Colleges Offer Creative Ways to Battle Binge Drinking

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About four out of five college students drink alcohol, and nearly half of them say they've binged, according to the latest statistics from the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. To counter these sobering numbers, some American colleges are turning to innovative strategies, reports Time.com.

A study by researchers at the University of Buffalo, New York, showed that talking to kids about the links between alcohol and cancer may be more effective than talking about potential sexual risks (a common focus of traditional campus anti-alcohol policies).

At Yale, students are being offered free bartending classes, no matter what their age, to teach them how to properly mix drinks. The courses focus on alcohol safety and pivot on the idea that kids pouring proper drinks at parties is a far better alternative to them guzzling cheap liquor indiscriminately.

Harvard is offering students grants that allow them to buy items other than alcohol for their parties. The goal is to either promote alcohol-free gatherings or, at the very least, provide students with activities other than drinking.

At boozy campus events, the University of Virginia offers rewards to designated drivers, such as unlimited non-alcoholic drinks, free food and a multitude of party favors.

And some colleges, such as Hobard and William Smith, focus on the idea of "social norming." This is the use of statistics that show the real ratio of drinkers to non-drinkers; the numbers help sober kids realize they aren't the only ones who pass on the booze. Experts say, in many cases, the number of drinkers is far lower than students may think.

For more about the health risks of binge drinking, click here.

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