

**Alcohol and College Students:
Do Parents Matter?**

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(ABSTRACT)

Higher education in America has attempted to define the relationships it has with both students and parents for many years. While some argue that the philosophy of *in loco parentis* has seemingly disappeared, others suggest that its return is imminent on American college campuses. One example of this return is the trend among campuses towards notifying parents when students are involved in judicial matters. Recent changes in federal privacy laws have clarified the right of colleges and universities to notify parents when their son or daughter is involved in a violation of the university alcohol policy. There is an assumption that parents will intervene with their students and help the university promote a more responsible use of alcohol.

Many colleges are debating the value of such notifications, but little is known as to whether or not the inclusion of parents in university discipline affects the decisions college students make about their alcohol consumption. The present study used qualitative and quantitative means to address this gap in literature.

Students whose parents were notified of their alcohol violation were interviewed in the qualitative component of the study. The interviews explored the relationships between students and parents before entering college, immediately after enrolling in college, and after parental notification. Students were then assigned positions within three categories of parenting styles (General Relationships, Level of Parental Involvement, and Parental Attitudes Toward Alcohol) for the three time periods explored in this study. The quantitative component explored students' experience with alcohol during the same three time periods. Students completed a pencil and paper survey about their drinking behaviors and were assigned to categories of alcohol consumption for each time period. This enabled the researcher to evaluate whether certain parenting styles were associated with certain drinking patterns. In addition, the researcher examined the results to identify trends in parental relationships and alcohol consumption over the three time periods in question.

The study revealed some interesting findings. First, parent and student relationships appear to improve over time, while the parents' Level of Involvement with their student remains the same. Second, during all time periods, the participants indicated that their parents had little control over their alcohol consumption. Third, while students may have experienced frustration with the parental notification process, most were comfortable with the concept of parents being notified when students have violated university policy with respect to alcohol. Finally, most students came to college with experience drinking alcohol, and most had parents who were permissive in their attitudes towards drinking once students arrived at college. Although the study examined only a limited number of students, the results indicate that universities may want to re-evaluate the way in which they educate students about alcohol.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables.....	vi
List of Appendixes.....	vii
Chapter 1	Introduction..... 1
	Purpose of the Study 9
	Research Questions 9
	Significance of the Study 9
	Limitations 11
	Organization of the Study 11
Chapter 2	Literature Review 13
	Relationships Between Students and Parents..... 13
	Relationships Before College 13
	Relationships Upon Matriculation to College 14
	Relationships Between Students, Parents, and the University 15
	Alcohol Behaviors and Attitudes Among Students 18
	The Monitoring the Future Study 18
	College Alcohol Survey..... 18
	CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey 19
	Parents and Student Alcohol Use..... 20
Chapter 3	Methodology..... 23
	Background 24
	Sample Selection..... 25
	Interview Protocol..... 28
	Data Collection Procedure 29
	Trustworthiness and Authenticity 30
	Data Analysis 31

Chapter 4	Results...	35
	Changes in Data Collection Procedure	35
	Description of the Sample	35
	Results Reported by Research Questions.....	36
Chapter 5	Discussion.....	53
	Parental Relationships & Alcohol Behaviors	53
	Changes in Relationships with Parents Over Time	54
	Changes in Drinking Behaviors Over Time	58
	Relationship of the Findings to Prior Research.....	60
	Implications for Future Research and Practice	62
	Limitations	64
	Conclusion.....	64
References.....		66
Appendixes		70
VITA.....		84

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample 37

Table 2 Relationships with Parents Before College..... 42

Table 3 Drinking Behaviors of Participants Before College 43

Table 4 Relationships with Parents Upon Matriculation to College..... 44

Table 5 Drinking Behaviors of Participants Upon Matriculation to College..... 46

Table 6 Relationships with Parents After Parental Notification 47

Table 7 Drinking Behaviors of Participants After Parental Notification 49

Table 8 Relationships with Parents Over Time..... 50

Table 9 Drinking Behaviors of Participants Over Time 51

LIST OF APPENDIXES

Appendix A Parental Notification Letter 70
Appendix B Script for Judicial Hearing 71
Appendix C Letter to Potential Participants..... 72
Appendix D Email to Solicit Participants 73
Appendix E Pre-Interview Screening Protocol..... 74
Appendix F Alcohol Survey 76
Appendix G Interview Protocol..... 77
Appendix H Individual Summary Sheet..... 83

Chapter 1

Introduction

Student discipline has always been a part of higher education. From the early days of the colonial college to the present, universities have involved themselves in regulating the behavior of their students. The responsibility of universities within this role, however, has never clearly been defined. A great deal of variety exists within codes of conducts distributed to students each year by colleges and universities. While federal and state laws require some underlying policies, universities often use their own discretion when formulating policy and the rules and regulations that affect the lives of their students (Dannells, 1997).

This relationship between an institution of higher education and the students it serves has changed over the years. In the early days of the colonial college, institutions played the role of surrogate parent to their students: the policy known as *in loco parentis*. Behavior was closely monitored to conform to Puritan standards and students were strictly disciplined when they drifted from those standards. University presidents, faculty, and tutors were the source of this supervision and discipline (Dannells, 1997).

Modeled after the English system of education, the colonial college provided schooling for students who were more equivalent in age to pre-teens and young teenagers than today's college students. Therefore, it was somewhat natural that administrators would take a more active role in the lives of their students. As minors, these students did not have the legal rights of adults, and universities were free to exercise control over students in the same way that parents might (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Edwards, 1994). Education took place in all aspects of a student's life as "academic, social, and moral aims of the college were virtually indistinguishable" (Dannells, 1997, pg. 3).

This authority held by universities over students and student life was occasionally challenged in American courts. However, the courts clearly supported an institution's right to act *in loco parentis*. One of the earliest challenges to the philosophy came in 1866, when Wheaton College enacted a policy that forbade students from joining secret societies (Grossi & Edwards, 1997). In the *People v. Wheaton College* (1866), the Illinois court acknowledged the right of the college to regulate this aspect of student life. "[A] discretionary power has been given [college authorities] to regulate the discipline of their college . . . and . . . we have no more authority to

interfere than we have to control the domestic discipline of a father in his family” (as cited in Edwards, 1994, pg. 3).

While this case acknowledged the right of universities to stand in place of the parent, the philosophy of *in loco parentis* was not officially documented until *Gott v. Berea College* (1913). Berea College prohibited their students from visiting a local restaurant, and the owner of this eating establishment argued that colleges did not have the right to regulate this out-of-class behavior (Grossi & Edwards, 1997). The court disagreed, stating that:

Whether the rules or regulations are wise or their aims worthy is matter left solely to the discretion of the authorities or parents . . . and, in the exercise of that discretion, the courts are not disposed to interfere, unless the rules and aims are unlawful or against public policy (as cited in Edwards, 1994, pg. 4)

Court decisions supported *in loco parentis* through the 19th and 20th centuries. During the Civil War, the American system of higher education modeled itself more and more after the English system. The concept of the residential college prospered as universities built dormitories and dining halls. These new components of campus were supervised almost exclusively by faculty, extending the scope of faculty responsibility even further into the out-of-class experiences (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Dannells, 1997).

While this increased interaction between faculty and students may have seemed desirable, it was taxing on faculty. It involved not only a large time commitment, but also led to tension between the two parties. Students felt overly supervised and faculty resented the behavior of students that constantly required their attention. A combination of these two factors along with the influence of the German research university led to a change in the structure of American universities by the early 1900s (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Dannells, 1997).

In the early part of the 20th century, faculty wanted to move away from their roles outside of the classroom. This led to a new breed of intellectuals who would become known as student personnel workers. Discipline was no less important and still followed an *in loco parentis* philosophy. But the nature of discipline did change somewhat. These personnel workers, often titled Deans of Men or Deans of Women, promoted the concept of self-discipline and responsibility in students. Counseling, rather than just simply punishment, became a focal point for the discipline of students by college administrators (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Dannells, 1997).

Deans continued to exercise this stringent authority until the demise of *in loco parentis* in the 1960s. Several factors contributed to the downfall of this philosophy. Religion, for example, had been an important factor in higher education. It had been integrated into all experiences of the university since the birth of the colonial college. As the general population in America became more liberal, students did as well. Religion began to lose its grip on higher education (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Dannells, 1997).

Religious differences were one of many new issues campus administrators were facing as campuses became more diversified. Higher education became more accessible to Americans and older students as well as students previously absent on campuses appeared. The diversification of student bodies meant the diversification of values and beliefs. Imposing one disciplinary philosophy on people of different religions, races, ages, and backgrounds was impossible. Universities needed new ways to deal with the populations now arriving on their campuses (Edwards, 1994; Grossi & Edwards, 1997).

The lowering of the age of majority to 18 in 1971 was also vital to the shift away from *in loco parentis*. Students now came to the university as adults and expected to be treated as such with the legal rights associated therewith. In return, universities expected students to become more responsible and disciplined (Edwards, 1994; Letzring & Holcomb, 1996).

The most powerful of the shifts that led to the demise of *in loco parentis* came with student demonstrations of the 1960s and 1970s. There was an overall loss of respect for authority and students became social activists for a variety of causes. They demanded to be heard and this shift in student attitudes away from conformity led to protests against administration as well. Students demanded rights and freedoms that stringent adherence to an *in loco parentis* philosophy did not provide. (Edwards, 1994; Grossi & Edwards, 1997).

Beginning in the early 1960s, legal precedent also contributed to the elimination of *in loco parentis* and caused colleges and universities to reconsider their relationships with students. Perhaps the most influential case was *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* (1961). In this case, the court ruled that students have the right to due process in disciplinary cases. This decision represented a shift from previous times when universities could impose discipline without ever really needing to explain themselves (Edwards, 1994). This ruling granted students the right to “fundamental fairness” in disciplinary cases and ultimately broadened the

relationship of students to their institutions for disciplinary purposes (Grossi & Edwards, 1997, pg. 835).

Several other minor cases followed the precedent set by *Dixon. Hegel v. Langsam* (1971) and *Soglin v. Kaufman* (1968) reinforced the theory that *in loco parentis* was no longer a reasonable practice for university administrators. In the latter case, the court ruled that the philosophy “had ‘long since’ been ‘undermined’ by the ‘facts of life’” (as cited in Edwards, 1994, pg. 8). Zirkel and Reichner (1986) contend that *in loco parentis* has “undergone a clear rise and complete demise in our courts” (pg. 282).

The legislation known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) was perhaps a final blow to the *in loco parentis* doctrine. FERPA established privacy rights for students with regard to their educational record. In essence, FERPA limited a right that parents once clearly had—to review information the University maintained on their student. While it still required the release of information to parents if their student was financially dependent on the parent, the law in itself was making a statement. The nature of the relationship of institution to both parent and student was changing. Universities were now looking to establish relationships with students, not just their parents (McClusky, 1998).

Most higher education experts would agree that due to one or all of these factors, *in loco parentis* has disappeared. But these same experts cannot seem to agree on what philosophy now stands in its place. Some scholars argue *in loco parentis* has been replaced by a contractual relationship in which students serve as consumers of the education services provided by the university (Grossi & Edwards, 1997; Letzring & Holcomb, 1996). Both institutions and students have expectations of one another in this contractual relationship, and the successful completion of the contract results in a degree for the student. However, the possibility exists that either may fail to meet these expectations (Letzring & Holcomb, 1996).

Others argue that the university serves as “facilitator.” This relationship is characterized by the university’s authority over students while the institution simultaneously recognizes student rights and responsibilities (Bickel & Lake, 1997, pg. 794). It implies a responsibility by the university to facilitate many aspects of campus life (e.g. learning, activities, development, and even safety) but places ultimate responsibility with the student to take advantage of what the university offers (Bickel & Lake, 1997).

Still others argue that *in loco parentis* is not dead, but rather making a comeback on American campuses. Scholars contend that this return is being sparked by students who seem to be asking for more guidance during their college years (Bronner, 1999). The generation of students now entering higher education grew up more closely supervised and overprotected as compared to the ways in which their parents were raised. The freedoms granted when they enter the university may be too much too soon (Unruh, 1995).

One example of this return to *in loco parentis* is the emerging controversy over parental notification policies. In recent years, colleges have begun contacting parents when their student violates certain university policies. Universities still believe that parents play a large role in the decisions their students make and involving parents when students engage in negative behavior may be more effective in eliminating high-risk behavior than simply imposing university disciplinary measures. Parental notification policies assume that parental input will influence students when they make decisions (Gonzalez, 1999).

Colleges have always been free to inform parents that their student was involved in disruptive behavior on campus, but few understood this was actually a legal right. Those that did likely felt the procedures necessary to follow the guidelines were too cumbersome to monitor (J.E. Cullen, personal communication, September 4, 2000). The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, also known as the Buckley Amendment allowed the release of student directory information, such as address and phone number, to third parties. But it guaranteed privacy for what it termed personally identifiable information, such as social security number and grades. Disciplinary records were included in student records as private information, and the law allowed their release only with the consent of the student (Cullen, 1999; FERPA, n.d.).

This law was never designed to prevent parents from accessing information. Instead, it prevented third parties like newspapers, other colleges, or other students from gaining this personal information without the consent of the student. However, it left university administrators confused as to whether parents could access their student's records. In actuality, parents were not considered third parties and FERPA permitted the release of all educational records, including disciplinary records, to parents when the student was declared a dependent by federal tax law (Cullen, 1999; Reisberg, 1998c).

Few institutions used this opportunity as a basis to release information to parents. However, recent incidents on American campuses have prompted colleges to reconsider their

options with respect to parental notification. The catalyst for change in one state was alcohol-related student deaths on public campuses. In Virginia, five students died due to alcohol-related incidents in the fall of 1997. As a result of these tragedies, the Attorney General established a Task Force on Drinking by College Students. Among the recommendations offered by the Task Force included one to report drug and alcohol violations to parents (*The Attorney General's*, n.d.).

Senator John Warner (R), acting on behalf of the Task Force as the spokesperson, led the fight to turn this recommendation into reality. He co-authored an amendment to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) that clarified the rights of universities to notify parents when their underage students were involved in a violation of university policy on drugs or alcohol. After heavy lobbying, the amendment was adopted as part of the Higher Education Act of 1998. The bill granted universities the right to develop their own parental notification policies (Asch, 1998; Cullen, 1999; Epstein, 1999; O'Hanlon, 1998). In July of 2000, the Department of Education further clarified the Amendment and provided guidelines for university administrators implementing parental notification policies (Inter-Association, n.d.).

A limited number of campuses have responded to the amendment to FERPA by developing parental notification policies. Other schools are watching closely to see how such policies are working at these institutions. Many administrators are only beginning to understand the new amendment and are debating the advantages and disadvantages of parental notification policies, as well as weighing the opinions of all the constituencies such policies affect (Marklein, 1998; Reisberg, 1998c).

