



# BLOOMINGTON NORMAL

## Community Campus Committee

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### Student Forum at Illinois State University

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High-risk drinking and its related consequences are at the forefront of tough issues that we face on college campuses and the surrounding communities in Bloomington and Normal. To tackle an issue of this magnitude, we must begin with a discussion both in the community and on the campus.

A Student Forum was held on September 8, 2009, in the Brown Ballroom in the Bone Student Center at Illinois State University. The forum was planned by a team of students from various campus groups, such as Athletics, University Program Board, Association of Residence Halls, and Diversity Advocacy. They planned for the event to be interactive and student-led. The panel of presenters included Student Body President Matt Spialek; Assistant Director of Student Conduct, Mboka Mwilambwe; Normal Police Department, Sergeant Dan Kelly; ISU Police Department, Lieutenant Sharon Sweeney; and Coordinator for Community Rights and Responsibilities, Anne Newman. Students were asked to submit anonymous questions that were answered by the panel.

The ISU Forum was a great success, with a turnout of over 300 students. Feedback at the end of the forum was almost all positive. When asked if an open forum was the best way accomplish that type of discussion, students answered mostly yes. Many claimed that making the questions anonymous was beneficial because it made everyone feel comfortable voicing their own opinions. One student reported “I thought this was very informational, and the game made you think about the questions instead of just hearing them and I loved having guest speakers.” When asked what the next step(s) would be for students in terms of addressing the alcohol issue at ISU, many students suggested providing alternative options to drinking, as well as making the statistics known to the public.

Students described ISU’s drinking culture as a “social” culture, where people drink to “binge, rather than drink for pleasure,” and “drink to get drunk.” They reported that they or their friends binge drink “to get drunk faster, to get away from problems, to get attention, and to cope with stress.” Speakers from the panel suggested alternative ways to relieve stress without turning to alcohol.

While most students responded that they attended the forum as extra credit for a class or athletics, almost all stated that they found the forum beneficial. Most were surprised by the statistics and reported that they would attend another informative event if it was offered.



*The Bone Student Center at Illinois State University*



*Illinois Wesleyan  
University*

*“Alcohol-related  
problems continue  
to plague the Twin  
Cities”*

*-Jeff Fritzen,  
co-chair of the  
BNCCC.*

## Community Forum

“Alcohol-related problems continue to plague the Twin Cities,” stated Jeff Fritzen, co-chair of the BNCCC, “which is why the Committee was formed in 2007.” Since that time, the BNCCC has collected local data about excessive drinking and related problems in the community and the picture has become more troubling as the number of young people involved in alcohol related tragedies increases.

To share this picture, the BNCCC held a community forum on October 14, 2009 in the Hanson Center at Illinois Wesleyan University. The open forum presented much of the data and discussed the approaches being considered by the Committee to address over-service, neighborhood parties, and other common problems. “The forum allows citizens to express their views regarding alcohol consumption and alcohol-related behaviors in the community,” said Jeff Fritzen.

The forum provided an opportunity for community members to discuss the current status of student alcohol consumption in the community. Speakers at the forum included BNCCC Community Liaison Bobbie Lewis-Sibley; IWU Associate Dean of Students Darcy Greder; Bloomington City Council Member Karen Schmidt; IWU Counselor Bob Rogers; and Bloomington Police Officer Randy Wikoff. Among the crowd was Bloomington Liquor Commissioner and Former Bloomington Mayor Rich Buchanan, who is now a valued member of the BNCCC.

According to data presented at the forum, 81.6 percent of respondents report to using alcohol on campus in 2009. Over 30 percent of students report to have missed class due to alcohol consumption, 40.1 percent have gotten into an argument or fight, 23.2 percent have driven under the influence and 16.1 percent have gotten into trouble with the police. Also presented was hospital Emergency Room data, which showed that there has been a significant increase in 21-24 year olds who consume alcohol in amounts that lead to negative consequences. These figures contribute to alcohol-related issues that the community also faces, such as vandalism, assault rates, criminal acts, alcohol-related hospital visits and more.

The community forum was an eye-opener that made it clear that a group such as the BNCCC is necessary. The BNCCC plans to continue its efforts in designing effective interventions to decrease high risk and underage drinking in our community

## EUDL Grant

Hard work has “paid off” for Illinois State University (ISU) and Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU), along with the Bloomington Police Department. Both ISU and IWU received grants from the Illinois Higher Education Center for Alcohol, Other Drug and Violence Prevention for 2009-2010 Illinois University and College Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) program. These grants will be used to fund projects that will enhance enforcement of underage drinking laws in Bloomington and Normal college campuses and surrounding communities. The grant period will last from November 1, 2009, to April 30, 2010, with a \$15,000 budget each.



According to data collected by the BNCCC in 2009, 77 percent of college students in Bloomington and Normal drank at least once in the past 30 days, and 56 percent of students consumed five or more drinks in one sitting in the past 30 days. This includes students that are below the legal drinking age. According to the data, 55 percent of students reported consuming alcohol before they turned 18 years of age.

