



September 23, 2011



Dear Higher Education Partner:

We are pleased to announce the release of the 2011 *National Drug Control Strategy (Strategy)*. It can be accessed online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/2011-national-drug-control-strategy>. The 2011 *Strategy* reflects the Obama Administration's comprehensive and balanced effort to reduce illegal drug use and its consequences. We are writing to call your attention to features of the new *Strategy* related to addressing illegal drug use and high-risk drinking on college campuses, and also to remind you of related Federal mandates and resources.

Illegal drug use and high-risk (binge, heavy, and underage) drinking affect every aspect of society vital to winning the future, including educating our youth and developing a competitive workforce for the new economy. The 2011 *Strategy* supports two of President Obama's goals for our Nation – reducing illegal drug use by ten percent within five years and having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020. Given these goals, we would like to call your attention to the 2011 *Strategy's* emphasis on the unique issues faced by colleges and universities due to illegal drug use and high-risk drinking, and their effects on student development and performance.

Together with our interagency partners, the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Department of Education are working collaboratively to prevent illegal drug use and high-risk drinking in our Nation's college and university communities. As leaders in our Nation's colleges and universities, we invite you to join us in these efforts to ensure the most effective prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services are available to all students.

The detrimental consequences of substance use on academic performance are significant and demonstrate why we must invest in prevention efforts among youth. About 25 percent of college students report academic consequences of their drinking, including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades.<sup>1</sup> A post-college study found binge drinking in college to be associated with academic attrition, early departure from college, and lower earnings in post-college employment.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, a study found that college students who used marijuana were more likely to put themselves in physical danger when under the influence, experience concentration problems, and miss class.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (2010). *A snapshot of annual high-risk college drinking consequences*. Retrieved from <http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/StatsSummaries/snapshot.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> Jennison, K. M. (2004). The short-term effects and unintended long consequences of binge drinking in college: A 10-year follow-up study. *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 30(3), 659-684.

<sup>3</sup> Sullivan, M., & Risler, E. (2002). Understanding college alcohol abuse and academic performance: Selecting appropriate intervention strategies. *Journal of College Counseling*, 5 (2), 114-124.

Because of such concerns, institutions of higher education (IHEs) have been required for over two decades to be in compliance with 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 86 – Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention, which implements Sections 120(a)(d) of Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.<sup>4</sup> These regulations require that as a condition of receiving funds or any other form of financial assistance under any Federal program, an IHE must certify that it has adopted and implemented a drug prevention program consistent with Part 86 requirements. Part 86 requires, for example, that an IHE’s drug prevention program include standards of conduct that clearly prohibit, at a minimum, the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees on its property or as part of any of its activities.<sup>5</sup> In order to promote continuous improvement of IHE drug prevention programs, Part 86 requires a biennial review of its program by the IHE to determine its effectiveness and implement changes to the program if they are needed, and to ensure disciplinary sanctions are consistently enforced.<sup>6</sup> Failure to comply with Part 86 requirements may cause an IHE to forfeit eligibility for Federal funding.<sup>7</sup>

The Administration’s plan (as outlined in the *Strategy*) includes the following components to address illegal drug use and high-risk drinking on college campuses:

- Creating educational campaigns that present accurate information about the consequences of drug and alcohol use, while being motivational and empowering and fostering success among our students;
- Encouraging early intervention to identify at-risk students, and getting treatment for students with substance use disorders; and
- Partnering with collegiate recovery programs and student organizations to develop peer communication strategies.

In addition, the Department of Education will build on its continued efforts to incorporate alcohol and other drug abuse prevention into higher education with the following activities:

- Enhanced monitoring of IHE compliance with the requirements of 34 CFR Part 86;
- Revamping its alcohol and drug abuse grant investments into a new Healthy College Campuses competition. The goals of the new competition, as currently planned, would be to spotlight models of excellence, promote innovation in programming, and invest in statewide coalitions that can maximize impact; and
- Expanding the technical assistance capacity of the Department’s Higher Education Center for Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Violence Prevention so that it can provide information and resources related to the creation of effective collegiate substance abuse recovery

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<sup>4</sup> 20 U.S.C. 1011i.

<sup>5</sup> 34 C.F.R. 86.100(a)(1).

<sup>6</sup> 34 C.F.R. 86.100(b).

<sup>7</sup> 34 C.F.R. 86.301.

programs. Part 86 requires that IHEs annually notify students of any drug or alcohol counseling, treatment, rehabilitation, and reentry programs available to them.<sup>8</sup>

We stand with the President and our colleagues at other Federal agencies in furthering our commitment to keep our youth healthy and drug-free. The release of the *Strategy* reaffirms our commitment to address substance use in the college population today, and to collaboratively work with you to achieve this goal.

There are many Federal resources to assist you in implementing effective prevention programs on your campus, and we particularly recommend to you the publications and resources of the HEC, [www.higheredcenter.org](http://www.higheredcenter.org), and [www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov](http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov).

Thank you for your commitment to fostering safe and productive drug-free educational communities and a competitive, drug-free workforce.

Sincerely,

/s/

R. Gil Kerlikowske  
Director  
Office of National Drug Control Policy

/s/

Arne Duncan  
Secretary  
Department of Education

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<sup>8</sup> 34 C.F.R. 86.100(a)(4).