# Alcohol Use Among College Students Attending Public Four-Year Institutions: Implications for Practice and Policy

Marlena Coco & Frankie Santos Laanan

Educational Leadership & Research Methodology * College of Education

## Background

About 80% of students use alcohol and about 50% binge drink. Many factors affect alcohol use in college including individual experiences students bring with them and overall college environment (NIHAA, 2013).

### Purpose

- Analyze national data from the Core Institute on extent and scope of alcohol use among college students
- Describe attitudes and perceptions among students about alcohol use
- Develop a predictive model to identify factors that relate to social interaction and alcohol use

## Theoretical and Conceptual Models

- Social – reciprocal determinism, peer interactions
- Cognitive – self-efficacy, expected outcomes
- Apply to health behavior and self-regulation

Astin (1994) Input Environment Output (IEO)
- Input: background characteristics, experiences students bring to college
- Environment: activities, experiences during college
- Output: outcomes of alcohol and drug use
- Apply to examine the impact of various experiences and environments on outcomes with opportunity to control for pre-existing differences

## Research Questions

- To what extent do alcohol rates differ between gender among college students with leadership roles in intercollegiate athletics, social fraternities/sororities, and ethnic/minority organizations?
- What are the unique effects of background characteristics, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and environmental factors that predict alcohol use during college? How do these factors differ by gender?

## Methods

- Quantitative study, survey research design
- Core Institute Alcohol and Drug Survey—Long Form
- Target population included college students attending two-year and four-year, public and private institutions in 2011, 2012, and 2013 (N=143,191).
- For this study, researchers delimited the sample to only include college students attending public four-year institutions (n=66,312).
- Descriptive, comparative, and inferential statistical analyses were used to analyze data including frequency and variation, t-test, cross-tabulation, and hierarchical multiple regression.

## Conclusions

- Students who were not involved reported higher frequency of alcohol use in the past 30 days.
- About 30% of the variance in alcohol use during the past 30 days is explained by the model: background characteristics, attitudes and beliefs about alcohol and campus environment, and involvement in student organizations.

## Implications

- College student alcohol use is prevalent and there are many consequences related to drinking. Health education leads to better health practices, including health benefits after graduation. Education impacts health through environmental conditions, social and psychological resources, and a healthy lifestyle.
- Research informs educators and leaders about factors associated with alcohol and highlights areas for programs to improve health and well-being.

## Selected References