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THE UNDERAGE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL AND DRIVING WHILE
INTOXICATED BY COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

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Dedication

First and foremost, I would like to thank my heavenly father, Jesus Christ, for granting me the ability to reach and accomplish this monumental endeavor in my life; **Philippians 4:13** says, *“I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength,”*.

I would like to dedicate this research paper to my late parents, Jose and Lidia Martinez, who were immigrants in this great country and while growing up always stressed the importance of obtaining a higher education. I would also like to dedicate this paper to my wife, Aimee Martinez, because without her unfailing assistance and constant reinforcement ensuring me that completing my Master’s Degree was possible, I would not be here. Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge my children, Caitlin and Dominus Martinez, for whom I am trying to set an example for. I would like to exemplify to them that it does not matter where you start out in life, but rather where you end up is what’s important.

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Dr. Hsu, I sincerely thank you for always being readily available to assist me in the completion of this project. I will always be in your debt, thank you again. Thank you, Dr. Dodson for coming on board this research project at a moment's notice. It is faculty members like you that make university students' ambitions come true.

ABSTRACT

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Damian Martinez
University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2018

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As a part of my employment at the University of Houston Central Campus Police Department, I have been on patrol for 17 years of service. While being on patrol, I have personally been dispatched to, or have come across intoxicated drivers. These various encounters with intoxicated drivers have mostly been college students attending the University of Houston Central Campus or college students from other institutions of higher education in the Greater Houston area. I have also had multiple interactions with intoxicated drivers who have no affiliation with the University of Houston Central Campus and instead are public citizens from all walks of life. All of these individuals have one thing in common: they decided to drive while under the influence of alcohol. I have personally witnessed graphic tragedies involving college students on several occasions. Many of these incidents resulted in severe injuries and fatalities. Unfortunately, a large number of these tragic incidents were attributed to drinking and driving under the influence by college students.

The decision to abstain from driving when under the influence of alcohol is not a difficult one. However, making decisions when influenced by alcohol results in a diminished ability to make ethical judgments, and often leads to tragic consequences. Not all tragedies involving drinking and driving by college student's end in physical harm. Some of these adverse outcomes can also include emotional and psychological damages incurred by the traumatic events that unfolded as a result of driving while intoxicated. Additionally, there are financial burdens that come from such incidents, as well as legal ramifications and academic consequences.

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* All of these arrests were conducted by the corresponding university police departments for each separate university.

CHAPTER I: IDENTIFYING THE DILEMMA OF DRUNK DRIVING ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Introduction

Consumption of alcohol, both on and off campus, by college students has been a severe problem and has grown to be a known “rite of passage” that many students willingly partake in while attending college. As a result of the rising popularity of college drinking, drunk driving by university students is a steadily growing problem facing our society today. Equally alarming is the issue of underage drinking. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), “Car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens, and about a quarter of those crashes involve an underage drunk driver. Young drivers, aged 16-24, make up 40% of the drivers involved in fatal alcohol-impaired crashes,” (Yoder, NHTSA, 2017). Forty percent is a significant portion of the adolescent population that encompasses many young adults and their families. Operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol is a toxic combination that affects not only the operator of the vehicle and any passengers in said vehicle, but also all other drivers on the road who are not at fault for any accident that may, and most likely will, occur.

The scope of my study for this Master’s Project will focus on data collected from college students and drunk drivers associated with the top five (5) public universities in the State of Texas. The data collected was obtained via Open Record Requests that I submitted. The data obtained for this project was gathered from the following top five public universities: (1) Texas A&M College Station, (2) University of Texas Austin, (3) University of Texas Dallas, (4) Texas Tech University, and (5) University of Houston Central. These universities showed similarities when comparing various dynamics, such as population demographics of students attending the schools, the population of students

residing on campus, and current fraternity and sorority social normalities on campus, to name a few.

This paper is made up of multiple sections that focus on different aspects of underage drinking, driving while intoxicated, and binge drinking in relation to college students. The sections in this paper consist of: factors that arise from drunk driving, the ease of obtaining alcohol even when under the legal age to consume alcohol, the question of whether to drink or drive, the effects of drinking and driving at a young age, how to understand the tragedies of drunk driving, factors and results of drinking and driving, remediation to minimize college-aged drunk drivers, and the exponential benefits in reducing underage drinking and driving.

Over the course of my 17 years in law enforcement, I have received numerous explanations from college students rationalizing why they decided to drink and drive. Some of the chief justifications I have heard are that college students are at a certain point in their lives in which they have obtained a new kind of freedom from their parents by being away at college. Another popular justification is that these college students are beginning to face school on a different, more difficult level, and often feel overwhelmed when trying to meet the required course loads that are set forth by the university. These students are facing new academic duties that they must fulfill, and the manner in which some choose to cope with that stress is the the consumption of alcohol. Beyond just drinking alcohol, some unfortunately decide to operate a motor vehicle. In short, I have interviewed countless college students that have suffered the tragedies of drinking and driving, and they have given many reasons as to why they drove while intoxicated. My message to them is always the same: just don't do it. The consequences that you may incur are not worth it.

The Intersections of College and Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol and its consumption while in college is not a new dilemma, but rather one that has been around for quite some time. Let us not be oblivious to what happens in college; the consumption of alcohol is real and driving under its influence is increasingly common.

Unfortunately, the consumption of alcohol on campuses is very often by individuals who are under the legal age to do so, which clearly in itself is a crime. Poor decisions that are made while under the influence of alcohol can lead to a multitude of tragedies, legal problems, and academic consequences. There is always the impending question of the location or persons from which underage individuals obtain the alcohol. As discussed below, I believe the appropriation of alcohol is not the problem, but rather the core of the issue here is what happens during and after consumption takes place and the decisions that are made under the impairment.

The task of obtaining alcohol, regardless of being under the legal age to consume it, does not appear to be a difficult one. Let us first understand that there is a major difference in comparing college students who attend a four-year university and students enrolled in a local commuter community college with no residential facilities. Some of these differences include Greek Life housing on campus, larger and more diverse athletic teams with significant monthly events (i.e. football games), and the ability to openly have social parties on campus residential facilities.

Some of the larger four-year universities previously mentioned, such as Texas A&M College Station, University of Texas Austin, University of Texas Dallas, Texas Tech University, and University of Houston Central, all have large residential facilities associated with and located on their campuses. It is a known fact that alcohol consumption occurs in these facilities, regardless if there is a campus policy in place which strictly

prohibits alcohol in any residential areas. In reality, many of these universities actually allow alcohol in residential areas.¹ My experiences as a staff member at a large university and also as a public servant has shown me that underage drinking on campus is more often than not an unavoidable reality.