A recent publication by the Inter-Association Task Force on Alcohol & Other Substance Abuse Issues (n.d.) was designed to help administrators evaluate the pros and cons of parental notification for their campus. *Parental Notification* offered thoughts for universities to consider when developing a policy. Such suggestions included involving key constituents in the policy developing process and identifying whether or not parental notification was consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.

Additionally, the report listed pros and cons of parental notification. According to *Parental Notification* (Inter-Association Task Force), schools should consider the message these policies send to both parents and students. For example, parental notification may tell both

groups that the university takes alcohol abuse very seriously. But at the same time, students may perceive that the policy sends the message that the university does not consider them adults.

For this reason, student reaction to the introduction of a parental notification policy is almost always negative. By notifying parents about their behavior, students say the university is ignoring their rights as responsible adults. While students generally do not argue against the right of universities to regulate the behavior of students, they do not believe that their parents should be involved in the process (Burghart, 1999; Epstein, 1999; Reisberg, 1998c). Students argue that such policies are an invasion of their privacy (Bacon-Blood, 1999; Burghart, 1999).

Administrators don't necessarily disagree with students. In fact, they may find it hard to give up the privacy rights their generation fought to gain on campus (J.E. Cullen, personal communication, September 4, 2000). But they argue that students only seem willing to accept adult responsibilities when it suits their best interests (Edwards, 1994).

Rather than relying solely on the law to assist in combating alcohol abuse, colleges are instead considering parental notification policies. Many universities feel that involving parents is the next step in attacking the problem of alcohol abuse on campus. While some administrators have ignored alcohol use and abuse altogether, others have tried unsuccessfully to confront the problem. It appears to be one area of student discipline that continually baffles university administrators (Garland, 1999; Reisberg, 1998a; Reisberg, 1998b; Wechsler, Kelley, Weitzman, Giovanni, & Seibring, 2000).

The most recent College Alcohol Study (CAS) conducted by Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, and Lee (2000) at the Harvard School of Public Health found that two in five students had binged in the two weeks preceding the survey. Binge drinking was defined as five drinks for men and four drinks for women in a row. This statistic was consistent with data from 1993 and 1997 CAS studies as well, implying that drinking patterns among college students have been fairly consistent over the past decade. Additionally, one in five students were frequent binge drinkers, binging three or more times in the two weeks before the survey, or more than once a week, on average. The survey also found a significant increase from 1993 to 1999 in alcohol-related problems "including injuries, drunk driving, violence, and academic difficulties" (Reisberg, 1998b; Wechsler, Dowdall, Maener, Gledhill-Hoyt & Lee, 1998, pg. 63).

Colleges and universities have used many resources to combat the alcohol abuse on campus. Educational programming remains prevalent, especially the development of social

norming campaigns designed to battle perceptions of alcohol consumption on campus. Such campaigns are based on the belief that students drink at the rate they believe their peers are drinking. Since students often believe their peers are drinking more than they really are, publicizing actual drinking rates can correct those misperceptions and lead to a drop in alcohol consumption (Wechsler, Kelley, et al., 2000).

Institutions are also working to provide more alternative activities on the weekends (Wechsler, 1998; Wechsler, Kelly, et al., 2000). After a call by parents and students for these activities, West Virginia University developed *WVUp All Night*. This program is offered on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights to all students and combines free food, drink, and entertainment with the hope of luring students away from spending the evening at bars or parties. The program has consistently drawn 2,000 – 4,000 students a night for the three years of its existence (M.L. Collins, personal communication, June 7, 2000).

WVUp All Night also makes alcohol available, at a cost, to students who are 21 and older. This campus pub philosophy has gone through phases of acceptance through the years as an alternative to driving off campus for an evening out. The campus pub at Salisbury State University is open to all students, with wristbands identifying those who can drink. Among other advantages, administrators argue that the pub can work to validate social norms: “the pub allows underage students to see that their older peers often drink moderately, or not at all.” (Reisberg, 1998a, pg. A41).

Another strategy to combat alcohol abuse on campus has been to develop task forces aimed at addressing alcohol issues. Task forces include representatives from various campus constituencies who identify areas on which the campus should focus its efforts to fight alcohol abuse. A recommendation often arising from task forces is to hire an administrator whose duties primarily focus on alcohol or drug issues. Designating such resources allows a university to work with not only the campus, but with elements beyond the campus like neighborhood bars or liquor stores to confront alcohol abuse by students (Reisberg, 1998a; Wechsler, Kelley, et al., 2000).

Because the statistics about alcohol consumption among college students appear to be stable, some universities are looking for new ways to fight alcohol abuse. Recent changes in federal law have allowed universities and parents to partner in this process. This partnership has manifested itself in the form of parental notification policies. While students initially respond to parental notification policies with outrage, administrators do not know whether such policies are

having an affect on the behavior of students, particularly behavior related to alcohol consumption. An unexplored dimension of parental notification is how the existence of the policy affects the decisions made by college students confronted with alcohol choices. The present study was designed to address this gap in the existing literature on students and alcohol on campus.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes and behaviors of students regarding alcohol consumption before and after those behaviors led to parental notification. This study further explored the relationship of students with parents before the student came to college, after the student matriculated at college, and after parental notification. The researcher sought to gain a better understanding of the role parents play in the decision-making practices of their students.

Data were collected through qualitative and quantitative methods. Personal interviews with students whose parents were notified of their alcohol violation were conducted in order to elicit data about the research questions. The respondents also completed a pencil and paper survey that elicited quantitative data about their drinking behaviors during the three time periods explored in the study.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between perceived parenting style and the drinking behavior of students before they enter college?
2. What is the relationship between perceived parenting style and the drinking behavior of students upon matriculation to college?
3. What is the relationship between perceived parenting style and the drinking behavior of students after parental notification?
4. Are there changes in perceived relationships with parents over the time periods of before entering college, upon matriculation to college, and after parental notification?
5. Are there changes in drinking behaviors over the time periods of before entering college, upon matriculation to college, and after parental notification?

Significance of the Study

The present study had significance for both future practice and future research. In terms of future practice, several constituencies might benefit from the results. Judicial officers serving

an institution with a parental notification policy can use the results to evaluate the effects the policy may be having on student behavior. Institutions are increasingly expected to provide justification for their practices and this increased accountability may require that institutions demonstrate the outcomes of their parental notification policy. If this is the case, then this study may assist in that process.

Judicial officers who are considering implementing such a policy can use the results as they consider the potential impact of a parental notification policy on their campus. The study explored the effect of parenting style on student drinking behaviors. Such information may inform judicial officers on campuses considering implementing parental notification about the potential outcomes of the policy.

Parents might also benefit from the results of this study. Parents have shown they are interested in being informed about alcohol and drug violations (Cullen, 1999). The results of this study may demonstrate how parents can be more influential in affecting the behavior of their students.

Finally, this study had significance for policy makers at universities as they consider the relationship of institutions to parents. Privacy rights are an issue in higher education today and the results of this study might enable policy makers to consider the effects of parental notification policies on day-to-day practice. The results of this study may have implications for how the university as a whole involves parents in student life.

The present study was also significant in terms of future research. The present study did not disaggregate data to examine differences in alcohol behavior among different types of students. Future studies could examine attitude and behavior differences by age, gender, race, or housing status (on- versus off-campus students). Such a study would broaden the information available about parental notification policies and their effects on students.

Future scholars might also wish to explore the effects of parental notification policies on behavior at different institutions. The present study examined effects on behavior at a single university. Because parental notification policies are unique to each institution, comparing different schools and their policies may help determine whether different types of policies have different effects on behavior. Results may help administrators as they consider implementing a parental notification policy based on the characteristics of their individual institution.

Future research may also weigh the benefits of notifying parents for violations beyond those related to drugs and alcohol. The present study only explored the effects of parental notification policies on behaviors related to alcohol violations. Exploring student opinions on a broader range of conduct violations would provide a deeper understanding of the effects of parental notification policies on student behavior in general.

Limitations

Like any research, the present study had initial limitations. Only one institution and one policy were involved in the study. Both the institution and the policy are unique. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing the results of this study to other colleges and universities.

In much the same manner, respondents in this study were required to meet several criteria before being eligible to participate in the study. Those that did not meet all criteria were excluded. Because of this, a specific type of student may have been more frequently represented in the sample. Applying the results of this group of students to all college students is not possible.

Third, one technique used to collect data was qualitative in nature. The interview protocol was designed by the researcher. It is possible that the questions were biased in some way based on the beliefs and experiences of the researcher. If this occurred, the results might have been influenced.

Finally, students served as the data source. Like any study involving people, there was a possibility that participants did not respond candidly. If this was the case, then results may have been influenced.

Despite these limitations, the present study served to fill a gap in literature about the affects of parental notification policies. Students, as those most affected by such policies, serve as the best sources of information regarding the policy's effects.

Organization of Study

This study is organized in five chapters. The first chapter served as a general introduction to the issue of parental notification policies and described the purpose and significance of the study. Chapter Two provides a literature review of topics related to the study. The third chapter describes the methodology utilized in the study including the sampling technique and the procedures used to collect and analyze the data. Chapter Four presents the results of the study.

The final chapter includes a discussion of those results, including their implications for future research and practice.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In order to evaluate the parental notification policy, it was necessary to examine current literature on a variety of issues relating to college students. This review is organized around four main sections. The first section addresses the relationships students have with their parents before college and after entering college. The second section summarizes the relationship between students, parents, and the university with regards to student discipline. The third section summarizes the literature on students' experience with alcohol during the time periods of before college, after entering college, and after parental notification. The final section explores the potential effects parents have on decisions students make about alcohol.

Relationships Between Students and Parents

Relationships Before College

The unique personalities and experiences of both parents and children during childhood and adolescence can lead to a variety of types of relationships. In a series of studies, Baumrind (1967, 1971) explored parenting styles and how these parenting styles affect the behavior of children in various situations. Out of these studies came one of the most well known typologies of parental authority. The typology describes three forms of parental authority.

The first type, authoritative, consists of parents who strike a balance between parental control and child independence. Perhaps the most important ingredient of this type of authority is the presence of a high level of give-and-take verbal communication between parent and child. This is often demonstrated by parental demands that are followed by reasoning. While authoritative parents demand much from their children, they also demonstrate an effective level of nurturance and understanding that leads to the most well-adjusted children in Baumrind's model (1967, 1971).

Authoritarian parents, on the other hand, limit the independence and autonomy of their children. They are more controlling while at the same time less nurturing, leading to children who are "discontent, withdrawn, and distrustful" (Baumrind, 1971, pg. 2). The verbal give-and-take so valued in the authoritative model is noticeably absent in the authoritarian pattern of parental authority (Baumrind, 1967).

The third style identified by Baumrind (1967, 1971) is permissive parenting. These parents exhibit a low level of control over their children. They demand little and in return their

children demonstrate low levels of self-control and initiative. A unique characteristic of this group of parents is that they bargain with their children by giving their love in return for behavior correction.

While Baumrind's (1967) conclusions were based on studies involving very young children, there are indications that by the time a child reaches adulthood, most parents and children identify their relationship as "positive and supportive" (Thorton, Orbuch, & Axinn, 1995). A longitudinal study by Thorton et al (1995) of a general sample in a metropolitan area found that the positive relationships children develop with parents during adolescence continue and even improve as the child persists through adulthood.

Relationships Upon Matriculation to College

The relationships established during the teenage years likely influence a student's ability to transition into the college campus environment. Rather than examining the changes in relationships before and after entering college, most current research focuses on the transition experience of students based on the parenting style utilized by mothers and fathers (Hickman, Bartholomae, & McKenry, 2000; Wintre & Sugar, 2000). The categories of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting identified by Baumrind (1967, 1971) often serve as the basis for these studies.

Hickman, Bartholomae, and McKenry (2000) found that authoritative parenting has a positive impact on adjustment for students. The environment created by a supportive family structure with a focus on communication may make students more independent and responsible, rendering the new experience of college easier to handle.

In the child rearing process, parents naturally shape some personality traits of their sons and daughters and thus indirectly influence the child's ability to adjust to new environments and experiences. Even though college students may no longer be geographically close to their parents, the family continues to be influential in the lives of those students (Adams, Ryan, & Keating, 2000). A study by Wintre and Sugar (2000) identified "mutual trust, open and honest communication, and equal treatment" as characteristics of parent and student relationships that are most likely to help the student adjust to various aspects of the college campus (pg. 212). Similarly, students with a secure attachment to their parents are more likely to have a smooth transition to their college or university (Kenny, 1990, as cited in Wintre & Sugar, 2000). Those who work with college students may find that involving parents when students are having trouble

adjusting to a new situation may be more helpful than working with the student alone (Wintre & Sugar, 2000).

Relationships between Students, Parents, and the University

Parental notification policies take this philosophy of involving parents to a new level and are a fairly new phenomenon in the field of judicial affairs. As such, research that examines the effectiveness of such policies in preventing unwanted behavior on campus is limited. The limited information that is available on the effects of parental notification policies comes from popular media and is anecdotal in nature. Most articles focus on the legality of parental notification, as well as evaluating the opinions of university administrators, students, and parents about such policies. In short, the current literature seeks to explain the “how” and “why” of these policies.

Universities continue to debate the advantages and disadvantages of parental notification. Colleges worry about parents finding out too late that their child has a behavioral problem and may be facing serious campus judicial sanctions (Gonzalez, 1999). Some parents may not learn of behavioral problems until their child is suspended or dismissed from the university, when it is far too late to intervene (Gonzalez, 1999). Early intervention may benefit both parents and students in the long run.

Students and privacy advocates, however, argue that college students are adults and parental notification policies treat them like children (Bacon-Blood, 1999; Burghart, 1999; O’Hanlon, 1998). But both universities and parents argue that students may not be adults quite yet (Bacon-Blood, 1999; Burghart, 1999). Students between the ages of 18 and 21 are legally adults but great ambiguity exists in the amount of freedom students, parents, and universities believe they should be granted. One parent argued this point about her daughter: “Just because she’s in college doesn’t mean my responsibility as a parent ends” (Asch, 1998, pg. 43). In the same way, it has been argued that “geographic distance does not eliminate the authority of a parent when their children depart for college” (Reisberg, 1998c).

Striking a balance between student and parental rights is often the goal of parental notification policies. Most policies do not call for universities to notify parents after a first violation, but rather they wait until a pattern of negative behavior has developed (Bacon-Blood, 1999). Once behaviors cross a line and become potential health risks, the behavior potentially creates a foreseeable risk. Once this occurs, university administrators are more willing to take action. They believe that parents exert a strong influence on their children in regards to health

behaviors while in college (Gonzalez, 1999). Partnering with parents to advocate better health choices is another means through which to combat alcohol abuse.