The EUDL grant will help both Universities to reach their goals of increasing police enforcement and decreasing underage drinking on campus and the surrounding communities. The grant will allow IWU to partner with the Bloomington Police Department to create more policing efforts on campus and the bordering neighborhoods. It will also permit the ISU Police Department to coordinate with University Housing Services for extra residence hall and campus alcohol enforcement patrols. The grant will help both Universities to reach their goals of increasing police enforcement and decreasing underage drinking on campus and the surrounding communities.

## Alcohol Purchase Surveys

With four colleges and five high schools in Bloomington-Normal and underage drinking increasing throughout the years, we have a large number of youth to be concerned about. According to data taken by the Illinois Youth Survey in 2008 and 2009, the average age of first alcohol consumption in McLean County is 16. Many underage students are consuming in heavy amounts, which contributes to negative consequences such as driving under the influence, vandalism, sexual assault, hospital visits and more.

While many underage students are able to recruit a friend over 21 years old to purchase alcohol for them, it is possible that they may try to purchase it themselves. In order to make sure that underage people are not buying packaged liquor, the BNCCC conducted alcohol purchase surveys. With the help of volunteer students that appeared to be underage, but were not, the BNCCC visited 34 off-premise establishments in Bloomington. Students entered the establishments and attempted to purchase alcohol without a driver's license. Out of 34 businesses, 11 sold alcohol without viewing a driver's license that said that the customer was 21 years of age or older.

The BNCCC did not conduct this survey in order to get businesses in trouble, but instead to inform businesses that their employees may be serving people underage. Not only is this dangerous for the underage person, but it is dangerous for the establishment as well. Establishments will be notified of the results of the survey after a second round of alcohol purchase surveys are conducted in Bloomington.

## BNCCC Member Spotlight: Sharon Sweeney



Sharon Sweeney is a Lieutenant at the Illinois State University Police Department where she has worked for over 25 years. She has been a member of the BNCCC for 2 ½ years and has made significant contributions which have aided the committees success.

While working at ISU, Sharon spent eight years doing narcotics work in Task Force Six with the Illinois State Police. She has made a positive difference in many people's lives, which gives her both personal and professional satisfaction. It is no surprise that she enjoys tackling high-risk drinking and its consequences with the ISU Police and the BNCCC because of her history of making efforts to encourage positive behavioral choices. Sharon works with the ISU alcohol task force as well as the Choices Grant, which was awarded to the National Collegiate Athletic Association to provide student activities that do not involve alcohol.

Sharon wishes to accomplish exactly what the BNCCC's mission states: to reduce high-risk drinking and related consequences among Bloomington-Normal students. She enjoys the camaraderie between members and the fact that people from different schools and professions are all working together toward the same goal. With a daughter entering college next year, Sharon also finds personal motivation to keep campuses safe.

Sharon spearheaded the committee that successfully applied for the grant from the Illinois Higher Education Center for Alcohol, Other Drug and Violence Prevention for 2009-2010 Illinois University and College Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) program. This grant will help both ISU reach their goals of increasing police enforcement and decreasing underage drinking on campus. She continues to do work for this grant as well as other duties for the BNCCC.

Sharon also teaches alcohol classes at ISU to those students who are sanctioned by the University for alcohol violations. She stresses the importance of education so the students can make better choices related to alcohol use so as not to lose the things they value.

In her spare time, Sharon enjoys cooking gourmet food, and watches the Food Network for inspiration. Having played softball, volleyball, and basketball herself, she takes pleasure in watching her daughter play sports and take part in the Colorguard. When asked if there was anything she would like to share with others related to the BNCCC, she said "The BNCCC is a great group of people working toward a common goal. It is wonderful to be part of such a great organization and I encourage others to participate."

## BNCCC Member Spotlight: Kerri Calvert



When you hear about the efforts that are taking place to reduce high-risk drinking in our community, chances are you will hear the name, Kerri Calvert. Kerri is one of two Co-Vice Chairs of the BNCCC. Kerri is an original member who has been with the BNCCC for five years. She began her work instituting STEPS (Serving Training to Encourage Profitable Service) and the BNCCC became a natural extension of that work.

Kerri brings to the group great direction and insight that carries over into her work at Illinois State University where she is the Health Promotion Coordinator and chair of the ISU Alcohol Task Force. In this role Kerri leads a dedicated group of individuals in developing and implementing activities that support the mission and vision of the BNCCC. Their goal is to develop a wide range of activities and programs that work to reduce high risk drinking and related consequences by Illinois State University students. Under Kerri's leadership they are making great strides. Most recently, a student forum was held to discuss alcohol issues on campus and over 300 students turned out to talk through the issue.

Kerri has a true passion for bettering the environment for those around her. This is evidenced not only by her 9 year career at Illinois State University. Kerri was a volunteer in the Peace Corps from 1984-1986 helping to provide Home Economics education to individuals in Western Samoa and returning to work in the same area from 1987-1991 to better the educational system.

In her free time, Kerri enjoys reading, walking on the trail, eating chocolate (If you have some, please share with her!), and attending her boys' sporting events to cheer them on.

When Kerri was asked if there is anything else she would like to share with others related to the BNCCC or otherwise she added, "Through my efforts with the BNCCC, I have met many outstanding, caring committed professionals, community residents and students. It is amazing how much can be accomplished when everyone works together toward a common goal."

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