While on campus and overseeing a fraternity party, the main concern for campus security and university staff is ensuring that all attendees of such parties are of a legal drinking age. In my personal experience responding to calls for patrol services at Greek Life housing for an overly intoxicated and/or unresponsive individual, it is usually a member of the hosting organization that is involved or responsible for the provision of alcohol. Unfortunately, I have received the same answer multiple times when inquiring about who was responsible for the mandated age verifications. Regrettably, this is a real university dilemma that I have personally witnessed and it is an issue that does not garner the necessary attention it should. The lives of college students are exponentially at risk. I have witnessed countless individuals that were transported in an emergent manner to local hospitals for alcohol poisoning sustained at many of these college parties.

Not only do incidents happen in Greek Life housing, but also in residential facilities for all other students on these campuses. On patrol, I have responded to dormroom parties and gatherings in which there is an abundance of alcohol involved. Oftentimes, someone over-consumes alcohol and is in need of immediate medical attention. Consequently, the person(s) who provided the alcohol to the minor would be subject to a criminal charge, but it is very difficult to pinpoint the responsible party. The underage participants are also subject to prosecution for a minor in possession of alcohol charge. In

¹ To provide some examples of campus policies, the University of Houston-Central Campus does allow alcohol on campus (uh.edu/dos/programs, 2017), the University of Texas also allows alcohol on campus (www.healthyhorns.utexas.edu, 2017), Texas Tech also allows alcohol on campus in certain residence location (housing.ttu.edu/reslife/hallpolicies, 2017), and Texas A & M does not allow alcohol on campus, except for certain school sponsored organization events (student-rules.tamu.edu/append 8, 2017).

addition, these wrongdoers can and should face repercussions from the university administration, considering that alcohol consumption can have adverse academic effects on students; "...25% of college students report academic consequences of their drinking including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism," (DID YOU KNOW, 2014).

The consumption of alcohol by underage college students has medical consequences that range from alcohol poisoning to physical altercations resulting in bodily harm. Patrols on duty often receive disturbance calls pertaining to physical altercations and assaults in which there have been minor to severe injuries related to impairment from excessive alcohol consumption. Over-consumption of alcohol can also lead to potential criminal incidents such as sexual assaults, physical assaults, and even death.

The accessibility of alcohol to minors is unprecedented, making the decision to partake in illegal consumption a lot easier. Take the tradition of tailgating, for instance. At large-scale events, such as football games, the consumption of alcohol is indeed excessive in many cases. Putting this into perspective, we are talking about several hours of tailgating consisting of alcohol consumption, as well as the continuation of drinking inside the stadium. That is multiple hours of alcohol consumption which ultimately may result in impaired decision making, such as the popular decision to operate a motor vehicle under the influence.

Another example of the ease of alcohol consumption is the geographical location of bars that are in relative proximity to many university campuses. One would assume that the ability to obtain alcohol illegally would be more difficult when it is solicited in a regulated establishment. The assumption of such would come from the fact that these alcohol establishments have state licenses and can face hefty fines for not accurately

identifying a patron in the establishment who is under the legal age to consume alcohol. If a business has a license for on-premise alcohol consumption and the business sales are over 51% of gross receipts, then it must post a sign indicating such, and the patron must be 21 years of age to enter (The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, 2017). However, many underage students find ways around these rules, and are often left unnoticed.

I would also like to mention the epidemic of false identification that circulates around most university campuses. Speaking from my past experiences, I have dealt with individuals who possessed false identifications or were using one of their friend's identifications to obtain alcohol in bars. Another method by which underage individuals can obtain alcohol is by having a person above the legal age purchase the alcohol and provide it to them. I was able to collect the following data which provides some insight on the use of fictitious identification(s) by college students. "Despite legal restrictions of on-premise and off-premise alcohol sales to minors, 51% of underage college students reported that they thought alcohol was "very easy" to obtain and 18% reported that they used false identification (fake ID) for obtaining alcohol," (Wechsler et al., 2002a, 2002b p. 223–236).

The Situational Prevention of Underage Alcohol Consumption in College

The action of consuming alcohol under the legal age is a crime. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines crime as, "an illegal act for which the government can punish someone; especially: a gross violation of law," (Merriam-Dictionary, 2016). Preventative measures must accompany the crime rates that we are experiencing today. A particular method that has adequately addressed a wide range of offenders for several decades is situational crime prevention (SCP). SCP is an approach that strives to reduce the number of criminal events by proactively focusing on reducing the opportunity for crime to occur. SCP has a broad spectrum of factors that are intertwined. Some of these contributing factors are finances,

public status, the window of opportunity to commit the crime, and the understanding that the criminal action can be a repeat action because of the sensation or rewards developed by the initial act. This relates to alcohol consumption by college students because of the positive or carefree way they feel while under the influence. When these particular dynamics come together, they can significantly influence an offender to act. "In so far as an individual's social and physical environments remain relatively constant and past experiences much influence his decisions, this scheme gives ample scope to account not only for occasional offending but also for recidivism; people acquire a repertoire of different responses to meet particular situations, and if the circumstances are right they are likely to repeat those responses that have previously been rewarding," (Clarke, 1980).

The theory of SCP is not limited to just one type of crime, but instead can be applied to many criminal incidents. There are various models that come with SCP, but the one that directly applies to the topic of this paper is the Conservative Model which postulates that, "This model combines elements of classical criminological theory (with an emphasis on voluntarism and personal responsibility) with rational choice theory which sees human behavior primarily in terms of calculated perceptions of the costs and benefits of particular courses of action," (Center for Problem-Oriented Policing Drunk Driving, 2006). For this paper, we will focus on the prevention of underage drinking and driving while intoxicated by college students.

Proposed Responses to Underage Drinking and Driving on Campus, Part I

As I mentioned before, there has to be an acceptance that the act of underage drinking does, in fact, occur on university campuses, which can lead to intoxicated driving by college students. With this acceptance, strategies clearly must be developed and implemented to prevent such actions on college campuses. First, reporting individuals who are attempting to drive while intoxicated should be heavily reinforced while on campus.

There can be an anonymous email address and phone tip line in which individuals and places that supply alcohol to people can report any suspicions of illegal activity to the police department. I understand that there may be a fear of repercussion from law enforcement or a sense of loyalty that deters students from reporting on other students. There are countless reasons which come into play, but failure to act should not be one of them. Thus, promoting and training university students, faculty, and staff about the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption, drunk driving, and the need to report such incidents is my first proposed response to this issue.