Another balance that universities strive to equalize is the promotion of individual independence and responsibility versus the promotion of responsibility to the university community (Burghart, 1999; Garland, 1999; Marklein, 1998). On the campus of one university, 75% of disciplinary actions are alcohol related (Garland, 1999). The impact of alcohol abuse does not solely affect the abuser but rather the university community as a whole. “Vandalism, violence, and vomit,” described as the “three v’s,” are secondary effects of abuse that affect other students as well as campus facilities (Garland, 1999, paragraph 13).

Taking all these points into consideration, one institution in particular has gone beyond explaining just the “how” and “why” of parental notification. The University of Delaware is a frontrunner in promoting the parental notification movement. The University implemented a parental notification policy even before Congress passed the amendment clarifying the rights of institutions to implement such policies. University administrators have taken the freedom to notify parents about drug and alcohol policy violations one step further and now involve parents in any violation of the published code of conduct on the part of their students (Reisberg, 1998c).

In the first year during which the Delaware policy was implemented, 1,414 parents received notices that their students were involved in a University violation (Epstein, 1999). The notification system seems to have had an effect on the number of violations that occur on campus. For example, in terms of cases related to violations of the alcohol policy the University has documented a 50% decline in recidivism rates between the 1996/1997 and 1997/1998 academic years (Reisberg, December 1998). In addition, the University has experienced declines in residence hall vandalism, alcohol incidents requiring hospitalization, and binge drinking since the implementation of the policy (Burghart, 1999).

University of Delaware administrators are pointing to the parental notification policy as one reason for the changes in these statistics. The University argues that parents play a key role in correcting student behavior because they still hold a great deal of influence over their children—such as the ability to take a car away (Marklein, 1998, pg. 6D). Parents respond in different ways, some by merely holding a discussion with their student and others by reinforcing the actions of the University through additional disciplinary measures (Burghart, 1999). No matter what response University of Delaware parents take, however, they seem to appreciate

being informed and being given the opportunity to help their students work through their problems (Burghart, 1999).

A similar opinion was expressed in the results of a phone survey conducted with parents of students at another major university who were notified of their student's drug or alcohol violation. Seventy-five parents received letters indicating the nature of the violation committed by their son or daughter in the spring 1999 semester. During the following semester, the staff in the judicial affairs office at that campus polled these parents.

Specifically, the staff addressed three main issues. First, they gauged the attitudes of parents about the process of parental notification. Second, they elicited data about the interactions of parents with their student after receipt of the notification letter. Finally, they sought to determine how parents felt about the university's methods of addressing alcohol and drug abuse on campus (Cullen, 1999).

The results indicated strong support (97.3%) for notifying parents about University drug and alcohol violations. Most parents (84.2%) agree, either strongly or somewhat, that parental notification is effective in addressing dangerous alcohol abuse on campus (Cullen, 1999). Additionally, 63.2% of parents feel that being informed about incidents helps initiate honest conversation about their student's alcohol or drug use (Cullen, 1999).

Involving parents in student discipline on campus, while often appreciated by parents, is not always ideal from an institutional perspective. Universities have struggled to define their position in relation to parents for decades. While parents often pay the bills, in reality they have limited access to information about their student (Asch, 1998). FERPA regulations limit the information available to third parties but it does contain an exemption that allows for the release of sensitive information to parents who can prove their student is a dependent according to federal tax law. Few schools consider this exemption, however, and often require the written consent of the student before releasing information, leaving parents to hope that their student is providing them with accurate and complete information (Cullen, 1999).

The concept of parental and institutional relationships has yet to be fully explored in professional literature. It is unclear exactly what parents want or expect from the college or university to which they send their son or daughter and the reciprocal relationship is likewise unexplored. That is, what do colleges and universities expect of parents when it comes to enforcing conduct standards on campus? In much the same manner, literature addressing the

relationship of parents to their college students is limited. Further inquiry into the role parents play in the lives of their student would expand the current body of literature.

Additional exploration of parent, student, and institutional expectations may also reveal which factors are most influential in affecting student alcohol consumption. First, however, the behaviors and attitudes of students in regards to alcohol must be explored.

Alcohol Behaviors and Attitudes Among Students

There are a number of national studies on the issue of alcohol use and abuse by both high school and college students. The Monitoring the Future Study (Johnston, O'Malley, & Bachman, 1997), the College Alcohol Survey (Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, & Lee, 2000), and the CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey (1998) provide national statistics on alcohol use. Both the Monitoring the Future Study and the College Alcohol Survey also investigated alcohol use during high school.

The Monitoring the Future Study

The Monitoring the Future Study, conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan, is a longitudinal study of alcohol and drug use among high school seniors, with follow-up interviews conducted to determine changes in alcohol and drug use patterns after high school (Johnston et al., 1997).

Among students, 51% of high school seniors and 68% of college students had used alcohol at least once in the 30 days preceding the survey and 74% of seniors and 83% of college students had used alcohol in the previous year. Defined as five or more drinks in a row, the study also found that 30% of high school seniors and 39% of college students had binged in the two weeks before taking the survey (Johnston et al., 1997).

College Alcohol Survey

The College Alcohol Survey (CAS), conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health, is perhaps the most extensive study exploring alcohol use and abuse among college students. Conducted in a consistent fashion in 1993, 1997, and 1999 and using a nationally representative sample, the study provides a database through which to compare trends and areas for concern regarding the consumption of alcohol (Wechsler et al., 2000).

The greatest concern established by the results of the CAS survey was binge drinking. Binge drinking was defined as consuming five or more drinks in a row for men and four or more drinks for women at least once in the two weeks before the survey was conducted. The results revealed that two out of every five college students could be classified as binge drinkers. The

researchers also identified a small increase over the years in the number of frequent binge drinkers, defined as bingeing three or more times in the two weeks preceding the survey. The 1999 study identified nearly one in four students as frequent binge drinkers (Wechsler et al., 2000).

Binge drinkers experience more secondary problems as a result of their alcohol consumption. These secondary problems include driving after drinking, damaging property, suffering injuries, having unprotected sex, and missing classes. Increases in the frequency of 12 different problems among binge drinkers were found from 1993 to 1999 (Wechsler et al., 2000).

All these data may suggest that eliminating alcohol problems on campus is hopeless. But the CAS study did identify one major positive note among the findings. While the number of binge drinkers remained stable at 44% from 1993 to 1999, the results revealed a significant increase in the proportion of students who choose to abstain from alcohol (from 15% to 19%) during the same time period. The percentage of frequent binge drinkers also increased significantly (20% to 23%) during this time period, however. These results suggest that drinking patterns among college students as a whole are becoming more polarized, with more students at both ends of the spectrum—abstaining from drinking and frequently bingeing (Wechsler et al., 2000).

The number of college binge drinkers who also bingeed in high school increased significantly from 70% to 74% between 1993 and 1999. Again, the polarization of bingers versus non-bingers was evident when evaluating drinkers in high school. The number of students who did not drink in high school and who continued abstaining in college increased significantly between 1993 and 1999 from 21% to 27%. On the other hand, those who bingeed in high school and turned into frequent bingers in college also increased significantly from 38% to 47% during the same time period (Wechsler et al., 2000). This led the researchers to conclude that “a major determinant of college binge drinking is students’ alcohol use while they were in high school” (Wechsler, Dowdeall, Maenner, Gledhill-Hoyt, & Lee, 1998, pg. 67).

CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey

A third major study was the CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey. The results in the 1995-1996 survey parallel those of the CAS study. Data drawn from a nationally representative sample of nearly 90,000 college students revealed that two in five students are binge drinkers. The CORE definition of binge drinking, however, is the same for both men and women—consuming

five or more drinks in one sitting in the two-week period before the survey. The study went on to note that the average number of drinks per week consumed by students was 5.1 (“Recent Statistics,” 1998).

Like the CAS study, the CORE survey documented the secondary effects of alcohol use, both for the drinking student and for students who were affected by the alcohol use of their peers. Twenty-nine percent of students reported their studying has been interrupted because of others’ drinking, and 22% have felt unsafe because of others’ alcohol consumption (“Recent Statistics,” 1998).

The study also examined the consequences for students as a result of their personal alcohol or other drug use. Nearly 60% have suffered a hangover and an alarming 33.6% had driven a car under the influence of either an illegal substance or alcohol in the year prior to the survey. Additionally, 35.8% of students report alcohol or drugs made them do something they later regretted and 13% report they were hurt or injured while under the influence (“Recent Statistics,” 1998).

The CORE survey also explored factors that may lead to alcohol abuse by looking at the social and sexual effects students perceive alcohol to have. The majority of students feel that alcohol breaks the ice, enhances social activity, allows people to have more fun, and facilitates both male and female bonding. Twenty-one percent of men also feel alcohol makes women sexier, while 12% of women feel that alcohol makes men sexier (“Recent Statistics,” 1998).

It is clear that alcohol plays a large role in the lives of many college students. But how much can parents influence their child’s alcohol consumption? Research that has examined this question is extensive, and most studies have concluded that various factors influence the level of alcohol use.

Parents and Student Alcohol Use

Several studies have explored the role that parents play in the decisions students make about alcohol use, both as adolescents and as college students. In an extensive national longitudinal study on health risks for adolescents in grades 7 through 12, Resnick et al. (1997) identified parental connectedness and time availability as key factors in shaping health-related behaviors. Accessibility of alcohol also increases the risk of adolescents using alcohol, and family closeness leads to lower levels of substance abuse (O’Conner, 1998; Resnick et al., 1997).

Interestingly, only a third of parents whose middle or high school students are regularly using alcohol are aware of their children's alcohol consumption (Bogenschneider & Wu, 1998). And even when parents are aware of their son's or daughter's alcohol use, that awareness does not reduce the risk of deviant behavior like drinking and driving among their children. Only when the parent is more involved than just being "aware" does the risk decrease (Bogenschneider & Wu, 1998).

While it appears high school students are drinking alcohol, Bogenschneider & Wu (1998) argued that parents are not always aware of their children's alcohol consumption. When "awareness" was defined as "being unsure or believing that your adolescent's alcohol use was likely," (pg. 14) a third of 345 mothers or fathers whose children reported regular alcohol use claimed they were aware of their child's use of alcohol. Fifty-six percent of mothers or fathers, however, claimed "awareness" of alcohol use on the part of friends of their son or daughter. The results led the authors to conclude that parents do not believe their children drink but do believe their child's friends are drinking.

What does seem to help in preventing teenage substance abuse is what Steinberg, Fletcher, and Darling (1994) call "parental monitoring," meaning "knowing where children are and what they are doing" (pg. 1060). When this parental monitoring occurs, students receive effective transmission of family expectations. Because of this, they are less likely to associate with other students who do not hold those similar values. In this way, students are less likely to encounter peer pressure to drink and therefore are less likely to consume alcohol (1994).

On the college level, open communication between parents and students leads students to drink more responsibly. However, students' whose parents exhibit a more liberal attitude about drinking are more careless in their drinking experiences such as failing to designate a driver when drinking. Overall, researchers advocate that parents discuss alcohol use with their children, arguing that such discussions will lead to less risky behavior by students (Booth-Butterfield & Sidelinger, 1998).

In summary, alcohol and drug abuse continues to be a problem on America's college campuses. Studies report that parents are influential in the decisions their students make while in college. Because of this, many universities have adopted or are considering adopting parental notification policies as another method to address the problem of alcohol abuse on campus.

However, there is very little research that examines the influence parental notification policies have on student behavior. The present study addressed this gap in the literature.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes and behaviors of students regarding alcohol consumption before and after those behaviors led to parental notification. This study further explored the parenting styles utilized by parents before the student came to college, after the student matriculated at college, and after parental notification. The sample included students found in violation of university alcohol policies that resulted in their parents being notified of the behavior. This study was designed to gain a better understanding of the role parents play in the decision-making practices of their students in regard to alcohol. Specifically, this study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between perceived parenting style and the drinking behavior of students before they enter college?
2. What is the relationship between perceived parenting style and the drinking behavior of students upon matriculation to college?
3. What is the relationship between perceived parenting style and the drinking behavior of students after parental notification?
4. Are there changes in perceived relationships with parents over the time periods of before entering college, upon matriculation to college, and after parental notification?
5. Are there changes in drinking behaviors over the time periods of before entering college, upon matriculation to college, and after parental notification?

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The quantitative component consisted of a questionnaire that elicited data on alcohol consumption among participants over the three time periods examined in this study. This approach enabled the researcher to assign students to categories based on their alcohol consumption patterns for each time period.

The qualitative component consisted of interviews with students whose parents had been notified of a violation of the alcohol policy. The researcher felt that there were too many variables unique to students' relationships with their parents to fully answer the research questions about relationships with parents through quantitative techniques. An interview session with each student allowed for the open expression of thoughts without the restriction of forced-choice items on a questionnaire.

The information provided to the researcher through interviews allowed for the grouping of participants by the types of relationships they had with their parents during the three time periods explored in the study (before college, upon entering college, and after parental notification). The author then explored relationships between parenting styles and alcohol consumption during each time period. Trends in relationships and alcohol use over the three time periods were also analyzed.

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study including the steps taken to collect and analyze the data for both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study.

Background

The institution where this study was conducted adopted a policy in January of 1999 to notify parents about their son or daughter's drug or alcohol violation. The notification process is initiated when a student is referred to the institution's Office of Judicial Affairs due to a violation of the campus' alcohol consumption policy. Most often a university official or the local police department initiates such referrals. The charged student is then offered a hearing at which time they can accept or deny responsibility for the violation. There are two potential outcomes to this hearing. Students may be found "not responsible," and the case is closed. Or, students may be found "in violation" and sanctioned.

Several options for sanctioning students who violate the university alcohol policy are available depending on the severity of the incident. Reflection papers are almost always required. This involves a written reflection by the student and what they learned as a result of the incident. Students are also likely to be required to attend one of three different alcohol education programs offered by the university or the local community.

The student's status with the University may change as well. University policy separates alcohol violations into two categories: major and minor. Examples of minor violations include underage possession or consumption of alcohol. Examples of major violations include consuming alcohol to the point of illness, destroying property while under the influence of alcohol, or involvement in an altercation with another individual while under the influence of alcohol. Two minor violations or one major violation will likely result in the student facing a probationary period. This means another violation for which they are found responsible will automatically result in suspension from the University. This is called deferred suspension. While suspension from the University is generally the result of three minor or two major violations of

the University's alcohol policy, hearing officers are free to use their discretion when assigning sanctions.

Parents are only notified when three criteria are met. First, their student must be under the age of 21 at the time the hearing concludes. Second, their student must have been found responsible through the university judicial system for a violation of the alcohol policy. Third, the sanction imposed on their student must be deferred suspension, suspension, or dismissal. All three of these criteria must be met before parental notification occurs.

