

The University of Wyoming (UW) Alcohol, Wellness Alternatives, Research, & Education (AWARE) Program and Department of Residence Life & Dining Services (RL&DS) have fostered a partnership worthy of recognition for its success in alcohol abuse prevention among college students. This partnership has resulted in more than three years of data demonstrating excellence and the following outcomes among UW students: 1) Reduction in frequency and quantity of alcohol use; 2) Reduction in problems associated with alcohol use; 3) Reduction in risk factors associated with alcohol use; and 4) Increased protective factors. In 2008, UW's AWARE Program was recognized as being a "Promising Model Program" for alcohol abuse prevention by the US Department of Education, an honorable distinction awarded to only five institutions of higher education that year. The AWARE Program is based on the 2002 recommendations from the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) Task Force on College Drinking and reflects the most current, theory-based best-practices available as evidenced in the 2007 report, Experiences in Effective Prevention from the US Department of Education's report on model programs. AWARE addresses alcohol and other drug issues at three levels, including:

1) Individual Student: AWARE provides individualized alcohol education and skills training to students who have received an alcohol-related citation or student conduct referral. Students meet individually with an AWARE staff member and then receive one or more of the following intervention services: AlcoholEdu for Sanctions, Alcohol Education Seminar, Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS).

2) Student Population as a Whole: UW provides alcohol education and skills training to UW students through various avenues including mandatory online alcohol education for freshmen, a peer education program, a graduate assistant on residence hall floors, classroom presentations and dining hall resource fairs.

3) University and Surrounding Community: The A-Team is a campus-community coalition that works to develop, recommend, and assess best practices in policy, prevention and intervention, and enforcement to reduce underage drinking and excessive alcohol use. Members of the A-Team include UW students, staff, faculty, law enforcement, and community members.

A key element in the success of AWARE has been a partnership with the UW Department of Residence Life & Dining Services (RL&DS). With 2,000 students (primarily freshmen) living in the residence halls, RL&DS has been an important partner to have in changing the environment of college alcohol use. Specifically, this partnership has included the following initiatives:

1. A graduate assistant position for alcohol education in the residence halls
2. A social norms marketing campaign in the residence halls
3. Alcohol education programming, particularly during the first six weeks of fall semester
4. Alcohol-free residence halls
5. Extensive training for Resident Assistants on alcohol
6. Student conduct sanctioning to AWARE Program for all alcohol violations, even first time offenders
7. Participation in the A-team, UW's campus-community coalition on alcohol.