission's goal was to find ways to address alcohol and drug-related issues at the University of Southern California. It was viewed as an important component of developing an effective campus-wide drug education program. Commission members were selected for their on-campus involvement and interest in drug education.

The Commission used as an assessment tool "A Guide for College Presidents and Governing Board: Strategies for Eliminating Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse on Campuses." These guidelines presented to the Commission by then President James Zumwage provided the Commission with the ability to evaluate the campus against a checklist found in the guidelines. This included education, assessment, intervention, policy and enforcement.

The recommendations that follow grew out of the assessment completed by the Commission. The Commission attempted to critically examine 1) the impact of the campus environment, in general, and 2) the development and maintenance of substance-abuse problems. For example, the Commission reviewed pertinent State laws and campus regulations and their enforcement; campus traditions and practices that may give ambiguous or "double-standard" messages on alcohol or drugs; and promotional activities by campus organizations and alcohol beverage manufacturers and distributors. The Commission also evaluated the effectiveness of primary and secondary prevention efforts as well as changes made at the "environmental" level to determine the most successful strategies to move forward.

53
The recommendations of the Commission are as follows:

General Recommendations

1. The University should establish a standing University-wide committee to coordinate the discussion, planning, promotion, and integration of all facets of alcohol and drug abuse education, prevention, intervention, and treatment throughout the University community. This Committee would be composed of representatives of constituent groups such as Student Affairs, Civic and Community Relations, Alumni Relations, Athletics, Security, Employee Assistance, faculty, staff, and students. The Committee would be designated as "the official" advisory body to the President on policy related to creating a drug and alcohol responsible environment among all University constituencies.

2. The University should ensure that policies that apply to alcohol and drug abuse are consistently enforced and apply equally to all members of the University community.

3. The University should publish and disseminate all relevant policies on alcohol and drug abuse to ensure that all members of the community have an opportunity to be informed.

4. The President and other members of the academy are urged to take every opportunity to address the issues of alcohol and drug abuse in written and verbal form. We particularly request that University leaders participate fully in Intercollegiate Awareness Week aimed at educating the community concerning alcohol and drug abuse.

5. Every academic and administrative department having programs and classes related to drug prevention, education, intervention, or treatment should evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and classes and provide the results of the evaluation to the University-wide committee.

6. The Student Affairs Division should continue to assume responsibility for providing leadership in the education, prevention, intervention and other strategies needed to assist students.

a. The University should offer a guaranteed substance-free living experience for those students wishing to live in this type of environment.

b. The University should ensure that drug and alcohol responsibility education shall be included as a criteria in the recognition of student organizations where appropriate. Particular attention should be paid to the President's Award given annually to the outstanding fraternity and sorority.
c. The University should emphasize education of "high-risk" student groups in the area of substance abuse.

7. The Staff/Faculty Counseling and Consultation Center should provide the same leadership for faculty and staff as the Student Health and Counseling Services does for students. Particular efforts should be made to address the special needs of staff and faculty including the following:

a. Develop and conduct a management training program on substance use and abuse.

b. Make an annual presentation to the Dean's Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse related to faculty.

c. More fully involve faculty and staff with the National Intercollegiate Alcohol Awareness Week.

d. Survey faculty and staff on drug usage and perceptions on policy enforcement.

8. The University should explore funding new and continuing drug prevention and education efforts by seeking support through alumni, the Development Office and external grants.

9. Academic courses directly related to alcohol and other drugs should be listed by department with a full title, not merely as "Special Topics."

These are the formal recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Drug Prevention. The members of this committee include: John Brodie, Carol De Groot, Elena Eskey, Mattie Grace-Rylander, Lisa Jack, Michael Morris, Ronald Orr, Linda Povarny, Denise Speaks, Brad Weber, Nancy Pedersen.

This Commission has become increasingly concerned about the problems of alcohol and drug abuse on our college campus and its pervasive detrimental impact on the quality of campus life. The Commission encourages a commitment from all members of the University community to make every effort to alleviate substance abuse problems. To meet this objective, the Commission believes that the recommendations described above will move us in the right direction.