The responsibility for carrying out the notifications lies with the Office of Judicial Affairs. Notification takes place by means of a letter addressed to the parents and sent to the student's primary parent as listed in the University's database. The letter lists the violations for which the student was found responsible and explains the FERPA legislation that allows the University to notify parents of certain policy violations. A copy of the text contained in the notification letter to parents can be found in Appendix A. The letter also asks the parent to partner with the University in turning the incident into a "teachable moment." Notification letters are sent to parents approximately 10 days after the student is found in violation of the policy. The 10-day waiting period ensures that students have had an opportunity to exhaust all appeal options before their parents are notified of their violation.

The policy is not ironclad, however. Judicial officers may make the decision not to inform parents at their discretion. Such instances may occur when students can prove they are not a dependent of their parents or when the judicial officer feels it may do more harm than good to inform parents of the violation. This background provides the context for the methodology of the present study.

Sample Selection

The study was conducted at a large, Research I university in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The institution had an undergraduate enrollment of approximately 18,000 students and a total enrollment of 26,000 at the time the study was conducted. The university was composed of 58% male students and 42% female students. Eighty-two percent of students were Caucasian, 5.9% were Asian, 4.4% were African-American, and 1.8% were Hispanic. Traditional-aged (18-24 years old) students made up the overwhelming majority of undergraduate students.

There were several criteria that participants were required to meet before they could participate in the study. First, the student must have been involved in a violation of the University's alcohol policy. Parental notification can also occur with drug violations, but students involved in drug violations were not included in this study. Also excluded were students who violated both drug and alcohol policies in the same incident. Because drugs tend to be viewed as a more serious violation of the law than is alcohol, it was possible that the drug violation may have served as more of a catalyst for behavior change than did an alcohol violation. The researcher wanted to select participants who had violated like standards of conduct rather than confounding the study by including participants who had violated standards related to more than one issue.

Second, participants' parents must have been notified of their student's alcohol violation during the fall or spring 2000-2001 academic year. This means that students whose violation occurred during the spring 2000 semester may be included in the participant pool. Due to the nature of the adjudication process, some cases are carried over from spring to fall because of time constraints. For example, students who committed a University alcohol violation during finals week in the spring may not have their case heard until the fall semester and parental notification would not have taken place until the fall.

The third criterion for selection related to the participants' age. Parental notification only occurs when violators are under the age of 21. Therefore, only students aged 17-20 at the time of the violation and interview were eligible to participate. If students turned 21 before the interview could be conducted they were excluded from the study. Once students turn 21, it is not necessary to change drinking behavior since the law (and university policy) allows for consumption. The author instead chose to focus on students who must make the decision whether to abide by university policy.

Finally, only those who remained enrolled at the university after being found responsible for an alcohol violation were eligible to participate in the study. Therefore, only students who received a sanction of deferred suspension were contacted. Students who were suspended or dismissed from the University as a result of their behavior were no longer on campus and were not contacted to be participants.

It is also important to note that the university where this study was conducted had a relationship with the local police department. As a result, off-campus violations of the

university's alcohol policies were just as likely to lead to parental notification as were on-campus violations.

The Office of Judicial Affairs provided the researcher with the necessary information from which to draw a sample. Potential participants were notified in two ways about the study. At the time of the student's judicial hearing and a finding of "responsible," the judicial administrator informed the student that the present study was being conducted. Only a general description of the research was provided, stating that the study was focused on students who violated university policy. Violators were told they might be invited to participate in this study. The script used to describe the study to students after their hearing is included in Appendix B. Students whose parents were notified in the fall semester but before the present study began were sent a letter containing the same information provided by the hearing officer about the study. An example of this letter is provided in Appendix C.

Two weeks after the parental notification letter was sent, an email message was sent to potential participants. This two-week period allowed time for the parents to receive the letter of notification and for students to have initial conversations with parents. The email message identified students as potential participants for the study. Additionally, a more specific description of the study was provided that described the study as one on students who were affected by the parental notification policy. Potential participants were asked to reply to the message stating their intent to participate or not participate in the study. If the researcher did not receive a reply to the message, a follow-up email message was sent one week later. The follow-up message contained the same information as the initial message. A copy of the text of the email message can be found in Appendix D.

If students chose to participate, they were asked to include their phone number in their reply. Upon receipt of a potential participant's phone number, the researcher called the student to conduct a pre-screening interview to ensure the participant met all criteria for the study. For example, potential participants were asked their current age to determine if they would turn 21 prior to participating in the study. A copy of the protocol used to pre-screen participants can be found in Appendix E.

For the purpose of this study, "parent(s)" was defined as the parent(s) with whom the student primarily resided during high school. In the pre-interview screening participants were asked to describe their family situation while in high school. The student identified the

individual(s) playing the role of the parent(s), and all questions from that point forward were formatted to match the identified person(s).

Upon confirmation of eligibility, the researcher scheduled an interview with the student. Attempts were made to schedule interviews during the sixth week after the parents were informed of their student's violation. The researcher felt this was sufficient time for participants to reflect on their experience, without allowing too much time for them to forget everything they may have learned through the incident. Every effort was made to follow a consistent timeline with participants, although unforeseen circumstances may have made the deadlines impossible to meet. Interviews with students were conducted throughout the fall 2000 and spring 2001 semesters.

To promote participation in the study, an incentive was offered to participants. Every participant was paid \$10 for the time they devoted to taking part in the study. At the conclusion of the interview, the interviewer provided \$10 cash to the participants, who then signed an acknowledgement that they received the incentive.

In addition, one \$50 prize was awarded to a randomly selected participant. Students were eligible for this prize if they participated in a full interview session. At the conclusion of the interview participants filled out a 3 x 5 index card listing their name, address, phone number and email address. The researcher stored these cards until all interviews were complete.

One card was randomly drawn one week after data collection concluded. The researcher attempted to contact the participant whose name was drawn by phone. If the individual could not be found after one week, the researcher selected another card. The student picked up the cash incentive at a designated appointment time with the researcher.

Interview Protocol

An interview protocol was designed to collect data for the study. The interview protocol consisted of questions designed by the researcher to gain an understanding of the relationship of the participant to their parents before entering college, upon entering college but before parental notification, and after notification. Questions also sought to understand the participant's attitudes and behaviors about alcohol during these three time periods as well as to explore the messages respondents received from their parents about alcohol use. Questions were developed to elicit responses that would allow conclusions to be drawn about the influence of parents on student decisions about alcohol.

There were four main components of the interview protocol. The first dealt with how the participants perceived their relationship to their parents. This section was further divided into three sub-sections. These sub-sections asked about the relationship during the three stages identified in the research questions—before coming to college, upon arriving at college, and after parental notification. The researcher prompted participants to address certain factors in the relationship with their parents if the respondents did not offer thoughts on these topics on their own. These prompt questions focused on the involvement of parents in the participant’s day-to-day decision-making, academic life, social life, and personal life. Additional prompt questions explored communication patterns of participants with their parents.

The second section of the interview protocol consisted of a quantitative questionnaire that elicited data on participant involvement with alcohol. Questions asked about behaviors with and attitudes toward alcohol before college, upon arriving at college, and since parental notification. Questions also elicited information about parent alcohol use as perceived by the respondent. A copy of this survey is provided in Appendix F.

The third section of the interview protocol was designed to further explore the responses given by the participant on the quantitative questionnaire about alcohol use. Interview questions sought to understand the messages participants received about alcohol use from their parents, and to gauge the parent’s current knowledge about their student’s alcohol use.

The final section of the protocol explored the experience of the student with the parental notification process. Questions asked about the way students informed their parents of the incident and how the parents responded to that information. A copy of the interview protocol is provided in Appendix G.

Upon initial drafting of the interview protocol, pilot interviews were conducted to test the clarity of items and instructions. Additionally, a panel of experts reviewed the protocol questions. The protocol was then revised to incorporate suggestions made by pilot participants and experts. In addition, an expert reviewed one pilot interview to critique the skills of the researcher. Suggestions offered as a result of that critique were implemented in subsequent interviews.

Data Collection Procedure

Interviews were scheduled and participants were asked to plan on spending 60 minutes in the interview. At the start of the interview session, the interviewer reminded the participants

about the purpose of the study, their role in it, and assured them confidentiality would be maintained at all times. Respondents were asked to read and sign an informed consent form. The form listed the purpose of the study, a reminder that their information would be kept confidential, and a description of the incentive process. It also reminded students that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Interviews were conducted in a conference room centrally located on campus. This location was selected because it was easily accessible for participants and limited distractions for the researcher and participants. The interview began with informal dialogue to establish rapport with participants.

Interviews were tape recorded, with the participant's permission, to facilitate data analysis. At the conclusion of each interview, any information that might identify the participant was eliminated from the tape. The tape was then given to an independent professional transcriber who provided typewritten transcripts of the interviews to the researcher. The tapes were then returned to the researcher who listened to the tape while reviewing the transcript to check for accuracy.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Trustworthiness can be defined as the extent to which data obtained is truthful (Miles & Huberman, as cited in Gatz, 1998). The researcher took steps within the current study to ensure trustworthiness. First, participants were assured that the information they provided would be confidential. Second, all students who participated in the research study were given an alias to prevent recognition within the text of this report. This was done to help ensure participants that they could be completely candid in their responses. If they were completely candid it was assumed that the data resulting from the interviews would be more truthful (Borg & Gall, 1983).

Additionally, all potential respondents who met the selection criteria for the study were invited to participate. As a result, the data they provided were not specific to any particular group. That is, any number of individuals who met the selection criteria could have provided data for the study. This rendered the data more truthful (Borg & Gall, 1983).

Authenticity can be described as the extent to which the data elicited through the study are relevant when attempting to answer the research questions (Miles & Huberman, as cited in Gatz, 1998). Authenticity was enhanced in several ways in the present study.

First, the researcher conducted pilot interviews to help ensure that the items and instructions were clear to participants. If participants clearly understood what was being asked of them, they were more likely to provide data that were authentic (Borg & Gall, 1983). Pilot participants were asked to comment on questions and the interview process. Their comments and suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the protocol. The pilot interviews were also used to check for the sound quality of the audio equipment to ensure interviews could be accurately transcribed.

Additionally, one of the pilot interviews was reviewed by an expert to assist the researcher by critiquing her interview skills and strengthening the researcher's interviewing techniques. Having an expert review the interviewing skills of the researcher maximized the probability that participants would clearly understand what was being asked of them (Borg & Gall, 1983). It was assumed that this ensured that participants provided information that was directly related to the research questions posed in the study, a mechanism that enhances authenticity.

Finally, a panel of experts reviewed the interview protocol to ensure questions were clear, relevant, and complete (Borg & Gall, 1983). Items that were questionable were discussed and revised until a consensus was reached. This method of revision is used to ensure that the data elicited related to the research questions posed in the study, enhancing authenticity as a result.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed to enable the researcher to answer the questions posed in the study. The first research question sought to identify the relationships students had with parents before entering college and the drinking behaviors of students during that same time period.

To analyze the relationship with parents before college, the researcher conducted a text analysis of the responses participants made to the interview questions that focused on the high school years. The unit of analysis was the comment. A comment was defined as a sentence or phrase, or series of sentences and phrases that related to a single topic. Once the participant moved to a new topic, a new comment was noted. An example of the document used to record and assign comments is included in Appendix H.

Comments were assigned to one of three categories and to subcategories as appropriate. Described below are the categories and subcategories that emerged from the data. Examples of comments that were assigned to these categories and subcategories are included in Chapter 4.

The first category included General Relationship comments. This included comments related to communication, honesty, the willingness of students to go to parents with problems, and general comments about students' relationships with parents before college that did not fit into any other category identified in the analysis.

To further segment the data, General Relationship comments were designated as Good, Neutral, or Bad. Comments were assigned based on whether the respondent perceived his/her relationship with parents to be good, neutral, or bad.

The second category to which comments about high school were assigned was Level of Involvement. Within this category were four subcategories of Day-to-Day Life, Academic Life, Social Life, and Personal Life. Comments were further delineated into a High, Moderate, or Low Level of Involvement within each subcategory. Topics that fell into the subcategory of Day-to-Day Life included the awareness of parents of the activities and locations of their student and the involvement of parents in financial decisions and spending patterns of students. Comments that related to academics were assigned to the Academic Life subcategory. This included comments regarding the academic pressure placed on participants by parents, homework, or parents' knowledge of classes students were taking.

The third subcategory within Level of Involvement category was Social Life. Comments about curfews, parents' familiarity with their student's friends and activities with friends, or knowledge of or ability to influence their student's evening or weekend plans were included within this subcategory. The final subcategory, Personal Life, included comments about the parents' knowledge of significant others or knowledge about the feelings or emotions of their student as well as any challenges or struggles the student was facing.

The third major category included comments regarding the way respondents' parents addressed or did not address their alcohol use while in high school. The researcher called this category Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol. The comments that centered on alcohol were assigned to four subcategories of Strict No, Passive No, Unsure/Assumed, and Permissive.

Once all comments were assigned to a category and subcategory, the researcher totaled all comments that fit within the General Relationship category. The participant was then assigned to either the Good, Neutral, or Bad subcategory based on the position to which he/she made the greatest number of comments.

To assign participants to a Level of Involvement category, the researcher first totaled the number of High, Moderate, and Low Level of Involvement comments made within each of the four subcategories of Day-to-Day Life, Academic Life, Social Life, and Personal Life. Based on the highest number of comments, respondents were assigned to either the High, Moderate, or Low position. Once each subcategory had a designation, the researcher considered the position for each subcategory, and assigned students an overall Level of Involvement.

The third major category was Parental Attitudes Toward Alcohol. To assign students to one of the four subcategories, the researcher first totaled all comments within the category. Participants were then assigned to Strict No, Passive No, Unsure/Assumed, or Permissive based on which category reflected the greatest number of comments offered by the respondent.

Two other points are notable in regards to the method by which comments were placed into categories. First, there were times when one comment addressed two time periods. When this occurred, the researcher assigned a 0.5 to the subcategory identified in the first time period and another 0.5 to the subcategory related to the second time period.

Second, the categories, which segmented comments into a High, Moderate, or Low Level of Parental Involvement, reflected a student perspective. That is, the researcher relied on participant suggestions about whether such involvement was high, moderate, or low in assigning the comments to different levels.

To examine data about alcohol behaviors while in high school, the researcher analyzed responses given on the survey about alcohol consumption before college. Survey items elicited data on two issues: how frequently participants drank and how much they drank on those occasions. Participants' combined responses to these two items were used to assign them to categories of High, Moderate, Low or Non- drinkers.

