

# Binge drinking shows immaturity of some students

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With spring break behind us, some students might remember a nice vacation while others simply won't remember the break at all.

In 2005, two-thirds of students said they drank in the last month, while around 40 percent binge drank, according to [Wasting the Best and Brightest: Substance Abuse at America's Colleges and Universities](#).

Binge drinking means drinking enough alcohol to raise the blood-alcohol concentration to 0.08 percent or more within two hours, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

They define binge drinking as a type of drinking behavior averaging four or more drinks for women and five or more drinks for men within the time frame.

Wasting the Best further reported the rates of students frequently binge drinking increased by nearly 16 percent.

Sure, people drink on campus and obviously people binge drink, too, but just because something may be commonplace doesn't excuse it. We need to know why people binge drink in order to address it.

Wasting the Best reported that nearly half of all students drinking on campus drank for relaxation and to forget about their problems. The publication also said students want social acceptance.

But wait a minute. You already know this stuff. You know people binge drink, you know the reasons why and you know the dangers.

"Binge drinking is deadly," said Jackie McHargue, dean of students, in an e-mail interview. ["Across the country, more than 1,000 students die every year in alcohol related deaths."](#)

But if students know this, then why talk about it? For one thing, binge drinking sits high on the list of idiotic behaviors. Just think about the next morning. If you're cringing right now, then you know how the story goes.

There might be a reason for such a high prevalence on college campuses. We know most parents don't hover around students at college, but if students wait until they get to college and out of their sight, then binge drinking takes on a childish aura. Of course, students justify their juvenile behavior.

Wasting the Best listed several occasions when students engage in heavy drinking. These include freshman year, spring break and the 21st birthday. In other words, college made drinking a rite of passage. Right, and maybe we should make the first STD or failed course a rite of passage also.

However inane binge drinking may be, serious consequences exist when the drinking goes too far.

"Binge drinking can cause blackouts and place a student in a dangerous situation which can lead to sexual assault and other acts of violence," McHargue said. ["Binge drinking also has a cumulative effect on the body - and mixing alcohol with other drugs \(both prescribed and illegal\) can be a deadly combination."](#)

So while we know this information, and students know the risks involved, many continue to engage in the behavior.

Certainly colleges have an interest in curbing binge drinking. Students' safety remains one of the top priorities. However, this problem doesn't resolve itself easily.

Increasing the alcohol tax might be a way to end binge drinking. The Task Force on Community Preventive Services expects that if the price of beer increased by 1 percent, then consumption would drop by 0.5 percent. Wine consumption would drop 0.64 percent for the same increase.

In reality, more taxes do little to curb drinking. Binge drinking involves quite a bit of alcohol, so to stop it prices must rise significantly. However, that's not really fair to the rest of society. People who want a six-pack at the end of the day shouldn't pay exorbitant prices just because of college students. And let's not forget Prohibition and all the drinking it didn't stop.

The Task Force also discusses decreasing the number of days alcohol can be sold. They cite a study which found a correlation between alcohol consumption and the number of days it can be sold.

So if we decrease the number of days alcohol may be sold, then we'll see a decrease in consumption. This might work, but students could stock up for the weekend party, and this also keeps the regular drinker from getting alcohol because of college students.

These options do little to nothing to stop binge drinking and potentially upset the rest of society. However, one solution exists, and it looks promising.

Wasting the Best reported on a survey which showed some college professors holding exams or classes on Saturday morning.

This looks like a good deterrent to binge drinking because it forces students to choose between staying up late partying or studying for exams. This keeps society out of the picture because this only affects college campuses. This solution even shows the selfishness and immaturity of binge drinking.

By choosing to attend college, students must understand college as a privilege. Many people want to get a higher education, but find they cannot because they lack the means, background or grades. Such a privilege remains a luxury in our society.

When students binge drink, they not only violate this privilege, but also slap others in the face who cannot attend college. Sure, plenty of students justify binge drinking as a part of the college experience, but this complacency removes the irresponsibility of binge drinking, which shows the immaturity of some. By having exams on Saturday morning professors put responsibility on their students to choose between studying and partying.

"Education on responsible decision-making occurs inside and outside the classroom," McHargue said. "We need to continue to hold students accountable when they violate our alcohol policies and utilize those opportunities to truly engage students in authentic conversation about their behavior."

Just because we can do something doesn't mean we should. **And just because binge drinking remains commonplace on campus doesn't make it a justifiable act. Until students get their priorities straight about why they came to college, binge drinking remains a childish and selfish act that lowers and hurts the value of college.**