Another proposed response is implementing academic sanctions on students who are caught underage drinking. In addition to academic penalties, I believe that individuals should also face criminal charges, when applicable. I am confident that there are individuals that may feel otherwise, but if there is no fear of legal consequence, then there may be a diminished fear to commit the crime. This proposed response is based on the concept of deterrence in crime literature, in which the fear of punishment may deter individuals from committing proscribed actions.

Routine Activities Theory

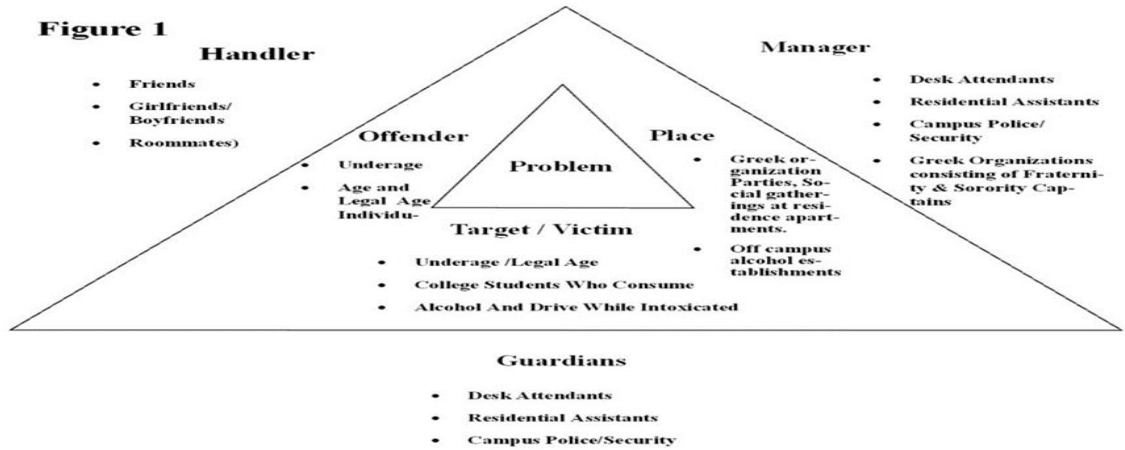
The Routine Activities Theory (RAT) may also play a significant part in explaining and responding to drinking and driving by college students. RAT and SCP have essential overlaps that can work together to address the issue of drinking and driving in colleges adequately. Both of these theories are based on related dynamics; “Osgood et al. argue that the motivation to commit any deviant act depends on the level of situational opportunities created by routine activities. The motivation to deviate emerges in situations where deviance is easy and rewarding. Hence, as routine activities include more frequent exposure to situations that are conducive to deviant behavior, the likelihood of deviant activity occurring increases,” (Bernburg and Thorlindsson, 2001, p. 543-567).

In analyzing the issue of underage drinking and driving, we can use what is known as the Problem Analysis Triangle, also known as the crime triangle, which has been utilized efficiently to address many types of crimes and disorders. There are 3 (three) parts of the Problem Analysis Triangle: (1) the offender, (2) the target/victim, and (3) the place. These three separate categories all surround a specific “problem” that is the focus of the crime triangle. The Problem Analysis Triangle has 3 (three) additional subcategories consisting of: (1) the handler, (2) the manager, and (3) the guardian. The descriptions for each category are as follows:

“Offenders can sometimes be controlled by other people: those people are known as handlers. Targets and victims can sometimes be protected by other people as well: those people are known as guardians. And places are usually controlled by someone: those people are known as managers. Thus, effective problem-solving requires understanding how offenders and their targets/victims come together in places, and understanding how those offenders, targets/victims, and places are or are not effectively controlled, (Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, 2016)”.

To provide a visual illustration of these concepts, I have completed an example of a Problem Analysis Triangle related to underage drinking on campus (see figure 1 below).

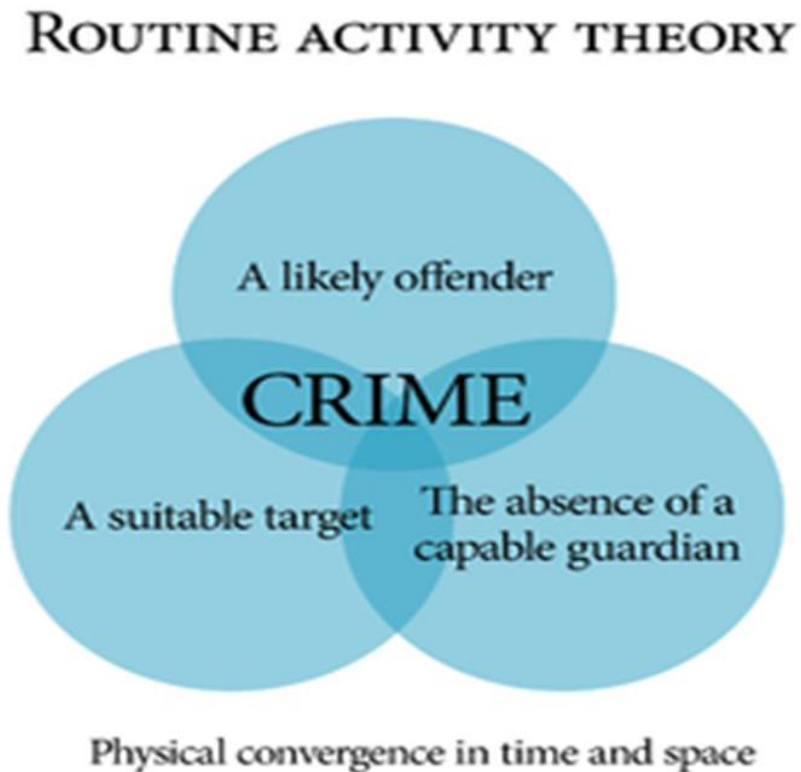
Figure 1: An illustration of the Problem Analysis Triangle



The RAT is a theory that was developed in 1979 by Marcus Felson and Lawrence E. Cohen, which deals directly with the victimization of individuals. This theory elaborates that when an individual is performing their routine or daily activities and falls prey to a crime, they fall under the category of this theory. As visually explained in Figure 2's diagram of this theory, Felson and Cohen (1979, p. 588–608) argue that there has to be a combination of three key factors to intertwine for crime to occur:

“...proposed that criminal opportunities, while rare, arise from individuals' daily activities. There are three central elements that must converge in time and space for a criminal opportunity to arise: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and a lack of capable guardianship. The activities of individuals' throughout the day generate and reduce opportunities for the central elements to converge in space, thereby influencing the likelihood that a criminal event will occur,” (Cohen and Felson, 1979, p. 588–608).