To answer to the second research question, the researcher followed the same steps as were followed for the first research question except that responses to items about relationships with parents and drinking behaviors immediately after entering college were analyzed.

To respond to the third research question posed in the study, the steps were repeated using the responses participants provided about relations with parents and drinking behaviors since parental notification.

In addition to identifying relationships between parenting styles and alcohol consumption, the researcher also examined the results to identify trends in parental relationships

and alcohol consumption over the three time periods in question. This involved looking at whether the frequencies of parenting styles or the frequencies of drinking styles changed over time.

In summary, this study sought to understand the relationship between parenting styles and student alcohol consumption over three time periods. The methods used to collect and analyze data described in this chapter were deemed sufficient to answer the research questions posed in the study.

Chapter 4

Results

The following chapter reports the results of the data collection. The chapter is organized into three sections. The first section describes changes to the original data collection procedures. The second describes the demographic characteristics of the sample. The third describes the results of the research project. These results are reported in the order of the research questions posed in the study.

Changes in Data Collection Procedures

Three changes were made to the data collection procedure. First, the original study design called for only those students who remained enrolled in the university to be eligible to participate in the study. One student who failed to meet this criterion was included. The student was not forcibly removed from the university but rather voluntarily took a semester off to work locally. The author felt that this would not taint the data acquired since the student remained in town and was still responsible for adhering to university policies until graduation.

The next change involved the original timeline that a student be interviewed approximately six weeks after parental notification. This timeline proved difficult to follow due to constraints beyond the control of the researcher. Two things in particular hampered this plan. First, breaks during the semester—two for one week and another for four weeks—delayed the researcher's ability to interview students within the original time frame. Second, the researcher relied on the Office of Judicial Affairs to provide contact information for students. During the middle of the data collection process, the office experienced a transition with databases and was unable to obtain the names of parents in order to mail notification letters. This prevented the author from contacting some students within the original time frame. The students affected by this time delay were contacted one week after the letters were mailed to parents.

Finally, one change was made in order to increase participation in the study. The original incentive of \$10 per interview was increased to \$20. At that time, another email was sent to all students who had not responded to any email messages announcing the increased incentive. One additional student was interviewed as a result of this change.

Description of the Sample

The final sample included 13 students, representing 45% of the 29 potential participants who were eligible to be included in the study. Nine men and four women agreed to participate in

an interview session with the researcher. Eleven students were sophomores, one was a freshmen and one was a junior. All students (N=13) represented the majority race on campus. One participant was 18 years old, six were 19, and six were 20. Eleven students lived with their birth parents while in high school, one lived with only his/her father, and one lived with his/her birth mother and stepfather.

The researcher also obtained information from participants about the perceived drinking patterns of their parents as part of the paper and pencil survey. Parents were assigned to categories by using the procedure outlined in Chapter Three to place students into a drinking category. Of the 25 parents, 9 were characterized as non-drinkers, 11 as low drinkers, 4 as moderate drinkers, and none as high drinkers. One participant was unsure of the drinking patterns of one parent.

Four other questions integrated into the interview were used to obtain demographic data. First, 9 students were provided with alcohol by their parents at some point in their life. One additional participant had received only wine on holidays. All students (N=13) told their parents about their alcohol violation(s) before they received the notification from the Office of Judicial Affairs. Eight students commented that they would have told their parents about their violation even if the university had not. Finally, four students had gotten into trouble with police or school officials because of alcohol use before attending college. The demographic data is summarized in Table 1.

Results Reported by Research Questions

Upon receipt of the transcripts, the author analyzed the data according to the procedure outlined in Chapter Three. The unit of analysis was the comment. A comment was defined as a sentence or phrase, or series of sentences and phrases that related to a single topic. Once the participant moved to a new topic, a new comment was noted. Comments were then assigned to one of three categories—General Relationship, Level of Involvement, or Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol.

The first category included General Relationship comments. Comments were further segmented into Good, Neutral, or Bad subcategories. For example, in answering “how would you describe your relationship with your parents during high school?” Ken commented, “Well, very positive. I would say that I had one of the least rocky experiences with my parents

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=13)

Characteristic	n	%N
Gender		
Male	9	69
Female	4	31
Race		
Majority	13	100
Minority	0	0
Class Standing		
Freshmen	1	8
Sophomore	11	85
Junior	1	8
Age		
18	1	8
19	6	46
20	6	46
Parental Status		
Birth Parents	11	85
Mother & Step Father	1	8
Father Only	1	8
Perceived Drinking Patterns of Parents (N=25)		
Non	9	36
Low	11	44
Moderate	4	16
High	0	0
Unknown	1	4
Totals	25	100

throughout adolescence than friends I knew.” This comment would be placed into the Good subcategory.

A Neutral comment might address the willingness of students to spend time with their parents. Jennah remarked that “since they didn’t see me that much during the week they were very big on family time at home on the weekends . . . I liked it, but then sometimes I would really resent it because after I’ve worked so hard all week I would want to go out and be with my friends.”

A Bad General Relationship comment could reflect the general communication ability of parents and students. For example, Jason remarked “Sometimes it gets hard talking to my dad. Me and my dad have always had a communication failure.”

The second category that emerged was labeled Level of Involvement. This category encompassed four subcategories: Day-to-Day Life, Academic Life, Social Life, and Personal Life. Comments were further divided into High, Moderate, and Low levels of involvement within each of these subcategories. The following are examples of comments that reflected a High Level of Involvement:

My parents actually do not want me to get a job. They feel that the best thing for me to do is just study and they will help me financially with whatever I need. (Patrick)

I actually talk to my mom about anything. I talk to my mom about sex. (Jason)

My dad did my schedule for me. (Patrick)

Yes, they definitely knew [where I was going at night with my friends]. There is no way that my parents would ever let me go out without knowing where I was at. (Randy)

They liked my grades to be good. That is mainly all they have asked that I keep my grades up. (James)

The following are examples of comments that would fall into the Moderate Level of Involvement:

My parents both worked until 9 p.m. at night, so they really didn’t have an exact idea of what we were doing, but they knew that we came home after school and knew whatever sport we were doing. (Jennifer)

They pressured me, but it was more like ‘you know if you mess things up, it’s your future.’ (Chad)

I guess it [my curfew] was about 12 a.m. If I wanted to stay out later it wasn't like a big fight to get it pushed back. (Chris)

I would tell them a lot of good stuff. I would never really tell them the bad stuff. (Carin)

The following are examples of comments that would fall into the Low Level of Involvement:

[They didn't know what I was doing] other than taking classes. (Gerry)

He really didn't need to [pressure me about academics], I always did well. (Larry)

I have always played the opposite to my parents. I have always been like I am doing good, doing fine, everything is going good, but I would never tell them that it wasn't. (Randy)

He was never really one to ask me all the details of what I did all the time so I don't really feel it necessary to tell him. (Larry)

The final category entitled Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol emerged as students discussed the way their parents addressed or did not address their alcohol use. The comments that centered on alcohol were divided into four subcategories of Strict No, Passive No, Unsure/Assumed, and Permissive.

The subcategory of Strict No included comments where students clearly understood that their parents were sending them the message that they should not be consuming alcohol. For example, after Chad's parents were notified of his alcohol violations, they made it clear what they thought. "Since it was my second violation and the next one is suspension, they are a lot more strict now. They do not like the fact that I am going to drink. 'You realize that one more thing and you are out of [university name].' They are a lot more concerned about me drinking." When asked "What do you think your parents expectations were of you in regards to alcohol while you were in high school?" Jason replied "not to do it." Both comments would be placed into the Strict No category.

The second subcategory identified was Passive No. Comments that fell into this category reflected language that parents did not want their student to drink, but accepted it as a fact of life. Rebecca commented that her mother "did not encourage it, but she knew what was going to happen, so she wanted me to do it responsibly."

The next subcategory, Unsure/Assumed, included comments where expectations, feelings, or knowledge about students' alcohol use that was portrayed by parents was ambiguous,

absent, or unclear. In this subcategory, students often received messages indirectly, such as when a parent commented on their brother's alcoholism, or didn't receive them at all and made assumptions about whether or not their parents knew they were drinking or what their parents felt about alcohol or their alcohol use. The comments placed into this subcategory reflected a parenting attitude towards alcohol of "don't ask, don't tell." For example, when asked if her parents knew what she was doing while out with her friends, Jennah replied "No. They didn't ask but I think they probably had an idea." When asked if his parents knew he was still drinking after parental notification, James replied "they probably think I am drinking once in a while." These comments both reflect statements that were placed into the Unsure/Assumed subcategory.

The final subcategory of Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol was Permissive. In this subcategory, students received the message that it was permissible to drink, albeit responsibly. Ken's comment regarding his parent's message about alcohol reflected a comment that would be placed into the Permissive subcategory: "They were always pretty . . . took a light tone with it because they knew that I was responsible with it." Larry shared his father's attitude towards alcohol, "He says sometimes that you shouldn't drink just to get like obliterated, but do it, like, within control." This comment would also be placed into the Permissive subcategory.

Each participant was assigned to a General Relationship, Level of Involvement, and Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol subcategory using the procedure outlined in Chapter Three.

To examine students' alcohol behaviors, the researcher analyzed the data from the paper and pencil survey that students completed during their interview. The survey elicited data about the alcohol use of students during the three time periods explored in the study (before college, upon matriculation to college, and after parental notification).

Participants were assigned as either a High, Moderate, Low, or Non- Drinker for each time period examined according to the information they provided the researcher on the survey. A Non-Drinker was defined as an individual who had not consumed alcohol during the time period in question. Low Drinkers were students who consumed one to three drinks on the average night where drinking was involved, so long as this did not occur on more than six occasions per month. Students who drank on one to six occasions in the average month, but consumed four to six drinks on those evenings were assigned as Moderate Drinkers. Students who drank on seven or more occasions in the average month but only consumed one to three drinks were also classified as Moderate Drinkers.

Finally, High Drinkers drank on an average of four times or more per month and consumed seven or more drinks on each occasion. Participants who drank 11 or more times per month but consumed only one to three drinks were also designated as High Drinkers.

To explore the first research question, the researcher analyzed both the qualitative and quantitative portion of the study as outlined in Chapter 3. Relationships between parents and students before college were explored. The results are summarized in Table 2.

The results of the analysis of data showed that overall students demonstrated fairly positive relationships with parents while in high school. Five students maintained Good relationships with their parents while eight demonstrated Neutral relationships. No students were categorized as having Bad relationships with their parents during high school.

Next, parents were placed into an overall category of Level of Involvement and were assigned to High Involvement, Moderate Involvement, or Low Involvement during high school. Most parents (n=8) maintained a Moderate Level of Involvement with their student before college. One maintained a High Level and four parents maintained a Low Level of Involvement before college.

Finally, parents were placed into a category based on the message their student received about their Attitudes Towards Alcohol before college. Results for this portion of analysis varied across the four categories. Five parents were characterized as taking the Strict No approach to alcohol. Four were Unsure/Assumed, three were Permissive, and one was Passive No.

To address the alcohol consumption component of the first research question, the researcher analyzed the data from the paper and pencil survey according to the procedure outlined above. Only one student before college was identified as a non-drinker. The remaining students were split evenly among Low, Moderate, and High levels of drinking, with each level including four students. The results of this analysis are summarized on Table 3.

To answer the second research question, the researcher followed the same steps as were followed for the first research question except that comments to items about relationships with parents and drinking behaviors upon matriculation to college were analyzed. The results on parental relationships are summarized in Table 4.

Upon matriculation to college, nine students were characterized as having a Good General Relationship with their Parents and four with having a Neutral relationship. No students were identified as having a Bad relationship with their parents upon matriculation to college.

Table 2

Relationships with Parents Before College (N=13)

Analytical Category	n	%N
General Parental Relationships		
Good	5	38
Neutral	8	62
Bad	0	0
Sub-Totals	13	100
Level of Parental Involvement		
High	1	8
Moderate	8	62
Low	4	31
Sub-Totals	13	101
Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol		
Strict No	5	38
Passive No	1	8
Unsure/Assumed	4	31
Permissive	3	23
Sub-Totals	13	100

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 3

Drinking Behaviors of Participants Before College (N=13)

Drinking Behavior	n	%N
Non-Drinkers	1	8
Low Drinkers	4	31
Moderate Drinkers	4	31
High Drinkers	4	31
Totals	13	101

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 4

Relationships with Parents Upon Matriculation to College (N=13)

Analytical Category	n	%N
General Parental Relationships		
Good	9	69
Neutral	4	31
Bad	0	0
Sub-Totals	13	100
Level of Parental Involvement		
High	2	15
Moderate	7	54
Low	4	31
Sub-Totals	13	101
Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol		
Strict No	2	15
Passive No	1	8
Unsure/Assumed	3	23
Permissive	7	54
Sub-Totals	13	100

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Also during the same time period, the parents of two students demonstrated a High Level of Parental Involvement. Seven were characterized as having Moderate and four as Low Parental Involvement upon matriculation to college.

Finally, during the time period of upon matriculation to college, seven parents were Permissive in their messages about alcohol, three were Unsure/Assumed, two demonstrated a Strict No attitude, and one delivered a Passive No message.

Behaviors about alcohol were also analyzed during the time period of upon matriculation to college. Eight students were identified as High Drinkers, four as Moderate Drinkers, and one as a Low Drinker during this time period. The results of this survey are presented in Table 5.

To answer the third research question posed in this study, the steps were repeated using the comments participants provided about relations with parents and drinking behaviors since parental notification. The results on parenting styles are summarized in Table 6.

The General Relationship most parents had with their students after parental notification could be characterized as Good (n=11). Two relationships were categorized as Neutral and none as Bad.

After parental notification, the Levels of Parental Involvement varied. Eight parents were placed into the Moderate category, four into the Low category, and one into the High category of involvement.

Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol were mixed. Six parents were Permissive in their attitudes about alcohol after parental notification. Four took the Strict No approach, three took the Passive No approach, and none were placed into the category of Unsure/Assumed.

The drinking behaviors of students were again analyzed, but for the specific time period after parental notification. One change from the method of analyzing alcohol behaviors was made during this time period. During the time periods of before college and upon matriculation to college, students were asked how many times in the average month they consumed alcohol. However, after parental notification, students were asked specifically on how many occasions they had consumed alcohol since notification. In some instances a month had passed since notification. In other cases, more time had elapsed. In either event the researcher used the number of occasions on which students had consumed alcohol and the number of drinks consumed per occasion to assign students to categories. Five students during this time period

Table 5

Drinking Behaviors of Participants Upon Matriculation to College (N=13)

Drinking Behavior	n	%N
Non-Drinkers	0	0
Low Drinkers	1	8
Moderate Drinkers	4	31
High Drinkers	8	62
Totals	13	101

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 6

Relationships with Parents After Parental Notification (N=13)

Analytical Category		%N
General Parental Relationships		
Good	11	85
Neutral	2	15
Bad	0	0
Sub-Totals	13	100
Level of Parental Involvement		
High	1	8
Moderate	8	62
Low	4	31
Sub-Totals	13	101
Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol		
Strict No	4	31
Passive No	3	23
Unsure/Assumed	0	0
Permissive	6	46
Sub-Totals	13	100

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

were identified as High Drinkers, four as Moderate Drinkers, and four as Low Drinkers. No students were characterized as Non-Drinkers. The results are summarized in Table 7.

To answer the fourth research question posed in the study, the researcher examined the relationships of students and parents over the three time periods explored in the investigation. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 8.

Over time, it appeared that the General Relationship with parents improved. The number of relationships characterized as Good increased during each time period, from five before college to nine upon matriculation to college to 11 after parental notification while the number of Neutral relationships decreased from 8 to 4 to 2 during these three periods respectively. No students within the sample during any time period were characterized as having a Bad relationship with their parents.

The Level of Parental Involvement varied minimally over the three time periods in the study. Four sets of parents were characterized as having Low involvement during each time period. Most parents were Moderately involved in the lives of their students. Eight were labeled as such before college, seven upon matriculation to college, and eight after parental notification. The same pattern existed for High parental involvement, with one assigned to this category during the first time period, two assigned to it during the second time period, and one assigned to it in the third time period.

To answer the fifth research question posed in the study, the researcher examined the changes in student drinking behaviors over the three time periods examined in the study. The results of this examination are summarized in Table 9.

It appears as though students within the sample entered college with experience in drinking alcohol. Only one student was identified as a non-drinker before college. No student was considered a non-drinker upon matriculation to college or after parental notification.

Students overall increased their alcohol consumption upon matriculation to college. Only one student was characterized as a Low Drinker upon matriculation to college. Four were assigned to the Moderate Drinker category and eight to the High Drinker category.

After parental notification, most students were Moderate or Low Drinkers. Only three participants were identified as High Drinkers, six were identified as Moderate Drinkers, and four students were identified as Low Drinkers. However, no students were assigned to the Non-Drinker category.

Table 7

Drinking Behaviors of Participants After Parental Notification (N=13)

Drinking Behavior	n	%N
Non-Drinkers	0	0
Low Drinkers	4	31
Moderate Drinkers	4	46
High Drinkers	5	23
Totals	13	100

Table 8

Relationships with Parents Over Time (N=13)

Analytical Category	Before College		Upon Matriculation		After Notification	
	n	%N	n	%N	n	%N
General Parental Relationships						
Good	5	38	9	69	11	85
Neutral	8	62	4	31	2	15
Bad	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sub-Totals	13	100	13	100	13	100
Level of Parental Involvement						
High	1	8	2	15	1	8
Moderate	8	62	7	54	8	62
Low	4	31	4	31	4	31
Sub-Totals	13	101	13	101	13	101
Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol						
Strict No	5	38	2	15	4	31
Passive No	1	8	1	8	3	23
Unsure/Assumed	4	31	3	23	0	0
Permissive	3	23	7	54	6	46
Sub-Totals	13	100	13	100	13	100

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Table 9

Drinking Behaviors of Participants Over Time (N=13)

Drinking Behavior	Before College		Upon Matriculation		After Notification	
	n	%N	n	%N	n	%N
Non-Drinkers	1	8	0	0	0	0
Low Drinkers	4	31	1	8	4	31
Moderate Drinkers	4	31	4	31	6	46
High Drinkers	4	31	8	62	3	23
Totals	13	101	13	101	13	100

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

The results present some interesting information about relationships between parents and students and student drinking behaviors. These findings and their implications for future practice and research are discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The present research study sought to explore the attitudes and behaviors of students regarding alcohol consumption before and after those behaviors led to parental notification. The researcher sought to better understand the role that parents play in the decisions their children make about alcohol.

This chapter discusses the results of the study in four main sections. The first discusses the findings of the research according to the research questions posed in the study. The second relates the findings to past research. The third offers implications for future research and practice. The fourth considers the limitations of the present study.

Parental Relationships & Alcohol Behaviors

The first three research questions posed in the study explored the relationship between the perceived parenting styles and drinking behaviors of students during three time periods: before college, upon matriculation to college, and after parental notification.

Students' General Relationships with their parents generally improved over time from the first to the final period. During these periods, the alcohol consumption of students increased, and then decreased overall. This would seem to suggest that there is not a correlation between the General Relationship of parents and students and the alcohol behaviors of students between the three time periods explored in this study.

The majority of parents involved themselves minimally to moderately in the lives of their students over the three time periods explored in the study. Because of the consistency in Level of Involvement and the differences revealed in alcohol consumption it does not appear as though there is a relationship between parental Level of Involvement and the drinking patterns of students.

Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol varied dramatically over time as did students level of alcohol consumption. It would seem that students do not respond to their parents Strict No or Passive No policies on alcohol. Over the three time periods, six sets of parents, then three sets of parents, then seven sets of parents took this approach. Yet, only one student during one time period was identified as a Non-Drinker. The first conclusion that can be drawn is that students do not respond to their parents conservative policies on alcohol.

There are a few possible explanations for this finding. First, students may make the assumption that their parents cannot control them while in high school or college. Despite their parents' requests that they abstain from alcohol, they still behave as they choose. Carin's parents expected her not to drink while she was in high school. When asked how this made her feel when she was out drinking, she responded "I didn't care." Jennah's parents' expectations did not mean too much either. Her parents expected her never to drink more than two beers. When asked if this affected her when she did decide to drink, she said "My parents expectations? Honestly, I don't think about it."

Second, many students may have felt they had simply been unlucky in the past to get caught and they did not have an alcohol problem that needed to be addressed. Those who were Low to Moderate Drinkers before parental notification in particular felt that their drinking behavior could continue with a few minor adjustments in terms of location and peer surroundings. Therefore, despite their parents' clear or passive objection to alcohol, they felt that becoming Non-Drinkers was an extreme and unnecessary precaution.

Changes in Relationships with Parents Over Time

The fourth research question attempted to discover if there were changes in relationships with parents over the three time periods (before college, upon matriculation to college, and after parental notification). The results with respect to this issue are mixed.

The General Relationship category included such things as communication, honesty, and the willingness to discuss problems with parents. During no time period did any student within the present study have a Bad General Relationship with their parents. While students identified areas where their relationships with parents were strong and also weak, overall students expressed Neutral to Good parental relationships.

Over time, parental relationships appeared to improve. After parental notification, nearly all students were classified as having Good General Relationships with their parents. One possible reason for this is simply that students mature over time and they may find that they are more comfortable sharing their lives with their parents. These days, Randy is "telling them [things] more than they are asking." Patrick had the same experience. "The older I get, the more I realize that they actually know what they are talking about."

Another explanation may be that upon arriving at college, parents and students argue less about petty issues like chores or how many hours a student is watching television or playing

video games during the day. These arguments that may have strained relationships in high school may become more infrequent in college, allowing students and parents to communicate on a deeper level about more important concerns or issues.

Students may also experience a willingness to open up to parents and be more honest about life in general. Patrick felt this way about his experiences. “When I came here, I just kind of more or less just started accepting and telling them what I did and how I did it.” Parents may respect this and improvements in relationships may result. Jennifer had this same experience. “I probably have an even better relationship with them now because they know I acted responsibly after the fact.”

A final reason that may explain why the General Relationships between students and parents improved was that adversity brought them closer. The majority of students felt very supported by their parents after they were informed of their alcohol violation(s). So while parents might have expressed frustration, disappointment, and anger towards their student because of their judicial violations, participants still felt as though their parents were allies in working through the situations. Randy had this experience with his parents, especially his father. Expecting a very angry reaction from him, he instead got support. He repeated his father’s reactions in the interview. “I just want you to know that your mother and I are going to back you up . . . You are just going to have to suffer the consequences, but we are going to help you out.”

The second major category in Relationships with Parents was the Level of Parental Involvement. The results of this portion of the study indicate that over time, parents maintain their level of involvement in their student’s Day-to-Day Life, Academic Life, Social Life, and Personal Life. This seems to suggest that despite the distance between parents and students once they depart for college, parents still manage to stay involved in the life of their student. Some parents would maintain their Level of Involvement by visiting and calling on a regular basis. Others had traditions, such as tailgating together before a football game. Patrick’s mother enjoyed talking to his friends. In fact, when she would visit she would speak to his friends and “have their parents’ phone numbers and their parents’ addresses and when she got back home she would call their parents and talk to them.” Jennah’s parents were both engineers and were able to help her with her homework questions.

The most varied category within Relationships with Parents was the Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol. Before college, parents took a mixed approach to alcohol, with five

advocating that their students not drink, one requesting that their student not drink, four being unclear about what they expected in regard to alcohol, and three taking a permissive attitude towards alcohol.

Upon matriculation to college, these messages shifted as only two parents sent the message to their student that they should not be drinking and seven were permissive. One explanation for this transition may be that parents accept the popular notion that alcohol is a part of college life and expect that once students leave for college that they will become part of this culture of alcohol consumption. Chad's parents used to work in a college environment "They met [at university name] and they used to go out with the college people there, so they know what it is like."

James felt his parents took this same approach. "I guess they knew it was college and alcohol is associated with it. I think they still trusted me." The latter comment suggests another explanation for why parents might shift their Attitudes Towards Alcohol. Because students are living on their own at college, parents feel less control over their behavior and trust their students to make their own decisions about alcohol. Parents may also want to give up some degree of control in order to promote development on the part of their student. This was the case with Jason: "They say that 'You are your own man now. You can make your own expectations.'"

Several shifts in Parental Attitudes Towards Alcohol also occurred between the final two time periods (upon matriculation to college and after parental notification). First, the number of students who felt their parents were unclear in their attitudes about alcohol shifted from three to zero. All students told their parents about their violation(s) before they received the notification letter so this shift would seem to indicate that conversations about alcohol were initiated due to the impending notification. This may have caused previously unclear attitudes and expectations to be made clear.

The second shift between these final two time periods was that the number of parents taking a Strict No or Passive No approach to alcohol increased. Comments by students indicated that this occurred for two reasons. First, parents were concerned about the amount and frequency of their student's drinking. This was true of Chris' parents, who shared their concern with him that they believed he drank too much. Chris' parents would also be "extremely, extremely mad" if he were suspended. This threat of suspension may have made parents become more

conservative in their previously permissive attitudes and may help explain the shift in Attitudes Towards Alcohol.

The final explanation for why parents presented a Strict or Passive No message to their student may have been that parents expected students to follow university rules. Chad relayed his parents perspective on this: “You may not think you are doing anything wrong and you may think the rules are stupid, but the fact is that you are in their school, and you are taking their classes, you have to obey their rules.”

One unexpected and interesting finding with respect to Parental Attitudes Toward Alcohol was that six parents were permissive in their attitude after parental notification. There may be several possible explanations for this finding.

First, it is possible that the parents felt students had “learned their lesson” through their judicial, and sometimes legal, sanctions. Parents may have felt that they did not need to pressure their student to be more careful because the student was already motivated enough to stay out of trouble. Jennah commented that “I think they know that I’ve learned lessons about when it’s appropriate and when it’s not.” Jennifer felt her conversations with her mother echoed this sentiment. “I have had a conversation with my mom about how now that I look back on it, that it wasn’t the smartest thing I have ever done in my life. She is happy about that because she realizes that I have grown from the experience.”

Second, parents may have thought their student was responsible all along in terms of their alcohol behaviors and were Permissive in their attitudes as a result.

My dad and I talked a lot about the fact that I’m not the kind of person that drinks to get drunk. I’ll have a couple of beers to, just because it’s socially acceptable, because it’s something to do. He realizes that and they’ve always understood that I’m responsible with it. (Ken)

Other parents who were categorized as Permissive felt their student was simply unlucky to get caught. Since the student had regularly acted responsibly, the parents may have not felt it necessary to send a different message to their student about alcohol. Ken commented that “Actually my dad and I had a good laugh about it. It seems like only I would have the luck in my own apartment complex to be busted for something so stupid and insignificant.”

The final explanation given by students was that their parents knew that they could not do anything about their student’s drinking. Larry’s parents knew that he “wasn’t going to stop.”

Changes in Drinking Behaviors Over Time

The final research question sought to explore changes in drinking behaviors over the three time periods in this study. The results indicate that there are changes in patterns of alcohol consumption. All but one student entered college with some experience with alcohol. The remaining students were split evenly among the low, moderate, and high levels of drinking during this time period.

It appears that once students enter college their alcohol consumption increases. This could be explained in several ways. First, with the increased freedom students experience at college they may have more social opportunities available to them and they may find alcohol more accessible.

Second, college students no longer need to worry about coming home and facing their parents after a night of drinking. This may make students more comfortable in drinking when and how much they want. Patrick had this experience when he first went to college. “[Alcohol] became a bigger subject because there is so much more drinking at college, but I guess as soon as you get away from your parents, you can do anything you want and you do not have to come home.”

Third, the collegiate environment tends to perpetuate a culture of high alcohol consumption and students may be more likely to give in to the pressure to drink than they were in high school. This was Jason’s experience. “It was probably just more to do with because everybody else was doing it.”

These same reasons might help explain why the majority of students in the present study were classified as High Drinkers upon matriculation to college. Increased opportunity, lower levels of parental accountability, and intensified peer pressure may turn Low or Moderate high school drinkers into High Drinkers in college.

After parental notification, the majority of participants shifted from High to Moderate Drinkers. The number of Low Drinkers increased by three, Moderate Drinkers by two, and the number of High Drinkers decreased by five. The remaining High Drinkers offered two explanations for their continued drinking patterns.

First, as students persisted through college and continue drinking, their tolerance increases. A student like Chris, for example, who required only a moderate level of alcohol to feel intoxicated at one point in college required a higher level of consumption after a period of

time. Therefore, the period after parental notification may have been that time period where more alcohol was consumed in order to reach the desired level of intoxication. Second, as will be discussed later in this chapter, many students argued they can still be responsible and drink.

Students offered a variety of explanations for decreasing their alcohol use after parental notification. The first explanation was rooted in the sanctioning the students received as a result of their violation(s). All students were placed on deferred suspension, indicating that another violation of university policy might result in suspension from the university. Many students feared removal from the university. Nearly all students indicated that they were more careful about their drinking because of the threat of suspension, as exemplified in the following remarks by Ken:

What I've found is that being on this deferred suspension, I don't have any leeway room at this point. I don't feel like being forced to take a year off if I get caught with anything else again. So at that point I basically said I'm going to have to be the totally sober one when I go out because I can't afford any other problems So it's impacted in a way that I can't do the same things as I had before. Just 'cause I don't feel like having any further problems.