Figure 2: Illustration of the Routine Activity Theory



The individual who is wanting and willing to consume alcoholic beverages and acts upon such impulses can identify as the likely offender. The willful disregard for driving after consuming alcohol and the unsuspecting victim, whom of no fault of their own may cross paths with the likely offender, can be identified as the suitable or vulnerable target. Without the presence of a capable guardian, such as a university official, a friend/roommate, coworker, or classmate, the act of drinking and driving can occur due to the lack of someone willing to intervene. There is a misconception that drinking and driving is a victimless crime, which is so far from the truth. In the act of drinking and driving, there is always a minimum of one victim, which would likely be the

offender. When an innocent victim crosses paths with the intoxicated driver, there can easily be multiple victims.

The notions of the routine activities theory (RAT) fit what many college students go through in regards to excessive alcohol consumption known as binge drinking. This is a common practice that many larger universities have to face, especially the ones with residential facilities on campus. The act of binge drinking and partying is considered by many students to be a rite of passage when attending a large university. As previously discussed, Greek Life organizations consist of sororities and fraternities that host parties on and off campus. This affects the corresponding campus because highly inebriated individuals can become a concern for the university and local police departments, examples being incidents of alcohol poisoning, disturbance calls, physical altercations, sexual assaults, and drunk driving.

The three critical components labeled in RAT are all present when dealing with drinking and driving on college campuses. The three significant factors of RAT for this issue are as follows: (1) A motivated offender could be a college student intentionally going out to consume alcohol knowing that he/she is driving, (2) A vulnerable victim can be an unsuspecting driver on the road that may just happen to be at the wrong place at the wrong time and may face dire consequences when crossing paths with a drunken “motivated offender” and, (3) An absence of a capable guardian, such as a designated driver, who may have been able to prevent the convergence of the vulnerable target with the motivated offender.

In my years of experience, I have often asked myself why so many individuals choose to drink and drive or even to consume alcohol when they are not legally able to do so. I believe that this is done, in part, without the fear of potential consequences of such actions, or thinking that the harm which could result from such actions is a distant non-

reality. Both of these senseless thoughts are exacerbated when under the influence of alcohol. I believe that this mentality may be evoked by the idea that driving under the influence and underage drinking are victimless crimes.

Now, some individuals choose not to drink and drive. Thus, the logical question to pose is, “Why do some individuals decide to drink and drive while others choose not to?” From my personal experiences and learning in my graduate studies, I would say that often the young individuals who decided not to break the law are fearful of the possible negative consequences such as going to jail, being seriously injured, or even killed. In other words, the individual is deterred through the fear of the costs of such actions, and that fear is a barrier not allowing them to proceed to commit the crime. This correlates with the deterrence theory in criminology, which states that there are two different types of deterrence. One type of deterrence is the, “general deterrence, designed to prevent crime in the general population. Thus, the state’s punishment of offenders serves as an example for others in the general population who have not yet participated in criminal events,” (Onwudiwe, I., Odo, J. & Onyeozili, E., 2005, p. 234-237). The second type of deterrence is the specific deterrence that is “designed by nature of the prescribed sanctions to deter only the individual offender from committing that crime in the future,” (Dilulio, J “Deterrence Theory ” 2010).

Proposed Responses to Underage Drinking and Driving on Campus, Part II

It is my belief that the fear of consequences is what ultimately diverts the majority of students from excessive drinking and driving and underage alcohol consumption. For example, the fear of legal troubles and school administrative problems is a deterrent. As such, the universities should continue to implement student training, such as the one currently being offered at Texas Tech University. This university-mandated training requires that all new incoming students complete a course called “Think About It.” The

course is considered a mandatory prevention class that speaks about the dangers of alcohol, its over-consumption, and the insurmountable risks of drinking and driving. This is an excellent idea because it puts valuable, truthful information out directly to the students, regardless of whether they have been in trouble with law enforcement for alcohol abuse or not. With such a program, Texas Tech University appears to be using the general deterrence theory in which it conveys the consequences or costs of drinking and driving to the general population of the student body.

With drinking and driving come many risks, the most likely risk being getting arrested, which will lead to an arrest record. Many of these young adults don't understand that decisions made today can negatively affect them later on in life. Individuals who have made contact with law enforcement as a result of drinking and driving are subject to arrest for driving while intoxicated. These arrests are required to be documented as police offense reports. To provide some example statistics of such student arrests, I filed formal Open Records Requests under the State of Texas Public Information Act to various large Texas universities. I requested the number of arrests for affiliated students by their corresponding university police departments, regardless of whether or not the incident occurred on or off campus. I stipulated that the arrested individuals had to be students of that corresponding university. I was able to obtain the data for all of the universities that I requested information from, and they are listed in the following figures:

Figure 3: University of Houston - Central statistics of UH Students arrested for Driving While Intoxicated

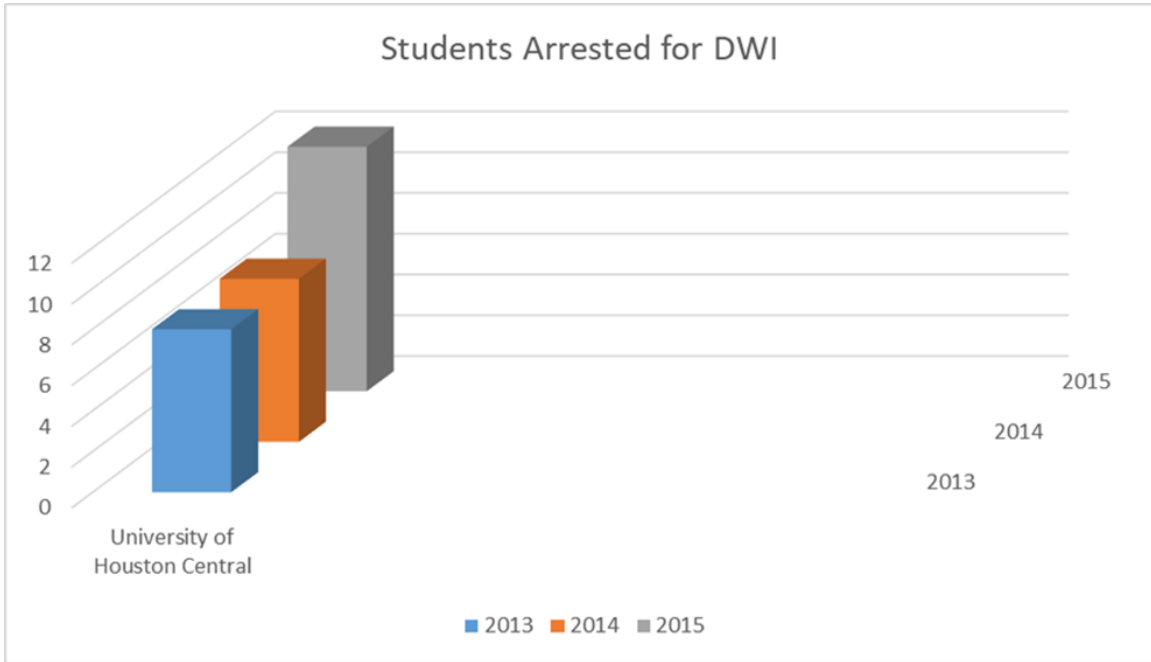


Figure 4: University of Texas - Austin statistics of UT - Austin Students arrested for Driving While Intoxicated