A separate but similar reason that may cause students to lower their alcohol consumption after parental notification is their parents. They may feel an obligation to either decrease their consumption or to follow the rules in order to avoid suspension so as not to disappoint their parents. Patrick felt this obligation to his parents.

I am actually not drinking nearly as much now. . . . They do not even want to hear the word alcohol, because I have had two alcohol violations and dad can understand one mess up, but he cannot understand two, and he definitely could not understand three, and if I get kicked out of school for alcohol, they are going to have a [deleted expletive] fit.

Another reason why students may have decreased their alcohol consumption was due to the realization that they were drinking too much. Randy felt his violation gave him the opportunity to reflect: "It kind of made me step back and look at everything, I guess get out of that. I was just kind of wilded out." James had a similar reaction:

It has changed me a lot, especially the night in jail. That scared me a lot. Like before the incident, the nights were just getting crazier and crazier and after my arrest, things have

changed a whole lot. If I go to a party, I will only have one or two just where I can still handle myself a lot better.”

Despite the reasons listed and the fears students felt about potential consequences of alcohol use, no students were identified as Non-Drinkers after parental notification. There was a general feeling among the participants that alcohol could be a part of social activities so long as they were careful. This meant having an awareness of where they were drinking and an awareness of the individuals with whom they were drinking. Students felt that by combining these two, they were minimizing their risk while still having the opportunity to be social with friends and enjoy alcohol.

I'll drink and have some friends over at my place because there's no way that I would have any kind of problem there. (Ken)

I am still out partying and stuff like that, but I try and stay at my place. I do not want to do it around a lot of people because I have a feeling that being around a lot of people, it is just asking for a lot more trouble. So, I keep to myself a lot more. I am not going out to parties and getting real wild and trying to stumble home. (Chad)

Relationship of the Findings to Prior Research

It is important to consider the results of this study in relation to prior research on the topics of student and parent relationships and student alcohol use. This study took a particular approach to characterizing relationships between parents and students that is unparalleled in previous research, making the results difficult to compare. There were however several individual components of the study that are comparable.

First, Thorton, Orbuch, & Axinn (1995) concluded that most parents and students identify their relationship as “positive and supportive” by the time the child reaches adulthood. The same study suggests that the positive relationships children develop during adolescence continue, and even improve, as the child persists through adulthood. The results of the present study corroborate these findings. During each time period, relationships with parents were identified as either Neutral or Good, and these relationships improved over time.

The findings of this research study also support what experts have been saying about alcohol use while students are in high school. The Monitoring the Future Study (1997) suggested that 51% of high school seniors had drunk alcohol in the 30 days before the study and 74% had

consumed in the previous year. Within the present study, 93% of students consumed alcohol while in high school.

The College Alcohol Survey (2000) established concern about binge drinking on campus. Binge drinking was defined as consuming five or more drinks in a row for men and four or more drinks for women at least once in the two weeks before the survey was conducted. The study found that two in five college students could be classified as binge drinkers. The CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey (1998) found the same results, using a slightly different definition of binge drinking. It was defined the same for both men and women—consuming five or more drinks in one sitting during the two weeks preceding the survey. In the present research study, students were asked how many drinks they consumed on the average night when they used alcohol. Before college, eight (62%) students answered that they drank four or more drinks in the average evening. This number increased to 12 (92%) upon matriculation to college, and then nine (69%) after parental notification. These numbers seem to indicate that binge drinkers were represented in the sample at a higher rate than exists in the general student population. This may not be too surprising since the participants were all students whose drinking behaviors had led to judicial sanctions. Nonetheless, the present findings support prior studies.

Another comparable piece of information involves the relationship of an academic institution to parents and students. Gonzalez (1999) identified two reasons why universities may want to implement notification policies. First, colleges officials worry that parents may not find out until too late about their child's behavioral problem and the resulting serious judicial sanctions. At that point, it may be too late for the parent to intervene. The present study provided mixed support for this argument. Eight of the 13 students interviewed for the study would have told their parents about their violation(s) even if the university had not. This would suggest that these parents would have been involved in the process even without notification. However, the five remaining students would not have told their parents, which may have led to the situation Gonzalez (1999) was suggesting. It is possible that these students with one more violation of university policy may have been suspended without their parents ever knowing there was even a problem had they not been notified by the university.

When those students who said they would have told their parents even if the university had not were asked why they would have done so, most commented that their violations were significant and they would feel badly keeping something like this from their parents (Chad).

Jannah felt this same way, saying that there was “no way” she could have kept it from her parents. Other students commented their parents had the right to know (Ken), especially since they were paying the tuition bills (Chad). No student commented specifically that the policy treated them like children, as articles by Bacon-Blood (1999), Burghart (1999), and O’Hanlon (1998) suggest. However, participants on occasion commented that college students are independent and that the university should not contact their parents since they are adults.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

The present study had implications for both future research and future practice. While this investigation did not explore all aspects of parenting styles or student alcohol behaviors, it did provide a foundation on which other research can build.

The project explored parenting styles and alcohol behaviors with a sample that represented only White students and primarily students who resided with their birth parents throughout their lifetime. Perhaps future studies can explore parental relationships and drinking behaviors and analyze differences by race and family background. Such a study may help administrators recognize how parental notification affects students from different groups of people and different types of families.

Future research might also explore the perspective of parents. The present study was based on the students’ perception of their relationship with their parents and their alcohol behaviors. The parent’s perspective, or a combination of parents’ and students’ perspectives, might provide some enlightening results on the issue of parenting styles and student alcohol behaviors.

Future research may also want to explore the role of parents in the alcohol behavior of students in the general university population. The present study only looked at students who had experienced the university judicial system due to their alcohol consumption. A study on other students would contribute to the body of knowledge about parenting styles and alcohol behaviors in general.

The study also had implications for future practice. The results suggested that parents of students who have been through parental notification have little say in the decisions their students make about alcohol. Even when threatened with financial consequences, the prospect of “extremely mad” parents, or suspension, students still continue drinking. This may imply that rather than trying to eliminate campus drinking, administrators should focus on assisting students

in making better choices about alcohol. Most students commented that they are more careful about where and with whom they drink. They are also more cautious in their behavior. Assisting students in making better choices before or after their first violation may help diminish high risk drinking for future students.

Some students experienced frustration with the process of parental notification. One student was not told his parents were going to be informed and did not find out until he tried to sign up for on-campus housing and was unable to do so. He claimed not to even know the policy existed until the researcher contacted him to participate. Other students exhibited frustration in the time lag between their hearing and the notification of the parents. One student's notification took nearly six months. Another student said they were unsure what deferred suspension meant. Another was surprised about off-campus enforcement, thinking that as long as he was off-campus drinking he would not face university sanctions even if he were caught by police. This confusion about a variety of issues within the notification process should assist judicial affairs administrators in the future. Hearing officers should ensure that students understand the process and that the notification is conducted in a timely fashion. Students should also be reminded about future consequences should they be referred again for a violation of university policy.

Along the same lines, students expressed frustration because they felt the university was sending them mixed messages about alcohol use. One student was arrested off-campus after taking a breathalyzer test that showed a .02 blood alcohol content (BAC). One sanction he received from the university was to take an alcohol education class. In the class, the student was taught how to engage in low-risk drinking behaviors and maintain a BAC of .06 or less. After being arrested and severely sanctioned for a BAC lower than this, the student felt he was receiving mixed messages from the university. Administrators should consider situations such as these and ensure that they and others involved in the judicial process (e.g. police, judicial officers, residence life staff) are all working towards the same goal. If universities would like to eliminate underage drinking, then the content of alcohol education classes may need to change. However, if universities simply want students to make better decisions and be responsible in their alcohol use, then perhaps sanctions should not be as severe as suspension when students do engage in lower-risk drinking and yet are still involved in violations of campus policy.

Information in the present study can also be used to inform parents about behavioral problems on campus. Parents may have a stereotypical idea of what types of students face

discipline violations in college. This study presented some interesting results that may help eliminate these stereotypes. For example, all the students in the present study had Neutral to Good General Relationships with their parents. Parents may believe that only students who have Bad relationships with their parents get into trouble at college.

Finally, colleges should use the present study to recognize that many students are arriving on campus not only with experience with alcohol but also with parents who are permissive in their attitudes towards alcohol. The university may be the lone torchbearer in trying to curb student drinking. With peer pressure in addition to a collegiate culture that accepts alcohol as part of campus life, the university may not have enough influence to persuade students to limit their alcohol consumption to safe levels.

Limitations

As with all research, the present study had limitations. The first limitation related to sample size. Only 13 students agreed to be interviewed for the study. It is not possible to generalize comments of a small number of students to the general population. Therefore, caution should be taken in interpreting the results.

Second, because of notification variations, students were interviewed at different periods of time after parental notification. This could have affected students and what they remembered about their particular situation. Also, this time variation may have affected some results on the paper and pencil alcohol survey. Students may have been classified as heavier drinkers than they really were after parental notification. If this occurred, the results may have been influenced.

As with any study that involves students, there is the possibility that participants were not completely candid in their responses. Students exhibited strong emotions at certain times in interviews and this emotion may have affected their responses to questions. If this occurred, it may have affected the results.

Conclusion

In the end, combinations of factors were influential in the decreased or more careful approach to alcohol consumption after parental notification. The threat of suspension seems to be the most powerful preventive measure. Other students felt their violations were a wake-up call and chose to decrease consumption because they felt it was affecting their personal or academic well-being.

Parents did play a minor role in the decisions of students but it does not appear that parents can profoundly affect the drinking behavior of their student. However, parental notification does not seem to do any harm. Overall students did not express bitterness at the university for informing their parents. Even those who would not have told their parents about their violations still understood why parents may have the right to know, even if they wish that right to know did not exist. Since all students ended up maintaining or improving their relationship with their parents after parental notification, it appears that continuing the process of notifying parents is worthwhile.

The aim of the parental notification policy at the campus where the study was conducted is that parents will partner with the university in eliminating high-risk drinking by students. This aim may not be as successfully achieved as the university had hoped, but if nothing else, the process of parental notification at least stimulates discussion between parents and students about alcohol. Even if parents disagree with university policies, they all want the best for their student, which generally means persisting to graduation and avoiding suspension. Ultimately, only students can make the decision about their drinking behaviors. However, parents can and do remind students of the consequences of their behaviors with alcohol. Even parents who remain permissive in their attitudes about alcohol ask students to think through their decisions and avoid abusing alcohol.

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Appendix A
Parental Notification Letter

<Date>

Dear <Parent/Guardian>

I am writing to inform you that your son/daughter was recently found responsible in the student judicial system for a violation of the alcohol policy which has resulted in a sanction of deferred suspension. A copy of the decision letter he/she received is enclosed.

As you may know, Congress amended the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act in the Fall of 1998 to permit universities to notify the parents or guardians of students under 21 about alcohol and other drug violations. This exception to the privacy rights of students was enacted because of the health and safety consequences of alcohol and other drug abuse. <University> believes that these consequences are of particular concern when a student commits a drug violation, a major alcohol violation, or a second minor alcohol violation and is placed on deferred suspension or suspension. We believe that parents share the University's concern in such a situation for the student's health, safety, and academic progress. Thus the University decided, effective with the spring 1999 semester, that we would notify parents of judicial actions taken in such cases.

We hope that you will partner with the University at this "teachable moment" in your son's/daughter's life. We encourage you to discuss this matter with him/her and share your concerns for his/her well being. Thank you, in advance, for helping us work together for the benefit of your son/daughter. If after speaking with your son/daughter, you need additional information about this situation, please contact my office. Information about *University Policies on Student Life* can be found <in the University Student Handbook> or on the World Wide Web at <Web Address>.

Sincerely,

<Name>

Director of Judicial Affairs

Enclosure

Appendix B
Script for Judicial Hearing

To be read upon the conclusion of a student hearing:

The Office of Judicial Affairs is in the process of conducting research on students who have been found responsible for a violation of Virginia Tech's alcohol policy. Barring any appeals you may wish to undertake, you may be eligible to participate in the study.

Within the next few weeks, you may be contacted through email and asked to participate in the study. Should you choose to take part in the study, it involves a short time commitment and you will be paid for your participation.

Please understand that your participation or non-participation will have no effect on the present case or any future violations of the University Policies for Student Life.

Appendix C
Letter to Potential Participants

<Date>

Dear <Name>,

The Office of Judicial Affairs is in the process of conducting research on students who have been found responsible for a violation of Virginia Tech's alcohol policy. We have retained the services of a consultant for this purpose.

Within the next few weeks, you may be contacted through email and asked to participate in the study. Should you choose to take part in the study, it involves a short time commitment and you will be paid for your participation.

Please understand that your participation or non-participation will have no effect on your previous case or any future alleged violations of the University Policies for Student Life.

Sincerely,

<Name>
Director of Judicial Affairs

Appendix D
Email to Solicit Participants

Dear <Name>,

Recently you were made aware of a study taking place by the Office of Judicial Affairs about the parental notification policy adopted by the university. As a student that has been directly affected by this policy, you may be eligible to participate.

The study will require one one-hour time commitment for an interview. In return, you will receive \$10 in cash and be eligible for a \$50 raffle.

Interview questions will focus on your experience with alcohol, your relationship with your parents, and parental notification. Confidentiality is guaranteed and interviews will be scheduled at your convenience.

Please reply to this email stating your intent to participate or not participate in this study. If you are interested in participating, please include your phone number in your reply. I will contact you to confirm your eligibility and set up an interview time.

Thank you for your time, and I hope you choose to participate!

Errin Jeffes

Appendix E
Pre-Interview Screening Protocol

Hi. My name is Errin Jeffes. A few days ago you replied to an email from me agreeing to participate in my research study. The study is about life in college and relationships between college students and their parents, as well as issues of university policy. I told you I would be calling to confirm your eligibility for the study. Are you still interested in participating?

- No
 - Reiterate the importance of their input to the study.
 - Remind them of the incentive.
 - Ask what's holding them back.

- Yes

Great! There are a few things that I need to ask you about to make sure you are eligible for the study.

Were your parents notified of your recent violation of University policy?

How old are you?

- Must be under 21.
- If 20, ask when they turn 21.
 - If before the interview date, they are ineligible.

Are you still enrolled at VT?

Sounds like you are eligible for this study! I have a couple more questions for you and then we'll find a time to meet.

Sex: Male Female

Current Classification (by credits): Fresh Soph Jun Sen

Race: Caucasian African-American Hispanic International Other

During high school, with which parent(s) did you primarily reside?

Has your family status changed since high school?

- If yes, how?

Which alcohol policy did you violate?

- On how many separate occasions have you been found responsible for violating VT's alcohol policy?

Thanks for your time. I'd like to set up a time with you to meet within the next week.

Date of phone call: _____

Interview date range (sixth week after parental notification): _____

- Date Scheduled:
- Time Scheduled:
- Location:
- Does participant want a reminder about the meeting?
 - If yes, email or phone mail?

Appendix F Alcohol Survey

*A drink is defined as one beer, one wine cooler, one shot of liquor, or one mixed drink.

1. Did you drink alcohol before college?	YES	NO			
If No , skip to question # 2					
If Yes , in the average month, on how many occasions did you drink alcohol?	1-3	4-6	7-10	11+	
On the average night when you consumed alcohol, about how many drinks did you consume?	1-3	4-6	7-10	11+	
Did you ever get into trouble with police or school officials because of your alcohol use while in high school?	YES	NO			

2. In the average month, on how many occasions did you drink alcohol once you arrived at college (but before you were found in violation of VT's alcohol policy)?	1-3	4-6	7-10	11+	
On the average night when you consumed alcohol, about how many drinks did you have?	1-3	4-6	7-10	11+	

3. Over the [period of time since notification], on how many occasions did you drink alcohol?	0	1-3	4-6	7-10	11+
On the average night when you consumed alcohol, about how many drinks did you have?	0	1-3	4-6	7-10	11+

Please answer the following question based on the person(s) with which you primarily resided while in high school:

4. In the average month, on how many occasions do you believe your parents drink alcohol?	<i>Guardian 1:</i>				
	NA	0	1-3	4-6	7-10 11+
	<i>Guardian 2:</i>				
	NA	0	1-3	4-6	7-10 11+
5. On the average night when your parents consumed alcohol, about how many drinks did they have?	<i>Guardian 1:</i>				
	NA	0	1-3	4-6	7-10 11+
	<i>Guardian 2:</i>				
	NA	0	1-3	4-6	7-10 11+

Guar

Please note which parent you identified as each Guardian:

Guardian 1: _____

Guardian 2: _____

Appendix G

Interview Protocol

- ❑ Establish rapport with participants. Ask about major, classes, weekend plans.
- ❑ Review consent form and have them sign. Get permission to record interview.

“I will be asking you several questions during our interview. The study I’m conducting is about your life as a college student and your relationship with your parents over the past few years. Please describe your experiences as thoroughly as possible as best you can. As a reminder, the interview will be recorded to assist in my research, but your answers are completely confidential and you will not be identified in my paper. If you do not understand a question, then please ask for clarification.”

Relationship to Parents

The following questions ask you to consider your relationship with your parents.

1. How would you describe your relationship with your parents in high school?

- Communication?
 - Did you go to your parents when you were in a jam?
 - Did you discuss your problems with your parents?
- Day-to-day decisions?
 - What type of income did you have? Did they keep tabs on where you spent your money?
 - Did they always know where you were?
- Academics?
 - Did they pressure you about grades?
 - Did they check to make sure you did your homework each night?
 - Did they attend parent/teacher conferences?
- Social life?
 - Did your parents know all your close friends?
 - Did you have a curfew?
- Personal life?
 - Did you talk to your parents about how you were feeling and why?
 - Did you tell your parents about who you were interested in dating?

2. How would you describe your relationship with your parents when you first arrived at college?

- Communication?
 - How often did you speak to your parents on the telephone?
 - How often did you see your parents?
 - Did you go to your parents when you were in a jam?
 - Did you discuss your problems with your parents?
- Day-to-day decisions?
 - Who was financing college? What type of income do you have? Did they keep tabs on where you spent your money?
 - Did they always know what you were up to?
- Academics?
 - Did they know what classes you were taking?
 - Did they pressure you about grades?
 - Did they ask you about your homework?
- Social life?
 - Did your parents know all your close friends?
 - Did they want to know where you were going at night or on the weekends??
- Personal life?
 - Did you talk to your parents about how you were feeling and why?
 - Did you tell your parents about who you were interested in dating?

3. How would you describe your relationship with your parents since [time of violation]?

- Communication?
 - How often did you speak to your parents on the telephone?
 - How often did you see your parents?
 - Did you go to your parents when you were in a jam?
 - Did you discuss your problems with your parents?

- ❑ Day-to-day decisions?
 - What type of income do you have? Did they keep tabs on where you spent your money?
 - Did they always know what you were up to?
- ❑ Academics?
 - Did they know what classes you were taking?
 - Did they pressure you about grades?
 - Did they ask you about your homework?
- ❑ Social life?
 - Did your parents know all your close friends?
 - Did they want to know where you were going at night or on the weekends?
- ❑ Personal life?
 - Did you talk to your parents about how you were feeling and why?
 - Did you tell your parents about who you were interested in dating?

STOP—Have student take Alcohol Questionnaire. Give them a break when completed and use this time to review their answers.

Experience with Alcohol

The following questions will ask about your experience with alcohol.

- 4. Did you ever talk to your parents about alcohol while you were in high school?**
- If Yes:
 - What did you talk about?
 - What do you think were your parents expectations of you in regards to alcohol?
 - If No:
 - Why do you think you didn't talk about it?
 - What do you think were your parents expectations of you in regards to alcohol?
- 5. How about when you went to college? Did you have a talk with your parents about alcohol either shortly before or shortly after you left for college?**
- Yes:
 - What did you talk about?
 - What do you think were your parents expectations of you in regards to alcohol?
 - No:
 - Why do you think you didn't talk about it?
 - What do you think were your parents expectations of you in regards to alcohol?

The following questions depend on the answers given on the alcohol questionnaire.

Ask Question?

- _____
- 6. Were your parents aware that you were drinking in high school?**
- Yes:
 - What do you think they thought about your drinking?
 - No:
 - What do you think your parents would have done if they found out?

- _____
- 7. Were your parents aware that you were drinking when you first came to college (but before parental notification)?**
- Yes:
 - What do you think they thought about your drinking?
 - No:
 - What do you think your parents would have done if they found out?

- _____
- 8. Are your parents aware that you are still drinking?**
- Yes:
 - What do you think they thought about your drinking?
 - No:
 - What do you think your parents would do if they found out?

- _____
- 9. Have your parents ever provided you with alcohol?**
- Yes:
 - When did they do this?
 - Why do you think they did this?
 - No

Parental Notification

10. Tell me about the incident(s) that led to parental notification?

- Depending on pre-interview screening, this may be more than one occasion. Ask about each occasion if applicable.

11. Were you aware you were violating University policy?

- Yes:
 - What were your thoughts on this as you were drinking?
- No

Let's talk for a minute about what happened when your parents were notified of the incident.

12. Did you tell your parents about what happened before they got the letter?

- Yes:
 - What was their response?
- No:
 - Why not?

13. How did they react when they found out?

14. Were you completely honest with your parents about what happened?

- Yes
- No:
 - What did you tell them that wasn't completely honest?
 - Why weren't you completely honest with them?

15. If the University hadn't told your parents, would you have?

- Yes
 - Why?
- No
 - Why?

16. Since your parents have been notified, have you had a discussion about alcohol with them?

- Yes:
 - What did you talk about?
 - What do you think are your parents expectations of you in regards to alcohol?
- No:
 - Why do you think you didn't talk about it?
 - What do you think are your parents expectations of you in regards to alcohol?

Appendix H
Individual Summary Sheet

SUMMARY SHEET

Age: _____
Sex: _____
Race: _____
Class: _____

HS Parental Status: _____
Current Parental Status: _____

DRINKING BEHAVIORS

BC:

UMC:

APN:

Parents:

Guardian One:

Guardian Two:

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS (N=)

Non-time period Specific (n=)

BC:

General (n=)
 Good
 Neutral
 Bad
Day to Day Life (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Academics (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Social Life (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Personal Life (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Alcohol (n=)
 Strict No
 Passive No
 Unsure/Assumed
 Permissive
Unrelated Comments (n=)

UMC:

General (n=)
 Good
 Neutral
 Bad
Day to Day Life (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Academics (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Social Life (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Personal Life (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Alcohol (n=)
 Strict No
 Passive No
 Unsure/Assumed
 Permissive
Unrelated Comments (n=)

APN:

General (n=)
 Good
 Neutral
 Bad
Day to Day Life (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Academics (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Social Life (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Personal Life (n=)
 High
 Moderate
 Low
Alcohol (n=)
 Strict No
 Passive No
 Unsure/Assumed
 Permissive
Unrelated Comments (n=)

Subtotal (n=)
Relevant (n=)

Subtotal (n=)
Relevant (n=)

Subtotal (n=)
Relevant (n=)

ERRIN J. JEFFES

EDUCATION

- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia** **August 1999 to Present**
Master of Arts in Education, Anticipated May 2001
Educational Leadership & Policy Studies: Higher Education and Student Affairs
- Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana** **August 1995 to May 1999**
Bachelor of Science, *Magna Cum Laude*, May 1999

EXPERIENCE

- Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia**
Graduate Hall Director, Residential and Dining Programs
Select, train, supervise, and evaluate a staff of Resident Advisors and Senior Resident Advisors; Coordinate housing management including occupancy reports, room changes, check-in/check-out procedures, room inspections, and residence hall opening and closing; Assume rotating duty coverage for 8,900 on-campus students; Train new and returning Resident Advisors through in-building and area-wide sessions; Co-Instruct *Introduction to Residence Education*, the three-credit course for new Resident Advisors; Provide programming support and leadership guidance in the application of various University and Resident Advisor initiatives.
- East Ambler Johnston Hall*** **August 2000 to Present**
Responsible for the day-to-day administration of a 408-bed, traditional style residence hall housing freshmen and upper-class students; Primary supervisor for ten Resident Advisors and one Senior Resident Advisor; Advise the East Ambler Johnston Hall Council; Chair the Summit Area Staff Development Committee; Serve on the Residence Education Policy and Procedure Review Committee; Serve on the Freshmen Theme Housing Program Committee; Assist in the selection of professional and paraprofessional staff.
- New Residence Hall East and West*** **August 1999 to May 2000**
Responsible for the day-to-day administration of a 438-bed, two-building, suite-style residence hall housing upper-class students and a freshman theme-housing unit; Primary supervisor for eight Resident Advisors and one Senior Resident Advisor; Served as a liaison to faculty members coordinating the *Residential Leadership Community* housed in New Residence Hall West; Advised the New Residence East and New Residence Hall West Hall Councils; Served on the Area Coordinator Search Committee; Served on the Resident Advisor Selection Individual Interview Committee; Served on the *Residential Leadership Community* Student Selection Committee.
- Bridgewater State College, Bridgewater, Massachusetts** **Summer 2000**
ACUHO-I Intern, Office of Residence Life and Housing
Provided daily direction and support through the co-supervision of ten Summer Conference Aides; Assisted in the administration of housing summer conference guests; Implemented the operation of a new Summer Conference Centralized Desk Service; Revised departmental publications including brochures, informational packets, and room inventory forms; Collaborated in the development of a new programming model for Resident Advisors; Participated in freshmen orientation information sessions; Developed an understanding of the housing database to assist in the room assignment process; Served as a member of the Student Judicial Committee, Appellate Board, and Billing Appeals Committee.
- Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia** **January 2000 to May 2000**
Practicum Student, Office of Judicial Affairs
Read various texts and developed an understanding of the philosophy of judicial affairs; Conducted research on national judicial trends; Participated in the interviewing and training of Student Judicial Committee members; Observed Administrative and Student Judicial Committee hearings; Researched and collaborated on the development and implementation of an ethics class for educational judicial sanctions; Designed and developed an on-line survey to investigate student thoughts on the parental notification policy.

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana

Summer 1999

Conference Assistant, Valparaiso Union

Coordinated meeting/space/housing needs in advance of and during each conference; Served as a university representative to conference leaders; Worked with appropriate campus departments including maintenance, housekeeping, and police to meet the needs of conference groups; Conducted regular evaluations of procedures and offered suggestions for continuing improvement of conference services.

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana

Summer 1999

Intern, Office of Residence Life

Represented the Office of Residence Life during the summer orientation program for incoming freshmen; Co-coordinated the Resident Assistant fall training program and the re-writing of the *RA Manual*; Assisted with freshmen housing assignments; Served as a damage billing appeals officer; Assisted in the planning of a year-long freshmen programming initiative to be conducted in the residence hall in conjunction with the required freshmen CORE classes.

Indiana Residence Hall Organization

February 1998 to February 1999

Conference Chair

Successfully bid to host the 1999 Indiana Residence Hall Organization Conference, February 19-21, 1998; Advised and assisted committee chairs in preparing the campus to host the conference including planning for registration, housing accommodations, entertainment, dining services, and programming for approximately 200 delegates.

PRESENTATIONS

Brown Bag Lunch Professional Development Series: "Alcohol and College Students: Do Parents Matter?" A presentation to student affairs professionals based on thesis research. ● **SACSA 2000:** "The Missing Link: Can Students Find Us On the Web?" A presentation on the accessibility of graduate preparation programs in student affairs on the web. ● **Virginia Tech Fall Training and Leadership Workshop:** presentations on topics including programming, diversity, peer helping, leadership, community building, hall administration, sexual assault, eating disorders, and other generalist topics. ● **Hall Council Training:** presentations on diversity, delegation. ● **Office of Judicial Affairs:** Co-presented a session describing the University Judicial System to Panhellenic Council to assist in the redesigning of their own Judicial System. ● **IRHOC 1998:** "Avoid Sinking the Titanic!" A presentation on men's and women's communication styles in the workplace.

PUBLICATIONS

Turrentine, C.G., Bonarek, J.M., Gray, J.K., Hardman, C.W., Jeffes, E.J., Romero-Aldaz, P.I., Tyburski, K.C. (in press). The missing link: An evaluation of Web access to graduate preparation programs in student affairs. *College Student Affairs Journal*.

ACTIVITIES

Virginia College Personnel Association (VCPA): Graduate Student / New Professional Representative, 2000-2001 ● **American College Personnel Association (ACPA):** Commission III Web Page Designer, 2000-2001 (Recognized by ACPA with the "Award for Excellence – Publications, 2001") ● **Graduate Student Assembly:** Higher Education and Student Affairs Representative, 2000-2001 ● **Commission on Student Affairs:** Graduate Student Assembly Representative, 2000-2001 ● **Football Ticket Distribution:** Policy and Procedure Review Committee, 2000-2001 ● **Graduate Student and Faculty Forum Conference:** Registration Co-Chair, 2000-2001 ● **Association for Student Development Fall Drive-In Conference:** Publicity & Recruitment Co-Chair, 2000 ● **Association for Student Development:** Publications Chair, 2000

AFFILIATIONS

American College Personnel Association ● Virginia College Personnel Association ● National Association of Student Personnel Administrators ● Southern Association of College Student Affairs ● Gamma Phi Beta International Sorority