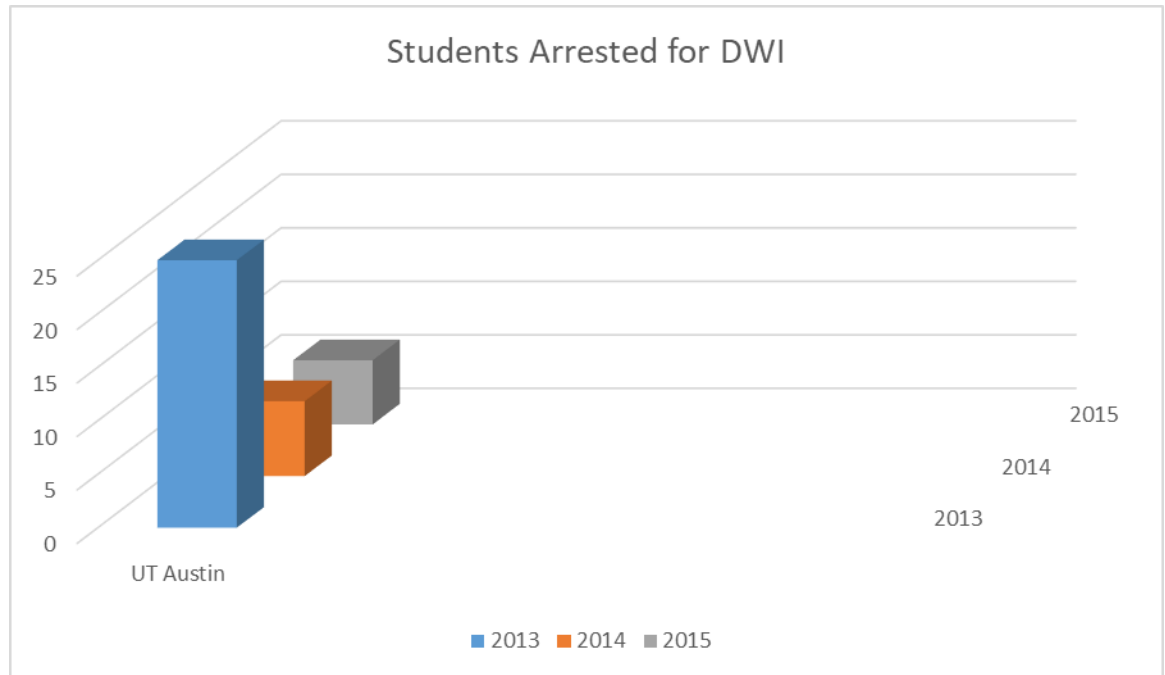


Figure 5: Texas Tech University statistics of Texas Tech Students arrested for Driving While Intoxicated

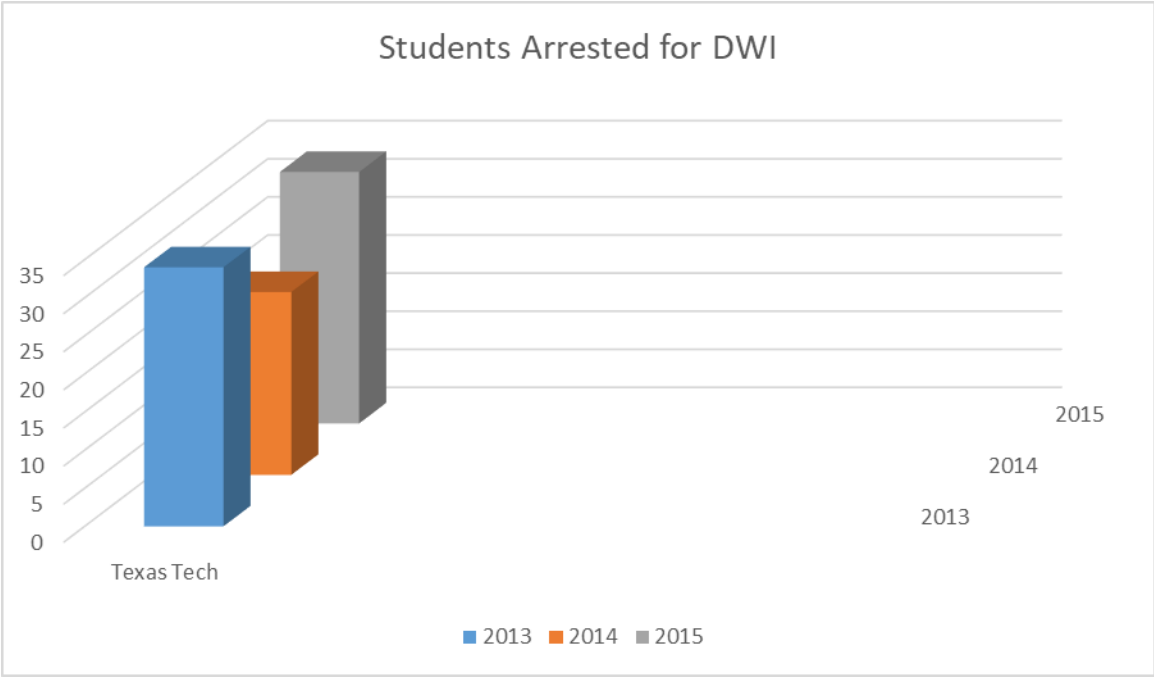


Figure 6: University of Texas - Dallas statistics of UT Dallas Students arrested for Driving While Intoxicated

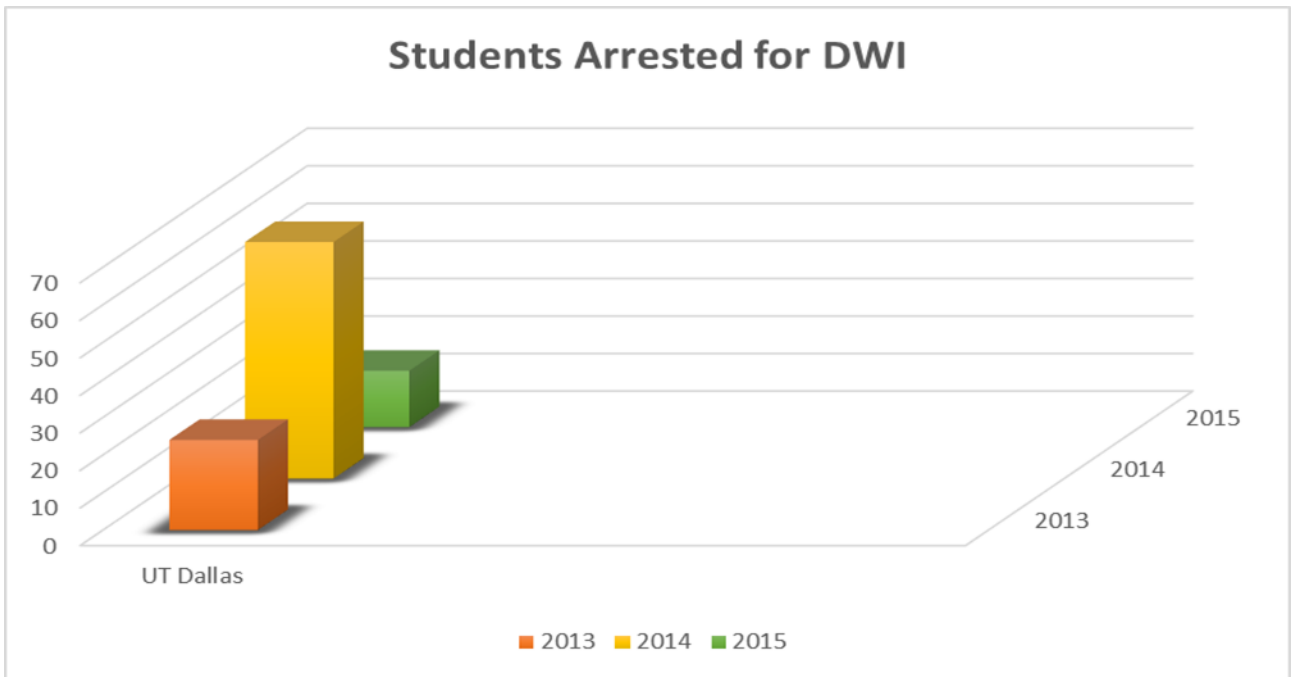


Figure 7: Texas A & M University statistics of Texas A & M Students arrested for Driving While Intoxicated

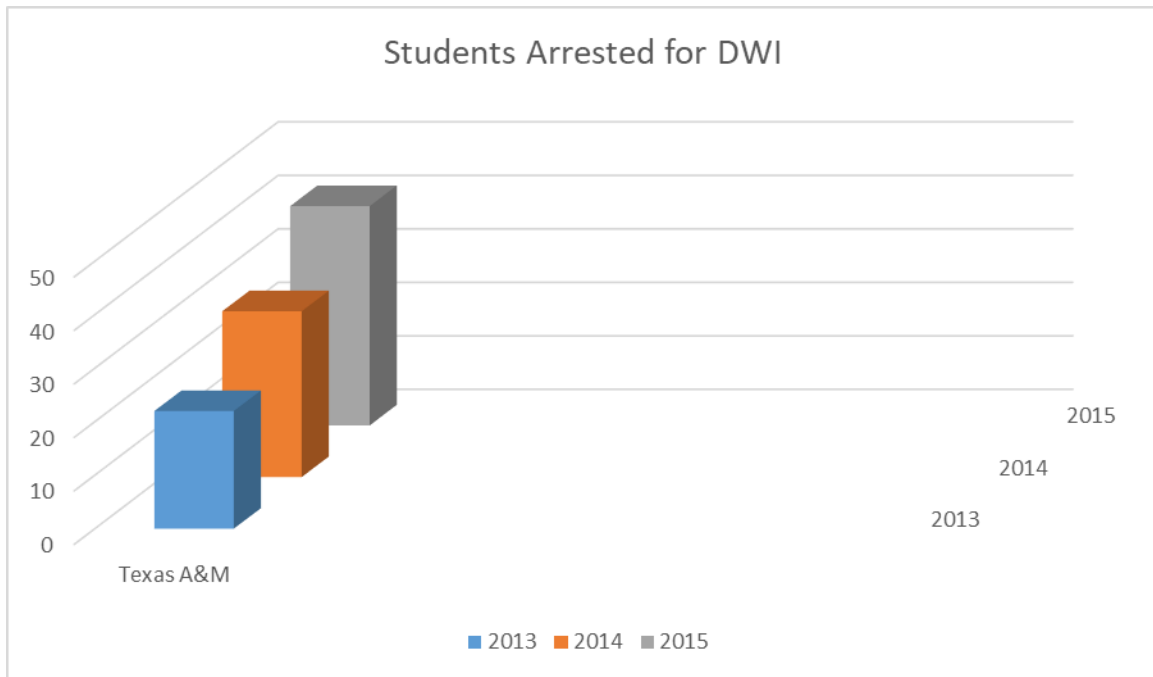
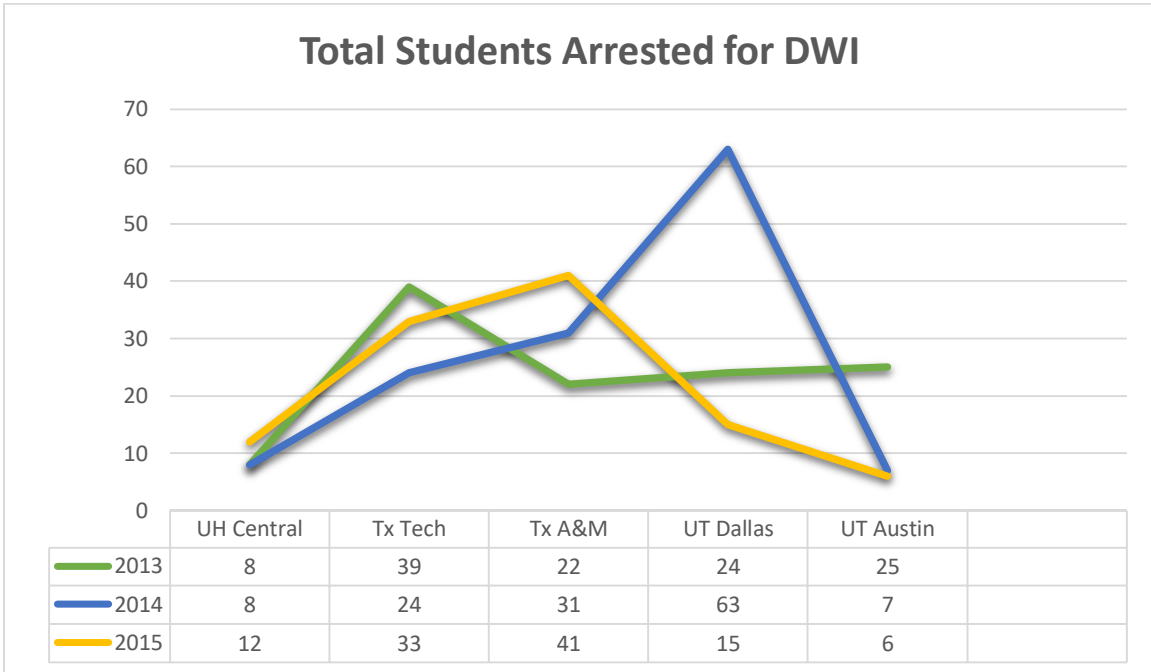


Figure 8: Totals for students arrested at the 5 public Texas universities used in this project



The data clearly shows that driving while intoxicated is a matter of great concern. The issue is severe, and the fact that some college students are continuously drinking, driving, and binge drinking is alarming. Multiple factors come along with these actions that can affect the rest of their lives, as well as the lives of any person who has been injured in a drunk driving automotive accident. Unfortunately, many of these young individuals do not deem their lives or the lives of others important when drinking and driving.

CHAPTER II: BECOMING COGENT OF THE SEVERITY REGARDING COLLEGE STUDENTS AND DRUNK DRIVING

I mentioned earlier in this project that the decisions made by these individuals may have a regretful effect on the rest of their lives. I personally have spoken to college students who have been arrested for driving while intoxicated. At crime prevention presentations presented by the University of Houston Central Police Department, the feedback provided is astonishing. I have gained a different perspective of how being arrested for driving while intoxicated can alter one's life.

I recall having a casual conversation with an individual at one of these alcohol crime preventions, and this person confided in me how impacted they were when they were placed in handcuffs and under arrest. This individual shared with me how his current view of reality shifted once he was inside the police car. This person discussed the court process with me and how demeaning and embarrassing it was for them. I also remember the individual telling me how afraid they were inside the Harris County Jail as they were processed. The individual did not seem like a career criminal, but rather just a regular person who made a poor choice while under the influence of alcohol. This individual further informed me that the arrest was a result of drinking on campus and then being stopped by police off campus. Unfortunately, that impaired decision cost him his freedom, and affected him and his family financially as well as mentally.

Decision-making is largely affected while under the influence of alcohol. It is not just the arrested person's life that is changed, but all of these poor decisions also impact the offender's family as well as any victims involved and their respective families. Multiple problems may arise with a DUI arrest and/or conviction, such as personal, legal, and possible future employment problems. These problems may also develop into alcohol

abuse and can become issues that will affect academic grades and chances at a healthy and productive adult future.

My standpoint on driving while intoxicated is a clear and firm one: it is illegal and should not be tolerated. My feelings are such because I have seen the effects of drunk driving on a professional, work-related basis and a personal standpoint as well. I have also lost a family member to a drunk driver who, while under the influence of alcohol, made a poor choice to drink and drive. The convicted drunk driver who was responsible for the fatal accident walked away from it with minor injuries, but cost my family member her life. The news story covering this tragedy is linked below:

<http://abc13.com/archive/9287551/> (Kobza, 2013).

<http://www.houstontx.gov/police/nr/2013/oct/nr131015-1.htm>

(“SuspectArrested,” 2013)

<https://www.click2houston.com/news/texas/alleged-drunk-driver-charged-in-deadly-wrong-way-crash-near-memorial-park> (Boyle, 2013).

The drunk driver was a local community college student in the Houston area who made the poor choice to drink and drive. The driver was so impaired by alcohol that she did not even realize that she was driving the wrong way on the Katy Freeway. My relative was in the back seat of an acquaintance’s vehicle as the driver of this vehicle drove east. The impaired driver drove west into oncoming traffic as she entered an exit ramp. The driver of the vehicle that my relative was in was struck on the front right side of the vehicle, in an attempt to do an evasive maneuver. The impaired driver continued straight, never deviated, and crashed into the vehicle my relative was in, killing her on impact. She was only 23. This incident, like the hundreds of others that occur every year, reinforces my stance on driving while intoxicated. I am sure the intent of the suspect was not to go out and kill anyone that

night. Tragically, her actions, due to the inability to make a sound decision while under the influence of alcohol, resulted in someone dying during the prime years of her life.

From my personal experience in dealing with drinking and driving, I cannot stress the importance of preventing drunk driving enough. Multiple consequences come from choosing to drink and drive, including death. The loss of a loved one affects the surviving living relatives in various ways. Many surviving family members plainly cannot get over the loss of the deceased and have to deal with the grief of losing a loved one for the rest of their lives. One has to remember that,

“A drunk-driving fatality is violent and abrupt.

The body’s disfigurement may preclude mourning rituals that occur while identifying or viewing the body.

Surviving family member’s ruminations about the physical status of the body after the crash or about the deceased’s level of awareness at the time of death may make it difficult for them to accept the death,” (Sprang, 1997).

Besides death, there are other harms. For example, temporary or permanent physical injury to the driver, passengers, or innocent bystanders can result when being involved in a motor vehicle accident. There can also be psychological trauma. Some of this may include but is not limited to mental anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and emotional distress.

Dealing with their newly obtained independence, many young adults who have gone away to college either start or increase their consumption of alcohol. Many of these college students, regardless of gender, begin to over-consume alcohol and evolve into what are known as binge drinkers. As mentioned in the article “Binge Drinking on America’s College Campuses,” binge drinkers are separated into (3) categories:

- Binge Drinker: Male who consumed five or more drinks in a row; female who consumed four or more drinks in a row at least once in a two-week period.
- Occasional Binge Drinker: Student who binged one or two times in a two-week period.
- Frequent Binge Drinker: Student who binged three or more times in a two-week period.
Drink: A 12-ounce beer, a four-ounce glass of wine, a 12-ounce wine cooler, or a shot of liquor taken straight or in a mixed drink (Wechsler, 1999).

Binge drinking is a significant contributor to college students drinking and driving. The more alcohol consumed, the less control one has of their reflexes and reactions. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, “Students attending schools with Greek systems and with prominent athletic programs tend to drink more,” and “Alcohol consumption is highest among students living in fraternities and sororities,” (College Drinking, <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>).

While I am not categorizing all college students as binge drinkers, alcohol consumption is a commonly practiced activity on university campuses, even when school regulations are in place. A reason for this is the ease of obtaining alcohol due to the number of business establishments with liquor licenses adjacent to many large college campuses. I was able to obtain the number of businesses with issued Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission (TABC) liquor licenses for the corresponding years of this project through a public inquiry via the TABC. In the corresponding zip codes to the five universities studied in this project, the data is as follows:

Zip code 77004 (University of Houston Central Campus)

Year	# of Establishments with issued liquor licenses
2013	102
2014	110
2015	185

Zip code 77843 (Texas A & M University)

Year	# of Establishments with issued liquor licenses
2013	3
2014	6
2015	11

Zip code 79409 (Texas Tech University) Lubbock County is a “Dry County” and these alcohol licenses were issued specifically to the Texas Tech University.

Year	# of Establishments with issued liquor licenses
2013	3
2014	4
2015	4

Zip code 78705 (University of Texas-Austin)

Year	# of Establishments with issued liquor licenses
2013	134
2014	155
2015	166

Zip code 75080 (University of Texas- Dallas)

Year	# of Establishments with issued liquor licenses
2013	111
2014	162

In a majority of the cases, the data above shows an increasing trend in the number of establishments that have alcohol licenses in the same zip codes as the universities mentioned above from 2013 to 2015.

Responses to Address Drinking and Driving on College Campuses

Remediation of the crucial issue of underage drinking and driving while intoxicated requires an overall campus and community effort. Merely depending on law enforcement to solve this problem is not sufficient. Law enforcement officers are unable to be everywhere at once, and due the number of calls they receive for service, police are unable to adequately and proactively address the issue of intoxicated drivers alone. Regarding university efforts to address this issue, the University of Houston Central campus does offer counseling for addiction problems such as alcohol, as well as alcohol prevention programs, among many other support groups. By spreading drunk driving statistics and information to the entire campus community, we can possibly prevent someone from getting seriously hurt from drinking and driving.

An example of a proactive and engaging university response to this issue is occurring at the University of Houston Central campus. On Thursday nights, the Greek Life Organization is dedicated to providing alternative transportation for their members. This consists of the individual Greek organizations renting large buses so that they may go out to bars, clubs, and other nightlife settings while also ensuring they have a safe ride back to the dorms. This prevents these students from getting arrested for driving while intoxicated or hurting themselves and others. When the buses return, there are members of Residential Life and Housing present to alleviate any potential problems and make sure the students return to their residences safely.

I believe that the idea of alternative transportation such as taxis, limousines, Uber, and the buses mentioned above, are a step in the right direction because they eliminate the need for a designated driver. Additionally, there are various alternative sources out there other than the ones mentioned above. The Texas Department of Transportation promotes a program on their sober rides website, established in 2013, which allows individuals who require a safe ride to request a shared ride or a taxi. The program also has educational videos which illustrate the importance of not drinking and driving, and provides maps of public transportation routes and pedicabs. The site is also readily available in Spanish.

Several states have programs of this nature. I was also able to locate a program that was introduced by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation named SafeRide. The program itself consists of, "An initiative in Wisconsin known as SafeRide that provides funding assistance to taverns to promote alternative transportation for patrons that is partially funded by a surcharge on drunk driving convictions. An evaluation of the initiative concluded that it is cost-effective," (Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 2005). I believe this is a good idea mainly because it is partially funded by individuals who have been convicted of driving while intoxicated. By using a portion of their court cost and other fees, these funds assist in preventing someone else from driving while intoxicated.

Ultimately, I would recommend the consideration of stricter sanctions for those individuals who choose to drink in their residential facilities and cause incidents that result in the involvement of police and/or medical services. Stronger sanctions such as, being evicted from the residential facility and having to move off campus, for instance, should be a new rule in addition to the already mandatory alcohol counseling courses. Perhaps even the creation of alcohol-free residences for students that choose not to be associated with campus residents that do wish to drink. Make this an option so that the student(s) can choose what residential facility they would like to be housed in.

There should also be an increase in alcohol awareness programs that require attendance from all incoming students, as well as a yearly refresher course for upperclassmen. This perhaps should be a joint effort by the campus police department, Dean of Student's office, and if applicable, the campus counseling and psychological services. This realistic solution has the potential to be a tandem program to provide accessible health counselors to discuss alcohol abuse. A stronger administrative presence and stricter enforcement of administrative regulations in relation to Greek life parties would be beneficial as well. Examples of such are ID checks for underage individuals and limiting or eliminating initiatives at nearby establishments that encourage heavy drinking, such as discounted prices for alcohol or the buy-one-get-one-free deals on alcohol.

Another solution would be a statewide program in which there is a limitation on the number of establishments with alcohol licenses within a certain distance from college campuses. As previously illustrated, data shows that there has been an increasing trend in the number of business establishments with alcohol licenses in the same zip codes as some of the larger public Texas universities.

Another recommendation is to place harsher penalties on college students that are convicted of driving while intoxicated, such as requiring counseling and/or mandating the attendance of public information meetings with groups such as MADD or AA. There is such a group right here in the local Houston Area known as Krysta's Karing Angels, (www.krystaskaringangels.com). Krysta's Karing Angels was founded in June 2010 and states that, "With your help, we can work to ease the pain that drunk driving causes and honor the memory of our beloved Lil' Krysta and all other victims' families that have been affected by this 100% preventable death." This group was created and is coordinated by an individual named Mark Rodriguez, and I have personally met Mark Rodriguez multiple times. Mr. Rodriguez lost his daughter, Krysta Rodriguez, in February 2010 to a drunk

driver. He now devotes his time to speaking to many group of individuals about the dangers of drunk driving. Mr. Rodriguez is also often in possession of cars in which people have died in from being killed by drunk drivers. Mark hauls these vehicles to his speeches and explains the story behind each incident involving each vehicle and how a drunk driver unintentionally either killed the occupant or a bystandard. Hearing the story is one thing, but seeing the actual physical result of such tragedies unveils a realistic picture that is beyond horrific.

In closing, minimizing and eliminating underage alcohol consumption and drunk driving on college campuses requires a collaborative effort. Safer communities and universities are a personal and professional goal of mine. Not only is saving lives one of my priorities, but also trying to avoid that students' incur the negative costs of entering the criminal justice system with alcohol offenses is important to me. Let us remember that everyone and anyone can save the life of an intoxicated driver by becoming a capable guardian.

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